



## PROGRAMME FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT (PISA)

### EQUITY IN EDUCATION: BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO SOCIAL MOBILITY

#### MEXICO

- **Equity in education** means that schools and education systems provide equal learning opportunities to all students. Equity does not mean that all students obtain equal education outcomes, but rather that differences in students' outcomes, such as academic performance, social and emotional well-being, and post-secondary educational attainment, do not depend on their socio-economic background.
- **Social mobility** refers to a change in the socio-economic status of individuals between their childhood (when this status is largely determined by their parents' background) and their adult life. Upward social mobility occurs when students born into socio-economically disadvantaged families end up, as adults, in positions of higher status than those of their parents (e.g. skilled occupations).
- This report identifies some **education policies and practices that promote educational equity and social mobility**. Given the increase in income inequality in recent years, improving equity in education is even more urgent today than in previous decades. Improving equity in education is essential for easing social mobility.

## Key findings

- In Mexico, about 11% of the variance in students' science performance in PISA 2015 was accounted for by differences in students' socio-economic status (OECD average: 13%; among OECD countries with above-average performance the relationship is weakest in Estonia and Norway [8%]). Between 2006 and 2015, equity in science performance improved in Mexico (on average across OECD countries: equity in science performance improved at a lower rate than in Mexico during this period; Figure 1.1). In addition, equity in student self-efficacy improved during the same period, meaning that the socio-economic gap in the index of science self-efficacy narrowed.
- Equity in performance also improved in Mexico in the other two main subjects PISA assesses, reading and mathematics. Significant improvements were observed in equity in reading performance between 2000 and 2015 and in mathematics performance between 2003 and 2015.
- The mean science score in PISA 2015 among socio-economically disadvantaged students in Mexico was 386 points, while among advantaged students it was 446 points. This gap of 60 points represents the equivalent of two full years of schooling (OECD average gap: 88 points; the gap is only 69 points in Estonia; Table 3.1).
- Some 60% of disadvantaged students in Mexico attend disadvantaged schools, i.e. schools where other students tend to be disadvantaged as well (OECD: 48%; in Finland, only 40% of disadvantaged students attend such schools). However, where disadvantaged students attend advantaged schools, they score 71 points higher, or the equivalent of more than two years of school, than those attending disadvantaged schools (OECD average: 78 points higher; among OECD countries with above-average performance no performance difference is observed between the two groups of students in Finland, Norway and Poland; Figure 1.1).
- In Mexico, 12% of disadvantaged students are “nationally resilient”, meaning that they score in the top quarter of science performance in Mexico (OECD average: 11%; 14% in Estonia and Finland). Some 3% of disadvantaged students in Mexico are “core-skills resilient”, meaning that they score at PISA proficiency Level 3 or above in science, reading and mathematics (OECD average: 25%; 42% in Estonia, 41% in Japan, and 40% in Canada and Finland; Figure 1.1).
- Some 22% of disadvantaged students in Mexico are “socially and emotionally resilient”, meaning that they are satisfied with their life, feel socially integrated at school and do not suffer from test anxiety (OECD average: 26%; 50% in the Netherlands, 43% in Switzerland and 39% in Finland; Figure 1.2). Disadvantaged students in Mexico who are academically resilient are also more likely to be socially and emotionally resilient. In particular, among disadvantaged students in Mexico, those who are “core-skills resilient” are nearly three times more likely to be “socially and emotionally resilient” as well (Figure 3.11).
- Mexico is one of four countries with the largest proportions of disadvantaged students (80% or above) reporting high levels of life satisfaction (rated at least 7 on a 10-point scale; Table 3.9a). Yet the share of students who reported that they feel they belong at school fell by more than 15 percentage points between 2003 and 2015 (Table 2.6).

**What the results imply for policy**

- Policies and practices aimed at providing more equal education opportunities for all children can be implemented at the classroom, school and education-system levels. Countries need to consider creating and strengthening policies and programmes that support disadvantaged students. For example, countries can promote greater access to early childhood education and care, particularly among disadvantaged families, as these programmes both provide more equitable learning environments and help children acquire essential social and emotional skills.
- Countries can also set ambitious goals for and monitor the progress of disadvantaged students, target additional resources towards disadvantaged students and schools, and reduce the concentration of disadvantaged students in particular schools. They can also develop teachers' capacity to identify students' needs and manage diverse classrooms, promote better communication between parents and teachers, and encourage parents to be more involved in their child's education. Teachers and schools can foster students' well-being and create a positive learning environment for all students by emphasising the importance of persistence, investing effort and using appropriate learning strategies, and by encouraging students to support each other, such as through peer-mentoring programmes.

**To learn more, see...**

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**Contacts:**

Andreas Schleicher  
Advisor to the Secretary-General on  
Education Policy, Director for Education  
and Skills  
[Andreas.SCHLEICHER@oecd.org](mailto:Andreas.SCHLEICHER@oecd.org)

Daniel Salinas  
Analyst  
Directorate for Education and  
Skills  
[Daniel.SALINAS@oecd.org](mailto:Daniel.SALINAS@oecd.org)



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