

Education at a Glance 2011

OECD Indicators

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2011-en>

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Under embargo until 13 September, at 11:00 am Paris time

Country note – Mexico

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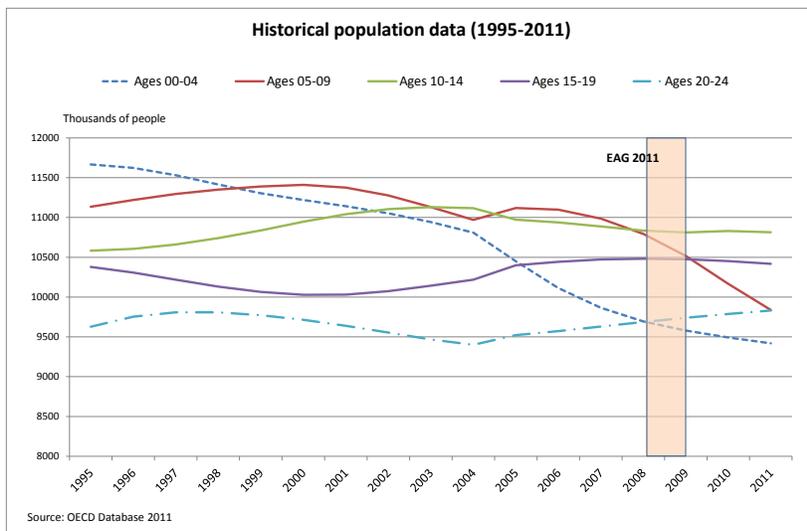
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In Mexico, upper secondary and tertiary attainment has doubled over the past five decades...

The population of Mexicans who have attained an upper secondary education has doubled from 21% among 55-64 year-olds to 42% among 25-34 year-olds. A similar evolution can be seen at the tertiary level, with only 9.8% of those now aged 55-64 having attained tertiary education compared to 20.2% of 25-34 year-olds who have done so. Still, attainment levels are among the lowest among OECD countries: lower than those in Chile for both levels of education, and lower than those in Brazil for upper secondary education (Indicator A1). Although the gap in attainment levels between Mexico and other OECD countries has narrowed, it is still large.

...and virtually all 5-14 year-olds are enrolled in school.

As in other OECD countries, participation in education is close to 100% for 5-14 year-olds. While the population at this age is shrinking from its highest levels in 2007, the challenge for Mexico has been to provide education to the largest population of young people that the country will see in some decades, and to increase its investment per student.



But participation rates remain low at older ages...

At 45%, upper secondary graduation rates are the second lowest among OECD countries after Turkey, and only 52% of upper secondary students complete their studies within the theoretical duration of programmes (compared to 68%, on average, in other OECD countries).

Only 52% of 15-19 year-olds are enrolled, which is 10 percentage points higher than in 2000, but is low compared to Brazil (75%), Chile (73%) and the OECD average (82%). Only 11% of Mexicans aged between 20 and 29 participate in education, only 2 percentage points higher than in 2000, and around half as many as their counterparts in Chile (23%), Brazil (21%), and on average in OECD countries (26%).

