

## Education at a Glance 2004

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**Briefing note – SPAIN**

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**New figures in *Education at a Glance 2004* provide further evidence of the benefits accruing from education**

*The case for more and better education is often made, whether in terms of lifelong learning, expansion or diversification of the provision in particular sectors or simply improving the quality of the education that is already delivered. In all cases, there is a need for an assessment of the benefits that reform can bring both to individuals and to the nation as whole. Recognising these key issues, *Education at a Glance* examines the benefits and outcomes of education. In providing new analyses on trends in the employment prospects of those with different levels of education and with new analyses of the financial returns accruing to individuals' investment in education, the 2004 edition provides some key indicators that can help with that assessment.*

### **The benefits of education**

*For individuals, investing in education brings improved employment prospects ...*

- Employment ratios for those with tertiary qualifications are significantly higher than for those without these qualifications. On average across OECD countries, the proportion of 25 to 64-year-olds with a tertiary qualification and who are employed is 8 percentage points higher than for those who only have high school qualifications (the difference is 9 percentage points for **Spain**). This employment advantage is as high as 22 percentage points in Poland but negative in Mexico (i.e. graduates have a lower chance of being in employment than those with upper secondary qualifications). [Table A10.2a., p.158]
- The employment advantage of someone with upper secondary qualifications compared with someone with lower qualifications is even more marked than at the tertiary level. Here, employment ratios are on average 18 percentage points higher for those with upper secondary qualifications than for those without them (16 percentage points in **Spain**). This employment advantage is evident in all countries and is strongest in the Slovak Republic (42 percentage points) and Hungary (35 percentage points) and weakest in Korea (2 percentage points) and Iceland (4 percentage points). [Table A10.2a, p.158]



- Despite rapid rises in educational attainment, particularly at the tertiary level, these relationships have remained fairly stable over time, though some subtle change is evident. Over the last decade, the employment advantage had by those qualified to the tertiary level diminished slightly and the advantage of upper secondary graduation strengthened slightly. This is most apparent when looking at comparative unemployment ratios between the levels of education over time: in 2002, the proportion of adults qualified at the upper secondary level who were unemployed was 1.4 percentage points higher than for adults educated at the tertiary level, whereas in 1995 the difference was 1.9 percentage points. In Spain, the change was even larger, from 2.1 percentage points in 1995 to .7 of a percentage point in 2002 [Table A10.2b, p. 161]
- Education and earnings are closely linked, with education beyond high school bringing a particularly high premium. Earnings of university-level graduates in the 30 to 44 years age group are more than 80 per cent higher than the earnings of those who have completed only secondary education in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Portugal and the United States. In Spain, these earnings premiums are 26 per cent for females and 22 per cent for males. [See Table A11.1a, p. 175]
- It is possible to contrast the benefits for individuals of attaining the next level of education (in terms of higher average earnings, lower risk of unemployment and the public subsidies they receive during their studies) with the costs that individuals incur when studying (in terms of tuition fees, lost earnings during studies and higher tax payments later in life). The private returns for those obtaining a university degree or advanced research qualification immediately following earlier study are positive in all countries and particularly so for males in Hungary (19.8 per cent) and females in Finland (15.2 per cent). The returns for such students in Spain are 9.2 per cent for males and 8.5 per cent for females. For a 40-year-old returning to study, the rates of return are lower than those for students who progress immediately to the next level at an early age, but the rates are still particularly high for males in Hungary (16.4 per cent) and females in the United Kingdom (9.9 per cent). The rates for Spain are 11.2 per cent for males and 8.2 per cent for females. In scenarios where tuition costs are waived, the rates increase in Spain to 12.1 and 9.7 per cent respectively [Table A11.5, p. 181]

***And as well as benefits to individuals, the wider economic benefits of raising education attainment are well evidenced ...***

- Analysis repeated from *Education at a Glance 2003* examines the driving factors of economic growth and shows that rising productivity accounted for at least half of GDP per capita growth in almost all OECD countries with available data [Chart A12.2, p. 191]. Labour productivity can be increased in several ways and the educational attainment of the working population plays a pivotal role, including through its role in determining the rate of technological progress.
- Studies of the macro-economic returns to education estimate that increasing the average level of attainment by one year raises the level of output per capita by between 3 per cent and 6 per cent. [Indicator A12, p.187].

