

A unique view from children around the world:

Children's Worlds Survey, 2017-19

- Between 2017 and 2019, the third wave of the Children's Worlds survey asked over 128,000 children aged around 8, 10 and 12 years in 35 countries / territories across four continents their views about their lives.
- The survey provides a unique contemporary view of children's lives in a wide range of countries in terms of economic wealth, geography and culture.

What are the aims of the project?

The aims of the Children's World project are:

1. To understand and promote children's own views and experiences of their lives and well-being
2. To encourage policymakers, and all those concerned with children's well-being, to take account of these views and act to improve children's experiences of childhood

Who did the research?

The survey was carried out by an international team including researchers from universities in each of the countries taking part. It received core funding from the Jacobs Foundation and additional funding within each country. Ethic approval was gained for the research in each country.

How was the research done?

Questionnaires were developed by discussing, testing and piloting with children, and were translated into xx languages. Children in mainstream schools completed the survey either on paper or computer.

What did the survey ask?

The survey covered a wide range of aspects of children's lives:

Topics covered in the survey

Characteristics	Economic / material
Home	Family
School	Friends
Neighbourhood	Time use
The country	Self
Overall well-being	Rights

How do children feel about their lives overall?

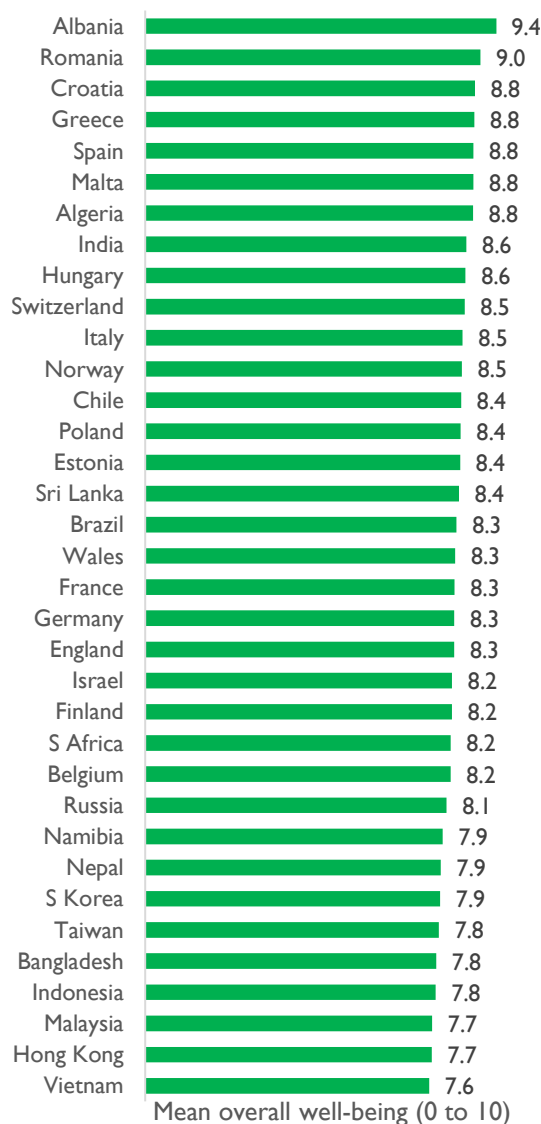
Children were asked questions about:

- How satisfied they were with their life
- How often they felt happy
- How often they felt sad

Figure 1 shows an average of the answers of children aged 10 years old to these questions.

- Most children had a positive sense of well-being but there was variation between countries.
- The top six countries were all in southern Europe. The bottom eight countries were all in Asia.
- The position of countries did not seem to reflect their economic wealth

Figure 1: Overall well-being



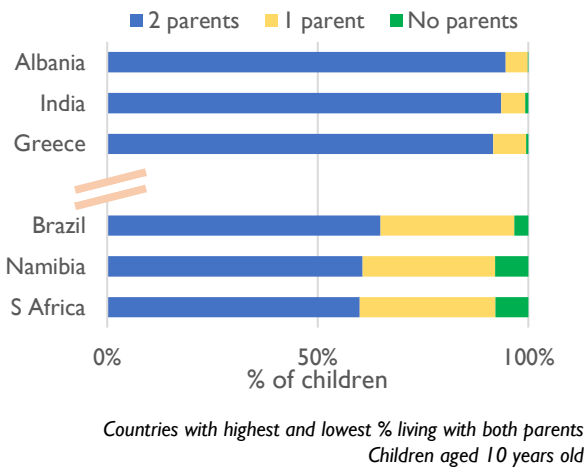
Children aged 10 years old. The chart shows mean scores based on answers on life satisfaction and feelings of happiness and sadness

Who do children live with?

