

*Jobs for Youth/Des emplois pour les jeunes*  
**France**

*Summary in English*



## SUMMARY AND MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

### Young people hit hard by the economic downturn

France, like the other OECD countries, is currently facing a serious economic crisis, with unemployment rising very rapidly, particularly among the youth. According to Enquête Emploi, while the unemployment rate for 25-54-year-olds changed little during the year, reaching 7.4% in the 4th quarter of 2008, the rate for 15-24-year-olds rose from 19% in the 4th quarter of 2007 to 21.2% in the 4th quarter of 2008. Unemployment increased much more among young men (+3.2 percentage points) than among young women (+0.6 percentage point). Indeed, in the 3rd quarter of 2008 the unemployment rate of young men surpassed that of young women for the first time ever. More young men work in unskilled jobs in sectors (such as construction) that are very sensitive to the business cycle.

According to the latest OECD forecasts, the economic situation will continue to deteriorate in 2009 and in 2010. This should lead to a sharp increase in youth unemployment throughout the OECD area, but especially in France where the youth unemployment rate is more sensitive than elsewhere to economic fluctuations.

## Mediocre average performance of the youth labour market in France

The economic crisis has hit young people in France at a time when their situation on the labour market was already not very positive, with the indicators for mid-2008 still not back to their good level in 2003. This is especially worrisome given that the performance of the youth labour market in France is mediocre in comparison with that of many other OECD countries. French young people, who are among the most pessimistic about their career prospects, face an unemployment rate that in 2007 was seven percentage points above the OECD average. If the age effect alone is taken into consideration (that is, if all young people of a specific age are considered, and not only young people in the labour force), then in 2007 unemployment affected at most 8% of 15-24-year-olds, but France was still 2 percentage points above the OECD average. Furthermore, in 2007 long-term unemployment affected one unemployed French youth out of four, compared with the OECD average of one out of five.

The cyclical difficulties that young people are currently experiencing to a large extent reflect problems of a more structural character. In light of this, while one of the main short-term priorities is to take specific measures to help French youth who risk being hit hardest by the crisis, it is advisable that to the extent possible these measures be designed so that they also facilitate the integration of young people into the labour market once the crisis is over. In addition, it is also important to maintain or improve some of the policies that were implemented before the economic downturn, while also undertaking new reforms to enable young people to make the transition into employment in France.

## The French model of the school-to-work transition

Successfully entering the labour market in France depends to a great extent on following a linear educational trajectory to obtain an initial selective diploma (from a *grande école*, or a university institute of technology), which are particularly highly valued by employers. Young people who deviate from this educational path have more difficulty obtaining an initial diploma that protects them from unemployment, and when entering the labour market face multiple barriers. These young people can then experience long periods of uncertainty, and those who are most disadvantaged and cannot count on help from their families have a high risk of finding themselves out of the labour market for a long time, and even experiencing poverty. Initial labour-market entry mechanisms are thus still very decisive for the rest of the career pathway.

## Three groups of young people: “high performers”, “youth left behind” and “poorly integrated new entrants”

In France, like in the other OECD countries, not all young people have the same chance at successfully joining the labour market. In addition to the group of “high performers”, who represent the great majority of young people in countries like the Netherlands, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and the Nordic countries, and about half of youth leaving school in France,

there is also a group of “youth left behind” in all the OECD countries. The size of this group can be estimated based on the number of young people who are neither in employment, nor education or training (NEET), and represents about 11% of 15-24-year-olds in France, a percentage that is close to the OECD average (12%). While the characteristics of these young people differ from one country to another, they share the fact that they are accumulating disadvantages. In France, these are mainly youth who do not have a diploma, who come from an immigrant background and who live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. It is crucial that these “youth left behind” are helped as quickly as possible into employment and often to obtain a qualification or diploma at the same time.

