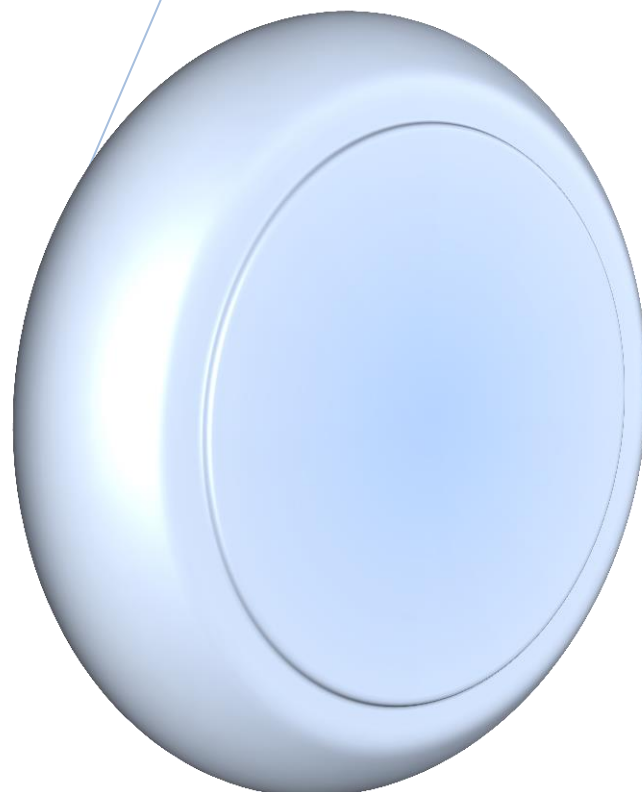


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of the European Union



## Country report of Croatia

Background materials for the partnership

An overview of the education system of the learning  
country from the perspective of inclusion and equity

9/1/2019



## Country Report of Croatia

Country reports in our project are to serve as background materials for the partnership so partners can better understand the education system of the learning countries from the perspective of ***inclusion*** and ***equity***.

Country reports - to be drafted for, and presented at the second partner meeting in Varazdin, and finalised right afterwards to be published on the project website - have various aims. It is important to make it clear that they are not research papers. They can, but do not necessarily refer to research with endnotes or footnotes. What we need to become aware of are our own learning needs, and also, we intend to familiarize other partners with policy level strategies and measures worth concentrating on in the STAIRS project.

The reports are to be comprised of six chapters, and we strongly recommend that each partner follow some basic rules when compiling each chapter:

- Introduce key data
- Focus on key issues regarding equity and inclusive education
- Focus on proven good practices on the policy level; briefly introduce recommended interventions and measures of your country
- Raise your own questions and identify learning needs *from a national perspective*

Main chapters:

1 Education in the partner country

2 National context and current research: key issues regarding social inclusion

3 Terminology: integration, inclusion, social inclusion, special needs, equity vs. equality, etc.

4 Identifying key local stakeholders: institutions and professionals

5 Critical analysis of national indicators regarding social inclusions

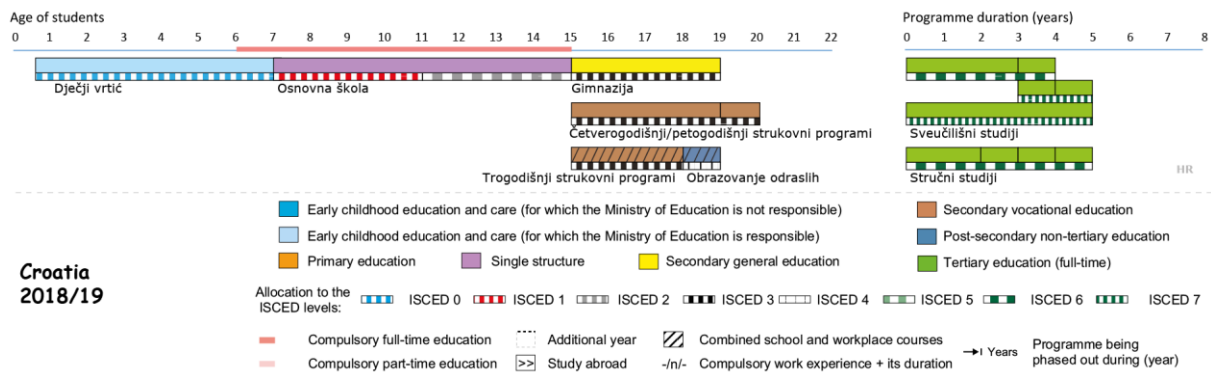
6 Recommendations: local focus

Appendix – Statistics

# Education System in Croatia

## 1 Education in Croatia

### Structure of the National Education System



Source: Eurydice 2018/19

[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/croatia\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/croatia_en)

Level of education	Type of institution, main features, key data	Issues regarding the inclusiveness of the education system	Relevant measures in the past 10 years (successful or failed)
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### 1.1 Early childhood education and care (ECEC) (ISCED 0)

#### ECEC 1 - Creche

Early Childhood Education and Care in Croatia is funded and managed by local authorities. Central educational authorities provide legislative guidance, accreditation and monitoring of the educational programs.

Early Childhood and Education and Care programs which satisfy public needs are preschool programs, programs for national minority children, programs for children with development difficulties and programs for gifted children. These programs are normally included in 252 kindergartens in Republic of Croatia where preschool education is not obligatory but can be initiated at the age of 6 month and can last until the age of 6 or 7 years, until beginning of the primary school education.



Children with development difficulties have priority with enrollment into the preschool institutions which is guaranteed by the decision of the local or state authority. Programs for children with development difficulties can be stated as the public need and they have priority with financing.

Early Childhood Education for children with development difficulties is conducted in regular kindergartens or special groups following special or adjusted program, but also in special institutions depending on the type and degree of development difficulties in a child.

Number of children with development difficulties in educational groups with special program in kindergartens and special institutions is established depending on the age of a child or his or hers development issue. Children with the same type of development difficulties are divided into groups as following: from year one to 2 maximum 3 children with development difficulties are involved into the regular group; from 2 to 4 years of age maximum 5 children can be involved; from 3 to 7 years maximum 7 children are involved. Children with autism, children with different age and children with different type of difficulties are divided as following: from age one to 2 maximum 2 children can be involved into the regular group; from age of 2 to 5 maximum 3 children; from 3 to 7 years also 3 children can be integrated into the regular group; and from age 6 to 7 maximum 4 children are integrated into the regular group in kindergarten.

Early Childhood Education and Care is regulated by the Law of Early Childhood Education and Care (Official Gazette, 97), Decree on elements specific for children with development difficulties (Official Gazette 47/87), Regulation for special terms and measurements for achieving preschool educational program (Official Gazette, 1997, article 6 and 7), Regulation on dividing state budget and measurements of co-financing preschool educational program (Official Gazette, 1997, article 2, 3 and 8), State pedagogical standard for preschool education (2008)

### Specific issues on the inclusiveness on this level

Child with development difficulties can achieve social interaction and can socialize with children its age, making an example within it coeval on how to develop new skills or behavior and it is also included into the activities in the area that is underdeveloped and also suited for the child its age. All of this is developing its level of self-respect and self-esteem which is also allowing the child to create a positive image about it-self through different activities and social relations in kindergarten. For other children, being surrounded with children that have development difficulties, means learning new social skills and also learning new ways to interact with children with different abilities. It also helps them develop a sentiment of empathy and tolerance but also gives them a chance to learn about differences and to develop more self-esteem by helping others.

### Relevant measures in the past 10 years (successful or failed)

- Introducing assistants in kindergartens – successful (because local authorities found the solution for single cases financing; but it is time limited solution, and not systematically developed approach)



- Including children with development difficulties into regular kindergarten programs – successful (because the law guaranty their inclusion in kindergartens; but in the practice it is not always possible to implement it, because of missing resources)
- Technical adjustment of kindergartens for children with development difficulties - partially successful (because of different possibilities to use EU funds for these purposes).

## **ECEC 2 - Pre-school programs (ISCED 0)**

Type of institution, main features, key data

In school year prior to the enrolling into primary school, children are obliged to attend the pre-school program, provided by kindergartens and primary schools.

Specific issues on the inclusiveness on this level

Children with development difficulties are making social interactions and being prepared for first grade in Primary school, which means they are developing skills needed for Primary education. It has been improved in the past 5 years because of opened possibilities to finance it through EU programs.

Relevant measures in the past 10 years (successful or failed)

- Introducing assistants – successful - especially in the last 5 years when the number of assistants has increased significantly (cca 90%) because of the possibility to finance it through EU funds (the problem is to ensure sustainability).
- Program for preschool education has been adjusted to children with development difficulties – successful (because relevant ministries developed the standards; but the financing continued education for experts who work with children is the problem).

## **1.2 Primary and secondary education (ISCED 1, 2, 3)**

General education (ISCED 1)

Type of institution, main features, key data

Primary and lower secondary education is organized as a single structure system, starting at the age of 7 and consisting of eight years of compulsory schooling. Primary and lower secondary education comes from Primary school education and it is obligatory for all children



in Republic of Croatia. Primary school education is obligatory for all children between the age of 5 to 15 and it is free of charge. For children with severe developmental difficulties Primary education is free until 21 years of age.

Education of children with development difficulties in Primary education is based according to established forms which are making sure that children have complete or partial educational integration. School institutions, in which forms of integration are made, are determined by school network plan and programs, while special measurements of space and equipment for education of children with development difficulties are determined by States pedagogical standard for Primary education. Regular program with individual access and adjusted program is included in every school.

