



# Equity in Education: Breaking down Barriers to Social Mobility

Tarek MOSTAFA

# Context

---

- Higher income inequality and lower social mobility tend to go together
  - Greater income inequality limits education opportunities for talented yet underprivileged individuals
  - In societies with higher income inequality, disadvantaged youth tend to perceive smaller-than-actual returns to investing in further education
  - The actual increase in earnings associated with a university degree tends to be smaller for disadvantaged youth
- Education can promote social mobility – but this varies across countries
  - High educational performance among disadvantaged youths is a strong predictor for their success in further education and work
  - In countries where educational success remains strongly linked to social background rather than student talent and attitudes, education may not promote greater social mobility but reproduce existing inequalities

# Concepts

## Equality



The assumption is that everyone benefits from the same supports. This is equal treatment.

## Equity



Everyone gets the supports they need

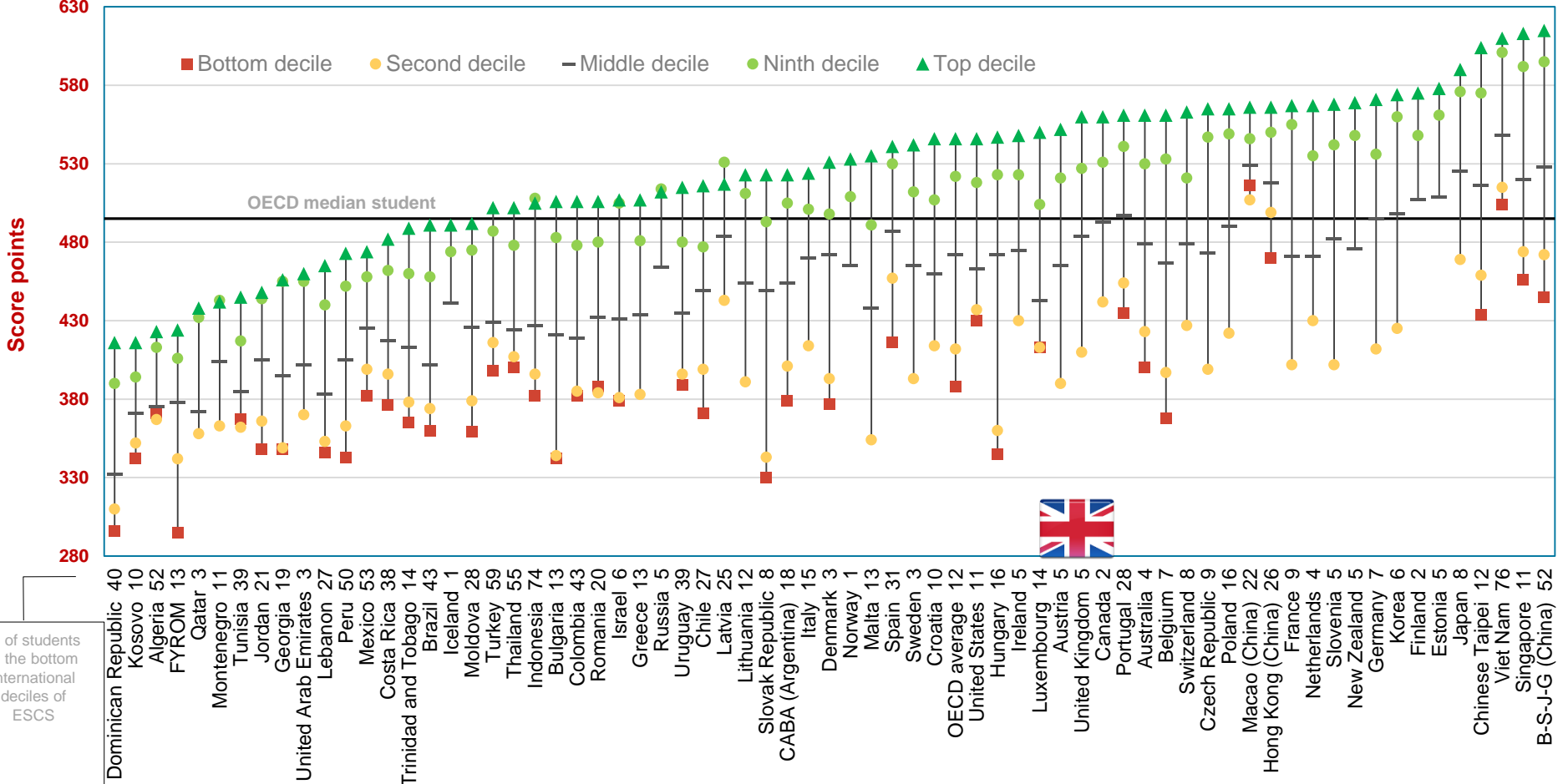
## Justice

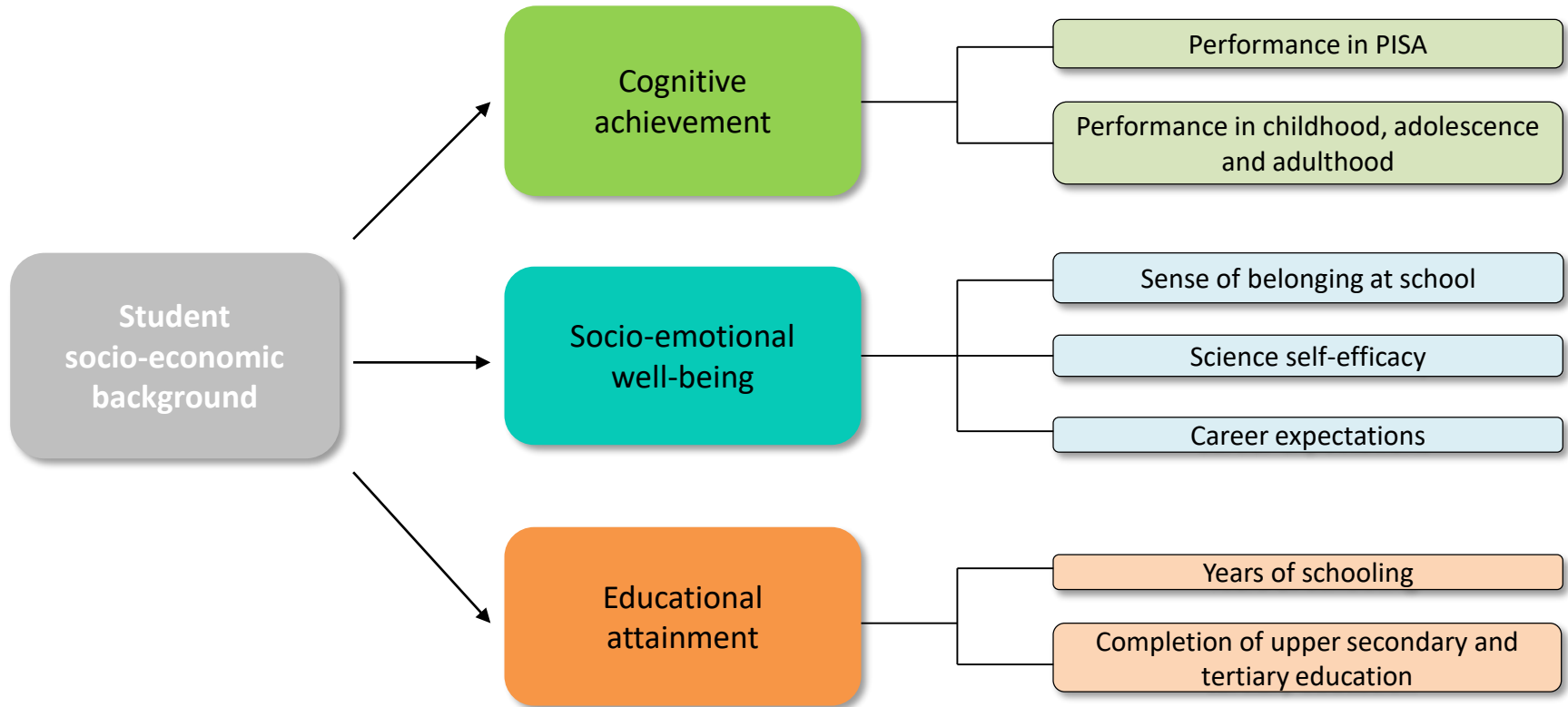


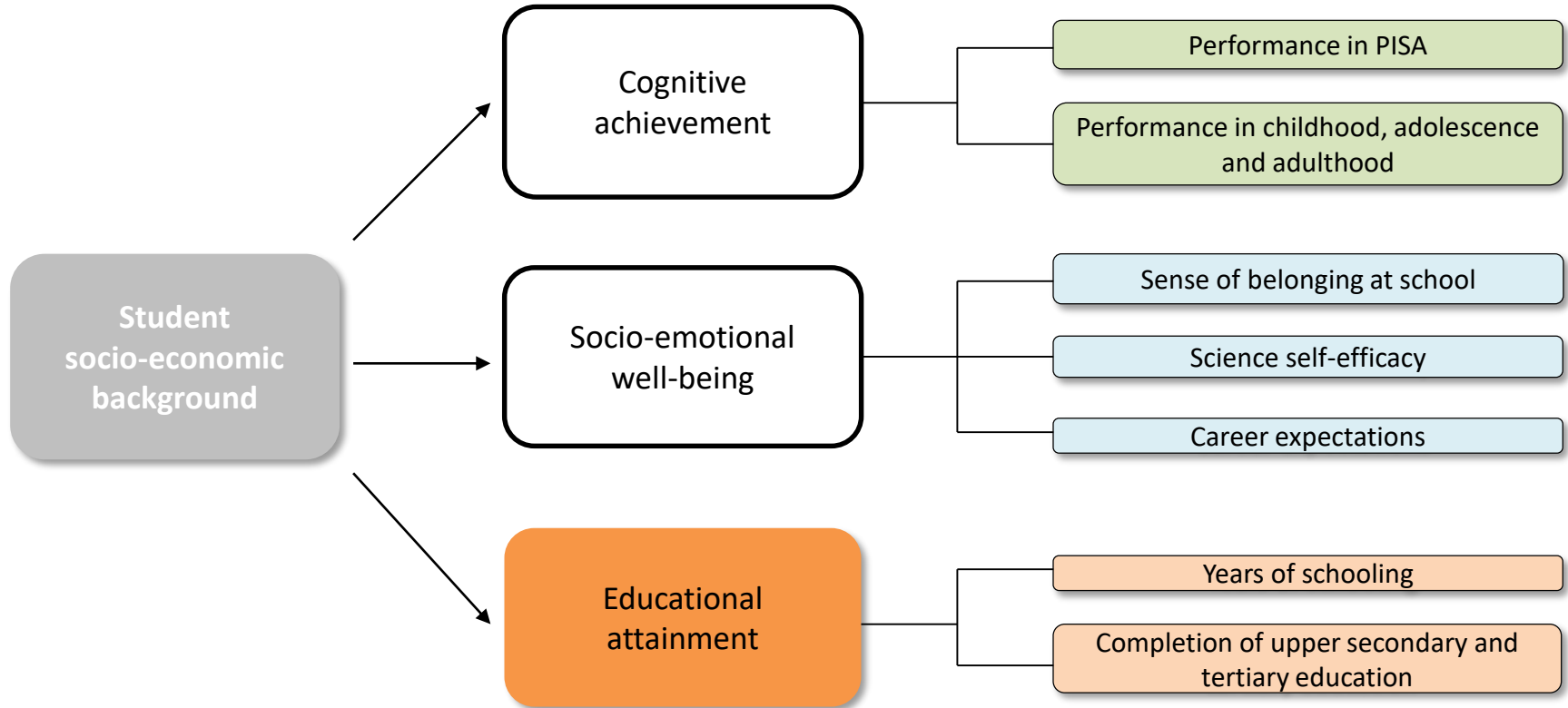
All 3 can see the game without supports of accommodations because the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed.

# Poverty is not destiny –

Learning outcomes by international deciles of the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS)







# Overall educational attainment is rising

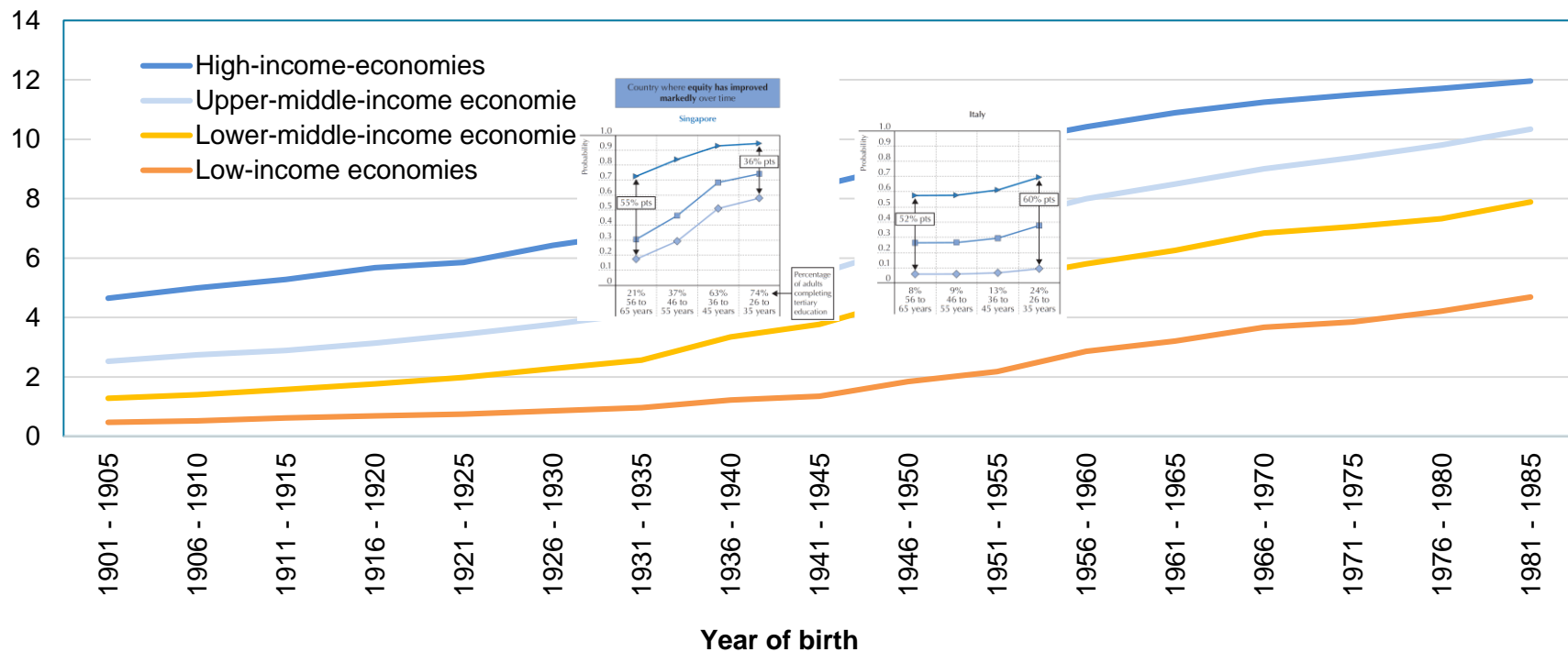
---

But inequity in completion of tertiary education persists over time within countries

# Wealthier countries have benefited more from the expansion of access to education over the past century

Figure 2.10

## Years of schooling

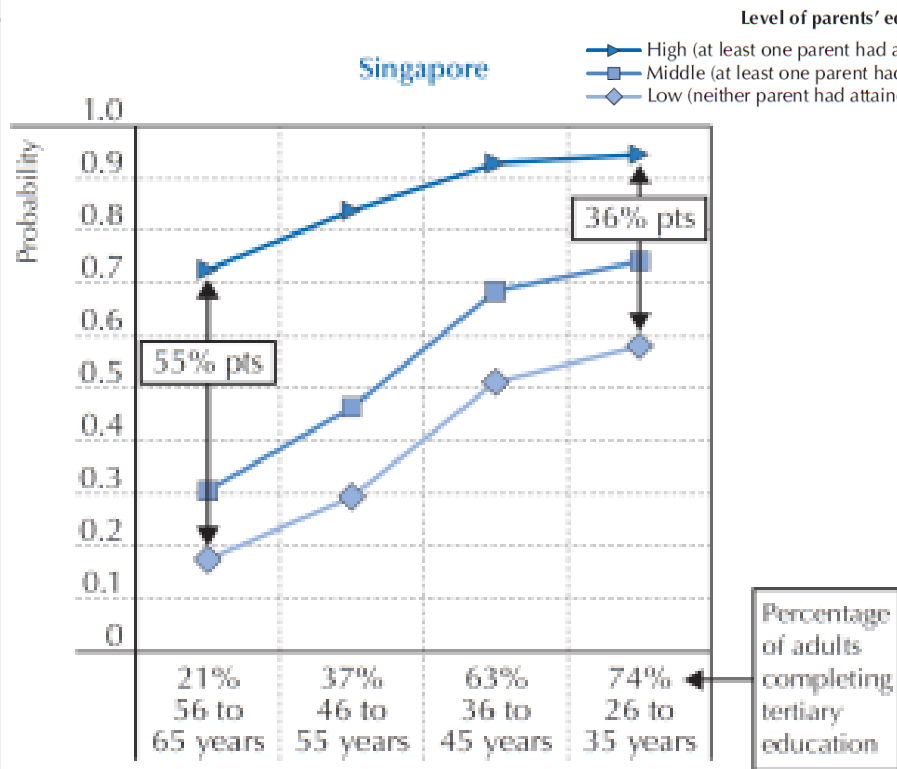




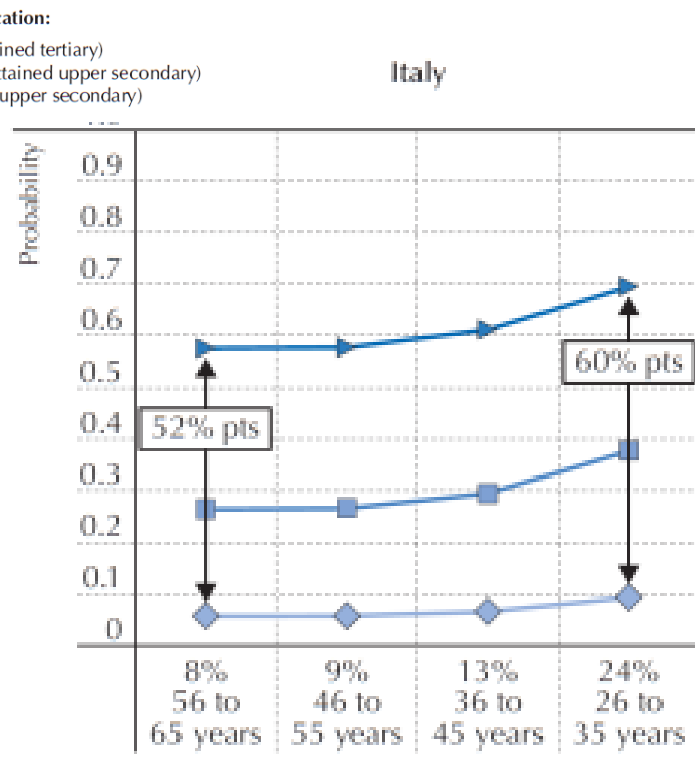
# Expansion in education does not automatically result in greater equity

