



Children's Worlds National Report

Romania

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1. Introduction

1.1 Context and population

External influences

The total population of Romania, according to the Tempo online database of the National Statistical Institute is around 22,346,178. The population in the targeted age groups is distributed as in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of the children by age (7-13), in absolute and relative numbers.

Age	Number of children	Percent
7	228697	1.02%
8	231800	1.04%
9	225011	1.01%
10	224457	1.00%
11	220877	0.99%
12	223442	1.00%
13	236884	1.06%
Total	1591168	7.12%

Statistical data (according to the last census, that of 2011) show that the great majority of the Romanian population (88.9%) declared itself to be of Romanian ethnicity. The ethnic Hungarian population recorded was 6.5%, and the number of those who declared themselves to be Roma was around 3.3%. According to scholars and NGO's, this latter proportion is underestimated, giving that a certain percent (at least 10%) of Roma do not identify themselves as such. Moreover, only a proportion of the Roma population speaks Romani (the rest speak Romanian or Hungarian, depending on the majority language in their region).

As far as religion is concerned, the largest share is represented by the population of Greek Orthodox religion (85.94%). 4.56% of the Romanian population are Roman-Catholics, and 3,15% are Protestants. 0.84% are Greek-Catholics, 0.61% are Baptists, 1,93% are Pentecostals, and 0,45% are Adventists. Other declared religions sum up to 1.80%. Romanians are religious people and teach their children as such. After a decision of the Constitutional Court, in 2015 the Ministry of Education required that, in order for their children to study religion in school, the parents should request this in writing. Subsequently, 90% of the parents sent these request.

There are 8 development regions in Romania, which correspond to NUTS II-level divisions in European Union member states: North West, Centre, North East, South East, South, Bucharest-Ilfov, South West, and West.



Figure 1. Distribution of the Romanian development regions

After the fall of communism in 1989, Romania followed a difficult transition to democracy and a functional market economy. The economic and social problems inherited from the communist period and the serious transformation that took place afterwards produced a strong economic crisis in the 1990s, followed by an aggravation of social problems. After a recovery in the 2000s, Romania re-entered economic crisis until the beginning of 2010s. According to Eurostat, the GDP per capita (PPP) was 7500 Euro, compared to the EU28 average of 27500. This makes Romania the lowest ranked in the EU28 (with the exception of Bulgaria). The result in social terms is that 22.5% of the population is at risk of poverty (compared to the EU28 mean of 16.6%). The situation is even worse for children: Romania has the highest at-risk-of-poverty rate for children under 16: 31.5%, compared with the EU28 mean of 19.9%.

Of all children of this age, 50.28% live in urban areas and 49.72% in rural areas. 51.39% of them are boys and 48.61% girls.

On one hand, in Romania there are competitive urban middle-class parents, who send their children to good schools and push them in education with extra classes, while offering them a good standard of living. On the other hand there are comparatively poor families from rural areas, where around 50% of the population lives. Children in rural areas have a comparatively poor standard of living. They spend more time in travelling to and from schools (around 90 minutes per day) and also spend on average two hours a day helping their parents (cleaning the house, looking after animals or taking care of other household members). 13% of the rural children even say they work four hours or more a day. Working at home clearly constitutes a disadvantage for the quality of life of rural children³.

Romanian children spend a lot of time on the internet. They report higher levels of cyber-bullying compared to children in the rest of Europe⁴. Their use of TV is also at high levels.

³ Bădescu, Gabriel, & Petre, Niculina. (2012). The child Wellbeing in Rural Romania: report for World Vision Romania Risoprint Retrieved from http://www.worldvision.ro/_downloads/allgemein/The_Child_Wellbeing_Rural_Romania_EN.pdf

⁴ Barbovschi, Monica. (2015). Romania - EU Kids Online - Research. Retrieved from <http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/ParticipatingCountries/romania.aspx>

Family and Child Policies

Children and family issues are included in political discussions, and are sometimes high on the political agenda. The low level of child allowance for families, the levels of maternal leave, the situation of children left at home by migrating parents, the quality of health services for children, are some of the topics discussed by politicians in recent years. These issues are also subjects of press campaigns.

Parents are entitled to paid maternal/paternal leave of up to 2 years (or up to 3 years in case of a disabled child) in which s/he receives 85% of the salary. Schooling is free of charge up to the end of high school, but parents receive no allowance for their children in school. Poor children receive allowances for school uniforms and 200 euro to buy a computer. All children receive a glass of milk and a pastry every day at school. Only children from alternative educational systems (such as step-by-step) benefit from state-funded after-school programmes. Most health services for children are free.

In Romania parents serve as an umbrella for adverse socio-economic conditions. However, strong conditions such as economic crisis can negatively influence children's lives. Poverty affects many children, mostly in rural areas. Another condition is the migration of parents for work. In the process some children are left at home, in the care of relatives. Starting with 2007-2008, the problem was brought to the front of public discussions, after some press campaigns triggered by the suicide of several children in this situation. There was a response from the authorities who issued some regulation and the Romanian Agency for Child Protection monitored the situation for several years.

Education System

In Romania, the main part of education takes place in state-run institutions. The language of teaching is Romanian, which is compulsory for all citizens, regardless of their nationality. According to the law, teaching can also take place in languages of the national minorities, as well as in world languages.

The law allows the organisation of various forms of private education at all levels. In Romania, the law ensures 10 years of compulsory education, which includes primary education (grades I-IV) and lower secondary education (grades V-X). These 10 years of compulsory education are free of charge.

Education in Romania is structured as follows: pre-school education, primary education, lower secondary education, upper-secondary, post-secondary non-tertiary, higher education, and postgraduate education.

Pre-school education is intended for children aged between 3 to 7 years, who can be enrolled in day nurseries, as well as in nurseries with extended or weekly programs. Children in Romania have access to access to free education, starting at the age of six, when they should enter the "preparatory school year". They start compulsory school at age of seven, until the tenth grade (age 16-17). High school ends with the twelfth grade and with the baccalaureate. Higher education is aligned with the European Higher Education Area.

Pre-school education has the following levels: lower group, middle group, upper group and a preparatory grade, which are set up according to children's ages and abilities. In the case of primary education (grades 0-IV – 6/7 years - 10/11 years), there are only day classes. In the case of lower secondary

education (grades V-VIII – 10/11 years - 14/15 years) there are predominantly day classes; in some particular cases, evening or distant learning classes can be organised for those people who are more than two years older than the age corresponding to their grade. The upper secondary education (14/15 years -18 years) includes high schools and vocational schools. Post-secondary non-tertiary, higher and postgraduate education are stages that follow after high school graduation and a successful baccalaureate exam.

In 2012, in the country as a whole, out of a total number of 4,386,316 children aged between 0 and 19 years, 673,641 pre-school children were enrolled in some form of education, 1,629,406 children attended primary and lower secondary educational institutions, 888,768 students were enrolled in high schools and 12,382 students attended various vocational schools. The school-aged population's enrolment in education was 76% at country level (81.8% children aged 3 to 6, 94%, children aged 7 to-10, 92.8% children aged 11 to 14, 81% children aged 15 to 18 and 50.3% young people aged 19 to 23).

Access to school of Romanian children is universal. However children from rural areas and Roma children are disadvantaged and face strong barriers that prevent them having a good education.

Distance is a problem in many rural areas. Almost a quarter of children in villages travel 90 minutes or more to school daily. Also, they work more in the household (up to 4 hours a day) which reduces the time for homework, extracurricular activities and leisure⁵. Roma children live in disadvantaged communities, where the lack of the clothing and equipment may discourage their parents from sending them to school. Roma children suffer from discrimination and social exclusion: in some schools they are segregated, and their schools are in worse condition than in the rest of the country. In the course of field investigation for this project, in rural areas there was a higher percent of children missing from school. An important proportion of them were Roma. In fact, while the school system proclaims its openness and inclusivity, there are many cases of hidden school leave.

Family environment

Romania is not far from a traditional (patriarchal) society, in which the divorce rate is rather low. The average number of children is quite low also. Middle class families give birth to one to two children. Recently there was an increase in proportion of single-parent families. In 2012 the total fertility rate per woman was 1.5.

Urban families are generally nuclear. They live in apartments with up to four rooms. Houses are overcrowded. The national average of inhabitants per room is 1.6 – among the highest in Europe. In rural dwellings the average is higher. However not all rooms are occupied in the same proportion as those in the urban areas. In rural settings also the proportion of multi-generation households is higher. More than 90% of the Romanians own their houses.

Children from villages usually help their parents in the household as well as in agriculture. Such involvement is seen as an educational method and also as a productive way of using children. However this diminishes their quality of life⁵. Urban children also take on responsibilities for house cleaning and

⁵ Bădescu, Gabriel, & Petre, Niculina. (2012). The child Wellbeing in Rural Romania: report for World Vision Romania Risoprint Retrieved from http://www.worldvision.ro/_downloads/allgemein/The_Child_Wellbeing_Rural_Romania_EN.pdf

taking care of others, but to a lesser extent. Data from the Statistical survey on time use (TUS 2012) shows that girls are involved almost twice as much as boys in these activities⁶.

Everyday life

According to the Statistical survey on time use (TUS 2012), children (aged 10 to 14 years) study daily, on average, 5:06 hours on a school day and 1:11 hours on weekend days. They use the computer daily for leisure time, on average, 40 minutes. They sleep on average 9:36 hours on school days and 10:51 on weekends. In a school day they also spend 2:51 hours on personal care (3:09 on weekends). 0:42 hours are dedicated to household and family care (0:55 hours in weekend), but the distribution by gender is unequal: girls spend 0:54 hours for this activity in school days (1:05 in weekend days) while boys only 0:32 (0:46 on weekend days). As a result girls report they have 25 minutes less for leisure at weekends than boys. On working day Romanian children age 10 to 14 travel around 1:04 hours, while at weekends only 42 minutes⁶.

Romanian children study in the morning, except in some crowded secondary schools when teaching is organized in shifts and starting with 5th grade (11 years old pupils) children study in the afternoons.

In the last few years, there was an increase in the after-school programmes (most of them financed by parents). As a result a considerable amount of children from cities stay in schools until 4:00 PM. Alternatively in cities and in most of cases for rural children, they stay at home alone or in the care of a relative (mostly grandparents) until around 6:00 PM when they reunite with their parents coming home from work. In the evenings, after their homework is done, most children spend their time with their parents. A few go out but most of them watch TV together with the adults.

Only a fifth of Romanians go on holiday in the summer – mostly middle class. 81% of those having children go on holidays with them⁷. In the rest of the holidays, urban children go to summer camps in the countryside, to their relatives or just hang around. Children from rural areas are even less likely to go on organised holidays. Some of them are involved in agricultural work.

Unequal Childhoods

Although parents generally act as an umbrella for their children, the inequality in the country affects children. According to Eurostat, in 2011, 32.9% of children were at risk of poverty. One of five children with adults active in the labour force is poor. One of ten children live in households without employed adults⁸. Geographically, poverty is concentrated in the North-East region. Children in rural areas are also deprived. Only a third of the houses in these areas have an internal bathroom; a quarter have an internal toilet and only one in 10 have sewage. However in recent years extreme poverty areas have also developed in cities. A quarter of children from villages say that they are tired because they have to work

⁶ National Institute of Statistics. (2013). Time use in Romania. Statistical survey on time use (TUS), carried out in households during September 2011 - September 2012 Bucharest.

⁷ IRES. (2015). Vacanțele românilor [The Holidays of Romanians]. Research report. Retrieved from http://www.ires.com.ro/uploads/articole/ires_vacantele-romanilor-2014_raport-de-cercetare.pdf

⁸ Guvernul României [Romanian Government]. (2014). Strategia nationala pentru protectia si promovarea drepturilor copilului 2014-2020 [National Strategy for child protection for the period 2014-2020].

in the household (before or after coming from school). 12% of them skipped school because they had to work⁹.

