

Exploring the relationship between children's knowledge of their rights and their subjective well-being

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Background information of the researched Provinces

	Oran	Tlemcen	El Bayadh
N° of Counties (<i>Dairas</i>)	09	20	08
N° of Municipalities	26	53	22
Area (km ²)	2,121	9,061	78,870
Population	1,382,980	950,431	200,969
Geography	Large coast on the Mediterranean Sea with a typically mild weather	Extreme West, 170 kms of borders with Morocco.	Part of the Hauts-plateaux region with a semi-arid weather

Oran (Mid North-West): It is the second most populated area in Algeria. It is a coastal Province (2,121 sq. kms) of the Mediterranean Sea and populated with 1,382,980 inhabitants (est. 2007). It has a Mediterranean mild weather.

Tlemcen (Extreme North West): It is situated on the extreme West of Algeria on the Moroccan borders with a total area of 9,061 sq. kms and a population of about 1 million inhabitants (est. 2007).

El-Bayedh or Bayed (South-West, *Hauts-plateaux* Sahara region): It is a much larger Province, about 37 times the area of the Province of Oran and seven times less populated compared to this latter region. It stretches down into the Great Sahara and has many of the characteristics of the Sahara region in terms of weather and population characteristics.

Children's Rights

- The beginning of legislation protecting children was in the 19th century, with the first legal Act which established the minimum age for working in the coal mines (the Mines Act, 1842 in the UK)
- In the last 100 years, human rights as well as children rights issues have seen many advances in the world: 1824 Geneva children right's declaration followed by the Rights of the Child Declaration in 1959 and the celebration of the International Year of the Child in 1979.
- The adoption in 1989 by the United Nations of the international Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- CRC is the most ratified treaty on human rights
- By ratifying the CRC, governments commit themselves to develop environments which permit children to mature their physical and mental capacities away from hunger, poverty, illness and all types of abuses or any other injustices, besides respecting their civil, economic, social, cultural and political rights.
- The term of 'children' refer to the age range of 0 to18 years, as defined by CRC.



- Includes the right to health, education, family life, play and recreation, an adequate standard of living and to be protected from abuse and harm.
- There are four general principles that underpin all children's rights:
- **Non-discrimination** : All children have the same right to develop their potential in all situations and at all times. For example, every child should have equal access to education regardless of the child's gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, parentage, sexual orientation or other status
- **The best interests of the child** must be "a primary consideration" in all actions and decisions concerning a child, and must be used to resolve conflicts between different rights. For example, when making national budgetary decisions affecting children, Government must consider how cuts will impact on the best interests of the child
- **The right to survival and development:** vitally important to ensure access to basic services and to equality of opportunity for children to achieve their full development. For example, a child with a disability should have effective access to education and health care to achieve their full potential
- **The views of the child** mean that the voice of the child must be heard and respected in all matters concerning his or her rights. For example, those in power should consult with children before making decisions that will affect them.

<http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

Children's Rights in Algeria 1

- Since independence in 1962, the 'socialist egalitarian' system made children's education one of its main targets
- In 1988, the population revolted and a new constitution allowing a multi party system was voted in 1989
- The country plunged into internal war after 1991 until 2002
- Algeria ratified CRC in 1992
- The **main reservations** of Algeria to the CRC are with relation to article 14 (paragraphs 1 and 2) and articles 13, 16 and 17. For Algeria, respecting 'the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion' should be interpreted in compliance with the basic foundations of the Algerian legal system.
- For instance, the Constitution stipulates that Islam is the state religion and in its article 35, it says that 'there shall be no infringement of the inviolability of the freedom of conviction and the inviolability of the freedom of opinion'.
- The Family Code also specifies that a child's education has to take place in accordance with the religion of its father.
- For some critics such reservations 'indirectly reduce the liberty of religion'.

Children's Rights in Algeria -2 -

Article 13 of the CRC concerning **the child's right to freedom of expression** and articles

16 and 17 stipulate: the child should not be 'subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation' were also subject to interpretative reservations.

The Algerian government emphasised that all these articles should be applied while taking into account 'the interest of the child and the need to safeguard its physical and mental integrity'. Moreover, the Algerian government stressed that the application of these articles should take into account the provisions of its Penal Code, 'in particular those sections relating to breaches of public order, to public decency and to the incitement of minors to immorality and debauchery' and the provisions of 'Law No. 90-07 of 3 April 1990, comprising the Information Code, and particularly its article 24 stipulating that "the director of a publication destined for children must be assisted by an educational advisory body"' (Ait-Zai, 2005).

THOUGH, many benefits : equality and non-discrimination, the right to life, to a name and a nationality, the right to better health care, an education of quality, as well as protection from all types of violence, have been gradually reinforced in the body of Algerian legislation.

- The Algerian authorities launched a Childhood Action Plan, *Plan National pour les enfants* (MDCFCF, 2008) covering the **period 2008 to 2015** with the aim of ensuring that all children and adolescents enjoy more:
 - 1. Their rights and participate in the development of policies that affect them;
 - 2. A quality health care including protection against HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD);
 - 3. A quality education at all levels;
 - and, 4. A protective environment against of abuse, violence and exploitation.
- A big number of NGOs and NGO coalitions are working in this area

Children's Rights in Algeria -3-

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Children's Rights in Algeria 2

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The level of realization of Children's Rights in North Africa

(in alphabetical order)

	Children aged 0-14 (%)	Under-5 mortality rate (%)	RCRI* (Scale 0-10)	General Assessment
Algeria	28	20	6.67	Noticeable problems
Egypt	32 %	21	6.06	Difficult Situation
Libya	27.3	15.4	5.94	Difficult situation
Morocco	27.1	31	6.67	Noticeable problems
Tunisia	23	16.1	8.4	Satisfactory situation

*The Realization of Children's Rights Index (RCRI) is a grade between 0 and 10 that shows the level of realization of Children's Rights in a country.

Source : <http://www.humanium.org/en/>

Questions about Children's Rights in ISCWEB Questionnaire

- 1- I know what rights children have (No, Not sure, Yes)
- 2- I have heard about the children's rights convention (CRC) (No, Not sure, Yes)
- 3- I think in my country adults in general respect children's rights (No, Not sure, Yes)

	I know what rights children have	I know about the children's rights convention	adults in general respect children's rights
No	18,5%	39,8%	49,2%
Not sure	32,3%	24,7%	35,6%
Yes	49,2%	32,8%	47,5%

Half of the number of children said 'yes' to the question 'I know what right children have'. Just over a third (35.6%) said that they knew about the children's rights convention. and 47.5% said that they think in their country adults in general respect children's rights. Differences between gender groups were only significant in knowledge about the convention of children's rights in favour of boys.

Older children were more likely to say that they knew about the convention and what rights children have. But. older children were less likely to think that adults respected children.

