

Children as equal citizens?

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– Belgian team

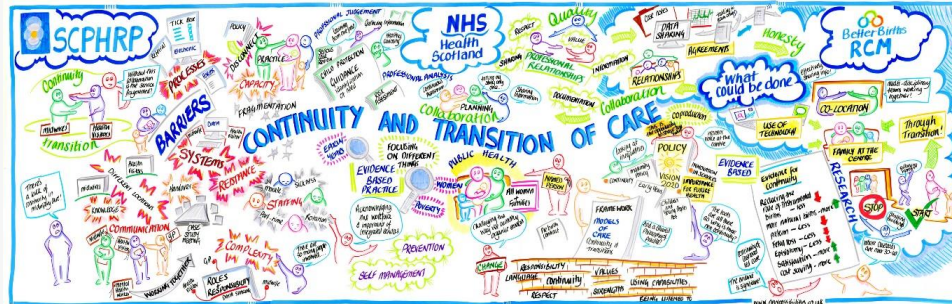
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E-QUAL: Center of Expertise Quality of Life

- Interdisciplinary center situated within the faculty of Education, Health and Social work of the University of applied sciences (HOGENT)
- Overall mission: to increase the Quality of Life (QoL) of persons in socially vulnerable situations
- Quality of Life: common goal across different sectors
- Need for interprofessional collaboration (~ important role for education)



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Basic underlying principles

- Quality of Life as a **multidimensional, universal, subjective and dynamic** concept;
- Central issue is the **perspective of the person**;
- Focusing on the **capacities, strengths and support needs** of clients and their environment without losing sight of their specific vulnerabilities;
- **Cross-target group, cross-sector and cross-disciplinary approach** towards QoL but focusing on people in vulnerable situations; < shared framework >

From “well-becoming” to “well-being” (Ben-Arieh, 2006)



Well-becoming

Focus on “next-generation adults” ~ adult perspective (growing up to become good partners, good citizens, good parents,..)

Well-being

Children as valued members of the community ~ child-perspective

Quality of Life and Children's Rights

UN Convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC; in 1989) as a crucial turning point (Casas, 2016).

- Increased interest in well-being of children and youth
- Right to have your own opinion about things that concern your life (UNICEF, 2012) ~ perspective of children themselves (~ subjective component of QoL)

Quality of Life and Children's Rights

What is included ?

- The Convention sets out the rights of children, aged zero to 18 years, and the **responsibilities of governments** to ensure those rights.
- Child rights are based on what a child needs to survive, grow, **participate and meet their potential**. They apply equally to every child, **regardless of ethnicity, gender or religion**.
- The Convention includes the **responsibilities of parents, governments and children themselves** to ensure the rights of children are met.

(UNICEF)

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Three themes are identified that predominate in the academic work on the UNCRC:

- (1) **autonomy and participation rights** as the new norm in children's rights practice and policy,
- (2) children's rights vs parental rights and
- (3) the global children's rights industry.

(Reynaert et al., 2009)



Results

Analyses by JOP



Jeugdonderzoekplatform

Context of the research project in Flanders and Brussels (Flemish Community)

- Stratified random sample:
 - Educational network
 - Equal opportunities indicator: percentage of pupils whose mother does not have a secondary school diploma
- 50 schools
- 3322 participants:
 - 8yo (2nd grade): 1134
 - 10yo (4th grade): 1112
 - 12yo (6th grade): 1076
- Face-to-face

