



Ability to engage in open, appropriate and effective communication across cultures

This chapter examines students' ability to engage in open, appropriate and effective communication across cultures. In particular, it examines students' awareness of intercultural communication, their contact with people from other cultures and their mastery of languages other than their own. All factors are explored considering variations in students' socio-economic status and circumstances.

What the data tell us

- The proportion of students who reported having contact with people from other countries at school ranged between 70% and 78% in Albania, Germany, Greece, Italy, New Zealand, Panama, Singapore, Switzerland, Chinese Taipei and the United Arab Emirates, while it ranged between 20% and 30% in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Turkey and Viet Nam.
- Significant and positive associations between having contact with people from other countries and students' attitudes and dispositions were observed in most countries and economies. The indices that were highly associated with contact with people from other countries are students' cognitive adaptability, self-efficacy regarding global issues and interest in learning about other cultures.
- The largest proportions of students who speak several languages were observed in Croatia, Estonia, Hong Kong (China), Latvia, Macao (China), Malta and Singapore, where more than 90% of students reported that they speak two or more languages. The smallest proportions were observed in Australia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Korea, Mexico, Scotland (United Kingdom) and Viet Nam. Language-learning opportunities are widely available.
- On average across OECD countries, only 12% of students reported that they do not learn any foreign language at school, while 38% reported that they learn one foreign language and 50% reported that they learn two or more.
- Speaking multiple languages and learning one or more foreign languages at school were positively associated with students' dispositions and attitudes in a large number of countries and economies.

A third dimension of knowledge, skills and attitudes required to thrive in an interconnected world is the ability to engage in effective communication across cultures (Chen and Starosta, 1996_[1]; Deardorff, 2009_[2]). Students who are proficient in this competence understand cultural norms, interactive styles and degrees of formality in intercultural contexts and can adapt their behaviour and communication to suit every situation. They appreciate the importance of respectful dialogue, strive to understand others and make an effort to include marginalised groups. Effective communication requires being able to express oneself clearly, confidently and without anger, even when expressing a fundamental disagreement (Wiseman, Hammer and Nishida, 1989_[3]; Collier, 2015_[4]). Respectful communication involves understanding the expectations and perspectives of diverse audiences and applying that understanding to meet the audience's needs. In effective communication, all participants are able to make themselves understood and to understand the others (Huber et al., 2014_[5]).

Speaking more than one language is a clear asset for effective intercultural communication (Bialystok, 2016_[6]). Effective communication in intercultural contexts is also facilitated through active listening. This means listening not only to what is being said, but also to how it is being said, through both voice and accompanying body language. Competent students are capable speakers who can use their body language and voice effectively when they discuss and debate global issues. They can express and justify a personal opinion and persuade others to pursue a particular course of action.

This chapter examines students' awareness of intercultural communication, their contact with people from other cultures and their mastery of languages other than their own. All of these factors are explored considering variations in students' socio-economic status and circumstances and in association with other attitudes, such as interest in and respect for other cultures, perspective taking, and knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

AWARENESS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The student questionnaire in PISA focused on two aspects of intercultural communication: awareness of intercultural communication¹ and multilingualism. The construct of awareness of intercultural communication focuses on students' ability to communicate clearly in a range of situations, even if they are speaking a language that is not their mother tongue or with people speaking a language different from their own (Svalberg, 2012_[7]; Corcoll, 2013_[8]; P. M. Ribeiro, 2016_[9]). Students should be able to recognise the different forms of expression, the subtleties of cross-cultural communication and the ways of expressing disagreement. They should be able to listen for understanding and manage breakdowns in communication. They should be able to adjust and modify their behaviour in order to effectively communicate with others (OECD, 2018_[10]; Council of Europe, 2018_[11]).

PISA 2018 asked students to describe their awareness of intercultural communication. They were asked to respond to seven statements related to the following hypothetical scenario: "Imagine you are talking in your native language to people whose native language is different from yours." The statements were: "I carefully observe their reactions"; "I frequently check that we are understanding each other correctly"; "I listen carefully to what they say"; "I choose my words carefully"; "I give concrete examples

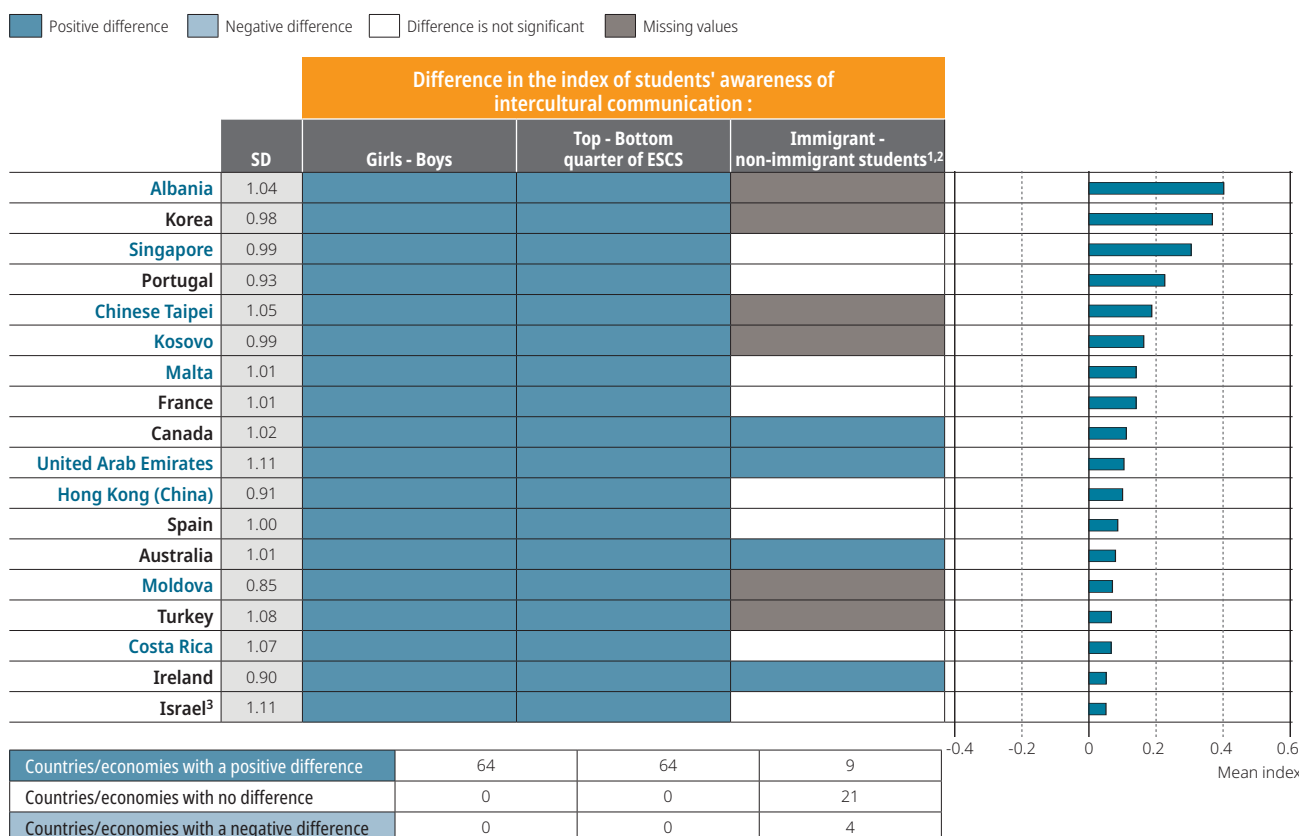
to explain my ideas"; "I explain things very carefully"; and "If there is a problem with communication I find ways around it". Answers were given on a four-point scale ("strongly disagree", "disagree", "agree", "strongly agree") and were combined into the index of awareness of intercultural communication. A positive value in this index indicates that students have a greater awareness of intercultural communication than the average student across OECD countries.

Students in Albania, Korea, Kosovo, Portugal, Singapore and Chinese Taipei reported the greatest awareness of intercultural communication, while those in Baku (Azerbaijan), Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Morocco, the Russian Federation, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Thailand and Ukraine reported the lowest values in this index (Figure VI.4.1). Across all countries and economies, girls reported greater awareness of intercultural communication than boys. The largest gaps in favour of girls were observed in Albania, Jordan, Lithuania, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, while the smallest were found in Colombia and Indonesia. Large differences were also observed between advantaged and disadvantaged students. Advantaged students (those in the top quarter of the PISA index of economic and cultural status) in all countries and economies reported greater awareness of intercultural communication than disadvantaged students. The largest differences were found in Bulgaria, France, Israel², New Zealand, the Philippines and Romania.

Across the 35 countries and economies with more than 5% immigrant students, differences in awareness of intercultural communication in favour of immigrant students were observed in 9 countries/economies: Australia, Canada, Ireland, Macao (China), Saudi Arabia, Scotland (United Kingdom), Slovenia, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates, after accounting for students' and schools' socio-economic profile. The reverse was observed only in Estonia, Italy, Lebanon and Montenegro (Table VI.B1.4.3).

Figure VI.4.1^[1/3] **Students' awareness of intercultural communication**

Average, dispersion and variations, by students' socio-demographic profile



1. After accounting for students' and schools' socio-economic profile. The socio-economic profile is measured by the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS).

2. Differences between immigrant and non-immigrant students are only presented for countries and economies where more than 5% of students have an immigrant background. The values for countries/economies with smaller proportions of immigrant students are reported as missing.

