

Wellbeing Index Stockholm

Q2 (2506)



CENTER FOR WELLBEING,
WELFARE AND HAPPINESS

Highlights

- Stockholm has a Wellbeing Index of 6.87 (out of 10).
- Wellbeing in Stockholm is relatively equally distributed, with a Wellbeing Equality Coefficient (WEC) of 14.4.
- Young people report the lowest wellbeing.
- Four factors (TACK) explain 75 percent of Stockholmers' wellbeing.
- Stockholmers are 4.67 times more likely to help each other than they themselves believe, according to the Coffee Indicator.
- The Wellbeing Index has strong effects on satisfaction with living in Stockholm and likelihood of recommending Stockholm.
- Residents' views are characterized by three themes: nature, opportunities, and pulse.

About Wellbeing Index Stockholm

Wellbeing Growth

CWWH, together with Stockholm Business Region, the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce, and Region Stockholm, has launched the objective of making Stockholm a region of wellbeing growth.

The wellbeing growth objective is intended to function in a similar way as economic growth — as a fundamental, direct, and measurable goal considered in economics and politics.

Wellbeing growth means that wellbeing increases over time and that people's quality of life and overall state of being improves. The idea that all people should feel better is an end in itself, emphasized in an increasing number of international and national directives worldwide¹, including the UN *Resolution 65/309 Happiness: towards a holistic approach to development*.

But we also expect wellbeing growth to contribute to a stronger economy through lower societal costs, such as reduced need for health care and social services, decreased work and school absence, less crime, and fewer democratic losses, while at the same time generating higher revenues through productivity, innovation, entrepreneurship, employment, and improved societal and democratic functionality.

We further expect wellbeing growth to create a more favorable environment for businesses and international collaborations, as well as making the region more attractive to live in and visit.

Wellbeing Growth as a measure

For wellbeing growth to be set as a target similar to economic growth (measured through GDP), a metric is needed that is, first, simple to construct and use in measurements, and second, easy to interpret and track over time.

We call this metric the Wellbeing Index. It consists of four sub-questions measuring overall quality of life ("a good life") and three primary dimensions of wellbeing: happiness, meaning, and life richness. These four questions are combined into a mean value index that can range from 1 (lowest possible wellbeing) to 10 (highest possible wellbeing).

¹ For an overview, see CWWH:s report *Att målsätta och mäta välmående på nationell nivå*.

We calculate the Wellbeing Index on a quarterly basis (similar to GDP). Each quarter, approximately 1,000 randomly selected people in the Stockholm region are surveyed, using the same method as applied in the UN's *World Happiness Report*².

About the Wellbeing Index Stockholm Report

CWWH will quarterly publish a report on each measurement of the Wellbeing Index in Stockholm.

Each report presents and interprets changes in the index. The reports will also focus on different themes, which may be both general and of particular current relevance.

The reports also provide space to analyze correlations with events, initiatives, and priorities in the region.

About the Wellbeing Index Stockholm Report Q2 2025

This first report in the series focuses on how we compile and measure the Wellbeing Index and explains its fundamental properties and interpretations.

We apply CWWH's TACK framework to analyze how four fundamental factors affect wellbeing in Stockholm.

We also take a closer look at the relationship between the Wellbeing Index and residents' satisfaction with living in Stockholm, as well as their willingness to recommend living, working, or visiting Stockholm to others.

In addition, we analyze residents' open responses on how they would describe Stockholm today to someone unfamiliar with the city, and how they would like to describe Stockholm in the future.

Finally, we introduce the Coffee Indicator, a unique measure of residents' expected and actual goodwill toward one another.

² <https://www.worldhappiness.report>

About the measurement Q2 2025

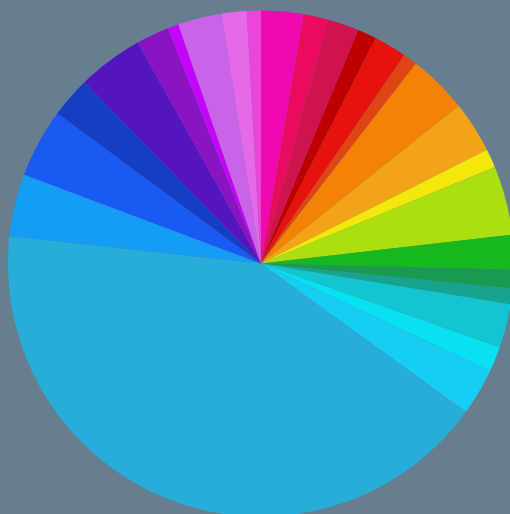
With the help of Norstat, we have posed questions to a representative sample of people in the Stockholm region. The sample is as follows.

N = 1051

56.1%, 43.9%
Women vs men

17-99
Mean 50.3
Age

Municipalities:

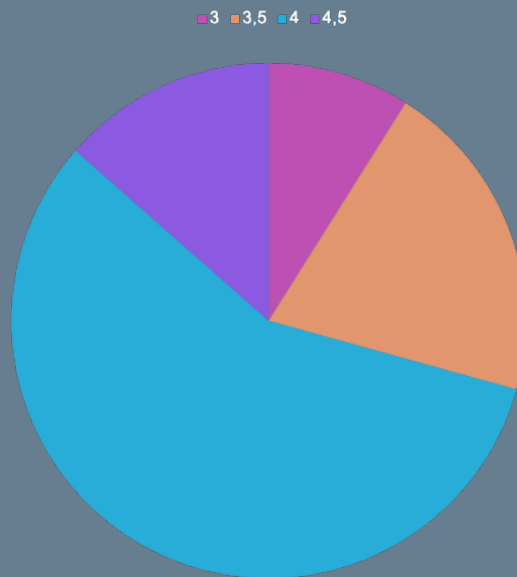


Geographic distribution:

