

1. Employment

Definition and measurement

A person is employed if working for pay, profit or family gain for at least one hour per week, even if temporarily absent from work because of illness, holidays or industrial disputes. The data from labour force surveys of OECD countries rely on this work definition during a survey reference week. The basic indicator for employment is the proportion of the working age population aged 15-64 who are employed. These employment rates are presented by age, gender, educational attainment and migrant status. Temporary employees are wage and salary workers whose job has a pre-determined termination date as opposed to permanent employees whose job is of unlimited duration. National definitions broadly conform to this generic definition, but may vary depending on national circumstances.

In 2009, employment rates varied by a factor of nearly two across the OECD (Panel A, SS1.1). The Swiss employment rate was nearly 80%, while the Turkish employment rate was below 45%. High employment rates were also found Nordics and the five predominantly Anglophone countries. Employment rates were noticeably lower in eastern and southern European countries, partly because of their relatively low female employment.

Due to the economic crisis, employment rates decreased in most OECD countries (Panel B, SS1.1). In most OECD countries, 2009 employment rates were lower than in 2007. Employment rates fell more than 4 percentage points in the

United States, Spain, Ireland, Estonia, and Iceland. Despite the crisis, some countries have bucked the declining trend. Poland has recorded an increase in employment rates of 2% of the period, and Germany has also been relatively immune to the crisis.

Young people were much more likely to be employed on a temporary basis than prime age workers (SS1.2). This age pattern was found in all OECD countries, reflecting the fact that many young people are still in education, and those youth active in the labour market, typically with low education levels, have accumulated little job experience. The share of temporary employment was also higher for women than for men.

As in past recessions, youth were hit particularly hard by the 2008-09 recession (SS1.3). On average for the OECD area, youth employment fell by around 4%, twice the overall employment decline. While women were significantly less likely to be employed than men, overall the impact of the crisis was more pronounced on male employment. Migrants, who were slightly less likely to be employed than the native-born population, were also hit particularly hard.

Figure notes

Figure SS1.1: 2005 for India, 2007 for China, and 2008 for Brazil, Israel, the Russian Federation and South Africa. Changes in Panel B refer to 2000/05 for India, 2005/07 for China, 2005/08 for South Africa, 2007/08 for Israel and the Russian Federation, and 2006/08 for Brazil. Data refer to population aged 15+ for Indonesia.

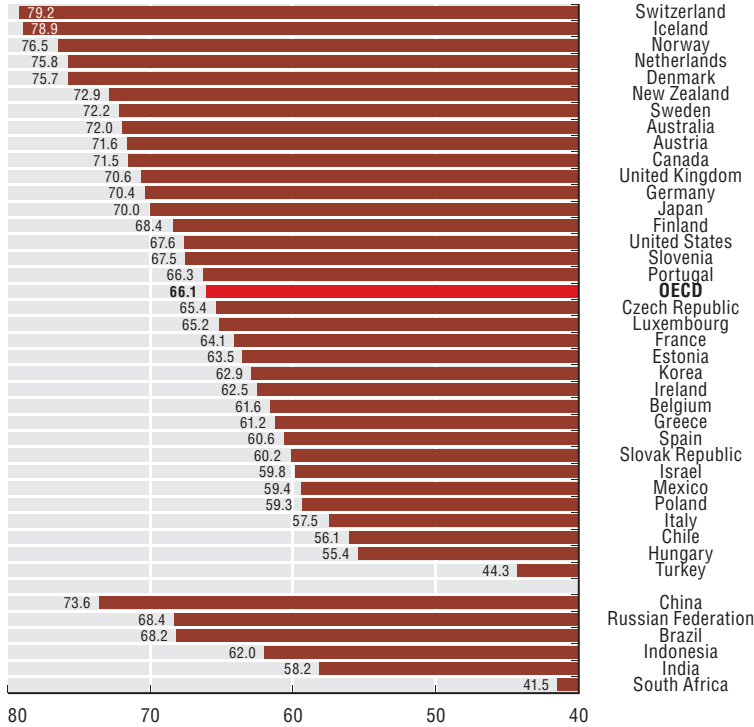
Figure SS1.2: Data are ranked in ascending order of prime age (25-54) temporary employment. Data is for 2005 for the United States and 2006 for Australia.

