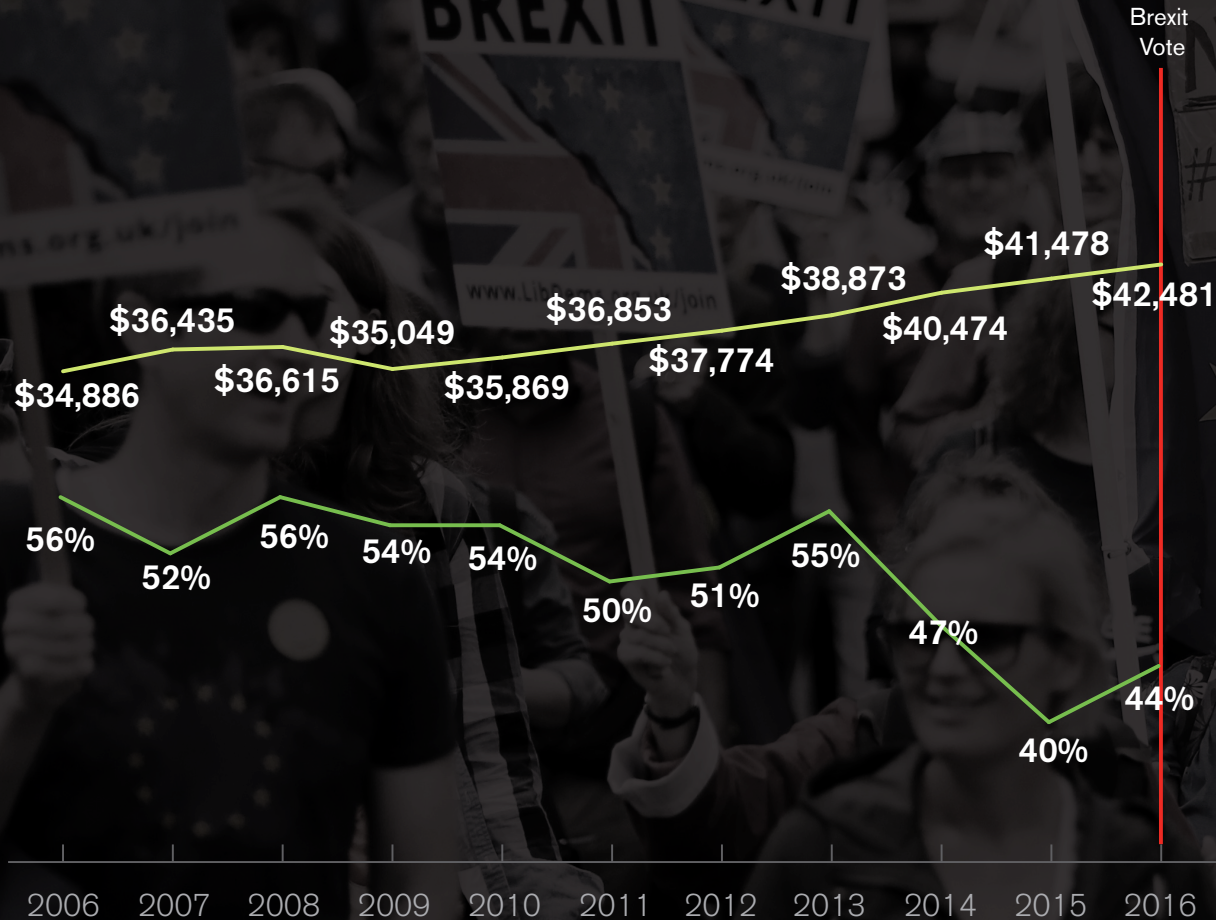


# What Happiness Today Tells Us About the World Tomorrow

## United Kingdom GDP and Life Evaluations

■ % Thriving

■ GDP per capita, PPP\*



\*In current international dollars, estimates from IMF

## **Copyright Standards**

This document contains proprietary research, copyrighted and trademarked materials of Gallup, Inc. Accordingly, international and domestic laws and penalties guaranteeing patent, copyright, trademark and trade secret protection safeguard the ideas, concepts and recommendations related within this document.

The materials contained in this document and/or the document itself may be downloaded and/or copied provided that all copies retain the copyright, trademark and any other proprietary notices contained in the materials and/or document. No changes may be made to this document without the express written permission of Gallup, Inc.

Any reference whatsoever to this document, in whole or in part, on any web page must provide a link back to the original document in its entirety. Except as expressly provided herein, the transmission of this material shall not be construed to grant a license of any type under any patents, copyright or trademarks owned or controlled by Gallup, Inc.



**Jon Clifton**

Managing Partner,  
Gallup

## “Are you better off than you were four years ago?”

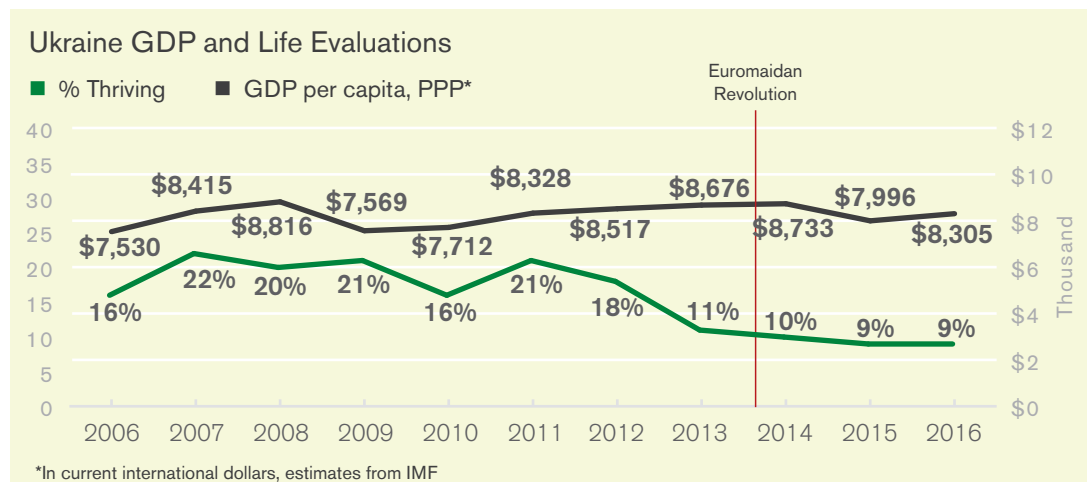
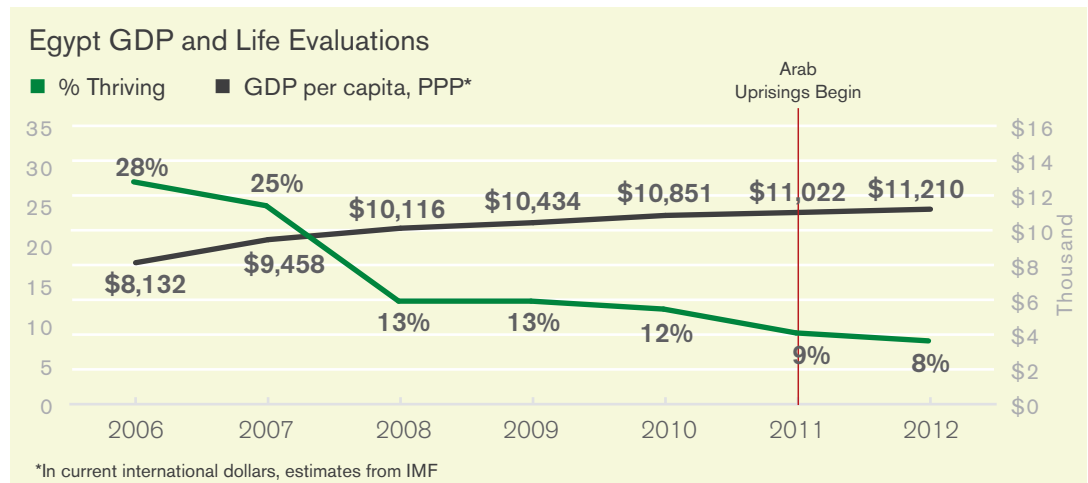
Ronald Reagan famously asked Americans this question during the 1980 presidential election campaign. Americans answered with a resounding “no” when they elected him president.

