

Colombia

The output of educational institutions and the impact of learning

- Upper secondary attainment is often seen as a minimum qualification for successful labour market participation. Although the general increase in educational attainment has seen a parallel decline in the share of 25-34 year-olds without upper secondary attainment, 14% of young adults across the OECD still left school without an upper secondary qualification. In Colombia, the share is 25%, which is higher than the OECD average.
- Higher educational attainment is often associated with better employment prospects but Colombia is an exception. In 2021 the employment rate among 25-34 year-olds with tertiary education in Colombia was 10 percentage points higher than among those with below upper secondary attainment and 10 percentage points higher than among those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment. On average across OECD countries, the employment rate among 25-34 year-olds with a tertiary qualification was 26 percentage points higher than among those with below upper secondary attainment and 8 percentage points higher than among those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment. While the positive link between educational attainment and employment rates holds for both men and for women across the OECD, it is particularly strong for women. In Colombia, 42% of women with below upper secondary attainment were employed in 2021, compared to 72% of those with tertiary attainment. In contrast, the figures were 87% and 85% for men.
- Across the OECD, the labour market benefits of tertiary attainment have proved especially strong during economic crises. This was also the case during the COVID-19 pandemic in Colombia. Between 2019 and 2020, unemployment for 25-34 year-old workers with below upper secondary attainment increased by 5.4 percentage points, by 6.8 percentage points for workers with upper secondary attainment and by 6.5 percentage points for workers with tertiary attainment. In 2021, unemployment for workers with below upper secondary attainment fell by 5.8 percentage points, compared to 2020, by 2.4 percentage points for workers with upper secondary attainment and by 2.9 percentage points for workers with tertiary attainment.
- Educational attainment affects not just employment prospects, but also wage levels. On average across the OECD, 25-64 year-old workers with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment earn 29% more than workers with below upper secondary attainment, while those with tertiary attainment earn about twice as much. In Colombia, the earnings advantage of tertiary-educated workers was even greater than the OECD average. In 2020, workers with upper secondary attainment earned 46% more than those with below upper secondary attainment and those with tertiary attainment earned more than three times as much.
- National averages provide only an incomplete picture of the situation in any given country. In most OECD countries, there are large differences in educational attainment across subnational regions. This is also the case in Colombia. In 2020, the difference between the region with the highest share of 25-64 year-olds with tertiary attainment (Bogotá Capital District, at 36%) and that with the lowest share (Córdoba (CO), at 16%) was 20 percentage points. These subnational variations do not only

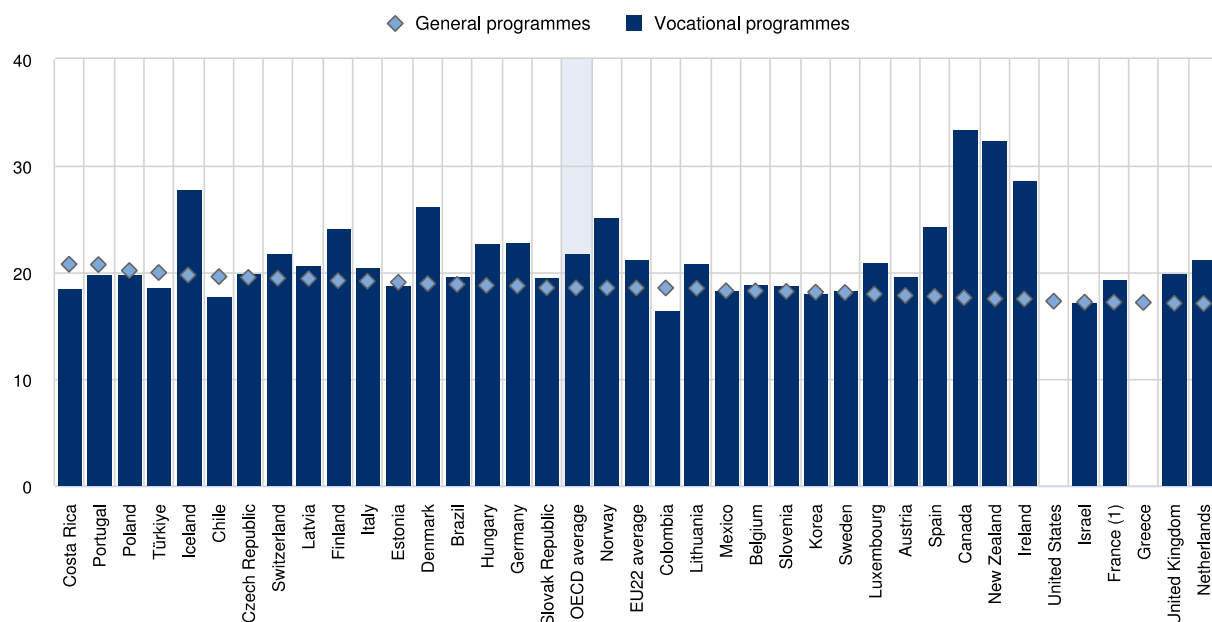
reflect differences in education opportunities. To a large degree, they are due to economic conditions and internal migration patterns.