***Dramatic improvements in educational attainment have driven these personal and economic benefits ...***

- To summarise the current levels of educational attainment amongst the adult population, one can calculate the average number of years of schooling that the stock of qualifications held by the adult population represents, based on the duration of current educational programmes. For OECD countries on average, the level of educational attainment corresponds to 11.8 years of schooling and ranges from 7.4 years in Mexico to 13.8 years in Norway. The stock of



qualifications in Spain is below the OECD average and represents 10.3 years of schooling on average. [Table A1.1, p. 47].

- Tertiary attainment in particular has grown rapidly in many countries and continues to grow. Evidence on trends can be obtained by comparing attainment rates for different age-groups in the population. The percentages of the population across the OECD countries that have attained a university qualification (Tertiary-type A or advanced research qualification) are higher for successively younger age-groups (11 per cent for 55-64 year-olds, 14 per cent for 45-54 year-olds, 16 per cent for 35-44 year-olds and 19 per cent for 25-34 year-olds). With 17 per cent of its 25-64 year old population having attained a university qualification, Spain ranks just above the OECD-wide country mean of 16 per cent. However, for the 25-34 year age group, Spain has a rate of 25 per cent. For this age group, only four other countries have a higher rate than Spain (Canada, Korea, Norway, and the United States). [See Table A3.3, p. 71]
- The percentage of the 25 to 64-year-old population with tertiary level education rose again in the latest figures and now stands at 23 per cent on average across OECD countries (24 per cent in Spain). However, most of that increase is due to significant increases in tertiary graduation rates in a comparatively small number of countries, with the risk that some countries are being left behind. [Table A3.4a, p.72] Continuing increases in today's entry rates to universities suggest that this expansion will continue. Entry rates to university level education (tertiary type-A) increased in most countries in 2002 compared with the 2001 figures published in *Education at a Glance 2003*.
- On average across OECD countries, 51 per cent of the age-group now enters a tertiary program leading to the equivalent of a bachelors' degree or higher (50 per cent in Spain). Entry rates are particularly high in Australia (77 per cent), Finland (71 per cent), Iceland (72 per cent), Poland (70 per cent) and Sweden (75 per cent) and tertiary enrolment has expanded dramatically in some countries, with enrolment more than doubling in Hungary and Poland between 1995 and 2002. [See Table C2.1, p. 288; Table C2.2, p.289].
- This growth is putting significant pressure on the financing of tertiary education in these and other countries. In seven out of the 24 OECD countries for which data are available, spending on tertiary educational institutions has not kept pace with the expansion of enrolments, with the consequence that expenditure per student has decreased, in real terms, since 1995. However, between 1995 and 2001, Spain recorded the third highest increase in expenditure per student (after Ireland and Turkey) [See Table B1.5, p. 220]
- Together with the financial pressures that tertiary expansion can bring, there is added strain on the system to maintain completion rates. Spain has a lower drop-out rate from first degree programs (23 per cent) than the OECD average (30 per cent). Countries with much lower rates include Japan (6 per cent), Turkey (12 per cent), Ireland (15 per cent) and the United Kingdom (17 per cent). [See Table A3.2, p. 70]

*..and increases in foreign student enrolment have played a part in tertiary level expansion*

- In some countries, increases in foreign student enrolment have contributed to the expansion of tertiary enrolment. **In 2002, 1.9 million students were enrolled outside their country of origin** within OECD and partner countries (see Notes). This represented a 15 per cent increase in total student mobility since the previous year [Table C3.6, p. 313].
- Five countries (Australia, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States) together receive nearly 73 per cent of all foreign students studying in the OECD area (Spain receives 2 per cent) [Chart C3.2, p. 297].



