

WELL-BEING AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN IN BALTIC COUNTRIES: STUDY REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION	3
About the Project.....	3
About the Study.....	3
About the Latvian Child Welfare Network	4
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	6
Conclusions About Methodology	6
Study Results	7
METHODOLOGY.....	12
Methodology of the Project.....	12
Methodology of the Focus Groups.....	14
Methodology of the Survey	15
MAIN RESULTS OF FOCUS GROUPS.....	16
School Life	16
Life outside the school.....	18
Conclusions.....	19
KEY INDICATORS OF CHILDREN'S WELFARE AND WELL-BEING	21
Socio-Demographic Profile of Baltic Countries	21
Children's Personal Welfare	22
Material Well-Being.....	23
Education and School.....	24
Housing and Environment	25
Family and Peers	26
Health and Risk Behaviour	28
APPENDIXES.....	31
Bibliography	31
Focus Group Questions.....	32
Survey questionnaire.....	32

INTRODUCTION

About the Project

The Latvian Child Welfare Network, in collaboration with NGO partners *Ziburio Fondas* (*Lighthouse Foundation Lithuania*) from Lithuania, *Lapse Huvikaitse Koda* (*Child Advocacy Chamber*) from Estonia and *Stiftelsen Fyrljuset* from Sweden implemented a joint project Well-being of Children in Baltic countries. The project implementation was launched in August 2016 and continued until May 2017. The total project budget was EUR 16 950, of which 55% of the funding was granted by the Nordic Council of Ministers in Latvia.

The main project objectives and deliverables were as follows:

1. To establish and pilot a system of children's well-being indicators that would allow for carrying out a regular and internationally comparable assessment of children's well-being in Baltic countries.
2. To create a Children's Well-Being Platform at the Baltic level that would strengthen cooperation and information exchange between non-governmental organisations operating in Baltic countries and between experts in the field who work for and with children.

In the future, it is planned to continue work on the improvement of the indicators and, in cooperation with the academia and the state authorities responsible for the well-being of children, to carry out an in-depth study of children's well-being and use the results in policies and support programmes to improve children's well-being both in Latvia and the other two Baltic countries.

About the Study

The study was aimed at developing a model of children's well-being indicators that would allow for carrying out regular and comparable measurements of children's well-being in Baltic countries. In turn, the results of such a study would provide an opportunity to establish an evidence-based child and family support policy.

Children's well-being measurements, indicators and monitoring are widely used worldwide to assess children's development. The focus in Latvia so far has been on collection of statistical data, while children's subjective well-being has been less analysed. Therefore, the goal of this study was to establish and pilot a model of indicators, which includes both objective (statistics) and subjective (children's self-assessment) indicators and provides an analysis of their correlation. Consequently, collection of statistical data was carried out in addition to conducting a quantitative survey of children aged 10 to 17 years in each country. To find out what aspects of daily life children raise when talking about well-being, nine focus group discussions (three in

each country) were implemented at the start-up phase of the study. The resulting content was used to design a quantitative survey questionnaire as well as to define the initial indicators model.

Building on foreign experience and practice of international organisations, the statistical indicators (over 500 different indicators) and children's subjective self-assessment indicators (over 100 different indicators) used in different measurements have been summarised. Thereafter, they have been adapted to the situation in Baltic countries by identifying indicators that are the most relevant, are available for all three countries and are methodologically comparable.

For ease of the analysis and use of data, all the indicators were categorised into five thematic groups: (1) material well-being, (2) education and school, (3) housing and living environment, (4) family and peers, and (5) health and risk behaviour. Each of the thematic groups included statistical data characterising the specific area and subjective self-assessment characterising children's well-being based on the children's survey. The total number of objective and subjective indicators in the model is around 150.

The study was carried out during the period from August 2016 to May 2017. The statistical data were obtained from the international databases (Eurostat, World Health Organization, UNICEF, OECD, PISA, World Bank, etc.), while the data on the children's well-being self-assessment were obtained from the children's quantitative survey, which involved responses from a total of 2,000 children in all three Baltic countries.

About the Latvian Child Welfare Network

Latvian Child Welfare Network (LCWN), Association was founded on November 11th, 2014 by 8 international and national NGO's, representing for child development and well-being relevant fields such as education, social welfare and health. These organisations are: Education Development Centre (EDC); Latvian Children's Fund; Latvian Country Family Doctors' Association; Foundation *Dardedze*; Ronald McDonald House Charities; Latvian EAPN; Save the Children Latvia.

The goal of the LCWN is to advocate for children's rights and ensure the increase of the physical, social, mental and material well-being of children in Latvia by making use of the right of civil society to participate in decision making and monitoring of its implementation.

Based on the strategy, developed by the LCWN till 2019, the main targets are:

- Safe and child friendly environment, including successful deinstitutionalization of children in out of home care, qualified practitioners for prevention and intervention in the work with children.
- Quality and inclusive education for children from preschool to the end of elementary school close to the children's residence, awareness raising and promotion of the need for paradigm change in the education system according the children's needs;
- Accessibility of primary and secondary health care services for children as well importance of prevention based health system and investments.

Achievements so far:

- Cooperation agreement with Ministry of Welfare & The State Inspectorate for Protection of Children's Rights.
- Participation in the Maternal and Child Health Advisory Council at the Ministry of Health; Submission of proposals for the Working plan 2015-2017 of the Welfare Ministry of Latvia.
- Participation in the preparation of the Alternative report on the State of Child Rights for UN.
- Membership at Eurochild as a national partner.

The Network sees as its main task a dialogue with policy-makers and the public in addition to promoting interdisciplinary awareness and approach centred on children's needs.

More about us: www.bernulabklajiba.lv

Contact us:

email: info@bernulabklajiba.lv

address: Zemitāna laukums 5, Riga, LV-1006

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Conclusions About Methodology

Overall, the results of the project indicate that the used methodology – to combine statistical data and subjective self-assessments – is an effective way to measure and to analyse the children's well-being. Inter-national comparisons show substantially different situations in each of the Baltic States, and these differences, in turn, largely correlate with each national child and family policy, as well as the overall national development trends and approaches. Data and self-assessment comparisons allow to identify those areas where policy interventions are needed.

At the same time, it needs to be taken into account that not always the collected data and self-assessments can be unambiguously interpreted. Focus group discussions with children is appropriate and well used method to identify topics about which children talk, when thinking about their own welfare and well-being (good life, good day, etc). But in general, it is observed that children have adopted themselves well in their given life environment and do not think much about 'what could be if would be'. Consequently, children in general assess their life positively, although they can name also many different aspects with which they are not satisfied.

It points to significant methodological conclusion – children's well-being and welfare fully and in depth can be analysed only when both statistical and subjective aspects of the self-assessment are incorporated in the indicator system. Otherwise, the assessments are unilateral – statistics do not always reflect the subjective well-being, whereas the subjective well-being is not always correlated with the general statistical, socio-economic and other indicators.

