

*Dear Readers,*

Welcome to the fourth issue of the Newsletter! As you will observe, the interest in measuring societal progress and issues such as quality of life and well-being have been growing all over the world. A great deal of further interesting work is underway. Moreover, the financial and economic crisis has exposed the fragility of certain earnings achieved during the past years. Many people are feeling exceptionally vulnerable; this is encouraging them to reflect on the key parameters which are used to assess the progress of their societies.

The last few months have been a busy period for the Global Project and the rest of 2009 is going to be just as busy. In the second half of 2008, over 20 presentations were given at events around the world. We ran a conference in [Moscow with ROSSTAT](#) for the CIS and Eastern European Countries in September, as well as two conferences on local community indicators organised in partnership with the Political and Ethical Knowledge on Economic Activities ([PEKEA](#)) and the Council of Europe ([COE](#)), another 10 events are planned for 2009.

The first [Global Project training courses](#) were run successfully in Italy, Slovakia and Jordan, with another 11 courses in preparation for 2009. A number of research projects are near completion. Team members are also busy organising the [3rd World Forum in Busan, Korea on the 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> of October, 2009](#), with the KNSO.

Some of the other major achievements of the second half of 2008 include:

- Regional working groups were established in OECD/Europe and for the Arab Region. Strong support was recently expressed by the UNESCAP Committee on Statistics for the Asia and Pacific region;
- The Taxonomy of progress (version 1.0) is nearly ready for the second peer review, as well as the 'Handbook on measuring societal progress' for its first peer review. A project on measuring trust (run with Unicredit) is currently underway. A handbook on 'measuring well-being involving citizens' is being researched. A report on 'What makes a successful set of indicators?' has been completed. The [Knowledge Base](#) on Measuring Progress has now over 400 related documents listed.
- A web library on innovative ICT tools and Wiki4Progress are currently under development.

A number of new [associates](#) of the Global Project have been recently appointed; they are working with us on specific projects. They include the International Institute for Information Design (Austria), the Institute for Studies and Economic Analyses (Italy), International Society for Quality of Life Studies, the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics, Foundation Du Devenir (Switzerland), the National Centre for Visual Analytics (Sweden) and the Community Indicators Consortium (USA). Meanwhile our list of Global Project [Correspondents](#) is growing steadily; it now includes the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Atkinson Foundation (Canada), the Hungarian and Irish Central Statistical Offices, and Foro Consultivo Científico y Tecnológico (Mexico). To see a full list [click here](#) of organisations formally involved in the Global Project network.

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At the same time, some well known experts and political leaders have also been discussing progress and its measurement. Some of the most interesting recent articles include;

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"We have known for years that human economic activity exhausts our natural resources and damages our fragile environment, yet economists and governments have been slow to incorporate them into their measurements." Written by Nobel Prize laureate [Joseph Stiglitz](#).

Read his inspiring paper on ["Progress what Progress?"](#)

§

French President Sarkozy's [Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress](#) is based on increasing concerns about the adequacy of current measures of economic performance. There are broader concerns about the relevance of these figures as measures of societal well-being, as well as measures of economic, environmental, and social sustainability.

§

The [World Economic Forum](#) (Davos, Switzerland) has a Network of Global Agenda Councils comprising 68 Councils whose members are collaboratively addressing the world's key issues and challenges. Council Members are amongst the world's leading and most influential thinkers. One council is dealing with **Benchmarking the Progress in Society**: [Report - Issue Description](#)

§

[A more humane way to measure progress](#) (The Financial Times 31.01.2009) and read some more interesting news articles about ['What the World is saying'](#) on our website Newsroom.

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The current financial crisis highlights the need for new indicators. Read this interesting [article](#) from the [FAIR](#) group in France.

