

April 2022



HAPPINESS GUIDEBOOK



INTRODUCTION

In the World Happiness Report, Switzerland ranks third, while Poland is 44th. This fact aroused our interest. We wanted to learn more about happiness in the context of these two different cultures. A few weeks ago, we, the G3F class of the Kantonsschule Wohlen, started our exchange project with a group of Polish students from the Maria Konopnicka Lyceum in Radom, Poland. We travelled to Poland for a week and then back to Switzerland together with the Polish exchange students.

The World Happiness report tries to explain different levels of happiness amongst different countries with five measurable and objective indicators. We tried to understand, to what extent these criteria influence our happiness from a subjective and individual point of view. Therefore, we divided into five groups, each aiming to find out as much as possible about individual happiness, concerning their topic.

GENEROSITY

The Generosity group investigated how generosity affects the own sense of happiness. This topic was brought into the context of war refugees, which is a very current topic. Is a long and healthy life enough to be happy?

HAPPINESS AND HEALTHY LIFE EXPECTANCY

The Group Happiness and healthy life expectancy dealt with this question. They found interesting differences between Polish and Swiss people. Poland has a dark past with oppression and war. These situations prevented the people from being able to make their decisions freely.

HAPPY TO MAKE LIFE CHOICES

In the chapter Happy to make life choices, the responsible group examines the question of how important free decision making is.

MONEY IS NOT EVERYTHING

Many people would say that money makes you happy. But is it really money that makes us happy or just the things we can afford with it? The group Money is not everything tried to answer this question.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

How much do our social contacts influence our well-being? And how easy is it for us to make new contacts? In the chapter on Social support, the group links the importance of friends and families with happiness. They found differences between Switzerland and Poland.

In our happiness research we conducted surveys and planned many activities to find answers to these questions. We focused primarily on the viewpoint of young people, as we have better access to them. We also interviewed many strangers on our trips, which gave us a greater variety of responses. In this happiness guidebook, our results of the happiness research as well as experiences from our journey are written down. At the end you will find some tips on how you could get a little closer to your individual happiness.

GENEROSITY

Generosity is not only shown through money or material goods, but also through the time we devote to the ones in need. Tragic situations force people to be generous. We are witnessing a war between Ukraine and Russia. The media shows a terrifying reality – this arouses our emotions. There are a lot of possibilities to help, for example fundraising and volunteering. We wanted to help too, that is why we collected money and bought food for the Ukrainian refugees. Back in Switzerland, we made a call for donations in our school. The tinned food, diapers and dressing materials were transported back to Poland with the bus that brought us here.

In our online survey we asked 99 people from Poland and Switzerland if they had ever done a generous act. 62 people answered yes. The part we wanted to focus on next was what kind of generous act most of them did. Two out of three said that they show generosity in a material way: Donating money, clothes or other things. Only 20 people show generosity in a non-material way. Money and other material things are an important part of showing generosity but do not forget about time and kindness, which can also help people in need. The first step to be generous and happy is to get rid of a selfish lifestyle.

„It's not me, it's we.“

On one day during our exchange project, we went on a trip to the Rheinfall. At the Rheinfall we hiked and climbed in an adventure park. We hiked to the castle Laufen, where we did an experiment: Sweets were shared, but not equally. Some students got four candies, the others less and some people none. Then we asked, if the students are okay with the division. The result was that the students with more sweets were unhappier with the situation than the others. After the day we asked the students, how they feel after the adventure park. This is seen in the word cloud. Overall, the people were excited and happy after the day.

Bringing the donations to the refugee center



The donations for the Ukrainian refugees at the Kantonsschule Wohlen



exhilarated
 beautiful
 wonderful
 free full of adrenaline
 scary
 wild
 bravery
 exhausted
 awake
 fine
 pleased
 relaxed
 proud
 satisfied
 relieved
 amused
excited
happy
tired



Word cloud on how the adventure park made us feel

HAPPINESS AND HEALTH

We think that everyone has their different ways to increase their life expectancy. For some people happiness means swimming, walking, drinking coffee, spending time and laughing with family and friends. Long walks in the fresh air and good food also have a positive impact on our feeling of happiness. One day during the visit in Switzerland we went hiking on the Rigi and enjoyed the beautiful weather and the view. We laughed and had a lot of fun. Important for our wellbeing is enough sleep and time to rest and calm down. It's important to find a good balance in life. Pure happiness is something that we'll probably never achieve in life, but it's worth devoting our whole life searching for it. That's what we tried in our exchange.