Innerstad Närförort Ytterförort



Socioeconomic distribution:



Classification according to Statistics Sweden³:

- 1 = areas with big socioeconomic challenges
- 2 = areas with socioeconomic challenges
- 3 = socioeconomically mixed areas
- 4 = areas with favorable socioeconomic conditions
- 5 = areas with very favorable socioeconomic conditions

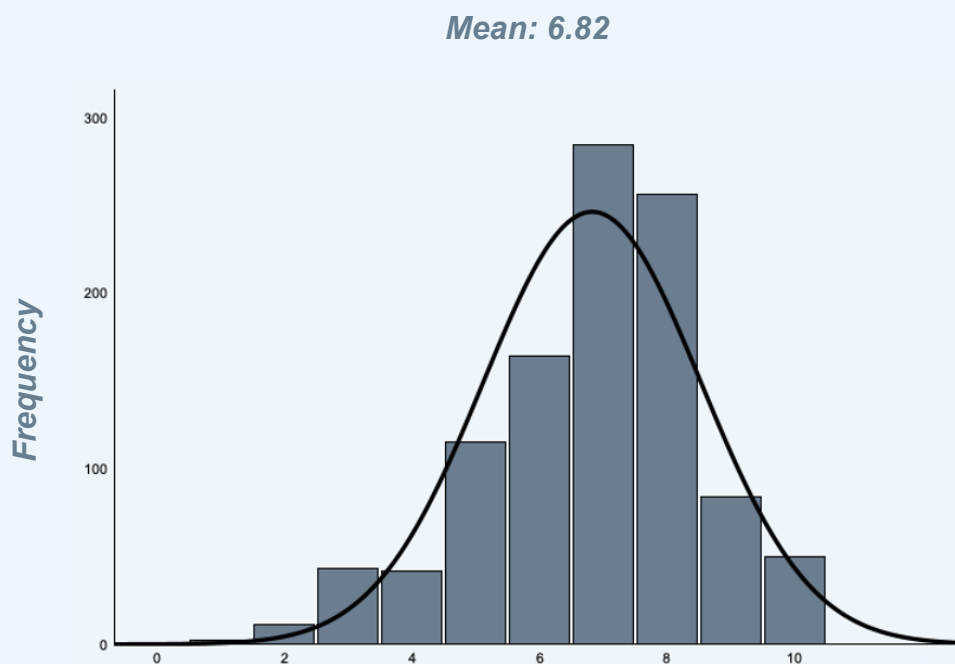
³ https://www.statistikdatabasen.Statistics Sweden.se/pxweb/sv/ssd/START__AA__AA0003__AA0003F/IntGr5Socio/

Wellbeing Index

We measure Wellbeing Index with four questions:

1

Where would you place your life right now, on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 represents the best possible life and 1 the worst possible life?



This is a variant of the question used in the UN's annual World Happiness Report, which measures and ranks happiness in almost 150 countries. In its original form, the scale is formulated as a ladder, the so-called Cantril ladder. Research⁴ shows that the ladder formulation creates a bias toward measuring status and wealth, while our formulation provides a better picture of people's perception of how good life is overall.

The three following questions measure the dimensions of wellbeing that research has shown to be internationally and culturally universal⁵, and that CWWH's studies have shown have a significant impact⁶ on people's perception of how good life is overall.

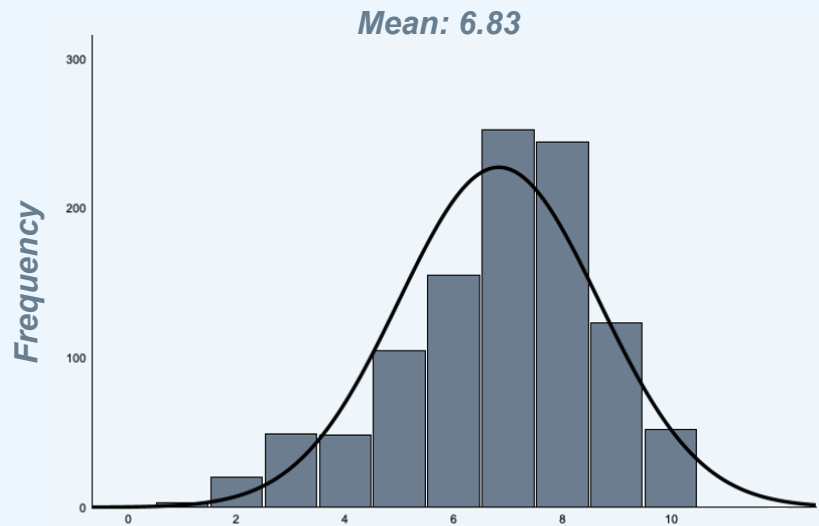
⁴Nilsson, A. H., Eichstaedt, J. C., Lomas, T., Schwartz, A., & Kjell, O. (2024). The Cantril Ladder elicits thoughts about power and wealth. *Scientific Reports*, 14(1), 2642.

⁵Oishi, S., Choi, H., Koo, M., Galinha, I., Ishii, K., Komiya, A., ... & Besser, L. L. (2020). Happiness, meaning, and psychological richness. *Affective Science*, 1(2), 107-115.

⁶Dahlen, M., & Thorbjørnsen, H. (2022). Individuals' assessments of their own wellbeing, subjective welfare, and good life: Four exploratory studies. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(19), 11919.