Well-being and participation on 3 domains



Home



School

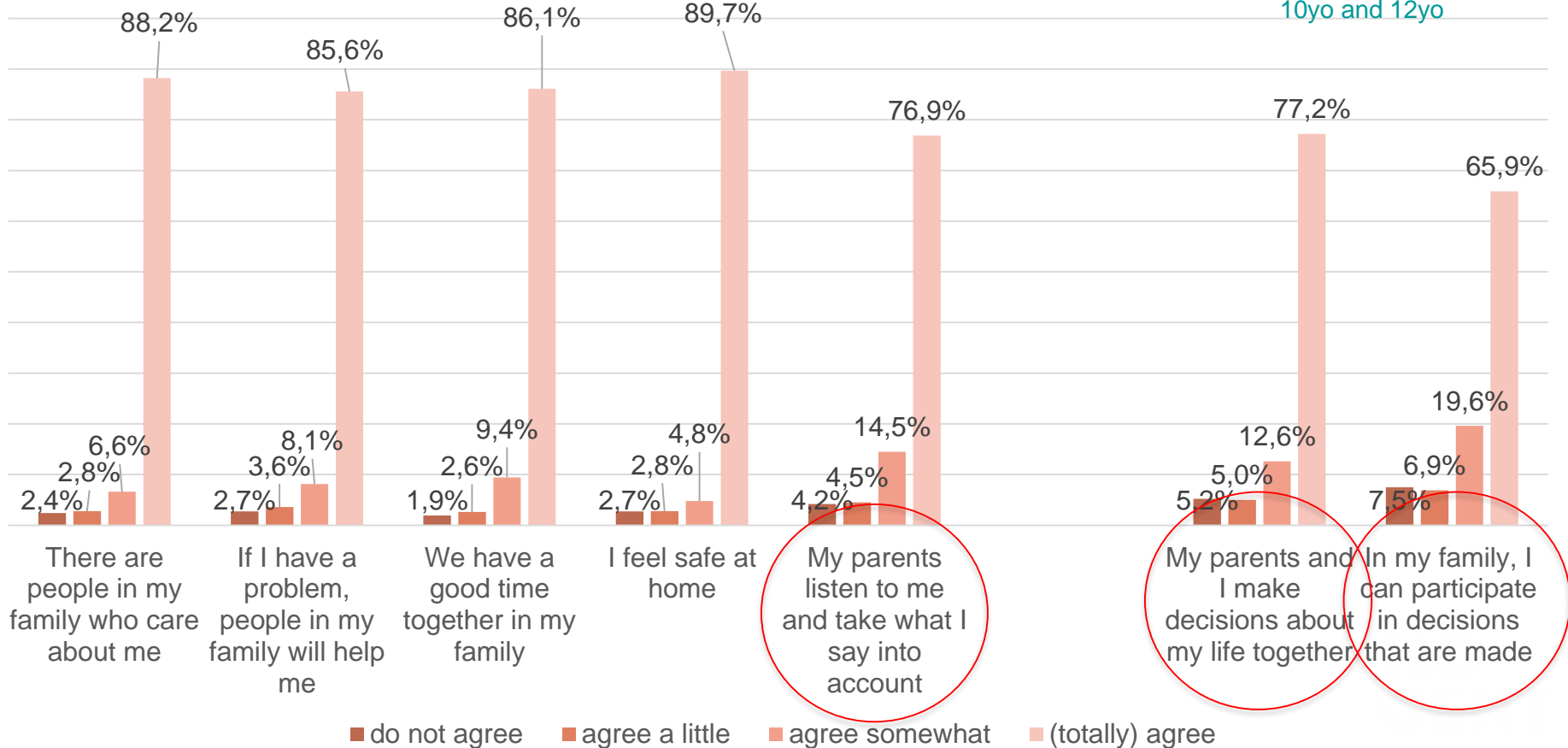


Local Area

Your home and the people you live with: how much do you agree with these sentences? (%)