3. The global competence sample from Israel does not include students in ultra-Orthodox schools and, thus, is not nationally representative. See PISA 2018 Technical Report (OECD, forthcoming) for details

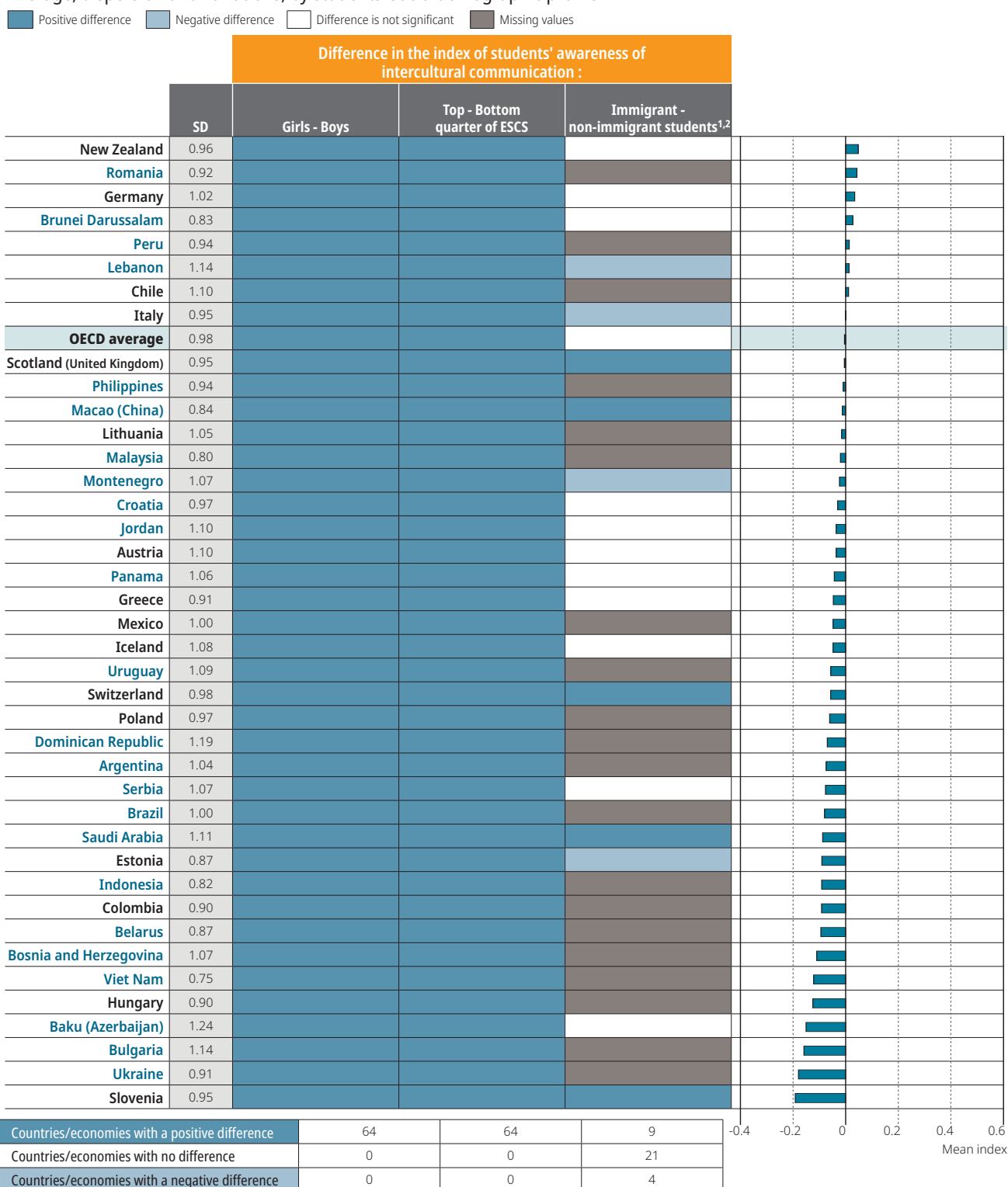
Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of the index of students' awareness of intercultural communication.

Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Table VI.B1.4.1 and Table VI.B1.4.3.

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Figure VI.4.1[2/3] **Students' awareness of intercultural communication**

Average, dispersion and variations, by students' socio-demographic profile



1. After accounting for students' and schools' socio-economic profile. The socio-economic profile is measured by the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS).

2. Differences between immigrant and non-immigrant students are only presented for countries and economies where more than 5% of students have an immigrant background. The values for countries/economies with smaller proportions of immigrant students are reported as missing.

3. The global competence sample from Israel does not include students in ultra-Orthodox schools and, thus, is not nationally representative. See PISA 2018 Technical Report (OECD, forthcoming) for details

Countries and economies Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of the index of students' awareness of intercultural communication.

Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Table VI.B1.4.1 and Table VI.B1.4.3.


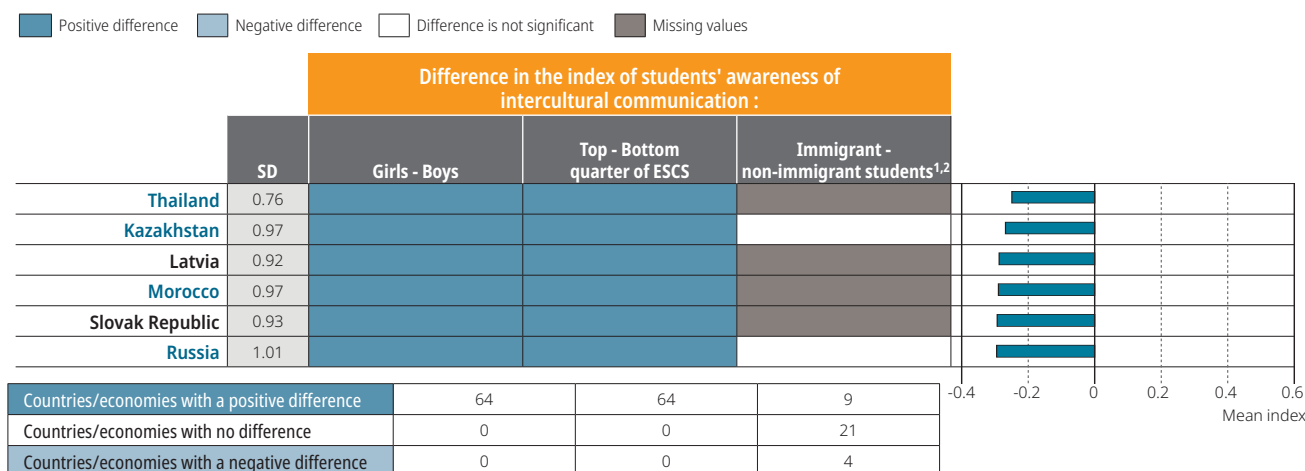
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Figure VI.4.1^[3/3] **Students' awareness of intercultural communication**

Average, dispersion and variations, by students' socio-demographic profile



1. After accounting for students' and schools' socio-economic profile. The socio-economic profile is measured by the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS).

2. Differences between immigrant and non-immigrant students are only presented for countries and economies where more than 5% of students have an immigrant background. The values for countries/economies with smaller proportions of immigrant students are reported as missing.

3. The global competence sample from Israel does not include students in ultra-Orthodox schools and, thus, is not nationally representative. See PISA 2018 Technical Report (OECD, forthcoming) for details

Countries and economies Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of the index of students' awareness of intercultural communication.

Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Table VI.B1.4.1 and Table VI.B1.4.3.

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A large majority of students agreed or strongly agreed with each of the seven statements (Figure VI.4.2). Some 88% agreed or strongly agreed that they listen to what others say; 85% agreed or strongly agreed that they can find a way around problems with communications; 84% agreed or strongly agreed that they check to be sure that people understand each other correctly; 82% agreed or strongly agreed that they observe others' reactions; 81% agreed or strongly agreed that they give concrete examples to explain ideas; 80% agreed or strongly agreed that they choose their words carefully; and 78% agreed or strongly agreed that they explain things very carefully (Table VI.B1.4.1). These results highlight that nine out of ten students report that listening for understanding is a key element of communication. This is supported by several frameworks on intercultural communication (OECD, 2018_[10]; Council of Europe, 2018_[11]).

Larger dispersions in the index of awareness of intercultural communication were observed in Austria, Baku (Azerbaijan), Bulgaria, the Dominican Republic, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Most of the variations were observed within schools. Only 10% of the variation or less was observed between schools, except in Lebanon, where 18% of the variation was observed between schools. Large dispersions indicate greater inequalities in the distribution of this attitude, while large variations between schools are a sign of greater stratification on this measure. Polarisation was observed in many countries, as students in the two middle quarters of the distribution show similar average levels of awareness of intercultural communication. By contrast, students in the bottom quarter of the index reported markedly less awareness about intercultural communication than those in the second quarter, while students in the top quarter reported significantly greater awareness than those in the third quarter (Table VI.B1.4.1 and Table VI.B1.4.3).

Awareness of intercultural communication is likely to be associated with other attitudes required for living together. For instance, students who are interested in learning about other cultures or have greater respect for people from other cultures are likely to develop stronger cultural sensitivity, which is reflected in their behaviour. Figure VI.4.3 presents the correlation coefficients between the index of awareness of intercultural communication and the seven indices explored in Chapters 2 and 3.

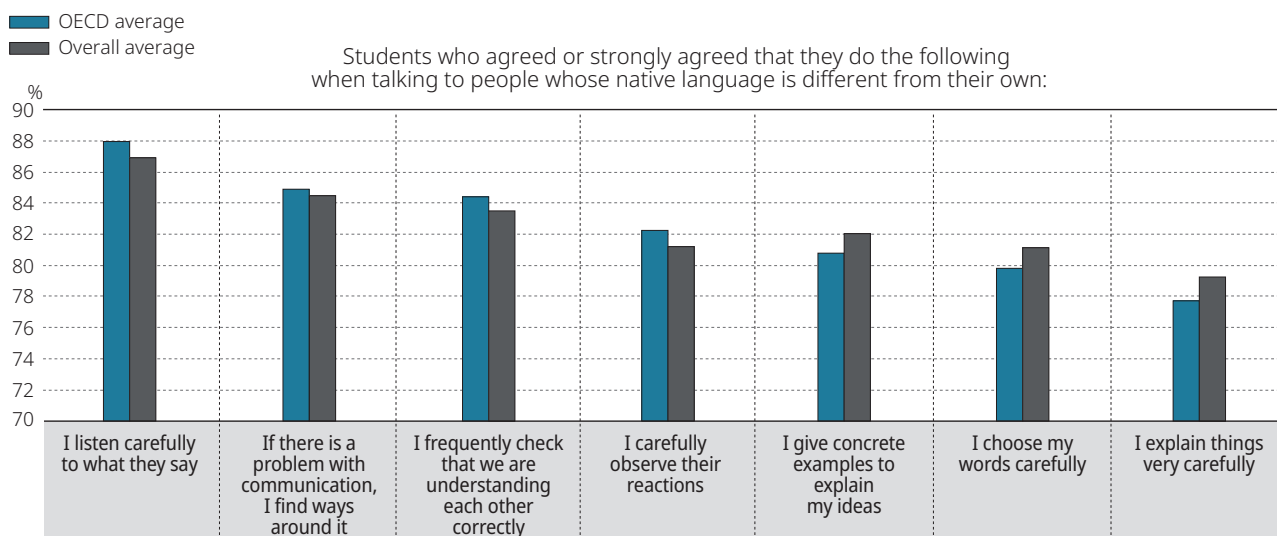
On average across OECD countries, the correlations were positive but modest. The strongest correlations were between awareness of intercultural communication and respect for people from other cultures (correlation coefficient of 0.3) and students' awareness of global issues (correlation coefficient of 0.29). The weakest correlation was with students' index of cognitive adaptability (correlation coefficient of 0.25). This finding shows that students who have positive attitudes, such as respect towards people from other cultures, who are able to understand the perspectives of others and who exhibit higher levels of awareness and self-efficacy regarding global issues tend to have greater awareness of the nuances of intercultural communication.

