



The Scotiabank  
**Young People in the Community Index**

Assessing the state of health, well-being and education  
of young people across the Americas

2017 | White Paper





Economic growth, inequality and poverty are ever present concerns around the world. Young people in particular are keenly affected and are often hit hardest by a lack of jobs or access to education and healthcare; all of which can seriously impact them and the community where they live.

At Scotiabank, investing in our communities has been a focus for over 180 years – our goal is to help create a better life for the people that we serve around the world. Investing in the health, well-being and education of young people is an investment in the long-term security, stability and growth of both our communities and our business. Scotiabank aims to help young people – our future leaders – by providing them with the necessary skills and resources they need for success. As such, we have been fine-tuning our corporate giving strategy, with a goal to invest 70% of our philanthropic support into organizations that help young people in the community.

A key tool in our efforts has been the development of our Scotiabank Young People in the Community (YPC) Index, which pools together publically available data from around the world to help us determine the current state of youth in North and South America.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, fluid 'J' followed by a smaller 'P'.

Jean-François Perrault  
Senior Vice President and Chief Economist  
Scotiabank

# Understanding the state of youth today: Scotiabank's Young People in the Community Index

To maximize our support for young people, we need to have a deeper understanding of the current challenges facing young people across our key geographies.

To help make sense of it all, we engaged with the strategy consultancy GlobeScan and an Advisory Council of leading external experts on youth issues, drawn from countries across Latin America, the Caribbean and North America. Together, we reviewed, collated and standardized relevant publically available indicators to create Scotiabank's Young People in the Community (YPC) Index, which will help us better understand the current state of young people in North, Central and South America.

The YPC Index focuses on two pillars crucial to youth development and success – Health/Well-being and Education. Nineteen separate indicators are monitored to evaluate the state of young people today and each of these indicators or data points are derived from publically available, reliable and valid data sets<sup>1</sup> from the majority of countries covered in the YPC Index.

Our current focus is on 30 countries across North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, which reflects a large portion of Scotiabank's footprint and where we can have the most impact on young people.

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## ➤ PROVIDING A PLATFORM FOR ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT

The YPC Index is a guide that will help Scotiabank identify where needs may be the greatest across the Americas, so that we can properly inform our investments in young people. It is also a tool that anyone can use – it can be a discussion point that brings youth advocates together to improve or create policies that relate to young people, identify gaps in available data, or pin-point problem areas that are in need of particular attention and funding.

The YPC Index can provide a platform for advocacy and engagement with various partners in the youth development space, including governments, businesses and non-profit organizations, in addressing key challenges affecting young people. As we track the indicators over time, the YPC Index can measure progress on tackling important youth challenges on a country-by-country level.

The YPC Index also serves to identify the areas where gaps in knowledge currently exist when it comes to youth-oriented data.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g., sourced from WHO, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, UNICEF, World Bank, etc.

## ➤ TOP-LEVEL FINDINGS OF THE INDEX

There is a great deal of variation in the state of health, well-being and education of young people across the Americas. While some issues such as youth unemployment are more pervasive across smaller nations, other issues such as access to banking or undernourished children affect both large and small economies. More advanced economies such as Canada and the U.S., although often near the top on many indicators, have their share of problem areas such as substance abuse and incarceration rates. Each country has its own unique story and our YPC Index helps us identify issues needing support.

Map 1 summarizes the state of young people on health and well-being related indicators. These include nutrition rates (as measured through obesity, underweight and stunting/underheight measures), immunization, natal and antenatal care, alcohol and tobacco usage, youth incarceration, personal safety and teenage pregnancy.

Overall, countries such as Barbados, Guatemala, El Salvador and Jamaica have generally lower than average scores on health and well-being, while young people from the U.S., Costa Rica, Uruguay and Canada enjoy far higher scores on most health and well-being indicators.

Map 2 shows variation among countries in terms of education-related indicators for young people, including digital connectedness, access to banking, employment, primary and secondary enrollment rates, and years of schooling.