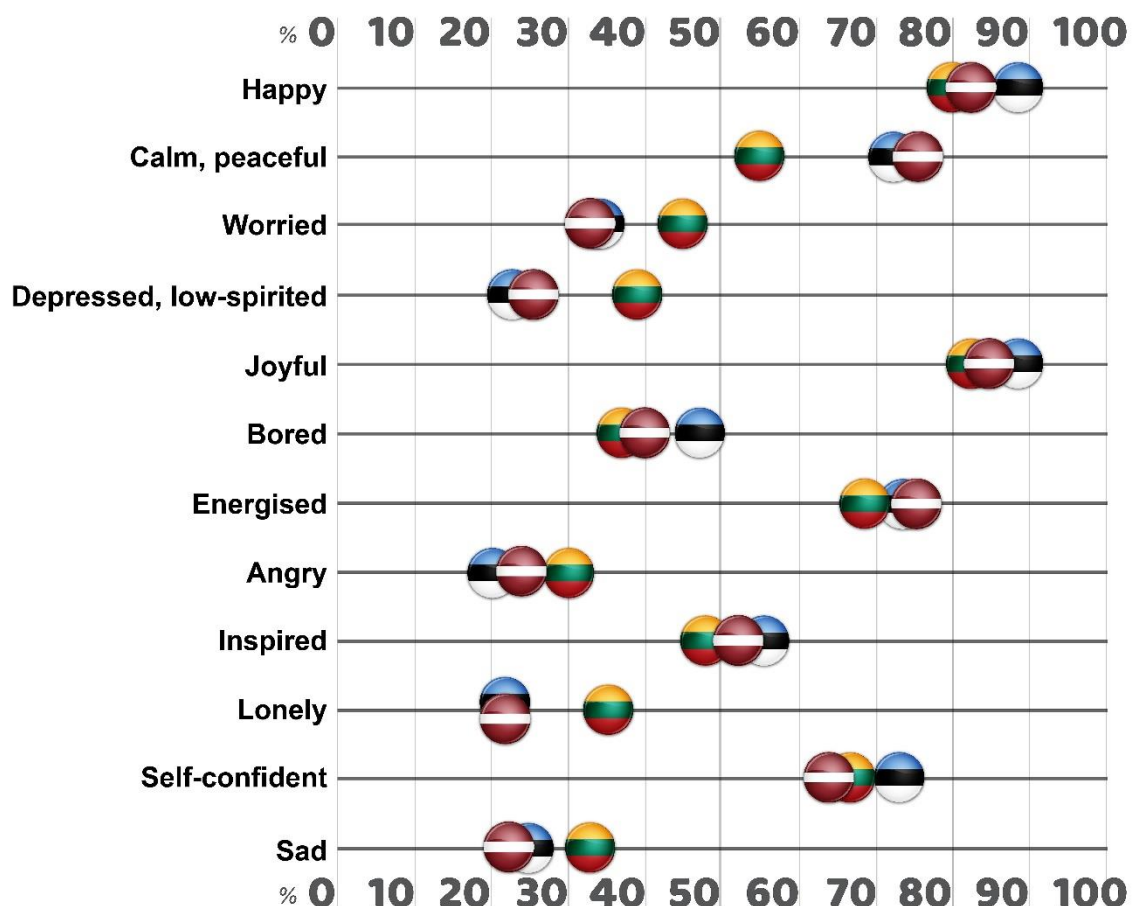
Evaluating the given project results, several recommendations for future measurements of children's welfare and well-being can be defined. First, within repeated measurements to analyse not only current data, but also changes in figures for the past 3-5 years – this would allow not only to assess the current situation, but also the direction and dynamics of changes of the situation. Secondly, to achieve regular and segmented collection of the children related data at the national level. By carrying out the given study, the data about children in each country was easier and more convenient to obtain in the international databases, rather than in the national statistics. Only the Estonian Statistical Bureau has given a separate section for data on children, while in Latvian and Lithuanian databases children as a separate target group is treated very rarely. Thirdly, to bring forward the necessity to create integrated databases, namely, to collect individualised data on children (education data, health data, social status data, etc.) in order to assess their mutual correlation. Currently, each set of data can be analysed just as an individual unit of data, it is not possible to analyse the extent to which

particular aspect of children's life affect the other aspects. Namely, integration of databases, and also longitudinal studies need to be developed.

Study Results

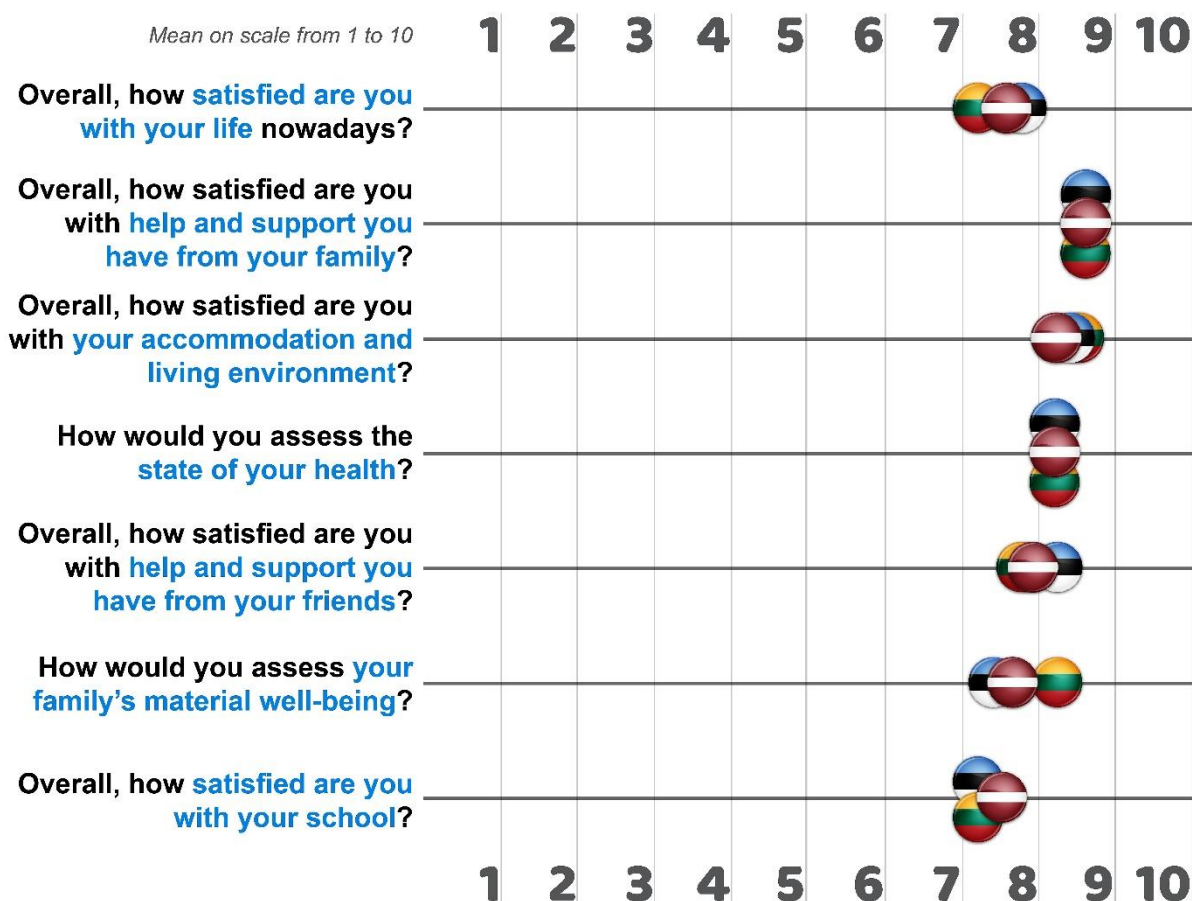
The data on the children's subjective self-assessments indicate that children feel most positive in relation to family environment as well as housing and living environment, while the evaluation of their school and family's material well-being is relatively lower. The biggest differences between Baltic countries are observed regarding family's material well-being and relationships with peers and friends.

It can also be observed that the children's subjective personal welfare is significantly different in each country. Children in Lithuania feel worried, depressed, angry and lonely markedly more often than children in Latvia and Estonia. Children in Estonia feel happy, inspired and self-confident more often than children in Latvia and Lithuania.



Although the subjective self-assessment of well-being is expressed in a positive way, there are several aspects of the children's daily life where the statistical indicators demonstrate serious shortcomings (such as health, material well-being of households, school environment, etc.). Such a mismatch between the objective and subjective indicators supports the previous

conclusions of different researchers: children's subjective well-being is a relative indicator of the actual situation, because children are characterised by a high adaptability to living and housing conditions. This largely explains why children's subjective well-being indicators are often similar in the countries which are very different in terms of development.



Transnational comparisons show that the well-being of children in Lithuania is substantially lower than that in Latvia and Estonia (children more often feel depressed, worried, angry and tired at school and have poor relationships with school mates; they quarrel with their parents more often, feel ill more often, etc.), whereas the situation in Estonia is considerably better than in Latvia and Lithuania in several respects (children feel happy more often, like to go to school, feel safer in the area where they live, have more free time for their hobbies, have better relationships with their family members and peers, etc.).

At the same time, transnational comparisons also show that better socio-economic indicators do not always ensure better indicators of children's subjective well-being. Although Estonian human and economic development indicators are much better than in Latvia and Lithuania, many of the subjective well-being assessments by Estonian children are not different from those given by Latvian and Lithuanian children. On the other hand, the above-mentioned aspects where the Estonian children's self-assessment is expressed in a more positive way

show that the reforms carried out in the Estonian education and family support policies have yielded positive results even in the short term.

It should also be noted that the indicators of families' material deprivation observed in the statistical data are very little correlated with children's subjective feeling of material well-being. At the same time, it certainly should not be interpreted as evidence that the material well-being of families has no effect on children's well-being: although material well-being has only an insignificant impact on the subjective well-being, opportunities for the development of children in the long run are largely determined precisely by the material well-being of families.

The data of the study also point to several aspects where there is a need to ensure evidence-based policies. The problem of minor children emigration is relevant in all three countries. Every year, each of the countries loses about 1% to 2% of the total number of minor children due to emigration (which means approximately 3,000 children in Latvia). Minor children who have emigrated over the past six years account for 21% of the number of new-born infants (approximately 122,000 have been born and 26,000 have emigrated). At the same time, the question of the birth rate increase is on the agenda more often than the question of emigration reduction.

Another aspect where there is a mismatch between policies and the data representing the actual situation relates to family support policy. Of all the children born in Latvia only 58% are born in wedlock and only 55% of all children live with both parents (while 28% live in single-parent households). At the same time, policies put a strong emphasis on traditional marriage as a factor of children's proper development. 72% of children are born in wedlock in Lithuania, but at the same time the children have markedly more negative well-being indicators than in Latvia. By contrast, only 42% of children are born in wedlock in Estonia, but children's welfare and well-being indicators are often significantly higher than in Latvia. These and other aspects make it necessary to assess the extent to which policies and political agenda are evidence-based and address the issues that have an impact on children's well-being in the long run.

