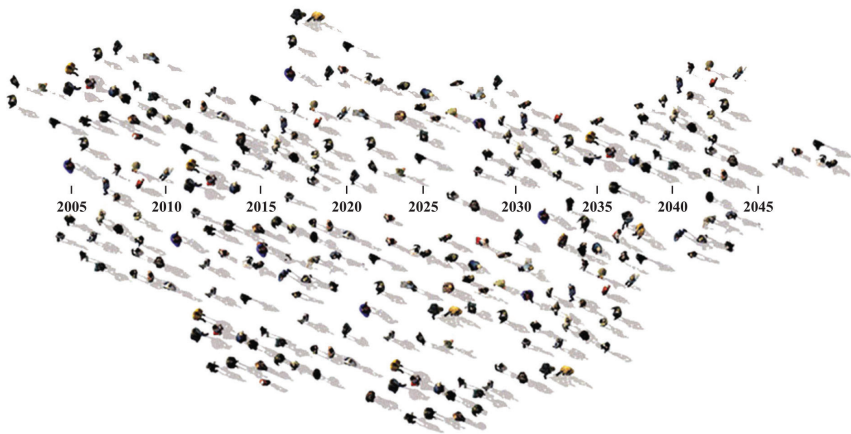


THE SOCIAL WELL-BEING SURVEY OF MONGOLIA



▼ TRUST

▼ AFFECT

▼ COOPERATION

▼ EUDAIMONIA

▼ LIFE SATISFACTION

▼ DOMAIN EVALUATION

Independent Research Institute of Mongolia

Independent Research Institute of Mongolia (IRIM) is one of Mongolia's first organizations to promote independent research as institutional practice. Our vision is to be the leading center of knowledge in Mongolia on development-related issues and to provide world-class independent research outcomes. We aim to promote cooperation between government, industry and civil society and to implement programs that are innovative and responsive to the needs of the population. IRIM is a member of Consortium of Social Well-being in Asia and the International Sociological Association.

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OVERVIEW

This report presents an overview of the findings from IRIM's Social Well-being Survey conducted between 2016 and 2018. Key points from the report include:

- Social trust was identified as being relatively low, more than half of the sample population (61 %) indicated that they don't trust others in society. The average point for perception about helping others and receiving help from others was also below average (4.7 out of 10 scale-point).
- Interpersonal trust and cooperation in Mongolia is concentrated among social networks of personal trust. People were most willing to help family members, friends and relatives and least willing to help LGTB people, strangers, people with different religious belief and those of different nationalities.
- Mongolians seem satisfied with their own lives (scoring 7.5 out of 10 scale-point which is a relatively high score compared to other countries). They reported that they are relatively happy and that their lives are worthwhile.
- People were more positive about the future prospects of their lives, more negative about their past and neutral about their present.
- There were striking differences in how people evaluate their external environment and personal environment - they were most satisfied with their personal relationships, relatively concerned about their level of education and their safety, and significantly dissatisfied with the political and economic situation in Mongolia.

Inequalities

- We found that income levels were the most important determinant of higher levels of life satisfaction where people with higher income had higher levels of life satisfaction.
- We also found that age, gender, educational level and type of settlement were linked to differences in life satisfaction.
- Regarding trust and cooperation, there were differences depend-

ing on the respondents' age and employment status.

- The inequality of subjective well-being within and across groups is an important indicator.

Policy implications:

- We suggest identifying potential ways to build general social trust and to encourage cooperation beyond social networks of personal relationships. Attention should be paid on enhancing social cohesion at the societal level as a necessary condition for economic performance and well-being, legitimacy of democratic institutions and investment in long-term policies such as fighting climate change.
- The findings so far suggest public policies directed at vulnerable groups and the poor need to keep focusing on poverty reduction but need to simultaneously improve social services such as education, health and employment.
- There are differing values among different income groups, age groups and residences. There should be more in-depth studies on Mongolians' values.
- Therefore, we intend to continue conducting the survey on a regular basis and to create a time-series. The survey results can be used at provincial level and/or for different groups and can be used as outcome indicators of important public policies, programs and projects. We will present our findings through media on a regular basis.

TRUST

High levels of trust and intra-citizen support are key elements of citizen cooperation. If a society has high levels of distrust between its members, it creates an additional burden for all activities in that society (Fukuyama 1995) by reducing collaboration.

Generally, do you think you can trust most people, do you think you should not be too careful when you communicate with people?