Access to education, participation and progress

- Compulsory education begins at the age of 5 and ends at the age of 16 in Colombia. The range of ages for which at least 90% of the population are enrolled is shorter than the period of compulsory education and goes from the age of 5 to the age of 14. This differs from most other OECD countries, where more than 90% of the population are enrolled for longer than the period of compulsory education.
- The age at which children enter early childhood education differs widely across countries. In Colombia, early childhood education starts offering intentional education objectives for children younger than 1 and 30% of children under 3 are enrolled in early childhood education. Across OECD countries, the average enrolment rate among children below the age of 3 is 27%, but the rates range from less than 1% to 63%. The enrolment rate among 3-5 year-olds increases substantially in all OECD countries. In Colombia, 77% of all children of this age are enrolled in early childhood education, which is slightly below the OECD average.
- The average age of graduation from general upper secondary programmes varies from 17 to 21 years across OECD countries and is 19 years in Colombia. Differences in the average age of graduation from vocational upper secondary education are much larger and vary from 16 to 34 years across the OECD. These differences largely depend on whether vocational upper secondary students usually enrol in these programmes towards the end of their compulsory education or in mid-career. In Colombia, the average age of graduation from vocational upper secondary education is 16 years, which is below the OECD average at 22 years (Figure 1).
- In almost all OECD countries, women make up the majority of those graduating from general upper secondary education. In Colombia, the share is 52% (OECD average 55%). In contrast, men are overrepresented among graduates of vocational upper secondary programmes in most OECD countries, but not in Colombia where they make up 45% of all vocational upper secondary graduates, below the OECD average (55%).
- In Colombia, 29% of 18-24 year-olds are still in full- or part-time education or training at either upper secondary or tertiary level (significantly below the OECD average of 54%). A subset of these students (8% of 18-24 year-olds) combine their education or training with some form of employment in Colombia, compared to 17% on average across the OECD.
- One significant difference across countries' education systems is on whether or not vocational upper secondary programmes provide access to tertiary education. In 12 OECD countries and other participants, including Colombia, all vocational upper secondary graduates have direct access to tertiary education.
- As is the case in all OECD countries, a majority of students enrolled at tertiary level in Colombia are bachelor's students (65%). However, the next commonest enrolment level varies from country to country. In Colombia, short-cycle tertiary students make up the second largest group of tertiary students at 28%. This is also the case in 13 other OECD countries, while in the remaining 26 countries with available data, master's students form the second largest group.

Figure 1. Average age of first-time upper secondary graduates, by programme orientation (2020)

In years



1. Average age is based on all graduates instead of first-time graduates.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the average age of first-time upper secondary graduates in general programmes.

