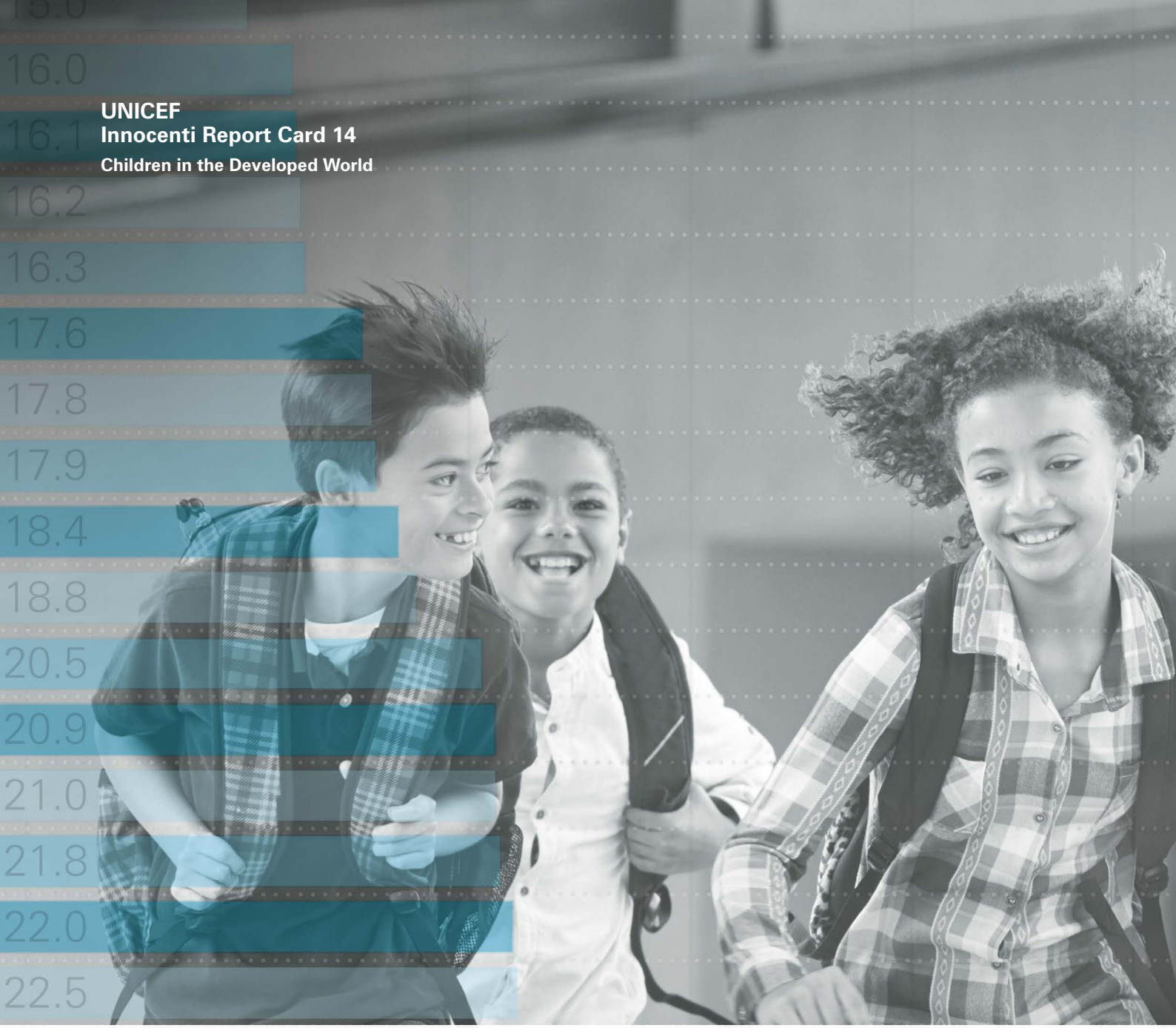
UNICEF
Innocenti Report Card 14
Children in the Developed World



Building the Future

Children and the Sustainable Development Goals in Rich Countries

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Office of Research–Innocenti

Innocenti Report Card 14 was written by Chris Brazier.

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The *Innocenti Report Card* series is designed to monitor and compare the performance of economically advanced countries in securing the rights of their children.

In 1988 the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) established a research centre to support its advocacy for children worldwide and to identify and research current and future areas of UNICEF's work. The prime objectives of the Office of Research – Innocenti are to improve international understanding of issues relating to children's rights, to help facilitate full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, supporting advocacy worldwide. The Office aims to set out a comprehensive framework for research and knowledge within the organization, in support of its global programmes and policies. Through strengthening research partnerships with leading academic institutions and development networks in both the North and the South, the Office seeks to leverage additional resources and influence in support of efforts towards policy reform in favour of children.

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Report Card 14

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals have set ambitious targets that apply to rich countries as well as poor. The most telling sign of a nation's progress towards meeting those goals will be how well it meets the needs of its children.

This *Report Card* offers an assessment of child well-being in the context of sustainable development across 41 countries of the European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This group includes both high- and middle-income economies, but here we refer to them all as 'high-income countries' – or 'rich countries', for convenience. The concept of child well-being is rooted in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) but the Agenda for Sustainable Development adds new dimensions. Progress across all these dimensions will be vital to children, and advanced economies will therefore need to monitor the situation of children and young people both nationally and globally.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed by the international community in 2015 represent an ambitious effort to set a global agenda for development that is both equitable and sustainable, in social, economic and environmental terms. The earlier Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) prioritized the reduction of poverty, as well as progress in related social indicators. The 17 goals of the SDGs add to this a series of outcomes associated with inequality, economic development, the environment and climate change, as well as peace and security. In contrast to the MDGs, which primarily applied to low- and middle-income countries, the ambitious agenda of the SDGs is of necessity universal; it thus applies to rich countries, as well as poor.

The stronger focus of the SDGs on equitable development and on leaving no one behind also demands attention to inequalities along multiple dimensions – of income and wealth, health and educational opportunity, as well as voice and political participation – both within and between countries. Addressing rising inequality and its related problems requires a focus not just on the conditions of the poorest, but also on the consequences of wealth accumulation by the richest. As countries seek to meet the SDGs, so the changing political landscape will require new approaches to ensure inclusive and sustainable outcomes.

Long-term, inclusive and sustainable social goals are best met through attention to the needs of children. Ensuring the well-being and realizing the rights of all children (including migrants and refugees) is not only a commitment made by those states that have signed the CRC, but is also an essential condition for achieving long-term development goals. Every high-income country invests in its children: healthy, educated children are better able to fulfil their potential and contribute to society. By contrast, problems of child development often carry through into adulthood, with the resulting social costs accruing to the next generation, too. Indeed, achieving the SDGs is about ensuring that future generations have the opportunities enjoyed by the present generation: successful outcomes for today's children will build the foundations for the well-being of our societies tomorrow.

Commitments to the SDGs made by governments now need to be

translated into programmes and public investments that can deliver on this wide-ranging set of goals and their 169 accompanying targets. While many goals require commitment at the global or multilateral action level if they are to be achieved (particularly those associated with climate change and the global economy), they also demand national action. If countries are to be held to account for their progress towards these goals, appropriate indicators for monitoring that progress are necessary. UNICEF has long been at the forefront of global efforts to monitor life outcomes and social progress for children, and it now plays a leading role in monitoring child-related SDG indicators (see Box 2: *UNICEF's global role in SDG monitoring,* page 6).

Many of the SDG indicators proposed by the global community are most appropriate for lower-income contexts. *Report Card 14* proposes an adapted set of indicators to assess countries' performance against the promise of "leaving no one behind" when national circumstances, ambitions and existing levels of social progress are already well advanced (see Box on the right: *How have* Report Card 14 *indicators been selected?*).

Specifically, this report seeks to bring the SDG targets for children in high-income countries into meaningful operation (while staying true to the ambitions of the global agenda) and to establish a point of departure for reviewing the SDG framework in these contexts. It focuses on those goals and targets with most direct relevance to the well-being of children in high-income settings. Where appropriate, it adapts the agreed SDG indicator, the better to reflect the problems facing children in such countries *(see Table 1 pages 4-5)*.

Although limited by the lack of comparable data in some domains, this report compares 41 countries across 25 indicators. As in other *Report Cards*, countries are ranked on their achievements in well-being for children according to the selected indicators. The *Report Card* cannot provide an in-depth analysis of the reasons behind differences, nor of the policy options available for making progress on selected indicators. Nonetheless, by illustrating variation along key dimensions of child well-being related to the SDGs – from ending poverty to promoting peaceful and inclusive societies – it suggests areas where policy efforts or public investment may be targeted to improve outcomes, and reveals where data inadequacies still need to be addressed.

Box 1 How have *Report Card 14* indicators been selected?

Indicators for monitoring child-relevant SDGs in high-income countries were selected using the criteria listed below.

Relevance: Does the indicator directly concern child well-being in high-income countries?

Data availability and quality: Are high-quality data with adequate coverage available? Do they meet necessary standards regarding representativeness, comparability, accuracy and frequency of collection?

Communicability: Is the indicator itself easily explained, conceptually clear, and do the reported figures clearly convey the extent of progress by country on a given target?

Policy attainability: Is progress on the indicator realistic, within the time frame of the SDGs?

Alignment with global indicators: Is the indicator a good match to the proposed global indicator? Does it reflect the spirit and intent of the corresponding SDG goal and target?

Extensive consultations with experts at meetings of the *Report Card* Advisory Board – composed of academics, independent experts, UNICEF national committee members and communications experts – also informed the selection of indicators and established their conceptual relevance.

Source: Bruckauf, Z. and Cook, S. (2017). 'Child-Centred Approach to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in High-Income Countries: Conceptual issues and monitoring approaches', *Innocenti Working Paper* 2017-06, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence.

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Table 1: Mapping *Report Card 14* indicators to global goals, targets and indicators

Goal	Target (by 2030 unless specified)	*Report Card 14* indicator	Relationship to SDG global indicators
1 **End poverty in all its forms everywhere** (page 10)	**1.2** Reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions	Relative child poverty (60% of the median household income)	Official SDG indicator which uses 60% of the median for cross-country comparability
		Proportion of children living in multidimensional poverty	Based on UNICEF MODA methodology, which uses 7 child-specific dimensions of poverty for cross-country comparability
	1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable	Reduction in the rate of child poverty due to social transfers	Adapts the official SDG indicator for better country coverage
2 **End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition** (page 14)	**2.1** End hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round	Children under 15 living with a respondent who is food insecure (%)	Official SDG measure of food insecurity applied to households with children under 15
	2.2 End all forms of malnutrition	Obesity rates among adolescents aged 11-15	Obesity is a form of malnutrition, and is highly relevant for high-income countries. Differs from the official SDG indicator
3 **Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being** (page 18)	**3.2** End preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age	Neonatal mortality rate	Official SDG indicator
	3.4 Promote mental health and well-being	Suicides of adolescents aged 15-19 per 100,000 population	Official SDG indicator applied to relevant age group
		11-15-year-olds reporting 2 or more psychological symptoms more than once a week (%)	Indicator chosen for its relevance for high-income countries and links to suicidal behaviour. No matching global indicator
	3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including harmful use of alcohol	Children aged 11-15 who reported having been drunk in the previous month (%)	Drunkenness is a proxy of harmful use of alcohol among children and young people. Differs from the official SDG indicator
	3.7 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services	Number of births per 1,000 females aged 15-19	Official SDG indicator applied to the relevant adolescent population
4 **Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all** (page 24)	**4.1** Ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes	15-year-old students achieving baseline proficiency across reading, mathematics and science (%)	Official SDG indicator covering young people at the end of secondary education, adapted to reduce subject-specific bias
	4.2 Ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education	Participation rate in organized learning (one year before official primary entry age)	Official SDG indicator
5 **Achieve gender equality and empower all girls** (page 29)	**5.1** End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	Share of adult respondents agreeing "university education is more important for a boy than for a girl"	Measure of values and attitudes towards equal gender opportunities for children. No matching global indicator
		Gender difference in girls' and boys' share of daily participation in housework by age	Proxy of intergenerational transfer of norms as regards gender roles. No matching global indicator
	5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres	Women aged 18-29 who reported having experienced sexual violence before age 15 (%)	Differs from the global indicator in age group and recall period due to limited availability of cross-national data
8 **Promote full and productive employment and decent work for all** (page 33)	**8.5** Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men	Children living in jobless households (%)	New indicator showing the proportion of children impacted by unemployment/inactivity of household members
	8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training	Youth aged 15-19 not in education, employment or training (%)	Official SDG indicator, but with more child-specific age coverage (15-19 rather than 15-24)
10 **Reduce inequality within and among countries** (page 36)	**10.1** Progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40% of the population	Palma Ratio: ratio of income share held by top 10% of households with children to bottom 40%	Not an official SDG indicator, but a standard indicator of inequality, adapted to reflect children's experience
	10.2 Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of economic or other status	Impact of socio-economic status on students' performance across 3 subjects	Not an official SDG indicator, but an equal-opportunity measure regularly reported by PISA
	10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard	Gap between household income of child at 50th percentile (median) and child at 10th percentile, reported as % of median	Not an official SDG indicator, but consistently used by UNICEF *Report Cards* to measure how far behind the poorest children are being allowed to fall from 'average' standards in society
11 **Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable** (page 41)	**11.6** Reduce the adverse per-capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality	Annual average PM2.5 concentrations in urban areas, weighted by proportion of child population (0-19) living in urban areas	Official SDG indicator but weighted to reflect the proportion of children living in cities
12 **Ensure sustainable production and consumption patterns** (page 43)	**12.8** Ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature	15-year-old students familiar with 5 or more environmental issues (%)	Not an official indicator but reflects the SDG focus on education for sustainable development (including climate-change education)
16 **Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development** (page 45)	**16.1** Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	Deaths of children aged 0-19 by intentional assault per 100,000	Official SDG indicator adapted for children aged 0-19
	16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children	Children aged 11 to 15 who have experienced bullying at least twice a month in the past month (%)	Bullying as a form of physical and psychological violence corresponds to the official indicator but focuses on children
		Women aged 18-29 who reported having experienced physical violence before age 15 (%)	Differs from the global indicator in age group and recall period due to limited availability in cross-national data

Box 2 UNICEF's global role in SDG monitoring

For the past 70 years, UNICEF has played a leading role in calling for more and better data on the situation of children worldwide. In recent decades, the organization has established surveys and extensive cross-national databases of indicators relating to the well-being of children, including the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) programme.

Today, the SDGs place an unprecedented demand on national statistical systems to generate the information required to monitor official indicators. UNICEF, as custodian of ten of the global SDG indicators and co-custodian of a further seven, supports national and international partners in meeting the data demands of the SDGs. UNICEF is the sole custodian of indicators in the areas of stunting, malnutrition, infant mortality, neonatal mortality, skilled birth attendants, developmental trajectories of children under 5, child marriage, female genital mutilation, physical punishment, and sexual violence (by age 18).

For each SDG indicator, custodians like UNICEF lead the development of global data standards and contribute to national statistical capacity building, so as to facilitate the compilation and verification of national data. Once compiled by the custodian, SDG indicators are submitted to the global SDG database (managed by the UN Statistics Division), along with an interpretation of the data and trends for the annual SDG progress reports.

Beyond its specific custodian role, UNICEF will work closely during the SDG period with other international agencies (such as the UNESCO Institute of Statistics' Global Alliance to Monitor Learning) to support the production of other child-related global SDG indicators, and with national governments to collect, analyse and use other child-related data.

This *Report Card* is an example of UNICEF's data work outside its custodian role. It focuses on higher-income countries and provides proxy measures relevant to these countries that are aligned with official targets under each goal.

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Summary league table

The summary league table on pages 8-9 shows how some rich countries do better than others across nine social-progress goals for children. At first glance, the league table reads well for those countries accustomed to appearing at the top of recent comparisons of human and child development – the Nordic countries, Germany and Switzerland – and less well for lower-income countries of the group, such as Romania, Bulgaria and Chile.

However, a more detailed look uncovers some key considerations.

First, the indicators that underlie the table reveal room for improvement across the board: all countries rank in the mid- or bottom-third on at least two of the goals. A closer look behind the headline measures shows that the majority of rich countries are going backwards on key indicators in the goals of *reduced inequalities* (Palma ratio, income gaps), *good health and well-being* (childhood obesity rates) and *quality education* (learning outcomes).

Second, although countries such as Bulgaria and Romania have lower incomes per capita than other countries in the industrialized world, the presence of countries such as New Zealand and the United States in the bottom reaches of this league table is proof that high national income alone is no guarantee of a good record in sustaining child well-being.

Third, the overall results of the League Table are driven by consistency across the traditional goals of reduction of poverty, deprivation and inequality, advances in education, health and employment, areas where national social policies on children and families are arguably the strongest; but those goals are not strongly associated with the newly defined social-progress goals of environmental sustainability, responsible consumption and production, and peace.

The results therefore highlight the new challenges set by the SDGs. And, unlike the traditional goals that preceded them, these new goals are subject to a range of supranational influences – such as globalization of markets and economic shocks, pollution, advances in information flows, instability and migration. They therefore demand the attention of all countries, in collaboration, no matter how rich or how poor.

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League Table – Country performance across nine child-relevant goals

Country	No poverty	Zero hunger	Good health and well-being	Quality education	Decent work and economic growth	Reduced inequalities	Sustainable cities and communities	Responsible consumption and production	Peace, justice and strong institutions
Norway	1	4	5	9	5	2	2	13	30
Germany	8	8	4	7	6	9	24		15
Denmark	4	2	21	5	10	3	20	19	10
Sweden	6	9	13	16	7	11	6	21	5
Finland	2	15	16	1	15	4	5	11	29
Iceland	3	17	2	27	18	1	8	27	1
Switzerland	5	3	12	11	2	7	27	31	7
Republic of Korea		5	10	3	12	16		22	23
Slovenia	11	27	11	23	9	10		2	13
Netherlands	7	6	6	17	8	12	34	33	14
Ireland	9	31	22	13	37	8	1	8	9
Japan	23	1	8	10	1	32	33	36	8
United Kingdom	16	34	15	20	31	6	14	9	16
Luxembourg	19	12	14	25	3	15	31	28	19
Austria	10	10	9	26	24	13	18	30	28
Spain	28	26	3	12	36	28	16	16	4
Estonia	18	20	26	21	14	29	4	4	35
Portugal	30	32	1	24	26	27	7	1	27
France	15	7	17	14	20	34	23	25	21
Czech Republic	17	16	25	22	13	31	26	24	6
Australia	12	28	23	39	23	17	3	18	18
Croatia	20	14	24	36	35	18	11	14	11
Poland	22	24	32	31	4	23	17	10	20
Italy	31	23	18	19	30	20	30	15	2
Canada	32	37	29	8	11	14	19	6	37
Belgium	14	11	19	6	28	19	36	32	32
Cyprus	13	30		34	21	5	22		36
Latvia	27	21	27	18	16	25		12	38
Malta	24	39	28	2	29	21	32		12
Slovakia	21	19	34	35	19	24	10	29	26
Greece	29	35	20	33	32	36	28	17	3
Hungary	26	22	31	30	33	30	21	23	17
Lithuania	25	25	33	29	27	33		5	31
New Zealand		18	38	15	34	26	9	35	33
Israel	36	13	7	28	22	39	37	34	25
Turkey		40	37	41		22	29	3	22
United States	33	36	36	32	17	35	13	20	40
Mexico	34	41	30	4	40	41	15		
Romania	37	33	35	40	25	38	12	37	24
Bulgaria	35	38	39	38	39	40	25	7	34
Chile		29	40	37	38	37	35	26	39

Higher Average Lower insufficient data

The league table summarizes the overall findings of this *Report Card*. Countries are listed in order of their average performance across nine Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 5 (Gender) is also included in the *Report Card*, but there were too many gaps in the available data for the results to be incorporated into this composite table. Before goals with multiple indicators are ranked, each indicator has been normalized using a z-scores method and averaged using equal weights.[1] Each country's rank within a particular goal is shown, ranging from 1 for the highest performer to 41 for the lowest.

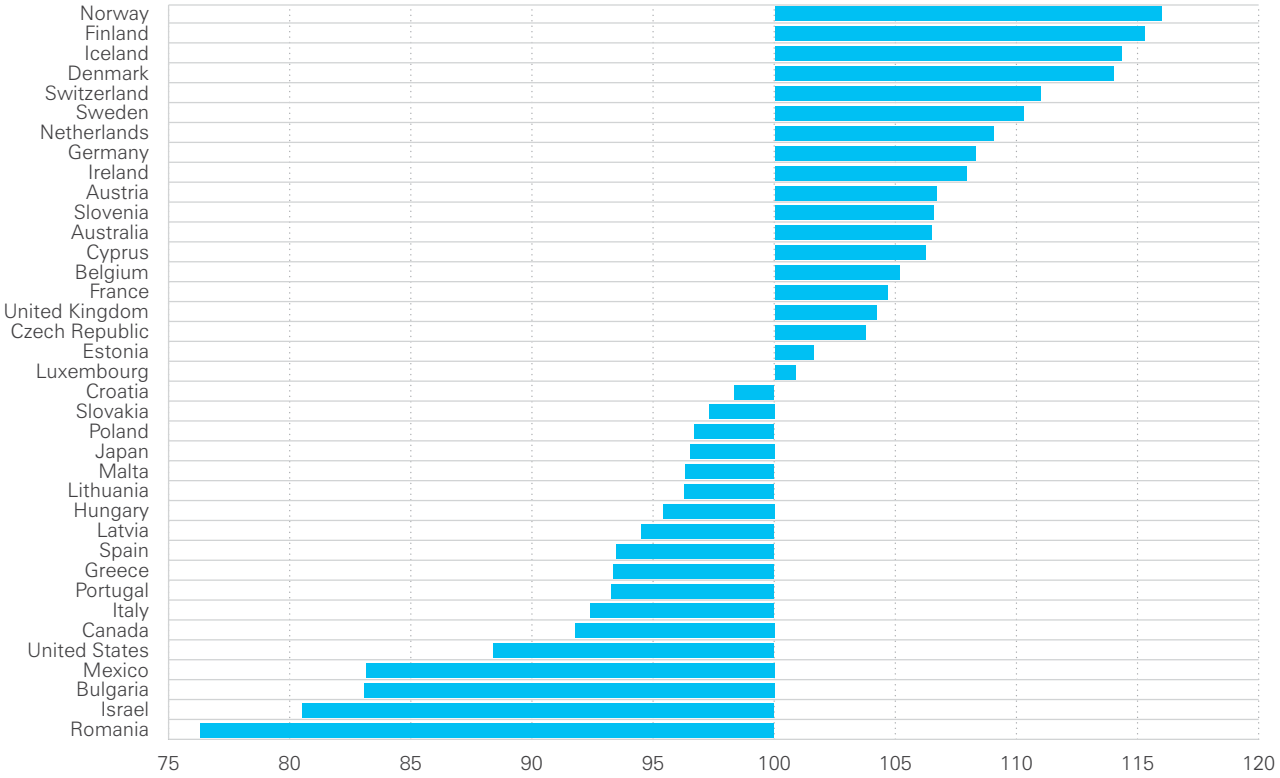
GOAL 1

End poverty in all its forms everywhere

- An average of one child in five in high-income countries lives in poverty, though there is wide variation – from one in ten in Denmark, Iceland and Norway to one in three in Israel and Romania.
- Measuring children's multidimensional poverty produces an even broader range of national results, with Switzerland and Romania at opposite extremes.
- Social transfers have proven to be very effective tools in reducing child poverty.