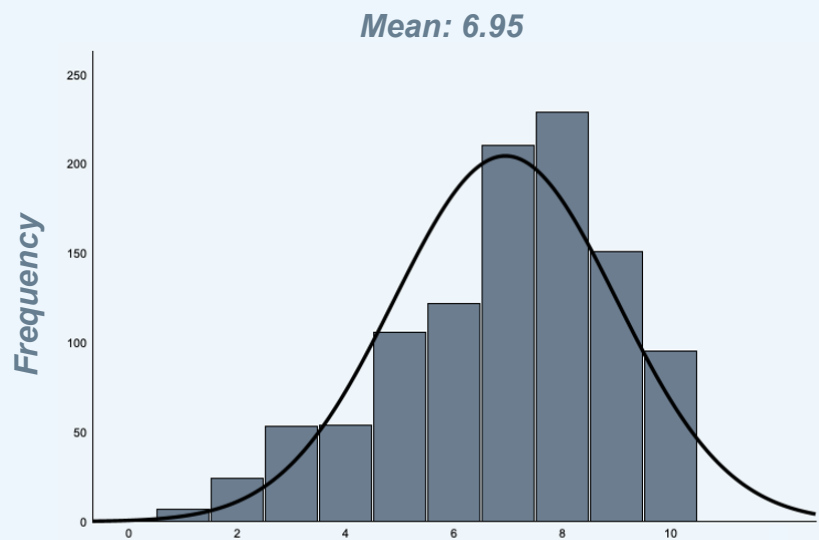
2

How happy do you feel overall?



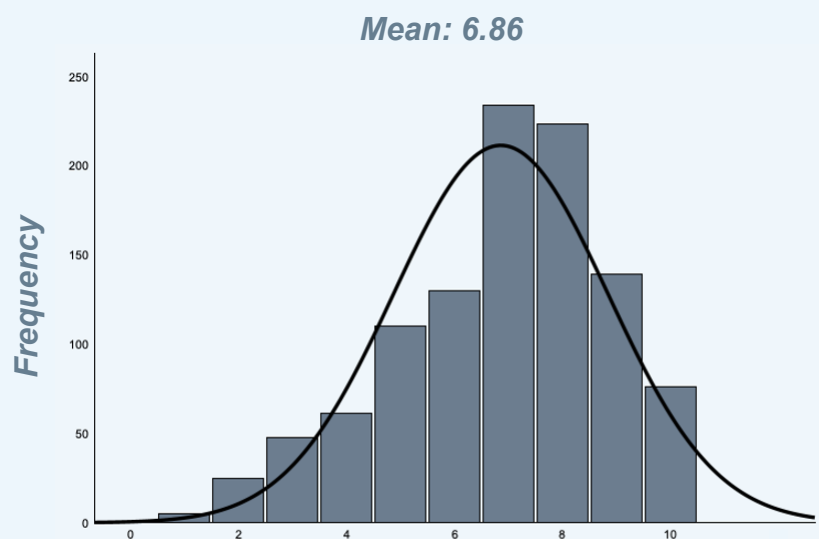
3

How meaningful does your life feel overall?



4

How rich does your life feel overall?



Together, the three wellbeing dimensions explain 75 percent of how good life is overall.

In a stepwise regression, the dimensions are ordered according to how much of the variation they explain. All three are shown to have a significant impact and together explain 75.3 percent of the variation in people's perception of how good life is overall.

Happiness - strongest effect ($\beta = 0.561$)

Richness ($\beta = 0.201$)

Meaningsfulness ($\beta = 0.147$)

$R^2 = 0.753$ ($F = 1067$)

To form the Wellbeing Index, we combine the four questions into a mean value:

Where would you place your life right now?

+

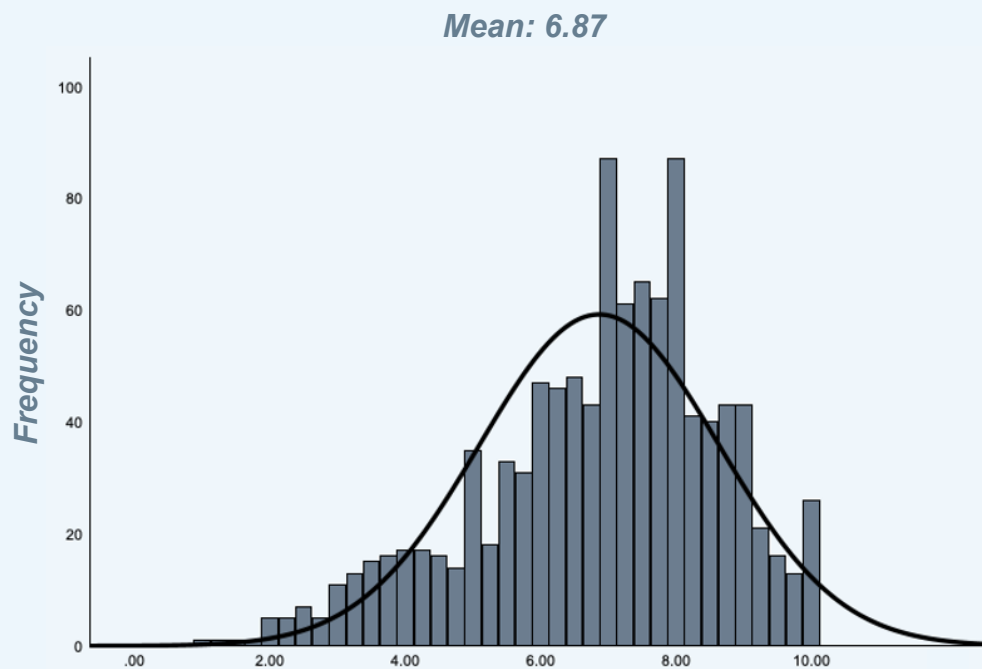
How happy do you feel overall?

+

How meaningful does your life feel overall?

+

How rich does your life feel overall?



A factor analysis of the wellbeing dimensions and quality of life shows that they primarily measure similar aspects of one and the same underlying concept. The so-called eigenvalues indicate that a common component provides a better explanation than several subcomponents.