Roma children are by far the most affected by these issues. Being from a Roma ethnic background increases the probability of a child of being poor by 37%. 40% of children declare they have insufficient food¹⁰. They also have less education opportunities (see Education System section, page 4).

According to the National Strategy for Child Protection for the period 2014 to 2020, children with disabilities are also included among the disadvantaged. They face strong barriers to have an education of quality, and also have to fight with low quality of health services and lack of accessibility to public space¹¹.

Children's Rights

At a national level, the National Authority for Child Protection and Adoption, which is under the authority of The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly, is the institution that conceives and develops programs in the field of child and family protection. It also coordinates and monitors the activity of the County Departments of Social Work and Child Protection, which are institutions that operate in each county.

Since 1989, significant efforts have been made to improve the situation of children and families at risk. The reform has focused mainly on creating the legal framework that makes possible the adoption of protective measures for these categories. In the field of child protection, Law 272/2004 on the protection and promotion of the rights of the child, later changed and completed by Law 257/2013, establishes the legal framework for respecting, promoting and assuring the rights of this category of the population. Government Decision 1113/2014 approved the National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child for 2014 to 2020 and the Operational Plan for the implementation of the National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child. Another relevant issue is that all these initiatives are based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Romania ratified by the adoption of Law 18/1990 (published in the Official Journal of Romania, issue 314 from 13 June 2001).

1.2 Sampling strategy and outcomes

The sample for Romania was designed in such a way to achieve a nationally representative sample of children in school grades 2 (age 8 to 9 years old), 4 (age 10 to 11 years old) and 6 (age 12 to 13 years old) with at least 1200 children in each group. The primary sampling unit was the class in the school. Separate samples were designed for grades 2 and 4 (corresponding to primary school) and 6 (secondary school education). All three samples followed the same methodology. First, a complete list of schools

⁹ Bădescu, Gabriel, & Petre, Niculina. (2012). The child Wellbeing in Rural Romania: report for World Vision Romania Risoprint Retrieved from http://www.worldvision.ro/_downloads/allgemein/The_Child_Wellbeing_Rural_Romania_EN.pdf

¹⁰ Bennett, John. (2012). Roma Early Childhood Inclusion: The RECI Overview Report. London: Open Society Foundations, Roma Early Childhood Inclusion, Roma Education Fund, Roma Good Start Initiative & Unicef

¹¹ Guvernul României [Romanian Government]. (2014). Strategia nationala pentru protectia si promovarea drepturilor copilului 2014-2020 [National Strategy for child protection for the period 2014-2020].

(with the number of children in the class) was obtained from the Ministry of Education. This list in Romania was divided into 16 strata by the eight development regions and by the territorial context where the school is located (urban/rural). The subsamples for these regions were proportional with the weight of these regions and urban/rural school children in the country as a whole.

Within each stratum two to four 4 counties were randomly selected from the list of counties in the development region (which represent about half or the counties from this region). Table 2 summarises the number of counties selected in each region.

Table 2: Counties selected within each strata

	Region	Counties	No. of counties selected/no. of counties
1	North West	Bihor, Cluj, Sălaj, Satu Mare	4/6
2	Centre	Alba, Braşov, Mureş	3/6
3	North East	Iasi, Bacău, Botoşani	3/6
4	South East	Constanţa, Buzău, Galaţi	3/6
5	South	Prahova, Argeş, Călăraşi	3/7
6	Bucharest-Ilfov	Bucharest, Ilfov	2/2
7	South West	Dolj, Olt, Vâlcea	3/5
8	West	Arad, Timiş	2/4

The schools within these counties were listed in the order of counties and by type of locality (rural or urban). A rough estimation of the total number of classes for each school was computed based on data offered by the Ministry. Then a sampling step was computed for each stratum, by dividing the number of enrolled pupils in this stratum and the planned number of children. A first sampling number was randomly extracted for the strata involving 8-years-old children – representing the number of the child, and the school and number of class (if more than one) in which this child was situated was selected in the sample. Then we added the sampling step and select the next corresponding class, until the end. In order to keep the number of schools at a lower level, we started the stepping by selecting the same first or last school for another age group (for example if for the 8-years-old sample we started with school A and the last in the sample was school B, then for the 10-years-old sample we started with a random child from school A, and for the 12-years-old survey we started with a random child from school B. For the next strata we did the same procedure but reversing the method for the 10-years-old and 12-years-old age groups.

The sampling plan is based on random selection of a child in class. However, when we chose the whole class in which this particular child is enrolled, that offered no guarantee that the designed number of selected children for each strata was achieved. This required corrections during the field work: after collecting all data from children included in the sub-sample of a particular strata, if we still had not achieved the target, new classes were added to the sample by the following procedures: a random class was selected from the schools in which data were already collected for a different age group. However, no more than two classes per school were selected.

The survey began in November 2013 and was completed by March 2014. After data cleaning, the survey data set contained questionnaires from a sample of 4104 children: 1242 (8- years old), 1355 (10 years old), and 1507 (12 years old).

For most of the questionnaires, the survey language was Romanian. However, in classes where the teaching language was Hungarian a translated version of the questionnaire was used. Based on the question about the language spoken at home, we made a rough estimation of the ethnicity of the respondent. Weights were assigned to all the respondents, in order to match the census distribution by the ethnic group of the children, mostly by Hungarian to be reasonably weighted, and also by type of locality (urban/rural). See Table 5 (page 9) for the weighted and unweighted counts for the language spoken at home.

2. Results

2.1 The participants

Age and gender

51.9% of the sample were boys and 48.1% were girls. The children's ages ranged from 7 to 13. Most of children are exactly 8, 10 or 12 years old.

Table 3: Age by gender (Numbers)

	7 years old	8 years old	9 years old	10 years old	11 years old	12 years old	13 years old	14 years old	Total
Boy	64	503	142	551	146	573	125	17	2120
Girl	89	468	126	483	167	548	72	9	1962
Total	153	971	268	1033	312	1121	198	26	4082

Only 2.9% of the children were born outside Romania.

Language spoken at home

In order to estimate the ethnic group to which the children belong we included a question on the language spoken at home. The results concerning the Romanian and Hungarian language were weighted to match the Census data. The proportion of Roma-speaking respondents varies from one age group to another. These proportions should be treated with caution, also because the middle class Roma citizens do not speak the Romani language but speak Romanian or Hungarian instead.

Table 5: Language spoken at home, by age group.

	8 year-old		10 year-old		12 year-old	
	Weighted counts & percent	Unweighted counts	Weighted counts & percent	Unweighted counts	Weighted counts & percent	Unweighted counts
Romanian	1134 (91.3%)	1134	1213 (89.5%)	1197	1365 (90.6%)	1359
Hungarian	73 (5.9%)	74	81 (6.0%)	101	76 (5.1%)	87
Romani	15 (1.2%)	16	41 (3.0%)	34	33 (2.2%)	32
Other	11 (.9%)	10	3 (.2%)	5	6 (.4%)	6
DK/NA	8 (.7%)	8	16 (1.2%)	18	26 (1.7%)	23
TOTAL	1242 (100%)	1242	1355 (100%)	1355	1507 (100%)	1507

2.2 Your home and the people you live with

Children were asked if they live in same or different homes. Around three-quarters of them always sleep in the same home. A very small percent (around 2%) declare they regularly sleep in two different homes with different adults.

Table 6: Home situation by age

	8 year-old	10 year-old	12 year-old
I always sleep in the same home	74.4%	77.0%	75.8%
I usually sleep in the same home, but sometimes sleep in other places (for example a friend's or grandparents')	23.2%	20.9%	22.0%
I regularly sleep in two different homes with different adults	2.4%	2.1%	2.2%

97.7% lived with their family. 1.2 percent lived in foster care, and a similar percent live in children's home. 82.6% of children live with their mother and father. 7.5% lived with a lone mother in the first and of these 1.7% stayed with a lone father. 4.1% lived with a mother and a partner and 1.7% stayed with a father and his partner (see Table 7). 68.0% live with siblings and 4.2% live with other children. 20.6% of the children live with their grandfathers and 33% of children live with their grandmothers.

Table 7: The 10- and 12-year-old's family composition (adults) (%)

	10 year-old	12 year-old
Mother and father	83.1%	82.1%
Mother and partner	3.6%	4.5%
Father and partner	1.1%	0.8%
Lone mother	7.6%	7.5%
Lone father	2.0%	1.4%
Other	2.6%	3.7%

Most of the children who fall within the 'other' living arrangement live with their grandmother (58%), their grandfather (35%) or with other adults (32%) (figure 2).

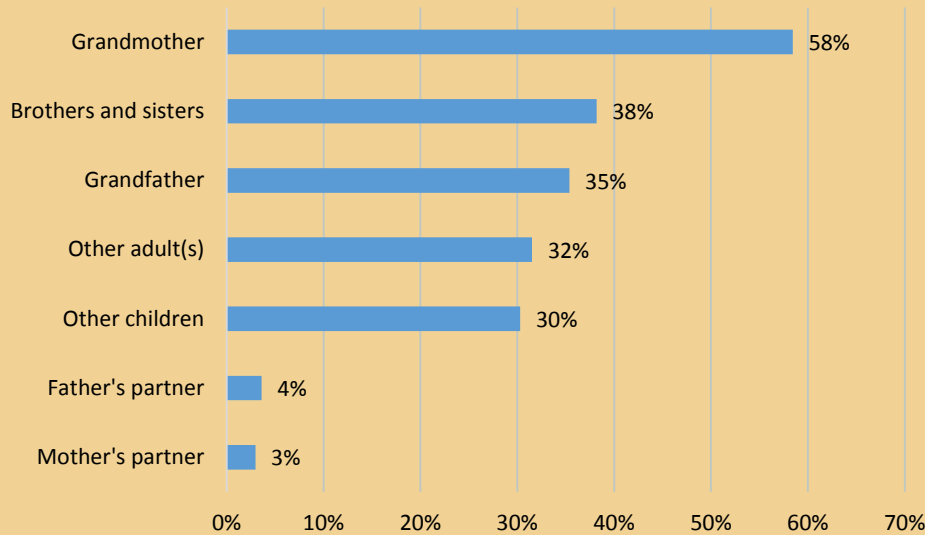


Figure 2: Members of the household of the children with 'other' living arrangements (age 10- and 12-year-old) (%)

The next five questions are about children's opinions about their home and the people they live with. The results are summarised in Table 5. Children were most in agreement with the statement 'I feel safe at home' and least in agreement with 'My parents/carers listen to me and take what I say into account'.

Table 8: Home and family (All age groups) (%)

	I do not agree	Agree a little bit	Agree somewhat	Agree a lot	Totally agree
I feel safe at home	2.2%	1.2%	3.6%	19.9%	73.1%
I have a quiet place to study at home	3.4%	2.1%	7.0%	23.1%	64.4%
My parents/carers listen to me and take what I say into account	4.9%	3.8%	13.6%	22.9%	54.8%
My parents/carers treat me fairly	3.3%	3.2%	8.4%	21.3%	63.8%
We have a good time together in my family	2.1%	1.6%	3.9%	18.4%	74.0%

Table 9 summarises variations in responses to these five questions. There were no variations in responses by gender. Positive answers to questions 'Parents listen to me and take what I say into account' and 'We have a good time together in my family' tend to decrease with age. There are also significant variations by family type, with children living with both birth parents having the highest levels of positive answers. Children living with a lone parent follow, but with lower levels on items 'Parents fair' and 'Having a good time together'.

Table 9: Variations in questions about home and the people you live with (Means on 0-4 scale).

