



CHILDREN'S WORLDS REPORT 2020

SUMMARY

A unique worldwide view of children's perspectives

Children's Worlds Survey, 2016-19

- Between 2016 and 2019, the third wave of the Children's Worlds survey asked over 128,000 children aged approximately 8, 10 and 12 years in 35 countries / regions 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 project goals?

1. Understand and promote children's subjective views and experiences of their own lives and well-being
2. 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 of researchers from universities in each of the participating countries. It received core funding from the Jacobs Foundation and additional funding in the individual countries. Ethic approval was gained in each country.

How was the research done?

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

What did the survey ask?

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

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

How do children feel about their lives overall?

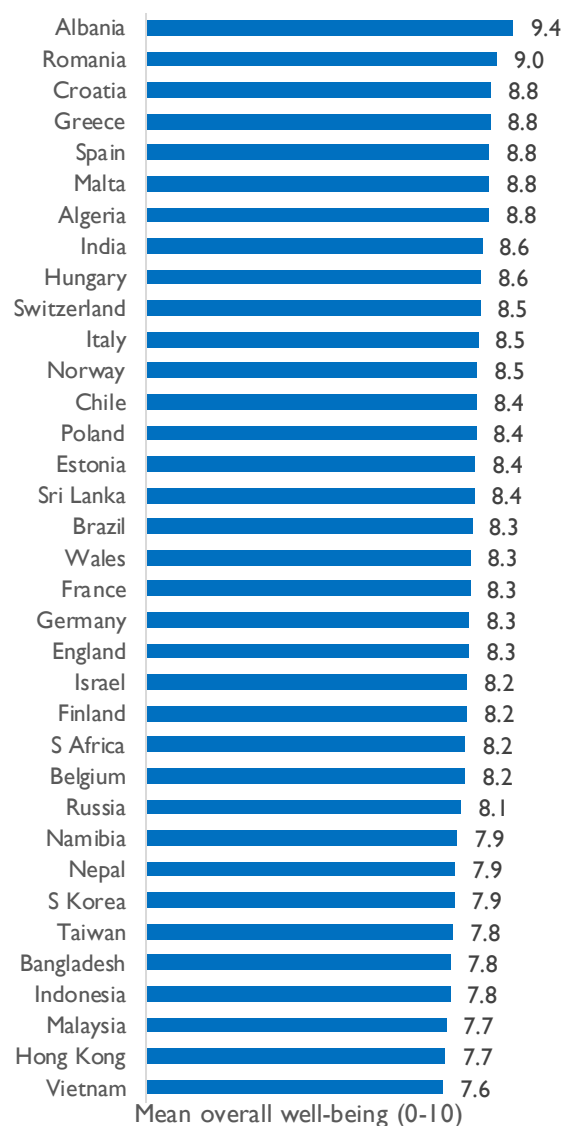
Children were asked questions about:

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

Figure 1 shows the averages of 10-year-old children for these questions.

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

Figure 1: Overall well-being



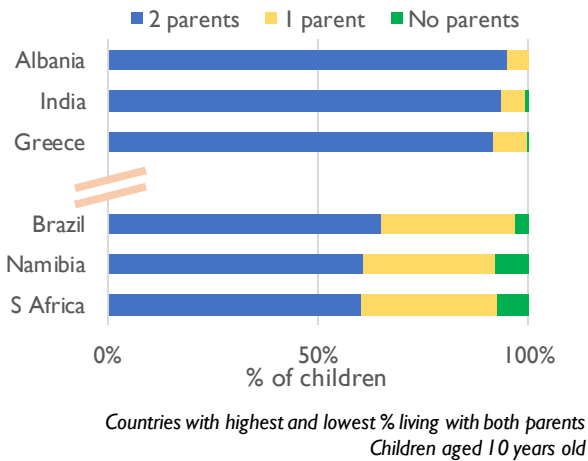
Children aged 10 years old. The chart shows mean scores based on life satisfaction and feelings of happiness and sadness

Who do children live with?

Responses reflected diverse circumstances. The majority of children in all countries lived with their family, however:

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

Figure 2: No. of parents that children lived with



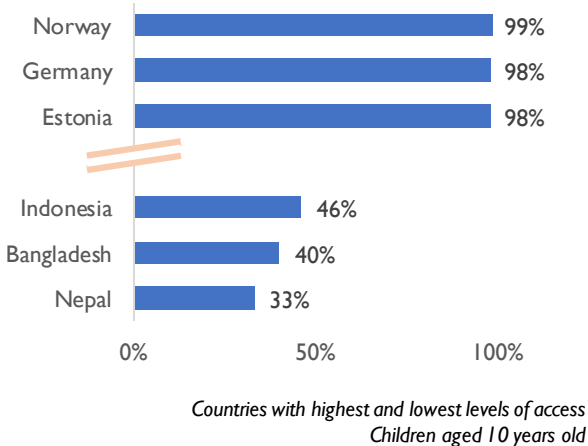
What do children have?

