Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives

LOOKING AT THE SURVEY OF ADULT SKILLS THROUGH THE LENS OF THE OECD SKILLS STRATEGY

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What is the Survey of Adult Skills?

Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)

Measures key cognitive skills

- Literacy
- Numeracy



Collects background information about participants

Asks participants about skills use at work











How is the Survey carried out?

At least 5 000 adults aged 16 to 65 years interviewed and assessed in their homes in each country

Some countries choose larger samples to obtain more detailed information about groups of interest (e.g. younger cohorts)

- National authorities are responsible for:
 - sampling
 - translating survey instruments and questionnaires
 - collecting and processing data

Respondents could answer questions *via* computer or opt for a pencil-and-paper version









Which countries are participating?

Round 1 countries (2008-13)			
Australia	Finland	Norway	
Austria	France	Poland	
Belgium	Germany	Russian Federation	
Canada	Ireland	Slovak Republic	
Cyprus*	Italy	Spain	
Czech Republic	Japan	Sweden	
Denmark	Korea	United Kingdom	
Estonia	Netherlands	United States	

Round 2 countries (2012-16)			
Chile	Israel	Singapore	
Greece	Lithuania	Slovenia	
Indonesia	New Zealand	Turkey	

*see notes on final slide

Survey of Adult Skills Round 1 Participating countries

166 000 adults across 24 countries/economies representing 724 million

(**see notes A and B in the Reader's Guide).

2013

Adults at each literacy proficiency level (millions)



Adults at each numeracy proficiency level (millions)





Literacy proficiency



(**see notes on final slide).

Numeracy proficiency



(*see notes on final slide).

Proficiency in problem solving in technology-rich environments



OECD Skills Strategy (2012)



Skills transform lives and drive economies

- What people know and what they can do has a major impact on their life chances
- Building the right skills can help countries improve economic prosperity and social cohesion by:
 - Contributing to social outcomes such as health, civic and social engagement
 - Supporting improvement in productivity and growth
 - Supporting high levels of employment in good quality jobs



OECD Skills Strategy pillars





OECD Skills Strategy pillars

Developing relevant skills

- Encouraging and enabling people to learn throughout life
- ✓ Fostering international mobility of skilled people to fill skills gaps
- Promoting cross-border skills policies





Literacy proficiency: score differences by educational attainment



Qualifications don't always equal skills



Distribution of literacy scores, by educational attainment

100 125 150 175 200 225 250 275 300 325 350 375 400 Score



14

Distribution of literacy scores 16-29 year olds with tertiary (type A) attainment

− 25th percentile
■ Mean ▲ 75th percentile



15

All adult education and training by literacy proficiency



Job-related adult education and training by literacy proficiency



Mean score on literacy by age group



Proficiency in problem solving in technology-rich environments



Literacy proficiency: score differences between native- and foreign-born adults



Likelihood of lower literacy proficiency among foreign-born and foreign-language adults



■ Native-born/native language - Neither parent attained upper secondary

- Foreign-born/foreign language At least one parent with upper secondary or higher
- Foreign-born/foreign language Neither parent attained upper secondary

Literacy proficiency by immigration background



Literacy and parents' education level for young adults (16-24 year olds)



Literacy and parents' education level for young adults (16-24 year olds)



OECD Skills Strategy pillars





Literacy proficiency and labour market status

Finland





Literacy proficiency and labour market status

Korea





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Share of men with at least (16- 65 year olds) literacy level 3, inside and outside the labour force



the share of men outside the labour force who have at least level 3 literacy.

Share of women with at least (16-65 year olds) literacy level 3, inside and outside the labour force

in labour force
 outside labour force



and the share of women outside the labour force who have at least level 3 literacy.

Effect of education and literacy on labour market participation





Effect of education and literacy on likelihood of being employed



OECD Skills Strategy pillars





Substantial restructuring or organisational change

Share of workers who reported substantial restructuring or reorganisation in their current workplace during previous three years that affected their work Per cent



Introduction of new processes or technologies

Share of workers who reported introduction of new processes or technologies in their current workplace during previous three years that affected their work



Workers in high-skilled and unskilled jobs



Average use of information -processing skills at work





Average use of generic skills at work



Percentage of workers using these skills every day





Use of information-processing skills at work, by establishment size

(all countries)





