NEW INDICATORS SHOW COUNTRY DIFFERENCES IN MEETING EDUCATION GOALS

{Journalists are invited to a press conference}
{on this publication at 11.00 a.m., on Wednesday 8th December 1993,}
{at OECD, 2 rue André Pascal, Paris 16e.}

International variations in the amount invested in education, in the pattern of education systems and in their outputs are quantified in a new collection of indicators published by the OECD. They show in figures how education systems in the 24 OECD countries have many similarities, but also some striking differences.

The 1993 edition of "Education at a Glance" builds on the first volume of this series, which appeared in 1992. This year the figures are more up-to-date and cover a wider range of subjects and countries.

Among the common issues confronting education systems, identified in the report, are the distribution of educational opportunities, the balance between public and private investment and high youth unemployment. But there are important variations between countries in terms of:

-- Resources devoted to various levels of education. There are, for example, twice as many students per teacher in Australia as in Norway.

-- Rates at which young people continue in education beyond the compulsory age. In Germany, for example, 80 per cent of 18-year-olds are in some form of education; in the United Kingdom, fewer than 30 per cent.

-- The proportion of young people who graduate from universities. This is four times higher in Canada than in Switzerland. The variation for women is even greater: the proportion of Norwegian women graduating is seven times that of Swiss women.
The "efficiency" of different levels of education in relation to the labour market. In Switzerland, university graduates are more likely to be unemployed than those with only a secondary education; in Finland, unemployment is less than one-third as high for university as for secondary-school graduates.

Further details and graphs illustrating the points above appear on the following pages. These differences cannot show which countries perform "better" educationally than others, since each has its own particular educational traditions and goals. But there is widespread pressure on governments to become more answerable to the public for the quality of education systems. In this context, where wide international differences exist, each government needs to reflect on whether its education system is as effective as it could be in relation to its goals.

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Journalists may obtain a copy of the report from the OECD Press Division, 2 rue André Pascal, 75775 Paris cedex 16 (tel. 45 24 80 88 or 80 89 – fax. 45 24 80 03).

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