



NATIONAL STATISTICAL COMMITTEE OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF BELARUS

# **Republic of Belarus**

## **Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey of Children and Women 2012**

Preliminary Findings

February 2013



The Belarus Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) of children and women was carried out in 2012 by the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus in cooperation with the main statistical departments of all oblasts and the city of Minsk.

Financial, methodological and technical support was provided by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

MICS is an international household survey programme developed by UNICEF.

The survey is conducted in the Republic of Belarus as part of the fourth global round of MICS surveys (MICS4) and provides up-to-date information on the situation of children and women and measures key indicators that allow countries to monitor progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed upon commitments.

The goal of MICS4 in the Republic of Belarus is to obtain objective information on the mother and child health and child development and education. This type of survey was conducted in the republic for the second time, as Belarus was part of MICS3 in 2005-2007, and made it possible to obtain information on important aspects of the life of children, namely: their state of nutrition and health, the prevalence of child labour, the main methods of raising a child in a family and on the various activities that promote learning in early childhood. Also, due to MICS4 survey a number of indicators were studied for the first time: reproductive behaviour of women, attitude of women and men to domestic violence, sexual behaviour of young people, life satisfaction and other topical for the Republic of Belarus issues.

## INTRODUCTION

This report presents selected results on some of the key topics covered in MICS4 and on a subset of indicators<sup>1</sup>. The results in this report are preliminary and could be refined in the next additions. The full report on the situation of children and women in the Republic of Belarus is scheduled for publication in May 2013.

Fieldwork was carried out between March 28 and July 2, 2012.

<b>Table 1. Sample Size and Response Rates, Republic of Belarus, 2012</b>		
	Number completed	Response rate
Household questionnaires	8284	98.0
Questionnaires for individual women (age 15-49)	5745	97.2
Questionnaires for individual men (age 15-59)	2769*	94.7
Questionnaires for children under five	3443	99.4

\* Men were interviewed in each third household of the clusters visited.

The standard MICS4 questionnaires<sup>2</sup> were adapted to the country context.

<b>Table 2. Questionnaire Content, Republic of Belarus, 2012</b>	
<b>Household Questionnaire</b>	<b>Questionnaire for Children under Five</b>
Household Information Panel	Under-Five Child Information Panel
Household Listing Form	Age
Education	Early Childhood Development
Water and Sanitation	Breastfeeding
Household Characteristics	Care of Illness
Child Labour	
Child Discipline	
Prevention of Iodine Deficiency (IDD)*	

\* Country-specific Module.

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the definitions, numerators, denominators and algorithms of indicators covered in MICS4 see [http://www.childinfo.org/mics4\\_tools.html](http://www.childinfo.org/mics4_tools.html).

<sup>2</sup> See [www.childinfo.org/mics4\\_questionnaire.html](http://www.childinfo.org/mics4_questionnaire.html) for standard MICS4 questionnaires.

<b>Questionnaire for Individual Women (age 15-49)</b>	<b>Questionnaire for Individual Men (age 15-59)</b>
<p>           Woman's Information Panel            Woman's Background            Access To Mass Media And Use of            Information/Communication Technology            Live Birth            Desire for Last Birth            Maternal and Newborn Health            Post-Natal Health Checks            Illness Symptoms            Contraception            Unmet Need            Marriage/Union            Attitudes Toward Domestic Violence            Sexual Behaviour            HIV / AIDS            Tobacco and Alcohol Use            Life Satisfaction         </p>	<p>           Man's Information Panel            Man's Background            Access To Mass Media And Use of            Information/Communication Technology            Marriage/Union            Attitudes Toward Domestic Violence            Sexual Behaviour            HIV / AIDS            Tobacco and Alcohol Use            Life Satisfaction         </p>

# FINDINGS

## NUTRITION

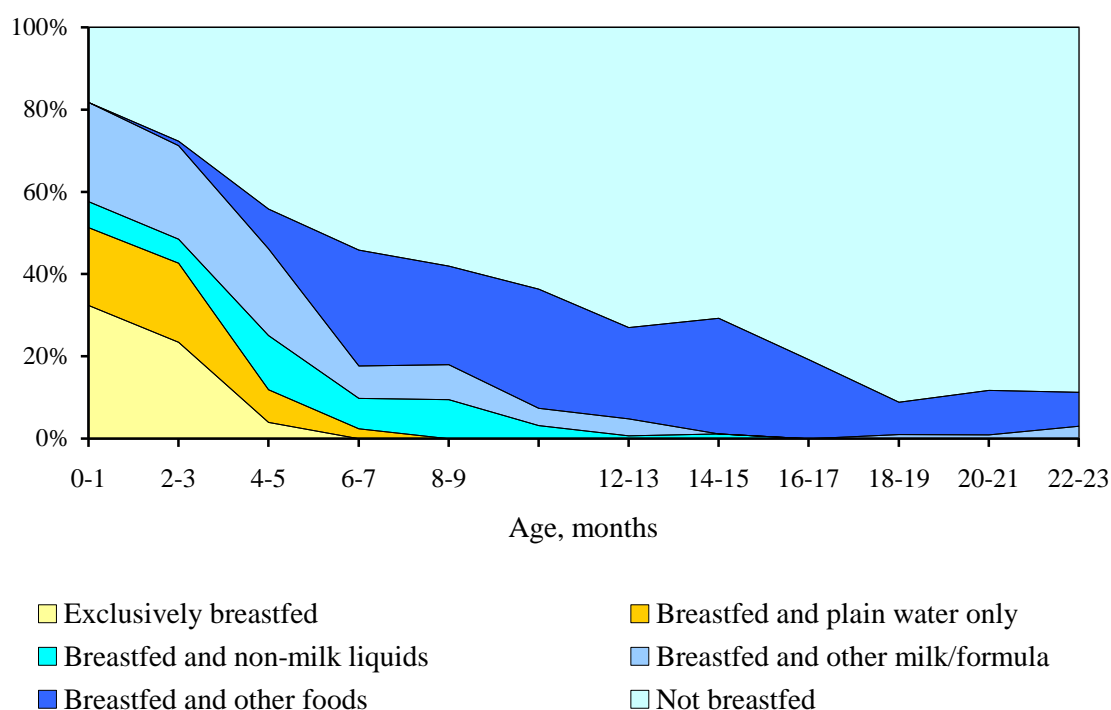
### *Breastfeeding*

According to the findings of the survey, 32 percent of 0-1 month old children are exclusively breastfed; among children that are 2-3 months old the percentage of children that are exclusively breastfed declines to 24 percent. By the sixth month, the percentage of children that are exclusively breastfed is 4 percent.