Comparisons on the basis of the province of residence showed that Oran children were marginally superior to other regions in knowledge of children's rights. But. El-bayadh children are marginally superior to Tlemcen in knowledge of CRC. El-bayadh and Oran children are marginally higher than children from Tlemcen in considering that adults respect them.

Correlations

	OSL	Happiness	WB	Family finance	Home environ mentt	Fam ily relat	School satisfa ction	Qualit y of schoo ling	Peer relat i	Bully ing	Peer involve ment	Qual ity of neig h
Know children rights	,041	,07*	,04	-,02	,06	,04	,08*	,06	,05	-,06	,03	,04
Heard about CRC	,07*	,12** *	,07	.05	-,01	,01	,07*	,03	,10* *	-,05	,10**	,21* **
Adults respect children's rights	,12* **	,18** *	,31* **	- .08*	,15***	,18* **	,17***	,18** *	,14* **	- ,12** *	,13***	,27* **

*p<.05; **p<.005; ***p<.001

Sig. correlations are noticed between Knowledge of children's rights and having heard of CRC. Adults respect children's rights has been strongly correlated with the two other items on children's rights

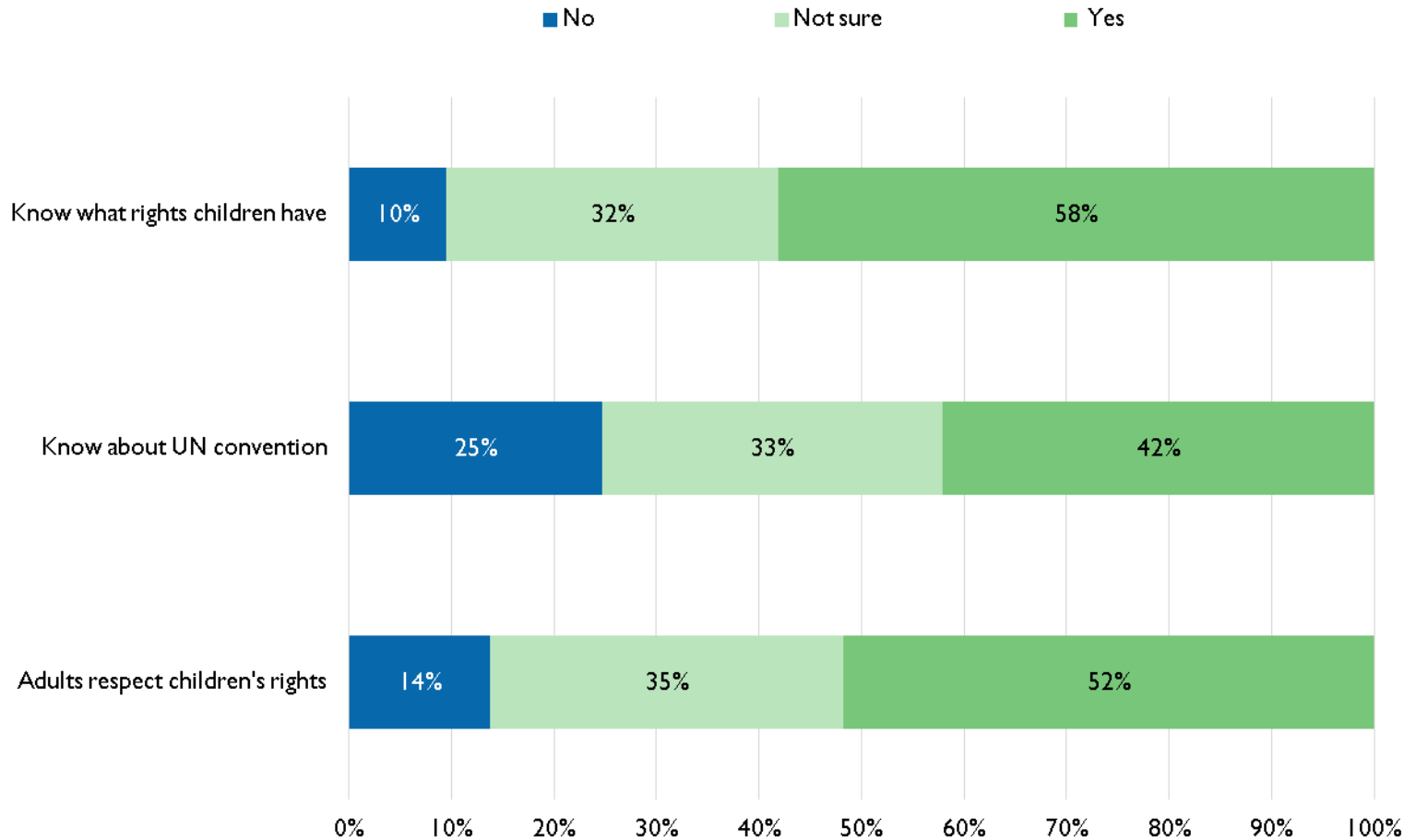
Regressions

	OSL			Happiness			Well-being		
	B	β	ΔR^2	B	β	ΔR^2	B	β	ΔR^2
Gender	-,07	-,02	,122	,44	,08	,101	-,01	-,007	,162
Age	-,60***	-,29		-,29	-,10		-,17*	-,18	
Know children rights	-,04	-,01		-,17	-,04		-,07	-,05	
Heard about CRC	,17	,06		,69*	,20		,05	,05	
Adults respect child's rights	,53**	,20		,76**	,21		,41***	,35	
Gender	-,23	-,06	,403	,43	,08	,21	-,09	-,05	,424
Age	-,26*	-,13		-,04	-,01		-,02	-,02	
Know children rights	-,008	-,003		-,07	-,02		-,06	-,04	
Heard about CRC	,06	,02		,52*	,15		-,009	-,008	
Adults respect child's rights	,05	,02		,38	,11		,19**	,16	
Family financial situation	,03	,006		,99*	,15		,34**	,16	
Home environment	,05	,05		,14	,09		,05	,10	
Family relationships	,91***	,29		-,18	-,04		,28**	,21	
School satisfaction	,25*	,19		-,17	-,10		-,009	-,01	
Quality of schooling	-,14	-,06		,50	,15		,26**	,25	
Peer relationships	-,18	-,07		,05	,01		,03	,03	
Bullying	-,10	-,04		,10	,03		,03	,03	
Peer Involvement	-,15	-,06		,31	,09		-,02	-,02	
Quality of neighbourhood	,09	,04		,01	,005		,12*	,13	
Satisfaction with neighbourhood	,14*	,16		,10	,08		,05*	,14	
Mental health	-,007	-,004		,24	,11		,06	,09	
Self image	,48***	,33		,52***	,27		,05	,07	

