



# MEASURING WHAT MATTERS TO PEOPLE

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**Statistics**

**Statistics Flanders**  
**Trustworthy numbers for a strong democracy**  
**Brussels, 13 December 2017**



# **The OECD Better Life Initiative : measuring what matters to people**



# The OECD response to the need to go beyond GDP



OECD

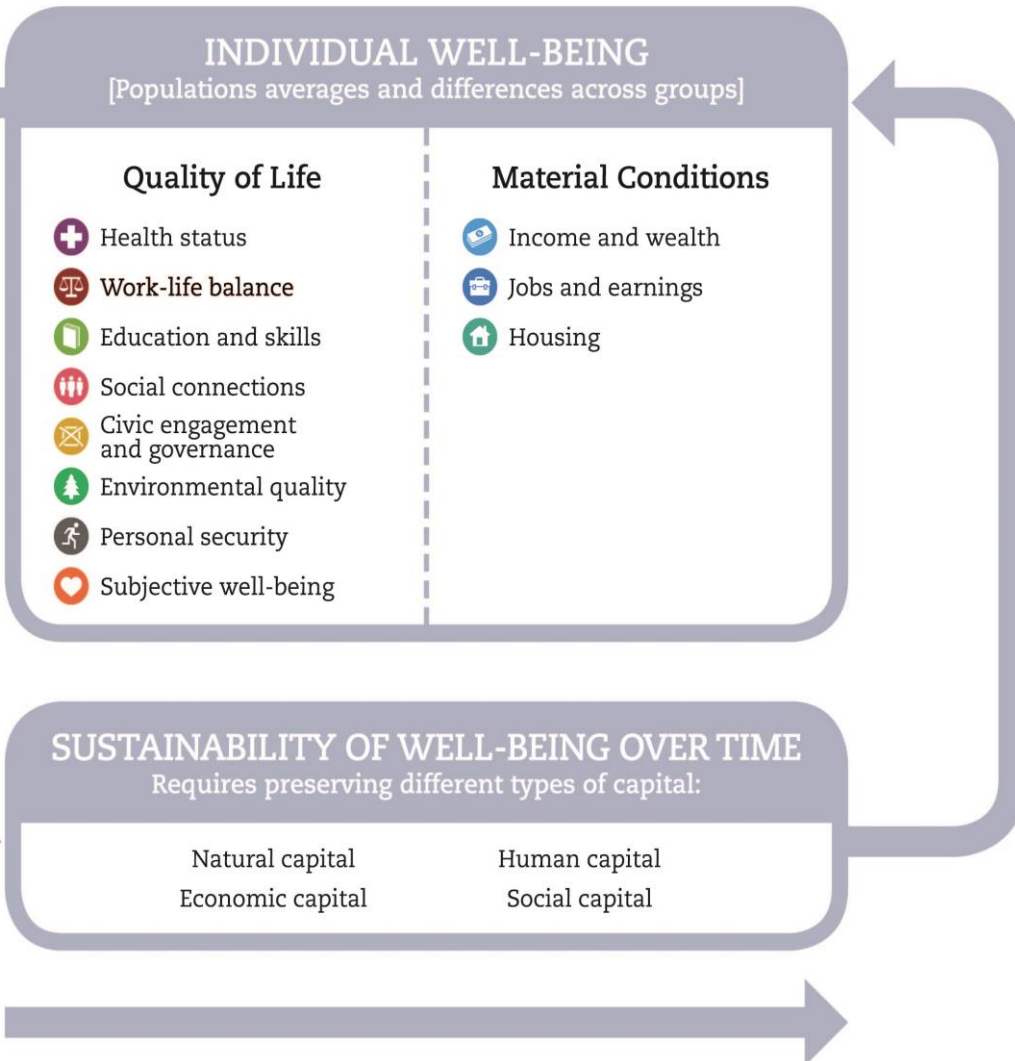
**Better Life** • **Launched in 2011**

Initiative

- Developing “**alternative**” indicators of **people’s well-being and societies’ progress beyond GDP** and integrating them into the **mainstream statistical system**
- Improving the **evidence base** available to policy-makers and citizens
- Promoting **integrated, multidimensional policy approaches to address what matters most to people**



# The OECD well-being framework



- A focus on **people** rather than the economic system or GDP
- Measures **outcomes** rather than inputs and outputs
- Examines both **averages** and **inequalities**
- Considers both **objective** and **subjective** aspects
- Concerned with well-being both **today** and **tomorrow**



# How's Life? 2017

## **Overview** of levels and trends:

- 25 headline indicators of current well-being
- 32 indicators of resources for future well-being (natural, human, economic and social capital)

**Detailed country notes** for 35 OECD countries and 6 partners

## **Thematic chapters** on:

- Inequalities in well-being
- Migrants' well-being
- Governance and well-being



Drawings by Giulia Sagromola

# How does Belgium compare?



Design by Dado Sagramola



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November 2017

## How's Life in Belgium?

Relative to other countries, Belgium performs above or close to the OECD average across the different well-being dimensions. Household net adjusted disposable income and household net wealth were among the top third in the OECD in 2015 and 2014 respectively. While both job strain and labour market insecurity are comparatively low in Belgium, in 2016 the employment rate stood at 62%, 5 percentage points lower than the OECD average, and the long-term unemployment rate was 4%, double the OECD average rate. In terms of work-life balance, the time off (i.e. time spent on leisure and personal care) of full-time employees is among the top tier in the OECD area, and only 4% of employees regularly worked 50 hours or more per week in 2016, less than one-third of the OECD average. While air quality in Belgium is close to the OECD average level, 34% of Belgians reported feeling satisfied with the quality of the water in the period 2014-16, slightly higher than the OECD average (29%). Belgium's personal security, social support and life satisfaction also stand slightly above the OECD average.

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



Note: This chart shows Belgium's relative strengths and weaknesses in well-being when compared with other OECD countries. For both positive and negative indicators (such as homicides, marked with an "X"), larger bars always indicate better outcomes (i.e. higher well-being), whereas smaller bars always indicate worse outcomes (i.e. lower well-being). If data are missing for any given indicator, the relevant segment of the circle is shaded in white.

Additional information, including the data used in this country note, can be found at:

[www.oecd.org/statistics/Relative-Well-being-2017-country-note-data.xlsx](http://www.oecd.org/statistics/Relative-Well-being-2017-country-note-data.xlsx)

# Belgium's comparative strengths and weaknesses in average well-being



Designs by Dink Bagman





# (Selected) changes in Belgium's well-being relative to 2005

## Cumulative gains in well-being since 2005...



**Long-term unemployment** has fallen from 4.4% in 2005, to 4.0% in 2016 ... and the **employment rate** is 1.2 percentage points higher than in 2005.



Annual average exposure to PM 2.5 **air pollution** has fallen by 7% overall since 2005



**Homicides** have fallen (from 1.5 per 100 000 people, to 1.0)



In 2014, **household net wealth** was 7% higher (in real terms) than in 2010. *However, household income* in 2015 was just 2% higher, in real terms, than in 2005.

## Cumulative losses in well-being since 2005...



**Labour market insecurity** in 2015 was 50% higher than in 2007 (when first measured)



**Housing affordability** has declined: the share of household disposable income spent on housing costs has increase from 19.7% in 2005, to 20.5% in 2015.



Although voting is compulsory, **voter turnout** fell from 91% in 2007, to 89% in 2014



**Life satisfaction** has fallen from 7.2 to 6.9, on a 0-10 scale



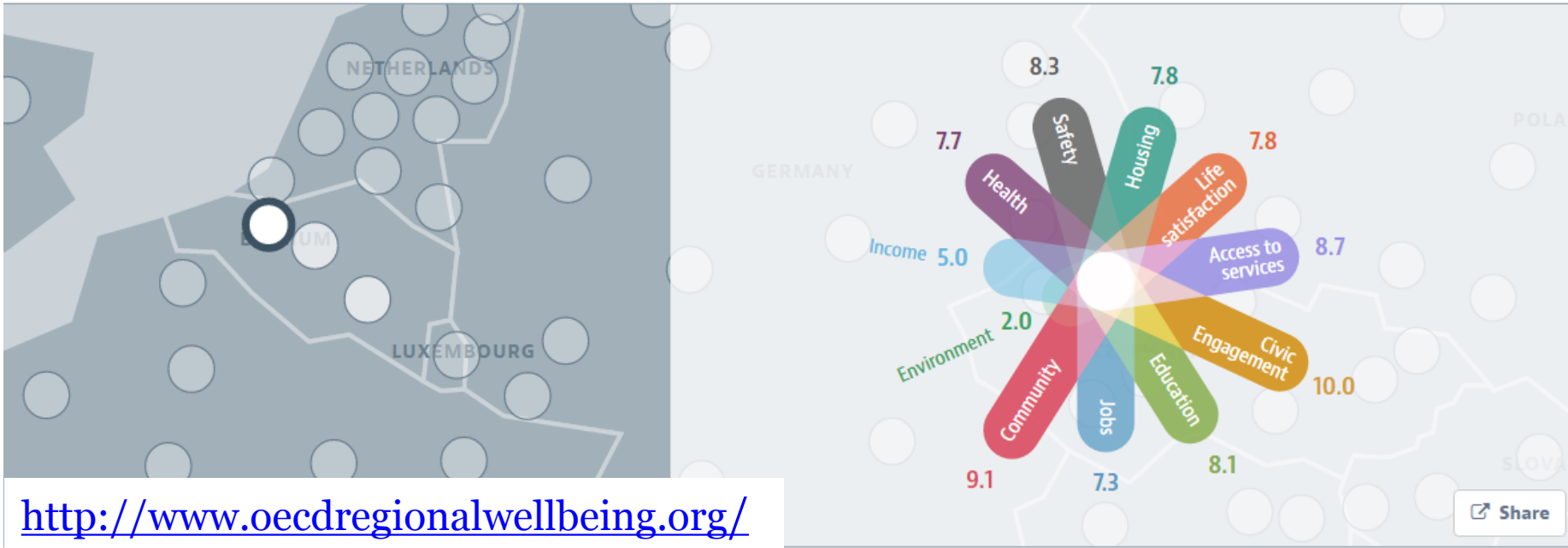


# But where you live matters...



OECD countries / Belgium

## Flemish Region (Vlaams Gewest)



Explore the map to find out how life is across OECD regions and discover regions with similar well-being.