Fig 1 Mean value

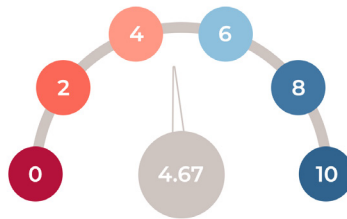
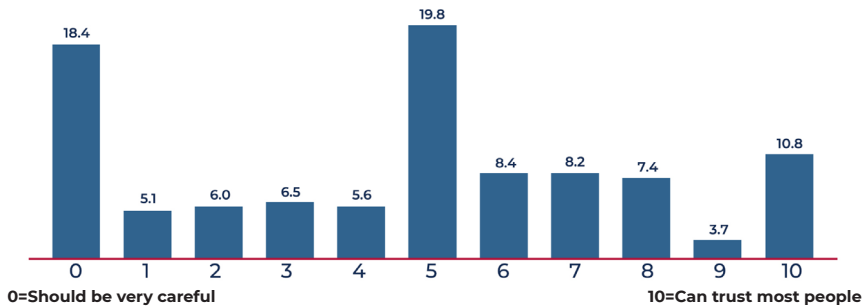


Fig 2 Proportion of respondents (%)



Do you think most people try to exploit you whenever there is an opportunity or do they try to be fair?

Fig 3 Mean value

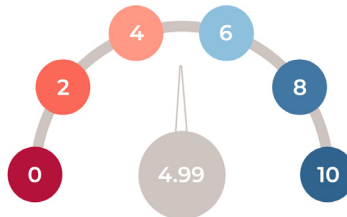
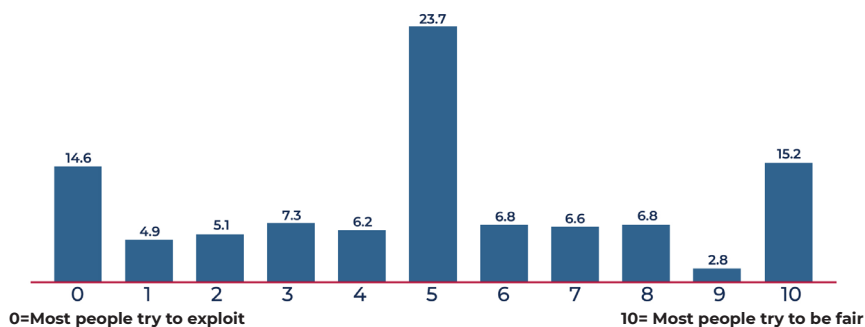


Fig 4 Proportion of respondents (%)



The responses to the above questions were below the score of 5, indicating 'general' interpersonal trust in Mongolia is not high. The survey results show that although there were some differences in responses by gender, rural/urban, and income level they were not statistically significant.

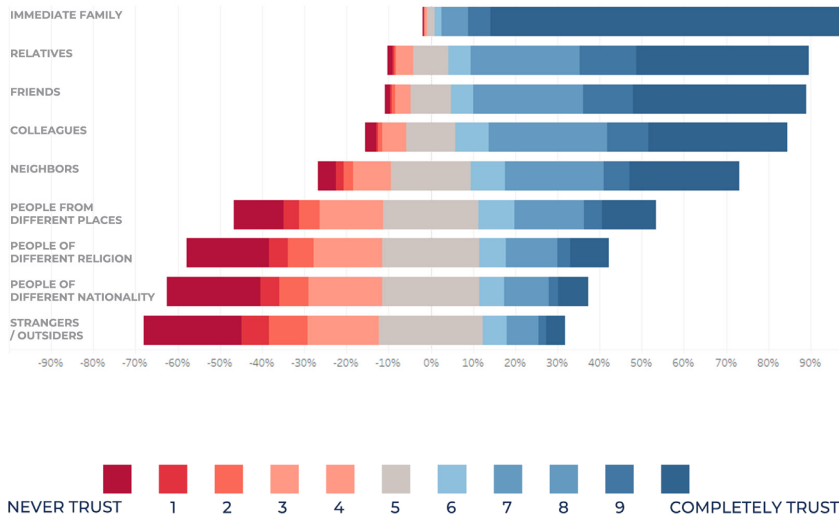
Fig 5 Mean value per groups

	Generally, do you think you can trust most people?	Do you think most people try to exploit you whenever there is a chance or they try to be fair?
Male	4.77	4.89
Female	4.59	5.08
Urban	4.60	4.59
Rural	4.71	5.22
Higher income	5.22	5.28
Lower income	4.78	5.44
Higher education	4.68	5.04
Lower education	4.21	4.81
Employed	4.72	4.99
Unemployed	4.60	4.99
Married	4.71	4.80
Single	4.62	5.25

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To elaborate more on trust, we attempted to define the status of both general (social) trust and particular trust in our survey and to what extent Mongolian society and communities are based on a sense of trust and reciprocity.