Were people voting based on how they felt about their own lives? If so, how would people in every single country in the world answer this question?

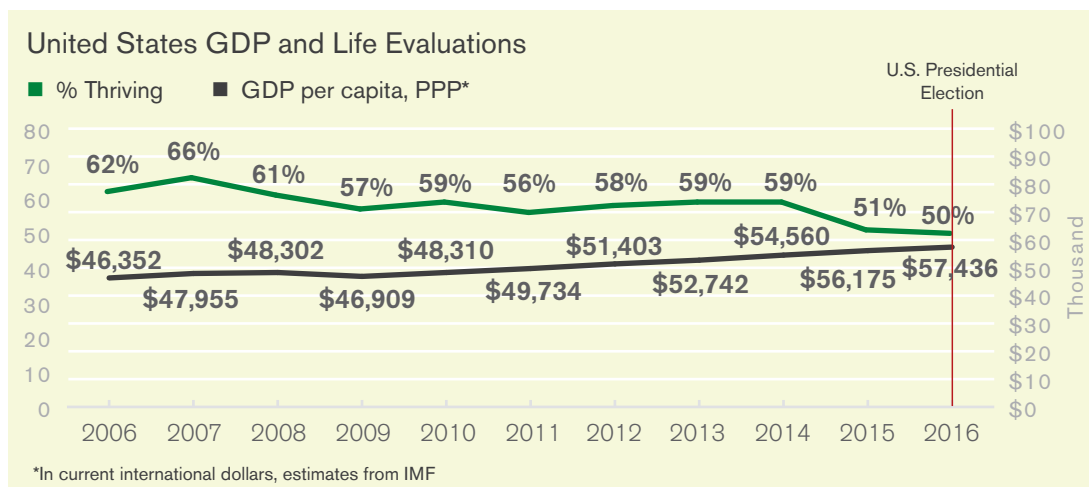
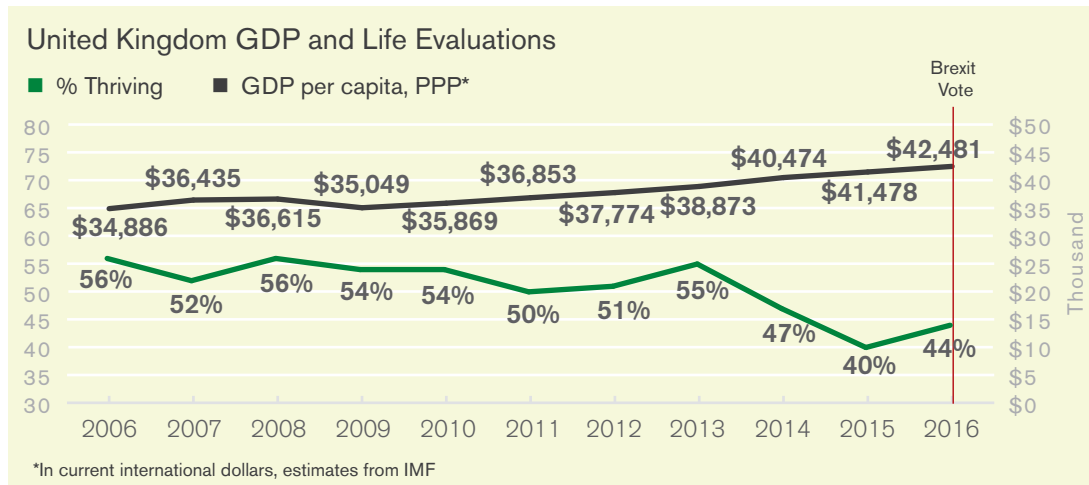
If world leaders are listening, they need to know this: Life is getting worse in Russia, India, Colombia and Egypt — countries that represent almost every continent. People in each of these countries, on average, have been rating their lives worse every year since 2014.

Leaders in each of these countries should be concerned. When people see their lives headed in the wrong direction, they want change. Recent research by London School of Economics academic George Ward shows that how people feel about their lives does influence how they vote in elections. In fact, he believes that subjective measures of well-being are better predictors of elections than questions about how people feel about the economy.

Ward’s research focused on European democracies, but how people feel about their lives should matter to leaders of all countries. People’s ratings of their lives trended downward ahead of unrest in the Arab Uprising countries. The same was true with Ukraine in the two years leading up to the Euromaidan Revolution.



Life ratings were down in the U.K. before Brexit and in the U.S. two years before the 2016 election.



These data and trends are part of a discipline known as behavioral economics. The field's underlying theory is that about 30% of what people do is rational; the other 70% is emotional. This new discipline has led to Nobel Prizes, bestselling books, new agencies within governments and even new majors at universities. What it hasn't led to is new national statistics.