Component 1, eigenvalue = 3,480
Component 2, eigenvalue = 0,239, <1
Component 3, eigenvalue = 0,146, <1
Component 4, eigenvalue = 0,135, <1

A Cronbach's alpha of 0.949 also shows that the questions measure the same underlying phenomenon, with a very high suitability for inclusion in the same index⁷.

In our first measurement, Stockholm has a Wellbeing Index = 6.87.

⁷ The standard deviation of the index (1.77) is lower than the mean value of the four questions' standard deviations (1.90), which may be interpreted as the questions complementing and balancing each other.

Distribution of wellbeing

Focusing only on the mean value of the index provides a limited understanding of residents' wellbeing.

First, for example, a few extremely high or low values may have a disproportionately large impact on the mean value and give a distorted picture. Second, the mean value says nothing about the distribution of values; in the extreme case, a mean value of 5.5 (the middle of the scale) could result from half of the participants answering 1 (minimal wellbeing) and the other half answering 10 (maximum wellbeing).

To provide a more complete picture, we therefore also calculate the standard deviation of the Wellbeing Index, which is a well-established statistical measure of the distribution of values. How far above or below the mean value do the majority (two-thirds) of the values fall?

In our first measurement, two-thirds of the residents' Wellbeing Index values fall between:

5.10 – 8.64 (standard deviation 1.77)

We are also interested in how wellbeing is distributed among people. Just as money and income can be more concentrated within a small part of the population (economic inequality) or more evenly distributed among people (economic equality), wellbeing can be more or less equally distributed.

That is why we have developed what we call the Wellbeing Equality Coefficient (WEC). It is calculated in the same way as the established Gini coefficient, which is used globally by, among others, the OECD and the World Bank to measure economic (in)equality.

WEC can take on values between 100 and 0. The extreme value 100 means that 100 percent of the aggregated and total wellbeing in the region is concentrated within a single resident. The value 0 instead means that the wellbeing in the region is distributed completely equally among all residents.

Just as economic developments can be positive overall but benefit either a few or many, changes in wellbeing (and our objective of growth) may reach fewer or more people. We want wellbeing growth to include as many as possible.

In our first measurement, the Wellbeing Equality Coefficient (WEC) for the Wellbeing Index is:

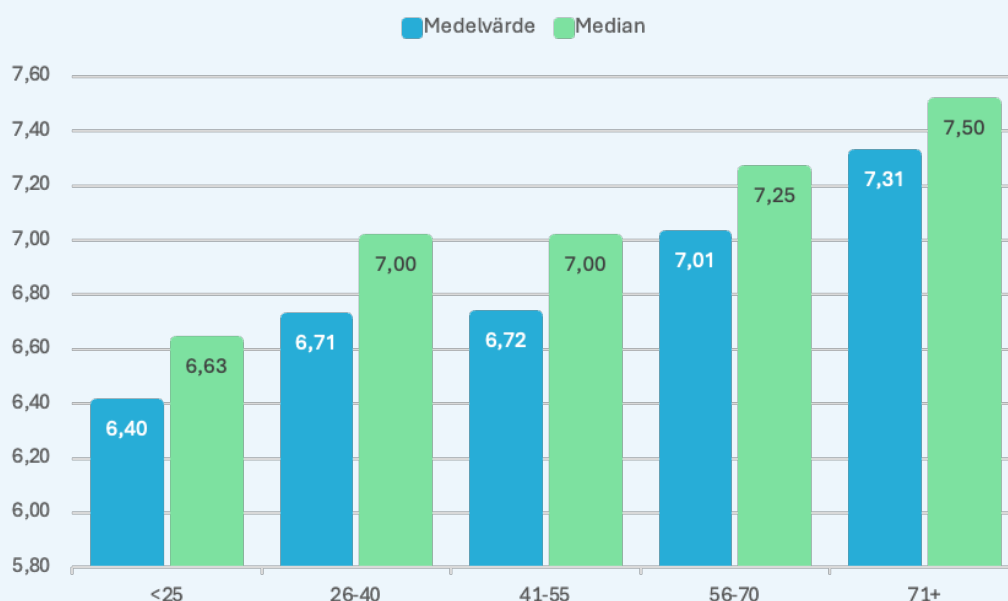
14.4

This should be regarded as a relatively low figure and may be interpreted as wellbeing being relatively equally distributed among residents. For comparison, Sweden's Gini coefficient for income distribution was 29.5 according to Statistics Sweden's most recent data from 2023⁸. The comparison is positive with regard to wellbeing. At the same time, we need to apply a stricter benchmark for wellbeing since wellbeing is limited to a scale of 1–10, whereas income spans a much larger scale and can be aggregated at higher levels.

How does the Wellbeing Index differ in Stockholm?

Young people have the lowest wellbeing

When we use age to explain residents' wellbeing in regressions, the result is a significant S-shaped relationship. Broken down into age groups, the following pattern emerges: people under 25 have the lowest wellbeing, the age groups 26–40 and 41–65 share a higher common level, and the age groups above that show rising levels:

