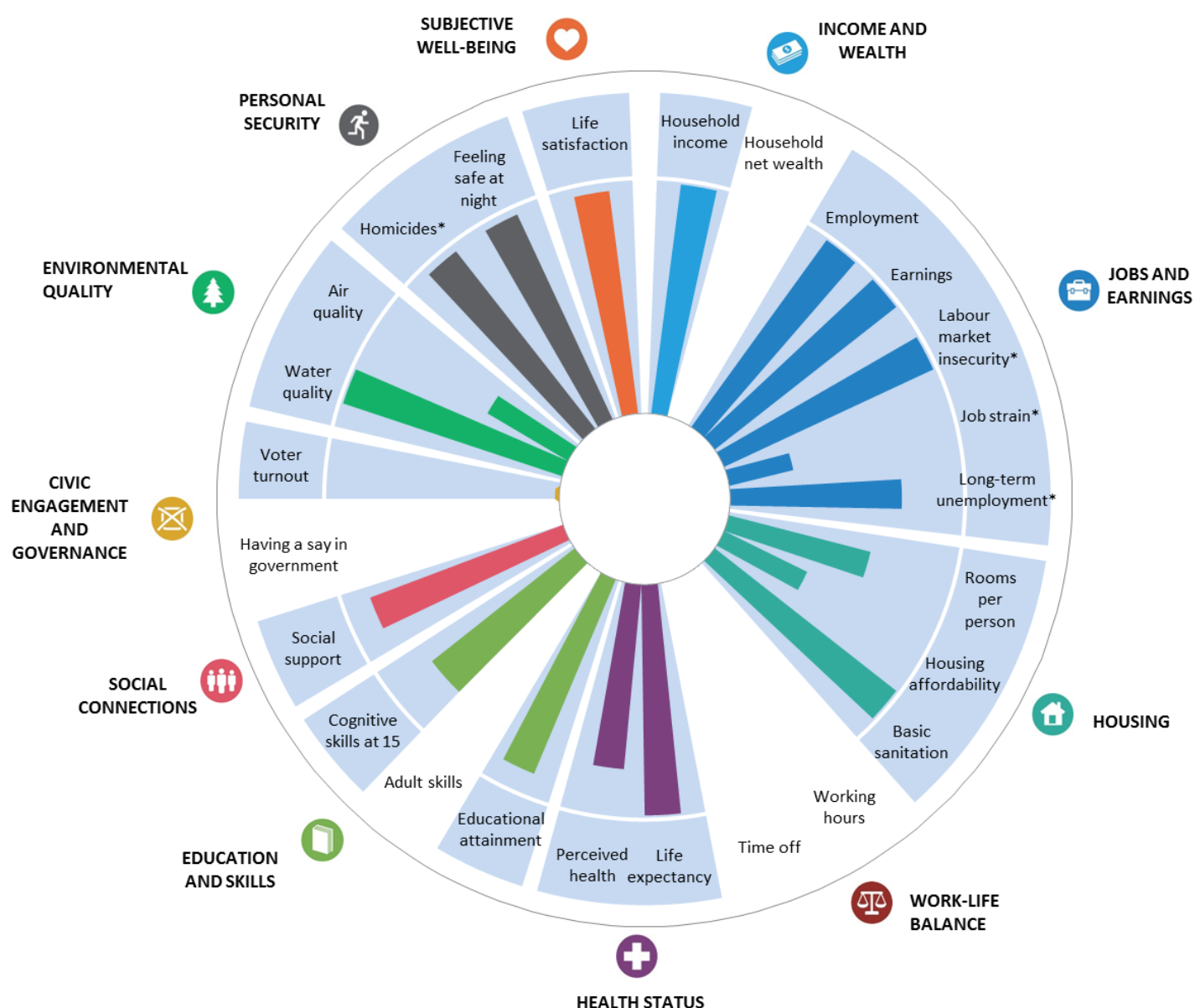


How's Life in Switzerland?