Figure G1 – End poverty

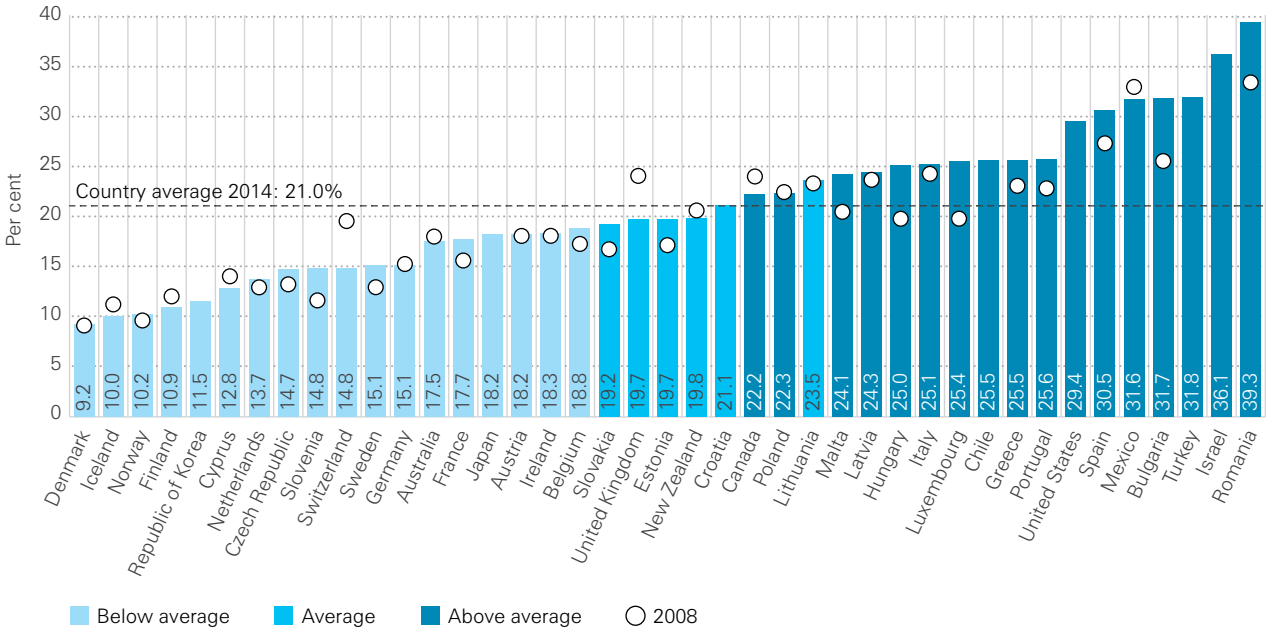
Average country performance across three indicators: child income poverty (0–17 years of age), multidimensional poverty (1–15 years) and effectiveness of social transfers (0–17 years)



Note: Chile, Republic of Korea, New Zealand and Turkey are excluded from the calculation of Goal 1 due to insufficient data (each country reports on only one of the three indicators for this goal).

This chart – and the others at the head of each goal section in this *Report Card* – is a composite of the indicators in the section. Read 100 as the average country performance for the goal, and 10 points as a standard deviation from this overall average. A greater than 5-point difference from 100, or half a standard deviation, can be interpreted as higher or lower than average (for a sample of around 30 cases, half a standard deviation is equivalent to a 99-per-cent confidence interval). Countries with a difference of 10 points or more from the average can be considered as 'high performing' or 'low performing', while those differing by 20 points or more can be considered 'leaders' or 'laggards'.

Figure 1.1 An average of one in five children in rich countries lives in relative income poverty
Percentage of children aged 0–17 living in a household with income lower than 60 per cent of the median, 2014 and 2008



Note: The relative child poverty rate shows the proportion of each nation's children living in a household where disposable income is less than 60% of the national median (after taking taxes and benefits into account and adjusting for family size and composition using the OECD modified equivalence scale).
Sources: European Union countries and Iceland, Norway and Switzerland – European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC); Australia – Household, Income and Labour Dynamics (HILDA); Canada – Canadian Income Survey (CIS); Chile – La Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN); Israel – Household Expenditure Survey (from Luxembourg Income Study); Japan – Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions; Mexico – El Módulo de Condiciones Socioeconómicas de la Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares (MCS-ENIGH); New Zealand – Household Economic Survey (estimates taken from Perry, B (2016). 'Household Incomes in New Zealand: Trends in indicators of inequality and hardship, 1982 to 2015', Ministry of Social Development, Wellington); Turkey – Income and Living Conditions Survey; United States – Current Population Survey 2013, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (from Luxembourg Income Study).

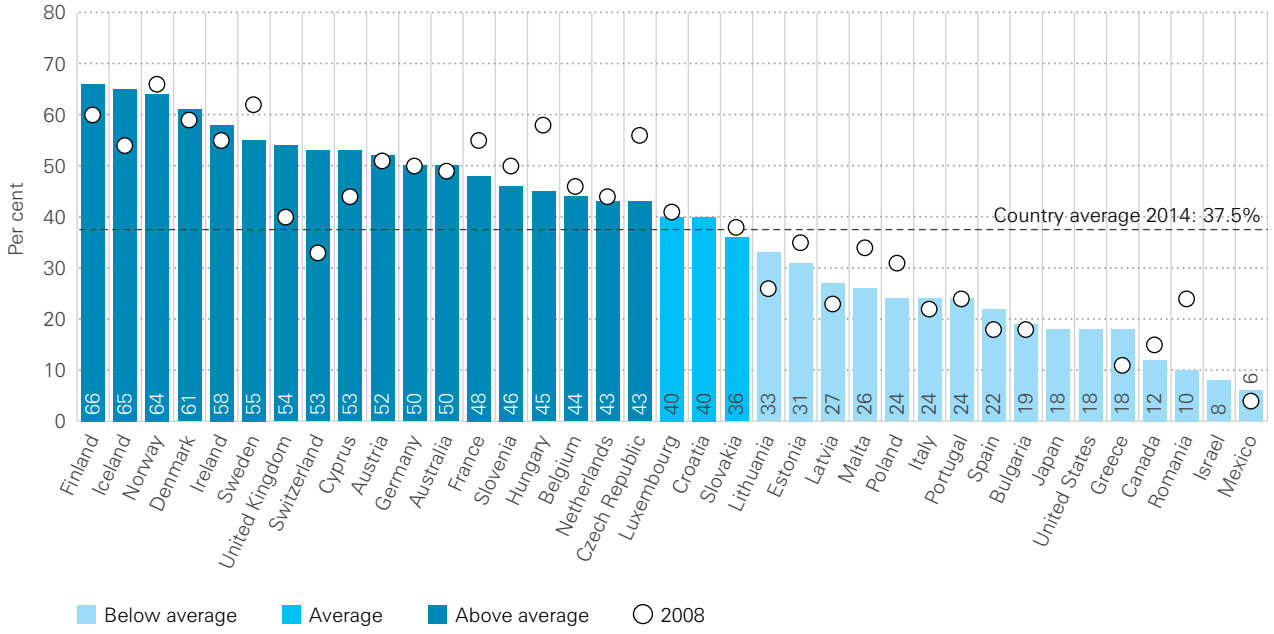
Goal 1 of the SDGs calls for an end to poverty in all its dimensions. The standard measure of poverty is based on income, and SDG indicator 1.2.1 aims to measure the proportion of people living below the national poverty line – including the share of children. Living in poverty during childhood can do lifelong damage, with proven effects on health, nutrition, brain development and educational attainment.[2] These effects can evolve into large earnings differences in adulthood.[3]

This *Report Card* uses a relative measure of monetary poverty. It calculates the national median income of all persons – the mid-point that sees equal numbers of individuals above and below the line – and then establishes a percentage of this as a poverty threshold. *Figure 1.1* presents child poverty rates across a broad range of high-income countries, showing the proportion of each nation's children who live in households with incomes of less than 60 per cent of the median.

A broad average of one child in five in 41 high-income countries lives in poverty. However, the record of individual countries is so divergent that children cannot be considered to have a common experience just because they are born into the rich world. Denmark has the best record on relative poverty, but even there 9.2 per cent of children are below the poverty line. All seven of the countries where the proportion of children living in poverty is around one in seven are in Europe.

Israel and Romania have the worst records on relative poverty – here more than one child in three is considered poor. However, Bulgaria, Mexico, Spain, Turkey and the United States[4] also have child poverty rates substantially above the rich-world average.

Figure 1.2 Finland, Iceland and Norway are most effective in reducing child poverty
Percentage reduction in the rate of child poverty due to social transfers, 2014 and 2008



Note: Reduction in child poverty is measured as the proportional difference between child poverty rates before and after social transfers. Child poverty rates are measured using income thresholds at 60 per cent of the median household income of the total population, before and after social transfers.
Sources: As for Figure 1.1.

Intervening to reduce child poverty

If child poverty rates were entirely dependent on household incomes derived from the market, they would be much higher across the board. Instead, governments intervene through benefits and taxes to redress inequalities. Social transfers can be effective in reducing the incidence of relative child poverty, as *Figure 1.2* reveals.

How effective can social transfers be? Across high-income countries, they are estimated to have a fairly large capacity to reduce pre-transfer child poverty. On average, social transfers in high-income countries reduce child poverty rates by almost 40 per cent. In 11 of these countries, social transfers more than halve pre-transfer child poverty; and in the most successful cases of Finland, Iceland and Norway, they reduce the pre-transfer child poverty rates by up to two thirds.

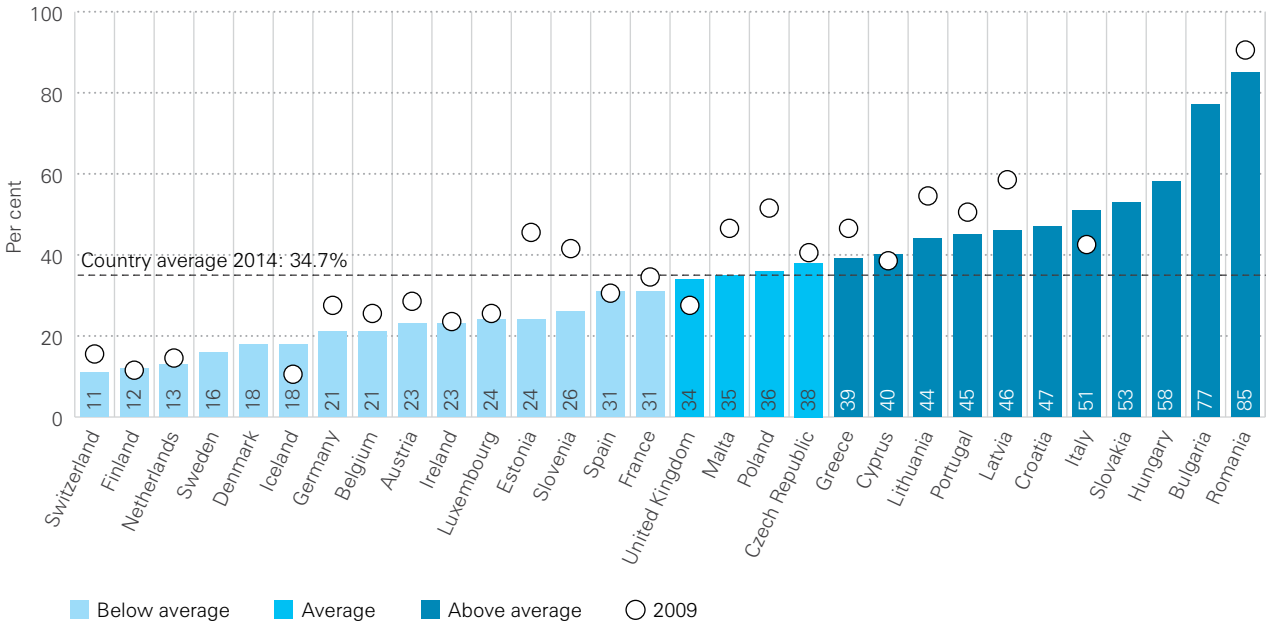
This impressive capacity to redress child poverty should not be taken for granted. It is known to depend on multiple factors, from the size of transfers and their targeting, to the initial levels of pre-transfer child poverty. Social transfers have a much more modest child poverty reduction effect in several countries analysed, reducing the pre-transfer child poverty rates by 10 per cent or less in some cases (Romania, Israel and Mexico).

These estimates need to be used with caution, however. Countries have different child poverty levels to start with, and so reducing high levels of child poverty with a single policy may prove difficult. The role of taxes and other social programmes is not considered here. The evidence does suggest strongly, however, that social transfers have a true potential to reduce child poverty effectively.

Measuring other dimensions of poverty

Poverty encompasses more than the lack of income. The SDGs specifically call for a reduction of at least half in "the proportion of men, women and children living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions". High-income countries have made a commitment to monitor multidimensional child poverty, and there are various methodologies for doing so.

Figure 1.3 One European child in three is deprived in two or more ways
Multidimensional child poverty (two or more dimensions), 2014



Note: Material deprivation is measured as children who are deprived of 2 or more of the following: nutrition, clothing, educational resources, leisure activities, social activities, information access, or housing. Data is for European countries only. Norway is excluded due to missing data. The country average is unweighted. Missing countries: Australia, Canada, Chile, Israel, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Turkey, and the United States.
Source: Chzhen, Y., Bruckauf, Z. and Toczydlowska, E. (2017). 'Sustainable Development Goal 1.2: Multidimensional child poverty in the European Union', *Innocenti Working Paper* 2017-07, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence.

In 2009, Mexico introduced an official national measure of multidimensional poverty. In addition to income, it assesses deprivation in relation to education, healthcare, social security, housing, basic services and food. In 2014, 54 per cent of children under 18 lived in multidimensional poverty in Mexico.[5] As in many countries, children are at higher risk of poverty than the population as a whole.

In a separate initiative, UNICEF has developed the Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA) tool to study multidimensional deprivation among children. It is based on child rights, as established in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This *Report Card* uses MODA for a cross-country comparison, based on 2014 data for 28 European Union countries, plus Iceland and Switzerland. It considers seven dimensions of child poverty that are rooted in the CRC: nutrition, clothing, educational resources, leisure activities, social activities, information access and quality of housing. Children who lack access to at least two of these seven dimensions are considered to be in 'multidimensional child poverty'.[6]

While over 40 lower-income countries have carried out national MODA studies, Iceland was the first high-income country to do so. In 2015, UNICEF collaborated with Statistics Iceland to perform a MODA analysis of data collected in 2009 and 2014.[7] The results indicated that children's material deprivation had more than doubled between 2009 and 2014, with a tripling in the number of children considered to be severely deprived.[8]

The variation in the multidimensional child poverty rate is vast: from 11 per cent in Switzerland to 85 per cent in Romania. According to this measure, less than one child in five is poor in the Nordic countries, the Netherlands and Switzerland. By contrast, at least one child in every two is poor in two or more dimensions in the Central European countries of Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, as well as in Italy. Ten countries have multidimensional child poverty rates of between 33 per cent and 50 per cent. These include Greece, Poland and the United Kingdom.

GOAL 2

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

- Given the ample food resources available, no level of food insecurity among children is acceptable; and yet in high-income countries, one child in eight is food insecure.
- Rates of food insecurity among children vary widely across countries, from 1 in 70 in Japan to one in three in Mexico and Turkey.
- Obesity is also a form of malnutrition, and rates are increasing in all but a handful of countries.
- Good nutrition is vital from birth, and breastfeeding is key to that, though most mothers in high-income countries stop breastfeeding before the recommended minimum of six months.

Figure G2 – End hunger

Average country performance across two indicators: food insecurity (0–14 years of age), rates of overweight and obese children (11–15 years)

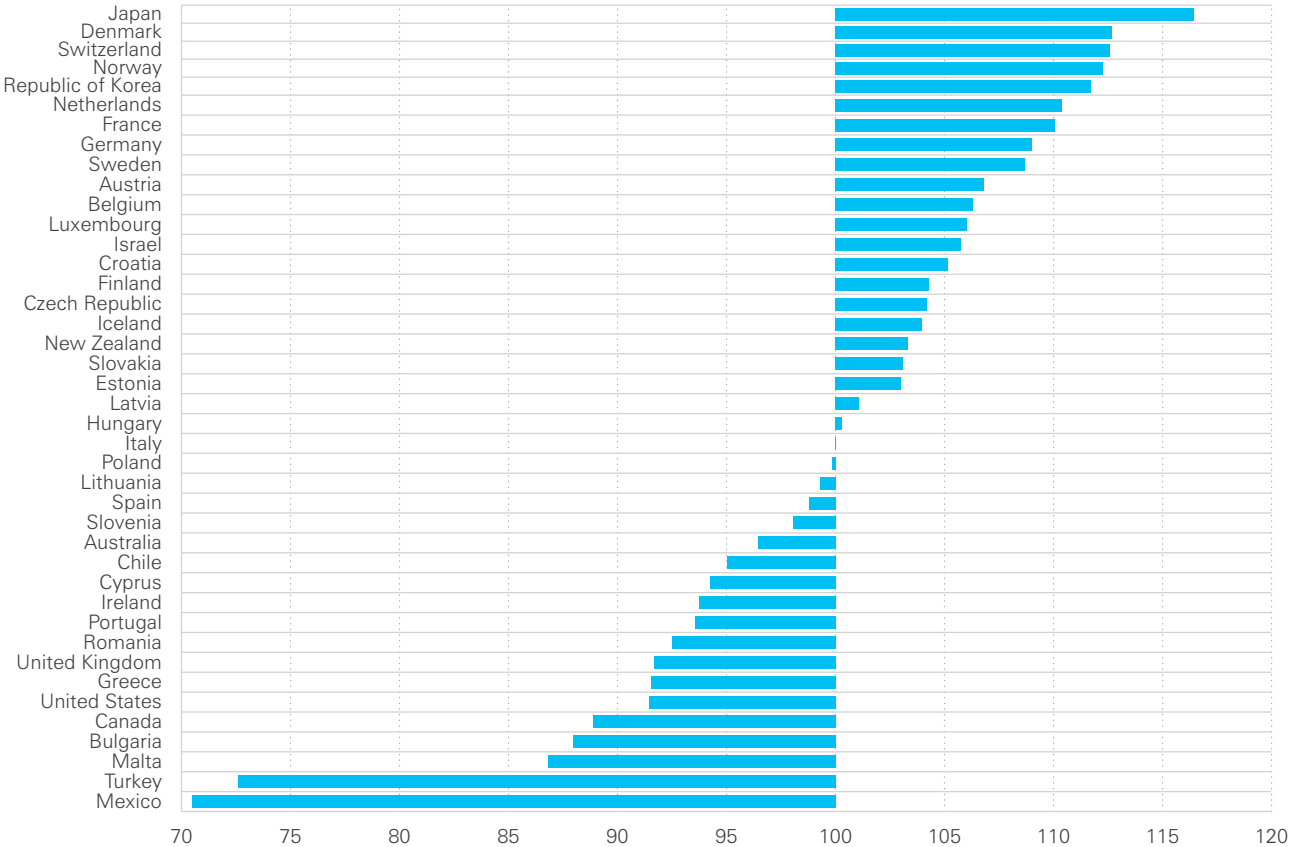
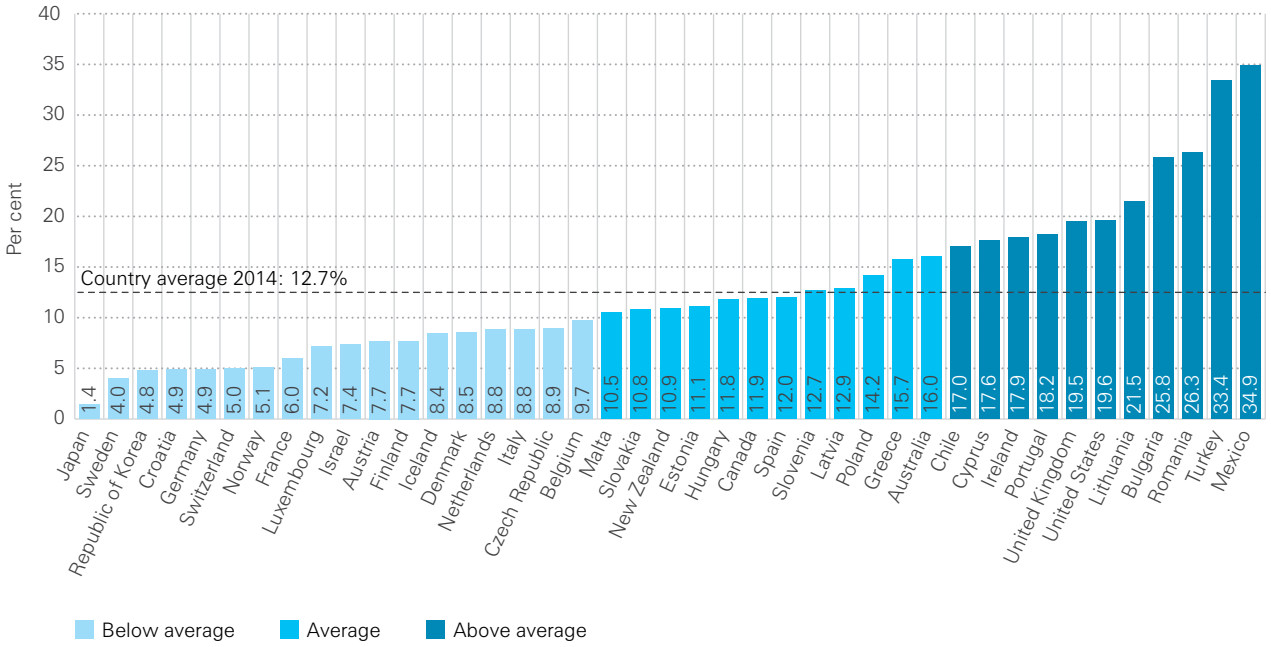


Figure 2.1 Food insecurity is high in some of the world's richest countries

Percentage share of children below the age of 15 living with a respondent who is food insecure, 2014/15



Note: Food insecurity is measured by the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), which was created by the Voices of the Hungry project at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and is incorporated into the official SDG indicator framework. Data come from Gallup World Poll Surveys, which fielded the FIES, from 2014 and 2015. The FIES country averages have been recalculated to reflect the share of children living in food-insecure households.
Source: Pereira, A., Handa, S. and Holmqvist, G. (2017). Prevalence and Correlates of Food Insecurity among Children across the Globe, *Innocenti Working Paper* 2017-09, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence.

Food security is an official measure of SDG Goal 2 on hunger and nutrition. Food insecurity is defined as lack of secure access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that can ensure normal growth and development, as well as an active and healthy lifestyle. When measured by this standard, some countries are doing much better than others in terms of meeting the needs of their citizens, as *Figure 2.1* reveals. This reports the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity among children under the age of 15.

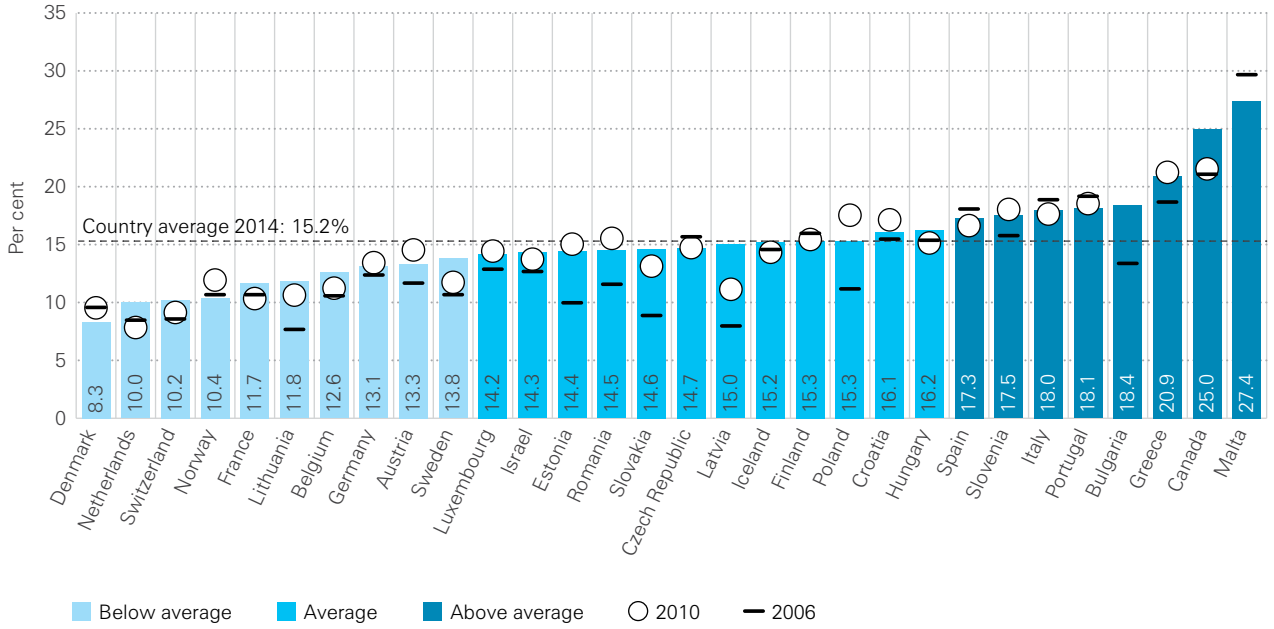
The average for this group of countries is 12.7 per cent, but there is striking variation. No level of food insecurity is acceptable, even if it affects only 1 child in 20, as in Croatia, Germany, Japan, Republic of Korea, Sweden and Switzerland. Yet one child in three suffers food insecurity in Mexico and Turkey, one in four in Bulgaria and Romania and around one in five in Lithuania, the United Kingdom and the United States. Although the general availability of food is not a problem in any of these countries, too many families struggle to satisfy their children's nutritional needs.