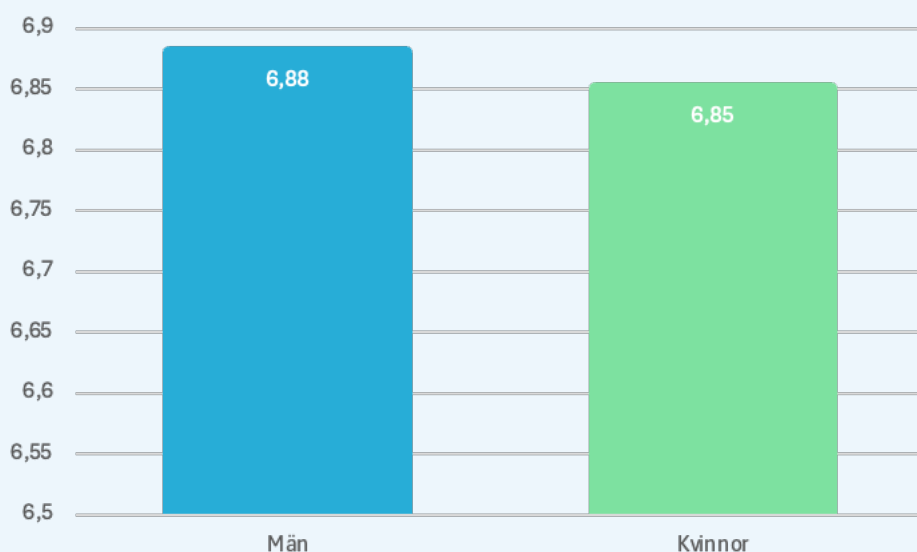


⁸ https://www.statistikdatabasen.Statistics Sweden.se/pxweb/en/ssd/START__HE__HE0110__HE0110F/TabVX1DispInkN/table/tableViewLayout1/?loadedQueryId=145148&timeType=item

This pattern resembles a trend we have identified⁹ in Sweden over the past decade: from the historical and international U-curve, where young and older people report the highest wellbeing, to an S-curve where young people instead have the lowest wellbeing. Efforts to improve young people's wellbeing may therefore be expected to have particular leverage.

No difference between women and men

The wellbeing of both women and men falls within the confidence interval for Stockholm's total mean value of 6.87, and we see no differences between the genders.



Small differences between areas

A geographic division into inner city, near suburbs, and outer suburbs shows no clear differences in wellbeing. All three areas fall within the confidence interval for Stockholm's mean value. No significant difference between the groups.

1. Near suburbs (7.00)
2. Inner city (6.90)
3. Outer suburbs (6.71)

A socioeconomic division into area types based on Statistics Sweden's classification (see page 6) likewise shows no clear differences in mean values. All four area types fall within the confidence interval for Stockholm's mean value. No significant difference between the groups.

Area type 4.5 (6.97)

Area type 4.0 (6.88)

Area type 3.0 (6.87)

Area type 4

⁹ Bittar et al. (2025). Flourishing in Sweden: Great Overall – But Not for All. International Journal of Wellbeing, forthcoming.

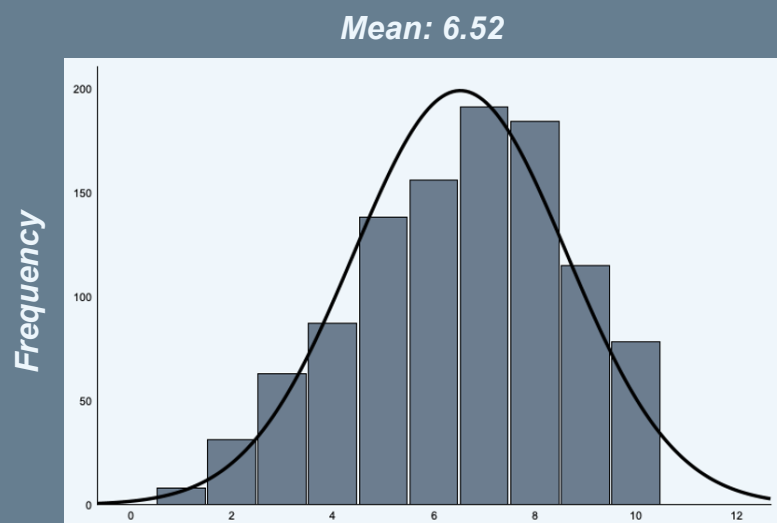
TACK: four fundamental factors for the wellbeing of the people of Stockholm

CWWH has developed a framework consisting of four factors that are fundamental to wellbeing at both the individual and societal level. With their help, we can explain current levels of wellbeing and identify basic problems and opportunities that can ultimately guide interventions and priorities.

Togetherness: To what extent do people feel a sense of togetherness with one another?

1

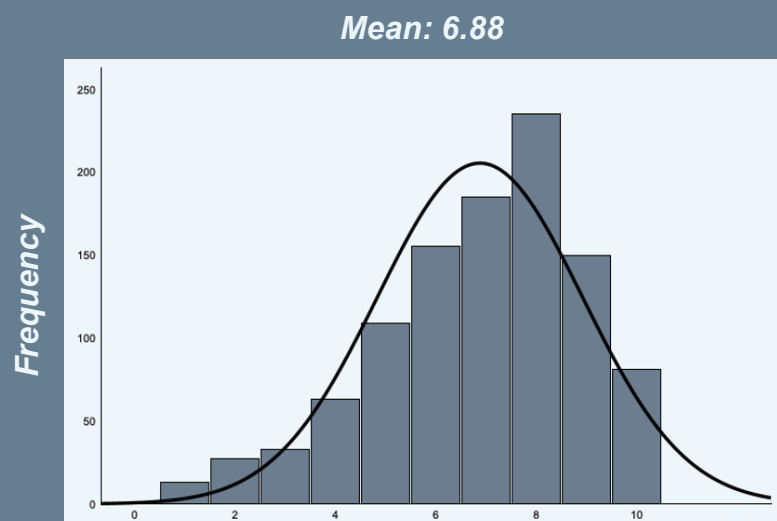
How much togetherness do you feel with others?



Agency: To what extent do people feel that they can influence their own life situation?

