

October 2015

# How's Life in Poland?

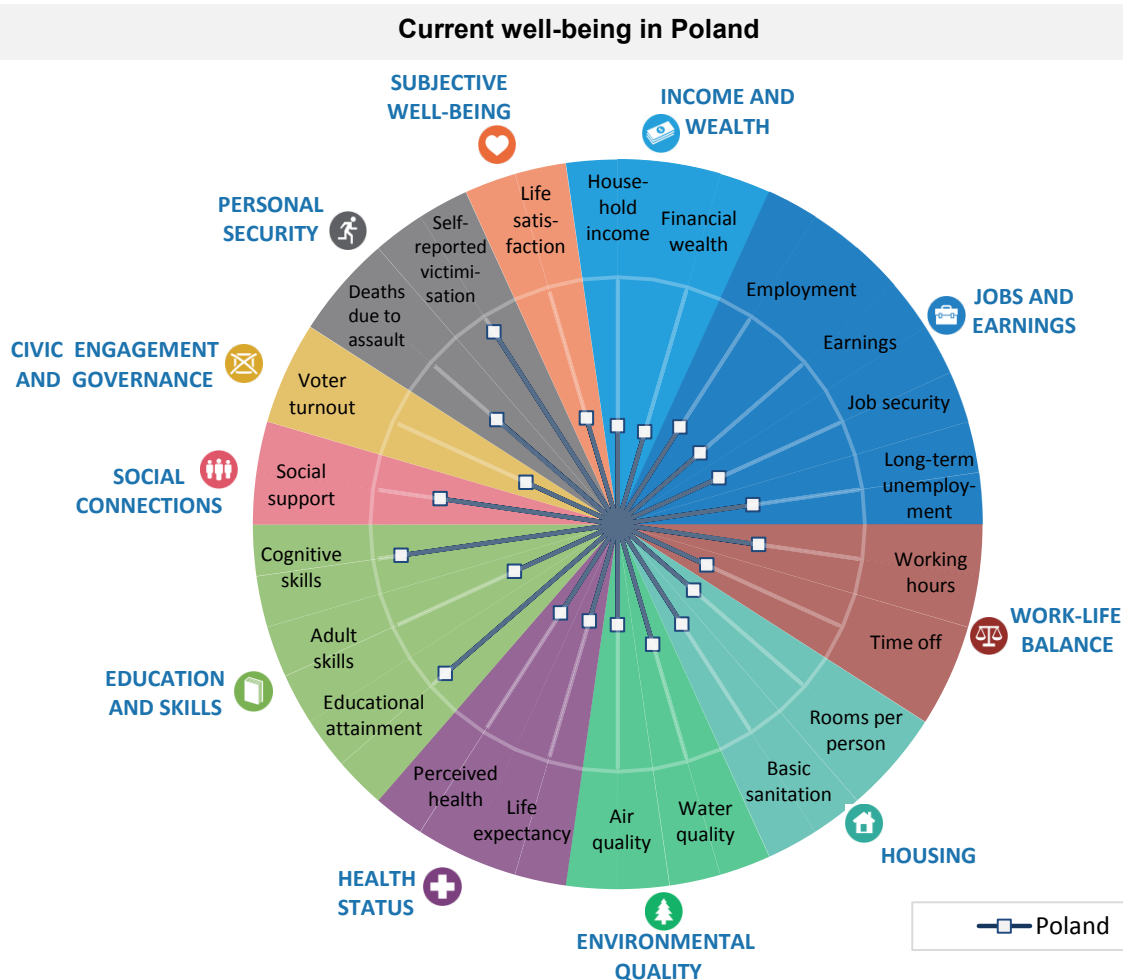


Additional information, including the data used in this country note, can be found at:  
[www.oecd.org/statistics/Hows-Life-2015-country-notes-data.xlsx](http://www.oecd.org/statistics/Hows-Life-2015-country-notes-data.xlsx)

## HOW'S LIFE IN POLAND IN 2015?

Poland has one of the lowest levels of **average household disposable income** per capita in the OECD. While **average earnings** in Poland increased by 5.2% between 2009 and 2013, they are still far below the OECD average. Poland also has comparatively low **job security**, and people with jobs report having less **time off** (i.e. time spent on leisure and personal care) than the OECD average.