Diversity of circumstances. The large majority of children in all countries lived with their family but:

- In seven countries, more than 90% of children lived with both birth parents, while in five countries less than 70% did so (Figure 2).
- In Kolkata, India and in Albania most children lived with a grandparent while in Finland and Norway less than 2% did so.

Figure 2: No. of parents that children lived with

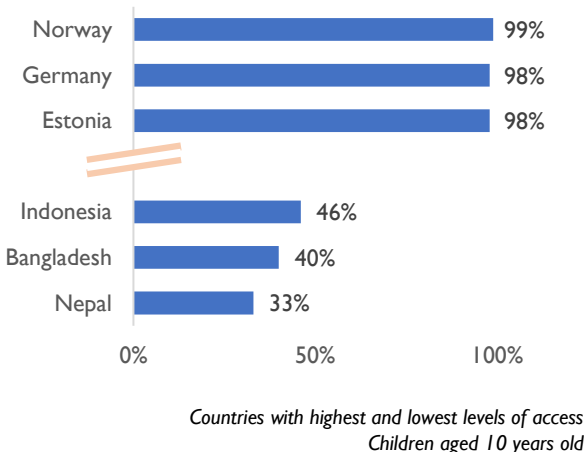


What do children have?

In a period when children's access to technology is being recognised as a key resource for their well-being and development:

- Over 90% of children had internet access in many rich countries but less than half did so in Bangladesh, Indonesia and Nepal

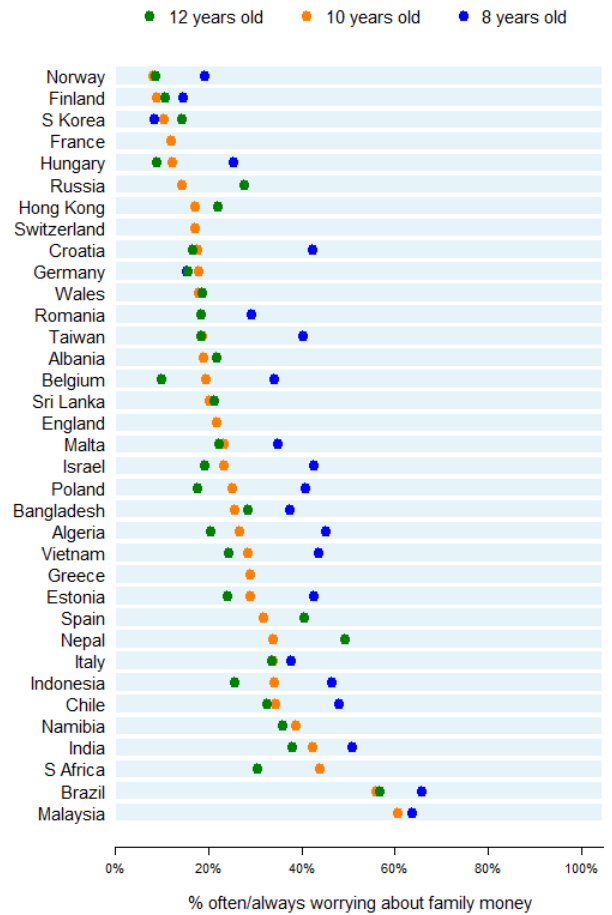
Figure 3: Internet access at home



- Mobile phone ownership among 10-year-olds also varied widely from 33% in Sri Lanka to 99% in Finland.
- In 13 countries more than one in ten children said that they did not have enough money to take part in school trips.

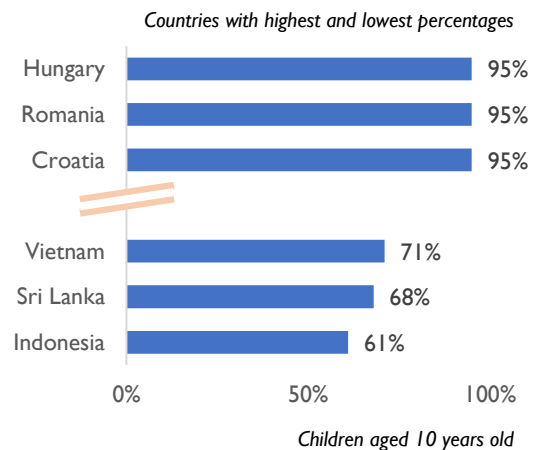
- Many children often or always worried about how much money their family had. These worries were greatest among the youngest age group surveyed. In most countries more than one in five 8-year-olds said that they often or always worried about family money.

Figure 4: % of children often worrying about family money



- In most countries more than one in ten children said they didn't always have enough food to eat each day.

