Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015: Settling In

Immigrants into the UK are increasingly highly educated, but their children suffer unemployment and discrimination, says OECD

68% of all immigrants in the United Kingdom are employed, a rate well above of the average immigrant employment rate in the EU (62%), according to a new OECD/EU report. *Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015: Settling In* finds that the good labour market outcomes are partly explained by the high educational levels of the immigrants to the United Kingdom. While in the EU on average, one in four immigrants holds a university degree, it is almost one in two in the United Kingdom. Among recent migrants, the share of highly educated has doubled in the last six years (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Shares of highly educated among immigrants with less than ten years of residence, 15-64 year-olds who are not in education, 2012-13 compared with 2006-7

In the United Kingdom, 1.2 million of 15-34 year-olds are native-born offspring of immigrants, while another 2.7 million have immigrated themselves. Immigrants who arrived as children show particular good education outcomes with their reading ability (as measured in the OECD’s PISA tests) as high as the scores of their native-born peers without a migrant background. Furthermore, in contrast to most other European countries, the share of disadvantaged foreign-born students who succeed in school despite their background is higher than the share among disadvantaged native-born.

Those migrant children who do well in the educational system are particularly likely to be employed. For example, when girls with a migrant background are highly educated, their subsequent employment rates are 66 percentage points higher than among those who only complete the compulsory level of schooling.

However, the unemployment rate among native-born children of migrants is also almost twice as high as among youth without a migrant background. Furthermore, more than one in five native-born children of migrants feel discriminated against – a share that is almost twice as high as among those who have themselves immigrated (Figure 2).
Further key findings include:

- In 2012-13, one immigrant in four lived in relative poverty, while it was one in six for the native-born. Furthermore, 21% of all immigrants lived in a household which was either overcrowded or run-down, compared to 10% of the native-born.

- While the employment gap between immigrants and native-born increased between 2006-07 and 2012-13 on average in the EU, in the United Kingdom the gap decreased by 3 percentage points. For immigrant men, the gap even reversed and the employment rate in 2012-13 was slightly higher than the rate of their native-born peers.

- In comparison to other OECD countries, immigrants are particularly well represented in the public services sector with more than one-third of all employed settled immigrants working in this sector. In 2012-13, the share was only higher in Denmark and Sweden.

- At 16%, the United Kingdom has one of the highest rates of self-employment among immigrants of all OECD countries. Among the countries with large immigrant populations, only Canada had a higher share.

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