



Recommendation of the Council on Creating Better Opportunities for Young People



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Background Information

The Recommendation on Creating Better Opportunities for Young People was adopted by the OECD Council at Ministerial level on 10 June 2022, on the proposal of the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee (ELSAC) and the Public Governance Committee (PGC). The Recommendation promotes government-wide strategies and sets out a range of policy principles to improve youth measures and outcomes in all relevant areas, including skills and competencies, labour market outcomes and social inclusion and youth well-being; and to strengthen young people's trust in government and public institutions, address age-based inequalities by promoting their participation and representation in public and political life, and strengthen administrative and technical capacities.

The OECD's work on policies for and with young people

Successful engagement of young people in the labour market, public and political life, and society overall is crucial not only for their own personal well-being and economic prospects but also for overall economic growth and social cohesion, trust in government and public institutions, and the resilience of democracy. The OECD has long-standing work both under the ELSAC and the PGC, and the need for a whole-of-government approach to develop an integrated vision for young people beyond the COVID-19 crisis has created the impetus for this Recommendation.

The OECD has been working for the past two decades on issues concerning young people's skills, labour market and social outcomes. The [2013 OECD Action Plan for Youth](#) sets out a toolkit of measures to tackle high youth unemployment in the aftermath of the 2008-09 global financial crisis and promote better employment outcomes for young people. The Action Plan was applied to country-specific contexts through the [Investing in Youth series](#), with 12 country reviews published as of 2021.

The OECD has also focused on the role of public governance in enabling youth-responsive policies and services, and in promoting intergenerational justice. In the aftermath of the global financial crisis, young people's trust in government declined in many OECD countries. The Youth Dialogue on Inclusive Growth organised in the context of the PGC Ministerial Meeting in 2015, for example, highlighted that young people's voices must be included in the policy process to build stronger, fairer and more inclusive societies. This work culminated in the 2018 [Youth Stocktaking Report](#) and the 2020 Report [Governance for Youth, Trust and Intergenerational Justice: Fit for All Generations?](#)

An OECD-wide process to reflect the wide-ranging measures to support young people

The OECD developed an [updated OECD Youth Action Plan](#) in 2021 in recognition of the need for a government-wide approach to supporting young people. This updated Youth Action Plan was welcomed by the Council at Ministerial level in June 2021, where Ministers also welcomed the proposal to develop a Recommendation with concrete policy principles. In line with the horizontal nature of government-wide policies, this Recommendation was thus developed jointly by the ELSAC and the PGC, in consultation with four other OECD committees: the Education Policy Committee, the Committee on SMEs and Entrepreneurship, the Directing Committee of the Co-operative Action Programme on Local Employment and Economic Development, and the Regional Development Policy Committee.

To ensure young people's views and perspectives were reflected in the Recommendation, a [consultation of young people from 20 OECD Member countries](#) was organised in September 2021. The participants included representatives of youth organisations and associations across OECD countries from the Directorate for Public Governance's Network of Youth Organisations; Youthwise participants, the OECD's youth advisory board; young representatives from the TUAC Youth Network and Business at OECD; and young representatives of organisations that support young people in vulnerable circumstances.

Promoting whole-of-government strategies for young people

The Recommendation is structured around five building blocks and recommends that Adherents:

1. Ensure that young people of all backgrounds and in all circumstances acquire relevant knowledge and develop appropriate skills and competencies;

2. Support young people in their transition into and within the labour market, and strive to improve labour market outcomes for young people, and especially those in vulnerable and/or disadvantaged circumstances;
3. Promote social inclusion and youth well-being beyond economic outcomes, with measures targeted at young people in vulnerable and/or disadvantaged circumstances;
4. Establish the legal, institutional and administrative settings to strengthen the trust of young people of all backgrounds in government, and their relationships with public institutions;
5. Reinforce administrative and technical capacities to deliver youth-responsive services and address age-based inequalities through close collaboration across all levels of government.

