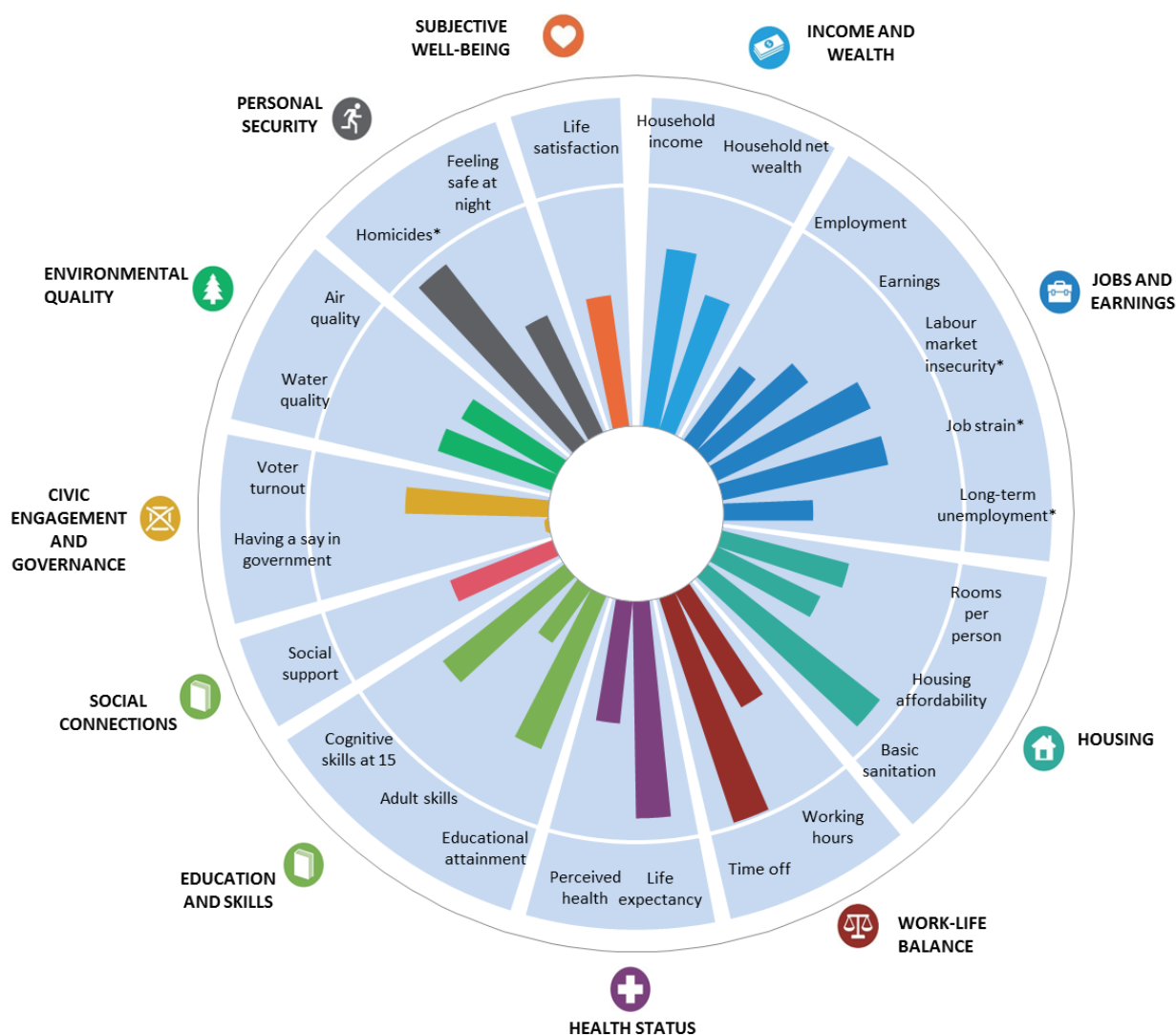


How's Life in France?

