



**THE GLOBAL GOALS**  
For Sustainable Development

# Ensuring Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education:

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

# GOAL 4

## in Canada

# 2020



**cmec**

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# Introduction



In September 2015, 192 United Nations member states, including Canada, adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030). It is a 15-year global initiative centred on an ambitious set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 169 targets, and over 230 indicators. Agenda 2030 envisions a secure world, free of poverty and hunger, with full and productive employment, access to quality education, and universal health coverage—a world with gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and an end to environmental degradation.

Agenda 2030 is a global framework of action for people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership. It integrates social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and accounts for issues of peace, governance, and justice. It is considered to be universal in nature, meaning that developing and

developed countries alike will engage in its implementation. Finally, Agenda 2030 includes an overarching principle of ensuring that no one is left behind in achieving the SDGs.

The government of Canada has embraced Agenda 2030 and is committed to supporting the implementation of the SDGs in Canada and internationally, having outlined its commitment in the 2018 Voluntary National Review (VNR) for Canada, *Canada's Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.<sup>1</sup>

While the federal government is coordinating Canada's overall participation in and reporting on Agenda 2030's 17 SDGs, provinces and territories, through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), are the lead for Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on education. CMEC continues to work with Statistics Canada, under the aegis of the Canadian Education

Statistics Council (CESC), to report on SDG 4 indicators.

In the 2018 VNR, provincial, territorial, and federal governments underscored that education and skills training are essential for Canada's economic and social prosperity, and for the well-being of all Canadians. SDG 4, *Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all*, is both an Agenda 2030 goal and a founding belief for education systems in Canada.

Responsibility for education at all levels is vested in provinces and territories. The Constitution Act, 1867 confers upon the provinces exclusive jurisdiction over education and stipulates that the power to make laws in relation to education and the right to develop and implement educational policies are exclusively assigned to the provincial governments. By virtue of the federal acts that created them, Canada's three territories—Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut, have comparable delegated powers. The territories have chosen to work in cooperation with provinces in this domain, including the provision of postsecondary programs.

Each province or territory is responsible for the work of achieving SDG 4 to reflect its unique geographic, linguistic, and cultural realities.

CMEC provides leadership in education on the pan-Canadian and international stages, supporting the provinces and territories in exercising their exclusive jurisdiction over education.

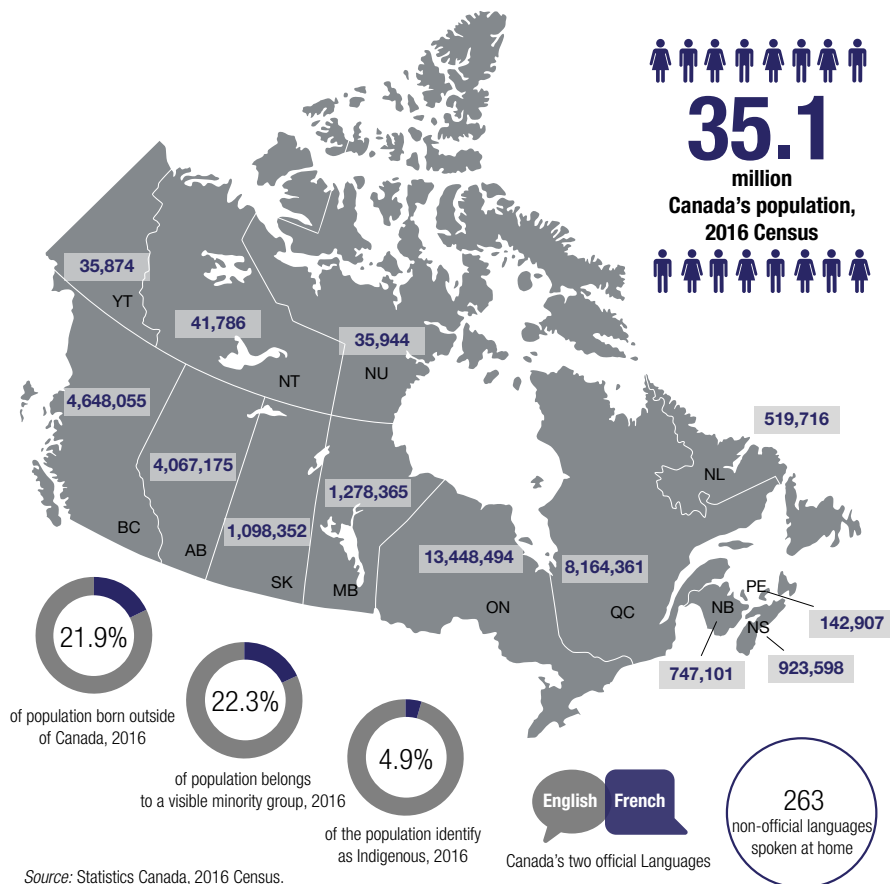
<sup>1</sup> Canada's Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Voluntary National Review is available at [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/20312Canada\\_ENGLISH\\_18122\\_Canadas\\_Voluntary\\_National\\_ReviewENv7.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/20312Canada_ENGLISH_18122_Canadas_Voluntary_National_ReviewENv7.pdf).

# Education in Canada

Canada is made up of ten provinces and three territories, each with significant differences in population, size of urban areas, culture, and language both within and across them. For example, Nunavut has a population of 37,082 and its territory covers 1.9 million square kilometres, while Ontario's population is 13.9 million and its territory covers 909,000 square kilometres.

The 2016 census estimated Canada's population to be 35.1 million. Canada has two official languages, English and French. The majority of francophones in Canada live in Quebec, where 79 per cent of the total population report French as their first language. In the 2016 census, 1,673,785 people identified themselves as Indigenous—that is, First Nations, Métis, or Inuit. The Indigenous population is growing faster than the non-Indigenous population. The 2016 census also enumerated over seven million foreign-born people in Canada, almost 22 per cent of the population. Canadians reported speaking more than 263 non-official languages at home, with those whose first language is neither French nor English representing 21.9 per cent of the population. Figure 1 provides an overview of key demographic data for the country.

**Figure 1. Canadian demographics at a glance**



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census.

# Early Childhood Learning and Development

The early years are a time of discovery when children develop the skills they need to succeed in school and life. Recognizing this, ministers of education are working collectively through CMEC and individually in their own provinces and territories to develop quality opportunities for early childhood learning and development, the first of four pillars of lifelong learning common to provinces and territories.

Provincial and territorial governments are working to transform their systems of early learning and development to create a more seamless early learning experience for children and their families, including smooth transitions into primary education so that the gains made in the former are sustained and enhanced in the latter. The final year of schooling before primary education is known as Kindergarten in Canada and has a dedicated curriculum in all 13 provinces and territories.<sup>2</sup>

While provincial and territorial ministries or departments of education have responsibility for early learning (e.g., Kindergarten), licensed/regulated early childhood programs that precede Kindergarten (e.g., centre-based) may fall under the responsibility of one or more ministries and departments, including health, family, and/or social services, in addition to education.

Early-learning programs differ both among and within provinces and territories depending on local authorities, such as school divisions, districts, or boards, to be responsive to the geographic, linguistic, and cultural realities of the populations they serve.



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<sup>2</sup> Kindergarten is called Grade Primary in Nova Scotia.

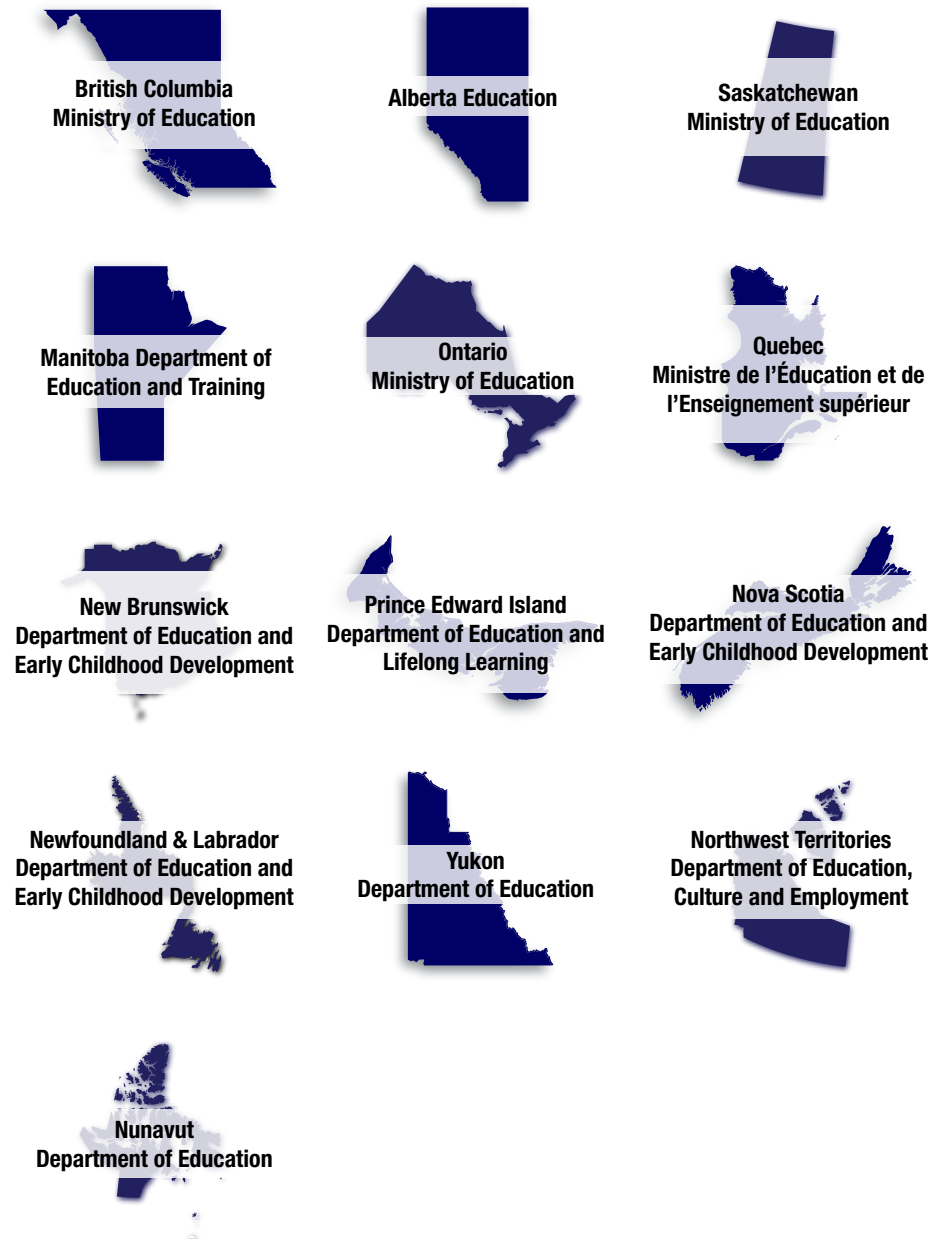


# Elementary-Secondary Education

In each province and territory, departments or ministries of education in Canada are responsible for organizing, delivering, and assessing education at the elementary and secondary education levels, as previously noted. Each province and territory has developed its own system of education and has, to that end, established legislation, policies, programs, curricula, and practices for its elementary and secondary education system. Furthermore, different systems of education reflect the unique contexts of their provinces or territories, thereby allowing them to respond to their specific needs, most notably to their historical and cultural realities. The comprehensive, diversified, and widely accessible nature of the education systems in Canada reflects our society's belief in the importance of education.

In Canada, there were 4,805,208 enrolments in public elementary and secondary schools in 2016–2017 (Statistics Canada, 2019a). While the ages for compulsory schooling vary from one province or territory to another, in most provinces and territories, children enter pre-primary education at age four or five, primary education at age six, and they complete secondary education at age 18. Each province and territory provides free elementary and secondary education to all Canadian citizens and permanent residents—typically up to age 18.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 2. Links to provincial/territorial Web sites of elementary-secondary education in Canada**



<sup>3</sup> In some cases, free education may be available to individuals up to age 21, depending on the program.

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## Overview of elementary-secondary education in Canada

12  
or  
13



years of free Kindergarten,  
elementary, and secondary  
education

4.8  
million



students in elementary  
to secondary education

400,000

educators in public  
schools, 2015



26%



of educators in elementary  
to secondary education are male

87%



high school  
graduation rate,  
2015  
(84% males,  
91% females)

Source: Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials, 2019.



# Postsecondary Education



In Canada, responsibility for postsecondary education also rests with provinces and territories. Postsecondary education institutions generally include universities, colleges, community colleges, polytechnics, and university colleges. Universities normally offer degree programs at the undergraduate level or higher (master's, PhDs), whereas colleges and polytechnics traditionally provide programs that are shorter in duration and focus on practical, technical, or occupational skills for direct entry into the labour market. Colleges and polytechnics typically grant diplomas and certificates rather than degrees, although a growing subset grant baccalaureate degrees and focus on applied research for industry. A university-college system also exists in the western provinces, which provides

four-year undergraduate degree programs. It is distinguished from universities mainly by its emphasis on teaching over research. In Canada, many community colleges and polytechnics offer both diplomas and certificates, as well as occupational preparation and adult education programs.

Canada has 223 public and private universities and 213 public colleges and institutes, including those granting applied and bachelor's degrees that are recognized by provincial or territorial governments, which oversee the regulation, organization, delivery, and assessment of education at all levels (CICIC, 2019). Publicly funded universities are largely autonomous. They set their own admissions standards and degree

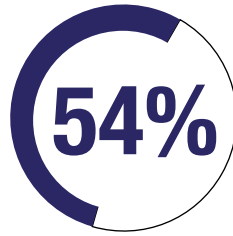
requirements, and generally manage their financial affairs and program offerings. In publicly funded colleges, government involvement may extend to admissions policies, program approval, curricula, institutional planning, and working conditions.

Vocational education straddles both secondary and tertiary sectors so it is not necessarily included in postsecondary/tertiary education data. Training may be offered during secondary school or in separate specialized schools, or in public and private colleges. Over two million people between the ages of 25 and 64 have an apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2019c).

Just over two million students were enrolled in public universities and colleges in 2016–17. Fifty-six per cent were female. While women outnumbered men in most fields of study, in engineering (79.5 per cent), mathematics, and computer-science-related fields (73 per cent), men made up a significant majority of enrolled students (Statistics Canada, 2018).

In 2016, more than half a million postsecondary certificates, diplomas, or degrees were awarded. Almost half of graduates in 2016 received a credential at the bachelor level or above, with 35.4 per cent receiving a bachelor's degree, 11.5 per cent graduating with a master's degree, and 1.5 per cent obtaining a doctorate. The number of college students who completed a degree at the bachelor level or above has more than doubled since 2010. In 2016, 21.2 per cent of graduates received a diploma from a career, technical, or professional training program. Women represented 57 per cent of all graduates in 2016. They made up more than half of the graduates at all levels of education, except for the doctoral level, where they constituted 46.5 per cent of graduates (ibid.).

