

# 1. EDUCATION LEVELS AND STUDENT NUMBERS

## How has the crisis affected the transition to work?

- The unemployment rate for 15-29 year-olds in OECD countries increased on average by 3.3 percentage points between 2008 and 2009, more than for the general population.
- Within that group, unemployment among people who have not attended upper secondary education has risen more than among tertiary graduates.
- The proportion of 15-29 year-olds remaining on or re-entering education has risen in many OECD countries.

### Significance

The recession that followed the financial crisis of 2008 has led to a big increase in unemployment in OECD countries. By the end of 2011, OECD countries will need to create 15 million jobs to return to pre-crisis employment levels. This spread looks at how the jobs crisis has affected young people's transition from education to employment.

### Findings

The economic crisis has affected labour markets in a number of ways. Part-time work has increased, average actual hours worked by the full-time employed have decreased, and the number of employees with temporary contracts has decreased in European countries. While the overall unemployment rate among the OECD countries increased by 2.0 percentage points between 2008 and 2009 (from 5.0% to 7.0%), the extent of the increase varies with age and level of education.

Young people have been the most affected. The unemployment rate for 15-29 year-olds in OECD countries has increased on average by 3.3 percentage points from 10.2% to 13.5%. As a result of the economic crisis, the labour market is becoming more selective and the lack of relevant skills and experience brings a higher risk of unemployment for recent entrants. The extent of risk varies with the level of education.

Among OECD countries (excluding Chile, Japan, Korea, Mexico and the United States), the lowest increase in the unemployment rate between 2008 and 2009 has

been among those with higher levels of education. It increased by 4.8 percentage points for those who did not complete upper secondary education, and by 1.7 percentage points for those who completed tertiary education. Workers with the lowest educational attainment are more likely to be in sectors such as construction or the automobile industry, which have been severely affected by the crisis.

With jobs hard to find, returning to or remaining in education can be an alternative for many young people. Between 2008 and 2009, the proportion of 15-29 year-olds in OECD countries (excluding Chile, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico and the United States), in education overall increased by 0.5 percentage points. Among 15-19 year-olds, the increase was 0.7 percentage points; among 20-24 year-olds, 0.9 percentage points; and among 25-29 year-olds, 0.3 percentage points. Overall, data suggest that these increases in participation largely reflect people remaining in – rather than returning to – education.

### Definitions

Data presented here are derived in part from “The impact of the crisis on employment” in *Statistics in Focus 79/2009*, published by Eurostat (2009) and the *OECD Employment Outlook 2010*.

Information on data for Israel:  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

### Going further

For additional material, notes and a full explanation of sourcing and methodologies, see *Education at a Glance 2010* (Indicator C3).

### Further reading from OECD

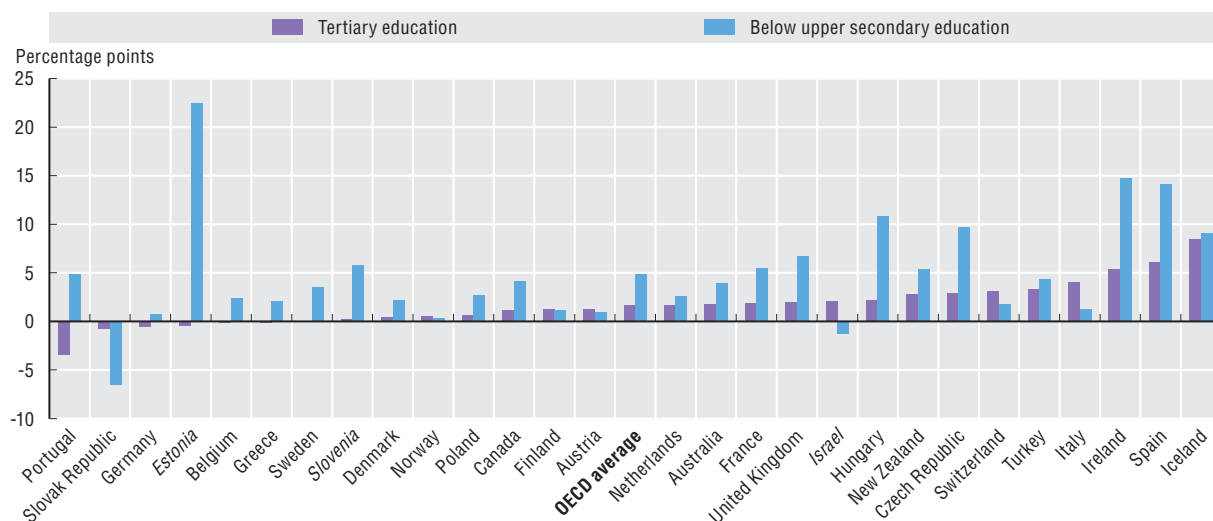
*OECD Employment Outlook 2010* (2010).

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Figure 1.14. **Change in unemployment rate for young people, 2008-09**

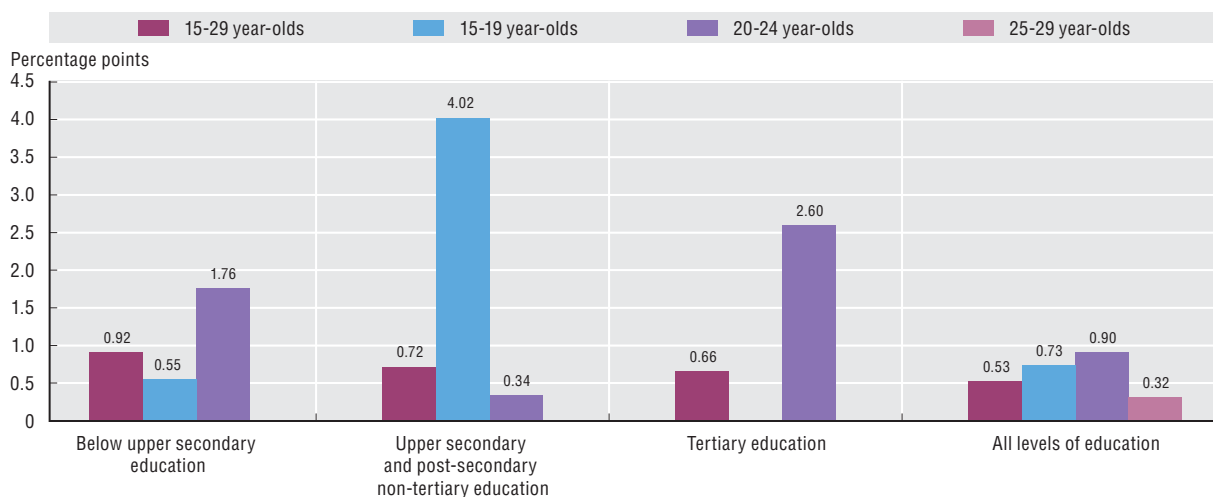
This figure shows the change in the number of 15-29 year-olds who were unemployed between 2008 and 2009.



Source: OECD (2010), *Education at a Glance 2010*, Box Chart 1 in Indicator C3, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932310453>.

Figure 1.15. **Change in numbers of young people participating in education, 2008-09**

This figure shows the change in percentage points in the numbers of students participating in education by age group and by level of educational attainment.



Source: OECD (2010), *Education at a Glance 2010*, Box Chart 2 in Indicator C3, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932310453>.



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