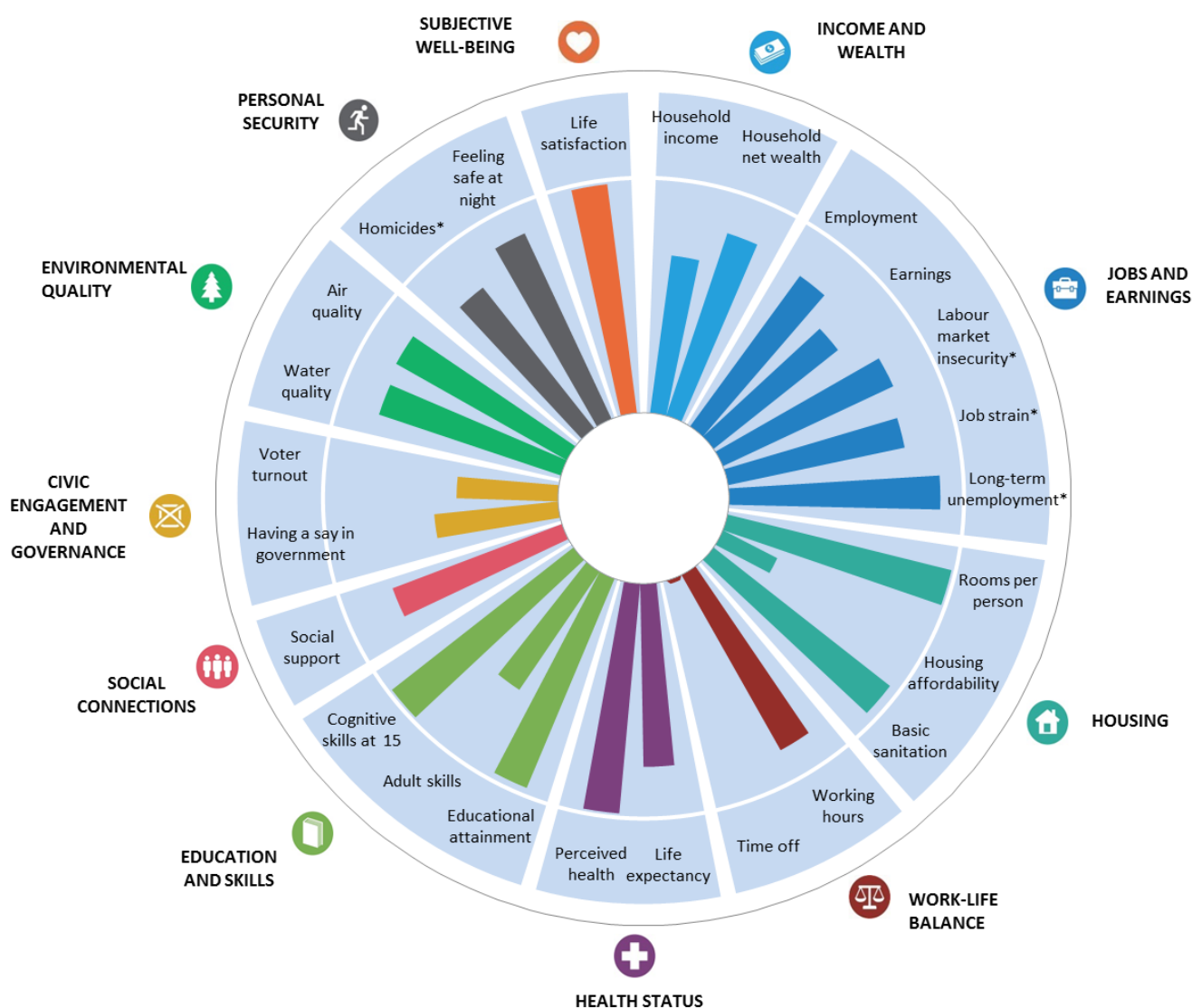


How's Life in Canada?