The most famous national statistics — GDP, household income and unemployment — focus on the rational side of what people do: what they spend, how much they make and whether they have a job. This report quantifies the other 70% of what makes a great life — the emotional side. For leaders who are wondering if people in their countries “are better off than they were four years ago,” this report has that answer.

Jon Clifton  
 Managing Partner,  
 Gallup

# What Happiness Today Tells Us About the World Tomorrow

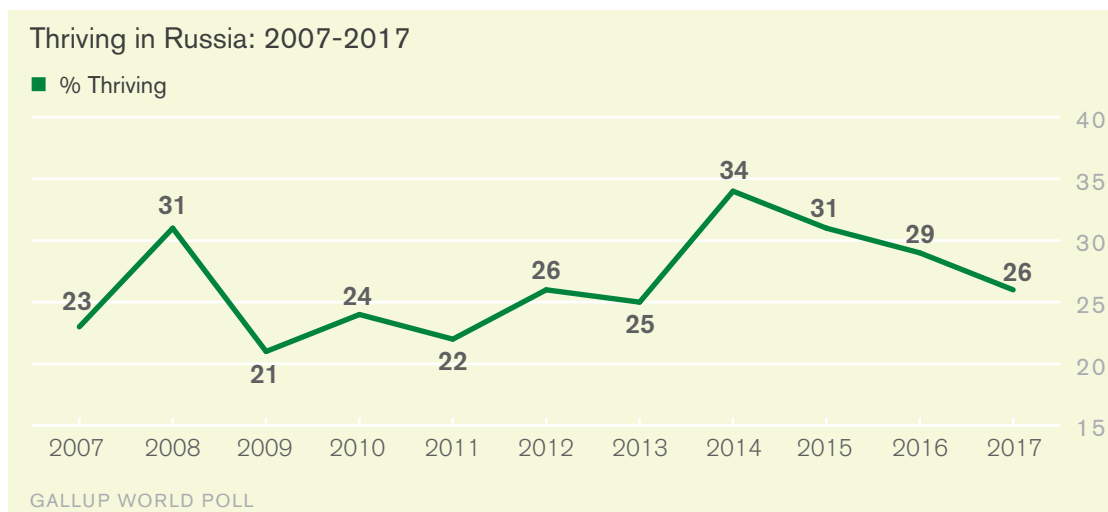
## Thriving Trends to Watch in 2018 and Beyond

This report, *What Happiness Today Tells Us About the World Tomorrow*, looks back over more than a decade of Gallup data on how people in more than 100 countries have rated their lives since 2007. The report reveals which countries today are significantly worse or better off than they were a decade ago, which ones are worse or better off than they were only a few years ago and which ones could be ready for change based on the more recent trends in their citizens' life ratings.

## Primed for Change?

Looking at the countries where “thriving” — the apex of life ratings — is significantly worse in 2017 than it was just three years ago<sup>1</sup>, four stand out. Thriving levels in Russia, Egypt, Colombia and India are moving in a negative direction — getting worse with almost every passing year — and all four will have elections in the next two years. In Russia, Colombia and Egypt, elections are scheduled to take place next year. India's next general election is planned for 2019.

## Russia: Is the Rally Over?

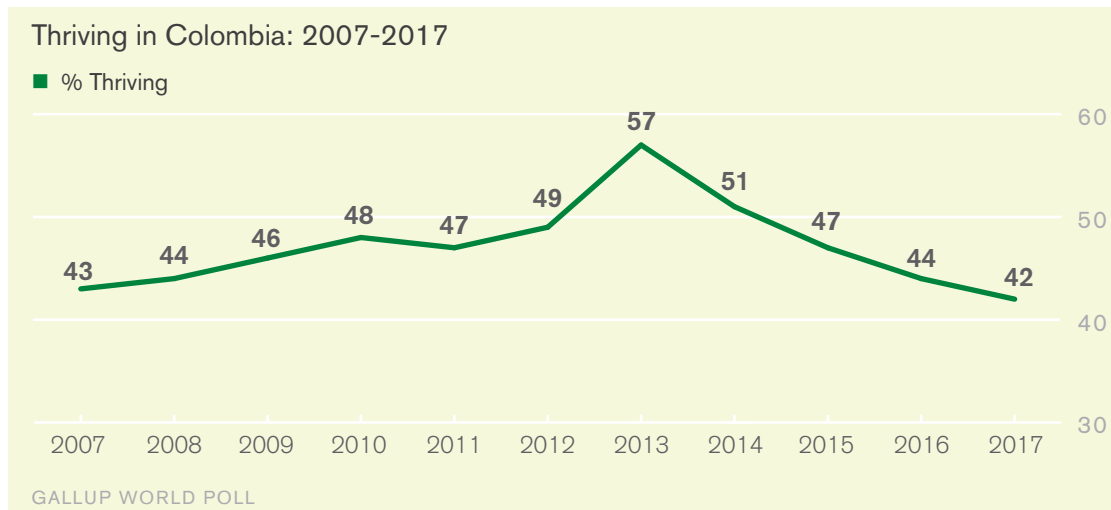


Riding a groundswell of national pride after the annexation of Crimea in March 2014, thriving in Russia rallied to a record-high 34%. Positivity colored nearly all aspects of Russians' lives that year — even as oil prices and the ruble collapsed. President Vladimir Putin's job approval rating soared from 54% to 83% in the space of a year, and a record 73% believed their leadership was taking Russia in the right direction.

Since then, thriving percentages in Russia have dropped eight percentage points, inching downward each subsequent year. At 80%, Russians' approval of Putin, who still has not confirmed whether he will run for office again, continues to be immune to the country's economic troubles. However, Russians are increasingly finding it difficult to get by on their current incomes, and a slim majority (52%) now believe their leadership is taking their country in the right direction.

<sup>1</sup> At press time, fieldwork for Gallup's World Poll in 2017 was not complete in all of the more than 140 countries scheduled for the year. The 115 countries and regions included in the analysis are countries where data collection, weighting and quality checks had been completed by October 2017 and for which Gallup also has 2014 data.