Each region is measured in eleven topics important for well-being. The values of the indicators are expressed as a score between 0 and 10. A high score indicates better performance relative to the other regions.

Help

### Regions with similar well-being in other countries



Austria  
Burgenland



Netherlands  
Gelderland



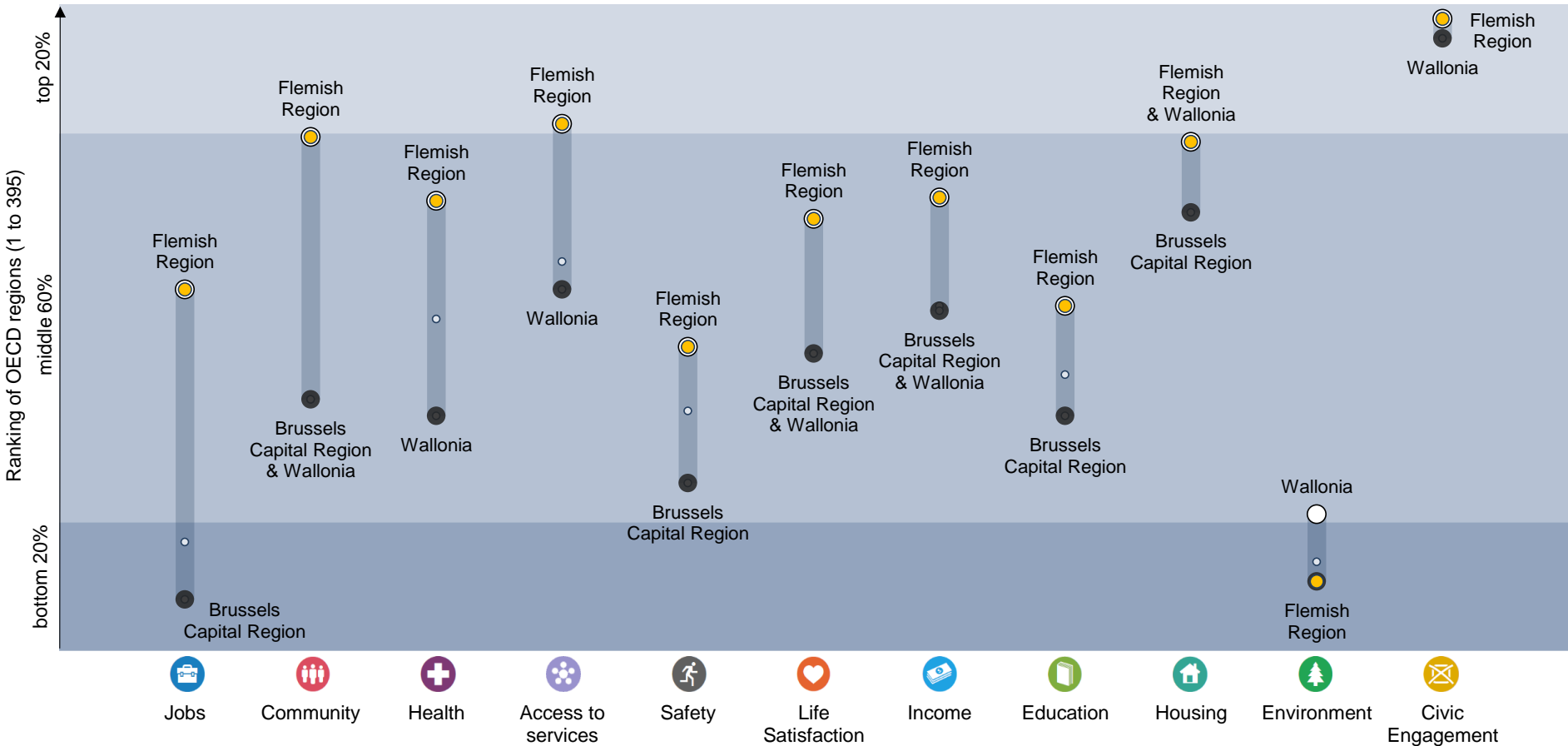
France  
Alsace



Germany  
Baden-Württemberg



# Relative performance of the three Belgian regions by well-being dimensions

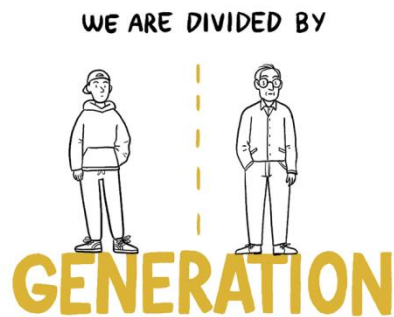


# How's Life? 2017 explores other well-being divides...



...within OECD countries, including by:

- gender
- age
- education
- wealth
- migrant status



AND WHERE  
WE WERE  
BORN



© Giulia Sagramola



...and **between people and**  
the **public institutions** that serve them



# Dispersion of income and other well-being outcomes across individuals



Drawings by Giulia Sagramola

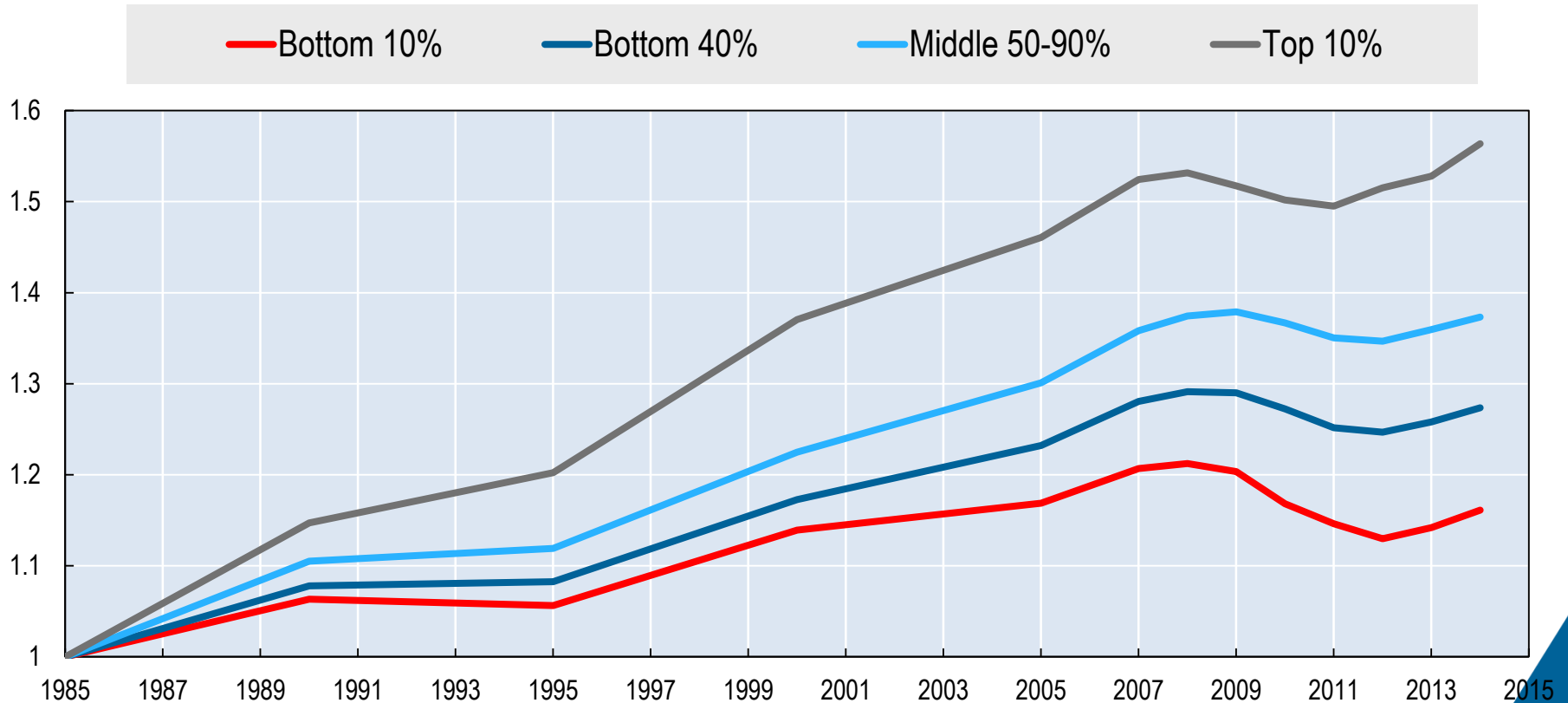


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# Widening income gap between rich and poor

Household income has increased more rapidly at the top of the distribution  
(data from 17 OECD countries; OECD 1985 = 1)