- In 19 of the 22 OECD countries for which there are data, the proportion of foreign students amongst all tertiary students increased over the last 4 years and is highest in Australia at 17.7 per cent and Switzerland (17.2 per cent) and is 1 per cent or less in Korea, Mexico, Poland, Slovak Republic and Turkey. The figure for Spain is 2.4 per cent [Table C3.1, p.306; Chart C3.1, p.293]
- In terms of the types of study followed by foreign students, university level (tertiary type-A) programmes are the norm, though in Belgium equal numbers follow lower level tertiary programmes. In Finland, Spain and Switzerland, around one in five foreign students is enrolled in highly theoretical advanced research programmes [Table C3.4, p. 312].

*...while, at the high-school level, progress in attainment has been more mixed.*

- The proportions of individuals in the population who have completed high school have been rising in almost all OECD countries, as shown by the attainment rates for successively younger groups in the populations. For the 25-64 year age group, the OECD country mean is 65 per cent. In Spain only 41 per cent of the population in this age range has attained at least upper secondary education. Only three other countries have a lower figure (Mexico, Portugal and Turkey). [See Table A2.2, p. 58; Chart A2.2, p. 53.]
- Young people who have not achieved or who are not pursuing upper secondary education are a particular concern, and the numbers in most countries are not trivial. The proportion of 20 to 24-year olds not in education and without upper secondary education is under 10 per cent in only eight out of 27 OECD countries. The OECD country mean is 19 per cent. The figure for Spain is 31.7 per cent. Only three other countries have a higher figure (Mexico, Portugal and Turkey) [Table C5.1, p. 350; Chart C5.1, p. 344].

## **Investment in education**

*Accompanying these trends in participation and attainment, there have been significant increases in expenditure on education amongst OECD countries...*

- In 13 out of 18 OECD countries for which data are available, public and private spending on educational institutions increased between 1995 and 2001 by more than 10 per cent in real terms, contributing to an average increase across these 18 countries of 20 per cent. Only in the Czech Republic did spending fall in real terms during the period. In Spain the increase in public spending on educational institutions at all levels of education was 17 per cent [See Table B2.2, p. 232].
- These trends mean that OECD countries in total spend 6.2 per cent of their collective GDP on education, from both public and private sources. The highest spending country on this measure is Korea with 8.2 per cent of GDP being spent on education, followed by the United States with 7.3 per cent. Both of these countries have much larger private funding of education compared with other countries: 3.4 per cent and 2.3 per cent of GDP respectively compared with the OECD average of 0.7 per cent of GDP. From both public and private sources, Spain spends 4.9 per cent of GDP on education. When public funding only is considered, Denmark and Sweden continue to spend the highest proportion of GDP on their education systems (6.8 and 6.3 per cent of GDP respectively). Public spending on education in Spain accounts for 4.3 per cent of GDP [See Table B2.1a, p. 229.]
- When the student numbers that this expenditure caters for are taken into account, a slightly different picture emerges. For instance, while the United States does not commit the highest percentage of GDP to expenditure on education, it does achieve, by some margin, the highest



expenditure per student from primary to tertiary education (in equivalent US dollars converted using purchasing power parities) at US\$ 10 871. The levels in other countries range from less than US\$ 3 000 in Mexico, Poland and the Slovak Republic to more than US\$ 8 000 per student in Austria, Denmark, Norway and Switzerland. The figure for Spain is US\$ 5,385 [See Table B1.1, p. 215, Chart B1.1, p. 199.]

- Some of the differences between countries' expenditure per student at the tertiary level can be explained by the large variation in expenditure on research and development (R&D) that takes place in tertiary institutions. On average, for countries reporting data, one quarter of tertiary expenditure is devoted to R&D, but this varies from less than 10 per cent in the Slovak Republic and the United States to around 40 per cent or more in Germany, Italy and Sweden. The figure for Spain is 20 per cent [Table B6.2, p. 267].