Obesity as a form of malnutrition

Target 2.2 of the SDGs is to end all forms of malnutrition by 2030. The main focus is on ending stunting and wasting in very young children, but there is a specific reference to the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, and the indicators track overweight as well as underweight. Obesity in children is also a form of malnutrition, and is a pressing challenge in high-income settings. Children are increasingly consuming too much unhealthy food and soft drinks with a high sugar content, while at the same time they are not exercising enough. Obesity has been linked to multiple health conditions in childhood, to lower self-esteem, and to a heightened risk of cardio-vascular disease and diabetes in adulthood.[9]

The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey

Figure 2.2 Rates of obesity have increased in most high-income countries
Percentage of 11–15-year-olds who are obese or overweight, 2014/15



Note: Data for Ireland and the United Kingdom have been excluded because of high non-response rates (over 50 per cent of children sampled). The United States did not take part in the HBSC study in 2014/15. Belgian estimates are based on population weights for regional samples (excluding the Brussels region). The country average is unweighted. Missing countries: Australia, Chile, Cyprus, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.
Source: HBSC, various waves.

collects data from children on their height and weight, and uses these to calculate their body mass index. On this basis, *Figure 2.2* shows the proportion of children aged 11–15 who are obese or overweight in 30 countries, mostly in Europe.

An average of one child in seven in these countries is overweight or obese, and there is lower variation on this indicator than on most others, with all but four countries having child obesity rates of between 10 and 20 per cent. The healthiest country in this respect is Denmark, where the rate has fallen in recent years from already low levels. At the other end of the scale are Malta and Canada, where one child in four is considered overweight.

It is a cause for concern that in 22 of the 30 countries surveyed, the proportion of children of this age who were overweight was higher in 2014 than in 2006. The sharpest increases in incidence over this period occurred in Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia.

Although Mexico is not included in the HBSC survey, it reports a very high proportion of overweight or obese children: 33 per cent of children aged 5–11 and 36 per cent of those aged 12–19.[10]

Box 3 Breastfeeding in high-income countries

Although there is a wealth of evidence that breastfeeding contributes to children's development in cognitive and general health terms,[i] specific targets for breastfeeding have not been set as part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Nevertheless, breastfeeding is critical to providing the required nutrition for newborn and infant development, and can contribute to other SDG goals related to nutrition, health and education. The World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF recommend exclusive breastfeeding for six months. Given this context, it is worth comparing breastfeeding rates in high-income countries, especially as this is one of the few positive health indicators on which rich countries tend to lag behind poorer ones.[ii]

The table below is drawn from a global review of breastfeeding rates published in early 2016.

Although some of the data are relatively old and do not refer to exclusive breastfeeding, the results indicate that the proportion of mothers who have ever breastfed is high in all the rich countries included, with only France and Ireland reporting rates of below 75 per cent. By the time the infant is 6 months old, between a third and a half of mothers who had started breastfeeding no longer continue, and in countries such as Canada, Greece and the United Kingdom the falling-off is more substantial. Rates continue to fall up to 12 months, by which point there is a marked difference in practice between countries: in Japan and Turkey the majority of mothers continue to breastfeed, while in Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom rates fall to 3 per cent or lower. More recent data for Mexico show 46 per cent of children are still being breastfed at the age of 12–15 months.[iii]

Country	Reference year	Estimates by time and prevalence		
		Ever breastfed	At 6 months	At 12 months
Australia	2010	92	56	30
Austria	2006	93	**42**	16
Canada	2011/12	89	**30**	9
Chile	2011/12	95	41	21
Czech Republic	2005	96	**42**	16
Denmark	2013	–	13	**3**
Finland	2010	92	58	34
France	2012/13	63	23	9
Germany	2009/12	82	**50**	23
Greece	2007/08	88	22	6
Ireland	2012	55	–	**2**
Italy	2013	86	46	19
Japan	2009	95	**63**	60
Mexico	2012	–	–	44
Netherlands	2006/08	–	32	**11**
New Zealand	2006	–	60	44
Norway	2013	95	71	35
Republic of Korea	2012	88	61	46
Spain	2011	77	47	**23**
Sweden	2010	98	52	16
Switzerland	2003	94	62	28
Turkey	2008	–	–	74
United Kingdom	2005/10	81	34	0.5
United States	2011	79	49	27

Note: Breastfeeding rates are not exclusive breastfeeding rates. Data in bold are extrapolated – see source for methodology.
Source: Victora, C.G. et al. (2016). 'Breastfeeding in the 21st Century: Epidemiology, mechanisms, and lifelong effect', *The Lancet*, vol. 387, no. 10017, pp. 475–490.

[i] OECD (2011). *Doing Better for Families*, OECD Publishing, Paris; Victora, C.G. et al. (2016). 'Breastfeeding in the 21st Century: Epidemiology, mechanisms, and lifelong effect', *The Lancet*, vol. 387, no. 10017, pp. 475–490.

[ii] Victora, C.G. et al. (2016). 'Breastfeeding in the 21st Century: Epidemiology, mechanisms, and lifelong effect', *The Lancet*, vol. 387, no. 10017, pp. 475–490.

[iii] National Institute of Public Health-UNICEF (2017). *MICS Mexico*, 2015. https://www.unicef.org/mexico/spanish/ENIM_KFR.pdf

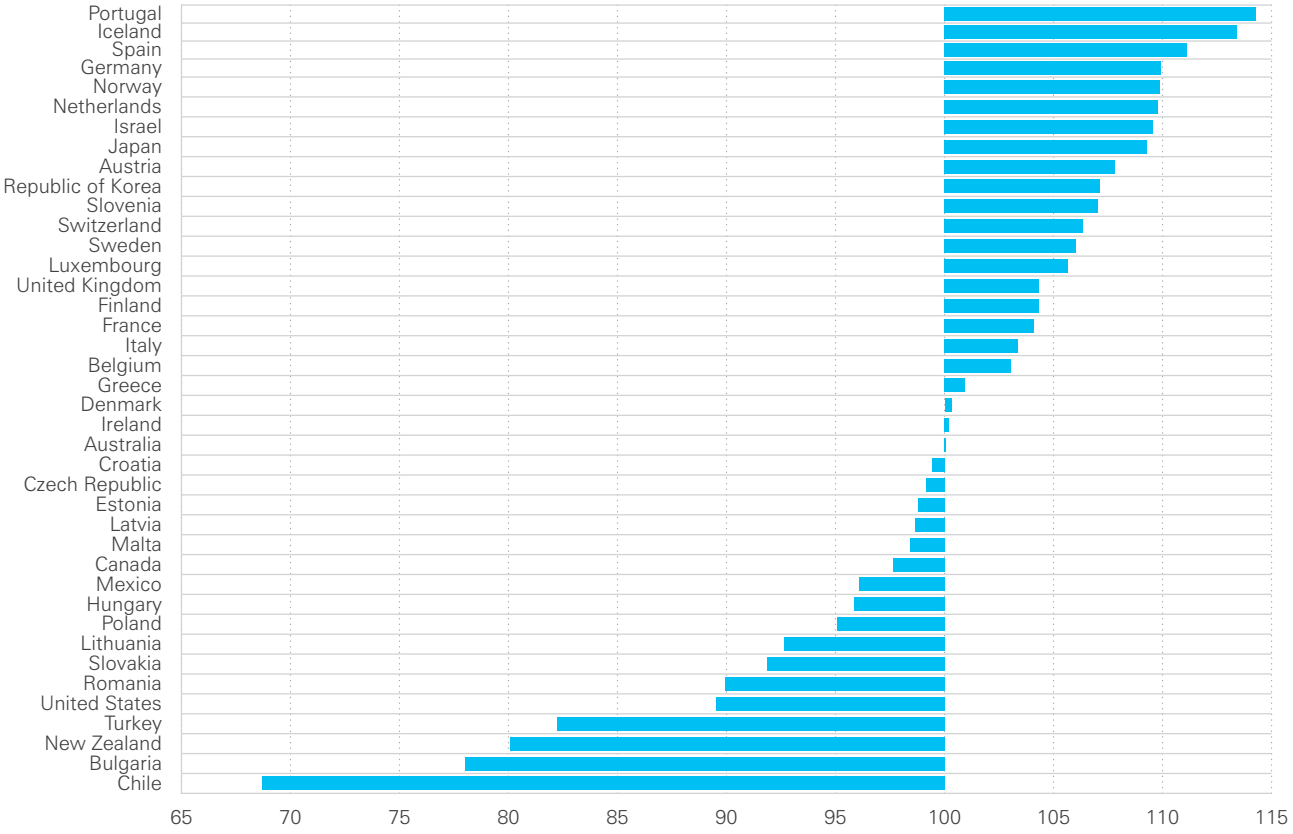
GOAL 3

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

- The rates of neonatal mortality, adolescent suicide, drunkenness and teenage births in high-income countries are all falling, though the gaps between the best and the worst performers on each of these indicators remain wide.
- National averages conceal variation in outcomes that reflect socio-economic, gender or other disparities that affect child health.
- The majority of countries surveyed saw an increase in adolescent self-reporting of mental health issues between 2010 and 2014. One adolescent in four reports experiencing two or more psychological symptoms more than once a week.

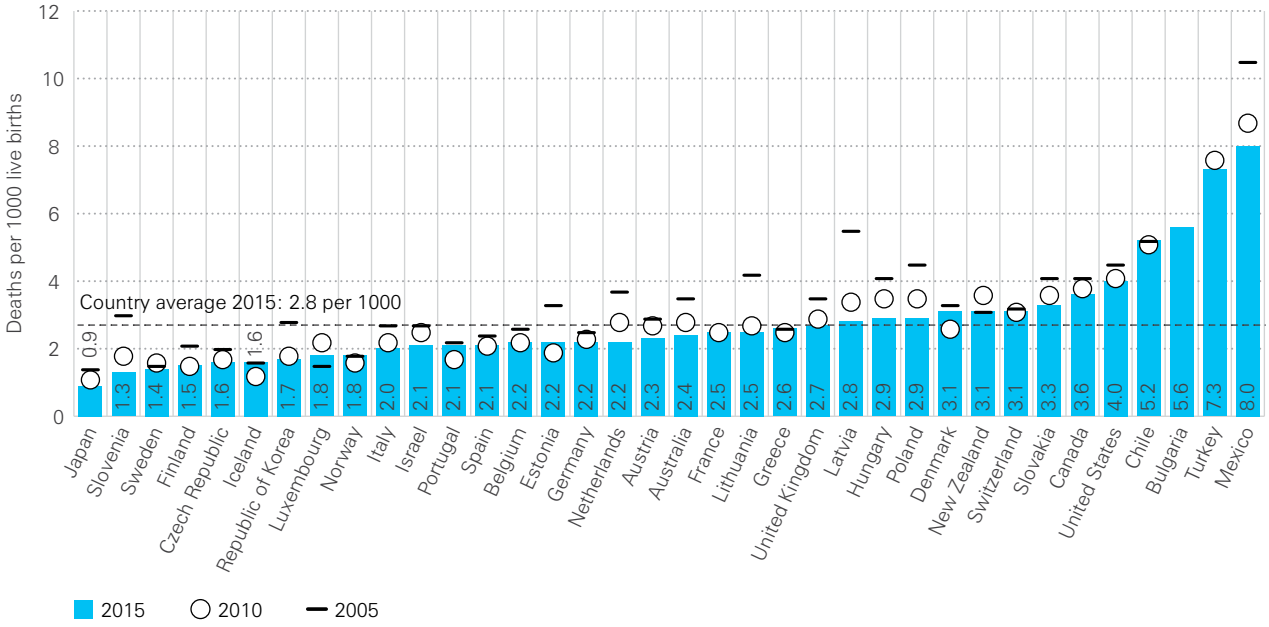
Figure G3 – Ensure health

Average country performance across five indicators: neonatal mortality (< 4 weeks of age), suicide rates (0–19 years), mental health symptoms (11–15 years), drunkenness (11–15 years) and teenage fertility rates (15–19 years)



Note: Cyprus is excluded from the calculation of Goal 3 on account of insufficient data (reporting on only two of the five indicators for this goal). Two data points for Mexico have been excluded from the calculation of the results for Goal 3: neonatal mortality rates (2015) and number of births per 1,000 females aged 15-19 (2015). Inclusion of these outliers would result in Mexico's ranking falling to 40th place.

Figure 3.1 Over the past decade, most rich countries have reported notable falls in neonatal mortality rates
Deaths in the first 28 days of life, per 1,000 live births



Note: Neonatal mortality has no minimum threshold of gestation period or birthweight. Data for 2015 is 2015 or nearest available year. Break in series: France (2009). No data for Ireland in 2015, France or Turkey in 2005. The country average is unweighted. Missing countries: Croatia, Cyprus, Malta and Romania.
Source: OECD Health database, 2016. Data for Bulgaria are from the WHO World Health Statistics 2016.

A focus on children is fundamental to the attainment of Goal 3 of the SDGs, not just because it refers to health and well-being "at all ages", but also because health problems in childhood can have a lasting impact throughout life. The first prerequisite is to ensure that as many children as possible survive the first year of life.

Newborn deaths are falling

The neonatal mortality rate – which tracks deaths in the first four weeks of life – is an official SDG indicator under Target 3.2. All high-income countries have already reduced their neonatal mortality rates to below the global target of 12 deaths per 1,000 live births, although averages may hide stark variations between different social groups. Given that neonatal mortality continues to fall in the highest-performing nations, *Figure 3.1* suggests that there is still room for improvement in the rest. However, national differences in the registration of premature and low-birthweight babies mean that international rankings of neonatal mortality need careful interpretation.[11]

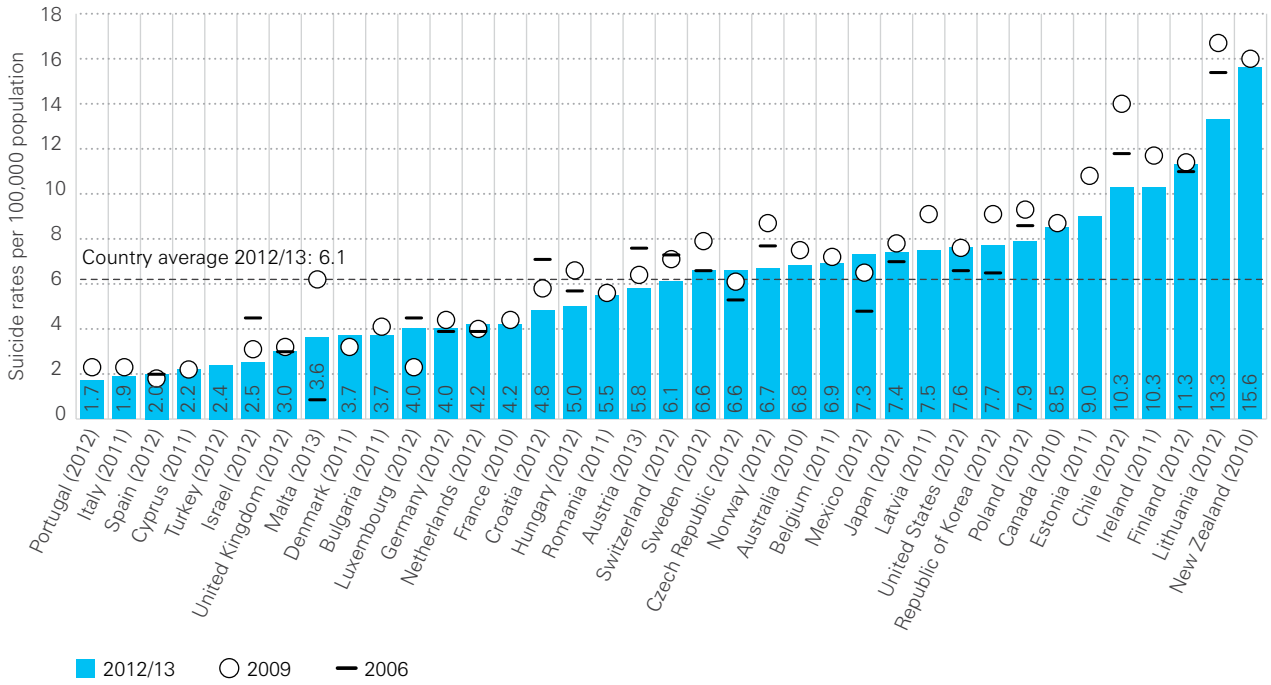
In 2015, an average of 2.8 children per 1,000 were dying in the first four weeks of life across these 36 OECD countries. Japan has set a new historic benchmark by achieving a neonatal mortality rate of under one, at just 0.9 per 1,000, despite the highest percentage of low-weight births in the OECD.[12] The improvement in the second-ranked nation, Slovenia, has been spectacular in recent years: between 2005 and 2015 it more than halved its neonatal death rate.

At the other end of the scale, the four OECD countries from the Americas, along with Bulgaria and Turkey, are above the rich-world average and still have a significant way to go to meet the standards of their highest-achieving peers. However, while Chile seems to have made no progress on this indicator since 2005, Mexico has shown a marked improvement, reducing its rate by almost a quarter over that period. Other nations that have made significant strides since 2005 are Latvia, which has halved its mortality rate, followed by Estonia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Poland.

Suicide: leading cause of death among the young

In high-income countries in 2012, suicide was the leading cause of

Figure 3.2 Adolescent suicide rates vary widely between high-income countries
Suicide rates of adolescents aged 15–19 per 100,000 population, based on the latest available data (2009–2013)



Note: The country average is unweighted. Figures are three-year averages around the year in brackets. Earlier estimates are averages for the three years preceding. Data are missing for Greece. Most recent data for Iceland (c2008, 5.4), Slovakia (c2008, 2.5) and Slovenia (c2009, 7.6). Missing countries: Greece, Iceland, Slovakia and Slovenia. [c=around]
Source: WHO mortality database, 2016.

death among young people aged between 15 and 19 of both sexes, accounting for 17.6 per cent of all deaths.

Figure 3.2 reflects the suicide rate for adolescents aged 15–19 across 37 OECD and EU countries.

The rate is lowest, at 1.7 per 100,000, in Portugal, and tends to be low in southern European countries. The highest rate, of 15.6 per 100,000 – nine times higher than in Portugal – is to be found in New Zealand, although in Canada, Chile, Estonia, Finland, Ireland and Lithuania teenage suicides are also well above the international average.

Across the board, boys are more likely to die by suicide than girls – three times more likely, on average, though there is a fivefold difference in the Central and Eastern European countries of the Czech Republic, Latvia, Poland and Slovakia. This gender gap runs the opposite way from the survey of self-confessed mental health symptoms. Girls actually attempt suicide around twice as often as boys, though generally the methods chosen are less lethal.[13]

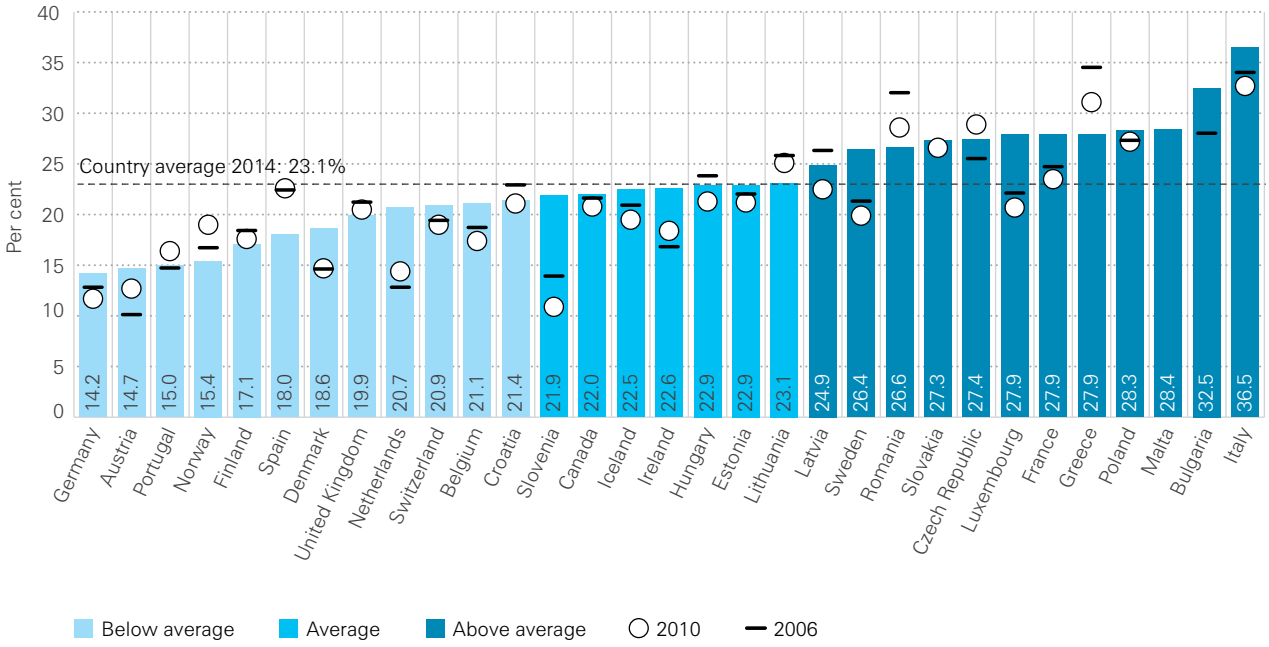
Adolescent suicide rates have fallen in the majority of countries in recent years. The biggest improvements have come in two of the nations with the highest suicide rates: Chile and Lithuania. In six countries, the suicide rate has risen, with marked increases for boys in Luxembourg and Slovenia significantly outweighing a decline in girls' deaths. In a handful of countries – Cyprus, Finland, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the United States – the opposite trend can be observed, with the suicide rate for girls increasing, while that for boys has been declining.

Adolescent mental health: a growing concern

Most of the SDG health targets that are relevant for high-income countries relate to older children and adolescents, rather than infants and younger children. Mental health and well-being (Target 3.4) is one of these. Objective and comparable international data on young people's mental health are not available –

Figure 3.3 Adolescent mental health issues are becoming more common

Percentage of adolescents reporting two or more psychological symptoms (feeling low, feeling irritable, feeling nervous, having sleeping difficulties) more than once a week



Note: Estimates for Belgium and the United Kingdom are based on population weights for regional samples (excluding the Brussels region for Belgium, and Northern Ireland in the case of the United Kingdom). The country average is unweighted. Missing countries: Australia, Chile, Cyprus, Israel, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Turkey and the United States.
Source: HBSC Study, various waves.

reliable measurement of the full range of neuropsychiatric conditions affecting adolescents would require more comprehensive transnational surveys than exist at present.

