

How successful are students in moving from education to work?

- On average across OECD countries, 16% of people aged 15-29 are not employed or in education and training (NEET); women are more likely to be NEET than men.
- The proportion of 15-29 year-olds no longer in education who had a job shrank from 41% in 2008 to 37% in 2011, on average across OECD countries.
- On average across OECD countries, almost 30% of 15-29 year-olds working part time would like to work more.

Significance

This section illustrates the difficulty of moving from education to work for the younger generation today. During recessionary periods, high general unemployment rates make the transition from school to work substantially more difficult for young people, as those with more work experience are favoured over new entrants into the labour market. This section looks at the number of years young people can be expected to spend in education, employment and non-employment. To improve the transition of young people from school to work, regardless of the economic climate, education systems should work to ensure that people have skills that match the requirements of the labour market, and to minimise the proportion of young adults who are neither in school nor in work.

Findings

On average across OECD countries in 2011, 47% of 15-29 year-olds were in education. Of the remaining 53%, 37% held a job, 7% were unemployed, and 9% were outside of the labour force. Unemployment levels are particularly worrying in Greece (14.6%) and Spain (17.0%), as is inactivity among young people in those countries (7.1% for Greece and 7.5% for Spain).

A typical 15-year-old in an OECD country in 2011 could expect to spend about 7.1 additional years in formal education, compared to 6.8 years in 2007. In addition, before turning 30, he/she could expect to hold a job for 5.6 years, to be unemployed for a total of 1 year, and to be inactive – that is, neither in education nor seeking work – for 1.4 years.

Women between 15 and 29 years old were twice as likely as men of that age to be inactive. During that period, they could expect to be completely out of the labour force for 1.9 years, compared to 0.9 years for men.

On average across OECD countries, in 2011, 14% of 25-29 year-olds who had not completed upper secondary education were unemployed, compared with 8% of those who had completed upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education, and 6% of 25-29 year-olds who had completed tertiary education.

Trends

Efforts by governments to raise people's level of education have led to significant changes in educational participation. In 2000, an average of 41% of 15-29 year-olds in OECD countries were in education; by 2011, that proportion had risen to 47%. While the percentage of individuals in education increased steadily between 2000 and 2011, trends in youth employment have been marked by two periods of large drops: between 2000 and 2003 (-3.3 percentage points) and between 2008 and 2011 (-3.7 percentage points). These decreases in youth employment coincided with the burst of the so-called "Internet bubble" (2000-03) and the burst of the real estate bubble in 2008. The proportion of 15-29 year-olds neither employed nor in education or training (NEET) remained stable at around 15% between 2000 and 2011.

Definitions

Data are collected as part of the annual OECD Labour Force Survey, and usually refer to the first quarter, or the average of the first three months of the calendar year, thereby excluding summer employment. For certain European countries, the data come from the annual European Labour Force Survey.

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 2013* (indicator C5).

Areas covered include:

- Expected years in education and not in education for 15-29 year-olds, as well as trends and gender differences.
- Transition from school to work for different age groups.
- Voluntary/involuntary part-time work.

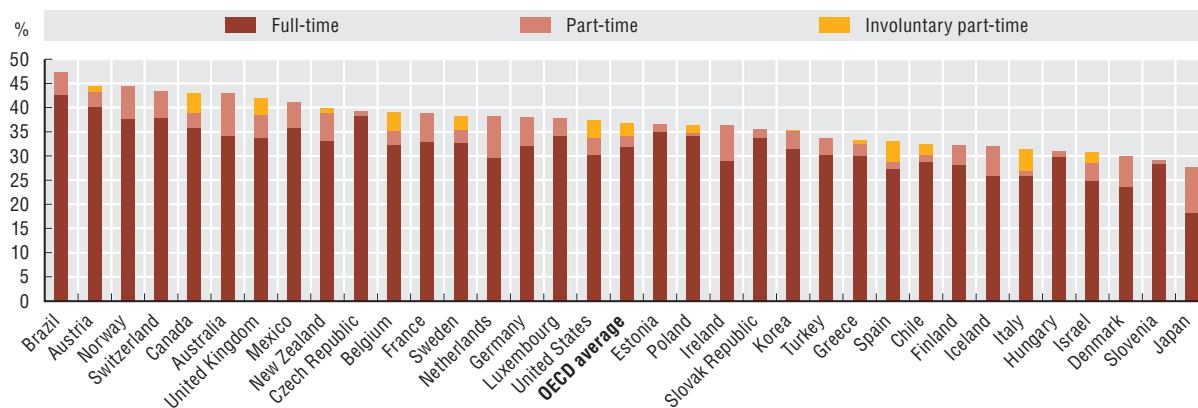
Further reading from OECD

Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives (2012)