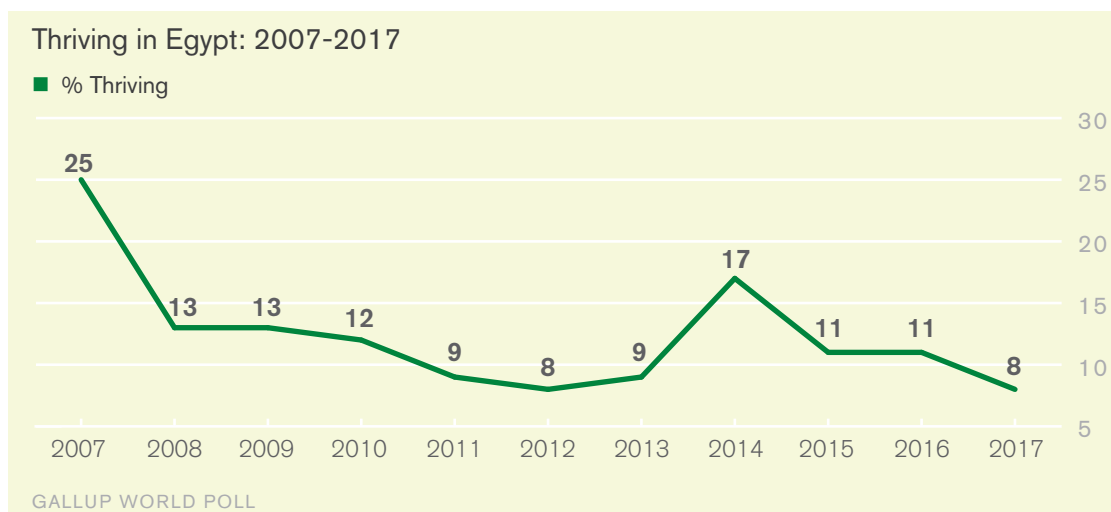
### Colombia: No Accord on Thriving



When President Juan Manuel Santos began his second term in 2014, a slim majority of Colombians (51%) rated their lives well enough to be considered thriving. Oil prices collapsed that same year. While Colombia's economy was better able to withstand the shocks than those of other oil-exporting countries in the region, economic growth slowed. Colombians' outlooks on the job market and economic situation soured — dragging thriving down a total of nine points by 2017.

Colombians also soured on Santos' leadership. Although Santos was eventually able to sign a new peace accord in 2016 with the rebel group FARC and end decades of hostilities in his country, the deal divided Colombians. Santos' approval ratings plummeted over the same period, from 42% in 2014 to 24% in 2017.

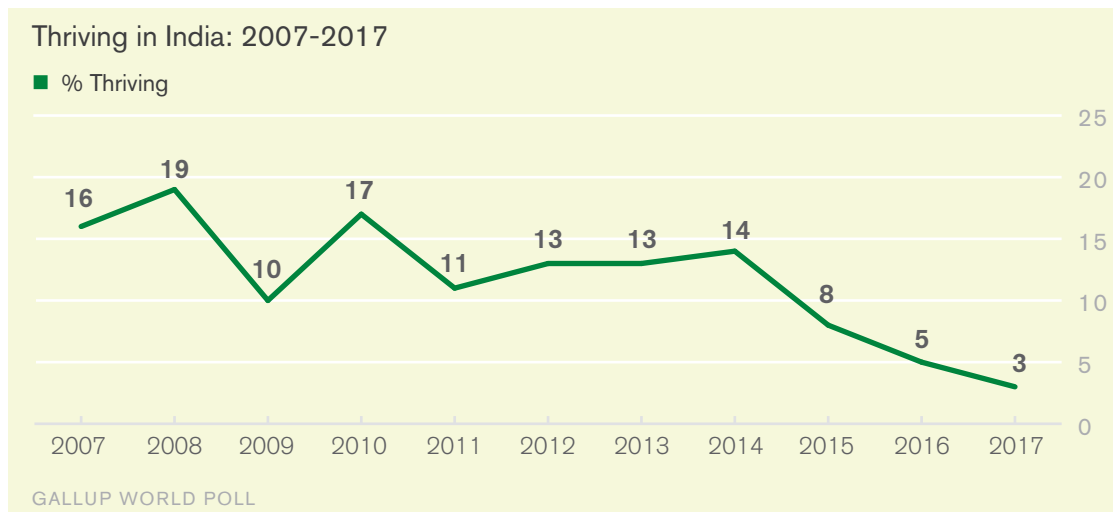
### Egypt: Thriving Returns to Uprising Lows



Egyptians seemed to be turning a corner after their last presidential election in 2014. After being mired at levels under 10% since the 2011 uprising, the percentage of Egyptians who rated their lives highly enough to be considered “thriving” nearly doubled to 17% that year. Nearly half (47%) of Egyptians believed their living standards were getting better — up from 28% the year before.

But the high hopes Egyptians may have had for their lives have continued to fade. As of this year, 8% of Egyptians are thriving — a percentage point lower than in 2011. And their outlook for their living standards in 2017 is about the same as it was then — 30% see their situations improving.

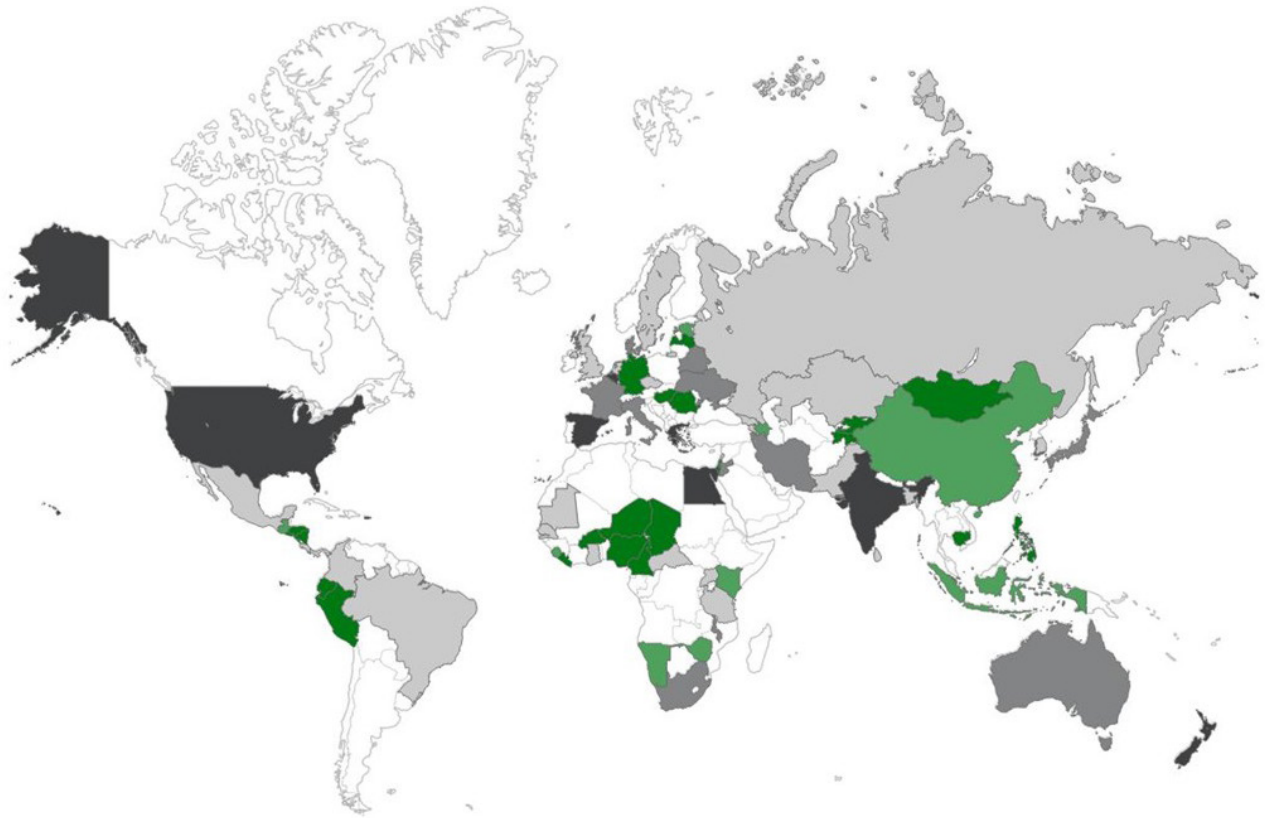
### India: High Expectations, Low Life Ratings