Besides, among breastfed infants of 2-3 months old 19 percent are receiving breast milk and plain water, 23 percent are receiving breast milk supplemented by other milk or milk formula; among children of 4-5 months old – 8 percent and 21 percent accordingly.

Figure 1 shows the different patterns of breastfeeding by the infant's age in months.

**Figure 1. Percent distribution of children under age 2 years by feeding patterns, by age, Republic of Belarus, 2012**



On average in the country 28 percent of children under one year old and about 12 percent of children under two years old are continuously breastfed.

More than half (58 percent) of children aged 6-8 months receive breast milk and also solid, semi-solid and soft food.

**Table 3. Findings for selected breastfeeding indicators, Republic of Belarus, 2012**

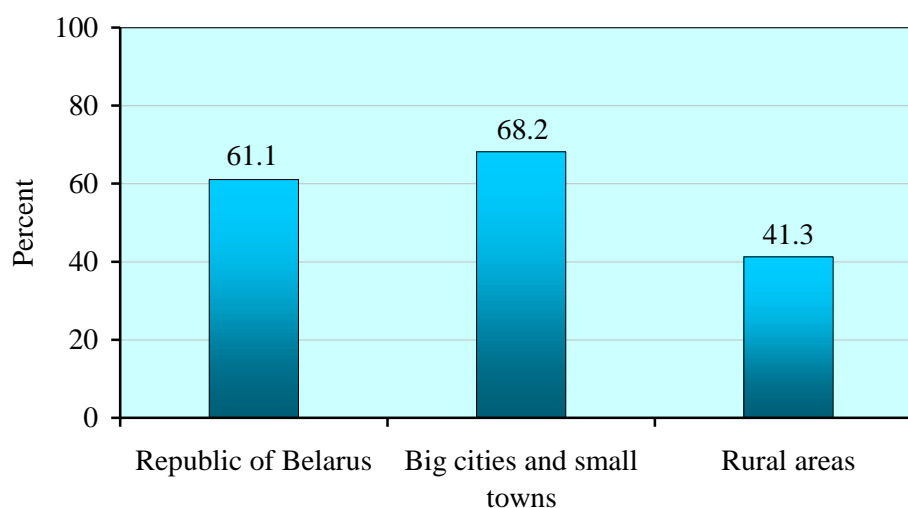
Exclusive breastfeeding under 6 months	19.0	Percent
Continued breastfeeding at 1 year	27.9	Percent
Continued breastfeeding at 2 years	11.5	Percent
Introduction of solid, semi-solid or soft foods (children 6-8 months)	57.6	Percent

## CHILD HEALTH

### *Treatment of Diarrhoea*

In the Republic of Belarus about 3 percent of children under age five years had diarrhoea in the two weeks preceding the survey. The recommended treatment for diarrhoea in children is oral rehydration therapy (ORS packet or recommended homemade fluid or increased fluids) with continued feeding. 61 percent of children with diarrhoea received that treatment. The difference between urban and rural areas is about 27 percentage points.

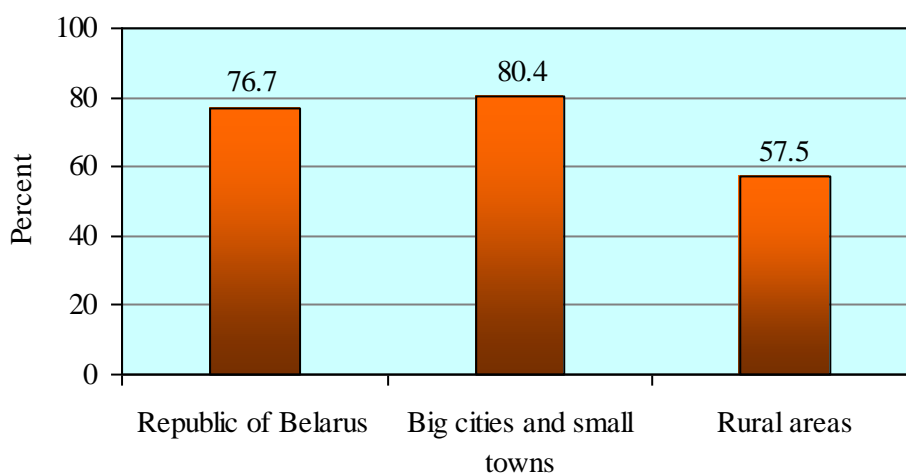
**Figure 2. Percentage of children under age 5 years with diarrhoea who received ORT and continued feeding, Republic of Belarus, 2012**



### ***Antibiotic Treatment of Suspected Pneumonia***

About 7 percent of children under age 5 years had symptoms consistent with pneumonia during the two weeks preceding the survey. From the total number of children with suspected pneumonia 77 percent received antibiotics treatment. The percentage of children under age 5 years with suspected pneumonia who received antibiotics treatment is 1.4 times higher in big cities and small towns than in rural areas.