The statistical data allows the identification of several aspects of children's development and well-being that can be considered as policy challenges. As far as the aspect of society's sustainability is concerned, significant challenges are related to the increase in the demographic dependency: while the proportion of children and young people in society will not change significantly in the short term and in the medium term, the proportion of the elderly population will grow, thereby creating a substantial load on the social budget. The above-mentioned emigration problem is an additional burden on such development trends.

Material well-being of households is one of the factors that have an impact on both birth rate and emigration process. Data show that one in five children in Latvia lives at the poverty line,

while more than 1/3 of households have “difficulties to make ends meet”. Single-parent households are particularly disadvantaged: more than half of them struggle to “make ends meet”.

The school environment in Latvia is characterised by a big proportion of those children who feel overloaded and tired (53%) at the educational institution, feel like an outsider at school (24%) as well as those who are faced with physical or emotional violence at school (9%). This leads to putting on the agenda not only the question of the content of teaching, but also the question of the school environment and relationships between pupils and teachers as well as between peers.

Family and peer environment is also an area where a few indicators point to serious deficiencies. Latvia has one of the lowest indicators on the international scale regarding receiving emotional support from family (more than one in three children claim that they feel no family support). One in ten children is smacked in the family and one in five often quarrels with the parents. Furthermore, every fourth child claims that he or she does not have enough friends and acquaintances with whom to spend time together. These data directly and indirectly point to the need to pay attention to whether the children are properly cared for, whether they receive the necessary emotional support from family and whether they are not neglected and left alone.

The most critical assessments in the aspect of subjective well-being indicators can be observed in the field of health. Latvia has the second highest indicator on the international scale regarding the proportion of the negative self-assessment of one's health. Furthermore, every second child claims that he or she does not have enough time to sleep and has too little time for his or her hobbies. Statistics also show that Latvian children are characterised by a high proportion of smokers and a high rate of injuries (injuries that require medical attention).

Significant differences in children's well-being data are seen in the aspect of the place of residence: children living in Riga claim more other than those living in rural areas they are tired and overloaded, that they have too much homework, that parents smack them and that they often quarrel with their parents, while rural children are more likely to say that they are satisfied with their school, feel safe in the area where they live and feel well at home. Some differences can also be observed in the aspect of the children's age: the older the children, the lower and more critical assessments they provide regarding the aspects of the study (satisfaction with life in general, school, housing, friends and family support as well as their health).

The data of the study overall allow the identification of the school environment, relationships with peers and parents, health and material well-being of households as the most relevant areas in promoting children's welfare.

Overall, the results of the study suggest that children's well-being is very subjective, and largely adaptive (also those children who are living in the worst conditions evaluate their life positively). At the same time, this does not mean that the situation of children development could be assessed as positive. Investments in children's education, health and improving parental skills help to ensure the long-term well-being, giving children the opportunity to realize their potential, regardless of their family's social and material status.

It is also essential to promote public discussion on whether it is important to seek formal achievements (in education) at the expense of children's well-being. Not always there will be positive correlation between these indicators, namely higher formal achievements can correlate with lower life satisfaction and worse daily life and self-assessments. Consequently – there needs be a compromise found between these various areas which, on the one hand, promote the comprehensive development of children and realisation of their potential, but on the other hand, also facilitate children's subjective well-being.

In-depth studies on children's well-being and their determinants can help to develop a reasonable and prudent policy and to analyse its impact on children, parents and families, as well as on the society as a whole in the long term. This, in turn, greatly reduces the risks that pseudo-problems get in the policy agenda and ensures that policy priorities comply with the real, and current and sustainable requirements of the society.

And finally, in the policy area of children and families the wider range of issues needs to be included, rather not only the promotion of the birth rate and the demographic aspects. For sustainability of the society the comprehensive development of children and provision of appropriate environment and conditions are very important issues. This includes issues both on parents' abilities and skills in the raising their children, and on the quality of education, but also such comprehensive issues as the inequality in the society and the development of the human capital.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology of the Project

Aim of the project:	<p>To develop child well-being indicator system, which would enable to conduct a regular, internationally comparable child-centred analysis (monitoring) on child well-being in Baltic countries.</p> <p>Project results provide important information for policy makers, providers of social services, schools and researchers about child well-being in Baltic countries and information that contributes to the design of effective services for children and their development.</p>
Project rationale:	<p>Children well-being indicators, indexes and monitoring is the widespread practice how to assess the children development situation in the country. For example, the Children and Young People Wellbeing Monitor are regularly carried out in Wales, the National Child and Youth Well-Being Index (CWI) – in America, the Child Development Index and Index of Children’s Subjective Well-being - in Great Britain, as well as several international practices - the Global Youth Wellbeing Index, Index of Child Well-Being in Europe, UNICEF Child Well-Being, etc.</p> <p>Most of the indicator systems analyse official statistics and the objective situation criteria, only a small part of them focus on the subjective children well-being. Therefore, the aim of the project and the innovative contribution therein is – to develop such indicator system that would allow to assess the existing situation of children from both objective, and subjective point of view.</p> <p>At the start point of this work, the assumption was that not always the objective criteria allow to fully assess the existing situation, i.e. – not always the objective well-being and prosperity correlate with the subjective well-being – prosperous living environment, good health, extensive education and leisure opportunities not necessarily imply that child feels well, is psychologically comfortable with the existing situation. For valuable children development objective indicators on children living environment, access to education, health, as well as subjective indicators on how</p>

	<p>children feel in the family, at school, with friends, etc are important.</p> <p>Therefore, the project identified five study areas of child well-being – Material Wellbeing, Education & School, Housing & Environment, Family & Peers, and Health & Risk Behaviour. In each of these areas the indicators were identified that are characterised by the objective aspect and the indicators that allow to analyse the subjective self-assessment of children (for example, regarding health – what is the official children health statistics and how children themselves assess their health).</p> <p>The current project must be regarded as a pilot project, within which the child well-being indicator model has been developed and adapted, and that could later be extended. The aim of the pilot project was – to determine if this indicator measurement can be applicable in the Baltic countries for in-depth analysis of the children situation, to identify those indicators that characterize the current situation most completely, as well as more particularly to activate the importance of subjective children well-being.</p>
Elaboration process of the indicators:	<p>(1) The overview and analysis of foreign good practices. Aggregation and analyses of the indexes, the indicator systems, and the monitoring methodologies developed and implemented in other countries to identify the adaptable methodologies in the Baltic countries.</p> <p>(2) Identification of the indicators applicable from foreign experience in the Baltic countries (initially identified set of indicators). Applicable indicators were identified based on several considerations – they are representing local situation of the Baltic countries, they are available in existing databases or easily obtainable for small scope additional research activities, as well as their aggregation/combination provides a comprehensive characteristic of particular areas (are not unilateral).</p> <p>(3) Focus group discussions with children. To find out what aspects children analyse/ mention, when it comes to the well-being and the welfare. What is important for children to feel good at home, at school, together with friends and in other environments.</p>

	<p>Children opinions are used to supplement the initially identified set of indicators.</p> <p>(4) Finalisation of the indicator system and obtaining necessary indicators in the international or national databases, as well as conducting the quantitative survey of children in order to obtain the subjective well-being assessments.</p> <p>(5) Statistical analyses of indicators and preparation of the analytical report, including the development of the policy recommendations.</p> <p>(6) Updating the methodology of the pilot project according to learnt experience – recommendations for further measurement activities of child well-being.</p>
Timeline of the project implementation:	August 2016 – May 2017

Methodology of the Focus Groups

Aim of the discussions:	To find out what aspects children analyse/ mention, when it comes to the wellbeing and the welfare. What is important for children to feel good at home, at school, together with friends and in other environments. Based on the obtained information and complementing experts' opinions, a system of children wellbeing monitoring indicators was developed.
Target group:	Children aged from 8 to 18 years.
Focus groups:	<p>ESTONIA</p> <p>Discussion #1: Socially disadvantaged families' children / Socially disadvantaged area, with less opportunities and access / Age 8-12 / No of kids: 10</p> <p>Discussion #2: Children in alternative care / group homes / Age: 13-16 / No of kids: 10</p> <p>Discussion #3: Children from regular families, more advantaged areas, from material wellbeing / Age 11-12 / No of kids: 10</p> <p>LATVIA</p> <p>Discussion #1: Children in rural area / Socially disadvantaged area,</p>

	<p>with less opportunities and access / Age 10-14 / No of kids: 12</p> <p>Discussion #2: Children in alternative care / SOS Children's Village / Age: 10-14 / No of kids: 7</p> <p>Discussion #3: Active youngsters at summer camp/ Age: 14-17 / No of youngsters: 9</p> <p>Discussion #4: Children at school in Riga/ Age: 8-11 / No of kids: 9</p> <p>LITHUANIA</p> <p>Discussion #1: Children home / Children day centre / Age 10-12 / No of kids: 5</p> <p>Discussion #2: Children home / Children day centre / Age 13-15 / No of kids: 4</p> <p>Discussion #3: Children at school in Vilnius suburb / Age: 16-17 / No of kids: 10</p> <p>Discussion #4: Children at school in Vilnius city / Age: 15-16 / No of kids: 10</p>
Process of discussions:	<p>Duration of a discussion – approximately 1-1,5h.</p> <p>Discussions were audio recorded.</p>
Time of discussions:	August-September 2016.