On average, Switzerland performs well across the OECD's headline well-being indicators relative to other OECD countries. Average **household net adjusted disposable income**, **earnings** and **employment** are among the highest in the OECD. **Life expectancy** at birth, at 83 years in 2015, was one of the highest in the OECD, while 80% of Swiss people **perceived their health** as "good" or "very good", 11 percentage points above the OECD average. In terms of housing conditions and environmental quality, Switzerland's performance is mixed. For example, while **access to basic sanitation** is good, **housing affordability** was low in 2015, and although 96% of Swiss people are satisfied with their local **water quality**, **air quality** (measured as the average concentration of PM2.5 in the air) is worse than the OECD average. Switzerland's **voter turnout** for national parliamentary elections stood at only 49% in 2015, the lowest voter turnout in the OECD; this, however, does not take into account Switzerland's highly participatory form of direct democracy.

Switzerland's average level of current well-being: Comparative strengths and weaknesses














Note: This chart shows Switzerland'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 Switzerland's average well-being over the past 10 years

Dimension	Description	Change
 Income and wealth	Household net adjusted disposable income is currently 11% higher, in real terms, than in 2005. It has grown steadily since 2005, despite stalling in 2008.	↗
 Jobs and earnings	The employment rate is over 2 percentage points higher than in 2010 (comparable data are not available prior to 2010). Real earnings improved consistently over the past decade, with a cumulative growth of 8%. However, labour market insecurity also increased sharply during the crisis, and is still twice as high as in 2007. Long-term unemployment, at 1.9%, is currently slightly above its 2010 level. Finally, the incidence of job strain increased from 27% in 2005 to 43% in 2015 – more than in any other OECD country over the past decade.	↗ ↗ ↘ ↘ ↘
 Housing conditions	Since 2005 the number of rooms per person has moderately increased, from 1.8 to 1.9. Housing affordability has also improved in the last decade: the proportion of income spent on housing costs fell from 22.2% in 2005 to 21.5% in 2013. Lack of access to basic sanitation has meanwhile remained relatively stable over the decade, at 0.1%.	↗ ↗ ↔
 Work-life balance	[No time series data available]	..
 Health status	Despite falling slightly between 2014 and 2015, life expectancy at birth has increased by a year and a half overall since 2005. There has been little change in the share of adults reporting to be in “good” or “very good” health since 2008.	↗ ↔
 Education and skills	The 10-year change in upper secondary educational attainment cannot be assessed, due to a recent break in the data. However, between 2014 and 2016, attainment rates in Switzerland remained relatively stable.	↔
 Social connections	The percentage of people reporting to have relatives or friends whom they can count on to help in case of need has changed little since 2005-07.	↔
 Civic engagement	Voter turnout remained relatively stable between the 2007 and 2015 parliamentary elections. This differs from the OECD average trend, which has seen voter turnout decrease by 2.4 percentage points in the last 10 years.	↔
 Environmental quality	Both the satisfaction with local water quality and the exposure to PM _{2.5} air pollution have remained relatively stable in Switzerland over the past decade.	↔ ↔
 Personal security	The rate of deaths due to assault has almost halved since 2005, and the share of people saying that they feel safe when walking alone at night has risen by 7 percentage points – in line with the trend in over half of all OECD countries.	↗ ↗
 Subjective well-being	Life satisfaction has remained stably high over the past decade.	↔


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.


Switzerland'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	3	↗ 2001-2011
Exposure to PM _{2.5} air pollution	2	↔ 2005-2013
Forest area	3	↔ 2005-2014
Renewable freshwater resources	2	.. Long-term annual avg
Freshwater abstractions	1	.. 2012
Threatened birds	3	.. Latest available
Threatened mammals	3	.. Latest available
Threatened plants	3	.. Latest available

 Economic capital		
Indicator	Tier	Change
Gross fixed capital formation	2	↘ 2005-2016
Financial net worth of total economy	1	↗ 2005-2015
Household debt	3	↘ 2005-2015
Financial net worth of government	1	↗ 2005-2015
No data available on produced fixed assets, intellectual property assets, investment in R&D, household net wealth and banking sector leverage.		

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	1	↗ 2014-2016
Educational expectancy	2	.. 2015
Cognitive skills at age 15	1	.. 2015
Long-term unemployment	2	↘ 2010-2016
Life expectancy at birth	1	↗ 2005-2015
Smoking prevalence	2	↔ 2007-2012
Obesity prevalence	1	↘ 2007-2012
No data available on adult skills.		

 Social capital		
Indicator	Tier	Change
Trust in others	2	.. 2013
Trust in the police	1	.. 2013
Trust in the national government	1	↗ 2005-2016
Voter turnout	3	↔ 2007-2015
Government stakeholder engagement	1	.. 2014
No data available on volunteering through organisations.		