Next steps

Both the OECD and Adherents are invited to disseminate the Recommendation. The Secretariat will disseminate the Recommendation among relevant stakeholders, including among young people, in particular through the Network of Youth Organisations and the informal “Friends of Youth” network of the PGC.

Discussions will also take place in OECD committees to determine how best to disseminate and implement the Recommendation. ELSAC and the PGC will jointly report to the Council on the implementation of the Recommendation in 2027.

For further information please consult:

<https://www.oecd.org/employment/youth/> and <https://www.oecd.org/gov/youth-and-intergenerational-justice/>.

Contact information: youth.recommendation@oecd.org.

THE COUNCIL,

HAVING REGARD to Article 5 b) of the Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development of 14 December 1960;

HAVING REGARD to the OECD Action Plan on Youth, launched in 2013 [[C/MIN\(2013\)4/FINAL](#)] and updated in 2021 [[C/MIN\(2021\)10/FINAL](#)], as well as the proposal to develop an OECD Recommendation to promote government-wide strategies to support young people that was welcomed by the OECD Council at its 2021 Meeting of the Council at Ministerial level [[C/MIN\(2021\)10/FINAL](#)];

HAVING REGARD to the standards developed by the OECD in the areas of gender equality in education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life; open government and participation and representation; mental health; financial literacy; digitalisation; and public governance at large, as well as in all policy areas that are relevant to young people;

RECOGNISING the important work of international organisations and fora on various aspects of youth policy, programmes and services, including the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Inter-Parliamentary Union;

RECOGNISING that successful and inclusive engagement of young people in education and training; the labour market; public and political life; and society, is crucial not only for their own personal well-being and economic prospects but also for overall economic growth, social cohesion, trust in government and public institutions and the resilience of democracy;

RECOGNISING the need for an ambitious, holistic and co-ordinated approach to create better opportunities and outcomes for young people, to promote the full inclusion of all young people, and particularly under-represented groups, in social, economic and public life, and to ensure that every young person receives support that reflects their own background and identity;

CONSIDERING that young people are a heterogeneous group, with diverse characteristics, which may differ depending on national circumstances, including socio-economic status and geographic area, age, gender, race and ethnicity, Indigeneity, migrant status, (dis)ability status and all other identities young people associate with, and their intersections;

CONSIDERING that the period of youth encompasses a range of transitions, notably within and between education and employment; and from childhood to independent living and participation in all spheres of public life, including voting, with life trajectories differing from individual-to-individual;

RECOGNISING that a young person's upbringing, family support and parental background, as well as child and family policies play a key role in shaping the future trajectories of young people in the labour market and public life, and their social and educational outcomes;

RECOGNISING that young people and future generations will live with the long-term impacts of decisions made today, and that the responsibility to safeguard societies, economies and the environment for the future lies with present-day decision-makers, including by addressing the existential threats of climate change and the interlinked biodiversity crisis;

CONSIDERING that youth policies, programmes and services are a shared responsibility of all branches and levels of government, according to their existing legal and institutional frameworks, and that therefore this Recommendation is relevant to all of them.

On the proposal of the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee and the Public Governance Committee, in consultation with the Committee on SMEs and Entrepreneurship, the Education Policy Committee, the Regional Development Policy Committee and the Directing Committee of the Co-operative Action Programme on Local Employment and Economic Development:

I. **AGREES** that, for the purpose of this present Recommendation, the following definitions are used:

- *youth* refers to a period of transition from childhood into adulthood, which is characterised by significant changes in young people's lives and the consolidation of their autonomy;
- *young people* refers to individuals aged 15 to 29 to allow for comparison of outcomes across countries and facilitate standardisation of data collection by age group – the range can vary depending on the topics and indicators;

II. **RECOMMENDS** that Members and non-Members having adhered to this Recommendation (hereafter the "Adherents") **ensure that young people of all backgrounds and in all circumstances acquire relevant knowledge and develop appropriate skills and competencies**. To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Take measures so that all young people are prepared to successfully engage in and positively contribute to green and sustainable societies and economies by:

