



## EDUCATION AT A GLANCE 2014

*Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* is the authoritative source for accurate and relevant information on the state of education around the world. It provides data on the structure, finances and performance of the education systems in the 34 OECD member countries, as well as a number of G20 and partner countries.

### Korea

**Korea has a huge educational gap between the younger and older generations.**

In 2012, more Korean adults had attained tertiary education than had attained only an upper secondary education. Since 2000, the share of Koreans aged 25-64 who have attained a tertiary education has increased by 18 percentage points to 42%, the fifth highest share among OECD countries (OECD average: 32%). Among those aged 25-34 years old, 66% held a tertiary qualification, the highest share among OECD countries, compared with an average of 39%. In this age group, Korea ranks first for both men (62%) and women (69%).

However, **Korea has the highest gap in education attainment between young adults and the older generation.** The gap in tertiary attainment rates between 25-34 year-olds and 55-64 year-olds was 52 percentage points in 2012, compared with an OECD average of 15 percentage points. For example, only 8% of Korean women aged 55-64 hold a tertiary qualification, the second lowest rate among all OECD countries, higher only than Turkey.

**This gap reflects a high degree of upward intergenerational mobility in education in 2012, the second-highest among OECD countries.** More than 58% of Korean adults attained higher levels of education than their parents (absolute upward mobility), compared with the OECD average of 39%. Only Finland and the Russian Federation also have upward mobility rates above 50%. Korean men were considerably more upwardly mobile than women, with 62% attaining higher levels of education than their parents, compared with 53% of women.

**Despite strong PISA results, there is room to improve the skills of Korean adults.**

Korea remains one of the top performers in PISA. **Almost one in three Korean 15-year-old students reached the highest level in mathematics, the greatest share among all OECD countries.** Between 2003 and 2012, Korea saw around a 6 percentage point increase in the share of students performing at or above Level 5, the highest increase among OECD countries except Poland.

However, **the level of skills among the Korean adult population remains low compared with other countries participating in the Survey of Adult Skills.**<sup>1</sup> This survey assessed the proficiency of adults in literacy and numeracy skills, from Level 1 (lower level of skills) to 5 (higher level of skills). Korean adults (25-64 year-olds) scored 269 on average in literacy for all levels of education combined, and 261 in numeracy, both just under the averages for OECD countries. As with educational attainment, there is a generational gap in proficiency levels for these foundation skills in Korea. Adults

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<sup>1</sup> The Survey of Adult Skills is a product of the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC).

aged 55-64 years old scored 45 points lower in mean literacy and 48 points lower in numeracy than those aged 25-34; this is the highest gap among OECD countries. **Korea also ranks low among tertiary-educated adults aged 25-64 years old**, scoring 291 in mean literacy compared with top-scoring countries Japan, with 314, and Finland, with 309. Around 14% of tertiary-educated Koreans aged 25-64 years old scored Level 4 or 5, compared with an OECD average of 24%.

### **Korea continues to spend heavily on education, but the share of private expenditure is higher than the OECD average.**

Total expenditure on educational institutions in Korea for all levels of education was the third highest among OECD countries, about 8% of GDP in 2011, compared with 6% on average for OECD countries overall. **The share of private expenditure in Korea was also among the highest, especially at the tertiary level:** 73% of spending on tertiary education came from private sources in 2011, compared with an OECD average of 31%. By contrast, annual public expenditure per student on tertiary educational institutions (USD 3 076) was much lower than the OECD average of USD 9 221.

### **Other findings**

- **A growing share of 25-64 year-olds participated in formal and/or non-formal-education, reaching 50% in 2012, similar to the OECD average.** The main reason given for not engaging in more/any learning activity was “I was too busy at work” (46%, compared with the OECD average of 30%). As in most OECD countries, participation was higher among those with higher skill levels and higher educational attainment, and higher among the employed than the unemployed.
- **Korean teachers in public institutions spend comparatively less time on teaching:** in 2012, on average they spent about 583 hours teaching per year at the pre-primary level and 568 hours at the lower secondary level. By comparison, the OECD averages are 979 hours and 691 hours respectively. At the upper secondary level, Korean teachers spent 549 hours teaching per year, compared with an OECD average of 655 hours.
- **The proportion of Korean adults (25-64 year-olds) reporting that they are in good health was the lowest by all levels of educational attainment and all literacy proficiency levels in 2012.**

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**For more information** on *Education at a Glance 2014* and to access the full set of indicators, visit [www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm).

<b>Questions can be directed to:</b> Corinne Heckmann Directorate for Education and Skills Email: <a href="mailto:Corinne.Heckmann@oecd.org">Corinne.Heckmann@oecd.org</a>	<b>Country Note author:</b> Shinyoung Jeon Directorate for Education and Skills Email: <a href="mailto:Shinyoung.Jeon@oecd.org">Shinyoung.Jeon@oecd.org</a>
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## Key Facts for Korea in Education at a Glance 2014