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

HOW LARGE ARE WELL-BEING INEQUALITIES IN SWITZERLAND?

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).

In Switzerland, **vertical inequalities** in well-being outcomes are at an intermediate level in most of the available indicators, including those of income, skills and life satisfaction. Inequality in earnings, however, is lower than in the OECD on average.

Evidence on the **gender gap** in Switzerland is mixed. For example, women in Switzerland are more disadvantaged than women in the OECD on average when it comes to earnings, low pay, educational attainment, and voter turnout. Switzerland is also one of few OECD countries where women are at greater risk of homicide than men. Yet the gaps between women and men are smaller than in the OECD on average for employment, perceived health and feelings of safety.

Young adults in OECD countries tend to fare worse than the **middle-aged** when it comes to income, wealth, jobs and earnings. In Switzerland these age-related gaps are comparatively large for earnings (with middle-aged adults earning double the wages of younger people), but smaller for employment and unemployment, when compared to the OECD average gaps. Swiss young people are also 26% less likely to vote than middle-aged adults.

In most OECD countries, people with a **tertiary education** tend to fare better than those with only a **secondary education** across a range of well-being outcomes. In Switzerland, this gap is often smaller than in the OECD on average – for example, in employment, unemployment, perceived health, and feelings of social support. By contrast, the education-related gap is comparatively large for voter turnout and feelings of safety.

Almost all the available indicators – including those related to income and wealth, jobs and earnings and personal security – suggest that **deprivations** in Switzerland are lower or close to the OECD average. The only exceptions are the incidence of long working hours (9.9%) and, in particular, the share of people not voting in national elections (51.6%).

	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					●

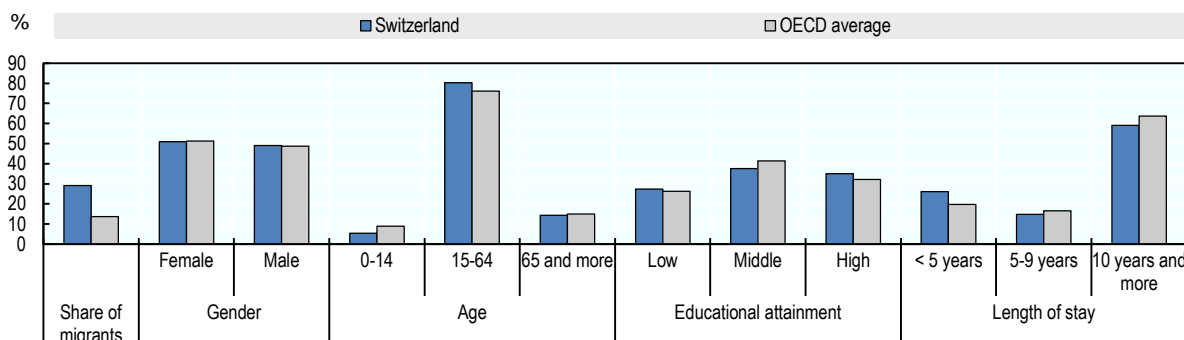
HOW'S LIFE FOR MIGRANTS IN SWITZERLAND?

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 Switzerland and OECD?

Almost one in three people living in Switzerland (29%) were born elsewhere, far above the OECD average (13%), and 51% of them are women (the same as the OECD average). Migrants in Switzerland are more likely to be of working age than in the OECD on average (80% of them are aged 15 to 64, as compared to 76% across the OECD), and they are more likely to have a middle or a high educational attainment than a low level. Three in five migrants arrived in Switzerland ten years ago or more.

Share of migrants in the total population and selected characteristics

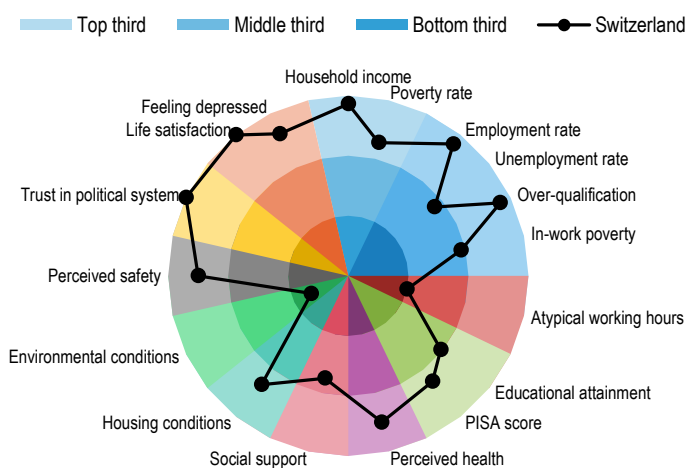


How is migrants' well-being in Switzerland?