Expansion opens opportunities for education to more students, who those students are determines whether expansion improves equity

## Equity has improved

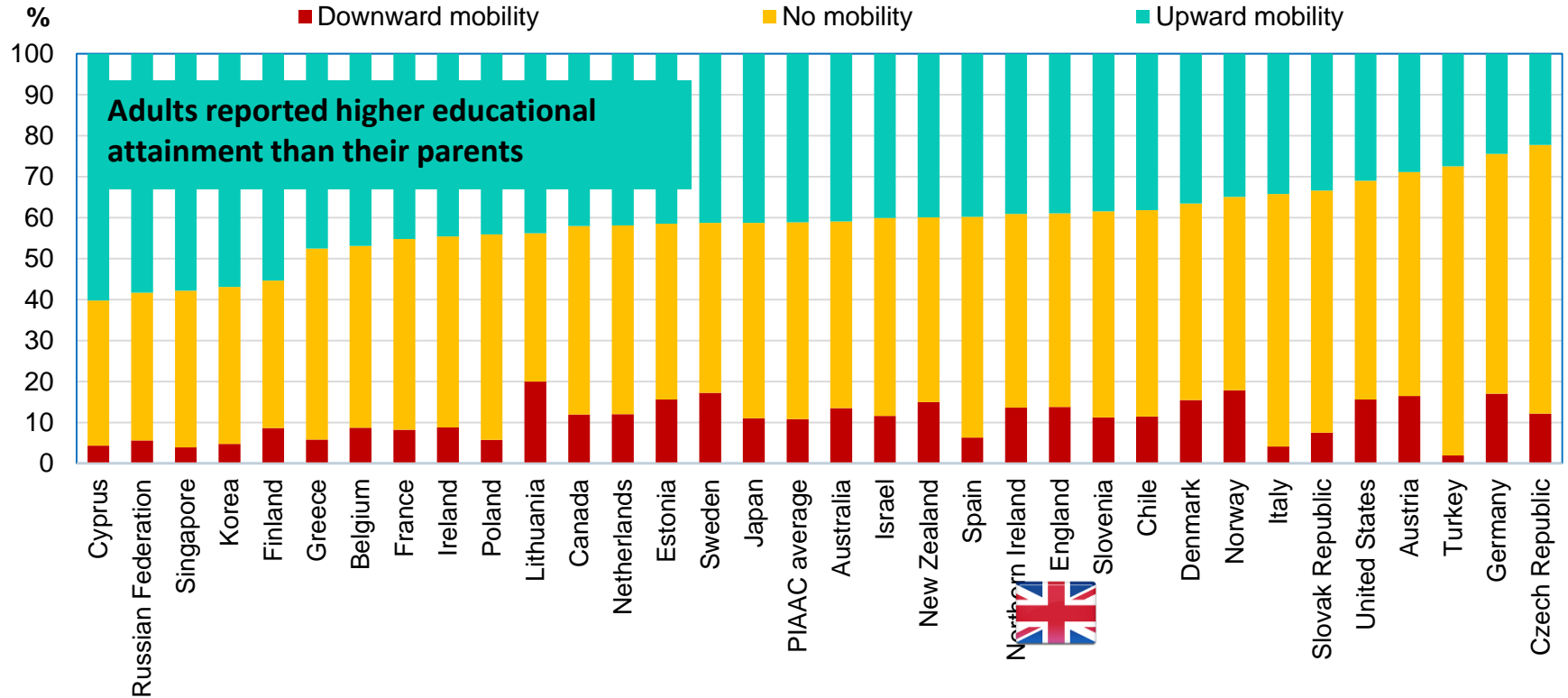


## Equity has declined



# Upward educational mobility varies across countries

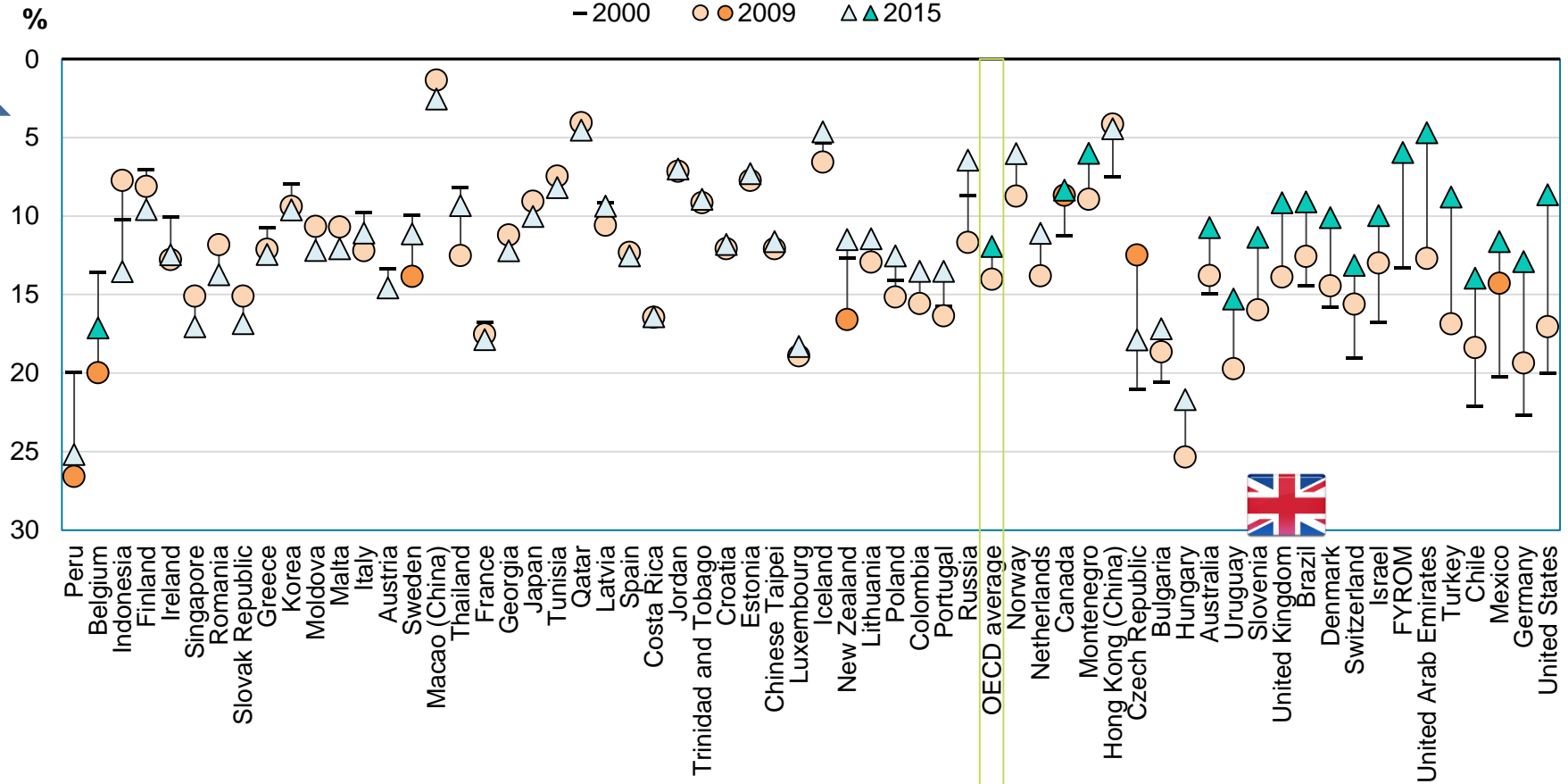