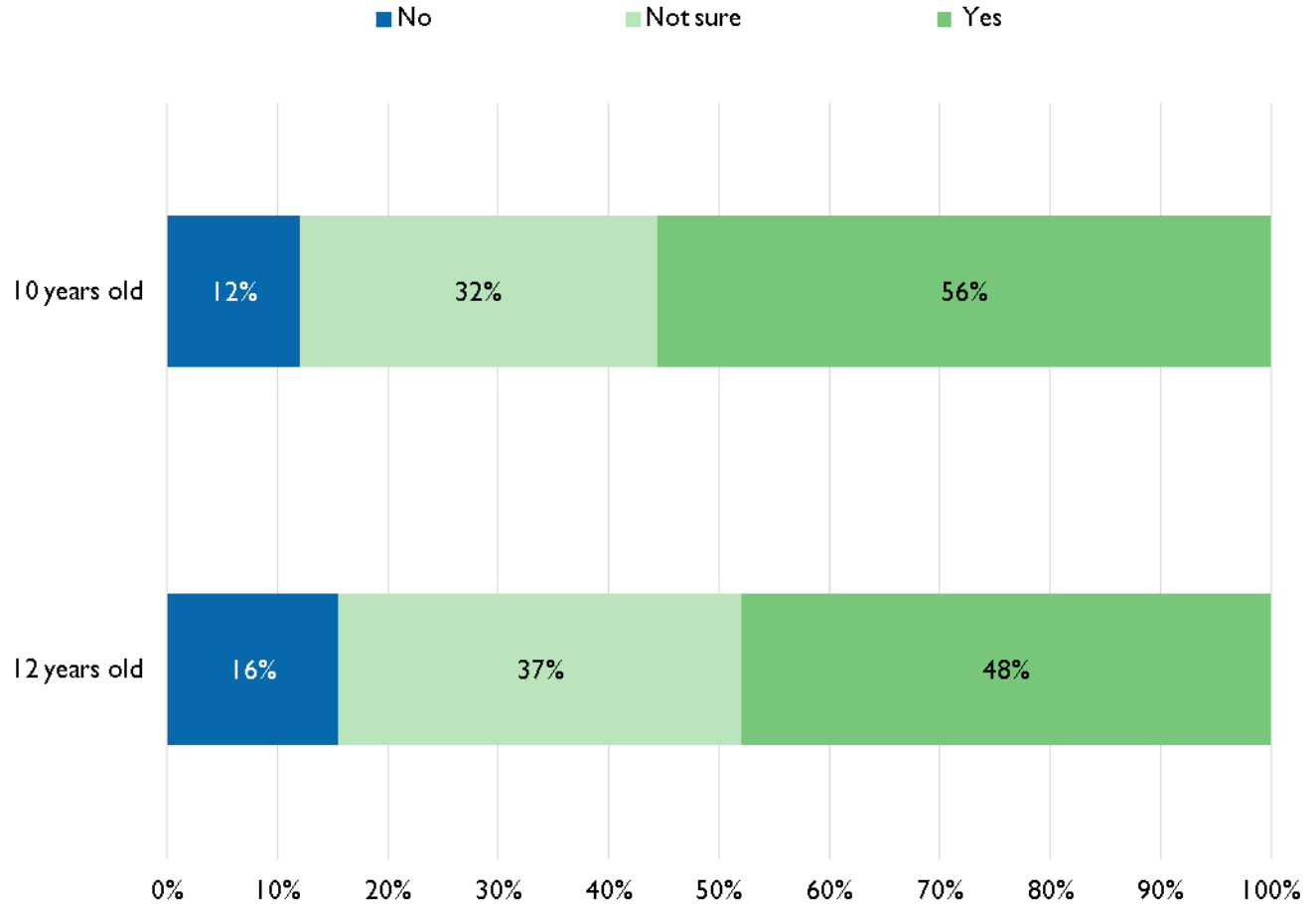
Age predicts negatively at a significant level both satisfaction with life and Well-being. Having heard of CRC contributes positively in happiness. Interestingly, the assessment of respondents of adults' respect of children's rights contributes strongly in explaining all three dependant variables. Step2. General life satisfaction is strongly predicted by family relationships, self-image and to some extent school satisfaction and neighbourhood satisfaction.

- THANK YOU!