Relative to other OECD countries, France's average performance across the different well-being dimensions is mixed. While **household net adjusted disposable income** stands just above the OECD average, France has several weaknesses across the jobs and earnings dimension: for example, at 65% the **employment** rate is 2 percentage points below the OECD average, and the **long-term unemployment** rate is more than double the OECD average. However, work-life balance in France is comparatively good: 8% of employees **work very long hours**, which is below the OECD average of nearly 13%, and full-time workers reported having more **time off** (i.e. time spent on leisure and personal care), on average, than those in any other OECD country. In 2015, average **life expectancy** at birth in France was 82 years, in the top tier of the OECD, but **self-reported health** was just below the OECD average. While France's **voter turnout** (about 75% in 2017) is above the OECD average, in 2012 only 10% of French adults reported feeling that they **have a say in what the government does**, the lowest percentage in the OECD.

Figure 1. France's average level of current well-being: Comparative strengths and weaknesses














Note: This chart shows France's relative strengths and weaknesses in well-being when compared with other OECD countries. For both positive and negative indicators (such as homicides, marked with an "**"), longer bars always indicate better outcomes (i.e. higher well-being), whereas shorter bars always indicate worse outcomes (i.e. lower well-being). If data are missing for any given indicator, the relevant segment of the circle is shaded in white.

Additional information, including the data used in this country note, can be found at:


www.oecd.org/statistics/Better-Life-Initiative-2017-country-notes-data.xlsx


Change in France's average well-being over the past 10 years

Dimension	Description	Change
 Income and wealth	The current level of household net adjusted disposable income is 6% higher, in real terms, than in 2005. Following a relatively sustained period of growth, the level fell slightly between 2010 and 2013, but regained momentum thereafter. Between 2009 and 2014, household net wealth grew by 19%, cumulatively.	↗ ↗
 Jobs and earnings	In 2016 the employment rate was very similar to the level seen in 2005. Although earnings have risen steadily and are currently 11% higher (in real terms) than in 2005, labour market insecurity and long-term unemployment have both worsened in recent years: labour market insecurity remains above pre-crisis levels, and long-term unemployment has increased by a quarter over the decade. Finally, after peaking in 2010, the incidence of job strain in 2015 has returned to the levels recorded in 2005.	↔ ↗ ↘ ↘ ↔
 Housing conditions	The number of rooms per person has improved slightly since 2005, but remains just below the OECD average level. Housing affordability has worsened: the proportion of household disposable income spent on housing has increased from 20.2% in 2005 to 20.9% in 2015. On the other hand, the percentage of people living without basic sanitary facilities has decreased significantly in the last decade, and is still well below the OECD average level.	↗ ↘ ↗
 Work-life balance	After rising between 2006 and 2011, the share of employees regularly working 50 or more hours per week has now returned to 2005 levels.	↔
 Health status	Despite falling by 0.4 year between 2014 and 2015, life expectancy at birth has increased overall by 2 years since 2005. Perceived health status has remained broadly stable.	↗ ↔
 Education and skills	Between 2005 and 2016, upper secondary educational attainment rates increased by 11.3 percentage points.	↗
 Social connections	France is among the 9 OECD countries where the percentage of people who have relatives or friends whom they can count on for help in case of need has fallen (from 94% to 88%) over the past decade.	↘
 Civic engagement	The percentage of votes cast among the population registered to vote fell by 9 percentage points between the 2007 and 2017 presidential elections.	↘
 Environmental quality	The percentage of people satisfied with local water quality has remained relatively stable over the last decade, just above the OECD average. Annual exposure to air pollution saw little change between 2005 and 2013, remaining close to the OECD average.	↔ ↔
 Personal security	Deaths due to assault have remained stable at relatively low levels in the last 10 years. Feelings of safety when walking home at night are also broadly unchanged.	↔ ↔
 Subjective well-being	People's life satisfaction has fallen gradually since 2005, from an average of 6.8 to 6.4 (measured on a 0-10 scale), a decline that is twice as large as the OECD average rate of decline.	↘


Note: For each indicator in every dimension: ↗ refers to an improvement; ↔ indicates little or no change; and ↘ signals deterioration. This is based on a comparison of the starting year (2005 in most cases) and the latest available year (usually 2015 or 2016). The order of the arrows shown in column three corresponds to that of the indicators mentioned in column two.