Fig 6 Which group of people do you trust the most? (%)



When arranged in order, respondents were least likely to trust strangers (3.06), and most likely to trust their family (9.74). This indicates that interpersonal trust in Mongolia is concentrated in family relationship rather than other social groups. However, 'a high level of social trust is a rare phenomenon' in other countries as well. For instance, according to Larsen's (2014) analysis of the World Value Survey findings, only 5 out of 52 countries had reported those answering they trust others had outnumbered those answering they don't. Similarly in Mongolia, more than half of the sample population (61 %) indicated that they don't trust others (scoring 5 or below).

COOPERATION

Social cohesion is based on trust and the willingness of individuals to cooperate and work together at all levels of society to achieve collective goals (Stanley 2003, 8).

Generally, do you think people are kind and helpful to each other, or just mind their own business?

Fig 7 Mean value

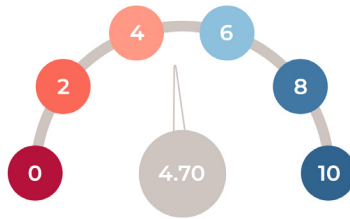
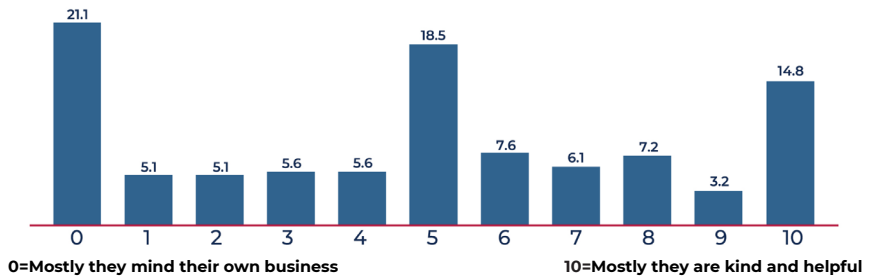


Fig 8 Proportion of respondents (%)



The average point for perception about general helpfulness was below average (4.7). In terms of people’s willingness levels to help certain groups including family members, friends and relatives scored higher than other groups and respondents were least willing to help LGBTB people, strangers and people with different religious belief and those of different nationalities. People were generally more willing to help those with whom they have a personal relationship than those within the general society.

Willingness to help and expectations of receiving help from others

Fig 9 Proportion of those responding yes (%)

	Social groups	I am willing to take time for them to spend my free time and help	They are willing to support and help me
1	Your family	98.3	97.5
2	Friends	94.0	90.3
3	Relatives	93.0	88.3
4	Colleagues	90.3	84.1
5	People with disability	78.7	50.9
6	Your neighbours	72.9	64.0
7	People from different homelands	65.7	48.3
8	People with different nationality	54.2	37.4
9	People with different religion	49.5	36.9
10	Strangers/outsider	46.7	28.2
11	LGTB	34.2	25.9

In terms of reciprocity, for all categories people were more willing to help others than they expected to be helped by others. However, that feeling of reciprocity was significantly less for strangers, people with different religious beliefs, of different nationalities and from different provinces. The closer the relationship, the more reciprocity is observed. The gaps in reciprocity among families, friends, relatives and colleagues were all below 10%. Notably, only 23% of the respondents stated that they believed that a stranger would help them.

We asked respondents about their actions and experience related to cooperation. The results indicate membership in any type of organization is low and people are mostly inactive in social activities. This trend also can be observed from Fig 10 where people help others on an individual basis (nearly half of the participants indicated they donated money or helped a stranger) rather than in an organized and collective way.

