

Japan

Japan performs favourably in several measures of well-being, and ranks close to the average or higher in several topics in the Better Life Index.

Money, while it cannot buy happiness, is an important means to achieving higher living standards. In Japan, the average household earned 23 210 USD in 2008, more than the OECD average of 22 284 USD.

In terms of employment, nearly 70% of people aged 15 to 64 in Japan have a paid job, above the OECD average of 65%. People in Japan work 1714 hours a year, less than most in the OECD who work 1739 hours. 66% of mothers are employed after their children begin school, same as the OECD average, suggesting that women are able to successfully balance family and career.

Having a good education is an important requisite to finding a job. In Japan, 87% of adults aged 25 to 64 have earned the equivalent of a high-school diploma, one of the best rates in the OECD. Japan is also a top-performing country in terms of the quality of its educational system. The average student scored 520 out of 600 in reading ability according to the latest PISA student-assessment programme, higher than the OECD average of 493.

In terms of health, life expectancy at birth in Japan is 82.7 years, the highest rate in the OECD. The level of atmospheric PM10 – tiny air pollutant particles small enough to enter and cause damage to the lungs – is 27 micrograms per cubic meter, and is higher than in most OECD countries where it stands at 22.

Concerning the public sphere, there is a strong sense of community and moderate levels of civic participation in Japan. 90% of people believe that they know someone they could rely on in a time of need, close to the OECD average. Voter turnout, a measure of public trust in government and of citizens' participation in the political process, was 67% during recent elections; this figure is lower than the OECD average of 72%.

When asked, 40% of people in Japan said they were satisfied with their life, below the OECD average of 59%.

These findings are based on data from 2008 or later.