Methodology of the Survey

Aim of the survey:	To gather children's subjective self-assessment data in thematic areas of the study (health, family, school, etc.).
Target group:	Children aged from 10 to 17 years.
Sample size:	<p>2002 respondents in total.</p> <p>539 - Estonia, 1293 - Latvia, 170 – Lithuania.</p>
Sampling method:	Self-selection / Stratified sampling by age and gender.
Survey method:	Web-programmed self-administered questionnaire.
Time of fieldwork:	February-March 2017.

MAIN RESULTS OF FOCUS GROUPS

To find out what aspects children analyse/ mention, when it comes to the wellbeing and the welfare, focus groups (in total 10 (in Latvia and Estonia – 3, Lithuania - 4)) with children aged from 8 to 18 years were carried out. To get better understanding of children's life and their well-being conditions, group participants were asked to describe their typical (working) day, experience and reactions to different situations and tell their opinions about issues that were of researchers' interest.

School Life

Clearly school has very important role in children's life both in terms of time they spend there and educational and emotional experience. Very few children enjoy thoughts about school – motivation to go there and learn is quite low. One of the difficulties are early mornings, especially for children living in regions the day starts even before 7 AM, as they should catch the school bus. At the same time, school is important for them as a place of socialization and friendship – for those living outside towns other possibilities to meet peers are very limited. Children say they especially enjoy the long break, missing lessons and any possibilities to overstep the rules and limits:

"I like rave in the mornings when the teacher has not come yet."

"When you have some free lesson suddenly – then we chat, go to the store and buy some snacks."

"I like to tease girls with lasers."

"In the mornings, I want to stay at home, but when you go and get to the school, you do not want to come home."

Dispiriting experiences in the school refers to the learning process and methods of discipline: bad marks, condemnation from teachers about unfulfilled homework, forgotten things and inability to answer their questions. Children say the lessons are boring and they have difficulties to comply with different rules.

"Teacher yell at you and the rest of class laughs"

"Social educator - annoys me. Yells. Often, even without the reason, I have to go to her cabinet where she tries to explain me the need to learn."

"Sometimes in the class the teacher yells that you should go back to your place and think, when you don't know something at the blackboard."

"If I get 1 I become mad and don't care about the teacher and lesson anymore. I push my book aside and lay on the table."

"When a teacher accuses for something you haven't done and put you 1 in the lesson."

"When support people in the school ask you write an explanation - I do not know what to write. And then at the end they send me away."

However, there are also children who enjoy particular subjects (such as mathematics, informatics). In all groups children like non-traditional learning experience offered by some teacher such as informative walking in nature. Also, day-care after the lessons when the atmosphere is more relaxed are more enjoyed, and definitely favourite among children are sports lessons. Good days in school are days when there are some school events or parties, and days when teachers are in a good mood.

"The day of active inquiry when we went to hike along the river, collected a variety of leaves and made posters with our pictures and made the exhibition afterwards. It was the best day at school."

"I like to play the ball games at school."

"Ideally would be to have daily sports lessons."

"They could make a green classroom with nature trails made from cones, clay and wood."

In general, we may conclude that learning process in schools could be more productive if children could use more of their energy not only try to suppress it and teachers had the opportunity to employ more of different alternative teaching methods.

Focus groups showed also that one of the main issues for children at school are relationships among class mates. Feeling accepted and well perceived is a basic need. Children don't feel well if they are teased and don't have friends – this is equal to nightmare and death of a close person.

„To feel good a child should have a home; they should grow and eat well; and be accepted by other people and children around“.

Children say friends are their first person of trust in many situations. Younger kids are more open and ready to trust their teachers in case of problems, but elder children, in case they have some trouble at school, will speak to their friends not teacher, first (*"Friends are closer"*). Friend or a mate nearby is also the first help in case a child doesn't understand the material in class.

One of the issues of researcher's interest was – do teachers consult with children and if yes, what topics are discussed. According to group participants teachers have asked them for some technical assistance, e.g. small help with computer, or they have inquired for pupils' opinion regarding different organizational issues – class excursions, interest groups, reading choices. About educational process, children's views are not required, although there are situations where kids would like to be listened to (e.g. regarding amount of home work).

"I would like to regulate the amount of homework. I wish teachers would listen to us because many kids participate in after school activities, but for unfulfilled homework we also get marks. And if you don't have it, you get 1."

"I am engaged in sports and my sports teacher at school always registers me for different contests, but my point of view is never asked."

Also, there are situations when teachers have to master the chaos in the classroom – then they are not searching for the initiators, but condemn anyone within the grasp with the bad mark. Children say in these situations there is no sense to object and search for the truth.

"When a teacher accuses you for nothing, classmates laugh at you and at the end you get 1 in the subject. Teacher doesn't hear who the real troublemaker is. It is better not to combat with teacher in such situation. It's better to remain silent."

Life outside the school

Life outside the school by most of children is perceived as the best life. Many research participants are engaged in different extracurricular activities, the most popular of which are sports training, art and music schools.

Some children in regions say that they spend their time after school with friends, having fun outdoors, going to the store or playing football. At home, they spend time playing computer, watching TV or reading books.

Asked to describe an ideal day children say it is with no school; with great weather when one can spend the whole day until the night outdoors with friends or going fishing, for example.

"I like to walk out. Late in the night, in the darkness with friends and do something."

"I like to relax, going out with friends. And come home as late as possible, because in the evening everyone is out, it is the best time."

"I do not want to come home in the evening, because in the evening the real fun begins both in SOS and outside the SOS in Bauska castle mound."

At home an ideal day are the day with some celebrations – Christmas, New Year, Ligo or birthday, when one shouldn't go to bed in time and there is something special going on. Family usually fits into the children's ideal day plans; however good friends are equally important.

Another issue of researchers' interest were things that would make children feel better in their life. It is worth to say that children already evaluate their current life as satisfactory (8 out of 10 balls on average), because they have friends and family, but there are some quite particular things/ wishes that could even improve their life or make them feel better. These are: computer, better marks at school, achievements in sports, friends living closer to one's home, better

health; a girlfriend and a lawful age; also - a bigger pocket money or scholarships in secondary schools.

Conclusions

- Family and friends are the most significant values to children, besides good health, money and other material values, and personal achievements.
- Many children express negative views about the school because of children non-friendly school environment, conservative teachers, early wake-up and lot of homework.
- Ideal school children describe as – peaceful, pleasant, fun teachers, responsive teachers, friendly classmates, good equipment, young teachers.
- Many children do not like being assessed – afraid of marks, that teachers assess them harshly, insult, not evaluate them well. They do not learn for enjoyment and knowledge, but for marks, assessment, and teachers. Beside – children feel overloaded and have lack of free time.
- Educational process in schools would be more productive if: a) children could use more of their energy and creativity in lessons not try to suppress it for the sake of discipline; b) teachers had the opportunity to employ more of different alternative teaching methods.
- Majority of children don't have clear idea about their future, rather they think about particular moment, however children with worse past life experience are more particular in their future plans.
- From focus groups as the most problematic aspects of the well-being of children in school can be identified:
 - negativity and stress raising learning environment;
 - a little room for self-expression;
 - a little creativity;
 - need to learn for marks, for assessment;
 - “old” teachers;
 - teachers “look down on” children;
 - cognitive overload, especially for homework;
 - a little time for interest education.
- As the most problematic aspects of the well-being of children outside school can be identified:
 - family disputes;

- insufficient quality time with the family;
- insufficient leisure time;
- poor relationship with parents and/or brothers/sisters;
- material possibilities;
- incomplete family/wish to live in the full family (both parents together).