*...with the private share of expenditure increasingly important, particularly at the tertiary level.*

- The share of expenditure on primary and secondary education that originates from private sources ranged, in 2001, from less than one per cent in Finland, Portugal and Sweden to 18.9 per cent in Germany and 23.8 per cent in Korea. Spain, at 6.7 per cent, is below the OECD average of 7.6 per cent. In most countries the private expenditure comes from households but in the case of Germany and Switzerland, the bulk of private money comes from private enterprises through the funding of the dual system of apprenticeships. (Note that the private shares include public subsidies provided to private entities such as households.) [See Table B3.2a, p. 242.]
- The prevalence of private funding at the tertiary level is far greater. The share of tertiary expenditure that originates from private sources ranged, in 2001, from 3 per cent or less in Denmark and Greece, to 84 per cent in Korea. Spain, with 24.5 per cent, is near the OECD average of 22 per cent [See Table B3.2b, p. 243.]
- In 13 out of the 19 OECD countries with comparable data, the private share of expenditure on tertiary education grew between 1995 and 2001 (in Spain this share fell slightly from 25.6 per cent to 24.5 per cent). In most countries, however, this growth in private spending was not associated with a decrease in public-sector spending on tertiary education. [See Table B2.2, p. 232, Table 3.2b, p. 243.]

*The public share of educational expenditure is often provided as subsidies to students or households...*

- An average of 17% of public spending on tertiary education is devoted to supporting students, households and other private entities, the remainder being spent directly on institutions. In New Zealand, almost half of public spending on education is provided in the form of this type of support, with percentages of around one third reported by Australia, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the United States. The corresponding figure for Spain is 8.3 per cent [Table B5.2, p. 258].

*.. and public funding of education is a social priority, even in OECD countries with little public involvement in other areas....*

- Across OECD countries, when the size of public budgets relative to GDP is compared with the proportion of public spending that is committed to education, it is evident that even in countries with relatively low rates of public spending, the priority that education is awarded within that spending is very high. For instance, the share of public spending that goes to education is highest in Mexico (24.3 per cent), Korea (17.7 per cent) and the United States (17.1 per cent) and yet total public spending as a proportion of GDP in these countries is not



high. In **Spain**, the share of public spending that goes to education is 11.3 per cent. The OECD average for this variable is 12.7 per cent [See Table B4.1, p. 249.]

## **Gender differences in educational outcomes**

### *In the 1990s women moved ahead of men in educational attainment...*

- Young women are now more likely to obtain first degrees from university-level institutions in most OECD countries: only in three (Japan, Switzerland and Turkey) are young men significantly more likely to do so. [See Table A4.2, p. 84.]. In the past, men typically had better access and earlier indicators show that, in 1990, men still had higher university-level graduation rates than women in half the countries with comparable data.

### *...with higher expectations for the future, but gender differences in study fields...*

- In 40 out of the 42 countries taking part in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2000 – **Spain** being one of them – 15-year-old females reported higher expectations for their future occupations than males [See Table A9.1, p. 140.]
- Nevertheless, there remain gender discrepancies in educational and career choices, with young men still favoring physics, mathematics and engineering-based courses at university and young women opting for the social sciences, health and teaching-related courses. In the humanities, arts, education, health and welfare, an average of more than two thirds of the university-level graduates are women, whereas there are less than one third in mathematics and computer science and less than one quarter in engineering, manufacturing and construction. Men are also more likely than women to earn advanced research qualifications such as doctorates [See Table A4.2, p. 84.]

### *...that have consequences for individual careers and salaries.*

- Males are more likely to be in employment than females at all levels of educational attainment but the gender gap decreases with increasing educational attainment. The proportion of the male adult population with lower secondary education who are in employment is 73 per cent compared to 49 per cent for females who are similarly qualified, a gap of 24 percentage points. At the lower secondary level, the gender gap in **Spain**, at 42 percentage points, is one of the largest in the OECD area. Only Mexico and Turkey have a larger gender gap at this level of education. Across the OECD, among persons who have attained university (tertiary Type-A) and advanced research qualifications, the gap is reduced to 11 percentage points. When all levels of education are considered together, the average gender gap across the OECD is 19 percentage points. Here again, **Spain** exhibits one of the largest gaps, at 33 percentage points. Only three other countries - Greece, Mexico and Turkey – have a larger gender gap when all levels of education are considered [Table A10.1a, p. 155].
- Females still earn less than males with similar levels of educational attainment and the magnitude of the disparity is substantial in most countries. In **Spain**, among 30 to 44-year-olds, and considering all levels of education, female earnings are 79 per cent of those of similarly qualified males (the highest ratio out of 21 countries). However, again considering all levels of education, among 55 to 64 year-olds, the proportion of female to male earnings was 47 per cent in **Spain** (3<sup>rd</sup> lowest) [Table A11.1b, p. 176]
- Career choices emerge early. Gender differences in fields of study at university level are mirrored in the educational aspirations of 15-year-olds. In responses in PISA 2000, career expectations of boys were far more often associated with physics, mathematics or engineering (on average 18 per cent of boys versus 5 per cent of girls) while those of girls were more