Overall, young people from Chile, Costa Rica, Brazil, Canada and the U.S. are generally ahead of most countries on the majority of education indicators. Meanwhile, countries such as Guatemala, Grenada, Suriname, Guyana, Venezuela and St. Lucia rank below average on most educational indicators and are countries where more support may be needed for young people.

For more detailed information, [please view the full Scotiabank YPC Index Report](#).

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## ➤ IDENTIFYING COUNTRY CHALLENGES IN CONTEXT

The purpose of the YPC Index is not to rank countries against each other. As we know, each country has its own unique context, and data points can never tell the whole story. The true value of the YPC Index is its ability to give a quick snapshot of how young people are faring within each country AND to understand their progress relative to other countries. For example, relative to youth in other countries, young people in Jamaica are more likely to have a bank account and proper nutrition, but are less likely to feel safe. Only by examining each country separately across all indicators can we take the first step in identifying potential gaps and areas that may need additional support.

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## ➤ BRIDGING THE INFORMATION GAP AND THE POWER OF COLLABORATION

A key finding from our work on the YPC Index is that there is a lack of publically available data on the state of young people in many countries across the Americas. Data from publically available sources can also be challenging to standardize and compare across regions, as definitions of health, well-being and education can vary considerably from country to country, resulting in data being measured inconsistently from one country to the next.

In particular, youth-specific data on mental health, including suicide rates or spiritual/cultural health, as well as on the prevalence of child abuse, child trafficking and gender-based violence, is difficult to access for many countries. Similarly, limited youth-specific data across multiple markets exists about the formal training of educators, access to transportation to get to school/work, digital education or connectivity, or health/nutritional education. Youth-specific information is also scarce when it comes to physical activity levels, access to green spaces or access to improved sanitation facilities and water sources.

These issues have all been identified as important influencers of youth development by our Advisory Council and the ability to provide reliable data for these issues would be welcomed by youth advocates.

There are many other dimensions to consider such as disparities by gender, age brackets, geography or socio-economic status. In future years, Scotiabank hopes to include some of these dimensions as more publically available and reliable data becomes available. In the meantime, the YPC Index can be a useful first step for advocates who are working in the field.

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## ➤ HELPING TO MAKE PROGRESS AND DELIVER IMPACT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

In order to help young people in our communities in an effective way, we believe that it is crucial to first understand where needs may be greatest in order to have the biggest impact. Work needs to be done to highlight and fill some of the gaps mentioned previously. It is not only a responsibility of government or multilateral institutions, but all stakeholders – including civil society, the private sector and policy makers – to work collaboratively to find cost effective ways to measure the state of youth on dimensions that span the entire spectrum of health, well-being and education.