**“Opening your mind to
travel is healthy”**

*A quote from a person we interviewed
in Switzerland, Rheinfell SH.*



HY LIFE EXPECTANCY



Comparison of the happiness level Rigi/Lucerne
 The people on the left side were happier while being in Lucerne, whilst the people on the right side were happier on Rigi. Almost all the people on the left side where from Poland, whilst the people on the right side were a mix of Swiss and Polish people.



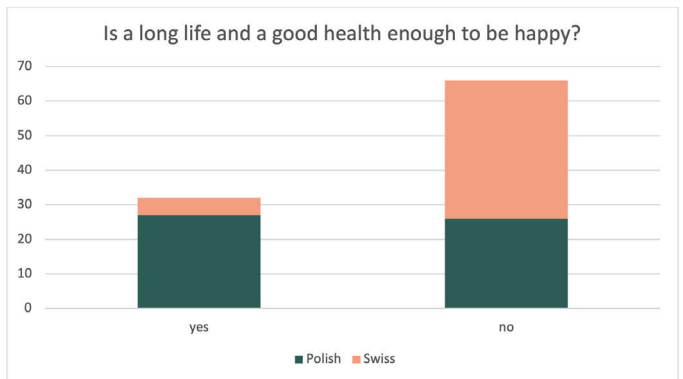
Krakow, Poland.



Radom, Poland.
 II LO im Marii Konopnickiej w Radomiu, Poland
 Food makes us happy.



In this graphic you can see that almost all Swiss people aren't satisfied with only being healthy and having a good life, whilst for Polish people 50% thought that it would be more than enough to be happy. We think that Swiss people have a higher standard of happiness and that their definition of happiness differs from that of Polish people.



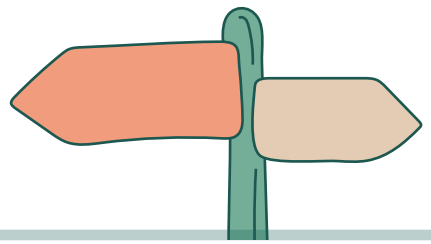
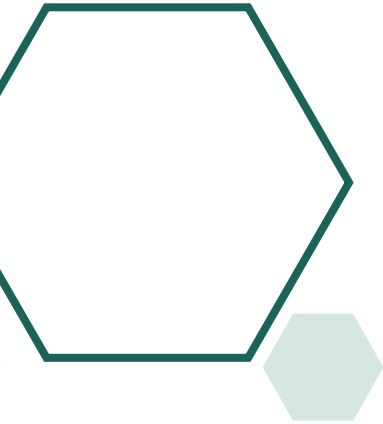
HAPPINESS TO MAKE LIFE CHOICES

During our exchange project, we realized that in the past, Poland experienced numerous situations when people could not make free decisions in their life. Poland went through many wars and suppression, which is reflected in all the statues and monuments. As example the Kosciuszko-mountain that was built in honor of the national hero, Kosciuszko. On our trip to Warsaw, we saw the monuments which were reminders of all the Polish people who fought for freedom. Also, one of most horrible things in world history took place in Poland, the Holocaust. It is important to never forget this time of human history, this is also the reason why we visited Auschwitz. A lot of tragic things happened in Poland and people could never make decisions about their life. They were put in these situations and had to fight hard to get out of them. In comparison, Switzerland has had a peaceful past and most of the time Swiss people have the freedom to make their own decisions.

When we visited Zurich during our exchange project, we offered the group different options of activities. They had the freedom to decide for themselves, what they wanted to do. Afterwards we asked whether they were satisfied with their choice. The result can be seen in the picture.

In our interviews and surveys, we realized that significantly more Polish than Swiss people tend to think that they are not able to make independent decisions in their life.