When compared to other OECD countries, people in Poland live in rather poor **housing** and **environmental conditions**. **Life expectancy** in Poland (77.1 years) is among the lowest in the OECD. However, Poland has one of the highest levels of **educational attainment** in the OECD: 90.1% of the adult working-age population have completed at least an upper secondary education compared to the OECD average of 77.2%. Regarding **social network support**, 91.2% of the population in Poland report having friends or relatives that they can count on in times of trouble compared to the OECD average of 88%. Poland also has one of the lowest **self-reported assault** rates in the OECD area.



This chart shows areas of well-being strengths and weaknesses in Poland, based on a ranking of all OECD countries. Longer lines show areas of relative strength, while shorter lines show areas of relative weakness. For more details, see [www.oecd.org/statistics/How's-Life-2015-country-notes-data.xlsx](http://www.oecd.org/statistics/How's-Life-2015-country-notes-data.xlsx).

### Resources for future well-being in Poland

Beyond measuring well-being today, *How's Life? 2015* looks at some of the resources (or “capital stocks”) that will shape people’s well-being in the future. These include aspects of **natural capital**, **human capital**, **social capital** and **economic capital**.

For example, **trust in other people** is an important component of **social capital**. In Poland trust in others is close to the European OECD average level: on a scale from 0 (“you do not trust any other person”) to 10 (“most people can be trusted”), the average score given by people in Poland is 6, while the European OECD average stands at 5.8.

## HOW'S LIFE FOR CHILDREN IN POLAND?

Giving children a good start in life is important both for well-being today, and in the future.

Poland's performance in child well-being is very mixed. 8.1% of Polish children live in a household with at least one **long-term unemployed parent**, which is higher than the OECD average (5.8%). Furthermore, the share of Polish children **reporting their health** as fair or poor stands at 17.5% compared to the OECD average of 13.6%.

While the **reading** skills of Polish students lie substantially above the OECD average level, Polish students have relatively poor **creative problem-solving skills**. Only 3.5% of Polish teenagers aged 15 to 19 are **not in employment, education or training** compared to the OECD average of 7.1%.

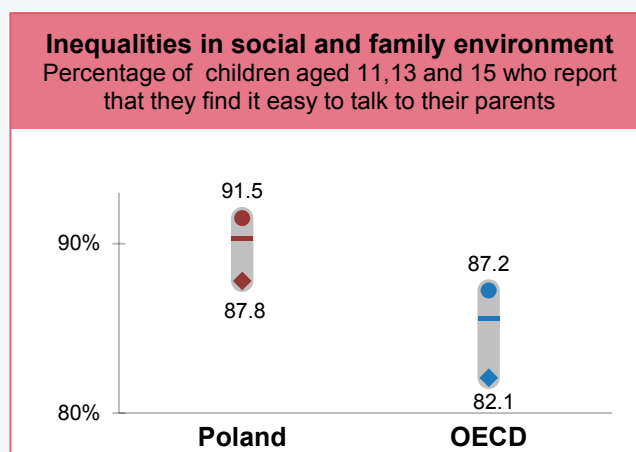
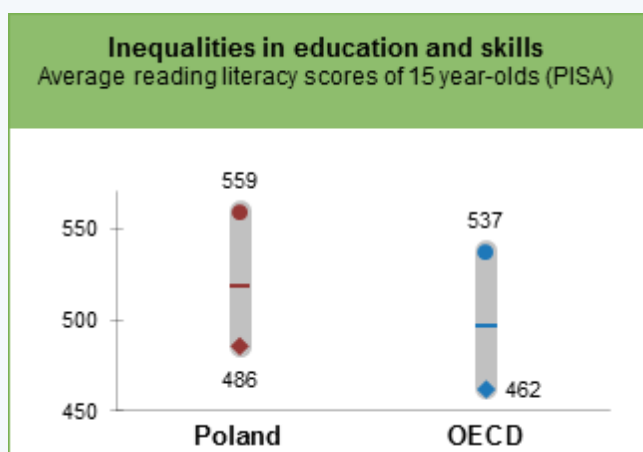
90.3% of Polish teenagers **find it easy to talk to their parents**, one of the highest shares in the OECD. However, only 51% of Polish students find that **most of their classmates are kind and helpful** compared to the OECD average of 68.2%. The share of Polish students **liking schools** lies also substantially below the OECD average.

The **life satisfaction** of Polish children is among the lowest in the OECD.