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The strength of the correlation between the index of awareness of intercultural communication and the index of respect for people from other cultures varied between 0.38 and 0.4 in Brunei Darussalam, Korea, Kosovo and Romania and between 0.14 and 0.2 in Baku (Azerbaijan), Bulgaria and the Dominican Republic. The associations with awareness of global issues ranged between 0.2 in Scotland (United Kingdom) and 0.47 in Jordan. When considering the correlation between the index of awareness of intercultural communication and students' attitudes towards immigrants, none of the correlations exceeded the threshold of 0.5 of a unit in any country/economy.

Figure VI.4.2 **Components of students' awareness of intercultural communication**

OECD and overall averages

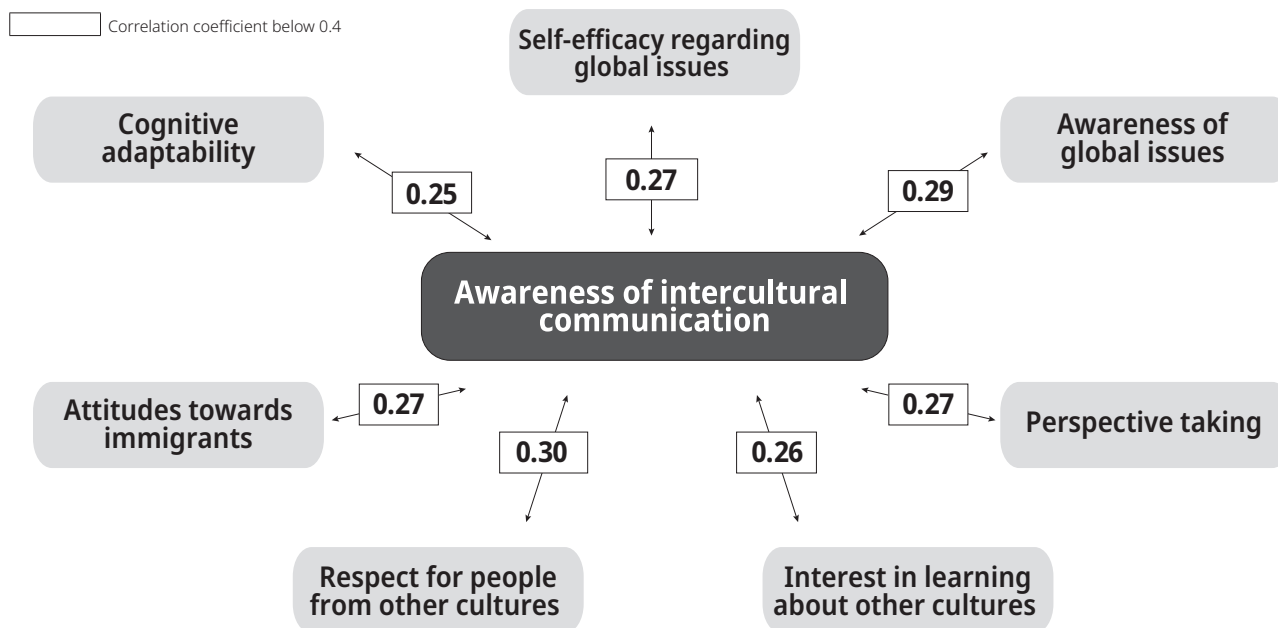


Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Table VI.B1.4.1.

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Figure VI.4.3 **Correlations between awareness of intercultural communication and other indices**

Based on students' reports, OECD average



Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Table VI.B1.4.4.

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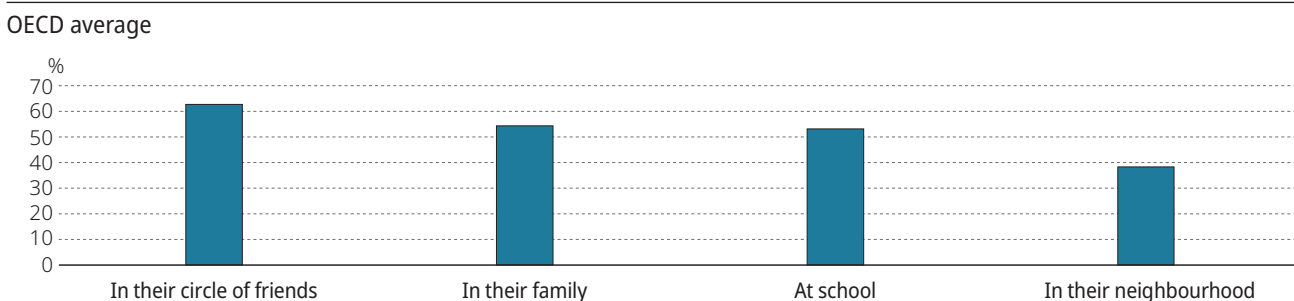
CONTACT WITH PEOPLE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

Contact with people from different cultures, in itself, has the potential to stir curiosity, open minds and create understanding (Brown and Zagefka, 2011^[12]; Aronson and Brown, 2013^[13]). By contrast, ignorance is a source of fear, closed-mindedness and indifference (Rosenthal and Levy, 2010^[14]; Bernardo, Rosenthal and Levy, 2013^[15]). The concept of connectedness is linked to cognitive change, in the sense that, if certain conditions are met, contact among different groups of people will enhance mutual understanding, reduce prejudice and improve relations (Allport, 1954^[16]; de Oliveira Andreotti, Biesta and Ahenakew, 2014^[17]).

Connectedness challenges arguments that contact between people of different cultural backgrounds would inevitably lead to prejudice and conflict. Such arguments were prevalent in the rhetoric about a clash of civilisations, but they have been criticised as demonstrating a lack of understanding about diversity within cultures and interdependence between cultures. Opposing paradigms have emerged focusing on dialogue between civilisations and different faiths. Those paradigms acknowledge that all major world traditions have evolved through contact and in dialogue with each other.

This section focuses on students' contact with people from other countries and how it is related to their attitudes and dispositions, such as interest in and respect for other cultures, attitudes towards immigrants, ability to understand different perspectives, and intercultural communication. Students were asked a yes-or-no question about whether they have contact with people from other countries at school, in their family, in their neighbourhood and in their circle of friends. Figure VI.4.4 shows the proportion of students who reported that they have contact with people from other countries. On average across all OECD countries, 53% of students reported having contact with people from other countries in their school, 54% in their family, 38% in their neighbourhood and 63% in their circle of friends. Those four categories overlap, as schoolmates and family members may also be friends or neighbours.

Figure VI.4.4 **Students who reported having contact with people from other countries**



Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Table VI.B1.4.5.

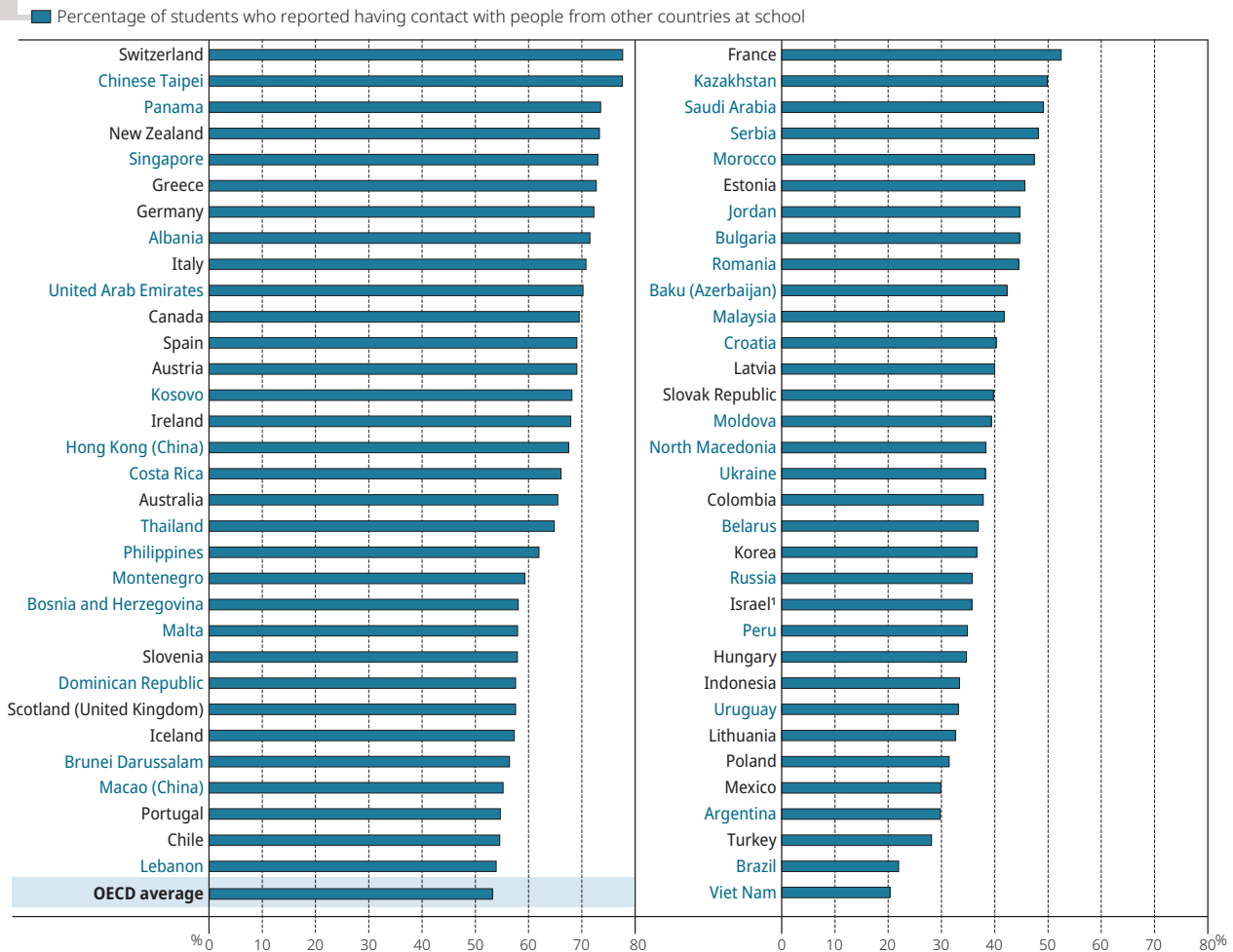
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There were substantial variations in those proportions between countries. The proportion of students who reported having contact with people from other countries at school ranged between 70% and 78% in Albania, Germany, Greece, Italy, New Zealand, Panama, Singapore, Switzerland, Chinese Taipei and the United Arab Emirates, while it ranged between 20% and 30% in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Turkey and Viet Nam. These results may reflect several factors, such as the proportion of first-generation immigrants in a country/economy, student mobility and the degree of interconnectedness between that country and the rest of the world (Figure VI.4.5).