#### Specific issues on the inclusiveness on this level

- School programs for children with development difficulties
- Equipping schools for children with development difficulties
- Educated and motivated teacher for working with children with development difficulties
- Accepting children with difficulties in school's environment
- Actively include parents in school work
- Financing education for children with development difficulties
- Including assistants in educational process
- Working with gifted children
- Working with parents

#### Relevant measures in the past 10 years (successful or failed)

- Monitoring and checking criteria of alignment schools into School network - partial success (because this part of education is obligatory for all children, but relevant institutions have very limited options to put it in)
- Connecting and coordinating supervising institutions (MZOS-ASOO-founder) – failed (there is no resources of any kind which could assure the implementation)
- Founders support schools – success (because local authorities found the solution for financing different projects aimed to children with difficulties through EU funds; but it is time limited solution)
- Investing in developing school capacity - partial success (lack of coordination between different institutions involved into the process)
- Involving parents and also community into the work of Primary schools – success (because they are most interested to help children in this age; but they also need lot of practical education).

#### Lower secondary education (ISCED 2)

Type of institution, main features, key data



Lower secondary education includes children between the ages of 15 to 18. Educating children with development difficulties is basically achieved according with established forms which assure their complete or partial educational integration. School institution, in which forms of integration are achieved, are determined by school network plan and programs while special measurements of space and equipment for educating children with development difficulties are based on States pedagogical standard for Primary education. Each school in Republic of Croatia has a regular program with individual access and adjusted program with intention of helping institutions specialized in educating children with development difficulties. Such institutions are Support centers which with his primer function, educating children and rehabilitation, provides rehabilitation and professional and methodological support for regular or special institutions which help children and provides services for children in need in their community. Support centers can be regular or specialized in working with children with certain development difficulty but also are involved in:

1. Organizing professional development for educational workers in purpose of informing them about development particularities and functioning of a child with development difficulties;
2. Participate in educating coworkers in educational work;
3. Organizing professional support and education for the managers of programs in educational work;
4. Providing organizational support to regular or specialized institution;
5. Providing support to workers in educational system when needed,
6. Providing rehabilitation support to children integrated in regular institutions;
7. Providing support and education for parents;
8. Developing new and innovative methodologies and techniques on how to pass on their knowledge to their pupils;
9. Cooperating with scientific and University community. The network of Support centers is determined by Ministry of Science and Education.

#### Specific issues on the inclusiveness on this level

- School programs for children with development difficulties
- Equipping schools (technical equipment) for children with development difficulties
- Educated and motivated teacher for working with children with development difficulties
- Accepting children with difficulties in school's environment
- Actively include parents in school work
- Financing education for children with development difficulties
- Constantly including assistants in educational process
- Working with gifted children.



## Relevant measures in the past 10 years (successful or failed)

- Monitoring and checking criteria of alignment schools into School network – partially successful (because it is regulated by law and special rulebooks, but the relevant institutions have very limited options to implement them into the practice)
- Connecting and coordinating supervising institutions (MZOS-ASOO-founder) - failed
- Founders support schools - partially successful (because local authorities found the solution for financing different projects aimed to children with difficulties through EU funds; but it is time limited solution)
- Investing in developing school human capacity – partially successful (because relevant ministries and agencies organize some educations for teachers; but there is no long term systematic solutions)
- Involving parents and also community into the work of schools – successful (but there are huge differences in social, educational status and living circumstances between the parents which are reflected to their involvement; the results in the cities are much better).

## Upper secondary education (gymnasium, Lyceum) (ISCED 3)

### Type of institution, main features, key data

High school education is not obligatory but almost every pupil continues his educational journey. Gymnasiums prepare their students for University education.

Education of a pupil with development difficulties in high school is achieved by established forms which assure their complete or partial educational integration. School institutions, in which integration forms are achieved, have been determinate according to school network plans and programs, while special measurements of space and equipment for education of children with development difficulties are based on States pedagogical standard for Secondary education. Complete educational integration is achieved by including students with minor development difficulties into regular high school class but also implementing regular or adjusted educational programs using individualized procedure and special help of defectolog with appropriate specialization or even with special professional help after school. Extra support is provided by Support centers which we have mentioned above.

### Specific issues on the inclusiveness on this level

- Cooperation between Primary Schools and Secondary Schools
- Lack of motivation by teachers who work with students with developmental difficulties
- Equipping educational institutions for receiving students with development difficulties
- Educational programs for working with students with development difficulties
- Assistants in classes
- Development of work books, text books, hand books and other literature and teaching aids in classes for students with development difficulties
- Working with gifted students



- Pedagogical services in schools

#### Relevant measures in the past 10 years (successful or failed)

- Including assistants in educational process - successful (because local authorities found the solution for financing different projects aimed to children with difficulties through EU funds; but it is time limited solution)
- Adjusting work books, hand books, manuals, teaching aids and other literature for students with development difficulties - partially successful (depending of teachers' engagement; but there is no systematical approach)
- Working with gifted students – failed (because local authorities only in single cases organized centers of excellence)
- Adjusting educational programs - successful (because it is regulated by law and special rulebooks)
- Educational institutions have been equipped for receiving and working with students with development difficulties - partially successful (because local authorities found the solution for financing different projects aimed to children with difficulties through EU funds; but it is time limited solution)
- Educating and motivating teachers for working with students with development difficulties - successful (but depending of teachers' engagement and sensibility).

#### Vocational education 1

##### Type of institution, main features, key data

Highschool education is not obligatory, but almost every pupil, after they have finished Primary School, decides to continue his education. Almost 70% of all pupils in Primary Schools in Republic of Croatia continue their education in one of the programs High Schools offers. In Republic of Croatia there are three-year, four-year or even five-year program for Technical High Schools, but also programs for assistance occupations like assistant chef, waiter assistant or baker assistant. A large role in choosing technical occupation have Centers for professional orientation where together with an adviser future high schools' student can choose the best occupation for them. Students with development difficulties can choose large number of occupations and qualifications adjusted to achieve their maximum potential. There are occupations which are regulated and which are due to some specific healthy reasons, unavailable for students with development difficulties, for example medical technician for general care or deck cadet. Finishing four-year or five-year high school education gives a student a choice between continuing with the education at University or entering the labor market. Finishing three-year program or program for assistance occupation automatically directs a student towards technical occupation and the labor market.



## Specific issues on the inclusiveness on this level

- Cooperation between Primary Schools and Secondary Schools
- Lack of motivation by teachers working with students with development difficulties
- Equipping of educational institutions for receiving students with development difficulties
- Educational programs for working with students with development difficulties
- Assistants in classes
- Development of work books, text books, hand books and other literature and teaching aids in classes for students with development difficulties
- Working with gifted students
- Pedagogical services in schools
- Practical education for students with development difficulties
- Cooperation between schools and advisors for professional orientation in choosing the right occupation for students with development difficulties
- Educating and including students with development difficulties into the market labor.

## Relevant measures in the past 10 years (successful or failed)

- Including assistants in educational process - successful (because local authorities found the solution for financing different projects aimed to children with difficulties through EU funds; but it is time limited solution)
- Adjusting work books, hand books, manuals, teaching aids and other literature for students with development difficulties - partially successful (depending of teachers' engagement; but there is no systematical approach)
- Working with gifted students – in progress (because the local authorities in past 5 years start to organized centers of excellence which give the opportunity to gifted students for progress)
- Adjusting educational programs - successful (because it is regulated by law and special rulebooks)
- Educational institutions are equipped for receiving and working with students with development difficulties - partially successful (local authorities found the solution for financing different projects aimed to children with difficulties through EU funds; but it is time limited solution)
- Educating and motivating teachers for working with students with development difficulties - successful (because teachers are aware of problems and relevant institution offer educations for this kind of work).
- Helping students with development difficulties to choose the right occupation (professional orientation) - failed (uncoordinated, unevenly and non-bounded criteria of different institutions who has to participate in this process).



## 1.3 Upper secondary non tertiary education

Type of institution, main features, key data

Republic of Croatia has a five-year educational program only for gaining qualification for general care nurses or technicians.

Because this qualification is specific it is not available for students with development difficulties.

## 2 National context and current research: key issues regarding social inclusion

Republic of Croatia is a creator and signatory State of numbers of documents, laws and rule books which are applied on educating children with development difficulties on all levels of educational system (nursery, kindergarten, preschool, Primary and Secondary education):

- Declaration of Human Rights - signatory State
- Convention on the Rights of the Child - signatory State
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - signatory State
- Law for Education in Primary and Secondary Schools - creator
- National curriculum for Primary school Education - creator
- National curriculum for Technical Secondary Education - creator
- Regulation for Assistants and Professional communicational mediators - creator
- Regulation for Primary and Secondary school education for children with development difficulties - creator
- National strategy for Rights of the Child in Republic of Croatia from 2014 to 2020 - creator
- Low for Preschool Education - creator
- Decree on elements specific for children with development difficulties - creator
- Regulation for special terms and measurements for achieving preschool educational program - creator
- Regulation on dividing state budget and measurements of co-financing preschool educational program
- State pedagogical standard for preschool education – creator.

With legislative regulation all segments and aspects of educating children with development difficulties have been covered. All time challenges are the teachers working in Primary and Secondary Schools because they are not educated or motivated enough to work with children with development difficulties. A big obstacle also presents a lack of communication and often inadequate communication between school – teacher - parent, because parents are marginalized and are often not included enough in school work and decision making concerning the education of their own child, even though everything is set up very clearly by the law.