2

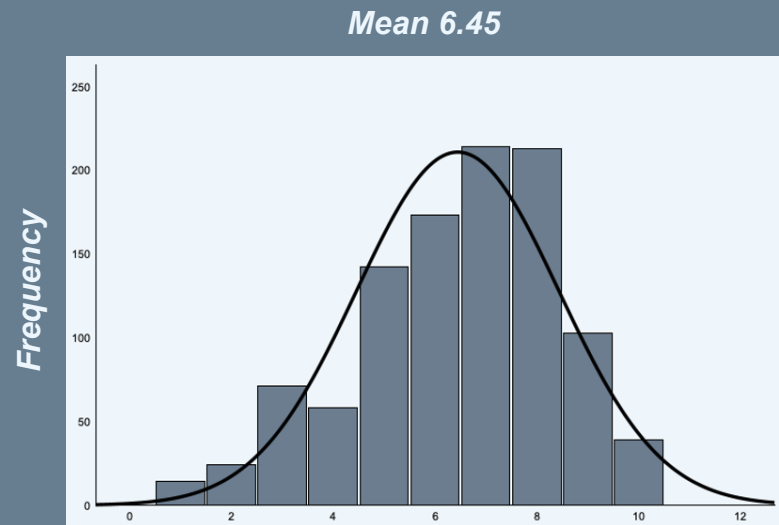
How much do you feel that you can influence your own life?



Coherence: To what extent do people feel that the different parts of their lives are connected in a functional and positive way?

3

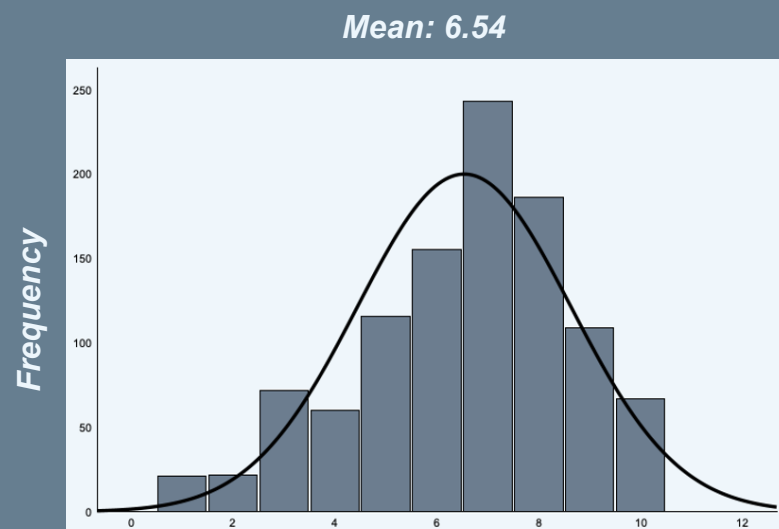
How much balance do you feel in your life?



Kinetics: To what extent do people feel that their lives are moving in a positive direction?

4

How positively do you view the future?



Together, the four TACK factors explain almost 75 percent of the wellbeing of the people of Stockholm.

In a stepwise regression, the factors are ordered according to how much of the variation they explain. All four are shown to have a significant impact and together explain 74.2 percent of the variation in the Wellbeing Index.

Balance in life – strongest effect ($\beta = 0.382$)

Positive outlook on the future ($\beta = 0.275$)

Own influence on life ($\beta = 0.203$)

Togetherness ($\beta = 0.159$)

$R^2 = 0.742$ ($F = 756$)

With the help of these four fundamental factors, we can in the future identify opportunities to promote the wellbeing of Stockholm residents, as well as assess and guide interventions.

The Coffee Indicator

Trust and belief in the goodwill of our fellow human beings has a decisive importance for wellbeing. This is shown, among other things, in analyses in the World Happiness Report, which make direct connections to countries' positions in the global happiness ranking¹¹.

The World Happiness Report uses the so-called “wallet test,” where people are asked what they believe would happen if they lost their wallet — would the person who found it contact them? The answer to that question has been shown to have a stronger average correlation with people's happiness than, for example, changes in income, unemployment, and the risk of being exposed to violent crime¹². The more people answer yes, the higher the country also ranks in global happiness.

We have developed a unique variant of the wallet test, where instead we ask people: “If you forgot your payment card when buying coffee, do you think the person behind you in line would offer to pay?” Partly, this draws on the strong connection to coffee and fika found both in the world's image of Sweden and in our own self-image. Partly, it is a scenario most people can relate to — unlike losing a wallet (as fewer and fewer people even use a wallet).

We also ask the question: “If the person in front of you in line to buy coffee forgot their payment card, would you offer to pay?” — to measure people's actual willingness to show goodwill.

The Coffee Indicator consists of three parts:

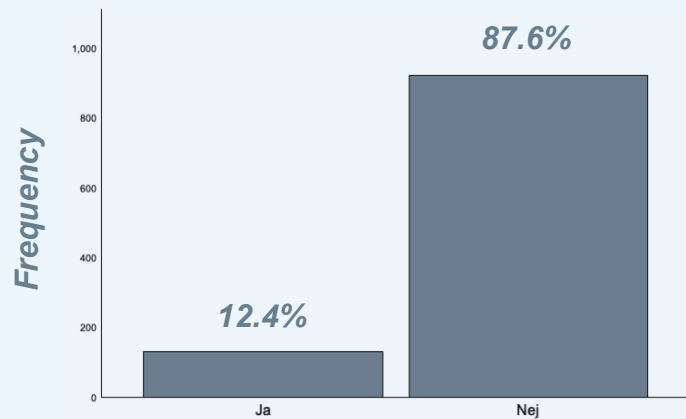
1. Residents' belief that someone would offer to pay for their coffee when they themselves cannot.
2. Residents' own willingness to offer to pay for someone else's coffee when that person cannot.
3. The ratio between the two: do residents have an over- or underestimation of each other's willingness to offer to pay for someone else's coffee

Our results show that 12 percent of residents believe that someone would offer to pay for their coffee when they themselves cannot. This turns out to have a strong correlation with wellbeing. The 12 percent who answer yes have an average Wellbeing Index of 7.42, compared with 6.79 among those who answer no. That is more than half a scale step (corresponding to a happiness increase of +9 percent). Residents therefore do not have particularly high confidence in each other's goodwill in this regard, and an increase would have a large potential effect on wellbeing in Stockholm.