	Feel safe	Place to study	Parents listen	Good time together	Parents fair
Gender (all age groups)					
Boy	3.59	3.39	3.16	3.33	3.58
Girl	3.60	3.43	3.15	3.40	3.64
Year group					
8 year-old	3.64	3.48	3.27	3.46	3.60
10 year-old	3.59	3.40	3.12	3.38	3.59
12 year-old	3.59	3.42	3.19	3.34	3.62
Family type (10 & 12 year old group)					
Mother and father	3.60	3.43	3.18	3.43	3.64
Parent and stepparent	3.52	3.23	3.03	3.24	3.48
Lone parent	3.61	3.42	3.15	3.16	3.54
Other	3.41	3.19	2.85	2.72	3.36
Total	3.59	3.41	3.15	3.36	3.61

Table 10 shows the frequencies of answers to the questions about time spent with the family. Most of the everyday activities are dedicated to talking together (91% do that most days or every day). 77.6% of the children have fun in the family, and 65.7% of the children

Table 10: Time spent with family in the past week (All age groups)

	Not at all	Once or twice	Most days	Every day
How often do family: Talk together	2.8%	6.1%	16.6%	74.5%
How often do family: Have fun together	7.1%	15.3%	36.1%	41.5%
How often do family: Learn together	17.2%	17.2%	25.0%	40.7%

In Table 11 we compare the proportion of answers 'Most days' or 'Every day' to the above questions about time spent with family. Girls are significantly more likely to talk together and have fun together with family, while the gender differences on frequency of learning together with the parents are not significant. The age group differences are significant: younger children are more likely to have fun and

learn together with their families. Children living with their biological mother and father spend more time talking with their parents than those who are living with a parent and a stepparent (the frequency of other family activities being similar). The children living with a lone parent talk and have fun together less than children living with both parents and with a parent and stepparent. Somewhat unexpectedly, children from other types of families report that they have fun together and learn together more than the rest of children. Finally, children in urban schools report they have fun together and learn less frequently than those from rural schools.

Table 11: Variations in time spent with family. Frequency of answers: 'most days' or 'every day' (%)

	Talk together	Have fun together	Learn together
Gender			
Boy	90.1%	79.1%	70.8%
Girl	92.7%	81.2%	72.0%
Year group			
8 year-old	91.6%	85.5%	84.3%
10 year-old	91.3%	78.4%	69.7%
12 year-old	90.9%	76.9%	62.0%
Family type			
Mother and father	92.9%	79.9%	67.3%
Parent and stepparent	89.1%	79.4%	68.0%
Lone parent	87.7%	70.8%	59.6%
Other	89.4%	81.8%	80.7%
Type of locality in which the school is located			
Rural	90.8%	81.8%	72.3%
Urban	91.7%	78.2%	70.4%
Total	91.3%	79.9%	71.3%

The next set of questions covered satisfaction with family life. Children in the 8-years-old age group were asked these questions using a five point emoticons scale. Table 12 summarises the results using a score from zero to four, where zero represents the unhappiest face and four represents the happiest face. For all variables, at least 95% of the children give answers corresponding to 'happy' or 'very happy'.

Table 12: Satisfaction with home and the people you live with (8 years old) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4
The house or flat where you live	.9%	.8%	1.9%	13.9%	82.5%
The people you live with	.7%	.9%	2.9%	14.5%	81.0%
All the other people in your family	.9%	.7%	3.2%	13.8%	81.4%
Your family life	1.5%	1.2%	2.0%	11.0%	84.3%

Children in the 10-years-old and 12-years-old age groups were asked the same questions, but on a scale from 0 to 10. Table 13 summarizes these answers for the gender, age and family type groups. There were no variations in satisfaction with these aspects of family life by year group. Girls are more satisfied with the people they live with. Significant differences are also found by family type. Children living with a lone parent are the least satisfied with their houses. Children who live in other arrangements are the most unsatisfied with the rest of the items.

Table 13: Variations in satisfaction with house and people (10 & 12 years old) (Means on the scale 0-10)

	The house or flat where you live	The people you live with	All the other people in your family	Your family life
Gender				
Boy	9.34	9.42	9.43	9.59
Girl	9.39	9.62	9.51	9.63
Year group				
10 year-old	9.38	9.51	9.49	9.61
12 year-old	9.35	9.53	9.46	9.60
Family type				
Mother and father	9.40	9.55	9.51	9.66
Parent and stepparent	9.35	9.47	9.58	9.68
Lone parent	9.13	9.45	9.31	9.52
Other	9.21	9.17	8.93	8.79
Total	9.40	9.55	9.51	9.66

2.3 Money and things you have

We asked children about the things they and their families own (for the 8-years-old group a shorter list was included). Table 14 summarises the positive answers to the questions.

Table 14: Things you have (All age groups) (Means)

	8 year-old	10 year-old	12 year-old
Mobile phone	-	75.7%	88.5%
Own room	-	56.3%	70.9%
Books to read for fun	-	90.5%	86.1%
Own stuff to listen to music	-	84.2%	89.1%
Clothes in good condition to go to school in	98.6%	98.9%	99.3%
Access to a computer at home	84.6%	84.6%	88.0%
Access to the Internet	76.5%	78.1%	81.6%
Family car for transportation	65.1%	58.5%	58.7%
Television that can use	95.9%	96.5%	97.3%

Almost 99% of the children had good clothes to wear for school. About 84% to 88% of the children have access to a computer at home, while over 75% of them have access to the internet. 75% of 10-year-old children have their own mobile phone, this percentage being significantly higher for 12-year-olds (88%). The percentage of children having their own room varies from 56.3% for 10-year-olds to 70.9% for 12-year-olds. Around 10% to 15% of the children have no books to read for fun and a similar proportion have no audio equipment to listen to music.

Overall, as table 15 shows, children are very satisfied with the things they have. Satisfaction decreases slowly from age 10 to age 12.

Table 15: The children's satisfaction with all of the things they have M (SD)

	8 year-old (scale 0-4)	10 year-old (scale 0-10)	12 year-old (scale 0-10)
All of the things you have	3.8	9.7	9.5

When asking the children about their worries about family money, the view that emerges is surprising. Around a third of the children report they are worried often or always. This would suggest that, contrary to expectations, children are sensitive to the financial problems their families have.

Table 16: How often do you worry about how much money your family has?

	8 year-old	10 year-old	12 year-old
Never	34.0%	30.8%	30.5%
Sometimes	22.8%	39.4%	41.8%
Often	18.6%	10.9%	10.6%
Always	24.6%	18.9%	17.1%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%

The following question was posed only to children in the 10-year-old and 12-year-old age groups. They were asked if they get pocket money. While almost a third of the children in the 10-year-old age group do not receive pocket money, the percent drops to 5% for the 12-year-old. A similar percent (under 40%) of children in both age groups receive money, but not regularly.

Table 17: Pocket money (10 year-old and 12 year-old) (%)

	10 year-old	12 year-old
I don't get pocket money	30.8	5.4
I get pocket money, but not regularly	39.4	36.3
I get pocket money every week	10.9	48.2
I get pocket money every month	18.9	10.1
Total	100.0	100.0

Children in the 12-year-old age group were asked questions about the economic status of their household. More than half of the children live in households with two adults working. 5.7% of children, on the other hand, lived in a household which had no adult in employment.

Table 18: How many adults that you live with have a paid job? (12 year-old)

	%
None	5.7
One	23.3
Two	52.5
More than two	18.5
Total	100.0

Children were rather optimistic concerning their level of living. Only 12.1% of them reported their family had less money than a year ago. Instead, 46.7% reported their family had more money than a year ago (table 19).

Table 19: Compared to a year ago, how much money does your family have now? (12 year-old)

	%
We have more money than a year ago	46.7
We have about the same as a year ago	41.3
We have less money than a year ago	12.1
Total	100.00

Similar to the previous question, only 9.1% of children reported their families were spending less than they did a year ago for them. Almost a half of them 47.7% thought they were spending more.

Table 20: How much money do your parents spend on things for you (like pocket money, clothes, presents or treats) (12 year-old)?

	%
They spend more than they did a year ago	47.7
They spend about the same as they did a year ago	43.2
They spend less than they did a year ago	9.1
Total	100.0

Finally, 16.6% of them answered they heard adults talking more about money problems than they did a year ago. More than half of them (52%) answered that they heard less talk about money problems than they did a year ago.

Table 21: How often do you hear adults in your family talking about money problems (12 year-old)?

	%
This happens more than it did a year ago	16.6
This happens about the same as it did a year ago	31.5
This happens less than it did a year ago	52.0
Total	100.0

2.4 Your friends and other people

The first question on this topic was focused on children’s views about their friends (Figure 3). More than half of the children (52%) totally agreed that their friends were usually nice to them and 63% totally agreed that they had enough friends. Girls report slightly more than boys that friends are nice to them but slightly less than boys that they have enough friends. There are also significant variations in answers to the above questions by age group: with age the number of positive answers decreases.

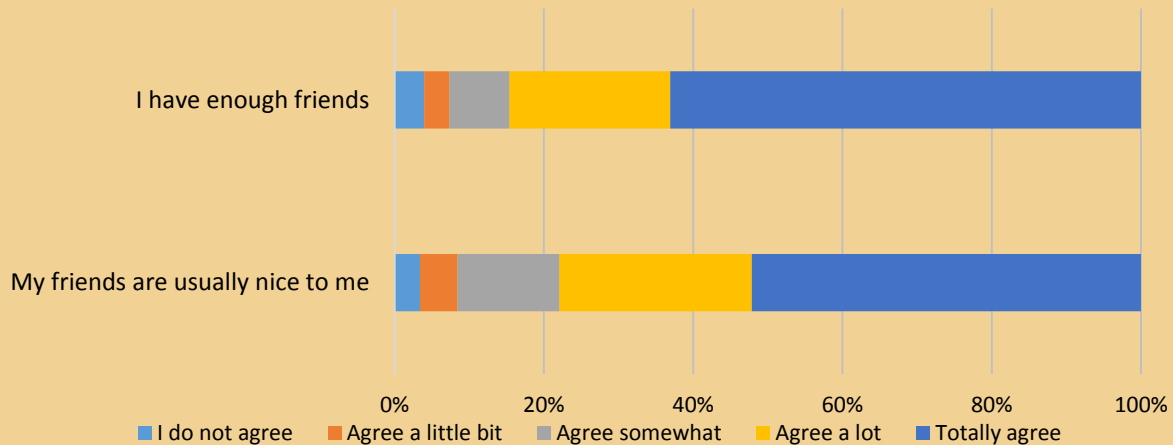


Figure 3: The children’s view about their friends (%)

More than half of children talk to one another every day (table 22). The frequency of having fun together with friends decreases with age. 57% of 8-year-old children had fun with friends every day. This percentage dropped to 42% in the case of 10-year-olds and to 39% for the 12-year-olds. Similarly, 23% of the 8-year-olds meet to study together with friends every day, while this percent drops to 15% for the 10-year-old and 12% for the 12-year-olds.

Table 22: Frequencies of children’s activities with friends in the last week, by age group.

		Not at all	Once or twice	Most days	Every day
Talk together	8 year-old	9.6%	12.3%	20.7%	57.4%
	10 year-old	8.8%	11.0%	27.2%	53.0%
	12 year-old	6.0%	10.8%	29.7%	53.6%
Have fun together	8 year-old	12.3%	11.1%	19.4%	57.2%
	10 year-old	12.8%	14.6%	30.1%	42.4%
	12 year-old	9.3%	16.1%	35.8%	38.8%
Meet to study together	8 year-old	54.5%	9.8%	12.7%	23.1%
	10 year-old	52.4%	17.1%	15.2%	15.2%
	12 year-old	52.1%	24.3%	11.8%	11.8%

In what concerns the satisfaction with their friends and other people, this is represented in table 23. Generally, children assess in a very positive manner their relationships.

Table 23: The children’s satisfaction with friends and other people.

	8 year-old (scale 0-4)	10 year-old (scale 0-10)	12 year-old (scale 0-10)
Your friends	3.5	9.0	8.9
The people who live in your area	3.4	8.7	8.6
Your contacts with people in general	3.5	9.1	9.2

There are no significant differences between satisfaction of children of different age groups with friends and relationships. Girls, however, are more satisfied with their relationships with people in general (see table 24).