- a) providing equitable access to quality formal, non-formal and informal learning to equip young people with key competencies for life-long learning and active participation in society, including basic skills (literacy, numeracy and problem-solving) and social, civic, emotional, entrepreneurial, financial, communication, creativity and language skills;
- b) promoting well-being in education and training institutions, including by equipping young people with socio-emotional skills and coping strategies to protect against stress and the impacts of adversity on well-being;
- c) addressing any barriers, systemic discrimination, stereotypes and biases, and their intersections, so that all young people can benefit from the same opportunities and aspirations, regardless of their background; and
- d) designing flexible and modular learning pathways to equip young people and future generations with the competencies required to pursue personal goals and navigate transitions in education and in a changing world of work.

2. Enable all young people to participate in an increasingly digitalised world, by:

- a) expanding access to digital devices, technologies and infrastructure to support learning and improve access to public services and the labour market;
- b) equipping young people with digital skills and problem-solving skills for the digital environment;
- c) empowering young people to engage safely, healthily, and responsibly in the digital environment, including through providing an understanding of both the risks and benefits of technologies in day-to-day life at both the individual and society level; and
- d) equipping education and training institutions and their staff with the knowledge, equipment and skills to facilitate young people's learning in and for a digitalised world.

3. Address and mitigate early leaving from education and training, provide early leavers with opportunities to return to school or training, and support young people in transitions between different levels of education by:

- a) developing early warning systems to identify students at risk of early leaving from education and training;
- b) implementing preventive measures and targeted interventions through enhanced educational follow-up, accessible mentoring, and health and social support for young people and their families, including mental health support and teenage pregnancy prevention measures;

- c) promoting accessibility of second chance and alternative education and training institutions and providing mechanisms to recognise prior learning of knowledge and skills to help early leavers re-enter education or training; and
 - d) making flexible pathways accessible to effectively retain young people in education or training, including through culturally responsive practices and adapted pathways for young people with special educational needs.
4. Strengthen work-based learning and apprenticeships to facilitate smooth and equitable school-to-work transitions and foster skills development that responds to the learning needs of young people by:
- a) balancing technical and job-specific skills with strong foundation competencies to enhance the employability of young people throughout their lives, working closely with employers and social partners to identify existing and emerging skills requirements;
 - b) providing access to opportunities for work-based learning through the involvement of employers, and supporting students who are unable to secure work placements, including through additional training as needed;
 - c) expanding opportunities for work-based learning for under-represented groups and beyond traditional fields, including through financial incentives for employers; and
 - d) developing smooth transition pathways between upper secondary vocational programmes and post-secondary programmes, including at the sub-national level, to strengthen future labour market outcomes.
5. Provide learner orientation and career guidance, including by engaging with employers through workplace visits, career talks and job shadowing, and providing information on skills in demand in the world of work and the relationship between education and employment;
6. Enable equitable access to pursue and continue post-secondary education and training by tackling financial and non-financial constraints, especially for young people from under-represented groups, including through reviewing existing financial aid systems for students and, where relevant, tuition fees and student loan forgiveness arrangements;
7. Encourage employers and business associations to ensure access to lifelong learning and training opportunities for all young people in employment; and
8. Provide teachers and staff in education and training with relevant support, including through the provision of continuous professional development opportunities, to ensure they can facilitate the development and well-being of all learners.

