

# Task Force 4.6; progress and draft measurement strategy

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TF4.6)

# Progress

- Meetings of TF4.6
  - 22 June and 20 September 2017
- Work undertaken
  - Development of an inventory of international and national literacy assessments and other sources of information on the literacy proficiency of the adult population
  - Preparation of a draft measurement strategy for Target 4.6.
- Other relevant developments
  - Expert group meeting of 7-8 November convened by UNESCO

# **Draft Measurement strategy**

# Context

- PIAAC is the only international assessment of adult literacy and numeracy that exists
  - World Bank's STEP study uses the PIAAC *literacy* assessment instruments (but not *numeracy*)
  - By 2019, data from PIAAC will be available for 37 countries and data from STEP for 15 countries
- Some national assessments of adult literacy and numeracy exist
  - Use wide variation of approaches

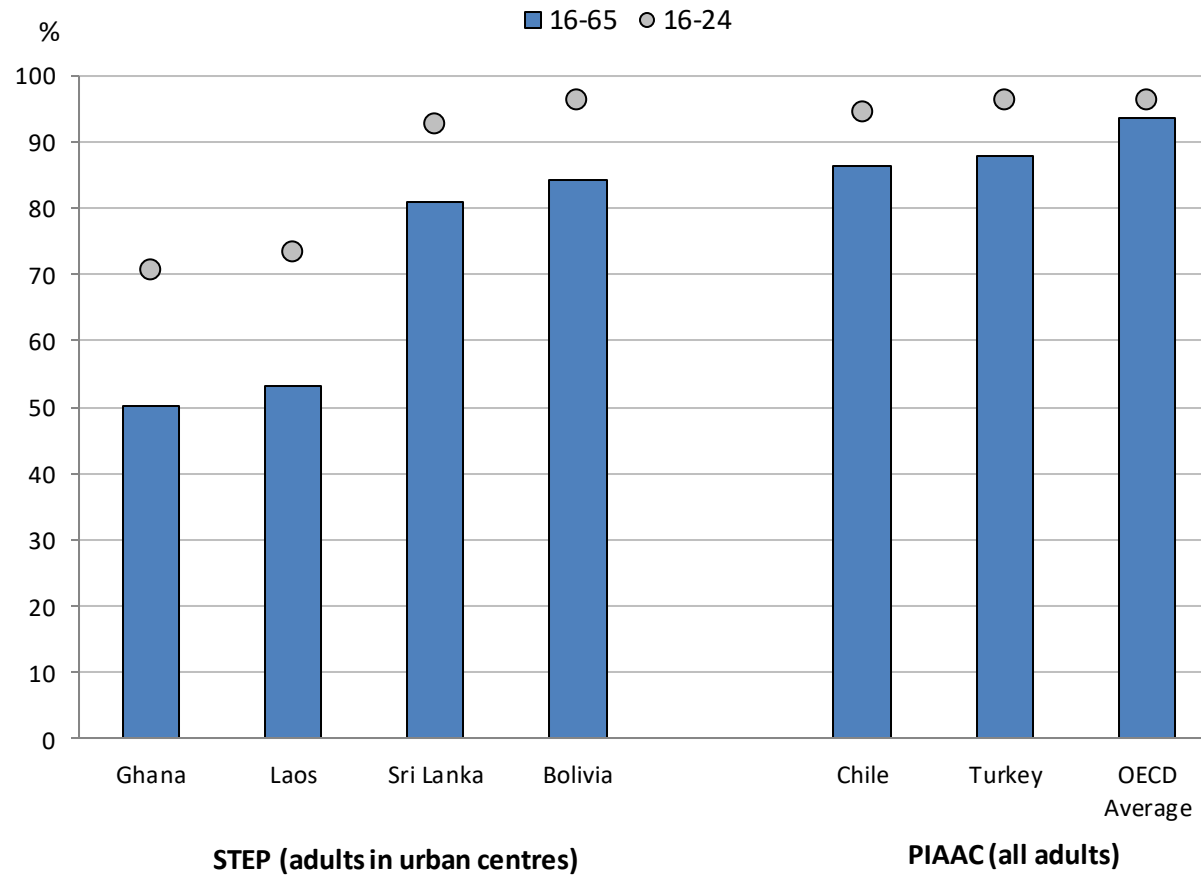
# Conceptualising literacy and numeracy

- PIAAC has well-developed and validated assessment frameworks for literacy and numeracy
- Adopt or adapt PIAAC frameworks or use or develop something else?
  - If not PIAAC, which framework?
- Writing – an element of ‘literacy’ conceived broadly, but difficult to define and measure in a comparable way across countries