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi took office in 2014, pledging to boost the country’s economic growth and create jobs. That year, 14% of Indians rated their lives positively enough to be thriving. Every year since then, majorities of Indians have been highly optimistic about their economy and have expressed confidence in their government. But Indians’ ratings of their lives have also gotten worse every year, and just 3% of all Indians fall into the thriving category in 2017. This suggests that Indians’ high hopes for their economy and their leadership may not yet align with what they are personally experiencing.

## A Decade of Change: Thriving in 2007 vs. 2017

■ ≤-10   ■ -5 to -9   ■ -4 to +4   ■ +6 to +9   ■ ≥+10



In many ways, even though the financial crisis was just starting to bubble, 2007 was the last relatively good economic year for a long time in many countries — particularly for the world's advanced economies. The credit crunch of 2007 turned into a full financial meltdown the next year, followed by one of the worst global downturns in the past century and a multiyear debt crisis in Europe. Tens of millions more across the globe would be out of work by 2010.

Fast-forward to 2017: Many job markets are in recovery and the global economy is growing, albeit at a sluggish pace that leaves it vulnerable to risks. However, in a number of major economies, including the world's largest — the U.S. — people's ratings of their lives still haven't rebounded to their 2007 levels. In addition to the U.S., seven other countries are still operating with a thriving deficit of at least 10 percentage points: Greece, Spain, Egypt, Singapore, India, Belgium and New Zealand.

### Thriving in Greece and Spain Down More Than 20 Percentage Points

Comparing where they stood in 2007 with where they stand now, Greece and Spain — both recipients of economic bailouts during Europe's debt crisis — have the highest thriving deficits in the world. Ten years ago, 44% of Greeks rated their lives positively enough to be considered thriving, but then came multiple years of recession, economic bailouts and austerity measures that led to violent protests. Slipping back into recession and facing a new round of austerity cuts in 2017, just 19% of Greeks are thriving.



In Spain, a majority of citizens (55%) in 2007 rated their lives positively enough to be considered thriving. While the recent economic news has been much better in Spain than in Greece, with employment gains accompanying gross domestic product (GDP) growth close to 3% in the past few quarters, 33% of Spaniards are thriving in 2017.

	2007 % Thriving	2017 % Thriving	Change Pct. Pts.
Greece	44	19	-25
Spain	55	33	-22
Egypt	25	8	-17
Singapore	49	34	-15
Belgium	59	45	-14
India	16	3	-13
New Zealand	71	60	-11
United States	66	56	-10

GALLUP WORLD POLL

### Thriving Down 17 Percentage Points in Egypt

The 17-point deficit in thriving in Egypt between 2007 and 2017 is a reminder that not all of the big changes in the past decade have been economic. Ten years ago, 25% of Egyptians had lives that fell into the thriving category. But even as the country's GDP continued to grow, the thriving percentage dropped precipitously in the years leading up to the uprising in 2011. Today, just 8% of Egyptians are thriving — one point lower than in 2011.

## Most Countries Are the Same or Better Off

Despite the economic and political shocks over the past decade, thriving percentages across the majority of the 74 countries for which Gallup has data for both 2007 and 2017<sup>2</sup> are the same today, if not higher than they were 10 years ago. Notably, few advanced economies — except for Germany, Israel and Latvia — are on the list of 21 countries where thriving percentages are at least 10 points higher than they were in 2007. In fact, developing countries dominate this list.

### Countries With Biggest Increases in Thriving Between 2007 and 2017

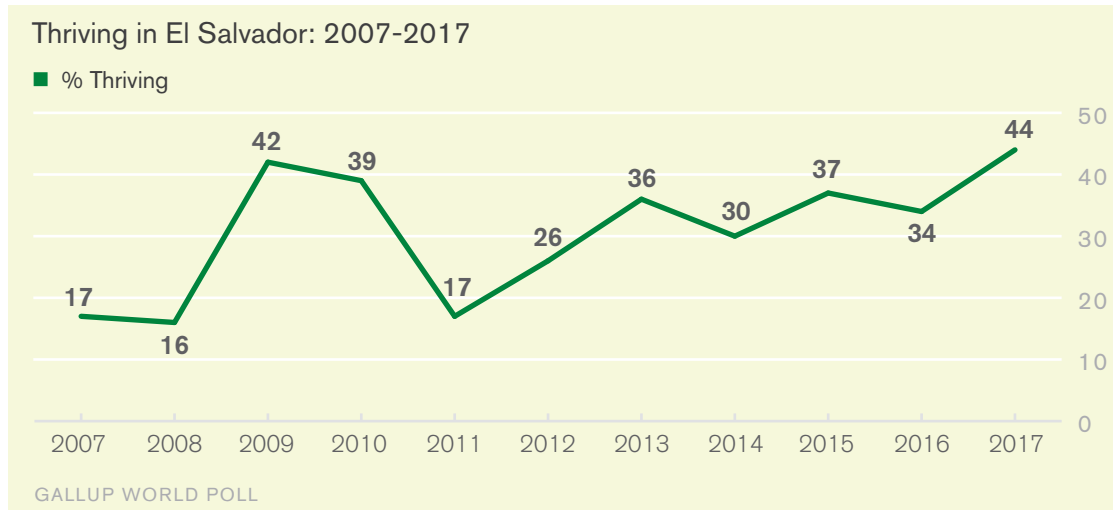
	2007 % Thriving	2017 % Thriving	Change Pct. Pts.
El Salvador	17	44	+27
Latvia	12	33	+21
Liberia	5	25	+20
Honduras	19	37	+18
Nicaragua	26	44	+18
Tajikistan	8	26	+18
Ecuador	20	37	+17
Kyrgyzstan	8	25	+17
Cambodia	2	18	+16
Mongolia	10	26	+16
Cameroon	6	21	+15
Hungary	16	30	+14
Nigeria	14	27	+13
Germany	35	48	+13
Israel	53	66	+13
Burkina Faso	1	13	+12
Philippines	16	28	+12
Romania	27	38	+11
Peru	23	34	+11
Niger	5	15	+10
Chad	5	15	+10