Table	Indicator	Korea		OECD average		Rank among OECD countries and partner countries*
<b>Educational Access and Output</b>						
	<b>Enrolment rates</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2005</b>	
C2.1	3-year-olds (in early childhood education)	85%	m	70%	64%	14 of 37
	4-year-olds (in early childhood and primary education)	87%	m	84%	79%	24 of 38
C1.1a	5-14 year-olds (all levels)	99%		98%		18 of 44
	<b>Percentage of population that has only attained below upper secondary education</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2000</b>	
A1.4a	25-64 year-olds	18%	32%	24%	34%	21 of 36
	<b>Percentage of the population whose highest level of attainment is upper secondary education</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2000</b>	
A1.4a	25-64 year-olds	41%	44%	44%	44%	22 of 37
	<b>Percentage of population that has attained tertiary education</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2000</b>	
A1.3a A1.4a	25-64 year-olds	42%	24%	33%	22%	6 of 37
	25-34 year-olds	66%	37%	40%	26%	1 of 36
	55-64 year-olds	14%	9%	25%	15%	29 of 36
	<b>Entry rates into tertiary education</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2000</b>	
C3.1b	Youth expected to enter tertiary-type A programmes before turning 25	57%	m	48%	m	7 of 35
	<b>Graduation rates</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2000</b>	
A2.2a	Percentage of today's young people expected to complete upper secondary education in their lifetime	92%	96%	84%	76%	12 of 29
A3.2a	Percentage of today's young people expected to complete university education (tertiary-type A) in their lifetime	m	m	38%	28%	
<b>Economic and Labour Market Outcomes</b>						
	<b>Unemployment rate of 25-64 year-olds - Men and Women</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2008</b>	
A5.4a	Below upper secondary	3%	2%	14%	9%	35 of 35
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	3%	3%	8%	5%	35 of 36
	Tertiary	3%	3%	5%	3%	29 of 36
	<b>Unemployment rate of 25-64 year-olds - Women</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2008</b>	
A5.4c (Web)	Below upper secondary	2%	2%	13%	9%	35 of 35
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	2%	2%	9%	6%	34 of 35
	Tertiary	3%	2%	5%	4%	31 of 35
	<b>Average earnings advantage for 25-64 year-olds with tertiary education**</b>	<b>2012 or latest year available</b>		<b>2012 or latest year available</b>		
A6.1a A6.1b (Web)	Men and women	147		159		22 of 33
	Men	140		164		26 of 33
	Women	152		162		25 of 34
	<b>Average earnings penalty for 25-64 year-olds who have not attained upper secondary education**</b>	<b>2012 or latest year available</b>		<b>2012 or latest year available</b>		
A6.1a A6.1b (Web)	Men and women	71		78		24 of 33
	Men	76		78		21 of 33
	Women	77		75		13 of 34
	<b>Percentage of 15-29 year-olds neither employed nor in education or training, by highest level of education</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2008</b>	
C5.3d (Web)	Below upper secondary	m	m	15%	14%	
	Upper secondary	m	m	16%	14%	
	Tertiary	m	m	13%	11%	

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Table	Indicator	Korea		OECD average		Rank among OECD countries and partner countries*
<b>Financial Investment in Education</b>						
	<b>Annual expenditure per student (in equivalent USD, using PPPs)</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2011</b>		
B1.1a	Pre-primary education	6861		7428		14 of 36
	Primary education	6976		8296		22 of 38
	Secondary education	8199		9280		23 of 38
	Tertiary education	9927		13958		23 of 37
	<b>Total expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2000</b>	
B2.2	Percentage of GDP	8%	6%	6%	5%	3 of 37
	<b>Total public expenditure on education</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2000</b>	
B4.2	As a percentage of total public expenditure	16%	17%	13%	13%	5 of 34
	<b>Share of private expenditure on educational institutions</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2011</b>		
B3.1	Pre-primary education	46%		19%		4 of 33
B3.1	Primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education	19%		9%		3 of 36
B3.1	Tertiary education	73%		31%		2 of 34
B3.1	All levels of education	37%		16%		2 of 33
<b>Schools and Teachers</b>						
	<b>Ratio of students to teaching staff</b>	<b>2012</b>		<b>2012</b>		
D2.2	Pre-primary education	16		14		12 of 31
	Primary education	18		15		10 of 36
	Secondary education	17		13		7 of 37
	<b>Number of hours of teaching time per year (for teachers in public institutions)</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2000</b>	
D4.2	Pre-primary education	583		1001		27 of 28
	Primary education	694	865	782	780	23 of 33
	Lower secondary education	568	570	694	697	29 of 33
	Upper secondary education	549	530	655	628	26 of 33
	<b>Index of change in statutory teachers' salaries for teachers with 15 years of experience/minimum training (2005 = 100)</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2008</b>	
D3.5	Primary school teachers	95	99	103	103	21 of 26
	Lower secondary school teachers	96	99	102	103	19 of 25
	Upper secondary school teachers	96	99	101	103	18 of 25
	<b>Ratio of teachers' salaries to earnings for full-time, full-year adult workers with tertiary education</b>	<b>2012</b>		<b>2012</b>		
D3.2	Pre-primary school teachers	1.32		0.80		1 of 25
	Primary school teachers	1.36		0.85		1 of 28
	Lower secondary school teachers	1.36		0.88		1 of 28
	Upper secondary school teachers	1.36		0.92		1 of 28
<b>New data from the Survey of Adult Skills</b>				<b>Korea</b>	<b>Average of countries with available data</b>	
	<b>Students in tertiary education... (20-34 year-olds)</b>			<b>2012</b>	<b>2012</b>	
A4.1a	...whose parents have not attained upper secondary education			10%	9%	
	...whose parents have an upper secondary education			43%	37%	
	...whose parents have a tertiary education degree			47%	55%	
	<b>Adults in formal and non-formal education</b>			<b>2012</b>	<b>2012</b>	
C6.1(L)	25-64 year-olds			50%	51%	

\* Countries are ranked in descending order of values.

\*\* Compared to people with upper secondary education; upper secondary = 100.

The Survey of Adult Skills is a product of the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies

m': data is not available. 'n': magnitude is either negligible or zero. 'c': there are too few observations to provide reliable estimates.