

## SOCIAL BENEFITS OF EDUCATION

This indicator examines the relationships between educational attainment and three outcomes that reflect the health and cohesiveness of the society: health, political interest and interpersonal trust.

### Definition

Estimates of the marginal effects of education in each of the three domains capture the increase in the probability of individuals exhibiting positive social outcomes when moving from one level of educational attainment to the next higher level. It can also be interpreted as the difference in the share of individuals exhibiting positive outcomes across levels of education. Calculations are based on country-specific regression models that predict each dichotomous outcome variable (e.g. high versus low interest in politics) from individuals' educational attainment level.

Health is measured by the share of adults who rate their health as at least "good." Political interest is measured by the share of adults who say they are at least "fairly interested" in politics. Interpersonal trust is measured by the share of adults who believe that most people try to be fair.

### Overview

Education affects people's lives in ways that go beyond economic outcomes such as labour market earnings. These effects include a variety of social outcomes such as health, political interest and interpersonal trust. Education can have an impact on individuals' health by helping them choose healthier lifestyles, better manage their illness and avoid conditions detrimental to their health, such as dangerous jobs and the stress of poverty. Education can raise political interest by providing relevant information and experience, by developing competencies, values, attitudes and beliefs that trigger interest in politics. Education can also affect interpersonal trust by helping individuals to better understand and embrace the values of social cohesion and diversity, or because people with higher education are more likely to live and work in environments in which crime and anti-social behaviour tend to be lower. Educational attainment is positively associated with self-reported health, political interest and interpersonal trust. Adults who have higher levels of educational attainment are generally more likely than those with lower levels of attainment to report that their health is at least good, are at least fairly interested in politics, and believe that most people try to be fair. For self-reported health, an increase in educational attainment from below-upper secondary to upper-secondary level is associated with a stronger and more consistent increase in outcomes, compared to the increase associated to a move from upper-secondary to tertiary education in all surveyed countries except Poland. In the case of political interest and interpersonal trust, an increase in educational attainment from upper secondary to tertiary level is broadly associated with stronger and more consistent increases in social outcomes, compared to an increase in educational attainment from lower to upper secondary education.

### Comparability

Calculations are based on micro-data for adults aged 25 to 64 from a range of surveys including the *European Social Survey (ESS)* of 2004 and 2006; the *Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey (ALL)* of 2003; the *World Values Survey (WVS)* of 2005; and the *International Social Survey Programme (ISSP)* of 2004 and 2006). These surveys are selected based on the availability of at least 1 000 observations and because of comparability of questions on self-reported health, political interest and interpersonal trust. The analysis has been limited to micro-data for which the distribution of educational attainment is within 10 percentage points from those published for comparable years in *Education at a Glance*. A few exceptions were made following the recommendations of the representatives from Canada, Finland, Korea and Norway in the INES (Indicators of Education Systems) Network.

In each chart, countries are grouped by data sources. For the chart on the effects of education on self-reported health, data in the first panel are based on *ALL 2003* and *WVS 2005*, those in the second panel on *ESS 2004*, and those in the third panel on *ESS 2006*. For the chart on the effects of education on political interest, data in the first panel are based on *ISSP 2004/06* and *WVS 2005*, those in the second panel on *ESS 2004* while those in the third panel on *ESS 2006*. For the chart on the effects of education on interpersonal trust, data in the first panel are based on *ISSP 2004* and *WVS 2005*, those in the second panel on *ESS 2004* and those in the third panel on *ESS 2006*.

### Sources

- OECD (2009), *Education at a Glance*, OECD, Paris.

### Further information

#### Analytical publications

- OECD (2007), *Understanding the Social Outcomes of Learning*, OECD, Paris.