Figure 2.12



# Equity can improve, and in relatively short time (Reading)

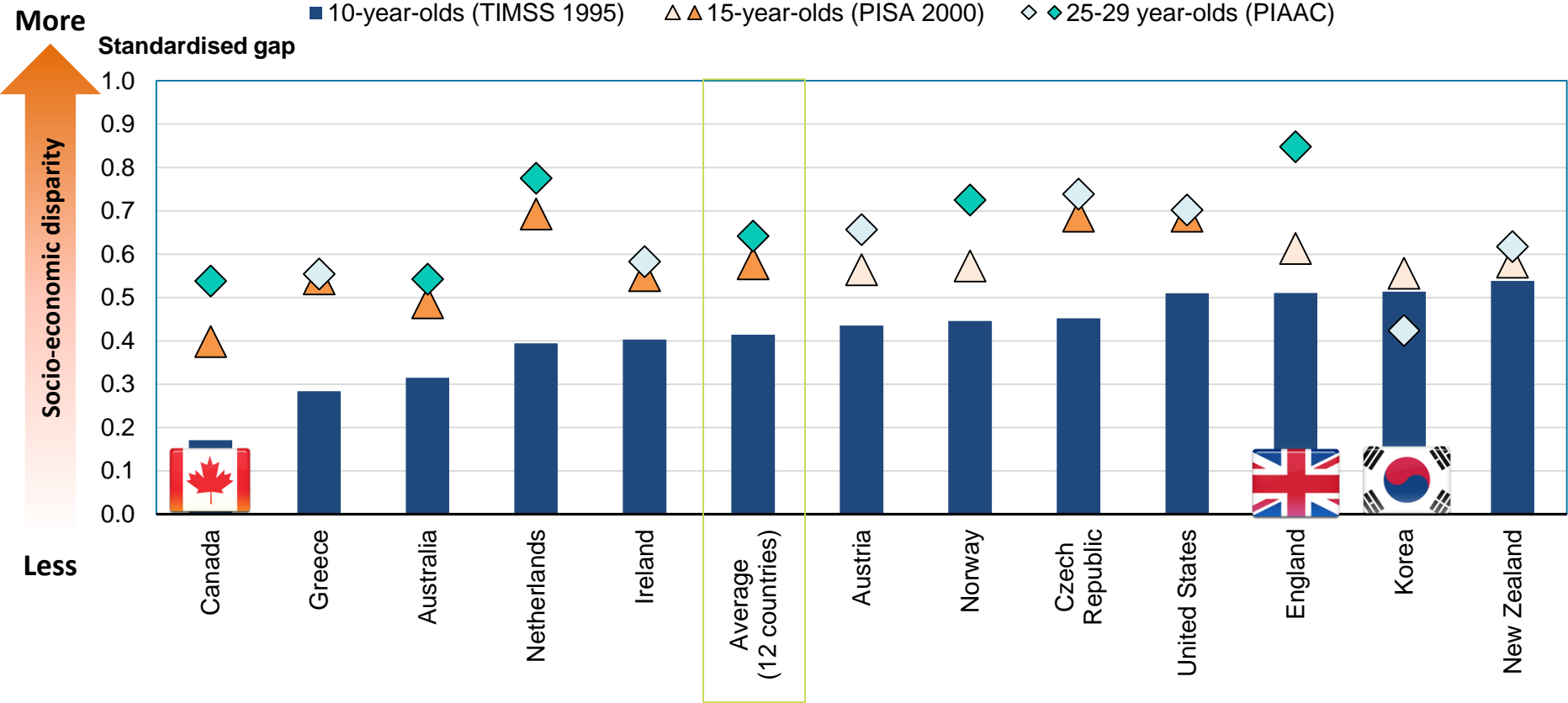
Figure 2.4

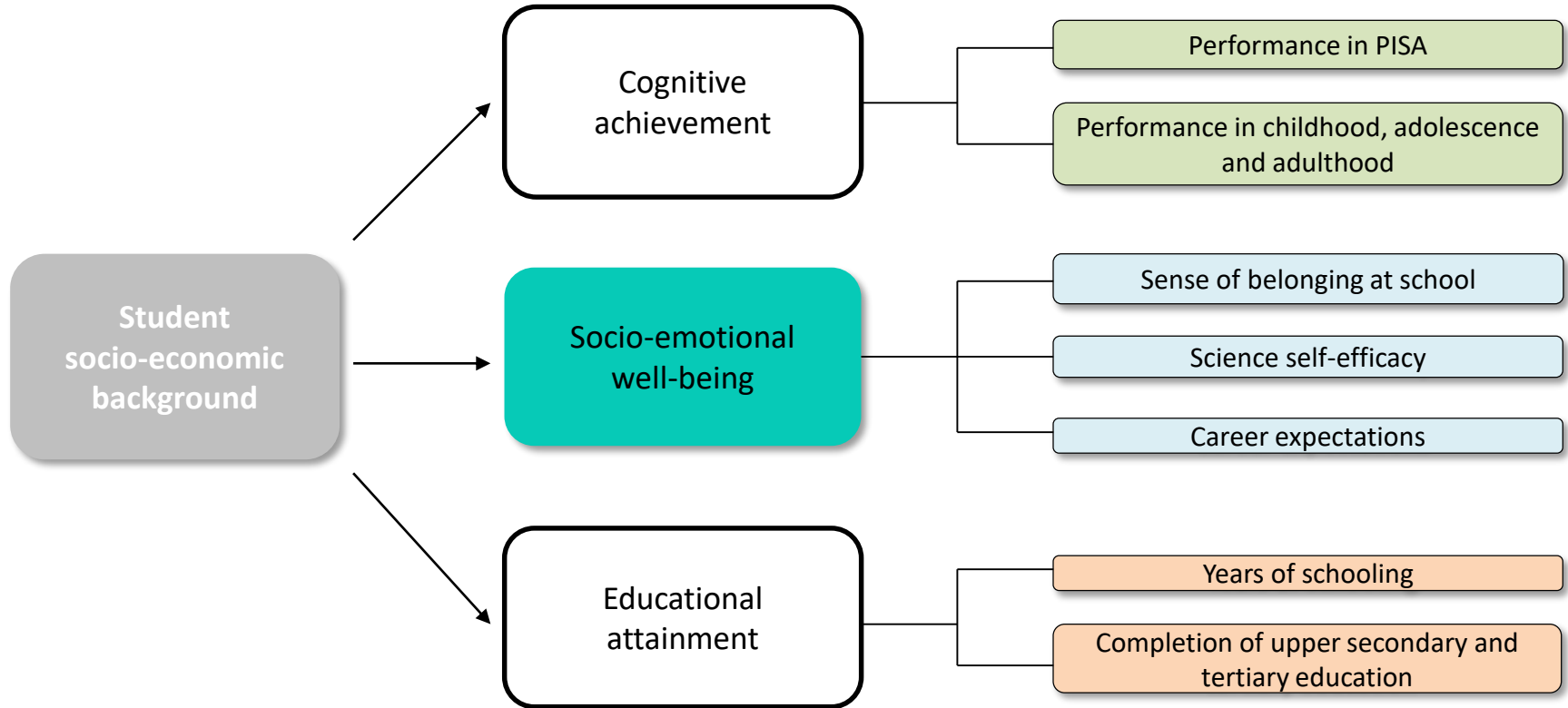
Greater equity



# Socio-economic disparities in mathematics are evident among young children and keep growing during adolescence and early adulthood

