

Colombia

Ensuring equal opportunities for students across socio-economic backgrounds

- Socio-economic status may significantly impact students' participation in education, particularly at levels of education that rely, in many countries, most heavily on private expenditure, such as early childhood education and care and tertiary education. In Colombia, private sources accounted for 27% of total expenditure in pre-primary institutions, higher than the OECD average of 17%. At tertiary level, 20% of expenditure comes from private sources in Colombia, compared to 30% on average across OECD countries.
- Across most OECD countries, socio-economic status influences learning outcomes more than gender and immigrant status. In Colombia, the proportion of children from the bottom quartile of the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS) achieving at least PISA level 2 in reading in 2018 was 56% lower than that of children from the top ESCS quartile, a larger share than the OECD average of 29%.
- International student mobility at the tertiary level has risen steadily reaching about 5 200 students in Colombia and representing less than 1% of tertiary students in 2019. The largest share of foreign tertiary students studying in Colombia comes from Venezuela. Students from low and lower-middle income countries are generally less likely to study abroad. In 2019, they represented 29% of international students in OECD countries, compared to 6% in Colombia.
- Large differences in educational attainment may lead to starker earnings inequality in many countries. In Colombia, 37% of 25-64 year-old adults with below upper secondary attainment earned at or below half the median earnings in 2019, above the OECD average of 27%.

Gender inequalities in education and outcomes

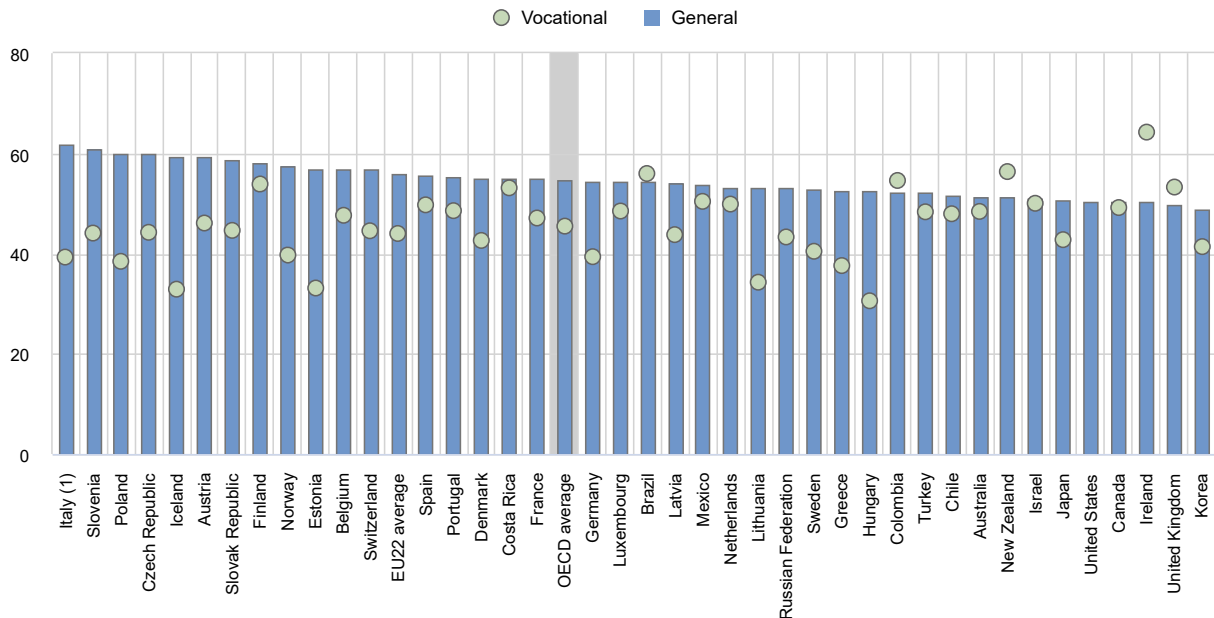
- In Colombia, 2.8% of students in lower secondary and 1.5% in upper secondary initial education repeated a grade in 2019, compared to 1.9% and 3% respectively on average across OECD countries. Boys are more likely to repeat a grade at lower secondary initial education than girls. In Colombia, 60% of repeaters at lower secondary level were boys, lower than the OECD average of 61%. At upper secondary level, the share of boys repeating a grade in Colombia remains stable at 60%, compared to 57% on average across OECD countries.
- Men are more likely than women to pursue a vocational track at upper secondary level in most OECD countries. This is not the case in Colombia, where 45% of upper secondary vocational graduates in 2019 were men (compared to the OECD average of 55%). Women are generally more likely to graduate from upper secondary general programmes. This is also the case in Colombia, where women represent 52% of graduates from upper secondary general programmes, compared to 55% on average across OECD countries (Figure 1).
- Tertiary education has been expanding in the last decades, and, in 2020, 25-34 year-old women were more likely than men to achieve tertiary education in all OECD countries. In Colombia, 34%