Canada typically performs above the OECD average level across most of the different well-indicators shown below. It falls within the top tier of OECD countries on **household net wealth**, the **employment rate** is high (73% in 2016), the **long-term unemployment rate** is low (0.8% in 2016) and fewer than 4% of employees usually **work 50 hours or more per week**, less than a third of the OECD average rate. However, full-time employees on average reported having less **time off** (i.e. time spent on leisure and personal care) than those in most other OECD countries. Housing conditions are generally good, but **housing affordability** stood below the OECD average in 2016. The average Canadian enjoys relatively good **air** and **water quality**, and both **feelings of security** and **life satisfaction** are among the highest in the OECD area. A high share of Canadians also report good levels of **perceived health**, although these data are not directly comparable with those of the other OECD countries, due to a difference in the reporting scale.

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














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

Dimension	Description	Change
 Income and wealth	Household net adjusted disposable income has risen by 20% cumulatively over the past decade in Canada, overtaking the OECD average in 2013-2014.	↗
 Jobs and earnings	In 2016, the employment rate in Canada was very close to its 2005 level, having fallen sharply in 2009 and gradually recovered since. Average earnings have increased strongly, and are now 18% higher, in real terms, than in 2005. Like most OECD countries, in Canada labour market insecurity was higher in 2015 than in 2007, although there has been some improvement since the 2009 peak. Although starting from a low base, long-term unemployment doubled between 2008 and 2016, and stands above its 2005 levels.	↔ ↗ ↘ ↘
 Housing conditions	The number of rooms per person has remained stable in the Canada over the past decade, and is the highest in the OECD. Housing affordability has slightly improved since 2005.	↔ ↗
 Work-life balance	The proportion of employees working 50 hours or more per week has decreased gradually over the last 10 years, from 4.7% in 2005 to 3.7% in 2016.	↗
 Health status	Life expectancy at birth in Canada increased from 80.5 years in 2007 to 81.5 in 2012 (comparable data for 2005 and 2015 are not available). The share of adults reporting to be in good health has remained relatively stable since 2005, at around 88%.	↗ ↔
 Education and skills	In line with the OECD average trend, the share of adults with at least an upper secondary level of education has increased from 85% in 2005 to 91% in 2016.	↗
 Social connections	The percentage of people who have relatives or friends whom they can count on to help in case of need has fallen slightly (from 96% to 93%) in the last 10 years in Canada.	↘
 Civic engagement	Voter turnout in parliamentary elections increased by nearly 4 percentage points in the last 10 years in Canada. This upward trend was particularly pronounced between the 2011 and 2015 federal elections, when the share of votes cast among the population registered to vote grew from 61% to 68%.	↗
 Environmental quality	The proportion of Canadians satisfied with their local water quality has risen from 87% to 91% over the last decade and is currently among the highest in the OECD. Annual exposure to PM _{2.5} air pollution improved substantially between 2005 and 2008, and has remained relatively stable in recent years.	↗ ↗
 Personal security	The rate of deaths due to assault fell in Canada from 2005 to 2012, whereas the share of people saying that they feel safe when walking alone at night increased by 4 percentage points over the decade – in line with the trend in over half of the OECD countries where data is available.	↗ ↗
 Subjective well-being	Life satisfaction in Canada has been broadly unchanged over the past 10 years.	↔


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.


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

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

 Economic capital		
Indicator	Tier	Change
Produced fixed assets	2	↗ 2005-2016
Gross fixed capital formation	3	↘ 2005-2016
Financial net worth of total economy	1	↗ 2005-2015
Intellectual property assets	2	↗ 2005-2016
Investment in R&D	3	↘ 2005-2015
Household debt	3	↘ 2005-2016
Household net wealth	1	.. 2012
Financial net worth of government	2	↘ 2005-2016
Banking sector leverage	1	↔ 2005-2016

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	↗ 2005-2016
Educational expectancy	3	.. 2015
Cognitive skills at age 15	1	.. 2015
Adult skills	2	.. 2011/2012
Long-term unemployment	1	↘ 2005-2016
Life expectancy at birth	2	↗ 2007-2012
Smoking prevalence	1	↗ 2005-2014
Obesity prevalence	3	↘ 2005-2013

 Social capital		
Indicator	Tier	Change
Trust in the national government	1	↗ 2005-2016
Voter turnout	2	↗ 2006-2015
Government stakeholder engagement	1	.. 2014
Volunteering through organisations	1	.. 2011/2012
No data available on trust in others and trust in the police.		

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

HOW LARGE ARE WELL-BEING INEQUALITIES IN CANADA?

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).