Boys were more likely than girls to report having contact with people from other countries at school in 24 countries and economies, while the reverse was true in 11 (Table VI.B1.4.6). Advantaged students were more likely than disadvantaged students to report having contact with people from other countries at school in 44 countries and economies, with the largest differences observed in Macao (China), Scotland (the United Kingdom), Singapore, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates. The reverse was true in Greece, Malaysia, Romania and the Philippines. Immigrant students were more likely to report having contact with people from other countries at school in 29 countries and economies of the 35 with more than 5% immigrant students. This could reflect the fact that due to stratification, immigrants are more likely to attend schools with other immigrants than their native-born peers.

Students also had contact with people from other countries in their families. This was most common (80% to 92% of students so reported) in Albania, the Dominican Republic, Kosovo, Lebanon, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, New Zealand, the Philippines and Serbia. Conversely, much smaller proportions of students (between 10% and 30%) reported contact with people from other countries in their families. This was the case in Hong Kong (China), Italy, Korea and Thailand.

Figure VI.4.5 Students who reported having contact with people from other countries at school



1. The global competence sample from Israel does not include students in ultra-Orthodox schools and, thus, is not nationally representative. See PISA 2018 Technical Report (OECD, forthcoming) for details

Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of the percentage of students who reported having contact with people from other countries at school.

Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Table VI.B1.4.5.

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Some 60% to 78% of students in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Dominican Republic and Kosovo reported having contact with people from other countries in their neighbourhood, while only 22% to 25% of students in Brazil, Macao (China), Poland, Portugal and Viet Nam so reported. On average, larger proportions of students reported having contact with people from other countries in their circle of friends. The proportions ranged between 81% and 86% in Albania, the Dominican Republic, Kosovo, Montenegro, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates. By contrast, less than 20% of students in Thailand so reported (Table VI.B1.4.5).

Contact with people from different countries or cultures boosts knowledge about those countries and can help create an understanding of their customs and traditions. Ultimately, students might acquire certain abilities and attitudes, such as curiosity, respect for others, the ability to understand different perspectives, adaptability in unfamiliar situations and awareness of different communication styles. In this section, variations in students' attitudes are examined by the degree of contact with people from other countries at school. The discussion in this section mainly focuses on the school context because of its policy relevance and because it could be influenced by school and teaching practices. However, results for the other three settings (family, neighbourhood and circle of friends) are provided in Annex B1.

In general, having contact with people from other countries at school (and in the family, neighbourhood and circle of friends) is positively associated with students' skills in and attitudes towards living with others. However, the associations tended to be only weak to moderate after accounting for students' and schools' socio-economic background. This could indicate that socio-economic background acts as a mediator of those relationships.

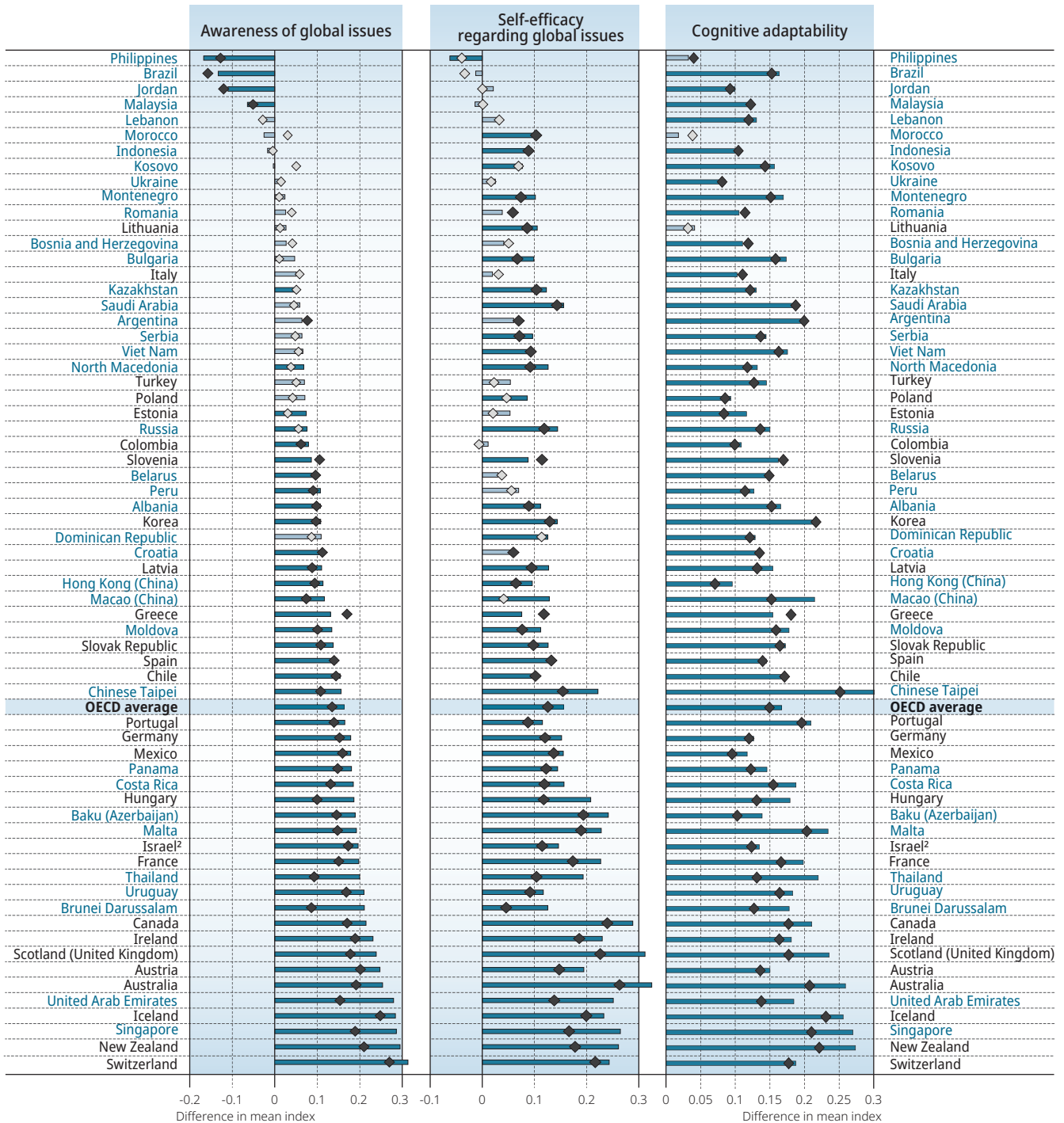
In 42 countries and economies, students who reported that they have contact with people from other countries at school exhibited greater awareness about global issues. The strongest associations, after accounting for students' and schools' socio-economic

profile, were observed in Iceland, New Zealand and Switzerland. Associations were negative only in Brazil, Jordan, Malaysia and the Philippines. In all other countries, the associations were non-significant (Figure VI.4.6).

Figure VI.4.6 **Contact with people from other countries, and attitudes towards global issues**

Differences in indices between students who reported that they have contact with people from other countries and those who reported that they do not have such contact

■ Before accounting for socio-demographic status¹
 ◆ After accounting for socio-demographic status



1. Socio-demographic status includes gender, immigrant status and student's and school's index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS).
 2. The global competence sample from Israel does not include students in ultra-Orthodox schools and, thus, is not nationally representative. See PISA 2018 Technical Report (OECD, forthcoming) for details.

Note: Statistically significant values are shown in a darker tone.
 Countries and economies are ranked in ascending order of the difference in the index of awareness of global issues

Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Table VI.B1.4.8.

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Students who reported that they have contact with people from other countries at school showed greater confidence when dealing with global and intercultural issues. The associations were positive and significant in 49 countries and economies and non-significant in all others. They ranged between 0.05 and 0.26 of a point increase in the index of students' self-efficacy regarding global issues. Associations were the strongest in Australia, Canada, Scotland (United Kingdom) and Switzerland.

Associations between contact with people from other countries at school and the index of cognitive adaptability were positive and significant in all countries and economies except Lithuania and Morocco, after accounting for students' and schools' socio-demographic profile. On average across OECD countries, having contact with people from other countries was associated with a rise of 0.15 of a unit in the index of cognitive adaptability. Associations were strongest in Australia, Iceland, Korea, Malta, New Zealand, Singapore and Chinese Taipei.

Having contact with people from other countries at school is positively associated with students' interest in learning about other cultures. Associations with the index of interest in learning about other cultures were positive in all but nine countries and economies and were strongest in Australia, Canada, Germany, Iceland, New Zealand and Scotland (United Kingdom). On average across OECD countries, having contact with people from other countries was associated with a rise of 0.17 of a point in the index of interest in learning about other cultures (Figure VI.4.7).

Similar findings were observed for the index of respect for people from other cultures. Associations were positive in 35 countries and economies and negative in 6 (Brazil, Indonesia, Lithuania, Morocco, the Philippines and Ukraine). Associations exceeded 0.3 points increase in the index only in Switzerland.

Associations with attitudes towards immigrants were positive, but mostly weak, in 19 countries and economies, while they were negative in 7 countries/economies. On average across OECD countries, having contact with people from other countries at school was associated with a rise of only 0.07 of a point in the index of attitudes towards immigrants.

Box VI.4.1. Study-abroad programmes

Study-abroad programmes have emerged as an alternative to intercultural contact in the classroom. These programmes allow students to interact directly with people from other countries and have the advantage of offering an immersive experience of another culture. Several studies (Berg, 2009^[18]) have shown that studying abroad does not automatically result in improved attitudes and dispositions; in some cases it could be a stressful experience for the student. However, when students are appropriately prepared, the experience can lead to gains in intercultural competence (Barrett, 2018^[19]).

This finding emerges from research done on exchange programmes organised by AFS (formerly known as American Field Service). In AFS programmes, high-school students spend ten months studying and living with host families in a foreign country. This experience is highly structured and aims to prepare participants to engage with other cultures. Students get to learn first-hand about the impact of culture on values and on the decisions people make. They gain the ability to see themselves through the eyes of others, challenge assumptions and broaden their views on cultural stereotypes and global issues. They begin to understand the perspectives of others and how to change their own perspectives effectively.

AFS relies on a number of principles in designing student exchange programmes. The approach involves a goal-based curriculum focused on the needs of students as future leaders. It combines immersive experiences and complements structured classroom learning with experiential and lifelong learning. Its objectives include building values and skills and developing intercultural knowledge, sensitivity and global awareness.