Figure SS1.3: Data are ranked in ascending order of employment rates of those aged 25-54. Data for Israel are for the period between 2007/08.

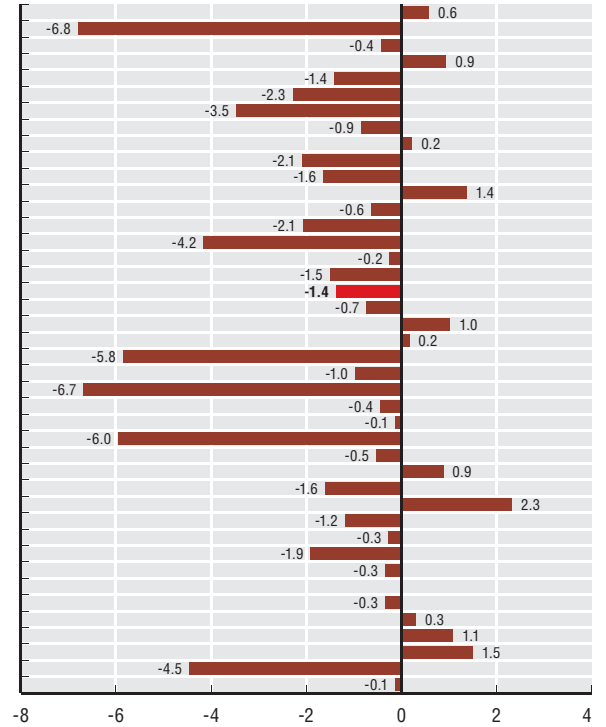
Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

SS1.1. Employment rates vary within the OECD, but the crisis hit employment in most countries

Panel A. Employment rate, persons aged 15 to 64, percentages, 2009 (↘)

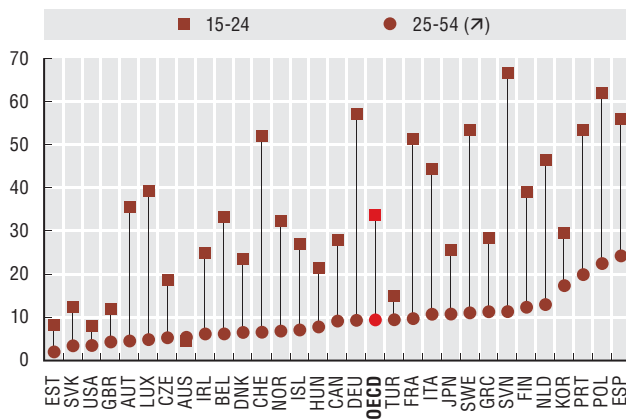


Panel B. Change in employment rate, 2007-09 (percentage points)



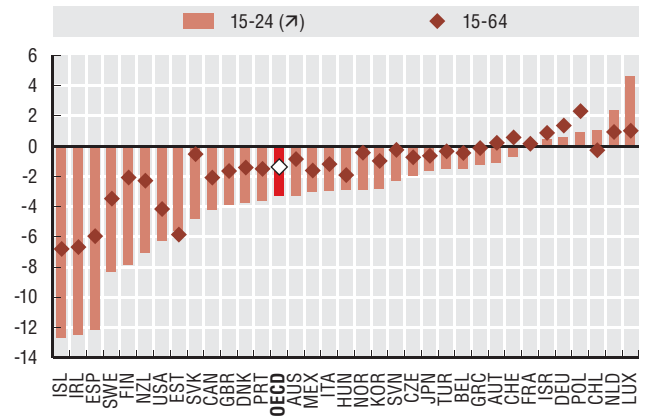
SS1.2. Young people are more likely to be on temporary contracts

Temporary employees as a proportion of total employees, by age, 2009



SS1.3. Young people have been hit harder by the crisis

Change in employment rate of the population by age, 2007-09 (percentage points)



Source: OECD (2010), OECD Employment Outlook, OECD Publishing, Paris (www.oecd.org/els/employment/outlook) and OECD (2010), International Migration Outlook (www.oecd.org/els/migration/imo), OECD-EU Database on Emerging Economies (www.oecd.org/els/social/inequality/emergingeconomies), Indonesia: ILO. StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932381779>



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