France's resources and risks for future well-being: Illustrative indicators

 Natural capital		
Indicator	Tier	Change
Greenhouse gas emissions from domestic production	1	↗ 2005-2015
CO ₂ emissions from domestic consumption	1	↗ 2001-2011
Exposure to PM _{2.5} air pollution	2	↔ 2005-2013
Forest area	2	↔ 2005-2014
Renewable freshwater resources	2	.. Long-term annual avg
Freshwater abstractions	2	.. 2013
Threatened birds	3	.. Latest available
Threatened mammals	1	.. Latest available
Threatened plants	3	.. Latest available

 Economic capital		
Indicator	Tier	Change
Produced fixed assets	2	↗ 2005-2016
Gross fixed capital formation	2	↔ 2005-2016
Financial net worth of total economy	2	↘ 2005-2016
Intellectual property assets	2	↗ 2005-2016
Investment in R&D	1	↗ 2005-2015
Household debt	2	↘ 2005-2015
Household net wealth	2	↗ 2009-2014
Financial net worth of government	3	↘ 2005-2015
Banking sector leverage	3	↘ 2005-2015

1	Top-performing OECD tier, latest available year
2	Middle-performing OECD tier, latest available year
3	Bottom-performing OECD tier, latest available year

 Human capital		
Indicator	Tier	Change
Young adult educational attainment	2	↔ 2014-2016
Educational expectancy	3	.. 2015
Cognitive skills at age 15	2	.. 2015
Adult skills	3	.. 2012
Long-term unemployment	3	↘ 2005-2016
Life expectancy at birth	1	↗ 2005-2015
Smoking prevalence	3	↗ 2006-2014
Obesity prevalence	1	↘ 2006-2014

 Social capital		
Indicator	Tier	Change
Trust in others	3	.. 2013
Trust in the police	3	.. 2013
Trust in the national government	3	↘ 2005-2016
Voter turnout	2	↘ 2007-2017
Government stakeholder engagement	2	.. 2014
Volunteering through organisations	2	.. 2012

↗	Improving over time
↘	Worsening over time
↔	No change
..	No data available

HOW LARGE ARE WELL-BEING INEQUALITIES IN FRANCE?

What is inequality and how is it measured? Measuring inequality means trying to describe **how unevenly distributed** outcomes are in society. *How's Life? 2017* adopts several different approaches:

- Measures of “**vertical**” inequalities address how unequally outcomes are spread across all people in society – for example, by looking at the size of the gap between people at the bottom of the distribution and people at the top.
- Measures of “**horizontal**” inequalities focus on the gap between population groups defined by specific characteristics (such as men and women, young and old, people with higher and lower levels of education).
- Measures of “**deprivation**” report the share of people who live below a certain level of well-being (such as those who face income poverty or live in an overcrowded household).

Vertical inequalities in France are close to the OECD average in most well-being dimensions, including income and wealth, health and life satisfaction. When it comes to earnings, the gap between the top and the bottom is narrower than in more OECD countries, while a higher level of inequality is found in terms of long working hours and the cognitive skills of 15-year-old students.

Compared to other OECD countries, France has mixed outcomes in terms of **gender inequalities**. For example, the employment gender gap (in favour of men) is narrower than in the OECD on average, but the risk of low pay among women in France is almost twice as high as that of men – a larger gap than in many OECD countries. Furthermore, French girls perform slightly worse than boys on tests of cognitive skills at age 15, but the gap in adult skills between men and women is narrower than in the OECD on average.

When considering the well-being achievements **young and middle-aged people** in France, the former experience large disadvantages in terms of household wealth, employment and unemployment, and feelings of safety, when compared to other OECD countries. However, the young are slightly better off in terms of work-life balance, skills and time spent socialising.

Generally, people with a **tertiary education** tend to fare better than those with only a **secondary education** across a range of well-being outcomes.

In France, these education-related gaps are smaller than average for earnings and voter turnout – and people with a tertiary education are more likely to work long hours in France. However, there are comparatively large gaps in terms of having a say in government, skill outcomes, water quality, feelings of safety and life satisfaction.

Although the levels of income poverty, asset-based poverty and risk of low pay are lower than the OECD average, almost half of the indicators point to high levels of **deprivation** in France. These include unemployment (9.8%), incidence of low student and adult skills (14.8% and 18.1% respectively), not having a say in government (67.4%) and dissatisfaction with life (7.6%).