GALLUP WORLD POLL

<sup>2</sup> At press time, fieldwork for Gallup's World Poll in 2017 was not complete in all of the more than 140 countries scheduled for the year. The 74 countries included in the analysis are countries where data collection, weighting and quality checks had been completed by October 2017 and for which Gallup also has 2007 data.

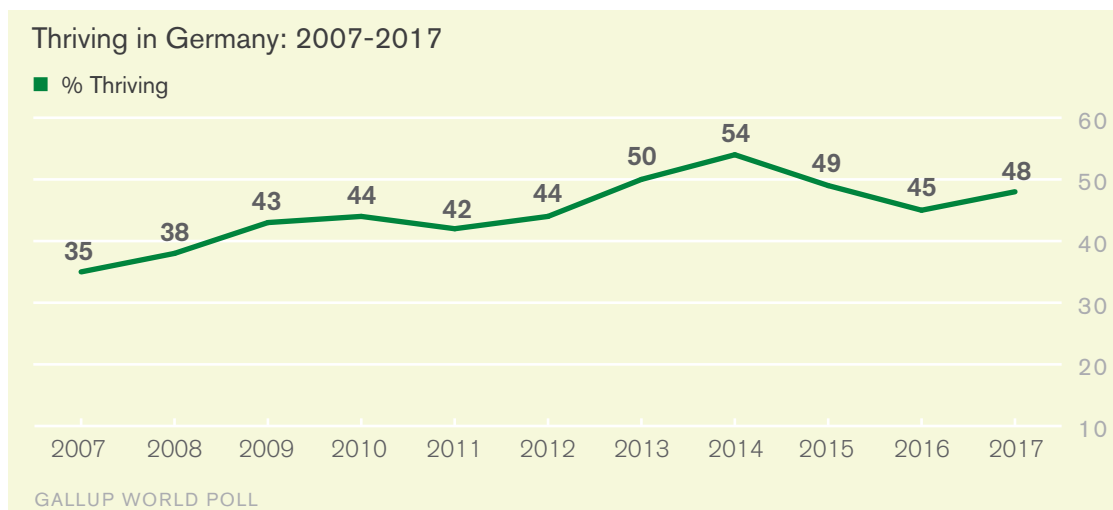
### El Salvador Thriving in Safer Conditions

Although El Salvador had one of the highest homicide rates in the world just a few years ago, in 2017, the country leads the world in increases in thriving over in the past decade. In 2007, with almost 40% of the population living in poverty, just 17% of Salvadorans could be considered thriving. The global economic crisis negatively affected El Salvador, but recent economic gains — and a crackdown on the country's violent street gangs — have helped push the thriving percentage to 44% in 2017.