frequently related to life sciences and health (20 per cent of girls compared to only 7 per cent of boys). [See p. 131 and <http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2003>.]

***There are also marked gender differences in educational achievement.***

- At the elementary school level, girls outperformed boys in reading in every country in the 2001 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's (IEA) Progress in Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), which provides a profile of students' performances in reading at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level. [See Table A9.2, p. 141.] And a study of trends in 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading literacy between 1991 and 2001 in nine countries shows that these gender disparities are long-standing and that only in Iceland has there been a significant reduction in the gender gap over the period [Table A5.2, p.94; Chart A5.1, p. 86].
- Females were also better readers by age 15 in every one of the 43 countries taking part in OECD's PISA 2000 study. In about half of the countries, males remained ahead in mathematical literacy, though the differences were much smaller. In scientific literacy there were few significant differences. Among 15-year-olds in **Spain**, females were significantly better than males in reading, significantly worse in mathematical literacy and had almost identical results as males in scientific literacy. [See Table A9.3, p. 142.]

**Teacher working conditions**

***Salary level is an important factor that can influence recruitment and retention of quality teachers...***

- At US\$ 28,161 starting salaries for primary teachers in **Spain** are among the highest in the OECD area. Only four countries have a higher figure, namely Denmark, Germany, Switzerland and the United States. At US\$ 31,550, starting salaries for lower secondary teachers in **Spain** are also well above the OECD average of US\$ 24,236 [See Table D3.1, p. 390.]
- Across OECD countries, salaries at the top of the scale are on average around 70 per cent higher than starting salaries for both primary and secondary education, though this varies between countries largely in line with the number of years it takes for a teacher to progress through the scale. For instance, top-of-the-scale salaries in Korea are almost three times that of starting salaries, but it takes 37 years to reach the top of the scale. The ratio of top-of-the-scale to starting salaries in **Spain** is lower than average [Table D3.1, p.391].
- While teachers in **Spain** earn salaries that are relatively high compared with those in other countries, direct international comparisons of salaries for teachers may not be of great relevance for recruitment since the teacher labor market is substantially domestic. The more important consideration is how teacher salaries compare with those that might otherwise be available to individuals who might become teachers. One indirect way to make this comparison is to examine teachers' salaries relative to GDP per capita. On this measure (the ratio of teachers' salaries after 15 years to GDP per capita), teachers at the lower secondary education level in **Spain** rank 6<sup>th</sup> among 29 OECD countries. [See Table D3.1, p. 390, Chart D3.1, p. 380.]
- Teachers' salaries have risen in real terms between 1996 and 2002 in virtually all countries for which data are available, with the largest increases evident in Hungary and Mexico. Salaries at the primary and upper secondary levels in **Spain** fell in real terms over the same period [Table D3.3, p. 398]



*...and working hours another.*

- Across the OECD, the number of teaching hours per year in public primary schools averages 803 but ranges from 617 hours in Japan to 1 139 hours in the United States. The figure for **Spain** is 880 hours. For lower secondary education the average number of teaching hours is 714 and ranges from 513 in Japan to 1 167 in Mexico. The figure for **Spain** is 564 hours. Only two other countries – Japan and Korea – register a lower figure. At the upper secondary (general programmes) level the average is 674 hours, with **Spain** well below this figure at 548 hours [See Table D4.1, p. 406.]
- It is possible to examine what proportion of working time is spent teaching. The percentage of working time that is spent teaching is higher at the primary level than it is at the secondary level. At both levels, however, the percentage of working time spent teaching is greater than 50% in only a minority of countries. This minority includes **Spain** [Table D4.1, p. 406 and Chart D4.2, p. 403].