Well-being inequalities in France

	Vertical inequality	Horizontal inequality by			Deprivation
		Gender	Age	Education	
		Women relative to men	Young relative to middle-aged	Secondary relative to tertiary	
Household income	●		●		●
Household net wealth	●		●	●	●
Earnings	●	●	●	●	
Low pay		●			●
Employment		●	●	●	
Unemployment		●	●	●	●
Housing affordability					●
Rooms per person					●
Life expectancy	●				
Perceived health		●	●	●	●
Working hours	●	●	●	●	●
Time off		●	●		
Educational attainment		●	●		●
Cognitive skills at 15	●	●		●	●
Adult skills	●	●	●	●	●
Time spent socialising		●	●		
Social support		●	●	●	●
Voter turnout		●	●	●	●
Having a say in government	●	●	●	●	●
Air quality					●
Water quality		●	●	●	●
Homicides		●			●
Feeling safe at night		●	●	●	●
Life satisfaction	●	●	●	●	●
Negative affect balance					●

Legend:

- top third of OECD countries
- middle third of OECD countries
- bottom third of OECD countries
- data gaps
- no measures

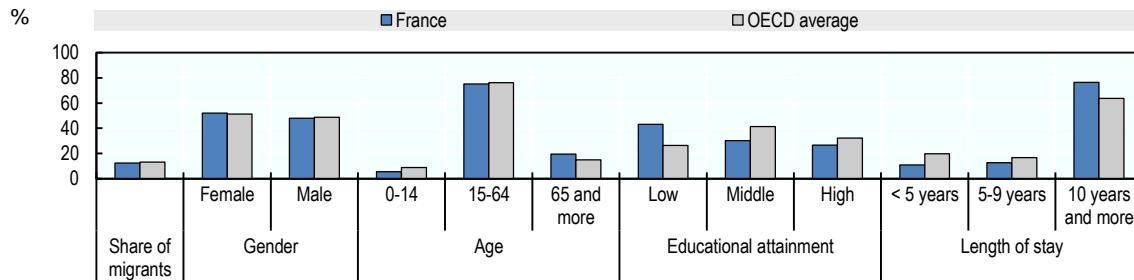
HOW'S LIFE FOR MIGRANTS IN FRANCE?

Migrants (defined as people living in a different country from the one in which they were born) represent an important share of the population in most OECD countries. Capturing information about their well-being is critical for gaining a fuller picture of how life is going, and whether it is going equally well for all members of society.

Who are the migrants in France and OECD?

More than one in ten people living in France (12%) were born elsewhere, similar to the OECD average (13%), and 52% of them are women (51% for the OECD average). Migrants in France are about as likely to be of working age as the OECD average (75% of them are aged 15 to 64, as compared to 76% across the OECD), and they are more likely to have a low educational attainment than a middle or a high level. Around four in five migrants arrived in France ten years ago or more.

Share of migrants in the total population and selected characteristics



How is migrants' well-being in France?

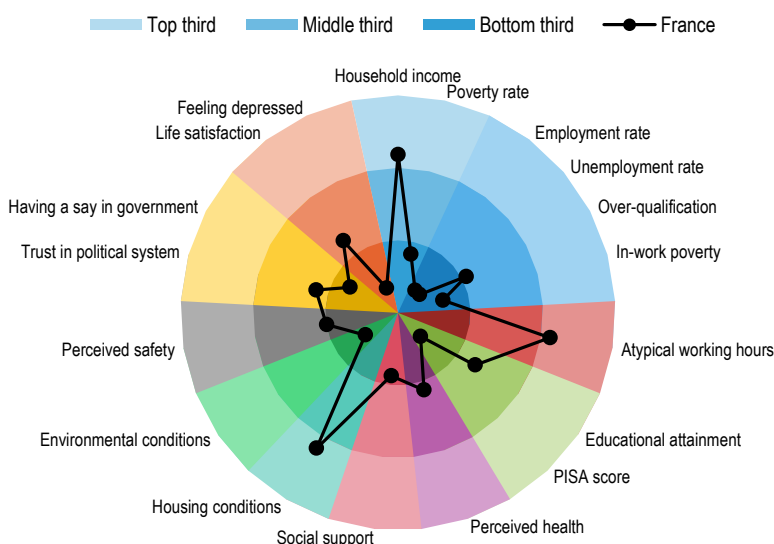
Compared with the migrant populations of other OECD countries, migrants living in France have a relatively good situation regarding household income, atypical working hours and housing conditions. Migrants settled in France rank in the middle third of OECD-country migrants for life satisfaction, trust in the political system, perceived health, educational attainment and over-qualification. They are in the bottom third for 10 out of 18 selected well-being indicators.