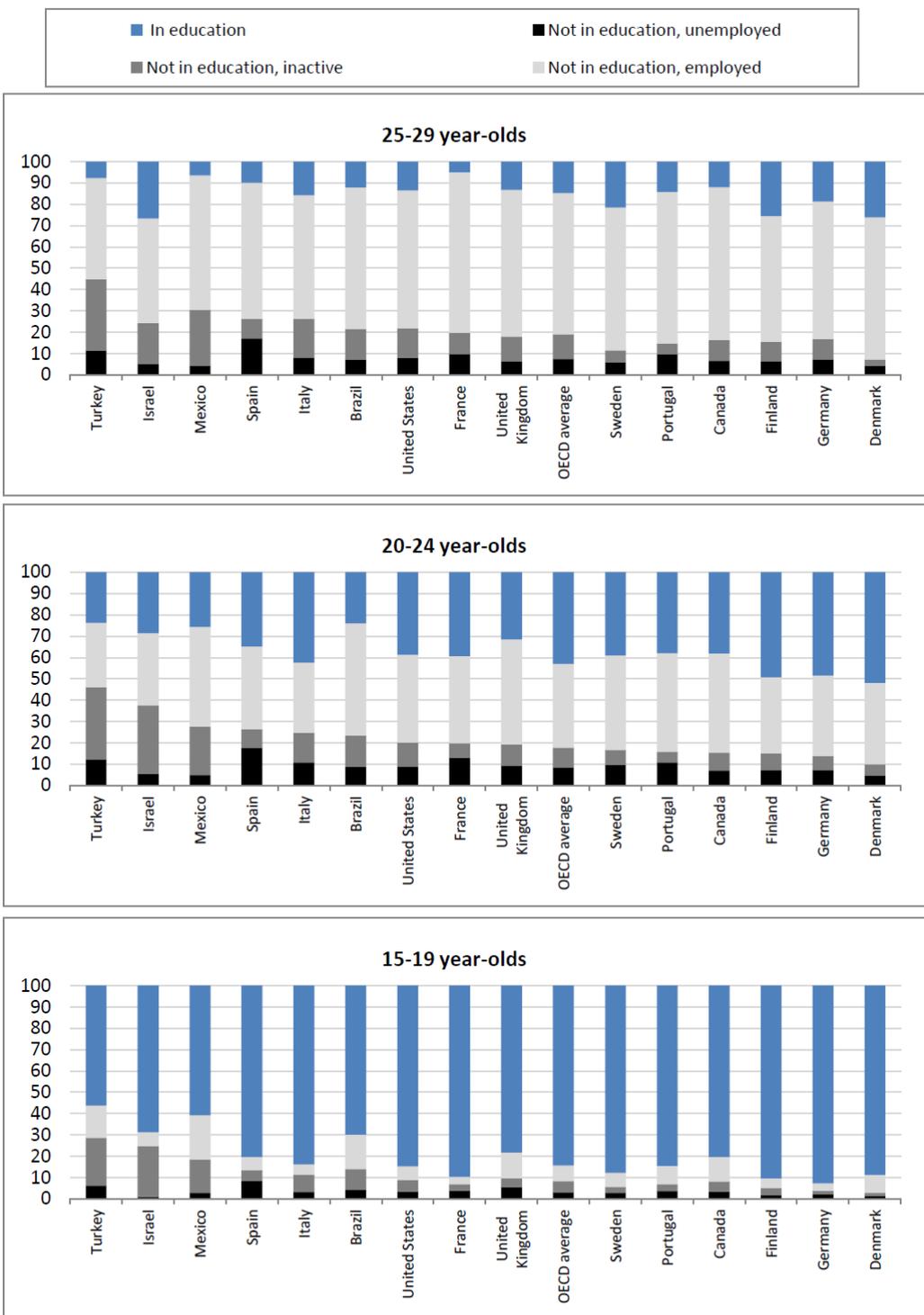
...and a significant share of young Mexicans remains inactive.

Some 18.4% of 15-19 year-olds and 30% of 25-29 year-olds in Mexico are not in education, are unemployed or are not in the labour force. This represents one-quarter of all of Mexico's 15-29 year-olds, just behind Turkey and Israel (see Chart 2).

Gender differences play an important role in levels of inactivity. In Mexico, women aged between 15 and 29 are 3.6 times more likely to remain not in education, either unemployed or not in the labour force, than men of the same age. The proportion of inactive women outnumbers the one of men increasingly with age. While women aged 15 to 19 are 2.3 times more likely than men to remain inactive, the ratio rises to 5.1 times for women aged between 25 and 29. These ratios are almost twice of those in Brazil and are also the strongest among reporting countries.

Chart C4.2. Education and employment among young people (2009)

Distribution of the population by education and work status



Countries are ranked in ascending order of the percentage of 20-24 year-olds in education.

Source: OECD. Table C4.2a. See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eag2011)

Educational attainment and unemployment rates are not as strongly linked as in other OECD countries...

Differences in employment rates between the population with tertiary level and below upper secondary are among the lowest in OECD (rank 27/34). The proportion of employed tertiary educated population is 20 percentage points higher than population which has not attained upper secondary education, lower than the difference of 28 percentage points on average in OECD but higher than in Brazil and Chile.

The increase in unemployment perceived in OECD countries from 2008 to 2009 was less dependent of educational level in Mexico than in other countries. The increase in unemployment for individuals with below upper secondary attainment was of 1.6 percentage points between 2008 and 2009 while for tertiary educated labour force the increase was of one percentage point. This contrasts with OECD average increase of 2.8 points for less educated workers and 1.1 points increase for workers with tertiary education.

...but the gender gap in employment is wide...

Despite the small gender gap in favour of women in graduation rates from university programmes (3 percentage points compared to an average of 15 percentage points among OECD countries), the employment rate for women with tertiary-type A (longer, largely theory-based programmes) and research diplomas is 16 percentage points lower than that for men with similar education (73% for women compared to 89% for men), the 4th largest gap among OECD countries, behind Korea, Japan and Turkey.

