



# Research Directions

Office of Research Services

## ***Skills on the Move***

**Dr Cristina Martinez-Fernandez from the Urban Research Centre is exploring strategies for developing, attracting and retaining skilled workers in regional areas through funding from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).**



'Demands for skilled workers and professionals are not uniform across countries but have clear local dimensions' says Dr Martinez-Fernandez. 'Local labour markets have particular skill needs, and local stakeholders increasingly need specific skills strategies to address them. In addition to this, skills are held by people and in a global context of movement and migration, people are no longer a "fixed resource" so population movement adds to the complexity of the skills demand mix. This movement can cause the loss of skilled people from a community, leading to skills shortages in many professions.'

This project will explore issues of mobile labour skills in a global context by examining specific strategies some Australian and overseas cities and regional areas have used to retain their current skilled workers and attract or train new ones. Looking at both urban and rural areas in East Asia, Europe, Australasia, North America and South America, the research team will gather case studies of the most innovative policies and practices employed to manage issues related to the skills market. These case studies will then be analysed to provide insights that can be used to provide guidance on design and implementation of effective skill strategies to local authorities and policy makers in OECD countries. Australian case studies will focus on the analysis of skills strategies in growing cities and shrinking cities.

This research will allow communities to strategically integrate many different areas that affect the level and quality of skills in their local area, such as education resources, service provision, level of economic and social development, and employment opportunities. It will also provide a mechanism by which policy makers can work with employers to ensure skills are upgraded and productivity is increased. By doing so, this research will have a positive impact on local economies and social capital of the regions in which skills strategies are implemented, and has the potential to have a long-term effect on wider OECD policies and practices around skills shortage and population movement concerns.

**Project Title:** Designing Local Skills Strategies

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### Contact Details:

[c.martinez@uws.edu.au](mailto:c.martinez@uws.edu.au)

<http://www.uws.edu.au/urban>