

Former head of the OECD urges students to reduce inequality



José Ángel Gurría, former **Secretary-General** of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (**OECD**), called on young people to reduce **inequality of opportunities**, one of the country's **main challenges**.

Gurría, who is also former Secretary of Finance, was the **guest speaker** at the **first event** of **INSPIRE 2021**, a virtual conference that marks the beginning of **Tec de Monterrey's** school year and aims to **motivate and empower** its students.

He gave the talk "The world we face: Challenges and opportunities for new leaders", in which he urged **young people** to be **prepared** to take the **lead** in **social development**.

*"The **Mexico** you encounter will probably and unfortunately be even **more unequal**, a Mexico where you'll be responsible for **reducing these gaps**," he said.*

*"These **inequalities**, as they accumulate over the years, create social upheavals and political instability, which as we've seen in other countries in Latin America, **reverse the progress made** after so much effort in the struggle for development."*



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A more unequal Mexico after the pandemic

Gurría raised the **enormous challenge** that the current generation of young people will confront due to the **scenario** left in the wake of the **COVID-19 pandemic**.

*“Post-COVID **Mexico will grow less and be more unequal**. There’ll be more challenges in terms of opportunities, and this will require more investment in health, education, transparency, infrastructure, and good governance.*

“And it’ll be up to you to try, to do it with more sensitivity, greater intelligence, greater efficacy than the generations that preceded you,” he warned.

“The Mexico you encounter will probably and unfortunately be even more unequal, a Mexico where you’ll be responsible for reducing these gaps.” - José Ángel Gurría

Young people’s responsibility for development

The former official asked the students to remember that in a Mexico with inequalities, they are **privileged** to have **access** to a **quality education**.

*“But with privilege come **obligations**. You have to engage your social radar. **Serve, know more, be more aware, and try harder**. You have to think about what you’re going to do with that privilege*

and resource,” he said.

“We invest in you, we trust you, and we **depend on you**,” said Gurría.

Gurría said that **continuing education** is an **essential aspect** for standing out as **leaders** in an increasingly globalized and competitive world.

“**Success** will depend on **talent, dedication, and empathy**, which should be a mantra,” he said.



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The ingredients of leadership for the future

Gurría told the young people that they will face the **challenge of becoming leaders** who contribute to reducing inequality.

He said that **managing, directing, leading by example**, and **listening** are part of a series of “**ingredients**” that young people must develop to become **leaders**.

Gurría also mentioned other aspects such as **curiosity, integrity**, and a **moral compass** as part of a leader’s **necessary skills**.

“Leaders must be **compassionate**, move forward, and be **decisive in the face of pain, injustice, poverty, lack of opportunities**, and man-made disasters,” he said.

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Gurría pointed out that given the **uncertain** and **competitive landscape** the world is experiencing, factors such as **development** and **sense of humanity** will become more **relevant** in leadership.

*“Leaders always have doubts. They wake up at midnight wondering if they did well for the company or the country, and **education** is what **helps leaders** understand the difference,”* says Gurría.

*“Hence the **importance** of a **good education**, of a **continuous** education of **excellence** throughout life at every stage,”* he adds.



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Entrepreneurship and its importance in the global landscape

Entrepreneurship is another **aspect** that Gurría lists as **essential** for the development of **globalized economies** in the present and future.

*“Not just for-profit enterprises. There are a lot of this type, but there are also many with the aim of **filling gaps** and **deficiencies** in **public service** to help **vulnerable sectors** in the country,”* he says.

To start with, the economist says that **entrepreneurial skill** is something that must be worked on through **constant innovation**.

“Innovation must be a way of being, a way of life, a way of addressing the challenges of the future,” he says.

Another thing the diplomat has **learned** is that **entrepreneurship** is a **skill** that must be **practiced** and therefore can be **taught** and **replicated** as part of a country’s present and future development.

“Enterprises are planted liked seeds and then watered, nourished, and allowed to grow, but also pruned, supported in some cases, guided, and above all multiplied,” he said.



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The virtual conference marking the beginning of the school year

INSPIRE 2021 was held at the Mexico City campus, and was run by [David Garza](#), Rector and Executive President of Tecnológico de Monterrey, and [Juan Pablo Murra](#), Rector of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies.

Tec de Monterrey’s other campuses **participated virtually**.

*“In such a **complex** and **rapidly-changing** year, we’re excited about the start of a new semester. Through this initiative, we hope to ‘**inspire**’ our students with the opportunity to listen to experts such as Dr. Gurría,”* said Garza.



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Murra said the start of new courses helps everyone to think about **growth and development**, so INSPIRE 2021 is a good **catalyst** for the entire Tec community.

5 students of academic excellence, who shared their concerns in a question-and-answer session, also participated in the event.

José Ángel Gurría was Secretary-General of the **OECD** from 2006 to 2021. He was Secretary of Finance and of Foreign Affairs, and General Director of Nacional Financiera (the federal government development bank) and of the National Bank of Foreign Trade in Mexico.

He studied **economics** at UNAM and holds graduate degrees from **Harvard** and the **University of Leeds**.

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