Happiness
the foundation of the future education

TEODOR NITU

- Mathieu Ricard (2003) posits that happiness, in the sense of a deep, lasting well-being, is a skill that can be learned with committed effort.

- the 2018 EU report on international Socio-Emotional Education (SEE) shows there is clear evidence that social and emotional education helps to build effective learning habits and leads to improved academic achievement (Corcoran et al., 2018; Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017).

- Children who developed SEL skills showed improvement in academic behaviour and attainment. (Social-Emotional Learning and Academic Achievement: Using Causal Methods to Explore Classroom-Level Mechanisms - Meghan P. McCormick, Elise Cappella, Erin E. O'Connor, Sandee G. McClowry, 2015)

- multiple studies already had shown that approaches such as Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) have been shown effective across many outcomes, including school climate, students' autonomy and influence, learning and attainment, and reduction of exclusion (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Lendrum, Humphrey, Kalambouka, & Wigelsworth, 2009; Wigelsworth, Humphrey, Kalambouka, & Lendrum, 2010).

- While academic achievement at school partially predicts success in adulthood, non-cognitive competences may better predict life success than cognitive ones (Kautz et al., 2014).

- Happy students are likely to learn better and more effectively (Fredrickson, 2001; Isen, 2001)

- Schools that put in place programmes to boost pupils' social and emotional skills have, on average, an 11% gain in attainment, as well as improvements in pupil behaviour (Public Health England in 2014)

- Children who have been taught happiness skills (awareness, kindness, gratitude and positive attitude) showed not only a drastic increase in their wellbeing but also their academic results improved by 20%. (UK Public Schools)

- Children with higher levels of happiness do generally appear to achieve better academically (Gutman and Vorhaus, 2012).

- Recent research suggests that a child's mental and emotional health at the age of 16 is the strongest predictor of adult life satisfaction, and that teachers can have an effect on the mental and emotional wellbeing of their pupils that can last even more than five years or (Clark et al., 2018).

- From all of the child's characteristics, happiness and emotional health is the most important predictor of adulthood happiness, more important than any academic qualification a person can achieve. (London School of Economics' Centre for Economic Performance)

46. Nicaragua (6.137)
47. Romania (6.124)
48. Kuwait (6.102)
49. Mauritius (6.101)
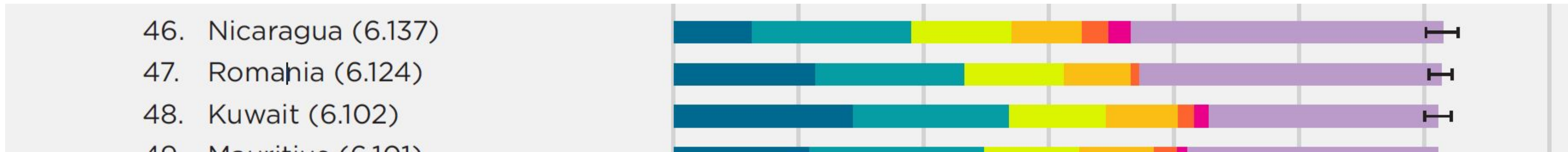
Figure 2.4: Changes in Happiness from 2008–2012 to 2017–2019 (Part 1)

1. Benin (1.644)
2. Togo (1.314)
3. Hungary (1.195)
4. Bulgaria (1.121)
5. Philippines (1.104)
6. Guinea (1.102)
7. Congo (Brazzaville) (1.076)
8. Serbia (1.074)
9. Ivory Coast (1.036)
10. Romania (1.007)

