

# Republic of Korea

## Human Capital Index 2020

This brief provides an update to the Human Capital Index (HCI). First launched in 2018, the HCI measures the amount of human capital that a child born today can expect to attain by age 18. It conveys the productivity of the next generation of workers compared to a benchmark of complete education and full health. Worldwide a child born in 2020 can expect, on average, to be 56 percent as productive as she could be when she grows up. All data represent the status of countries pre-COVID-19.

### THE HUMAN CAPITAL INDEX

**Human Capital Index.** A child born in the Republic of Korea today will be **80 percent** as productive when she grows up as she could be if she enjoyed complete education and full health. This is higher than the average for East Asia & Pacific region and High income countries. Between 2010 and 2020, the HCI value for the Republic of Korea decreased from 0.82 to 0.80. Figure 1 shows how the HCI and each of the components evolved over time.

- **Probability of Survival to Age 5.** 100 out of 100 children born in the Republic of Korea survive to age 5.
- **Expected Years of School.** In the Republic of Korea, a child who starts school at age 4 can expect to complete **13.6 years** of school by her 18th birthday.
- **Harmonized Test Scores.** Students in the Republic of Korea score **537** on a scale where 625 represents advanced attainment and 300 represents minimum attainment.
- **Learning-adjusted Years of School.** Factoring in what children actually learn, expected years of school is only **11.7 years**.
- **Adult Survival Rate.** Across the Republic of Korea, **94 percent** of 15-year olds will survive until age 60. This statistic is a proxy for the range of health risks that a child born today would experience as an adult under current conditions.
- **Healthy Growth (Not Stunted Rate).** Data on stunting are not available for the Republic of Korea.

### DIFFERENCES IN HCI ACROSS GENDER AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS

In the Republic of Korea, the HCI for girls is higher than for boys. Table 1 shows gender disaggregation for each of the HCI components.

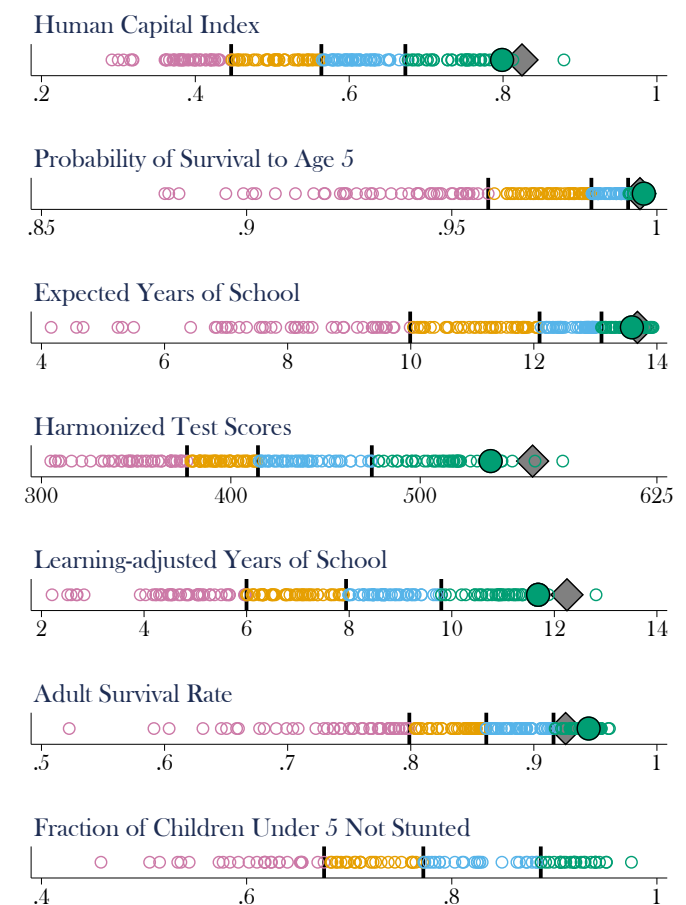
In the Republic of Korea, there are not sufficient data to disaggregate HCI by socio-economic groups.

**Table 1. HCI by Gender and Socio-economic Group**

Component	Boys	Girls	Overall
HCI	0.78	0.81	0.80
Survival to Age 5	1.00	1.00	1.00
Expected Years of School	13.6	13.6	13.6
Harmonized Test Scores	535	540	537
Learning-adjusted Years of School	11.6	11.7	11.7
Adult Survival Rate	0.92	0.97	0.94
Not Stunted Rate	-	-	-
HCI Ratio (richest / poorest 20 percent)			-

For more on socioeconomic disaggregated HCI, please visit <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/human-capital/brief/insights-from-disaggregating-the-human-capital-index>

**Figure 1. HCI and Components**



Note:

- Large circle represents Korea, Rep. in 2020
- Diamond represents Korea, Rep. in 2010
- Small circles represent other countries
- Lines and color of circles indicate quartiles of the distribution

Countries in the East Asia and Pacific (EAP) region have made remarkable progress on almost every dimension of human capital in the last decade (2010-2020). COVID-19, however, threatens to wipe out much of the progress. Action is needed to boost learning achievement; reinvigorate the health, nutrition, and education systems; and deploy social safety nets to protect the most vulnerable, thus enabling an inclusive and sustainable recovery and accelerating human capital accumulation.