## 2.1 Characteristics by the level of education

### Early childhood education and care (ECEC)

Social interaction of gaining basic life skills so children can be easier included in social life; building and developing child's self-esteem; gaining empathy from the community; excepting children with development difficulties by their coeval; including children with development difficulties in regular kindergarten groups.

### Pre-school and transition to the compulsory education

Making social interaction between coevals; preparing a child with development difficulties for Primary school; introducing the child with rules and obligations in Primary school; making friend among his coevals.

### Primary school

Including a pupil with development difficulties in regular programs; child with development difficulties can attend the classes alongside his assistant; technical adjustment of school institutions; adjusting educational programs; constant tracking of child's work and progress by pedagogical services; cooperation between teachers and parents; sensibility and education from teachers; extra help for children to master the material; organizing extra school activities and also activities outside the classroom adapted for a child with development difficulties.

### Secondary education

Including students with development difficulties into regular programs; assistants for students with development difficulties; technical adjustment of school's institutions; adjusting educational programs; monitoring and observing student's work and progress by pedagogical services; cooperation between parents and schools; sensibilization and education of teachers; extra help for students in mastering the material; organizing practical education adjusted to students; helping a student to choose his professional occupation; adjusting final examination (Državna matura - State Education Exam).



## **2.2 Characteristics by the education system and governance**

### **2.2.1 Features of the education legislation**

Republic of Croatia has brought a legislative regulation which covers all segments and all levels of education for children with development difficulties. The main problem in Republic of Croatia is disobeying the legislative regulative by educational institutions and also a complete lack of empathy for students with development difficulties but also, inexistence of a proper way of controlling institutional work which relates to children with development difficulties. Institutions lay also a small amount of care into working with gifted children who, in general, pass the educational system unnoted.

### **2.2.2 Teacher policy**

In general, professors at the University are not educated enough to teach students with development difficulties who are included into regular educational program. Educating for working with students with development difficulties is better for nursery and kindergarten educators, Primary and Secondary school teachers. The hardest have the teachers who are teaching in technical schools, and who are not teachers but engineers, technicians, economist, doctors etc. who only have professional exam which allows them to teach.

## **2.3 Social dimension**

Parental involvement in educational process depends on the level of their education. The biggest participation is when the child is in nursery or in kindergarten. In Primary school and especially Secondary school involvement of a parent is very small. In the Republic of Croatia the great part in parental involvement play the economic status. In fear of poverty a lot of parents are forced to work multiple jobs which leaves them small amount of time for their children. Low economic status limits the parental possibilities for assuring adequate medical protection and aid.

## **3 Terminology and its national context**

The partnership should agree on generally accepted categories and interpretations in the key terminology on the international level in this project. That's why the Glossary that our partnership intends to use should be created. It is important that we use the same language, e.g. we mean the same thing behind each word we use, and also, that we understand when and why it is sometimes not possible.



### 3.1 Terminology in Croatia

**Inclusive education** includes all students into the educational system. Meanwhile, we do not only talk about students with some physical or mental incapability, but also of those who in any way feel neglected, or have difficulties with studying, are poor or have to travel for hours to get to their school or make part of a national minority. Inclusion is a permanent process which does not only represent a change of state, but a change of understanding. We are trying to include all types of student in all kinds of activities in a certain school so fewer children will feel left out. Inclusive education follows the idea that all students are capable of learning and also to contribute with extra school activities alongside with comprehension and support of all subjects involved in the educational process and also of society in her all. Using inclusion, we are trying to adapt educational institutions, systems and methodologies of learning with the needs of children. It is used to promote acceptance and respect of differences among children, independently of their growth, gender, ethnic group, language, social range or even some physical incapability. Inclusive education means that education starts primarily at home and in a community, and afterwards in a formal or informal surrounding. Every person has their individualities which need to be accepted. With children, it is no different. Individual access in the classroom does not mean that students are being separated one from another, au contraire, it means that each student is allowed to show their uniqueness in the classroom.

**Integration** is the process of placing children with disabilities in educational institutions together with children of orderly development.

**Inclusion** is the process of inclusion of persons with different forms of disability in the most active and equal participation in society, especially in the educational process.

**Equality** - the principle of equal right and status of people in society.

**Disability** - a physical or mental disability that limits a person to one or more life activities (problems in mobility, communication, acquisition of knowledge and skills, self-care, sociability etc.).

**Children with disabilities** - children with physical disabilities (disability, visual and hearing impairment, children with chronic illnesses) or children with mental retardation or children with behavioral problems or children with learning disabilities and children with multiple disabilities.

**Inclusive education** - inclusion in the educational process not only of students with physical disability and mental health problems, but also of neglected student, poor student, students with learning difficulties as well as students belonging to national minorities.

**Inclusive educational environment** is an approach to education which improves learning and participation in teaching for all students, using appropriate tasks, adapting to the diverse needs of students, and overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for both individuals and groups.

**Special educational needs** - the needs of a child with a disability that makes it difficult to learn compared to other children of the same age.



## 4 Identifying key local stakeholders: institutions and professionals

### Institutions and actors

A lot of institutions that are in charge of well care of a child are also in charge of educating children with development difficulties in Republic of Croatia alongside local community. The highest institution that takes care of education is **Ministry of Science and Education** who is in charge of passing legislative regulations, educational programs for children with development difficulties. **Agency for Education and Agency for Technical Education** are in charge of helping, advising, supervising schools but also, they supervise the way how the classes are being organized and they are taking care that the teachers are well educated. **Local government and self-government** units are responsible for financing education for children with development difficulties and for financing technical equipment for educational institutions which organize and implement education for children with development difficulties and for which work principals are responsible. A lot of **associations for children** with development difficulties reunite parents with children that have similar difficulties. They are also fighting to achieve children and parents' rights, rights for educators in nursery and kindergartens, Primary and Secondary schools and also for pedagogical service workers, social workers, assistants and others.

### Interconnections

Even though cooperation between educational institutions for children with development difficulties has been legally specified, it is still not on satisfactory level. Equipment for institutions depends on the local self-government because not all institutions are situated in rich part of the country which automatically sets the level of sensibility towards educating children with development difficulties. Cooperation between local government and Ministry of Science and Education is good in general, but often there is a lack of communication. The heaviest communication is the one between Primary schools and Secondary schools. In most cases Primary Schools do not want to pass on needed documentation from a child to Secondary Schools even though they are obligated to do so. In these cases pedagogical service from Secondary school has to make the new documentation without any knowledge from eventual progress the child had made during his education in Primary school. Cooperation between agencies and schools is based on advising principals, professional services and the teachers on how to educate children with development difficulties in the best way possible. Agencies are in charge of educating teachers on how to educate a child with development difficulties.



## Role of identified stakeholders in the whole school approach

At the local level at the last 15 years, Varaždin County, as the founder of primary and secondary schools, systematically investing in the implementation of additional activities that support regular school programs, but these activities are not funded by state institutions.

The following activities are carried out:

1. Organizing and financing centers of excellence for gifted children
2. Organizing and financing assistance programs for children with special needs through the provision of assistants during their education
3. Providing free nutrition for children in threat of poverty
4. Subvention of transportation costs for high school students (which reduced the number of dropouts from high school attendance)
5. Scholarships for pupils in secondary's school and students
6. Introducing one shift classrooms in all schools (allows more space for additional activities for students, reduces parental stress).

Following scale has been used to describe the involvement level of each stakeholder:

missing - 1                  low - 2                  relevant - 3                  strong and effective - 4

• social workers	1	2	<u>3</u>	4
o their main role, if they are involved:				
• youth services and organizations	1	2	<u>3</u>	4
o their main role, if they are involved:				
• outreach care workers	1	2	3	4
o their main role, if they are involved:				
• psychologists	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
o their main role, if they are involved:				
• nurses and other therapists (speech and language)	1	2	<u>3</u>	4
o their main role, if they are involved:				
• child protection services	1	2	<u>3</u>	4
o their main role, if they are involved:				
• guidance specialists	1	2	3	4
o their main role, if they are involved:				
• police	1	2	<u>3</u>	4
o their main role, if they are involved:				
• unions	1	<u>2</u>	3	4
o their main role, if they are involved:				



- |   |   |   |          |   |
|---|---|---|----------|---|
| • business  | 1 | 2 | <u>3</u> | 4 |
| ○ their main role, if they are involved:  |   |   |          |   |
| • intercultural mediators   | 1 | 2 | 3        | 4 |
| ○ their main role, if they are involved:  |   |   |          |   |
| • migrants associations   | 1 | 2 | 3        | 4 |
| ○ their main role, if they are involved:  |   |   |          |   |
| • NGOs and other community based organisations from sports, cultural environment and active citizenship sectors | 1 | 2 | <u>3</u> | 4 |
| ○ their main role, if they are involved:  |   |   |          |   |

## Student, parent, family, community involvement

Educational programs on all levels of education and for all students' categories are provided by Ministry of Science and Education. In legislative regulations is written that parents are not allowed to participate in providing educational programs on any educational level which only shows how parents or family members who are interested are not involved enough in the education of children with development difficulties. Because of that parents have created certain associations with other parents whose children have development difficulties. These associations allow the parents to have legal, medical and all other needed advices that concern their child's life and education. Associations are places where all kind of initiatives are made, from introducing an assistant that accompanies their child in classes (Association "Puž" from Zagreb) until initiative of gaining free medication for all categories of development difficulties. These associations have an important role in creating activities for children with development difficulties in their free time, but also, they are in charge of providing free medical aid, organizing field trips, different workshops, summer vacations and other.