KEY INDICATORS OF CHILDREN'S WELFARE AND WELL-BEING

Socio-Demographic Profile of Baltic Countries

- The UN Development Programme's Human Development Index identifies the overall development trends of three Baltic countries: in the context of the three countries, Estonia has the highest index (ranked 30 in the world) and Latvia has the lowest index (ranked 44 in the world), while Lithuania has a medium index between Estonia and Latvia (ranked 37). A small increase in the index has been observed for all three countries over the past three years.
- The total fertility rate in Latvia and Lithuania is the same (1.70), while in Estonia it is lower (1.58). It can also be observed that the mean age of women at birth of the first child continues to increase: it is now 26 years of age in all countries.
- The proportion of minor children in the general population is the same in all countries and amounts to 1/5. At the same time, it can be observed that the proportion is decreasing in Lithuania, but in Estonia and Latvia it is slightly increasing. Long-term demographic forecasts, however, show that the proportion of children and young people will not change significantly because not only the number of young people, but also the total population will decline.
- At the same time, it is essential that the demographic dependency ratio is increasing as the proportion of older people in society as a whole is growing. Currently, the proportion of the people over the age of 65 in all three countries is identical to the proportion of the minor children (20%), but it is growing faster than the proportion of children (by 1% in the last four years).
- Data on the emigration of minor children show that Estonia lost about 1.5 thousand children due to emigration in 2015, while Latvia lost 3.2 thousand and Lithuania lost 6.7 thousand. This means that every year each country loses at least 1% of minor children due to emigration. Over the recent years, these figures have been declining, but are still markedly high.

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Year
Human Development Index: Index (UNDP)*	0,865	0,830	0,848	2015
Human Development Index: Rank (UNDP)*	30	44	37	2015
Resident population^	1 315 944	1 968 957	2 888 558	2016
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)^	1,58	1,70	1,70	2015
Mean age of women at birth of first child^	26,5	26,0	26,6	2015
Live births^	13 907	21 979	31 475	2015
Number of children (0–18 yo) in resident population^	258 835	369 085	551 610	2016
Share of children (0–18 yo) in resident population^	20	19	19	2016
Proportion of population aged 65 and over^	19	20	19	2016

Emigration by age (0–18 yo), number [^]	1 471	3 210	6 777	2015
Emigration by age (0–18 yo), share in population 0–18 [^]	0,6	0,9	1,2	2015

Data source: *UNDP; ^EUROSTAT.

Children's Personal Welfare

- General assessment of children's subjective well-being is about the same in all countries: the mean life satisfaction indicator is from 7.7 to 7.9 on a 10-point scale. It can be observed that as the age increases children's satisfaction with life decreases, which is particularly pronounced among girls.
- According to the children, the most significant problems in their city or parish are: personal issues, relationships with family, friends and schoolmates; smoking; and alcohol consumption.
- Children's self-assessments of well-being and different emotions experienced on a daily basis point to a particularly different situation of the Lithuanian children: they feel lonely, angry, depressed, sad, etc. much more often than children in Estonia and Latvia do.
- Children in Estonia are the happiest (89% claim that they are happy often or always), while the share of happy children in Lithuania and Latvia is the same (80%). It is interesting to note that despite the fact that Lithuanian children are much more likely to feel different negative emotions, they are as happy as Latvian children, where these negative daily feelings are less typical. At the same time, Estonian and Latvian children are very similar in their self-assessments of everyday feelings, and statistically significant differences can be seen only in two aspects – the feeling of happiness and the fact that the Estonian children claim that they feel bored markedly more often.

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Year
Self-assessment (for 10–17 yo)				
Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays? (Mean, 1–10)	7,9	7,8	7,7	2017
<i>Indicate, please – how often you experience such feelings?</i> (Often+Always, %)				
Happy	89	80	81	2017
Calm, peaceful	71	75	56	2017
Worried	34	33	45	2017
Depressed, low-spirited	24	25	39	2017
Joyful	89	85	82	2017
Bored	47	40	36	2017
Energised	73	75	69	2017
Angry	20	23	30	2017
Inspired	56	52	49	2017
Lonely	23	23	35	2017
Self-confident	72	64	66	2017
Sad	25	22	33	2017

Data source: The Survey of Well-being of Children in Baltic Countries.

Material Well-Being

- Gini coefficient scores (income equality) in all three countries are relatively similar: 35 in Estonia and Latvia and 38 in Lithuania.
- At the same time, the self-assessments of the material status of households with children are significantly different: while only 14% of such households in Estonia claim that it is difficult for them “to make ends meet”, this figure in Lithuania is 28% and in Latvia it is 38%. Single-parent households are at a particular disadvantage, where these figures are 26% in Estonia, 44% in Lithuania and 56% Latvia respectively.
- The indicator regarding children under 6 years of age living below the poverty line is similar in Estonia and Latvia (about 20%), while in Lithuania it is slightly higher (24%). The share of children under 16 years of age living below the poverty line is 19% in Estonia, 22% in Latvia and 28% in Lithuania.
- One in ten children in Lithuania lives in a jobless household, while this figure in Latvia and Estonia is slightly lower (7%).
- Even though approximately 1/5 to 1/4 of children are faced with some conditions of material deprivation, the subjective self-assessments are markedly positive. The self-assessments of family’s material well-being are highly positive: 8.1 in Lithuania, 7.6 in Latvia and 7.3 in Estonia.
- It is interesting to note that in Lithuania, where the highest material deprivation statistical indicators are observed, the subjective assessments are the most positive, while in Estonia, where the material deprivation rates are the lowest, the subjective assessments are also the lowest.

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Year
Statistics				
GNI per capita, PPP (current international \$) ¹	28 390	24 840	27 770	2015
Gini coefficient ²	34,8	35,4	37,9	2015
Central government debt, total (% of GDP) ¹	0,6	59,4	43,7	2013
At risk of poverty rate: Less than 6 years ²	20,1	19,9	23,5	2015
People at risk of poverty or social exclusion: Less than 6 years ²	22,8	27,7	25,8	2015
At risk of poverty rate: Less than 16 years ²	19,2	22,4	28,1	2015
People at risk of poverty or social exclusion: Less than 16 years ²	21,8	30,3	31,5	2015
Children aged 0–17 living in jobless households, % ²	7,5	7,2	11,4	2015
Households making ends meet with difficulty: Single person with dependent children ²	26,0	55,6	44,4	2016
Households making ends meet with difficulty: Households with dependent children ²	13,6	37,5	27,9	2016
Youth unemployment ratio (15–24 yo) ²	5,5	6,7	5,5	2016
Self-assessment (for 10–17 yo)³				
How would you assess your family's material well-being? (Mean, 1–10)	7,3	7,6	8,1	2017
<i>How often you experience such situations and feelings? (Often+Always, %)</i>				

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Year
My family provides everything I need (food, clothes, hobbies, school supplies, etc)	96	94	95	2017
I have enough pocket money to spend on myself	82	71	81	2017

Data source: ¹The World Bank; ²EUROSTAT; ³The Survey of Well-being of Children in Baltic Countries.

Education and School

- Education indicators in each of Baltic countries are different. Lithuania is characterised by a low proportion of early leavers and a higher proportion of the pupil–teacher ratio along with the lowest general indicators of educational attainment. By contrast, Estonia has the highest rate of early leavers from schools and the lowest pupil–teacher ratio along with the highest pupil performance indicators. Latvian indicators, in turn, are an average between Lithuania and Estonia.
- The proportion of low performers in Estonia is 5%, while in Lithuania it is 15% and in Latvia it is 10%. Meanwhile, proportion of top performers in Estonia is 20%, while in Lithuania it is 9% and in Latvia it is 8%.
- Latvia is characterised by a markedly lower proportion of the 15–year–olds who plan to pursue higher education: while their share is 54% in Lithuania and 43% in Estonia, they account only for 25% in Latvia.
- Although the subjective self–assessment of satisfaction with school is relatively positive in all countries, however, the survey data also show that Baltic countries have one of the highest indicators of child bullying and humiliation. 10% of 15–year–olds in Lithuania and Estonia and 18% of 15–year–olds in Latvia are faced with this problem. These figures are even higher among 11–year–olds.
- More than half of the children claim that they often or always feel overloaded and tired at school (as many as 65% in Lithuania) as well as that there is too much homework.
- Overall, it can be observed that approximately 1/5 to 1/4 of children are faced with some problems at school or generally do not feel well at school.