III. RECOMMENDS that Adherents **support young people in their transition into and within the labour market, and strive to improve labour market outcomes for young people, and especially those in vulnerable and/or disadvantaged circumstances.** To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Promote job creation, address barriers to labour market entry and transitions, and ensure quality jobs are available for all young people by:
- a) implementing sound macroeconomic and sectoral policies, including through investment in the green transition to align job creation for young people with environmental goals and sustainable development;
 - b) introducing and adapting targeted and time-limited hiring subsidies and/or tax incentives, as appropriate, to facilitate the employment of young jobseekers, with close attention to misuse;
 - c) improving employment opportunities for young people in rural areas, non-metropolitan areas and all areas experiencing socio-economic disadvantages through local, tailored and targeted initiatives, including through investment in transport and flexible housing support;

- d) tackling discrimination and encouraging diversity and inclusion in hiring practices through legislation and policies that counter prejudice and stereotypes; and
- e) facilitating the provision of job opportunities for young people with severe labour market barriers as a pathway towards stable and long-term employment.

2. Ensure that workplaces are barrier-free and that jobs are fair, safe and contribute to healthy and meaningful lives for young people, and reduce the percentage of young people in precarious employment by:

- a) guaranteeing labour rights and standards, adequate pay and access to social protection for young people regardless of employment status, including for informal workers, platform workers and other types of workers in non-standard jobs;
- b) stimulating social dialogue and effective collective bargaining to ensure fair working conditions and labour market outcomes, including adequate pay, for young people across all sectors and employment types, including for those in student jobs, internships and non-standard jobs;
- c) addressing and tackling all forms of discrimination, violence and harassment in the workplace through appropriate regulations and tools, and ensuring recourse and remedy mechanisms are accessible and effectively protect potential young victims from retaliation and reprisals;
- d) integrating mental health and wellbeing considerations in workplace policies to ensure that jobs contribute to healthy lives for young people; and
- e) providing support and workplace adjustments and accommodations, where appropriate, including for young people with health conditions and disabilities.

3. Strengthen employment services and support available for young people of all labour market statuses by:

- a) utilising profiling tools to ensure early identification and prioritisation of young people at risk of long-term unemployment, underemployment and/or inactivity, and to target employment services and programmes more efficiently to young jobseekers facing multiple labour market barriers;
- b) investing in high-quality and accessible digitalised and mobile services where appropriate, to reach a larger number of young people;
- c) offering counselling services based on reliable and relevant information on labour market prospects, education and training options, and skills in demand, to empower young people to make informed career decisions;
- d) facilitating mentoring programmes, targeted guidance and post-placement support for young people in vulnerable circumstances, especially those with a lack of local networks, to help them gain a foothold in the labour market;
- e) expanding learning opportunities, including language classes and information and technology courses, especially for young people with low qualifications and skills, through strong partnerships with employers, education and training providers, and the social economy; and
- f) providing support and training for young people pursuing careers in green industries.

4. Promote equitable access to entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship, through counselling (including post-creation coaching), training of entrepreneurial competencies, and access to finance and networks, and facilitate the promotion of innovative entrepreneurship in post-secondary institutions.