One feature of the French school-to-work model, which is also found in other continental European countries (Belgium, Greece, Italy, Spain), is the existence of another large group of young people who face difficulties entering the labour market – about one quarter of those leaving school in France. While these young “poorly integrated new entrants” often have diplomas, it can take a long time for them to find stable employment, even during periods of strong economic growth, and they frequently go back-and-forth between temporary jobs and unemployment. Long-standing policies in France to maintain high levels of the minimum wage and job protection have led to a labour-market duality that has tended to penalise many young people as they enter the labour market. Adjustments to the way the labour market functions could assist the efforts of these “poorly integrated new entrants”, but in the absence of such adjustments, France has been obliged to compensate by implementing other, often more complex policies to facilitate the transition from school to work.

## **How to improve the transition from school to work in France?**

To help young “poorly integrated new entrants” and “youth left behind” out of job uncertainty and poverty, the strategy of the French authorities must rely on a range of measures that meet the following four objectives: i) ensuring that everyone leaving the educational system possesses the skills needed on the labour market; ii) making the transition from school to work less abrupt; iii) tackling the demand-side barriers to youth employment, and iv) making the active measures for the least employable young people more effective and strengthening social protection for the most disadvantaged youth. As these four points are mutually reinforcing, it is essential to work on them simultaneously based on a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated approach.

### ***Ensuring that everyone leaving the educational system possesses the skills needed on the labour market***

For many years now France has sought to reduce the number of young people leaving the school system without a diploma. Although many actions have been implemented from kindergarten onward, they have not succeeded. When all is said and done, in 2008, 18% of youth were leaving school without the French baccalauréat, which is considered to be the minimum achievement needed today to enter the labour market and continue to acquire training.

The proportion of 16-year-olds not in school is 3%, a figure that reaches 9% by age 17. The Code of Education provides for the possibility of continuing schooling between age 16 and 18 if at the age when compulsory schooling ends (16) no qualification has been achieved. The end of compulsory schooling could at least be applied more flexibly, and be based not on age as such, but rather on the school year that the youth becomes 16. This would mean that young people would not leave school on their 16th birthday, but at least finish the current year, which might be the graduation year. Furthermore, acquiring a minimum educational level by age 18 could be made compulsory. This is the case, for example, in the Netherlands, where since 2007 a law has required 18-year-olds who have not acquired a two-year diploma from the 2nd cycle of secondary vocational school (*startkwalificatie*) to follow a work-study programme.

Educational counselling for pupils is viewed negatively in France, meaning disciplines are chosen largely by default. At secondary school, general and technological studies are considered to be more “prestigious” than vocational courses. The weakest pupils are almost systematically steered towards the vocational specialties in least demand, often in the services sector, which have available spaces in the vocational high schools but very rarely correspond to the pupils’ personal desires. Moreover, many vocational training courses offer poor preparation for employment. Guidance should on the contrary constitute an opportunity to construct an educational and professional future.

The public authorities wish to significantly improve the local coordination of their efforts to identify and deal with early school-leaving, and to this end have appointed local coordination officers. One school-leaver out of five over the age of 16 currently has no alternatives. Every possibility must be used to promote access to a qualification without necessarily awaiting the one-year waiting period during which it is the General Integration Mission of the Ministry of Education that is in charge of helping school-leavers to return to school or begin training. The regular schools could co-operate more broadly with all local stakeholders, in particular second-chance schools. Young people should be able to be accepted into these schools from age 16 rather than age 18. This is one of the goals of the Hope for Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods (*Espoir banlieues*) plan, which recommends the creation of a second-chance system in every *département*, but this needs to be extended to include all young people not in school throughout France.

On the Call-up Day for Defence Preparedness (JAPD), during which all French 17-year-old boys and girls undergo tests to detect illiteracy, a significant number of young people who have difficulty reading are identified (15% of boys, versus 8% of girls). Educational policy needs to take these difficulties into better account (in or out of the school framework), as, due to these youths’ poor mastery of basic knowledge, they could find themselves in a situation of lasting social exclusion. JAPD Day could also provide an opportunity to identify all 17-year-olds who could be considered as NEET. These youth should have personal interviews not only with National Defence personnel but also with Public Employment Service (PES) agents in order to be pointed as quickly as possible towards a vocational or educational integration agency,

preferably for a dual vocational training.