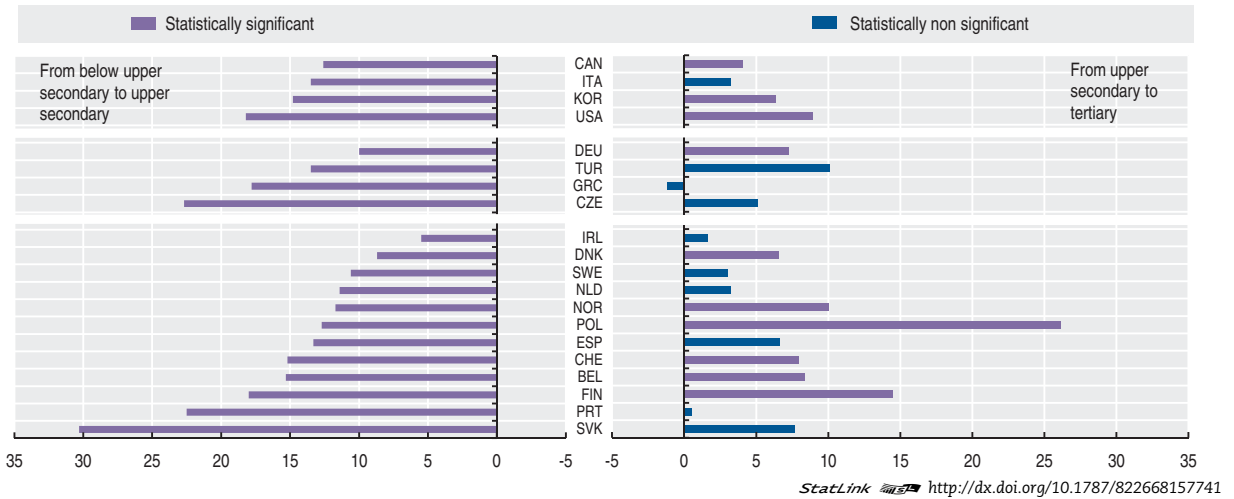
#### Web sites

- OECD Education at a Glance, [www.oecd.org/edu/eag2009](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2009).



### Marginal effects of education on self-reported health

Increase in the probability in percentage, 2006 or latest available year



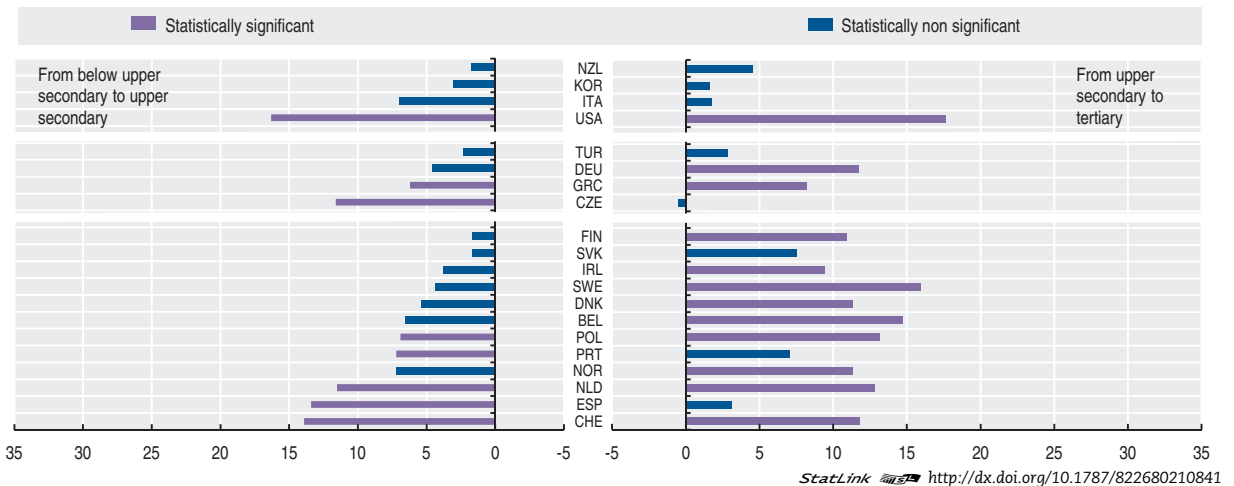
### Marginal effects of education on political interest

Increase in the probability in percentage, 2006 or latest available year



### Marginal effects of education on interpersonal trust

Increase in the probability in percentage, 2006 or latest available year





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