Fig 10 Membership in organizations (% of people answering yes)

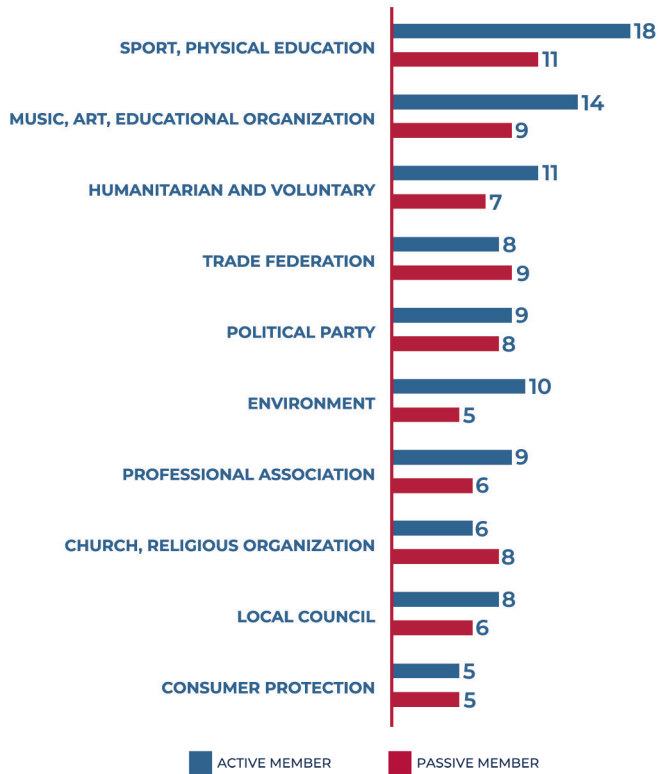


Fig 11 Have you done one of the followings in the period of the last month? (% of people answering yes)



LIFE SATISFACTION

Life satisfaction is a measure of how people evaluate their life. It is a cognitive evaluation rather than a statement of a person's current emotional state. The indicator is based on the Cantril Ladder which asks the respondents to 'imagine a ladder with steps numbered from 0 at the bottom to 10 at the top. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible life for you (OECD 2013, 268).

Overall, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?

Fig 12 Mean value

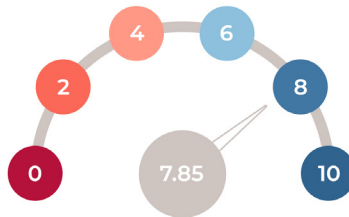
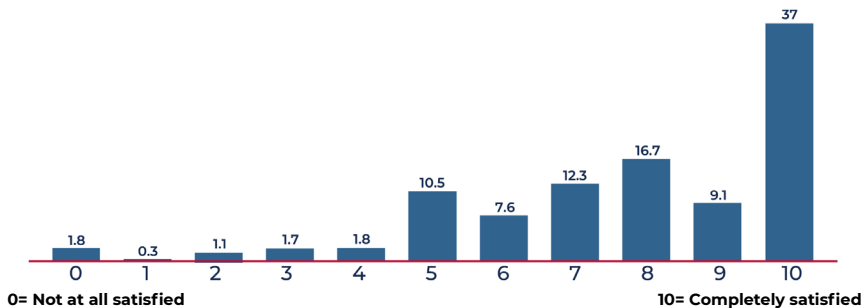


Fig 13 Proportion of responses (%)



Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?

Fig 14 Mean value

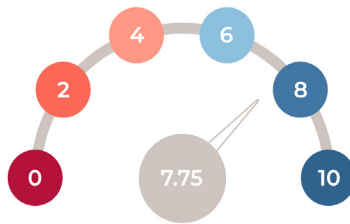
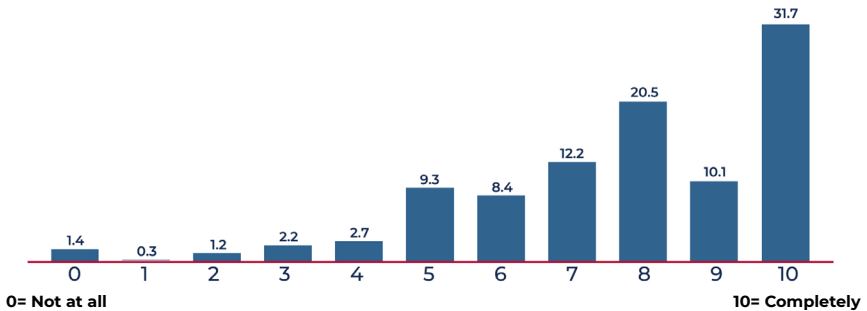


Fig 15 Proportion of responses (%)



Mongolians seem satisfied with their own lives. This is a relatively high score compared to other countries, at similar levels with Nordic countries which is around 7.5 whereas Syrians, Burundians and Central Africans rating their lives the worst at around 3.0 (Gallup World Poll 2017). Furthermore, they reported that they are relatively happy and that their lives are worthwhile. This could be linked to Mongolians' way of thinking and higher relational well-being.

