Spiritual State of the World's Children

Armenia

Spiritual State of the World's Children
A Quantitative Study

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR MINISTRY

Armenia

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ONEHOPE

OneHope is a non-profit organization with a mission to *affect destiny by providing God's eternal Word to all the children and youth of the world.* With programs in over 125 nations OneHope has reached over 500 million children and young people with a special presentation of the life of Jesus. Committed to presenting God's Word in a format that is relevant and dynamic, research is a critical step in the development of country and age specific products and programs.

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Section I: Key Issues Analysis

Key Issues

- Family composition
  - 97% - two parent family
  - 3% - live with mother or stepmother only

- Perception of Family
  - Definition of family
    - 57% define family as any person or group whom you love or care about deeply
    - 29 % define family as those related by birth, adoption or marriage
    - 14 % define family as any group of people who shares the same set of values and goals in the life
  - Function of family
    - Place for children –
      - 38 % consider an unmarried man and woman with children a family
      - 13% consider a single woman with children a family
    - Relationship –
      - 11% consider an unmarried man and woman a family
      - 0% consider homosexual women a family
      - 0% consider homosexual men a family

- Relationship with parents
  - 28% spend less than 15 minutes a week talking with their father about things that really matter
  - 55% spend more than 60 minutes a week talking with their father about things that really matter
  - 17% spend less than 15 minutes a week talking with their mother about things that really matter
  - 65% spend more than 60 minutes a week talking with their mothers about things that really matter

- Safety and Security of home
  - 85% feel their home is a place where they feel safe and loved
  - 2% are uncomfortable and rather be elsewhere

- Marriage
  - 93% believe God intended marriage to last a life time
  - 85% feel that they will be happy in their marriage
  - 36% approve of divorce even when children are involved
  - 32% feel the traditional family does not play a significant role in the stability of society
  - 27% admire single life
  - 21% report there is too much pressure to get married, would rather live together
  - 18% indicate that anyone who gets married should anticipate divorce

- Sexuality
  - Most likely to learn about sex from TV/movies, classmates/friends, and the internet
  - They are least likely to learn about sex from their parents

- Satisfaction with life
  - 26% of respondents indicate they are very satisfied and 45% somewhat satisfied with their lives
  - 17% are somewhat or 12% very dissatisfied with their lives
  - Over the past three months –
    - 71% admit having lied to their peers
    - 46% admit to watching a pornographic movie and 33% reading a pornographic magazine
    - 45% indicate they have lied to an adult
    - 29% report drinking enough to be legally drunk
    - 20% report watching MTV
    - 8% have had suicidal thoughts
    - 9% attempted suicide

- Influences (cited as having *a lot* of influence over thoughts and actions)
  - 83% Parents
  - 74% Siblings
  - 73% Friends
  - 67 % Music

- Moral behavior
  - 98% feel lying is sometimes a necessity
  - 91% feel bending the rules is okay
  - 88% feel truth to mean different things to different people
  - 86% feel that breaking the law is okay if it does not hurt anyone
  - 82% feel that the Bible/Koran does not provide practical standards for today
  - 69% are pragmatic indicating in several ways that moral behavior is relative and justified by whether or not it "works"

- Factors providing future satisfaction (cited as having *a lot* of importance)
  - 98% having a high paying job
  - 98% having a comfortable lifestyle
  - 97% being in good physical health
  - 97% having a clear purpose for life
  - 96% having one marriage partner for life
  - 96% living close to family/relatives

- Religious Practice
  - 45% religion is somewhat or 7% religion very important to them
  - 23% report weekly or daily prayer
  - 5% report weekly or daily scripture reading, including the Bible or Koran
  - 3% participate in weekly or daily religious services
  - 0% participate in weekly or daily youth or scripture study group

- Christian Theology
  - 95% believe people who do not accept Jesus Christ as their savior can still go to heaven
  - 90% believe if a person is generally good, or does enough good things for others during their life, they will earn a place in Heaven
  - 88% find the Holy Spirit a symbol of God's presence or power, but not a living entity and 82% the devil a symbol of evil