Child well-being in Poland		
Ranking of Poland compared to other OECD countries		
● top third    ● middle third    ● bottom third		
Income and Wealth	Disposable income of households with children	●
	Child income poverty	●
Jobs and Earnings	Children in workless households	●
	Children with a long-term unemployed parent	●
Housing conditions	Average rooms per child	●
	Children in homes that lack basic facilities	●
Environmental quality	Children in homes with poor environmental conditions	●
Health status	Infant mortality	●
	Low birth weight	●
	Self-reported health status	●
	Obesity	●
	Adolescent suicide rate	●
	Teenage birth rate	●
Education and Skills	Reading skills among 15 year olds (PISA)	●
	Creative problem solving among 15 year olds (PISA)	●
	Youth neither in employment nor education/training	●
	Educational deprivation	●
Civic engagement	Intention to vote	●
	Civic participation	●
Social and family environment	Children who find it easy to talk to their parents	●
	Students reporting having kind classmates	●
	Students feeling a lot of pressure from schoolwork	●
	Students liking school	●
	Sense of belonging in school at 15 years old (PISA)	●
	Time children spend with parents	●
Personal security	Child homicide rate	●
	Bullying	●
Subjective well-being	Life satisfaction	●

### Inequalities in child well-being

Across all OECD countries there are **large inequalities in child well-being**. Children from wealthier households enjoy both better material living conditions, and a higher **quality of life**, on average. In Poland, children from higher socio-economic backgrounds have higher reading literacy skills than children from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Furthermore, children from higher socio-economic backgrounds also find it easier to talk to their parents.



● High socio-economic status    ◆ Low socio-economic status    — National average

\* For more information (including definitions), see [www.oecd.org/statistics/Hows-Life-2015-country-notes-data.xlsx](http://www.oecd.org/statistics/Hows-Life-2015-country-notes-data.xlsx).

## THE VALUE OF GIVING: VOLUNTEERING AND WELL-BEING

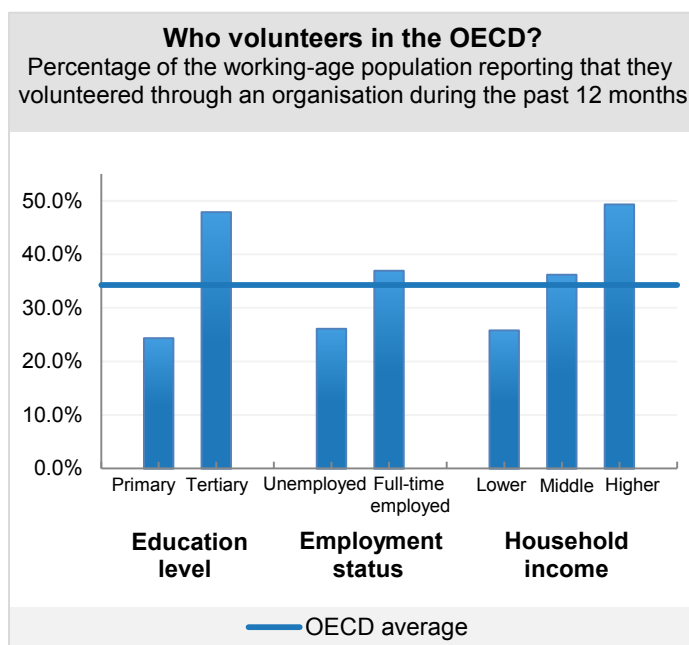
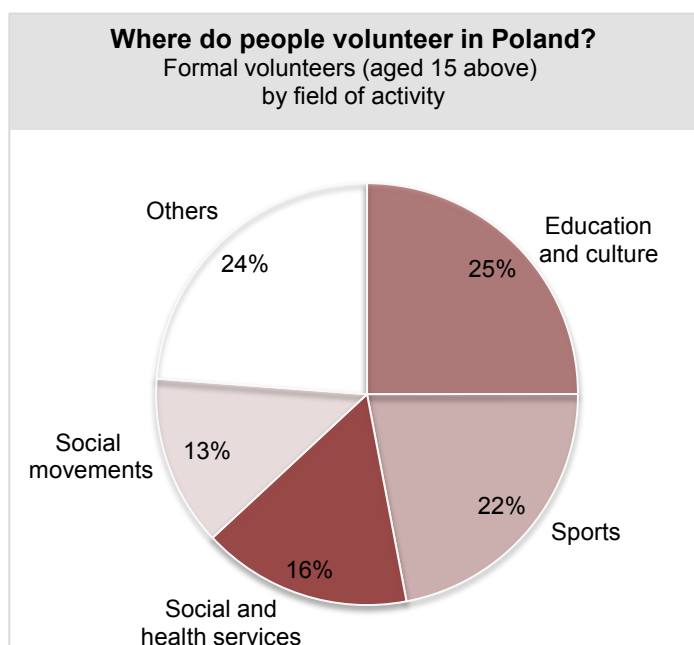
Volunteering makes an important “hidden contribution” to well-being, producing goods and services that are not captured by conventional economic statistics. When you add up the value of the time people spend on volunteering in OECD countries, it amounts to roughly 2% of GDP per year.