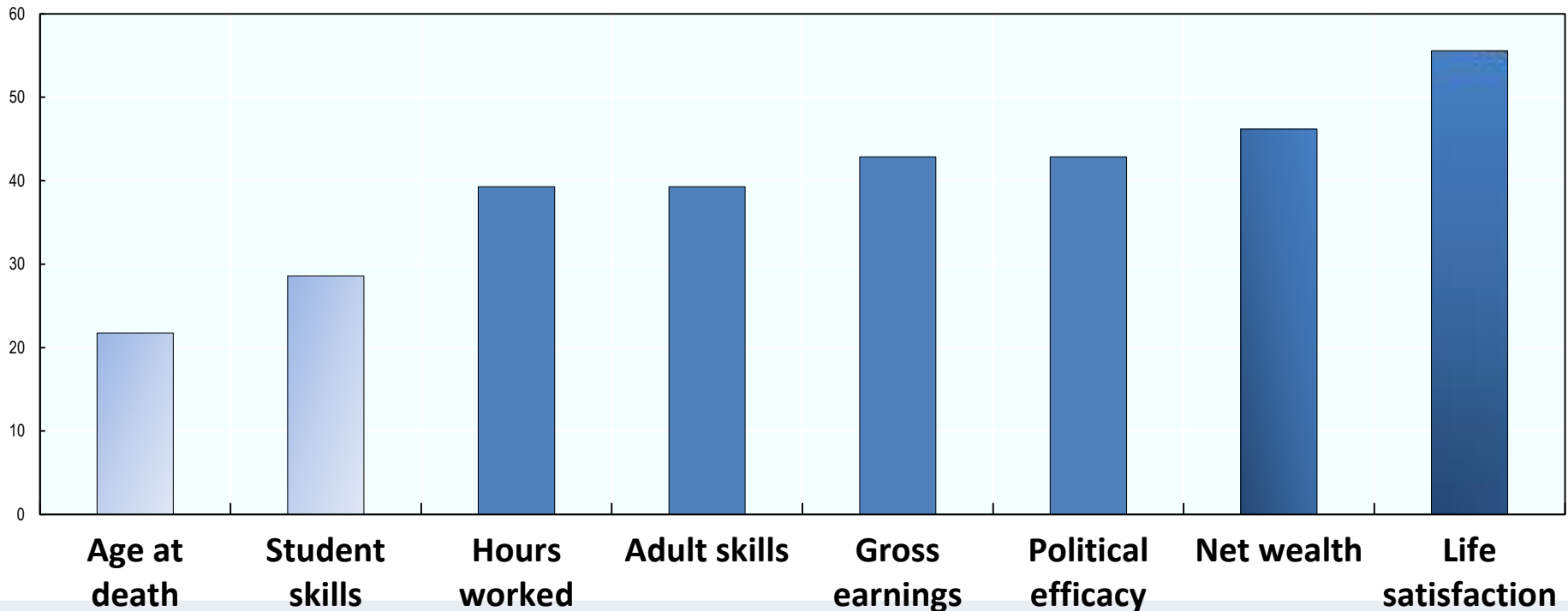


Source: OECD Income Distribution Database; Unweighted average over 17 countries



# Patterns of income inequality are not perfectly mirrored in other dimensions

Percentage of countries for which performance in income inequality is similar to performance in other “vertical” inequalities



For a given country, the performance in income inequality is considered “similar to” performance in other vertical inequalities if they **both fall in the same third** when OECD countries are divided into least equal, middle equal and most equal thirds.

# Which OECD countries have the lowest dispersions in well-being outcomes across individuals ?

Percentage of indicators in which a country shows comparatively **low** inequalities, latest available year



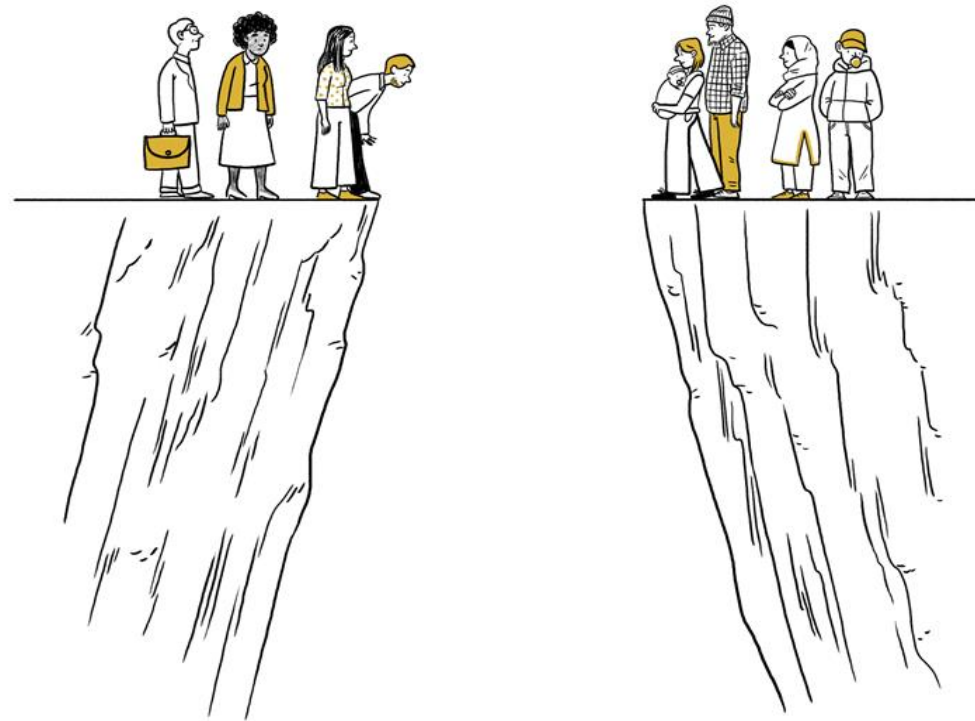
**Low inequalities** are defined as falling within the **most equal third** of OECD countries. Indicators are weighted so that the different dimensions of well-being are accorded equal weights.

# Differences in well-being outcomes among population groups



...consider differences among groups e.g.

- by gender
- by age
- by education level
- by migrant status
- by the region people live in

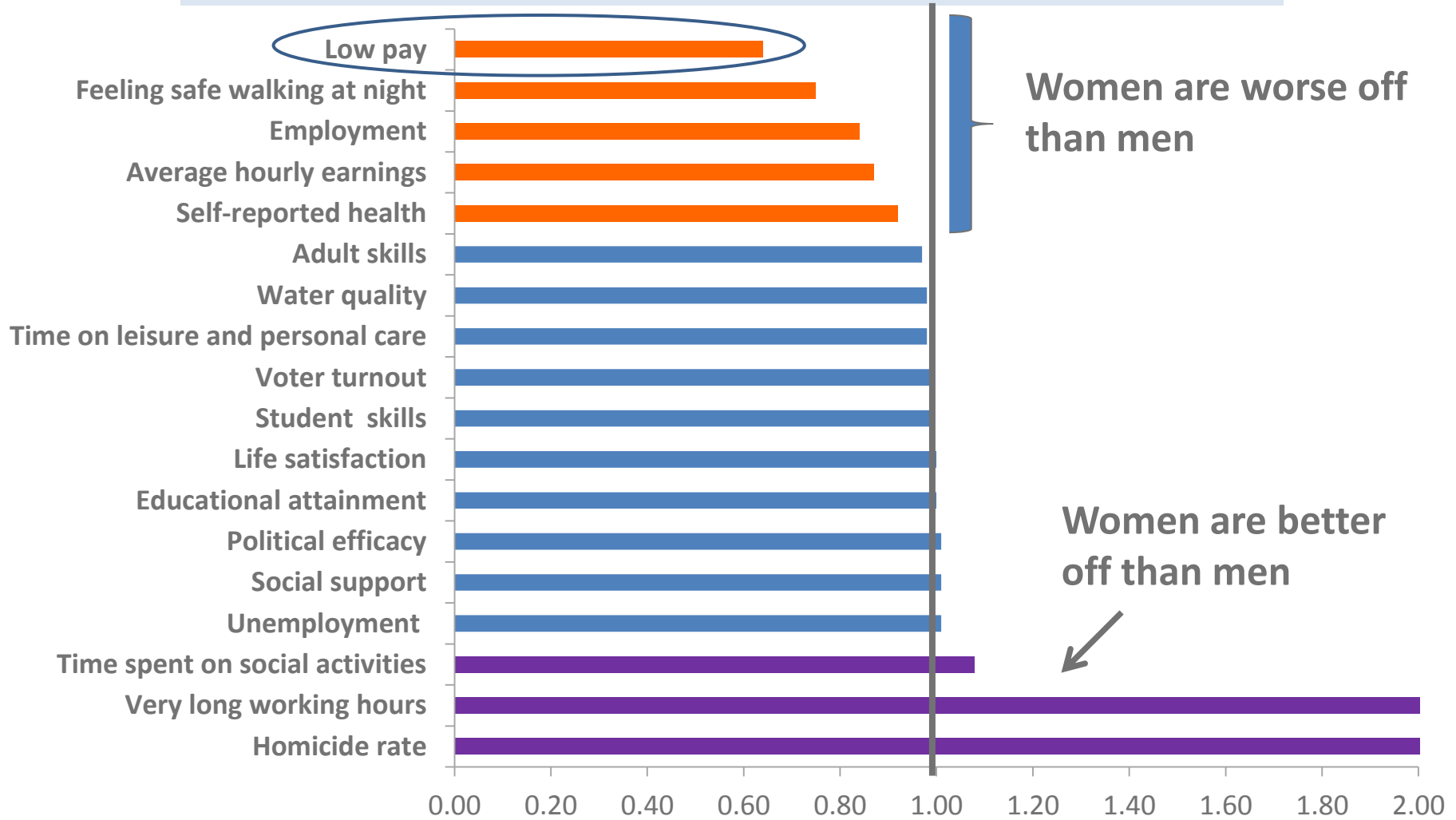






# The OECD average gender divide

OECD average ratio of women's well-being low pay outcomes, relative to men's (1 = equality)