Offering every individual a “second chance at a qualification” amounts to using continuing vocational training to correct the inequalities inherited from school. Yet far from correcting these original inequalities, the vocational training system usually reinforces them in OECD countries, particularly in France. Tertiary education graduates aged 20-29 have three times as much access to continuing vocational training as do those the same age with no diploma. There is a need to strengthen access to diplomas and to all professional certifications in other ways, in particular by the validation of job experience. To this end, the apprenticeship training contract set up in 2005 (contrat de professionnalisation, CP) by the social partners is aimed in particular at the least-skilled workers. In December 2008, only 9% of the young people covered by these contracts were unskilled.

The following measures need to be considered so that young people can develop the basis skills they need to enter the labour market and advance their careers:

- *Do everything possible to avoid early school-leaving.* All possible mechanisms need to be used to promote access to qualifications without necessarily awaiting the one-year period. The General Integration Mission of the Ministry of Education, local missions and other local organisations in charge of second-chance schools should work together to find a personalised solution for all young people leaving or about to leave middle school. Compulsory schooling could conclude at the end of the school year rather than on the 16th birthday, and be extended until age 18 if the young person has no qualifications.
- *Overhaul the way guidance functions in secondary education and better coordinate educational guidance and vocational guidance.* Middle and high school students and apprentices should be better informed about the many vocational specialties and gateways that exist in order to plan their educational and vocational pathway better, and in the case of apprentices, to reduce the number of contracts broken.
- *Create a deferred right to training for young people who have left the school system without basic skills, a qualification and/or a diploma.* The 12% of 17-year-olds identified on JAPD Day who have difficulty reading must be enabled at least to acquire basic skills during their working lives by establishing a deferred right to training, to be financed mainly by funds collected from business for vocational training and as part of the CP training contract.
- *Ensure that more small enterprises benefit from funds for vocational training for their training budgets targeted at young workers with low job skills.* The pending reform of vocational training should aim to develop training in small enterprises by securing funding and improving the range of services offered by the collection agencies.

### *Making the transition from school to work less abrupt*

France is a country where young people have little right to make mistakes or to proceed by trial and error before entering the world of work, unlike the Nordic countries and Canada where young people can go back-and-forth many times between work and study before definitively stabilising in a job. France needs to develop this kind of exploratory phase during which vocational experience can be built up before definitively leaving school. As the labour market penalises any “years of delay” upon leaving the school system, French students have little incentive to combine study and work (except apprenticeships), as this can delay finishing school. Even though the share of young people in France who combine study and work has been rising since the early 1990s, it is still modest compared to most other OECD countries (25% of those aged 20-24, i.e., 9 percentage points below the OECD average).

In many OECD countries, the experience of combining work and study shows that this facilitates labour-market entry, so long as the work does not exceed about 15 to 20 hours per week and thus undermine study. In Norway, for example, where all students receive a study allocation and higher education is free, almost all students work in order both to be financially independent during their school years and to find a job more easily when they finish their schooling, as companies value this initial experience in the world of work. This raises the question of whether this practice should be encouraged by subsidising French students for working. For instance, full-time students who work year-round could benefit from a subsidy (in the form, for instance, of an allowance or a modest wage supplement) for a maximum of 15 hours of work per week. A scheme like this could be evaluated soon after its introduction to ensure that the expected benefits for labour-market integration outweigh any deadweight effects.

France has also witnessed a growing trend to professionalise initial education through the use of compulsory on-the-job internships. However, it is difficult to find a company offering internships, especially for young people from immigrant or disadvantaged backgrounds. This is why the Ministry of Education launched the Target: Internships (Objectif stages) programme, which aims to provide pupils access to compulsory internships regardless of their origin, address, social background or relationship with the world of business.