As in many other OECD countries, migrants in France tend to experience lower well-being outcomes than the native-born population: in France, this is the case for 12 out of 15 selected well-being indicators. However, migrants in France are just as likely as the native-born to feel they have a say in government and to have atypical working hours, while reporting a higher level of trust in the political system.

Comparison of migrants' and native-born well-being in France

	Migrants have a worse situation	Same situation	Migrants have a better situation
Household income	▲		
Wealth	▲		
Physical health risks at work	▲		
Atypical working hours		▲	
Literacy scores	▲		
PISA score	▲		
Perceived health	▲		
Social support	▲		
Housing conditions	▲		
Environmental conditions	▲		
Perceived safety	▲		
Trust in political system			▲
Having a say in government		▲	
Life satisfaction	▲		
Feeling depressed	▲		

Comparing well-being outcomes for migrants in France with the migrant populations of other OECD countries



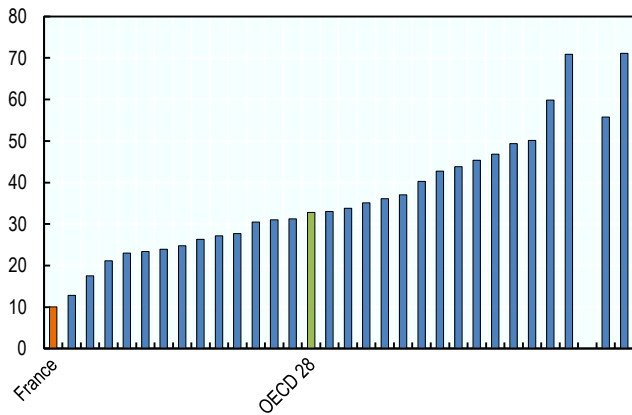
GOVERNANCE AND WELL-BEING IN FRANCE

Public institutions play an important role in well-being, both by guaranteeing that people’s fundamental rights are protected, and by ensuring the provision of goods and services necessary for people to thrive and prosper. How people experience and engage with public institutions also matters: people’s political voice, agency and representation are outcomes of value in their own right.

In France, 10% of the population feels that they have a say in what the government does, which is much lower than the OECD average of 33%. In recent years, voter turnout has fallen, with 84% of eligible voters casting their ballot in 2007 to almost 75% in 2017. When asked about whether or not corruption is widespread across government, 65% of French citizens answered “yes”, which is slightly higher than the OECD average of 56%. Since around 2006, the share of people in the OECD who report that they have confidence in their national government has fallen from 42% to 38%.

Having a say in what the government does

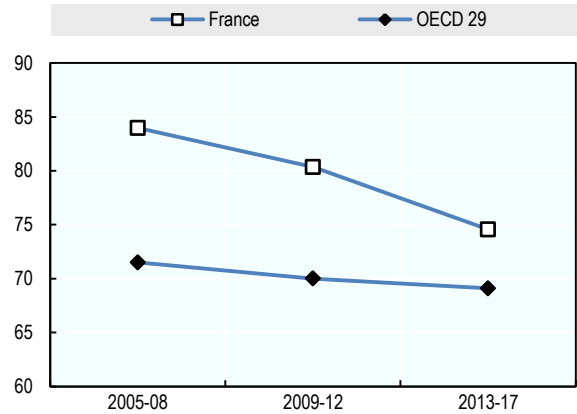
Percentage of people aged 16-65 who feel that they have a say in what the government does, around 2012



Source: OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC database)