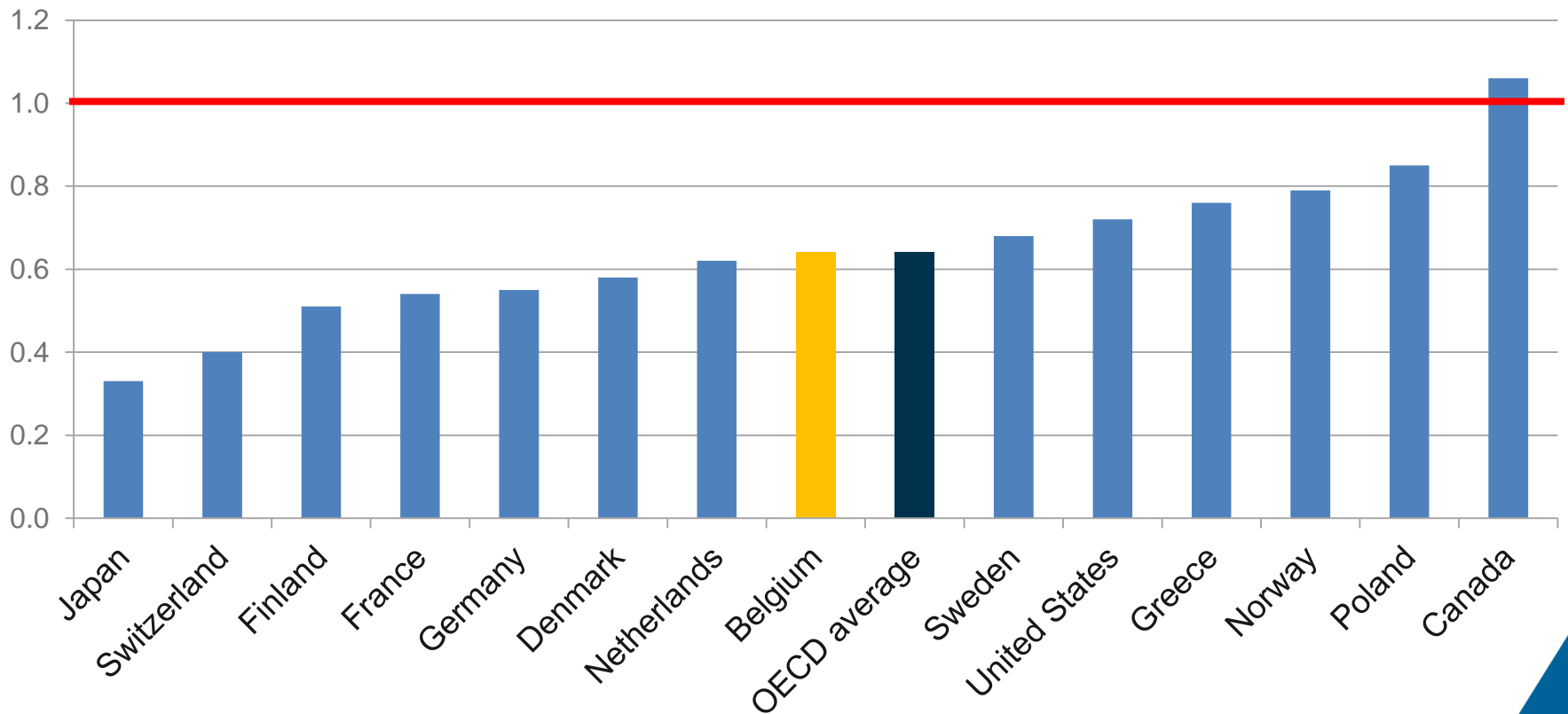
# Women are much more likely than men to be in jobs with low pay

## Low pay (full-time workers earning less than 2/3<sup>rd</sup> gross median income) ratio

1.0 = Equality between men and women.

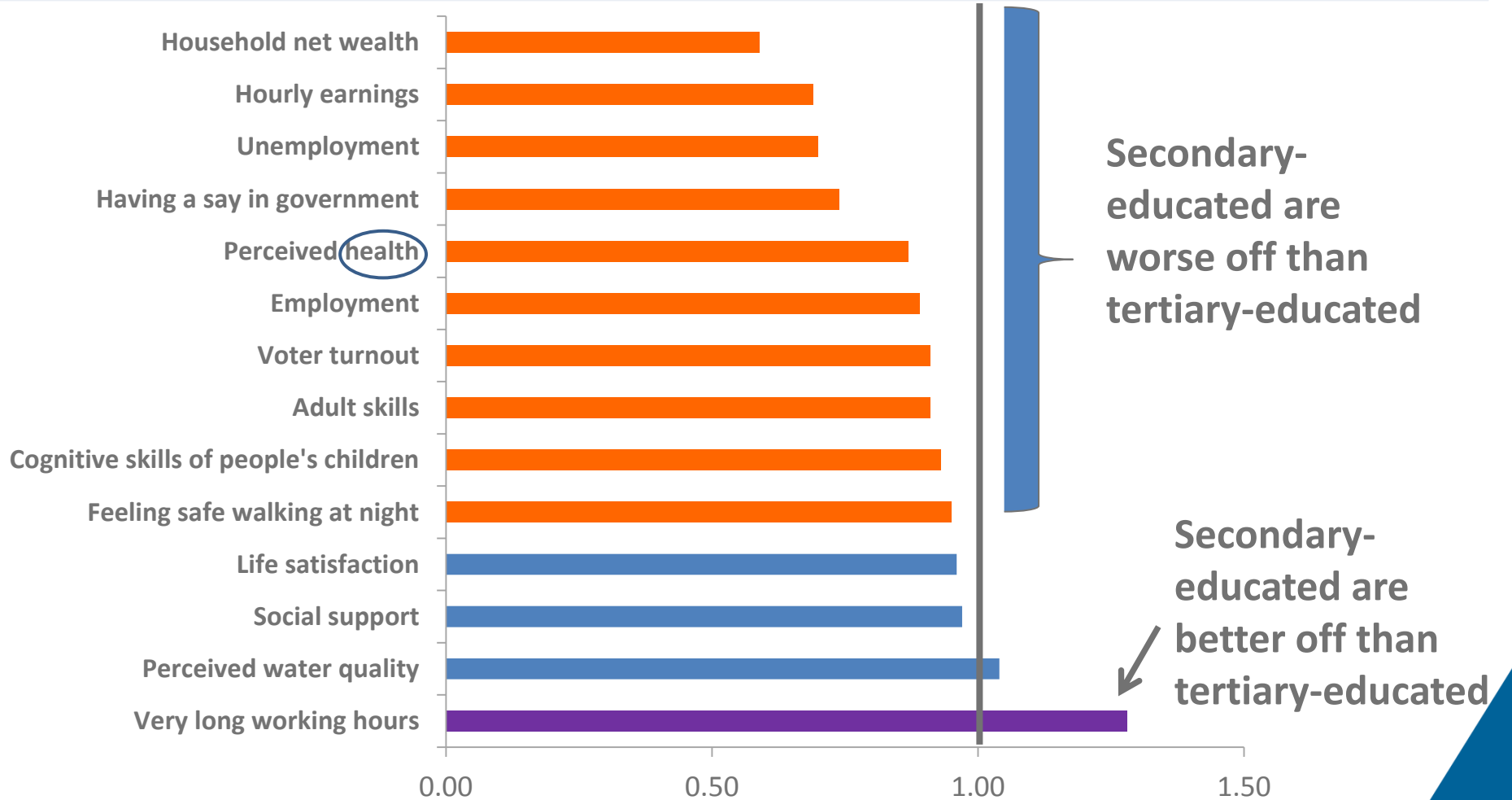
Scores below 1.0 = Women have a higher incidence of low pay

