

Education at a Glance 2011

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COUNTRY NOTE – ITALY

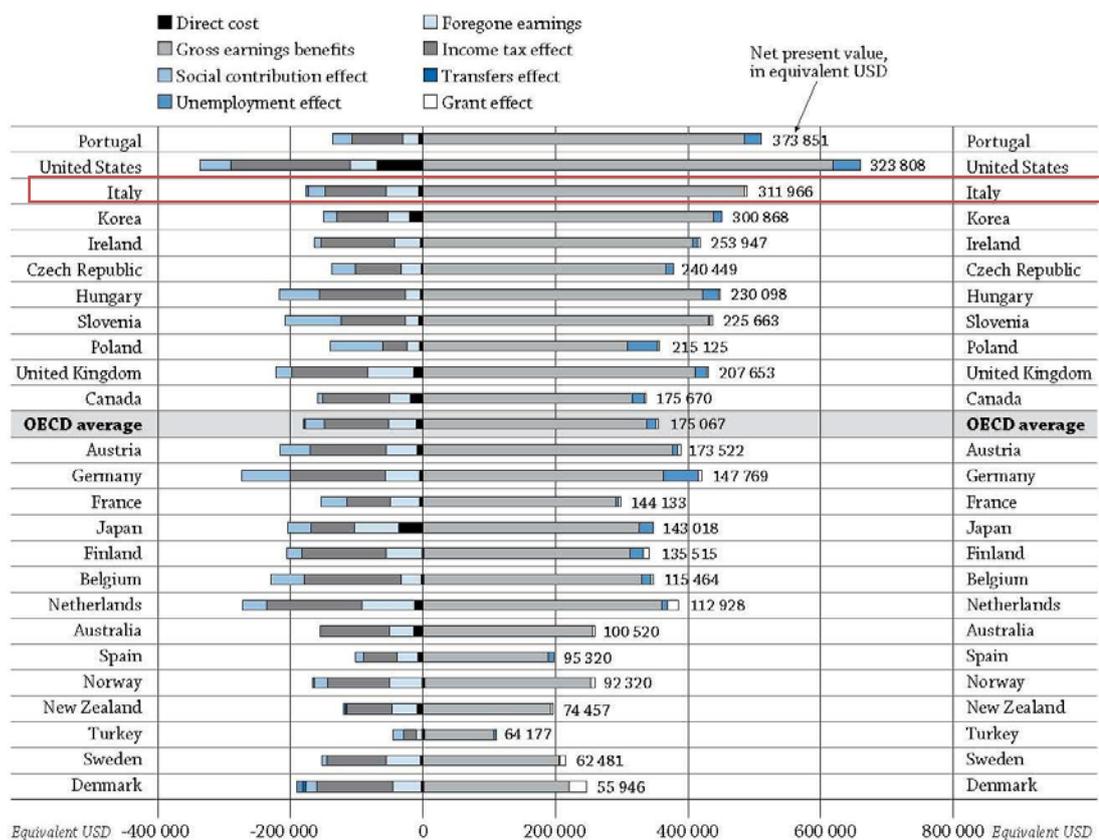
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Men with a tertiary education enjoy substantial earnings premiums – particularly if they also have work experience.

- Tertiary-educated 55-64 year-olds generally earn considerably more than similarly educated 25-64 year-olds, especially in Italy, where there is a 46 percentage-point difference between the two, as compared to the OECD average difference of 13 percentage points (Table A8.1).
- Over their lifetimes, Italian men with a tertiary education can earn more than USD 300 000 more than men without that level of education. The average earnings premium for tertiary-educated men in OECD countries is USD 175 000 (Table A9.3 and chart below).
- In Italy, 79% of tertiary-educated adults are employed, as compared with the OECD average of 84% (and 74% in Turkey, the lowest level among OECD countries). Employment rates are more than 28 percentage points higher for those with a tertiary education than for those who have not completed an upper secondary education. The average difference among OECD countries is 27 percentage points (Table A7.3a).

Chart A9.3. Components of the private net present value for a man obtaining tertiary education, ISCED 5/6 (2007 or latest available year)



Notes: Australia, Belgium and Turkey refer to 2005; Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and the United Kingdom refer to 2006. All other countries refer to 2007.

Cashflows are discounted at a 3% interest rate.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the net present value.

Source: OECD, Table A9.3. See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eag2011).

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- Employers pay an additional premium not only for better-educated workers but also for labour-market experience. A comparison between labour costs for 25-34 year-old men who recently graduated from tertiary education and those for 45-54 year-old men with a tertiary degree and 20-30 years of experience in the labour market indicates that costs vary substantially among countries. On average across the OECD area, an employer can expect to pay an additional USD 29 000 (approximately 50% more) per year for an experienced tertiary graduate than for a recent graduate. In Italy and Portugal, employers pay 120% or more for an experienced tertiary worker, while in Estonia, new graduates are paid more than their experienced peers (Tables A10.2 and A10.4).
- Workers in Italy invest less than half as much time in non-formal education during their working lives as the OECD average. In Italy, this amounts to 353 hours of non-formal education between the ages of 25 and 64, compared with the OECD average of 988 hours (Table C5.1a).
- In Brazil and Italy, women who have obtained a tertiary degree earn 65% or less of what tertiary-educated men earn (the OECD average is 72%) (Table A8.3a).