Incidence of over- and under-qualification



Over- and under-skilled workers



less than required by their jobs

Literacy scores by contract type and age group

Mean literacy scores for Korea and OECD average





Access to training by type of contract and age group

Proportion of people in training: Korea and OECD average





OECD Skills Strategy pillars





Skills transform lives and drive economies

- Skills have a major impact on each individual's life chances
- Low-skilled individuals are increasingly likely to be left behind
- Countries with lower levels of skills risk losing in competitiveness as the world economy becomes more dependent on skills
- Inequality in skills is associated with inequality in income
- Those with lower skills proficiency also tend to report poorer health, lower civic engagement and less trust











Developing skills

- > The level and distribution of skills differs markedly across countries
- Yet most of the variation in skills proficiency is observed within, not between, countries
- Social background has a strong impact on skills in some countries: others combine above-average performance with high equity
- Foreign-language immigrants with low levels of education tend to have low skills proficiency: successful integration is not simply a matter of time
- Some countries have made significant progress in improving skills proficiency: in other countries, the talent pool is shrinking



Developing skills

- Much of learning takes place outside formal education
- Proficiency levels are closely related to age
- There is a strong positive relationship between participation in adult education and skills proficiency
- But those whose skills are already weak are less likely to improve their skills through adult education and training.
- Using skills, particularly outside of work, is closely related to proficiency



Pointers for policy

- Develop links between the world of learning and the world of work
- Provide training for workers
- Ensure that the training is relevant
- Allow workers to adapt their learning to their lives



- Identify those most at risk of poor skills proficiency
- Show how adults can benefit from better skills
- Provide easy-to-find information about adult education activities
- Recognise and certify skills proficiency







Activating the supply of skills

- Unused skills can become obsolete or atrophy
- Only around one in two adults who have low literacy proficiency is employed
- Some countries make greater economic use of their highly skilled talent pool than others
- Many adults with low skills proficiency are outside the workforce
- Earnings increase with proficiency, but to very different degrees across countries



Pointers for policy

Provide high-quality early childhood education and care at reasonable cost



- Encourage employers to hire those who temporarily withdrew from the labour force
- Encourage older workers to remain in the labour market
- Create flexible working arrangements to accommodate workers with care obligations and disabilities
- Tax policies should encourage workers to make their skills available to the labour market
- Offer economic rewards for greater proficiency
- Continue to promote educational attainment





Putting skills to more effective use

- Skills will only translate into better economic and social outcomes if they are used effectively
- Using information-processing skills at work is closely linked to labour productivity
- Some skills mismatch is inevitable and even positive for the economy
- More could be done to address the match between demand for and supply of skills
- Under-skilling, under-use of skills and unemployment can also reflect lack of information and transparency
- Skills mismatches may be the result of geographical constraints
- Linking skills with broader economic-development strategies can help countries to move towards greater skills-driven prosperity



Pointers for policy

- Collect timely information about demand for and supply of skills
- Create flexible labour market arrangements
- Provide quality career guidance
- Ensure that qualifications are coherent and easy to interpret











Using the OECD Skills Strategy to tackle country-specific challenges



Building effective skills systems at national and local levels

Facilitating better policy development and effective implementation

skills.oecd.org/skillsoutlook.htm

skills.oecd

BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

BUILDING THE RIGHT SKILLS AND TURNING THEM INTO BETTER JOBS AND BETTER LIVES



OECD Skills Outlook 2013

First Results from the Survey of Adult Skills



Look inside View this book on the OECD iLibrary

This first OECD Skills Outlook presents the initial results of the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), which evaluates the skills of adults in 24 countries. It provides insights into the availability of some of the key skills and how they are used at work and at home. A major component is the direct assessment of key information-processing skills: literacy, numeracy and problem solving in the context of technology-rich environments.

- > Download this book for free (pdf, 7MB) | Buy a printed copy
- > Download the key findings: Skilled for Life? Key Findings from the Survey of Adult Skills | FR | GER
- > Read a summary in your language

See our multimedia page for videos, blogs, presentations and the Twitter feed relevant to the release of the OECD Skills Outlook 2013

Did you know?

Skill levels often differ markedly from what formal education gualifications suggest.





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BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES BUILDING THE RIGHT SKILLS AND TURNING THEM INTO BETTER JOBS AND BETTER LIVES





Thank you!

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Notes regarding Cyprus

Note by Turkey: The information in this document with reference to "Cyprus" relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Turkey recognises the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of the United Nations, Turkey shall preserve its position concerning the "Cyprus issue".

Note by all the European Union Member States of the OECD and the European Union: The Republic of Cyprus is recognised by all members of the United Nations with the exception of Turkey. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