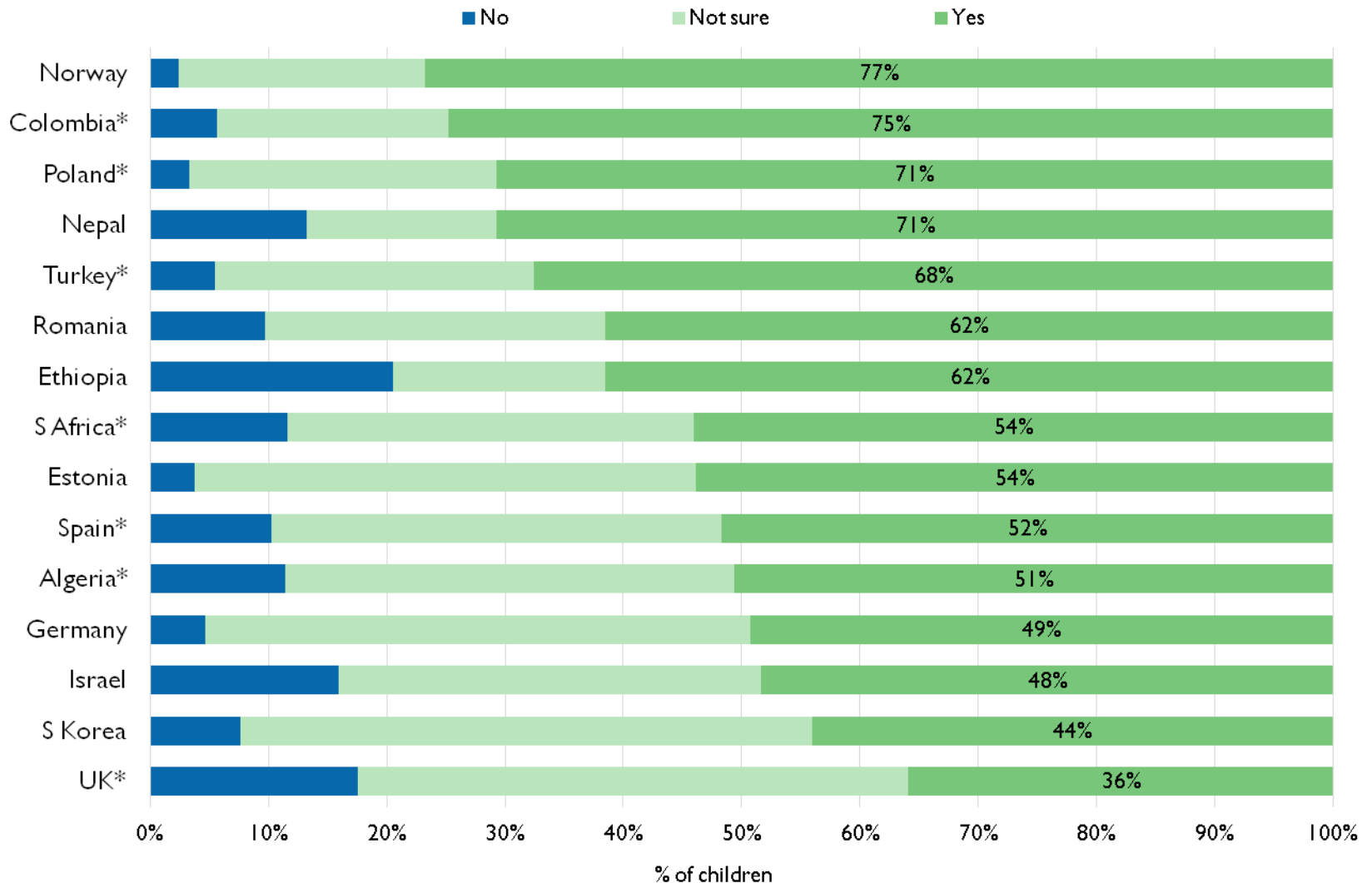
Questions about children's rights



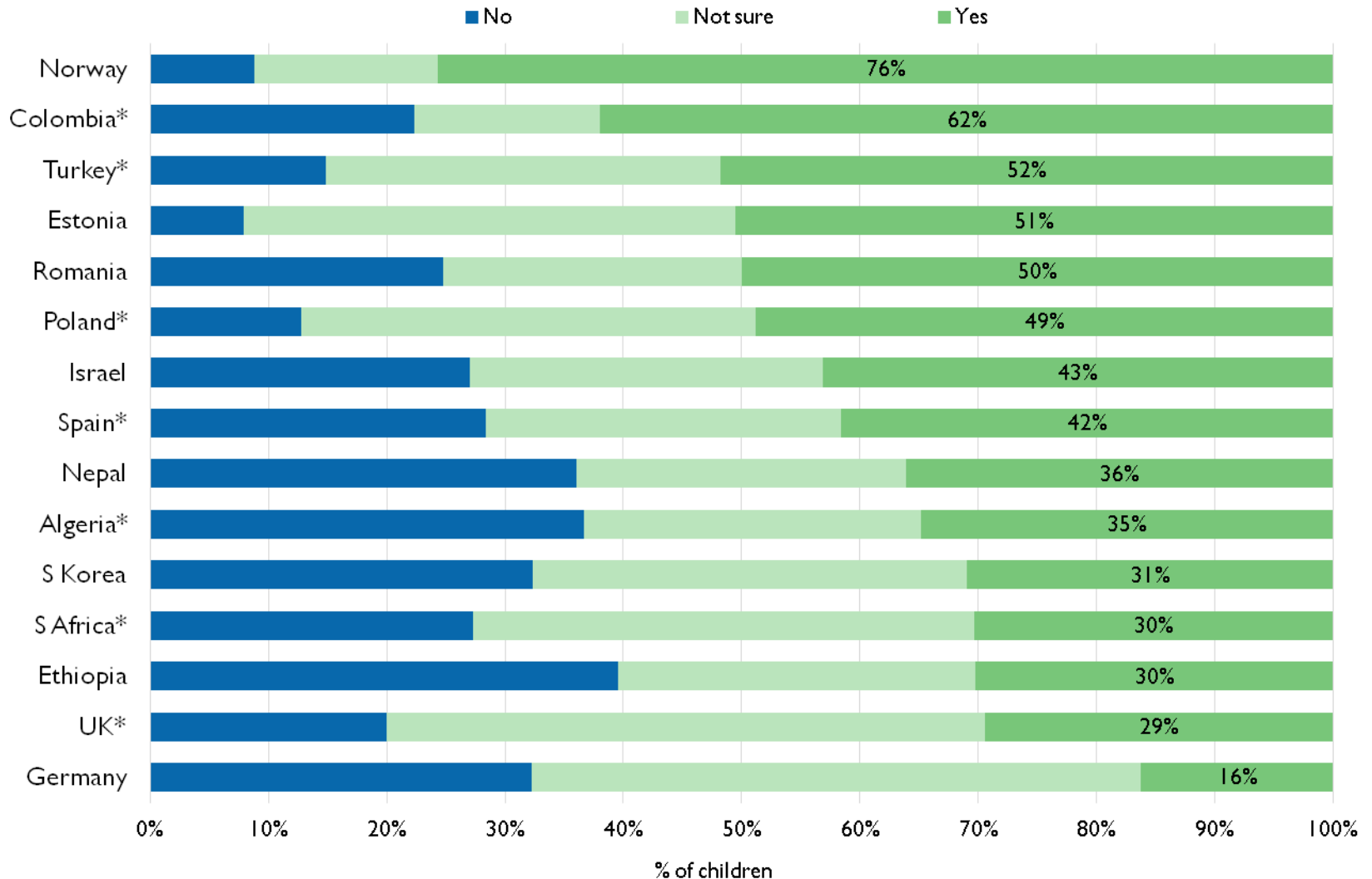
Whether children feel that adults respect their rights