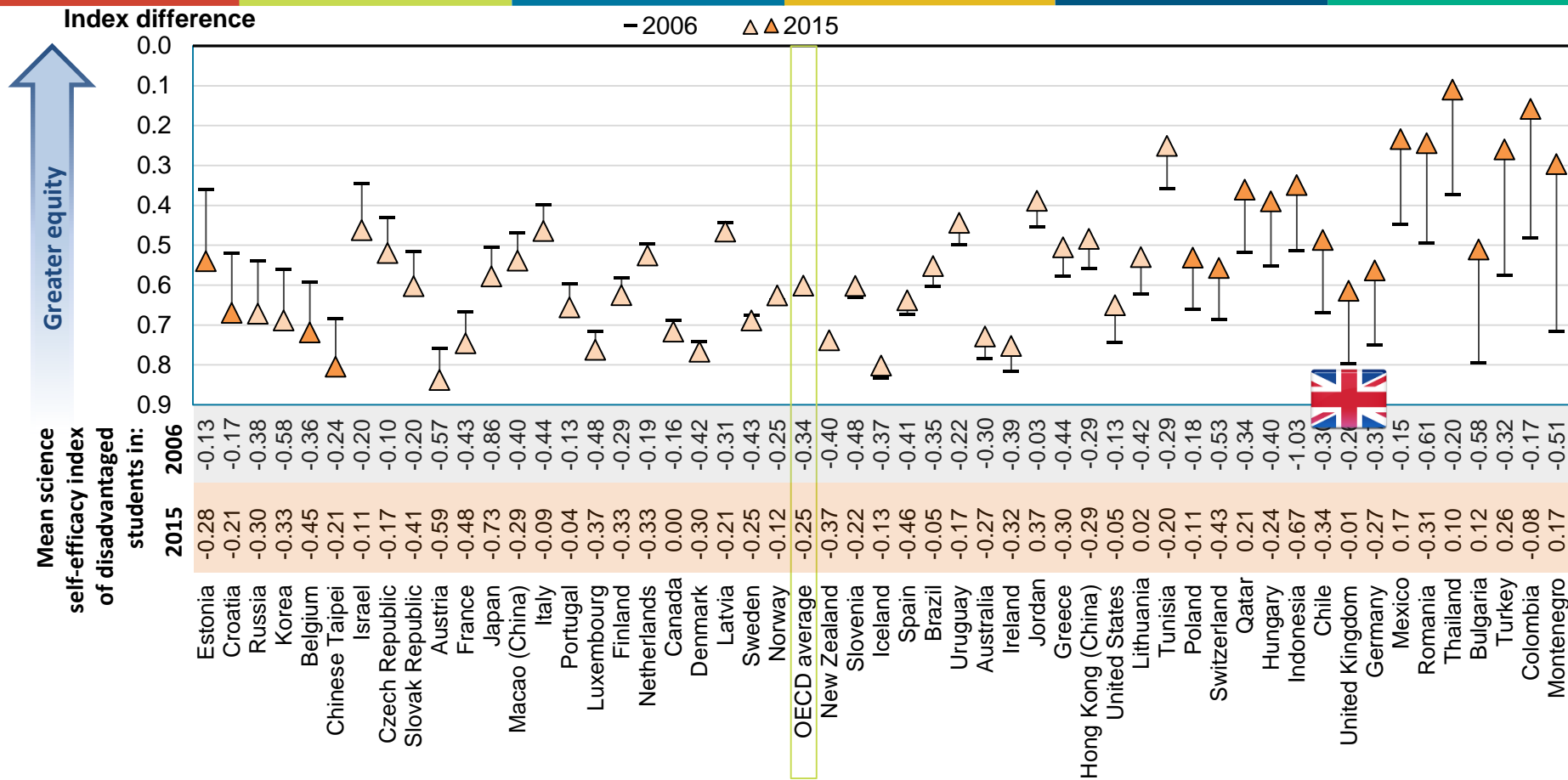
Figure 2.6





# Disparities in science self-efficacy are large

Figure 2.8



# Who succeeds despite disadvantage?

---

**Academic** resilience  
among disadvantaged students

# Types of academic resilience in PISA

Figure 3.1

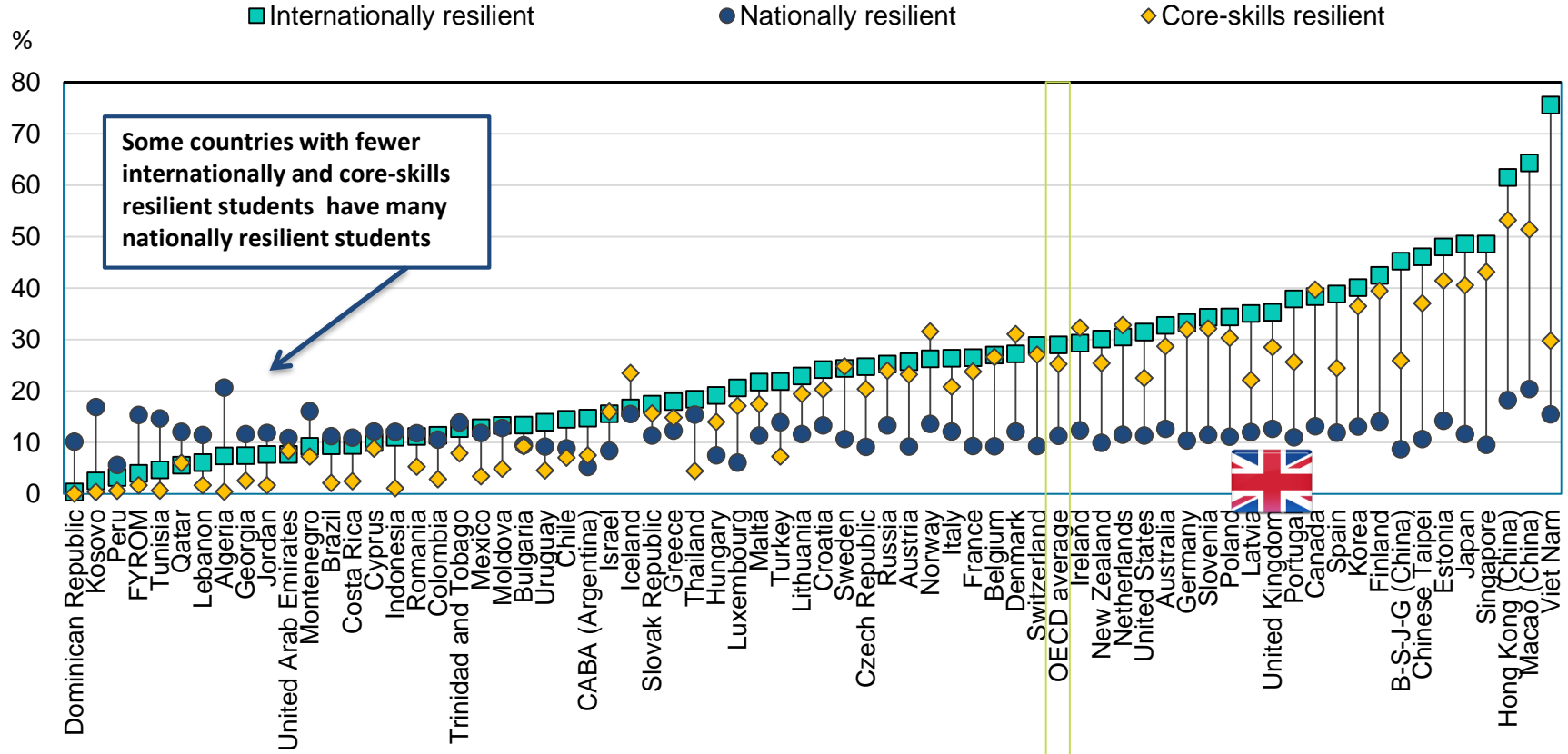
Types of academic resilience	What are these students able to achieve?	How do we measure it?	
<b>International</b>	Academic excellence by international standards	<b>Socio-economically disadvantaged students</b> in their own countries who score...	...in the top quarter of performance in science <b>among all students participating in PISA</b> , after adjusting for socio-economic background
<b>National</b>	Academic excellence by national standards		...in the top quarter of performance in science <b>among students in their own country</b>
<b>Core-skills</b>	Core knowledge and skills in key cognitive domains		... <b>at or above Level 3 in PISA</b> in science, reading and mathematics



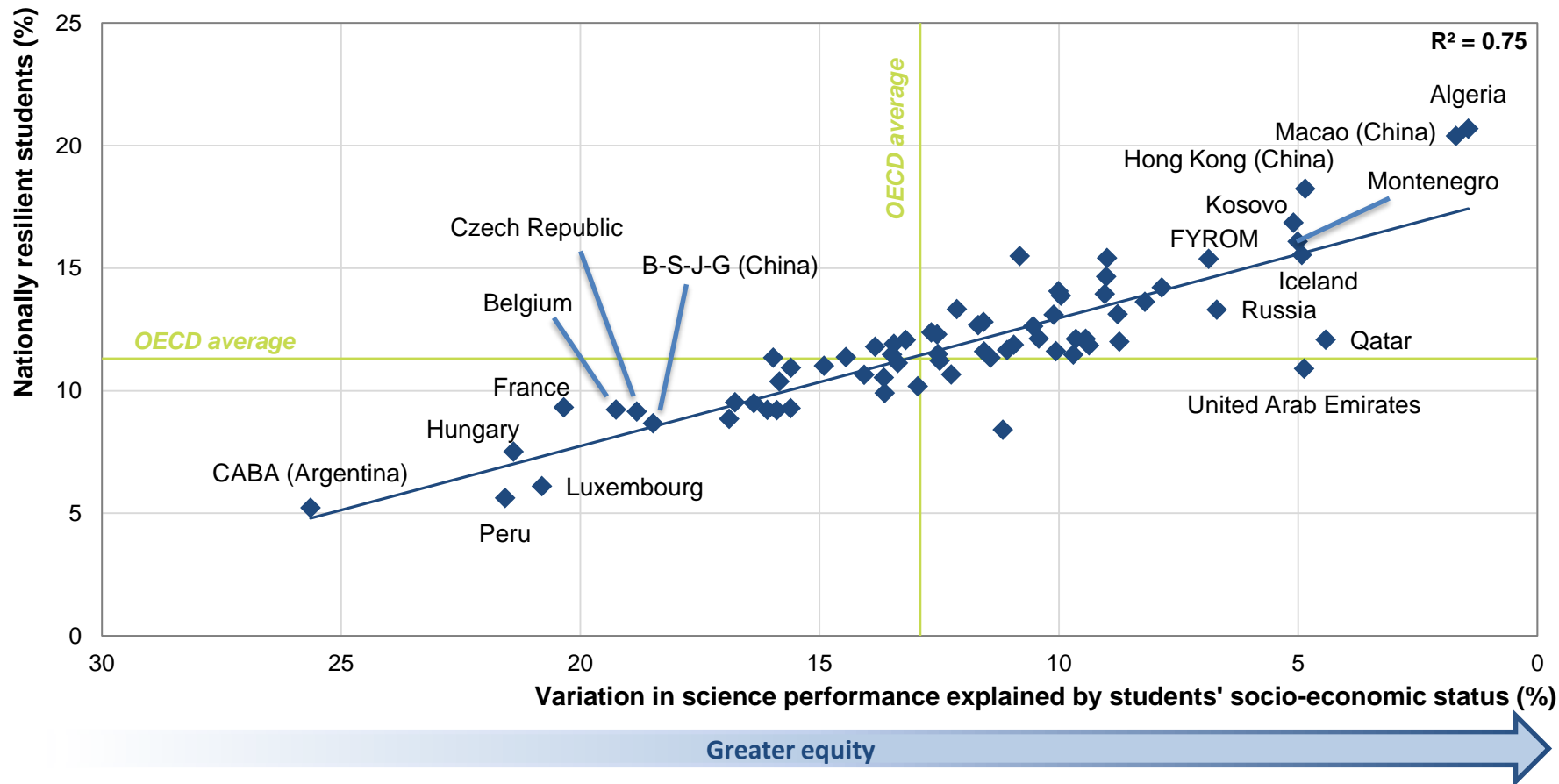
# The share of academically resilient students varies widely,