Further we asked the group how happy they were to make their own decisions on a scale from 1 to 10. They arranged in a row according to the scale and we took a picture. Furthermore, our observation from the surveys were that making free decisions has a bigger influence on Swiss than Polish peoples' level of happiness.



Summing up, we can say that it is important for human beings to make their own decisions and build their own opinions. However, we could also see that one can be happy despite living in a country in which one was not able to make free decisions. Happiness is very individual, and you can be happy if you have the freedom to live yourself up.

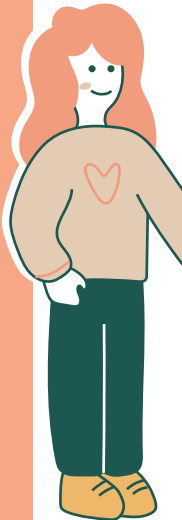
MONEY IS NOT EVERYTHING

Money is a fragile topic everywhere and most of the time people do not like to talk about it.

But how important is money for our own happiness? We asked ourselves this question and figured out that money itself does not bring happiness, it is rather that the things you can do with money that make you happy. A perfect example of that is our exchange project. Movetia provided us with a generous amount of financial support that enabled us to have the exchange project we had. We could afford hotels to stay in and restaurant visits.

We also asked many people during our exchange project what they would do if they had one million francs. They gave us answers like travelling, buy a house, do something with family or friends.

Another question we asked strangers was how strongly their financial situation does influence their wellbeing. As it can be seen in the diagram, people in Poland are more influenced than people in Switzerland. We thought that this could be a reason why Switzerland is further ahead as Poland in the World Happiness Report. We also asked them the following question: „Do you rather have a boring and mentally tiring job, but earn tons of money, or a job you enjoy a lot, but with a small salary? The data showed a similar picture as before: Swiss people tend to prioritize a job they like over a good salary more often than Polish people. We suggest that Swiss people on average are less often in financial troubles, positively affecting their level of Happiness.



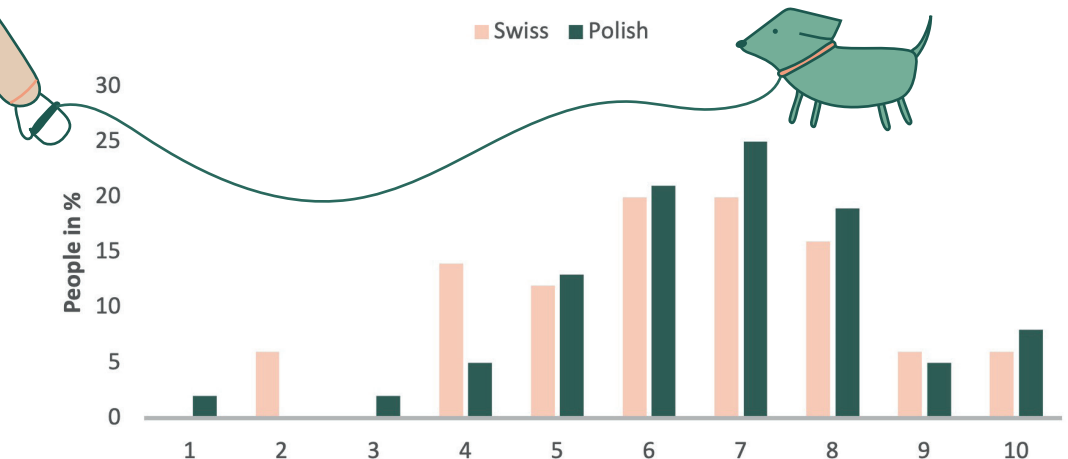
Concluding, money can be important to facilitate happiness. It is important to have good times with family and friends and to do things that make you happy, instead of just earning money, that you are never able to spend.

“You aren’t wealthy until you have something money can’t buy”

- Garth Brooks -

Because of the generous financial support from Movetia, we could afford to go out to eat in a restaurant.

HOW STRONGLY DOES YOUR FINANCIAL SITUATION INFLUENCE YOUR WELL-BEING ON A SCALE FROM 1 TO 10?

