

1. EDUCATION LEVELS AND STUDENT NUMBERS

How many adults investigate training opportunities?

- Adults who looked for information on training were twice as likely to participate in formal or non-formal education as those who did not.
- On average, 52% of adults had no contact with either the education and learning system or the information and guidance system.
- On average, 7% of adults looked for information but did not participate in further learning.

Significance

As noted on the preceding pages, education and training for adults are key to expanding the workforce's skills. However, in most countries, substantial numbers of adults – especially those with relatively low levels of education – do not take part in further learning. Information, guidance and counselling services can provide a first step to increasing adult participation by helping to create accessible learning environments, supporting learning at all ages and in a range of settings, and empowering citizens to manage their learning and work. This spread looks at the number of adults who make use of such information and guidance systems.

Findings

Individuals who looked for information were twice as likely to participate in formal or non-formal education as those who did not. The relative difference varies from less than twice in Finland, Germany, the Slovak Republic and Sweden, to more than three times in Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Portugal.

On average in the countries providing data, 52% of adults (25 to 64) had no contact with either the education and learning system or the information and guidance system, 41% participated in adult education and 7% looked for information but did not participate. Countries vary markedly on all three measures. More than two-thirds of adults remained outside both systems in Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Portugal, while two-thirds participated in Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Even among those who have not looked for information about learning possibilities in the past year, a sizeable 27% of adults took part in educational activities. How is this possible? Probably the most impor-

tant explanation is employer-sponsored training: workers are given training that they did not seek or choose. Another possibility is attendance at learning activities of fairly long duration, which continue without the need for further information by the participant.

Definitions

Data presented here are based on a special OECD data collection. Data for non-European countries were calculated from country-specific household surveys. Data for countries in the European statistical system come from the pilot EU Adult Education Survey, covering 29 countries. Formal education is defined as education provided in the system of schools, colleges, universities and other formal educational institutions and which normally constitutes a continuous “ladder” of full-time education for children and young people. Non-formal education is defined as an organised and sustained educational activity that may take place both within and outside educational institutions and cater to persons of all ages.

Going further

For additional material, notes and a full explanation of sourcing and methodologies, see *Education at a Glance 2010* (Indicator A5).

Areas covered include:

- Proportion of adults who have looked for or found information on formal or non-formal education opportunities, by gender, age group and labour market status.

Further reading from OECD

Education and Training Policy – Qualifications Systems: Bridges to Lifelong Learning (2009).

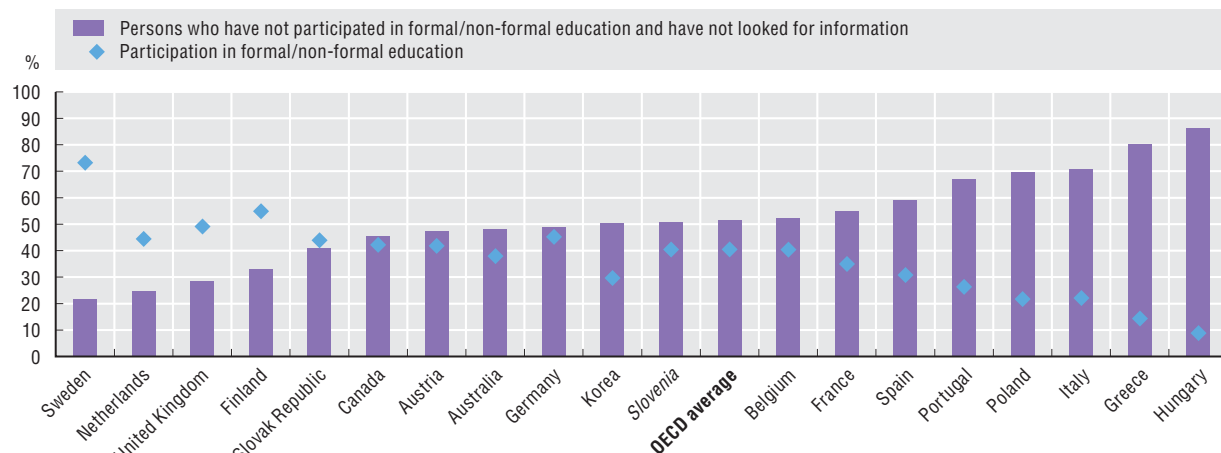
Co-financing Lifelong Learning: Towards a Systemic Approach (2004).