Voter turnout

Percentage of votes cast among the population registered to vote



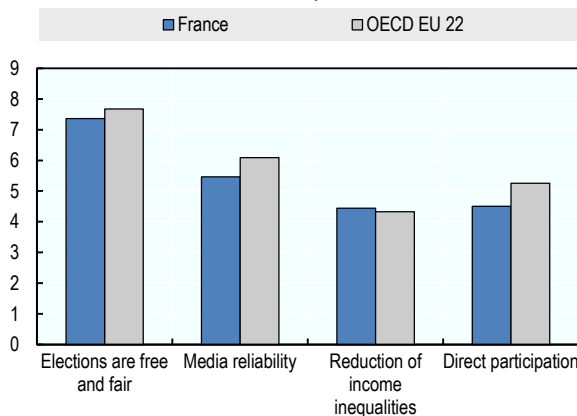
Note: Data refers to presidential elections. If more than one election took place over the time period indicated, the simple average voter turnout from all elections is shown. The OECD average sums elections that occurred over the time periods shown in 29 OECD countries.

Source: IDEA dataset

French people are generally less satisfied with the way democracy works in the country compared to the OECD European average. While the French are reasonably satisfied with the freedom and fairness of elections (7.4 on a 0-10 scale), they are less satisfied with policies to reduce inequalities (4.4) or the existence of direct participation mechanisms at the local level (4.5). Meanwhile, satisfaction with public services varies according to whether people have used those services in the last year. In France, satisfaction with both health and education services are higher than the European OECD average, with people that have had direct experience of using those services recently more likely to be satisfied than those without.

People’s satisfaction with different elements of democracy

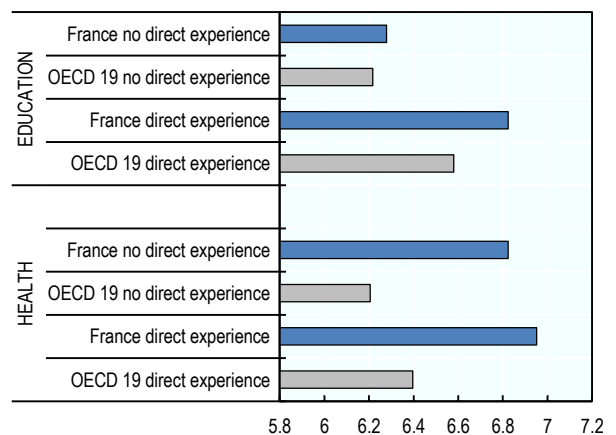
Mean score on a 0-10 scale, with higher scores indicating higher satisfaction with elements of democracy, 2012



Source: OECD calculations based on wave 6 of the European Social Survey (ESS), special rotating module on citizens’ valuations of different elements of democracy.

Satisfaction with public services by direct experience

Mean score on a 0-10 scale, with higher scores indicating higher satisfaction, 2013



Source: OECD calculations based on the EU Quality of Government (QoG) for 19 European OECD countries.

BETTER LIFE INDEX

The **Better Life Index** is an interactive web application that allows users to compare well-being across OECD countries and beyond on the basis of the set of well-being indicators used in *How's Life?*. Users chose what weight to give to each of the eleven dimensions shown below and then see how countries perform, based on their own personal priorities in life.

