



Business at OECD (BIAC) **Statement to the OECD** **2022 Education Ministerial**

***Education for a Resilient,
Regenerative Future***

December 2022



Established in 1962, *Business at OECD (BIAC)* stands for policies that enable businesses of all sizes to contribute to growth, economic development, and societal prosperity. Through *Business at OECD*, national businesses and employers' federations representing over 7 million companies provide and receive expertise via our participation with the OECD and governments promoting competitive economies and better business.

Business at OECD (BIAC) Statement to the OECD 2022 Education Ministerial

Education for a Resilient, Regenerative Future

Business at OECD (BIAC) appreciates the opportunity to participate and contribute to the OECD 2022 Education Ministerial, addressing the theme “Re-building an inclusive and equitable society through education”. This paper outlines key business priorities that relate to this Ministerial theme. We look forward to close cooperation with the OECD on initiatives intended to achieve this goal.

Introduction

Thriving, resilient and inclusive economies and societies, now and in the future, will need the key ingredient of quality education at all levels, including early education and continuing education that delivers relevant knowledge, skills, and character abilities (aka competencies).

As we look forward through the lens of a recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an immediate need for accelerating the pace of change in education. Addressing education transformation will require a determined investment in the three most critical areas outlined below:

1. Redesigning education curricula to match modern life needs and occupational demands;
2. Significantly improving teachers’ capabilities to deliver on (1) above;
3. Deploying appropriate technology to reinforce goals (1) and (2) above.

The language used herein will be direct, as the pace of change in education systems has dramatically fallen behind the needs of populations globally. Ensuring that education systems are meeting the current and future needs of our economies and societies is a pressing issue that requires the engagement of all relevant stakeholders.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that education systems alone do not solve the challenge of achieving more inclusive, resilient societies. Education must be considered within the context of a broader set of economic and social policies to advance opportunities, and also address the risks we face in our world today. Business can provide important insights as a key partner for the OECD, which through its cross-cutting and multidisciplinary approach, is best placed to advance progress across education systems, in turn providing opportunities for individuals in today’s economy and society.

Business priorities for the future of education

As an overall priority, access to quality and affordable education from the start for all is critically important. Our education systems need to prepare people to learn for life, to be agile and able to adapt across sectors and in the face of opportunities and challenges that lie ahead, including those brought on by environmental/climate challenges and digital transformation.

The following are specific recommendations in this context.

1. We need to redesign education curricula

We recommend that modern curricula should:

- **Develop the necessary foundational knowledge** to drive innovation, and economic and societal progress, including respect to the environment and climate change. Disciplines addressing new technologies, engineering, social sciences, and entrepreneurship, must be made an intrinsic part of a modernized curriculum. Traditional disciplines (mathematics, language, etc.) must be updated to reflect a much-changed world, via rebalancing subjects and assigning explicit time to be spent.
- **Emphasize the importance of competencies**, such as critical thinking/problem-solving, resilience and ethics/civics, needed to thrive in today's work and life environment - including to advance relevant assessments and data sources in support of this objective.
- **Address skill mismatches** and advance partnerships between business, governments and academia for the practical development of our education and learning systems. This should include ensuring technical/vocational training opportunities are provided such as apprenticeships, re-skilling, up-skilling, and blended learning including on-the-job training for adults. *We strongly advocate a much tighter connection between Education, Labor, and Commerce/Industry ministries.*
- **Develop innovative approaches to financing** for education, re-skilling and up-skilling, including solutions for employers and workers to allow training during working time.

2. We need to invest in, and elevate, the teaching profession

Teachers were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 crisis as they worked to deliver education in uncertain times and transformed remote working environments, with students of all ages. Data from the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) shows that, on average across the OECD countries that took part, only 26% of teachers agree that their profession is valued in society¹. Across the OECD, recruitment and retention are at worrisome levels. This highlights the urgent need to reinforce the focus on investment in teaching, to ensure teachers have the recognition and competencies to effectively teach in changing learning environments and to address new and emerging issues.

¹ [TALIS 2018 Insights and Interpretations](#), OECD (2020)

2. We need to invest in, and elevate, the teaching profession (continued)

We recommend that education systems:

- **Recruit and retain teachers effectively** by providing incentives to enter the profession, offering competitive pay, and adequate induction and mentoring.
- **Raise the social status of teaching** via awareness campaigns that reinforce the critical importance of teachers to parents and the general population.
- **Devote significantly increased national/jurisdictional resources towards the effective professional development of teachers** through access to quality competency training throughout teachers' careers, in their disciplinary knowledge, and in competencies. OECD data² shows that the quality of teaching practices in instruction significantly lags the quality of classroom management, and social-emotional support to students.
- **Equip teachers with digital skills and competencies for hybrid learning environments.** There will be other pandemics or disruptions making this necessary.

3. We need to invest in the digital infrastructure and capacity of our education systems

Modernized knowledge and competencies for navigating a rapidly transforming digital economy will be key to improving the competitiveness and recovery of our economies and societies from the various global crises. Technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) will impact employability and require modernized knowledge and competencies to navigate.

- **Invest in delivering affordable high-speed connectivity and relevant hardware** to transform learning environments to equip teachers with the resources to teach and students with the resources to learn, including internet access, hardware devices, and online tools.
- **Invest in digital skills.** Digital literacy will be even more important as digital tools become increasingly incorporated in life and work.
- **Advance Education Technology**, for personalized learning and training, without falling for “silver bullet” mindsets that there is a magical technology out there that can solve all education problems.

²-OECD (2020), Global Teaching InSights: A Video Study of Teaching, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/20d6f36b-en>

Conclusion

Business has a key role in supporting the development of education and training systems in cooperation with governments, academia, and relevant stakeholders, by making explicit their needs for modernized knowledge and competencies focused on employability and skills demand.

Business plays a key role in helping to shape education systems through:

- **Partnership with government and academic institutions** to ensure that education systems deliver the relevant knowledge and competencies to enhance employability in an increasingly dynamic work environment.
- **Delivering digital infrastructure** for affordable connectivity and high-quality hardware and devices to both teachers and learners.
- **Extending support for reskilling and upskilling** for all ages to cope with the digital transformation of our economies and jobs, including through apprenticeships, work based learning and vocational training.
- **Deploying technology solutions**, working with schools, education and training institutions and businesses including SMEs to support learning and work continuity, and leveraging connectivity infrastructure and hardware for those who currently do not have access to it.
- **Active engagement in social dialogue** to ensure that policies in the COVID-19 crisis respond to immediate needs of business and employees.

There simply is no time to waste. Humanity's prosperity is at stake. Whatever we do to address the unprecedented opportunities and challenges ahead, we need dialogue between governments, educational institutions, businesses, and key stakeholders.

Access to early work experience which allows individuals to explore different career paths should be a critical part of educational institutions. Effective continuous dialogue between education institutions, the private and the public sector will be critical to giving all people a chance, boosting the talent pipeline and building stronger businesses, economies and societies.

Annex:

Recent *Business at OECD (BIAC)* deliverables addressing education:

Joint IOE – *Business at OECD* Publication: *Learning for Life: Improving education and training policies to contribute to well-functioning labor markets and sustainable enterprises*, November 2022

Business Needs You, 2022

Business for Youth, 2021

Education Vision Paper: Education for a more resilient future, 2021

Business at OECD (BIAC) Character Survey, 2015

Business at OECD (BIAC) Education Survey, 2014



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