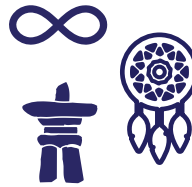
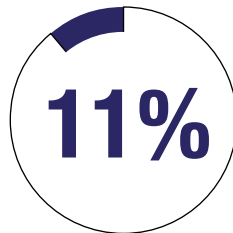
### Overview of postsecondary education in Canada



of population aged 25 to 64 with tertiary education<sup>4</sup> in 2016  
(50% of males, 62% of females)



students in public postsecondary programs



of the Indigenous population aged 25 to 64 had achieved university attainment in 2016  
(29% of total Canadian population with university attainment)

**532,158** 

postsecondary graduates, 2016  
(43% are males, 57% are females)

 **121,818**

postsecondary STEM graduates, 2016  
(70% are male, 30% are female)

<sup>4</sup> Tertiary education builds on secondary education, providing learning activities in specialized fields of education. It aims at learning at a high level of complexity and specialization. Tertiary education includes what is commonly understood as academic education but also includes advanced vocational or professional education (UNESCO, 2011).

# Adult Learning and Skills Development



Provincial and territorial ministries responsible for education plan, implement, and evaluate policies for adult learning and skills development. This work often occurs through consultation and/or in partnership with organizations such as nonprofit organizations.

In the context of globalization and technological change, the labour market increasingly leads learners to pursue learning throughout their lives in order to respond to new demands. These challenges are leading to an evolution in adult education activities and skills development. The provision of programs responding to these needs varies across provinces and territories, depending on the sector

and community. Each province and territory adapts its programs based on its specific needs and those of the populations it serves. Programs in areas such as basic skills and learning programs for adults, English or French as a second or additional language, community and volunteer-tutor adult-literacy programs, vocational education and training, apprenticeships, training in new technologies, and workplace and workforce learning are all important features of adult learning and skills-development systems.

Many institutions, governments, and groups are involved in delivering adult education and skills-development programs in Canada, with the

providers varying by province or territory. They include, but are not limited to:

- colleges and polytechnics, Indigenous colleges<sup>5</sup>;
- adult learning centres;
- community-based, not-for-profit organizations;
- school boards; and
- some private companies.

These various providers may address literacy and other learning needs for all adults. Some of them focus on specific groups such as rural populations, Indigenous communities, immigrants, displaced workers, and those with low levels of literacy or education.

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<sup>5</sup> Indigenous postsecondary institutions are defined differently in different provinces and territories.

# Indigenous Education in Canada

In Canada, the federal, provincial, and territorial governments have a constitutional responsibility for the education of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students. While the government of Canada has a responsibility for education of students who attend schools on First Nations reserves, provincial and territorial public education systems provide education to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students who attend schools off-reserve.

Indigenous students also attend public elementary or secondary schools in their cities, towns, and communities. The provinces and territories in which they reside are responsible for the educational services they receive. Educational services for Registered Indians in the Yukon and both Registered Indians and Inuit in Northwest Territories are provided by the respective territorial governments. In Nunavut, where 85 per cent of the population are Inuit, the territorial government is responsible for elementary and secondary education for all students. Since the 1970s, governments have increasingly embraced the concept of Indigenous control of Indigenous education and developing strong partnerships with Indigenous peoples to improve educational outcomes. Provinces and territories, as well as the government of Canada, have also developed agreements

with Indigenous communities or organizations to provide education services for Indigenous students. For instance, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement allowed for the creation of Cree, Inuit, and Naskapis school boards. In partnership with the Quebec government, this agreement has allowed these school boards to offer education services that are adapted to the needs of their local students. These education services are supported by funding from the government of Quebec and the government of Canada.

Provinces and territories are committed to moving reconciliation forward and to work together to improve education outcomes for Indigenous students. Canada's *Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Calls to Action* encourages education ministers to support the education of all Canadians on the legacy of residential schools and the history of Indigenous people in the country. Overall, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) identifies education as the key to reconciliation in Canada (TRC, 2015).

## Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action

The TRC was a commission like no other in Canada. Constituted and created by the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, which settled the class actions, the commission spent six years travelling to all parts of Canada to hear from the Aboriginal people who had been taken from their families as children, often forcibly, and placed for much of their childhoods in residential schools (TRC, 2015).

For over 150 years, residential schools operated in Canada. Over 150,000 children attended these schools. Many never returned. Often underfunded and overcrowded, these schools were used as a tool of assimilation by the Canadian state and churches. Thousands of students suffered physical and sexual abuse. All suffered from loneliness and a longing to be home with their families. The damages inflicted by these schools continue to this day. In 2009, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada began a multi-year process to listen to survivors, communities, and others affected by the residential school system. The resulting collection of statements, documents, and other materials now forms the heart of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, n.d.).

To redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission makes a number of calls to action. See *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* for more information.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* is available at [https://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](https://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf).



# English- and French-Language Education in Canada

English and French are Canada's two official languages and education in both languages is provided in provinces and territories.

According to the 2016 census, 30 million Canadians reported that they spoke English, and over 10 million reported that they spoke French. In addition, six million Canadians reported being able to conduct a conversation in both English and French (Statistics Canada, 2017b). While these statistics paint a general picture of English- and French-language usage in Canada, English or French-language communities differ from one part of the country to another and include majority-language communities (e.g., francophone communities in Quebec) minority-language communities (e.g., francophone communities in Manitoba or anglophone communities in Quebec), as well as English- or French-as-a-second-or-additional-language learners.

The majority of French-first-language communities in Canada live in Quebec, where 79 per cent report French as their first language. New Brunswick, the only officially bilingual province in Canada, also has a large proportion of francophones—over 32 per cent of the population report French as their first language. Outside of Quebec, francophones live in minority-language situations that present particular challenges for their language and the culture.



To ensure that Canadians are provided with learning opportunities in their own language,<sup>7</sup> and to provide opportunities for everyone to learn both English and French as a second or additional language, public education systems in Canada offer learning opportunities in both official languages. There are currently approximately 350 French-language school districts and over 700 public English-language school districts where curriculum is taught exclusively in the language of the school district with the exception of language courses offered in the other language (CICIC, 2019). Generally, schools in Canada offer second-language instruction in French or English.

Since 1983, the Protocol for Agreements for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction sets the key parameters for

collaboration between the two orders of government (provincial/territorial and federal) regarding education in English and in French. The protocol outlines the major elements in bilateral agreements between the department of Canadian Heritage and ministries of education in provinces and territories. These agreements aim to cover the additional costs that the provinces and territories incur in delivering minority-language education and second-language instruction, or of multiple second-language instruction in the case of Quebec.

<sup>7</sup> Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* recognizes the right of Canadian citizens belonging to the English- or French-language minority in a province or territory to have their children educated in that language, at the elementary and secondary levels, where numbers of students warrant, and that this right includes, where the number of those children so warrants, the right to have them receive that instruction in minority-language educational facilities paid for by public funds.

# Sustainable Development Goal 4 in Canada

Education is a central theme throughout Agenda 2030, which includes a stand-alone education goal: SDG 4—“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” UNESCO reiterates that “increased educational attainment helps transform lives by reducing poverty, improving health outcomes, advancing technology and increasing social cohesion” (UNESCO, 2016b, 10).

The SDGs, targets, and means of implementation are considered to be universal, indivisible, and interlinked (UNESCO, 2016a). Out of the 17 SDGs, seven have education-related targets. Education is central to the survival of a sustainable, prosperous, and equitable planet. Failure to achieve SDG 4 puts at risk the achievement of the 17 SDGs as a whole (OECD, 2017). Education is closely interlinked with all other SDGs because at least one target involves learning, training, educating, or at the very least, raising awareness of

core sustainable development issues (UNESCO, 2016b).

SDG4 consists of 10 targets and 11 indicators to guide countries and governments along a transformative path to a sustainable education agenda. There are seven targets that serve as expected outcomes and three targets that are means of achieving these targets. The indicators are markers of change or continuity. Within the SDG framework, they describe progress in relation to a specific target.

the collection, collation, analysis, presentation, and dissemination of data for regular monitoring of Canadian progress against the SDG indicators. It has therefore developed an on-line data hub to disseminate Canada’s SDG data, the [Sustainable Development Goals Data Hub](#).<sup>8</sup>

Statistics Canada is responsible for

10 TARGETS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4	
Seven Outcome Targets	Three Implementation Targets
4.1 Universal primary and secondary education	4.a Effective learning environments
4.2 Early childhood development and universal pre-primary education	4.b Scholarships
4.3 Equal access to technical/vocational and higher education	4.c Teachers and educators
4.4 Relevant skills for jobs	
4.5 Gender equality and inclusion	
4.6 Universal youth literacy	
4.7 Education for sustainable development and global citizenship	

<sup>8</sup> The Sustainable Development Goals Data Hub is available at <https://www144.statcan.gc.ca/sdg-odd/index-eng.htm>.

# Primary and Secondary Education (Target 4.1)

## Target 4.1

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

## Indicator 4.1.1

Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex.

Upon completion of the full cycle of primary and secondary education, all children should have established the building blocks of basic literacy and numeracy skills and achieved an array of learning outcomes as defined by and measured against established curricula and official assessment standards, including subject knowledge and cognitive and noncognitive skills that enable children to develop to their full potential (UNESCO, 2016a).

Target 4.1 covers the quality of primary and lower secondary education. The

key concepts to measure include the quality of education and learning in two subject areas (reading and mathematics) at the beginning and the end of primary education and at the end of lower secondary education. Minimum proficiency level (MPL) is the benchmark of basic knowledge in a domain (mathematics, reading, etc.) measured through learning assessments (UIS, 2018c).<sup>10</sup>

In Canada, this indicator has been broken down into six sub-indicators, and data are available for Canada for only the last two sub-indicators (4.1.1.c.1 and 4.1.1.c.2).

## Context

The provision of 12 years<sup>9</sup> of free, publicly funded, inclusive, equitable, quality primary and secondary education—of which at least nine years are compulsory and lead to relevant learning outcomes—should be ensured for all, without discrimination (UNESCO, n.d.). In 2017, 64 million primary-school-age children remained out of school worldwide (UIS, 2019).



<sup>9</sup> In Quebec, all children must attend school from age 6 to 16, or until they receive a diploma awarded by the minister. Not including preschool, a typical general education spans 11 school years and results in a secondary school diploma.

<sup>10</sup> Data for this indicator are drawn from various cross-national learning assessments, including: Programme d'analyse des systèmes éducatifs de la CONFEMEN (PASEC), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), Tercer Estudio Regional Comparativo y Explicativo (TERCE), and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).



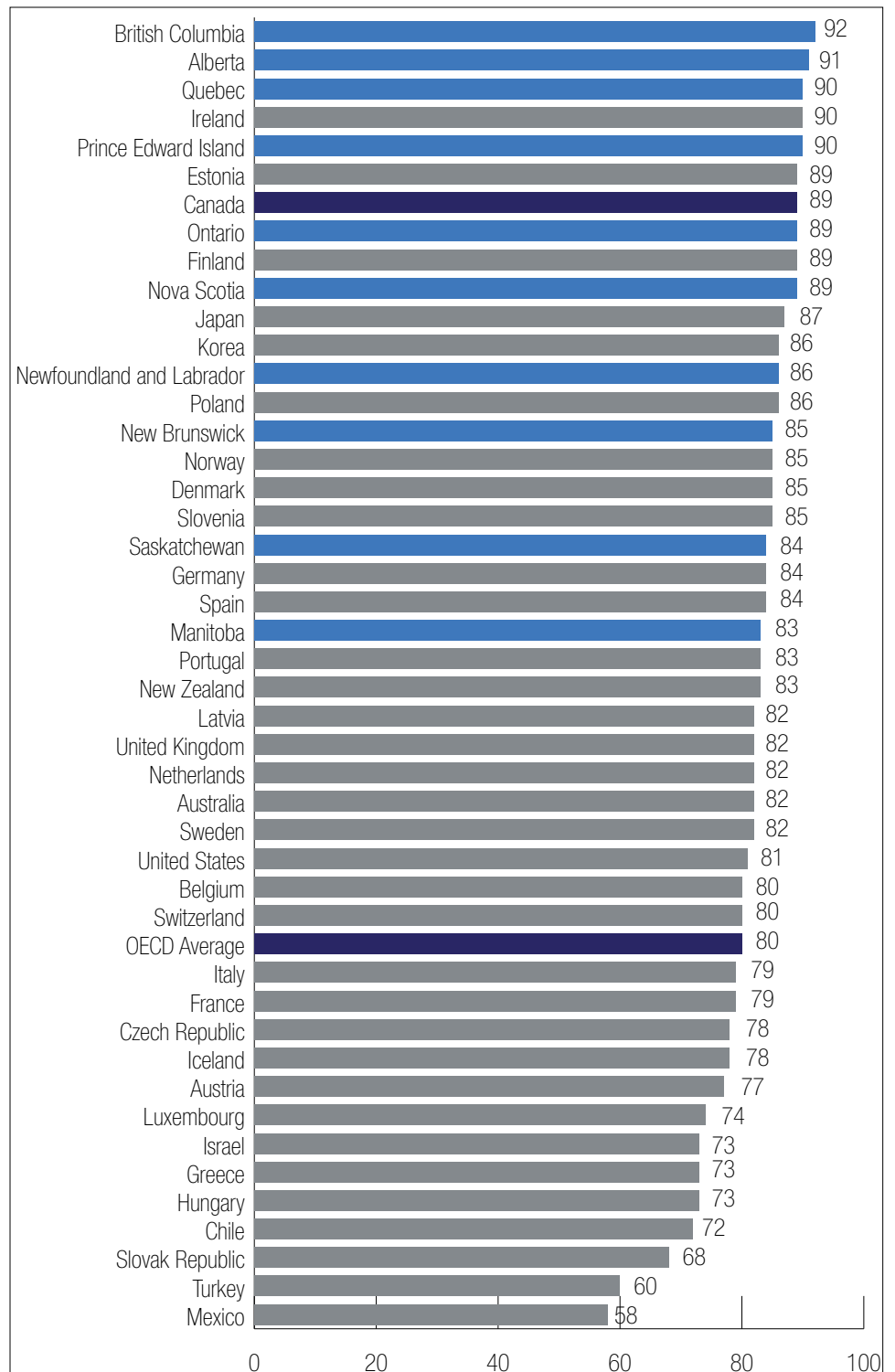
## Observations

According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2015, 15-year-old Canadian students are among the highest performers in reading internationally; all provinces scored at and above the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average in 2015 (O’Grady, et al., 2016), as Figure 3 illustrates. Among 72 participating countries and regions in 2015, Canada’s score of 527 in reading placed it just behind Singapore, and on par with Hong Kong (China).

More specifically for Indicator 4.1.1.c.1, 85 per cent of students in Canada met the minimum proficiency level (defined as level 2) in reading compared to the OECD average of 80 per cent (CESC, 2018).

In each of Canada’s provinces, over 80 per cent of 15-year-olds attained proficiency level 2 or above in reading, with 90 per cent or more of students attaining proficiency level 2 or above in reading in Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia.