## 5 Critical analyses of national indicators regarding social inclusions

### 5.1 Reflection on the international comparable databases in the partner countries own context

By joining the European Union, the Republic of Croatia has become an equal member of the community. One of the tasks was to adapt the legislation in line with EU recommendations. The Republic of Croatia signed the Declaration of Human Rights, UN Convention etc. documents, and fully aligns its legislation with EU recommendations.

### 5.2 National indicators (questions to all partners)

According to our knowledge, in Croatia there is no system for collecting and monitoring inclusiveness indicators in educational system. Only the number of children with difficulties



included into educational institutions has been registered. There are various papers on this topic. Ongoing educational reform envisages the creation of a system for monitoring inclusiveness in schools, and we hope it will be good start.

### **Example from Zagreb County:**

“The contemporary literature on inclusive education emphasizes the need to monitor the effectiveness of inclusive policies and practices. In order to create a European reference model for assessing the quality of inclusive education within the European project EBE EUSMOSI, a measurement instrument has been created that can record inclusive education in different countries. The aim of this paper is to present the results of evaluation of inclusive education in Croatia. The study involved teachers from other grades, elementary schools in Zagreb and Zagreb County (N = 120) who work in inclusive conditions, that is, teach children with identified disabilities in the classroom. The School Inclusion Quality Assessment Scale developed within the EBE EUSMOSI project was applied. The results speak to the criticality of teachers towards the implementation of inclusive education at their school level, but they are pleased that they make the necessary adjustments for students with disabilities within their class. Among the objective indicators of the quality of inclusive education created for European countries, a smaller number is applicable in Croatian terms. There is a noticeable lack of collaborative work and discussions within the school, as well as with the local community regarding the necessary improvement of the inclusive process. The results indicate concrete activities that can improve the quality of inclusive education delivery. ”

(Anamarija Žic Ralić , Daniela Cvitković, Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Edukacijsko-rehabilitacijski fakultet, Borongajska 83f, Zagreb, Republika Hrvatska anamarija.zic.ralic@erf.hr)6  
Recommendations: local focus

## **6.1 Croatian learning needs**

Croatia is currently in the process of transforming the school system, which should result in better inclusion of children (in general) in education through more appropriate forms of educational content. According that process, special attention will be paid to vulnerable groups of children in the education system (children with special needs, national groups such as Roma children, gifted students, children from socially disadvantaged families, etc.).

Considering the education system so far, the following problem has been identified:

1. The national centralized education system is not flexible and effective enough. Decisions are delayed and difficult to apply to certain vulnerable groups of pupils/children.
2. Lack of a quality organizational process which would clearly identify all the steps and procedures needed to resolve individual cases quickly and efficiently (improvement of IT systems, simpler and more accessible databases, improved results tracking system, etc.) and also in the current system there are conflicts or duplications of responsibilities and tasks



among different institutions. Therefore, parents, teachers and other staff in charge of support in schools (psychologists, pedagogues, rehabilitators, etc.) are not provided with timely and high-quality action.

3. Lack of quality, available, systematic and free of charge courses for additional education primarily for parents / guardians. It has been observed that a large proportion of parents need access to the information through workshops (especially families with financial difficulties and / or all kind of problems with children).

4. Systematic resolution of the problem of peer violence is also a problem that is not sufficiently recognized in society and it is resolved sporadically and declaratively without systematic prevention.

5. Insufficient financial support for families at risk of poverty, especially those families that have unsettled family relationships and have children with special needs. The issue of divorced parents and the payment of alimony payments are particularly emphasized here.

6. The system of non-institutional assistance through specialized non-government organizations (NGO) is complicated to maintain, often without sufficient financial support, and it is not an "extended hand" to specialized institutions.

There are solutions to these problems, which are most often declarative and sporadic, without systematic and permanent solutions, and that's why it is necessary to strengthen the cooperation of social welfare institutions with the education and financial system in order to provide lasting and uniform assistance to beneficiaries (children, parents, schools and professional associates).

## 6.2 European learning perspectives

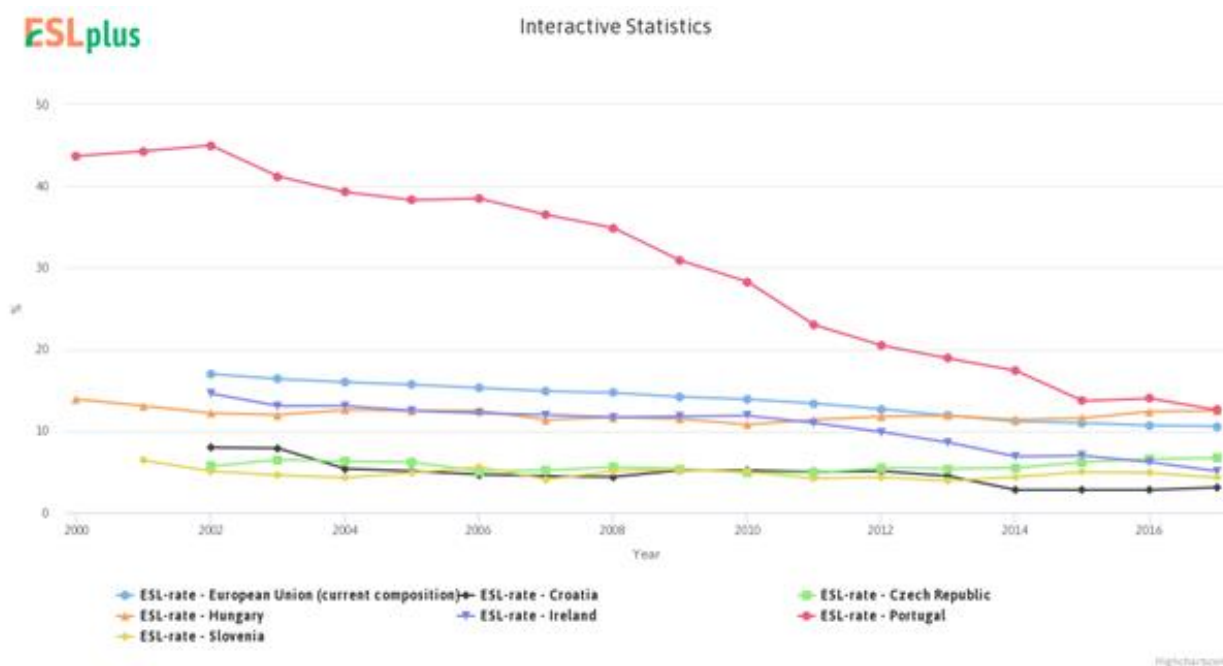
Suggestions for measures or using structural indicators for inclusive systems in and around schools are as it follows

- at national level, to be implemented by governments through strategic and cross-sector initiatives:
  - strengthen IT support
  - decentralize the system by giving more authority to local levels
- at school level, to be implemented by schools and/or local authorities, in line with national strategic initiatives:
  - strengthen co-operation and trust among all stakeholders involved in the process
  - providing support for all beneficiaries