Although **vertical inequalities** in income and wealth are slightly below the OECD average, Canada is classified in the bottom third (i.e. most unequal) in terms of earnings, working hours, adult skills and life satisfaction. By contrast, the gap in cognitive abilities between high-scoring and low-scoring 15-year-old students is comparatively narrow. Vertical inequalities in life expectancy are also low compared to the OECD average.

Across OECD countries, **women** typically fare worse than **men** on earnings, low pay and employment. In Canada, however, women are less likely than men to be in low-paid jobs, and less likely to be unemployed. Canada has a larger gender gap (in favour of men) in adult skills than in the OECD on average. Social support levels tend to be slightly higher among women in most OECD countries, but this is not the case in Canada.

Young adults in OECD countries tend to fare worse than the **middle-aged** when it comes to income, wealth and jobs. In Canada these age-related gaps are larger for wealth and earnings, but smaller for income and employment, when compared to the OECD average gaps. Younger Canadians also feel less safe at night and have slightly lower levels of adult skills than the middle-aged.

Generally, people with a **tertiary education** tend to fare better than those with only a **secondary education** across a range of well-being outcomes. For Canadians, these education-related gaps are often close to the OECD average, or in some cases smaller. However, Canadians with only a secondary education are more likely to work long hours than their tertiary-educated peers, something seen in around only one-third of OECD countries.

Canada records relatively low levels of **deprivation** in education and skills, environmental quality and life satisfaction. However, the incidence of low pay (22.2%), the incidence of long working hours (9.5%) and the homicide rate (1.4 per 100 000), are comparatively high.

Well-being inequalities in Canada

	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

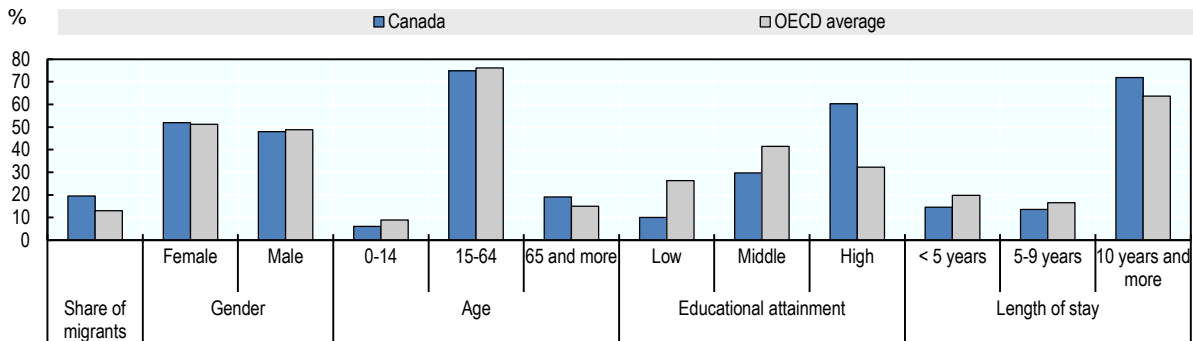
HOW'S LIFE FOR MIGRANTS IN CANADA?

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 Canada and OECD?

One in five people living in Canada (20%) were born elsewhere, above the OECD average (13%), and 52% of them are women (51% for the OECD average). Migrants in Canada 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 high educational attainment than a low or a middle level. Three in four migrants arrived in Canada ten years ago or more.

Share of migrants in the total population and selected characteristics

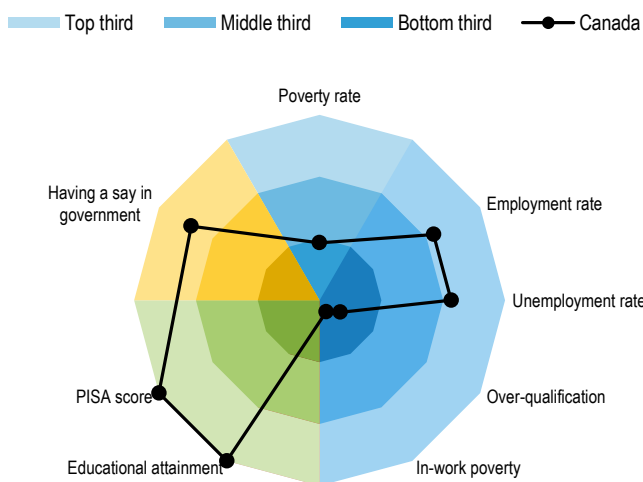


How is migrants' well-being in Canada?