The supply and duration of internships varies with the type of higher education. In general, internships are compulsory for obtaining a vocational training certificate (BTS), a university diploma in technology (DUT) or a diploma from one of the engineering or commercial grandes écoles. On the other hand, internships are neither common nor compulsory at university, even though they have been encouraged recently.

Developing the use of internships in the study programme is a step in the right direction to put pupils and students in contact with the world of business. Nonetheless, avoiding certain problems in implementation is a challenge. First, it is necessary to ensure that the internships have a high added pedagogical value and are linked to the training or study programme. Certain abuses must

also be avoided; for example, it is not rare for universities or the Ministry of Education to receive requests for internship agreements concerning graduates (young people who have thus completed their studies), who are offered the internship as initial work experience in the company. Interns are very cheap: payment equivalent to a third of the minimum wage is required only after three consecutive months of the internship and only in the private sector. There are no provisions for paying interns in the public sector.

The following measures are therefore recommended:

- *Consider moderately subsidising student work to give it a major impetus.* Full-time students who work all year could, for example, benefit from a subsidy in the form of an allowance or a wage supplement for a maximum of 15 hours work per week. Such a measure should, nevertheless, be evaluated after a certain time to ensure that it promotes integration effectively.
- *Set up compulsory internships at university starting at the bachelor's level.* The establishment of compulsory internships during the three years of the bachelor's degree should be systematically accompanied by the award of credits in the study programme, as is the case in the selective streams of study.
- *Penalise companies that abuse "fake internships".* Companies that ask educational institutions to arrange internship agreements for young people who have already graduated should be penalised.
- *Extend the decree that provides for compulsory compensation for internships of more than three months in the public sector.* The public sector hosts a large number of interns but does not act as a model for the private sector, to which the decree is currently limited.

### *Tackling the demand-side barriers to youth employment*

Discrimination against the hiring of young people from visible minorities is far from uncommon in France. Those hit hardest are relatively unskilled French youth of North African and especially black African origin. It is not easy to set up measures that are genuinely effective in combating discrimination. The programme that has proved most beneficial in the OECD countries is mentorships. These help to provide young people from immigrant backgrounds access to the labour market, to better understand "the rules of the game" and to forge links with companies. Mentorships, which draw on volunteers who are familiar with the world of business or government, should be broadly extended. But it is also important to fight overt discriminatory behaviour directly. In this respect, strengthening the role of the High Authority for the Fight against Discrimination and for Equality (HALDE), which now has the authority to initiate proceedings on its own, is a welcome step.

The work of the OECD and other organisations has shown that a moderate minimum wage does not necessarily have a negative impact on youth employment. On the other hand, when the minimum wage is set at a high level relative to the median wage, it can hurt the hiring of certain disadvantaged groups, in particular less-productive young people. In France, the minimum wage of 20-year-olds (which corresponds to the adult minimum wage) is 63%



of the median wage, which is the highest ratio in the OECD and is 19 percentage points higher than the average minimum wage for 20-year-olds in the 21 OECD countries that actually have a minimum wage.

France has chosen not to call into question the minimum wage, but to reduce labour costs at this wage level, and, since the early 1990s, has sought to achieve this by massively reducing employer contributions on low wages. Simultaneously, rather than adopt a youth wage, exceptions to the minimum wage have been introduced for youth under age 18 with less than six months seniority as well as for those on subsidised contracts and in apprenticeship training contracts.

These policies have, nevertheless, not necessarily promoted the hiring of less-skilled youth. First, given the high number of unskilled adults earning the minimum wage in France, when low-skilled young people seek a minimum-wage job in France they more frequently find themselves in competition with more experienced adults than is the case in other OECD countries.