of 25-34 year-old women had a tertiary qualification in 2020 compared to 26% of their male peers, while on average across OECD countries the shares were 52% among young women and 39% among young men.

- Gender differences in the distribution of tertiary entrants across fields of study are significant. Women tend to be under-represented in certain fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) across most OECD countries. On average, 26% of new entrants in engineering, manufacturing and construction and 20% in information and communication technologies were women in 2019. In Colombia, women represented 31% of new entrants in engineering, manufacturing and construction programmes and 20% in information and communication technologies. In contrast, they represented 62% of new entrants to the field of education, a sector traditionally dominated by women. In Colombia, men represent 41% of teachers across all levels of education, compared to 30% on average across OECD countries.
- Young women are less likely to be employed than young men, particularly those with lower levels of education. Only 37% of 25-34 year-old women with below upper secondary attainment were employed in 2020 compared to 82% of men in Colombia. This gender difference is larger than the average across OECD countries, where 43% of women and 69% of men with below upper secondary attainment are employed.
- In nearly all OECD countries and at all levels of educational attainment, 25-64 year-old women earn less than their male peers: their earnings correspond to 76%-78% of men's earnings on average across OECD countries. This proportion varies more across educational attainment levels within countries than on average across OECD countries. Compared to other education levels, women with tertiary education in Colombia have the lowest earnings relative to men with a similar education level, earning 80% as much, while those with below upper secondary education earn 87% as much.

Figure 1. Share of women among upper secondary graduates, by programme orientation (2019)

In per cent



1. Includes post-secondary non-tertiary level.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the share of women in general programmes.

Source: OECD (2021). Table B3.1. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterB.pdf).

Education and migration background

- Foreign-born young adults (15-29 year-olds) are also more likely to be neither employed nor in education or training (NEET) than native-born young adults. On average across OECD countries, 18.8% of foreign-born and 13.7% of native-born adults are NEET. In Colombia, the difference is 7 percentage points (36.7% compared to 29.3%).

Cross-regional disparities in education

- Tertiary attainment may vary significantly within a country. In Colombia, the share of 25-64 year-old adults with tertiary education varies from 15% in the region of Nariño to 35% in the region of Bogotá Capital District, a similar regional variation as the average across OECD countries with available data.
- On average across OECD and partner countries with subnational data on labour-force status, there is more regional variation in employment rates among those with below upper secondary education (17 percentage points) than for those with tertiary education (8 percentage points). In Colombia, there is a difference of 25 percentage points in the employment rate of adults with below upper secondary education between different regions of the country compared to 14 percentage points for tertiary-educated adults.
- The proportion of young people who are NEET shows significant subnational as well as national variation across OECD and partner countries. In Colombia, the difference in the share of

18-24 year-old NEETs between regions with the highest and lowest value is 24 percentage points, compared to 11 percentage points on average across OECD countries.