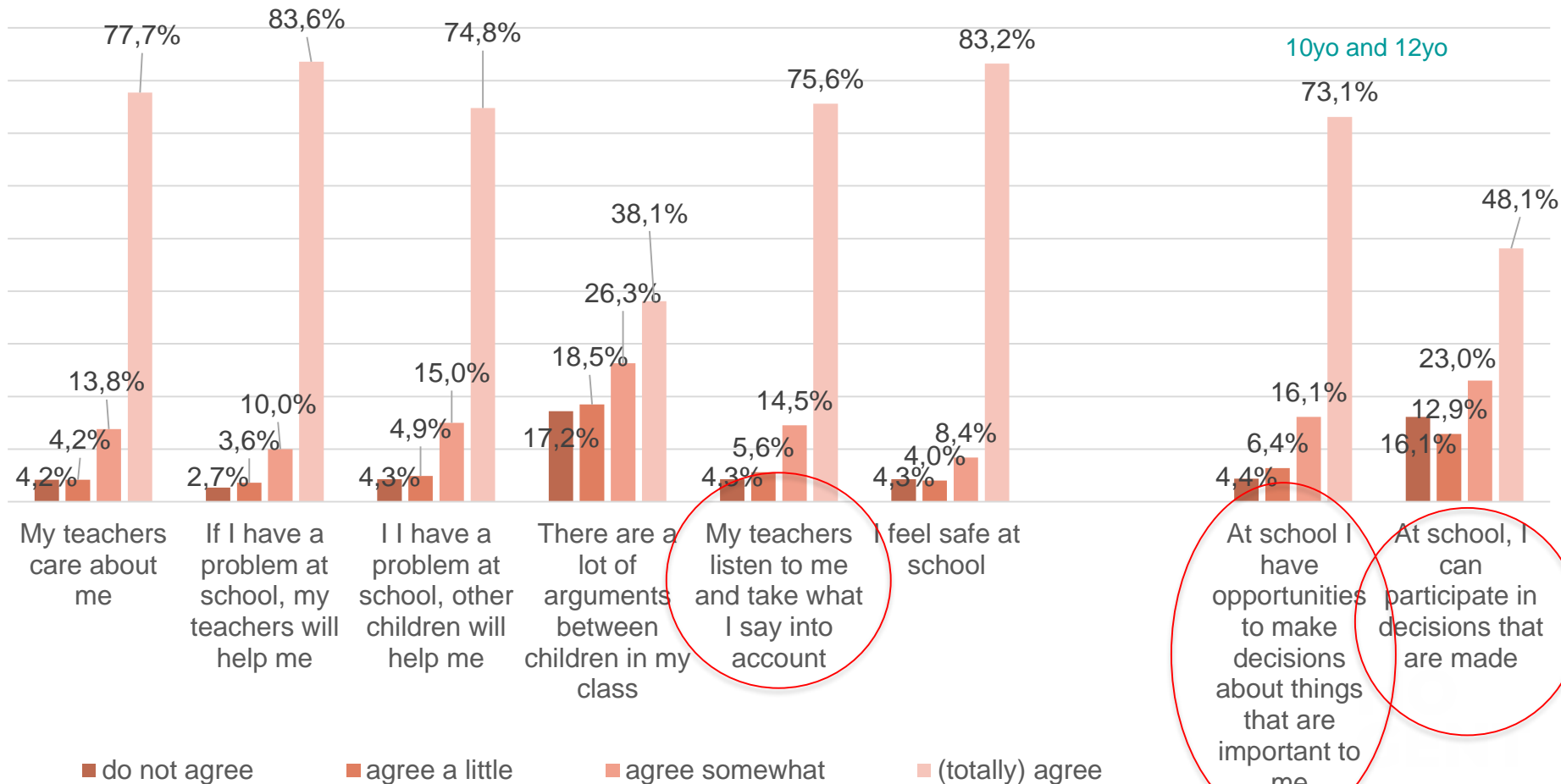
All age categories

10yo and 12yo

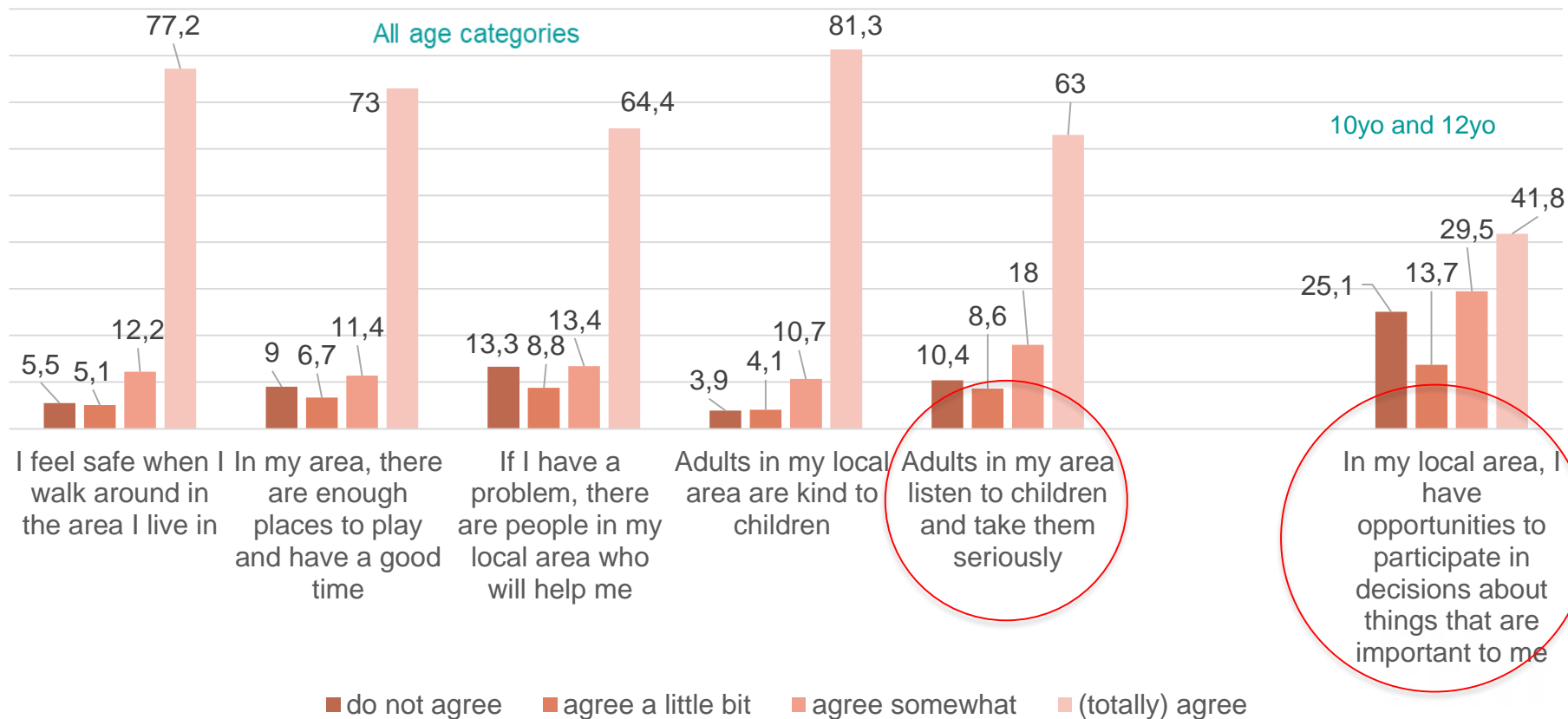


School: How much do you agree with these sentences? (%)

All age categories



Your local area: How much do you agree with these sentences? (%)