78. St. Petersburg — Russia (5.994)
79. Tokyo — Japan (5.989)
80. Pafos — Cyprus (5.981)
81. Bucharest — Romania (5.974)
82. Chisinau — Moldova (5.967)
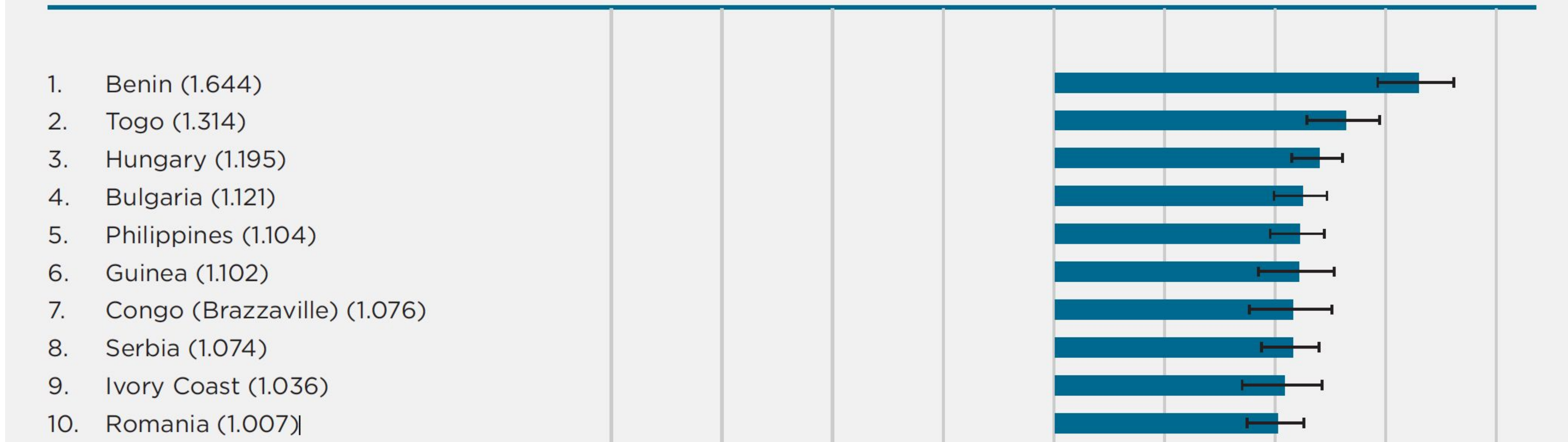
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The Children's Society

Figure 9

High life satisfaction

Country	%
Romania	85%
Finland	84%
Croatia	82%
Switzerland	82%
Spain	82%
Lithuania	81%
Iceland	81%