However, the HBSC survey does provide a non-clinical, self-reported measure of adolescent mental health. Every four years, schoolchildren aged 11–15 in a range of countries are asked how often they experience each of four symptoms: feeling low, irritability, feeling nervous and sleeping difficulties.

The results from 31 high-income countries in 2014 are shown in *Figure 3.3*.

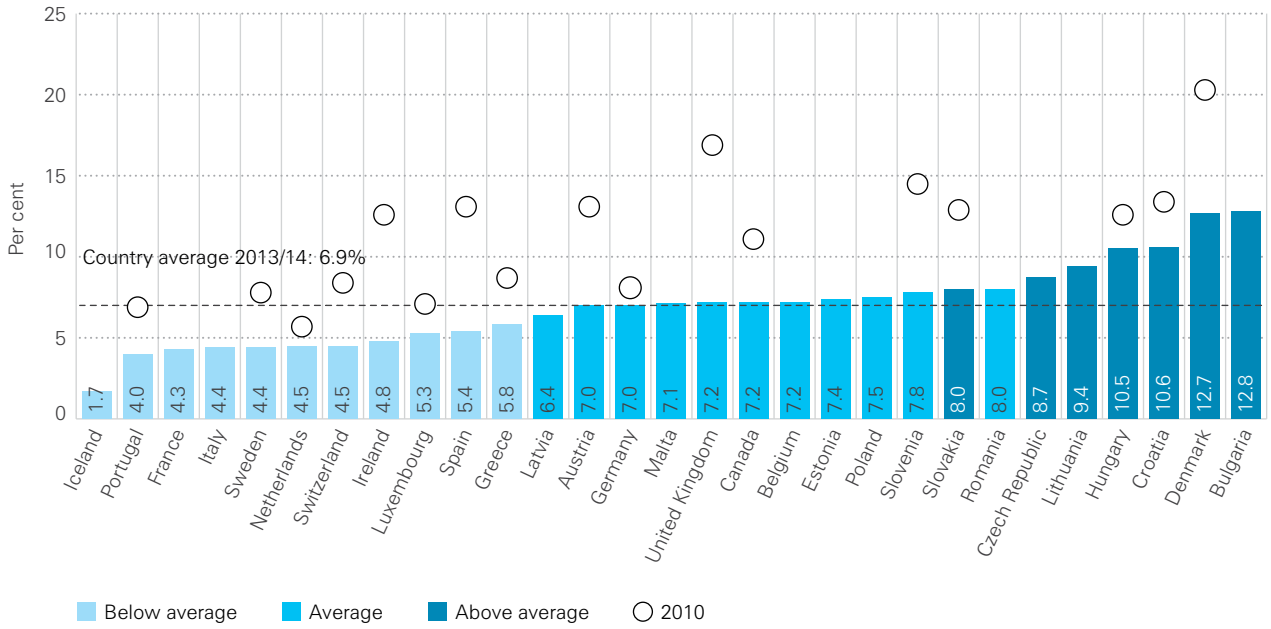
There should always be an element of caution around interpreting self-reported statistics, but an average of around one adolescent in four (23 per cent) reports experiencing two or more psychological symptoms more than once a week. This ranges from the lowest incidence of 14 per cent in Germany to the highest of 36 per cent in Italy. As in past surveys, girls are much more likely to report symptoms related to their mental health than are boys, with the gap widening as they become older.

The survey provides evidence that reporting of mental health issues is on the rise in many high-income countries: 15 of the 31 countries surveyed saw a rise of more than 2 percentage points in self-reported symptoms between 2010 and 2014, with particularly large increases in Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Sweden.

A few countries, however, have seen a reduction in the reporting of adolescent mental health symptoms. The positive results in Greece, Romania and Spain continue a longer-term trend, despite the recent economic crisis – between 2006 and 2014, the self-reported prevalence rate has declined in those countries by 7, 6 and 5 percentage points, respectively.

There is a manifest need for standardized, international data on

Figure 3.4 Adolescent drunkenness has declined markedly since 2010
Percentage aged 11–15 who reported having been drunk in the previous month



Note: 2014 data for Finland, Israel and Norway are excluded on account of high missing values. The 2010 data for Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Turkey are excluded on account of high missing values. Estimates for Belgium and the United Kingdom are based on population weights for regional samples (excluding the Brussels region for Belgium, and Northern Ireland in the case of the United Kingdom). The country average is unweighted. Missing countries: Australia, Chile, Cyprus, Finland, Israel, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Turkey and the United States.
Source: HSBC study, various waves.

adolescent mental health in high-income countries – as well as for positive initiatives that can help determine future policy to be shared. If left untreated, mental health disorders that emerge prior to adulthood impose a ten-fold greater health cost than those that emerge later in life.[14]

Adolescent drunkenness is becoming less common

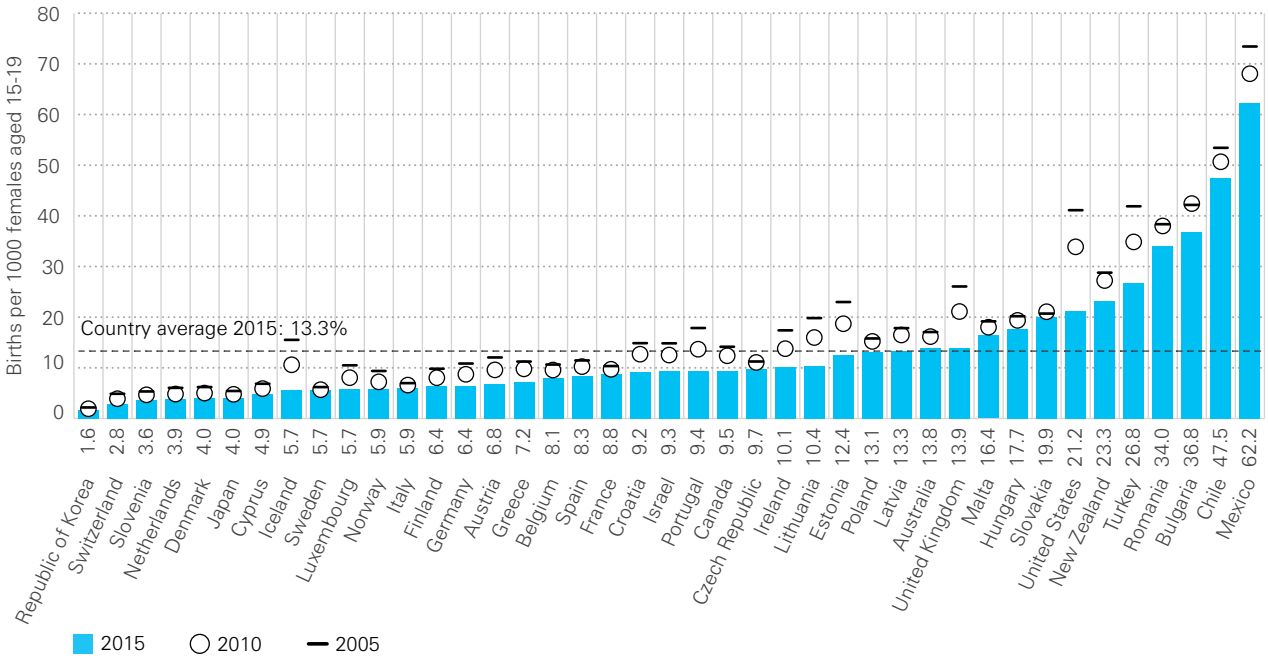
Target 3.5 of the SDGs aims to "strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including … harmful use of alcohol". Although the official indicator related to this focuses on adults, drinking by children is a matter of public concern in many high-income countries – and drunkenness among younger teenagers can constitute "harmful use", not least because of the association with medically treated injuries.[15] The HBSC survey provides data for a large group of industrialized countries.

Figure 3.4 shows the percentage of schoolchildren aged between 11 and 15 in each country who reported having been drunk in the previous 30 days.

There is substantial variation between countries. In Bulgaria and Denmark in 2014, 13 per cent of children had been drunk within the last month – seven times the figure for the country with the lowest incidence, Iceland. It is notable that 9 of the 11 countries with the highest rates are in Central and Eastern Europe. In contrast, southern European nations generally have rates of adolescent drunkenness that are below average.

It is also striking that, in all the countries with data for both years, the incidence of adolescent drunkenness declined between 2010 and 2014. In some countries, the improvement was dramatic: in Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom the rate more than halved. Nevertheless, it remains important to develop and maintain policies that guard against harmful drinking by adolescents.

Figure 3.5 The teenage birth rate is falling in all high-income countries
Number of births per 1,000 females aged 15–19



Note: The country average is unweighted.
Source: OECD Family database, 2016 for Romania and Slovenia, and World Development Indicators 2016 for other countries.

Teenage birth rates are falling fast

Adolescent birth rates have declined rapidly in many high-income countries in recent decades. The issue remains of significant concern, however, on account of the high individual and social costs associated with teenage pregnancies and births. Very young mothers face higher mortality risks and birth complications, in addition to the likely adverse impact on their own economic opportunities. Preventing early pregnancies can therefore improve the life chances and health prospects of two generations of children.

Figure 3.5 tracks changes between 2005 and 2015 in the number of births per 1,000 women aged 15–19 living in 41 high-income countries.

The lowest teenage birth rate is found in the Republic of Korea, with 1.6 per 1,000, while five other countries – Denmark, Japan, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Switzerland – also have a rate of four or under per 1,000. The highest rates occur in the Latin American countries of Chile and Mexico. The difference between high-income countries on this indicator is vast. Even leaving aside the countries with the highest rates, the adolescent birth rate in New Zealand and the United States is more than 13 times that in the Republic of Korea.

Without exception, all countries show a decline in the teenage birth rate between 2005 and 2015. The progress has been particularly marked in Iceland, which reduced its rate by 63.5 per cent over that period, but ten other countries reduced their rates by over 40 per cent: Austria, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. In contrast, there has been minimal recent progress in Slovakia and Sweden, while the slow rate of improvement in Bulgaria, Chile and Romania is of particular concern, given the scale of the problem in those countries.

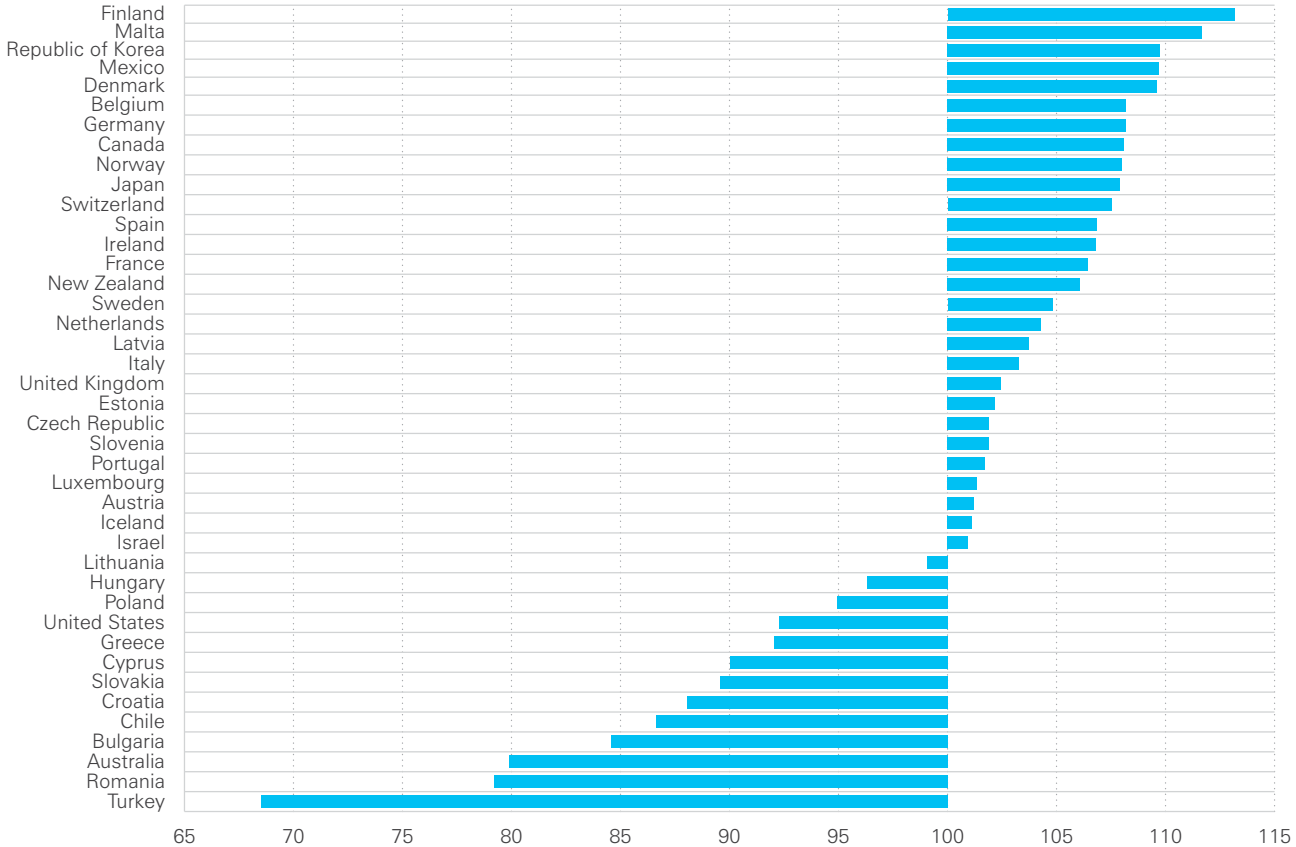
GOAL 4

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

- Measures of basic competency in reading, mathematics and science literacy show that even in the best-performing countries, one 15-year-old in five does not reach the level of basic competency.
- About 19 out of every 20 children have access to some kind of organized preschool provision one year before the start of formal schooling. However, both the quantity and the quality of such services for children from the age of 3 vary substantially across countries.

Figure G4 – Inclusive education

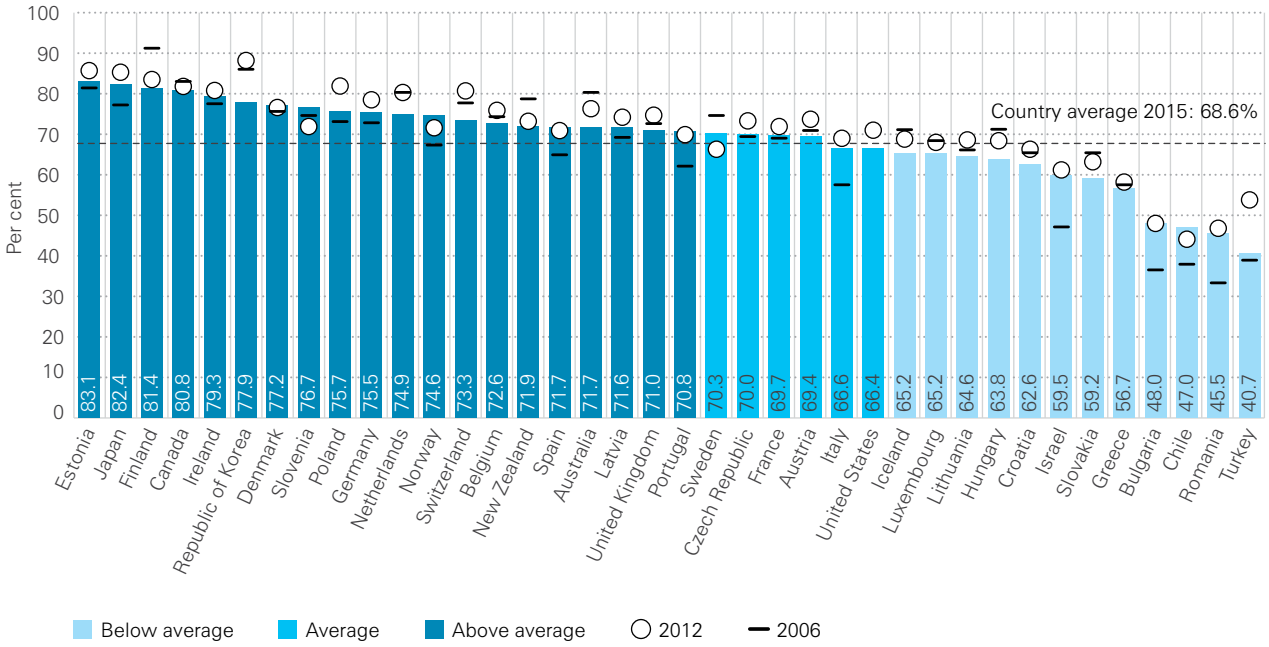
Average country performance across two indicators: rates of children achieving baseline learning proficiency (15 years of age) and participation rates in the preschool year (age 3–6)



Note: The data point for Turkey (2013/14) for participation rate in organized learning (one year before official age for entering primary school) is an outlier; the data point is therefore excluded from the calculation of the results for Goal 4. Inclusion of those data would result in no change to the ranking of Turkey on Goal 4.

Figure 4.1 Even in the highest-performing nations, around one child in five does not achieve baseline educational standards

Percentage of 15-year-olds achieving baseline competency in reading, mathematics and science



Note: Data for 2015 and 2012 are compared to 2006 data, as this was the last time that science literacy was the main focus of the PISA tests; 2009 data are available for the majority of countries; 2006 results for the United States are not reported because of lack of data availability in reading. Malta did not participate in PISA rounds 2006 and 2012. Data for Mexico are excluded due to low rates of enrolment. At the time of the PISA 2015 survey more than one in four Mexican students between the ages of 15-17 were out of school (26.7 per cent); children from the lowest income quintile make up almost half (45 per cent) of non-attendees in this age group, see UNICEF (2016). 'Niños y niñas fuera de la Escuela en México', https://www.unicef.org/mexico/spanish/UNICEF_NFE_MEX.pdf. Some 35.9 per cent of the Mexican sample reached baseline educational standards in 2015. The country average is unweighted. Missing countries: Cyprus, Malta and Mexico.
Source: OECD PISA survey, various waves.

Investing in children's education is key to any child-focused vision of the Sustainable Development Goals. Failure to achieve basic skills in core subjects at each educational level imposes a high cost on individual children and on society through school dropout, lower productivity and wages, and higher unemployment and inactivity. Achieving universal proficiency in fundamental skills ensures a fairer chance in life for all children and young people.

Falling short of universal competency at the end of secondary school

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a triennial survey that aims to evaluate national education systems by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students. *Figure 4.1* compares 39 industrialized countries on the proportion of their children achieving at least minimum proficiency (Level 2 or higher) in reading, mathematics and science in 2015. It is striking that no country, no matter how wealthy or how long established its education system, approaches universal competency in reading, mathematics and science among its 15-year-olds.

The highest proportions – over 80 per cent – are achieved in Canada, Estonia, Finland and Japan. The only other countries with more than 75 per cent of 15-year-olds attaining the basic level across three subjects are Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Republic of Korea and Slovenia. This is a diverse group of countries, but their national educational approaches are evidently more successful than others in ensuring baseline competency (proficiency Level 2 or higher) – though still far from universal.

At the other end of the spectrum, less than half of the 15-year-olds tested in Bulgaria, Chile, Romania and Turkey achieved the requisite minimum standard.

Box 4 Measuring quality in early childhood education and care

SDG Target 4.2 emphasizes the importance of access to high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) as a means of achieving equity and transforming lives through education. At the heart of this ambition is the message that access to ECEC alone is insufficient to achieve positive child outcomes, and that ECEC must also be of high quality. As a result, meeting Target 4.2 means developing methods to accurately measure and monitor quality standards in ECEC.[i]

As a minimum, measures of ECEC quality should capture: (a) the system design and organization (structure) of services, including accreditation, staff-child ratios, and health and safety regulations; (b) practice within ECEC settings (process), including interactions and relationships, the role of play, and the integration of care and education; and (c) child outcomes, including the child's social, emotional, mental, physical skills and benefits to family and community.

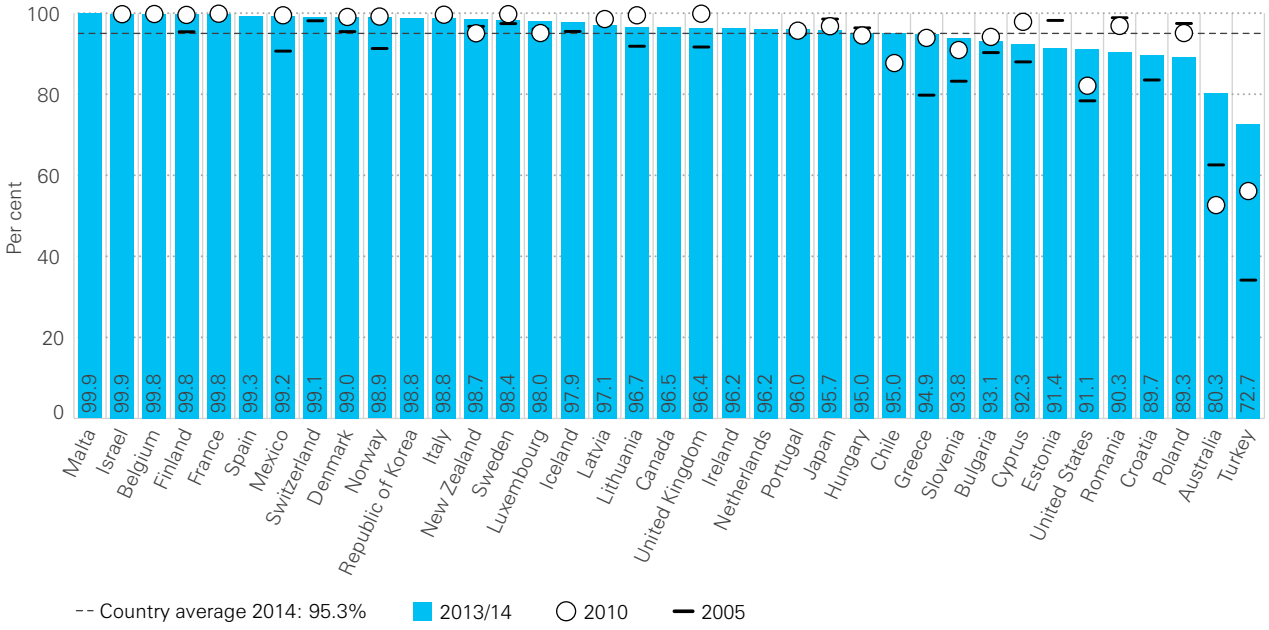
For cross-national monitoring efforts, key considerations include:

- **Monitoring ECEC quality in different contexts.** ECEC services in high-income countries vary widely in terms of decentralization, curriculum and funding structure. This means that a 'one-size-fits-all' solution to measuring quality and monitoring standards is unlikely to be found.
- **The interplay between home environment and formal care.** Quality ECEC settings are responsive to the dynamic nature of children's lives. The child's home learning environment and her/his interaction with formal settings influences child outcomes, and measures should be sensitive to this.
- **What it means to be 'ready for primary education' or 'developmentally on track'.** Quality ECEC settings foster child development and recognize children as active learners and capable explorers of their environment. The concept of 'school readiness', however, can be problematic if it shifts the focus too far from how children learn through *play* – vital in developing soft skills, such as self-regulation and attentiveness – towards a more school-like pedagogy, emphasizing the development of 'basic skills' and literacy outcomes.

Each country can ensure that the question of quality is high on the policy agenda by collecting data at the child level, identifying risks and barriers to positive child development, and ensuring that the system can respond to the needs of both child and family. Such efforts will link improvements in the quality of ECEC to policy measures and enhance equity in access.

[i] Bruckauf, Z. and Hayes, N. (2017). 'Quality of Childcare and Pre-Primary Education: How do we measure it?' *Innocenti Research Brief* 2017-13, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence.

Figure 4.2a More than nine out of ten children participate in organized preschool learning
Percentage participating in organized learning (one year before official age for entering primary school)



Note: Most recent data are for 2010 for Croatia, Estonia, Iceland and Switzerland. Data for Canada refer to adjusted net enrolment rate, one year before the official primary entry age, both sexes (per cent). Missing countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Germany and Slovakia.
Source: SDG Indicators Global Database (UNESCO, OECD and EUROSTAT Surveys of Formal Education).