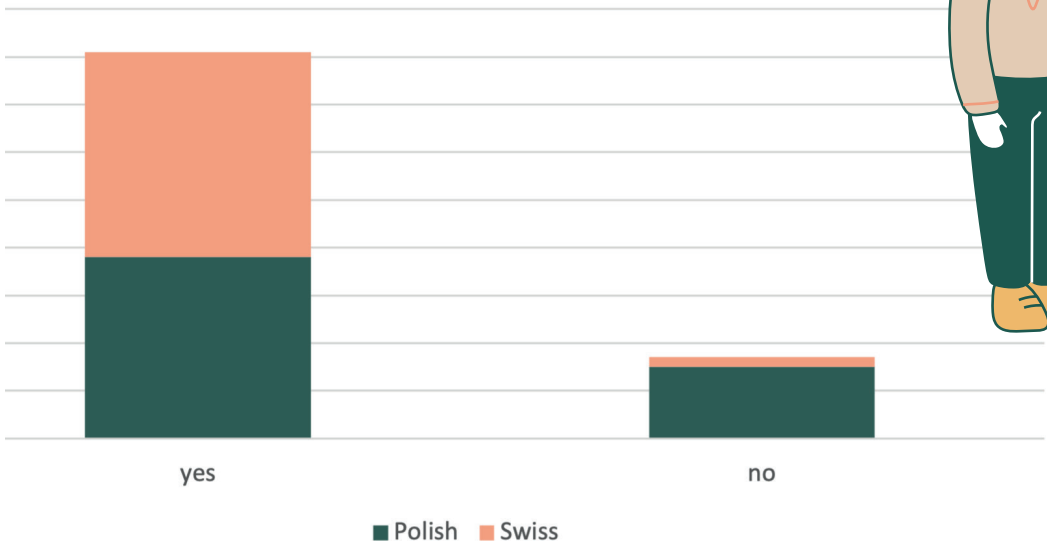


SOCIAL SUPPORT

Social support is important to be happy. It includes the warmth we receive from friends, family, and pets. A lot of people have the opinion that there are many chances to meet other people in Poland and Switzerland. During our exchange we made the same experience. We encountered so many new people and for some of us talking to those people gave us energy. We were very tired, but we still talked to others enthusiastically.

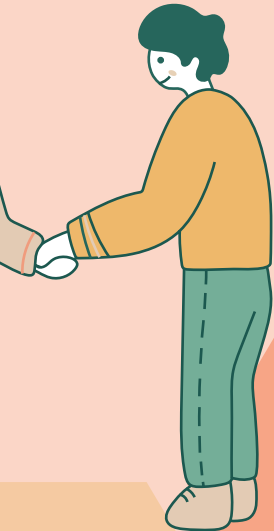
In our survey, we asked people “Do you have the feeling that in Switzerland/Poland there are many opportunities to have social contact?” The results showed that Polish people have more trouble making social contacts, as it can be seen in the graphic below. It shows us that there are more possibilities of making social contacts for the Swiss people. This fact could possibly be linked to the level of Happiness of Swiss people compared to Polish people.

Possibility of Social Contacts



In general, being with other people makes us feel comforted, supported, and understood. Social support gives us a sense of security and the capacity to trust others. When we are feeling down, we can rely on others. Even little compliments can make us happy.

We could see that in the result of our Happiness Experiment. We organized a competition of small challenges, some requiring a high amount of team effort, others less. After the challenges, we asked the groups, form a scale of 1 to 10, how important teamwork was. For the majority, teamwork is very important. But social support doesn't always involve other people. We discovered that you can be your own social support by making decisions that make you feel good.



HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO FOLLOW TO ACHIEVE HAPPINESS!

“Generosity can be shown in many ways. Be generous in the way you are able to. This can be in a material or non-material way.”

- generosity -

“Surround yourself with people, who you can rely on, but don't forget, you yourself are also someone to trust.”

- social support -



“Sharing moments with your family and friends can make you happy, but money can help to make these moments even more unforgettable.”

- money is not everything -

“Surround yourself with people who encourage you to make your own choices”

- freedom to make life choices -

“A good health is needed to be happy. Therefore, we advise to be in the fresh air as often as possible and to exercise several times. Do things with your family & friends and enjoy every single moment.”

- healthy life -

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Corina Willi, Alexandra Gisi

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