Figure 5: % of children who always had enough food each day

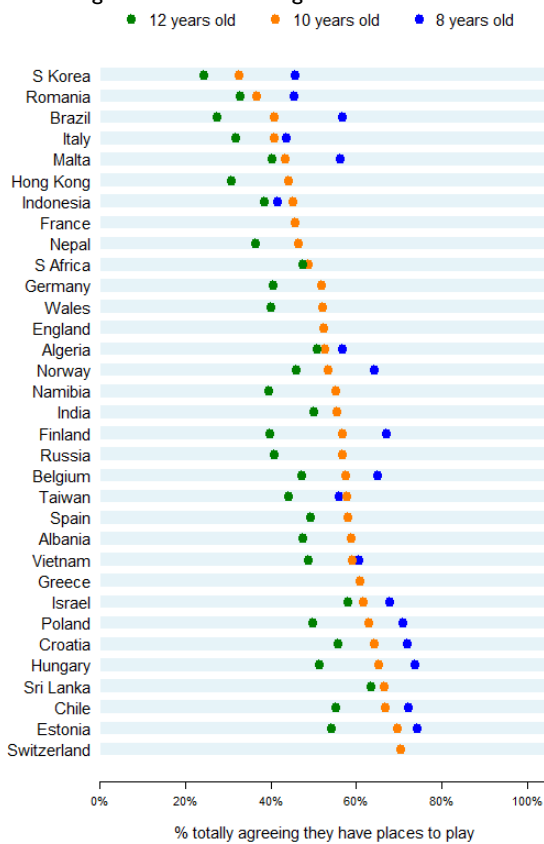


How children's views varied with age

Children's views about various aspects of their lives varied with age.

- Children's overall well-being tended to fall in most countries as children grew older
- Their feelings about various aspects of their lives also tended to become less positive as they got older in many countries. This included overall satisfaction with family life, school and the neighbourhood.
- For example in almost all countries, children felt less satisfied with the places to play and spend time in their neighbourhood as they got older.

Figure 5: % totally agreeing that there are places to play and have a good time in the neighbourhood



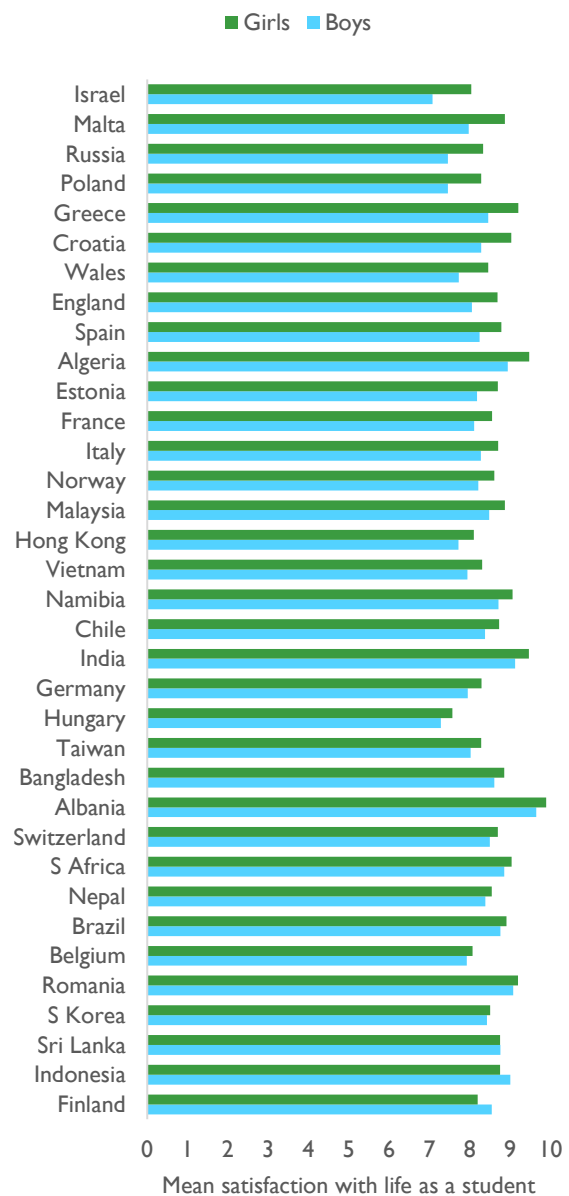
Children aged 8, 10 and 12 years old.
Some countries did not survey all age groups.

- An exception to this general pattern was children's feelings of safety at home. While older children tended to feel less safe at school and in their neighbourhoods, it was the youngest age group of children around 8 years old who tended to feel least safe at home.

