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Abstract

Erwachsenenbildung in Süd-Korea (Adult Education in South Korea)

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The Korean education system is very strongly geared to young people: the participation of the younger generations in state and private education is above the OECD average. The picture is different for older age groups, however. In recent years Korea has developed important elements of a system of lifelong learning like the extension of the coverage offered by the Employment Insurance System, the support provided by training consortia for large, medium-sized and small companies, and a new system of certification of prior learning. It is shown in this paper that these elements are, however, (1) still insufficiently interconnected, (2) not closely linked to the employment system, (3) they do not offer the low-skilled enough opportunities for lifelong learning, and (4) the resources spent on adult education are too low. It is also shown that the highly dualistic labour market acts as an important barrier to the expansion of lifelong learning. This division in the labour market, the lack of mobility prospects for irregular workers and workers in SMEs, and the seniority-based wage system all mean that there is virtually no financial incentive for many workers to invest in their own human capital.