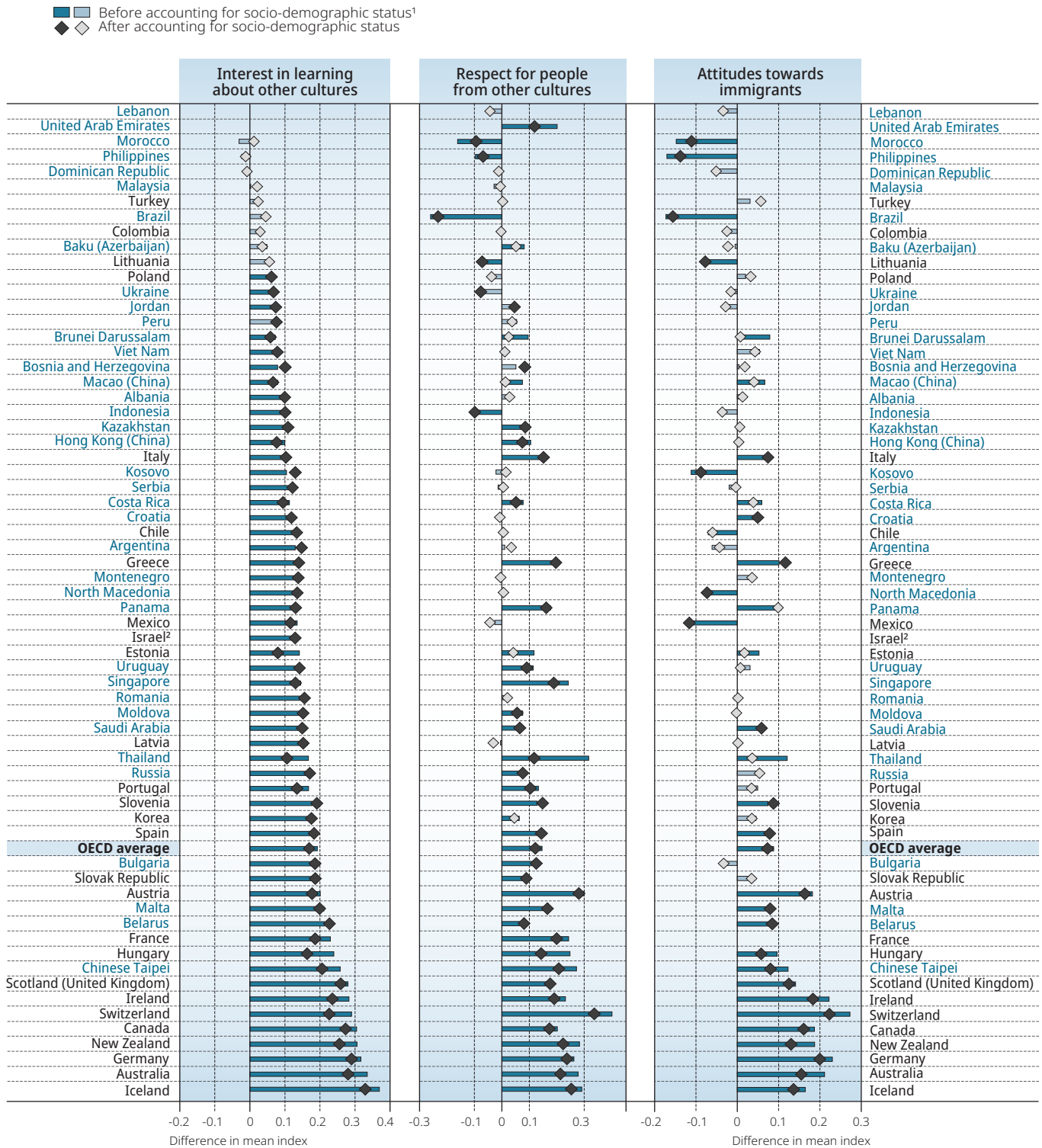
Evaluation studies (AFS, 2012^[20]; Hammer, 2004^[21]; Hansel, 2008^[22]; Hansel, 2008^[23]) show that high school students who have participated in the AFS programme have higher levels of intercultural competence, experience less anxiety when interacting with people from other cultures and have more friendships with people from other cultures. They also have greater knowledge of the host country and greater fluency in the language of the host country. More important, students maintain these advantages into their adulthood.

In 32 countries and economies, contact with people from other countries at school was positively associated with students' ability to understand different perspectives (Figure VI.4.8). Associations were negative only in Brazil and the Philippines. The strength of the association varied greatly, but was mostly weak, except in Chinese Taipei where it was moderate.

Associations with the index of awareness of intercultural communication were positive in 24 countries and economies and negative in 8, but the associations were mostly weak. On average across OECD countries, having contact with people from other countries at school was associated with a rise of 0.08 of a unit in the index of awareness of intercultural communication.

Figure VI.4.7 **Contact with people from other cultures and differences in attitudes towards other cultures**

Differences in indices between students who reported that they have contact with people from other cultures and those who reported that they do not have such contact



1. Socio-demographic status includes gender, immigrant status and student's and school's index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS).
 2. The global competence sample from Israel does not include students in ultra-Orthodox schools and, thus, is not nationally representative. See PISA 2018 Technical Report (OECD, forthcoming) for details.

Note: Statistically significant values are shown in a darker tone.

Countries and economies are ranked in ascending order of the differences in the index of interest in learning about other cultures.

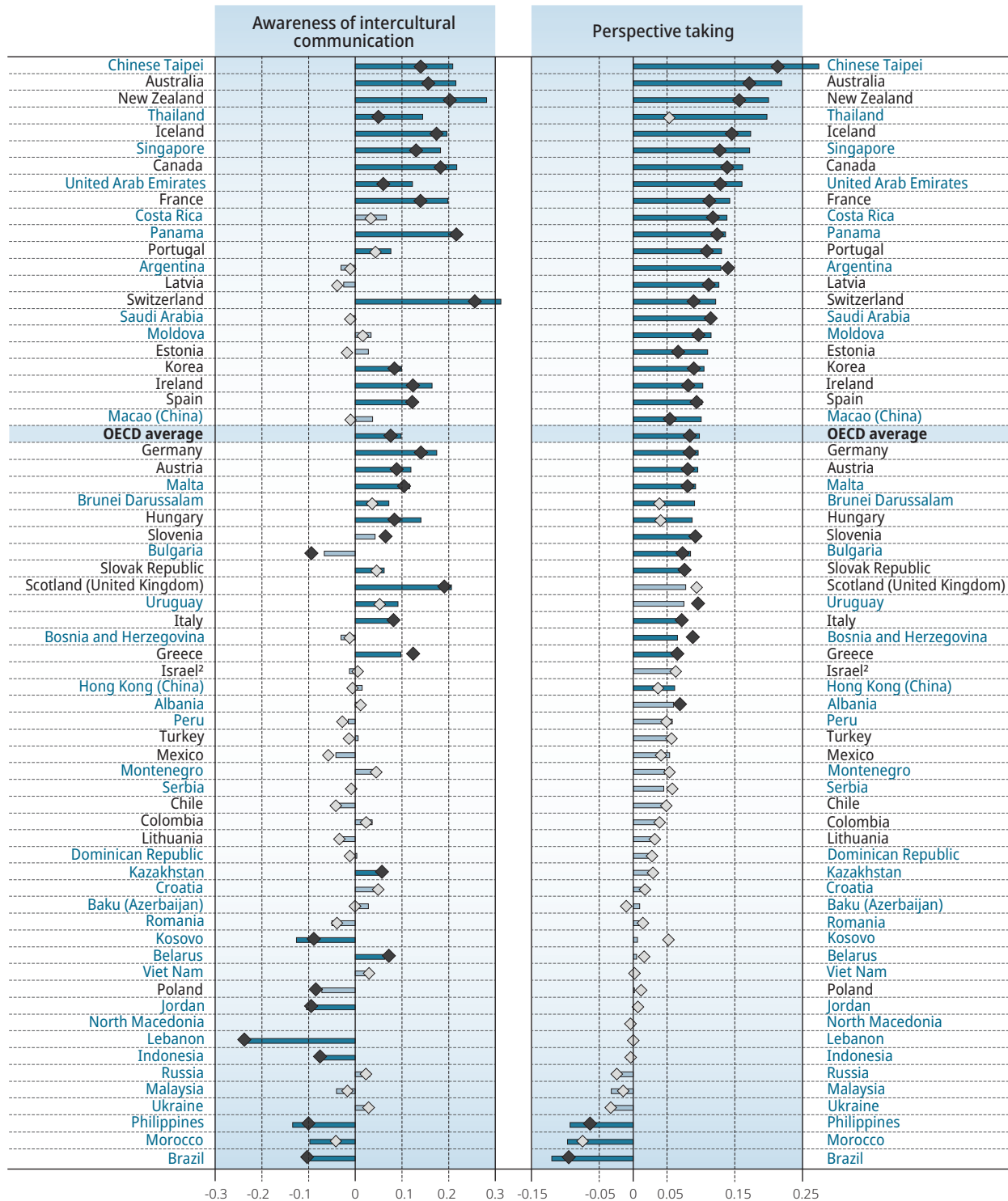
Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Table VI.B1.4.8.

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Figure VI.4.8 **Contact with people from other cultures and understanding others**

Difference in indices between students who reported that they have contact with people from other cultures and those who reported that they do not have such contact

■ Before accounting for socio-demographic status¹
 ◆ After accounting for socio-demographic status



1. Socio-demographic status includes gender, immigrant status and student's and school's index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS).

2. The global competence sample from Israel does not include students in ultra-Orthodox schools and, thus, is not nationally representative. See PISA 2018 Technical Report (OECD, forthcoming) for details.

Note: Statistically significant values are shown in a darker tone.

Countries and economies are ranked in ascending order of the differences in the index of perspective taking.

Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Table VI.B1.4.8.

StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934169956>



In summary, the positive association between contact with people from other countries in the different settings specified in the questionnaire and students' intercultural and global knowledge, skills and attitudes indicates that contact could foster understanding and mitigate prejudice, even though such associations vary in magnitude between countries. These findings add to the mounting evidence challenging the hypothesis that misunderstanding and conflict could result when people of different backgrounds interact. If anything, the findings tell us that creating opportunities for contact at school and beyond, virtual or in person, could be an effective way of fostering positive intercultural dispositions. However, the negative associations in some countries and economies warrant further analysis about the possible reasons.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN AND LEARNED BY STUDENTS

Speaking one language is a basic tool for communicating, but speaking two or more could be a valuable asset in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world (Vertovec, 2007_[24]). The ability to speak several languages is a key skill that improves people's employment prospects and broadens their horizons (Gross and Dewaele, 2017_[25]). Learning multiple languages has the potential of developing a range of skills that extend beyond the realm of language proficiency (Byers-Heinlein and Garcia, 2014_[26]). Multilingualism can promote social cohesion and intercultural dialogue. It equips immigrants with the opportunity to learn the language of the host country while cultivating their own native languages (Romaine, 2013_[27]). For native-born students, multilingualism opens a window onto the world and grants them access to all sorts of materials, ranging from literature to cinema. Languages allow young people to access international media and open the channels of intercultural dialogue. Supporting multilingualism through policy has become a major objective for many education systems around the world (Krzyżanowski and Wodak, 2011_[28]).