With the exception of Chile, these are also the countries with the lowest per-capita national income in the sample. However, it is evident that some countries make much more effective use than others of the resources they have available: the highest-performing nation of all on this measure, Estonia, has a per-capita national income less than half that of the four other countries in the top five.

Some of the weakest-performing nations are among those that made the greatest progress on this indicator in the nine years following 2006: Bulgaria, Israel and Romania all showed substantial improvement of around 12 percentage points, while Chile also improved; there was little evidence of positive change on this indicator in Mexico and Turkey.

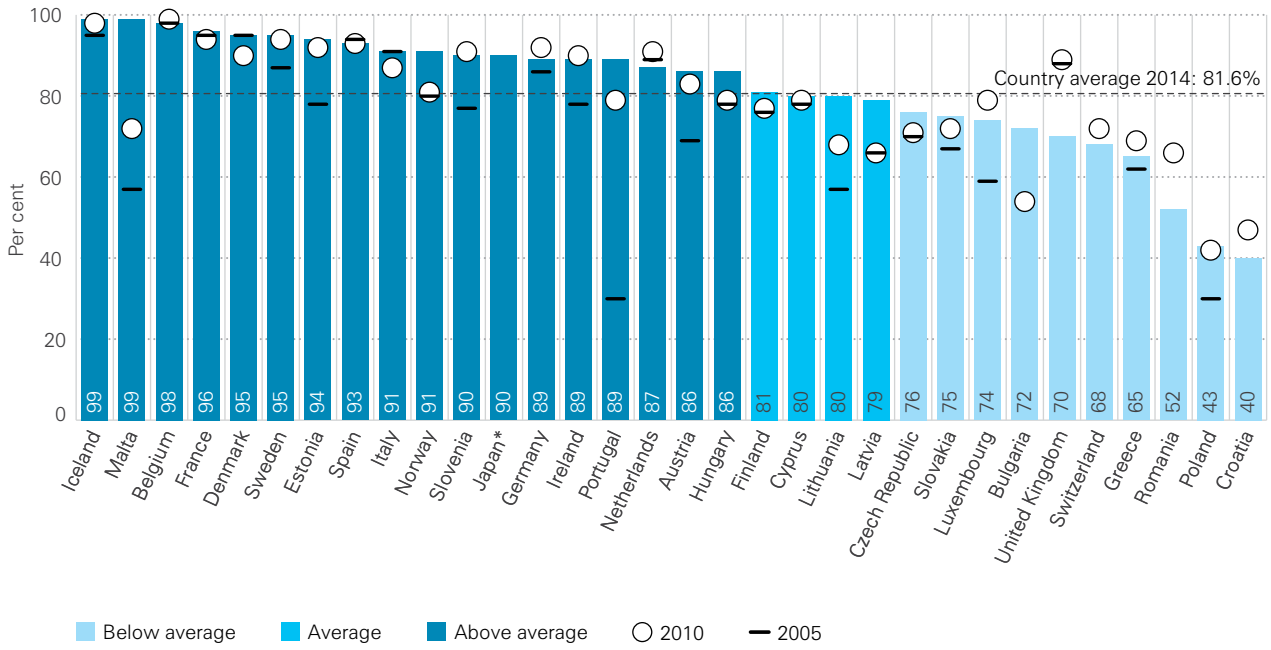
Almost all children have some preschool provision

Target 4.2 of the SDGs aims to "ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education". Early childhood development is a driving force for sustainable development in all societies,[16] and through public investment in early care and education initiatives, a good start in life can benefit not only millions of children today, but also their communities and societies in the future.

A growing body of evidence attests to the long-term benefits of high-quality preschool education and care for children aged 3–5, highlighting positive outcomes in terms of education, health, jobs and reduced criminal behaviour. Specifically, participation in such preschool programmes decreases the likelihood of low educational performance at the age of 15. These effects seem to be particularly positive for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.[17]

Figure 4.2a indicates that almost all children in high-income countries are benefiting from some level of organized learning one year before they start school.

Figure 4.2b Formal childcare attendance from 3 years is less prevalent in some countries
Percentage of children from 3 years to minimum compulsory school age attending centre-based services for at least one hour a week



Note: Missing countries: Australia, Canada, Chile, Israel, Mexico, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Turkey, the United States.
*Confidence intervals for Japan are not available, this country is categorized as a higher performer based on the grouping of nearest comparators.
Source: Eurostat (EU-SILC). Data for Japan from 2013 Comprehensive Survey of Living Standards, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

On average, 95 per cent of children across these countries benefit from formal preschool provision, although this measure does not account for hours used or the quality of provision (see Box 4: *Measuring quality in early childhood education and care,* page 26). Despite recent increases in both countries, the rates in Australia and Turkey remain substantially lower: between two and three out of every ten children do not participate in pre-primary education.

However, the data above cover only the year before primary school, which begins much later in some countries than in others. Expanding the age coverage to include all children from the age of 3 onwards produces a greater variety of national results, as *Figure 4.2b* shows. While nearly all children over age 3 take part in centre-based learning or care for at least one hour a week in Belgium, Iceland and Malta, less than half do so in Croatia and Poland.

GOAL 5

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- Around one woman in 16 in high-income countries reports having been sexually abused by an adult before the age of 15.
- Assumptions about gender roles communicated during childhood play a part in reproducing gender inequalities later in life.
- In all countries with data, more girls than boys report daily participation in housework.
- On average, 14 per cent of adults in sample countries felt that higher education was more important for boys than for girls, though there was a wide range of opinion – from 3 per cent supporting that idea in Sweden to 32 per cent in Turkey.

Few of the globally agreed indicators included under Goal 5 have comparable child-focused indicators that reflect gender inequalities in childhood. For other indicators, there is a lack of comparable cross-country data. Consequently, no composite table has been constructed from the indicators included under Goal 5.

Sustainable Development Goal 5 focuses on eliminating discrimination on the basis of gender, and on ending violence against girls and women. In many high-income countries, significant progress has been made in combating overt discrimination on the grounds of sex – sometimes through legislation and sometimes through changing social norms. Indeed, for many child-level indicators, such as education outcomes, girls frequently outperform boys. However, this does not yet translate into equality of outcomes in later life.

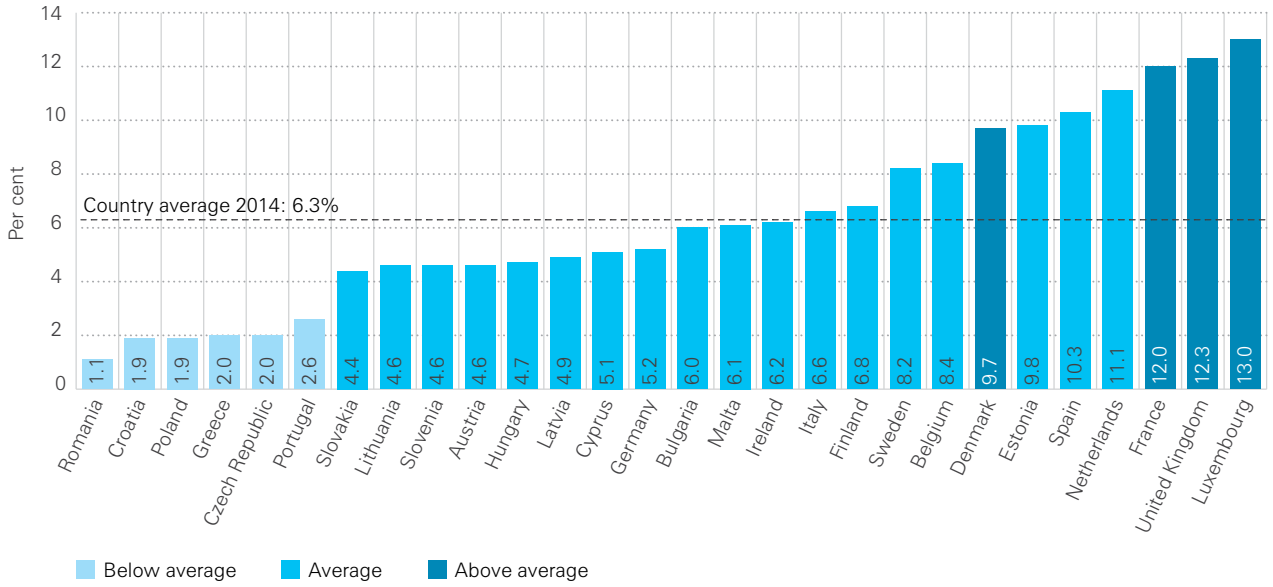
Gender equality requires an end to violence against girls

Experience of any form of violence in childhood can inflict lifelong damage – in both girls and boys (as recognized by Goal 16). Goal 5 focuses specifically on gender equality, and thus prioritizes the ending of all forms of violence against women and girls, including physical, sexual or psychological violence. *Figure 5.1* presents data from a 2012 survey undertaken by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. The survey asked women aged 18–29 whether they had suffered sexual violence from an adult before the age of 15.

In surveys on subjects such as sexual violence, some level of under-reporting is to be expected. Unwillingness to report acts of sexual violence can result from, among other factors, the trauma of recalling the experience, fear of blame or the stigma attached to such violence. Differences in results across countries may thus in part reflect social climates that are more or less conducive to women speaking openly about such experiences. What is clear is that sexual violence is experienced by girls in all countries and appears widespread. Bringing the prevalence of the problem to public notice is itself a step towards countering such abuse and empowering girls. It should be noted that sexual violence is also perpetrated against boys; to date, however, limited data are available on violence against boys or on the differential experience of girls and boys.

Figure 5.1 Sexual violence by adults affects 6 per cent of European girls under the age of 15

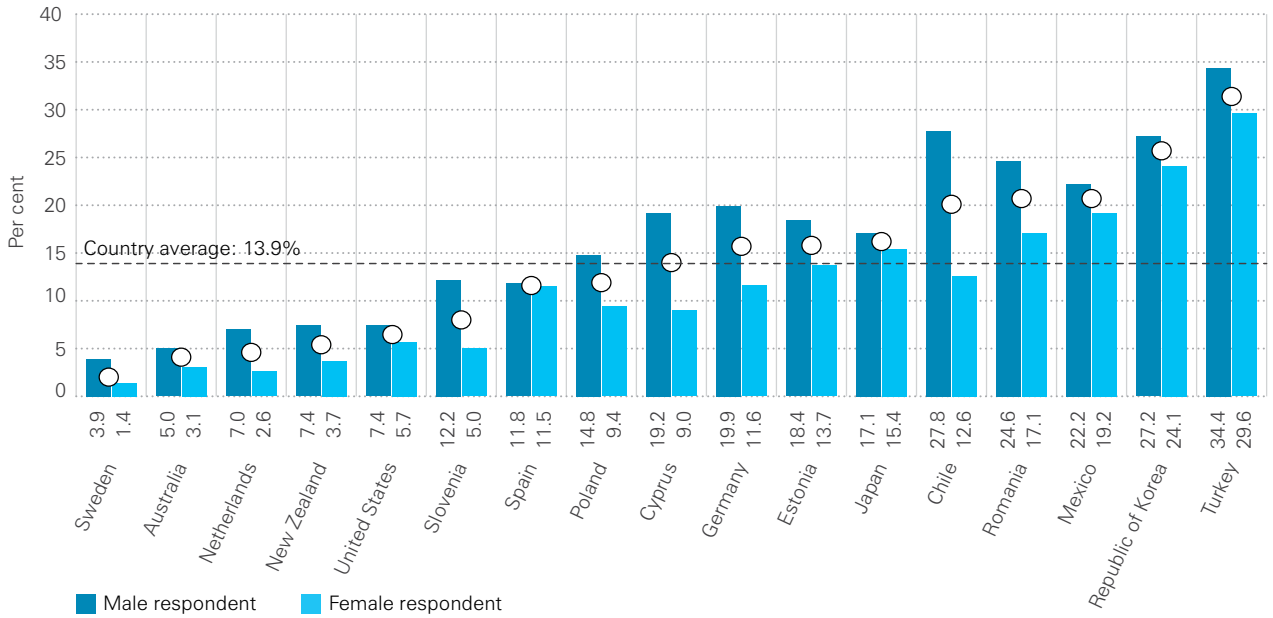
Percentage of women aged 18–29 who reported having experienced sexual violence before the age of 15



Note: Sexual violence was defined as: forced intercourse; unwelcome touching of breasts or genitals; being forced to pose naked; or the adult exposing their genitals. Missing countries: Australia, Canada, Chile, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States.
Source: FRA – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012.

Figure 5.2 Attitudes that reinforce gender inequality remain entrenched

Percentage of adult respondents agreeing that "university education is more important for a boy than for a girl", 2010–2014



Note: Data refer to the current official release version v2016-01-01 of the World Values Survey. Respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement. Circle on bars = male/female average.
Source: World Values Survey, 2010–2014.

Societal attitudes contribute to unequal outcomes for girls and boys

Gender differences persist in many areas of life in rich, as well as in poor countries. In most rich countries, women still lag well behind men when it comes to pay, to holding managerial positions and to political representation at both the local and the national level. In terms of wage gaps, for example, on average across the OECD, women earn 15.5 per cent less than men;[18] meanwhile, they hold only 27.9 per cent of seats in national parliaments.[19]

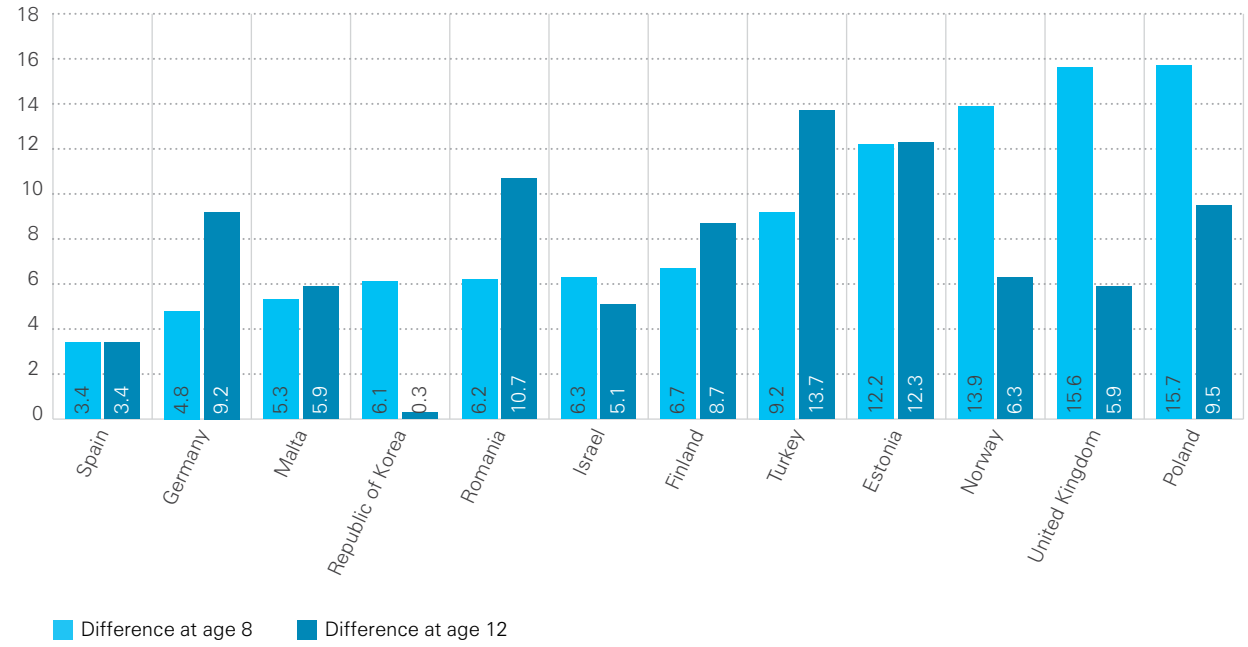
Yet in terms of their attainment at school and university, girls and young women consistently outperform their male peers in high-income countries. As of 2013, 55 per cent of all students in OECD countries who graduated from a general secondary education programme were girls and 58 per cent of graduates with a bachelor's degree were women[20] – but this is still not translating into an advantage in the labour market.

The gender gap in adult life is therefore not closely tracked by indicators of opportunity or performance during childhood: instead, other factors play into the later disadvantage of women. These include gender norms and expectations of gender roles that persist in most societies, notwithstanding the overall progress made towards gender equality in high-income countries over recent decades. For example, the view that university education is more important for boys than for girls is still widely held in many countries by both men and women, as a study of 17 countries conducted as part of the World Values Survey revealed (*Figure 5.2*).

Wide variation is displayed here in terms of social attitudes to gender. The proportion of respondents who value male education over female is as high as one in five in Chile, Romania and Mexico, is over one in four in the Republic of Korea, and is almost one in three in Turkey.

Figure 5.3 Girls do more housework than boys at ages 8 and 12

Percentage point difference in girls' and boys' share of daily participation in housework by age, 2013/14



Note: In some countries, only one region or administrative area was sampled, as follows: Poland – Wielkopolska region; Spain – Catalonia; Turkey – Istanbul; United Kingdom – England.
Source: Children's Worlds, the International Survey of Children's Well-Being (ISCWeB).

Such attitudes are likely to translate into differential educational opportunities and thus to unequal gender outcomes in adult life.

Girls do more housework

Another factor inhibiting gender equality in adult life is women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work. In most cultures, the assumption that such work within the household is primarily the responsibility of women is learned early in life, as children are socialized by example and by expectation both within and beyond the family home. The International Survey of Children's Well-Being collects data based on children's subjective perceptions of their own lives. Children aged 8, 10 and 12 were asked: "How often do you usually spend time helping around the house when you are not in school?" The results appear in *Figure 5.3*.

In the 12 high-income countries included in the survey, about 52 per cent of children aged 8 said that they helped with housework every day, while only 11 per cent indicated that they did so rarely or never. In all countries, more girls than boys report participating in housework on a daily basis, while boys predominate among those who say that they never or rarely help. The gender difference is consistent across all countries and all three ages. Although Mexico was not covered by the survey, national data for 2013 indicate that in the age group 10 to 13, 74 per cent of girls are involved in household work, compared with 64 per cent of boys.[21]

The nature of children's housework varies, depending on the socio-economic and cultural context, and children's contributions to household chores are by no means necessarily negative. However, the clear gap between boys' and girls' participation at the age of 8 does seem indicative of the kind of gender stereotyping that is reproduced within families and that can reinforce gender inequalities over the long term.

GOAL 8

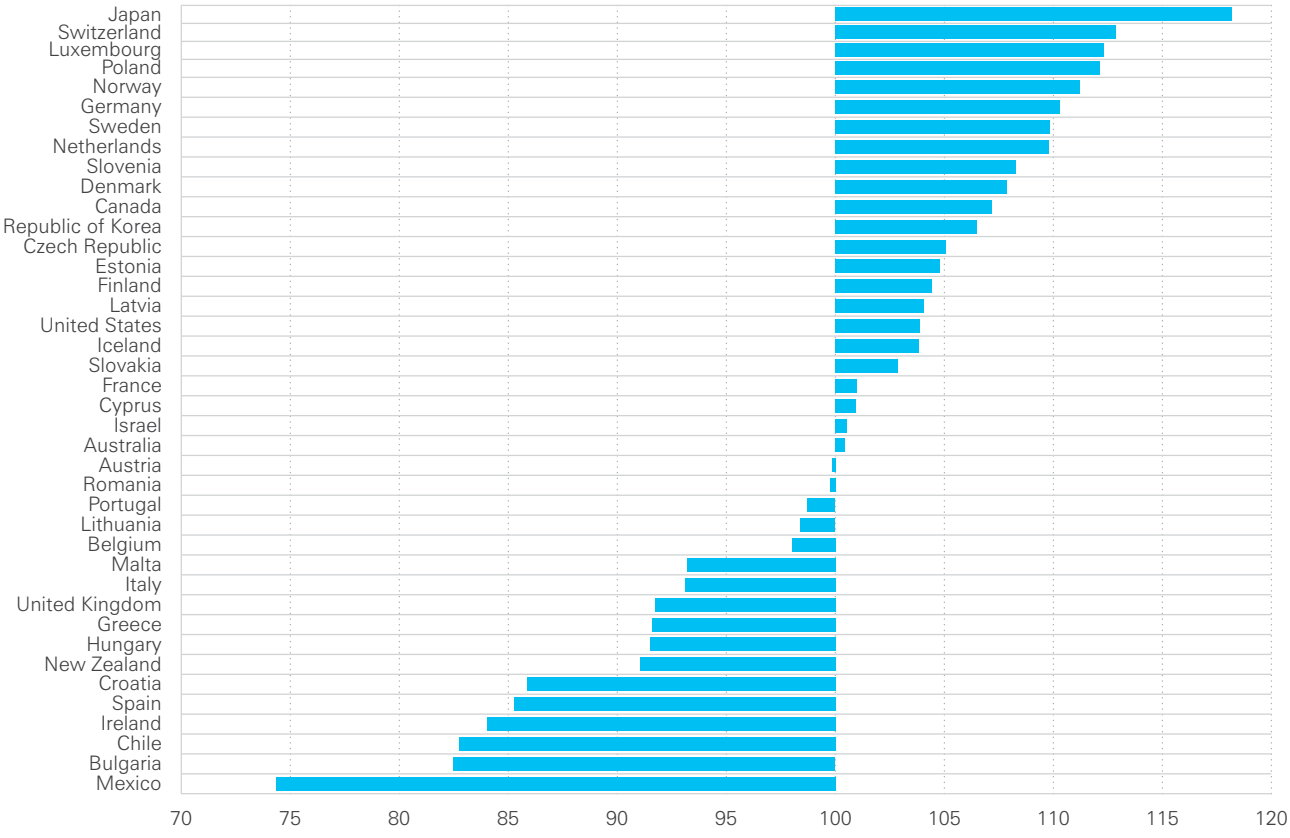
Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

» An average of 1 young person in 13 in the countries surveyed is not in employment, education or training (NEET) – and the proportion is much larger in southern Europe and Latin America. Jobs for young people can redress this lack of opportunities and improve the inclusion of young people.

» Around one child in ten lives in a household where no adult is employed; this rises to almost one child in five in Ireland.

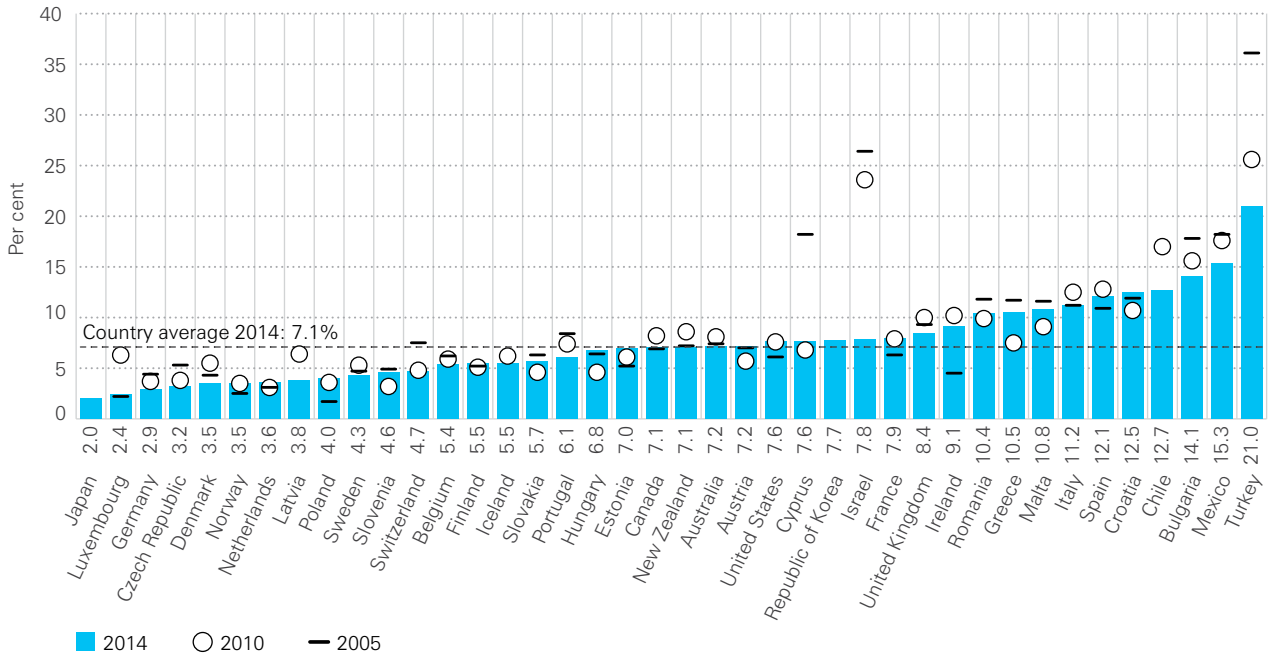
Figure G8 – Inclusive economic growth

Average country performance across two indicators: youth inactivity (NEET) rates (15–19 years) and children living in jobless households (0–17 years of age)



Note: The data point for Turkey for the proportion of youth (aged 15–19) not in employment, education or training in 2014 is an outlier, and so is excluded from the calculation of the results for Goal 8. The inclusion of the outlier would result in Turkey ranking 41st on Goal 8.