Source: OECD/Eurostat/UIS (2022), Tables B3.1 and B3.2. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

Financial resources invested in education

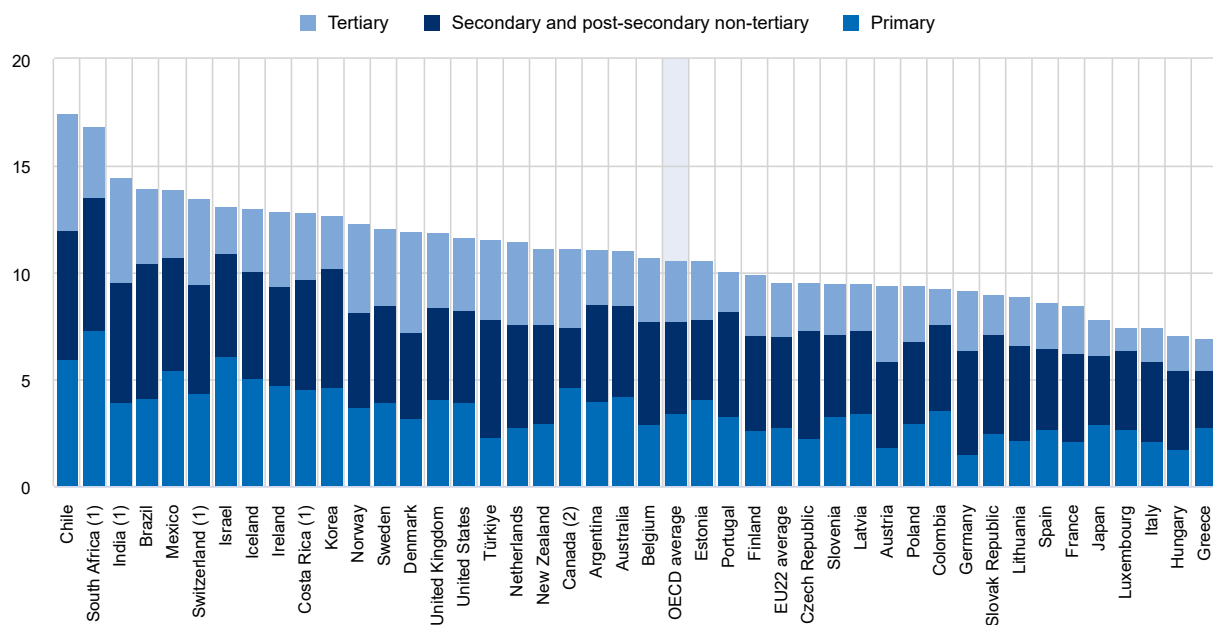
- All OECD countries devote a substantial share of national output to educational institutions. In 2019, OECD countries spent on average 4.9% of their gross domestic product (GDP) on primary to tertiary educational institutions. In Colombia, the corresponding share was 5.7%.
- Public spending on primary to tertiary education was 9.2% of total government expenditure in Colombia (Figure 2), lower than the OECD average (10.6%). Also, relative to GDP, public spending on primary to tertiary education (4.2%) is lower than the OECD average (4.4%).
- Spending on educational institutions as share of GDP or public budgets are important measures of the importance that countries place on education in their budgeting decisions. However, they do not show the total amount of funding per student because GDP levels, public budgets and student numbers vary from country to country. Across primary to tertiary education, OECD countries spend an average of USD 11 990 per student (in equivalent USD converted using PPPs for GDP) on educational institutions each year. In comparison, Colombia spent USD 3 916 per student in 2019. Its cumulative expenditure on educating a student from the age of 6 to 15 was USD 37 315, which was significantly below the OECD average of USD 105 502.
- Across OECD countries, the provision of education at primary and secondary levels in terms of curricula, teaching styles and organisational management leads, on average, to similar patterns of expenditure per student from primary to post-secondary non-tertiary levels. OECD countries as a whole spend on average around USD 9 923 per student at primary and USD 11 400 per student

at secondary level. In Colombia, the values are USD 3 729 at primary and USD 3 744 per student at secondary level, which are among the lowest across OECD countries.

- In contrast to lower levels of education, spending on tertiary education varies widely across OECD countries. Expenditure per student at tertiary level in Colombia is higher than at other levels of education, as is the case in almost all other OECD countries. The average expenditure per student in Colombia is USD 4 601 per year, which is about USD 900 higher than that of the primary level and USD 900 higher than that of the secondary level. It is among the lowest across OECD countries.
- Public funding dominates non-tertiary education (primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary) in all OECD countries, even after transfers to the private sector. On average across the OECD, private funding accounts for 10% of expenditure at primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary levels, while this share was 21% in Colombia in 2019. In contrast, private expenditure at tertiary level was higher in all OECD countries. In Colombia, the share of private expenditure at tertiary level reached 68%, which was above the OECD average of 31%.