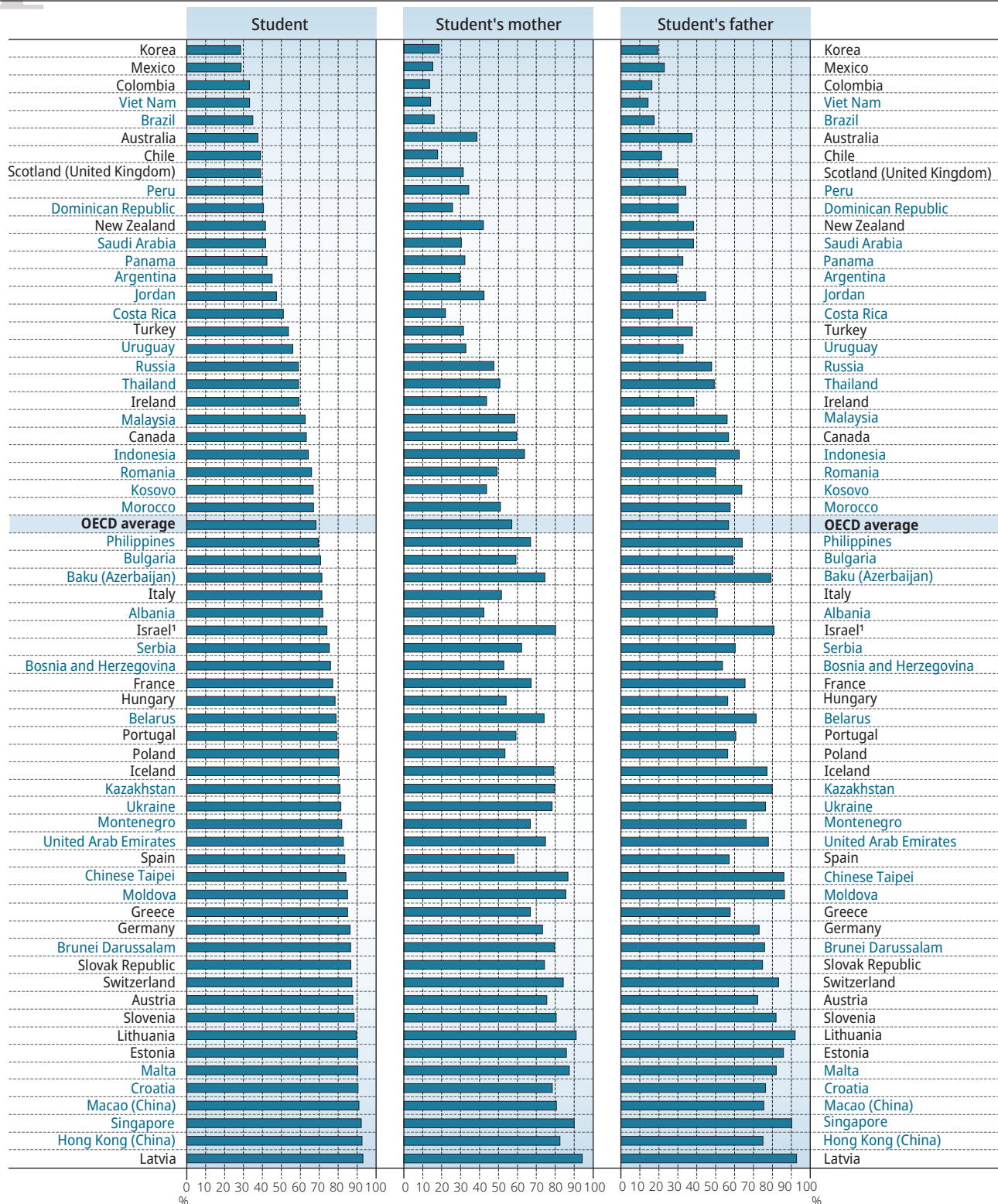
The prevalence of multilingualism was assessed in PISA 2018 using a number of questions about the languages students and their parents speak well enough to converse (including the language they speak at home) and the language students learn at school. The following section explores the proportion of students who speak and learn multiple languages and the association between the mastery of multiple languages and certain student attitudes.

The largest proportions of students who speak several languages were observed in Croatia, Estonia, Hong Kong (China), Latvia, Macao (China), Malta and Singapore, where more than 90% of students reported that they speak two or more languages. Those countries and economies are mostly small but well-connected to the rest of the world, and some are economic hubs in their region. This group of countries was followed by Austria, Brunei Darussalam, Germany, Lithuania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Switzerland, where 85% to 90% of students reported speaking two or more languages. Some of those countries have large populations of immigrant students with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. By contrast, in Australia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Korea, Mexico, Scotland (United Kingdom) and Viet Nam, less than 40% of students reported that they speak two or more languages. Students in English-speaking countries may not have much incentive to learn a second language, given that English has become the lingua franca of the world; but in other countries, if multilingualism is rare, it may be because of a lack of learning opportunities at school. On average across OECD countries, 68% of students reported that they are multilingual (Figure VI.4.9).

The findings also show that girls were more likely to speak several languages than boys in 30 countries and economies, while the reverse was only true in eight. In Albania, Brunei Darussalam and Ireland, as much as 10% more girls than boys reported that they speak two or more languages. By contrast, in Chile, Colombia, Israel and Korea, more than 5% more boys than girls reported that they speak two or more languages (Table VI.B1.4.11). Large differences were observed between socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged students, with more advantaged students reporting that they speak two or more languages. The largest differences were observed in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jordan, Romania and Uruguay, while the smallest were in Hong Kong (China), Israel, Latvia and Macao (China). Immigrant students were more likely to speak two or more languages than their native-born peers. This was the case in 21 countries and economies with more than 5% immigrant students, with the largest differences observed in Australia, New Zealand and Scotland (United Kingdom), where more than 40% more immigrants than native-born students spoke two or more languages. The reverse was true only in Costa Rica, Malta and Spain. This finding reflects the fact that immigrants are likely to speak the language of their country of immigration in addition to their heritage language.

When comparing the multilingual skills of students with those of their mothers and fathers, two patterns emerged. Students who reported that they speak two or more languages tended to have multilingual parents. However, in most countries, the proportion of multilingual parents was smaller than that of multilingual students. This shows some intergenerational transmission of multilingual skills from parents to children, but also a clear trend of rising multilingualism over time that goes beyond simple intergenerational transmission. This could be explained by the growing need for multilingual skills in the 21st century, the spread of the Internet and mass media, and the expansion of language learning and global student mobility (Table VI.B1.4.11).

Figure VI.4.9 Students who speak two or more languages



1. The global competence sample from Israel does not include students in ultra-Orthodox schools and, thus, is not nationally representative. See PISA 2018 Technical Report (OECD, forthcoming) for details.

Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of the percentage of students who speak two or more languages.

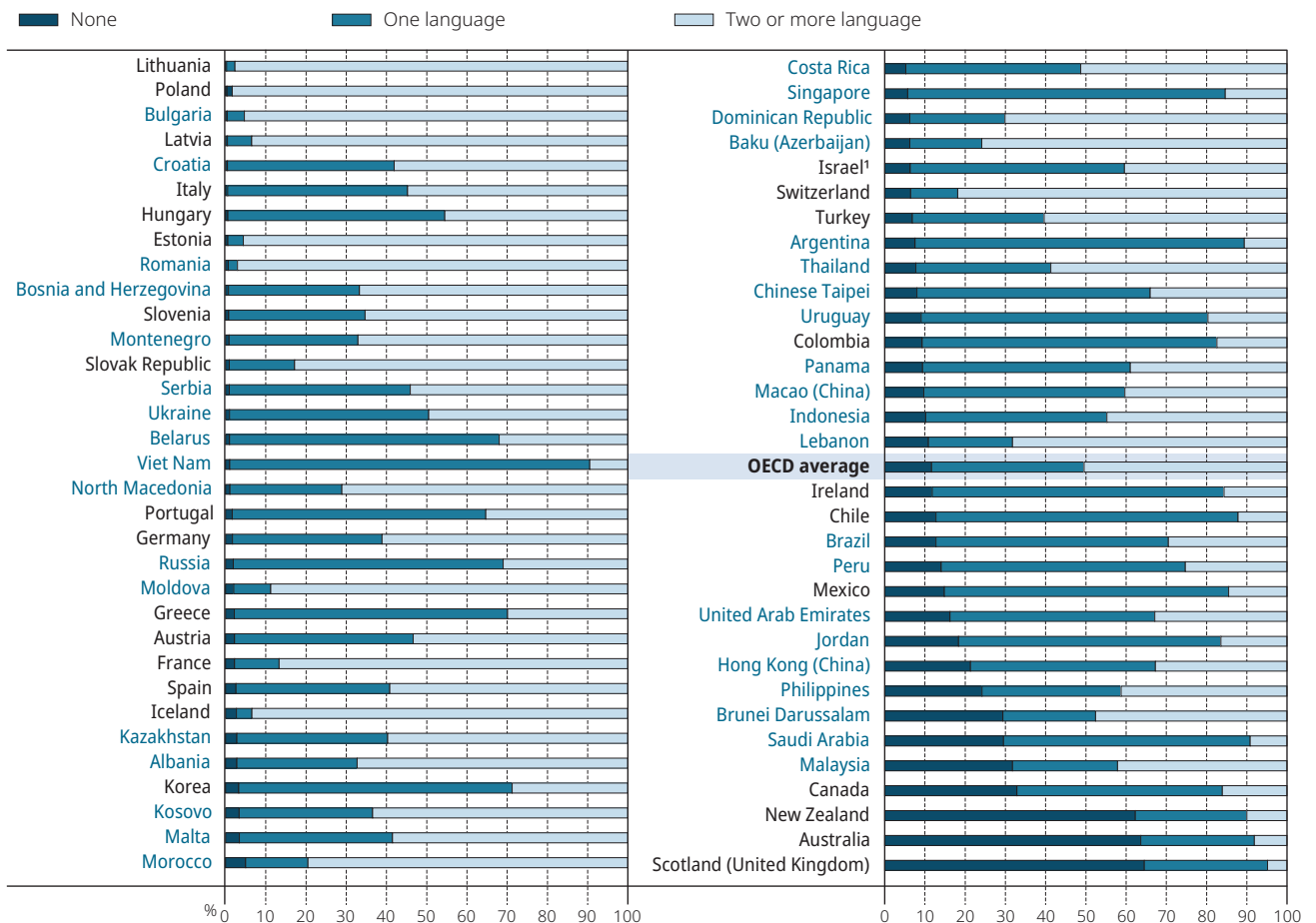
Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Table VI.B1.4.11.