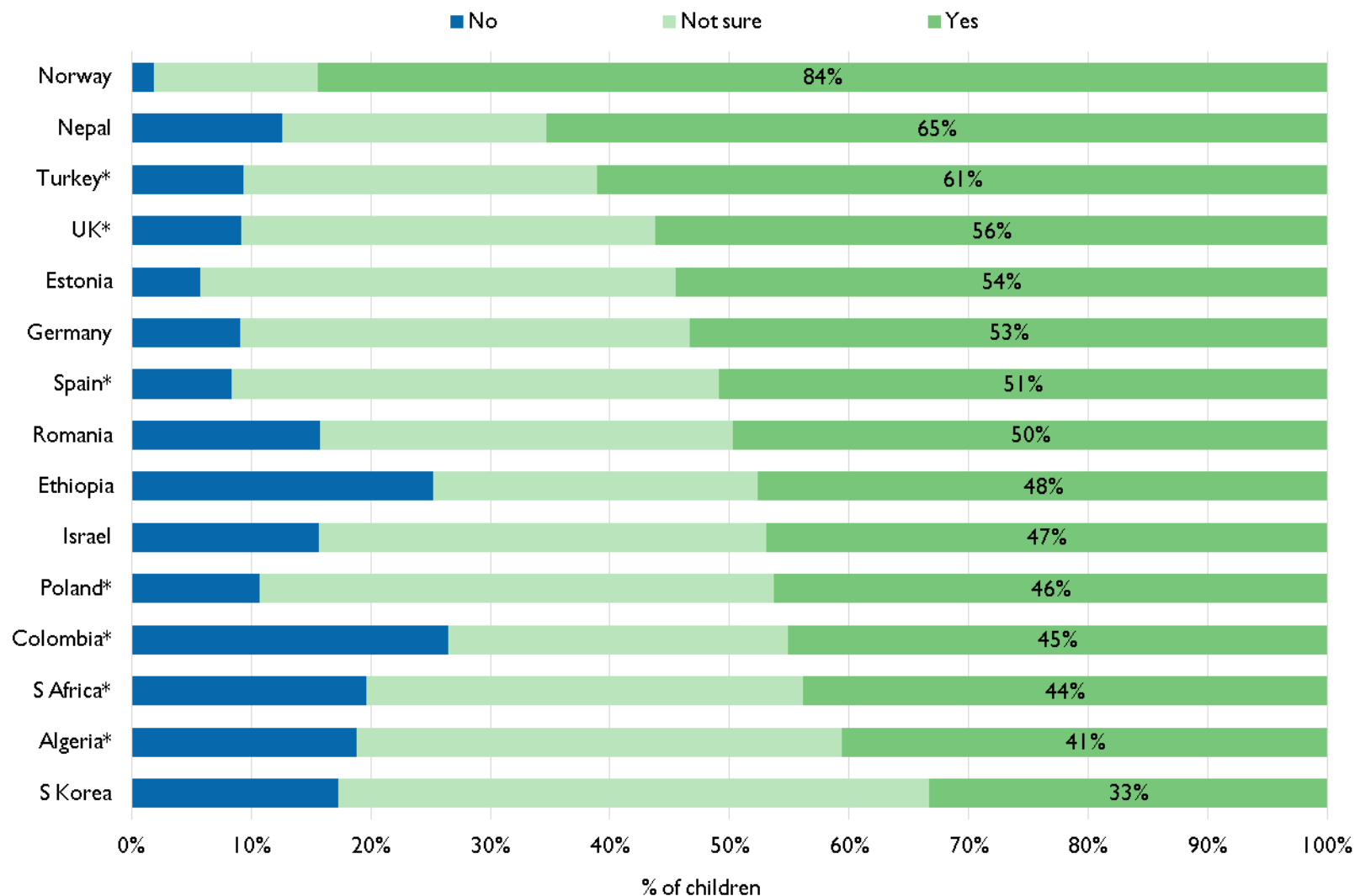
Responses to 'I know what rights children have' by country



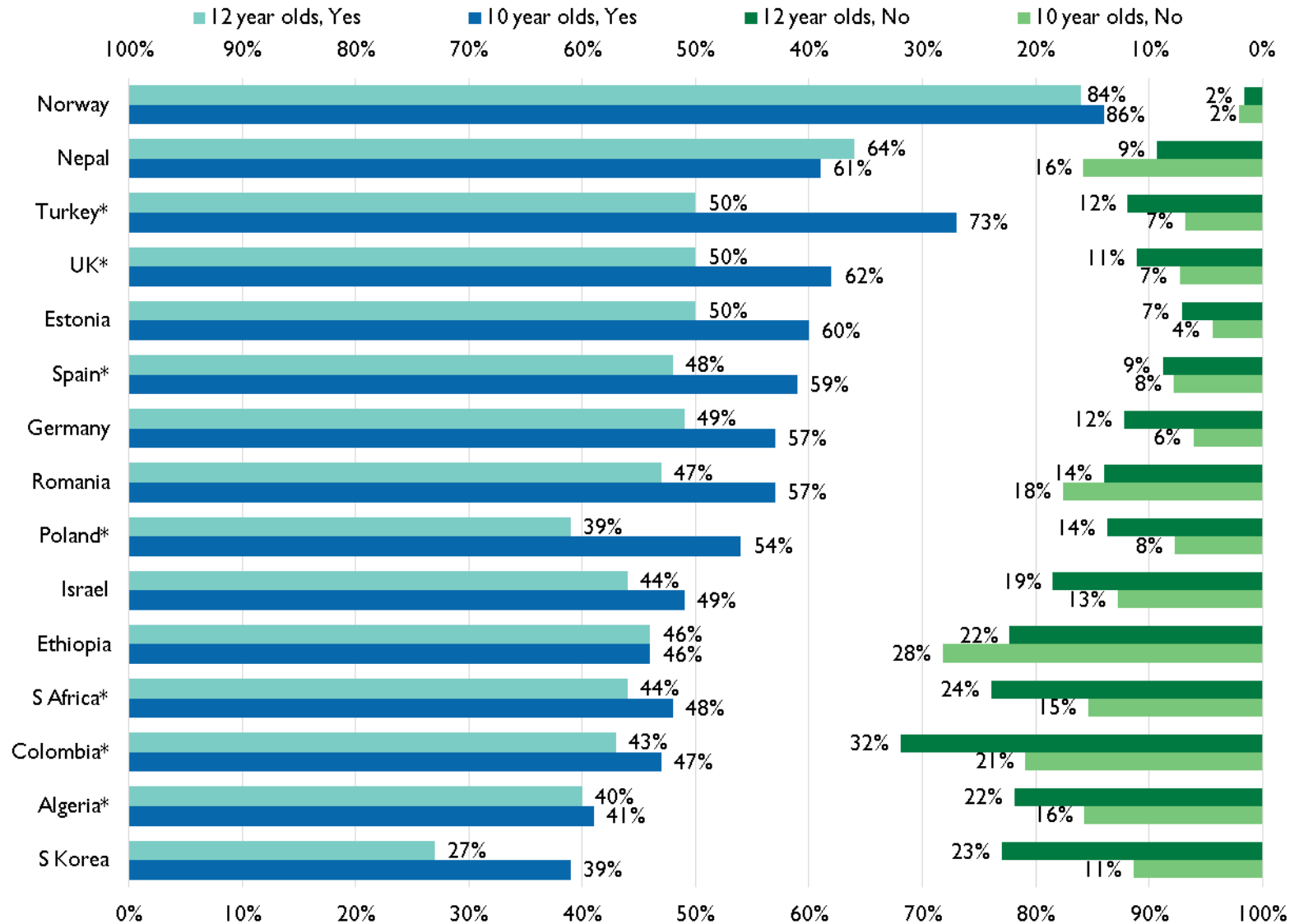
Responses to 'I know about the children's rights convention' by country



Responses to 'I think, in my country, adults in general respect children's right' by country