Children were asked about owning and access to several different material items.

Children's access to technology is now recognised as a fundamental resource for their well-being and development.

- Over 90% of children had internet access in many high-income countries. Less than half did so in Bangladesh, Indonesia and Nepal.

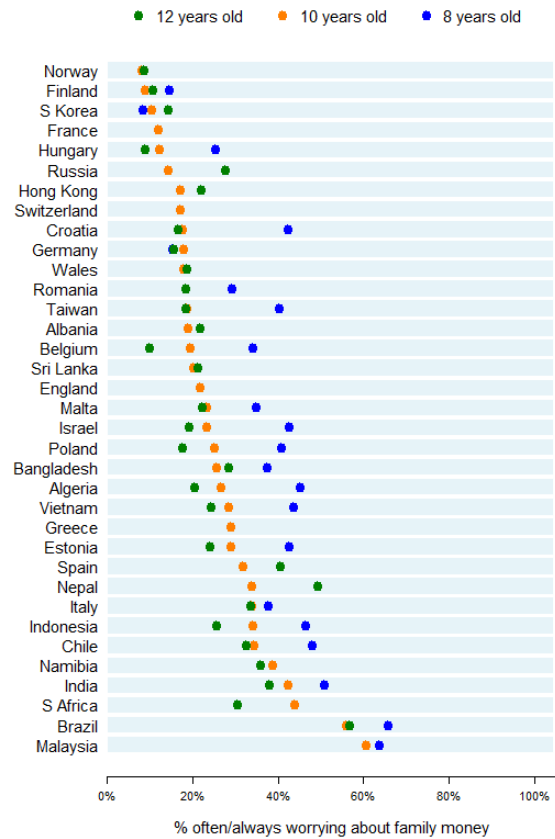
Figure 3: Internet access at home



- 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 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. The youngest age group worried the most. More than one in five 8-year-olds in the majority of countries said they often or always worried about family money.

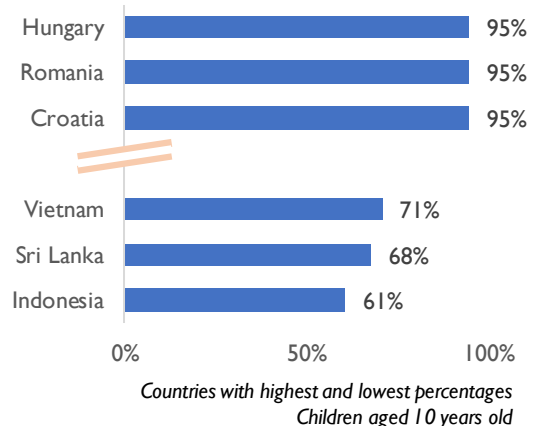
Figure 4: % of children often worrying about family money



Some countries did not survey all age groups

- 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

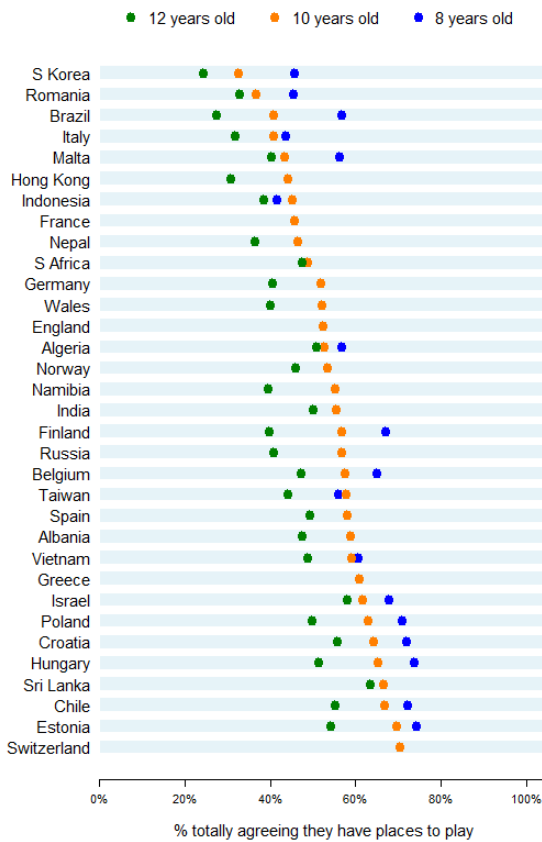


How children's views varied with age

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

- Overall well-being tended to fall as they grew older, in most countries
- In many countries they also tended to become less positive about various specific aspects of their lives as they grew older. These included satisfaction with family life, school and their neighbourhood.
- For example, in almost all countries children felt less satisfied with places to play and spend time in their neighbourhood, as they got older.

