

## Education at a Glance 2015. Education International analysis.

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### Introduction

1. Although Education at a Glance contains no new OECD research it represents a powerful analysis of existing data. EAG consists of quantitative data gathered from the educational jurisdictions in OECD through OECD's Indicators of Educational Systems (INES) and qualitative data from its Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) and Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). Both qualitative and quantitative data are analysed and reported on in a range of themes within this annual survey.

#### **EI analysis.**

2. There are a number of conclusions in EAG 2015 which are new, or which have been set out in a sharper form. The EAG executive summary on pages 27-28 contain a useful summary of its findings.

*OECD: ...there are more opportunities in the labour market-and higher earnings- for adults with a master's degree than those with only a bachelor's degree.*

This is the first time that OECD has acknowledged that Higher Education qualifications at bachelor degree level do not inevitably lead to high levels of employment and earnings. Rather it says bachelor's degrees are a stepping stone to this position. Such a statement should give weight to affiliates' arguments against high levels of tuition fees and the removal of undergraduate support.

3. *OECD :...women are still under-represented in certain fields of education, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).*

This finding should eradicate any complacency that young women have achieved actual equality in the educational opportunities available to them. There is still a long way to go in gender parity in all subjects.

4. *The education sector felt a delayed reaction to the global economic crisis of 2008...between 2010-2012 public expenditure on educational institutions fell in more than one in three countries.*

This is new information from the OECD. Previously it has described education spending as being relatively protected. The OECD's report

should give new impetus to campaigns to protect and enhance public spending on education.

5. *OECD: ...In the years following the crisis, even though some countries had already begun a slow recovery, teachers' salaries were frozen or cut...these trends did nothing to narrow the pay gap between teachers and other similarly educated workers...these uncompetitive salaries will make it much harder to attract the best candidates to the teaching profession.*

OECD's qualitative analysis from PISA and TALIS make it clear that there is high correlation between highly performing education systems and high levels of teachers' pay/compensation. Basically the OECD is ringing alarm bells that declining teachers' pay/compensation is going to undermine educational quality. Teachers' pay/compensation is not similar in many OECD countries with other comparable professions. Potential teachers are going elsewhere. It represents a very strong argument for affiliates to use in their teachers' pay/compensation campaigns.

6. *OECD:...Cuts in funding could also threaten professional development activities for teachers.*

TALIS makes it very clear how vital quality professional development is to high quality teaching. The default position for many governments is cut teachers' professional development funding as a no cost default option. The OECD point to the evidence that, in fact, this position is immensely damaging to educational quality.

7. *OECD:...One in five 20-24 year olds is neither employed nor in education or training.*

This statistic shows shockingly high levels of young people unemployed and without training. It shows how young people are suffering the worst effects of austerity. It also masks the devastating evidence that in many countries this percentage is much higher. It should be a wake-up call for all countries to boost skills education and provide additional support to industry to employ more young people.

8. *OECD:...Larger classes are correlated with less time spent on teaching and learning and more time spent on keeping order in the classroom.*

This represents a major shift in position for the OECD. Previously OECD had claimed that resources spent on attempts to reduce class size were a waste of time and that those resources would be better spent on

teachers' salaries. EI has consistently said that this was a false counter position. Indeed a recent analysis of TALIS data commissioned by EI from Linda Darling Hammond confirmed that large class sizes are correlated with teacher shortages. Now the OECD itself points to major detrimental effects arising from large classes. Affiliates will welcome this evidence in their campaigns to reduce class sizes.

9. *OECD:...The teaching force across OECD countries is ageing..*

Unless OECD countries reinvest in public education provision then in the long term there will be a major decline in the quality of their education systems. An ageing teacher workforce is an indicator of the poisonous effects of underinvestment in education combined with the evidence that education is not attractive to many highly qualified and committed young people. Again this is valuable background evidence to affiliates in their campaigns to enhance education funding.

**Additional note.**

10. In many countries larger classes leave more time for professional activities, not so in UK.