Table 24: The children’s satisfaction with friends and other people

	8 year-old (0-4 scale)		10 & 12 year-old (0-10 scale)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Your friends	3.5	3.6	8.9	9.0
The people who live in your area	3.4	3.5	8.6	8.6
Your relationships with people in general	3.4	3.6	9.1	9.2

2.5 The area where you live

Regarding the area in which the children live, there are some contrasting findings (see figure 4). On the one hand, more than 70% of them agreed a lot or totally with the statement ‘I feel safe when I walk around the area I live in’. However, in the case of the question ‘In my area there are enough places to play or to have a good time’, this percent drops to 50%.

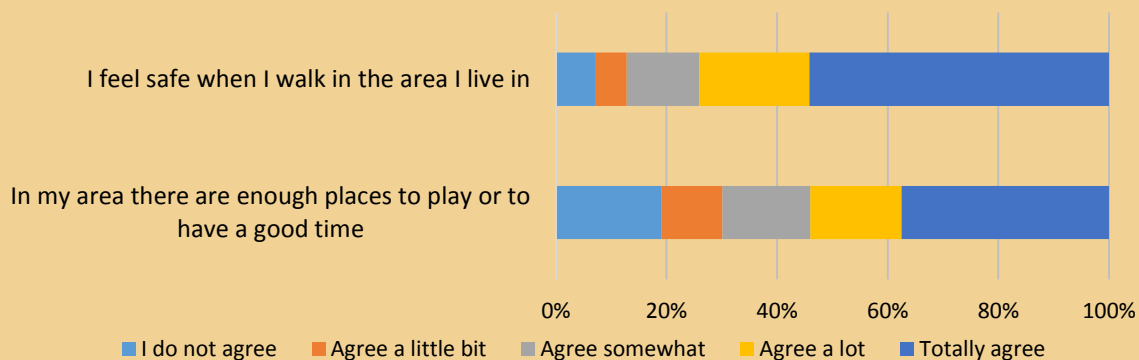


Figure 4: The Children’s evaluation of places to play and of the safety in the area they live in (%)

There is significant variation by the socio-demographic characteristics of children. Thus, boys evaluate slightly better the existence of places to play. Generally, the evaluation of children of their living areas declines with age. Strong and contrasting variations exist according to the type of locality. Children from rural areas report a deficit of places to play. Only 49% of them agreed a lot or totally that in their areas they have enough places to play or to have a good time, compared with those from the urban localities (59%). This is explainable giving the deficit of infrastructure in the Romanian urban areas. Concerning safety, the situation is opposite: while 80% of those in the rural localities agreed a lot or totally with the statement 'I feel safe when I walk around the area I live in', only 67% children from urban areas agreed with the question in a similar manner.

Table 25: Evaluation of the areas in which children's live (means on a scale from 0 to 4)

	Enough places to play or to have a good time	I feel safe when I walk in the area I live in
Gender		
Boy	2.5	3.1
Girl	2.3	3.1
Age group		
8 year-old	2.6	3.2
10 year-old	2.5	3.1
12 year-old	2.2	3.0
Type of locality in which the school is located		
Rural	2.2	3.2
Urban	2.7	2.9
Total	2.4	3.1

Children are generally very satisfied with the areas in which they live, and this seems not to decrease with age (Table 26). They are slightly less satisfied with the way they are dealt with at the doctors, and this seems to decrease with age. Children have significantly lower levels of satisfaction with the outdoor areas, and this also decreases with age.

Table 26: The children's satisfaction with the area in which they live

	8 year-old (scale 0-4)	10 year-old (scale 0-10)	12 year-old (scale 0-10)
How you are dealt with at the doctors	3.6	9.2	9.1
The outdoor areas children can use in your area	3.2	8.3	8.1
The area you live in general	3.7	9.3	9.3

There are no significant differences between the satisfaction of children of different gender and age groups with the area in which they live. Those who live in urban areas, however, are more satisfied with outdoor areas children can use (see table 27) than those in rural areas.

Table 27: The children's satisfaction with friends and other people

	8 year-old (0-4 scale)		10 & 12 year-old (0-10 scale)	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
How you are dealt with at the doctors	3.6	3.6	9.1	9.2
The outdoor areas children can use in your area	3.1	3.3	8.0	8.3
The area you live in general	3.7	3.7	9.3	9.2

2.6 School

Being bullied (hit and being left out by other children)

40% of children have been physically victimized at school and 44% have experienced relational victimisation (being left out by other children in the class).

Table 28: Being bullied in school in the last month (all age groups).

	Never	Once	Two or 3 times	More than three times
Hit by other children in your school	60.0%	16.1%	11.7%	12.2%
Left out by other children in your class	55.7%	11.0%	8.7%	24.6%

Socio-demographic characteristics have strong influences on levels of victimisation. Boys have been more victimised than girls. 8 year-old children have been in a much larger measure left out by other children in the class. Children from rural schools have experience victimisation slightly more frequently than those from urban schools.

Table 29: Being bullied in school by socio-demographic characteristic

		Never	Once	Two or 3 times	More than three times
Hit by other children in your school	Boy	53.9%	16.2%	13.6%	16.3%
	Girl	66.8%	15.7%	9.6%	7.9%
Left out by other children in your class	Boy	54.3%	10.7%	9.3%	25.7%
	Girl	57.2%	11.4%	7.9%	23.6%
Hit by other children in your school	8 year-old	59.5%	15.9%	11.0%	13.5%
	10 year-old	58.8%	17.1%	13.0%	11.1%
	12 year-old	61.4%	15.3%	11.1%	12.2%
Left out by other children in your class	8 year-old	40.5%	9.4%	12.3%	37.8%
	10 year-old	60.2%	12.6%	9.5%	17.7%
	12 year-old	63.8%	11.0%	4.9%	20.3%
Hit by other children in your school	rural	58.8%	16.9%	12.8%	11.4%
	urban	61.0%	15.4%	10.6%	13.0%
Left out by other children in your class	rural	54.1%	10.6%	9.6%	25.7%
	urban	57.1%	11.4%	7.8%	23.6%
Hit by other children in your school	Mother and father	60.7%	16.5%	12.4%	10.5%
	Parent and stepparent	53.2%	15.8%	9.2%	21.7%
	Lone parent	61.0%	13.0%	10.3%	15.7%
	Other	59.2%	16.0%	11.0%	13.8%
Left out by other children in your class	Mother and father	61.7%	12.0%	7.2%	19.1%
	Parent and stepparent	56.8%	17.8%	8.2%	17.1%
	Lone parent	67.4%	8.7%	5.2%	18.7%
	Other	42.8%	9.2%	11.9%	36.1%

Moreover, children who live with both biological parents have the lowest levels of victimisation, while those living with parents and step-parents and from other types of families have experienced the highest levels of physical victimisation. Children from other types of families have by far the highest levels of relational victimisation.

Attitudes toward school

Children were asked a series of questions concerning their evaluation and satisfaction with different aspects at the school. Contrary to the rather high levels of victimisation in schools, most children like to go to school (with the exception of 9% who dislike it or like it only a little bit). Most of children agreed a lot or totally agreed with all the rest of questions. The lowest levels of agreement are with the statement: ‘My teachers listen to me and take what I say into account’ (12% do not agreed or agreed a little bit). The highest levels of agreement were with the statement: ‘My teachers treat me fairly’ (only 6% do not agreed or agreed a little bit).

Table 30: Evaluation of different aspects of the school (All age groups).

	I do not agree	Agree a little bit	Agree somewhat	Agree a lot	Totally agree
My teachers listen to me and take what I say into account	6.2%	5.4%	15.6%	21.7%	51.2%
I like going to school	4.8%	4.3%	9.6%	21.1%	60.2%
My teachers treat me fairly	2.8%	3.5%	9.3%	19.9%	64.4%
I feel safe at school	4.5%	3.8%	9.3%	17.6%	64.8%

When examining the differences in the answers by socio-demographic characteristics, we find that girls are more positive about school than boys. Also, children from rural schools like to go to school and feel listened and understood in a slightly larger measure than children from urban schools. Positive views about school decrease, however, with age.

Table 31: Variations in views about school by gender and age group (All age groups) (Means on a 0-4 scale)

	My teachers listen to me and take what I say into account	I like going to school	My teachers treat me fairly	I feel safe at school
Gender				
Boy	3.0	3.2	3.3	3.3
Girl	3.1	3.4	3.5	3.4
Age group				
8 year-old	3.3	3.6	3.6	3.6
10 year-old	3.1	3.4	3.5	3.4
12 year-old	2.8	2.9	3.1	3.1
Type of locality				
rural	3.1	3.4	3.4	3.3
urban	3.0	3.2	3.4	3.3
Total	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.3

Similarly, children are generally satisfied with different aspects of school, but their satisfaction decreases with age (Table 32). The highest levels of satisfaction are with their life as a student, and with things they have learned (these questions were posed only for 10- and 12-years-old children). The next highest levels of satisfaction are for relationships with teachers and school experience. Children have the lowest levels of satisfaction with other children in their class and school marks.

Table 32: The children's satisfaction with the aspects in school (means)

	8 year-old (scale 0-4)	10 year-old (scale 0-10)	12 year-old (scale 0-10)
Other children in your class	3.5	8.7	8.5
Your school marks	3.6	9.0	8.4
Your school experience	3.6	9.3	8.9
Things you have learned	-	9.4	9.2
Your life as a student	-	9.6	9.4
Your relationship with teachers	3.6	9.3	9.0

Girls are more satisfied with all the aspects of school, with the exception of other children in the class. Children from rural and urban schools are rather equally satisfied with school, with the exception of school marks (those from urban schools being more satisfied and relationships with the teachers – reported to be slightly better in rural schools) (see table 33). For 8-year-old children we find a perfect match concerning these differences with the rest of age groups.

Table 33: The children’s satisfaction with the aspects in school (10 years & 12 years-old, scale 0-10)

	Boy	Girl	Rural school	Urban school
Other children in your class	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6
Your school marks	8.5	8.9	8.6	8.8
Your school experience	8.9	9.2	9.1	9.1
Things you have learned	9.2	9.4	9.3	9.3
Your life as a student	9.3	9.6	9.5	9.5
Your relationship with teachers	9.0	9.3	9.2	9.1

2.7 Time use

For Romanian children, the most common activity is doing homework (89% of them do this every day or almost), followed by watching TV (78%), and helping with housework (66%), playing sports or doing exercise (60%), using a computer (49%), reading for fun (48%). About 46% of the children take classes at least once a week. An extra item was added in Romania concerning children working, giving the policy preoccupation in this field¹². We found that 12.4% of the children in the sample work every day or almost.

¹² Studies based on National Institute Survey estimate that a total of 7% of Romanian children are involved in work. For certain age groups the percent is much higher. See Ghinăru, G. (2004). *Munca copiilor în România [Children's work in Romania]*: UNICEF.

Table 34: Time use (all age groups)

	Rarely or never	Less than once a week	Once or twice a week	Every day or almost
Taking classes outside school time	46.1%	7.9%	25.3%	20.8%
Reading for fun	15.0%	10.8%	25.8%	48.3%
Helping with housework	6.0%	6.7%	20.8%	66.5%
Doing homework	2.2%	2.6%	6.5%	88.7%
Watching TV	3.6%	4.0%	14.8%	77.7%
Playing sports or doing exercise	9.6%	7.3%	23.5%	59.6%
Using a computer	17.6%	9.4%	24.2%	48.8%
Working alone or with other members of the family	73.6%	6.5%	7.4%	12.4%

Girls read for fun, help with housework and do homework in a higher proportion. Boys use more computers, play sports and work. Reading for fun decreases with age, while watching TV and using computers increase. Children in rural schools take extra classes much less than those in the urban schools. They also use the computer less. Instead, they help more with housework and also work outside household more than those who learn in the urban schools.