**Figure 3. Percentage of children under age 5 years with suspected pneumonia who received antibiotics, Republic of Belarus, 2012**



### **WATER AND SANITATION**

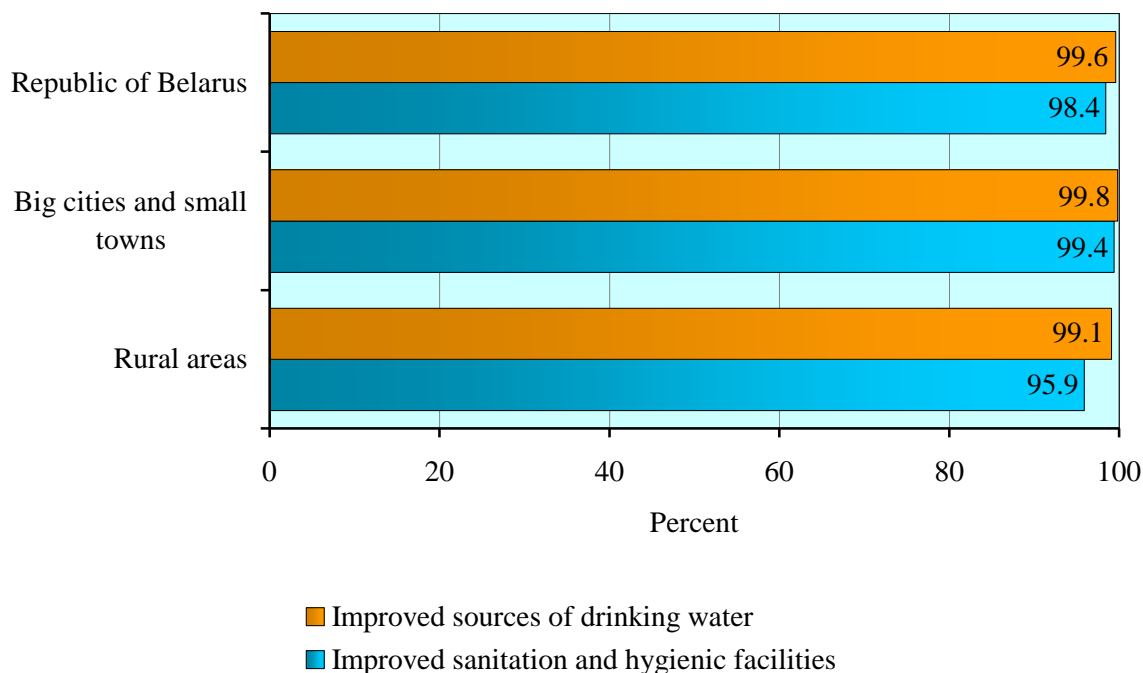
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In the Republic of Belarus overall 99.6 percent of the population use improved water sources. Evidently there is no difference between urban and rural areas: 99.8 and 99.1 percent respectively.

An improved sanitation facility is used by 98 percent of the country population. In this case 96% of the population use improved sanitation and not share this facility with other households. The utilization of unimproved sanitation and hygienic facilities is less than 2 percent.

The sanitation indicator shows a very small difference between big cities and small towns and rural areas: 99 percent of urban and 96 percent of rural population use improved sanitation facilities, correspondingly, 96 percent and 94 percent use the improved sanitation.

**Figure 4. Percentage of the population using improved sources of drinking water and improved sanitation and hygienic facilities, Republic of Belarus, 2012**



## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Among women aged 15-49 years with a live birth in the two years preceding the survey 99.7 percent received antenatal care (ANC) by a doctor at least 4 times. All women (100%) were attended by a doctor, nurse, midwife or auxiliary midwife at delivery and almost all pregnant women (99.9 percent) delivered in a health facility.

More than half (63 percent) of married or in union women aged 15-49 years use one or the other contraceptive method.

The unmet need for contraception (for either spacing or limiting births), is 7 percent, meaning that 7 of 100 women are limited in their planning of pregnancy and giving birth to a/another desired child.

**Table 4. Findings for selected reproductive health indicators, Republic of Belarus, 2012**

Contraceptive Prevalence Rate	63.1	Percent
Unmet Need	7.0	Percent



## CHILD DEVELOPMENT

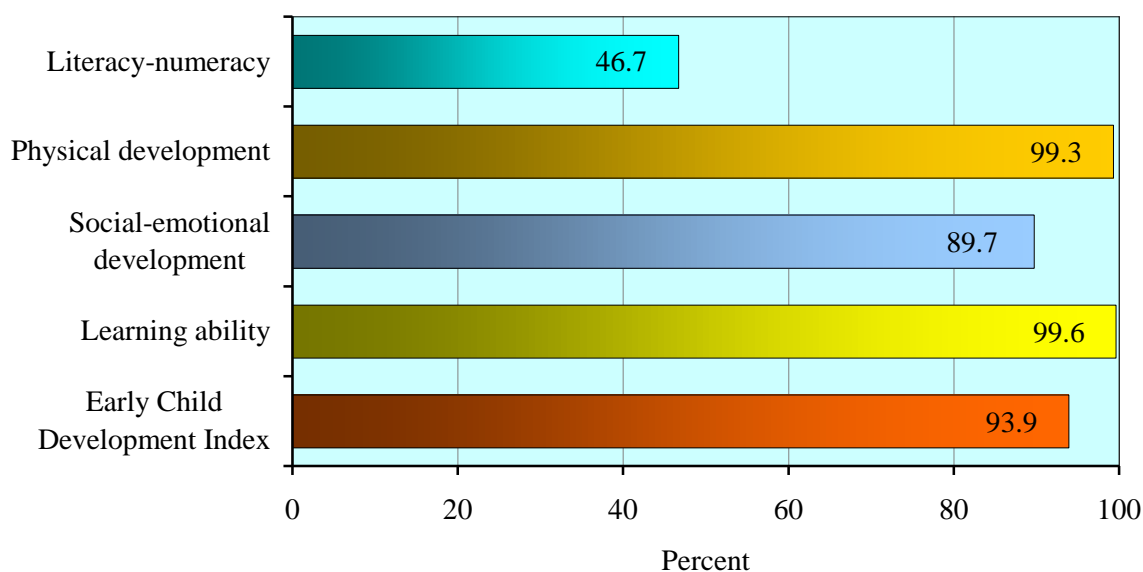
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In the survey early childhood development (for children aged 36-59 months) was assessed in four key domains:

- literacy-numeracy;
- physical (motor skills, freedom of recurrent illness);
- social-emotional;
- learning ability (ability to follow simple instructions, ability to occupy herself/himself independently).

The Early Child Development Index (ECDI) is the percentage of children who are developmentally on track in at least three of these four domains. In the Republic of Belarus the ECDI score for children of age 36-59 months is 94, meanwhile for young children aged 36-47 months it is 92 and for children aged 48-59 months is 96.