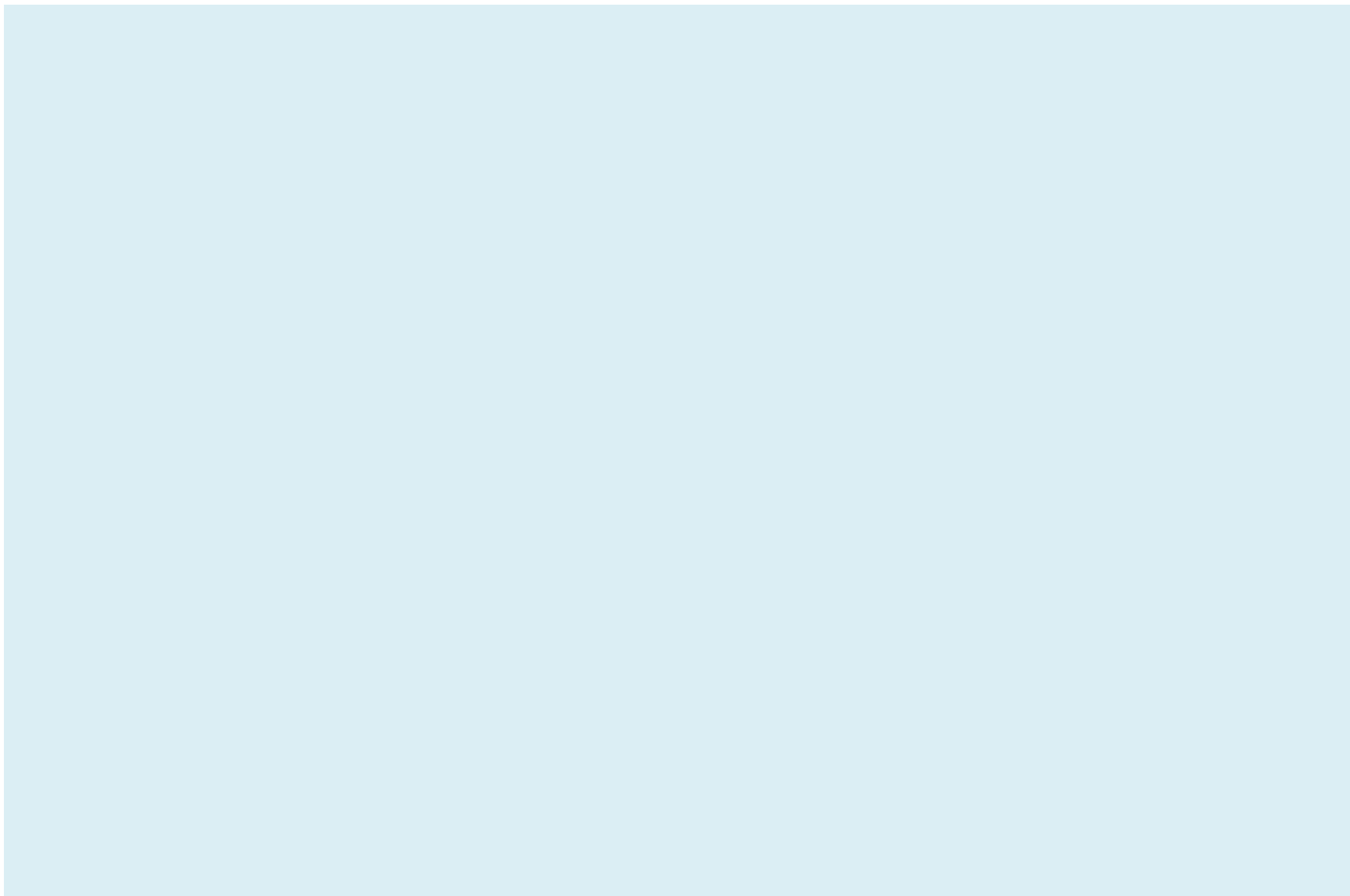
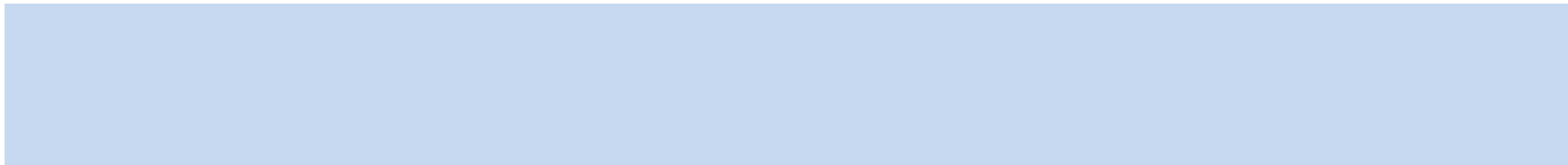


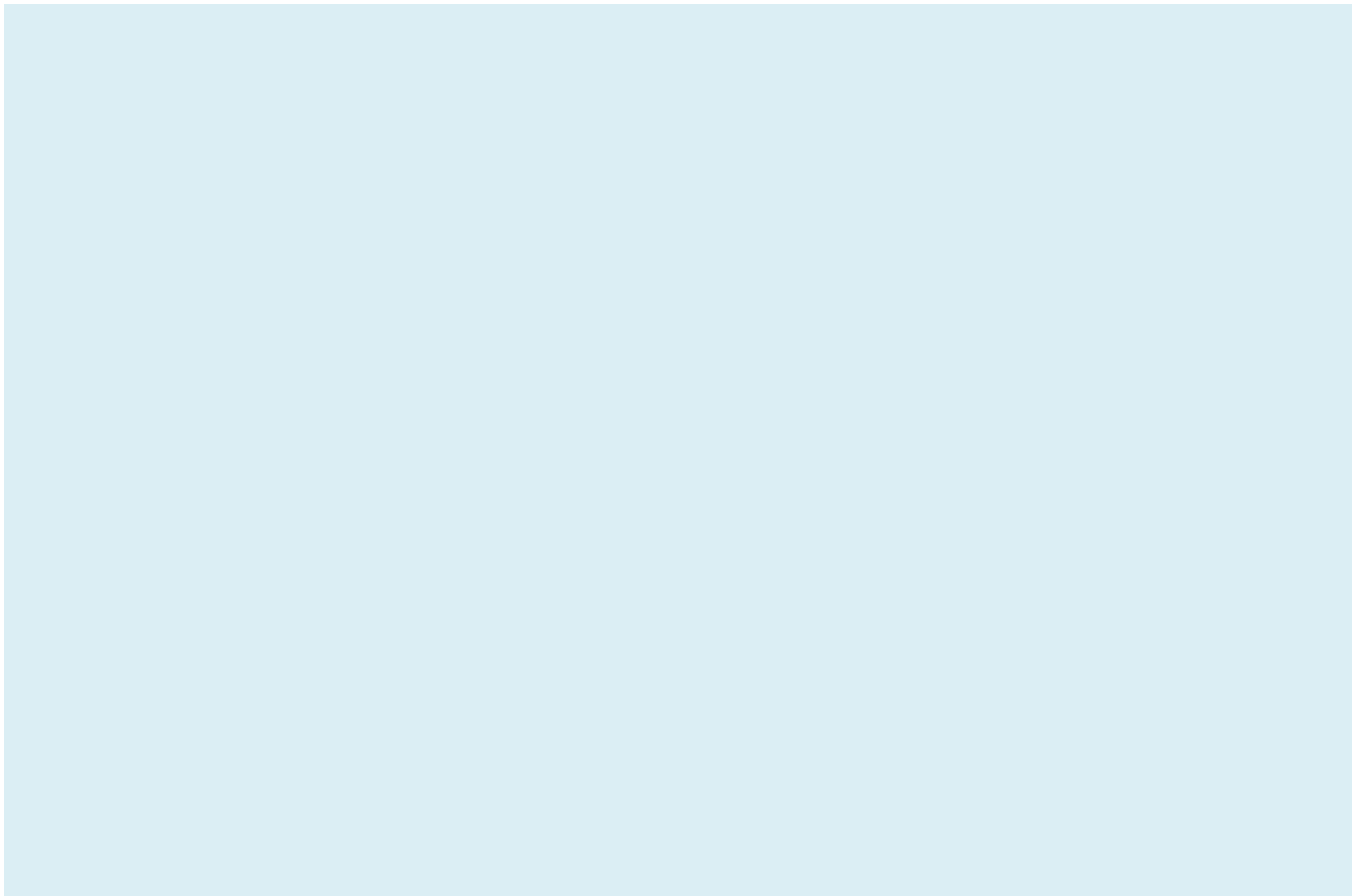
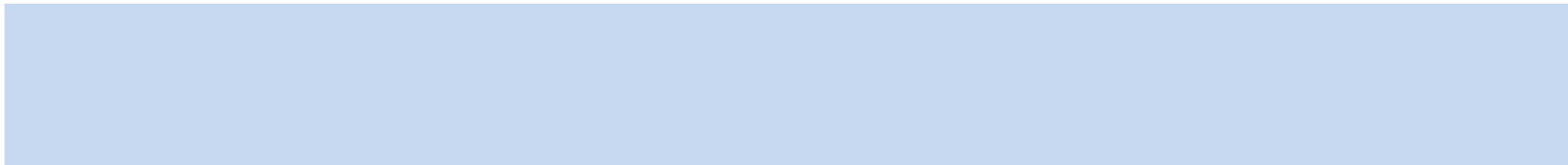
Variations in views about whether adults respect children's rights by country and age group