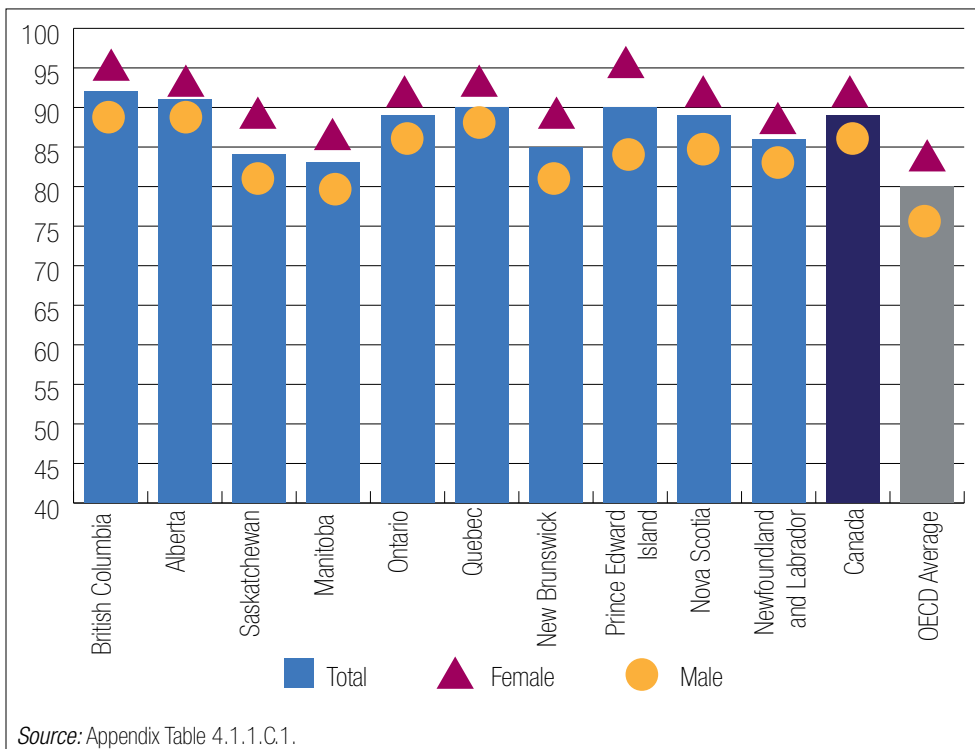
**Figure 3. Proportion of 15-year-olds achieving at least a minimum proficiency level (PISA level 2) in reading, OECD average, OECD countries, Canada and provinces, 2015**



Source: Appendix Table 4.1.1.C.1.

A significantly higher proportion of 15-year-old girls (92 per cent) met the minimum proficiency level in reading compared to boys (86 per cent) at the national level (CESC, 2018), as Figure 4 illustrates. This trend of girls outperforming boys in reading is consistent in Canada and across most OECD countries (O’Grady et al., 2016).

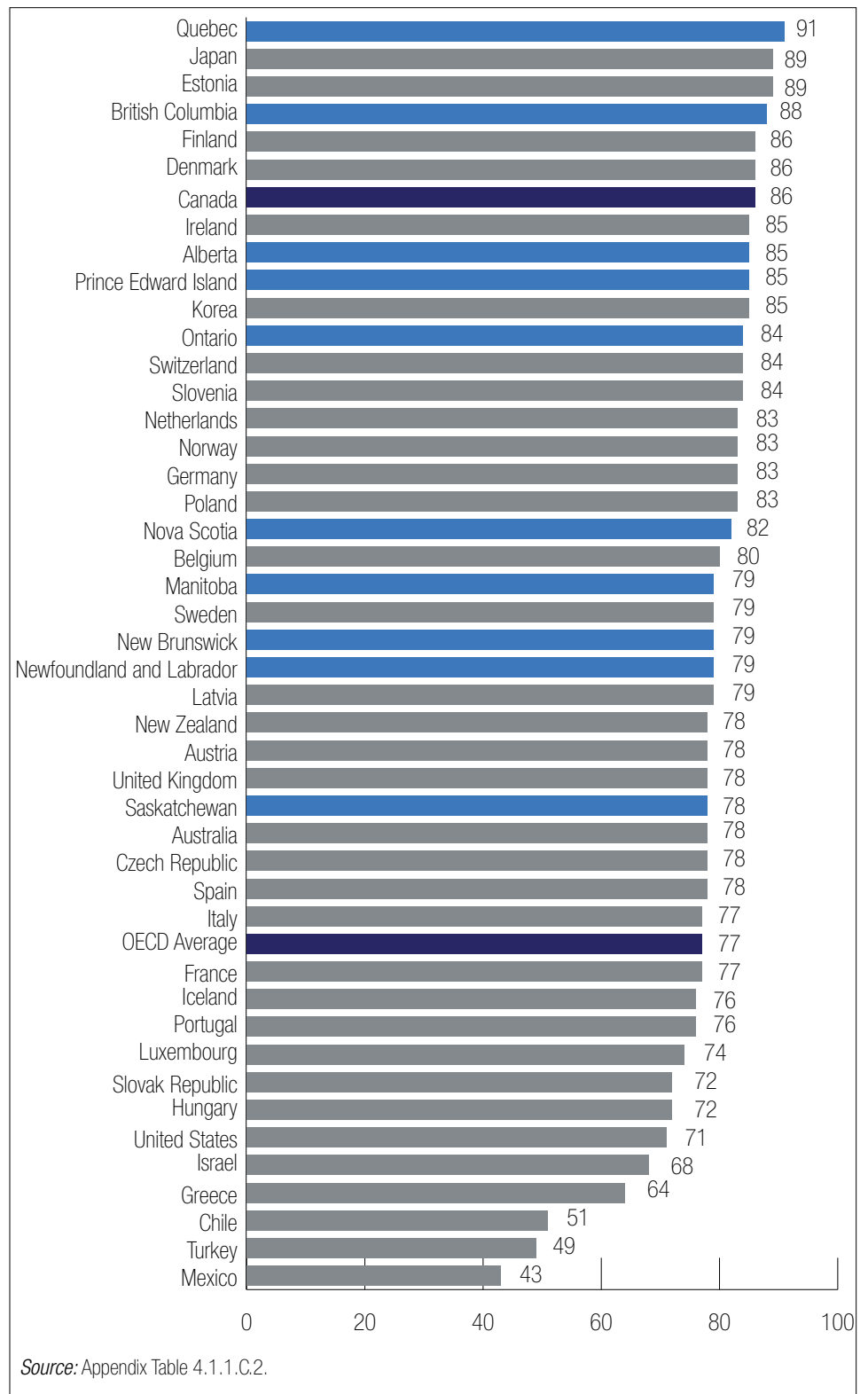
**Figure 4. Proportion of 15-year-olds achieving at least a minimum proficiency level (PISA level 2) in reading, by gender, OECD average, Canada and provinces, 2015**



As Figure 5 illustrates, 86 per cent of Canadian students met the minimum proficiency level in mathematics at the end of lower secondary education, compared to the OECD average of 77 per cent (CESC, 2018).

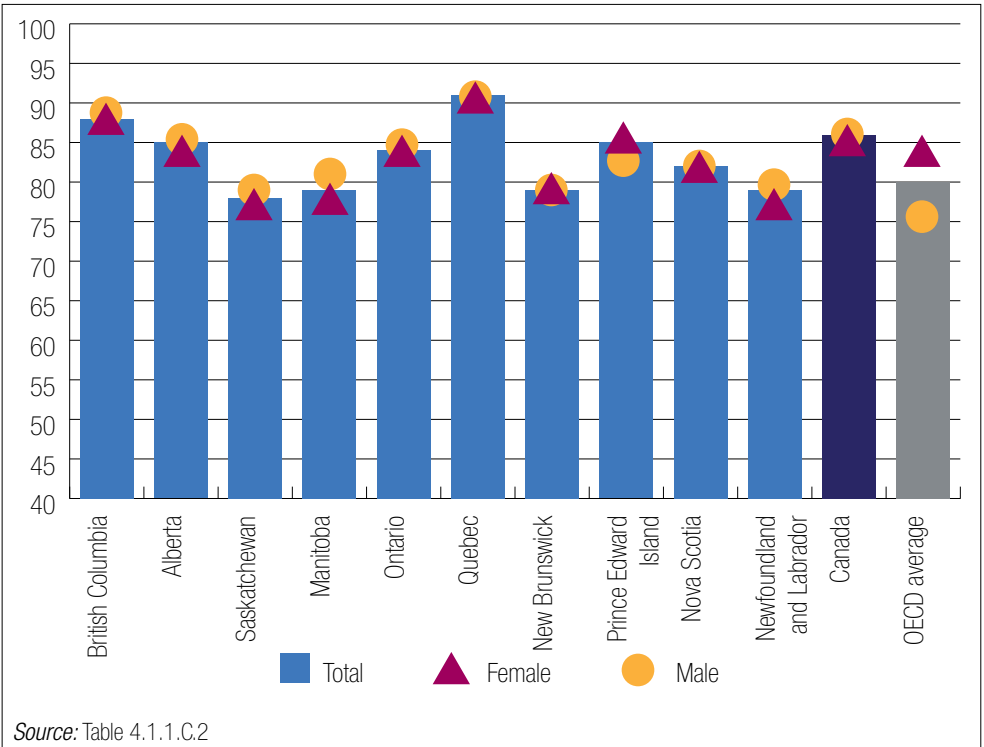
In Quebec, 91 per cent of students attained the minimum proficiency level in mathematics, with attainment ranging from 78 per cent in Saskatchewan to 88 per cent in British Columbia.

**Figure 5. Proportion of 15-year-olds achieving at least a minimum proficiency level (PISA level 2) in mathematics, OECD average, OECD countries, Canada and provinces, 2015**



A slightly higher proportion of 15-year-old boys (86 per cent) met the minimum proficiency level in mathematics when compared to girls (85 per cent). See Figure 6.

**Figure 6. Proportion of 15-year-olds achieving at least a minimum proficiency level (PISA level 2) in mathematics, by gender, OECD average, Canada and provinces, 2015**



## SPOTLIGHT

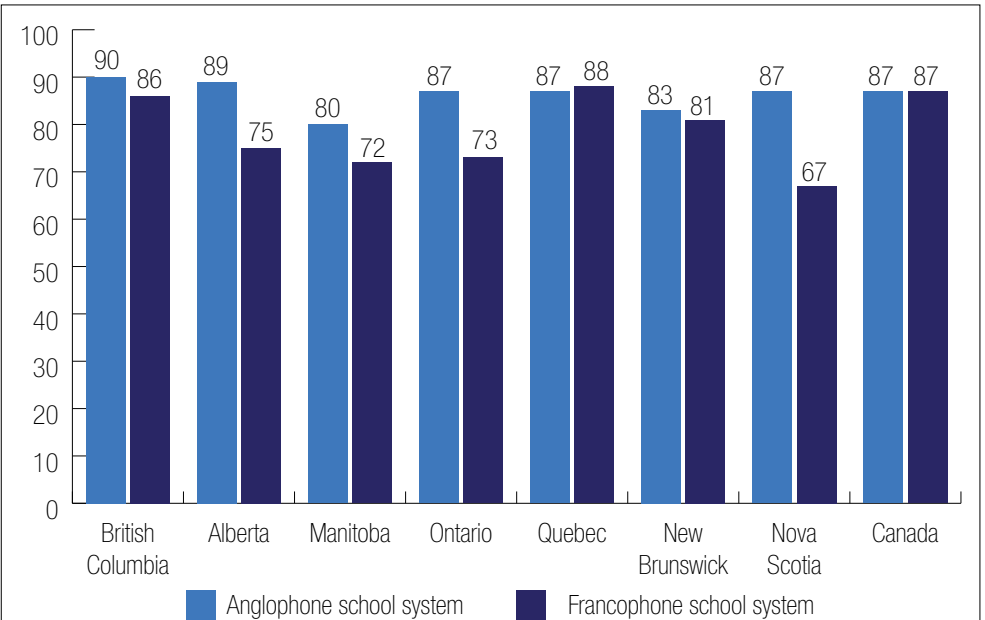
### Reading and mathematics performance among students attending majority- and minority-language school systems

Across the different provinces and territories in Canada, students attending majority-language school systems and those attending minority-language systems perform differently in reading and mathematics.

Seven provinces had sufficiently large samples in the anglophone and francophone school systems for researchers to analyze these gaps (British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia). Researchers compared the performance of the minority-language group (students in francophone school systems in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia and students in the anglophone school system in Quebec) to that of the majority-language group.

The relative performance of students in the two systems varied across provinces and by domain, as Figures 7A and 7B represent. Across Canada, the difference in reading performance between students in the anglophone school systems and those in the francophone school systems was not statistically significant. However, across the provinces, students in the majority-language school systems outperformed their peers in the minority-language school systems in four of the seven provinces. The differences between systems varied (O'Grady et al., 2016, 39) with the exception of Quebec, where differences between francophones and anglophones are not statistically significant.

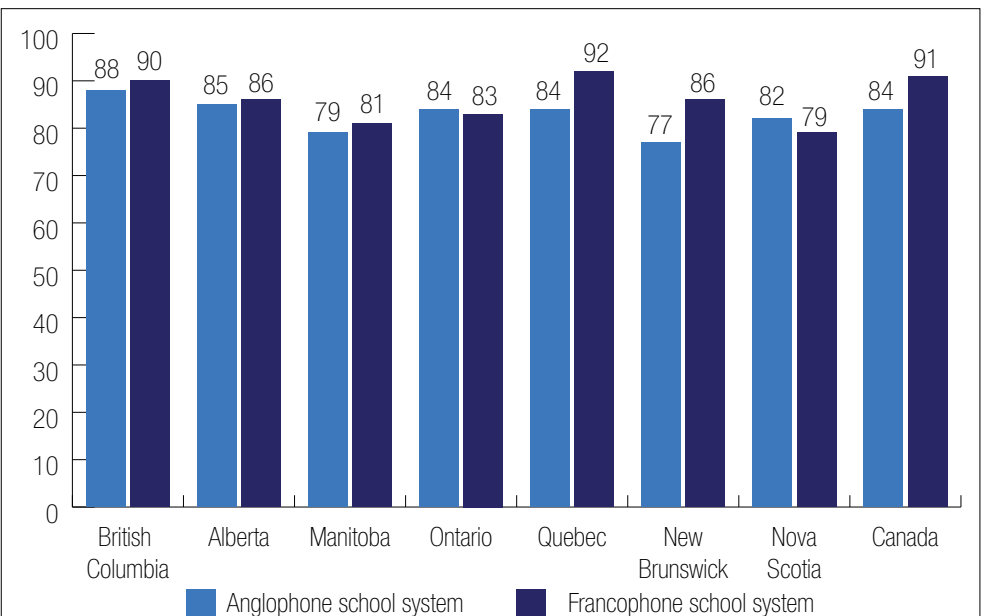
**Figure 7A. Proportion of 15-year-olds achieving at least a minimum proficiency level (PISA level 2) in reading, by language of the school system, Canada and provinces, 2015**



Source: Appendix Table 4.1.1.C.i.