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Language-learning opportunities seem to be widely available across countries and economies that participated in PISA 2018. On average across OECD countries, only 12% of students reported that they do not learn any foreign language at school, while 38% reported that they learn one foreign language and 50% reported that they learn two or more. The largest proportion

of students (more than 20%) who reported that they do not learn any foreign language were observed in Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Hong Kong (China), Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia and Scotland (United Kingdom). In three English-speaking countries (Australia, New Zealand and Scotland [United Kingdom]), 60% of students so reported. By contrast, in 42 countries and economies, more than 90% of students reported that they learn at least one foreign language at school. The proportion exceeds 99% in Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Ukraine (Figure VI.4.10). It is worth noting that, in Hong Kong (China), English is an official language and not considered as a foreign one. Therefore, all students in Hong Kong (China) learn English and Chinese. This explains the relatively high proportion of students (21%) reporting that they do not learn any foreign languages while in reality most of them are bilingual. This could also be the case in Canada where both French and English are official languages taught to students.

Figure VI.4.10 Students who learn multiple foreign languages at school



1. The global competence sample from Israel does not include students in ultra-Orthodox schools and, thus, is not nationally representative. See PISA 2018 Technical Report (OECD, forthcoming) for details.

Countries and economies are ranked in ascending order of the percentage of students who do not learn a foreign language at school.

Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Table VI.B1.4.11.

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How is multilingualism related to students' attitudes?

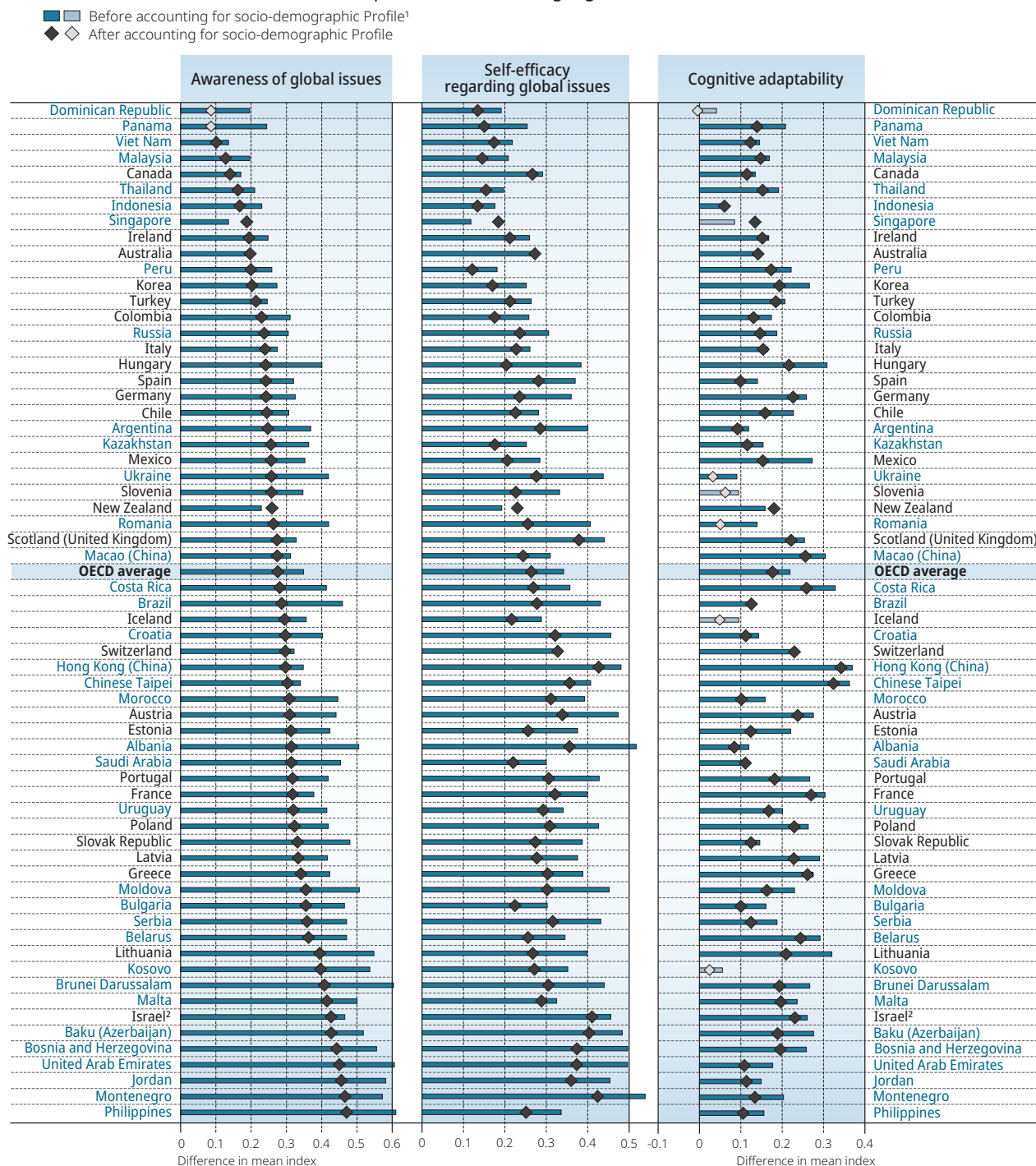
An analysis explored the association between speaking two or more languages and eight student indices: awareness of global issues, self-efficacy regarding global issues, interest in learning about other cultures, respect for people from other cultures, perspective taking, attitudes towards immigrants, cognitive adaptability and awareness of intercultural communication (Table VI.B1.4.12). Associations were positive and statistically significant in almost all countries. Given that speaking multiple languages is positively associated with socio-economic advantage, associations were slightly attenuated once the socio-economic profile of students and schools was accounted for. This shows that the associations between multilingualism and positive attitudes were not uniquely driven by socio-economic status, as the strength of the associations was mostly preserved after accounting for socio-economic status.

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In 28 countries/economies, speaking two or more languages was strongly associated with awareness of global issues, exceeding a 0.3 of a point increase in the index (Figure VI.4.11). The strongest associations were observed in Baku (Azerbaijan), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Israel, Jordan, Malta, Montenegro, the Philippines and the United Arab Emirates, after accounting for students' and schools' socio-economic profile. On average across OECD countries, speaking two or more languages was associated with a rise of 0.28 of a unit in the index of awareness of global issues.

Figure VI.4.11 **Speaking two or more languages and attitudes towards global issues**

Differences in indices between students who speak two or more languages and those who do not



1. Socio-demographic status is measured by the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS).

2. The global competence sample from Israel does not include students in ultra-Orthodox schools and, thus, is not nationally representative. See PISA 2018 Technical Report (OECD, forthcoming) for details.

Note: Statistically significant values are shown in a darker tone.

Countries and economies are ranked in ascending order of the differences in the index of awareness of global issues, after accounting for gender, and students' and schools' socio-economic profile.

Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Table VI.B1.4.12.

StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934170013>



Multilingualism is also associated with self-efficacy regarding global issues. In 21 countries and economies, including Baku (Azerbaijan), Hong Kong (China), Israel and Montenegro, associations exceeded a 0.3 of a point increase in this index while, on average across OECD countries, speaking two or more languages was associated with a rise of 0.26 of a unit in the index of self-efficacy regarding global issues.

Associations with cognitive adaptability were moderate in most countries and exceeded a 0.3 of a point increase in the index only in Hong Kong (China) and Chinese Taipei; they were non-significant in only six countries. On average across OECD countries, speaking two or more languages was associated with a rise of 0.18 of a unit in the index of cognitive adaptability.

In Australia, Austria, Canada, New Zealand and Switzerland, the index of students' interest in learning about other cultures was strongly associated with speaking two or more languages (Figure VI.4.12). In most countries, the associations were modest; they were non-significant in only six countries. On average across OECD countries, speaking two or more languages was associated with a rise of 0.24 of a unit in the index of interest in learning about other cultures.

Similarly, students who reported that they speak two or more languages exhibited greater respect for people from other cultures. The associations were strong and exceeded 0.3 points increase in the index of respect for people from other cultures in Austria, Estonia, Germany, Hong Kong (China), Latvia, Malta and Switzerland. Associations were positive and significant in all but five countries and economies (the Dominican Republic, Korea, Panama and Singapore).

Attitudes towards immigrants were more positive among students who speak two or more languages. On average across OECD countries, speaking two or more languages was associated with an increase of 0.19 of a unit in the index of positive attitudes towards immigrants. The associations were strongest in Austria, Brunei Darussalam, Germany, Slovenia and Switzerland; they were non-significant in only three countries (the Dominican Republic, Hungary and Viet Nam).

In all countries and economies except the Dominican Republic and Panama, students who speak two or more languages exhibited greater awareness of intercultural communication. This association was the strongest in Estonia, Israel, Jordan and Malta. On average across OECD countries, speaking two or more languages was associated with a rise of 0.23 of a unit in the index of awareness of intercultural communication (Figure VI.4.13).

Multilingualism was also positively associated with students' ability to understand perspectives other than their own. However, the associations were moderate to weak. On average across OECD countries, speaking two or more languages was associated with a rise of 0.11 of a unit in the index of students' ability to understand different perspectives. The strongest associations were observed in Greece, Malta, New Zealand and Chinese Taipei.

Associations between speaking multiple languages and demonstrating the skills and attitudes needed to interact with people from different cultures could be reciprocal. In other words, students who have positive attitudes towards learning about and interacting with other cultures may also be motivated to study languages other than their own. Hence, such positive attitudes and proficiency in foreign languages could feed into each other through a virtuous cycle.

In summary, the findings show that language teaching and learning have become common around the world and are a priority in many education systems. Moreover, the positive association between speaking multiple languages and the eight student attitudes and dispositions towards intercultural communication and relations is a clear indication that expanding multilingual education could help students thrive in an interconnected world.

