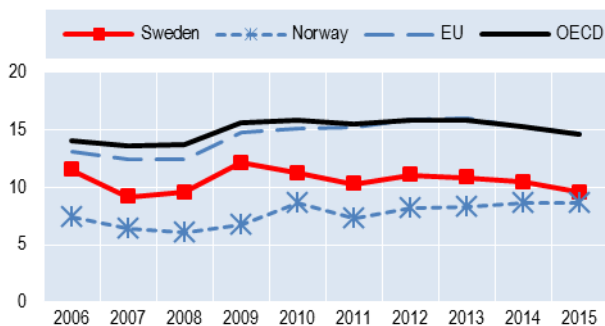




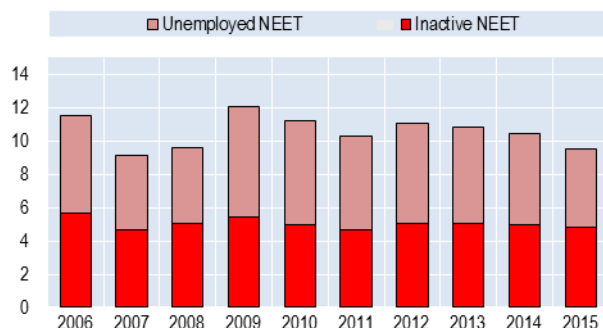
The 2016 edition of *Society at a Glance* examines social well-being and its trends across the OECD. The number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) remains elevated in many countries since the crisis; the report therefore focusses on this group of young people examining the characteristics of those at risk of being NEET along with policies to help meet the challenge. This edition also includes many new youth-specific indicators on family formation, self-sufficiency, income and poverty, health and social cohesion.

The NEET rate rose during the crisis but is now back to its pre-crisis level

NEET rate, 2003-2015



NEET rate by activity status, 2003-2015



Notes: The NEET rate is the proportion of 15-29 year olds who are not in employment, education or training. [Figure 1.5]

THE NEET SITUATION

As across the OECD, the proportion of young people who are not in employment, education or training (the **NEET rate**) rose in Sweden during the Great Recession from 9.2% in 2007 to a peak of 12.1% in 2009. By 2015, however, it was **back to its pre-crisis level** and is below the OECD average of 14.6%. As a result, the cost of NEETs in terms of foregone earnings is relatively low in Sweden at less than 0.5% of GDP [Figure 1.8].

Around half of this NEET group are inactive, and half are unemployed. Youth unemployment is typically twice as high as that of adults in the OECD. In Sweden, however, **youth unemployment is nearly 4 times higher**, partly because of students who wish to also work but cannot find a job. The **incidence of long-term unemployment is low** amongst youth, however, with just 4% of 15-24 year olds long term unemployed compared to 20% across the OECD [Figure 4.6].

Those with low education levels fare particularly badly in Sweden – **31% of youth who dropped out**

of school before competing upper secondary school **are NEET** compared to just 6% of those with a third level degree, one of the largest gaps across the OECD [Figure 1.9]. One-third of NEETs have not completed upper secondary. Apprenticeships can be a useful way of bridging the gap between school and employment for youth, particularly those with lower education levels, but apprenticeship rates are low in Sweden with **less than 2% of youth in an apprenticeship** compared to over 9% in Denmark and 15% in Germany [Figure 1.26].

Across the OECD, NEET rates for women are 38% higher than for men – but **Sweden has succeeded in closing the gender gap in NEET rates** [Figure 1.11]. This is one of the few countries to achieve this. The gender gap is also nil or small in other Nordic countries who tend, in general, to have high employment rates for mothers. **Young migrants are also at a higher risk of becoming NEETs**. On average across countries they are nearly 1.5 times more likely than native-born to be out of employment and not in education [Figure 1.16]. In Sweden this gap stands at 1.7.

OVERVIEW OF OTHER SOCIAL INDICATORS

Low employment rate among migrants

Employment rates are high in Sweden with over 75% of the working age population in employment [Figure 4.1]. But there is a large **gap in employment rates between native and foreign-born persons of working age**, second only to the Netherlands [Figure 4.3]. This can be partially attributed to the high numbers of humanitarian and lower number of economic migrants in Sweden – in 2015 Sweden received the most asylum applications relative to its population¹.

Incomes are high and grew slightly during the recession

Median income in Sweden is around **one quarter higher than the OECD average**. Disposable household income grew over the Great Recession with a 2% growth in median incomes. The growth in incomes was unequal however with a 1% growth for the poorest 10% compared to 4% for the richest tenth of the population [Figures 3.1 & 3.2]. **Income inequality is lower than average** but grew by **2% over the recession**, slightly more than the OECD average [Figure 5.2].

Higher poverty rates among youth

Overall poverty rates in Sweden are below the OECD average. Across the OECD, poverty rates for youth tend to be around one-third higher than for older age groups but in Sweden the **youth poverty rate is nearly 3 times higher than older age groups** [Figure 5.6]. This is common in the Nordic countries where more youth live independently and not with their parents, elevating their poverty rate. The poverty rate is also higher for the youth as **benefit adequacy is lower** for them with 63% of 30-64 year olds in Sweden lifted out of poverty due to benefit receipt compared to 43% of youth [Figure 1.24].

High perceived health

A high proportion of Swedish adults report being in good health (80% compared to the 69% OECD average) ranging from 70% of adults in the poorest one-fifth of the population to 89% amongst the richest fifth [Figures 6.4 & 6.5a]. Sweden has the 6th highest health spending per capita in the OECD [Figure 6.9].

High life expectancy and life satisfaction

At 82.3 years life expectancy in Sweden is almost 2 years higher than the OECD average [Figure 6.1].

Across the OECD life expectancy is higher for those with third level education, particularly for men, but Sweden has the lowest gap in the OECD. **Life satisfaction** amongst those over 15 is also ahead of the OECD average [Figure 7.1]. The Nordic countries tend to have **higher levels of trust in others**; in Sweden 62% of the population report trusting in others compared to 35% across the OECD on average [Figure 7.4].

Political and community engagement is high but youth show less interest

Overall, **confidence in the government** at 53% is ahead of the 44% OECD average [Figure 7.5]. **Voter turnout** in the last national election was 83%, the second highest rate in the OECD but young people, like in many OECD countries, are less likely to vote - 20% less likely in the case of Sweden [Figures 7.7 & 7.8]. **Disinterest in politics is low but is twice as high amongst youth** with 12% of the total population, and 23% of 15-29 year olds, expressing no interest at all in politics. **Rates of volunteering** among youth are also low – 13% of youth volunteered in Sweden compared to 22% across the OECD [Figure 7.15].

Marriage rates are rising and fertility rates are high

At 35.7 Sweden has the **highest age at first marriage for men** and the **second highest average age at first marriage for women (33)** up from 30.3 (men) and 27.7 (women) in 1990. **Marriage rates** are above the OECD average and have **increased since the nineties**, unlike all other OECD countries, excluding Turkey, where a decline in marriage rates has occurred. **Divorce rates are 40% above the OECD average** [Figures 3.11 & 3.12]. At 1.88 children per woman of child-bearing age the **fertility rate is above the OECD average** (1.68) and closer to the 2.1 rate required to keep the population constant. At **29.2 the average age of a first-time mother** is slightly higher than the OECD average and has risen by 1.5 years since 1995 [Figures 3.4 & 3.6].

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¹ See “International Migration Outlook 2016”, OECD Publishing Paris.