Note: Because of small sample size, results for students in the francophone school system are not reported for Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island. However, they are included in the calculations for the overall Canadian and provincial means.

**Figure 7B. Proportion of 15-year-olds achieving at least a minimum proficiency level (PISA level 2) in mathematics, by language of the school system, Canada and provinces, 2015**



Source: Appendix table 4.1.1.C.i.

Note: Because of small sample size, results for students in the francophone school system are not reported for Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island. However, they are included in the calculations for the overall Canadian and provincial means.



# Early Childhood Education (Target 4.2)



school. Organized learning programs, including early childhood education programs, consist of a coherent sequence of educational activities designed with the intention of achieving predetermined learning outcomes or the accomplishment of a specific set of educational tasks (UIS, 2018a). Access to early childhood development programs, especially for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, can reduce inequality by ensuring that all children begin formal schooling with equal foundations (UNESCO, 2016c). ECCE has also been identified as crucial for cognitive and emotional development (UNESCO, 2019).

## Target 4.2

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early-childhood development, care, and pre-primary education<sup>11</sup> so that they are ready for primary education.

### Indicator 4.2.1

Proportion of children under five years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning, and psychosocial well-being, by sex.

*Indicator 4.2.1 is under development.*

### Indicator 4.2.2

Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex.

## Context

Beginning when children are born, early childhood care and education (ECCE) lays the foundation for children's long-term development, well-being, and health. It builds the competencies and skills that enable people to learn throughout life and to earn a livelihood. ECCE lays the foundation for lifelong learning and supports children's well-being and progressive preparation for primary school entry, an important transition that is often accompanied by increasing expectations of what children should know and be able to do.

As part of Target 4.2, Indicator 4.2.2 measures children's exposure to organized learning activities in the year prior to the start of primary

The final year of organized learning before primary education, as defined in Indicator 4.2.2, is known as Kindergarten in Canada. The 13 provinces and territories each have a dedicated curriculum for Kindergarten.<sup>12</sup> In Canada, Kindergarten is compulsory in only three provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island). However, 97 per cent of children of eligible age attended Kindergarten in Canada in 2016 (CESC, 2018).

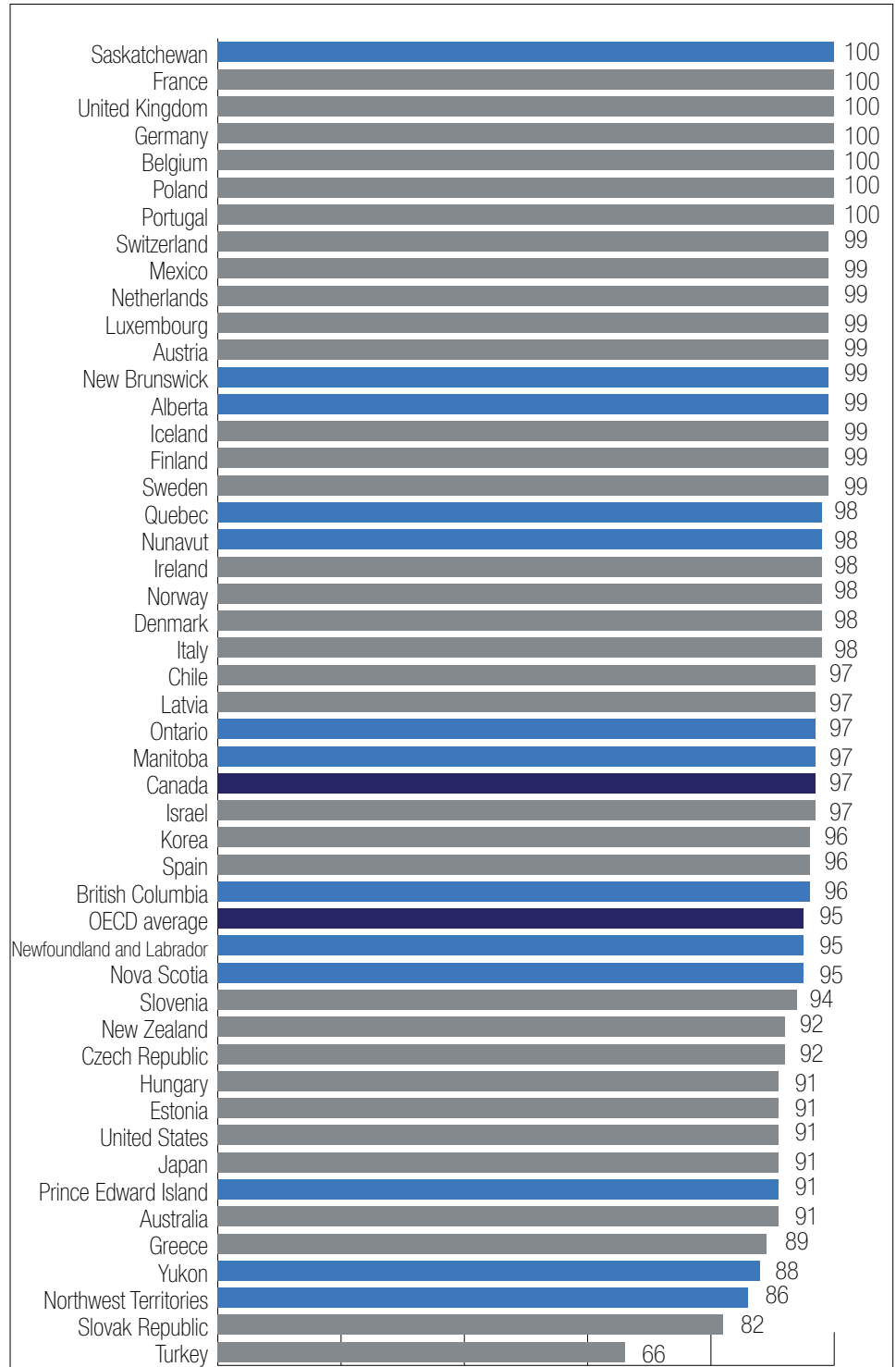
<sup>11</sup> Kindergarten for five-year-olds is compulsory in New Brunswick and is integrated with the primary education curriculum. The term *pre-primary* is typically used to refer to early childhood education outside of the public education system that takes place prior to the Kindergarten year for five-year-olds.

<sup>12</sup> Kindergarten is called Grade Primary in Nova Scotia.

## Observation

As Figure 8 shows, New Brunswick, Alberta, and Saskatchewan had the highest participation rates in organized learning one year before primary school, while Northwest Territories and Yukon had the lowest. On average, most provinces and territories had a higher participation rate in the year of organized learning before primary education than OECD countries (95 per cent), with the exception of Northwest Territories, Prince Edward Island, and Yukon (CESC, 2018).

**Figure 8. Participation rate in organized learning (one year before primary education), OECD average, OECD countries, Canada, provinces, and territories, 2015–2016**



Source: Appendix Table 4.2.2.1.



## SPOTLIGHT

### Pan-Canadian vision for early learning

The early years are a time of discovery when children develop the necessary skills they need to succeed in school and life. That's why Canada's federal, provincial, and territorial governments are working together to provide quality opportunities for early childhood learning and development in Canada.

Recognizing that Canada's early-childhood-learning-and-development systems have been developed by each province or territory to respond to the particular circumstances, geographical situation, and historical and cultural heritage of the populations they serve, ministers responsible for education in Canada have also taken collective action to highlight the importance of the early years. In 2012, ministers released their [CMEC Statement on Play-based Learning](#) to raise awareness about the importance of engaging children through purposeful play-based learning as a means of achieving quality outcomes for early learners.<sup>13</sup>

In 2014, CMEC released its [Early Learning and Development Framework](#), which sets out a pan-Canadian vision for early learning that can be adapted to the unique needs and circumstances of each province and territory.<sup>14</sup> It was designed to serve as a resource to support the development of policies and initiatives by ministries and departments of education and their partners that enhance the quality and continuity of the learning experience in the early years.

In 2017, the [Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework](#) set the foundation for a shared long-term vision where all children can experience the enriching environment of quality early learning and child care that supports their development to reach their full potential.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> CMEC Statement on Play-based Learning is available at [https://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/282/play-based-learning\\_statement\\_EN.pdf](https://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/282/play-based-learning_statement_EN.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Early Learning and Development Framework is available at <https://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/327/2014-07-Early-Learning-Framework-EN.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework is available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/early-learning-child-care/reports/2017-multilateral-framework.html>.

# Technical and Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education (Target 4.3)

## Target 4.3

By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education, including university.

## Indicator 4.3.1

Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and nonformal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex.

## Context

Access to quality learning opportunities beyond secondary education is the key focus of this target, firmly embedding the value of postsecondary education as a sustainable development goal. All

forms of tertiary education have expanded rapidly worldwide, with total enrolment rising from 100 million in 2000 to 199 million in 2013. However, a wide disparity exists in access to tertiary education, in particular at the university level, with regard to gender, social, regional, and ethnic background, and age and disability (UNESCO, 2016a).

In Canada, this target encompasses learning opportunities in apprenticeship and trades, as well as colleges and universities and adult learning (formal and non-formal), each governed by different policy frameworks and institutional arrangements and approaches. The OECD's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) has been selected as a direct measure to monitor Indicator 4.3.1.

## SPOTLIGHT

### CMEC Reference Framework for Successful Student Transitions

Transitions from education into career pathways are increasingly complex. Students are called upon to navigate multiple career transitions (learning and work) within constantly evolving and sometimes unpredictable labour markets. Some students can find it challenging to make informed, effective choices. More than ever, students need a set of advanced career-management skills and tailored supports to manoeuvre within and between learning and work.

The CMEC Reference Framework for Successful Student Transitions has been developed to inform, encourage, and support education stakeholders as they respond to the changing nature of student transitions.<sup>16</sup> The central component of the reference framework is a series of benchmarks intended to support and promote good practices in student transitions. These benchmarks provide provincial and territorial governments with common reference points to guide assessment, development, exchange, collaboration with key stakeholders, evaluation, and continuous improvement.



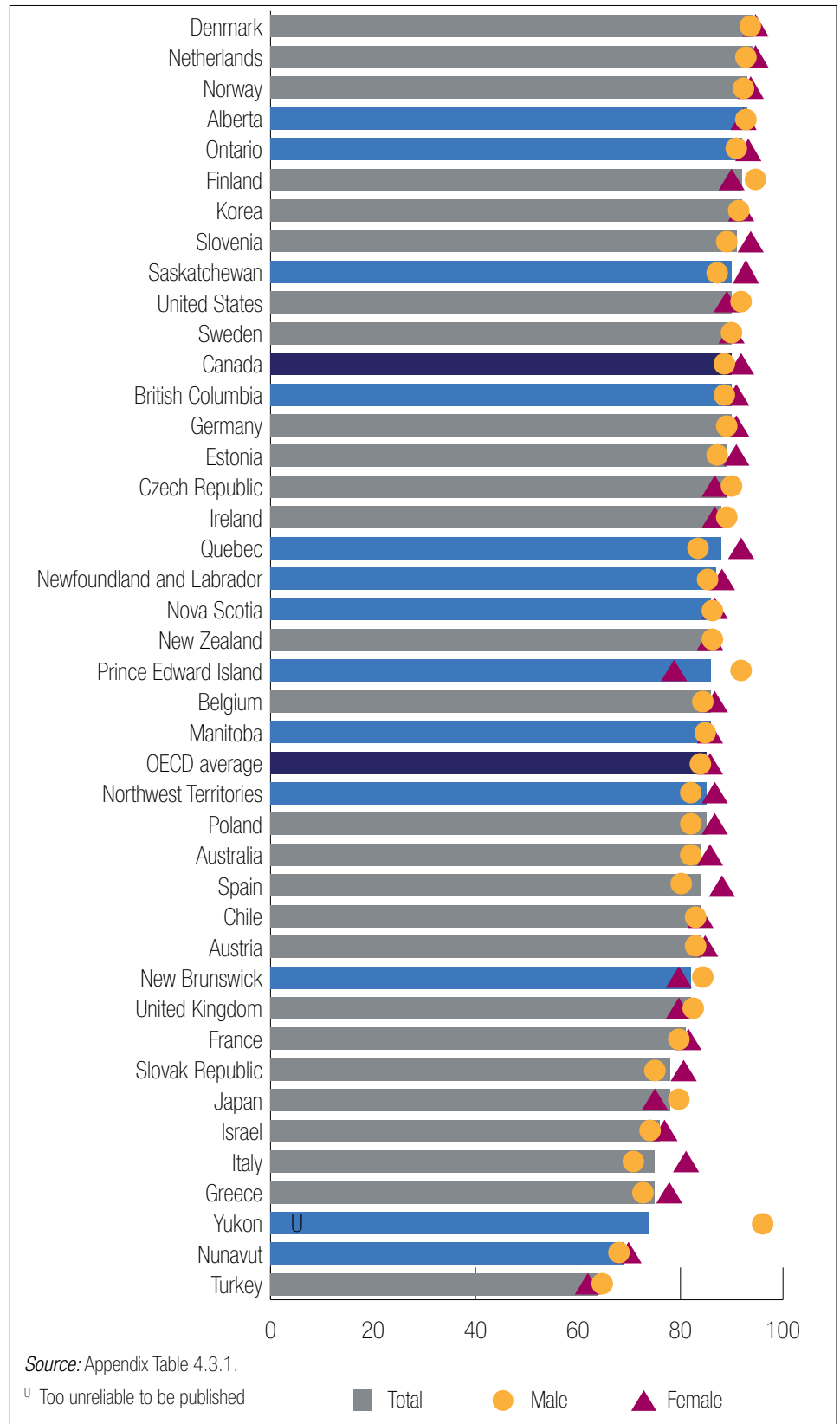
<sup>16</sup> CMEC Reference Framework for Successful Student Transitions is available at <https://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/372/CMEC-Reference-Framework-for-Successful-Student-Transitions-EN.pdf>.

