

Inactive youths

Did you know?

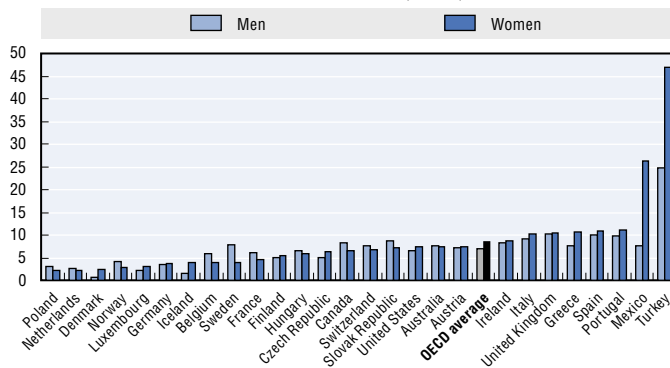
“Inactive youths” are those between 15 and 19 who have no jobs and are not at school.

In most countries the gender differences are small but there were substantially fewer young inactive women than men in Norway, Belgium and Sweden and many more inactive women than men in Mexico and Turkey.

Inactive youths constitute both a present and future problem. *Present* because they are more likely to be involved in various kinds of anti-social behaviour including property crime and drug abuse. *Future*, because lacking work experience or marketable skills they are likely to join the pool of the “socially excluded” for much of their lifetimes.

In most OECD countries less than 10% of those aged 15 to 19 are inactive and less than 5% in eight. Rates in excess of 10% were recorded in Turkey, Mexico, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.

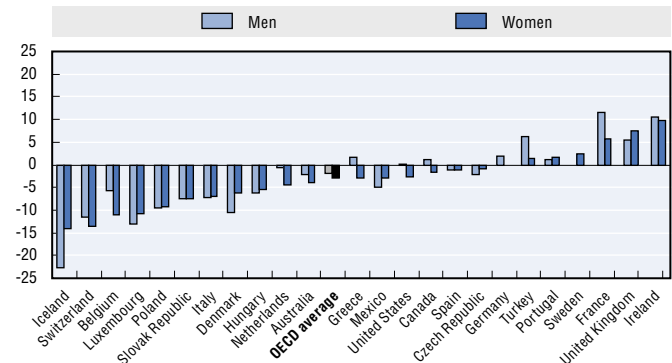
Percentage of people aged 15-19 who were not in education or work (2004)



The good news is that youth inactivity rates have been falling in most countries since 1995 – the first year for which these data are available. (In the chart below negative “growth rates” mean a decline.)

For the OECD as a whole, female youth inactivity rates have been falling at just over 3.0% per year compared with 1.9% for men. In most countries where youth unemployment has been rising, the increases have been larger for young men than young women. In Sweden, on the other hand, the annual growth of the inactivity rate for women has been relatively high while the rate for men has been falling.

Average annual growth in rates of youth inactivity
1995 or earliest year available to 2004



Source: OECD Education database.

Further reading:

OECD (2006), *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators*, OECD, Paris.
OECD (2005), *OECD Employment Outlook*, OECD, Paris.