Table 35: Time use: Activities the children do at least once a week (All age groups).

	Taking classes outside school time	Reading for fun	Helping with housework	Doing homework	Watching TV	Playing sports or doing exercise	Using a computer	Working
Gender								
Boy	46.1%	70.3%	84.0%	94.0%	92.8%	85.6%	78.0%	24.4%
Girl	46.2%	78.4%	90.7%	96.7%	92.0%	80.6%	67.9%	14.9%
Age group								
8 year-old	50.2%	79.7%	86.6%	95.6%	91.8%	84.1%	71.1%	n.a.
10 year-old	43.0%	77.7%	89.7%	94.7%	91.1%	81.7%	70.0%	21.6%
12 year-old	45.6%	66.4%	85.5%	95.3%	94.1%	83.6%	77.3%	18.3%
Type of locality								
Rural	36.4%	74.5%	90.0%	94.5%	91.5%	82.5%	69.4%	24.7%
Urban	55.1%	73.8%	84.6%	95.8%	93.2%	83.8%	76.4%	15.0%
Family type								
Mother and father	45.2%	73.7%	87.8%	95.2%	93.0%	83.7%	75.4%	20.2%
Parent and stepparent	39.3%	65.7%	90.8%	94.0%	94.5%	79.1%	66.5%	15.7%
Lone parent	41.0%	66.7%	85.9%	97.2%	92.0%	80.0%	71.2%	19.2%
Other	49.2%	77.1%	86.2%	94.9%	91.3%	83.2%	70.0%	19.5%
Total	46.1%	74.1%	87.2%	95.2%	92.4%	83.1%	73.0%	19.9%

There were also questions concerning satisfaction with the use of time and with free time activities, included in the questionnaire for 10- & 12-year-olds (table 36). Children are very satisfied with their time use and leisure activities. However their satisfaction decreases with age. There are no significant variations by gender or type of locality.

Table 36: The children’s satisfaction of use of time and free time activities (10 & 12 years-old) (averages on a 0-10 scale)

	Boy	Girl	10 year-old	12 year-old	Rural	Urban	TOTAL
How you use your time	9.2	9.1	9.3	9.1	9.2	9.2	9.2
What you do in your free time	9.3	9.2	9.3	9.2	9.3	9.2	9.2

When we look at the averages of these variables by type of family, we see that children in other types of families are by far the least satisfied (table 37).

Table 37: The children’s satisfaction of use of time and free time activities, by family type (10 & 12 years-old)

	Mother and father	Parent and stepparent	Lone parent	Other	TOTAL
How you use your time	9.2	9.0	9.3	8.7	9.2
What you do in your free time	9.3	9.2	9.3	8.3	9.2

2.8 Your life and your future

Satisfaction with domains of personal life

Children of all ages were asked to answer to six satisfaction questions about different domains of their lives (10- & 12-year-olds answered to eleven questions). As can be seen in Table 38 overall, they reported very high levels of satisfaction (over 9 out of 10 or 3.6 on a scale from 0 to 4). Children report the highest levels of satisfaction with health, safety and things they are good at. For the last two domains, the level of satisfaction slightly decreases with age (from 9.6 to 9.4). The lowest satisfaction is with ‘What may happen to you later in your life’ (around 9.0).

There are no significant differences between boys and girls and between children who learn in rural schools and those in urban schools concerning satisfaction with domains (Table 39).

Table 38: The children's satisfaction with different domains of their lives.

	8 year-old (scale 0-4)	10 year-old (scale 0-10)	12 year-old (scale 0-10)
The freedom you have	3.7	9.3	9.2
Your health	3.8	9.6	9.6
The way that you look	3.7	9.3	9.4
Your own body	3.8	9.4	9.3
How you are listened to by adults in general	3.6	9.2	9.1
Your self-confidence	3.8	9.4	9.4
How safe you feel	-	9.6	9.4
The things you want to be good at	-	9.6	9.4
Doing things away from your home	-	9.3	9.3
What may happen to you later in your life	-	8.9	9.0
Your preparation for the future	-	9.2	9.1

Table 39: Satisfaction with different domains of their lives, by gender and type of locality (10 & 12 years-old).

	Boy	Girl	rural	urban
The freedom you have	9.3	9.2	9.3	9.2
Your health	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6
The way that you look	9.4	9.3	9.3	9.3
Your own body	9.3	9.3	9.4	9.3
How you are listened to by adults in general	9.2	9.1	9.1	9.1
Your self-confidence	9.4	9.4	9.5	9.3
How safe you feel	9.4	9.5	9.5	9.4
The things you want to be good at	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5
Doing things away from your home	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3
What may happen to you later in your life	8.9	9.0	8.9	9.0
Your preparation for the future	9.2	9.1	9.1	9.1

There are, however, strong differences between children living in different family types. The highest levels of satisfaction have those who live only with their biological parents (even if with a lone parent). Children who live with a parent and a step-parent have lower levels of satisfaction with personal

appearance and body, how they are listened to by adults in general, personal safety, and preparation for the future. However, children who live in other types of families are by far the least satisfied with almost all the listed domains.

Table 40: Satisfaction with different domains of their lives, by family type (10 & 12 years-old).

	Mother and father	Parent and stepparent	Lone parent	Other
The freedom you have	9.3	9.2	9.3	8.3
Your health	9.6	9.5	9.7	9.0
The way that you look	9.4	9.1	9.4	8.8
Your own body	9.4	8.9	9.4	9.0
How you are listened to by adults in general	9.2	8.6	9.1	8.6
Your self-confidence	9.4	9.3	9.4	9.0
How safe you feel	9.5	9.1	9.4	9.1
The things you want to be good at	9.5	9.3	9.5	9.3
Doing things away from your home	9.3	9.4	9.3	9.1
What may happen to you later in your life	9.0	9.0	9.0	8.5
Your preparation for the future	9.2	8.9	9.1	8.8

Changes in children's lives

We also asked children in the 10- and 12-years-old surveys five questions about changes that occurred in the past year. As shown in figure 5, only 10% of children had moved house in the last year, 7.6% had changed their local area and 8% changed their school. 8.7% had lived abroad for more than a month in the last year, and 6.6% did not live with the same parents or carers that they lived with a year ago.

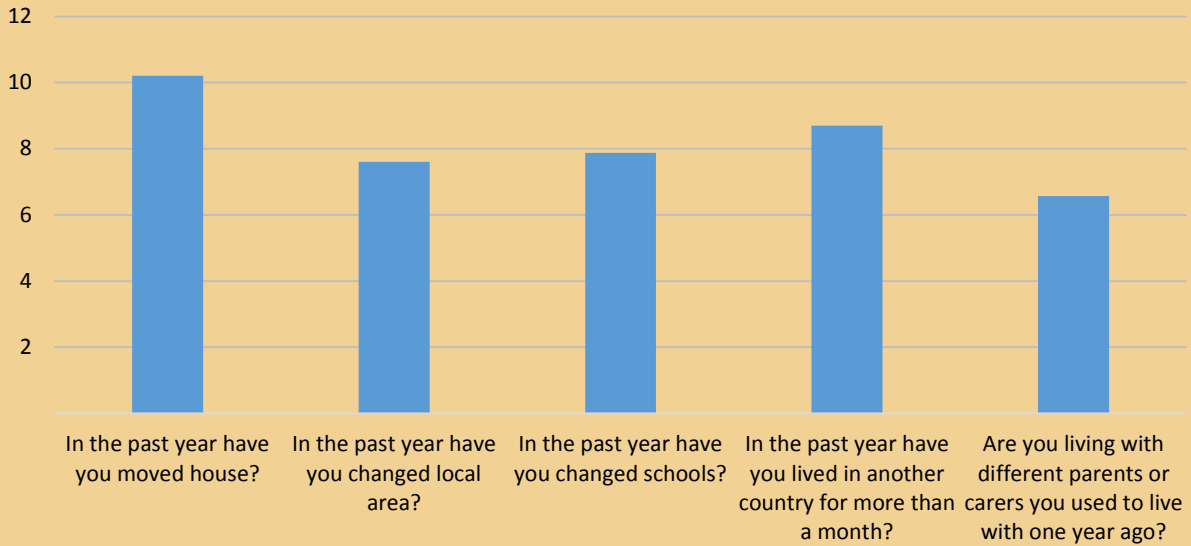


Figure 5: Changes in children’s lives (10 and 12 years-old) (%)

Boys tend to experience changes slightly more than girls, although with the exception of living in another country from a month or more the differences are not statistically significant. The age category of children was not associated with any changes. Differences in recent experiences of change by type of locality are interesting. Children who learn in rural schools were less likely to experience changes of house, area or school, but more likely to live with other parents than twelve months ago. As expected, we have found strong differences in changes according to family type. Children from original families experienced the lowest levels of changes. Children who live with a parent and stepparent are more likely to move house, change local area, change schools and live with a different parent. Children who live with a lone parent or in other arrangements are also subject to many changes.

Table 41: Changes in children's lives in the last 12 months – percent of answers of yes (10 and 12 years-old)

	Boy	Girl	10 year-old	12 year-old	rural	urban	Mother and father	Parent and stepparent	Lone parent	Other
In the past year have you moved house?	11.0	9.4	10.4	10.1	7.9	12.5	8.1	27.0	18.1	14.4
In the past year have you changed local area?	8.4	6.8	7.3	7.9	6.1	9.1	6.0	20.6	12.9	12.6
In the past year have you changed schools?	8.8	6.9	7.5	8.2	6.9	8.8	6.2	15.3	14.1	16.2
In the past year have you lived in another country for more than a month?	9.7	7.6	8.2	9.1	7.8	9.5	7.7	8.8	15.2	12.7
Are you living with different parents or carers you used to live with one year ago?	5.8	7.5	6.9	6.3	8.2	5.0	5.4	12.1	11.7	11.9

Knowledge and respect of children's rights

Analysing the three questions concerning children's knowledge and attitudes about their rights, we find that only 11% of children answer 'No' to the question 'I know what rights children have', while 29% were unsure. 28% said that they do not know about the children's rights convention (25% being unsure). Finally, 14% of children said that they think in Romania adults in general respect children's rights (32% being unsure). There was no variation in responses to these questions by gender. Older children were more likely to say that they knew about the convention and what rights children have. Older children were less likely to think that adults respected children. There was significant variation by family type in knowing what rights children have and about the convention but no variation in relation to whether adults respected children's rights.

Table 42: Children's rights (All age groups) (%)

	No	Not sure	Yes
I know what rights children have	11.2%	28.8%	60.0%
I know about the children's rights convention	28.0%	24.9%	47.1%
I think in my country adults in general respect children's rights	14.1%	31.9%	54.0%

As we expected, children’s knowledge on their rights and on UN convention generally increases with age. On the other hand, older children are less likely to think the adults respect children’s rights.

Lack of knowledge on children’s rights is associated with increased confidence that the adults respect these rights. We found similar relationships for rural children (compared to urban children), as well as for boys (compared with girls).