## Observations

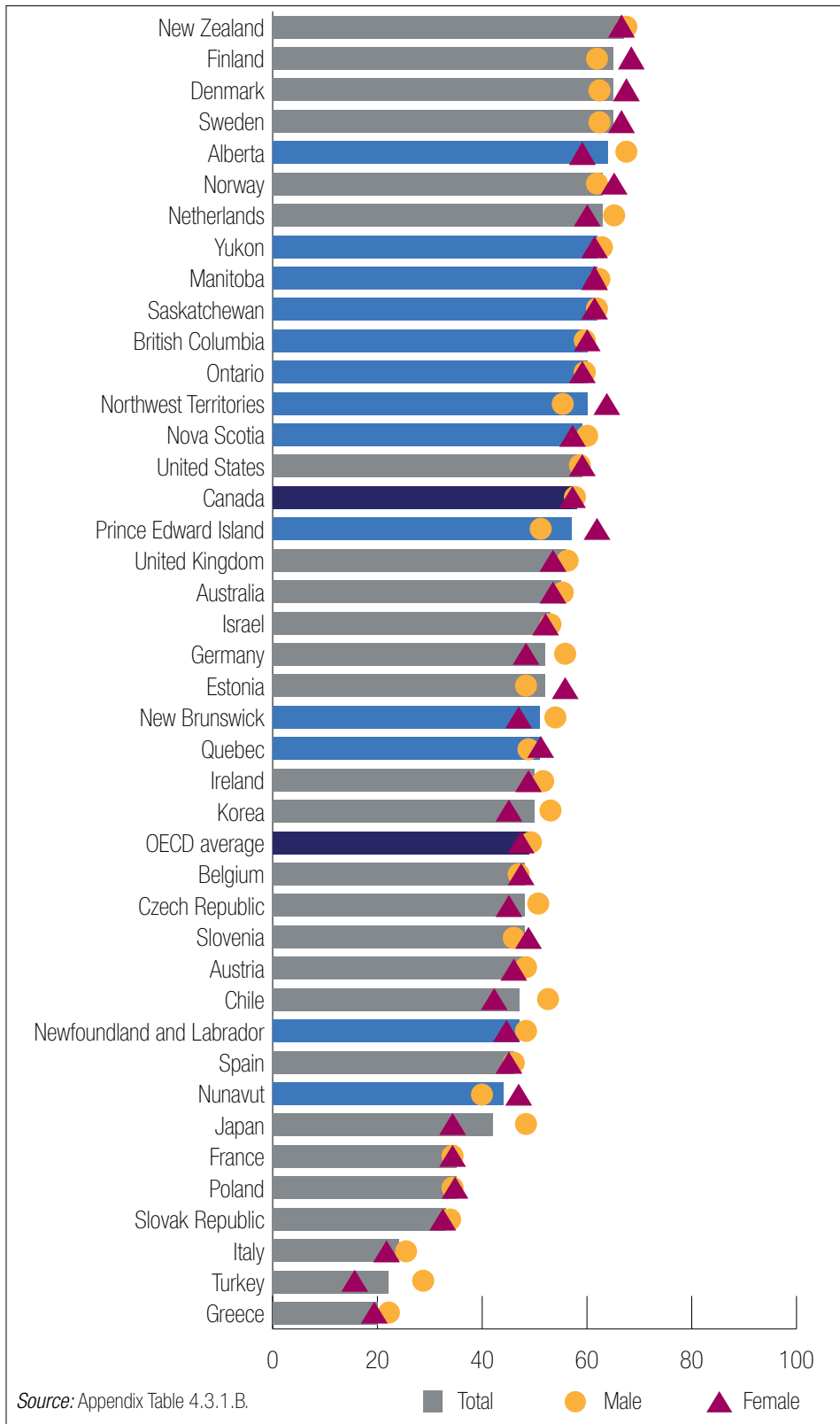
Figures 9A and 9B show the participation rate in formal and/or nonformal education and training of populations aged 16 to 24 and 25 to 65 respectively, by gender, for OECD countries, Canada, and provinces and territories in Canada.

Canadian youth aged 16 to 24 tend to have a significantly higher participation rate in formal and nonformal education than their counterparts in the OECD. Youth aged 16 to 24 have significantly higher participation rates than the OECD average in Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, and at the national level. Among the provinces and territories, Nunavut was the only one where the participation rate was significantly lower than the OECD average.

**Figure 9A. Participation rate of the population aged 16 to 24 in formal and/or nonformal education and training in the previous 12 months, by gender, OECD average, Canada, provinces, and territories, countries, 2012**



**Figure 9B. Participation rate of the population aged 25 to 65 in formal and/or nonformal education and training in the previous 12 months, by gender, OECD average, OECD countries Canada, provinces, and territories, 2012**



More men than women participated in formal and nonformal education in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Alberta. More women than men participated in formal and nonformal education in Prince Edward Island, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Quebec (Figure 9B).

In Canada, for adults 25 to 65 years of age, the participation rate in formal and nonformal education (58 per cent) was higher than the OECD average (49 per cent). Alberta had the highest participation rate among provinces and territories (64 per cent) and, like most province and territories, placed higher than all of the G7 countries with available data. Although higher than the participation rate in both Italy (42 per cent) and Japan (42 per cent), Nunavut had the lowest participation rate (44 per cent) in Canada.

Source: Appendix Table 4.3.1.B.

# Skills for Work (Target 4.4)

## Target 4.4

By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship.

### Indicator 4.4.1

Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill.

### Context

This target aims to encourage focus on the skills youth and adults need for the world of work. Recognizing the difficulty of monitoring such a broad target, the SDG monitoring framework has focused on ICT and digital literacy skills (UNESCO, 2017) because these skills determine the effective use of ICT, which has become ubiquitous in the world of work today.

Relevant skills for work allow youth and adults to actively participate in the labour force and remain relevant and responsive to technological and macroeconomic change. Skills for work are acquired in almost all education programs and, critically, can be acquired outside education systems—for example, within families, communities, and workplaces (UNESCO, 2016b).



Indicator 4.4.1 measures the percentage of youth (aged 16 to 24 years) and adults (aged 25 to 65 years) who report having undertaken certain computer-related activities in the 12 months preceding the survey. The computer-related activities captured in this indicator include e-mail use, use of the Internet to better understand issues, use of the Internet to conduct transactions, use of spreadsheet software, use of word-processor software, use of programming language, and participation in real-time discussions on the Internet.

### SPOTLIGHT

#### Promising practices that assist in aligning skills and education systems with the labour market's needs

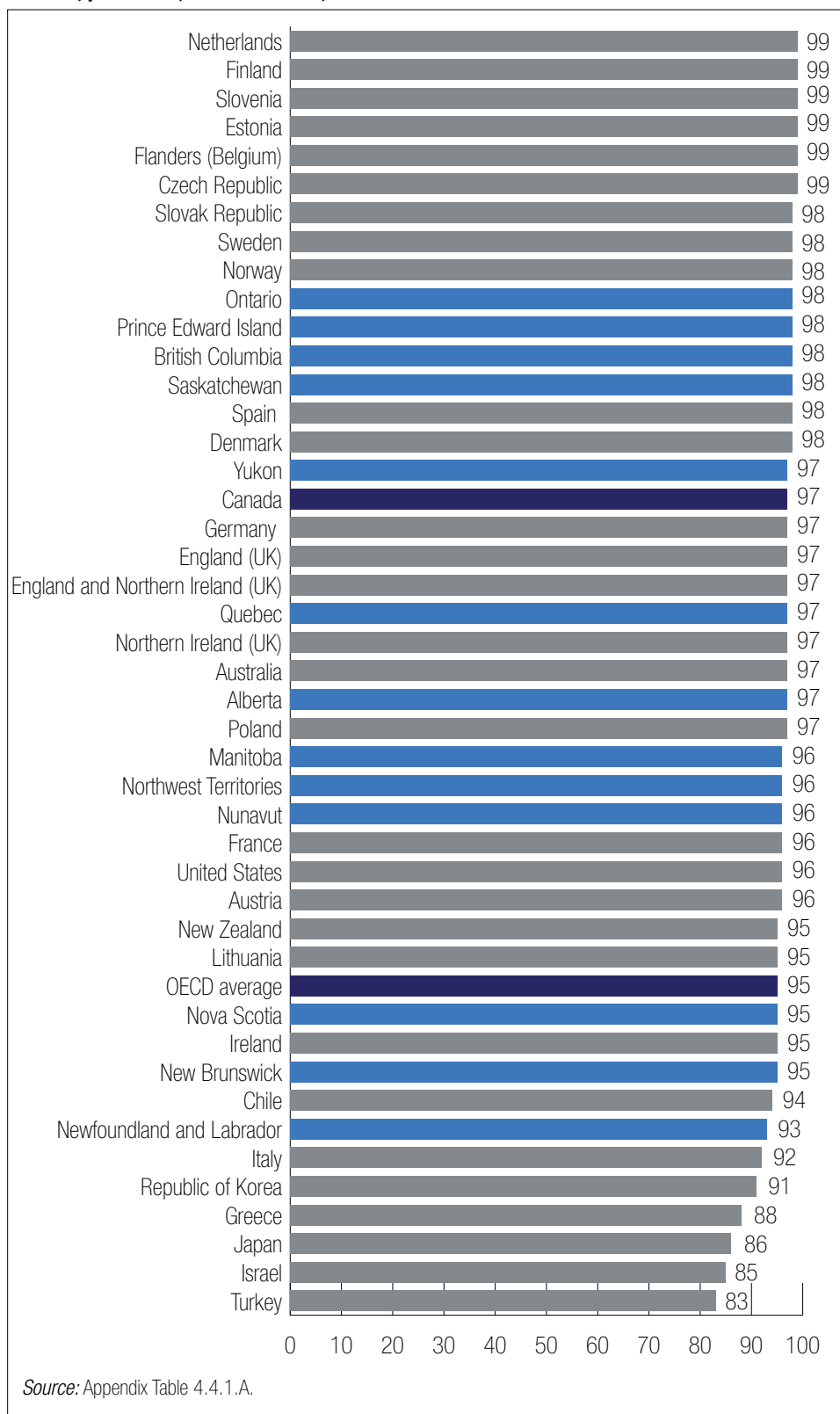
A highly skilled workforce is essential to help businesses grow and compete in an increasingly knowledge-based economy and to secure Canada's economic future. All provinces and territories across Canada are committed to delivering effective education, training, and employment programs and supports that provide the skills individuals need to participate fully in society and the labour market. A *Toolkit of Promising Practices* brings together best practices from across Canada that help align education and training systems with the emerging needs of the labour markets in every province and territory.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> The Toolkit of Promising Practices is available at [cmec.netedit.info/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/349/Toolkit\\_jan15-2016\\_EN.pdf](http://cmec.netedit.info/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/349/Toolkit_jan15-2016_EN.pdf).

## Observations

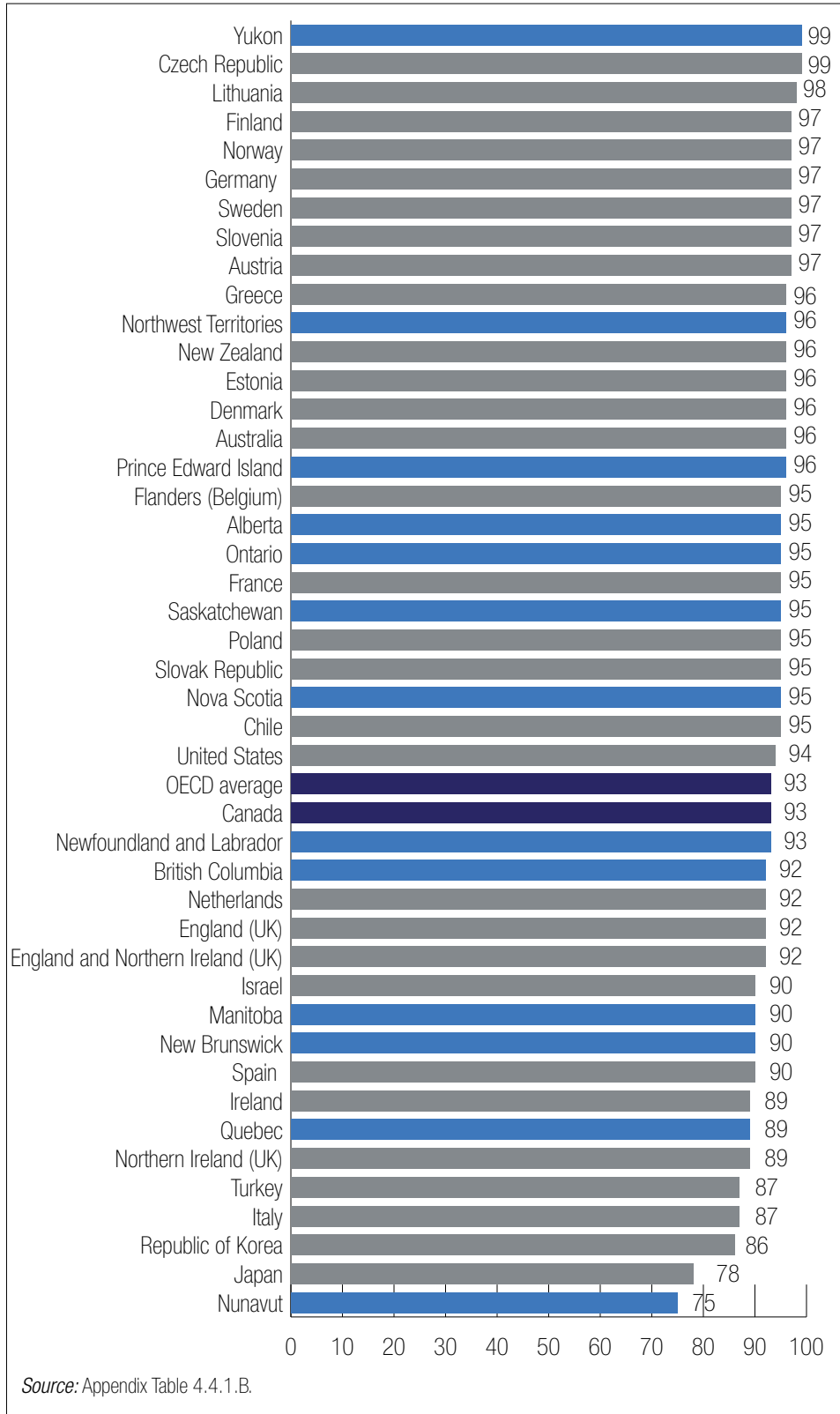
In Canada ICT skills use among youth aged 16 to 24 is equal to or higher than the average for OECD countries in all skill types except use of spreadsheets and programming language, as Figures 10A through 10G indicate.<sup>18</sup>

**Figure 10A. Proportion of the population aged 16 to 24 with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, using e-mail, OECD average, OECD countries, Canada, provinces, and territories, 2012**