...and there are few vocational programmes to ease entry into the labour market.

At just 1%, the graduation rate from vocationally oriented tertiary programmes is 8 percentage points lower than the OECD average and one of the lowest among OECD countries. This is also reflected in the low levels of investment in vocational training by firms and in the small proportion of vocational studies available. Participation in vocational programmes is higher at lower education levels but still below the OECD average in upper secondary education (9% in Mexico compared to 43% on average across OECD countries).

On the other hand, student performance is improving steadily...

Mexico has established a performance target to reach a combined country average of 435 score points in reading and mathematics in 2012; it is also among those countries with steady improvements in PISA scores. Between 2003 and 2006 reading scores rose from 400 to 410 points, and between 2006 and 2009 those scores climbed again from 410 to 425 score points. These results are associated with one of the highest proportions of instruction time dedicated to reading, writing and literature – 30% compared to the OECD average of 23%, the second highest percentage among OECD countries after that in the Netherlands.

In mathematics, Mexico's performance steadily improved from 385 score points in 2003, to 406 points in 2006 to 419 points in 2009.

... and is less influenced by socio-economic background.

The difference in socio-economic status, as measured by the *PISA index of social, cultural and economic status*, appears mainly between, rather than within, Mexican schools. Contrary to what might be expected, the distribution of PISA results for Mexico shows that performance is less influenced by socio-economic background than it is in all other OECD and G20 countries, except Indonesia. And this association weakened by 7 score points between 2000 and 2009, the 4th largest decline among OECD countries, and the 2nd largest among the Latin American countries that participate in PISA.

On average among OECD countries and in Mexico, the performance difference between public and private schools favours private schools. But after accounting for the socio-economic background of both students and schools, the difference is reversed and is statistically significant in favour of public schools.

Expenditure per student is growing...

Greater investment creates more opportunities to improve performance. Mexico increased its expenditure per student from primary through secondary education by 17% between 2000 and 2008. However, this increase is below the OECD average of 34% during the same period.

As a proportion of national wealth, expenditure on educational institutions has also risen to reach the OECD average of 3.7% of GDP.

...and is absorbed by shrinking class size...

Salary cost per student in Mexico is lower than OECD average but higher than in Chile. The difference from the OECD average at primary level is mainly driven by comparatively lower salaries (USD 20 415, Mexico ranks 19 of 31 countries), compared to USD 22 246 in Chile and USD 38 914 on average in OECD countries.

In lower secondary education, the difference is largely due to larger-than-average classes (28 students per class compared to the OECD average of 24 students; Mexico ranks 8 of 31 countries in this measure). Class sizes have reduced from 30.3 students per class in 2000 in lower secondary schools.

...and is highly focused on tertiary education.

Expenditure per student in tertiary education is 3.3 times higher than spending per primary-school pupil – the second largest ratio after that in Brazil, which spends 5.4 times as much on a tertiary student as on a primary-school pupil. The amount spent per tertiary student remained stable from 1995 to 2000 and increased 17% between 2000 and 2008, more than the OECD average increase of 14%.

In absolute terms, annual expenditure per student for all levels of education stands at USD 2 284 (converted using PPPs) –one-quarter of the OECD average of USD 8 169. This level is similar to that

found in other Latin American countries with data in *Education at a Glance 2011*, i.e. Argentina, Brazil and Chile.

As a percentage of GDP, expenditure on education has increased around one percentage point in the past decade to 5.8%, close to OECD average of 5.9%. Mexico has the lowest public expenditure as a percentage of GDP (24%) in the OECD area where public expenditure represents, on average, 43% of their GDP. Given the comparatively low public expenditure, the investment in education accounts for 20.6% of total public expenditure, the highest proportion among OECD countries.

Other findings for Mexico from Education at a Glance 2011

Good salaries for teachers

- Primary school teachers at the top of the salary scale earn twice the starting salary.
- Salaries for lower secondary school teachers, as related to GDP per capita, are the second highest among OECD countries (ratio of 1.76) after Korea, and compare to an average ratio of 1.24 among OECD countries.
- Mexico reports the 4th longest teaching time in lower secondary education after Argentina, Chile and the US.
- The ratio of salaries in primary education to GDP per capita is also high: 1.39 compared to an average of 1.2 in the OECD area.
- Teaching time in primary education is close to average.

Accountability systems

National assessments of performance were established in 2006 and exist at all levels, but neither school inspections nor school self-evaluations are required; only Greece, Italy and Luxembourg lack similar accountability procedures.