Scores above 1.0 = Men have a higher incidence of low pay



# The OECD average educational divide

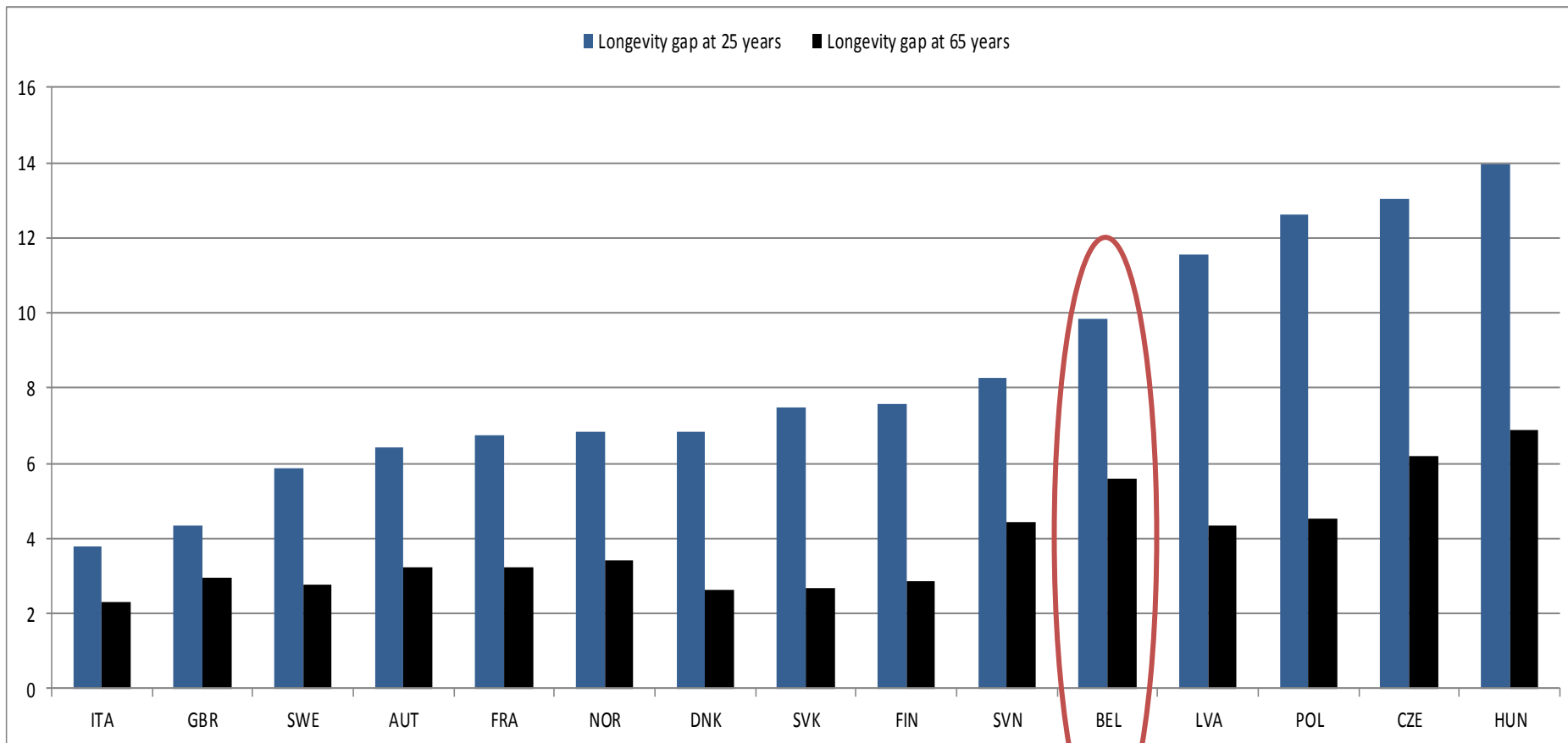
OECD average ratio of outcomes for people with a secondary education, relative to those with a tertiary education (1 = equality)





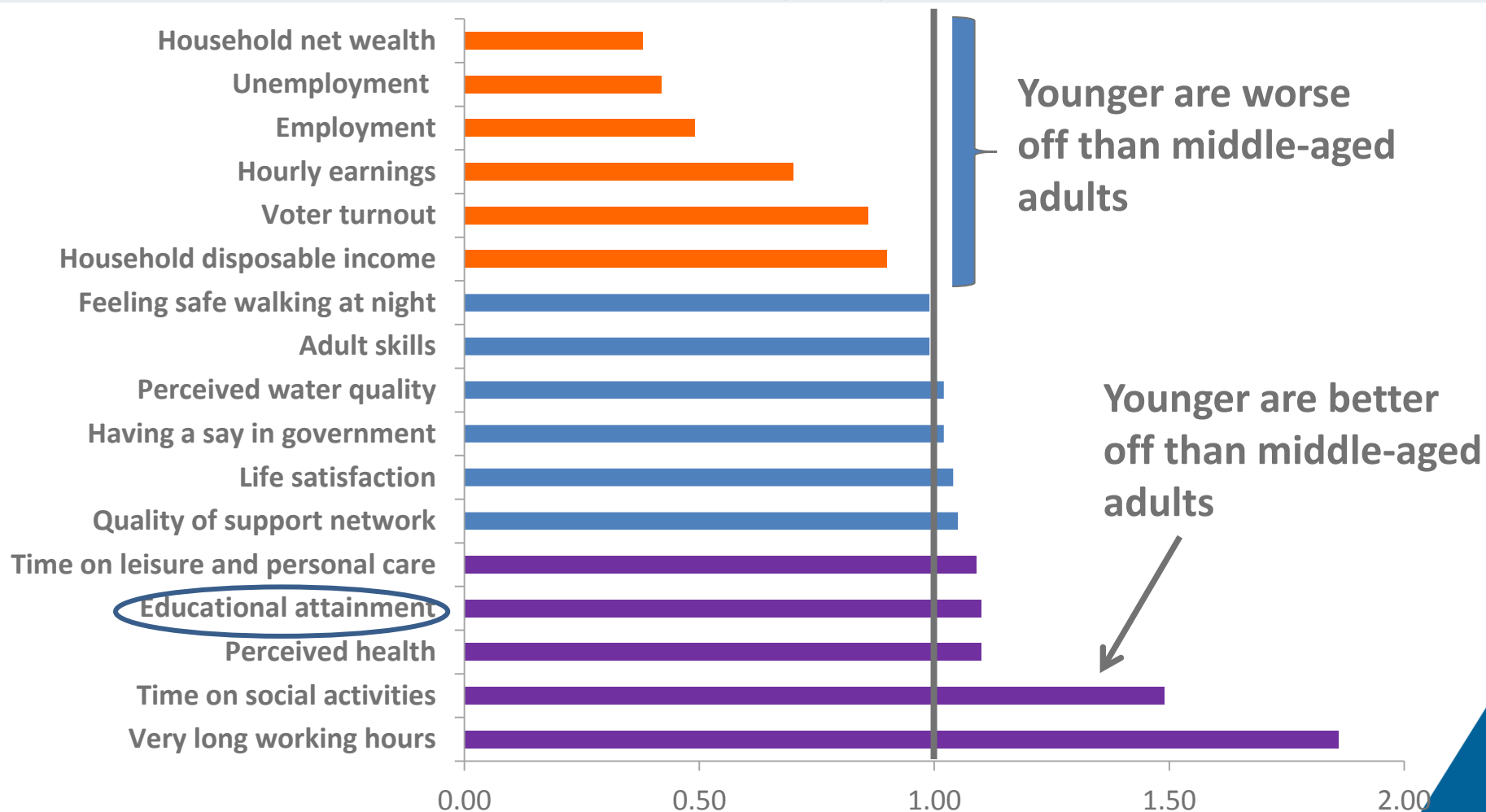
# Large differences in longevity in European countries

**Gap in life expectancy among men at age 25 and 65 by education  
(LE of men with tertiary education less that for men with below upper secondary education)**



# The OECD average generational divide

OECD average ratio of young people's well-being outcomes, relative to middle-aged adults (1 = equality)

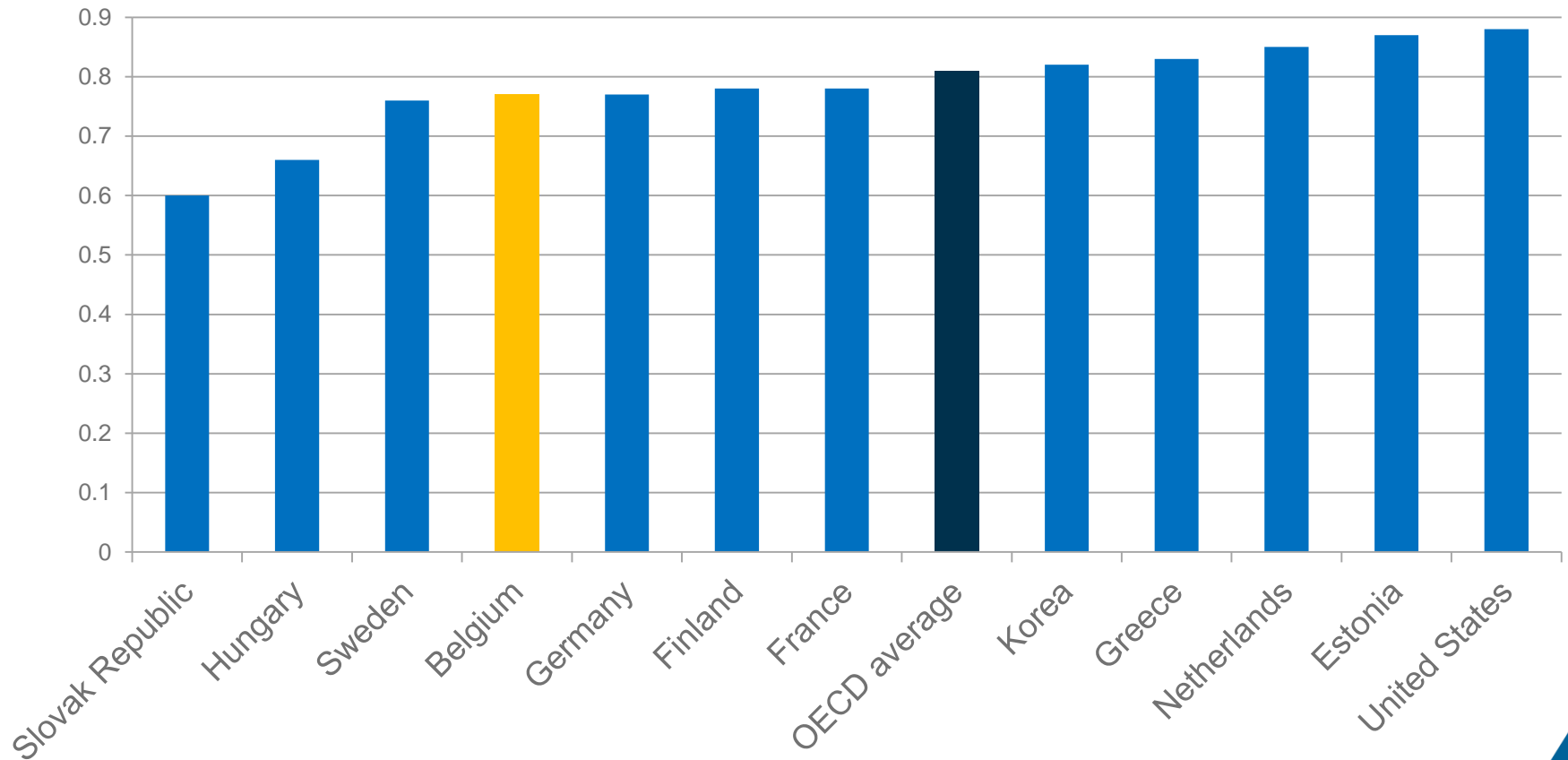


The age ranges considered vary slightly by indicator, but typically concern persons aged around 15-24, relative to persons aged around 25-54. For further detailed, see How's Life? 2017, Table 2.A.4.