¹¹<https://www.worldhappiness.report/ed/2025/caring-and-sharing-global-analysis-of-happiness-and-kindness/>

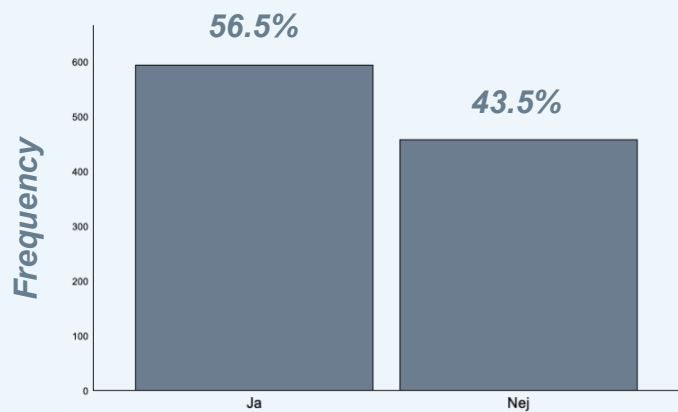
¹²<https://www.worldhappiness.report/ed/2025/caring-and-sharing-global-analysis-of-happiness-and-kindness/#fnref111>

If you forgot your payment card when buying coffee, do you think the person behind you in line would offer to pay?



In sharp contrast, as many as 56 percent of residents say that they themselves would offer to pay for someone else's coffee when that person cannot. This is a positive figure: more than half of the people of Stockholm say they are willing in this regard (even though there is still room for further increase).

If the person in front of you in line to buy coffee had forgotten their payment card, would you offer to pay?

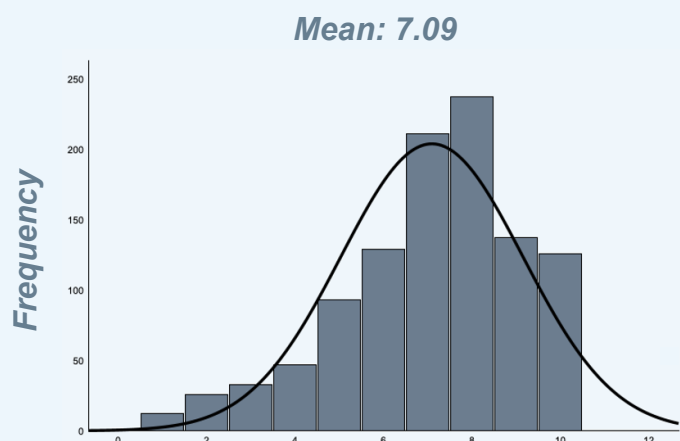


The ratio between the two is 4.67 (56/12). This means that the goodwill of the people of Stockholm is more than four times greater than they themselves believe. There is therefore a large latent wellbeing potential in making residents more aware of how much goodwill actually already exists around them. (For comparison, the wallet test shows an average international ratio of around 2.)¹³

Wellbeing influences satisfaction and the willingness to recommend Stockholm

We asked residents how satisfied they are with living in Stockholm and how willing they are to recommend Stockholm to others:

How satisfied are you overall with living in Stockholm?



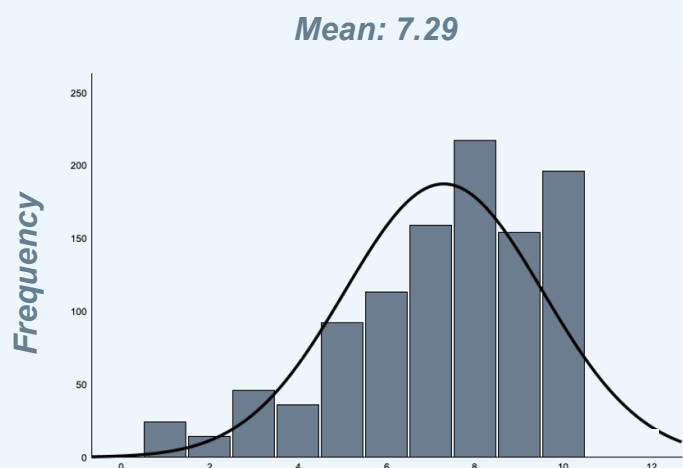
¹³Cohn, A., Maréchal, M. A., Tannenbaum, D., & Zünd, C. L. (2019). Civic honesty around the globe. *Science*, 365(6448), 70-73.

In a stepwise regression based on how much of the variation in residents' satisfaction with living in Stockholm is explained, wellbeing is shown to have a stronger effect than age, gender, and the area in which they live.

<i>Wellbeing – strongest effect ($\beta = 0.554$)</i>
Geographic areas ($\beta = 0.121$)
Age ($\beta = 0.081$)
Gender ($\beta = 0.079$)
$R^2 = 0.346$ (F = 140)

The correlation between the Wellbeing Index and satisfaction with living in Stockholm is strong, 0.57. This may be interpreted as an increase in wellbeing of one scale step raising satisfaction with living in Stockholm by 0.57 scale steps.

How likely is it that you would recommend Stockholm as a city to live in, work in, or visit?



Here too, a stepwise regression shows that wellbeing has a stronger effect on residents' willingness to recommend Stockholm than age, gender, and the area in which they live.