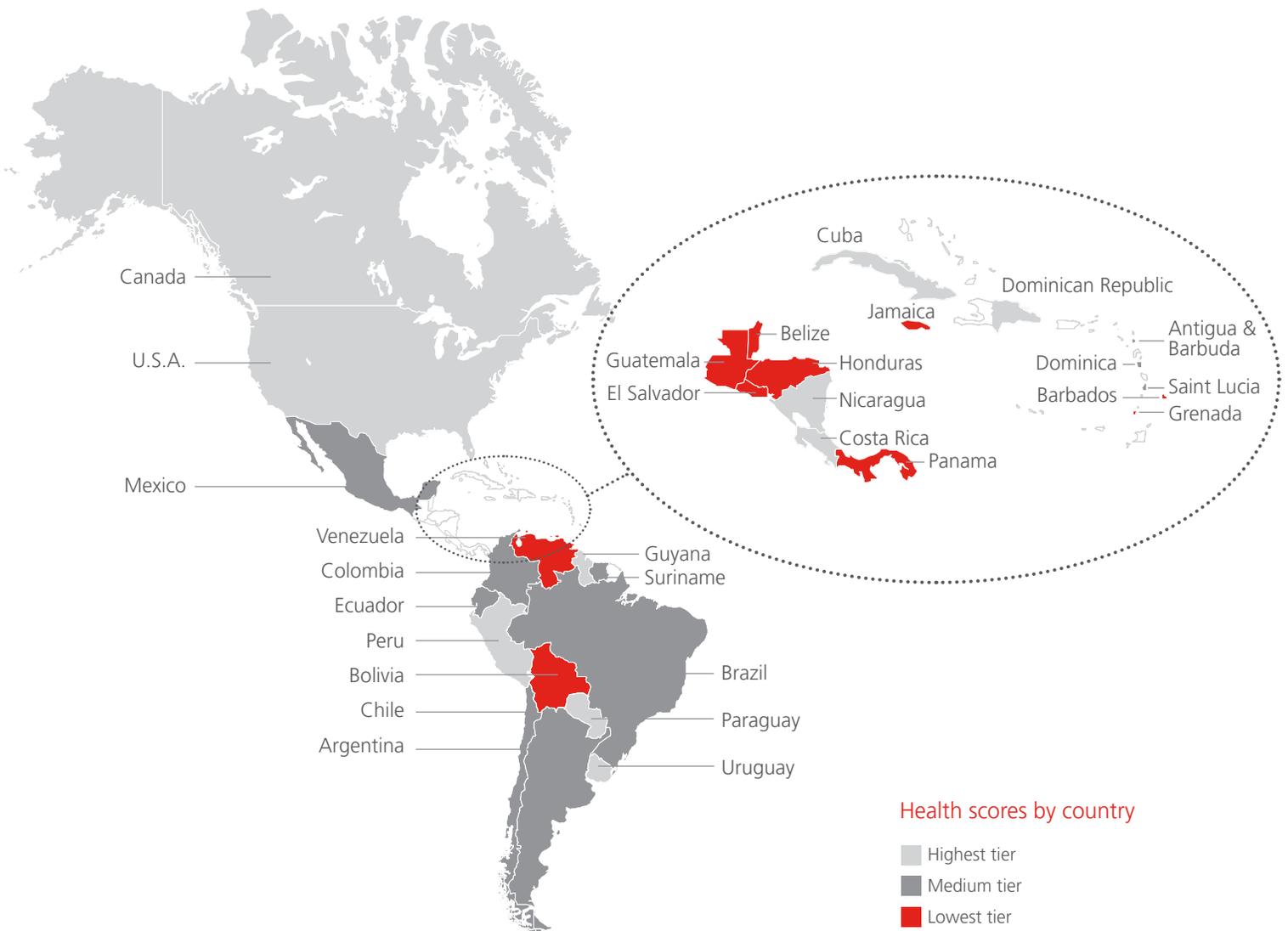
Scotiabank is committed to this endeavor and will work towards improving and deepening the YPC Index in future iterations.

We also welcome any feedback from youth advocates on how we can improve the YPC Index and bridge the information gaps going forward, to make it a valuable tool for other organizations.