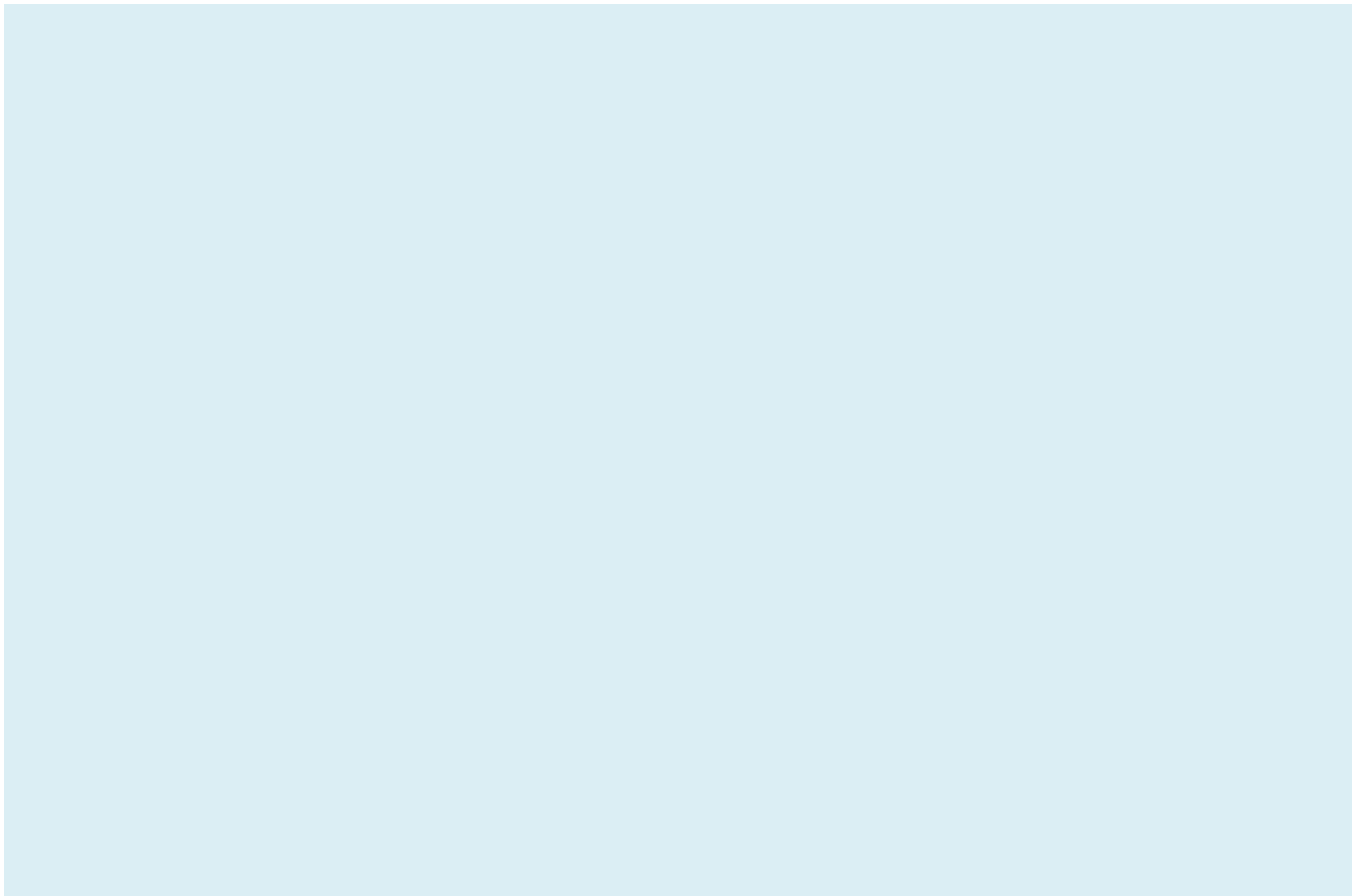
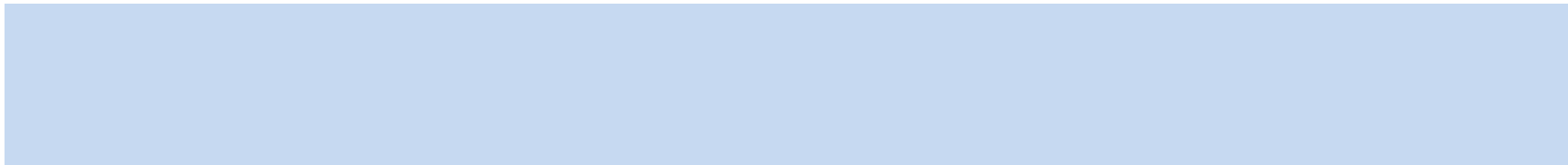


Country ranking for each children's rights question Based on percentage of 'Yes' responses