IV. RECOMMENDS that Adherents **promote social inclusion and youth well-being beyond economic outcomes, with measures targeted at young people in vulnerable and/or disadvantaged circumstances.** To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Provide adequate income support for young people with insufficient means, subject to mutual obligation requirements and coupled with high-quality activation services, and ensure that access is based on the individual circumstances of young people, and not on parental income alone, to facilitate independent living;
2. Align tax systems and benefit policies to make work pay for all young people, including for young parents and secondary earners;
3. Strengthen outreach to and support young people in vulnerable and disadvantaged circumstances in collaboration with regional and local stakeholders by:
 - a) providing integrated social, housing, health, employment and legal support that is informed by local and cultural contexts and tailored to young people through strengthening partnerships between employment, social and health services, youth centres, criminal justice agencies, the social economy, employers, trade unions, and education and training providers;
 - b) enabling employment and social services to work closely with schools, youth centres, community organisations and other stakeholders to identify young people in vulnerable circumstances who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and have not reached out to public services for support; and
 - c) identifying and addressing barriers to access, participation and achievement in employment and education, including inadequate support for young people with caring responsibilities, and/or experiencing violence, discrimination, addiction, health conditions and disabilities.
4. Ensure affordable, accessible and quality housing for all young people and their dependants through close collaboration of all levels of government and the involvement of civil society and the private sector by:
 - a) increasing housing affordability in areas of high demand and where training and jobs are available for young people, including through investment and reforms to land-use regulations that align with environmental best practices;
 - b) ensuring that housing policies facilitate mobility among young people through portable housing allowances and by reducing barriers to mobility in the social housing sector;
 - c) improving the targeting of public support schemes designed to facilitate home ownership among young people who would otherwise not be able to buy a home, and expanding housing support for young people facing financial barriers and seeking quality rental housing;
 - d) investing in student accommodation to provide quality and affordable housing options for young people pursuing vocational, post-secondary and other education and training opportunities; and
 - e) tackling institutionalisation and segregation, homelessness and housing insecurity by supporting young people in vulnerable circumstances to navigate changing living situations, including transitions from institutional settings.
5. Promote health and well-being for all young people, and pay equal attention to both mental health and physical health in youth policy, by:
 - a) providing timely, good quality, accessible and affordable physical and mental health support to young people through the health system and in educational institutions, workplaces, employment services and youth centres, and promoting literacy of health issues, including reproductive health and mental health;
 - b) promoting equitable working time arrangements and work-life balance, including through ensuring access to paid parental leave and affordable, good quality and flexible early childhood education and care options for young parents; and

- c) investing in accessible infrastructure and eliminating barriers to provide access to green and public spaces to promote sports, physical activity and culture and volunteering in both rural and urban areas, through local action in schools, youth centres, sports organisations, cultural institutions and the broader community.

V. RECOMMENDS that Adherents **establish the legal, institutional and administrative settings to strengthen the trust of young people of all backgrounds in government, and their relationships with public institutions**. To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Remove barriers to and promote youth participation in civic and democratic processes and decision-making, and representation in public institutions at all levels, including legislative and executive bodies, by:

- a) ensuring that young people are aware of, and empowered to, exercise their democratic rights and participate in public and political life by leveraging civic and citizenship literacy, including through curricular and extra-curricular activities;
- b) considering the review, where appropriate, of voter registration rules and minimum age requirements, which can constitute a barrier for youth participation and representation;
- c) increasing age diversity in parliamentary and executive bodies, where appropriate, through regulatory or voluntary measures, such as through youth quotas and voluntary targets in political party lists;
- d) addressing ageism and stereotypes against young people in public and political life by running or supporting awareness-raising programmes; and
- e) recognising and safeguarding youth rights, building legal literacy and protecting civic space for young people with targeted measures for disadvantaged and under-represented groups, and strengthening media and digital literacy to help combat different forms of mis- and dis-information, intolerance and violence and address the risk of polarisation and disassociation from civic and democratic institutions.

2. Promote meaningful youth participation in public decision-making and spaces for intergenerational dialogue at all levels, with targeted measures to engage disadvantaged and under-represented groups for more responsive, inclusive and accountable policy outcomes by:

- a) delivering targeted public communications that are relevant, clear and accessible to young people, based on active listening and understanding of young people's concerns and interests, including through digital means, as part of broader open government initiatives;
- b) engaging young people and youth stakeholders in all stages of the policymaking cycle to ensure age diversity in stakeholder participation through in-person as well as digital means, with methods tailored to their availability, needs and interests;
- c) creating or strengthening institutions such as youth advisory bodies and opportunities for stakeholder participation, including through information sharing, consultations and engagement with youth councils at national and sub-national level on all policy areas that young people determine are of interest to them, including global challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss, and digital technology policy; and
- d) exploring innovative methods to communicate and engage with diverse organised and non-organised groups of young people, such as through representative deliberative processes and digital government tools.