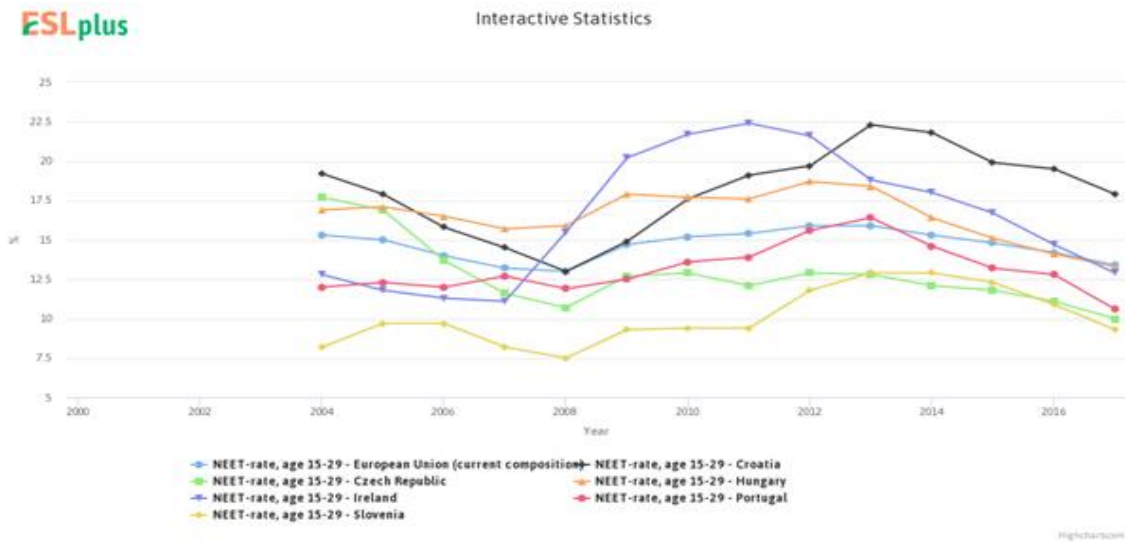
## Appendix - Statistics

### ESLplus database

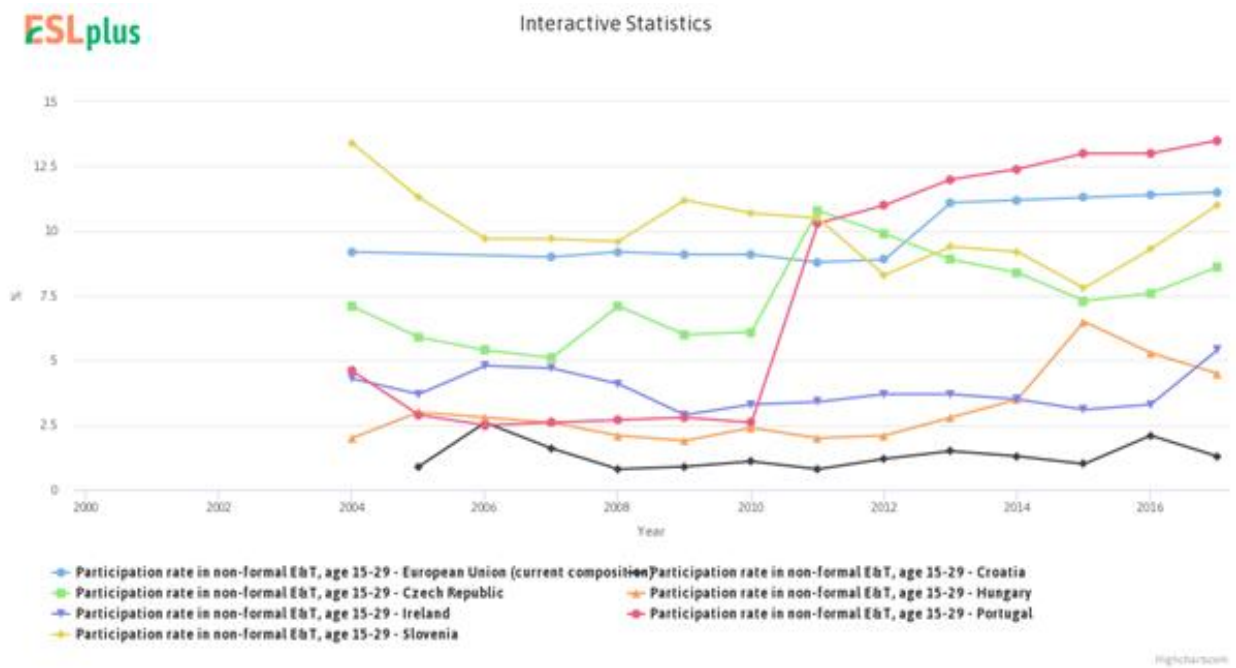
ESL-rate



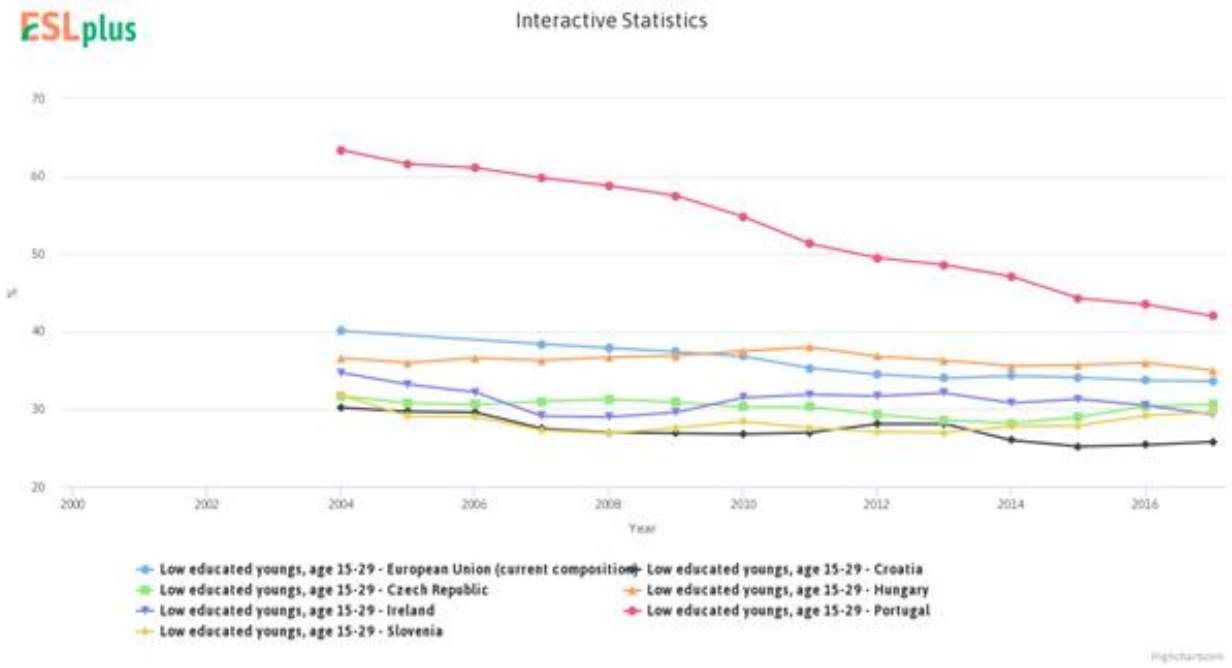
Neet-rate



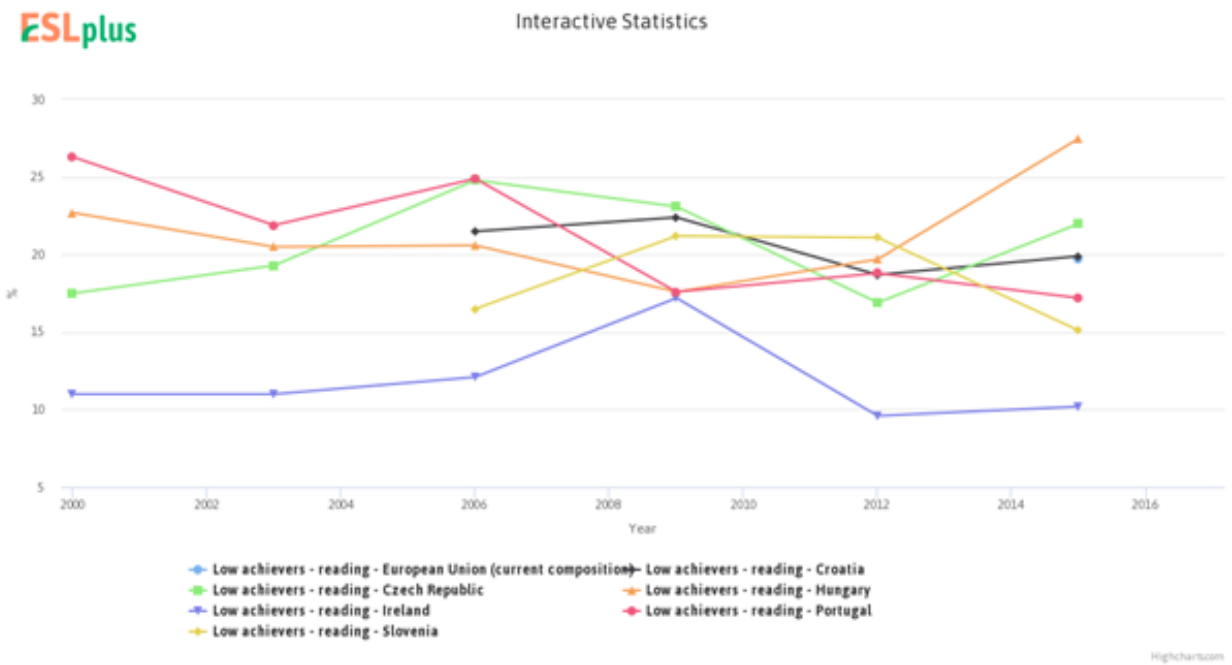
Participation rate in non-formal education and training