We found that income levels were the most important determinant of higher levels of life satisfaction where people with higher income had higher levels of life satisfaction. We also found that age, gender, educational level and type of settlement were linked to differences in life satisfaction.

Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?

Fig 16 Mean value

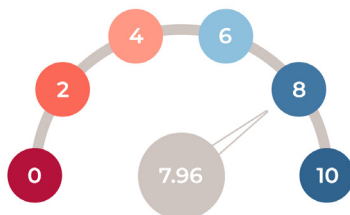
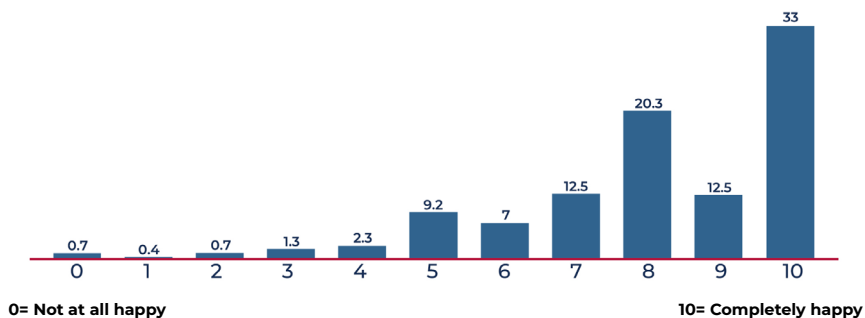


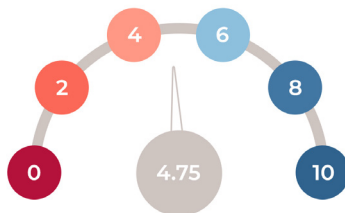
Fig 17 Proportion of responses (%)



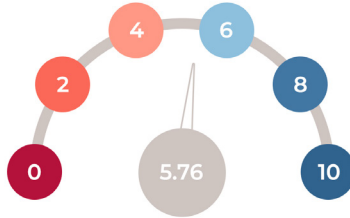
On which step of the ladder would you say you personally feel you stand?

Fig 18 Mean value

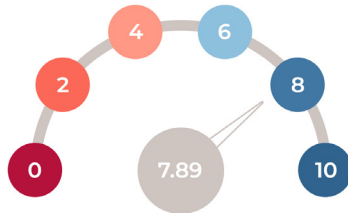
5 years ago:



At this time:



In 5 years time:



0= Not at all happy

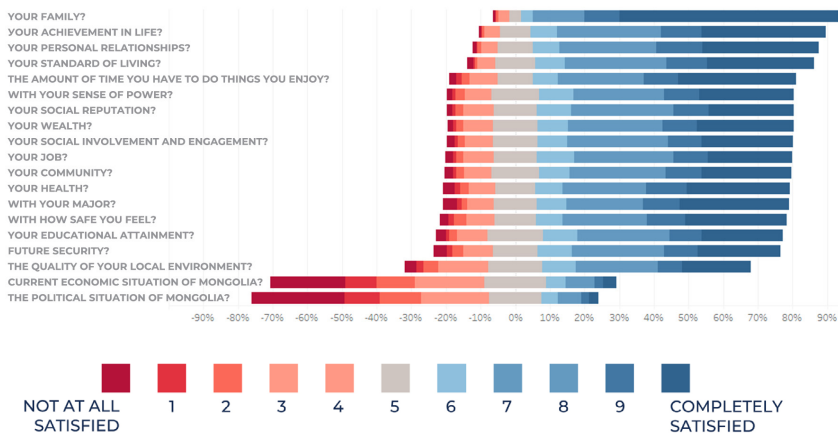
10= Completely happy

Another interesting finding is that people were more positive about the future prospects of their lives, more negative about their past and neutral about their present. This trend was also observed in other surveys IRIM has conducted in different topics such as perceptions about livelihood.

DOMAIN EVALUATION

Questions about satisfaction with individual domains of life can be meaningful as stand-alone measures and may be particularly useful for policy-makers seeking specific information on the effects of a given policy intervention (OECD 2013).

Fig 19 How satisfied are you with the following?



There were striking differences in how people evaluate their external environment and personal environment. A vast majority of respondents were significantly dissatisfied with the political situation and economic situation followed by the natural environment in Mongolia – all of which are external environments. People were relatively concerned about their level of education, security for their future life, their academic major and safety.

On all other domains, groups of completely satisfied people comprise the largest. People are most satisfied with family, gains of their life, personal relationships, and the time they spend for their interest.