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Year
Statistics				
Net enrolment ratio (%): Pre–primary education ¹	88,0 (2012)	88,9	88,1	2014
Net enrolment ratio (%): Primary education ¹	95,4	96,4	97,9	2014
Net enrolment ratio (%): Secondary education ¹	94,4	94,3	96,4	2014
Out–of–school children of primary school age ¹	3 429	3 395	561	2014
Out–of–school rate for children of primary school age ¹	4,4	3,0	0,5	2014
Effective transition rate from primary to lower secondary general education (%) ¹	99,4	98,3	99,3	2013
Early leavers from education and training (18–24 yo; %) ²	9,7	10,7	5,0	2016
Young people neither in employment nor in education and training (15–19 yo; %) ²	5,4	3,0	2,9	2015
Participation rate in non–formal education and training (15–19 yo) ²	4,2	3,0 (2014)	9,2	2015

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Year
Percentage of students expecting to complete a university degree (15 yo; based on self-reports) ³	42,8	24,7	53,6	2015
Pupil–teacher ratio: primary education (number of pupils per teacher) ⁴	11 (2013)	11	13	2014
Pupil–teacher ratio: secondary education (number of pupils per teacher) ⁴	8 (2013)	8	8	2014
Low performers in all subjects (maths, reading and science, %) ⁵	4,7	10,5	15,3	2015
Low performers in at least one subject (among maths, reading and science, %) ⁵	16,9	28,4	35,4	2015
Top performers in all subjects (science, reading and maths, %) ⁵	6,1	1,5	1,8	2015
Top performers in at least one subject (among science, reading and maths, %) ⁵	20,4	8,3	9,5	2015
Self-assessment (for 10–17 yo)⁶				
Overall, how satisfied are you with your school? (Mean, 1–10)	7,1	7,4	7,1	2017
<i>How often you experience such situations and feelings? (Often+Always, %)</i>				
At school I get physically bullied (getting hit, pushed around or threatened, or having belongings stolen)	5	9	6	2017
Percentage of frequently bullied students (15 yo) ³	10	18	10	2015
I like to go to school	61	52	57	2017
I feel overloaded and tired at school	55	53	65	2017
11-year-olds who feel pressured by schoolwork: Boys ⁷	28	22	35	2014
11-year-olds who feel pressured by schoolwork: Girls ⁷	31	19	28	2014
15-year-olds who feel pressured by schoolwork: Boys ⁷	45	33	50	2014
15-year-olds who feel pressured by schoolwork: Girls ⁷	59	44	58	2014
I have bad relationships with classmates	7	11	17	2017
My teachers listen to my views and take me seriously	68	78	70	2017
Teachers are too strict/ unfair to me	17	12	21	2017
If I have problems at school I know to whom to turn to solve them	74	66	69	2017
I have too much homework	54	58	62	2017
During breaks we can spend time outside the school	28	58	56	2017
I have enough time for lunch at school	82	73	79	2017
I feel like an outsider (or left out of things) at school (15 yo) (strongly agree+agree) ³	13	16	31	2015
I feel awkward and out of place in my school (15 yo) (strongly agree+agree) ³	17	24	34	2015

Data source: ¹UNESCO Institute for Statistics; ²EUROSTAT; ³OECD/PISA; ⁴The World Bank; ⁵PISA 2015 Results; ⁶The Survey of Well-being of Children in Baltic Countries; ⁷World Health Organization.

Housing and Environment

- Latvia has a markedly high proportion of children living in overcrowded spaces: a total of 57% of minors do not have their own separate room or they share a room with adults or more than one other minor. This indicator in Lithuania and Estonia is 40% and 23% respectively.
- Furthermore, it is also observed that Latvia has the highest indicators of children who live in dwellings without adequate amenities or are out of repair. For example, 14% of children live in dwellings without either a shower or bath, 13% have no indoor toilet, while 9% of children claim that their dwelling is too dark.

- The overall subjective assessments, however, are highly positive: most of the children are satisfied with their housing and living environment.
- Approximately 1/3 of the children claim that they do not have enough time for their hobbies and leisure activities. This indicator is largely linked with the indicators mentioned in the previous section regarding overload at school and excessive amount of homework.

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Year
Statistics				
Average time, in minutes, per day, spent using the Internet outside of school, on weekdays (15 yo) ¹	163	147	137	2015
Average time, in minutes, per day, spent using the Internet outside of school, on weekend days (15 yo) ¹	192	179	162	2015
Overcrowding rate: Less than 6 years ²	21,2	50,8	35,7	2015
Overcrowding rate: Less than 18 years ²	22,8	57,5	40,1	2015
Children (aged 0 to 6) living in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation, or rot in window frames of floor ²	11,8	23,7	15,3	2015
Children (aged 0 to 18) living in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation, or rot in window frames of floor ²	11,9	26,0	16,7	2015
Children (aged 0 to 6) having neither a bath, nor a shower in their dwelling ²	3,9	11,0	9,2	2015
Children (aged 0 to 18) having neither a bath, nor a shower in their dwelling ²	3,9	14,4	12,4	2015
Children (aged 0 to 6) not having indoor flushing toilet for the sole use of their household ²	2,6	10,6	9,4	2015
Children (aged 0 to 18) not having indoor flushing toilet for the sole use of their household ²	3,7	13,2	12,9	2015
Children (aged 0 to 6) living in households considering their dwelling as too dark ²	4,1	6,7	5,9	2015
Children (aged 0 to 18) living in households considering their dwelling as too dark ²	4,2	8,8	4,9	2015
Self-assessment (for 10–17 yo)³				
Overall, how satisfied are you with your accommodation and living environment (flat, neighborhood, neighbors)? (Mean, 1–10)	8,4	8,2	8,5	2017
<i>How often you experience such situations and feelings? (Often+Always, %)</i>				
I feel safe in area I'm living	96	88	94	2017
I have enough time for my hobbies, leisure activities	78	68	71	2017
I have a quiet place to study at home	87	85	85	2017
I like to be at home	94	89	94	2017
At home I generally feel free to express my ideas and opinions	91	88	88	2017

Data source: ¹OECD/PISA; ²EUROSTAT; ³The Survey of Well-being of Children in Baltic Countries.

Family and Peers

- The proportion of households with children is about the same in all three Baltic countries: minor children live in about 30% of households. Slightly more than half of these households have 1 child, about 1/3 have 2 children and about 10% have more children.
- Latvia has the highest proportion of parents with a lower level of education among other countries: the parents of one in ten children have a basic or lower level of education. At the same time, Latvia has the lowest indicator of parents with higher education: while this figure in Estonia is 56%, it is 46% in Latvia and 50% in Lithuania.

- In Estonia, only 42% of children are born in wedlock, while this figure in Latvia is 58% and in Lithuania it is 72%. Only about half of the children live with both married parents (66% in Lithuania). 27% of the children in Latvia live in a single-parent household.
- It can be observed that, in comparison to children in Estonia, Latvian and Lithuanian children are smacked and argue with their parents more often, and parents consider the children's opinions and spend time together less frequently. Approximately one in five children is generally faced with such situations in Latvia and Lithuania.
- There is a relatively high proportion of children in Lithuania and Latvia who claim that they do not have enough friends and acquaintances with whom to spend time together. While the share of such children in Estonia is only 18%, it is 25% in Latvia and 28% in Lithuania.
- Approximately one in ten children in Latvia and one in five children in Lithuania admit that they have bad relationships with their peers (in Estonia it is only 7%).
- International comparisons demonstrate that Latvia has one of the lowest indicators among all countries in the children's assessments as to whether they feel family and peer support daily.

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Year
Statistics				
Households with dependent children ¹	29,8	31,4	31,2	2015
Distribution of children (aged less than 18) by educational attainment level of their parents: Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0–2) ¹	8,6	9,8	5,8	2015
Distribution of children (aged less than 18) by educational attainment level of their parents: Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4) ¹	34,6	44,1	43,8	2015
Distribution of children (aged less than 18) by educational attainment level of their parents: Tertiary education (levels 5–8) ¹	56,8	46,1	50,4	2015
Marital births, % from total births ¹	42,0 (2012)	58,5	72,3	2015
Share of children (aged less than 18) living with both married parents ¹	53,6	55,6	65,8	2015
Share of children (aged less than 18) not living with parents ¹	0,9	1,7	2,5	2015
Share of children (aged less than 18) living with a single parent ¹	15,2	27,9	22,2	2015
Estimated average age of young people leaving the parental household ¹	23,6	27,5	25,6	2015
Number of children out of family ²	2 554	7 281	9 220	2015
Share of children out of family in total number of children ²	1,0	2,0	1,7	2015
Number of children in social care institutions (residential care) ²	1 068	1 429	3 275	2015
Number of children adopted ²	93	267	190	2015
Number of children under guardianship ²	1 281	4 620	X	2015
Number of children living in foster families ²	205	1 232	5 493	2015
Number of children in social families ²	X	X	452	2015
Self-assessment (for 10–17 yo)³				
Overall, how satisfied are you with help and support you have from your family (parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters)? (Mean, 1–10)	8,7	8,7	8,7	2017
Overall, how satisfied are you with help and support you have from your friends? (Mean, 1–10)	8,1	7,9	7,8	2017
<i>How often you experience such situations and feelings? (Often+Always, %)</i>				

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Year
If I have problems, my parents will help me	89	86	86	2017
My parents take into account my opinion	90	83	85	2017
My parents are too strict	12	19	15	2017
My parents like me to make my own decisions	78	72	78	2017
My parents ask about my day in school	83	85	81	2017
We spend time together with parents	71	69	68	2017
When I have done something wrong my parents smack me	3	10	9	2017
I quarrel with my parents	13	19	24	2017
I have enough friends and acquaintances with whom to spend time together	82	75	72	2017
I have bad relationships with peers/children of my age	7	12	18	2017
11-year-olds who report feeling high family support: Boys ⁴	73	68	No data	2014
11-year-olds who report feeling high family support: Girls ⁴	80	72	No data	2014
15-year-olds who report feeling high family support: Boys ⁴	68	55	No data	2014
15-year-olds who report feeling high family support: Girls ⁴	68	54	No data	2014
11-year-olds who report feeling high peer support: Boys ⁴	46	40	62	2014
11-year-olds who report feeling high peer support: Girls ⁴	59	55	74	2014
15-year-olds who report feeling high peer support: Boys ⁴	52	42	53	2014
15-year-olds who report feeling high peer support: Girls ⁴	71	51	67	2014

Data source: ¹EUROSTAT; ²Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia/Estonia/Lithuania; ³The Survey of Well-being of Children in Baltic Countries; ⁴World Health Organization.