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Figure 1.18. **Adults who have not sought information on nor participated in formal or non-formal education, 2007**

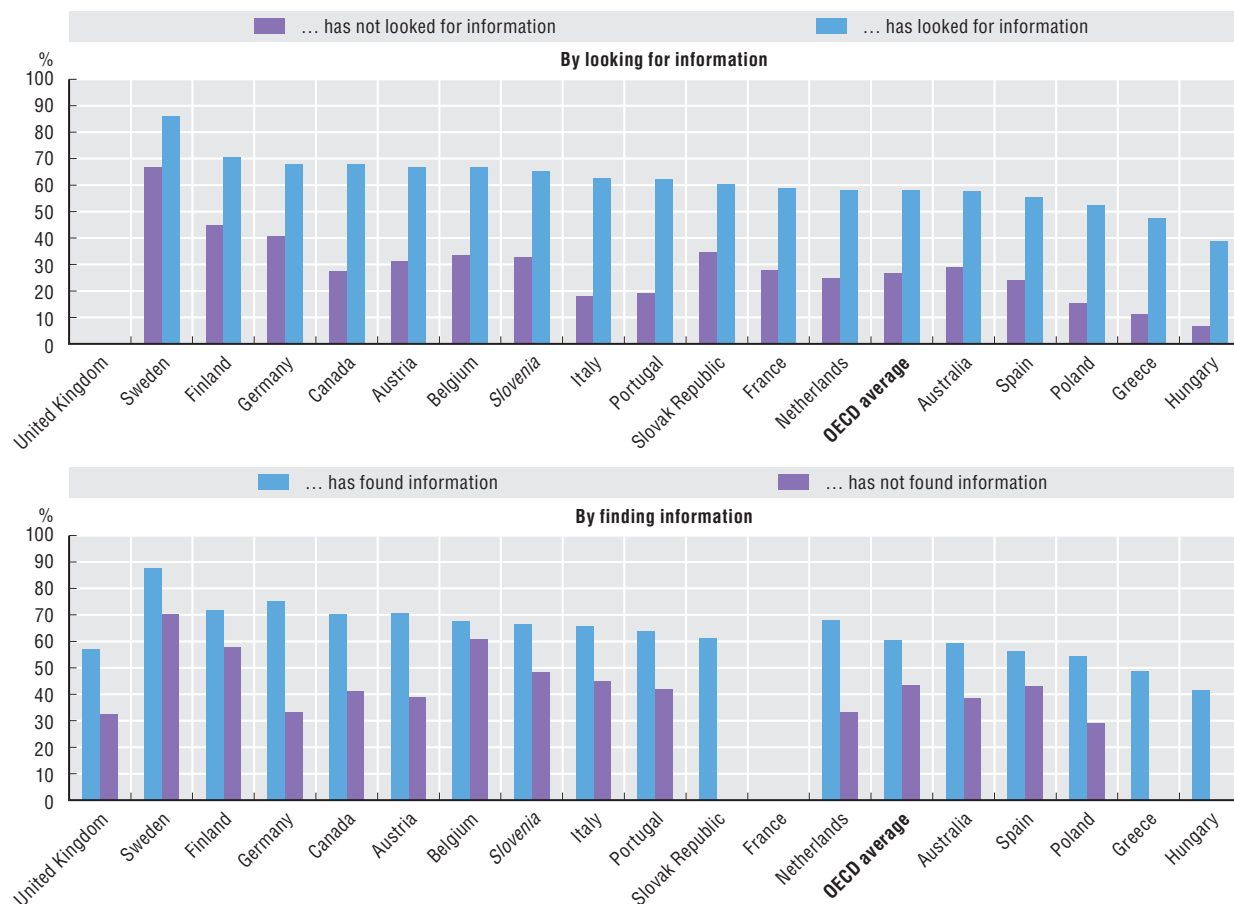
This figure shows the percentage of adults (25 to 64) who have neither taken part in nor sought information on formal or non-formal education compared with the percentage of adults who have taken part in such education.



Source: OECD (2010), Education at a Glance 2010, Table A5.2 available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932310168>.

Figure 1.19. **Participation in formal or non-formal education by people who have looked for or found information on learning activities**

These figures show the percentage of adults who have taken part in further education by two categories: 1. Those who did so after looking or not looking for information; 2. Those who did so after finding or not finding information.



Source: OECD (2010), Education at a Glance 2010, Table A5.3, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932310168>.



From:

Highlights from Education at a Glance 2010

Access the complete publication at:

https://doi.org/10.1787/eag_highlights-2010-en

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2010), “How many adults investigate training opportunities?”, in *Highlights from Education at a Glance 2010*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1787/eag_highlights-2010-12-en

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