In Italy, the proportion of GDP devoted to education is one of the smallest among OECD countries.

- Italy spent 4.8% of its GDP on education in 2008, 1.3 percentage points lower than the OECD total of 6.1% (ranks 29 of 34) (Table B2.1). In 2008, 8.6% of Italy's total expenditure on educational institutions came from private sources, well below the OECD average of 16.5% (Table B3.1).

Expenditure per student at upper secondary and tertiary levels has increased slightly since 2000.

- Between 2000 and 2008, expenditure per primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary student by educational institutions increased by only 6% in Italy (the OECD average is 34%), the 2nd smallest increase among the 30 countries with available data (Table B1.5).
- Expenditure per student at the tertiary level of education increased by 8 percentage points, compared with the OECD average of 14 percentage points (Table B1.5).
- Unlike elsewhere in the OECD area, expenditure per student by educational institutions does not rise substantially with the level of education: in Italy, expenditure increases from USD 8 200 at the pre-primary level to USD 9 600 at the tertiary level compared to the OECD average increase of from USD 6 200 at the pre-primary level to USD 13 700 at tertiary level.
- On average across OECD countries, salary cost per student at the upper secondary level is USD 3 450 compared to USD 2 998 in Italy (Table B7.3).

While more young people than ever before have a secondary-school diploma, the proportion of young Italians with this level of education is well below the OECD average.

- Some 70.3% of 25-34 year-olds in Italy attain an upper secondary education, well below the OECD average of 81.5% for that age cohort (ranks 29 of 35). Nevertheless, Italy is one of seven countries where the number of 25-34 year-olds who have an upper secondary or higher education is at least 30 percentage points greater than the number of 55-64 year-olds with similar levels of education. This indicates that access to upper secondary education has expanded considerably over the past 30 years (Table A1.2a).
- Italy has one of the lowest tertiary attainment rates among OECD countries: 20.2% of 25-34 year-olds in Italy attain this level of education compared to the OECD average of 37.1% for the same age cohort (ranks 34 of 37) (Table A1.3a).
- Graduation rates for both upper secondary and tertiary education (longer, largely theory-based) is below the OECD average (80.8% compared with 82.2% for upper secondary education, and 32.6% compared with 38.6% for tertiary education) (Tables A2.1 and A3.1).

Italian students enjoy relatively small classes and more instruction time...

- On average in OECD countries, there are 16 students for every teacher in primary schools. The student-teacher ratio ranges from 24 students or more per teacher in Brazil and Mexico, to fewer than 11 in Hungary, Italy, Norway and Poland (Table D2.2).
- While the average instruction time for students between the ages of 7 and 14 in OECD countries is 6 732 hours, formal teaching-time requirements range from 4 715 hours in Poland to 8 316 hours in Italy (Table D1.1).
- Due to heavy instruction time and less teaching time (compared to the OECD average), the salary cost per student is above the OECD average at the primary and lower secondary levels of education. At the upper secondary level, the salary cost per student is below the OECD average because of comparatively lower teachers' salaries.

		Italy	OECD average
Instruction time		8 316 hours	6 732 hours
Ratio of student to teaching staff	Primary	10.7	16.0
	Secondary	11.0	13.5
	Tertiary	18.3	14.9
Teaching time per year, primary, in hours		757	779
Teaching time per year, upper secondary (in hours)		619	656

...but teachers earn less than other professionals with a tertiary education, and they have a relatively long hike to the top of their salary scale.

- Lower secondary-school teachers reach the top of the salary scale after 24 years of service, on average among OECD countries, but in Italy, they do so only after 35 years of service (Table D3.1).
- Between 2000 and 2009, teachers' salaries rose by an average of 7%, in real terms, in OECD countries but decreased slightly (-1%) in Italy (Table D3.3).
- Relative salaries for primary, lower secondary and upper secondary teachers are low in Italy, where teachers earn less than the average salary of other workers with a tertiary education. Teachers' salaries are around 40% lower than the salaries of comparably educated workers (Tables D3.2).

Italy has developed multiple mechanisms to ensure of performance and market accountability...

- Italy has a long history of using national examinations at the lower and upper secondary levels. They are compulsory for all schools, both public and private, and no student is exempt from taking them (Tables D5.1a,b,c).
- National assessments, used to provide formative feedback to improve instruction, were implemented only recently in Italy (in 2008 at the primary and lower secondary levels). The results from national assessments are directly shared with school administrators and education authorities, but not with teachers, parents, students or the media. Among

countries with national assessments, only Finland handles its assessments in this way (D5.2a,b,c).

- Italian families have the right to choose among public schools, as funding follows students when they leave for another school, even though these adjustments are not made directly. Independent private schools also compete for students, and tuition tax credits are available to help families offset the costs of private schooling (Table D5.5).

...but has fewer mechanisms to ensure regulatory accountability than most countries.

- Italy does not require school inspections or school self-evaluations. Only Greece, Luxembourg and Mexico, among the 33 countries with available data, share this profile. In Italy, schools are expected to submit compliance-oriented reports to higher levels of authority. This mechanism ensures that schools comply with laws and regulations. However, unlike school inspections and self-evaluations, it does not focus on the quality of education nor does it identify the strengths and weaknesses of each school.