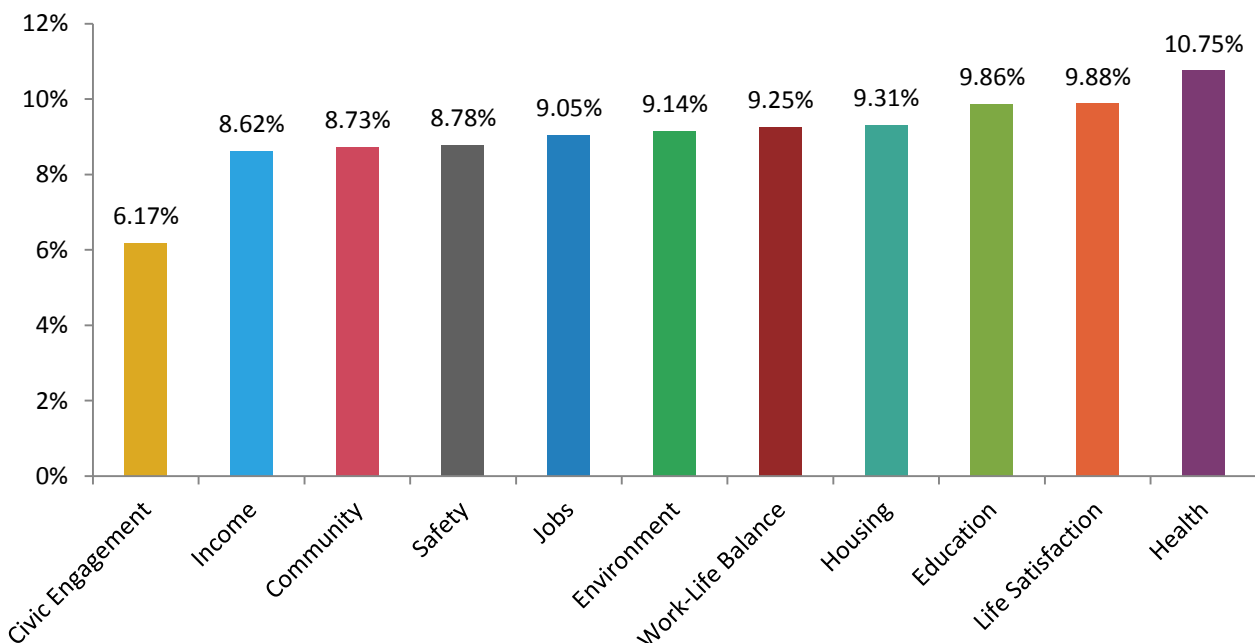


Users can also share their index with other people in their networks, as well as with the OECD. This allows the OECD to gather valuable information on the importance that users attach to various life dimensions, and how these preferences differ across countries and population groups.

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO PEOPLE IN FRANCE?

Since its launch in May 2011, the Better Life Index has attracted **over ten million visits from just about every country on the planet** and has received over **22 million page views**. To date, over 595,000 people in France have visited the website making France the 3rd country overall in traffic to the website. The top cities are Paris (32% of visits), Lyon, Toulouse, Nantes, and Rennes.

The following country findings reflect the ratings voluntarily shared with the OECD by 13,400 website visitors in France. Findings can only be considered as indicative and are not representative of the population at large. **For French users of the Better Life Index, health, life satisfaction and education are the three most important items** (shown below).¹ Up to date information, including a breakdown of participation in each country by gender and age can be found here: www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/responses/#FRA



¹ User information for France is based on shared indexes submitted between May 2011 and September 2017.

The **OECD Better Life Initiative**, launched in 2011, focuses on the aspects of life that matter the most to people and that shape the quality of their lives. The Initiative comprises a set of regularly updated well-being indicators and an in-depth analysis of specific topics, published in the *How's Life?* report. It also includes an interactive web application, the **Better Life Index**, and a number of **methodological and research projects** to improve the information base available to understand well-being levels, trends and their drivers.

The OECD Better Life Initiative:

- Helps to inform policy making to improve quality of life.
- Connects policies to people's lives.
- Generates support for needed policy measures.
- Improves civic engagement by encouraging the public to create their own *Better Life Index* and share their preferences about what matters most for well-being
- Empowers the public by improving their understanding of policy-making.

This note presents **selected findings for France from the *How's Life? 2017* report** (pages 1-6) and shows what **French users of the Better Life Index** are telling us about their **well-being priorities** (page 7).

HOW'S LIFE?



How's Life?, published every two years, provides a comprehensive picture of well-being in OECD and selected partner countries by bringing together an internationally comparable set of well-being indicators. It considers eleven dimensions of current well-being including: income and wealth; jobs and earnings; housing; health status; work-life balance; education and skills; social connections; civic engagement and governance; environmental quality; personal security; and subjective well-being. It also looks at four types of resources that help to sustain well-being over time: natural, human, economic and social capital.

The *How's Life? 2017* report presents the latest data on well-being in OECD and partner countries, including how lives have changed since 2005. It includes a special focus on inequalities, the well-being of migrants in OECD countries, and the issue of governance – particularly how people experience and engage with public institutions. To read more, visit: www.oecd.org/howslife.

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