Furthermore, apprenticeships in secondary vocational education are much less common in France than in “apprenticeship countries” like Germany, Austria and Switzerland. While the short-term employment outcomes of apprentices are better than those of vocational high school graduates – in 2007, 64% of apprentices were employed seven months after leaving the school system versus 49% of vocational high school graduates – whenever the apprentices are not hired by their host companies, they experience more difficulties than their high school counterparts.

As part of the multi-year Social Cohesion Plan, the French government set a goal of placing 500 000 young people in apprenticeships by 2009 and doubling the number of apprentices in higher education institutions by 2010. The number of apprenticeship contracts has risen overall in recent years, albeit, it is true, from a very low starting point. The current trend is to take on young people who have already obtained at least a vocational or bachelor’s degree. In 1992, for instance, 60% of new apprentices had no qualifications, compared with 40% in 2006. Though public sector apprenticeships were initiated in 1992, they are still very marginal and are filled particularly by those with more education: only 28% of young public apprentices do not have a qualification. Overall, while apprenticeships are beginning to be viewed more favourably today in France, it is crucial that this training scheme and the companies involved give priority to taking on unskilled pupils aged 15-16 to help them acquire a qualification or even a pre-qualification and a diploma while they are working.

Developing the apprenticeship system often runs into the difficulty that young people have trouble finding a company to take them on, particularly if they lack skills and come from an immigrant background. Due to the economic crisis, there is a non-negligible risk that companies will be even less willing to train an unskilled apprentice or could even break existing contracts. Companies should be encouraged to train, hire and retain more unskilled apprentices. Exemptions to employer contributions and regional or central government subsidies for apprenticeship agreements should be given only to companies that



take on unskilled apprentices. In addition, employers who hire an unskilled apprentice that they have trained should be given a subsidy.

Another measure would involve offering public-sector apprenticeship contracts in priority to young people for whom a wage starting at the agreed sector minimum would be a significant obstacle to recruitment. Training acquired in the public sector under these contracts should lead to a qualification that is valued on the labour market. The Pathways to civil service careers (PACTE) programme, the civil service equivalent of the private-sector CP training contract, should also be strengthened: only 500 contracts were agreed despite an announced target of 20 000 contracts per year.

While it does not seem that job protection has an impact on the overall unemployment rate, it does nevertheless tend to segment the labour market, in particular between those with permanent employment contracts (CDI) and those with fixed-term employment contracts (CDD). The greater protection offered by CDIs leads to employment difficulties for young people, as only very rarely is a CDD a quick stepping stone to a CDI. In 2005-06, only 16% of those aged 15-24 in France on a CDD had a CDI one year later, compared with 70% of young people in the United Kingdom. The casualisation of labour has increased in France, as the likelihood of moving from a CDD to a CDI was 45% in 1995-1996. The fact that too many young people begin their careers by alternating between a CDD and periods of unemployment leads them and their employers to under-invest in their human capital at an age when progress is decisive for their future productivity. It is thus important to make the transition process from the CDD to a CDI more systematic.

The social partners and the French government began to try to deal with this harmful labour-market duality in the January 2008 multi-sector labour agreement and the Law of June 2008 on labour contracts. This legislation has laid the cornerstone of a system that combines job flexibility and career security for all employees. The trial period has in particular been extended for all permanent contracts for workers and employees to two months, which is renewable once. In addition, for young people, the duration of an internship that is integrated into an educational curriculum during the last year of study is taken into account in the duration of the trial period.

A longer trial period could lead employers to hesitate less about hiring a beginner directly on a CDI rather than first offering a CDD or an interim mission. Despite the changes introduced in 2008, France stands at the average of OECD countries for the maximum legal duration of a trial period.

The following reforms can be recommended:

- *Actively encourage the mentoring of young people from immigrant backgrounds by private sector managers.* Mentorships could provide young people from immigrant backgrounds with information about the “rules of the game” and about the way to behave during interviews and on the job, and should reassure employers.
- *Limit subsidies for apprenticeships to unskilled young people.* To have at least 50% of unskilled young people in apprenticeships, compared with 40% today, the incentives for companies to train and

hire an apprentice should be limited to unskilled young people.

