Inequality and the Better Life Initiative

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What makes for a good life? While the richness of human experience cannot be captured in numbers alone, it is important that the statistics shaping public policy reflect both people’s material living conditions, and the quality of their lives. One of the strengths of the Better Life Initiative is in providing a diverse range of internationally comparable statistics on well-being – from health and wealth, to jobs and housing, safety and civic engagement. Yet national averages disguise a great deal of variation in people’s experiences within OECD countries – and it is important to understand how life is going for people, not just on average, but across all groups in society. Indeed, inequality is an important feature shaping the well-being of societies, including disparities associated with age, gender, education and income. The 2017 edition of the OECD report How’s Life? highlights the many facets of inequality, showing that gaps in people’s achievements and opportunities extend right across the different dimensions of well-being.

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