

1. EDUCATION LEVELS AND STUDENT NUMBERS

How successful are students in moving from education to work?

- On average across OECD countries, a 15-year-old in 2006 could expect to continue in formal education for about another 6 years and 8 months.
- Until reaching the age of 30, he or she could also expect to hold a job for 6 years and 2 months, to be unemployed for just over 9 months, and to be out of the labour market (not employed, not in education and not looking for a job) for almost 1 year and 4 months.
- Between the ages of 25 and 29, there is a clear link between people's education levels and the likelihood of their being in work.

Significance

This indicator shows the number of years young people can be expected to spend in education, employment and non-employment. During the past decade, young people have spent more time in initial education, delaying their entry into the workforce. Part of this additional time is spent combining work and study. The influence of the labour market on education, and *vice versa*, is both strong and complex.

Findings

On average, completing upper secondary education reduces unemployment among 20-24 year-olds by 7.4 percentage points and that of 25-29 year-olds by 6.8 percentage points. Not attaining an upper secondary qualification is a serious impediment to employment, while obtaining a tertiary qualification increases the likelihood of finding work.

In all countries except Austria, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Turkey, women spend more years in education than men. Up to age 29, more men are employed than women, spending 1.5 years more in work.

On average, 83% of 15-19 year-olds are in education. That drops to 39.7% for 20-24 year-olds, and to below 13.8% for 25-29 year-olds. In many OECD countries, young people are beginning their transition to work at a later age, and sometimes over a longer period. This reflects not only the demand for education, but also the general state of the labour market.

Trends

Between 2000 and 2006 in OECD countries, the proportion of 15-19 year-olds in education increased by

over 5 percentage points. For 20-24 year-olds, the increase was 6 percentage points and for 25-29 year-olds it was 2.2 percentage points. On average, however, only 15% of that older age group is in education; the rest are either working (69%) or outside the labour market and not employed (17%).

These increases in all the age groups reflect a continued expansion of education since the start of the decade, which has meant that more people in OECD countries are now outside the workforce, particularly among 15-19 year-olds. However, even though education expansion has lowered employment rates, the positive effects for individuals and society typically far exceed the lost productivity of the extra years of schooling.

Definitions

Data are collected as part of the annual OECD Labour Force Survey. For certain European countries, the data come from the annual European Labour Force Survey. Persons in education include those attending school part-time and full-time. Non-formal education or educational activities of very short duration are excluded.

Going further

For additional material, notes and a full explanation of sourcing and methodologies, see *Education at a Glance 2008* (Indicator C4).

Areas covered include:

- Expected years in education and not in education for 15-29 year-olds, plus trends.
- Gender difference in expected years in education and not in education for 15-29 year-olds.

Further reading from OECD

ICT and Learning: Supporting Out-of-School Youth and Adults (2006).

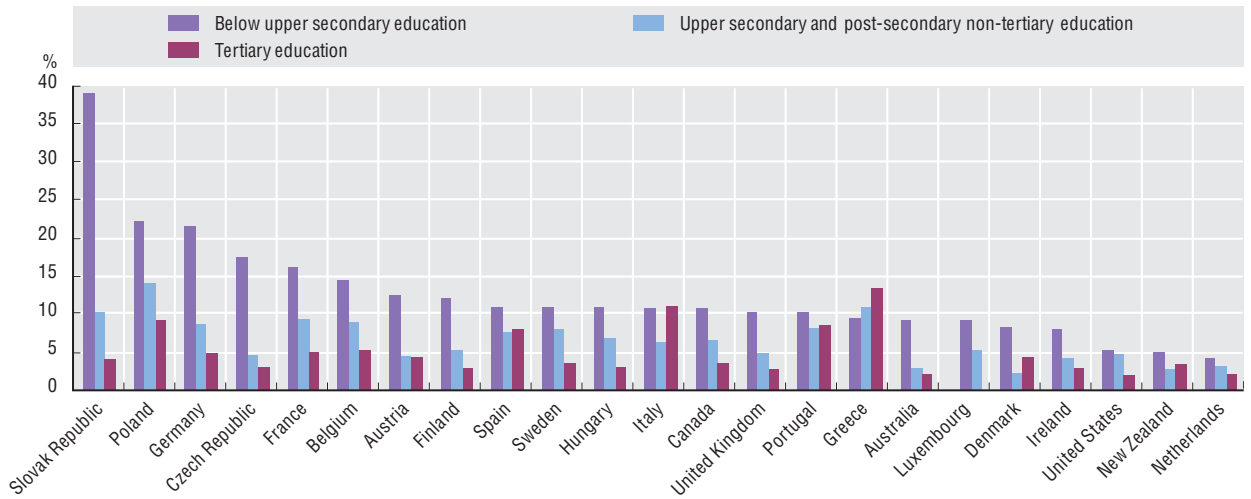
From Education to Work (2005).