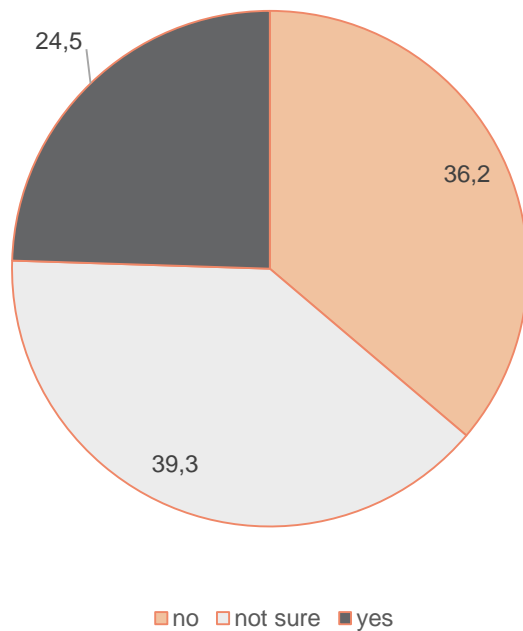


General life satisfaction

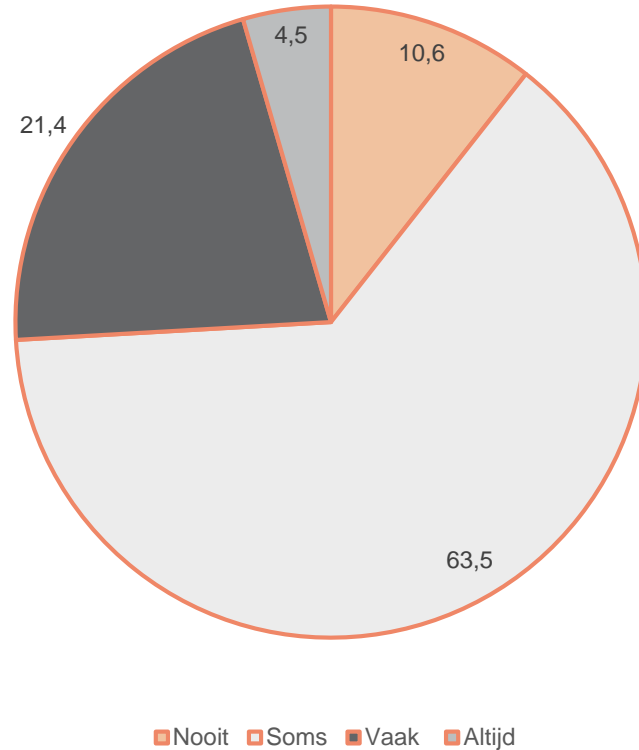
- 10yo and 12yo: main life satisfaction is most strongly correlated with how they are listened to by adults in general

Tabel 52. Correlaties tevredenheidsvragen (10- en 12-jarigen)	Tevredenheid met je leven in het algemeen
Satisfaction with how you are listened to by adults in general	0,54***
Satisfaction with how safe you feel	0,53***
Satisfaction with the freedom you have	0,52***
Satisfaction with what may happen later in your life	0,52***
Satisfaction with the way you look	0,51***
Satisfaction with how you spend your time	0,50***
Satisfaction with your health	0,50***
Satisfaction with getting on with the people you know	0,50***

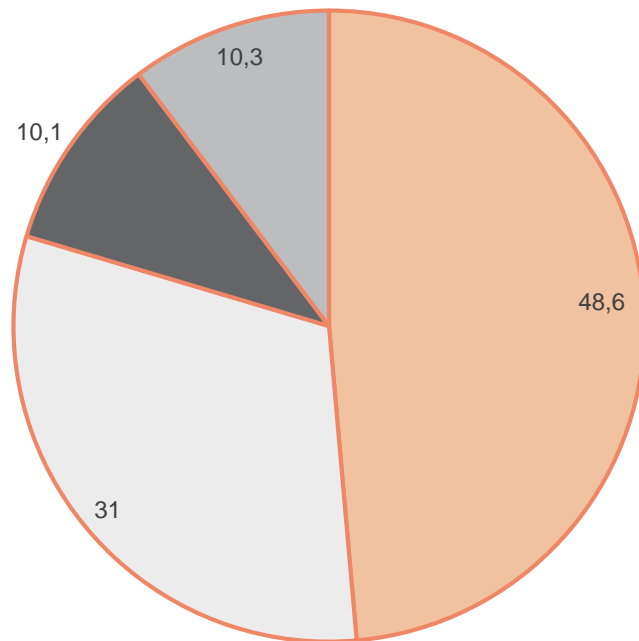
I know about the UN Convention on the rights of the child(all age categories) (%)



