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## Main Policy Lines in Education and Training October – December 2012

### II. OECD

#### 1. Divided we stand. Why inequality keeps rising.

Inequality has become a universal concern, among both policy makers and societies at large. Today, in advanced economies, the average income of the richest 10% of the population is about 9 times the average income of the poorest 10%. The economic crisis has added urgency to deal with policy issues related to inequality; inequality-related issues have reached the middle classes in many societies.

The most promising way of tackling inequality is more than ever by the **employment route**. This report clearly identifies up-skilling of the workforce as one of the most powerful instruments to counter rising inequality. Up-skilling is singled out as the only force which succeeded not only in reducing wage dispersion but also in increasing employment rates.

Investing in the workforce is crucial. The investment in people must begin in early childhood and be followed through into formal education and the transition from school to work. Human capital investment needs to be sustained over the full course of working life.

[Read more](#)

#### 2. What do students expect to do after finishing upper secondary school?

PISA in Focus

This brief summarises findings from the PISA report 'Grade expectations: How Marks and Education Policies Shape Students' Ambitions'.

The range of educational expectations that students hold in different countries is striking. Despite the changes in skill requirements, the educational expectations of students in school have remained surprisingly stable.

While performance on PISA tends to be associated with educational expectations, not all 15-years-old with advanced knowledge and skills aspire to high levels of further education (and vice versa). According to those data, some school systems should rather aim to raise student expectations, while other school systems should aim to offer better opportunities to learn. Students who hold ambitious and realistic expectations about their educational prospects are more likely to put effort into learning. Therefore, educational expectations, in part, become self-fulfilling prophecies.

[Read more](#)