



Press note: Unlocking the Potential of Migrants in Germany

*Germany should continue its efforts to integrate migrants through VET, says new OECD report*

The German vocational education and training (VET) system is known around the world for its ability to prepare young people for skilled employment. Germany has already devoted significant attention to VET as a mechanism to enable the integration of learners into economic life – and for good reason as it demonstrably gives learners skills that employers want, and enables new social relations, in real-world settings. The OECD releases a report today focused on an unprecedented test of the German VET system: how to respond to the significant increase in migrants who arrived in the country in 2015-16.

Welcoming the publication of the report, Ludger Schuknecht, Deputy Secretary General of the OECD said:

*“There is much that the world can learn from the ways in which migrants are being integrated into German life through VET. By continuing to focus on quality, German VET can become more accessible for all learners while maintaining its high standards.”*

The study finds that Germany has done much of value to enable integration through VET. The focus of its efforts has been on enabling migrants to benefit from vocational education. Approaches have built on key strengths of the German VET system, in particular strong work-based learning and engagement of social partners. Building up migrant skill sets before entry into VET is important in order to prepare them for training and to make them attractive for employers to recruit as apprentices. The report argues for upscaling successful preparatory programmes and making opportunities available more consistently for students over the age of 18. In order to prevent high dropout rates among migrants, opportunity exists to strengthen the availability of support measures during VET to provide migrants, like any learner at risk of poor outcomes, with targeted help. As some learners are struggling to move through the VET system, the report argues that Germany should give consideration to alternative pathways through VET. Where there is clear labour market demand, increased flexibility can be a more effective pathway for struggling learners who are less likely to succeed in mainstream vocational programmes. In such a way, access to VET can be increased for all youth at risk of poor outcomes, while high standards and the labour market relevance of provision is retained.

In recent years, Germany has undertaken remarkable efforts in developing new initiatives and scaling up existing approaches to enable integration. In order to inform decision-making and identify good practice, the study argues that Germany should now focus on improving data and evaluations about how the measures implemented are working. Greater emphasis can be put on facilitating peer-learning and co-ordination across the federal government and *Länder* to help expand effective practice and to take advantage of economies of scale.

The study complements a sister OECD VET publication, *Unlocking the Potential of Migrants: Cross-country Analysis*, which highlights practice across numerous countries.

Bergseng, B., E. Degler and S. Lüthi (2019), *Unlocking the Potential of Migrants in Germany*, OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/82ccc2a3-en>.

Jeon, S. (2019), *Unlocking the Potential of Migrants: Cross-country Analysis*, OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/045be9b0-en>

The OECD has reviewed national systems of vocational education and training around the world since 2008, published more than 40 reports in this topic. It has published three synthesis reports with its key findings - the latest one on how to develop and improve apprenticeships [here](#) and more detail about VET at the OECD [here](#).