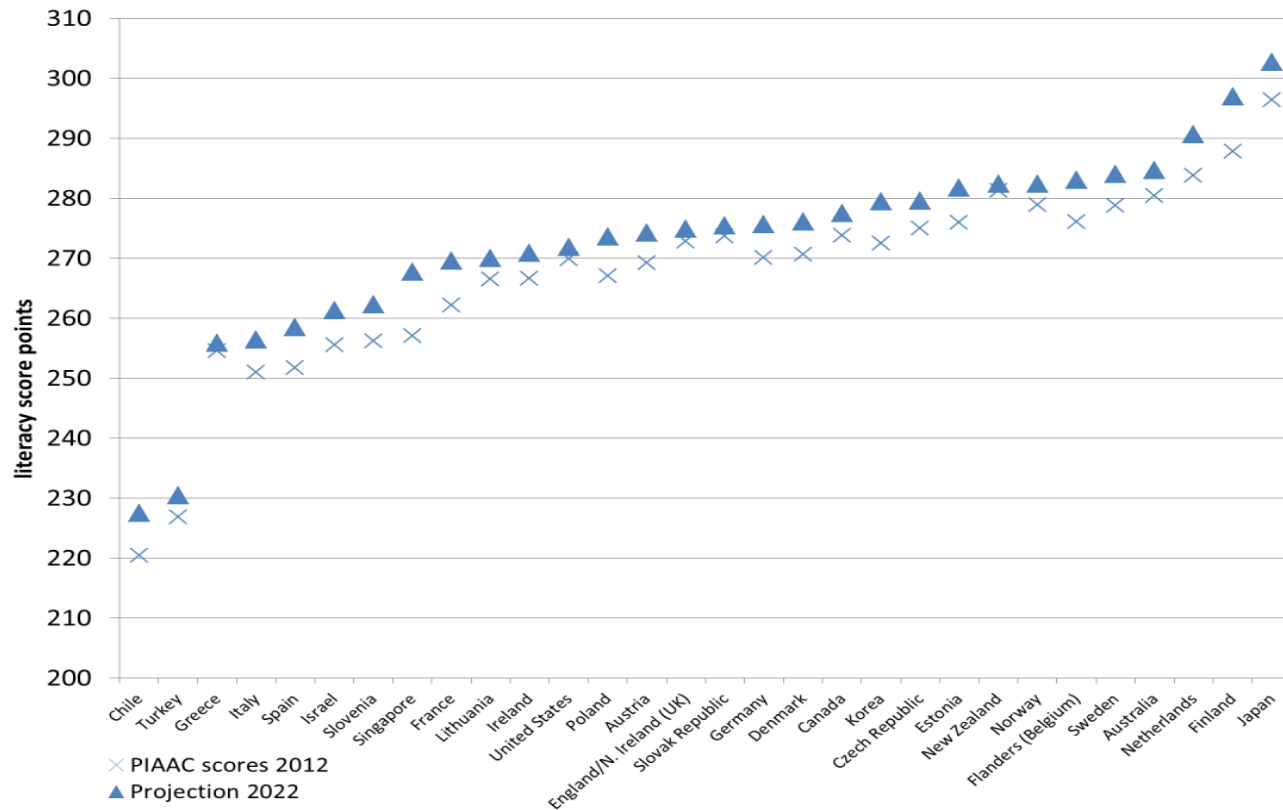
# Reporting thresholds

- Not an ***abstract*** question
  - Defined in relation to a ***scale***
  - Depends on definitions, frameworks and measures
- Extreme variation across countries in the proficiency of adults in literacy
  - Does a single target make sense?
- Slow rate of change in the proficiency of the adult population
  - Approximately 2% of the 15-64 year old population is replaced each year

# Percentage of adults and youth passing the PIAAC/STEP core test: selected countries and OECD average



# Literacy proficiency 2012/2015 and 2022 (projections), 16-65 year olds: countries in PIAAC



Source: Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) (2012, 2015).



# Expert meeting 7-8 November

- Objectives
  - Reach an agreement on an “expanded” conceptual framework for indicator 4.6.1, including domains (reading, writing, numeracy) for the global assessment framework for indicator 4.6.1
  - Explore the existing framework and/or propose the inclusion of alternative ways of measurement of the identified relevant competencies for indicator 4.6.1
  - Suggest a pragmatic action to define a minimum or fixed level of proficiency in literacy and numeracy to be reported on the indicator 4.6.1.
- Conclusions
  - Agreement on continued appropriateness of UNESCO definition of literacy
  - PIAAC frameworks represent a strong conceptual basis for measurement of literacy and numeracy

# Operational questions

- Vehicles
  - Existing international survey programmes such as PIAAC and STEP
  - New international comparative programmes
  - National literacy/numeracy studies
  - Omnibus household surveys
- Frequency of observations
  - Relatively infrequent observations of adult literacy/numeracy (related to costs and the wide age range covered)
  - PIAAC has a 10 year cycle (next data collection in 2021-22 – only one before 2030)
- The number of languages
  - Which languages to cover (national language(s), widely used languages?)
  - Translation, sample sizes and costs
  - PIAAC assesses primarily in national language(s) only

# Elements of a possible strategy

- Encourage countries to participate in projects such as PIAAC and STEP
- Encourage good practices in the measurement of literacy and numeracy among adults
- Review information on literacy and numeracy collected in census collections and omnibus household surveys with a view to improving data quality and comparability
- Explore the use of results from assessments of secondary school students (e.g. TIMSS and PISA) for the estimation of proficiency among youth cohorts (15-24 year olds)

# A work programme

- Develop a position paper on the definition and description of the constructs of literacy and numeracy; options and issues
- Develop Reporting thresholds. Options and issues, analysis of PIAAC and STEP data.
- Review of literacy and numeracy information collected in multi-purpose household surveys – possibilities for improving data quality and comparability
- Prepare a paper identifying vehicles for the collection of information on literacy and numeracy – periodicity, costs, other constraints
- Explore the possibility of using results from assessments of secondary-school students for estimation of literacy and numeracy levels for youth cohorts.

**THANK YOU**