Compared with the migrant populations of other OECD countries, migrants living in Switzerland have a relatively good situation for 11 out of 17 selected well-being indicators. Migrants settled in Switzerland rank in the middle third of OECD-country migrants for unemployment, in-work poverty, educational attainment and social support. They rank in the bottom third for atypical working hours and environmental conditions.

As in many other OECD countries, migrants in Switzerland tend to experience lower well-being outcomes than the native-born population: in Switzerland, this is the case for 8 out of 12 selected well-being indicators. However, migrants are just as likely as the native-born to report the same levels of wealth, PISA performance and perceived safety. They report a higher level than the native-born for trust in the political system.

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



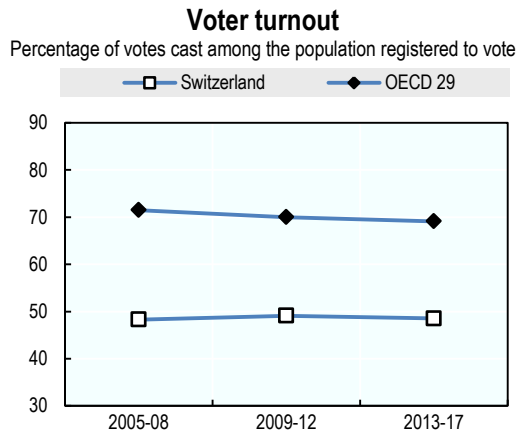
Comparison of migrants' and native-born well-being in Switzerland

	Migrants have a worse situation	Same situation	Migrants have a better situation
Household income	▲		
Wealth		▲	
Atypical working hours	▲		
PISA score		▲	
Perceived health	▲		
Social support	▲		
Housing conditions	▲		
Environmental conditions	▲		
Perceived safety		▲	
Trust in political system			▲
Life satisfaction	▲		
Feeling depressed	▲		

GOVERNANCE AND WELL-BEING IN SWITZERLAND

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.

On average, 33% of the population in OECD member countries feel that they have a say in what their government does. In recent years, voter turnout in Switzerland has largely remained the same, with almost 49% of the eligible voting population casting their ballot in 2015, compared to 48% in 2007. When asked about whether or not corruption is widespread across government, 22% of Swiss citizens answered “yes”, much lower 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%.



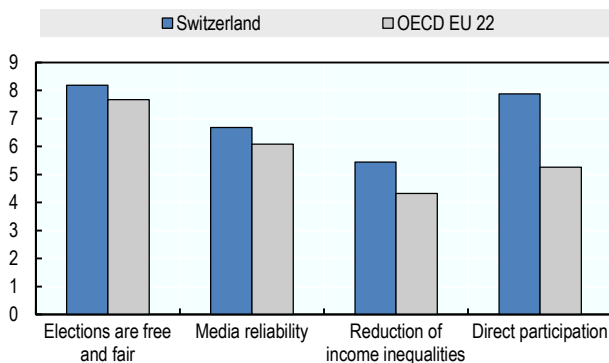
Note: Data refers to parliamentary elections. If more than one election took place over the time period indicated, the simple average voter turnout from all elections is shown. The OECD average sums elections that occurred over the time periods shown in 29 OECD countries.

Source: IDEA dataset

Overall, satisfaction with the way democracy works in Switzerland is consistently above the OECD European average. Swiss people tend to be satisfied with the freedom and fairness of elections (8.2 on a 0-10 scale), they are relatively satisfied with policies to reduce inequalities (5.4), and are quite satisfied with the existence of direct participation mechanisms at the local level (7.9). Meanwhile, Europeans’ satisfaction with public services varies according to whether people have used those services in the last year. For example, satisfaction with education is higher among those with direct recent experience (6.6 vs 6.2 on average), and this is also true of the health system (6.4 vs 6.2 on average). These data relate to 19 European countries only, and unfortunately no comparable data are available for Switzerland.