Figure 8.1 Among young people aged 15-19 around 1 in 13 is not in school or work
Percentage of youth (aged 15–19) not in employment, education or training (NEET rate)



Note: According to the International Labour Organization definition, students in work-study programmes are considered to be both in education and employed, irrespective of their labour market status. Reported 2014 data for Republic of Korea and Chile refer to 2013; reported 2010 data for Chile refer to 2009. Missing country: Lithuania.
Source: OECD Family Database, 2016. Data for Japan: Statistics Bureau, Labour Force Survey 2015.

Any strategy for achieving sustainable economic development has to include opportunities for young people to engage in productive employment that will provide them with a decent livelihood. A key measure of a country's success in delivering such opportunities is the proportion of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET). High NEET rates are unhealthy – not just for the young people themselves, but also for society as a whole. Young people not in education or in work are not developing their skills or their confidence, and may be at higher risk of social isolation, involvement in risky behaviour and poor mental and physical health.[22]

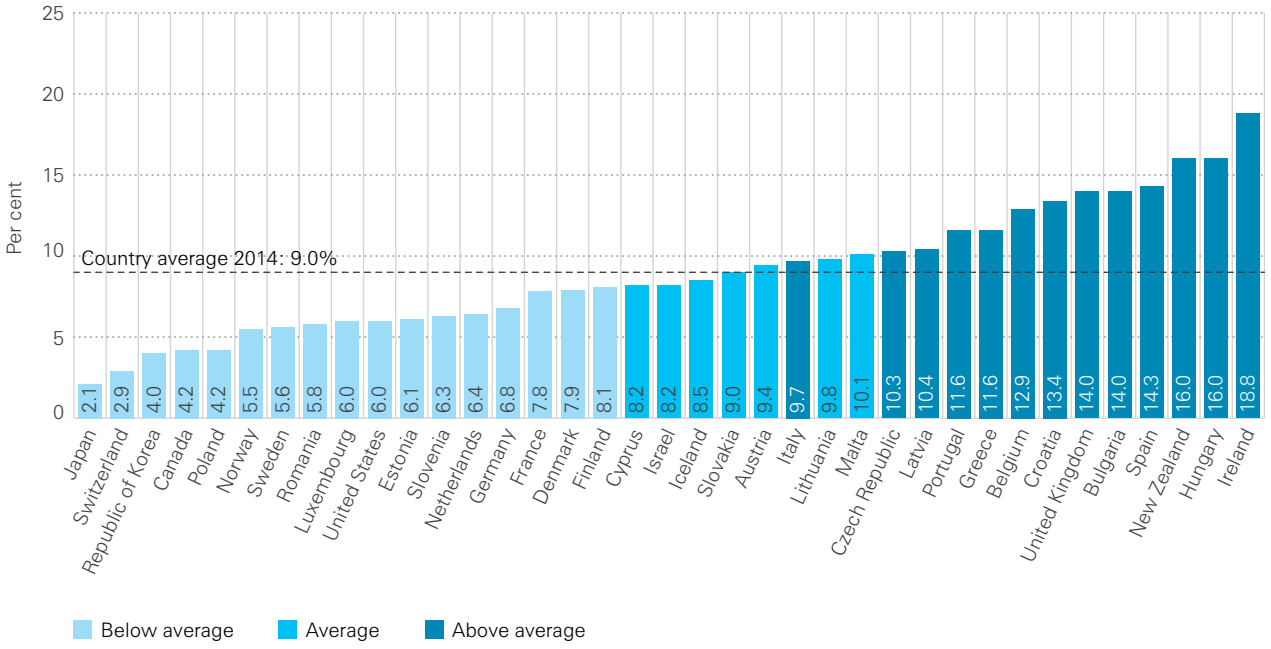
The official SDG indicator (8.6.1) is the share of youth aged 15–24 not in employment, education or training. Since the focus in this report is on children, *Figure 8.1* reports on the situation of adolescents aged 15–19.

Around 1 in 13 of this age group in high-income countries is NEET. In general, the highest rates occur in southern Europe and Latin America, and the lowest in Northern and Central Europe. Turkey's young people are worst affected, with 1 in 5 in this category.

NEET rates have fallen in most countries over the past decade. In some, the improvement has been spectacular: Israel reduced its NEET rate by more than two thirds between 2005 and 2014, bringing it down to the international average. Cyprus has cut its rate by more than half, and Turkey has also made massive strides, though it still has the highest rate among all OECD countries.

However, there has been a significant worsening of the situation in some other countries, with NEET rates doubling between 2005 and 2014 in both Ireland and Poland. Estonia, France and the

Figure 8.2 Around one child in ten lives in a household where no one works for pay
Percentage of children under 18 in jobless households (based on self-defined economic status of adults)



Note: Reported 2014 data for Republic of Korea and New Zealand refer to 2015; for USA they refer to 2013; and for Israel and Japan – to 2012. Mexico's data are excluded on account of high rates of informality in the labour market. Missing countries: Australia, Chile and Turkey.
Source: See Figure 1.1.

United States have also seen their NEET rates rise, albeit on a more modest scale.

Another key indicator related to Goal 8 is adult unemployment. Growing up in a household where no adult works has been linked to a greater risk of experiencing income poverty,[23] and poorer child well-being outcomes in areas of learning, bullying, and notably being NEET.[24] *Figure 8.2* shows the proportion of children living in households where nobody has a paid job.

The results range from 2 per cent of children in Japan to 19 per cent in Ireland. Around one child in seven lives in a jobless household in Bulgaria, Hungary, New Zealand, Spain and the United Kingdom.

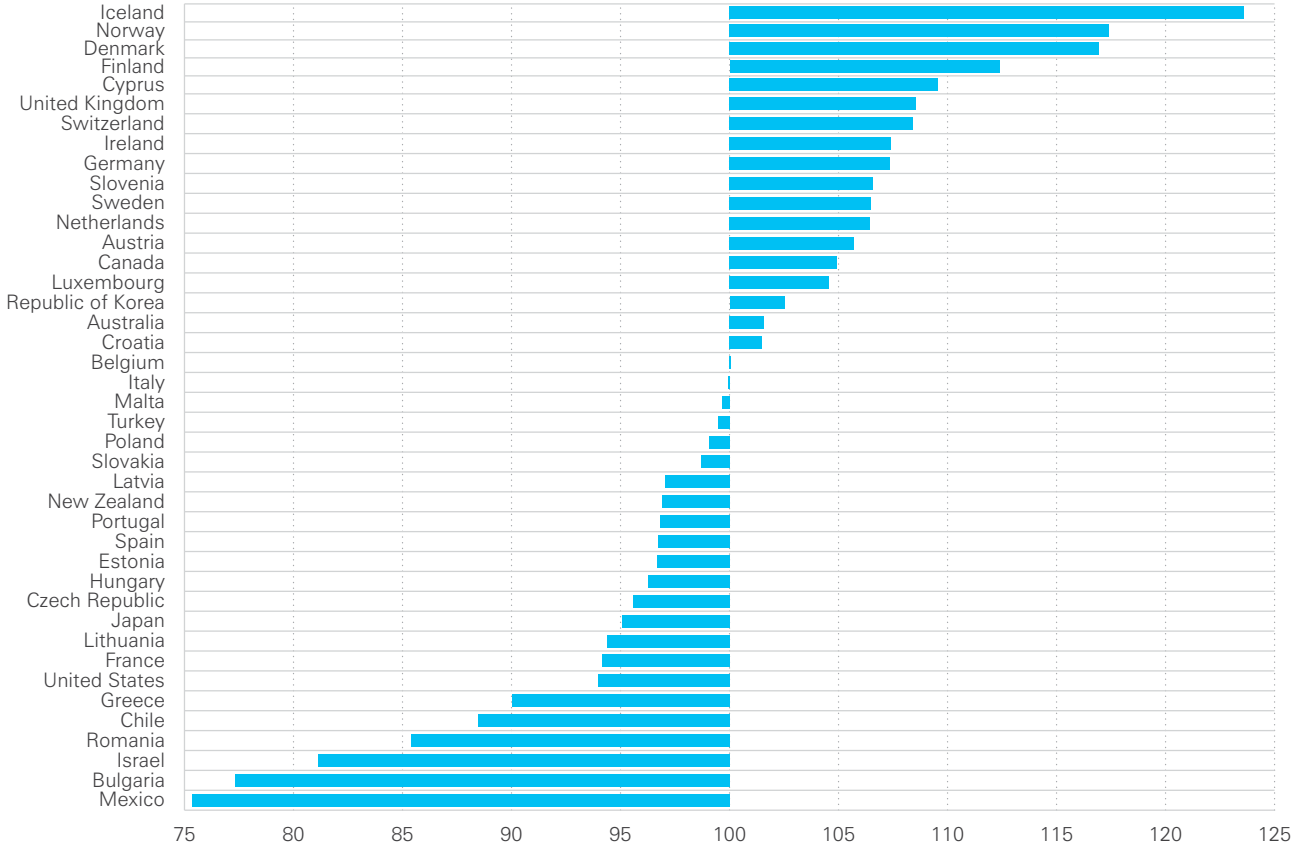
GOAL 10

Reduce inequality within and among countries

- Considerable inequalities remain in high-income countries. In two thirds of countries, the entire bottom 40 per cent of households with children have less income than the top 10 per cent.
- In most countries, the incomes of the poorest 10 per cent of the population have fallen further behind those at the median since 2008.
- These inequalities are at their most extreme in Bulgaria and Mexico, and at their least severe in Iceland and Norway.
- Economic disadvantage undermines equal opportunities: in every country studied, 15-year-olds from better-off families achieve substantially better educational results than their less-advantaged peers.

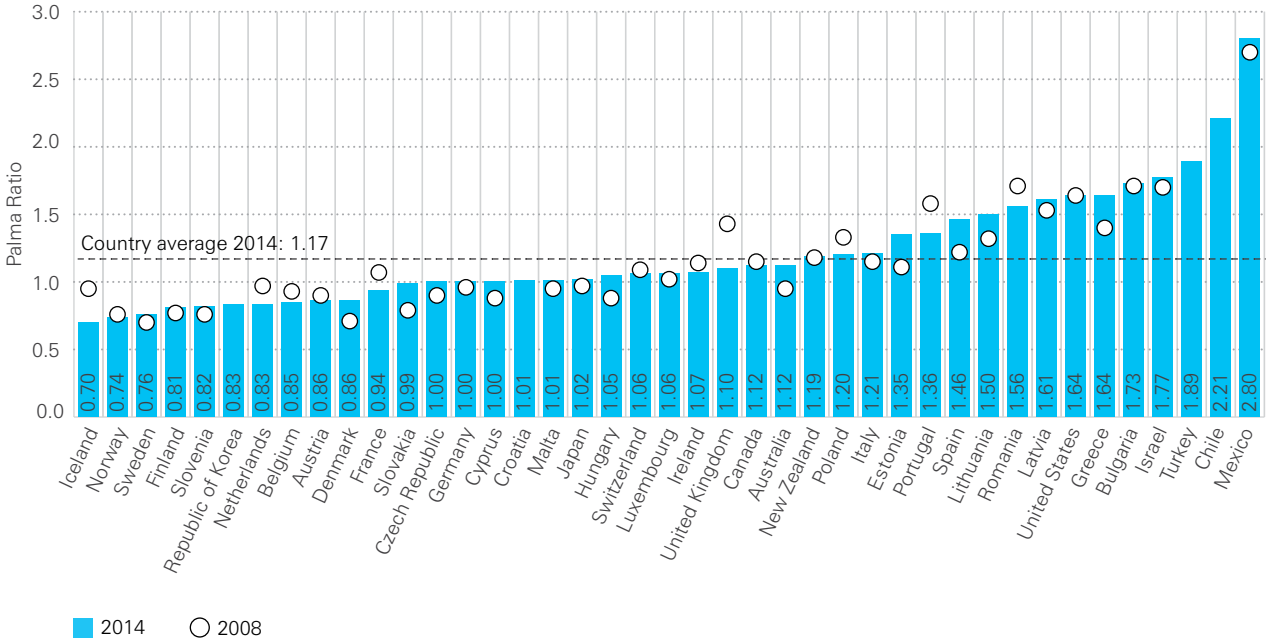
Figure G10 – Reduce inequality

Average country performance across three indicators: Palma ratio (0–17 years of age), 'bottom-end' inequality (0–17 years) and impact of socio-economic status on student performance (15 years)



Note: One data point for Mexico is an outlier and has been excluded from the calculation of the results for Goal 10 (2014, Palma ratio based on households with children). The inclusion of the outlier would result in no change for Mexico.

Figure 10.1 In most countries, the income share of the top 10 per cent exceeds that of the bottom 40 per cent
Palma ratio based on households with children, 2014 and 2008



Note: The Palma ratio is the ratio of the income share of the top 10 per cent and the bottom 40 per cent of the population in an income distribution. A value of 1.0 indicates that the income of the top 10 per cent is the same as that of the bottom 40 per cent. Values above 1.0 show that the share of the top 10 per cent is bigger, and values below 1.0 indicate that it is smaller. Values below 1.0 therefore suggest lower levels of inequality.
Source: See Figure 1.1.

Income inequality affects children in many ways. Recent evidence suggests that children growing up in countries with less equality tend to have worse outcomes in education, health and life satisfaction.[25] Moreover, in countries with higher income inequality, children's family income plays a larger role in determining their access to educational opportunities and resources.

One of the key SDG indicators on inequality uses the Palma ratio, which measures the income share of the bottom 40 per cent of the population relative to the top 10 per cent. *Figure 10.1* looks at this relationship for households with children in 41 high-income countries. This is a child-focused adaptation of the Palma ratio, where a value of 1.0 indicates that the income share of the top 10 per cent of the population is the same as that of the bottom 40 per cent. A value of less than 1.0 indicates that the bottom 40 per cent receives a bigger share of income than the richest 10 per cent; conversely a value greater than 1.0 indicates that the bottom 40 per cent receives a smaller share.

The lowest ratio is found in Iceland, where there has been a marked narrowing of the gap between the top 10 per cent and the bottom 40 per cent of households with children since the financial crash of 2008. The consequent reduction in the income of the richest group has taken Iceland's Palma ratio to below even the other Nordic countries of Finland, Norway and Sweden. Other countries where the gap between the richest and poorest segments of the population has narrowed are the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and the United Kingdom, whereas it has widened significantly in Australia, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Slovakia and Spain.

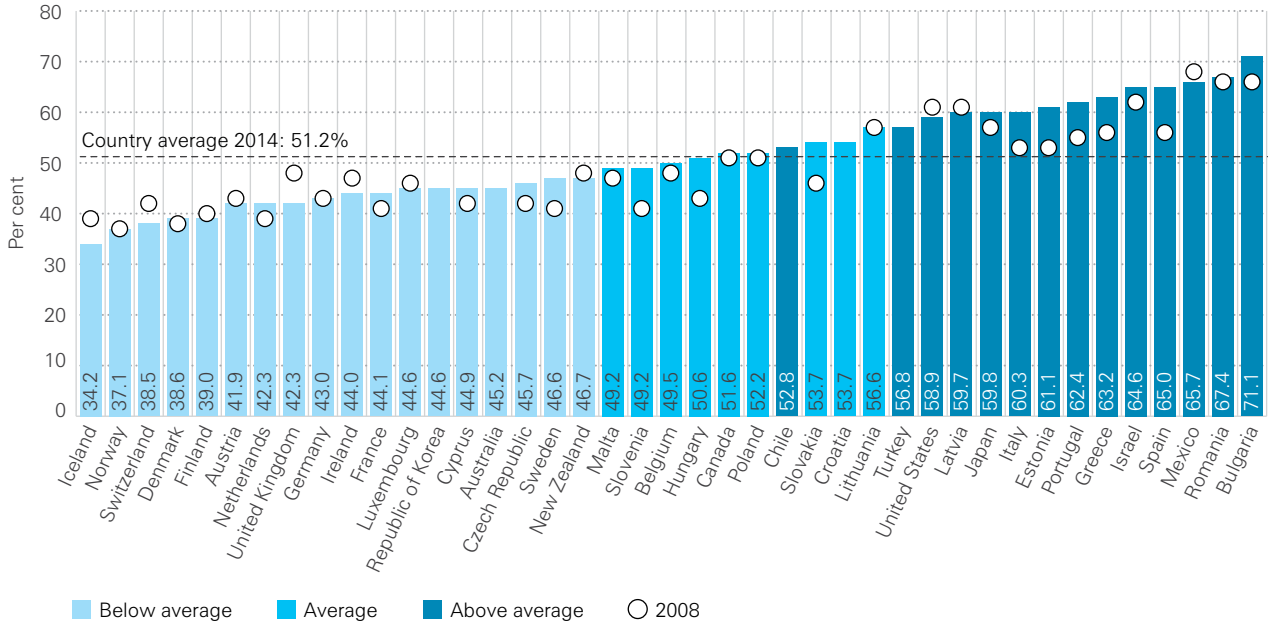
The highest levels of inequality by this measure are to be found in Latin America, in Chile and Mexico, though inequality is also well above the international average in Bulgaria, Greece, Israel, Latvia, Turkey and the United States.

Taking account of the poorest 10 per cent

In the spirit of the SDGs, which seek to leave no one behind, this report includes an additional indicator that focuses on the poorest children. In *Report Cards 9* and *13*, UNICEF tracked how far

Figure 10.2 In most countries, the poorest 10 per cent of households with children have fallen further behind the median income since 2008

Relative income gap between median income and that of the bottom 10 per cent of households with children, 2014 and 2008



Note: Relative income gap ('bottom-end inequality') is measured as the gap between household income of a child at the 50th percentile (the median) and that of a child at the 10th percentile, reported as a percentage of the median. Data for Chile are for 2015.
Sources: See Figure 1.1.

behind the median income the bottom 10 per cent of households with children were falling. *Figure 10.2* shows the position of such households in 2014, as well as changes since 2008.

In this and the previous indicator, Iceland leads the way. A child from a family in the 10th percentile in Iceland is closer to the national median than the equivalent child in any other country. The strong improvement in their relative position since 2008 is not, however, because the incomes of the poorest 10 per cent of households have risen (in fact, they have shrunk); rather it is because median income has declined even more.[26]

In 23 of the countries for which there are data, the poorest children were even further behind the median income in 2014 than they were in 2008. There is particular cause for concern in Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain, where the poorest 10 per cent of children are in a substantially worse position. In Portugal, this is despite the fact that the Palma ratio improved between 2008 and 2014. This goes to show the importance of tracking the position of the poorest 10 per cent of children, in addition to focusing on the bottom 40 per cent.

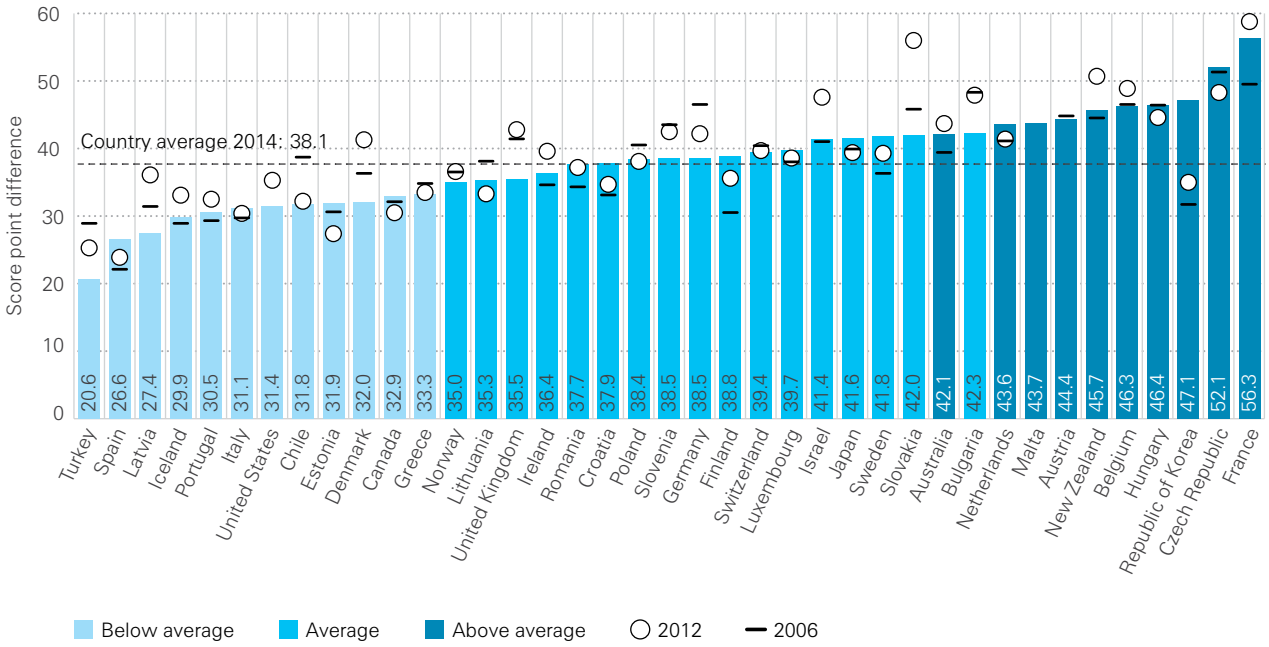
Socio-economic background affects achievement

The adverse impacts of inequality of opportunity can last a lifetime. One way in which this plays out is through the impact of socio-economic status on students' educational achievement. Evidence suggests that children's family backgrounds cause their paths to diverge early in life, even before they start school.[27]

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) has developed a broad measure of

Figure 10.3 Socio-economic advantage leads to better school results in all 39 countries studied

The score-point difference in reading, mathematics and science associated with a one-unit increase in the ESCS index



Note: All values are statistically significant. US 2006 data are not available, as there are no data on reading. Data for Mexico are excluded due to low rates of enrolment. At the time of the PISA 2015 survey more than one in four Mexican students between the ages of 15-17 were out of school (26.7 per cent); children from the lowest income quintile make up almost half (45 per cent) of non-attendees in this age group, see UNICEF (2016). 'Niños y niñas fuera de la Escuela en México', https://www.unicef.org/mexico/spanish/UNICEF_NFE_MEX.pdf. Socio-economic advantage led to a 19.8 score-point difference in Mexico in 2015. Data on the ESCS index are missing for Austria in the 2012 round. Missing countries: Cyprus and Mexico.

Source: OECD PISA survey, various waves.

socio-economic background – the economic, social and cultural status (ESCS) index. It is derived from five indices: parental education, occupational status of parents, family wealth, cultural possessions (art objects and classical literature) and educational resources.

Figure 10.3 shows the association between a one-unit increase in the ESCS index and students' results across the three subjects of reading, mathematics and science. A higher value indicates that socio-economic background has a greater impact on students' achievement.