COVID-19: 18 months into the pandemic

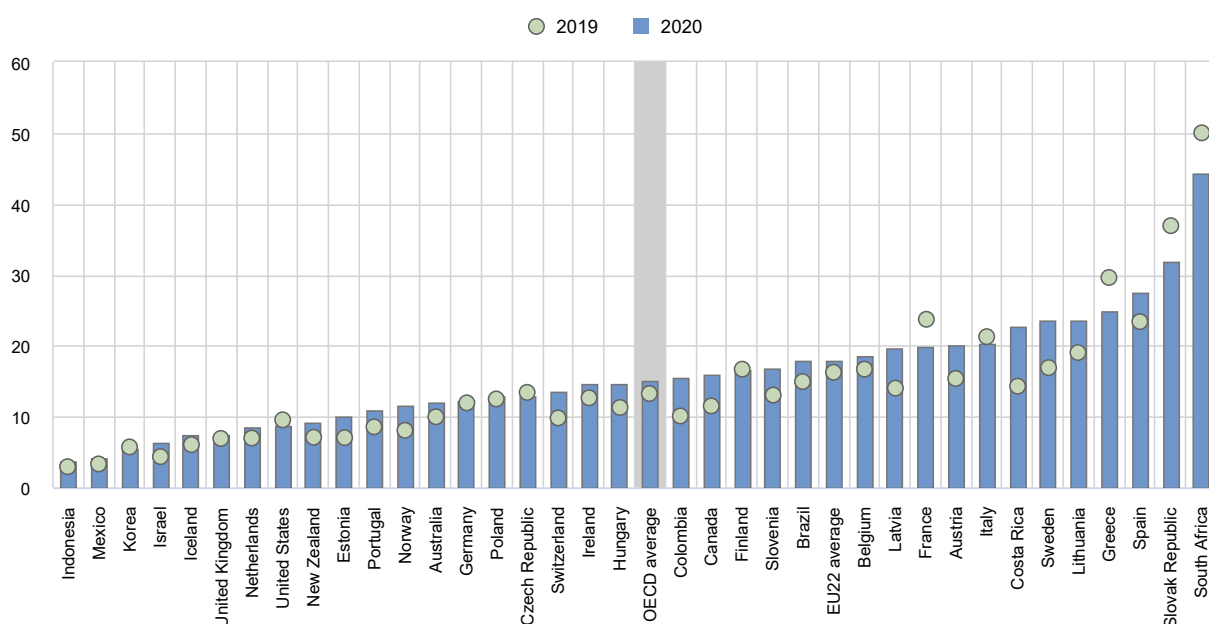
- The spread of COVID-19 has continued to impede access to in-person education in many countries around the world in 2021. By mid-May 2021, 37 OECD and partner countries had experienced periods of full school closure since the start of 2020.
- The number of instructional days when schools were fully closed since the start of 2020 due to the pandemic (excluding school holidays, public holidays and weekends) varies significantly between countries and increases with the level of education. Colombia is an exception. In Colombia, pre-primary schools were fully closed for an average of 152 days between 1 January 2020 and 20 May 2021. Meanwhile primary schools closed for 152 days, lower secondary for 152 days and upper secondary general schools for 152 days. In comparison, respective closures were 55, 78, 92 and 101 days on average across the OECD.
- In many countries, schools did not fully close but remained open with reduced capacity. Schools at upper secondary (general) level in Colombia for instance experienced 139 days of partial opening between January 2020 and May 2021, 65 of which occurred in 2020 and 74 in 2021. In total, this was higher than the number of days of partial opening in the OECD on average (57 days), where there were 27 days of partially open instruction in 2020, and 30 days in 2021. When adding both the number of days where schools were fully and partially closed, learning in upper secondary general education was disrupted by 291 days in Colombia between January 2020 and May 2021.
- The impact of COVID-19 and school closures on educational equity has been a concern for many countries. 30 out of the 36 OECD and partner countries surveyed, including Colombia, declared that additional measures were taken to support the education of children who might face additional barriers to learning during the pandemic. 22 of these countries, including Colombia, stated that they had subsidised devices for students to help them access education. Measures to encourage disadvantaged or vulnerable students to return to school after closures were also implemented in 29 OECD and partner countries, including in Colombia.
- Countries have faced difficult decisions on how to best manage their resources to ensure that students can continue to access quality education in the safest possible conditions and to minimise disruption to learning. Before the pandemic, total public expenditure on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education in Colombia reached 3.2% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2018, which was similar to the OECD average. About two-thirds of OECD and partner countries reported increases in the funding allocated to primary and secondary schools to help them cope with the crisis in 2020. Compared to the previous year, Colombia reported an increase in the fiscal year education budget for primary and lower secondary general education in both 2020 and 2021.
- 20 OECD and partner countries, including Colombia, stated that the allocation of additional public funds to support the educational response to the pandemic in primary and secondary schools was based on the number of students or classes. At the same time, 16 countries targeted additional funds at socio-economically disadvantaged students as a way to ensure that resources targeted those that needed them the most, including in Colombia.
- Countries' approach to prioritise teachers in vaccination campaigns against COVID-19 has varied. In total, 19 OECD and partner countries, including Colombia, have prioritised teachers as part of the government's plans to vaccinate the population on a national level (as of 20 May 2021).
- The impact of the pandemic on the economy has raised concerns about the prospects of young adults, especially those leaving education earlier than others. In Colombia, the unemployment rate among 25-34 year-olds with below upper secondary attainment was 15.5% in 2020, an increase of