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



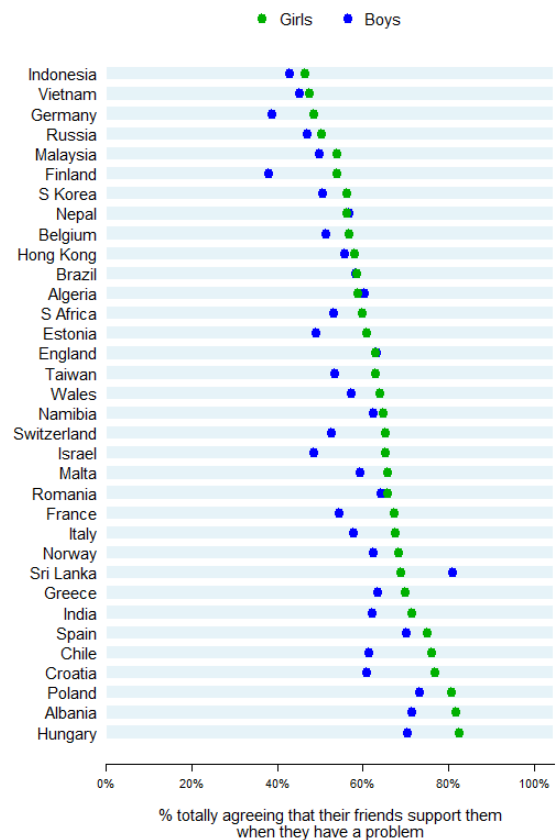
Some countries did not survey all age groups

- An exception to this pattern was children feeling safe at home. Older children tended to feel less safe at school and in their neighbourhood. It was the youngest age group who tended to feel least safe at home.

How girls' and boys' views differed

- Differences in life satisfaction and happiness between boys and girls were not clear and consistent.
- In many countries girls tended to report higher levels of sadness than boys
- In many areas of life, gender differences were mixed. For example, in some countries girls were happier with family life, in other countries it was boys.
- One of the aspects where girls tended to be more satisfied than boys, was friends' support

Figure 6: % totally agreeing that their friends support them when they have a problem



Children aged 10 years old

- Girls felt slightly safer at school than boys did in many countries, but they also felt slightly 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, their home and the things they had.
- Health and safety were often rated quite high.
- One aspect with a low rating in almost all countries was classmates.
- In many countries children rated the feeling of being listened to relatively low.

Areas for improvement

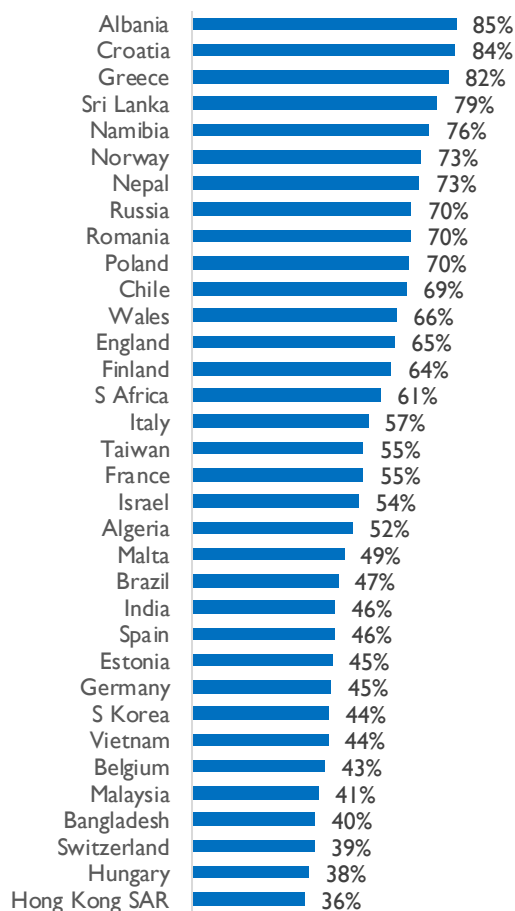
A key aim of this project is to help identify areas for improvement in children's experiences of life in each country, based on a comparative perspective

The report considers variations in ratings for different aspects of life within and between countries. This identifies the most and least positive aspects in each country. Policymakers can then recognise existing strengths and focus on areas for improvement.

Knowledge of rights

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

Figure 7: % of children knowing their rights



% who know their rights

Children aged 10 years old

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

Findings based on 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 views on their lives and well-being in 35 countries: A report on the Children's Worlds project, 2016-19* – which is available at the project website: www.isciweb.org