Health and Risk Behaviour

- Health and risk behaviour are the areas in which Baltic countries, in some respects, have one of the worst indicators in international comparisons, which allow identification of this sphere as one of the most important in the context of children's development.
- The three Baltic countries are those that have one of the highest proportions of smoking children, a high child and youth mortality rate (including due to road traffic accidents), a high injury rate, etc.
- Approximately every second boy and 40% of girls in Baltic countries started smoking before the age of 13, and it is the highest figure on the international scale. Among 15-year-olds, Estonia has the highest indicator for those who have used cannabis (29% of boys and 19% of girls), while Latvian figures are only slightly lower (23% and 19% respectively).
- Youth and child mortality rates in Lithuania are the highest on the international scale. Besides, Latvia and Lithuania have one of the highest child injury rates: about 60% of boys and 55% of girls seek medical attention due to injury at least once a year.
- Although the overall subjective health self-assessments are markedly positive, Latvia has the highest indicator for children who rate their health as poor or fair (on average 17% of 11-year olds and 25% of 15-year-olds, whereas this figure is markedly high among 15-year-old girls at 38%).

- More than half of the children claim that they often or always feel tired, while Latvia has a markedly low proportion of children who say that they have enough time to sleep (52%).

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Year
Statistics				
Body mass index (BMI) (15–19 yo): Underweight ¹	13	8	11	2014
Body mass index (BMI) (15–19 yo): Overweight and obese ¹	20	18	8	2014
Daily consumption of fruit and vegetables (15–19 yo): 0 portions ¹	42	48	41	2014
Daily smokers of cigarettes (15–19 yo): Total ¹	9	10	7	2014
Daily smokers of cigarettes (15–19 yo): Males ¹	14	13	10	2014
Daily smokers of cigarettes (15–19 yo): Females ¹	4	7	4	2014
15-year-olds who report first smoking at age 13 or younger: Boys ²	49	47	53	2014
15-year-olds who report first smoking at age 13 or younger: Girls ²	40	41	39	2014
Frequency of alcohol consumption (15–19 yo): Not in the last 12 months ¹	10	7	10	2014
Frequency of alcohol consumption (15–19 yo): Never ¹	32	43	47	2014
15-year-olds who have ever used cannabis: Boys ²	29	23	19	2014
15-year-olds who have ever used cannabis: Girls ²	19	19	10	2014
Time spent on health-enhancing aerobic physical activity (15–19 yo): Zero minutes per week ¹	25	13	18	2014
Infant mortality rate ³	2	7	3	2015
Under-five mortality rate ³	3	8	5	2015
Life expectancy at birth: Males ¹	73	70	69	2015
Life expectancy at birth: Females ¹	82	80	80	2015
Youngster (15–17 yo) fatality rate per million population ⁴	56	58	88	2014
Road accidents: Child (0–15 yo) fatality rate per million population ⁴	5	24	35	2014
Legally induced abortions by mother's age: Less than 15 years ¹	13	2	5	2015
Legally induced abortions by mother's age: From 15 to 19 years ¹	431	242	314	2015
Immunization coverage: DTP (diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), and tetanus) ³	95	93	97	2015
11-year-olds who report at least one medically attended injury in the last 12 months: Boys ²	58	63	60	2014
11-year-olds who report at least one medically attended injury in the last 12 months: Girls ²	50	54	54	2014
15-year-olds who report at least one medically attended injury in the last 12 months: Boys ²	54	62	54	2014
15-year-olds who report at least one medically attended injury in the last 12 months: Girls ²	46	54	45	2014
11-year-olds who consume soft drinks daily: Boys ²	9	7	16	2014
11-year-olds who consume soft drinks daily: Girls ²	6	5	9	2014
15-year-olds who consume soft drinks daily: Boys ²	7	8	13	2014
15-year-olds who consume soft drinks daily: Girls ²	3	5	7	2014
11-year-olds who brush their teeth more than once a day: Boys ²	57	45	45	2014
11-year-olds who brush their teeth more than once a day: Girls ²	72	58	57	2014
15-year-olds who brush their teeth more than once a day: Boys ²	55	40	42	2014
15-year-olds who brush their teeth more than once a day: Girls ²	79	63	61	2014
Self-assessment (for 10–17 yo)⁵				
How would you assess the state of your health? (Mean, 1–10)	8,1	8,1	8,1	2017
11-year-olds who rate their health as fair or poor: Boys ²	9	16	7	2014
11-year-olds who rate their health as fair or poor: Girls ²	9	18	6	2014

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Year
15-year-olds who rate their health as fair or poor: Boys ²	14	14	10	2014
15-year-olds who rate their health as fair or poor: Girls ²	20	38	25	2014
<i>How often you experience such situations and feelings? (Often+Always, %)</i>				
I'm happy with the way that I look	77	71	70	2017
I feel myself tired	55	60	66	2017
I regularly playing sports or doing exercises outside school	63	64	44	2017
I eat hot meal at least once a day	96	91	94	2017
I have enough time to sleep	68	52	58	2017
I am feeling sick and ill	14	16	21	2017

Data source: ¹EUROSTAT; ²World Health Organization; ³UNICEF; ⁴European Commission; ⁵The Survey of Well-being of Children in Baltic Countries.

APPENDIXES

Bibliography

- Amigo (2015). Amigo laimes indeks. Available: <http://laimigamgimenem.lv/1201/0/33855>
- Bela, B., Tisenkopfs, T. (eds.) (2006). Dzīves kvalitāte Latvijā. Latvijas Valsts prezidenta kanceleja. Zinātne.
- Bradshaw, J. and Richardson, D. (2009). An Index of Child Well-Being in Europe. Available: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs12187-009-9037-7>
- Centrālā statistikas pārvalde (2015). Bērni Latvijā. Available: http://www.csb.gov.lv/sites/default/files/nr_13_berni_latvija_2015_15_00_lv_en.pdf
- Communities and Local Government (2009). Local Index of Child Well-Being. Summary Report. Available: <https://www.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/research/pdf/localIndexCWB.pdf>
- Conti, G. and Heckman, J.J. (2012). The Economics of Child Well-Being. Available: <http://ftp.iza.org/dp6930.pdf>
- Currie, C et al. (eds.) (2012). Social determinants of health and well-being among young people. Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study: international report from the 2009/2010 survey. Available: http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/163857/Social-determinants-of-health-and-well-being-among-young-people.pdf
- Fauth, B. and Thompson, M. (2009). Young children's well-being. Domains and contexts of development from birth to age 8. NCB Research Centre - National Children's Bureau. Available: https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/NO97%20-%20young_childrens_well_being_final.pdf
- Goldin, N. (2014). The Global Youth Wellbeing Index. Available: <http://www.youthindex.org/full-report/>
- Gutman, L.M., Feinstein, L. (2008). Children's Well-Being in Primary School: Pupil and School Effects. Available: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/WBL25.pdf>
- Heshmati, A., Bajalan, C. and Tausch, A. (2007). Measurement and Analysis of Child Well-Being in Middle and High Income Countries. Available: <http://eaces.liuc.it/18242979200802/182429792008050203.pdf>
- Ipsos MORI (2011). Children's Well-being in UK, Sweden and Spain: The Role of Inequality and Materialism. Available: https://old.unicef.es/sites/www.unicef.es/files/IPSOS_UNICEF_ChildWellBeingreport.pdf
- Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija (2013). Jaunieši Latvijā. Aktivitāte, mobilitāte, līdzdalība. 2008-2013. Available: http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/statistika/petijumi/Jauniesi_Latvija_2008-2013.pdf
- Knies, G. (2012). Life Satisfaction and Material Well-being of Children in the UK. Institute for Social and Economic Research University of Essex. Available: <https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/research/publications/working-papers/iser/2012-15.pdf>
- Main, G. (2014). Child poverty and children's subjective well-being. Available: <http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/78451/1/GMcirfeb14.pdf>
- McLanahan, A. (2000). The Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study: Questions, Design, and a Few Preliminary Results. Princeton University. Available: <http://crrw.princeton.edu/workingpapers/WP00-07-FF-McLanahan.pdf>
- Moore K., Mbwana, K., Theokas, C., Lippman, L., Bloch, M., Vandivere, S., O'Hare, O. (2011). CHILD WELL-BEING: AN INDEX BASED ON DATA OF INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN. Available: <https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/ChildWellBeing.pdf>
- NatCen Social Research (2008). Predicting wellbeing. Available: <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/media/205352/predictors-of-wellbeing.pdf>
- OECD (2009). Doing Better for Children. Available: <http://www.oecd.org/els/social/childwellbeing>
- Office for National Statistics (2014). Measuring National Well-being - Exploring the Well-being of Children in the UK. Available: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_387750.pdf
- Rees, G., Goswami, H. and Bradshaw, J. (2010). Developing an index of children's subjective well-being in England. The Children's Society. Available: https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/research_docs/Developing%20an%20Index%20of%20Children%27s%20Subjective%20Well-being%20in%20England.pdf
- Save the Children UK (2008). The Child Development Index Holding governments to account for children's wellbeing. Available: <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/child-development-index.pdf>
- Šķestere, I. (2012). Pētījums par dzīves kvalitātes izvērtējuma metodēm un instrumentiem (1.daļa). Available: http://www.sif.gov.lv/nodevumi/nodevumi/4881/petijums_dz_kvalit_1.pdf