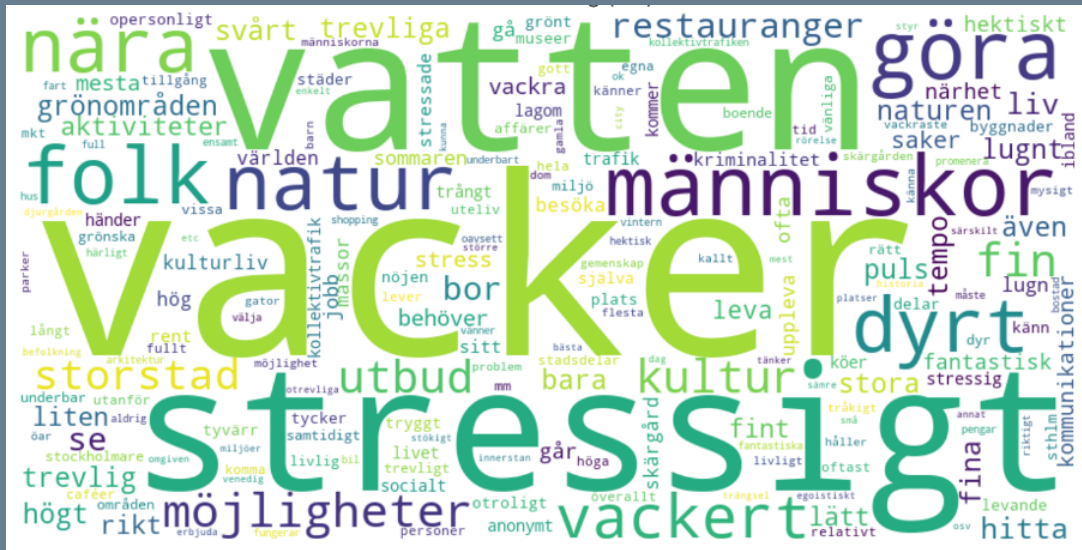
<i>Wellbeing – strongest effect ($\beta = 0.391$)</i>
Geographic areas ($\beta = 0.151$)
Gender ($\beta = 0.066$)
$R^2 = 0.181$ (F =78)

The direct correlation between the Wellbeing Index and the willingness to recommend Stockholm is $r = 0.40$.

These analyses show that interventions to increase residents' wellbeing can be expected to have clear and strong effects on their satisfaction with living in the region and their willingness to recommend Stockholm to others.

Residents' view of Stockholm

We asked residents open-ended questions about their view of Stockholm and conducted text analyses based on the responses. The word clouds visualize which words occur most frequently in the open responses — the larger the word, the more common it is



In a closer textual interpretation, we find that positive qualities such as “beautiful” (“vacker” in Swedish), “water” (“vatten”), “nature” (“natur”), “people” (“folk”), “opportunities” (“möjligheter”), and “culture” (“kultur”) emerge as central themes. They signal that many perceive Stockholm as attractive and close to nature, with access to recreation, the sea, green spaces, and a vibrant cultural life. Words such as “proximity” (“närhet”), “activities” (“aktiviteter”), and “variety” (“utbud”) further reinforce the image of a city where much is available.

At the same time, negative qualities are also expressed. The word “stressful” (“stressigt”) is one of the most prominent, along with “expensive” (“dyrt”), “crowded” (“trångt”), “crime” (“kriminalitet”), and “pace” (“tempo”). This suggests that many perceive Stockholm as a city with a fast pace, social pressure, and economic barriers. Other related words such as “queues” (“köer”), “difficult” (“svårt”), and “problems” (“problem”) reinforce this picture. The word cloud thus shows that Stockholm today is perceived both as beautiful and attractive, but also as demanding and challenging to live in. This dual image reflects a city that offers a lot — but also places high demands on its residents.

An interesting observation is that “people” (“människor”) is a very common word. For better or worse, one might say, Stockholm is associated with the people we meet.



The word “people” (“människor” in Swedish) is even more prominent in how residents would like to describe Stockholm.

Several prominent words — “openness” (“öppenhet”), “welcoming” (“välkomnande”), “togetherness” (“gemenskap”), “safety” (“trygghet”), and “diversity” (“mångfald”) — suggest that residents value a city with trust, social cohesion, and equality.

Words such as “nature” (“natur”), “environment” (“miljö”), “public transport” (“kollektivtrafik”), “clean” (“rent”), and “parks” (“parker”) clearly reappear. This reflects a desire for better balance between urban development and access to calm, green spaces.

“Culture” (“kultur”), “opportunities” (“möjligheter”), and “innovation” (“innovation”) indicate that many envision a future Stockholm as creative, dynamic, and accessible to more people.

Nature, opportunities, and pulse — Stockholm's DNA

A thematic analysis identifies three predominant themes that recur in a large majority of the responses:

Nature

Almost half of all responses include descriptions of the closeness to nature, the water, and beautiful surroundings.

Opportunities

The second most common theme is all the opportunities Stockholm offers. Opportunities for work and education, but also for entertainment, recreation, personal development, and wellbeing.

Pulse

The third most common theme is Stockholm's pulse and pace. Stockholm is eventful and ever-changing — anything can happen.

Final remarks

This is the first report of the Wellbeing Index in Stockholm, based on the quarterly measurement for Q2 2025.

The main purpose of this report has been to account for how we have formulated the Wellbeing Index and some of its conceptual and empirical properties.

We have tested the impact of some fundamental factors on the Wellbeing Index and also analyzed its correlation with residents' satisfaction with living in Stockholm as well as their willingness to recommend Stockholm to others.

Two unique benchmarks have been developed. The Wellbeing Equality Coefficient (WEC) measures how equally wellbeing is distributed among residents. The Coffee Indicator is a variant of the so-called wallet test in the UN's World Happiness Report, which measures people's trust in each other's goodwill (which has a clear correlation with wellbeing).

In this report, we have placed extra focus on residents' views of Stockholm, with the aim of contributing to the formulation of a Stockholm identity.

The next report will present the quarterly measurement of the Wellbeing Index in Stockholm for Q3 2025. It will take a closer look at the distribution of wellbeing in the region and various related factors. It will also place extra focus on one or more new themes.

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