**Figure 5. Percentage of children age 36-59 months who are developmentally on track for indicated domains, Republic of Belarus, 2012**



*Literacy Among Young Women*

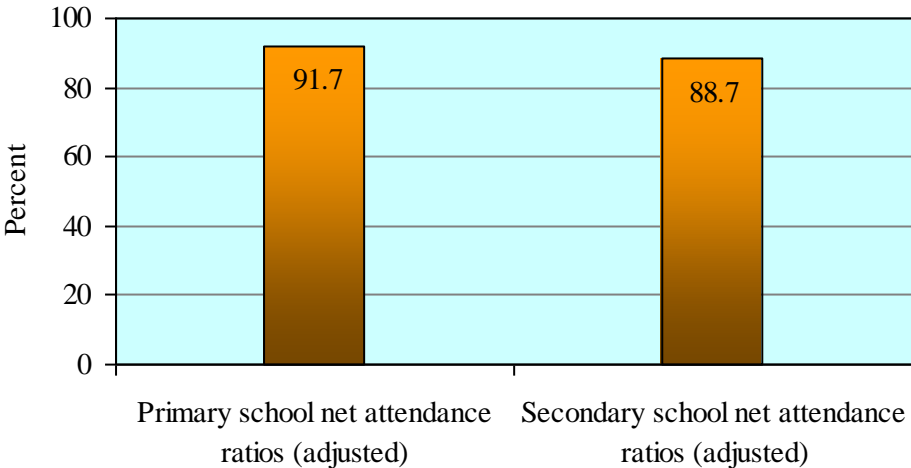
In the Republic of Belarus literacy of young women age 15-24 years is universal. The literacy rate is 100 percent.

*School Attendance*

According to the findings of the survey, 97 percent of children attend pre-school educational institutions: in big cities and small towns – 96 percent and in rural areas – 98 percent of 1<sup>st</sup> grade primary school children.

School attendance is high in the republic: 92 percent of children of primary school age are attending primary school and 89 percent of children of secondary school age are attending secondary school. Herewith, among children aged 6 years 71 percent attend primary school and among children aged 7 years – 98 percent.

**Figure 6. Primary and secondary school net attendance ratios (adjusted), Republic of Belarus, 2012**

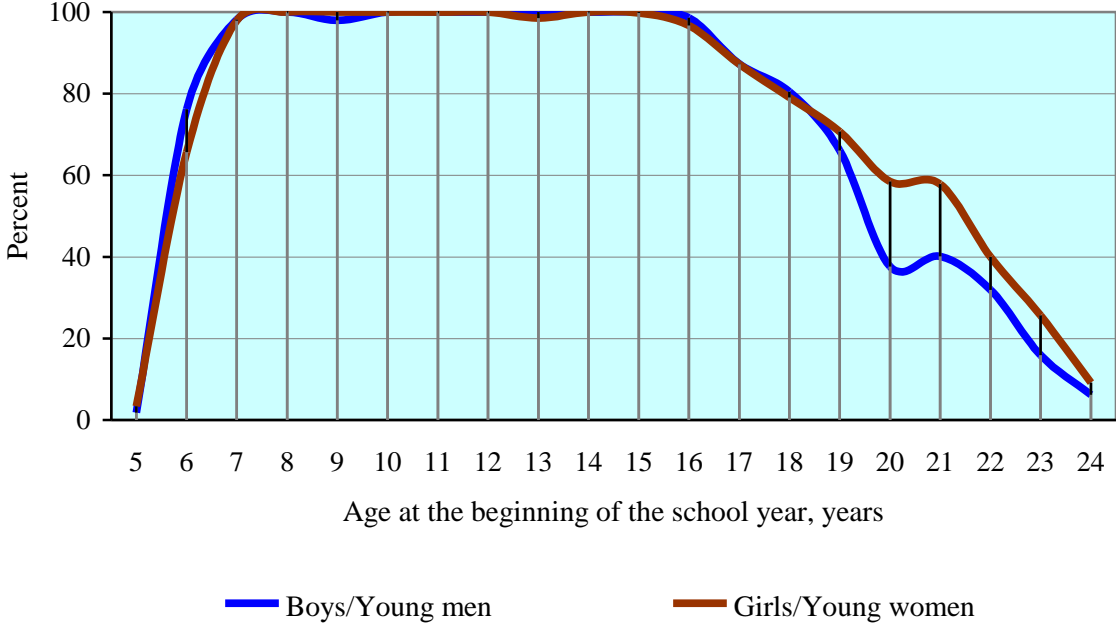


Legislation of the Republic of Belarus provides equal opportunities for girls and boys in education. There is practically no difference of girls’ and boys’ attendance at school: the Gender Parity Index (GPI) for primary and secondary school is close to 1.

According to the Code of Education of the Republic of Belarus the official school starting age is age 6 years and more. Nevertheless, 29 percent of children of age six years and 2 percent of children of age seven years do not attend school. School attendance remains at the level of 100 percent for children of age 8-15 years. As a rule, by the age 16-17 years children are graduating from school and not all of them continue their education at higher levels. By the age 18 years the attendance ratio at the educational institutions is at the level of 80 percent equally among girls and boys.

Gender differentials in the attendance ratio of the educational institutions are observed at the age of 20 years and more. The share of girls of 20-24 years old, obtaining/receiving the education, is in 1.5 times higher than of boys.

**Figure 7. Percentage of population age 5-24 years attending educational institutions, by sex and age, Republic of Belarus, 2012**



**CHILD PROTECTION**

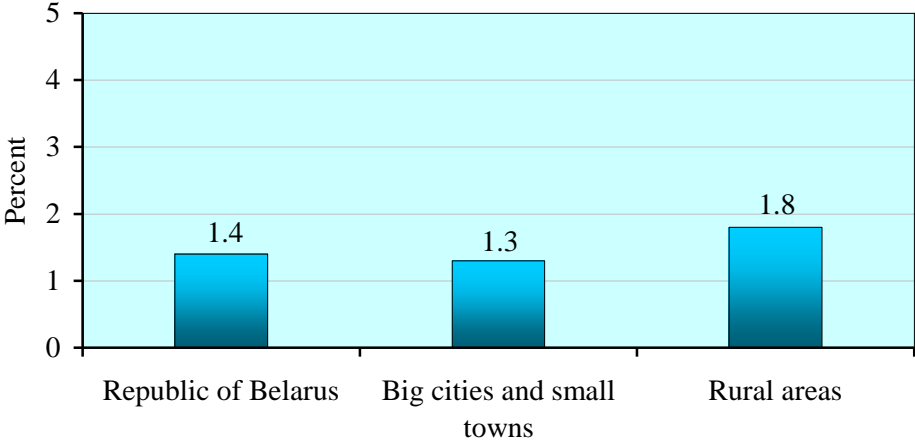
***Child Labour***

A child is considered to be involved in different forms of child labour if during the week preceding the survey:

- a child of age 5-11 years *at least 1 hour per week* was involved in labour activities out of home, in family business or *at least 28 hours per week* was doing household chores, such as cleaning, washing, etc.;
- a child of age 12-14 years *at least 14 hours per week* was involved in labour activities out of home, in family business or *at least 28 hours per week* was doing household chores.