We asked respondents to evaluate 19 aspects of their lives. There were no difference between income groups on four domains (environment, security, leisure time and income levels). For 14 domains, there were significant difference, lower income people with lower levels of satisfaction. For one aspect, lower income people had slightly higher levels of satisfaction with the political situation in Mongolia.

AFFECT

This set of questions is intended to collect information on recent positive and negative emotional states. The questions on positive and negative affect capture distinct aspects of subjective well-being that are not reflected in more evaluative measures” (OECD 2013, 257). The table below shows mean values for emotional states as reported by respondents.

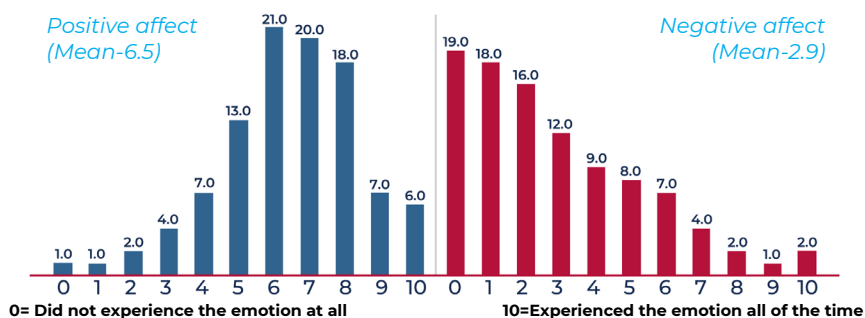
Fig 20 Did you feel the following yesterday? (Mean value)

	Questions	Mean value
positive	Did you experience enjoyment yesterday?	7.63
	Did you experience calmness yesterday?	7.59
	Did you experience happiness?	7.42
	How was your health yesterday?	5.73
	Did you smile or laugh a lot yesterday?	4.04
negative	Did you feel tired?	4.31
	Did you experience worry?	3.18
	Did you experience sadness?	2.50
	Did you experience anger?	2.40
	Did you experience stress?	2.36
	Did you experience depression?	2.26

0= Did not experience the emotion at all

10=Experienced the emotion all of the time

Fig 21 Did you feel the following yesterday? (Proportion of response in %)



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We found variation among emotion states depending on seasonal effect, whether people live in rural or urban areas and marital status. Namely, the respondents reported the highest positive affect in autumn (6.9) and lowest in winter (6.2) regardless of their socio-economic status and demographics; rural populations (7.5) indicated more positive affect than urban (6.3) and married people (7.3) had more positive affect than unmarried people (6.9).

EUDAIMONIC QUESTIONS

These questions ask about respondent's mental attributes and psychological function that are thought to constitute mental "flourishing" (OECD 2013, 32). We asked questions about autonomy, competency and meaning and purpose in life. These questions are one of the least tested set of questions in the literature in identifying subjective well-being.

Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?

Fig 22 Mean value

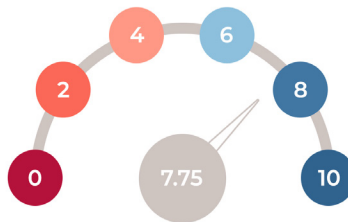


Fig 23 Proportion of responses (%)

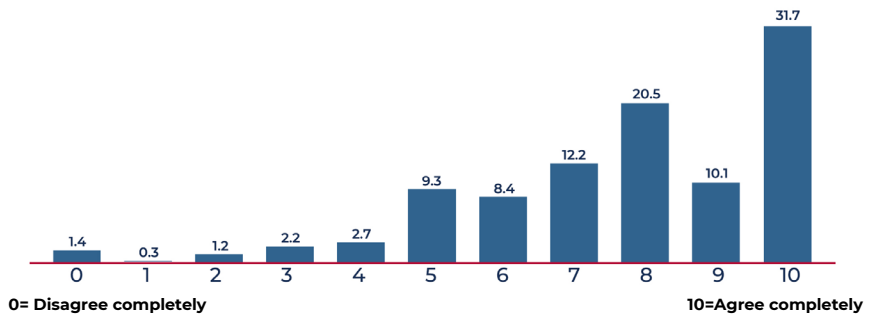
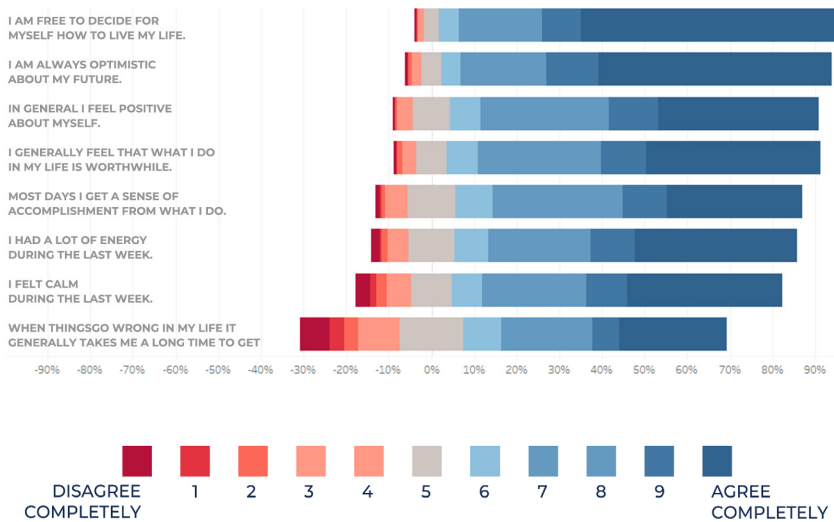