# Impact of parental education on cognitive skills of 15-old students

Ratio of cognitive skills (PISA scores on reading, mathematics and science) among students whose parents attained only a primary education, relative to those among students whose parents attained tertiary level





## ***2. The Better Life Index: learning about people's preferences***

# Engaging with citizens on what matters to them



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Index Responses Countries ▾ Topics ▾ FAQ

## Create Your Better Life Index

Rate the topics according to their importance to you:

	Housing	<input type="range"/>
	Income	<input type="range"/>
	Jobs	<input type="range"/>
	Community	<input type="range"/>
	Education	<input type="range"/>
	Environment	<input type="range"/>
	Civic Engagement	<input type="range"/>
	Health	<input type="range"/>
	Life Satisfaction	<input type="range"/>
	Safety	<input type="range"/>
	Work-Life Balance	<input type="range"/>

Reset  Help

Gender differences

Compare with others

Share your index

Display countries alphabetically | by rank

[www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org](http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org)

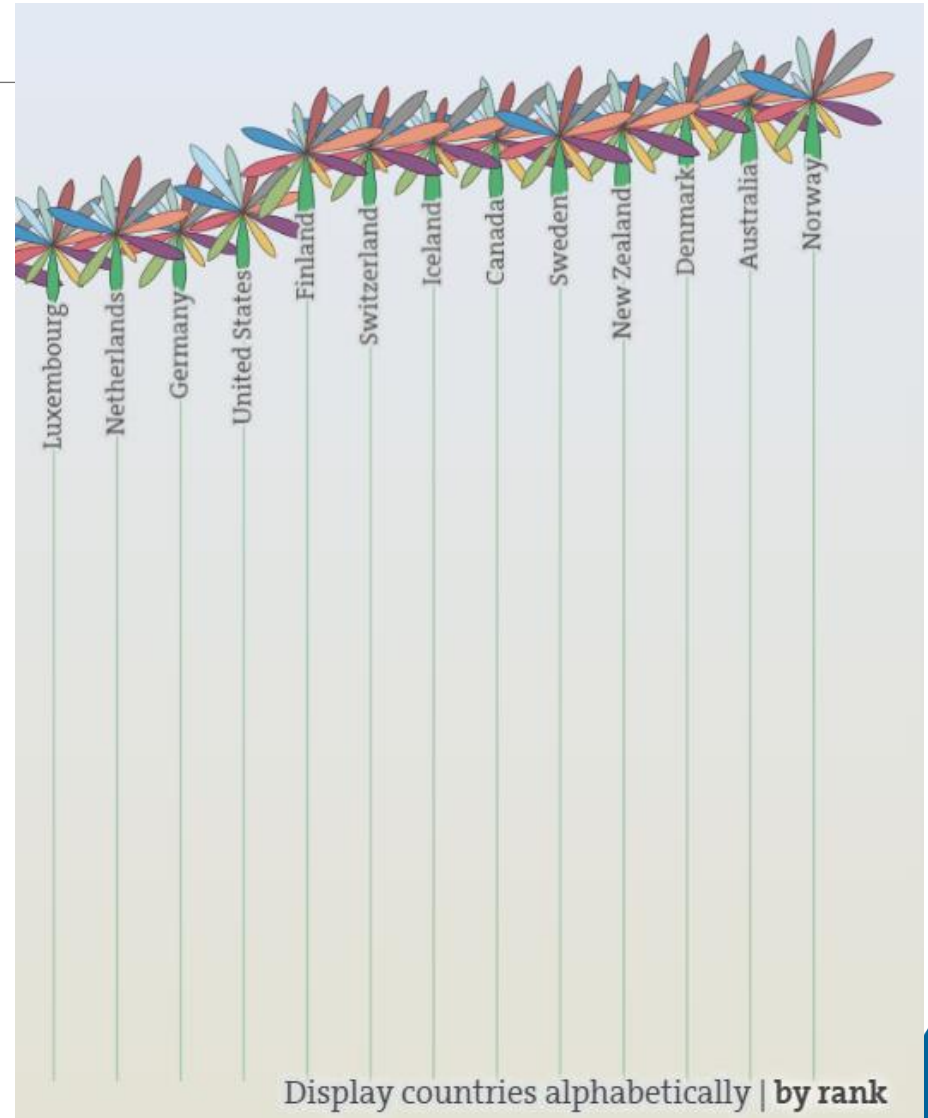




# Creating your own *Better Life Index*

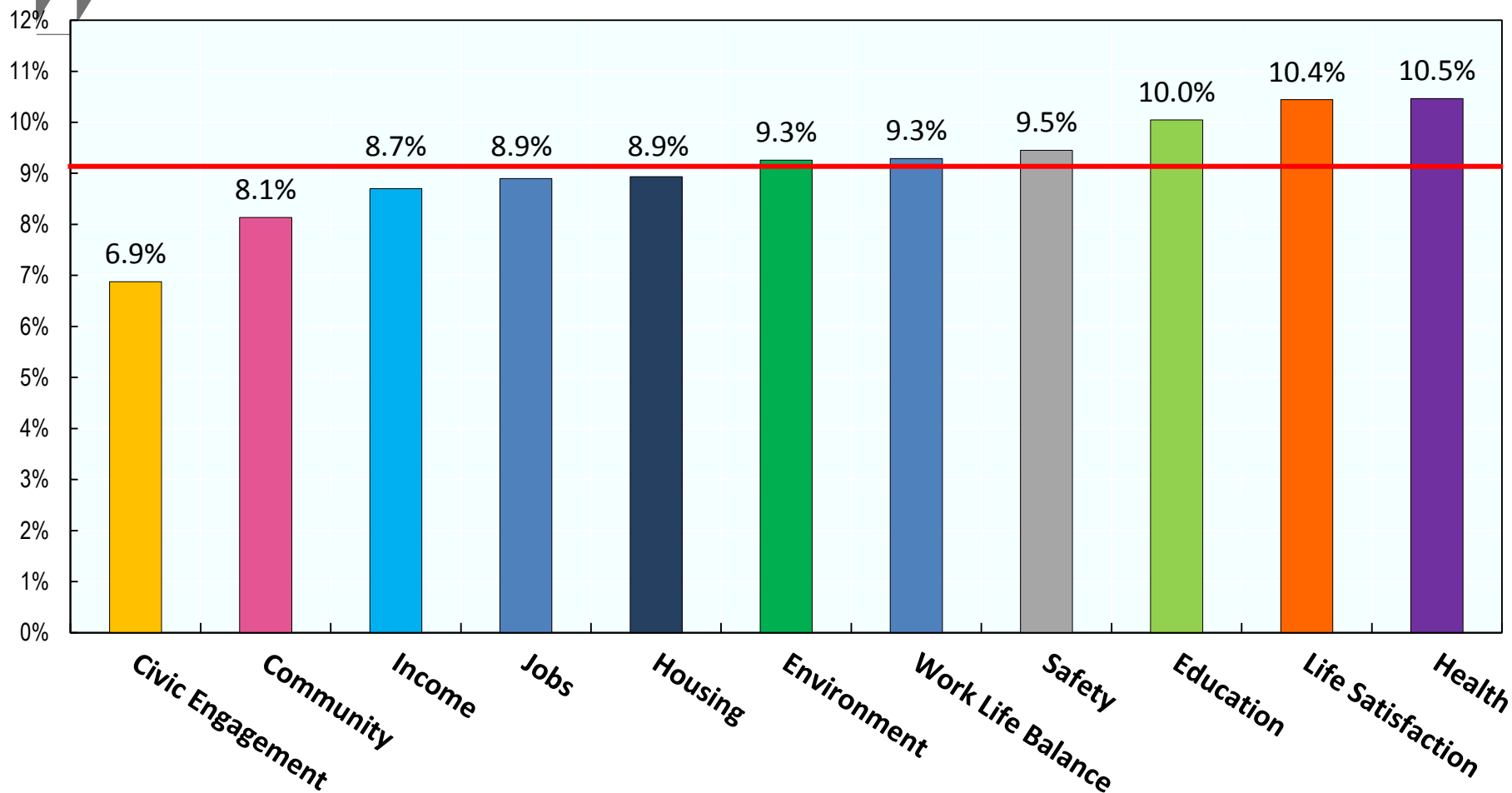
Rate the topics according to their importance to you:

	-	+
Housing	<input type="range"/>	<input type="range"/>
Income	<input type="range"/>	<input type="range"/>
Jobs	<input type="range"/>	<input type="range"/>
Community	<input type="range"/>	<input type="range"/>
Education	<input type="range"/>	<input type="range"/>
Environment	<input type="range"/>	<input type="range"/>
Civic Engagement	<input type="range"/>	<input type="range"/>
Health	<input type="range"/>	<input type="range"/>
Life Satisfaction	<input type="range"/>	<input type="range"/>
Safety	<input type="range"/>	<input type="range"/>
Work-Life Balance	<input type="range"/>	<input type="range"/>





# ... and learning from what OECD BLI users tell us



Notes: Responses weighted ex post to correct for biases in the age and gender composition of users. Ratings expressed as a percentage of the total ratings assigned; with equal weights to all 11 dimensions, each would attract 9.09% (shown as the red line). N = 73,761 people in OECD countries only.