5 percentage points from the previous year. In comparison, the average youth unemployment rate of 15.1% in 2020 across OECD countries represented an increase of 2 percentage points from 2019 (Figure 2).

- Despite the impact of the crisis on employment, the share of NEETs among 18-24 year-olds did not greatly increase in most OECD and partner countries during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. On average, the share of 18-24 year-old NEETs in OECD countries rose from 14.4% in 2019 to 16.1% in 2020. In Colombia, the share of 18-24 year-old NEETs was 27.6% in 2019, which increased to 34.5% in 2020.

Figure 2. Trends in unemployment rates of 25-34 year-olds with below upper secondary attainment (2019 and 2020)

In per cent



Compare your country: <https://www.compareyourcountry.org/education-at-a-glance-2021/en/2/3044+3045+3046/trend//OAVG>

Countries are ranked in ascending order of the unemployment rate of 25-34 year-olds with below upper secondary attainment in 2020.

Source: OECD (2021), Table A3.3. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterA.pdf).

Investing in education

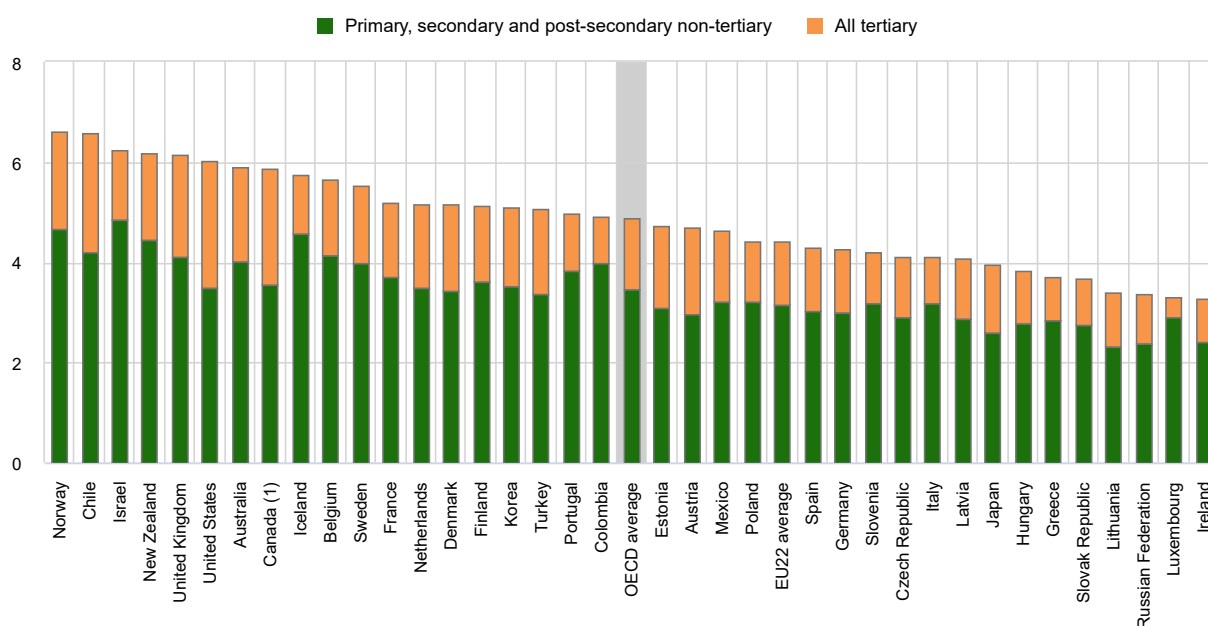
- Annual expenditure per student on educational institutions provides an indication of the investment countries make on each student. After accounting for public-to-private transfers, public expenditure on primary to tertiary educational institutions per full-time student in Colombia was USD 2 425 in 2018 (in equivalent USD converted using PPPs for GDP) compared to USD 10 000 on average across OECD countries.
- The provision of education across public and private institutions influences the allocation of resources between levels of education and types of institution. In 2018, Colombia spent USD 3 219 per student at primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education, USD 7 235 lower than the OECD average of USD 10 454. At tertiary level, Colombia invested USD 2 863