Fig 24 How satisfied are you with the following?



Mongolians reported relatively good levels of eudaimonia. It is interesting to note that Mongolians reported significantly high levels of satisfaction on “autonomy” - free to decide for oneself; and meaning and purpose of one’s life. When the questions were about recent experiences and competency, the number of people who reported negatively slightly increased.

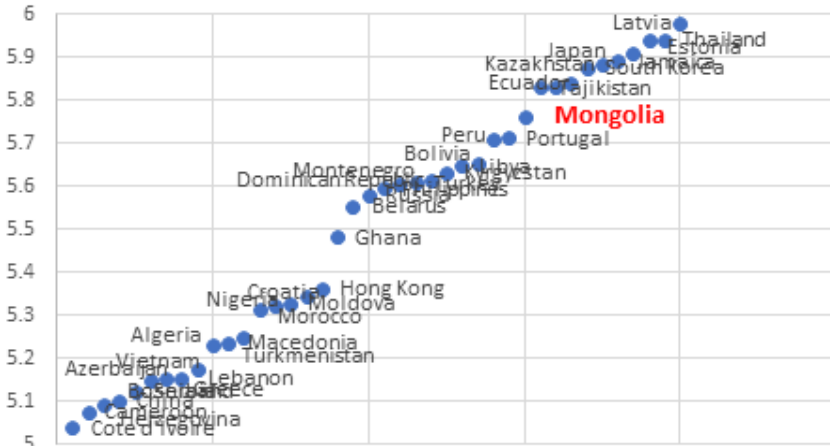
CROSS-COUNTRY COMPARISON

How high or low is the level of subjective well-being in Mongolia? For the sake of an indication, we compared our survey results with that of the World Happiness Report (2017). Mongolia ranked 61st out of 141 countries. According to the World Happiness Report, happiness in Mongolia has been gradually increasing since 2007 (4.61). Moreover Mongolia shares similar levels of happiness with our neighbors – Russia and China – as well as with other Central Asian countries.

Fig 25 Cantril Ladder

World Happiness Report 2016

Sweden	7.2868047	Switzerland	7.4735932
Austria	7.2937279	Iceland	7.4762139
New Zealand	7.3271828	Norway	7.5787449
Israel	7.3310361	Denmark	7.5937023
Netherlands	7.4589653	Finland	7.7882519



Afghanistan	2.6617181	Central African Republic	3.475862
South Sudan	2.8166225	Botswana	3.5048811
Yemen	3.2535601	Zimbabwe	3.6383002
Tanzania	3.3471212	Haiti	3.8238657
Malawi	3.416863	Egypt	3.9293442

0= Not at all satisfied

10= Completely satisfied

ABOUT THE REPORT

What people feel about their lives, how people view others and how people interact with each other matter. We want to live in a society that is beyond materially wealthy, where people live meaningful lives, satisfied with their life and surroundings and trust and help each other. Social cohesion and subjective well-being measurements complement existing measures of national progress and emphasise the views of individuals about what should be the most important aspects of well-being. Therefore, we hope the report will help improve our understanding of the factors driving societal progress and will strengthen the evidence-base for policy making.

This Report uses the broader notion of subjective well-being which allows for a more precise measurement of the relationship between subjectivity and society. As such the report goes beyond the shortcomings of happiness discourse which is accompanied by an emerging “happiness industry” and is seen as an individual goal.

