

Foreword

As the global economy emerges from the shadow of the crisis, it is time to think of new sources of growth creating the conditions for sustainable and balanced economic development that will deliver the quality jobs we need. The OECD is committed to working closely with governments all over the world to achieve this goal.

Vocational education and training for young people has a big part to play in making this a reality. This report sets out some practical steps that countries can take in partnership with employers – for example to ensure that vocational teachers and trainers have a good understanding of modern industry, and to develop workplace training as an integral element of most vocational programmes. Several countries have made strides in expanding upper secondary and tertiary education, but many still report skill shortages in technical and professional fields.

For vocational training to live up to its potential, we need a modernised approach, with highly professional teachers and trainers, preparing young people for the demanding jobs of the future. We need to recognise that as economies evolve, new jobs will emerge, in the environmental industries, in health care and elsewhere. The training needs to deliver not just a first job, but the adaptability and capacity to learn other skills, to allow for an evolving career. Above all, we need partnership between education and training systems and industry, to provide for workplace training, to ensure that skills have real labour market relevance and that young people gain an early appreciation and understanding of the world of work.

This initial OECD report is linked to 17 individual country studies, some of them complete and published, others – like those on China, Germany and the United States – still to come. They illustrate the rich international diversity in vocational systems. It is a field in which countries have much to learn from each other. The aim of our work is to help with this task.

Angel Gurría
Secretary-General of the OECD