France	80%
Portugal	78%
Estonia	78%
Latvia	78%
Austria	77%
Slovakia	77%
Hungary	76%
Sweden	76%
Italy	76%
Greece	76%
Luxembourg	76%
Czechia	73%
Slovenia	72%
Ireland	72%
Poland	72%
Malta	69%
United Kingdom	64%

% of children (aged 15)
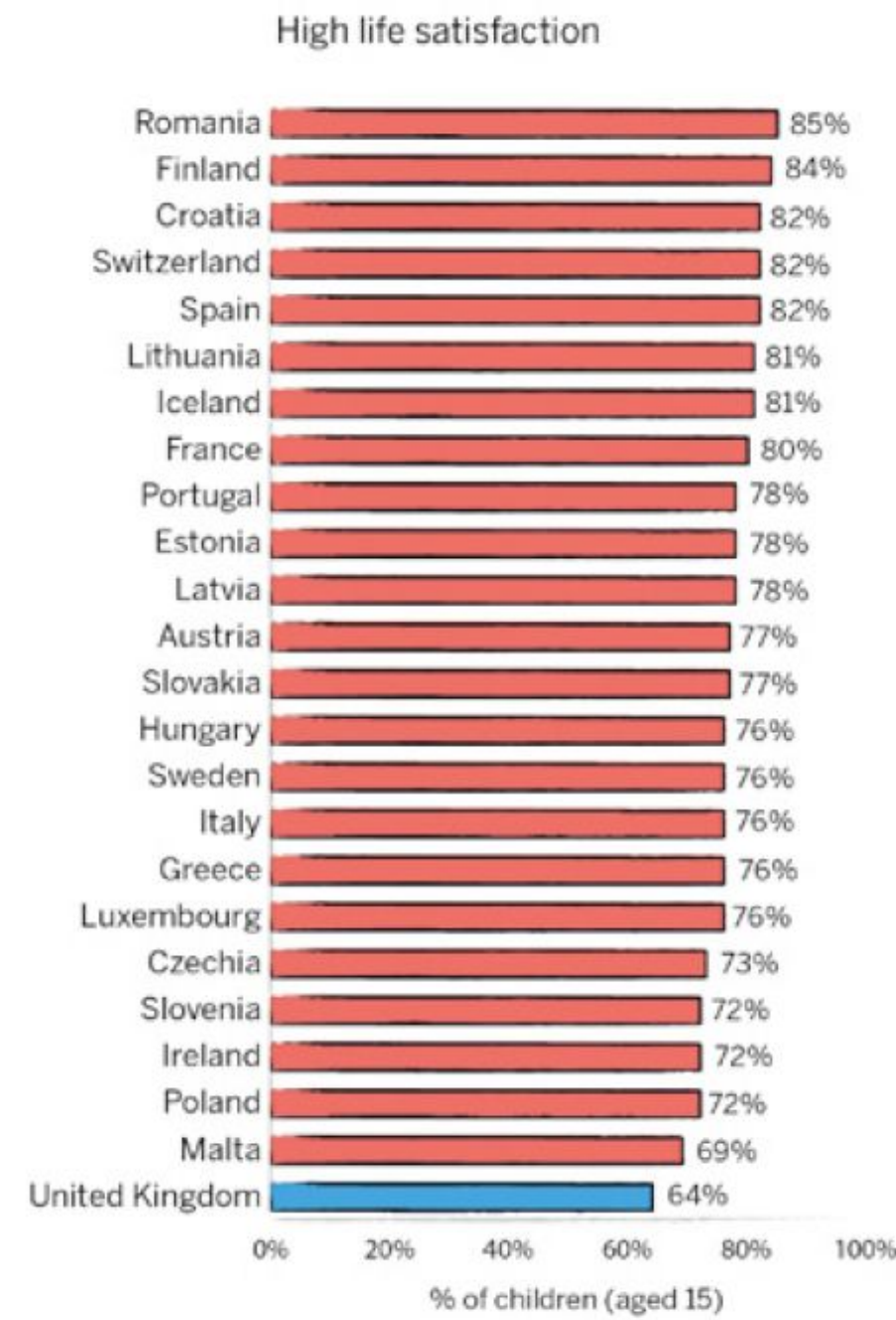
Source: PISA, 2018. Weighted data. 'High life satisfaction' is defined as a score greater than five out of 10 on a 0 to 10 scale.