- *Significantly increase apprenticeship positions in the public sector for the least-skilled young people, as well as entries into the PACTE programme.* To overcome the barrier of a minimum sector starting salary that is too high relative to their productivity, the least-skilled youth who are not on private apprenticeships should be given priority for public-sector apprenticeship contracts and the PACTE programme, with the goal of enabling them to acquire a qualification recognised on the labour market.

- *Continue efforts to reduce labour-market duality overall. The CDD seems to be less and less a stepping stone to a stable job for young people.* As in the Netherlands, temporary jobs (CDD and interim) could be automatically converted for all workers, regardless of their age, into a CDI after a certain time period or a certain number of renewals.

### *Making the active measures for the least employable young people more effective and strengthening social protection for the most disadvantaged youth*

More than 80 different employment measures have been applied to young people in a little more than 30 years. This chronic instability in employment measures has posed an obstacle to evaluating youth employment in France. Replacing one scheme by another even before it has been evaluated has made it difficult to develop the necessary perspective. Since the introduction of the Social Cohesion Plan in 2005, there has been greater stability in the number and frequency of active measures introduced for young people.

In January 2009, the President of France appointed a High Commissioner for Youth to be responsible for policies to promote the autonomy of young adults. In March 2009, the Commissioner set up a coordination body that will submit proposals for specific measures for comprehensively tackling the problems facing young people.

In the current economic situation, if additional measures or spending is undertaken to help young people hit by the crisis, it will be important to emphasise the measures that work best. For instance, the right to a social integration contract (CIVIS), established in 2005 for 16-25-year-olds, institutes regular personalised follow-up by a single referent in a local office and involves activation based on mutual obligations. CIVIS was implemented on a large scale, and 40% of the young people with a contract have sustainable jobs (CDD for more than six months or CDI excluding non-market-sector contracts). It is, in addition, a relatively inexpensive programme (about EUR 700 per year to assist each young person, excluding training and other active measures), which effectively promotes the attachment of low-skilled young people to the labour market. Nevertheless, the Fund for the vocational integration of young people (FIPJ) created in 2005 to give greater support to young people on CIVIS contracts through local offices has seen a very significant decline in its funding in recent years. The current evaluation of the CIVIS should help to determine what kind of improvements to make to this

scheme to provide it better funding where necessary.

Many other measures are being developed or have been recently implemented to improve the school-to-work transition for young people with multiple difficulties. One of these is the autonomy contract (contrat d'autonomie) introduced by the Espoir banlieues plan. This plan was launched in February 2008 and is aimed at integrating 200 000 youth under the age of 26 who do not have jobs and live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods into the world of work by subcontracting 45 000 autonomy contracts to private operators by 2011. An evaluation system was planned beforehand that should make it possible to rapidly determine whether this type of contract is well suited to young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

One problem often encountered involves the articulation between the different programmes, the coordination of the different intervenors and the governance of the schemes. This has been the case, for example, with the implementation of the CIVIS by local offices and the new autonomy contracts managed by private operators. There is a serious risk that the most disadvantaged youth will move from one scheme to another but remain stuck in their long-term disconnection from the labour market. A département-level steering committee headed by the département prefect has just been established to better coordinate the different schemes.

In addition, a boarding school scheme was set up in 2005 to meet the need for training in behavioural and basic skills for young people aged 18 to 22 facing marginalisation and multiple barriers to employment (the EPIDE or the so-called Défense deuxième chance). It turns out that the costs of this scheme, in particular property costs, are disproportionate with respect to the number of youth assisted (more than EUR 40 000 per year per young person). In comparison, the annual cost for a young person in a similar residential programme in the United States (Job Corps), which has existed since the 1960s, is much lower, and the results are positive only for older young people (aged 20-24).