The results are both remarkable and consistent. Students aged 15 from advantaged backgrounds in socio-economic terms achieved better results in the three core subjects in 2015 than their less-advantaged peers across all 39 industrialized countries studied. On average across the OECD countries, the performance difference associated with a one-unit increase in the PISA ESCS index is equivalent to more than one year of schooling.

The biggest impact of all is found in France, where a one-unit increase in the ESCS index is associated with an average improvement across the three subjects of 56 score points, the equivalent of almost two years' schooling.

At the other end of the range, Turkey is the country where socio-economic background has least influence on school results – in part because there was a smaller variation in academic performance.

The influence of socio-economic background on educational performance is persistent over time. However, between 2006 and 2015, big improvements in equity were made in Chile, Germany and Turkey, while France, Finland and particularly the Republic of Korea moved in a more inequitable direction.

Box 5 Looking through the migration lens: including every child

Within Goal 10 on reducing inequality, Target 10.7 aims to "facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies".

Around 50 million of the world's children have been uprooted, either across borders or within their own countries. One refugee in every two is a child. In Europe, one asylum application in four is from a minor. These children may be migrants, refugees, internally displaced or stateless. First and foremost, however, they are children – no matter where they come from or who they are. States have a shared responsibility and a legal obligation to protect displaced children. The extent to which displaced children are protected from abuse and deprivation depends on how well migration is managed, on how migrant children are integrated into society and on their access to necessary services.

In the European context, national responses to the recent inflow of children seeking sanctuary in Europe were swift, using whatever resources were immediately available. While significant attention has been given to children on the move, the sheer number and scale of the increasing influx of children has resulted in enormous stress on European socio-political and economic systems. Despite the ratification of relevant international treaties and many examples of good practice in individual countries, there are chronic deficiencies in all European Union members' migration, asylum and child-rights structures, systems and services that impede their ability to provide support and services for children in need. Access to services varies and shifts according to children's asylum status and/or place in the migration process, and some groups – such as unaccompanied minors – tend to be prioritized over others.

UNICEF's study 'Children on the Move' (2016) offers an overview of the policy and practice environment affecting refugee and migrant children across Europe. The review covers the legal entitlements of various categories of children on the move: asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors, undocumented migrants, refugees or those subject to return proceedings. Access to education, health and social services are basic entitlements that should be provided to all children on the move, irrespective of their legal status.

Basic education is a fundamental right guaranteed to all children. Despite this, 'Children on the Move' demonstrates that the quality, type and amount of education varies according to the legal status of the child, rather than according to her/his actual educational needs. Similarly, according to international law and the CRC, children in the migration pathway should have access to appropriate healthcare; yet in practice, entitlement to general healthcare services is quite restricted. Access to social assistance is also restricted for migrant children, as all EU Member States require a valid residence permit before social security payments can be made. This policy automatically disadvantages undocumented and irregular migrants.

The table below highlights some of the most severe instances of lack of legal entitlements for migrant and refugee children in European countries. Practical obstacles, combined with limited support measures, mean that these children are frequently disadvantaged, leaving them at risk of poverty.

Undocumented migrant children excluded from schooling
Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania
No specific maternity-care provision for migrants
Bulgaria, Cyprus, Finland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland and Slovakia
Undocumented migrant children only entitled to emergency healthcare
Bulgaria, Cyprus, Finland, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Slovakia

Source: UNICEF CEE/CIS (2016). 'Children on the Move' is an ongoing study of legal entitlements for migrant children. Developed from data provided in Byrne, K. (2016, on file with authors) 'Law, Policy and Practice Affecting Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe'.

In order to meet SDG Target 10.7, which guarantees safe, regular and responsible migration for every child, it is necessary to break the link between entitlements and legal status for children on the move, and to provide services on the basis of their rights and needs. Protection of Europe's borders and protection of children are not mutually exclusive.

Source for this box: Toczydlowska, E. and D'Costa, B. (2017). 'Migration and Inequality: Making policies inclusive for every child', *Innocenti Research Brief* 2017-14, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence; UNICEF CEE/CIS (2016). 'Children on the Move', an ongoing study of legal entitlements for migrant children. Developed from data provided in Byrne, K. (2016, on file with authors) 'Law, Policy and Practice Affecting Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe'.

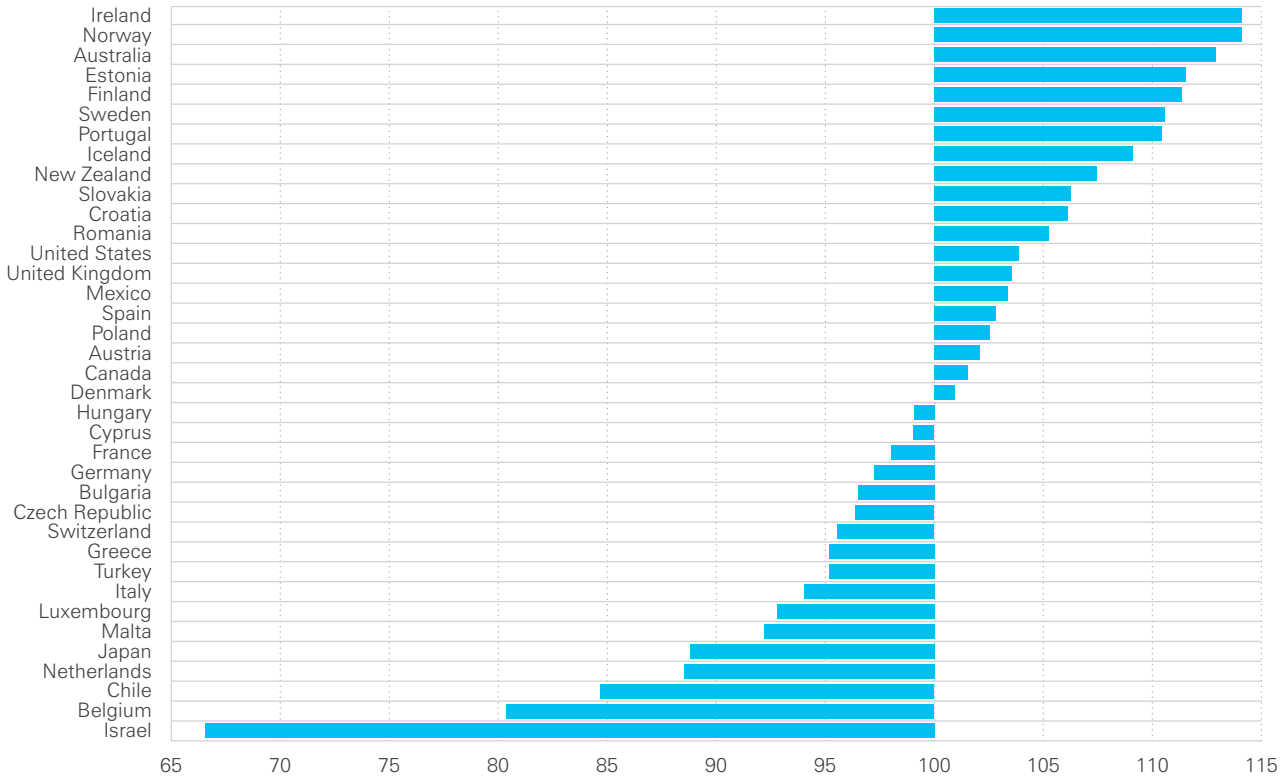
GOAL 11

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

- Half of all high-income countries studied fail to meet the safe levels for urban air quality established by the World Health Organization; children are especially vulnerable to such pollution.
- The average level of urban air-pollution concentration for the group of countries studied exceeds the safety threshold.

Figure G11 – Make cities safe

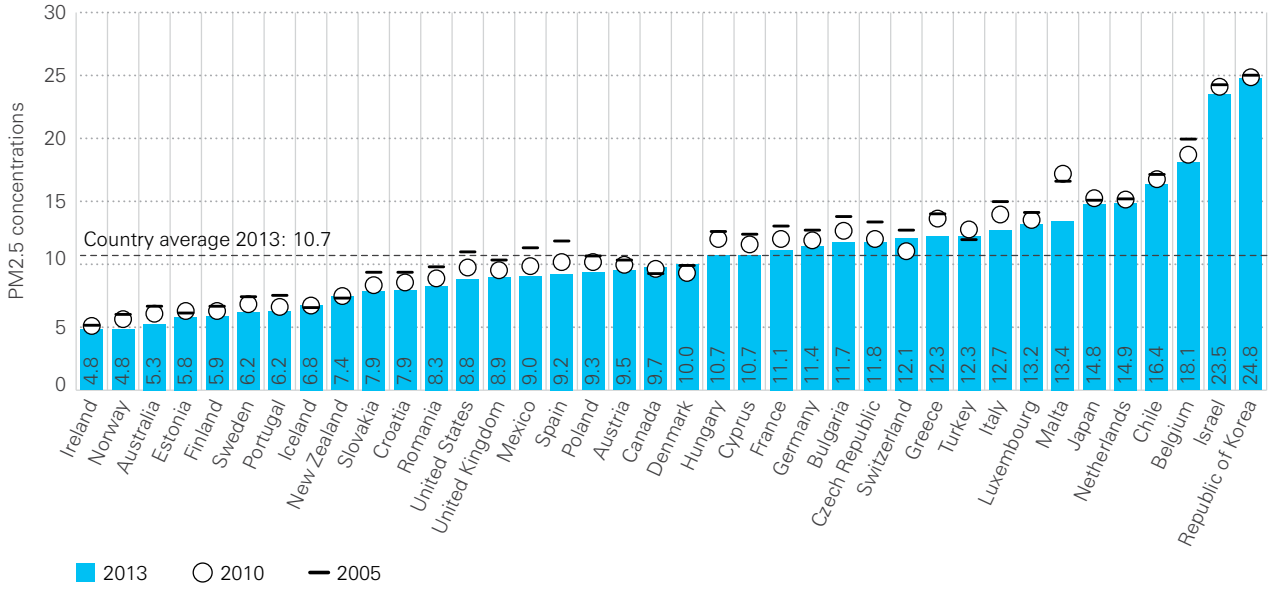
Average country performance on one indicator: annual average concentrations of fine particle pollution (PM2.5μ) in urban areas, weighted by proportion of child population living in urban areas (0–19 years of age)



Note: Missing countries: Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Korea and Slovenia. The data point (2013) for Korea for annual average PM2.5 concentrations in urban areas, weighted for child population, is an outlier and has been excluded from the calculation of the results for Goal 11. The inclusion of the outlier would result in the Republic of Korea ranking 38th on Goal 11.

Figure 11.1 Children's health is threatened by high levels of air pollution

Annual average PM2.5μ concentrations per cubic metre for 2013, 2010 and 2005 in urban areas, weighted by proportion of child population (0–19) living in urban areas



Note: Data are weighted to account for the child population (aged 0–19) living in urban settings, according to the most recent United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) figures, the population for 2013 is the average of the 2010 and the 2015 reports (data reported every five years). Urbanization rates on average across the country groups were 73.8 per cent in 2005, 74.9 per cent in 2010 and 75.4 per cent in 2013. Data for Latvia in 2010 were 7.9, and for 2005 – 8.0. For Lithuania data for 2010 were 9.1, and for 2005 – 9.5. Data for 2013 missing for both Latvia and Lithuania. Missing countries: Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia.

Source: Brauer et al. (2016). 'Ambient Air Pollution Exposure Estimation for the Global Burden of Disease 2013', *Environmental Science and Technology*, vol. 50, no. 1, pp. 79–88; UNDP (2017). 'Urban and Rural Population by Age and Sex, 1980–2015'. Available at: nin.tl/UNDP2017

Making cities sustainable and safe for human habitation will involve reducing the levels of air pollution that currently afflict the inhabitants of many urban areas.

Children are particularly susceptible to air pollution, because they breathe in more air per unit of body weight than adults. Their lungs are especially vulnerable to damage from such pollution both while developing in the womb and during the first years of life, while studies indicate that ultrafine particles can do permanent damage to children's brain tissue.[28] In addition, nearly 600,000 children under the age of 5 die annually from diseases caused or exacerbated by the effects of air pollution globally.[29] Outdoor play and exercise can do more harm than good in heavily polluted environments.

The official SDG indicator for monitoring air pollution is 11.6.2, which measures annual mean levels of fine particulate matter in cities. *Figure 11.1* shows the annual average levels of air pollution in 38 OECD and EU countries, measured in concentrations of PM2.5μ. This is particulate matter with a diameter of less than 2.5 microns – so fine that it is able not only to penetrate inside the lungs, but also to enter the bloodstream, causing a variety of health problems.[30] The data have been weighted to take account of the proportion of children in each country living in urban areas.

The World Health Organization has established a safe level of air quality of below 10 micrograms of PM2.5 per cubic metre. Of the 38 countries included in the sample, nearly half do not meet this standard, while the international average is just over the safe level. Levels of air pollution were more than twice the safe level in the urban areas of Israel and the Republic of Korea. Children in Belgian cities faced the highest levels of air pollution in Europe.

One source of encouragement is that air quality improved between 2005 and 2013 in almost all the high-income countries studied: the exceptions were Denmark, Iceland and New Zealand, where there was no improvement, and Canada and Turkey, where there was a deterioration. The biggest improvements over this period were seen in Malta, Mexico and Spain, with the United States also making significant progress.

GOAL 12

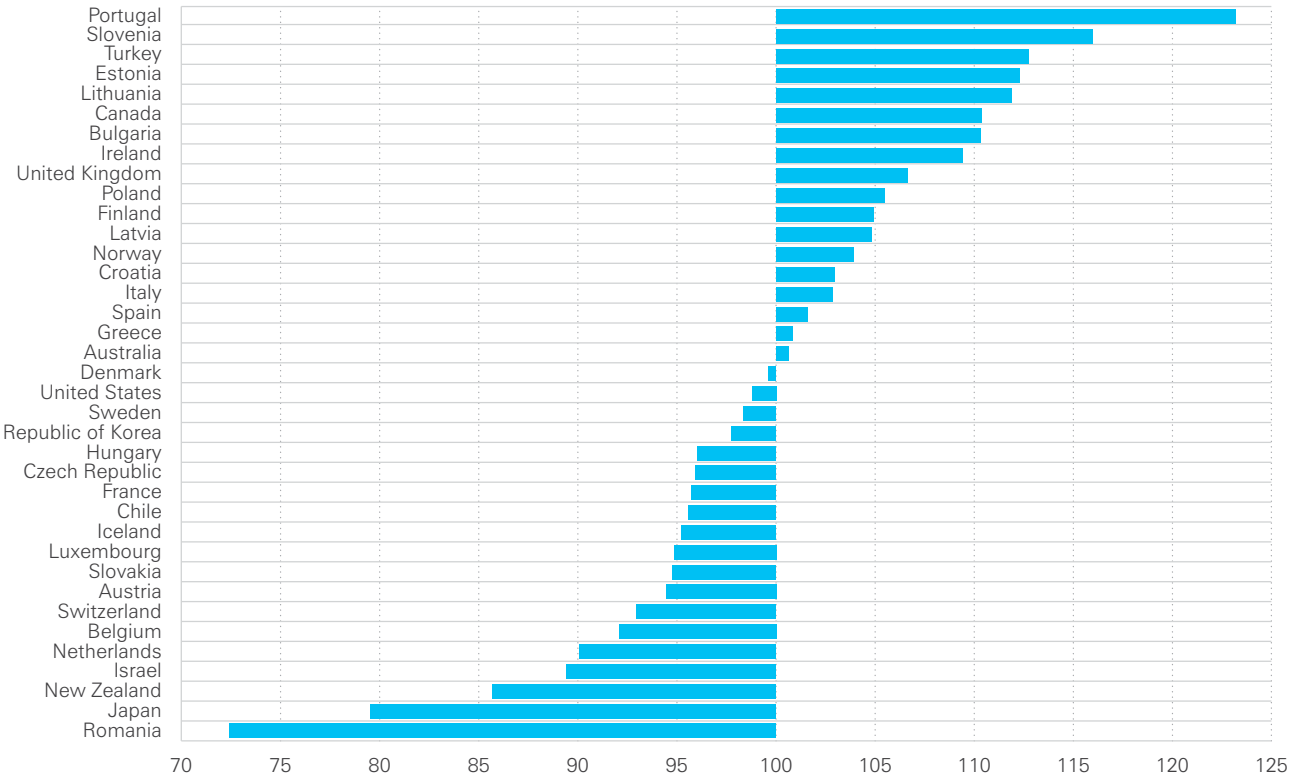
Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

» Young people in high-income countries are largely aware of today's environmental challenges: an average of 62 per cent of 15-year-olds are familiar with at least five of a set of seven key environmental issues.

» Young people are most aware of air pollution and the extinction of plants and animals, and least familiar with genetically modified organisms and nuclear waste.

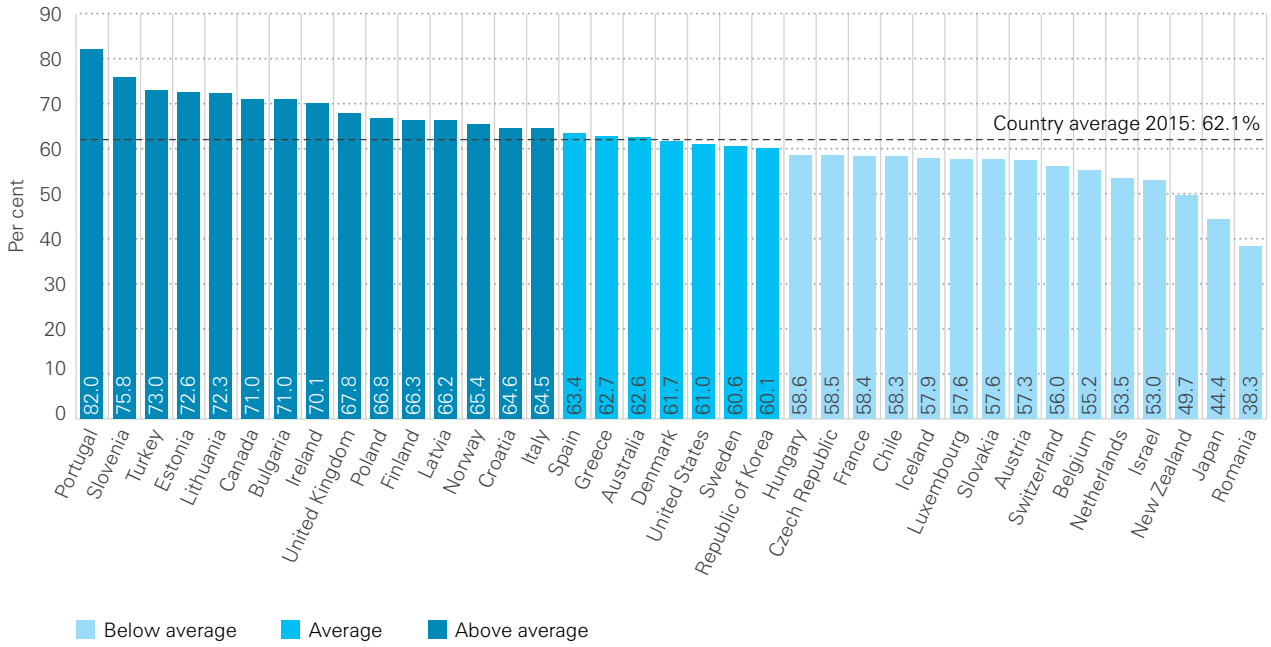
Figure G12 – Ensure sustainable consumption

Average country performance on one indicator: students familiar with five or more environmental issues (15 years of age)



Note: Missing countries: Cyprus, Germany, Malta and Mexico.

Figure 12.1 The majority of 15-year-olds in the OECD countries are aware of at least five environmental issues
Percentage of 15-year-old students familiar with, or knowing something about, five or more environmental issues



Note: Germany is excluded on account of a high rate of missing values. Mexico is excluded due to low rates of enrolment in upper-secondary school at the time of the PISA 2015 tests (65 per cent) – see UNICEF (2016). 'Niños y niñas fuera de la Escuela en México', p.29: https://www.unicef.org/mexico/spanish/UNICEF_NFE_MEX.pdf. However, in Mexico in 2015, 60 per cent of 15-year-old students were familiar with, or knew something about, five or more environmental issues. Missing countries: Cyprus, Germany, Malta and Mexico.
Source: OECD PISA survey 2015.

For SDG 12, indicator 12.8.8 is the most directly relevant to children and youth, since this measures the level of environmental awareness among 15-year-old students as they approach the end of secondary education. It is a plausible assumption that the greater is young people's understanding of environmental problems and humans' impact on nature, the more they will be able to contribute to global progress towards sustainability.

The 2015 PISA asked students if they were familiar with, or could explain well, each of the following seven key environmental problems:

- the increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere
- use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs)
- nuclear waste
- the consequences of clearing forests for other land use
- air pollution
- extinction of plants and animals
- water shortage.

Figure 12.1 compares the results across 37 countries.

On average, 62 per cent of students are at least familiar with five or more environmental issues. Portugal stands out, with 82 per cent awareness; in a further seven countries, more than seven students in ten have this level of knowledge: Bulgaria, Canada, Estonia, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovenia and Turkey. At the opposite end of the scale, in Japan, New Zealand and Romania, less than 50 per cent of students are this aware.

Some issues are more widely recognized than others. In general, air pollution had the highest level of recognition, with around 83 per cent of students having some knowledge of it, followed by the extinction of plants and animals (79 per cent). The issues with which they were least acquainted were the use of GMOs (42 per cent) and nuclear waste (55 per cent). Awareness of the effects of greenhouse gases fell in the middle, with 65 per cent of students able to explain the problem.

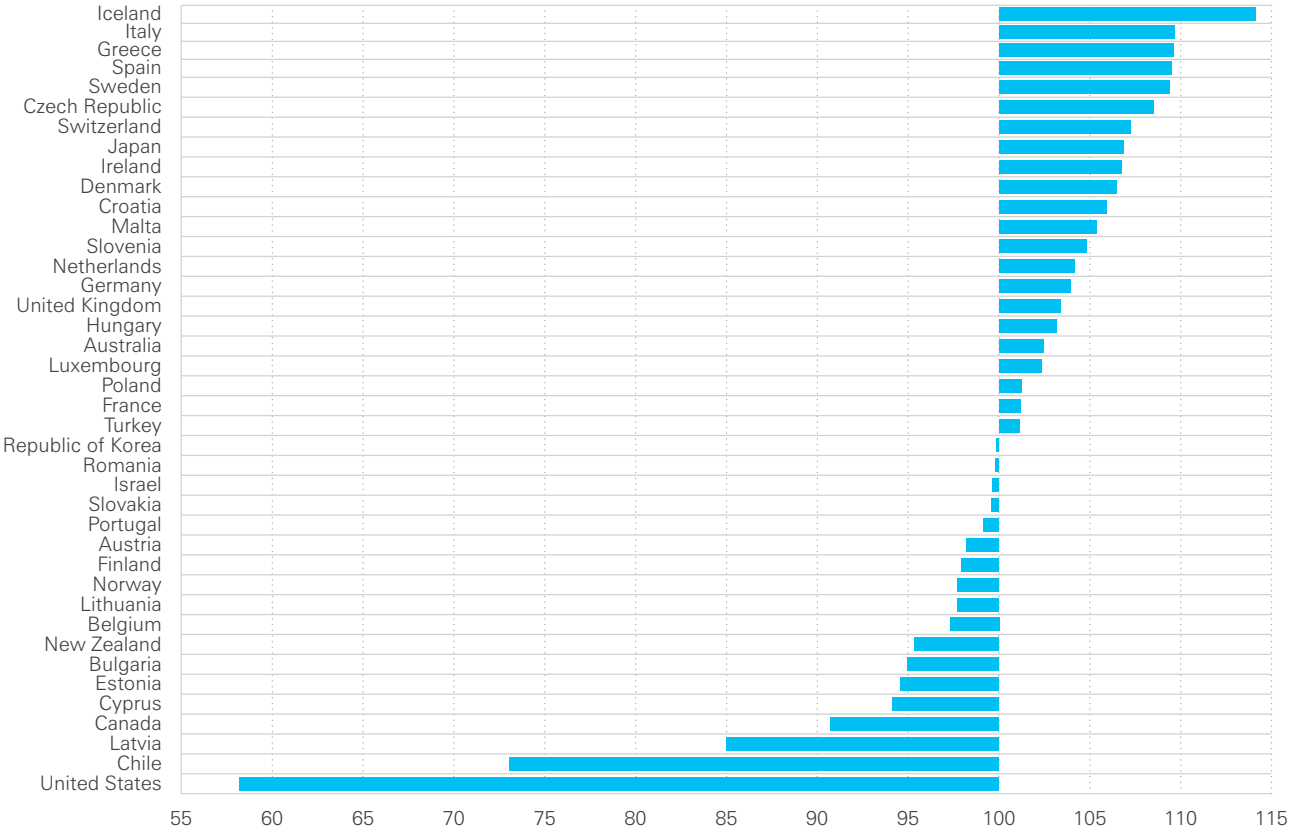
GOAL 16

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

- All high-income countries have to address high rates of violence affecting children, as they seek to develop peaceful and inclusive societies.
- Rates of child homicide are far higher in the Americas than in Europe – in Mexico the rate is nine times the average for the countries examined, while in the US it is four times the average.
- At least one child in ten in countries surveyed regularly experiences bullying, with the incidence particularly high in the Baltic States.
- On average, one woman in five reports having suffered physical violence from adults before the age of 15.