Figure 10

High happiness

Country	%
Spain	96%
Ireland	96%
Portugal	96%
Switzerland	95%
Croatia	94%
Malta	94%
France	94%
Romania	94%
United Kingdom	93%
Hungary	92%
Austria	92%
Italy	92%
Luxembourg	92%
Finland	91%
Iceland	91%
Lithuania	91%
Greece	90%
Estonia	89%
Sweden	89%
Slovakia	88%
Latvia	88%
Poland	87%
Czechia	87%
Slovenia	83%

% of children (aged 15)

Source: PISA, 2018. Weighted data. 'High happiness' is defined as feeling 'always' or 'sometimes' happy.

Figure 11

Low sadness

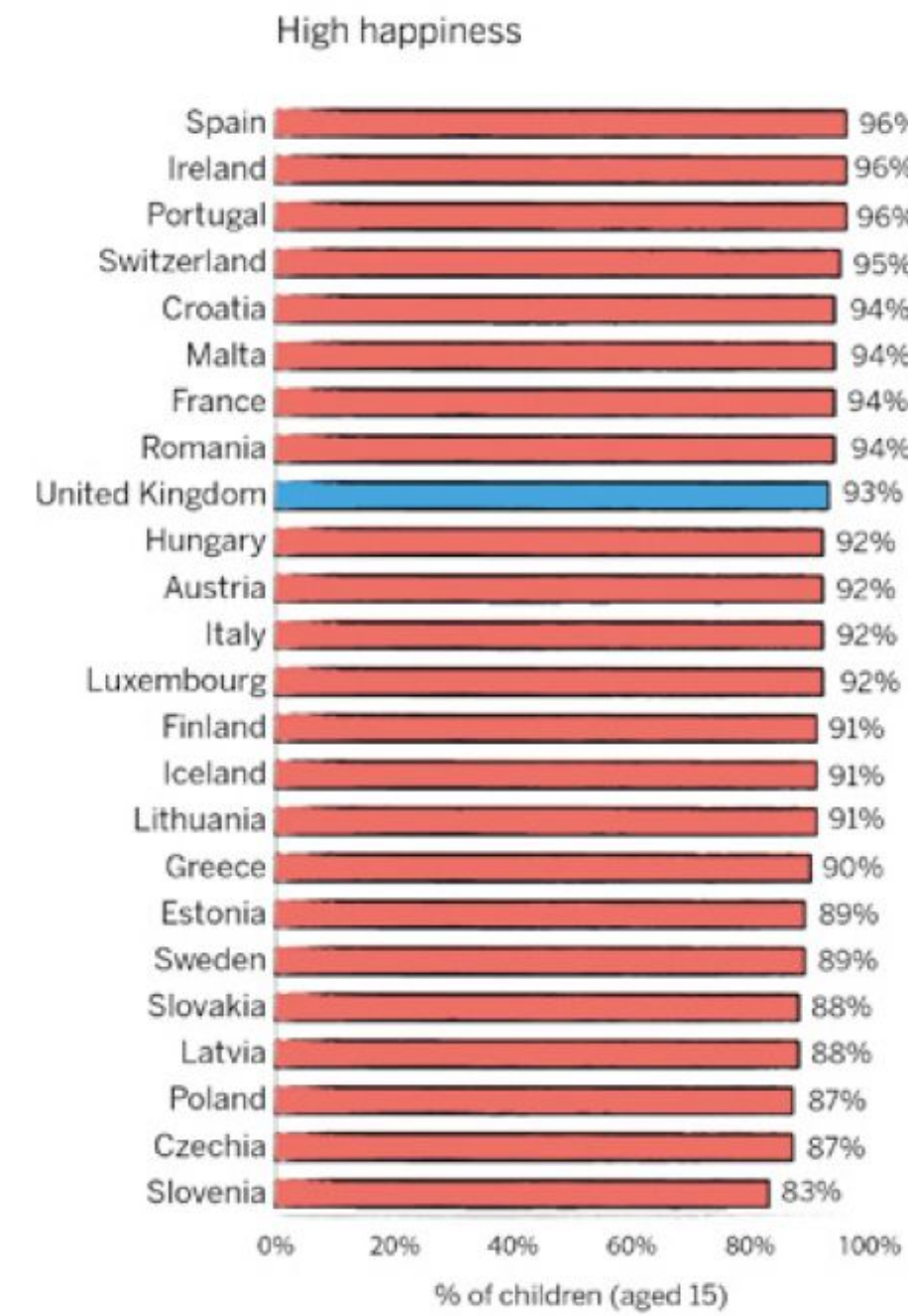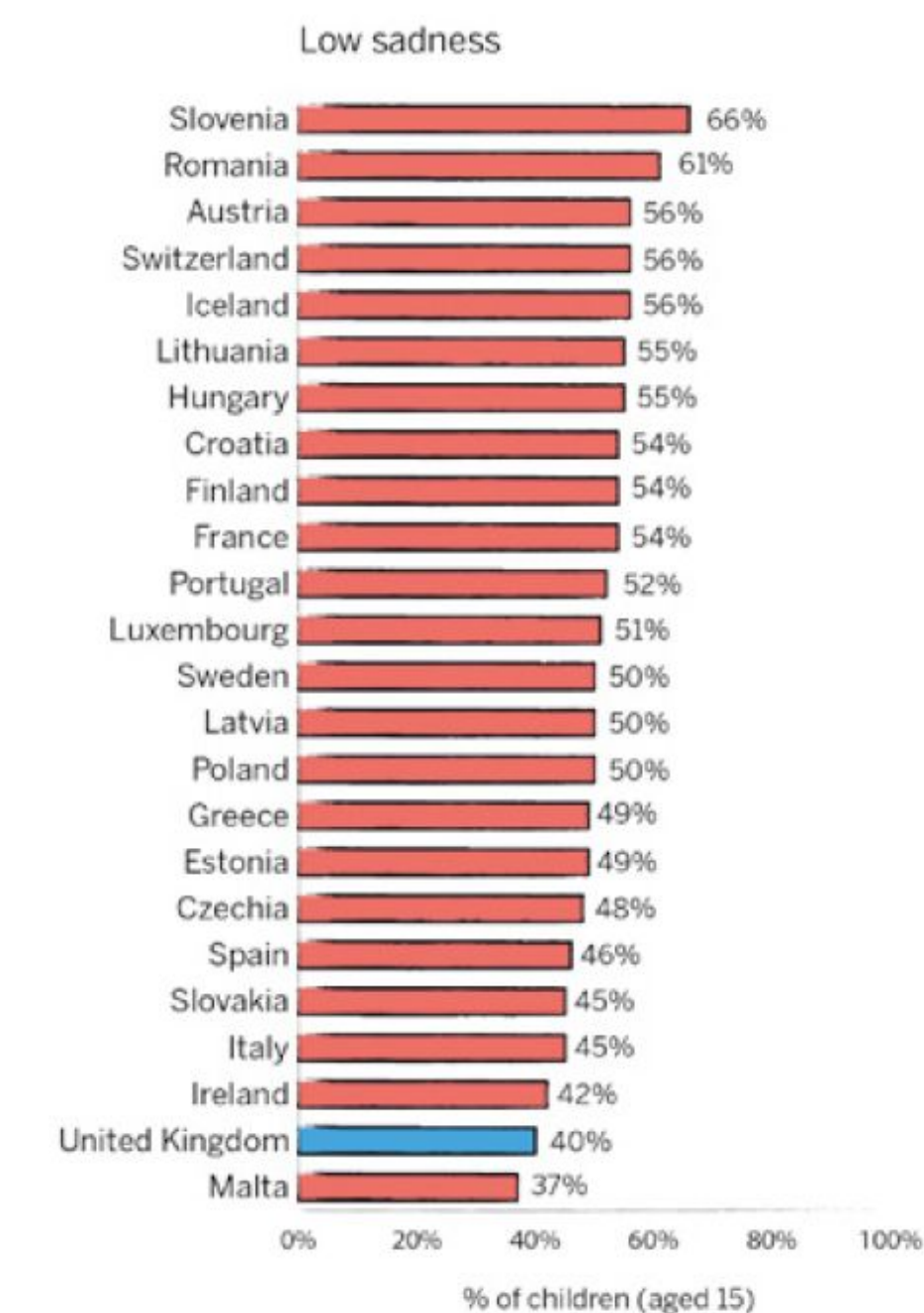| Country	%
Slovenia	66%
Romania	61%
Austria	56%
Switzerland	56%
Iceland	56%
Lithuania	55%
Hungary	55%
Croatia	54%
Finland	54%
France	54%
Portugal	52%
Luxembourg	51%
Sweden	50%
Latvia	50%
Poland	50%
Greece	49%
Estonia	49%
Czechia	48%
Spain	46%
Slovakia	45%
Italy	45%
Ireland	42%
United Kingdom	40%
Malta	37%