Low educated youngs age 15-19



### Low achievers in reading (PISA)

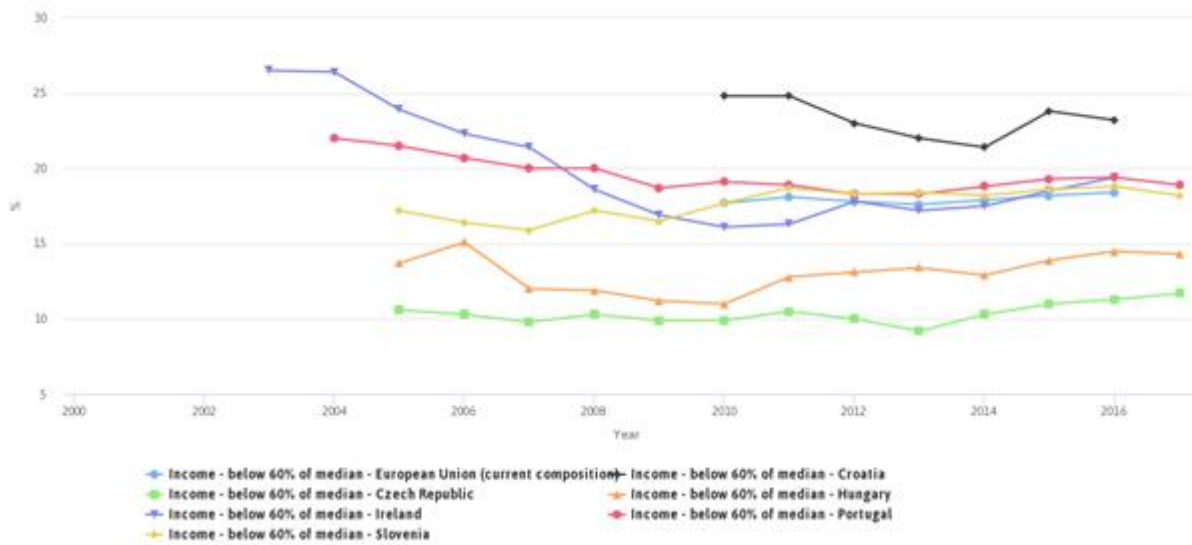


### Income below 60% of median



ESLplus

Interactive Statistics

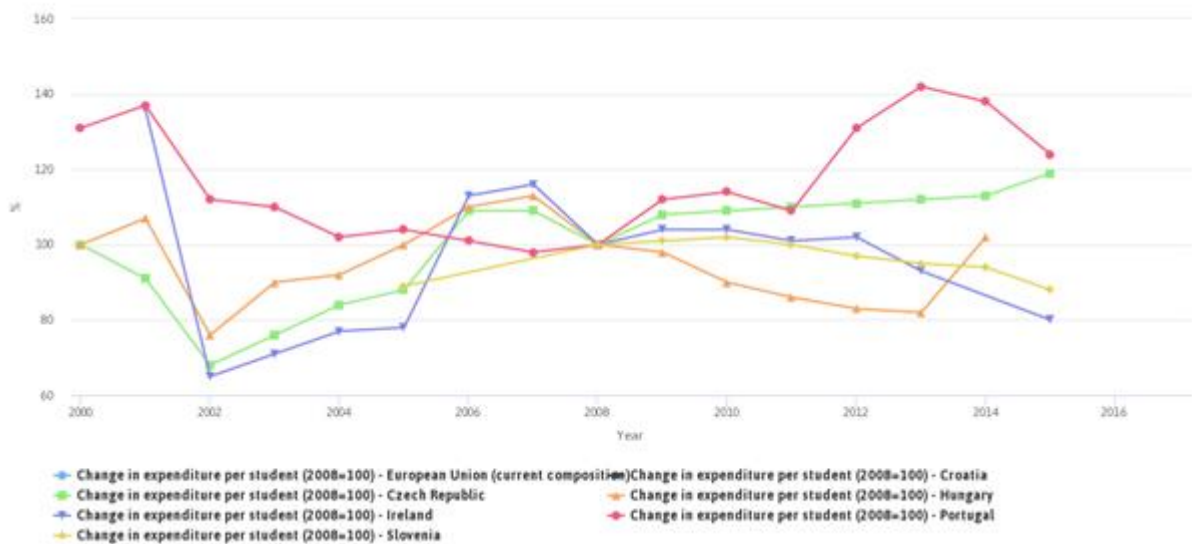


Highcharts.com

Change in expenditure per student (2008=100%)

ESLplus

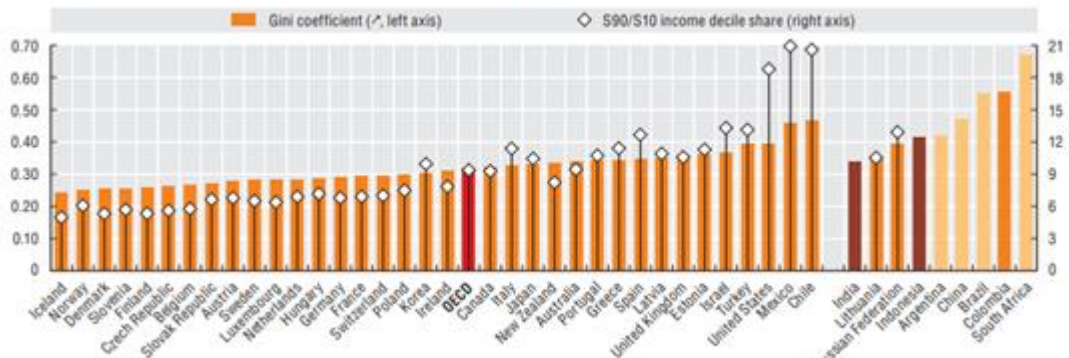
Interactive Statistics



Highcharts.com

### 5.1. Large differences in levels of income inequality

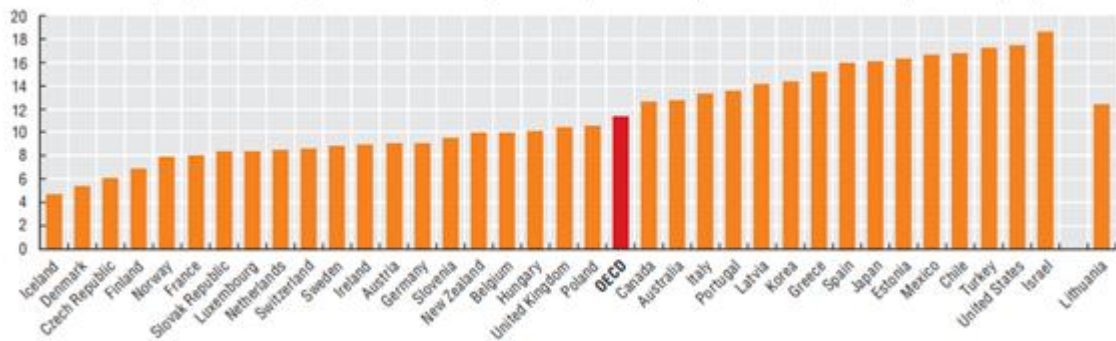
Gini coefficient of household disposable income and gap between richest and poorest 10%, in 2014 (or nearest year)



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933405418>

### 5.4. Large differences in levels of relative poverty

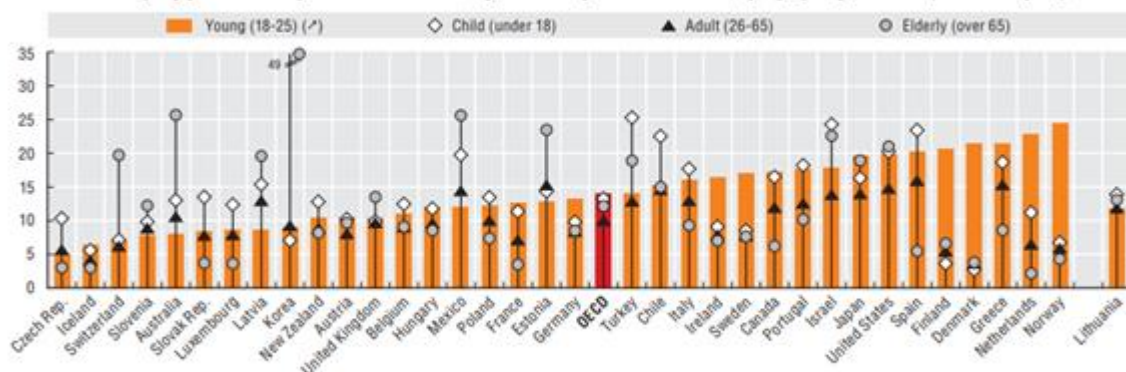
Percentage of persons living with less than 50% of median equivalised disposable income, in 2014 (or nearest year)



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933405446>

### 5.6. In 2014, poverty was highest among youth and children and lowest among adults and elderly

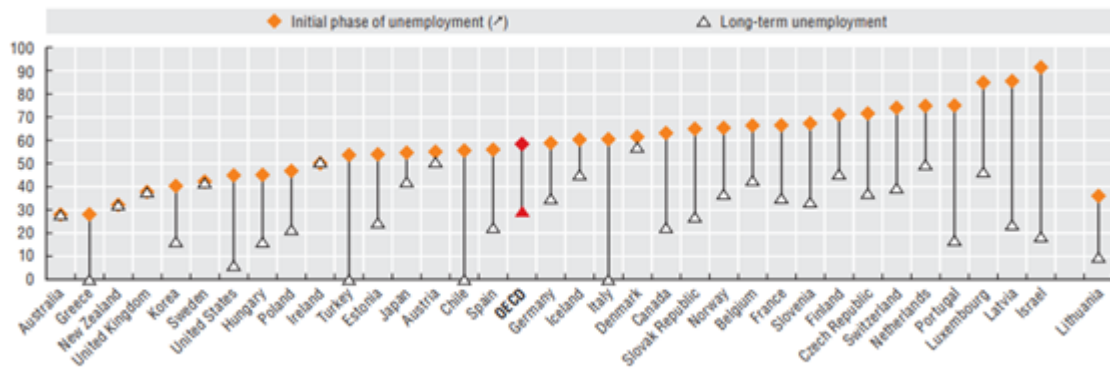
Percentage of persons living with less than 50% of median equivalised income, by age group, in 2014 (or nearest year)



Source: Provisional data from OECD Income Distribution Database (<http://oe.cd/idd>).