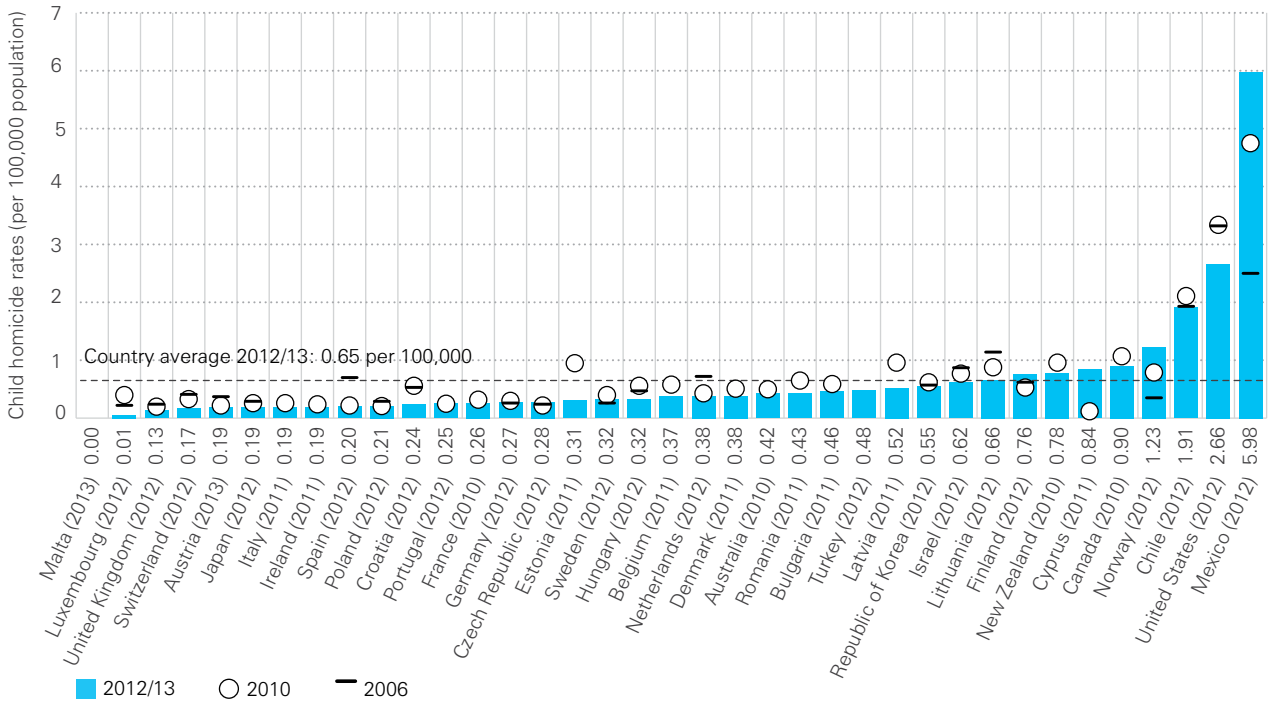
Figure G16 – Promote peace and justice

Average country performance across two indicators: homicide rates (0–19 years of age) and bullying rates (11–15 years)



Note: Missing country: Mexico. One data point (2014) for Lithuania has been excluded (children aged 11–15 who had experienced bullying at least twice in the past month); one data point for Mexico (2012/13) has been excluded (child homicide rate: deaths of children aged 0–19 by intentional assault per 100,000). These are outliers, and their inclusion in calculating the results for Goal 16 would result in Lithuania ranking 39th and Mexico ranking 41st.

Figure 16.1 The Americas have high rates of child murder
Child homicide rate (deaths of children aged 0–19 by intentional assault per 100,000)



Note: Mexico is excluded from the composite League Table, as it is an outlier with a child homicide rate over three standard deviations higher than the country average as reported here. Figures are three-year averages around the year in brackets. Earlier estimates are averages for the three years preceding. Country average is unweighted. Missing countries: Greece, Iceland, Slovenia and Slovakia.
Source: WHO mortality database, 2016.

The first official SDG indicator under Goal 16 is 16.1.1, which tracks the rate of intentional homicides per 100,000 people. *Figure 16.1* adapts this to show the number of children murdered in 37 high-income nations.

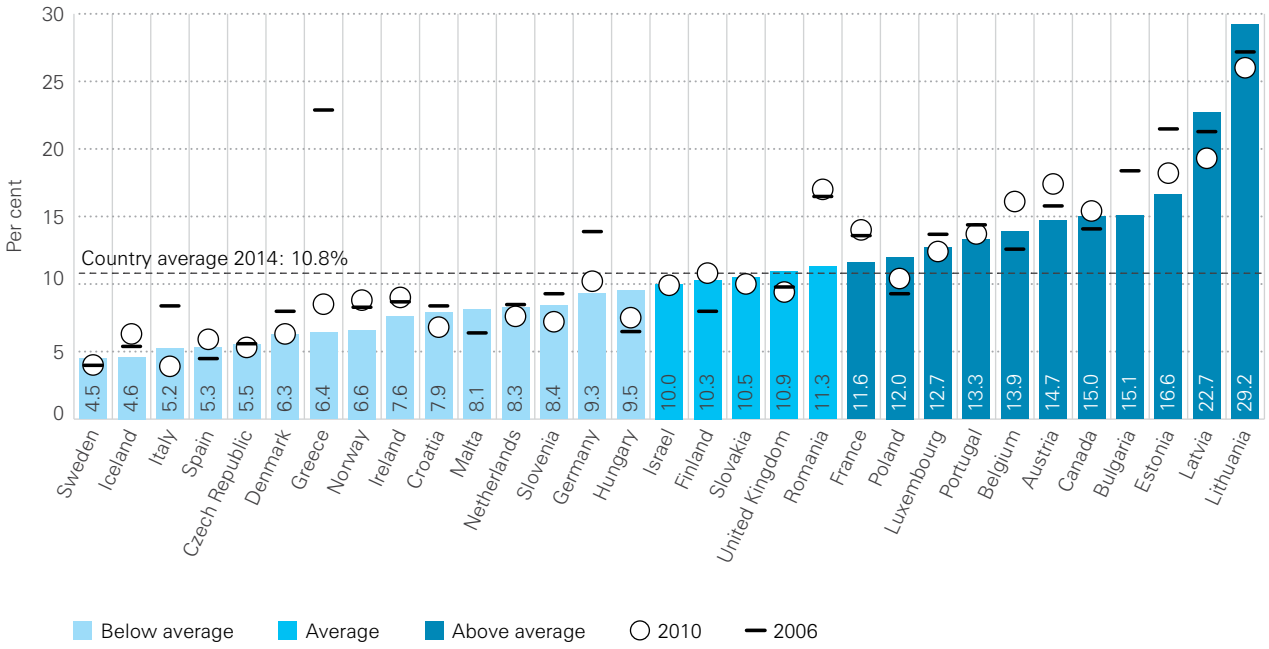
While the international average for the countries included is 0.65 deaths per 100,000 population, this conceals an extraordinary variation. Of course, even the murder of one child is unacceptable, but rates are very low indeed in most European countries, and the international average would also be much lower were it not for the much higher child homicide rates in three countries of the Americas: Chile, the United States and Mexico. In Chile and the United States, child murder rates are respectively around three and four times the average for high-income countries; these rates have declined slightly since 2009. In Mexico, by contrast, the rate has risen from under 3 per 100,000 in 2006 to almost 5 in 2009 and to 6 in 2012/13, a trend that can be attributed to the rise in violence related to illegal drug gangs over that period.

The highest child homicide rate in Europe is in Norway, where the rising trend between 2006 and the most recent year available should also give cause for concern. Although the massacre on Utøya Island of 22 July 2011 must have affected the 2012 figure, the trend was already rising between 2006 and 2009.

Bullying: everyday violence

Most children in high-income countries are more likely to experience violence on an everyday basis in the form of bullying. Bullying has recently been the focus of a UN General Assembly resolution and a report from the Office of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-

Figure 16.2 More than one child in ten in rich countries experiences chronic bullying
Percentage of children aged 11–15 who had experienced bullying at least twice in the past month



Note: Chronic bullying refers to when children have experienced bullying two or more times in the previous month. Data for 2014 are not available for Switzerland. Countries missing from HBSC in 2014 include Turkey and the United States. Estimates for Belgium and the United Kingdom are based on population weights for regional samples (excluding the Brussels region for Belgium, and Northern Ireland in the case of the United Kingdom). Data for Japan, which records 14.3 per cent of 10–12-year-olds and 13–15-year-olds who report having been "lightly bumped or hit or kicked while pretending to play (more than 2 or 3 times a month)", are available from the Japanese National Center for Research on Education '2013–15 Bullying Follow-up Survey', but are not included in the comparison above. Missing countries: Australia, Chile, Cyprus, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States.
Source: HBSC study, various waves.

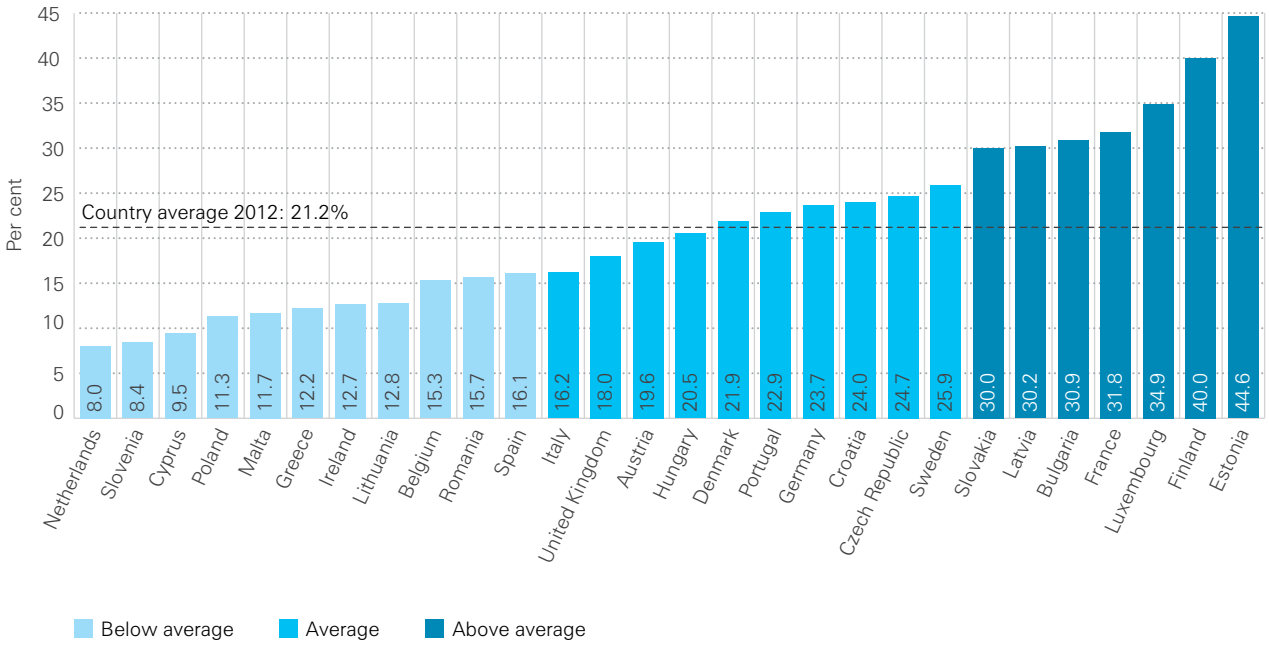
General on Violence against Children. The report makes it clear that bullying includes violence of an emotional and psychological, as well as of a physical kind. It links experiences of bullying to ill-health, low self-esteem, poorer educational outcomes, depression and thoughts of suicide.[31] *Figure 16.2* gives some indication of the scale of the problem, showing the proportion of children aged 11–15 who reported having experienced bullying at school two or more times a month.

An average of around one child in nine experiences regular and repeated bullying. However, the overall average conceals significant differences between countries. While chronic bullying in Sweden and Iceland affects less than 5 per cent of children, Lithuania has a startlingly high rate of 29.2 per cent, and its Baltic neighbours, Estonia and Latvia, have the next highest incidence. In Estonia, the rate of bullying has at least declined since 2006, though the biggest improvement over this period has been in Greece, where the chronic bullying rate declined from 22.9 per cent in 2006 to 6.4 per cent in 2014.

Stopping adult violence against children

Target 16.2 aims to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children. All of these forms of violence against children exist in high-income countries, which are all too often the end destination for children trafficked into prostitution or other forms of exploitation. In the absence of more detailed comparative data, *Figure 16.3* shows the results of a survey by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights that reflects the levels of adult physical violence against girls aged under 15.

Figure 16.3 One girl in five under the age of 15 experiences physical violence from adults
Percentage of women aged 18–29 who reported having experienced physical violence before the age of 15



Note: Physical violence was defined as: hair-pulling, slapping, hitting, kicking, beating or stabbing. Missing countries: Australia, Canada, Chile, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States. Insufficient country coverage to include in calculation of Goal 16.
Source: FRA – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012.

Women aged 18–29 were asked if, before the age of 15, they had experienced violence from an adult, such as hair-pulling, slapping, hitting, kicking, beating or stabbing. Figure 5.1 used corresponding questions about past experiences of sexual violence.

The rate of such violence is lowest in the Netherlands and Slovenia, where 8 per cent of women recalled being assaulted during childhood, and is highest in Estonia (45 per cent) and Finland (40 per cent). The nature of the survey reflects national experience over a long period – at least two decades. However, it is interesting to note that Finland, which has a high rate of reported physical violence, was one of the first European countries to ban corporal punishment (in 1983), while the nation with the lowest incidence, Slovenia, has only recently (in October 2016) passed legislation prohibiting it in the home.[32]

The inclusion here only of girls is a consequence of data availability, rather than because physical violence or corporal punishment is directed more at girls than boys. If anything, the limited international evidence suggests that boys are marginally more likely to suffer corporal punishment.[33]

The experience of such violence is not only a violation of all children's rights, but can also be extremely damaging, increasing the chances of domestic violence occurring in later life.[34]

Box 6 How national averages hide the vulnerable: the example of indigenous children

Values of non-discrimination and inclusion lie at the heart of the Agenda for Sustainable Development, reflected in its central promise of "leaving no one behind". National averages, however, conceal forms of vulnerability, often rendering invisible the most disadvantaged and excluded children. These may include indigenous children, Roma, undocumented migrants, children with disabilities or those outside family care. This box focuses on one such group, by presenting selected statistics on indigenous children from four geographically diverse countries (Australia, Canada, Mexico and Norway).

Goal 1: End Poverty Indigenous children face rates of poverty higher than the national average. In 2010, 38 per cent of all Aboriginal children (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) in Canada lived in income poverty, compared to 17 per cent of non-indigenous children. Further disaggregation by identity shows that half the children of Status First Nations in Canada lived in poverty. In Mexico, 78.6 per cent of children and adolescents in indigenous households and 90.8 per cent of those who spoke an indigenous language were in poverty in 2014. This compared with 50.7 per cent of non-indigenous children and adolescents.

Goal 3: Health and Well-being Indigenous children perform poorly on many health and well-being indicators. In 2011, 11 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies in Australia were born with low birthweight – more than twice the proportion of non-indigenous babies. Data collected in 2014 showed that adolescent birth rates among the Sami people of Norway were more than double the national average. Aboriginal children in Canada experience higher rates of injury, suicide, obesity, infant mortality and health conditions, such as tuberculosis.

Goal 4: Quality Education Despite progress in many countries, closing the education gap between indigenous and non-indigenous children remains a challenge. According to a 2015 Australian government report, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children continued to lag behind their non-indigenous peers in reading and numeracy, with low attendance being one of the critical factors behind this achievement gap. Language is a factor in low school attendance, and preschool programmes have an important role to play in supporting indigenous languages. For instance, in 2015, around half of the 1,000 Sami children enrolled in Norwegian preschool were in Sami-language kindergartens. Yet official statistics on the language of children leaving kindergarten do not include the Sami language.

The SDG agenda is a window of opportunity to bring a dramatic change to the lives of not just indigenous children and youth, but all excluded children. In efforts to improve data collection, attention should be paid to the specific need for data on such groups, recognizing their particular cultural and linguistic contexts and ensuring respect for their rights. Such data and monitoring can support a stronger national focus on policy responses for inclusion and equity.

Source: Richardson, D., Bruckauf, Z., Toczydlowska, E. and Chzhen, Y. (2017). 'Comparing Child-Focused SDGs in High-Income Countries: Indicator development and overview', *Innocenti Working Paper* 2017-08, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence.

BUILDING THE FUTURE

Conclusion

All the world's countries came together in 2015 to draw up a roadmap to the more equitable, inclusive and healthy world they aspired to reach by 2030. This *Report Card* delivers a child-centred assessment of where high-income nations stand at the start of this journey towards sustainable development. It compares the performance of 41 OECD and EU countries on 25 indicators, focusing on the goals and targets most relevant to children in high-income countries and adapting the global indicators according to the availability of cross-country data.

There are many positive stories within these pages. The vast majority of high-income countries have seen declines in the rates of neonatal mortality, adolescent suicide, teenage births and drunkenness. Nearly all preschool children engage in organized learning one year before the start of compulsory schooling. Young people show a high level of environmental awareness nearly everywhere. Child homicide rates are almost universally low.

Yet high-income countries are still far from delivering for their children the vision held out by the SDGs. Income inequality is growing, adolescents' mental health is worsening and child obesity is increasing. Not a single country does well on all indicators or has shown positive trends on all fronts.

Although countries have moved forward in unison on some indicators, there are still gulfs between them in other areas. Countries differ most in their rates of child poverty and food insecurity, though there is also significant variation in the rates of adolescent suicide and chronic bullying. National income levels are far from explaining all of these differences: for example, Slovenia is far ahead of much wealthier countries on many indicators. This demonstrates that government policies and priorities matter if children are to make sustained progress. Countries that rank high in the league table on reducing inequality also tend to score well on ending poverty, ensuring healthy lives, quality education and inclusive economies.

Based on the evidence collated in this *Report Card*, UNICEF calls for high-income countries to take action in five key areas.

» **Put children at the heart of equitable and sustainable progress**

Improving the well-being of all children today is essential for achieving both equity and sustainability. Advances on each of the child-centred indicators presented in this *Report Card* should reinforce progress in others. Policies that reduce gaps in material well-being, health and education among children today will translate into a reduction in inequalities in adult life and contribute to the well-being of future generations of children. The younger generation will spearhead changes in norms that are key to attaining the goals of gender equality, peaceful societies and environmental sustainability. The surest route for countries to attain the aspirations laid out in the Agenda for Sustainable Development is to place children at the centre of their policy priorities.

» **Leave no child behind**

National averages often conceal extreme inequalities and the severe disadvantage of groups at the bottom of the scale. Some children are left so far behind that they may be missing from available data: those that are undocumented, out of school or in institutional care, to name but a few. Data-collection efforts should aim to be as inclusive as possible, and be sensitive to children who may regularly be left out or who are invisible to official statistics. The data available should also allow for disaggregation by key individual characteristics. A first step towards future equality and sustainability is to identify those at the greatest risk of falling behind.

» **Improve the collection of comparable data, including on violence against children, early childhood development, migration and gender**

This *Report Card* has revealed that internationally comparable statistics on high-income countries are lacking in four key SDG areas: violence against children, early childhood development, migration

and gender. In the first two areas, rich countries lag behind their lower-income peers, which tend to collect these data via internationally comparable household surveys. Some of the most urgent child-rights violations in high-income countries relate to migration – and the SDG framework challenges all countries to respect the rights of all children, irrespective of their migration status. Yet appropriate indicators that measure performance in this domain are lacking. Finally, given that girls tend to do better than boys on many childhood indicators, there is a paucity of data reflecting the processes that lead to women's disadvantage in the labour market and under-representation in public life.

» **Use these rankings to help tailor policy responses to national contexts**

This *Report Card* shows that no country does well on all indicators of well-being for children covered here, and all countries face challenges in achieving these child-focused targets within the framework of the SDGs. The league table presented in this report indicates which countries come closest to achieving child-focused targets for each goal, and may allow other countries to craft policy responses that are appropriate to their own contexts. The rankings are to be read as an invitation to national discussions on what the appropriate policy responses should be.

» **Honour the commitment to global sustainable development**

The overarching SDG framework engages all countries in a global endeavour. High-income countries are accountable not only for their own performance in pursuing the goals, but also for their commitments to global environmental sustainability and development assistance – on which the present and future well-being of children worldwide unquestionably depends.

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1. Calculating the z-score involves establishing the difference between a reported value and the mean, and then dividing it by the standard deviation. Before averaging, indicator z-scores are reordered so that higher values represent more positive outcomes. Statistical outliers are excluded before the z-score is calculated; these are noted beneath each chart, as appropriate.

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Data Sources – the Background Papers

The original research for this report, including further methodological explanations, can be found in the *Innocenti Working Papers* and *Innocenti Research Briefs* detailed below and available at **www.unicef-irc.org**

Bruckauf, Z. (2017). Adolescents' Mental Health: Out of the shadows. Evidence on psychological well-being of 11–15-year-olds from 31 industrialized countries, *Innocenti Research Brief* 2017-12, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence.

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International abbreviations

International abbreviations (ISO) for countries covered in the *Report Card*

AT	Austria
AU	Australia
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CA	Canada
CH	Switzerland
CL	Chile
CY	Cyprus
CZ	Czech Republic
DE	Germany
DK	Denmark
EE	Estonia
ES	Spain
FI	Finland
FR	France
GR	Greece
HR	Croatia
HU	Hungary
IE	Ireland
IL	Israel
IS	Iceland
IT	Italy
JP	Japan
KR	Republic of Korea
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
LV	Latvia
MT	Malta
MX	Mexico
NL	Netherlands
NO	Norway
NZ	New Zealand
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SE	Sweden
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
TR	Turkey
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States

Abbreviations and acronyms

CASEN	La Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (Chile)
CIS	Canadian Income Survey
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
ECEC	early childhood education and care
ESCS	economic, social and cultural status
EU	European Union
EU-SILC	European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
FIES	Food Insecurity Experience Scale
GMO	genetically modified organism
HBSC	Health Behaviour in School-aged Children
HILDA	Household, Income and Labour Dynamics (Australia)
ISCWeB	International Survey of Children's Well-Being
MCS-ENIGH	El Módulo de Condiciones Socioeconómicas de la Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares (Mexico)
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MODA	Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis
NEET	not in employment, education or training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

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Child poverty in rich countries 2005

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Child poverty in perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries

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