



## What children think about their lives?

**We are very pleased to share with you the findings of Children's Worlds second wave of data collection that were published today.**

More than 53,000 children aged 8 to 12 in 15 countries – Algeria, Colombia, England, Estonia, Ethiopia, Germany, Israel, Korea, Nepal, Norway, Poland, Romania, South Africa, Spain and Turkey – were asked about their experiences and views about their lives in a wide range of key aspects of their lives including their family and home life, friendships, money and possessions, school life, local area, time use, personal well-being, views on children's rights, and their overall happiness. The Jacobs Foundation has funded this ongoing international project over the past three years.

This survey is the most wide-ranging and diverse study ever conducted internationally on children's lives from their own perspectives. It fills a major gap in international research. The research demonstrates that it is possible and valuable to ask children how they feel about their lives and that different children from different places share a common childhood. Important results were found that can be used to improve children's lives around the world.

### *Overall well-being and on specific aspects*

It was found that most of the children in the 15 countries rated their satisfaction with life as a whole (on a scale from zero to ten) positively, but the percentage of children with very high well-being (10 out of 10) varied from around 78% in Turkey and 77% in Romania and Colombia to around 40% in South Korea.

The percentage with low well-being (less than 5 out of 10) varied from less than 2% in Romania and Colombia to over 7% in South Korea and South Africa.

Additional differences between countries were also observed. Children in European countries tend to report higher levels of satisfaction with their friendships while children in African countries tend to be happier with their school lives. Children in northern European countries are particularly dissatisfied with their appearance and self-confidence.

### *Younger children are happier, girls and boys are equally happy*

Children's well-being decreased between the ages of 10 and 12 in many European countries and in South Korea, while there was no age pattern in other countries such as Israel and Ethiopia. Overall happiness did not vary between girls and boys, but there were significant gender differences in satisfaction with oneself (body, appearance and self-confidence) in Europe and South Korea, but not in the other countries in the survey in Asia, Africa and South America.

### *Children's lives vary around the globe*

The survey also asked the children about their lives – including who they lived with, how they spent their time, and their experiences of children's rights. These types of questions enable the project to paint a picture of how children's lives vary around the globe. For example, in terms of living arrangements, well over half (61%) of children in Nepal lived in a household consisting of parent(s) and grandparent(s) whereas in the UK, Norway and Israel less than 10% of children did so. The research also highlights the prevalence of children living in two different homes in some European countries – over 10% of children in Norway, England and Estonia – a pattern which is rarely seen in some other countries in the survey.

There were also substantial differences between countries in how children spent their time. For example, children tended to report spending much more time on homework in Estonia and Poland than in South Korea and England. Children in Poland, Norway and Israel spent the most time playing sports and exercising.

Children in some countries (including Algeria, Nepal and South Africa) spent much more time caring for siblings and other family members than in other countries (such as Germany, Turkey and South Korea).

Finally, there were widely varying levels of knowledge of and views about children's rights across the 15 countries. Over three-quarters (77%) of children in Norway said that they knew what rights children had compared to 36% in England. Moreover, 84% of children in Norway agreed that adults generally respected children's rights in their country compared to less than 50% in seven countries.

[For the full report](#)

[For the National reports](#)

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## More events and publications

Findings from the report and the National reports will be presented in a series of conferences around the world during the remainder of 2015. These include presenting of the findings from the European countries at the European Parliament in Brussels today (13<sup>th</sup> of May), the launch of the Asian findings in Seoul, South Korea on May the 21<sup>st</sup> and presentation of the International findings at ISCI's 5<sup>th</sup> conference on 2-4 September in Cape Town, South Africa.

### *What's next?*

At least five more countries – Argentina, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Wales – are taking part in this wave. Later in the year further reports and working papers will be published including findings for children aged 8 years old.

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