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933405464>

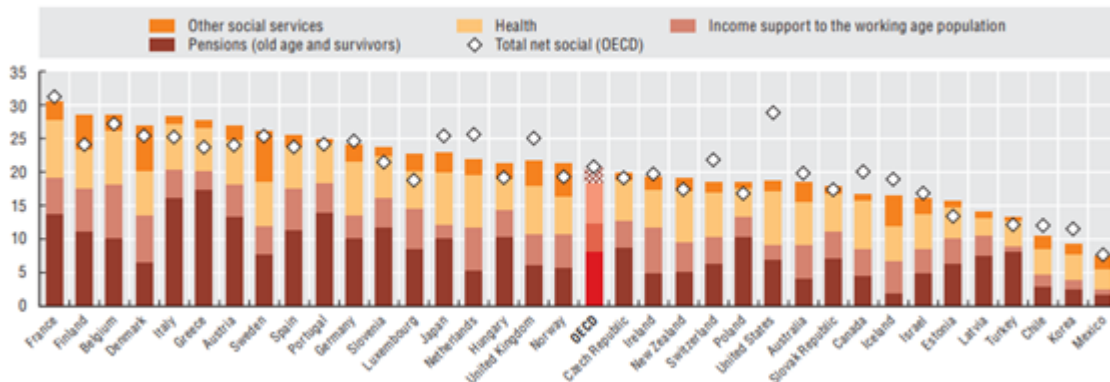
**5.7. In most countries, benefit incomes decline significantly for people with long unemployment spells**  
 Net income while out of work in percentage of net income in work (NRR), 40 years-old single, 2014



StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933405479>

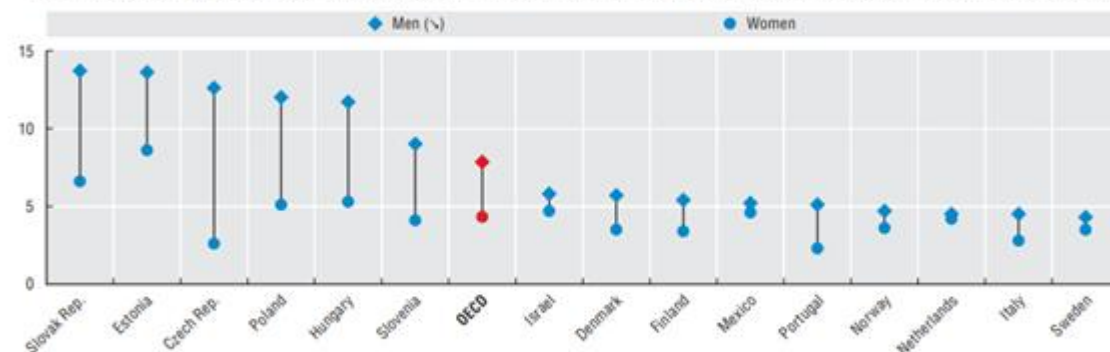
**5.10. Most spending goes to pensions and health**

Public social spending by broad policy area and total net social spending, 2013/14, in percentage of GDP



StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933405505>

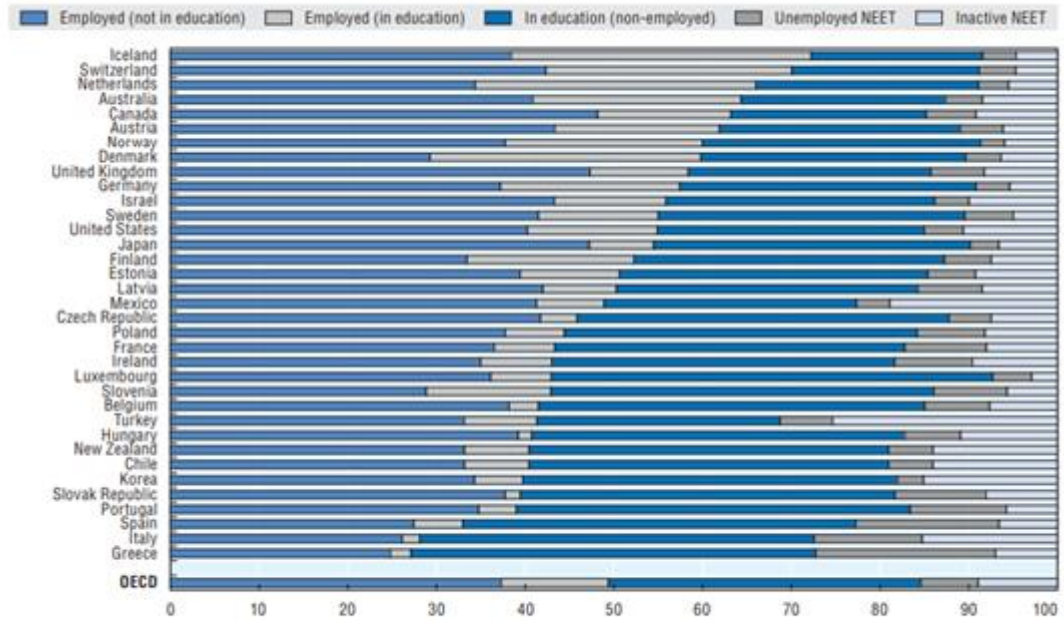
**6.2. People with highest level of education can expect to live six years more than people with lowest level of education**  
 Gap in life expectancy at age 30 between the tertiary and below upper secondary level of education, by sex, 2013 (or nearest year)




Source: Eurostat database complemented with national data for Israel, Mexico and the Netherlands.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933405552>

**Figure 1.4. In the best-performing countries, many young people combine work with education**  
Labour market status of young people, percentages, 2014



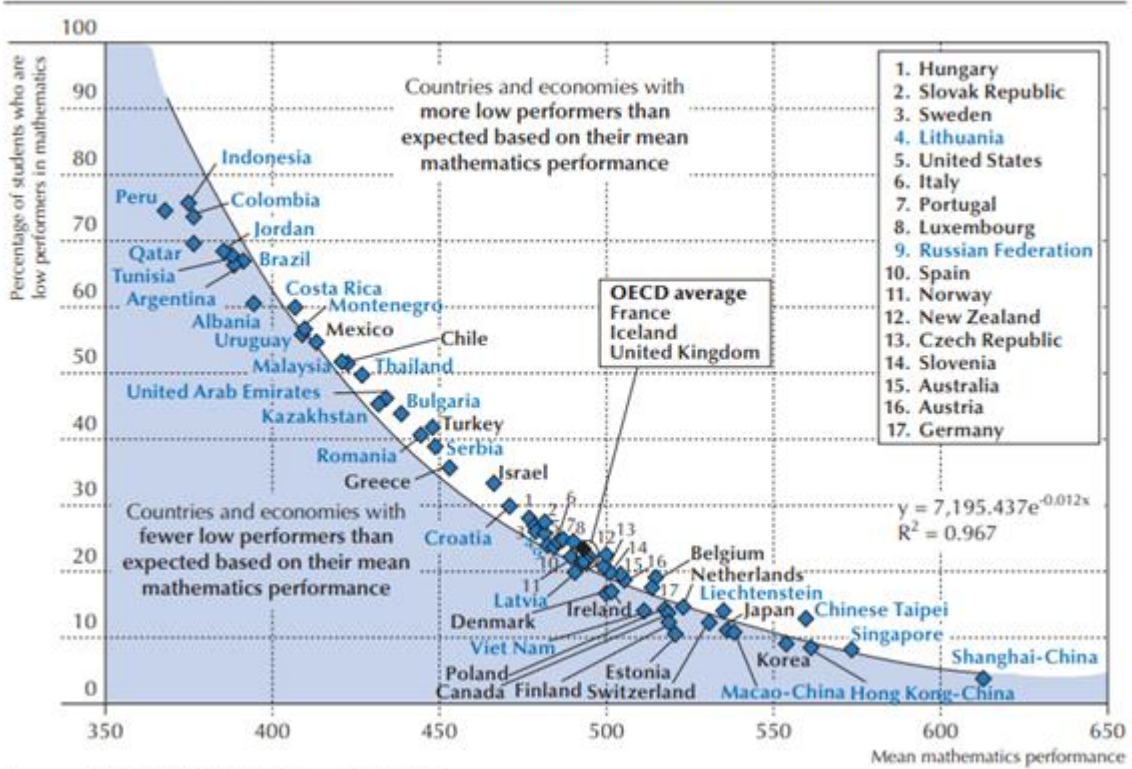
Note: Countries are ranked, from top to bottom, in order of youth employment rates. Data for Chile, Korea, New Zealand and Turkey relate to 2013.  
Source: OECD calculations based on national Labour Force Surveys and the OECD Education Database (Australia, Germany, Israel and New Zealand).

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933404835>

1

■ Figure 1.10 ■

**Relationship between the percentage of low performers and countries'/economies' mean performance**



Source: OECD, PISA 2012 Database, Table 1.13.  
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933315245>