Statham, J. and Chase, E. (2010). Childhood Wellbeing: A brief overview. Available: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/June_Statham/publication/242676811_Childhood_Wellbeing_A_Brief_Overview/links/549bd87c0cf2b80371372fc7/Childhood-Wellbeing-A-Brief-Overview.pdf

Strazdins, L. et al. (2011). Parent and child wellbeing and the influence of work and family arrangements: a three cohort study. Available: https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/sprp_44.pdf

TÁRKI Social Research Institute (2011). Child well-being in the European Union. Better monitoring instruments for better policies. Available: http://www.tarki.hu/en/research/childpoverty/tarki_chwb_mainreport_online.pdf

The Children's Society (2013). The Good Childhood Report. Available: https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/good_childhood_report_2013_final.pdf

The Duke Center for Child and Family Policy (2014). Child and Youth Well-Being Index (CWI) Report. Available: <https://childandfamilypolicy.duke.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Child-Well-Being-Report.pdf>

The Scottish Government (2014). GROWING UP IN SCOTLAND: Family and school influences on children's social and emotional well-being. Available: http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/20296/1/00452548_Redacted.pdf

Welsh Government (2015). Children and Young People Wellbeing Monitor for Wales 2015. Welsh Government Social Research. Available: http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/24929/3/151211-children-young-people-wellbeing-monitor-2015-en_Redacted.pdf

World Vision International (2011). Compendium of Indicators for Measuring Child Well-being Outcomes. Available: <http://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/Compendium%20of%20Indicators-English.pdf>

Focus Group Questions

- 1) What is a good day? How you would describe a good day?
- 2) And what is a bad day?
- 3) How was your day today? Why good/ bad?
- 4) What is a good school?
- 5) And what is a bad school?
- 6) Is your school good or bad? Why?
- 7) What is a good friend?
- 8) What is a bad friend?
- 9) What you enjoy doing the most in your free time?
- 10) Is there anything you would like to do in your free time, but cannot? Why cannot?
- 11) If you could change something in your life, what would it be? Why? What you would like to change at home, in school, in friends, in yourself?
- 12) If it would be possible to choose – where you would like to live? Why there?
- 13) What is the most important in life to you?
- 14) How do you think – will you be able to achieve what you wish in your life? Why yes/not?
- 15) What are the biggest dreams/ targets you would like to achieve in your life?
- 16) What is the most joyful event in your life this year?

Survey questionnaire

Hello!

We are currently working on the study about living conditions of children and young people in the Baltic States, therefore we are asking children and young people to fill in a small questionnaire. We would like to ask you to participate in this study too!

There is no right or wrong answer in the questionnaire – your opinion and assessment is important for us! If you can't give the answer to any of the questions, leave it blank. However, please fill in the questionnaire as completely as possible.

We guarantee that your information will be used only in aggregate form and answers will be kept confidential – they will not be available neither to teachers, nor to parents, nor to other peers!

Filling the questionnaire will take no more than 10 minutes of your time!

Thank you very much for your response!

General Information

S1.1	How old are you?											
S1.2	Your gender:					Man		1				
						Woman		2				
S1.2ar	Where do you live now?					Capital of the country		1				
						Another city		2				
						Rural area		3				
S1.3	Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	<i>Not at all</i>											<i>Completely</i>
S1.4	How do you think - what are the main problems of children and young people in your city/parish?											
	Indicate, please – how often you experience such feelings?											
						Never	Rarely	Often	Always			
S1.5	Happy					1	2	3	4			
S1.6	Anxious					1	2	3	4			
S1.7	Calm, peaceful					1	2	3	4			
S1.8	Worried					1	2	3	4			
S1.9	Depressed, low-spirited					1	2	3	4			
S1.10	Joyful					1	2	3	4			
S1.11	Bored					1	2	3	4			
S1.12	Energised					1	2	3	4			
S1.13	Angry					1	2	3	4			
S1.14	Inspired					1	2	3	4			
S1.15	Lonely					1	2	3	4			
S1.16	Self-confident					1	2	3	4			
S1.17	Sad					1	2	3	4			

Material Wellbeing

S2.1	How would you assess your family's material well-being?										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	<i>Very poor</i>										<i>Very wealthy</i>
	For each mentioned expression indicate, please – how often you experience such situations and feelings?										
						Never	Rarely	Often	Always		
S2.2	My family provide everything I need (food, clothes, hobbies, school supplies, etc)					1	2	3	4		
S2.3	I have enough pocket money to spend on myself					1	2	3	4		

Education & School

S3.1	Overall, how satisfied are you with your school?											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	<i>Not at all</i>											<i>Completely</i>
S3.2	What do you LIKE best about your school?											
S3.3	What do you DISLIKE most about your school?											
	For each mentioned expression indicate, please – how often you experience such situations and feelings?											
						Never	Rarely	Often	Always			
S3.4	At school, I get physically bullied (hit, pushed around or threatened, or having belongings stolen)					1	2	3	4			
S3.5	I like to go to school					1	2	3	4			
S3.6	I feel overloaded and tired at school					1	2	3	4			
S3.7	I have bad relationships with classmates					1	2	3	4			
S3.8	My teachers listen to my views and take me					1	2	3	4			

	seriously				
S3.9	Teachers are too strict/ unfair to me	1	2	3	4
S3.10	If I have problems at school I know to whom to turn to solve them	1	2	3	4
S3.11	I have too much homework	1	2	3	4
S3.12	During breaks we can spend time outside the school	1	2	3	4
S3.13	I have enough time for lunch at school	1	2	3	4

Housing & Environment

S4.1	Overall, how satisfied are you with your accommodation and living environment (flat, neighbourhood, neighbours)?									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	<i>Not at all</i>					<i>Completely</i>				

	For each mentioned expression indicate, please – how often you experience such situations and feelings?				
		Never	Rarely	Often	Always
S4.2	I feel safe in area I'm living	1	2	3	4
S4.3	I have enough time for my hobbies, leisure activities	1	2	3	4
S4.4	I have a quiet place to study at home	1	2	3	4
S4.5	I feel good at home	1	2	3	4
S4.6	At home, I generally feel free to express my ideas and opinions	1	2	3	4

Family & Peers

S5.1	Overall, how satisfied are you with help and support you have from your family (parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters)?									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	<i>Not at all</i>					<i>Completely</i>				

S5.2	Overall, how satisfied are you with help and support you have from your friends?									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	<i>Not at all</i>					<i>Completely</i>				

	For each mentioned expression indicate, please – how often you experience such situations and feelings?				
		Never	Rarely	Often	Always
S5.3	If I have problems, my parents will help me	1	2	3	4
S5.4	My parents take into account my opinion	1	2	3	4
S5.5	My parents are too strict	1	2	3	4
S5.6	My parents like me to make my own decisions	1	2	3	4
S5.7	My parents ask about my day in school	1	2	3	4
S5.8	We spend time together with parents	1	2	3	4
S5.9	When I have done something wrong my parents smack me	1	2	3	4
S5.10	I quarrel with my parents	1	2	3	4
S5.11	I have enough friends and acquaintances with whom to spend time together	1	2	3	4
S5.12	I have bad relationships with peers/children of my age	1	2	3	4

Health & Risk Behaviour

S6.1	How would you assess the state of your health?									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	<i>Poor</i>					<i>Excellent</i>				

	For each mentioned expression indicate, please – how often you experience such situations and feelings?				
		Never	Rarely	Often	Always
S6.2	I'm happy with the way that I look	1	2	3	4
S6.3	I feel myself tired	1	2	3	4
S6.4	I regularly playing sports or doing exercises outside school	1	2	3	4
S6.5	I eat hot meal at least once a day	1	2	3	4
S6.6	I have enough time to sleep	1	2	3	4
S6.7	I am feeling sick and ill	1	2	3	4

Thank you very much for your response!