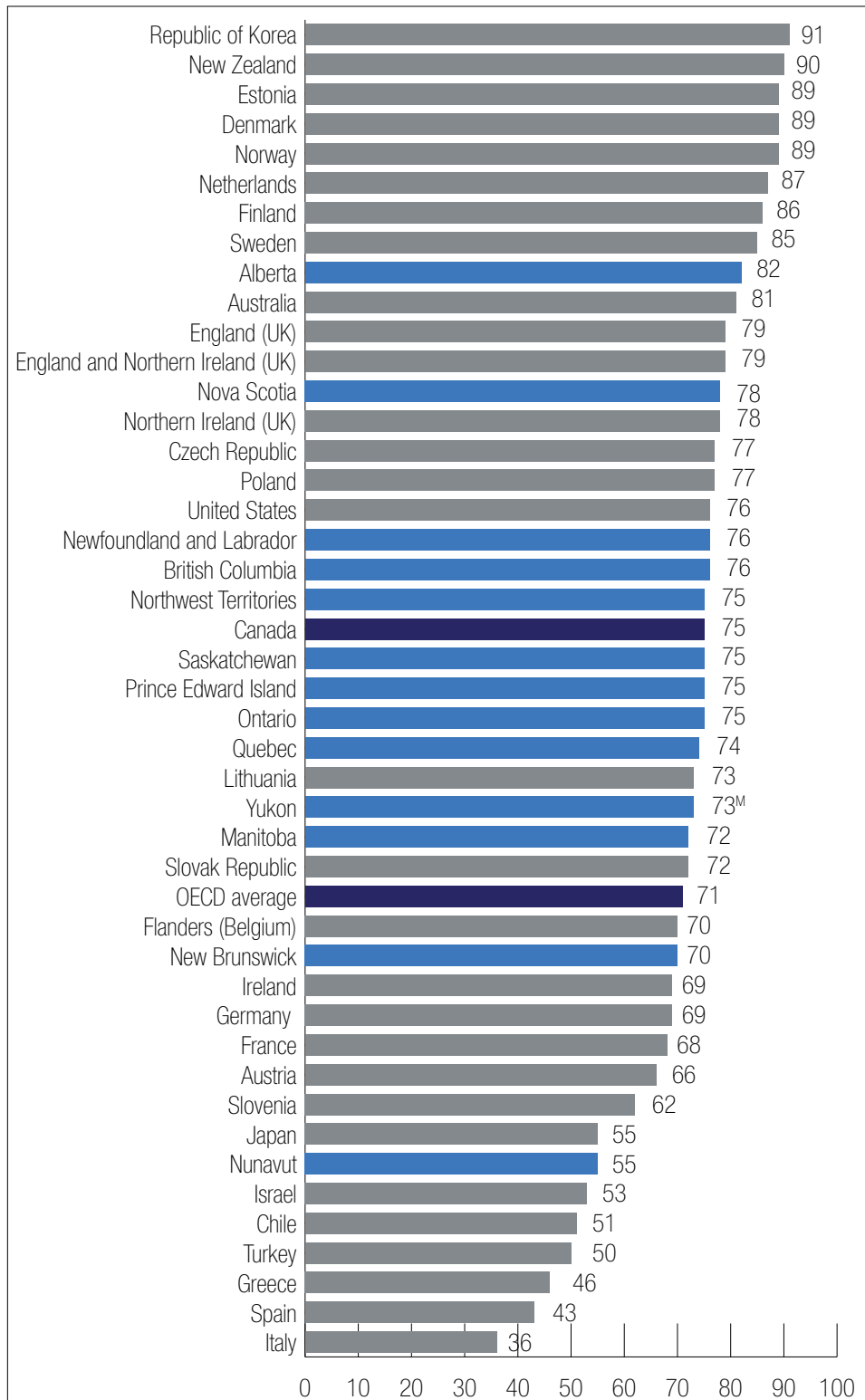
<sup>18</sup> For information on the population aged 25 to 65, see accompanying data tables in the appendix.

**Figure 10B. Proportion of population aged 16 to 24 with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, using the Internet to better understand issues, OECD average, OECD countries, Canada, provinces, and territories, 2012**





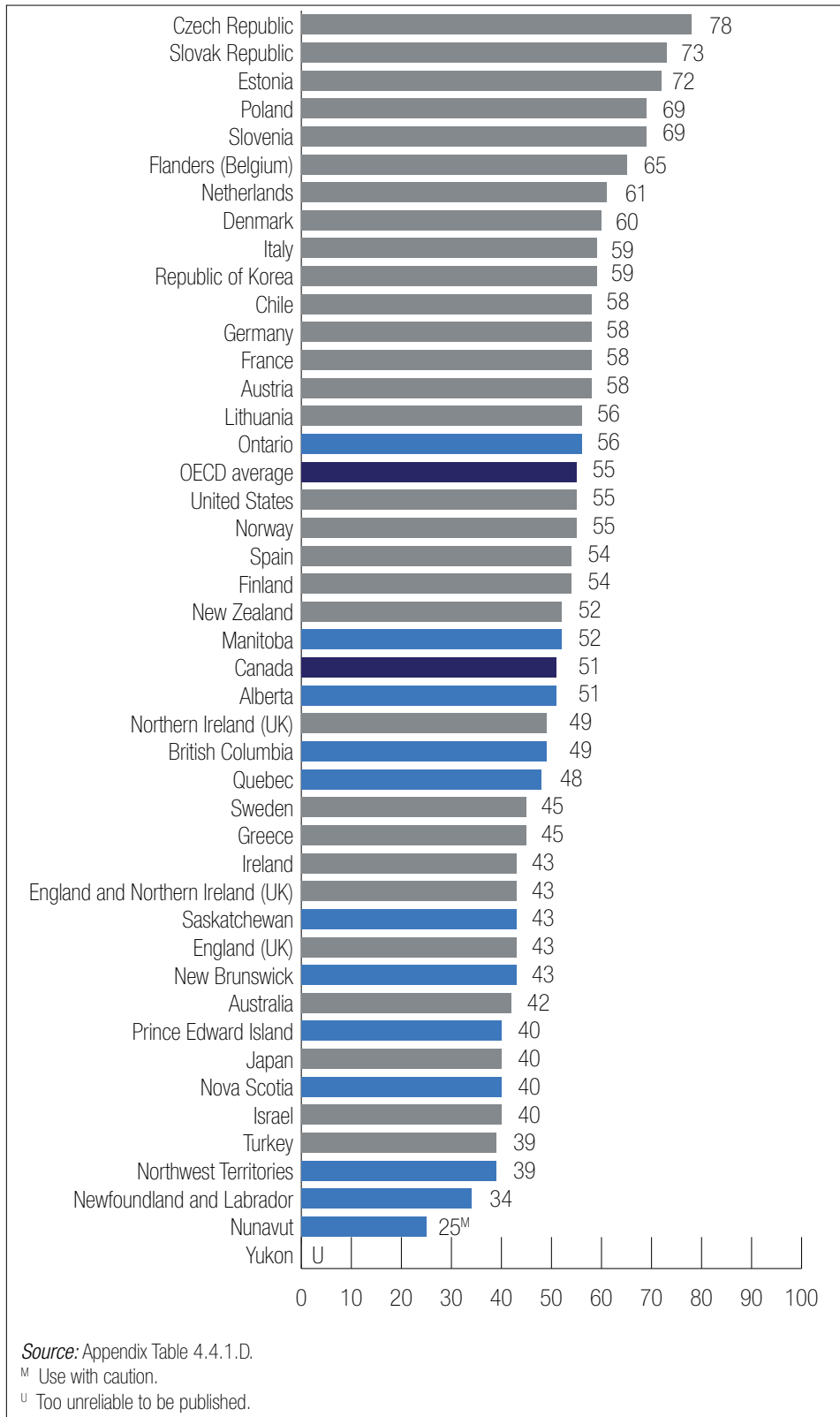
**Figure 10C. Proportion of the population aged 16 to 24 with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, using the Internet to conduct transactions, OECD average, OECD countries, Canada, provinces, and territories, 2012**



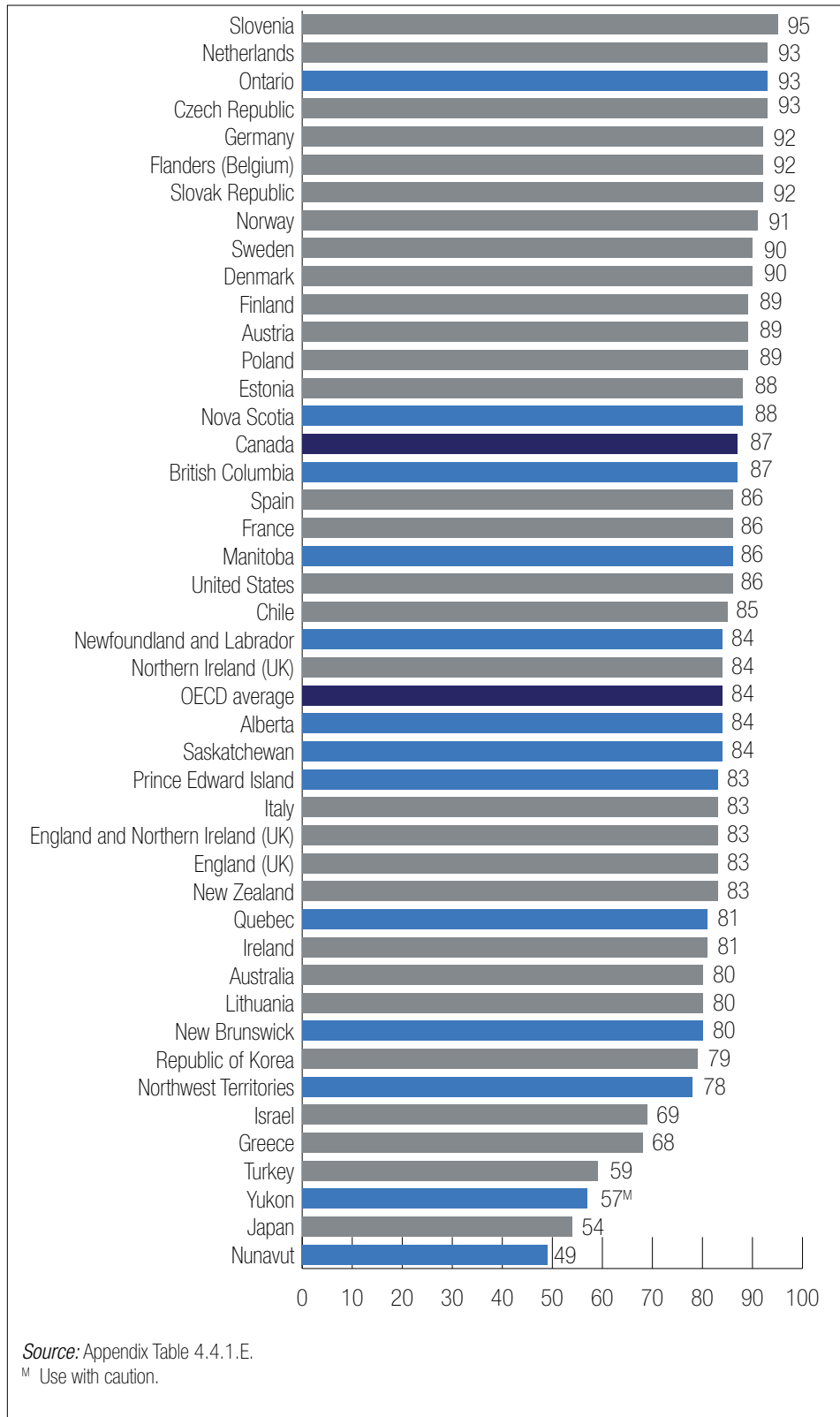
Source: Appendix Table 4.4.1.C.

<sup>M</sup> Use with caution.

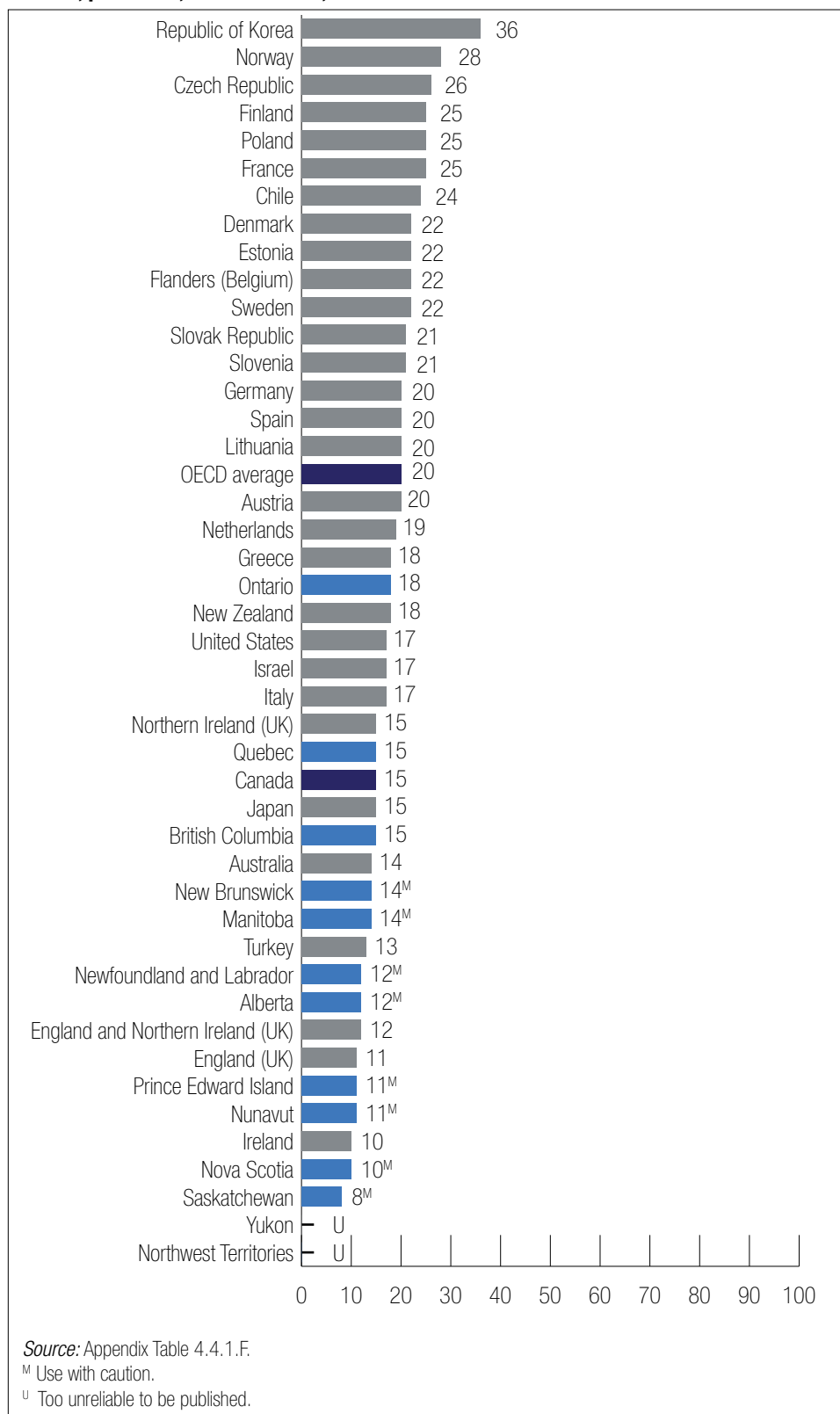
**Figure 10D. Proportion of population aged 16 to 24 with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, usage of spreadsheet software, OECD average, OECD countries, Canada, provinces, and territories, 2012**