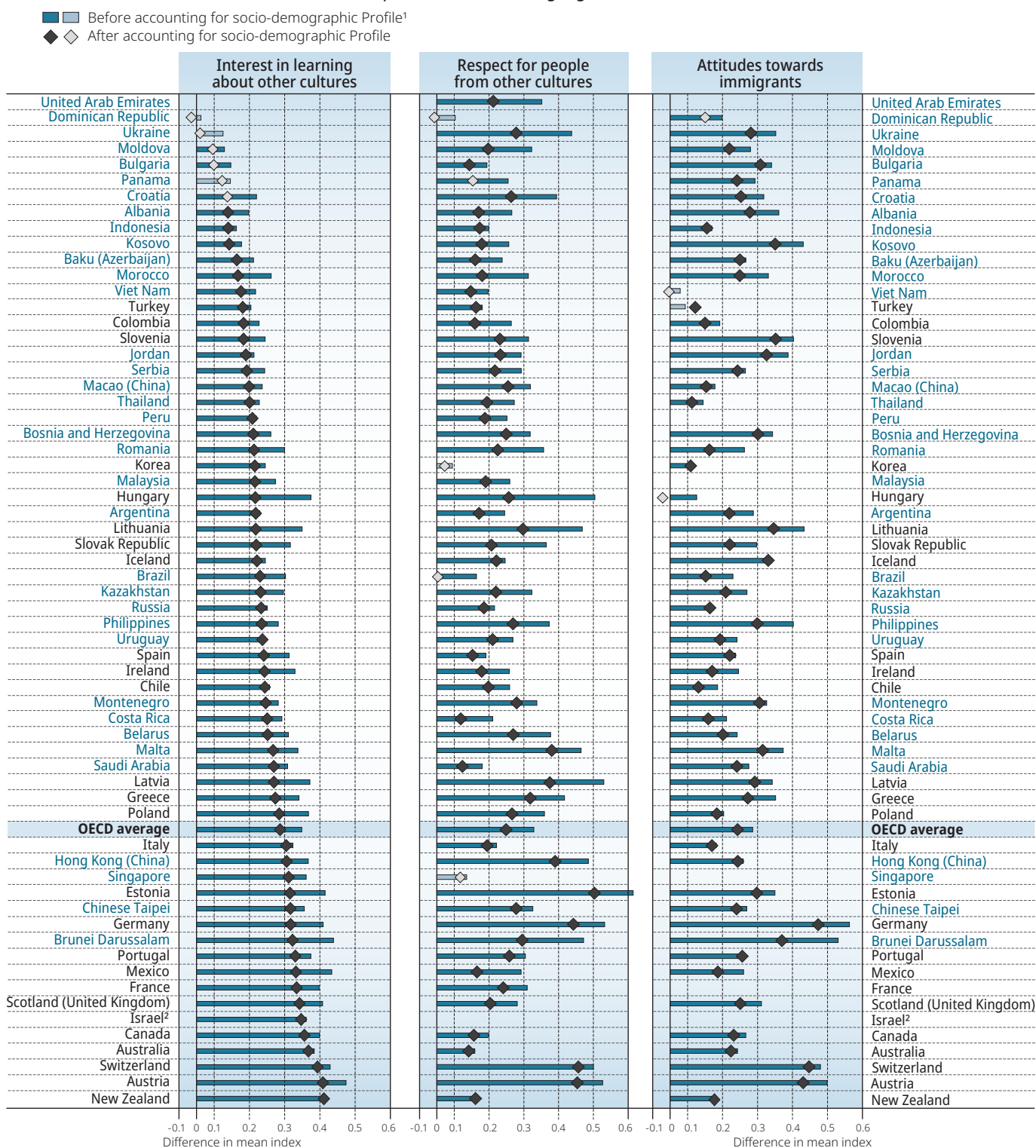
Is learning multiple languages at school positively related to students' attitudes?

The positive associations between speaking multiple languages and students' attitudes and dispositions are mirrored by positive associations between learning multiple languages at school and the same attitudes and dispositions (Table VI.B1.4.13). Those associations are strong and positive across a majority of countries and economies and on average across OECD countries. They are attenuated when students' and schools' socio-demographic profiles are accounted for.

On average across OECD countries, learning one or more foreign languages (as opposed to learning none) is associated with a rise of 0.21 of a unit in the index of respect for people from other cultures and a rise of 0.19 of a unit in the indices of students' awareness of intercultural communication and students' self-efficacy regarding global issues. It is also positively associated with the indices of students' awareness of global issues and students' attitudes towards immigrants (a rise of 0.18 of a unit in both indices), students' interest in learning about other cultures (a rise of 0.14 of a unit), students' perspective taking (a rise of 0.11 of a unit) and students' cognitive adaptability (a rise of 0.08 of a unit).

Figure VI.4.12 Speaking two or more languages and attitudes towards other cultures

Differences in indices between students who speak two or more languages and those who do not



1. The socio-demographic profile is measured by the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS).

2. The global competence sample from Israel does not include students in ultra-Orthodox schools and, thus, is not nationally representative. See PISA 2018 Technical Report (OECD, forthcoming) for details.

Note: Statistically significant values are shown in a darker tone.

Countries and economies are ranked in ascending order of the differences in the index of interest in learning about other cultures, after accounting for gender, and students' and schools' socio-economic profile.

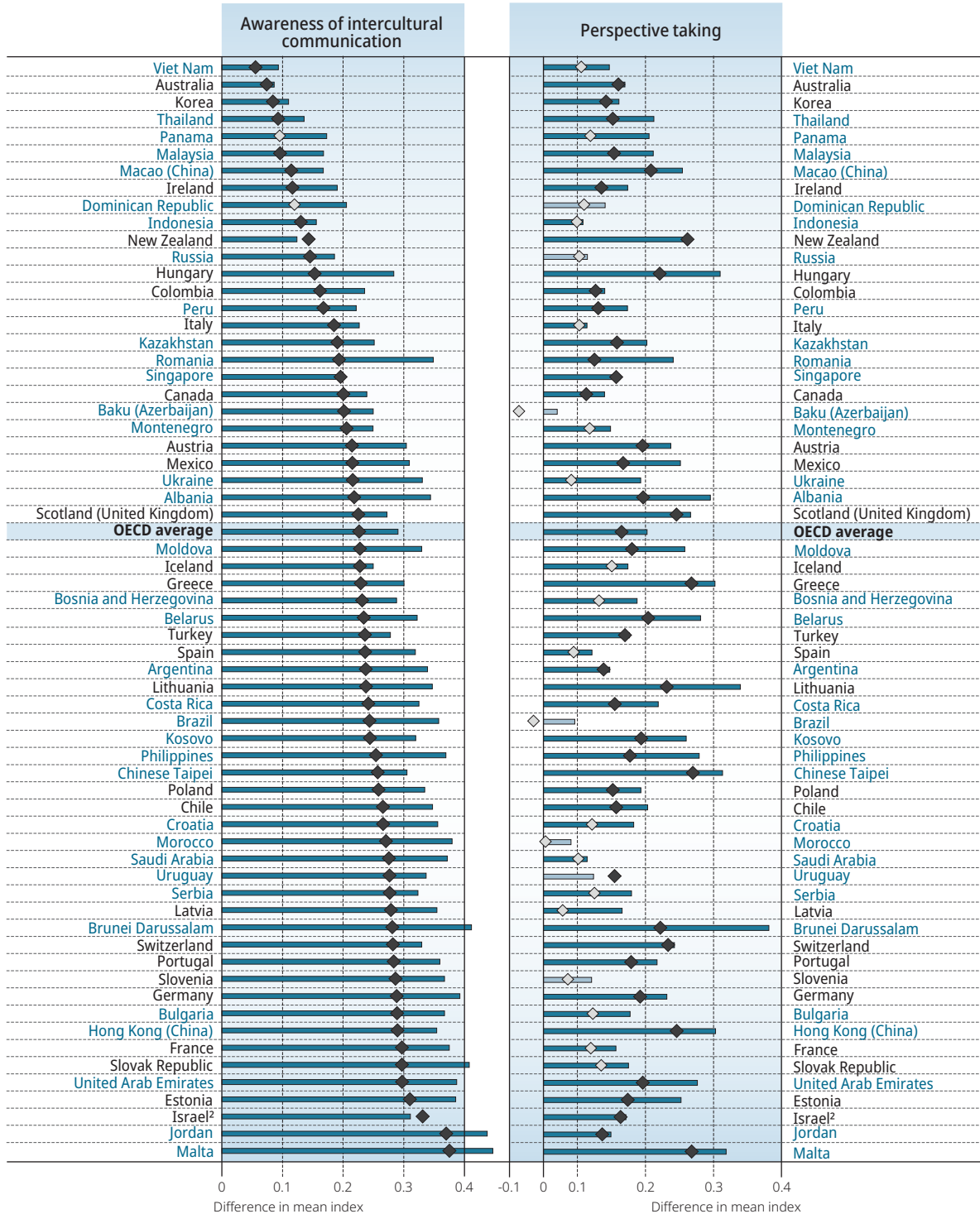
Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Table VI.B1.4.12.

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Figure VI.4.13 **Speaking two or more languages and understanding others**

Differences in indices between students who speak two or more languages and those who do not

■ Before accounting for socio-demographic status¹
 ◆ After accounting for socio-demographic status



1. The socio-demographic profile is measured by the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS).
 2. The global competence sample from Israel does not include students in ultra-Orthodox schools and, thus, is not nationally representative. See PISA 2018 Technical Report (OECD, forthcoming) for details.
Note: Statistically significant values are shown in a darker tone.
 Countries and economies are ranked in ascending order of the differences in the index of awareness of intercultural communication, after accounting for gender, and students' and schools' socio-economic profile.

Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Table VI.B1.4.12.
 StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934170051>

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The associations are positive for the following indices: 1) students' awareness of intercultural communication (in 37 of the 57 countries/economies with non-missing results); 2) students' self-efficacy regarding global issues (32 countries/economies); 3) students' awareness of global issues (41 countries/economies); 4) perspective taking (19 countries/economies); 5) students' interest in learning about other cultures (28 countries/economies); 6) students' respect for people from other cultures (34 countries/economies); 7) students' attitudes towards immigrants (32 countries/economies); and 8) students' cognitive adaptability (23 countries/economies).

One important question remains: Do monolingual students (those who speak just one language) have more positive attitudes and dispositions when they learn one or more foreign languages at school?

On average across OECD countries, 83% of students who speak only one language with others learn at least one foreign language at school. The proportions are relatively large and exceed 95% in 24 countries and economies. This shows that foreign-language learning opportunities are widespread, even among monolingual students. The largest proportions are observed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Viet Nam (Table VI.B1.4.14).

In general, learning one or more foreign languages at school while being monolingual is positively associated with students' knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions (compared to monolingual students who do not learn foreign languages at school). However, these associations are moderate to weak, on average across OECD countries, and are attenuated once students' and schools' socio-demographic profiles are accounted for.

The associations are positive for the following indices:

- 1) students' awareness of intercultural communication (in 17 of the 44 countries/economies with valid results);
- 2) students' self-efficacy regarding global issues (17 countries/economies);
- 3) students' awareness of global issues (20 countries/economies);
- 4) perspective taking (5 countries/economies);
- 5) students' interest in learning about other cultures (9 countries/economies);
- 6) students' respect for people from other cultures (19 countries and economies);
- 7) students' attitudes towards immigrants (16 countries/economies); and
- 8) students' cognitive adaptability (5 countries/economies).

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Note

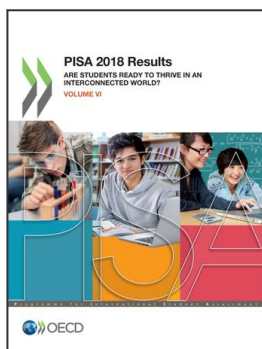
1. The comparability of scaled indices across countries and economies is examined in Annex A5. The annex presents the findings of in-depth measurement invariance analyses for every index used in PISA 2018, Volume VI.
2. The global competence sample from Israel does not include students in ultra-Orthodox schools and, thus, is not nationally representative. See PISA 2018 Technical Report (OECD, forthcoming) for details.

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