per student, USD 14 202 less than the OECD average. Expenditure per student on public educational institutions is higher than on private institutions on average across OECD countries. This is also the case in Colombia, where total expenditure on primary to tertiary public institutions amounts to USD 3 193 per student, compared to USD 3 010 on private institutions.

- Between 2012 and 2018, expenditure per student from primary to tertiary education increased at an average annual growth rate of 1.6% across OECD countries. In Colombia, expenditure on educational institutions grew at an average annual rate of 0.3%, while the number of students fell on average by 0.1% per year over this period. This resulted in an average annual growth rate of 0.4% in expenditure per student over this period.
- The share of national wealth devoted to educational institutions is the same in Colombia as on average among OECD countries. In 2018, Colombia spent 4.9% of its GDP on primary to tertiary educational institutions, which is the same as the OECD average. Across levels of education, Colombia devoted a higher share of GDP than the OECD average at non-tertiary levels and a lower share at tertiary level (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Total expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (2018)

In per cent



Compare your country: <https://www.compareyourcountry.org/education-at-a-glance-2021/en/5/3059+3060+3061+3062+3063+3064/default>

1. Primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education includes pre-primary programmes.

Countries are ranked in descending order of total expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP.

Source: OECD (2021), Table C2.1. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterC.pdf).

Working conditions of school teachers

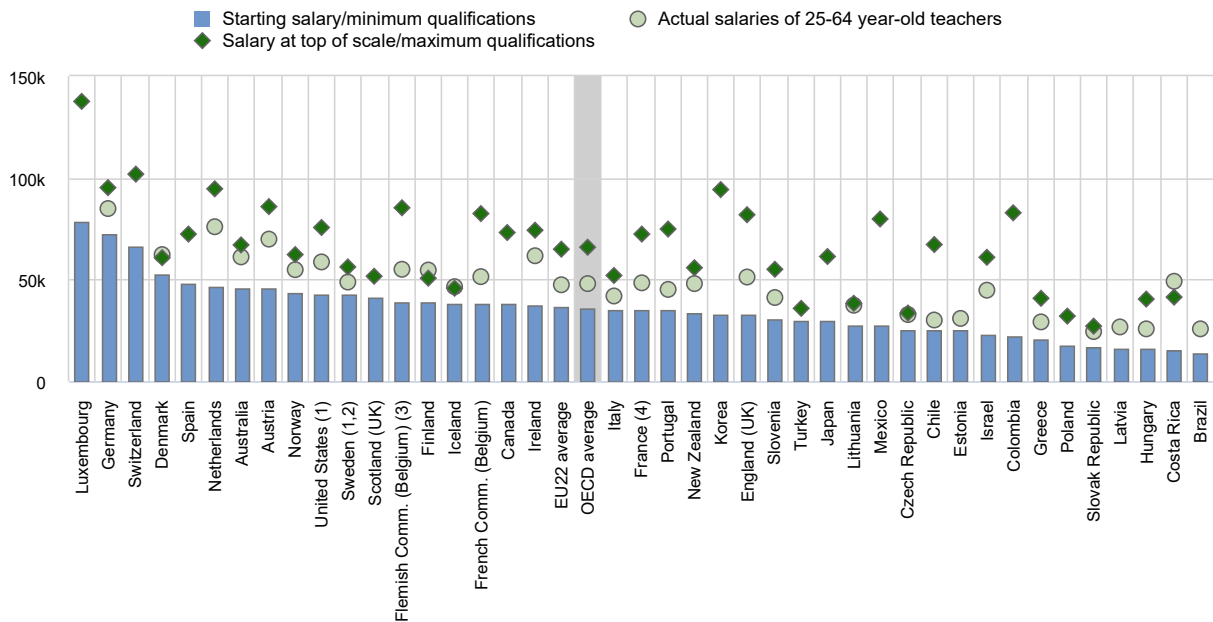
- The salaries of school staff, and in particular teachers and school heads, represent the largest single expenditure in formal education. Their salary levels also have an impact on the attractiveness of the teaching profession. In most OECD countries and economies, statutory

