

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 2008 could expect to continue in formal education for about another 6 years and 10 months.
- On average, completing upper secondary education reduces unemployment among 20-24 year-olds by 8.3 percentage points and among 25-29 year-olds by 5.3 percentage points.
- The proportion of 20-24 year-olds who are not in education and have not attained upper secondary education is nearly 11 percentage points higher among people born abroad; however, there are very large variations between countries.

Significance

This spread looks at the number of years young people can be expected to spend in education, employment and non-employment. All OECD countries are experiencing rapid social and economic changes that make the transition to working life more uncertain for younger individuals. In many cases, the challenges are especially severe for young people from an immigrant background. In the wake of the economic crisis, long-term unemployment among young adults is likely to rise in most countries.

Findings

On average, a 15-year-old can expect to remain in school for an additional 6 years and 10 months, but this rises to a high of at least 8 years in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, the Netherlands and Slovenia and a low of 5 years or less in Mexico and Turkey. In addition, an average 15-year-old can expect over the next 15 years to hold a job for about 6 years and 1 month, to be unemployed for just over 8 months and to be out of the labour market – neither in education nor seeking work – for 1 year and 2 months.

Young people (15-19 years-old) who are not in employment, education or training, or “NEETs”, have attracted considerable attention in some countries, in part because they often receive little or no support from the welfare system. On average across OECD countries, the proportion of NEETs among 15-19 year-olds is 6.8%, ranging from over 31% in Turkey to 2.1% in the Netherlands.

On average, completing upper secondary education reduces the unemployment rate among 20-24 year-old non-students by 8.3 percentage points. Since it has become the norm in most OECD countries to complete upper secondary education, those who fail to do so are much more likely to have difficulty finding a job when they enter the labour market. In Belgium, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Slovak Republic, Spain and the United Kingdom, the unemployment rate for

20-24 year-old non-students with less than upper secondary education attainment is 15% or more.

The proportion of 20-24 year-olds who are not in education and have not attained upper secondary education is typically higher among people who were born abroad. On average across OECD countries, this difference is nearly 11 percentage points, but there are big variations between countries. In Austria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Poland, Switzerland, the United States and Slovenia, the foreign-born in this age group are three times more likely not to be in education and not to have attained upper secondary education. But in Australia, Canada, Hungary, Portugal and the United Kingdom, immigrants do better than natives.

Trends

Over the past 12 years, rates for those not in education and not employed have varied by 10 percentage points or more in the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Spain, indicating that 20-24 year-olds have experienced very different labour market conditions (see Chart C3.3 in *Education at a Glance 2010*).

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. Note, the reference year used for data shown here, 2008, does not yet take into account the impact of the global recession (see next page).

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).

Areas covered include:

- Expected years in education and not in education for 15-29 year-olds, plus trends and gender differences.
- Education and occupational mismatches for young individuals.

Further reading from OECD

Closing the Gap for Immigrant Students (2010).

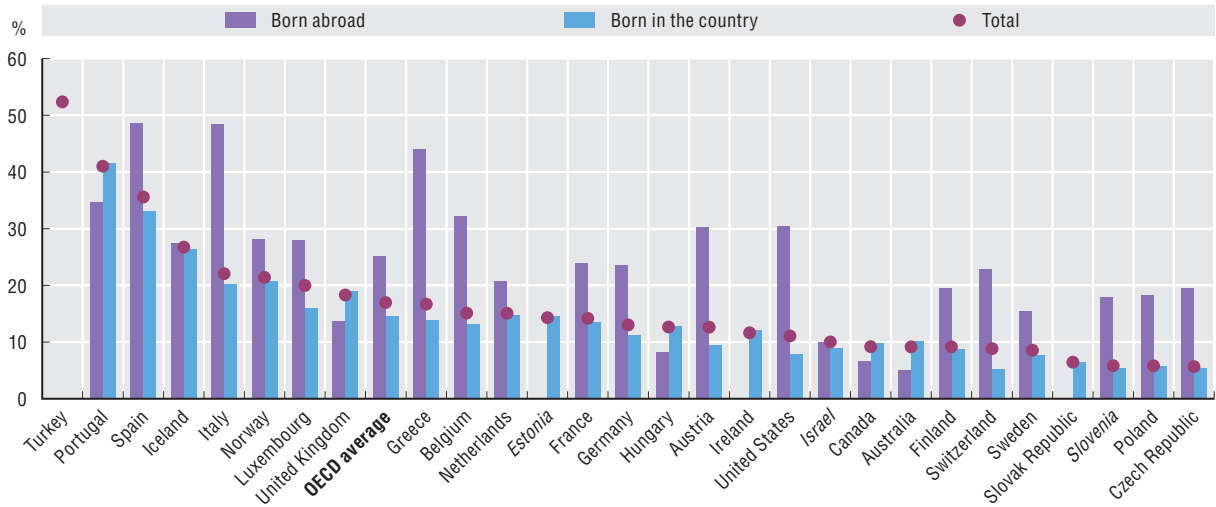
From Education to Work (2005).

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Figure 1.12. **Percentage of 20-24 year-olds not in education, 2007**

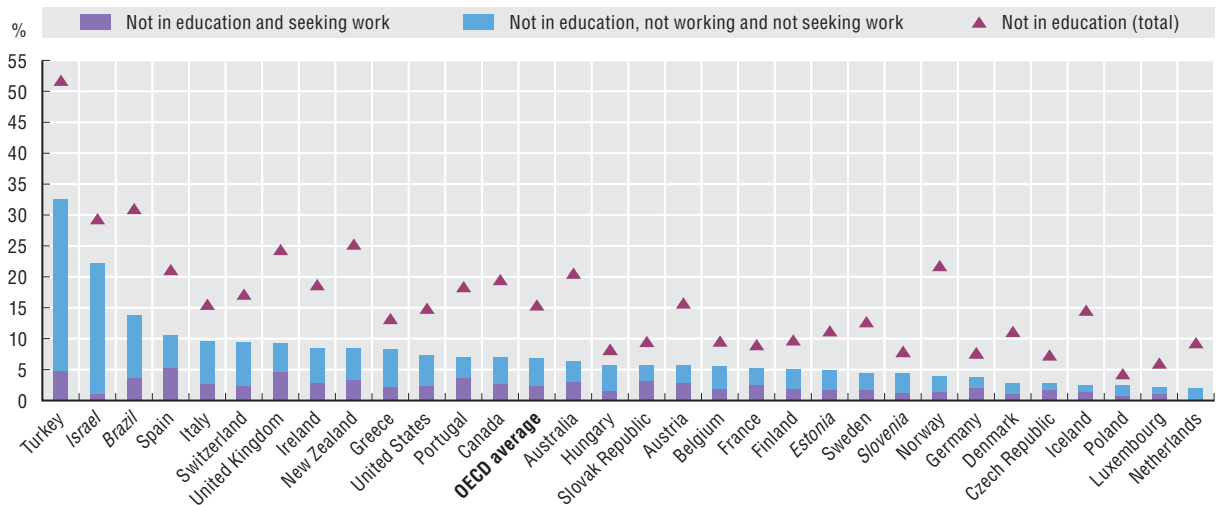
This figure shows the proportion of 20-24 year-olds who are not in education and who have not attained upper secondary education, by migrant status.



Source: OECD (2010), *Education at a Glance 2010*, Table C3.5, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932310453>.

Figure 1.13. **Percentage of 15-19 year-olds not in the labour market or the education system, 2008**

This figure shows the percentage of 15-19 year-olds who are not in education, as well as those not in education and unemployed and those not in education and not in the labour force.



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



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