Figure 2. Composition of total public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure (2019)

Primary to tertiary education (including R&D), in per cent



1. Year of reference differs from 2019. Refer to the source table for more details.

2. Primary education includes pre-primary programmes.

Countries are ranked in descending order of total public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure.

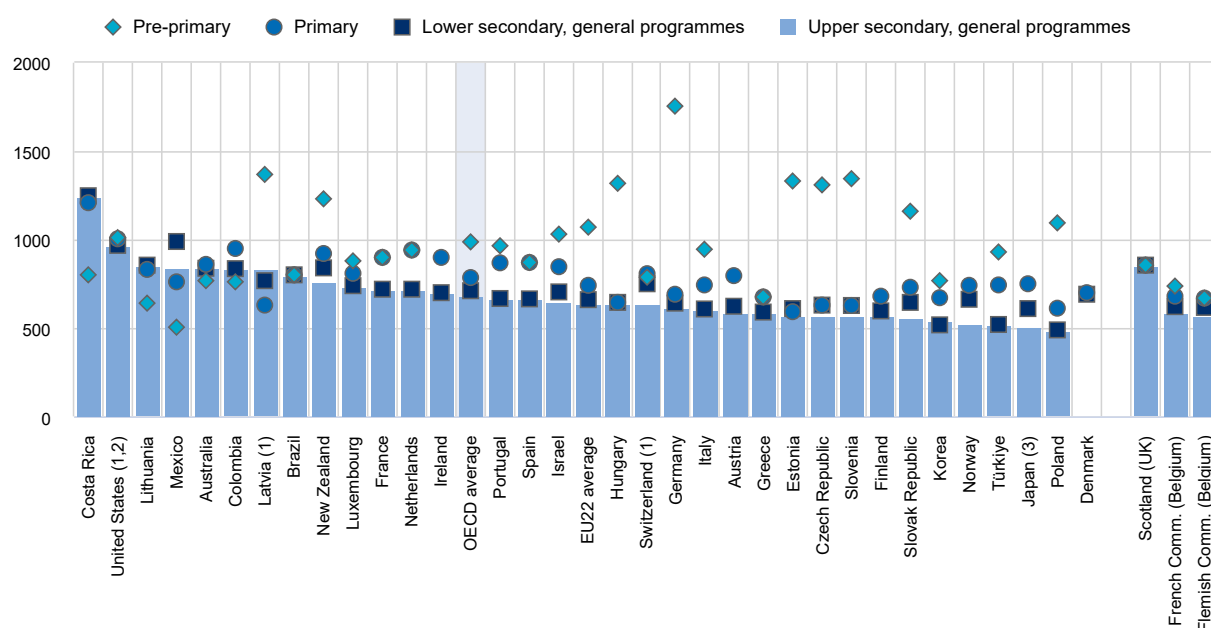
Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2022), Table C4.1. See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-C.pdf).

Teachers, the learning environment and the organisation of schools

- Based on official regulations or agreements, annual teaching hours in Colombia are 760 hours per year at pre-primary level, 950 hours at primary level, 836 hours at lower secondary level (general programmes) and 836 hours at upper secondary level (general programmes) (Figure 3).
- During their working hours, teachers also perform various non-teaching tasks such as lesson planning and preparation, marking students' work and communicating or co-operating with parents or guardians. At the upper secondary level, 51% of teachers' working time is formally dedicated to non-teaching activities in Colombia, compared to an average of 56% across OECD countries.
- Continuing professional development is compulsory to some extent for teachers of general programmes in most countries with data. In Colombia, professional development activities are compulsory if teachers want to advance in the salary scale.

Figure 3. Teaching time of teachers, by level of education (2021)

Net statutory teaching time in hours per year, in public institutions



1. Actual teaching time (in Latvia except for pre-primary level).

2. Reference year differs from 2021. Refer to the source table for details.

3. Average planned teaching time in each school at the beginning of the school year.

Countries and other participants are ranked in descending order of the number of teaching hours per year in general upper secondary education.

Source: OECD (2022), Table D4.1. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-D.pdf).