salaries of teachers (and school heads) in public educational institutions increase with the level of education they teach, and also with experience. On average, statutory salaries of teachers with maximum qualifications at the top of their salary scales (maximum salaries) were between 86% and 91% higher than those of teachers with the minimum qualifications at the start of their career (minimum salaries) at pre-primary (ISCED 02), primary and general lower and upper secondary levels in 2020. In Colombia, maximum salaries were 278% to 338% higher than minimum salaries at each level of education (Figure 4). However, most teachers were paid between these minimum and maximum salaries.

- The average number of teaching hours per year required of a typical teacher in public educational institutions in OECD countries tends to decrease as the level of education increases: it ranged from 989 hours at pre-primary level (ISCED 02), to 791 hours at primary level, 723 hours at lower secondary level (general programmes) and 685 hours at upper secondary level (general programmes) in 2020. In Colombia, teachers teach 768 hours per year at pre-primary level, 960 hours per year at primary level, 845 hours at lower secondary level (general programmes) and 845 hours at upper secondary level (general programmes).
- During their working time, teachers also perform various tasks other than teaching itself such as lesson planning and preparation, marking students' work and communicating or co-operating with parents or guardians. At the lower secondary level, teachers in Colombia spend 49% of their statutory working time on teaching, compared to 44% on average among countries with available data.
- In primary and secondary education, about 35% of teachers are at least 50 years old on average across OECD countries and may reach retirement age in the next decade, while the size of the school-age population is projected to increase in some countries, putting many governments under pressure to recruit and train new teachers. In 2019, 41% of primary teachers in Colombia were at least 50 years old, which was higher than the OECD average of 33%. On average across OECD countries, the proportion of teachers aged at least 50 years old increases with higher levels of education taught, to 36% in lower secondary education and 40% in upper secondary education. In Colombia, this proportion reaches 40% at both lower and upper secondary levels.

Figure 4. Lower secondary teachers' average actual salaries compared to the statutory starting and top of the scale salaries (2020)

Annual statutory salaries of teachers in public institutions, in equivalent USD converted using PPPs



Compare your country: <https://www.compareyourcountry.org/education-at-a-glance-2021/en/7/all/default>

Note: Actual salaries include bonuses and allowances.

1. Actual base salaries.
2. Salaries at the top of the scale and the minimum qualifications, instead of the maximum qualifications.
3. Salaries at the top of the scale and the most prevalent qualifications, instead of the maximum qualifications.
4. Includes the average of fixed bonuses for overtime hours.

Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of starting salaries for lower secondary teachers with the minimum qualifications.

Source: OECD (2021), Table D3.3 and Education at a Glance Database, <http://stats.oecd.org>. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterD.pdf).

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More information

For more information on Education at a Glance 2021 and to access the full set of Indicators, see:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/b35a14e5-en>

For more information on the methodology used during the data collection for each indicator, the references to the sources and the specific notes for each country, see Annex 3 (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3.pdf).

For general information on the methodology, please refer to the OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics: Concepts, Standards, Definitions and Classifications (<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264304444-en>).

Updated data can be found on line at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-data-en> and by following the *StatLinks*  under the tables and charts in the publication.

Data on subnational regions for selected indicators are available in the *OECD Regional Statistics* (database) (OECD, 2021). When interpreting the results on subnational entities, readers should take into account that the population size of subnational entities can vary widely within countries. For example, regional variation in enrolment may be influenced by students attending school in a different region from their area of residence, particularly at higher levels of education. Also, regional disparities tend to be higher when more subnational entities are used in the analysis.

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<https://gpseducation.oecd.org/>

The data on educational responses during COVID-19 were collected and processed by the OECD based on the Survey on Joint National Responses to COVID-19 School Closures, a collaborative effort conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS); the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the World Bank; and the OECD.

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