% of children (aged 15)

Source: PISA, 2018. Weighted data. 'Low sadness' is defined as feeling 'never' or 'rarely' sad.

Figure 12

Sense of purpose

Country	%
Romania	79%
Croatia	77%
Hungary	74%
Switzerland	73%
Lithuania	72%
France	72%
Spain	70%
Portugal	70%
Austria	69%
Slovenia	69%
Luxembourg	69%
Estonia	67%
Malta	67%
Italy	67%
Slovakia	67%
Poland	66%
Finland	66%
Iceland	65%
Latvia	64%
Greece	63%
Ireland	60%
Sweden	60%
Czechia	59%
United Kingdom	57%

% of children (aged 15)
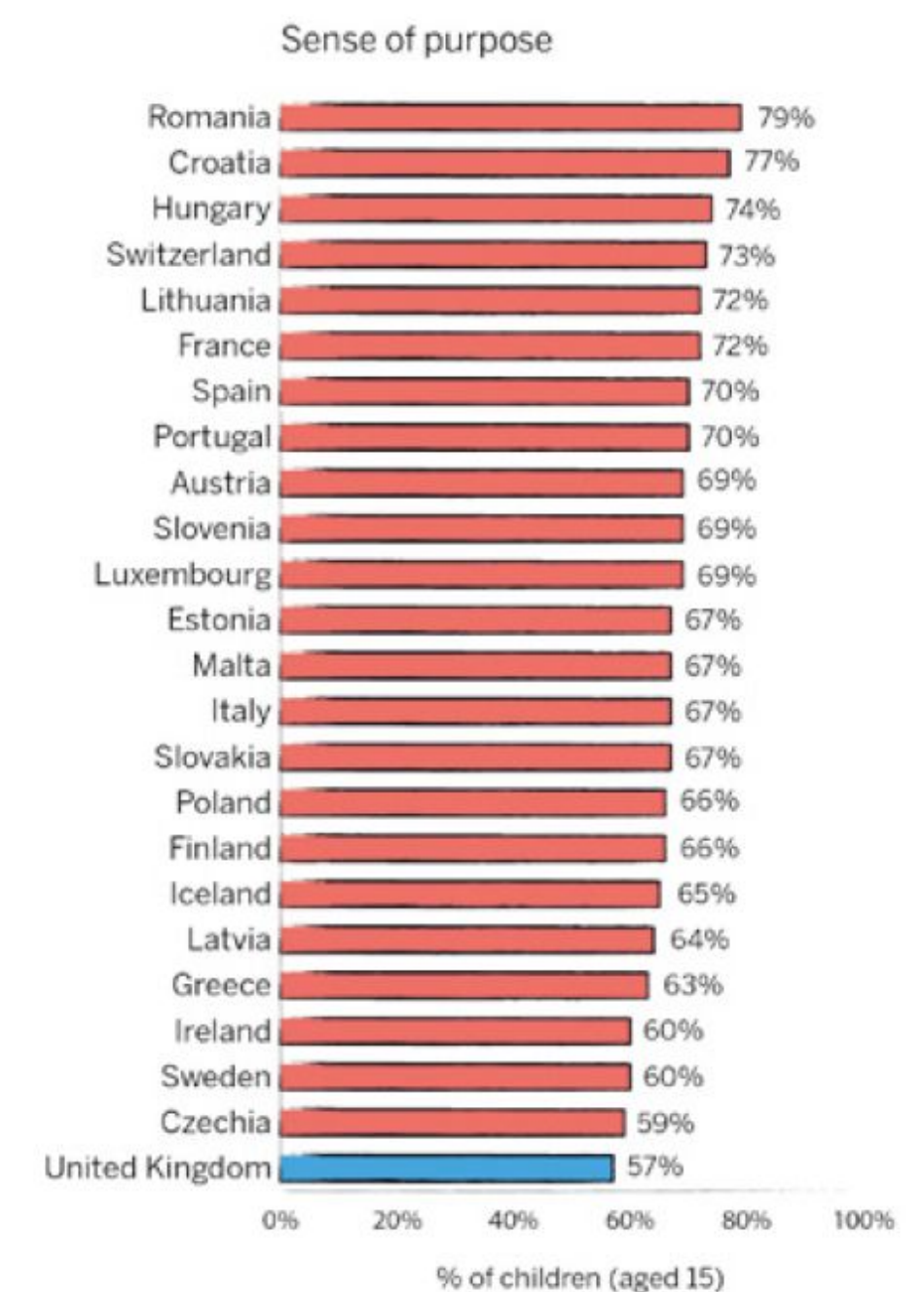
Source: PISA, 2018. Weighted data. The percentages refer to children who agreed or strongly agreed that they had a sense of purpose.

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Mean life satisfaction, 2018