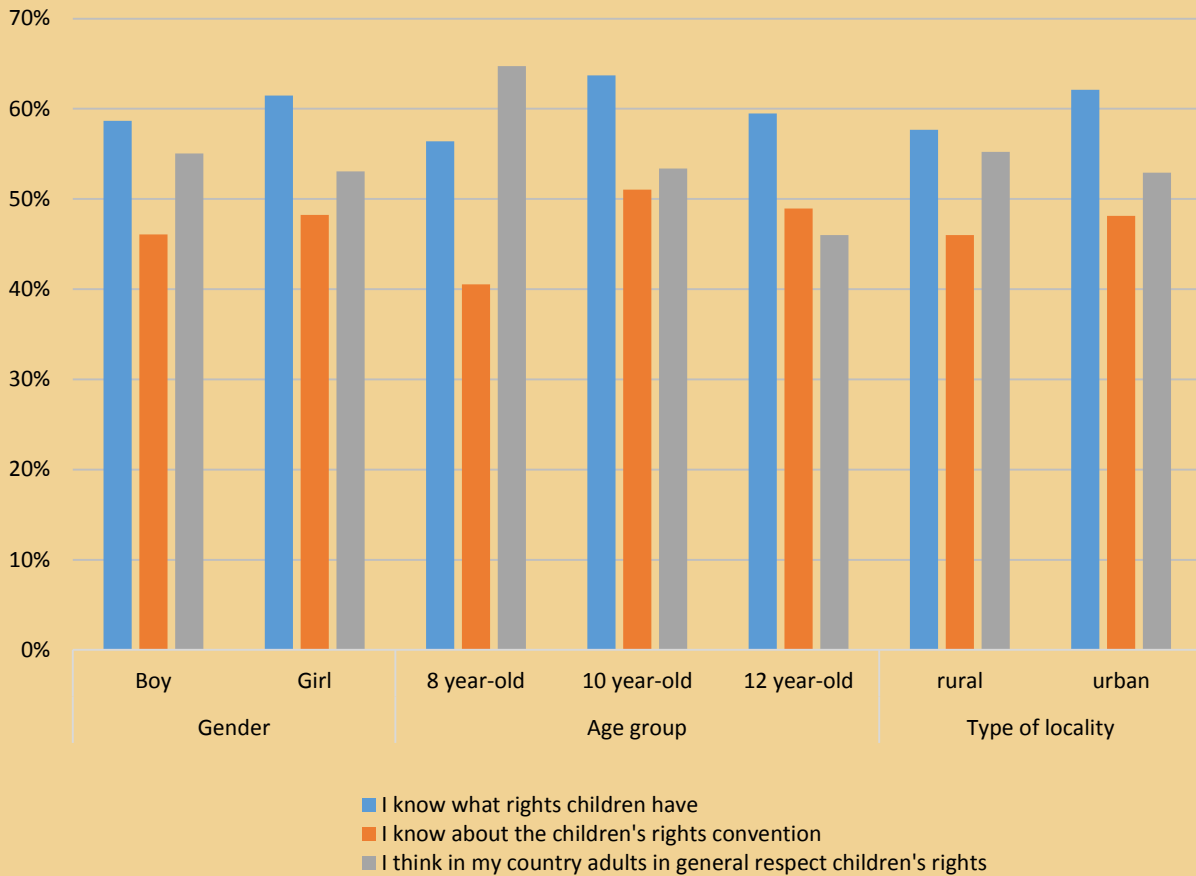


Figure 6: Answers of yes at the questions concerning children’s rights, by gender, age group and type of locality (%)

2.9 Subjective well-being

Several measures of children subjective well-being were included in the survey, such as overall life satisfaction, The Student’s Life Satisfaction Scale, Brief Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale, Personal Well-being Index – School Children (PWI-SC), and Positive Affect. For more detailed information about these scales see the Methods section in the General Introduction on page 2

Overall life satisfaction (OLS)

This is a single-item measure on a scale from 0 to 10. Overall, more than 81% of the 10 year-olds and 74% of the 12-year-olds are totally satisfied with their lives (scoring 10 on a scale from 0 to 10). Among the 8 year-olds, 84% score the happiest face (4 on a scale from 0 to 4).

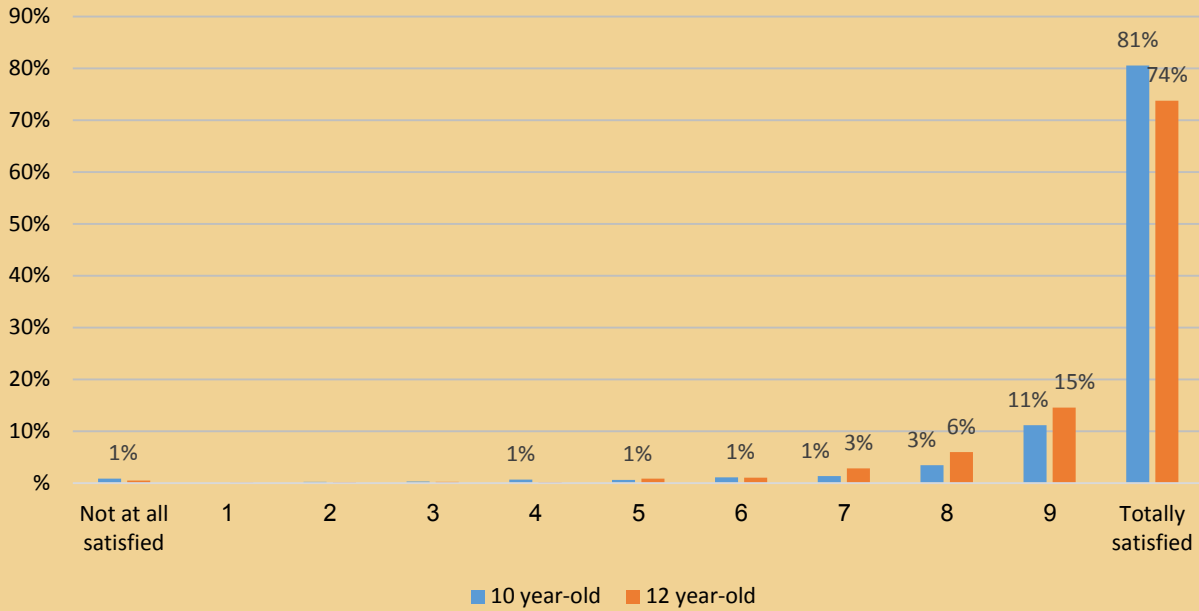


Figure 7: Overall life satisfaction 10 and 12 years-old

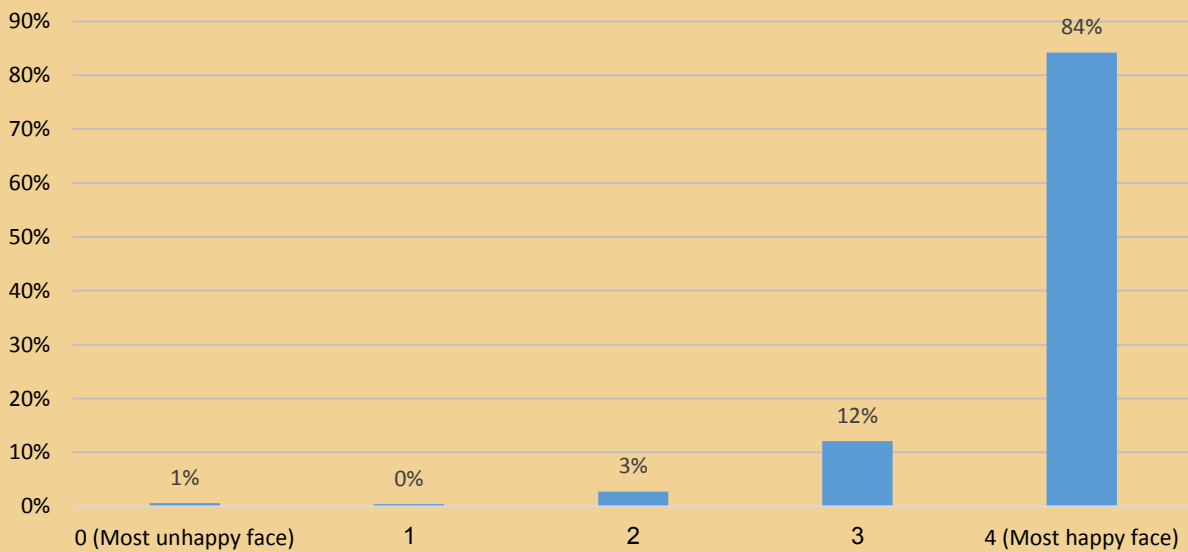


Figure 8: Overall life satisfaction (8 year-old)

The Student's Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS)

The scale used in Children's Worlds survey is a reduced version of Huebner's Student's Life Satisfaction Scale. It is composed of 5 items. The children in the 8-year-old age group answered the items on a five-point agreement scale from 'I do not agree' to 'Totally agree'. The responses were very positively distributed.

Table 43: SLSS items (8 year-old)

	I do not agree	Agree a little bit	Agree somewhat	Agree a lot	Totally agree
My life is going well	.9%	.9%	3.8%	16.2%	78.3%
My life is just right	1.2%	1.5%	4.4%	19.4%	73.5%
I have a good life	1.0%	1.4%	3.3%	16.1%	78.2%
I have what I want in life	2.9%	3.0%	6.3%	18.6%	69.2%
The things in my life are excellent	1.7%	2.0%	5.7%	18.9%	71.6%

The children in 10 and 12 years-old age groups were asked the same questions but on a 0-10 scale.

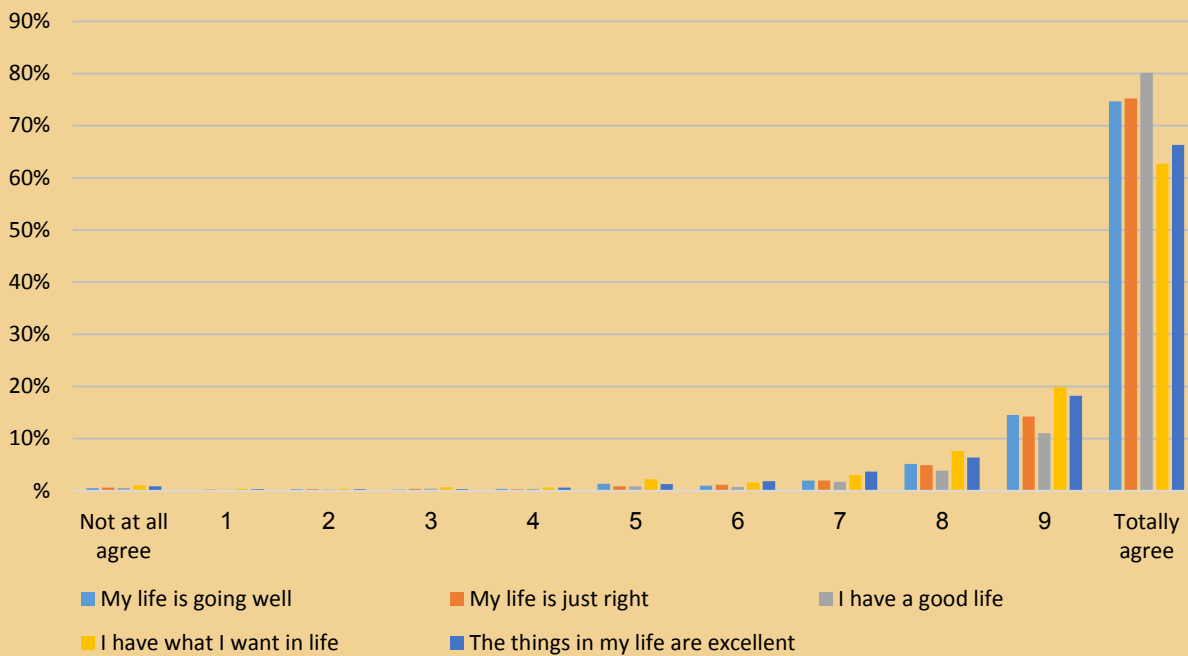


Figure 9: SLSS items (10 and 12 years-old) (%)

For all age groups, exploratory factor analysis issued a single-dimension solution, with a single factor explaining over 70% of the overall variation. The scale composed by summing the five items and transforming it onto a scale from 0 to 100 has very good reliability (with Cronbach alpha over 0.8). The distribution of values of these scale by the three age groups is shown in Figure 9. We can see that the percentages of children who report values from 90 to 100 decreases with age. This is however compensated by the percentages of children with scores from 80 to 90, percentages that increase with age.