*...and class size*

- Class size is frequently seen as a key working condition, often being the subject of negotiations with employing authorities. Average class sizes at both primary and lower secondary level vary substantially across OECD countries. At the primary level they average a little less than 22 students per class and range from 36 students per class in Korea to less than half that number in Greece, Iceland and Luxembourg. The figure for **Spain** is just below the average, at 20.9. On average across countries, classes at the lower secondary level are around 2 students larger than at the primary level [See Table D2.1, p. 376]. Both Korea and Japan have relatively large class sizes and yet are high performing countries in international comparisons of student achievement. This and other evidence points to there being no simple relationship between class size and learning benefits for students, though there may be a benefit in working conditions for teachers.

## **Context factors shaping the learning environment and educational outcomes**

*The results in this year's Education at a Glance also provide further insights on context factors which influence learning and the learning environment ...*

*.... at the individual student level in terms of engagement in school life.....*

- Students' sense of engagement in school life can be seen as a context for teaching and learning as well as an outcome itself. On average, nearly a quarter of 15-year-olds in the PISA 2000 study expressed negative views about their sense of belonging at school, and an average of one in five reported either recently missing school, arriving late or skipping classes. Students in Austria, Sweden and Switzerland reported a particularly high sense of belonging, while students in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Japan, Korea and Poland reported a below-average sense of belonging. The figure for **Spain** was around the OECD average. However, **Spain** has the lowest figures for participation among all OECD countries [Table A8.1, p. 128; Chart A8.1, p.118].
- Analysis of the school level results shows that students' sense of belonging and their participation tend to go hand in hand and are closely related to school performance, suggesting that schools with high levels of engagement also tend to have high levels of academic performance [Chart A8.3, p. 124].



*...at the school level in terms of school admission and grouping policies....*

- School policies for admitting and grouping students are important policy levers which influence the learning environment. Based on survey reports from school principals in 2002, students' academic performance is the most commonly used criterion for admitting students to upper secondary schools, though there is wide variation among countries. More than 80% of students in Finland, Hungary and Norway attend schools where students' academic performance is always used as a criterion for admission. In **Spain**, 7% of students attend such schools [Table D5.1, p. 419; Chart D5.1, p. 409]).
- For grouping students, the most commonly used criterion is the student's choice of specific subject or programme; on average some 73% of students attend schools where this criterion is always used (the figure for **Spain** is 86 %). By contrast, in Mexico, almost half the students attend schools where this is never the practice. Grouping students to ensure that classes contain a mixture of abilities is the next most common policy, followed by grouping students by similar age [Table D5.3, p. 421).
- Schools in the Flemish Community of Belgium, Hungary, Ireland and Italy are, on average, more selective both in admitting and in grouping students than the international average. By contrast, in **Spain** and Sweden, schools appear to be less selective in their admission policies than the international average and they also tend to use selective grouping policies less frequently [Chart D5.3, p. 416].

*..and at the system level in terms of the decision making structure in which the school system operates*

- An analysis of the decision making responsibilities at the lower secondary level of education sheds light on the degree of decentralisation that exists within countries' systems.
- Overall, based on data for 2003, decision making is most highly centralised (decisions taken at the central and/or state level of government) in Australia, Austria, Greece, Luxembourg, Mexico, Portugal, **Spain** and Turkey, with central government particularly dominant in Greece (88% of decisions taken by the central administration) and Luxembourg (66%). Decisions are more often taken at the school level in the Czech Republic, England, Hungary, New Zealand and the Slovak Republic and in particular in the Netherlands where all decisions are taken at the school level [Table D6.1, p.432; Chart D6.1, p.423].
- Between 1998 and 2003, decision making in most countries – including **Spain** - became more decentralised, most notably in the Czech Republic, Korea and Turkey. The opposite trend was evident in the French Community of Belgium and Greece [Chart D6.3, p. 429].

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