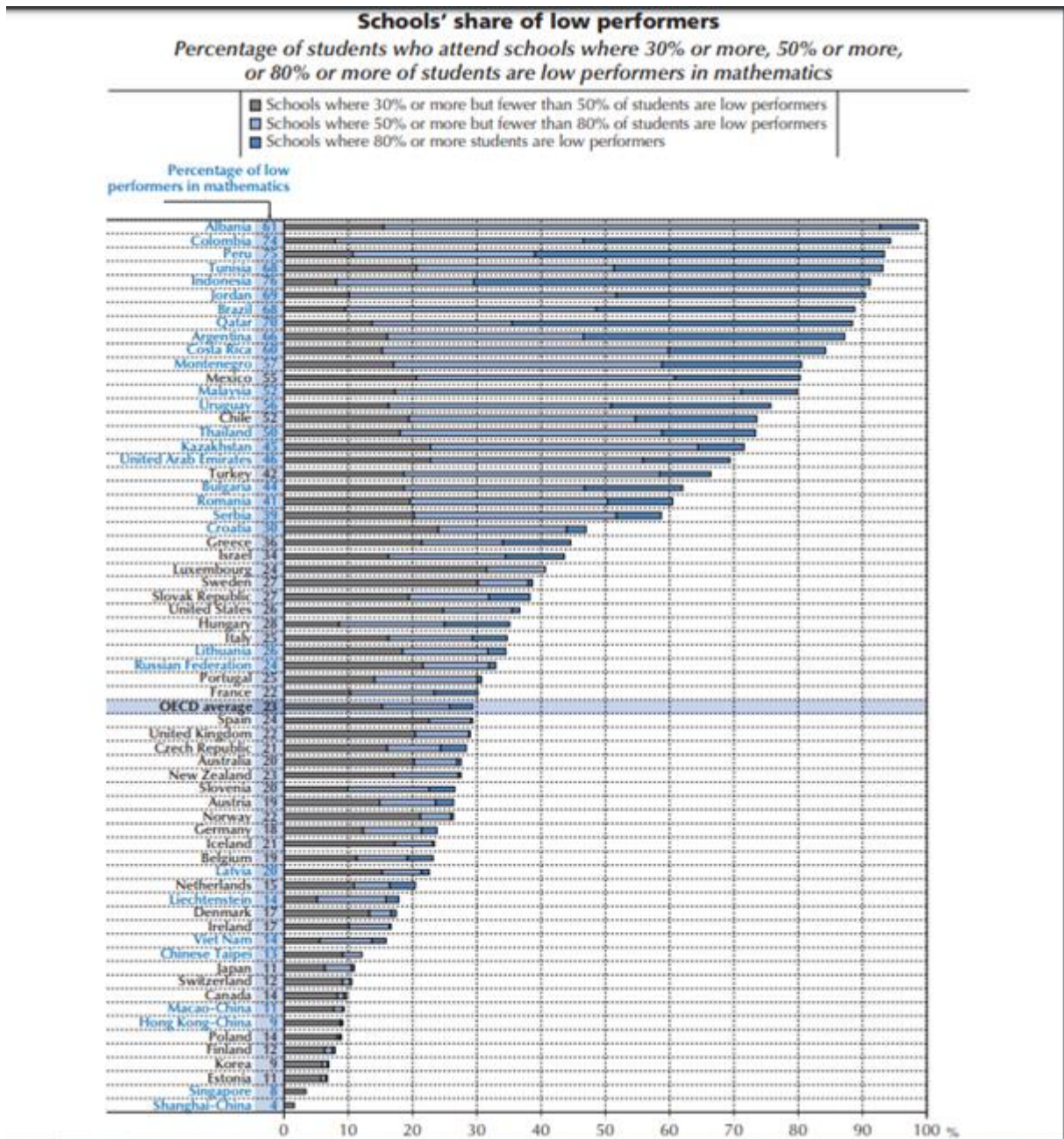
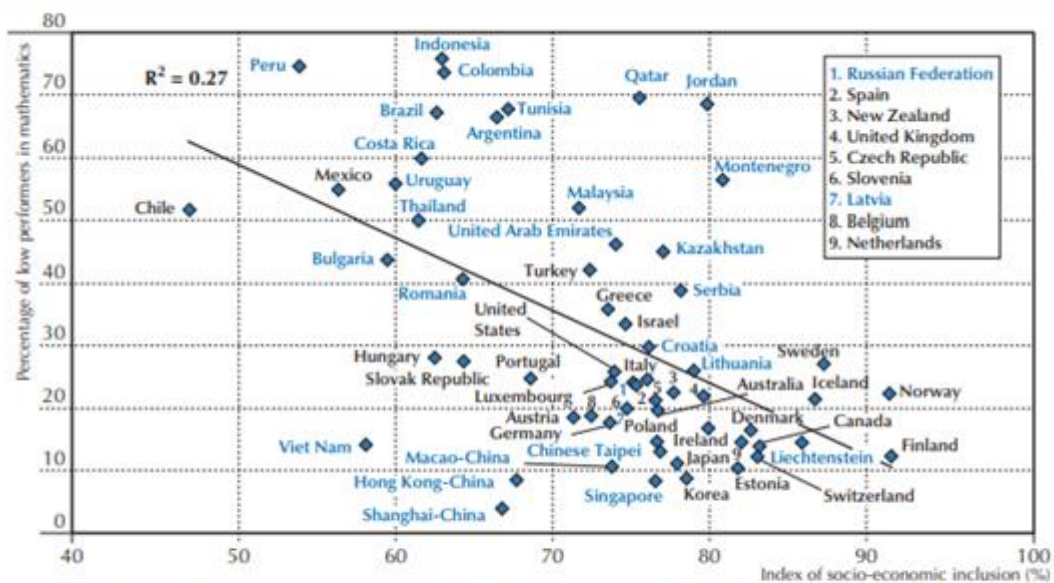


Figure 4.4 Socio-economic profile of schools by proficiency levels in mathematics Schools' mean value on the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status

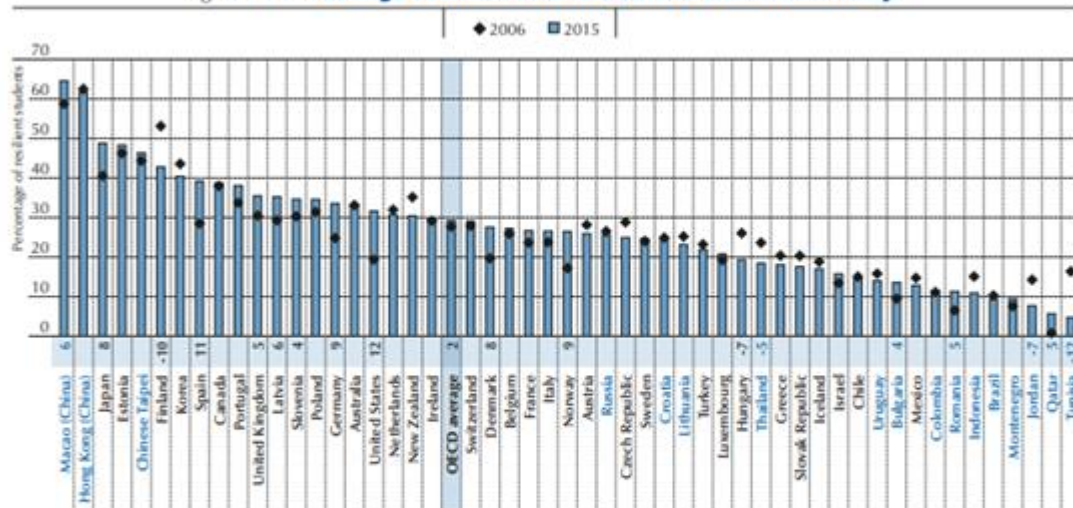
Figure 5.1a

Socio-economic inclusion and percentage of low performers in mathematics



Notes: The index of socio-economic inclusion shows the extent to which students' socio-economic status varies within schools, measured as a percentage of the total variation in students' socio-economic status across the school system. The relationship is statistically significant ( $p < 0.10$ ). Only countries and economies with available data are included. Source: OECD, PISA 2012 Database, Table 5.1. StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933315796>

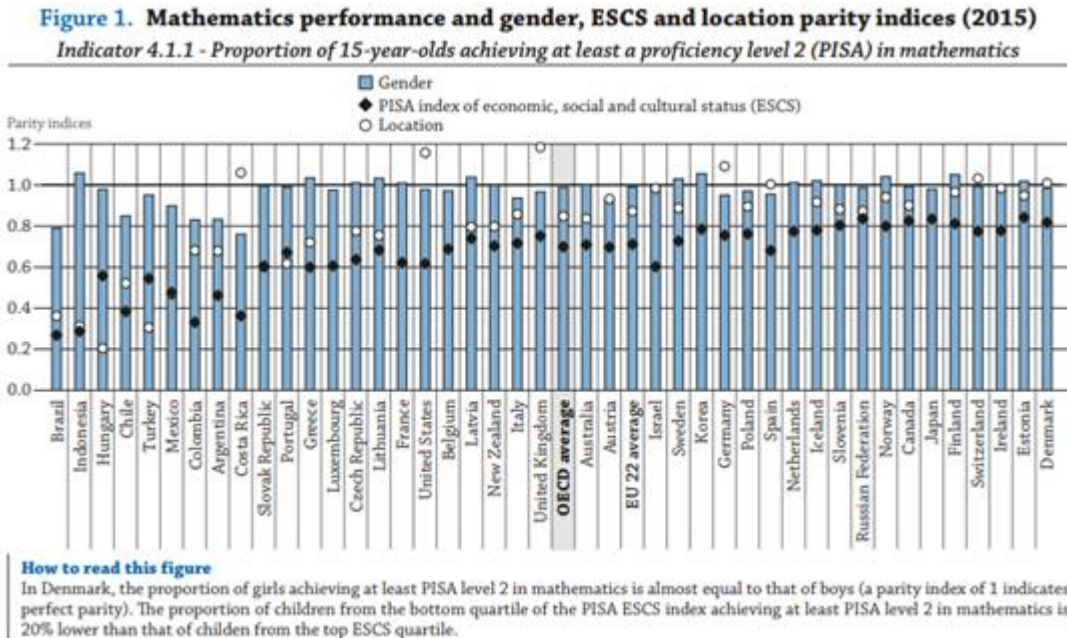
Figure I.6.18 • Change between 2006 and 2015 in student resiliency<sup>1</sup>



1. A student is classified as resilient if he or she is in the bottom quarter of the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS) in the country/economy of assessment and performs in the top quarter of students among all countries/economies, after accounting for socio-economic status. Notes: Only countries/economies with available data are shown. The percentage-point difference between 2006 and 2015 in the share of resilient students is shown next to the country/economy name. Only statistically significant differences are shown (see Annex A3). Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of the percentage of resilient students in 2015. Source: OECD, PISA 2015 Database, Table I.6.7. StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933432860>

Source: PISA 2015

Education at a Glance





*The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.*

*The content of this publication is responsibility of Varaždin County and it cannot reflect the opinion and position of the European Union and / or the Contracting Authority.*

*“The European Union is made up of 27 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms.*

*The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders”.*