

Adult Learning

Recognising and enriching human capital

- ▶ How do we measure the value of learning throughout a whole lifetime?
- ▶ How can we assess and validate learning gained outside formal study?
- ▶ What can we do to better match people's needs for new skills and provide training programmes for qualification?

The learning outcomes from formal education and training are certified by awarding diplomas, but many occupations now require a significant amount of learning outside formal structures. This type of learning is not well understood and is often undervalued. It was also under-researched until the OECD launched a project on the **Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning** in 23 countries to help policy makers develop strategies to use all the skills, knowledge and competences of the workforce.

Adult participation in education and training has been a focus of statistical work and of programme and policy analysis. The OECD has conducted international reviews bringing together the education and employment perspectives on provision and policies for adult learning, with complementary studies on qualifications, ageing, and financing.

Another ambitious project currently underway, the **Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)** aims to publish a powerful comparative data set on human capital in 2013. Covering 26 countries with information from 5 000 participants in each country, PIAAC will cover key cognitive skills; educational attainment and skill formation; skill use in the workplace and elsewhere; labour market outcomes; characteristics of individuals; and changes in literacy and numeracy skills over time.



Deepening globalisation, increasing mobility, and accelerating innovation are combining to produce more knowledge and diffuse it more quickly than many people can absorb. Knowledge is accumulating so rapidly and production systems evolving so quickly that many of the skills and competencies people need just to do their job now have to be acquired after they start working. We help countries share lessons on how to enhance, measure and make the most of their human capital.

DID YOU KNOW... The recognition of non-formal and informal learning can make it easier for people who drop out of school to return to formal learning later on.