both in relative and absolute terms

Figure 3.3

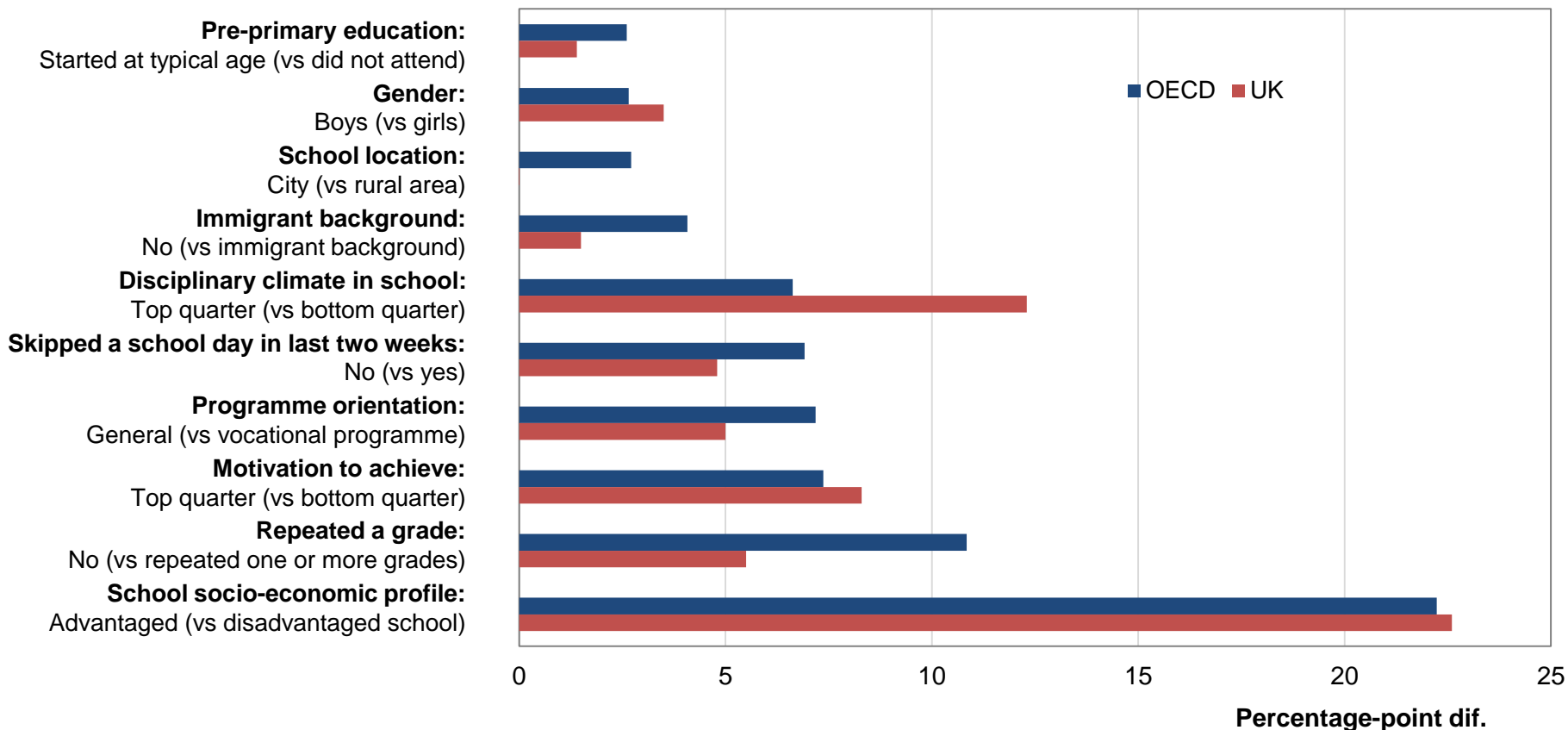


# National resilience is strongly linked to equity in student achievement **Figure 3.5**



# Some predictors of academic resilience (national resilience)

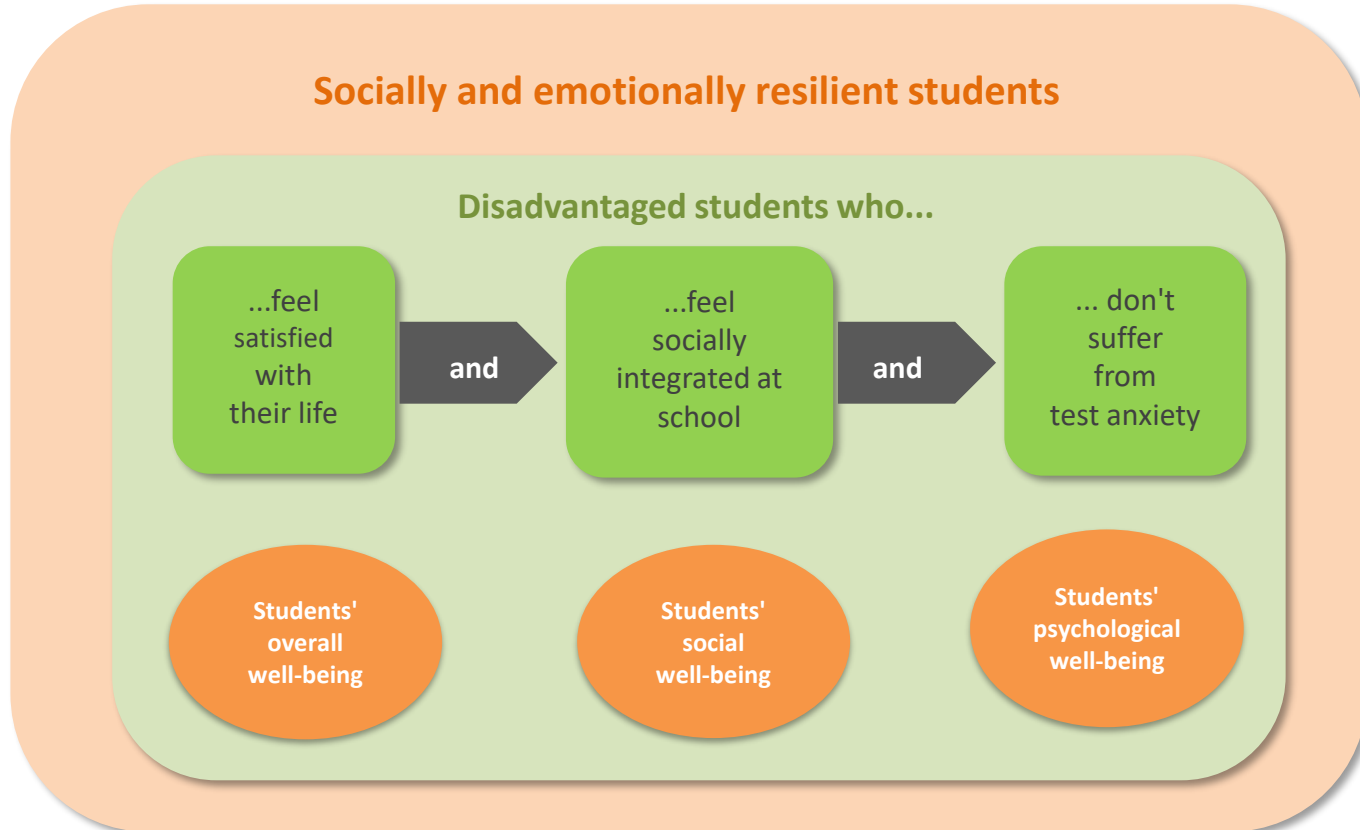