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Figure 1.12. **Percentage of 25-29 year-olds who are unemployed and not in education, 2006**

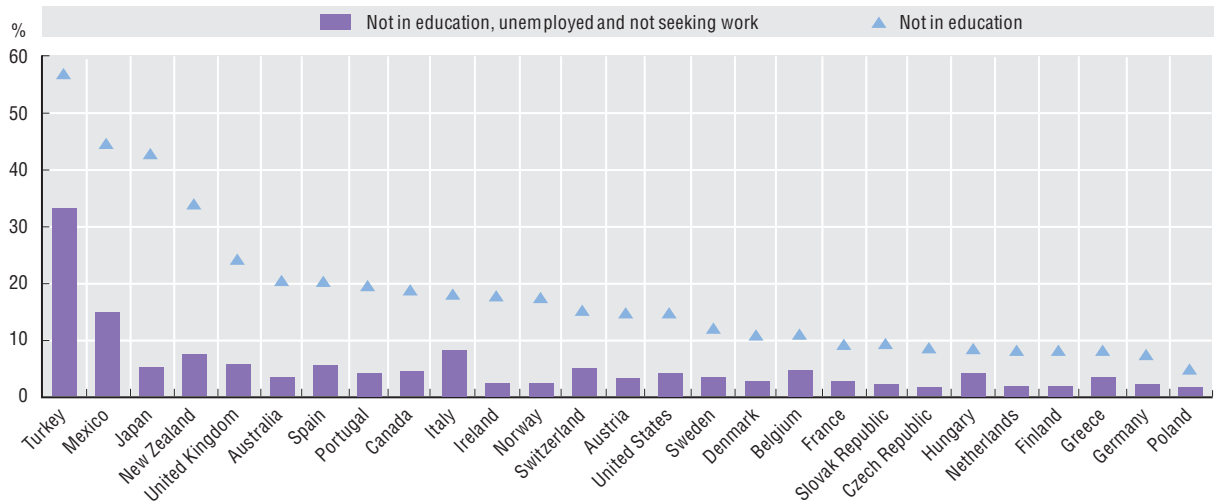
This figure shows the percentage of 25-29 year-olds who are unemployed and not in education, broken down by their level of education. Young people who have not studied beyond lower secondary education are more likely to be out of work.



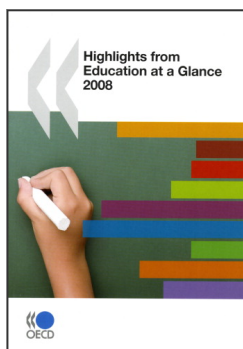
Source: OECD (2008), *Education at a Glance 2008*, Table C4.3, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/402165765880>.

Figure 1.13. **Percentage of 15-19 year-olds who are not in the labour market or the education system, 2006**

This figure shows the percentage of 15-19 year-olds who are not in education, as well as the proportion who are not in education and not working and/or not seeking work.



Source: OECD (2008), *Education at a Glance 2008*, Table C4.2a, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/402165765880>.



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