Overall in the republic 1.4 percent of children of age 5-14 years are involved in different forms of child labour, respectively, 1.3 percent of children in the big cities and small towns and 1.8 percent of children in the rural areas.

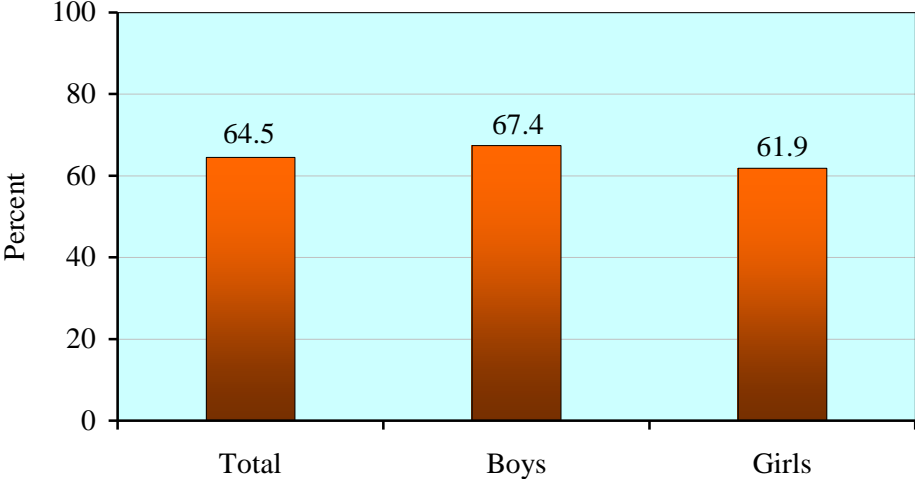
**Figure 8. Percentage of children age 5-14 years who are involved in child labour, Republic of Belarus, 2012**



***Violent Discipline***

Overall in the republic 65 percent of children age 2-14 years experience violent discipline, which includes both psychological pressure and physical punishment. Comparison of the findings by gender shows that a somewhat higher percentage of boys experiences this type of discipline than girls (67 and 62 percent respectively).

**Figure 9. Percentage of children age 2-14 years who experience violent discipline, by sex, Republic of Belarus, 2012**

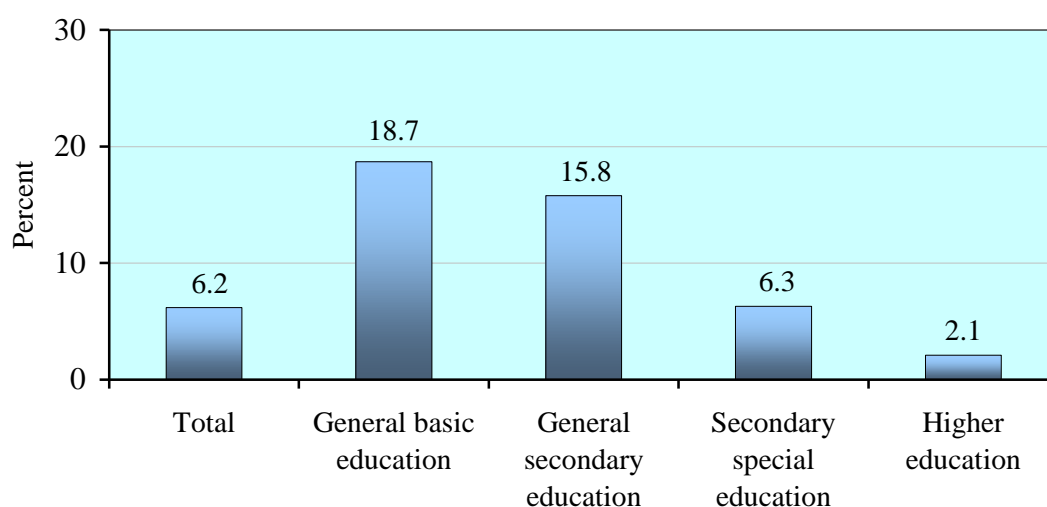


### ***Early Marriage***

In the Republic of Belarus about 6 percent of women age 20-49 years who were first married or in union before age 18. In the big cities and the small towns this rate is 5 percent and in the rural areas – 11 percent.

Significant differences in this indicator are linked to the level of women education: the share of women with general basic education who were first married or in union before age 18 is 19 percent, while the share of women with higher education is 2 percent.

**Figure 10. Percentage of women age 20-49 years who were married before age 18, by education level, Republic of Belarus, 2012**