- 69% believe what they do for others is more important than what they believe about Jesus Christ
- 68% have heard about Jesus and the Bible from Churches
- 62% do not know what happens after death
- 58% believe Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, Jews, and all other people pray to the same God
- 56% find the idea of sin is outdated
- 35% find the Christian faith relevant to the way they live
- 17% believe forgiveness of sins is through Jesus Christ

Strengths & Opportunities

- Strong family structure
- High regard for family
- Believe marriage is intended to last for a life time
- Half see religion as important to them
- Value community action and serving others

Weaknesses & Threats

- Moral code based on pragmatism
- Low regard for the unique value of any particular religion
- Infrequent attendance at religious services
- Half see religion as unimportant
- Negligible personal commitment to Christ

Recommendations

- Forthcoming from Strategic Planning Session with OneHope staff

Section II: Project Description

Acknowledgments

This project was made possible in part by funding from the Maclellan Foundation and Global Ministries - OneHope.

We acknowledge the cooperation of the Association of School Directors of Armenia, the headmasters and staff of the schools included in the sample, students, volunteers, and the OneHope-Armenia Staff.

The Attitudes & Behaviors of Youth (ABY) instrument administered in this study was made available by Josh McDowell Ministries.

Overview

OneHope seeks to understand what children and youth deal with in their day-to-day realities. We know that children and youth face a variety of social challenges and experience psycho-social needs to which they are often left without effective responses. We do know that the needs of children vary from country to country and even regionally within countries. However, without reliable information we are unable to tailor our products and distribution programs to address needs specific to particular contexts.

While the issues and challenges facing children and youth in developed countries are researched and documented, those in developing countries are not. Without an accurate analysis of their contexts these populations are treated as though they share a common reality. An awareness of the immediate reality of children is often discovered only after ministry has begun and resources have been committed to a project.

The Spiritual State of the World's Children (SSWC) project will capture the following information about children in Armenia:

- Typical family situations, relationships and parental contact
- Behaviors and moral values
- Daily occupations and pastimes
- Worldviews, influences, beliefs, future goals, and religious affiliation
- Theological perspectives and commitment

Research Methodology

The Spiritual State of the World's Children project utilizes the ABY survey, which is a stratified random survey of secondary school children. The survey was stratified by degree of urbanization and gender for Armenia. Additional strata that permit analysis are: family composition, ethnicity, and religious affiliation.

The core survey was constructed using the Survey of Juveniles designed by Chris Sleath of Josh McDowell Ministries. The survey was administered in secondary schools across Armenian. Surveys were administered in randomly selected accessible[1] schools segregated by population density (proportional to national population distribution of urban-rural residents where possible) to students in the schools randomized by gender (proportional to the national ratio of male-female).

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[1] Schools considered inaccessible are those that are in conflict zones, those in areas of extremely low population, those who denied research in their school, or those that cannot be reached by public transportation.

Project Overview

The time frame for data collection was March 2008 through May2008; subsequent data collection took place September 2008. Karen Khachatryan served as the local Research Coordinator for the Armenia research project. Oversight was provided by Mindy Chandler and Dr. Allen Reesor of Pompano Beach, Florida. The research followed project design instructions (see below under Logistics). Note: Except for one high school, questions related to sexual attitudes and behavior were not permitted in schools.

Data was entered into a web-based database, which was hosted by Philip Issa of Elite Research. The final report includes Metadigm's analysis of the data, which has been reviewed by Rene Paulson, PhD. Secondary data is provided when applicable. This report is available for use by partners supporting the utilization of collaborative research in conducting ministry to children and youth.

The final report will be made available to ministry partners who promote ministry to children and youth through collaborative research.

Logistics

Review

National leaders reviewed the survey and recommended minor edits.

Randomization

Reliability of the survey results depends upon consistent randomization of the participants. Two strata of randomization that govern participant selection employed in this project were gender and population density distributions.

Karen Khachatryan provided a list of schools segregated by population density. Population density was interpreted as urban, semi-urban, or rural. Additionally, the study population was further segregated into one of three classes: less than one hundred thousand, between one hundred thousand and one million, or more than one million. This list was used to select randomly identified schools at Metadigm Group Headquarters. The list of randomized schools was returned to the local Research Coordinator for review. Schools that were inaccessible (see footnote on inaccessibility above) were replaced by available schools.

To ensure that gender participation reflects the male/female ratio of the national population, where possible, randomization by gender was finalized when students were selected for participation.