Focus on tertiary education

- Despite the labour market advantages of a tertiary degree, many tertiary students do not graduate on time or do not graduate at all. In Colombia, 12% of bachelor's students graduate within the theoretical programme duration. Across the OECD, the completion rate within the theoretical programme duration ranges from 12% to 69%. Completion rates three years after the theoretical

programme duration are significantly higher in most countries and the differences between OECD countries somewhat narrower. In Colombia, 52% of bachelor's students have graduated within three years after the end of the theoretical programme duration, compared to 68% on average across the OECD.

- In all OECD countries, tertiary completion rates are higher for women than for men. In Colombia, 57% of women graduated within three years after the end of the theoretical programme duration at bachelor's level, compared to 45% of men. On average across the OECD, there is little systematic difference between the completion rates of public and private institutions, but the figures differ from country to country. In Colombia, 47% of bachelor's students graduate from public institutions within three years after the end of the theoretical programme duration, while the share is 55% for private institutions.
- Over the decades, independent private institutions have been established to meet increased demand for tertiary education. On average across the OECD, 17% of students are enrolled in independent private institutions, but this figure masks large differences between countries. In Colombia, 49% of tertiary students are enrolled in such institutions. Independent private institutions charge higher annual tuition fees on average than public institutions for master's programmes in all OECD countries and other participants with available data, except in Chile and Lithuania.
- Staff at tertiary level tend to start their careers relatively late due to the length of the education they need to qualify. In Colombia, only 5% of academic staff are aged under 30, below the OECD average (8%). In contrast, the share of academic staff aged 50 or over is 34%, which is below the OECD average by 6 percentage points.

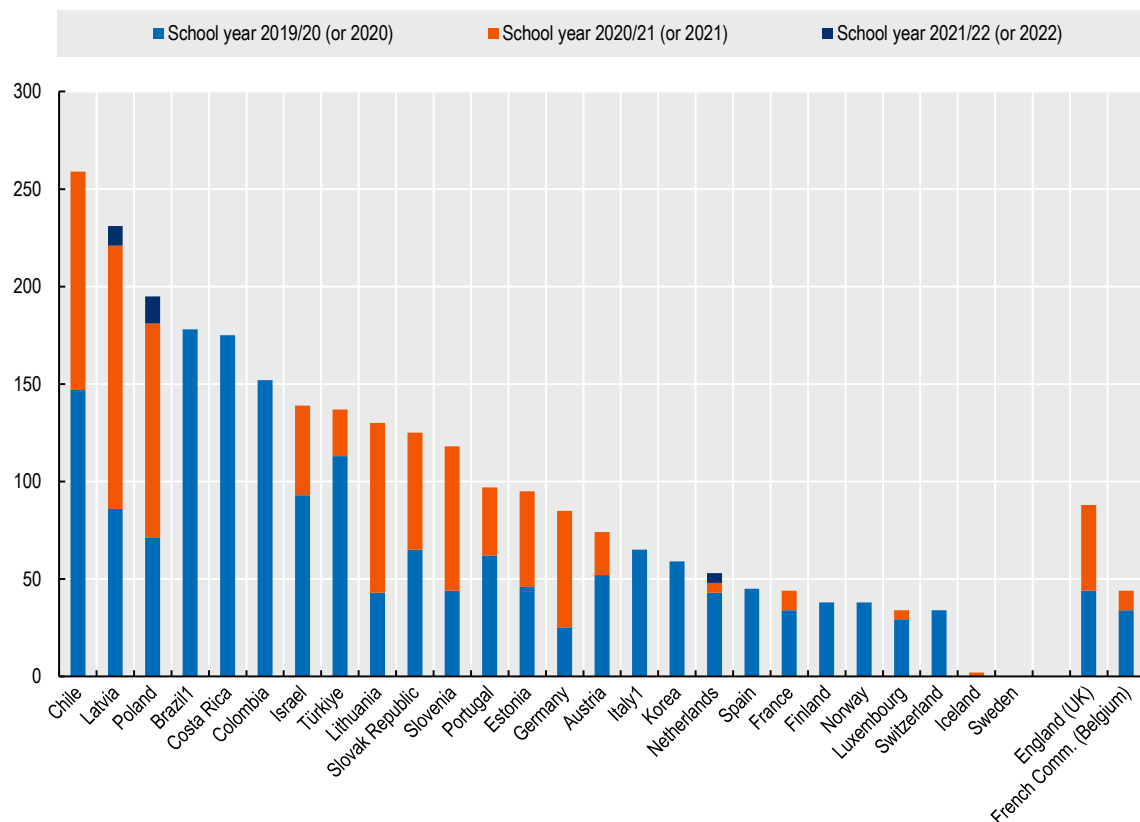
COVID-19: The second year of the pandemic