### **HIV/AIDS, Sexual Behaviour**

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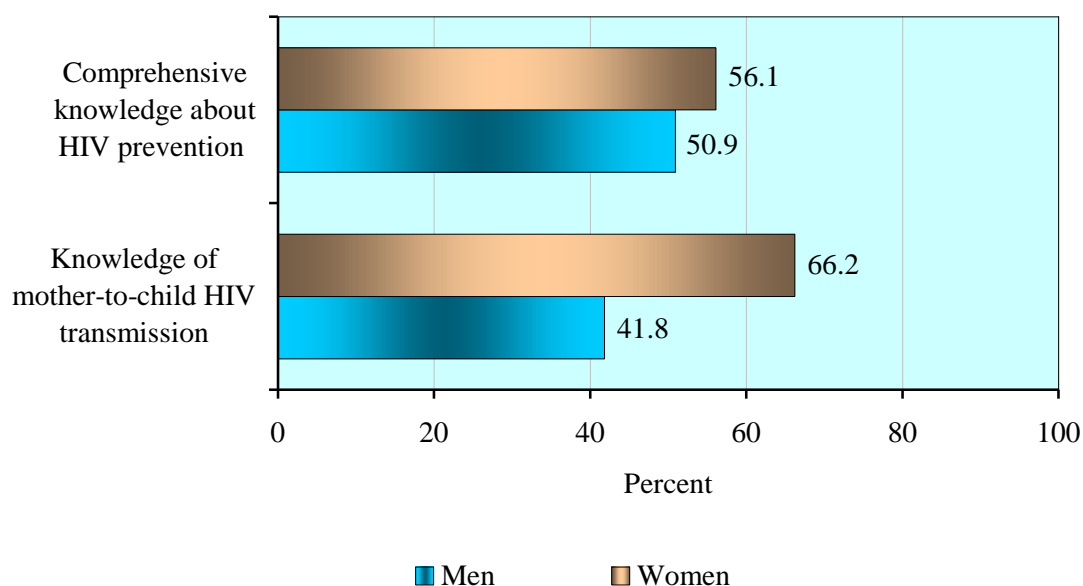
#### ***HIV/AIDS***

Practically all interviewed women have heard of AIDS or HIV: 99.8 percent of women age 15-24 years and 99.9 percent of women age 15-49 years. Among men the percentage is, respectively, 99.7 percent and 99.9 percent.

Comprehensive knowledge about HIV prevention have 56 percent women and 51 percent of men age 15-24 years, 55 percent of women and 57 percent of men age 15-49 years.

Correctly identify all three ways of mother-to-child HIV transmission can 66 percent of young women and 42 percent of young men. Among women age 15-49 years this indicator is 65 percent and among men age 15-49 years – 50 percent.

**Figure 11. Knowledge about HIV/AIDS prevention and transmission, for young people age 15-24 years, Republic of Belarus, 2012**



### *Sexual Behaviour*

According to the results of the survey, 64 percent of women and 67 percent of men age 15-24 years have had sex, and besides, 0.7 percent of young women and 3.4 percent of young men had their first sexual experience at the age before 15 years.

In the 12 months preceding the survey 39 percent of women and 69 percent of men age 15-24 years had sex with a non-regular partner (a non-marital, non-cohabiting partner). Among young women who had sex with a non-regular partner 69 percent reported that a condom was used during a sexual intercourse. Among young men this indicator is 82 percent.

**Table 5. Findings for selected sexual behaviour indicators for young people age 15-24 years, Republic of Belarus, 2012**

	Women	Men	
Ever had sex	63.8	67.4	Percent
Sex with non-regular partners	38.6	68.6	Percent
Condom use with non-regular partners	68.5	82.1	Percent

# ATTITUDES TOWARD DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Study of public attitudes towards domestic violence reveals traditional beliefs related to violence against women by their husbands/partners. If women agree with the statement that in certain situations the husband/partner has the right to hit or beat his wife / partner, then in real life, they tend to be abused. Similarly, men who agree with these statements, in real life tend to use violence against their wives/partners.

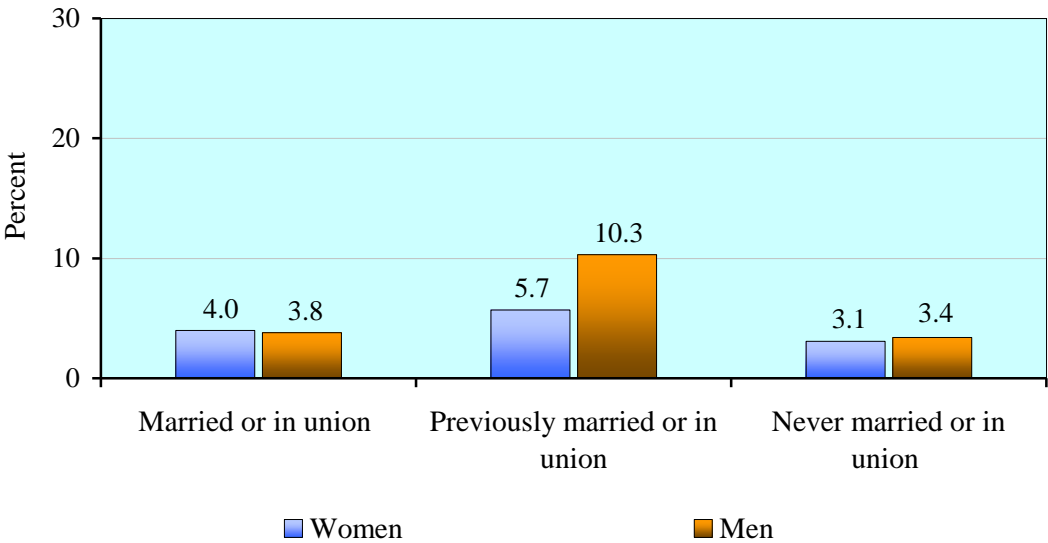
According to the findings of the survey, in the Republic of Belarus most of the population expressed their negative attitude to domestic violence. Only 4 percent of women and men age 15-49 years gave positive responses and justified husbands/partners in hitting or beating their wives/partners at least in one of the following situations:

- she goes out without telling him;
- she neglects the children;
- she argues with him;
- she refuses to have sex with him;
- she burns the food.

In big cities and in small towns the share of positive responses is lower than in rural areas: among women it is 3 percent against 8 percent and among men 3 percent versus 7 percent.

Differences in this indicator also vary depending of the marital status of the respondents.