Compared with the migrant population of other OECD countries, migrants living in Canada have a relatively good situation regarding PISA performance, educational attainment, having a say in government, employment and unemployment. Migrants settled in Canada rank in the bottom third of OECD-country migrants for over-qualification, poverty and in-work poverty.

In contrast with many other OECD countries where migrants usually experience lower well-being outcomes than the native-born, migrants in Canada are more likely to experience similar well-being outcomes to the native-born population: in Canada, this is the case for four out of seven selected well-being indicators. However, migrants in Canada have a lower level of literacy, social support and life satisfaction.

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



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

	Migrants have a worse situation	Same situation	Migrants have a better situation
Literacy scores	▲		
PISA score		▲	
Perceived health		▲	
Social support	▲		
Perceived safety		▲	
Having a say in government		▲	
Life satisfaction	▲		

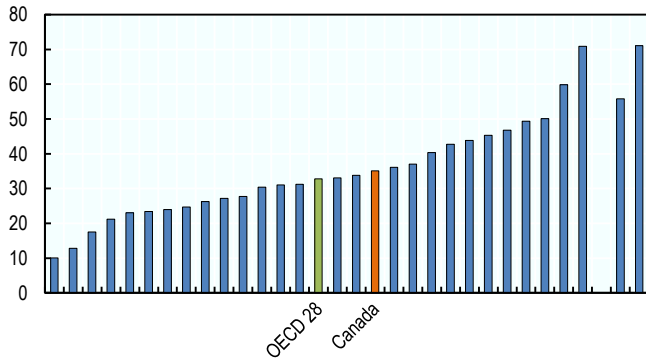
GOVERNANCE AND WELL-BEING IN CANADA

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 Canada, 35% of the population feels that they have a say in what the government does, which is slightly higher than the OECD average of 33%. In recent years, voter turnout in Canada has increased, with just over 68% of the population voting in 2015, compared to almost 65% in 2006. When asked about whether or not corruption is widespread across government, 38% of Canadians 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%.

Having a say in what the government does

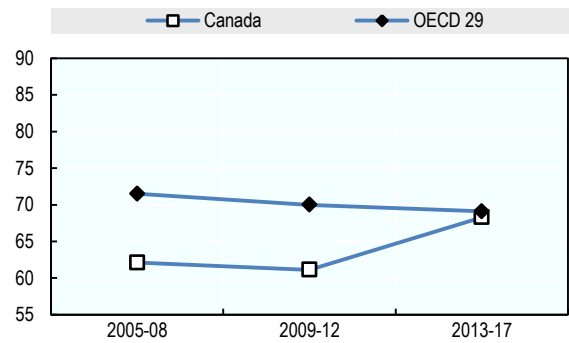
Percentage of people aged 16-65 who feel that they have a say in what the government does, around 2012



Source: OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC database)

Voter turnout

Percentage of votes cast among the population registered to vote



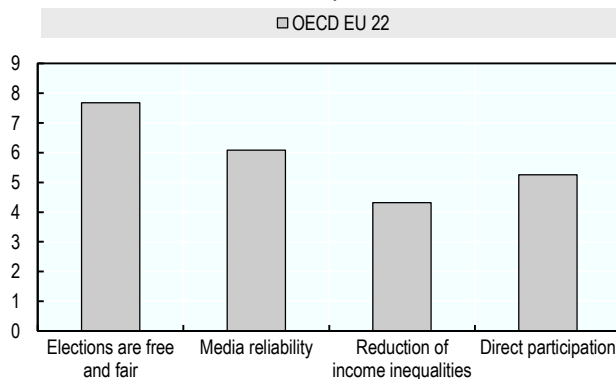
Note: Data refers to parliamentary elections. If more than one election took place over the time period indicated, the simple average voter turnout from all elections is shown. The OECD average sums elections that occurred over the time periods shown in 29 OECD countries.

Source: IDEA dataset

In the 22 European OECD countries where it can be assessed, satisfaction with democracy varies, depending on which aspect is considered. While Europeans tend to be reasonably satisfied with the way elections are held (7.7 on a 0-10 scale), they are relatively less satisfied with policies to reduce inequalities (4.3) or the existence of direct participation mechanisms at the local level (5.3). 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 Canada.

