

# HOW HAPPY ARE WE?



A century ago, asking people to express the level of their happiness and satisfaction with their lives would seem like a lunatic idea. With a slight shift in attitude and approach, for nearly thirty years, an ongoing research has been conducted by the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research. The aim of this project is to 'measure' - if possible at all - the level of happiness of each country.

Nearly a hundred countries are subject to observation and recently, the most up-to-date results were officially announced. Participants were asked to answer just two simple questions: 1. Taking all things together, would you say you are very happy, rather happy, not very happy, or not at all happy? 2. All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?

The results reveal several interesting facts. Countries, which rated as the happiest, include **Denmark**, Puerto Rico, Columbia, Iceland, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Switzerland, Canada, etc. On the contrary, Zimbabwe, Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine, Albania, Iraq, and Russia are listed as homes to the most dissatisfied nations.

There are several aspects which affect the feeling of happiness. The research suggests that democratic countries offer a 'friendlier' environment to their inhabitants compared to countries under authoritarian rule. The old saying "money can't buy you happiness" was also proven wrong: prospering nations ranked higher than countries where poverty prevails. Also, the level of tolerance is a relevant indicator of a nation's content with their lives.

To conclude, the research has proved an increasing trend where overall, we are getting happier compared to previous statistics. Also, the happiest are those nations which have free choice as to how they wish to live their lives.

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