Despite having rather broad access to active measures, relatively few French people under the age of 25 are eligible for financial allowances. In some cases, a small amount of one-off financial assistance is granted to young people in difficulty, in particular in disadvantaged neighbourhoods under the autonomy contract (EUR 300 per month for six months). Young people usually benefit from financial assistance only under the unemployment insurance scheme. Those who are eligible receive relatively generous benefits, with a replacement rate estimated at 70%, compared with an OECD average of 62%. At the end of 2006, 44% of job-seekers under age 25 registered with the national employment agency (ANPE) received benefits under the unemployment insurance scheme, compared with 48% of those aged 25-49. On the other hand, adults at the end of their eligibility more frequently have access to a specific solidarity allowance (ASS) granted after five years of activity during the ten years preceding the loss of employment.

The unemployment insurance agreement for the 2009-10 period changes the required contribution period from six to four months when first signing on,

based on the principle “one day’s contribution, one day’s benefit”. The reference period was also extended from 22 to 28 months. On the other hand, a jobseeker who signs on again within 12 months following an initial qualification for benefits on the basis of four months, after having taken another job in the meantime, must have at least six months of contributions to receive benefits. Although the broadening of eligibility conditions for unemployment insurance will increase the coverage of young people, in the current crisis it is important to ensure that training periods during internships, apprenticeships and training contracts are validated in order to attain the four months required. The recent grant of a one-off EUR 500 bonus to job seekers who have worked only two to four months out of the last 28 months is a step in this direction.

Unlike in many other OECD countries that allow access to social benefits from the age of legal maturity (18 years), France, like Luxembourg and Spain, allows access to the main social welfare scheme, the minimum integration income (RMI), only later, starting from age 25. Access to social benefits is usually made conditional upon the obligation to follow an activation measure (for example, a training requirement for unskilled young people up to age 27 in the Netherlands or up to age 25 in Denmark). Starting from mid-2009, the active solidarity income (RSA) will replace the RMI by bringing together the social minima and certain employment-related benefits for social welfare beneficiaries and low-paid workers. A single integration contract will also be introduced.

For the moment, there are no plans to extend the RSA benefit to youth under age 25. For this group, the government wishes first to bring into play family links, without offering the youth a minimum income, while working to improve their entry into the labour market. The government sets up a Fund to support experimental efforts for young people aged 16 to 25. This is funded by state contributions and by any public or private legal entity that joins it, for the purpose of implementing experimental social and vocational integration programmes on behalf of the most disadvantaged youth.

The following measures are thus recommended:

- *Provide more resources to personally assist unskilled young people to find jobs and improve governance in order to better coordinate national and regional actions.* All stakeholders must work together to improve the coordination of existing programmes with a view to achieving results.
- *Rigorously evaluate all integration schemes for young people facing the greatest difficulties.* There are two goals: to increase the available information about which schemes for disadvantaged youth work well, and to determine their cost-effectiveness.
- *Expand unemployment insurance eligibility conditions to cover young people.* It would be a welcome step, particularly in a time of economic crisis, to validate any period of youth employment, such as internships and dual programmes, in order to attain the number of months required.
- *Establish a safety net for the most disadvantaged young people*

*under age 25 and ensure that there is a rigorous approach to activation.* The RSA could eventually be extended to those under age 25.

© OECD 2009

Reproduction of this summary is allowed provided the OECD copyright and the title of the original publication are mentioned.

**Multilingual summaries are translated excerpts of OECD publications originally published in English and in French.**

**They are available free of charge on the OECD Online Bookshop [www.oecd.org/bookshop/](http://www.oecd.org/bookshop/)**

For more information, contact the OECD Rights and Translation unit, Public Affairs and Communications Directorate at: [rights@oecd.org](mailto:rights@oecd.org) or by fax: +33 (0)1 45 24 99 30

OECD Rights and Translation unit (PAC)  
2 rue André-Pascal, 75116  
Paris, France

Visit our website [www.oecd.org/rights/](http://www.oecd.org/rights/)