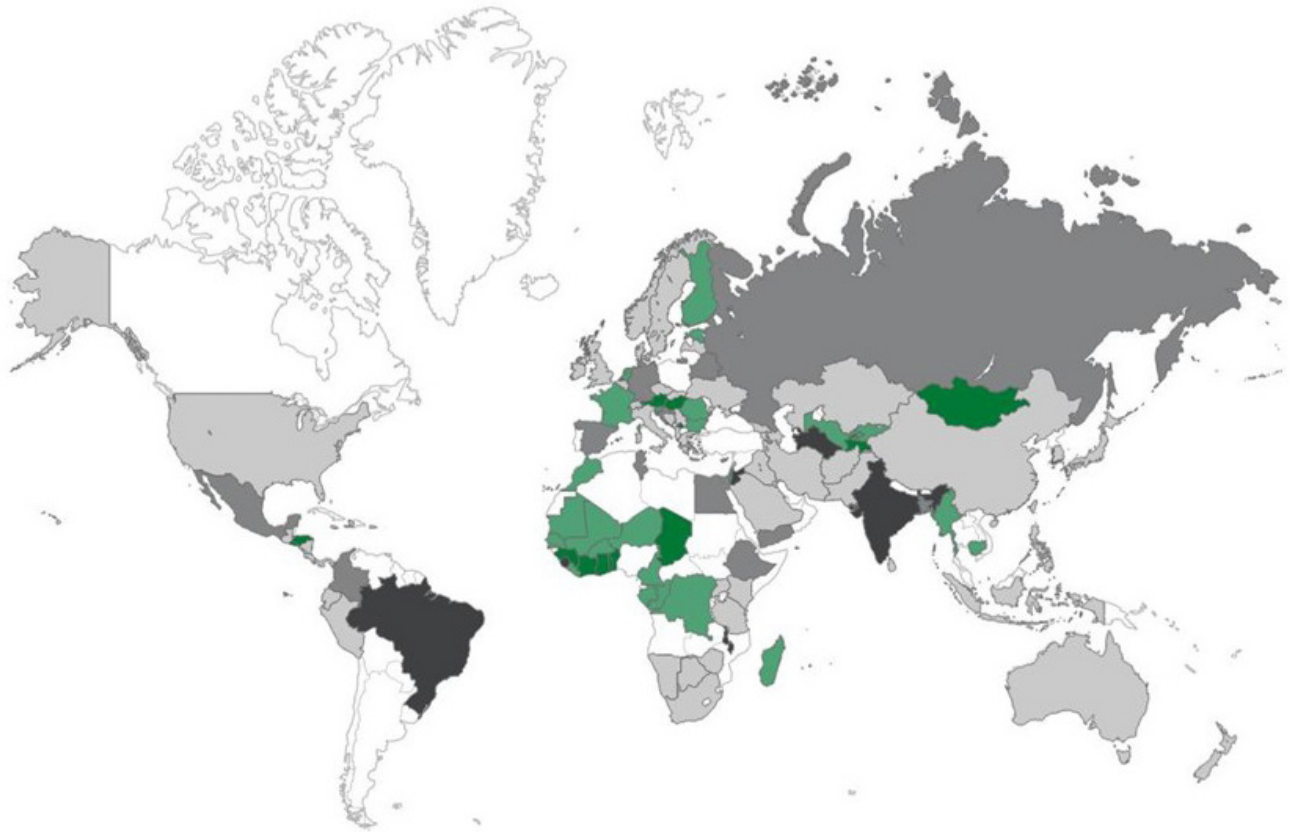
### Thriving Amid Crises in Germany

Germany is one of the few advanced economies where thriving levels are higher now than they were 10 years ago, largely because of how relatively quickly its economy rebounded from the global economic crisis. Germans were not immune to the effects of the global downturn; barely more than one-third rated their lives positively enough to be considered thriving in 2007 (35%), and not many more did the following year (38%). However, Germany's GDP, as well as the percentage of the population that was thriving, was already back at pre-crisis levels (41% in 2005) by 2011.



### Recent Trends: Thriving in 2014 vs. 2017

■ ≤-10   ■ -5 to -9   ■ -4 to +4   ■ +5 to +9   ■ ≥+10



While looking at how people's life ratings have changed in the past decade paints a good picture of where countries have been, looking at how they've changed in recent years provides a better idea of the direction in which they are headed. Like 2007, 2014 was a significant year in the global economy — particularly for countries with economies tied to hydrocarbons — because the price of oil collapsed.

For the most part, the list of countries with the biggest declines in thriving over the past three years (10 points or more) looks different from the list of countries with similar declines in the past 10 years. While a number of the world's least-developed countries make the list of countries with the biggest changes in the past three years, the list also includes Brazil and India, two of the five BRICS countries. With thriving scores dropping eight points in this time frame, Russia, which is also part of this group of major emerging economies, narrowly missed making the list of countries with the biggest declines.

### Turkmenistan Leads Declines in Thriving

The 20-point drop in thriving in Turkmenistan is the largest documented decline in any of the 115 countries that Gallup has scores for in both 2014 and 2017<sup>3</sup>. Until 2017, thriving percentages in the Central Asian country had been mostly

<sup>3</sup> At press time, fieldwork for Gallup's World Poll in 2017 was not complete in all of the more than 140 countries scheduled for the year. The 115 countries and regions included in the analysis are countries where data collection, weighting and quality checks had been completed by October 2017 and for which Gallup also has 2014 data.

stable, hovering near 30% since 2011. The sudden drop to 11% this year comes as residents continue to deal with food shortages and long waits in line for essential items such as eggs, butter, milk and flour.

Turkmen not only rate their lives worse in 2017, they are also openly less positive about their daily experiences — record-high percentages said they did not feel well-rested (42%) and reported that they worried a lot (48%).

**Biggest Decreases in Thriving Between 2014 and 2017**

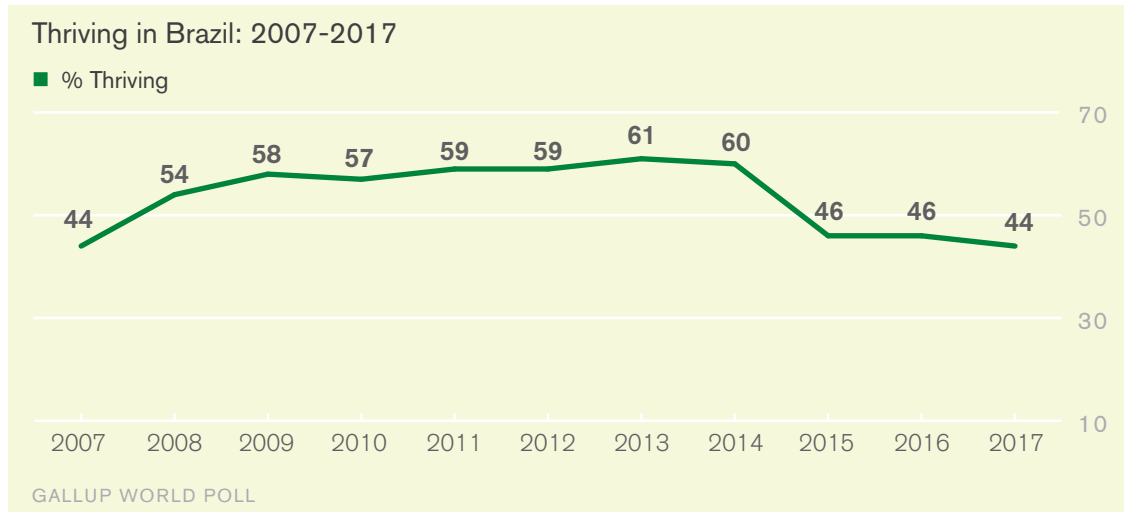
	2014 % Thriving	2017 % Thriving	Change Pct. Pts.
Turkmenistan	31	11	-20
Brazil	60	44	-16
Sierra Leone	23	11	-12
India	14	3	-11
Jordan	29	18	-11
Malawi	19	9	-10

GALLUP WORLD POLL

**Thriving Brazilians Now in the Minority**

The next-largest decline in thriving was in Brazil — the only country on the list where thriving dropped from a majority level (60%) in 2014 to a minority level (44%) in 2017. The 16-point decline in the world's ninth-largest economy reflects several tumultuous years of economic and political crises that included the impeachment and removal from office of President Dilma Rousseff.

In 2015, Brazil entered its deepest and longest recession on record, and thriving levels dropped sharply to 46%. Thriving was still mired near that level (at 44%) after the country finally exited recession in the first quarter of 2017.



### Just 3% of Indians Thriving in 2017

The other BRICS country on the list, India, arguably had less room to fall than Brazil, but it too suffered a double-digit decline in thriving in the past three years. Fourteen percent of Indians were thriving in 2014, but just 3% rated their lives positively enough to be considered thriving in 2017.

India's largely rural population initially led the declines in life evaluations, with thriving dropping from 14% to 7% between 2014 and 2015, and edging even lower to 4% and 3% in the years after that. Declines among urban Indians have been much more gradual, although they are down in the past year, dropping from 11% to 4%.