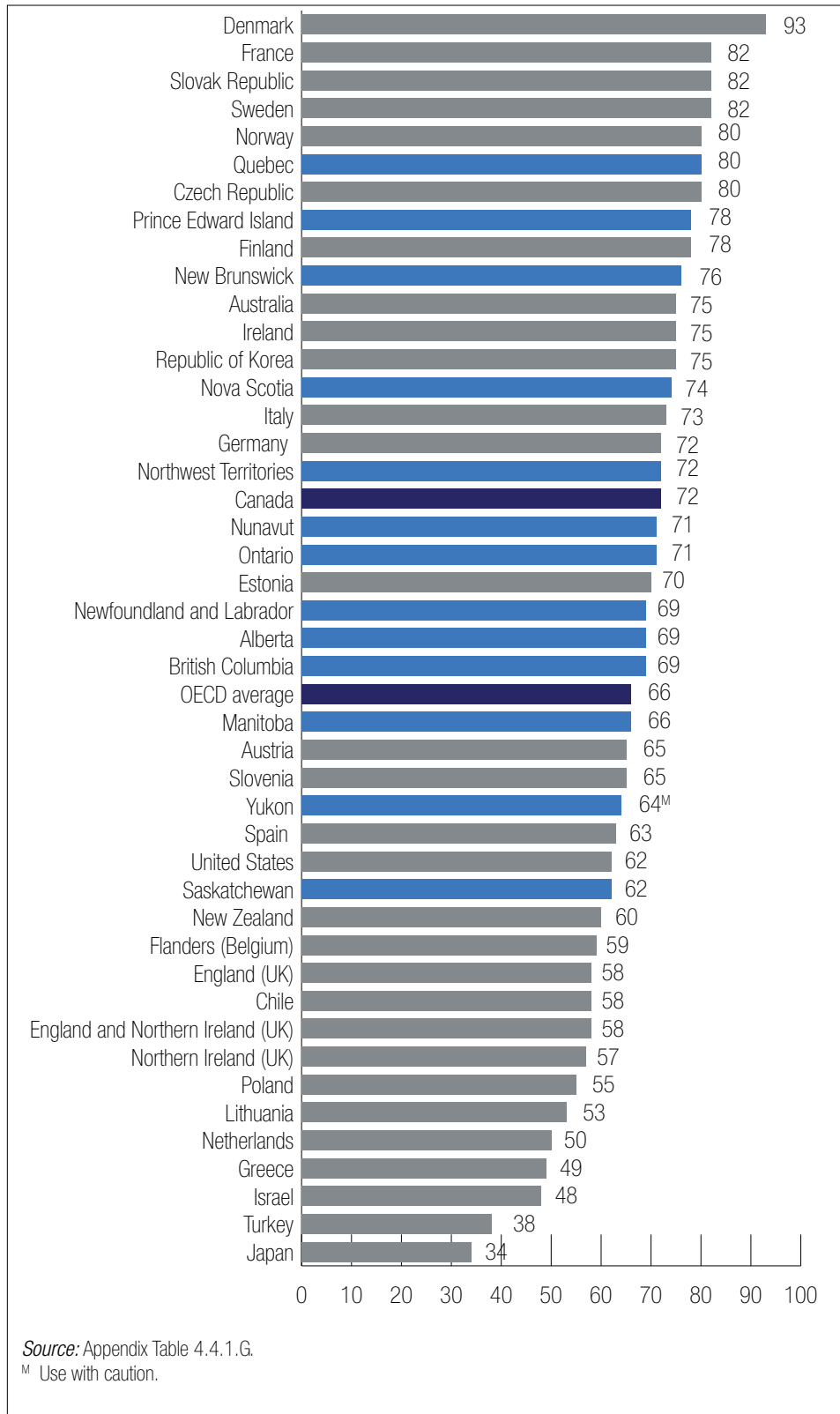
**Figure 10E. Proportion of population aged 16 to 24 with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, usage of word processor, OECD average, OECD countries, Canada, provinces, and territories, 2012**



**Figure 10F. Proportion of population aged 16 to 24 with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, usage of programming language, OECD average, OECD countries, Canada, provinces, and territories, 2012**



**Figure 10G. Proportion of population aged 16 to 24 with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, participating in real-time discussions on the Internet, OECD average, OECD countries, Canada, provinces, and territories, 2012**



In Canada and in OECD countries, youth (aged 16 to 24) tended to use certain ICT technologies, such as word processors, spreadsheets, and programming language, more widely than adults (aged 25 to 65). Youth in Canada, however, used certain ICTs such as spreadsheet software and programming languages less widely than their counterparts in OECD countries.

In contrast, adults (aged 25 to 65) in Canada tended to use ICTs at proportions equal to or greater than their counterparts in OECD countries. While findings at the national level show some overarching trends, findings at the provincial and territorial level often reveal a more nuanced and complex picture of ICT use.

At the national level, both youth and adults were slightly more likely to use e-mail in everyday life than the OECD average. In similar proportions, most adults in OECD countries and in Canada appear to use the Internet to better understand various issues in their everyday lives. There are only slight differences in Internet use to better understand various issues between the 16-to-24 age group and the 25-to-65 age group.

However, the use of word processors in everyday life appears to differ by age. The proportion of adults who reported using a word processor in everyday life was significantly higher among 16 to 24 year-olds than 25 to 65 year-olds in most provinces and territories.

# Equity in Education (Target 4.5)

## Target 4.5

By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including people with disabilities, Indigenous people, and children in vulnerable situations.

### Indicator 4.5.1

Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile, and others such as disability status, Indigenous people, and conflict-affected, as data become available) measure for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated.

### Context

Equity is one of the most prominent features of the Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030. This term broadly refers to different concepts related to fairness and compensatory actions that recognize disadvantage. The parity index is the key indicator that will be used for global monitoring across all disaggregated indicators. As a result, equity-related indicators account for the largest share of the data needed to monitor SDG 4 as a whole.

To achieve inclusive education, policies should aim to transform education systems so they can better respond to learners' diversity and needs. This is key to fulfilling the right to education. Equity is related not only to access, but also to participation and achievement of all students, with special attention to those who are excluded, vulnerable, or at risk of being marginalized.

Given the pluralistic nature of Canadian society, Canadian educators, government officials, nongovernmental organizations, and civil society work to eliminate systematic discrimination and provide equitable and fair access to quality education for all (CMEC, 2018b).

### Observations

*Data sources are being explored.*

Canadian results in science are characterized by relatively high levels of equity. A way of studying differences in achievement is to look at the distribution of scores within a population (O'Grady et al., 2016). The difference between the mean score of students at the 90th percentile and those at the 10th percentile is often used as a proxy for equity in educational outcomes. This proxy or difference represents the relative distribution of scores or the gap that exists between students with the highest and lowest levels of performance within each province or territory.

For Canada overall, those in the highest decile scored 240 points higher than those in the lowest decile. This compares to 247 across OECD countries (O'Grady et al., 2016, 24). For reading, differences range from 218 in Prince Edward Island to 244 in Ontario, while for mathematics, they ranged from 198 in Prince Edward Island to 227 in Quebec. In all provinces, the difference in performance between high achievers and low achievers was smaller than the OECD average. This indicates that Canada's education systems continue to achieve a high degree of equity (ibid., 35).

Although high-achieving countries tend to have a larger gap, high achievement does not necessarily come at the cost of equity. Notably, Singapore and Japan achieved higher average scores compared to Canada (556 and 538 respectively), but only Japan has similar equity levels when it comes to the difference in the achievement gap (271 and 243 respectively) (ibid., 24).



## SPOTLIGHT

### Indigenous Education

Indigenous peoples are linguistically, culturally, and politically diverse. However, all Indigenous peoples in Canada have experienced colonization processes that have undermined Indigenous young people's access to their identity, language, and culture. Indigenous children have not generally had access to the same quality of education that other children in their country have had access to. In combination these two forces have undermined the educational opportunities and outcomes for successive generations of Indigenous children and young people—at times with catastrophic effects.

Since 2005, education systems across Canada have made it a priority to support First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students to achieve their full potential. With the focus on improving Indigenous education, improving student achievement and well-being, and closing the achievement gap between Indigenous students and all students, successive [pan-Canadian action plans](#) over the last decade have led to improvements by sharing best practices in Indigenous education, strengthening the capacity for evidence-based decision making, and working to support teacher training.<sup>19</sup>

Actions under way in individual schools, education systems, and pan-Canadian forums have been designed to improve opportunities for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students to increase all students' knowledge and awareness about Indigenous histories, cultures, and perspectives. [Promising Practices in Supporting Success for Indigenous Students](#) identifies promising strategies, policies, programs, and practices in Canada that support improved learning outcomes for Indigenous students to build an empirical evidence base on Indigenous students in education.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Pan-Canadian action plans are available at [https://www.cmec.ca/53/Indigenous\\_Education.html](https://www.cmec.ca/53/Indigenous_Education.html).

<sup>20</sup> Promising Practices in Supporting Success for Indigenous Students is available at <http://www.oecd.org/education/promising-practices-in-supporting-success-for-indigenous-students-9789264279421-en.htm>.



# Literacy and Numeracy (Target 4.6)

## Target 4.6

By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.

### Indicator 4.6.1a

Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional literacy skills by sex.

### Indicator 4.6.1b

Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional numeracy skills by sex.

## Context

Literacy and numeracy are lifelong and active processes that begin in the early years and develop throughout one's life. To succeed in today's technologically driven and interconnected world, students require strong literacy and numeracy skills.

Key concepts to measure in Target 4.6 include proficiency in literacy and numeracy—these skills are foundational in a continuum of learning that enables individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society.

Indicators 4.6.1 a and b are therefore measures of the proportion of a given population achieving level 2 proficiency in literacy and numeracy, as defined in PIAAC.



## SPOTLIGHT

### PIAAC in Canada

From November 2011 to June 2012, over 27,000 Canadians aged 16 to 65 completed the OECD's PIAAC study, joining over 100,000 people worldwide in completing this survey. The resulting data on literacy and numeracy provide a rich evidence base about skills in today's societies and economies worldwide. In Canada, PIAAC data have been used to better understand the relationship between skills and a host of issues and topics, from health and civic and social engagement, immigration in Canada, and postsecondary education. Through [www.piaac.ca](http://www.piaac.ca) education policy-makers and partners can access data and analysis on literacy and numeracy skills in Canada and their importance for society and the economy, including:

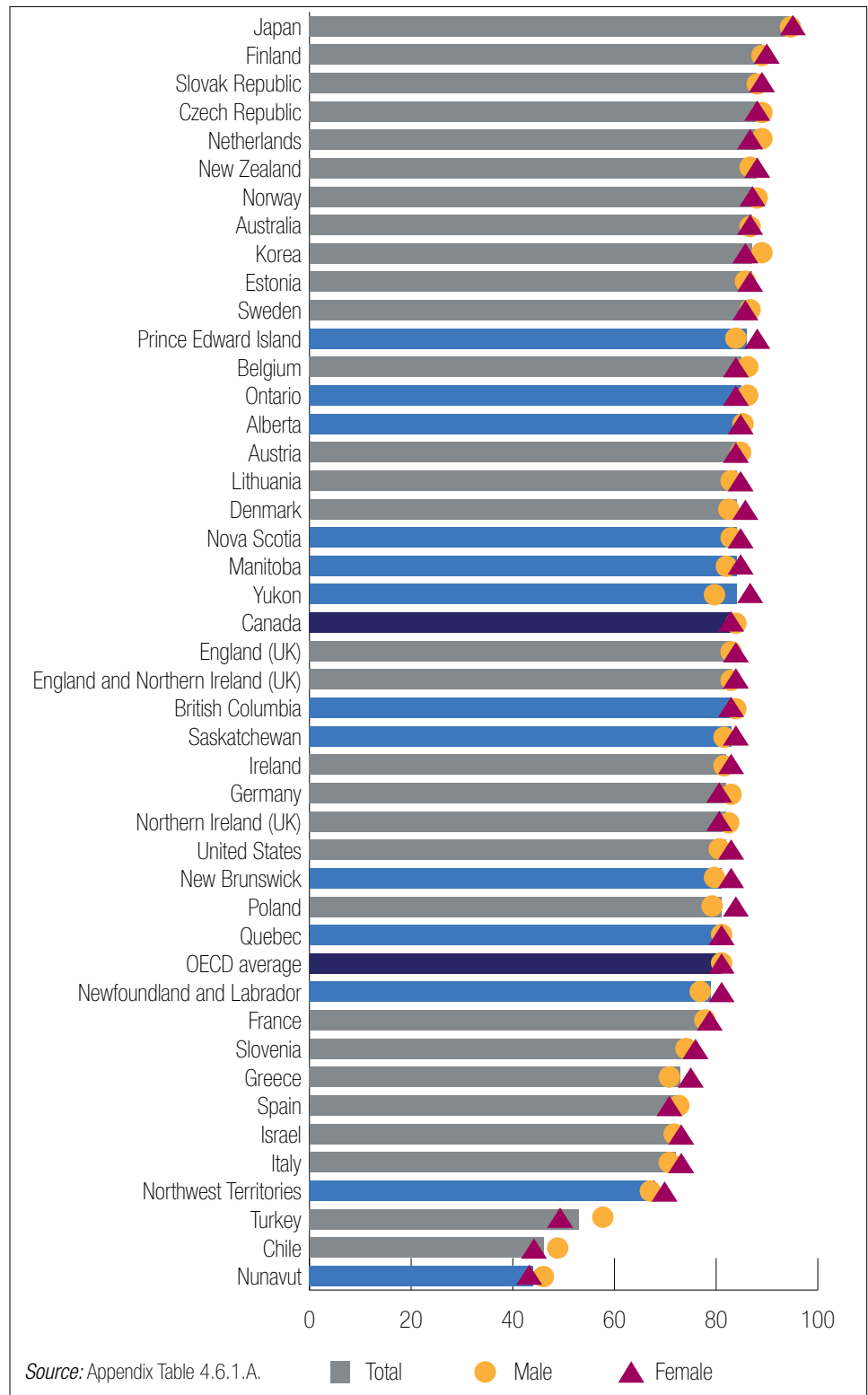
- *The Health and Social Dimensions of Adult Skills in Canada: Findings from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) (2018)*
- *Skills Proficiency of Immigrants in Canada: Findings from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) (2017)*
- *In Focus: PIAAC in Canada—What Is the Role of Education in Developing Literacy and Numeracy Skills in the Territories? (2016)*
- *Postsecondary Education and Skills in Canada: Findings from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) (2016)*
- *Skills in Canada: First Results from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) (2013).*