Figure 3.7



# Who succeeds despite disadvantage?

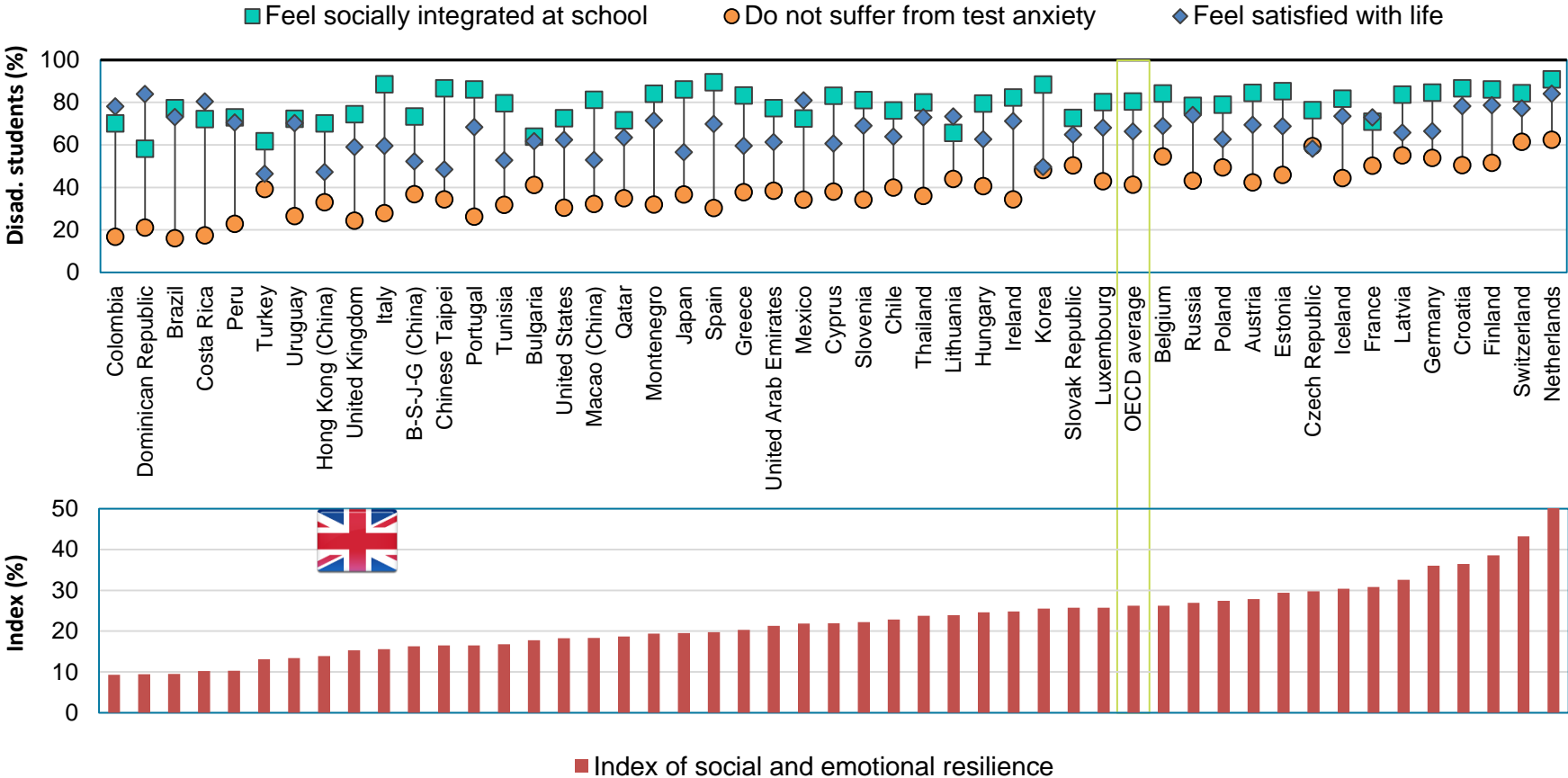
---

**Social-emotional** resilience  
among disadvantaged students



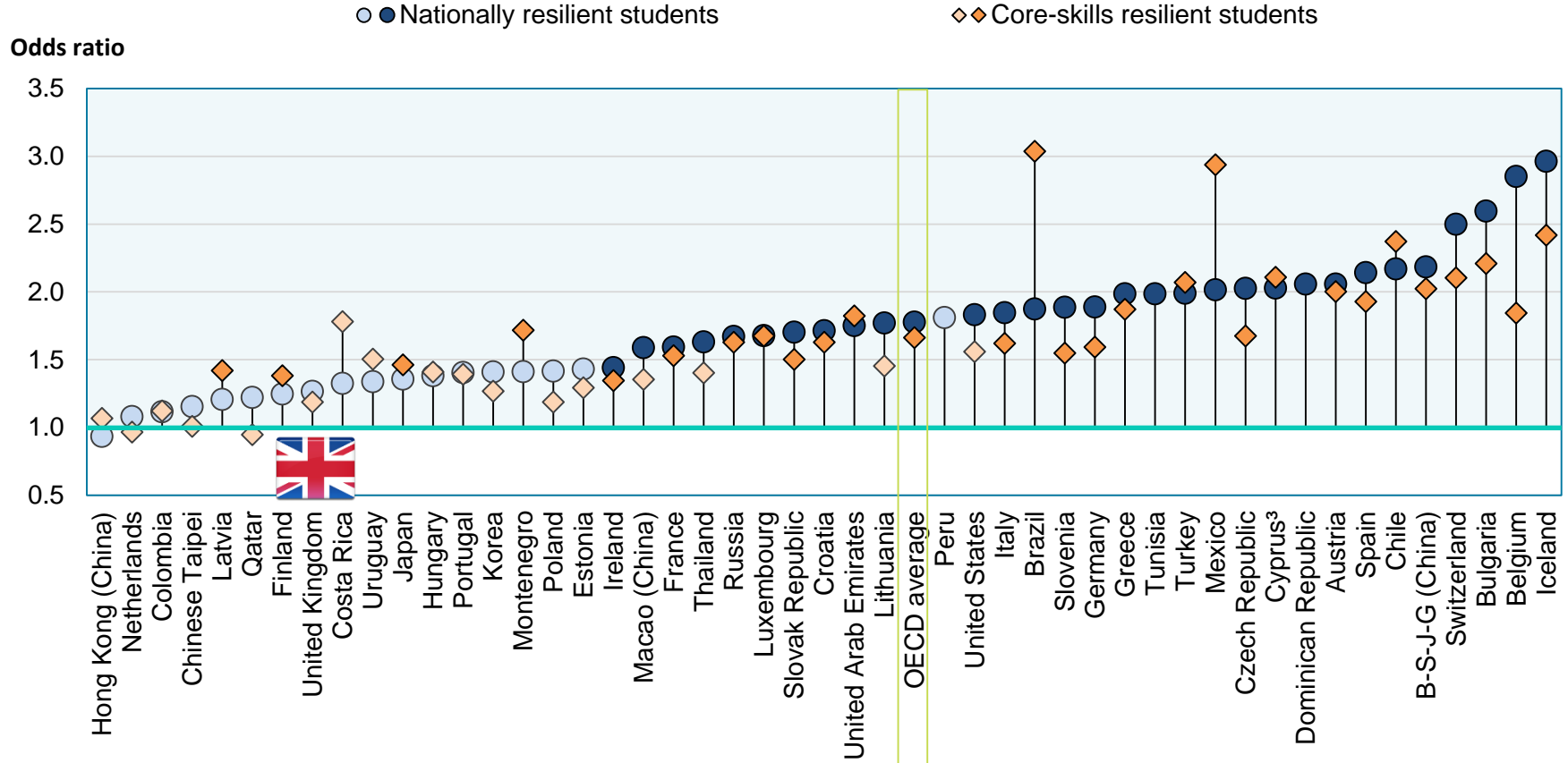
# Some 26% of disadvantaged students are socially and emotionally resilient