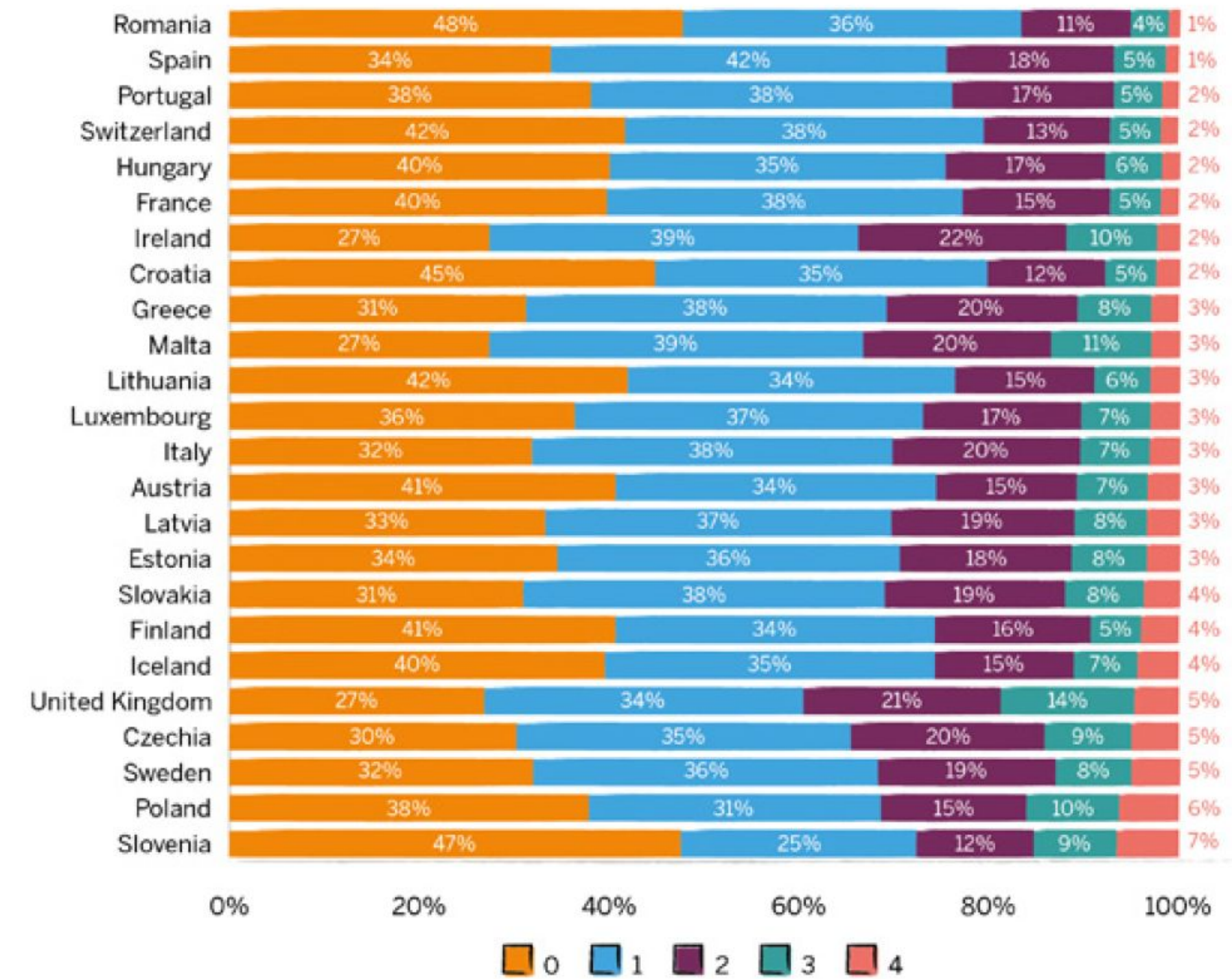| Country	Score
Romania	7.87
Croatia	7.69
Finland	7.61
Lithuania	7.61
Switzerland	7.38
Spain	7.35
Iceland	7.34
Slovakia	7.22
Estonia	7.19
France	7.19
Latvia	7.16
Austria	7.14
Portugal	7.13
Hungary	7.12
Luxembourg	7.04
Sweden	7.01
Greece	6.99
Czechia	6.91
Italy	6.91
Slovenia	6.86
Poland	6.74
Ireland	6.74
Malta	6.56
United Kingdom	6.16

Source: PISA, 2015 and 2018. Weighted data.

Figure 13: Number of measures for which children had low well-being

Country	0	1	2	3	4
Romania	48%	36%	11%	4%	1%
Spain	34%	42%	18%	5%	1%
Portugal	38%	38%	17%	5%	2%
Switzerland	42%	38%	13%	5%	2%
Hungary	40%	35%	17%	6%	2%
France	40%	38%	15%	5%	2%
Ireland	27%	39%	22%	10%	2%
Croatia	45%	35%	12%	5%	2%
Greece	31%	38%	20%	8%	3%
Malta	27%	39%	20%	11%	3%
Lithuania	42%	34%	15%	6%	3%
Luxembourg	36%	37%	17%	7%	3%
Italy	32%	38%	20%	7%	3%
Austria	41%	34%	15%	7%	3%
Latvia	33%	37%	19%	8%	3%
Estonia	34%	36%	18%	8%	3%
Slovakia	31%	38%	19%	8%	4%
Finland	41%	34%	16%	5%	4%
Iceland	40%	35%	15%	7%	4%
United Kingdom	27%	34%	21%	14%	5%
Czechia	30%	35%	20%	9%	5%
Sweden	32%	36%	19%	8%	5%
Poland	38%	31%	15%	10%	6%
Slovenia	47%	25%	12%	9%	7%

Source: PISA, 2018. Weighted data.