## Observations

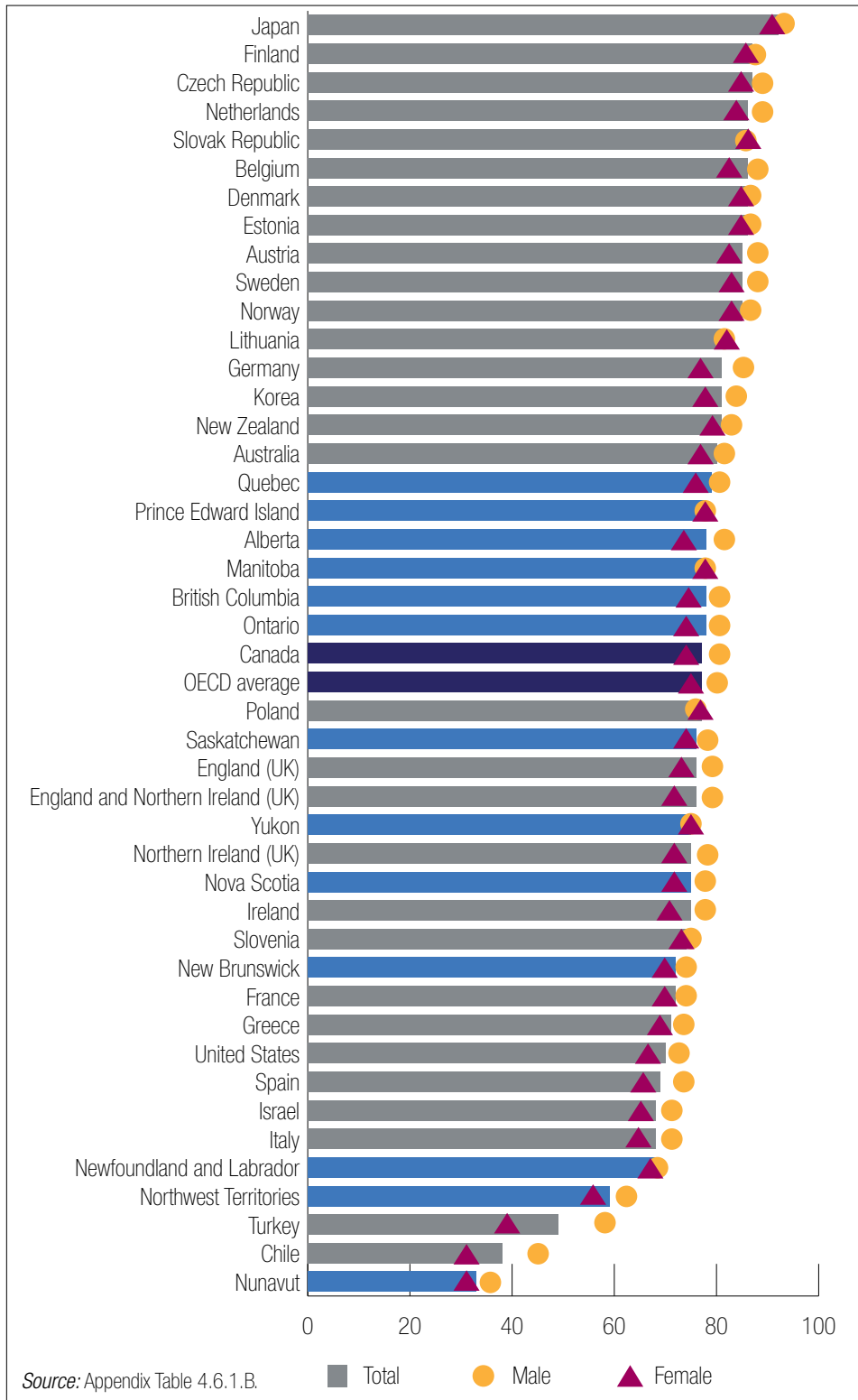
Figures 11A and 11B show the proportion of the population aged 16 to 65 scoring at level 2 or above in literacy and numeracy respectively, by gender, for OECD countries and Canadian provinces and territories.

In Canada, the proportion of youth and adults aged 16 to 65 achieving at least level 2 or above in literacy skills (83.5 per cent) was slightly higher than the OECD average (80.8 per cent) in PIAAC 2012. Most provinces and territories in Canada had a comparable proportion of youth and adults aged 16 to 65 who scored at or above PIAAC's proficiency level 2 compared to the OECD average. Among provinces and territories, the highest proportion of adults aged 16 to 65 who scored at or above PIAAC's literacy proficiency level 2 were in Prince Edward Island (86 per cent), Ontario, and Alberta (85 per cent) while the lowest proportion live in the Northwest Territories (68 per cent) and Nunavut (44 per cent).

**Figure 11A. Proportion of population aged 16 to 65 scoring at level 2 or above in literacy, by gender, OECD average, OECD countries, Canada, provinces, and territories, 2012**



**Figure 11B. Proportion of population aged 16 to 65 scoring at level 2 or above in numeracy, by gender, OECD average, OECD countries, Canada, provinces, and territories, 2012**



Among provinces and territories, the highest proportion of adults aged 16 to 65 who scored at or above PIAAC’s numeracy proficiency level 2 live in Quebec (78.5 per cent) and in Prince Edward Island (78.4 percent) while the lowest proportion live in the Northwest Territories (58.9 per cent) and Nunavut (33.4 per cent).

Overall, no gender differences were observed at the national level or in any province and territory in literacy.

The picture for numeracy, however, is quite different. Men have significantly higher average numeracy skills than women in Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia and at the national level. They also have measurably higher average numeracy skills than women across the full age spectrum, and this difference becomes more pronounced in older age groups at the national level (Statistics Canada and CMEC, 2013).

In summary, the proportion of adults achieving a minimum level of proficiency in literacy skills in Canada was slightly higher than the OECD average, and at the same level with the OECD in numeracy skills (CESC, 2018). However, among provinces and territories, Northwest Territories and Nunavut had the lowest proportion of adults achieving a fixed proficiency in numeracy and literacy (CESC, 2018).

# Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development (Target 4.7)

## Target 4.7

By 2030, ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

## Indicator 4.7.1

Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in: education policies, curricula, teacher education, and student assessment.

## Context

Today, global competencies in education—and global citizenship in particular—are key to achieving the SDG 4, which seeks to effectively address current and future global and national education challenges to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”

More than any other target, Target 4.7 touches on the social, humanistic, and moral purposes of education. It explicitly links education to other SDGs and captures the transformative aspirations of the new global development agenda (UNESCO, 2016b). Global citizenship education

fosters respect for all to build a sense of belonging to a common humanity and to help learners become responsible and active global citizens (UIS, 2018a). Global citizenship education (GCED) also aims to empower learners to assume active roles to face and resolve global challenges and to become proactive contributors to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, and secure world (UIS, 2018a). Likewise, education for sustainable development (ESD)

empowers learners to make informed decisions and take responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity (ibid.).

## Observations

*Indicator is under development.*

## SPOTLIGHT

### Global Competencies in Canada

[www.globalcompetencies.cmec.ca](http://www.globalcompetencies.cmec.ca)

Provinces and territories continuously work to incorporate content about global citizenship and sustainable development into their primary and elementary curricula and teaching practices.

Following extensive consultations, studies, recommendations, and reviews undertaken across the country, Canada's provincial and territorial education systems are moving toward a shared vision of the competencies needed for the 21st century. Firmly grounded in strong foundations in literacy and numeracy, the skills needed for the future of work and society are referred to as global competencies.

At the pan-Canadian level, global competencies represent a collaborative effort to prepare students for a complex and unpredictable future with rapidly changing political, social, economic, technological, and ecological landscapes. The pan-Canadian global competencies are overarching sets of attitudes, skills, and knowledge that can be interdependent, interdisciplinary, and leveraged in a variety of situations both locally and globally. They are designed to assist students in being able to:

- meet the shifting and ongoing demands of life, work, and learning;
- be active and responsive to their communities at a range of levels from local to global;
- benefit from new technologies;
- engage in meaningful relationships with people from countries and cultures around the world;
- act responsibly to new challenges and issues; and
- embrace opportunities as they arise.

This pan-Canadian work is the basis of Canada's approach to support the implementation of the SDG 4 and its targets.

**Figure 12. Pan-Canadian Global Competencies**



Global citizenship and sustainability involve reflecting on diverse world views and perspectives and understanding and addressing ecological, social, and economic issues that are crucial to living in a contemporary, connected, interdependent, and sustainable world. It also includes the acquisition of knowledge, motivation, dispositions, and skills required for an ethos of engaged citizenship, with an appreciation for the diversity of people and perspectives, and the ability to envision and work toward a better and more sustainable future for everyone.

These pan-Canadian global competencies are closely aligned with the competency frameworks that the provinces and territories have prioritized in their education systems. The provinces and territories are at various stages of progress with respect to their own competency frameworks.

# School Environment (Target 4.A)



## Target 4.A

Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability, and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all.

### Indicator 4.A.1

This indicator measures the proportion of schools with access to:

- electricity;
- the Internet for pedagogical purposes;
- computers for pedagogical purposes;
- adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities;
- basic drinking water;
- single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and
- basic handwashing facilities.

## Context

This target addresses the need for adequate physical infrastructure and safe and inclusive environments that nurture learning for all, regardless of background or disability status. A quality learning environment is defined through a number of attributes, including but not limited to the following considerations:

- infrastructure to support reasonable class sizes and adequate sanitation facilities;
- ensuring that all students, including girls and women and other marginalized groups of students, feel safe in their learning environment;
- safety; and
- the rights and needs of children and youth with special needs.

## Observations

*Data sources are being explored.*



# Scholarships (Target 4.B)

## Target 4.B

By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least-developed countries, small-island developing states, and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering, and scientific programs in developed countries and other developing countries.

## Indicator 4.B.1

Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study.

## Context

Official development assistance (ODA) is the accepted measure of international development cooperation. Total ODA flows to developing countries quantify the public effort that donors provide for scholarships. The data cover official international assistance to provide education places for developing-country students in donor-country educational institutions (UIS, 2018b).

## Observations

Globally, an estimated 25,000 scholarships were offered in 2015 by government programs to students from developing countries (UNESCO 2016b). In 2016, the government of Canada provided USD 15,980,000 in ODA for scholarships, distributed by sector and by type of study.

In addition to the ODA for scholarships, international students from developing countries can access hundreds of scholarships in Canada made available through federal and provincial government programs, or directly through postsecondary institutions.

Canada is widely recognized as a destination for quality education and Canada's federal, provincial, and territorial governments are engaging broadly to attract potential students, thereby advancing inclusive and equitable quality education in line with the SDGs. (For more information, see [www.EduCanada.ca](http://www.EduCanada.ca).)

For example, the government of Canada offers short-term scholarships for international students and researchers in Canada and for Canadians studying or doing research internationally. Global Affairs Canada supports various scholarship programs (for more information, see *Canada's Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*). Provincial governments of Ontario (e.g., Ontario Trillium Scholarships) and Quebec also offer scholarships to international students (see Spotlight).

## SPOTLIGHT

### Merit scholarship program for international students in vocational and technical training at the college level

The merit scholarships for international students in vocational and technical training at the college level allow recipients to cover the cost of their stay for the duration of their studies, benefit from an exemption from the differential tuition fees payable by international students, and obtain health insurance coverage under Quebec's provincial healthcare plan.

The exemption quota program for differential tuition fees allows international students to be exempted from the tuition fees that international students pursuing vocational or technical training in Quebec normally pay. It does not provide for scholarship or health insurance coverage.

These programs are for school boards, collèges d'enseignement général et professionnel (cégeps), and private colleges looking to recruit international students (other than those from metropolitan or overseas France) who want to pursue full-time studies in Quebec in a vocational or technical program of study leading to a diploma of vocational studies or diploma of college studies.

There are also considerable advantages to Quebec's vocational and technical programs for developing nations. Quebec represents an opportunity for students to study in fields with limited or non-existent program offerings in their home country. Quebec's educational institutions offer state-of-the-art facilities where students get hands-on experience with cutting-edge technology. Graduates from vocational and technical programs have the skill sets that employers are looking for, in addition to international working and living experience, which make them an attractive hiring prospect and bring added value to local businesses, especially in Africa and Latin America.

# Teachers (Target 4.C)



## Observations

Globally in 2014, 82 per cent of teachers had the minimum qualifications required to teach in pre-primary education, 93 per cent in primary education, and 91 per cent in secondary education (UNESCO 2016b).

In the public provincial and territorial school systems in Canada, all primary and secondary teachers are expected to have received at least the minimum organized teacher training. Because these education systems are highly regulated, by definition, teachers in the system must meet these requirements to teach within that system. Table 1 outlines teacher-certification requirements.

## Target 4.C

By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least-developed countries and small-island developing states.

### Indicator 4.C.1

Proportion of teachers who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g., pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country in:

- pre-primary;
- primary;
- lower secondary;
- upper secondary education.

## Context

Teachers play a key role in ensuring the quality of education. Ideally all teachers should receive adequate, appropriate, and relevant pedagogical training to teach at the chosen level of education and be academically well-qualified in the subject(s) they are expected to teach (UIS, 2018b). Indicator 4.C.1 measures the share of the teaching work force that is pedagogically well trained.

**Table 1. Qualification requirements for elementary and secondary teachers in provinces and territories**

Province or territory	Qualification required for elementary and secondary teacher certification
British Columbia	Bachelor of education (BEd) or bachelor's degree and 30 credits of general coursework in areas related to the BC elementary curriculum
Alberta	Four-year university degree that includes a basic teacher-preparation program (BEd) or a bachelor's degree supplemented with a teacher preparation program (two-year postdegree for teacher course work and practicum)
Saskatchewan	University degree or equivalent (i.e., four years of postsecondary education) and completion of an approved teacher-education program consisting of at least 48 semester hours, including a practicum
Manitoba	Bachelor of education (BEd) requiring an undergraduate degree (three or four years) followed by two years of training in education
Ontario	A bachelor of education (BEd) or undergraduate degree and four semesters (approximately two years) of teacher education is required.
Quebec	Four-year university degree: Baccalauréat en Éducation préscolaire et enseignement au primaire et baccalauréat en enseignement secondaire (according to chosen concentration)
New Brunswick	A university undergraduate degree, a one-year bachelor of education, and a New Brunswick Teacher's Certificate
Prince Edward Island	Bachelor of education (BEd) (typically four years)
Nova Scotia	Undergraduate degree: three years of approved undergraduate content studies and two years of an approved program of professional studies including a practicum
Newfoundland and Labrador	Bachelor of education (BEd) or a BA plus one year of postdegree study in education
Yukon	Bachelor of education (BEd) or a bachelor's degree plus an approved program of teacher preparation of not less than one academic year
Northwest Territories	Bachelor of education (BEd) or a bachelor's degree plus an approved program of teacher preparation of not less than one academic year
Nunavut	Bachelor of education (BEd) or a two-year postdegree bachelor of education after degree (BEAD)

**Note:** Qualification requirements for Kindergarten (pre-primary) teachers are generally the same as those for primary and secondary teachers. Some provinces and territories require additional courses or certification to teach Kindergarten.

## SPOTLIGHT

### Pan-Canadian assessment centre and integration of internationally educated teachers

The aim of the project is to work with CMEC's Registrars for Teacher Certification Canada (RTCC) to create a pilot pan-Canadian hub for the intake and initial assessment of the academic and professional qualifications held by internationally educated teachers (IETs), including language-competency assessment.

This work builds on the findings of a 2014 pan-Canadian project on the experiences of internationally educated teachers and their certification and workforce integration experiences in Canada. For more information, see [Certification and Workforce Integration: Experiences of Internationally Educated Teachers](#).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Certification and Workforce Integration: Experiences of Internationally Educated Teachers is available at <https://cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/328/Certification-and-Workforce-Integration-EN.pdf>.

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# Appendix A

Appendix Tables referred to at the bottom of graphs in this publication are available in the companion file, accessible at the following link:

<https://cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/406/Sustainable-Development-Goal-4-in-Canada-EN-APP-A.PDF>