Verifying Access

Research Assistants met with the administration of each school to explain the survey and obtain school consent for participation.

Survey Printing

A master copy of the survey response form was forwarded electronically to the local Research Coordinator, who was responsible for the printing of 4,500 collated and stapled copies.

Quality Control

Hard copies of the survey response form were randomly assessed to evaluate survey validity. Hard copy survey response forms will be retained by the local OneHope office in Armenia for one year to verify the accuracy of data entry if needed and as a back up to electronic data files. The surveys are kept confidential, and will be turned over to a designated OneHope Headquarters representative on or about 12 months following the close of data collection. After 12 months, a OneHope representative will oversee the destruction of all hard copy surveys.

Implementation & Survey Administration

Data Collection

The survey was administered in the schools identified by randomization and previously contacted. Permission to conduct this survey was given by the Association of School Directors of Armenia, but was limited to 10th and 11th grade students. The research agent identified the number of 10th and 11th grade classes in session at each school on the day of the survey. In cities of more than 100,000, 6-8 classes per school were selected for inclusion in the study; due to small class sizes in rural areas, 4-6 classes per school were selected across a larger number of schools. Students in both urban and rural areas were randomly selected proportional to the male/female ratio for Armenia.

Students were asked to voluntarily participate. Participants were administered the survey in groups that could be accommodated in a classroom. Approximately 2,162 students across 31 schools were surveyed.

The surveys were conducted by two people. A brief scripted introduction was read aloud and students were given the opportunity to ask questions. Administrators took turns reading each question aloud to students.

The following assisted with data collection: Robert Petrosyan, Sergey Aleksanyan, Sona Aramyan, Maryam Davtyan, Artur Hakobyan, Vahe Aleksanyan, Vahag Grigoryan, and others.

Data Entry

The local Research Coordinator was responsible for accurate input of the data into the web-based survey database. The following assisted with data entry: Sona Aramyan.

Section III: Profile of Youth in Armenia

Data Qualifications

Due to the gender distribution of the sample in which are 59% female subjects and 41% male subjects, overall analysis will be weighted toward female attitudes. Additionally, there were no subjects younger than 15 years old or older than 17 years old. Subjects younger than 16 were 15% more likely to be female; when considering younger responses, it is therefore important to remember that they are both under represented and more likely to reflect female attitudes.

After the data was cleaned, the total sample size for Armenia was 2,158.

Demographic Profile

Of the total sample, 59% were female and 41% male, these percentages held across the rural, semi-urban, and urban subjects. Fifty percent of subjects responding to this survey were 16 years old, 28% were 15 years old, and 22% were 17 years old; there were no subjects younger than 15 or older than 17. Though there were more females responding to the survey than males, males are significantly more likely to be 17 years old and females more likely to be 15-16 years old.

Sixty percent of subjects report that they are in the 10th grade and 40% in the 11th grade.   Forty-four percent of subjects report that they are doing *average* in school, 35% that they are doing *good*, and 21% report *excellent* school performance.   About half of female subjects report *average* performance and males at 28% are more likely by 13% than female subjects to report *excellent* performance. Urban subjects are more likely to report *good* performance than their peers in lower density populations.

Fathers are 37% employed in i*ndustrial* jobs, followed by 21% whose fathers are identified as *other*[2] employed (possibly indicating self employment or unemployment), and 20% in the *service industry*. Rural subjects are most likely (by about 10%) to report their fathers in the *other* category and 6% more likely to indicate that they work in the *agricultural* industry; they are least likely, however, to state that their fathers are in the *industrial* sector. Semi-urban subjects are most likely to report that their fathers are *professionals* and urban, in the *public sector*. Mothers are 25% employed in the *service industry*, 22% are reported in the *other* category (which may indicate self-employment, unemployment, or stay-at-home mothers), and 21% in the *industrial* industry. Rural subjects are most likely to report that their mothers are in the *agriculture* sector and are *other* employed; semi-urban subjects are most likely to report their mothers as working in the *industrial* and *service* sectors. As population density increases, so does the *professional* employment of mothers.

Ninety-seven percent of subjects indicate that their parents are married and the same percentage that they live with their natural parents. Two percent report that their parents are divorced or separated and 3% live with a female adult head of household. As the population density increases, there is a slight decrease in subjects reporting that their parents are married and that they live with both natural parents.