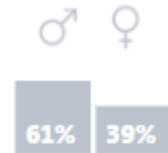


# Ingredients of the “good life”: Belgium, France, United States

## Belgium

1877 responses

### Gender



### Age



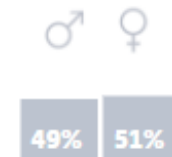
### Topics



## France

13904 responses

### Gender



### Age



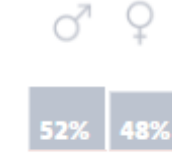
### Topics



## United States

20641 responses

### Gender



### Age



### Topics



Notes: Responses have **not** been weighted to correct for biases in the age and gender composition of the sample of users.

Source: OECD Better Life Index <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/>



**Understanding what matters is key to  
restore trust in institutions**



# Distance between people and the public institutions that serve them



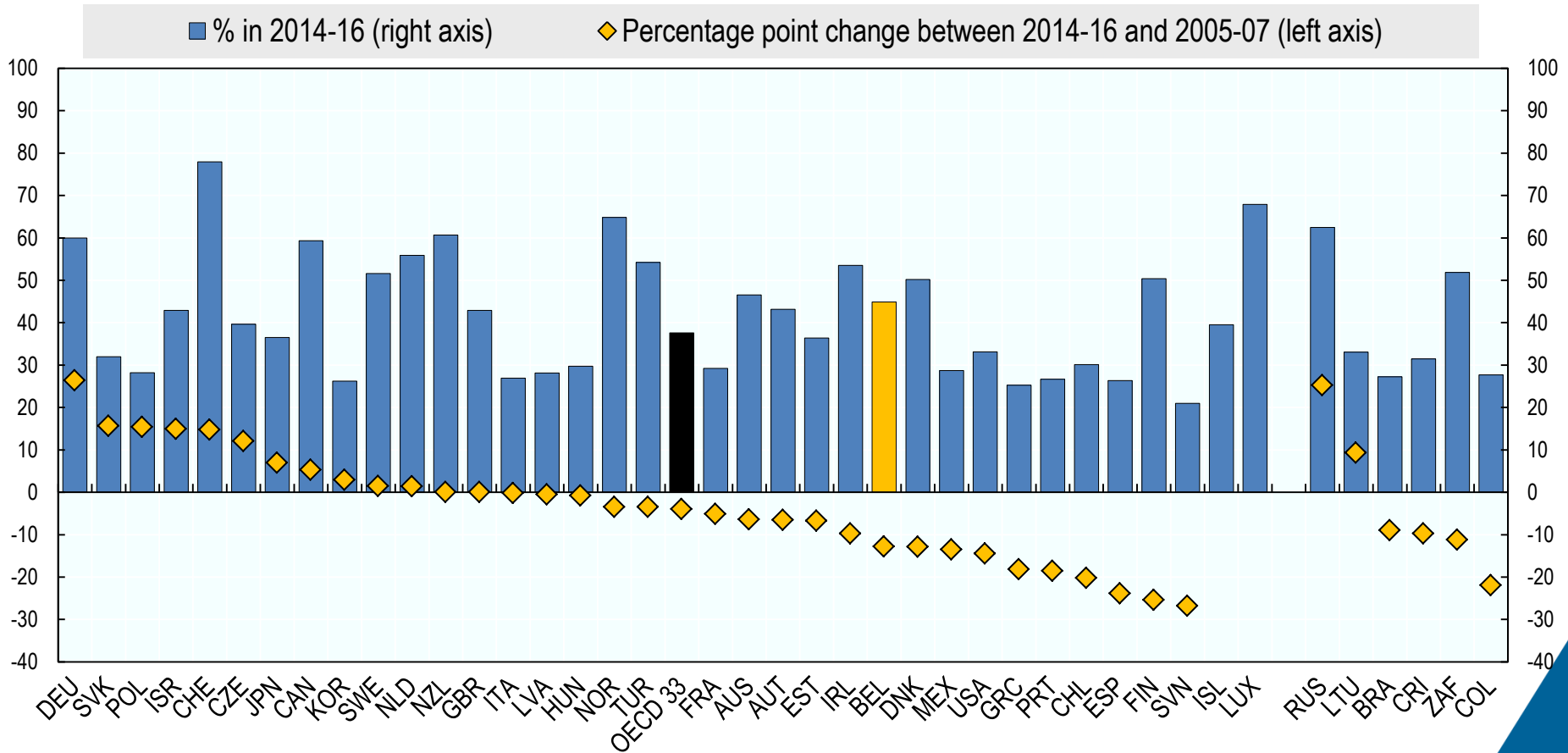
Drawings by Giulia Sagromola





# Declining trust in governments

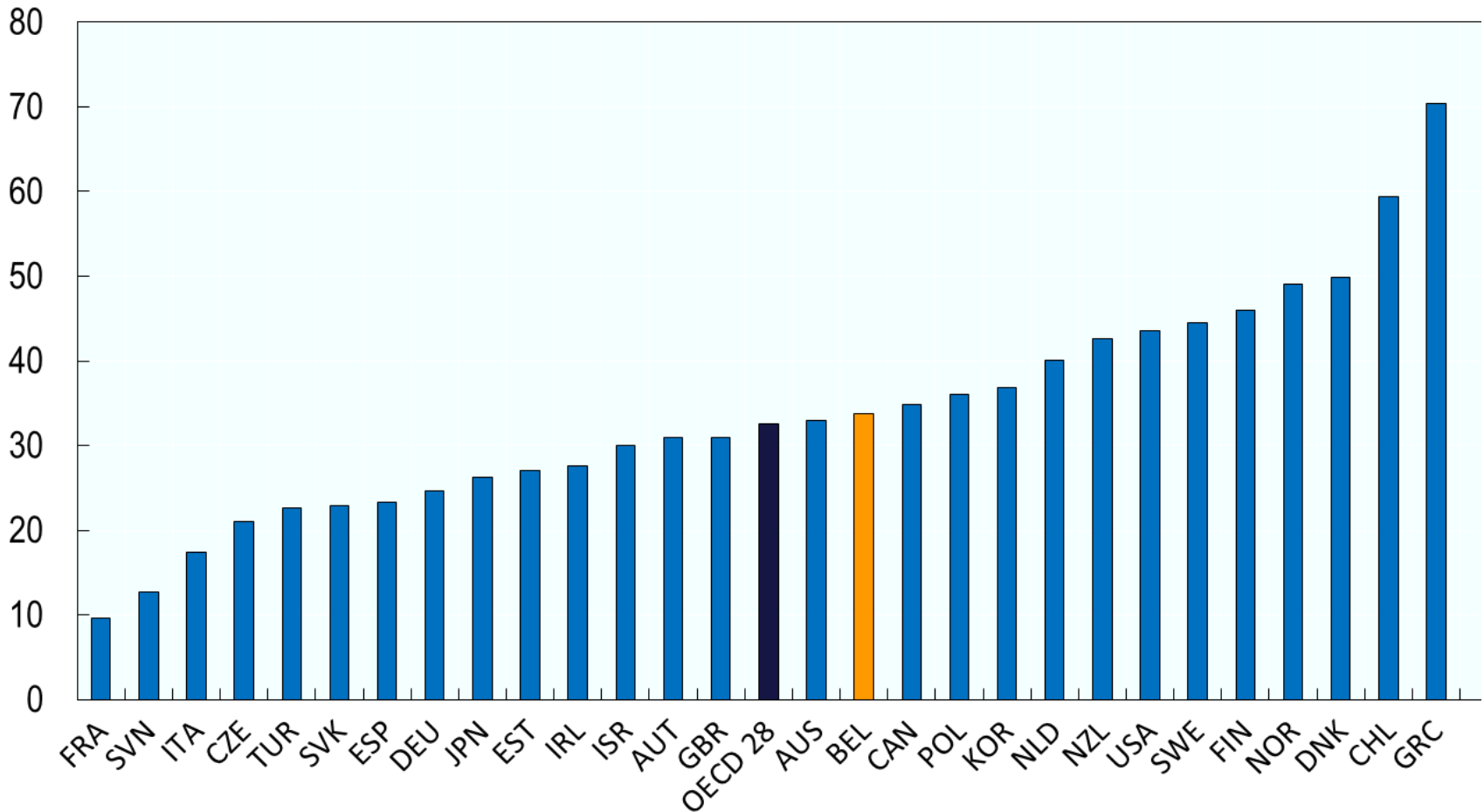
## Confidence in national government 2014-16 and changes since 2005-07



