

Research and News of Note

Enrollment in University Education Rises Globally

More students around the world are completing university-level courses and other forms of postsecondary education, such as high-level vocational programs, according to *2004 Education at a Glance*, the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's annual summary of educational statistics.

The OECD has 30 member countries, including Australia, Japan, Korea, Mexico, the United Kingdom, the United States, and several European nations. On average across OECD countries in 2002, 32 percent—as compared to 26 percent in 2000—of the age groups studied (25-34, 44-45, 45-55, and 55-64) completed a first university-level degree. In 2000, the UK had the highest completion rate, 36 percent, among OECD countries. In 2002, however, the UK, still at 36 percent, fell behind Austria and Finland (both with 45-percent completion rates) and Iceland and Poland (41-percent completion rates each). In 2002, the UK had a strong rate of retaining students to graduation, with a 17-percent dropout rate. Only three other countries had lower dropout rates: Japan (6 percent), Turkey (12 percent), and Ireland (15 percent).

According to the report, countries with the biggest rise in those seeking postsecondary education command higher earnings benefits. In Australia, Canada, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, and the UK, earnings benefits increased between 6 and 14 percent from 1997 to 2001; these are countries that also experienced a more than 5-percent rise in the number of 25- to 64-year-old postsecondary graduates.

In 2002, 1.9 million students in the countries studied were enrolled in postsecondary programs outside their country of origin, with nearly 75 percent of students studying abroad choosing Australia, France, Germany, the U.S., and the UK.

The data for this report are drawn primarily from OECD member countries; for some indicators, the 19 countries that participate in the World Education Indicators program (a joint project through the Unesco Institute for Statistics) are also included. For more information [click here](#).

Personal Connections Motivate Donors

More than half of the respondents in a recent online survey said that a "personal request from a friend or family member" was the single most important motivating factor in whether they made a charitable donation. Nearly 13 percent found "messages via broadcast media" to be the most important factor; for 9.8 percent of the respondents, mail solicitations were most effective.

The survey, *The Kintera/Luth Nonprofit Trend Report*, includes responses from 1,751 individuals in the United States and is part of a research partnership between Kintera Inc., a technology company, and Luth Research, an online market research firm. For more information [click here](#).

Matching Donations Could Increase Gifts

Donors might increase their gifts to charitable organizations if the federal government directly matched part of their donations instead of allowing charitable deductions, according to recent research.

Two economists, Catherine Eckel, of Virginia Tech, and Philip Grossman, of St. Cloud State University, conducted several experiments to determine whether charitable giving is stimulated more by "rebates"—similar to tax deductions—or by matching subsidies.

The research, which was supported by grants from the Aspen Institute and the National Science Foundation, combined lab experiments and field studies.

The field studies were conducted with the cooperation of Minnesota Public Radio as part of its regular fund-raising drives. In MPR's usual mail solicitation, donors were given a choice of a rebate or the potential to increase the size of the contribution going to the radio station through a matching contribution. The average total donation (donor's gift plus match) by donors who were told in advance that their gifts would be matched exceeded the total donation for donors who received the comparable refund offer. For more information, contact Grossman, pgrossman@stcloudstate.edu, or (320) 308-4232.