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[2] Fathers who are identified as *other* employed (and perhaps some of those from *industrial* employment*)* may include fathers working abroad mainly in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

Family Relationships

Ninety-three percent of subjects believe that God intended marriage to last a lifetime; 90% feel their family experience has been positive, 85% believe they will be happy in their own marriages, 71% desire a marriage like their parents', 68% feel the traditional family is important to societal stability, 67% believe that marriage problems have been exaggerated, and 64% disagree with divorce if children are present. Sixty percent indicate the desire to remain a virgin until marriage; just over half (52%) would regain their virginity if it were possible.

Females are less likely to be positive about marriage and significantly more likely to want to remain a virgin until marriage than male subjects. Males, on the other hand, are more likely to desire a marriage like their parents', believe they will be happy in their own marriages and to feel their family experience has been positive. Urban subjects are less positive about marriage overall. Younger subjects are more positive about marriage and hold more conservative views than older subjects.

Fifty-seven percent of subjects define family as any person or group whom you love or care about deeply; 29% hold a more traditional definition that family is all the people related by birth, adoption, or marriage. Females are significantly more likely to define family by love/care (77%) compared to males (26%), while males are far more likely to define family as those who are related or those sharing similar values/goals in life. Semi-urban subjects are most likely to define marriage by relationship, and rural subjects by love/care. Younger subjects are 12% more likely to define family by love/care and older subjects as those sharing similar goals/values.

Over one-third accept cohabiting, unmarried heterosexual couples with children as family, 13% an unmarried woman and her children as family, and 11% cohabiting (unmarried) heterosexual couples without children as family. All subjects rejected homosexual couples (gay and lesbian) and heterosexual divorced women living together as family. Half of male subjects accept unmarried couples with children as family, 22% higher than female subjects. Older subjects are more likely to accept heterosexual cohabiting couples with children and unmarried women and their children as family compared to their younger counterparts. As population density increases, so does the acceptance of unmarried heterosexual couples with children as family.

Eighty-five percent of respondents feel their home is a place where they feel save and loved; males are 22% more likely than females to feel this way. Twelve percent report that they sometimes feel loved yet at other times do not feel loved in their homes; females are far more likely (by 20%) to admit this is the case. Only 2% are uncomfortable in their homes.

Subjects report that the adults in their families set good examples (97%), spend time with them (97%), demonstrate their love for other adults in the home (90%), and express interest in the children in the home (76%). Seventy-one percent feel adults expect more of them than what is fair, but also that adults do admit when they are wrong or mistaken (57%). Females are far more likely to indicate that the adults in their family do not trust them, and are more likely to also report that the adults in their homes fight with each other and also that they admit when they are wrong or mistaken. Male subjects are far more likely to feel the adults in their family demonstrate that they love each other, and more likely to also report that they shout at them, do not allow them to do what they want to do, and expect more of them than what is fair. Older subjects are far more likely to feel the adults in their family are interested in them, and more likely to report that they shout at them, fight with each other, and are too strict; younger subjects are more likely to state that the adults expect more than what is fair, do not trust them, but demonstrate love for each other.

Over 95% of subjects report that they are very or fairly close to their fathers and mothers, with more reporting a very close relationship with mothers. Male subjects tend to be more likely to report close, rather than very close, relationships with both parents; this is particularly true of the relationships with fathers. Older subjects are more likely to report close relationships with their parents than younger subjects. Subjects interact with and feel very positively about their parents.

Nearly all report a very high level of respect for their parents: they show love for parents, feel proud of their parents, and almost never question their parents' love for them. Male and older subjects are far more likely to report more frequent and positive interactions with their fathers while female and younger subjects have closer relationships with their mothers than the older subjects.

Almost one-third of those surveyed report that they spend more than 4 hours a week with their fathers and about half spend the same amount of time with their mothers in meaningful conversation. At the same time 28% spend less than 15 minutes a week in meaningful conversation with fathers and 17% with mothers. Females are less likely than males to spend time talking to fathers and males less time with mothers in meaningful conversation. As age and population density increases, subjects spend less time with parents.