Source: adapted from Figure 4.13, How's Life? 2017



# Only one in three people in the OECD feel that they have a say in what the government does

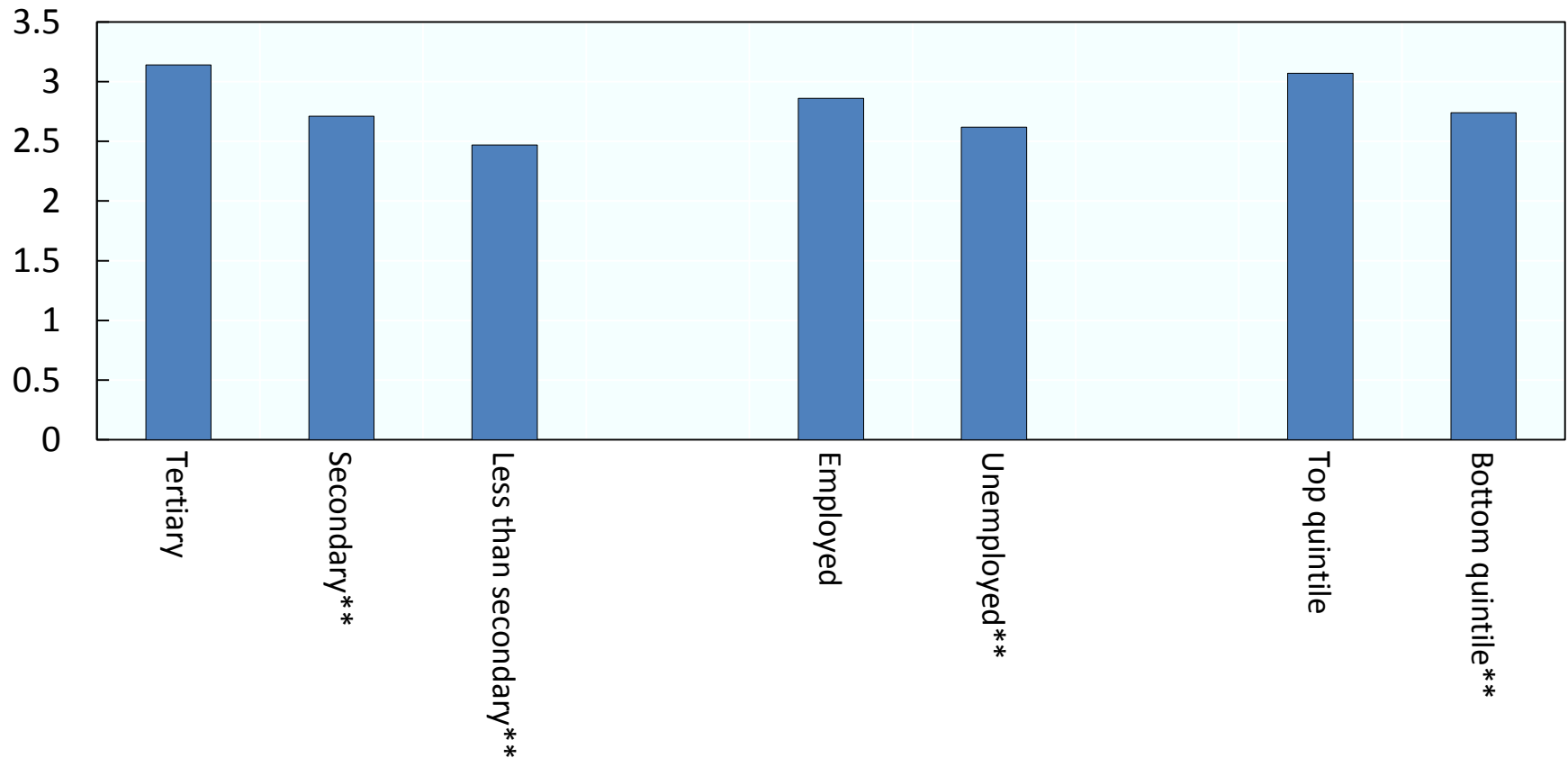


Adapted from How's Life? 2017, Figure 4.11.

**...over half believe that corruption is widespread, and only 38% have confidence in their national government**



# People with fewer economic resources are less likely to feel they have a say in what the government does



OECD average mean score on a 1 - 5 scale (higher scores indicate higher feeling of having a say in what the government does)

\*\* indicates a statistically significant difference at the 95% confidence level, with tertiary-educated, employed and the top income quintile serving as the reference groups, respectively.

Adapted from How's Life? 2017, Figure 4.12.



# Do politicians represent the people they serve?

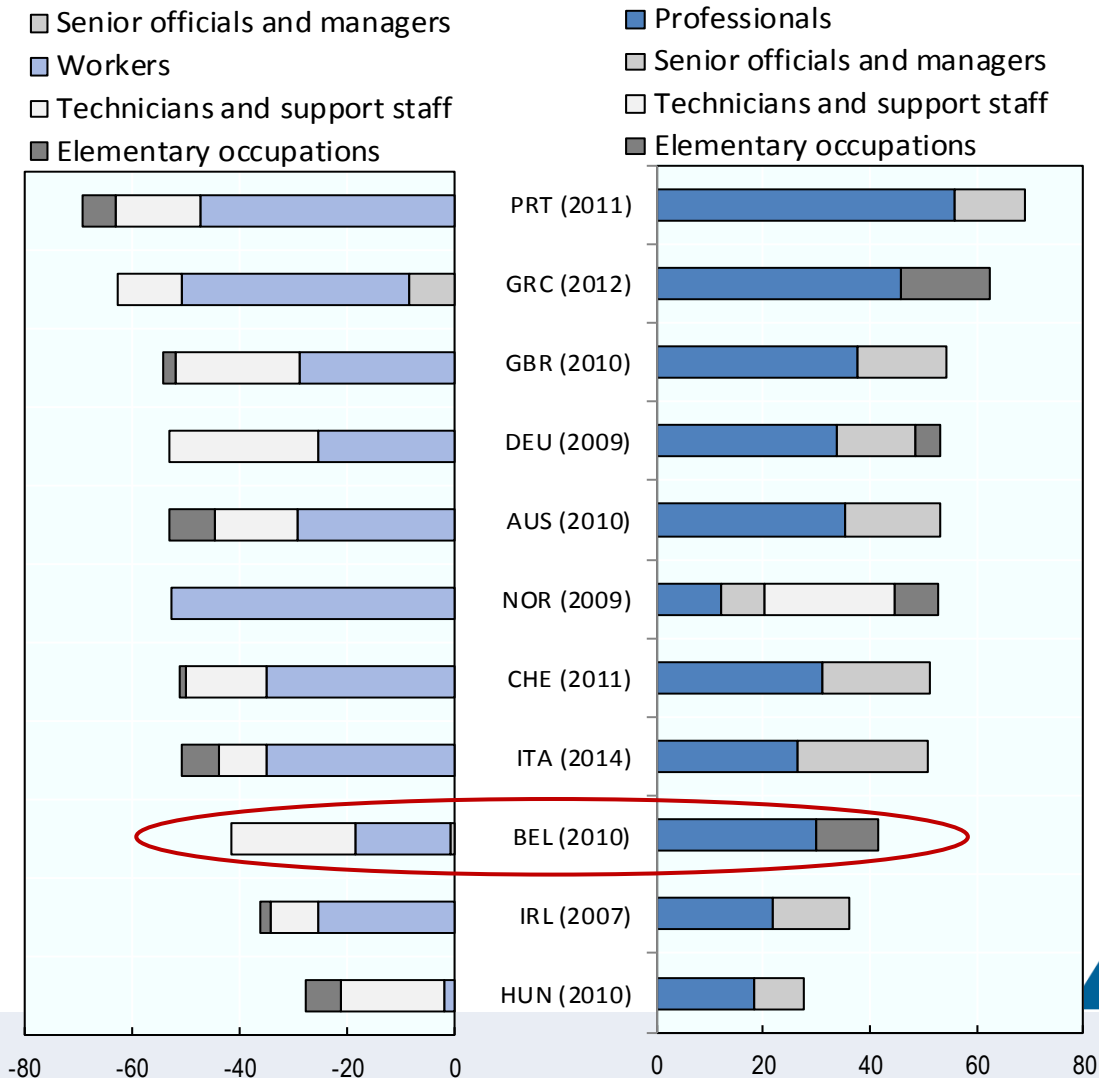


Groups under-represented

Groups over-represented

A study of 11 OECD countries found that manual, agricultural and service workers make up 44% of the population at large, but only 13% of members of parliament.

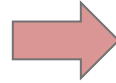
... in Belgium the figures are 32% and 15%, respectively (2010 elections)



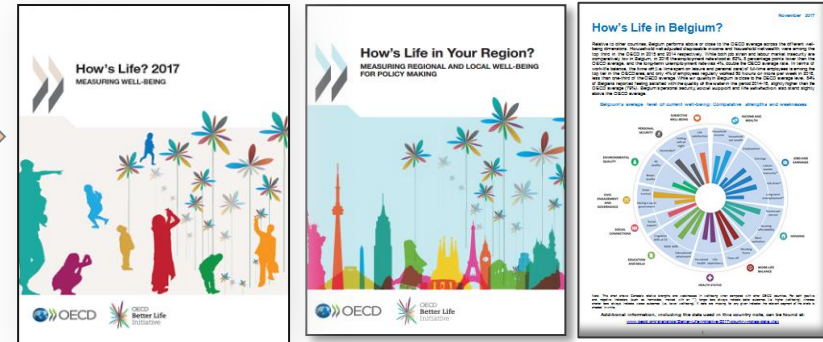
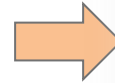


# Better Life Initiative: Different media for different audiences

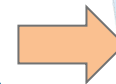
Public  
outreach



Data Collection  
Reporting, Analysis  
Communication



Research & methodological  
work





# Bottom line: Measuring what matters for better policies



A **more complete picture** of progress – capturing aspects of life often missed by more conventional measures)

Highlighting **the diversity of experiences** at a granular, people-centred level



Supporting the **strategic alignment** of outcomes across government departments

**Forward-looking:** resources for future well-being, not just outcomes here and now





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*Thank you for your attention!*

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- <http://www.oecd.org/inclusive-growth/>