3. Promote the representation of young people in the public sector workforce, as well as inter-generational learning between older and younger employees by:

- a) systematically monitoring age diversity and inclusion in the public sector workforce through regular data collection, analysis, communication and through the use of employee surveys, with a view to ensuring a supportive and inclusive workplace environment;
- b) considering measures to proactively attract, develop and retain young talent from diverse backgrounds in the public sector workforce, including by ensuring that public recruitment systems and assessment methodologies keep pace with changing skills and competency requirements as well as changing aspirations, and through implementing effective on-boarding programmes and mobility opportunities, such as through dedicated graduate programmes; and
- c) implementing strategies to leverage the benefits of a multigenerational workforce, including through greater use of talent management practices and tools such as mentoring programmes, coaching, and support networks to promote intergenerational teamwork and learning.

4. Provide young people with opportunities that encourage civic engagement and participation, including by promoting meaningful volunteer service and youth work through laws, strategies and programmes, at the appropriate level(s) of government, to enable a common vision, clear responsibilities, coordinated action and adequate resources as well as increase resilience and social cohesion.

VI. RECOMMENDS that Adherents **reinforce administrative and technical capacities to deliver youth-responsive services and address age-based inequalities through close collaboration across all levels of government.** To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Improve the collection, use and sharing of data and evidence disaggregated by age, sex and all other relevant characteristics to track inequalities among young people from diverse backgrounds and across age groups, and inform decision-making by:

- a) establishing clear arrangements for age-disaggregated data collection and sharing, improving the interoperability between data systems across sectors, while safeguarding the digital security of personal data;
- b) systematically gathering age-disaggregated data and indicators across all policy and service areas in co-ordination with national statistics offices and line ministries, and, where relevant, with universities and other research institutions;
- c) systematically using age-disaggregated evidence in the targeting, elaboration, monitoring and evaluation of laws, policies and programmes; and
- d) equipping policy makers with adequate skills, resources and capacities to ensure the availability, accessibility and use of age-disaggregated data.

2. Promote an integrated approach to youth policy making, service delivery and youth-responsive policy outcomes across all relevant sectors by:

- a) developing youth policy that is evidence-based, transparent, participatory, inclusive and cross-sectoral, and is supported by political commitment, adequate resources, and effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;
- b) considering the elaboration of youth strategies, at the appropriate level(s) of government, including national, regional and local, and ensure these provide a comprehensive and integrated approach to improve social and economic outcomes as well as civic and public participation;
- c) identifying clear institutional mandates, providing adequate resources and establishing effective coordination mechanisms and incentives for horizontal and vertical co-ordination to ensure the coherent delivery of youth policy and services; and
- d) providing accessible, barrier-free, people-centred and user-friendly public services for young people including through digital means, to facilitate their access to information and counselling across all public service areas, including to legal, juvenile and other justice services.

3. Embed an intergenerational perspective into rule making, public budgeting, public procurement, infrastructure decision-making and delivery taking the long term ecological, economic and social dimensions of policies into account to ensure inclusive policy outcomes across age groups and avoid compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, by:

- a) raising awareness of intergenerational justice considerations among policy makers and equipping them with adequate skills and human and financial resources to address age-based inequalities;
- b) systematically applying public management tools such as strategic foresight and regulatory impact assessments to address inequalities across age groups and with regard to future generations; and
- c) strengthening oversight and accountability mechanisms to monitor youth and intergenerational justice commitments and facilitating the legal, financial and political independence of such mechanisms.

VII. INVITES the Secretary-General to disseminate this Recommendation.

VIII. INVITES Adherents to disseminate this Recommendation at all levels of government.

IX. INVITES non-Adherents to take account of and adhere to this Recommendation.

X. INSTRUCTS the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee and the Public Governance Committee, in consultation with other relevant OECD committees, to:

- a) serve as fora for the structured exchange of views and sharing of experiences and good practices on matters related to this Recommendation, and to foster dialogue among Adherents;
- b) support the efforts of Adherents to implement this Recommendation through comparative data, analytical studies and country reviews;
- c) report to the Council on the implementation, dissemination and continued relevance of this Recommendation no later than five years following its adoption and at least every five years thereafter.

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