Beliefs and Perspectives on Daily Life

Twenty-six percent of subjects indicate being very and 45% somewhat satisfied with their lives, with male subjects far more likely to report higher life satisfaction. Over 95% of the subjects value a high-paying job, a comfortable lifestyle, good physical health, a clear purpose for life, one marriage partner for life, and living close to family/relatives. Females are more likely to want to influence others' lives and one marriage partner for life; males are more likely to express the desire to make a difference in the world, be active in church, live close to family/relatives, to have close personal relationships, live with integrity, have children, and own a large house. Rural subjects are most likely to desire to be active in a church and to have a close relationship with God. Younger subjects are more likely to want to be active in church, influence others, live close to family/relatives, desire fame/recognition, want a comfortable lifestyle, and have one marriage partner for life; older subjects are far more likely to desire living with a high degree of integrity than older counterparts.

In a typical week, subjects spend most of their free time watching TV, followed by studying for school, listening to music, and reading a book. Electronic media (MP3, cell phone, laptops) and fashion magazines are influential media. Life influences reported in descending order are parents, siblings, friends, and music. As it relates to life influences and how they most likely learned about sex, subjects are most likely to learn from TV/movies, followed by their classmates/friends and the internet; they are least likely to learn about sex from their parents.

Females are far more likely to read a book, listen to music, and watch television; they are also more likely to cite their teachers, music, siblings, parents, and other religious faiths. Male subjects are more likely to access internet, SMS chat, sleep, and also report greater influence of friends, internet information, and Hinduism than female subjects. Urban subjects are least likely to report religious leaders in their community as prominent influences, and rural subjects are most likely to cite the Bible and the Christian faith as important in their lives. Younger subjects are more likely to report community religious leaders, textbooks, other religious faiths, teachers, movies, and Christianity as significant influences in their lives than older subjects, who are more likely to cite siblings and friends as important in influencing their thoughts and actions.

Eighty-two percent of subjects do not feel scripture provides practical standards for living and only 15% believe the Bible provides absolute truth for all people. They have a very pragmatic approach to morality: 98% report that lying is sometimes necessary, 91% feel that rule-bending is necessary to get by these days, 88% find truth to mean different things to different people, 86% believe law-breaking is permissible so long as it does not hurt anyone, and 69% find something ethical or morally right if it works in life. This is reflected in their reported behaviors over the last three months: 71% of subjects report having lied to their friends/peers, 46% watched pornography, 45% cheated, 45% lied to an adult, and 40% smoked a tobacco product. Nine percent have attempted suicide or had suicidal thoughts in the past three months. Males are significantly more likely than females to watch/read pornography, use illegal drugs, cheat, lie, get drunk, intentionally hurt someone either physically, gamble, and smoke. However, females are significantly more likely to hurt someone emotionally, and far more likely to steal and attempt suicide (and also more likely to have suicidal thoughts). Rural subjects are most likely to attempt suicide or have suicidal thoughts, smoke, and gamble. Urban subjects are most likely to weekly watch MTV. Older subjects are significantly more likely to smoke and far more likely to read pornography, attempt suicide, and use illegal drugs; they are also more likely to watch pornographic movies, steal, lie to their friends, and get drunk.

Religious Background and Practice

Eighty-percent of subjects report that they are of the Armenian Church, 18% practice their own personal faith, and 2% profess no faith at all. Only 7% reports that their faith is very important to them and 45% that it is somewhat important, and 8% can recall a time when their religious beliefs actually changed the way they behaved. After they have left school or moved away from home, 82% indicate that they are not too likely or not at all likely to attend religious services. Females and rural subjects are more likely than their male and semi-urban/urban counterparts to indicate continued participation in religious activities.

Subjects are most likely to have heard about the Bible or Jesus at 68% from Churches, then 64% from textbooks, and 46% family/relatives; they have heard the least about the Bible or Jesus from missionaries (2%). Rural subjects are most likely to have heard from Churches (by more than 30%) and family/relatives (by more than 15%) than urban students. Younger subjects are more likely to have heard about the Bible or Jesus from Churches, textbooks, and family/friends; older subjects are 10% more likely to have heard through friends.