Map 1

# Scotiabank's YPC Index: **A focus on health and well-being**

Summary of the state of young people across 11 health and well-being indicators



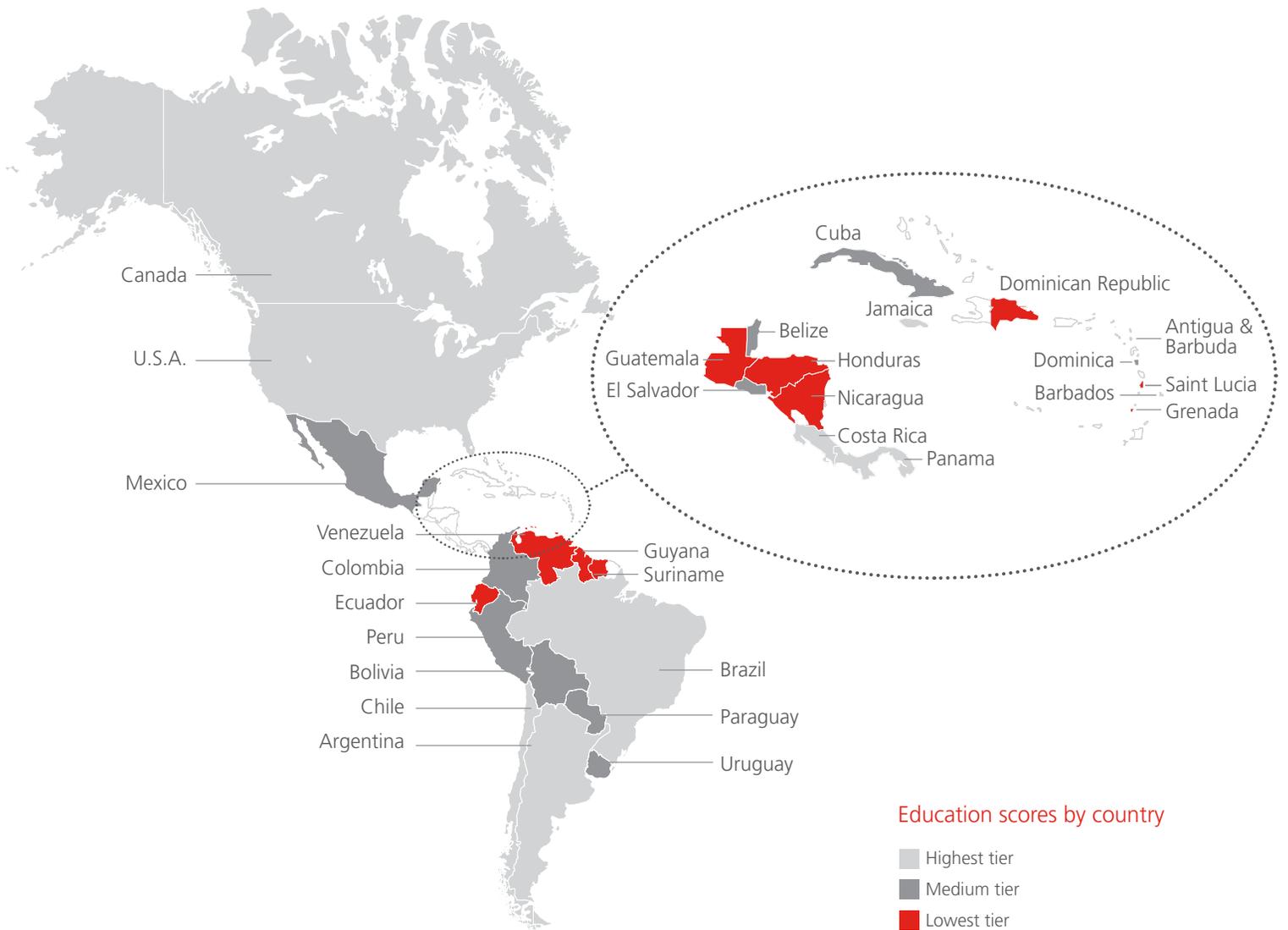
For more detailed information, [please view the full Scotiabank YPC Index Report](#).

To download an Excel table listing the source data for each indicator, [please see the Excel spreadsheet in the Downloads tab](#).

Map 2

# Scotiabank's YPC Index: **A focus on education**

Summary of the state of young people across eight educational indicators





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### Scotiabank Young People in the Community (YPC) Advisory Council

The Scotiabank YPC Advisory Council is composed of a group of 10 international experts that work or have expertise in the field of youth development – primarily health and well-being and education. Council members volunteered their time to guide and validate the construction of the YPC Index. Organizations include: Junior Achievement Worldwide, Maria Ayuda (Chile), Fundación Alberto Baillères (Mexico), UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean, Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc Nation (Canada), LIVE UP: The Caribbean Media Alliance, PLAN Canada, Canadian Foundation for Economic Education, CARE Peru, and the Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto (Canada). For a detailed list of participants, [please view the full Scotiabank YPC Index Report](#).

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