### Volunteering in Poland and the OECD

The **main sector of volunteering activity** in Poland is education and culture, followed by sports. Volunteering through an organisation (termed “**formal volunteering**”) is less common in Poland than in the average OECD country. 19.4% of the Polish working-age population report that they engaged in formal volunteering during the past 12 months. This is one of the lowest shares in the OECD area, where the average stands at 34.2%.

**How often do people volunteer?** 60.8% of people in Poland who participate in formal volunteering do so less than once a month. The share of formal volunteers who volunteer every day is 5.3% and lies slightly above the OECD average of 4.7%.

**Who volunteers?** Across the OECD area, people with a university degree are more likely to participate in formal volunteering than those with lower levels of education. Similarly, people who are in employment are more likely to volunteer than those who are unemployed. Participation in formal volunteering also increases with people’s level of household income.

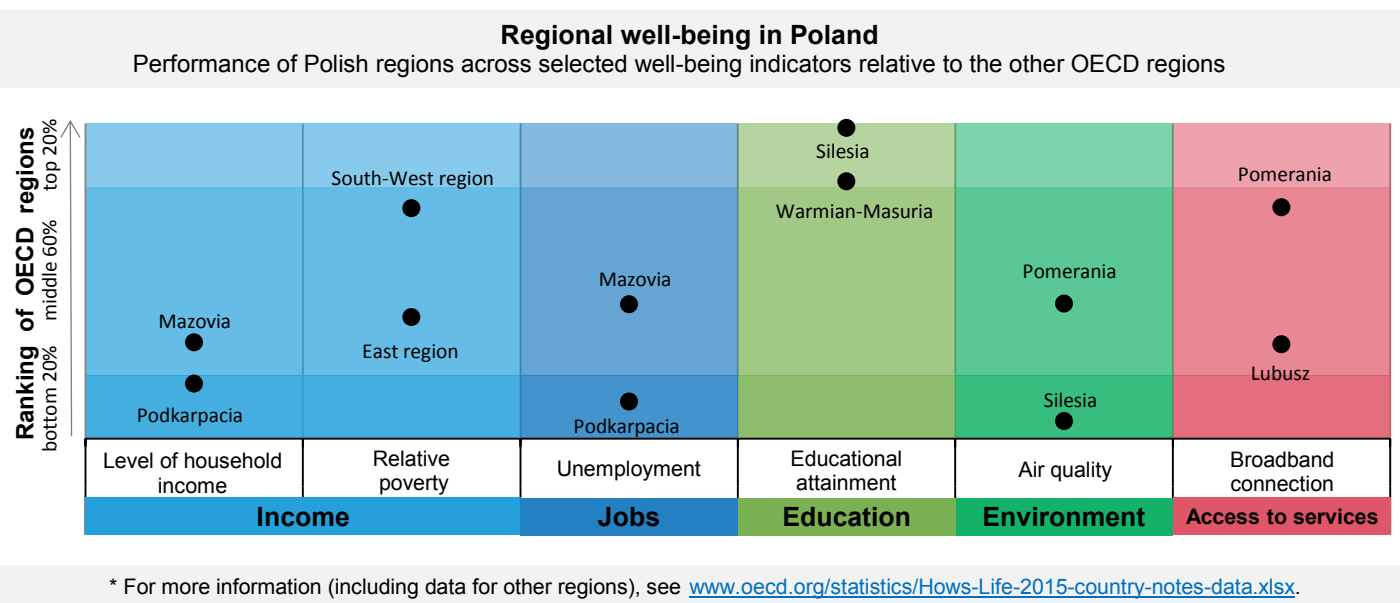


Volunteering brings benefits for volunteers themselves, as well as for the people and communities they help. For example, people who engage in volunteering are more likely to have higher literacy, numeracy and problem-solving **skills** and receive **higher wages**, on average, relative to non-volunteers.