**Figure 12. Percentage of the population age 15-49 years justifying a husband/partner in hitting or beating his wife/partner in a certain situation, by marital status, Republic of Belarus, 2012**

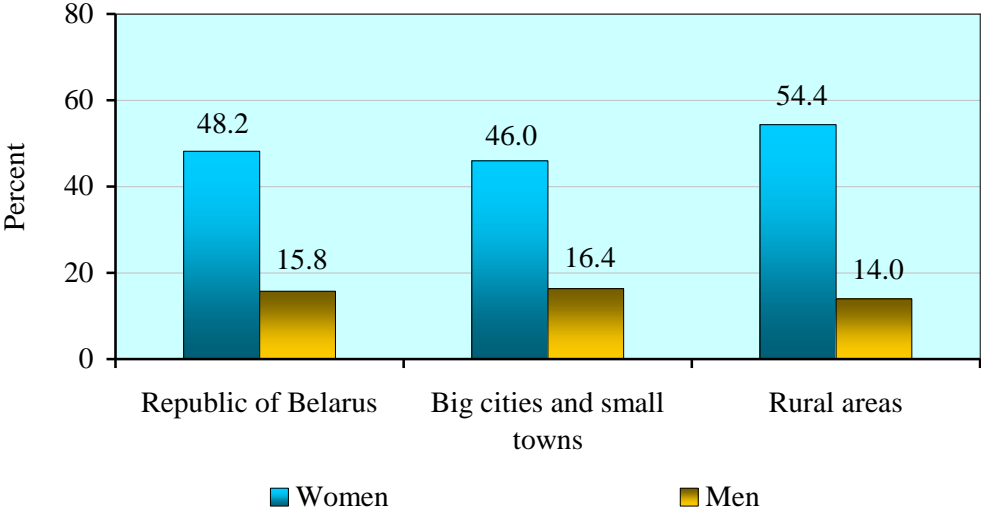


**TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL USE**

*Tobacco Use*

According to the findings of the survey, in the Republic of Belarus 48 percent of women age 15-49 years and 16 percent of men of the same age never smoked and never used smoked tobacco products. Differences in this indicator are registered not only by gender, but also by place of residence.

**Figure 13. Percentage of the population age 15-49 years who never smoked or never used smoked tobacco products, Republic of Belarus, 2012**



Among the population age 15-49 years who ever smoked or ever used smoked tobacco products 39 percent of women and 53 percent of men smoked only cigarettes, 2 percent of women and 1.4 percent of men used only smoked tobacco products (cigars, water pipe and other). 4 percent of women and 19 percent of men smoked at least one cigarette for the first time under age 15.



**Table 6. Findings for selected tobacco products use indicators for young people age 15-24 years, Republic of Belarus, 2012**

	Women	Men	
Never smoked and never used smoked tobacco products	50.8	32.4	Percent
Smoked at least one cigarette under age 15	6.5	17.5	Percent
Smoked and used smoked tobacco products – total	49.2	67.6	Percent
in which:			
smoked only cigarettes	32.3	36.2	Percent
smoked cigarettes and used smoked tobacco products	14.3	29.2	Percent
used only smoked tobacco products	2.5	2.1	Percent

### *Alcohol Use*

In the Republic of Belarus among the population age 15-49 years 6 percent of women and 5 percent of men never used alcohol. Nevertheless, about 4 percent of women and 9 percent of men had the first at least one drink of alcohol (one bottle or can of beer, or one glass of wine, or one shot of vodka, cognac and other alcoholic drinks) under age 15 years.

**Table 7. Findings for selected alcohol use indicators for young people age 15-24 years, percent, Republic of Belarus, 2012**

	Women	Men	
Never used alcohol	16.3	16.6	Percent
Had alcohol at least once under age 15	10.3	8.1	Percent

## ACCESS TO MASS MEDIA AND USE OF INFORMATION/COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

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### *Access to Mass Media*

The proportion of the population age 15-49 years who at least once a week read a newspaper or magazine is 77 percent of women and 72 percent of men, listen to radio – 52 percent of women and 62 percent of men, watch television – equally 96 percent of women and of men. At the same time about 1 percent of women and the same proportion of men are not exposed to any of mass media.

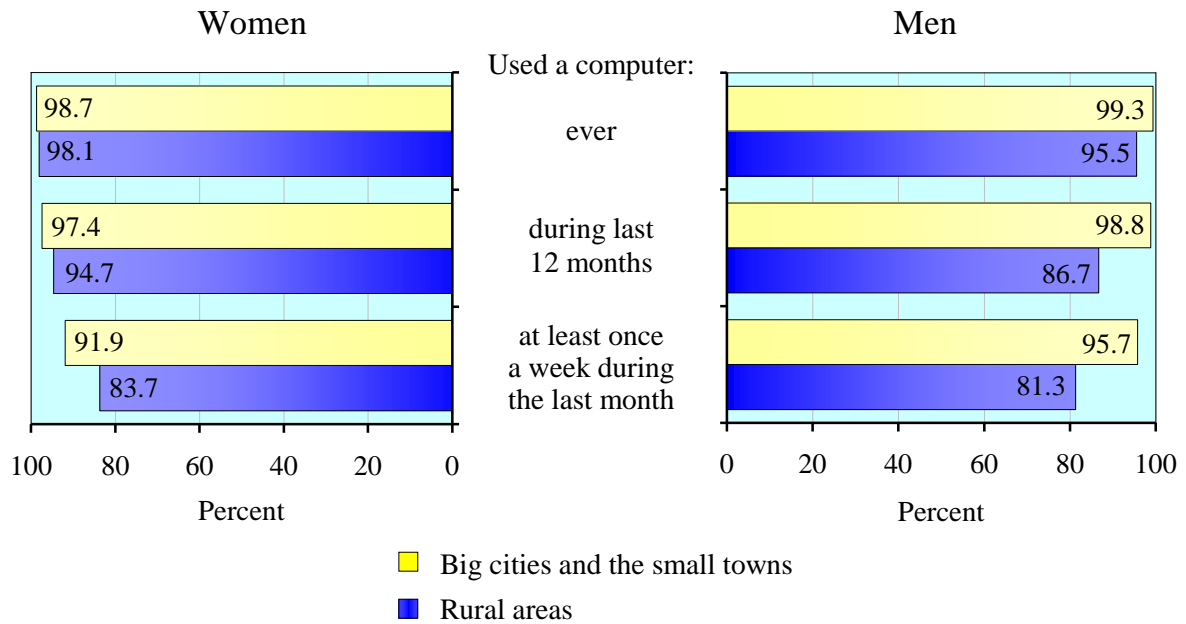
**Table 8. Findings for selected access to mass media indicators for young people age 15-24 years, Republic of Belarus, 2012**

	Women	Men	
At least once a week:			
read a newspaper or magazine	70.8	53.8	Percent
listen to radio	43.1	51.2	Percent
watch television	92.7	94.4	Percent
No mass media	1.3	1.3	Percent