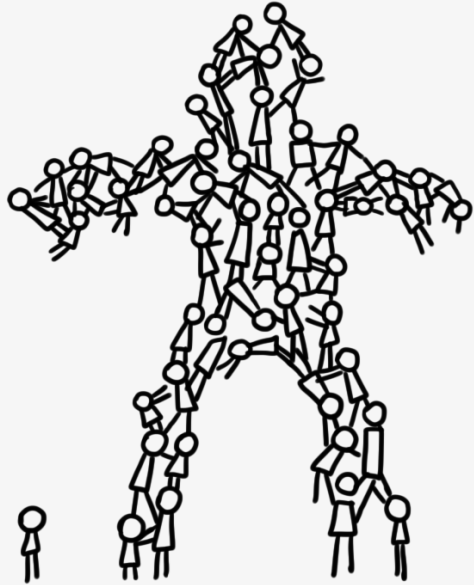
How often do you worry about things you hear about (like in the news) about what is happening in Belgium? (12yo) (%)



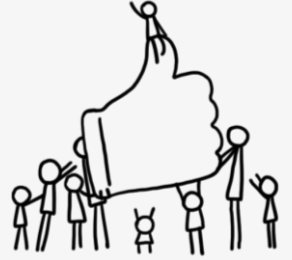
How often do you worry about how much money your family has?
(all age categories) (%)

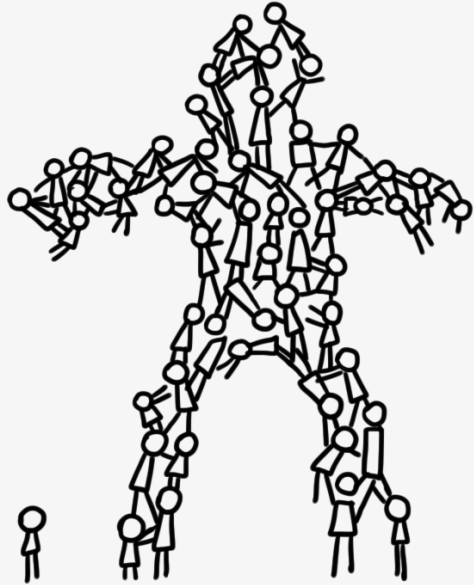


■ never ■ sometimes ■ often ■ always



- Persistent influence of migration background and economical situation
And: gender and children growing up in two houses
- Mean scores tell us little about individual socially vulnerable situations
- Childhood is a crucial stage to develop citizenship





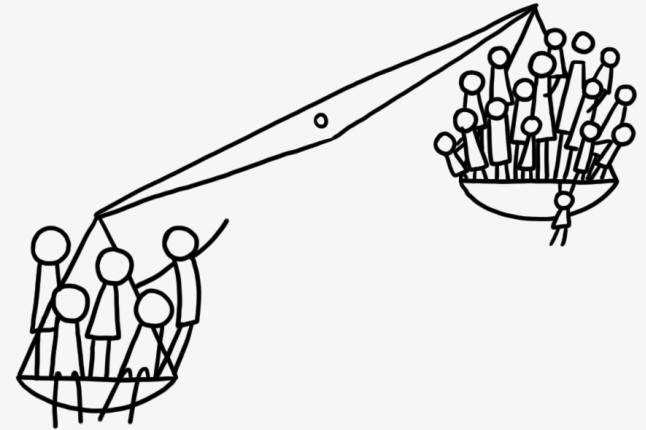
Correlations between 'objective' criteria of life circumstances/social background and satisfaction indicators are not that strong

- Importance of *subjective* well-being
- Need for policies that focus on several tracks



But...

- Autonomy = individual responsibility?
- Focus on the competent child?
- Autonomy vs. protection?



(KeKi, 2012; Reynaert et al., 2009)

Reflection question:

How to include children's voices in policies without focusing too much on their individual responsibilities?

CHILDREN'S – WORLDS

INTERNATIONAL SURVEY OF CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

The International Survey of Children's Well-Being (ISCWeB) is an international study that wants to gain insight in how children themselves perceive their living environment. It is based on a children's rights perspective and considers children as full citizens that have something to say about their life.