In OECD countries, older people who volunteer formally are more likely to report a **better health status** than non-volunteers. Furthermore, formal volunteers in the OECD, on average, also report higher **life satisfaction** than non-volunteers.

## GOING LOCAL: MEASURING WELL-BEING IN REGIONS

Where people live has an important impact on their opportunities to live well. There can be large differences in average levels of well-being in different regions within the same country. **How's Life in your Region?** and the **OECD regional well-being web-tool** assess performance across 9 dimensions of well-being in the 362 OECD large regions – 16 of which are in Poland. Drawing on this work, *How's Life? 2015* includes a special focus on measuring well-being in regions.



### Regional gaps in material living conditions

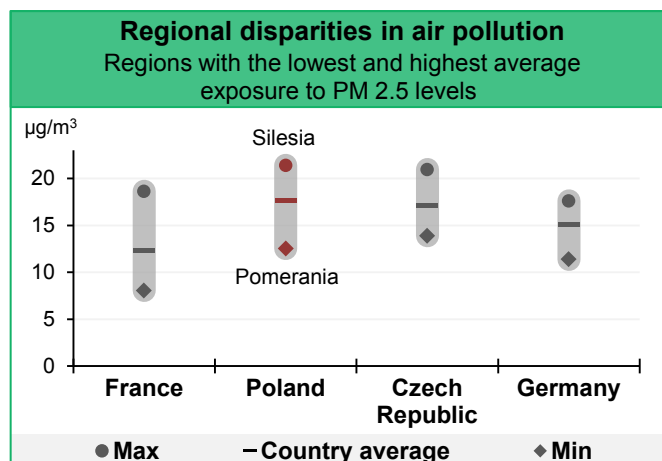
Regional inequalities in income in Poland are larger than in the Czech Republic or Germany: the **average household adjusted disposable income** is 52% higher in Mazovia than in Podkarpacia. Regarding **relative income poverty**, while 8.8% of people in South-West region have an income of less than half of the Polish median income, the share is 13.9% in the East region. **Unemployment rates** range from 7.2% in Mazovia to 14% in Podkarpacia. This gap (6.8 percentage points) is larger than the regional differences observed in many other OECD countries.

### Regional differences in people's quality of life

Regarding **educational attainment**, 95.3% of the labour force has at least a secondary education in Silesia, while this share is 88.5% in Warmian-Masuria. This gap (6.8 percentage points) is smaller than the regional differences in the Czech Republic, Germany and many other OECD countries.

The regional variation of **air quality** in Poland is smaller than in France, but larger than in the Czech Republic or Germany.

The share of households with a **broadband connection** ranges from 78.8% in Pomerania to only 63.3% in Lubusz (estimated values).



## BETTER LIFE INDEX

The **Better Life Index** is an interactive web application that invites citizens to compare well-being across OECD countries and beyond on the basis of the set of well-being indicators explored 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.

11 topics to define well-being

 Housing	 Community	 Health
 Income	 Education	 Life Satisfaction
 Jobs	 Environment	 Safety
	 Civic Engagement	 Work-Life Balance