How girls' and boys' views differed

- There were no clear and consistent differences in life satisfaction or happiness between boys and girls.
- However in many countries girls tended to report higher levels of sadness than boys
- In many areas of life there was a mixed picture of gender differences. For example in some countries girls were happier with their family life, but in other countries it was boys.
- One of the aspects of life where girls tended to be more positive than boys was school

Figure 6: Satisfaction with life as a student by gender



Children aged 10 years old

- Girls also felt a little more safe at school than boys in many countries, but at the same time a little less safe in their neighbourhoods

How happy were children across the different aspects of their lives?

- The aspects of life that children tended to rate highest in most countries were their family, the things that they had and the home that they lived in.
- Health and safety were often rated quite high.
- One aspect that had a low rating in almost all countries was classmates.
- In many countries children also gave relatively low ratings for feelings of being listened to.

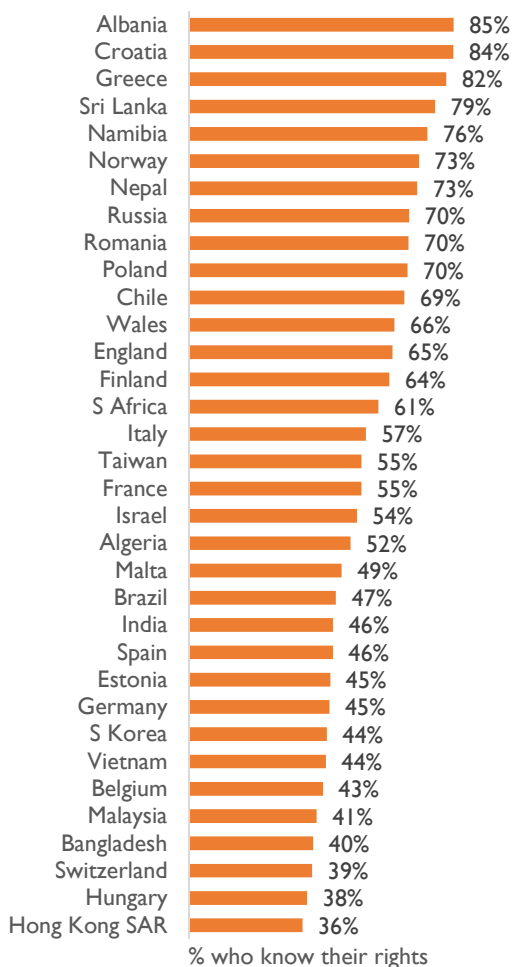
Areas for improvement

A key aim of the project is to help to identify areas for improvement in terms of children’s experiences of life in each country, based on a comparative perspective

The report uses a method that takes account of variations in ratings for different aspects of life within and between countries to identify the most and least positive aspect in each country. This can help policymakers to recognise existing strengths and focus on areas for improvement.

Knowledge of rights

- In 14 out of 34 countries less than half of children said that they knew their rights. More than four in five did so in Albania, Croatia and Greece



Country	Most positive aspect	Least positive aspect
Albania	Classmates	Neighbourhood
Algeria	Life as a student	Neighbourhood
Bangladesh	Life as a student	Health
Belgium	Possessions	Life as a student
Brazil	Learning	Safety
Chile	Future	Neighbourhood
Croatia	Freedom	Neighbourhood
Estonia	Neighbourhood	Learning
Finland	Listened to	Life as a student
France	Neighbourhood	Listened to
Germany	Freedom	Neighbourhood
Greece	Appearance	Possessions
Hong Kong SAR	Safety	Time use
Hungary	Future	Life as a student
India	Life as a student	Freedom
Indonesia	Life as a student	House
Israel	Freedom	Learning
Italy	Health	Future
Malaysia	Neighbourhood	Classmates
Malta	Appearance	Freedom
Namibia	Life as a student	Classmates
Nepal	Life as a student	Appearance
Norway	Freedom	Time use
Poland	Future	Life as a student
Romania	Freedom	Classmates
Russia	Neighbourhood	Life as a student
South Africa	Life as a student	Classmates
South Korea	Classmates	Appearance
Spain	Classmates	Life as a student
Sri Lanka	Student	Neighbourhood
Switzerland	Neighbourhood	Learning
Taiwan	Safety	Time use
UK (England)	Possessions	Appearance
UK (Wales)	Freedom	Appearance
Vietnam	Listened to	Friends

These findings are based on a calculation of relative scores.
See full report for details.
Children aged 10 years old

This summary is based on findings in the initial report on this wave of the survey – *Children’s Worlds, Wave 3, Initial Findings* – which is available at the project website: www.isciweb.org