Figure 10: Distribution of SLSS values for all age groups (%)

Brief Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale

The Brief Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale is an adaptation of the measure proposed by Huebner, summing five domains (satisfaction with family, friends, school experience, local area and body). The five variables load onto a single factor. Scales only shows moderate reliability (Cronbach alphas between 0.55 and 0.6). The scale is a sum of these five scores transformed so that it is from zero to 100. The distribution of scores is shown in Figure 11.

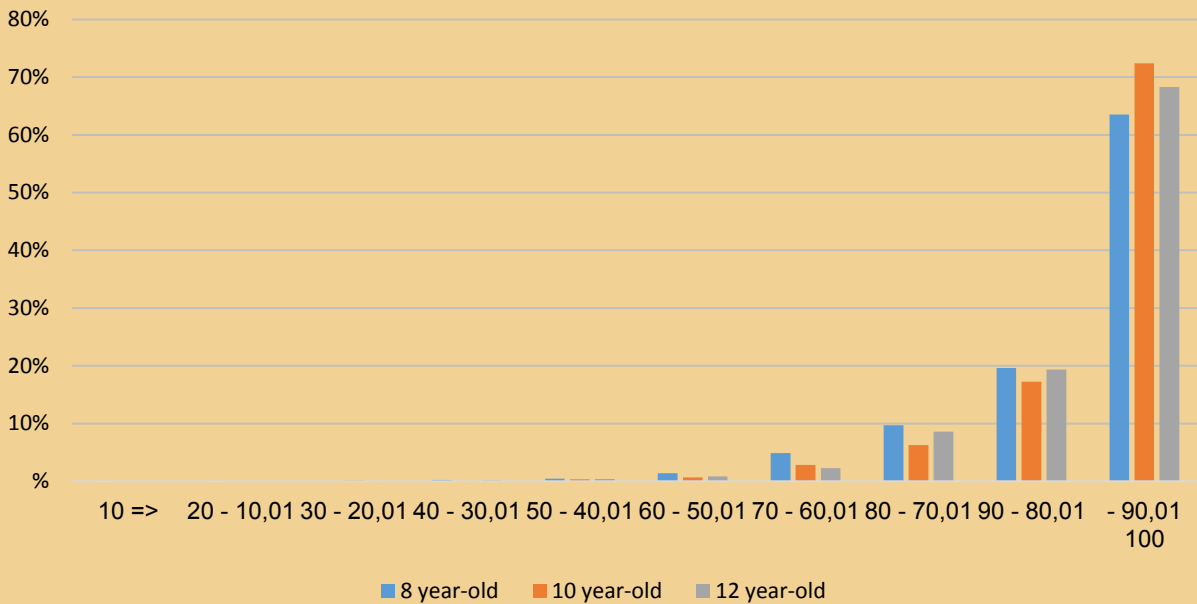


Figure 11: Distribution of scores on the BMSLSS (all age groups) (%)

Personal Well-being Index – School Children (PWI-SC)

For the 10-year-old and 12-year-old age groups, we computed the Personal Well-being Index – School Children (Cummins & Lau), by computing the sum of the following of satisfaction: ‘All the things you have’, ‘Health’, ‘The things you want to be good at’, ‘Your relationships with people in general’, ‘How safe you feel’, ‘Doing things away from your home, and ‘What may happen to you later in your life’. The seven variables load in a single factor and the scale obtained by summing these variables has good reliability (Cronbach alpha = 0.694). In figure 12 we included the variations of the levels of this variable for the age groups.

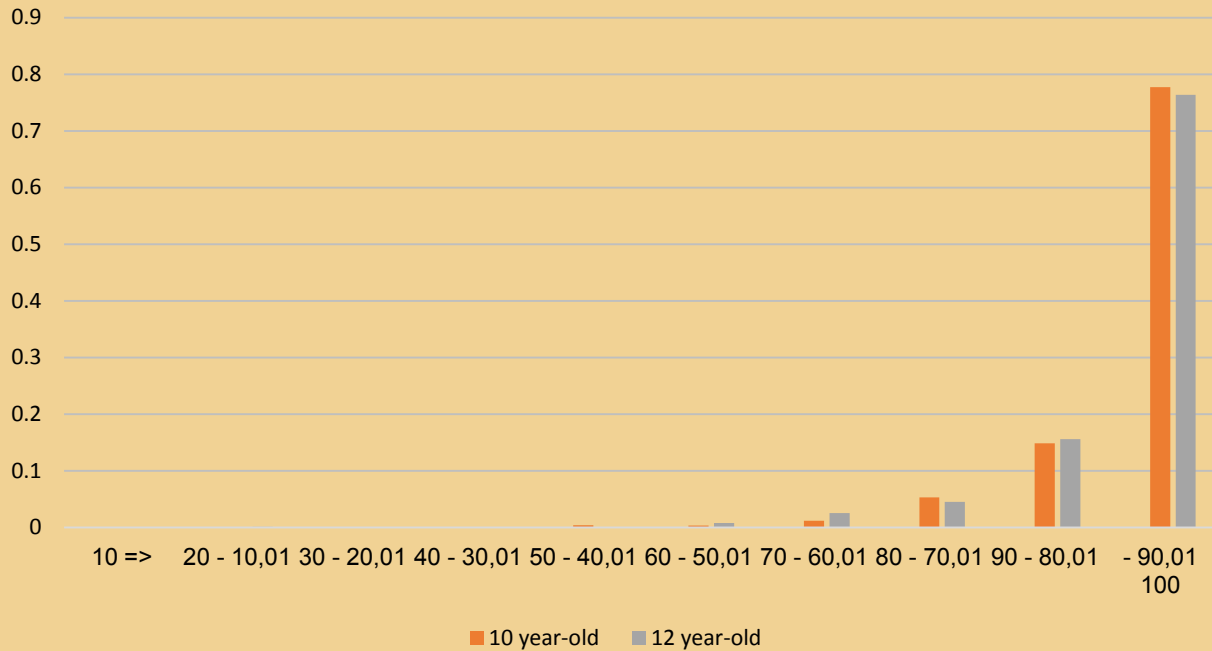


Figure 12: Distribution of scores on the PWI-SC (10 and 12 years-old) (%)

PWI-SC9

Following Casas et al¹³ we computed an adapted version of the PWI-SC which includes two additional items which refers to satisfaction to: ‘How you use your time’ and ‘Your school experience’. The distribution for this nine-item scale for the two age groups is shown in Figure 13. These nine variables load onto a single factor and the summative scale has good reliability (Cronbach alpha = 0.76).

¹³ Casas, F., Sarriera, J., Alfaro, J., González, M., Malo, S., Bertran, I., Figuer, C. Abs, D., Bedin, L., Paradiso, A., Weinreich, K., Valdenegro, B. (2012). Testing the Personal Wellbeing Index on 12-16 year old adolescents in 3 different countries with 2 new items. *Social Indicators Research*, 105, 461–482.

Casas, F., Baltatescu, S., Bertran, I., Gonzalez, M., & Hatos, A. (2013) School satisfaction among adolescents: Testing different indicators for its measurement and its relationship with overall life satisfaction and subjective well-being in Romania and Spain. *Social Indicators Research*, 111, 665–682.



Figure 13: Distribution of scores on the adapted PWI-SC9 (10 and 12 years-old) (%)

Positive Affect

Children in the 10-year-old and 12-year-old age groups were asked six questions on positive affect. Children were asked how often in the last two weeks they had felt: ‘Satisfied’, ‘Happy’, ‘Relaxed’, ‘Active’, ‘Calm’, and ‘Full of energy’. The six variables load onto a single factor and the scale obtained by summing these variables has very good reliability (Cronbach alpha = 0.828). In figure 14 we included the variations of the levels of this scale for the two age groups.



Figure 14: Distribution of scores on the Russell's Core Affect (10 and 12 years old) (%)

Variations in overall subjective well-being

The purpose of this section is to compare the behaviour of the six measures of subjective well-being for children with different socio-demographic characteristics (Table 44).

There were no significant gender differences in subjective well-being. For age there is a consistent trend that shows 10-year-old children having higher levels of subjective well-being than 12-year-old children. BMSLSS and PWI9 show the highest difference between these age groups, most probably because of the use of the item referring to satisfaction with school experience.

As expected, children living with both parents had the highest levels of subjective well-being. The strongest differences are for BMSLSS and SLSS. Somewhat paradoxically however, children with lone parents have (by most measures) higher subjective well-being than those living with a stepfather or stepmother. There is no clear trend in differences between urban and rural children: all are below the significance levels.

Table 44: Variations in different measures of subjective well-being (10 and 12 years-old) (Means)

	OLS	SLSS	BMSLSS	PWI7	PWI9	Positive affect
Gender						
Boy	95.2	93.7	92.0	93.3	92.7	92.5
Girl	95.1	93.8	93.0	93.9	93.5	91.9
Age group						
10 year-old	95.5	94.2	93.1	93.8	93.6	92.4
12 year-old	94.7	93.3	92.0	93.3	92.6	91.9
Family structure						
Mother and father	95.7	94.5	92.9	93.8	93.3	92.7
Parent and stepparent	92.3	92.2	90.7	92.5	91.6	91.0
Lone parent	95.3	92.1	92.4	93.5	93.0	90.6
Other	87.5	86.1	88.1	90.6	89.9	86.5
Type of locality						
rural	95.4	93.5	92.5	93.3	92.8	92.4
urban	94.8	94.0	92.5	93.8	93.3	91.9
Total	95.1	93.7	92.5	93.6	93.1	92.2

2.10 Romanian's children's worlds

When we compare the children's satisfaction with different aspects of their lives, we find some important variations, which are not immediately obvious when discussing separately each aspects of life separately. These differences are proof of the value of asking children about different aspects of their lives. Table 45 below shows mean life satisfactions scores, standard deviations, and percentages below the mid-point for all questions asked about satisfaction with different aspects of life in the 8-year-old children.

Table 45: Satisfaction with different aspects of life (8 years-old) (Mean, SD, % max and % below mid-point)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	% max	% below mid-point
All the things you have	3.8	.6	85.0%	1.2%
Your life as a whole	3.8	.6	84.2%	1.0%
Your self-confidence	3.8	.6	83.5%	1.4%
The house or flat where you live	3.8	.6	82.5%	1.7%
Your health	3.8	.6	82.2%	1.5%
Your own body	3.8	.6	81.9%	1.5%
Your family life	3.8	.7	84.3%	2.8%
What you do in your free time	3.7	.6	81.1%	1.5%
The way that you look	3.7	.6	81.6%	1.7%
All the other people in your family	3.7	.6	81.4%	1.6%
The people you live with	3.7	.6	81.0%	1.6%
The area you live in general	3.7	.8	78.8%	3.4%
The freedom you have	3.7	.7	75.0%	1.9%
Your relationship with teachers	3.6	.8	76.8%	3.0%
Your school experience	3.6	.8	74.2%	2.9%
How you are dealt with at the doctors	3.6	.8	72.1%	3.1%
Your school marks	3.6	.8	72.5%	3.4%
How you are listened to by adults in general	3.6	.8	72.0%	3.1%
Your friends	3.5	.8	67.0%	3.2%
Your relationships with people in general	3.5	.8	65.4%	3.4%
Other children in your class	3.5	.9	63.7%	3.8%
The people in your area	3.4	.9	61.6%	5.0%
The outdoor areas children can use in your area	3.2	1.2	58.1%	11.8%

We can be seen children in this age group are strongly positive about all aspects of their life. The highest satisfaction is for most of the aspects related to the self (things you have, life as a whole, self-confidence, health, body, free time, the way you look etc.). Second come the family aspects (house, other people in the family, people you live with). Then come the school aspects (relationships with teachers, school marks etc.), and friends and schoolmates, and other people. Finally the lowest satisfactions are for people in the local area and the outdoor areas.