OECD EU average satisfaction with different elements of democracy

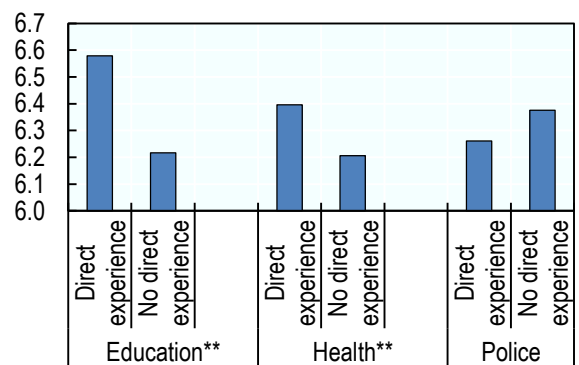
Mean score on a 0-10 scale, with higher scores indicating higher satisfaction with elements of democracy, 2012



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

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

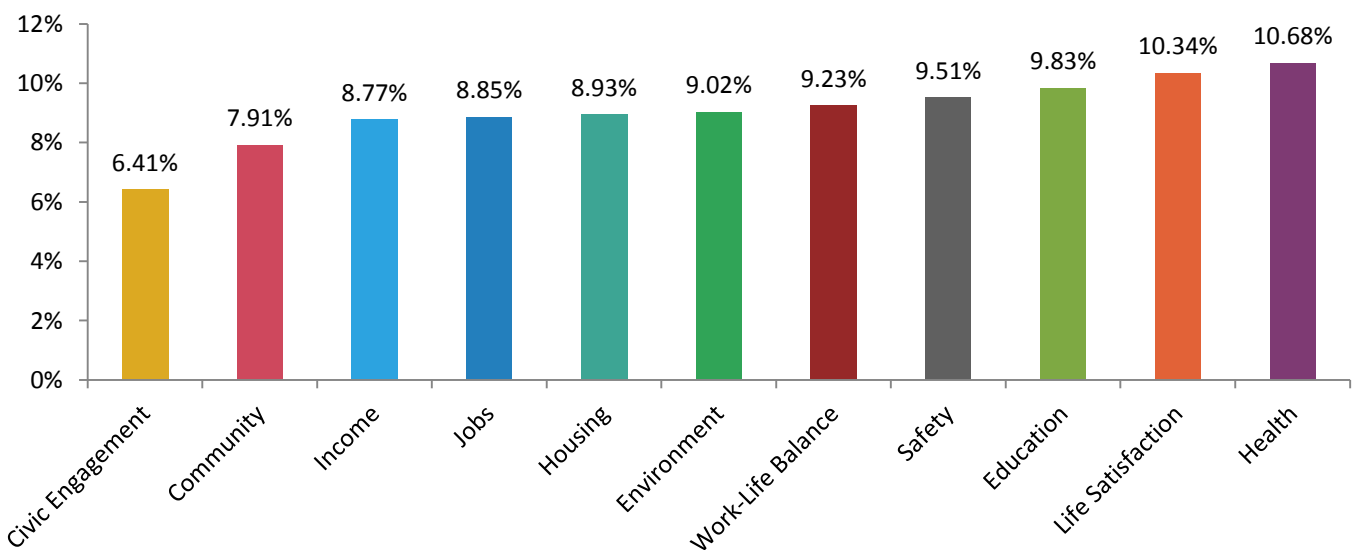


Users can also share their index with other people in their networks, as well as with the OECD. This allows the OECD to gather valuable information on the importance that users attach to various life dimensions, and how these preferences differ across countries and population groups.

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO PEOPLE IN CANADA?

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 573,000 people in Canada have visited the website making Canada the 4th country overall in traffic to the website. The top cities are Toronto (16% of visits), Montreal, Ottawa, Calgary, Vancouver, Edmonton, Mississauga, Winnipeg, Quebec City and Markham.

The following country findings reflect the ratings voluntarily shared with the OECD by 6,300 website visitors in Canada. Findings are only indicative and are not representative of the population at large. For Canadian users of the Better Life Index, **health, life satisfaction 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/#CAN.



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