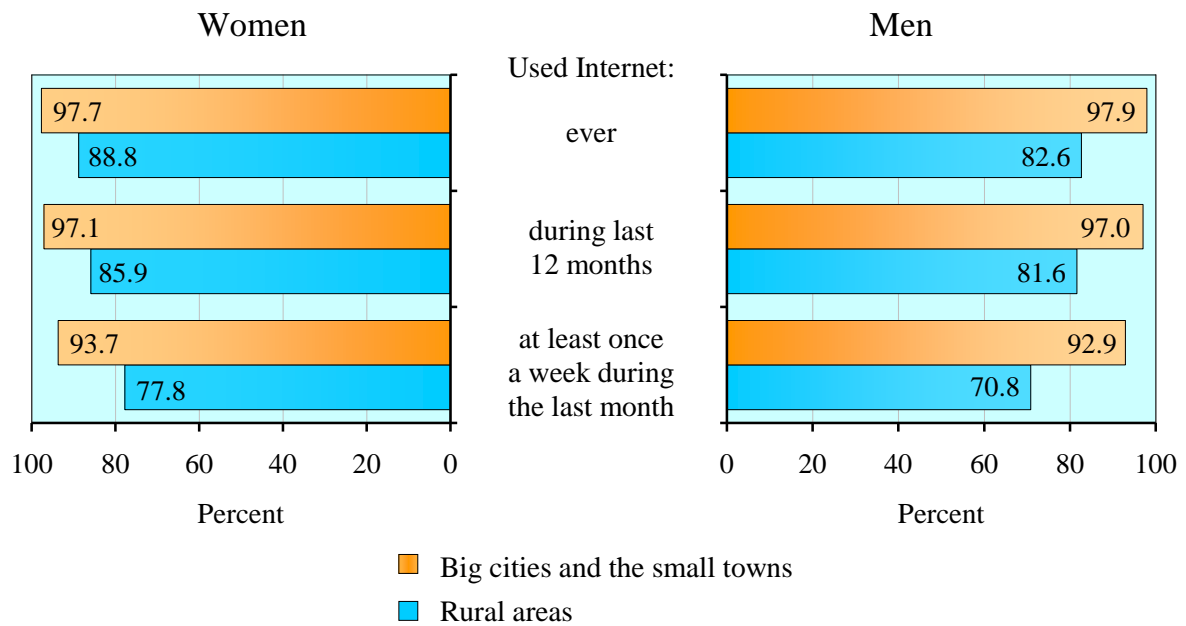
### Use of Information/Communication Technologies

Overall in the republic among young people age 15-24 years more than 98 percent (98.6 percent of women and 98.4 percent of men) ever used a computer and about 95 percent (95.3 percent of women and 94.2 percent of men) had access to Internet with any device. There are no significant differences in computer use by place of residence, while the proportion of Internet users in big cities and small towns is by 10-20 percentage points.

**Figure 14. Percentage of population age 15-24 years that used computer, Republic of Belarus, 2012**



**Figure 15. Percentage of population age 15-24 years that used Internet, Republic of Belarus, 2012**



## LIFE SATISFACTION

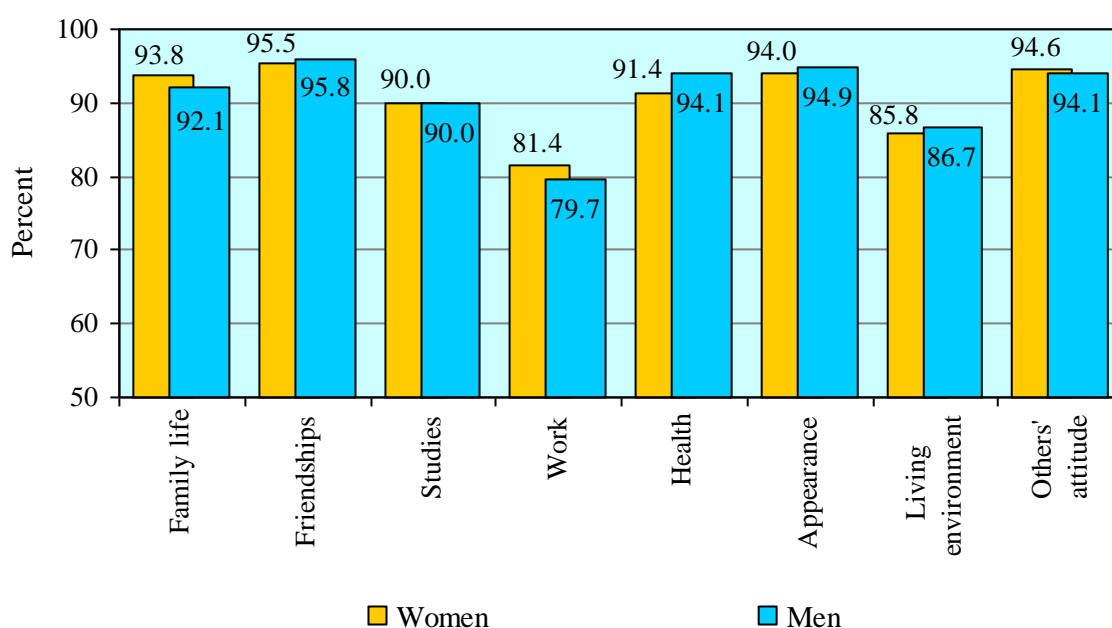
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In this survey life satisfaction is defined as a complete or partial satisfaction of the respondents with such aspects of their life as:

- family life;
- friendships;
- studies (for those who are at any educational institution) or work (for those who currently work);
- health;
- appearance how they look ;
- living environment (improvement and quality of housing);
- attitude on the part of others.

In the Republic of Belarus share of women and share of men age 15-24 years satisfied with life in general is practically equal of 65 percent.

**Figure 16. Life satisfaction by young people age 15-24 years, by different aspects of life, Republic of Belarus, 2012**



The proportion of young people overall positively assessing the changes in their lives during the past year is 56 percent among young women and 46 percent of young men. Optimism about the life improvement in one year from now is manifested by 86 percent of women and 81 percent of men age 15-24 years.