	Know about rights	Know about UN convention	Adults respect child rights	Mean ranking
Norway	1	1	1	1.0
Turkey*	5	3	3	3.7
Nepal	4	9	2	5.0
Poland*	3	5	9	5.7
Colombia*	2	2	13	5.7
Romania	6	4	8	6.0
Estonia	9	6	5	6.7
Spain*	11	8	6	8.3
Ethiopia	7	11	11	9.7
Israel	13	7	10	10.0
South Africa*	8	12	12	10.7
UK*	15	14	4	11.0
Germany	12	15	7	11.3
Algeria*	10	10	14	11.3
South Korea	14	13	15	14.0







.../... Key points

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- There are many significant variations by gender and age group.
- The most substantial and significant variations by age relate to having fun together and learning together in their families in favour of the youngest ones. while these latter are less satisfied with the people they live with and all other people in their families. Also. with age the frequency of talking. having fun and meeting to study with friends increases. The 10 years-old age groups children are significantly more satisfied with all aspects related to treatments at the doctors. the outdoor areas children can use. and the area they live in in general than the older 12 years-old group. This latter group of children is less satisfied with safety. doing things away from home. what may happen to them later in life. and also marginally lower in appearance. but no difference between the 10 and the 12 groups in time use. Furthermore. bullying forms. being hit and being left out. significantly decrease with age.
- Older children were more likely to say that they knew about the convention and what rights children have. But. they were less likely to think that adults respect children.

.../... Key points: gender differences

- The domains where the largest gender differences exist relate to family aspects and friends in favour of girls. despite that boys tended a little more frequently to talk and have fun with friends than girls.
- Interestingly that girls are more satisfied than boys with all aspects of school and in satisfaction levels with: 'The way that you look'. and marginally higher in 'Satisfaction with: Your own body' and 'How you are listened to by adults in general'. However. girls scored less in having enough places to play or to have a good time. and feelings of safety when they walk in the area they live in. Boys are much more likely to have experienced being hit by other children at school but no differences between them and girls in feeling left out. Furthermore. girls are more satisfied than boys by how they use their time in the older age groups. but these later are more likely to read for fun. help with housework. do homework and watch TV. Boys are more likely to take classes outside school. take part in organized leisure activities and do sports or exercise and use a computer. Notable also is that there are no variation by gender in the mean level of satisfaction with things they have and in the mean level of how often they worry about how much money their families have.
- We have also conducted comparisons in children's feelings and experiences according to the province of residence. Notable is that the three compared provinces have no common borders. and are quite different in urbanisation and modernisation levels. Generally. children from the less modern area of El-Bayadh have **higher material deprivation**. are more likely to worry about money. think their areas do **not have enough places to play and have fun**. are the least satisfied with **the outdoor areas**. and have the lowest satisfaction with the **areas they live in** in general. Children of Oran are more favoured in responses to questions about **their schools**. including school marks. Things they learn. school experience. and relationship with teachers. The strength of the differences varies across questions. Nevertheless. Children living in El-Bayadh were significantly **less likely to be hit and to be left out by mates** compared to both other provinces.

What's next?

- To my knowledge this is the largest study on this topic in Algeria. A lot of will was needed to complete it.
- The results should be taken seriously by decision makers in addressing issues of equality in development and modernisation efforts.
- Apparently, regional disparities in that respect have a direct effect on children's lives and well-being.
- Also important to study is the regional cultural models and their peculiarities with regard to children's bringing up and socialisation practices.
- Also, there are indications that in Algeria boys and girls are treated differently which may have an effect on their adult life and the roles they should play in a modern and an emancipated society.

Future

- Use some more advanced statistical techniques to analyse and share more detailed findings from this data set.
- A qualitative study is being conducted to explore meanings and understandings of the studied issues
- More than 90% of the participating children gave their names for a follow up study...

ANY ADVICE WELCOME...

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 - THANK YOU!

Limitations

- 1-Only the schools under the direct responsibility of the Ministry of Education were sampled (excluding private schools, community (religious) schools and those related Social Action (children with special needs))
- 2-Lack of precise statistical information in the Directorates, partly because updating occurs at later dates (initially we used estimations on the basis 2010 data and information on schools posted on official websites).
- 3-Researchers did not have the possibility to cross-check the numbers. No printed lists were handed to us.
- 4- The 'ideal' distribution relative to the size of the population was not fully met, but the sample largely exceeds the expected 3,000 participants for the whole country
- 5- Had to adjust the working schedules to the needs of schools, but envisioned beforehand alternatives plans

Sampling strategy

- **3 stages...**
- **1- Choosing 01 region** only from the whole country: West of Algeria, because: 1- the country is very wide; 2- time and resources restrictions)
- **2- Purposive sampling of Provinces**, after many consultations with colleague researchers, to ensure that the selected Provinces represent the whole Western region. The Provinces do not have any common borders (see map). The research took place in 03 different Provinces
- **3-** Randomly selecting schools from the existing list at the Directorate of Education in each province.
- **4-** In each school working with only two of the available class groups (clusters) at the time of the research, around 50 children max. per cluster (i.e., 2 class groups per school for each age)

Results

- Your home and the people you live with
 - All but 3.3% of children said that they always (85%) or usually (11.7%) sleep in the same homes
- 95.7 % lived with their family. The remainder lived in foster care 1.9%. a children's home or in another type of home 2.4% which include living in the school internship.
- About 89% of children said they lived with their mother and father.

Children's rights in Algeria

- and emplo**Family and Child Policies**
- Inherited from the Islamic religion much of its culture of education and caring for children and their well-being (starting from forbidding abortion, to encouraging the marriage institution)
- Ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2001 and is since gradually adapting its legislation to its requirements

the Algerian Context

- Many private and public institutions deliver this education starting from the age of three years.
- enrolment rate in compulsory education (6 to 16 year olds) is estimated to be around 94% and hardly no disparity between girls and boys (the ratio of girls to boys is 0.99)
- Many weaknesses have in the educational system: Crowded classrooms, needs to improve teacher preparation, low internal efficiency, integrating children with disabilities, enhance the right to rights to participation in school life, protection measures, ...
- Family: Predominance of conservative values, a trend away from the extended family type and towards the nuclear family model, Women represent about 20% of the active workforce; In 2010, the total fertility rate was 1.76 children born/woman. This is a drop from 2.41 in 2009 and 7.12 in the 1970s. Divorce rates are estimated at 7% of total marriages per year.

Everyday Life: limited number of specific playgrounds and other children facilities, weaknesses in the organisation and management of the area of leisure and cultural activities the most important occupations for children at weekends consist of doing school homework (a little over 70 percent), watching television (almost 70percent), hanging around with peers (near 60 percent) and, for nearly half of girls, helping with domestic chores

Algerian Sample

- Designed to achieve a representative sample of the western region of Algeria of children in school years 3 (Primary School- 3PS); 5 (Primary School-5PS) and 1st Middle School (1MS) with at least 1,000 children in each group.
- The primary sampling unit was schools.
- The final sample: **3,676 children**