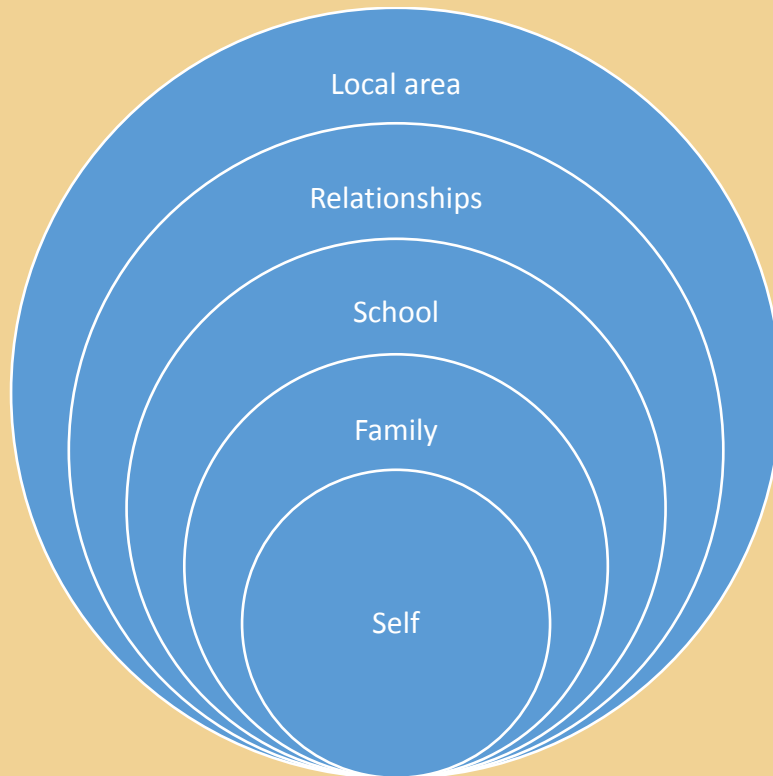


Figure 15: 8-year old children's satisfaction worlds

For the 10- and 12-year-old children, a larger set of questions was used, on a scale from 0 to 10. However we can identify a similar hierarchy of children's worlds. The most notable difference is that the self and family domains are much more intertwined.

Table 46: Satisfaction with different aspects of life (10 and 12 years-old) (Mean, SD, % max and % below mid-point)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	% max	% below mid-point
Your family life	9.6	1.2	82.8	1.6
Your health	9.6	1.2	80.1	1.2
All the things you have	9.6	1.1	78.2	1.0
The people you live with	9.5	1.5	82.8	2.6
Your life as a whole	9.5	1.3	76.9	1.5
The things you want to be good at	9.5	1.1	68.2	0.8
All the other people in your family	9.5	1.4	76.6	1.8
Things you have learned	9.5	1.3	74.2	1.2
What you do in your free time	9.5	1.2	72.1	1.1
Satisfied with: How safe you feel	9.5	1.4	75.1	1.5
Your self-confidence	9.4	1.4	72.0	1.9
The house or flat where you live	9.4	1.6	76.3	2.4
Your own body	9.3	1.5	70.4	1.9
The way that you look	9.3	1.5	69.4	1.9
Doing things away from your home	9.3	1.5	67.0	2.3
Your life as a student	9.3	1.6	68.7	2.5
The area you live in general	9.3	1.7	70.8	2.8
The freedom you have	9.2	1.7	68.4	3.1
How you use your time	9.2	1.6	63.8	2.5
How you are dealt with at the doctors	9.2	1.8	68.2	3.5
Your relationship with teachers	9.1	1.8	65.3	3.3
Your relationships with people in general	9.1	1.7	62.3	3.0
How you are listened to by adults in general	9.1	1.7	61.8	3.2
Your preparation for the future	9.1	1.6	58.5	2.4
Your school experience	9.1	1.6	58.8	2.3
What may happen to you later in your life	9.0	1.9	55.3	3.8
Your friends	9.0	1.8	58.2	3.5
Your school marks	8.7	2.0	48.6	4.5
The people in your area	8.6	2.0	47.6	5.0
Other children in your class	8.6	2.0	45.2	4.2
The outdoor areas children can use in your area	8.2	2.8	48.7	11.3

2.11 National questions

It was estimated that almost 2 million Romanians work abroad. Most migrant parents are forced not to take their children with them, giving the precariousness of their economic and work situation, and the need for stability in children's lives. Thus, children remain in care of surrogate parents (relatives or friends). In the last few years, the situation of 'children left home' has emerged as a social problem in Romania. While there are positive outcomes such as increased financial possibilities and social capital of the families, most of effects on children are negative. The literature concludes that children left at home experience negative psychological conditions, such as loneliness, anxiety, trauma, and loss of trust in adults. There are integration problems following such as violence and aggressive behaviours. Some positive effects were also cited in the literature, generated by the increase in material well-being of children through remittances.

We asked 10- and 12-year-old children if, in the last year, any of their parents lived or worked in other country more than a month. Results show that 16.2% of the children had their mother working abroad while 23.6% had their father in the same situation. Moreover, 8.7% of the children indicated that both their parents had worked abroad at least a month in the last year.

Overall, children whose parents had not spent time abroad have higher satisfaction with life, which is in line with the discovery that the lack of life events keep children happy¹⁴. The unhappiest are those for whom both parents went abroad.

As the result of gender roles in Romanian families, the fact that mother went abroad has almost as strong a negative effect on children's subjective well-being as is the case when both parents worked abroad.

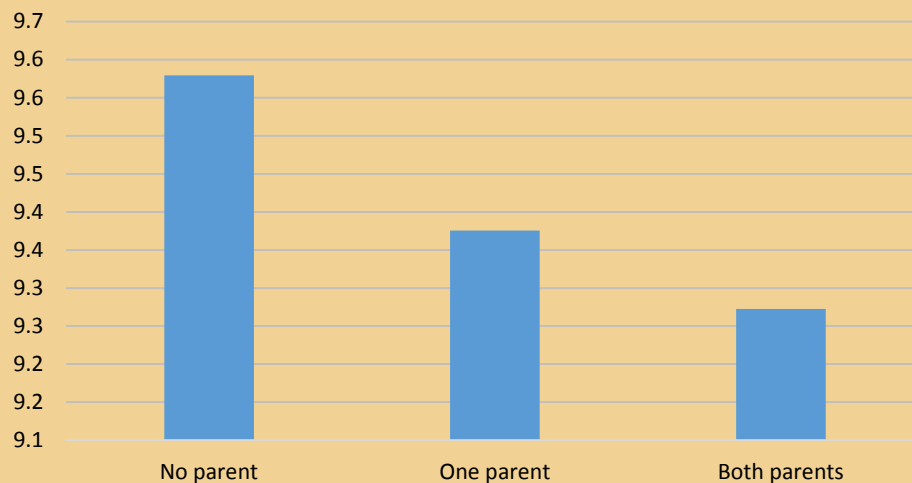


Figure 16: Life as a whole of the 10 and 12 years old children, by number of parents who went at least a month abroad to work.

¹⁴ Montserrat, Dinisman, Bălțătescu, Grigoraș, & Casas. (2014). The Effect of Critical Changes and Gender on Adolescents' Subjective Well-Being: Comparisons Across 8 Countries. *Child Indicators Research*, 1-21. doi: 10.1007/s12187-014-9288-9

One of the most important Roma populations in the whole of Europe lives in Romania. Much research and policy debate has been dedicated to alleviating their problems generated by lack of education, poverty and social exclusion. Roma children also suffer strong social exclusion problems. A proxy measure for ethnicity by asking 'what language is mostly spoken at home?' was used and the results are shown in Table 5.

The problems of Roma are reflected in most of the answers to the questions of the survey. It is also shown in the overall measures of well-being. Children who speak Romani at home have the lowest mean scores among all the language groups.

Table 47: Averages on OLS and SLSS, by age and language spoken at home.

		Romanian	Hungarian	Romani
Satisfaction with life as a whole	8 years old	3.8	3.7	3.6
	10 & 12 years old	9.5	9.3	9.1
SLSS	8 years old	90.6	89.2	87.8
	10 & 12 years old	94.0	90.8	89.3

3. Conclusions

Key points

Children's worlds are situated on a continuum of satisfaction starting with self and family as the most satisfactory and having, on the other end, relationships and local area as the least satisfactory. With age, satisfaction with family increases in ranking and school becomes less and less satisfactory.

For all the measures in the survey we examined the variations in gender, age group, type of locality in which the school is located and type of family.

For many of the measures of children's subjective well-being, there are only small variations by gender. Girls are more likely to participate in activities with the family, and are more satisfied with the people they live with, as well as with the relationships with people in general. They like going to school more and evaluate all their school life dimensions more positively. At home they read more, help with housework and do homework in a higher proportion. Boys, on the contrary, more frequently use computers, play sports and work. They evaluate the places to play in the area they live more positively. In school, they experience higher levels of bullying. They also tend to experience more changes in their lives than girls.

Age is associated with stronger variations in the behaviours as well as in the attitudes of children. Many of children's evaluations of their lives decrease with age. They feel less listened to by their parents and other adults. They spend much less time in family activities like having fun or learning together. Instead, they have more access to mobile phones, computer and Internet at home. They find less satisfaction and safety in the area in which they live. While they are less victimised by their colleagues in schools, they have less positive evaluations of school. Indeed, the most dramatic age differences are within the school domains. All evaluations of the quality of school life decrease steadily with age. Finally, also children's subjective well-being is decreasing with age.

Rural children benefit less from the modern endowments of their families: mobile telephone, computer and Internet. As a result they less frequently play with computers, watch TV, and play sport. Instead, they do much more activities that are thought to decrease their quality of life, like helping with housework or even working. They are also less satisfied with play and fun possibilities in their living areas. However, they do not seem less satisfied with all aspects of their situation than children from urban settings. On the contrary, they seem to evaluate some aspects linked with school more positively and are more likely to say that they like going to it. This may be also because they experience less changes in life, including changes of local area and school. Overall, urban and rural children have rather equal levels of subjective well-being.

We have also computed variations in children's experiences and evaluations according to family structure. Here we found a pattern of significant, and sometimes strong, differences. Children living with both parents tend to have higher levels of satisfaction with family life and higher levels of overall subjective well-being. They are also involved more frequently in family activities such as talking together

and having fun together. In many cases, children living with stepfamilies have worse quality of life than those living with a lone parent. Children subjected to other living arrangements – most of them children left in care of relatives by the migrating parents - have the lowest subjective well-being of all.

Methodological limitations

The large majority of children interviewed gave very positive answers to most of the evaluation and satisfaction questions. As a result, satisfaction indicators (with 11 points) have very high averages. Comparatively, the use of scales with 4 or 5 points diminishes significantly the number of very positive answers. We may be dealing with a methodological effect of scaling. In Romania pupils receive grades from 1 to 10. While 4 is synonymous with ‘insufficient’, in very few cases teachers give marks below 4. As a result ratings on 0-10 scale are positively biased¹⁵. Also there may be what we called the ‘need for performance’ bias. Giving the location where interviews took place – in schools - Romanian children may have felt the need for positive feedback by showing they are performing well on dimensions included in the study. This kind of social desirability effect may have positively biased their results. Further studies should explore this matter.

Concluding comments

This is a brief and descriptive report, which is intended to show general trends in Romanian children’s well-being, as well as some basic factors that affect it. The gathered data, however, has an excellent quality and not only allows, but also invites in-depth analyses, using multivariate techniques, as well as comparative international approaches that would contribute to a better understanding of the lives, needs and satisfaction of children in our country.

¹⁵ In samples of adults it was also found that, after linearly transforming the results, Romanians score higher on life satisfaction on scales from 0 to 10 than on scales from 1 to 4 or from 1 to 5. For example in European Quality of Life Survey Romania has average life satisfaction scores higher than Poland, which does not show up in most of other surveys.