- The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted traditional schooling in 2020 and the first half of 2021, leading to school closures across all OECD countries. While most shut down their premises entirely in the wake of the pandemic in 2020, by 2021 the situation had improved and returned to normal in most countries in 2022. In Colombia, primary and secondary schools were entirely closed for 152 days in 2020 and stayed open in 2021 and 2022 (Figure 4). Partial closures reached 65 days in 2020 and 125 days in 2021.
- National examinations have also been affected by the pandemic. At general upper secondary level, 18 OECD countries postponed their national examinations during the school year 2019/20, while 10 countries even cancelled them entirely. In 2020/21, national examinations were postponed in 9 countries and cancelled in 6 countries. Colombia rescheduled its national examinations in 2020.
- Most countries conducted assessments of the impact of school closures on learning outcomes at various levels of education and along several dimensions. Colombia has conducted studies to evaluate the effects of the pandemic on the impact on primary, lower secondary, upper secondary general and vocational education. The assessments covered mathematics, reading and science. Like many other countries, Colombia also evaluated dimensions such as the effectiveness of distance-learning strategies during school closures, non-cognitive skills as well as the mental health and well-being of students and teachers.
- In school year 2022, national programmes to support students affected by the pandemic were implemented in Colombia at pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary general and vocational level. At primary to upper secondary education, measures to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic included, community mobilisation campaigns to bring students back to school, cash transfers to increase enrolment among students from disadvantaged families, adjustments to subject curricula, early warning systems to identify students at risk of dropping out, referral systems for students in need of specialised services, psychosocial and mental health support to students, individualised self-learning programmes, tutoring programmes or financial

support for tutoring. The government does not plan to assess the effectiveness of these programmes.

Figure 4. School closures due to COVID-19 (2020, 2021 and the first quarter of 2022)

Number of instruction days of full closure of lower secondary schools excluding school holidays, public holidays and weekends



Note: The data underlying this report were produced through the Survey on Joint National Responses to COVID 19, a collaborative effort conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank (WB), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Data for other levels of education are available at <https://www.oecd.org/education/Results-4th-wave-COVID-Survey-OECD-database.xlsx>.

1. Data for 2021 and 2022 are missing.

Countries and other participants are ranked in descending order of the total number of days lower secondary schools were fully closed during the school years 2019/20 (2020), 2020/21 (2021) and 2021/22 (2022).

Source: OECD/UIS/UNESCO/UNICEF/WB (2022).

- The increased digitalisation of education has been a major consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic in many OECD countries. At primary to upper secondary level, Colombia has responded to the pandemic with an enhanced provision of digital tools at school, distance learning, hybrid learning, in-service digital training to teachers and digital training to students.
- The challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic have created additional costs for education systems. Preliminary budget estimates for 2021 suggest that, compared to 2020, the education budget at pre-primary to upper secondary level in Colombia declined slightly (by between 1% and 5%, in nominal terms), while it remained nearly unchanged at the tertiary level.

- Young adults who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) for prolonged periods are at risk of adverse economic and social outcomes in both the short and the long term. After increasing during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the share of 18-24 year-olds who are NEET in Colombia declined in 2021. The share of NEET among young adults was 28% in 2021, below pre-COVID levels.

References

OECD (2022), *Education at a Glance 2022: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en>.


OECD (2022), "Regional education", *OECD Regional Statistics (database)*, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/213e806c-en>.

More information

For more information on Education at a Glance 2022 and to access the full set of Indicators, see: <https://doi.org/10.1787/3197152b-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/EAG2022_X3.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, 2022). 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 Joint Survey on 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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