Satisfaction with different elements of democracy

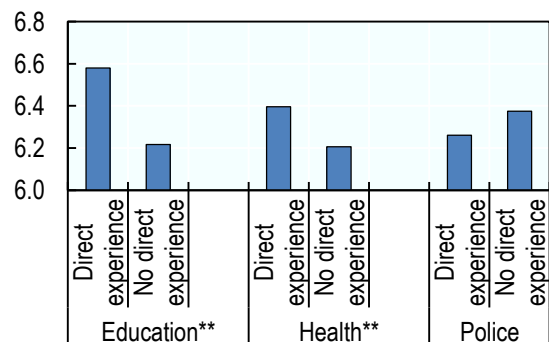
Mean score on a 0-10 scale, with higher scores indicating higher satisfaction with elements of democracy, 2012



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

OECD EU average satisfaction with public services by direct experience

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



Note: ** Difference is statistically significant at 95%

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.

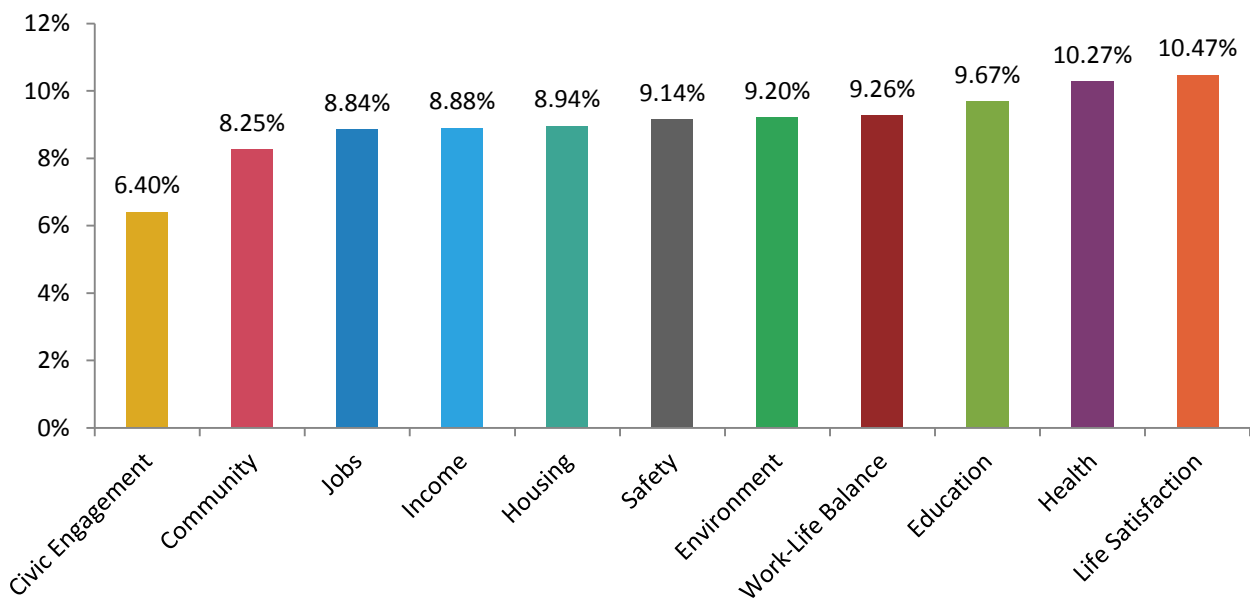


Users can also share their index with other people in their networks, as well as with the OECD. This allows the OECD to gather valuable information on the importance that users attach to various life dimensions, and how these preferences differ across countries and population groups.

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO PEOPLE IN SWITZERLAND?

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 132,500 people in Switzerland have visited the website making Switzerland the 18th country overall in traffic to the website. The top cities are Zurich (28% of visits), Geneva, Lausanne, Bern, Basel and Lucerne.

The following country findings reflect the ratings voluntarily shared with the OECD by 2,229 website visitors in Switzerland. Findings are only indicative and are not representative of the population at large. **For Swiss users of the Better Life Index, life satisfaction, health and education are the three most important topics** (shown below).¹ Up to date information, including a breakdown of participants in each country by gender and age can be found here: www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/responses/#CHE.



¹ User information for Switzerland 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 Switzerland from the *How's Life? 2017* report** (pages 1-6) and shows what **Swiss 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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