The report is a breakthrough in Mongolia in many aspects including:

- It is conducted by national and independent researchers;
- It is conducted over-time in different seasons, months and days of the year;
- It is comparable across countries, social groups and time.

This initiative is representative of IRIM's commitment and vision of becoming a knowledge center of Mongolia's development issues. The social cohesion and subjective well-being survey was funded by IRIM.

Who can use this report?

We hope that this report will reach to a wide audience and will help shaping constructive public debate, support policies to bridging inequalities and allowing distribution of outcomes across society and identify priorities at the national level and garner support for action.

The report is important for government policy makers, international development agencies, academics, private sector actors, media, non-governmental and civil society organizations and representatives from the general public who have an interest in well-being and development. This report is a summary of our survey results intended for specialist and non-specialist audiences.

Work with us

We need the help of supporters, partners and champions to turn data into better policies and investments that truly improve people's lives. We intend to continue measuring social cohesion and subjective well-being in Mongolia, publish all our data online, make it available both in English and Mongolian, expand its coverage and extend its outreach for meaningful policy change.

Join our efforts:

- Make a financial contribution to our mission
- Donate your time and volunteer
- Use our survey report and data in your work
- Establish academic partnerships with us
- Establish policy partnerships with us
- Share your thoughts about the survey.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

We are aiming to continue undertaking general social surveys on large samples periodically to allow for comparisons across different nations and over time. Through these surveys, we hope to address the lack of general social studies in Mongolia that try to explain society as a whole and answer questions such as:

- How individuals and society are changing
- What their characteristics are
- What measures are appropriate to address these social issues.

Conceptual framework

Social cohesion

Social cohesion is based on the willingness of individuals to cooperate and work together at all levels of society to achieve collective goals (Jenson 2003). Social cohesion refers to the existence or absence of shared values and a sense of identity and belonging within a society, trust in their fellow citizens and political institutions and voluntary cooperation among the members of the society. Although there are many elements of social cohesion, in this report we measure horizontal trust (trust between members of society) and voluntary and civil society cooperation. Our questions on measuring trust and cooperation used various international sources such as World Values Survey and European Social Survey to allow comparison.

Subjective well-being

Subjective well-being is a relative construct, rather than something reflecting absolute achievements in society. However, it is useful to detect the impact of life circumstances. We rely on the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s framework on measuring subjective well-being. Accordingly, we measure the following elements of subjective well-being:

- Life evaluation – a reflective/cognitive assessment on a person's life or some specific aspect of it. It asks people to reflect on their life and assess how it is going overall.
- Affect - asks about people's feelings or emotional states over a short period of time to assess these aspects of personal well-being

on a day-to-day basis.

- Eudaimonia – implies a broader range of concerns rather than just happiness and focuses on subjective well-being more broadly defined than one’s positive affect. It asks people to consider the extent to which they feel a sense of meaning and satisfaction in life.

In order to keep the report simple, we present the ‘mean’ values for summarising the level of subjective well-being and the distribution of measures. It should be noted that this is just a guide, the mean values are taken from normative statements and so do not reflect absolute values from objective data.

Questionnaire

Our questionnaire consists of a wide range of information such as basic demographics, living situation, employment and socioeconomic status of the respondents (25 questions in total).

Questionnaire structure	Number of questions
Demographic and socioeconomic	25
Trust	12
Cooperation	15
Life evaluation	12
Affect	11
Domain evaluation	19
Eudaimonic	9

Sample size and representativeness

This survey used face-to-face interviews using tablets and paper questionnaires with 2318 people, aged 15 and older. The survey was conducted four times between June 2016 and November 2017. All reported margins of sampling error include computed design effects for weighting. Aimags and cities included in the analysis are: Bayankhongor, Dornod, Gobi-Altai, Khentii, Khovd, Selenge, Umnugobi, Uvurkhangai, Zavkhan aimags and Darkhan, Erdenet and Ulaanbaatar cities.

Measurement and analysis

Subjective well-being is a composite index measured by using the 11-scale Cantril Ladder (the self-anchoring striving scale). It asks people

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to rate how they value their life in terms of the best possible subjective well-being (10 or 7) through to the worst possible subjective well-being (0). The report uses scores that are calculated as the mean value of responses to the Cantril Ladder and aggregates normalised scores of average achievements in various dimensions. Several co-variables were asked in the survey such as main socio-demographic questions about respondents and their household to allow to analyse in detail the drivers of subjective well-being.

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