### Most Countries Are the Same or Better Off

Thriving percentages across 95 of the 115 countries or areas for which Gallup has data for both 2014 and 2017<sup>4</sup> are the same today, if not higher than they were three years ago. Countries from almost every region of the world make up the list of 13 countries and regions where thriving percentages are at least 10 points higher than they were in 2014. However, countries in sub-Saharan Africa — many of them returning to some type of stability after years of conflict or outbreaks of disease — make up half the list.

	2014 % Thriving	2017 % Thriving	Change Pct. Pts.
Kosovo	11	36	+25
Benin	4	23	+19
Ivory Coast	4	22	+18
Ghana	11	28	+17
Guinea	5	21	+16
El Salvador	30	44	+14
Tajikistan	12	26	+14
Hungary	16	30	+14
Mongolia	13	26	+13
Chad	2	15	+13
Honduras	25	37	+12
Togo	3	13	+10
Austria	48	58	+10

GALLUP WORLD POLL

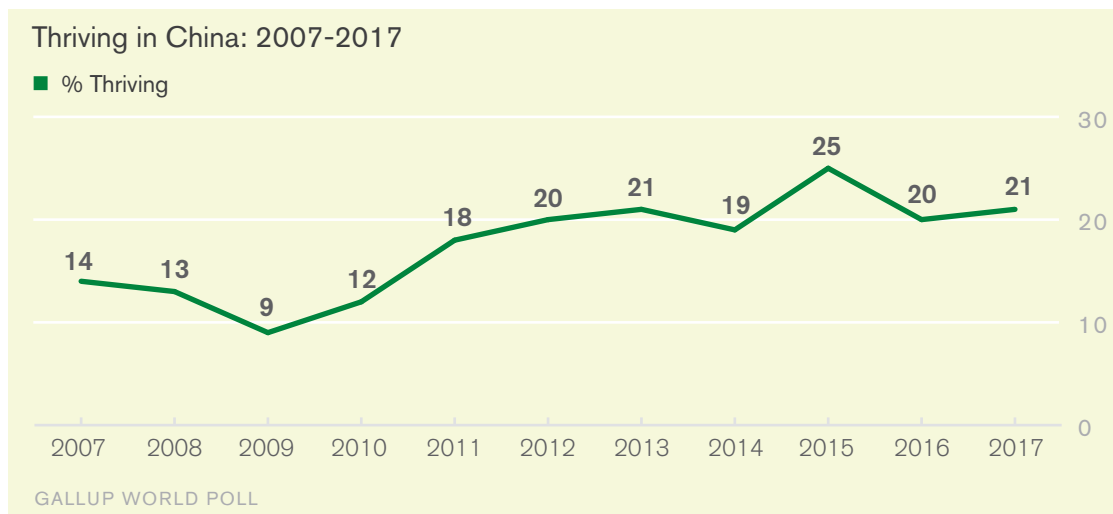
<sup>4</sup> At press time, fieldwork for Gallup's World Poll in 2017 was not complete in all of the more than 140 countries scheduled for the year. The 115 countries and regions included in the analysis are countries where data collection, weighting and quality checks had been completed by October 2017 and for which Gallup also has 2014 data.

### Kosovo Leads Increases in Thriving, Up From Record Low

Kosovo led all other regions and countries surveyed with a 25-point increase in thriving from 2014 to 2017. However, this increase is up from Kosovo's record-low 11% who were thriving in 2014 — as results in the region's parliamentary election proved inconclusive and the region remained mired in constitutional crisis for six months. The 36% of Kosovo residents who are thriving in 2017 is more in line with estimates in several other years of polling in the past decade. Coincidentally, the 2017 measure was collected amid Kosovo's recent snap parliamentary election.

### Thriving Mostly Stable in China Since 2014, Up Since 2007

Unlike other BRICS countries, instead of declining, thriving levels in China have largely remained stable near 20% for the past several years. The country's strong economy has made this continued buoyancy possible, but China's thriving percentages would not be this high without the considerable investments it has made toward its own development over the past decade. Between 2007 and 2015, when China had met nearly all of the Millennium Development Goals, thriving percentages rose from 14% to 25%.



## Life on a Global Scale

For more than a decade, Gallup has asked adults worldwide to rate their lives on the Cantril Self-Anchoring Striving Scale, where “0” represents the worst possible life and “10” represents the best possible life.

- Please imagine a ladder, with steps numbered from 0 at the bottom to 10 at the top. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible life for you. On which step of the ladder would you say you personally feel you stand at this time?
- Please imagine a ladder, with steps numbered from 0 at the bottom to 10 at the top. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible life for you. Just your best guess, on which step do you think you will stand in the future, say about five years from now?

Gallup classifies people as “thriving” if they rate their current lives a 7 or higher and their lives in five years an 8 or higher, and “suffering” if they rate both their current and future life situations a 4 or lower. Those in the middle are “struggling.” People do not rate themselves as falling into one of these three categories.

Across countries, Gallup finds people’s life ratings are highly related to income, education levels and reported disease conditions. Individuals who are thriving — the focus of this report — have fewer disease conditions, fewer sick days, higher incomes, are more highly educated and have better work environments. Countries with a higher percentage of thriving adults in their population also report that the area they live is a good place to live for people of different ethnicities, races and cultures.

Compared with thriving individuals, struggling individuals are much more likely to worry about money on a daily basis, and suffering individuals are less likely to have basic necessities such as food and shelter.



## Survey Methods

Results for 2017 are based on telephone and face-to-face interviews with approximately 1,000 adults in each country, aged 15 and older, conducted throughout the year in 115 countries and regions. Results for all other years are based on telephone and face-to-face interviews with approximately 1,000 adults in each country each year, aged 15 and older, conducted throughout the year.

In large countries such as Russia, China and India, samples are larger, ranging from 2,000 to 4,000 adults. For results based on the total sample of national adults in 2017, the margin of sampling error ranges from  $\pm 2.1$  percentage points to  $\pm 5.6$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level. All reported margins of sampling error include computed design effects for weighting.

Countries/Regions included in the 2007-2017 analysis: Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Russia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Zimbabwe

Countries/Regions included in the 2014-2017 analysis: Afghanistan, Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, China, Colombia, Congo (Brazzaville), Congo (Kinshasa), Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Zimbabwe

GALLUP® Analytics

Analyze the  
world in  
one click.

Learn more!

For more information about  
Gallup Analytics, email  
[gallupanalytics@gallup.com](mailto:gallupanalytics@gallup.com) or  
call +1-202-715-3131.

