

OECD Forum 2011: Getting Back to Work

The crisis has destroyed an unprecedented number of jobs all over the world. There are 46 million unemployed in the OECD area today and youth unemployment remains particularly high. Despite signs of recovery in most countries, the risk remains that many people may lose touch with the labour market.

What can governments do to create jobs? What public policies have proved effective? How to find innovative ways to create more sustainable, green and good-quality jobs? How to avoid a “lost generation” of young jobless?



Effective and innovative labour programmes are urgently needed to jumpstart job creation. Most countries have maintained or expanded policies to help the unemployed find work during the crisis. Some have invested in training, especially for people with low or obsolete skills. Fighting joblessness also means creating favourable conditions for entrepreneurship, tax breaks and other types of hiring subsidies for firms that recruit people who have been out of work for more than a year.

The crisis has also highlighted several longer-term issues. Young people who completed their education during the crisis find themselves competing not only with older, more experienced workers, but also even younger groups with more up to date qualifications. How can governments ensure they do not become a “lost generation” of long-term unemployed as economies improve? At a time of ageing populations and increasing pressure on pension systems, how to balance the needs of older workers and retirees with those of younger jobseekers? How will the fact that all of us will have to work until later in life in order to finance pension income affect the number of jobs becoming available for younger generations?