

Notes to accompany Indicators of Child Well-being data set

These data sets offer the opportunity to look at trends on a number of important indicators of individual and social well-being. The gaps reflect lack of availability – governments do not always collect, or submit, the same data to central agencies. Sources for data are provided as footnotes to each of the data sets, and can be found in major university libraries.

The main data set (Child Indicators) allows students to compare how countries differ from each other in a given year, and whether the same countries stay the “best” or the “worst”. Questions for discussion include:

- Is there general convergence between countries?
- Are some indicators more stable than others? (And how do you decide? Do you use raw changes? Or should you standardise in some way?)
- Some results seem counter-intuitive. (See e.g. Denmark’s enrolment rates.) How might you respond to data that seem odd?
- Do some countries stand out as apparently different from the norm?
- Do some indicators seem to be related to each other?

The smaller data sets provide fuller statistics for a subset of indicators, and can be worked on separately.

These are useful measures in terms of which to discuss possible difficulties of data collection; the effects of changing definitions on results; and the pitfalls of comparisons across time and between countries where there may be differences in both definitions and efficiency of data collection.

A final and more technical discussion point:

- The EU weighted average is given for selected years/indicators. Why would we use a weighted rather than a “raw” country average? Is it necessarily/always the best choice?

Photo-copiable