### DOMESTIC RESOURCE UTILIZATION AND MOBILIZATION

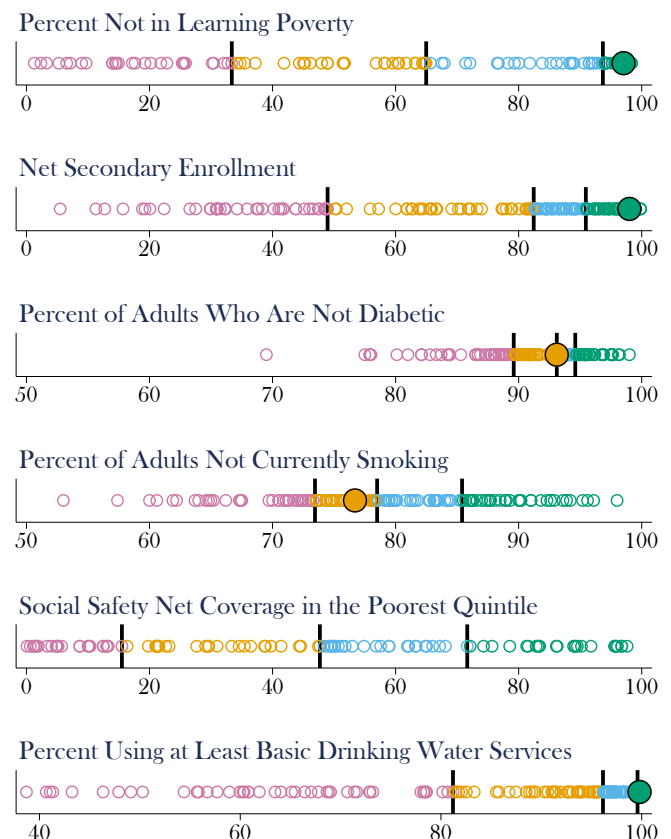
- **Health Spending.** The Republic of Korea spends **4.4 percent** (2017) of its GDP in public spending on health. This is lower than both the regional average (4.9%) and the average for its income group (5.3%). **22 percent** (2015) of the population incurs catastrophic health expenditure measured as out-of-pocket spending exceeding 10% of household consumption or income.
- **Education Spending.** The Republic of Korea spends **4.6 percent** (2016) of its GDP in government education spending. This is lower than the average for its region (4.7%) but higher than the average for its income group (4.5%).
- **Social Assistance Spending.** In the Republic of Korea, data on social assistance spending are not available. The average for its region is 1.1 percent and for its income group is 1.7 percent.
- **Government Revenue.** General government revenue in the Republic of Korea is **21.8 percent** (2017) of GDP. This is lower than both the regional average (40.7%) and the average for its income group (37.3%).

### COMPLEMENTARY INDICATORS

- **Learning Poverty.** In the Republic of Korea, **3 percent** (2015) of 10-year-olds cannot read and understand a simple text by the end of primary school. This is lower than both the average for its region (15%) and the average for its income group (14%).
- **Net Secondary Enrollment.** In the Republic of Korea, **98 percent** (2017) of secondary-school age children are enrolled in secondary school. This is higher than both the average for its region (72%) and the average for its income group (89%).
- **NCD Deaths.** In the Republic of Korea, the probability of dying between ages 30 and 70 from cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, or chronic respiratory diseases is **8 percent** (2016). This is lower than both the average for its region (21%) and the average for its income group (14%).
- **Diabetes.** In the Republic of Korea, **7 percent** (2019) of the population ages 20-79 has type 1 or type 2 diabetes. This is lower than both the average for its region (12%) and the average for its income group (9%).
- **Smoking.** In the Republic of Korea, **23 percent** (2016) of the population age 15 and older are current smokers (**41 percent** among men). This is lower than the average for its region (25%) but higher than the average for its income group (22%).
- **Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Index.** The index, ranging from 0 to 100, measures coverage of essential health services based on tracer interventions. In the Republic of Korea, the UHC Index score is **86** (2017). This is higher than both the average for its region (65) and the average for its income group (79).
- **Social Safety Net Coverage.** In the Republic of Korea, data on social safety net coverage of the poorest quintile are not available. The average for its region is 45 percent and for its income group is 70 percent.
- **Social Safety Net Adequacy.** In the Republic of Korea, data on social safety net adequacy for the poorest quintile are not available. The average for its region is 9 percent and for its income group is 22 percent.
- **Human Capital Utilization.** In the Republic of Korea, **67 percent** (2018) of the working-age population is employed. This is higher than the average for its region (65%) but lower than the average for its income group (70%).

- **Female Labor Force Participation.** In the Republic of Korea, the female labor force participation rate is **53 percent** (2019). This is lower than the average for its region (57%) but similar to the average for its income group (53%).
- **Drinking Water.** In the Republic of Korea, **100 percent** (2017) of the population has at least a basic source of drinking water. This is higher than both the average for its region (92%) and the average for its income group (99%).

Figure 2. Complementary Indicators



Note:

- Large circle represents Korea, Rep.
- Small circles represent other countries
- Lines and color of circles indicate quartiles of the distribution

This brief is based on the most recent data available from the Human Capital Project, World Development Indicators, Atlas of Social Protection Indicators of Resilience and Equity (ASPIRE), UNESCO Institute for Statistics, WHO Global Health Observatory and Global Health Expenditure Database, IMF World Economic Outlook, selected national sources and World Bank staff estimates.

For more information on the definition of indicators and data sources, please visit: [www.worldbank.org/humancapital](http://www.worldbank.org/humancapital)