Although 91% of subjects acknowledge that Jesus Christ was a real person and 71% that he was virgin-born, 69% feel that what they believe about Jesus is not as important as what they do for others. Similarly, about 60% believe that God is the omniscient, omnipotent Creator and created the universe, yet 26% do not know what they believe about God and 53% feel that God is no longer involved in people's lives. Eighty-eight percent of subjects believe that the Holy Spirit is simply a symbol of God's presence or power, but not a living entity; correspondingly, 82% believe that the devil is simply a symbol of evil, but not a living being. Sixty-nine percent of subjects acknowledge the existence of angels and their influence in people's lives. Only half believe that Jesus actually returned to life after being crucified, and merely 17% believe that forgiveness of sins is possible only through faith in Jesus Christ and 18% believe that people who do not consciously accept Jesus as their Savior will go to Hell.

Only 5% believe that confession of sins and faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to gain access into Heaven and 62% are uncertain of what happens after death. However, 90% believe that if people are good, they will earn a place in heaven, 69% that what they do for others is more important than what they believe about Jesus Christ, 15% believe that people go to Heaven after death because God loves them, 8% that people will go to Heaven because you were a good person, and 7% that people cease to exist after death. Generally, female, urban and older subjects are more likely to be ambivalent and inconsistent in their beliefs about God and moral values than their counterparts.

This uncertainty of religious values is consistent with low incidence of the practice of religious disciplines and commitment; 23% reports weekly or daily prayer, and only 5% weekly or daily Scripture reading. They also report a low commitment to religious service attendance with only 3% reporting weekly attendance; similar attendance is reported for both parents and siblings. Forty-four percent of subjects indicate that their mothers and siblings *sometimes* attend religious services. Ninety-six percent of subjects indicate that they do not attend religious youth services and of the 3% who do, nearly all attend religious youth group meetings of over 60 people.

More than 90% indicate that they have not made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important to their lives today. Of those who have, 45% indicate having made the commitment to Jesus Christ between the ages of 5-8, 28% less than 5 years of age, and 21% between 9-12 years.

Section IV: Armenia Secondary Data

Secondary Research Profile
ARMENIA

DEMOGRAPHICS & POPULATION	
Population	3,237,660
Population (under 15 yrs)	21.6%
Life Expectancy	61 yrs
Birth Rate (per 1,000 people)	11.7
Infant Mortality (per 1,000 live births)	23.28
Estimated Urban / Rural Population	1,950,000.00 / 1,093,000.00
Largest City / Population	Yerevan / 1,195,519
EDUCATION & LITERACY	
Literacy Rate (over 15 yrs)	98.6%
Primary Completion rate (% of relevant age group)	90.69%
Literacy Rate – Males	99.4%
Literacy Rate – Females	98%
ECONOMICS	
GDP (PPP) Per Capita (2008)	$6,600 USD
GDP (official exchange rate) Billions of USD (2008)	$12.07
Poverty Rate (% below poverty line)	50.9%

SOCIAL			
Human Development Index[3] (out of 177)	83	Prisoners (per capita)	92/100,000
Divorce Rate *as percent of Marriages*	Not Available	Estimated % ages 15-49 living with HIV	29/100,000
Unemployment Rate	7.1%	All registered NGOs	5,000 +
Murder Rate (per capita)	0.0425746 /1000	Teen Pregnancy (15-19 yrs) Birth Rate	56.2/1,000
Rape Rate (per capita)	0.0093865/1000	Theft Rate (per capita)	0.054307/1000

ETHNIC GROUPS & RELIGIONS			
Armenian	93%	Armenian Orthodox	94%
Azeri	3%	Other Christians	4%
Russian	2%	Yezidi (Zoroastrian/animist)	2%
Yezidi Kurds	2%		

LANGUAGES	
Armenian (official), Russian, Azerbaijani, Ukrainian, Greek, Georgia, Karachay-Balkar, Kurmanji (Northern Kurdish); records also indicate evidences of Assyrian Neo-Aramaic	

This data is drawn from CountryWatch.com, World Health Organization, and public domain data. Statistics are generally from 2005 but may be earlier if none more recent are available.

[3] Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite index that measures the level of well-being in 177 nations in the world. It uses factors such as poverty, literacy, life expectancy, education, gross domestic product, and purchasing power parity to assess the average achievements in each nation. It has been used in the UN's Human Development Report since 1993.