Figure 3.10



# Nationally and core-skills resilient students are more likely to be socially and emotionally resilient

Figure 3.11



# How are disadvantaged students affected by the socio-economic profile of their school?

---

The double disadvantage



# Some 48% of disadvantaged students attend disadvantaged schools, on average across OECD countries

Figure 4.1

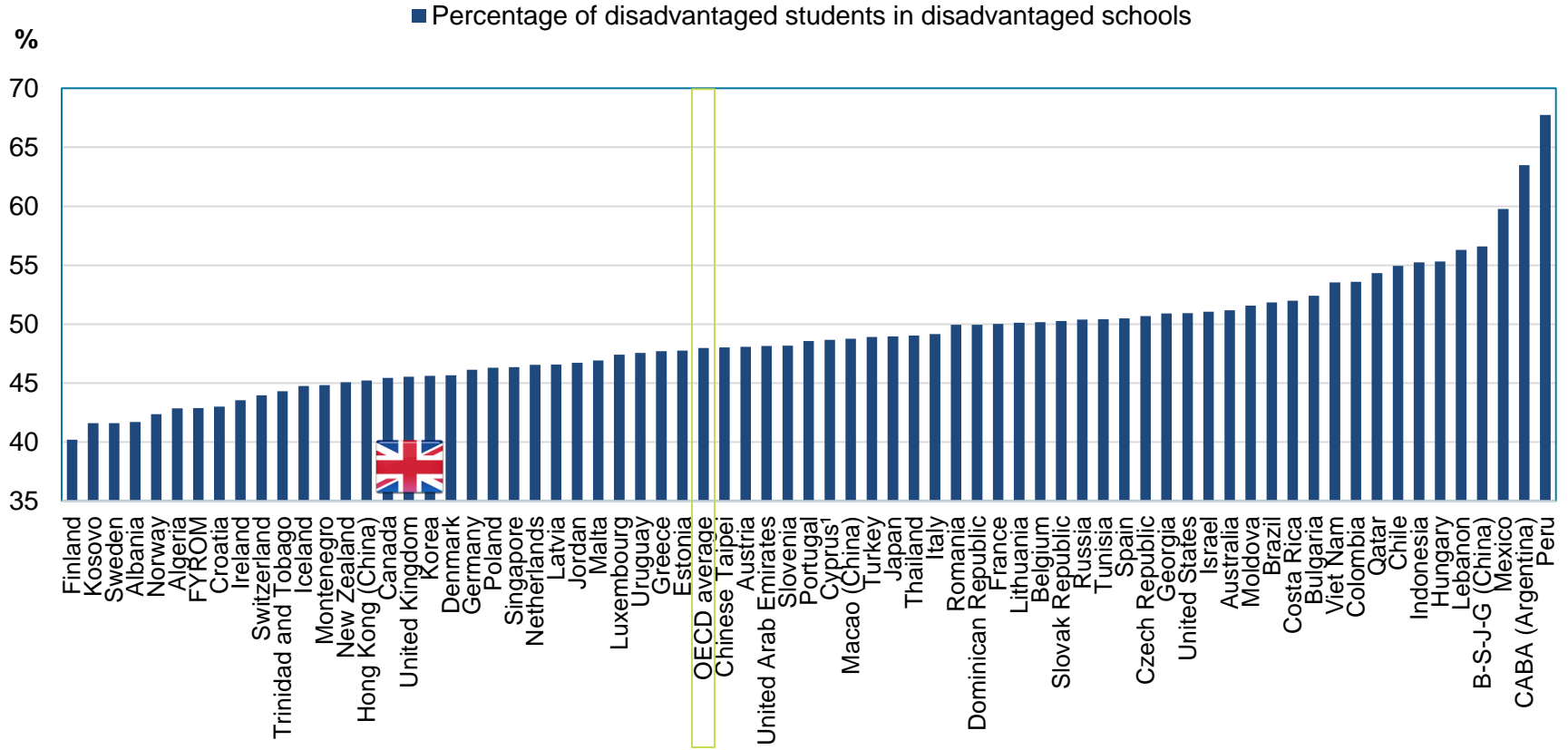
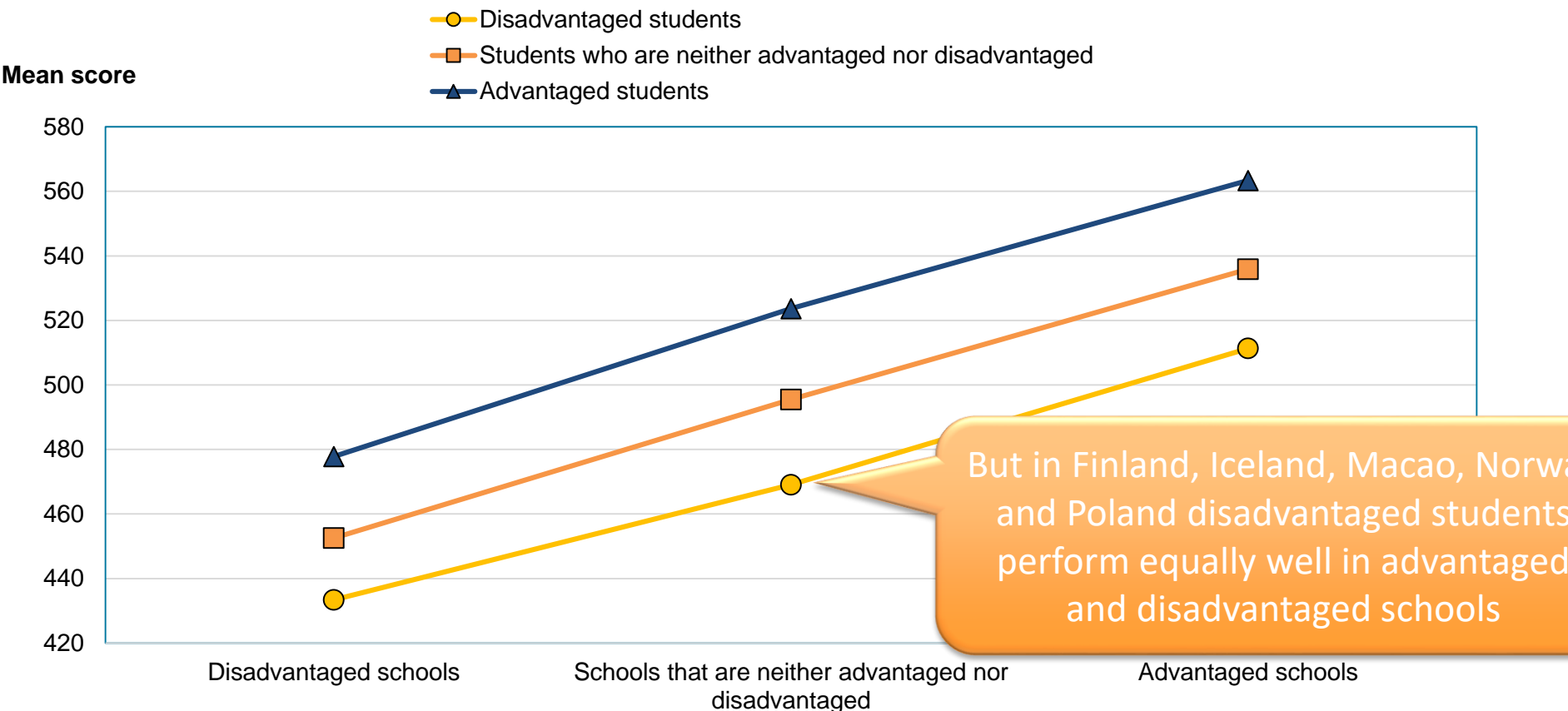


Figure 4.3

# Across OECD countries, disadvantaged students attending advantaged schools score 78 points higher than those in disadvantaged schools

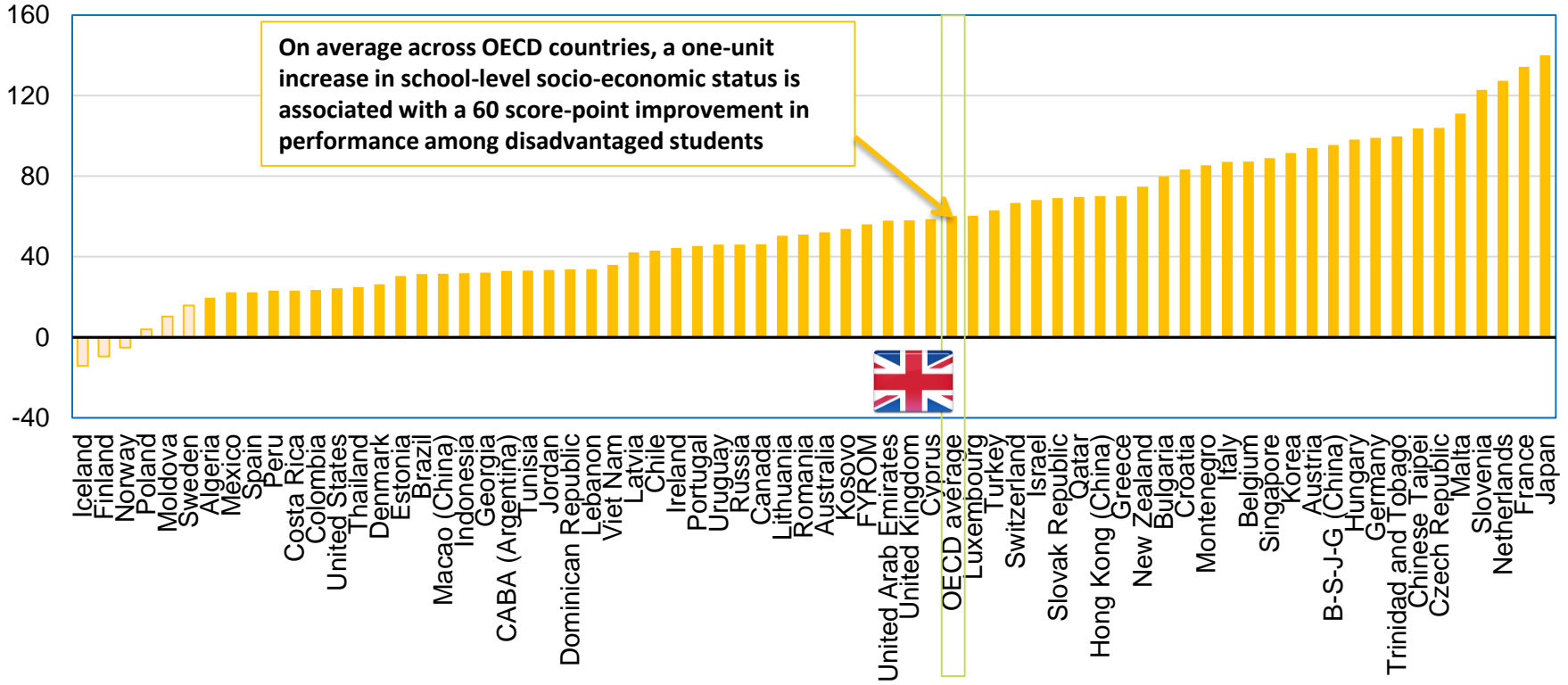


# In some countries, attending a more advantaged school is associated with significantly better performance

Figure 4.4

Score-point dif.

Disadvantaged students



# Some conclusions

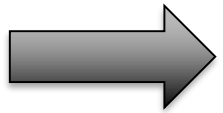
---

- Support disadvantaged children, adolescents and young adults in their education
- Provide quality early-education programmes to disadvantaged children
- Set ambitious goals and monitor the progress of disadvantaged students
- Develop teachers' capacity to detect student needs and manage diverse classrooms
- Target additional resources towards disadvantaged students and schools
- Reduce the concentration of disadvantaged students in particular schools
- Create a climate that favours learning and well-being
- Encourage parent-teacher communication and parental engagement

## Educational mobility and school-to-work transitions among disadvantaged students

---

- Further analyses carried out using longitudinal data for 5 countries: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Switzerland, and USA.



See paper in OECD library

[https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/fr/education/equity-in-education\\_9789264073234-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/fr/education/equity-in-education_9789264073234-en)

# Thank you

---

Find out more about our work at [www.oecd.org/pisa](http://www.oecd.org/pisa)

- All publications
- The complete micro-level database

Email: [Tarek.Mostafa@oecd.org](mailto:Tarek.Mostafa@oecd.org)