Each flower represents a country and each petal represents a topic

Rate the topics according to their importance to you

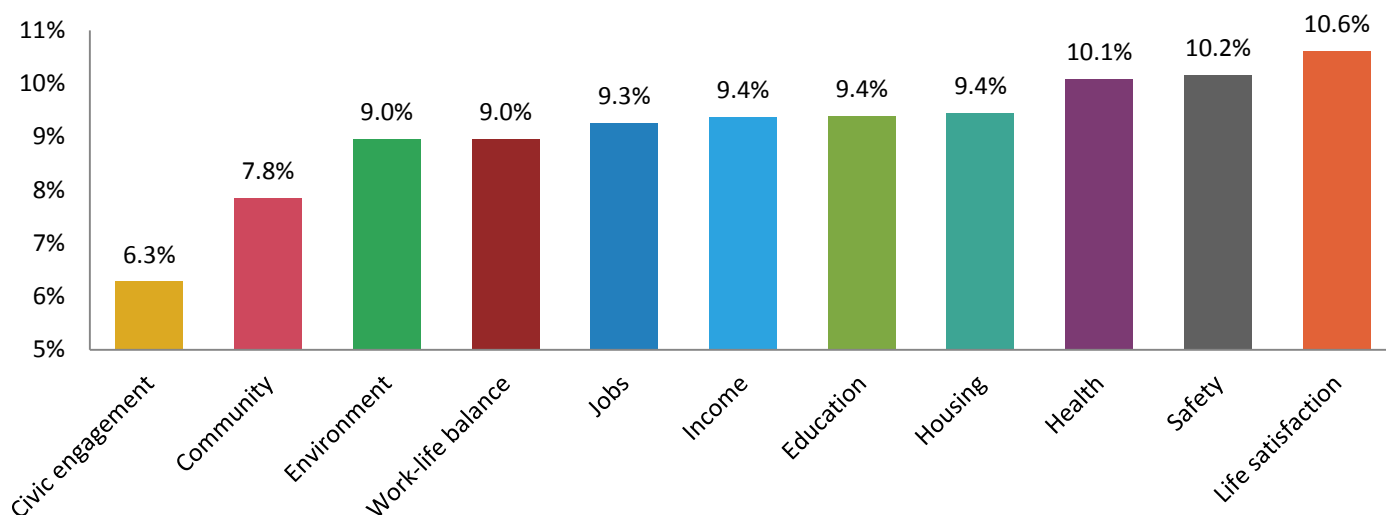


Users can also share their index with other people in their networks, as well as with the OECD. This allows the OECD to gather valuable information on the importance that users attach to various life dimensions, on how these preferences differ across countries, and on the demographic characteristics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

## WHAT MATTERS MOST TO PEOPLE IN POLAND?

Since its launch in May 2011, the Better Life Index has attracted **over seven million visits from just about every country on the planet** and has received over **15 million page views**. To date, over 73,000 people in Poland have visited the website making Poland the 23rd country overall in traffic to the website. The top cities are Warsaw (36% of visits), Krakow, Poznan, Wroclaw, Katowice and Gdansk.

The following country findings reflect the ratings voluntarily shared by 1,100 website visitors in Poland. Findings are only indicative and are not representative of the population at large. **For Polish users of the Better Life Index, life satisfaction, safety and health are the three most important topics** (shown below).<sup>1</sup> Up to date information, including a breakdown of participants in each country by gender and age can be found here: [www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/responses/#POL](http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/responses/#POL).



<sup>1</sup> User information for Poland is based on shared indexes submitted between May 2011 and April 2015.

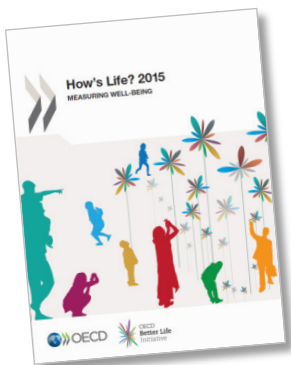
The **OECD Better Life Initiative**, launched in 2011, focuses on the aspects of life that matter to people and that shape the quality of their lives. The Initiative comprises a set of regularly updated well-being indicators and an in-depth analysis of specific topics, published in the *How's Life?* 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 towards a better understanding of well-being 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 brochure presents **selected findings for Poland from the *How's Life?* report** (pages 2-5) and shows what **Polish users of the Better Life Index** are telling us about their **well-being priorities** (page 6). A supporting Excel file with the data underlying the graphs shown in this note and further information is available here: [www.oecd.org/statistics/Hows-Life-2015-country-notes-data.xlsx](http://www.oecd.org/statistics/Hows-Life-2015-country-notes-data.xlsx).

## HOW'S LIFE?



*How's Life?*, published every two years, provides a comprehensive picture of well-being in OECD countries and other major economies by bringing together an internationally comparable set of well-being indicators that the OECD considers as essential to a good life. It looks at people's material conditions and quality of life across the population in eleven dimensions 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.

The *How's Life? 2015* report includes for the first time a set of indicators to measure the stocks of resources that help to support **well-being over time**. The report also contains three special chapters focusing on **child well-being**, **volunteering** and **regional well-being**.



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