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Figure 2.7. Full-time and part-time work for young people not in education, 2011

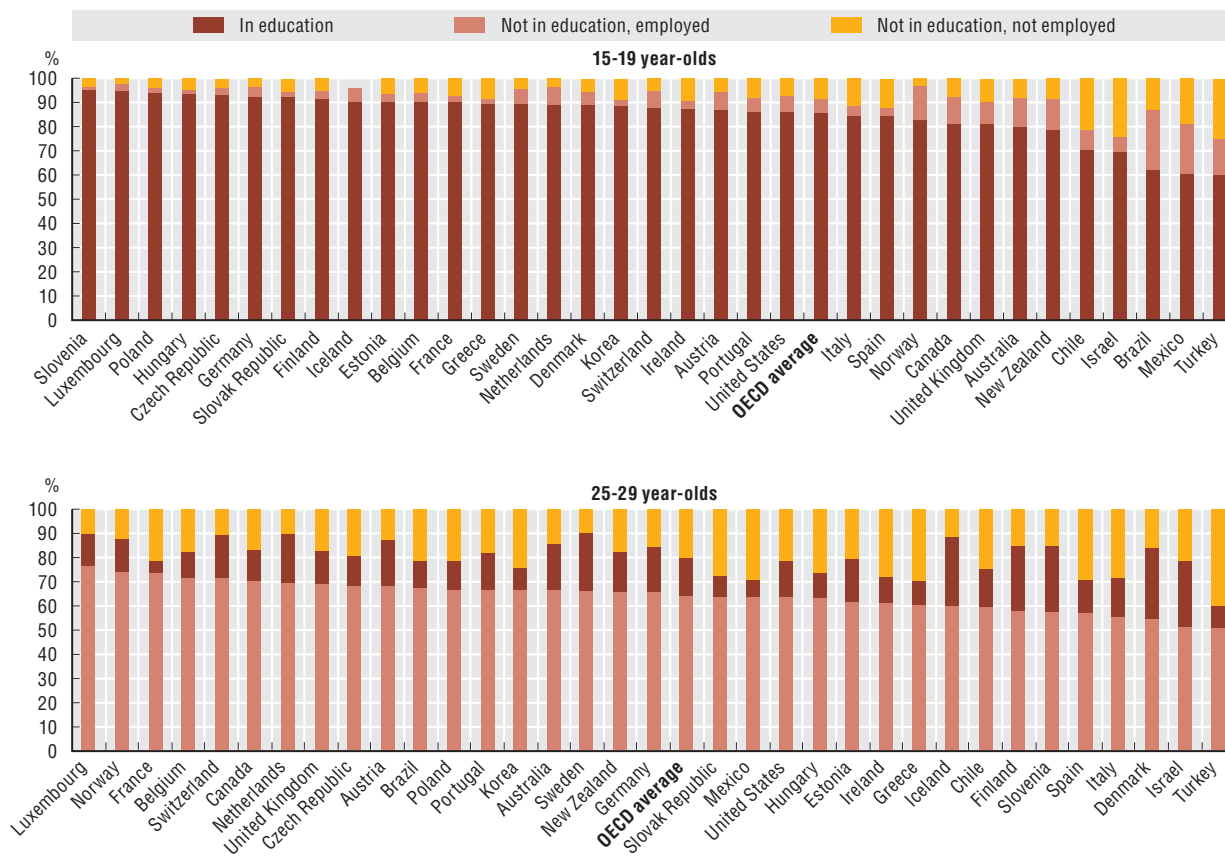
This figure shows the proportion of 15-29 year-olds no longer in education in full-time and part-time work, and how many would rather work full-time.



Source: OECD (2013), Education at a Glance 2013, Chart C5.1, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932847640>.

Figure 2.8. Education and employment among young people, 2011

These figures show the distribution of education and work status among young adults, by age group. Young adults leaving school and entering a difficult labour market are more likely to become unemployed or fall outside the labour force entirely.



Source: OECD (2013), Education at a Glance 2013, Table C5.4a, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932851117>.



From:
Education at a Glance 2013
Highlights

Access the complete publication at:
https://doi.org/10.1787/eag_highlights-2013-en

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2013), "How successful are students in moving from education to work?", in *Education at a Glance 2013: Highlights*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1787/eag_highlights-2013-11-en

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