

## Foreword

**H**ighlights from *Education at a Glance 2008* offers a reader-friendly introduction to the OECD's collection of internationally comparable data on education.

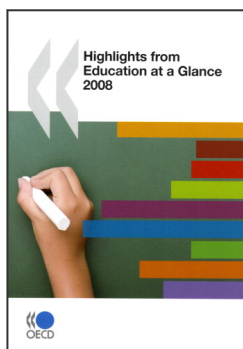
As the name suggests, it is derived from *Education at a Glance 2008*, the OECD's flagship compendium of education statistics. However, it differs from that publication in a number of ways, most significantly in its structure, which is made up of five sections that explore the following topics:

- **Education levels and student numbers:** This section looks at education levels in the general population, how and where young people are studying and how well they make the transition into the world of work, overseas study and social barriers to education.
- **The economic benefits of education:** This section looks at the extent to which education brings economic gains to individuals, in the form of higher incomes and lower unemployment rates, and at how these benefits serve as an incentive for people and societies to invest in education.
- **Paying for education:** This section looks at how much countries spend on education, the role of private spending, what education money is spent on and whether countries are getting value for money.
- **The school environment:** This section looks at how much time teachers spend at work – and how much of that time is spent teaching –, class sizes, teachers' salaries and the age and gender distribution of teachers.
- **PISA:** This special section introduces findings from the 2006 round of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which examines the abilities of 15-year-old students in dozens of countries around the world.

In general, this publication uses the same terminology employed in *Education at a Glance*. However, in one or two places terminology has been simplified. Readers who want to find out more should consult the Reader's Guide (see page 7).

Tables and figures in this volume are all accompanied by a dynamic hyperlink, or StatLink, that will direct readers to an Internet site where the corresponding data are available in Excel™ format. In addition, reference is sometimes made in text to figures and tables that appear in *Education at a Glance 2008*. This material can generally be accessed via the StatLinks accompanying the tables and figures in the relevant indicator.

Readers wishing to find out more about the OECD's work on education should go to [www.oecd.org/edu](http://www.oecd.org/edu). For more on PISA, visit [www.oecd.org/pisa](http://www.oecd.org/pisa).



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