*With best wishes,*

*Lynda Hawe, Editor*



[Torres Del Paine National Park, Chile](#) © Jon Hall 2009

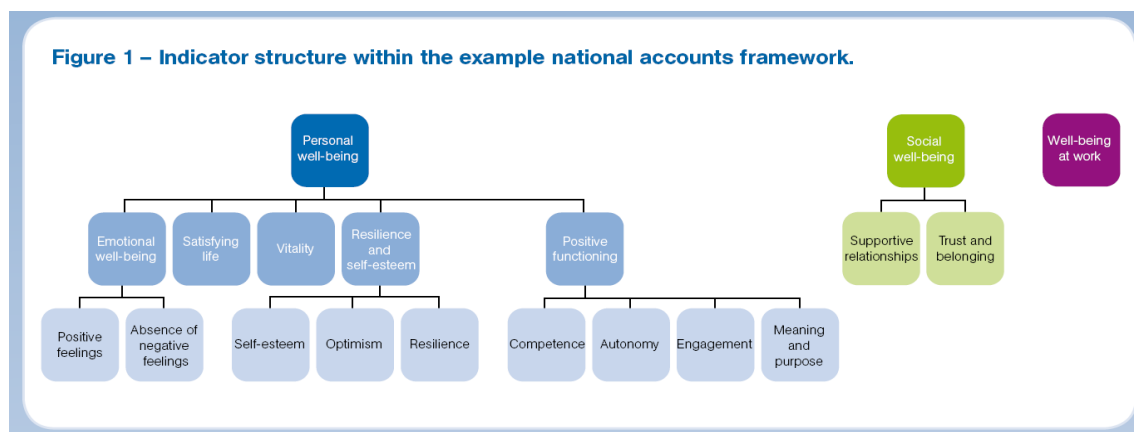
## National Accounts of Well-Being

By Saamah Abdallah, New Economics Foundation (nef)

No assessment of the progress of societies would be complete without measuring people's *subjective well-being* – their experiences, feelings and perceptions of how their lives are going. For this reason, **nef** (the new economics foundation) launched, in January 2009, the *National Accounts of Well-Being*: a radical robust proposal to guide the direction of modern societies. The framework we have devised for National Accounts are an entry point – a way to start the debate about how governments should measure people's well-being. **nef** calls on governments, civil society, statisticians and academics to work together to refine the measurements, begin collecting them on a regular, systematic basis, and use them to inform policy. As many organisations and academics have already recognised (including the OECD itself), it is time to move beyond purely economic indicators as markers of the success or failure of countries and policies.

Academics have been studying the measurement of what is often called 'life satisfaction' or 'happiness' since the early 1970s. Indeed, every year since 1976, levels of happiness in Europe have been measured in the Eurobarometer survey. Typically, however, these data are based on the response to a single question. It is not until recently that the science of well-being has developed to the point where more rigorous, thorough assessments of people's well-being can be attempted, that separate out different aspects of well-being, and that allow policy makers to begin to consider how their policy areas impact on well-being as a whole.

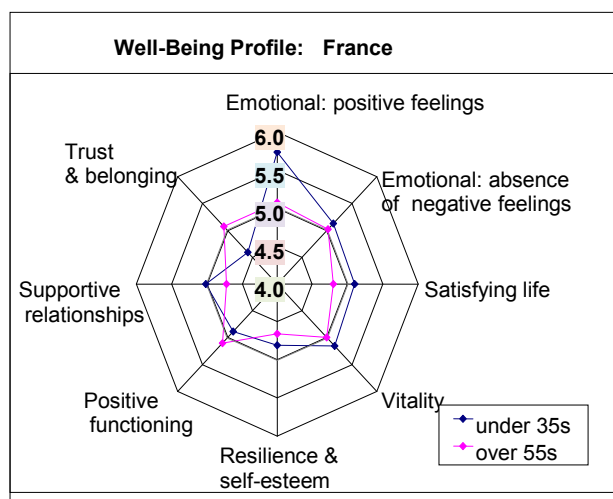
In 2007, data was released from a 50-question module, included in the European Social Survey, exclusively on personal and social well-being, and which **nef** had helped design in collaboration with the University of Cambridge and four other European research centres. **nef's National Accounts of Well-Being** use these data to explore the pattern of well-being in 22 European countries. The hierarchical framework used is shown in the figure below.



Personal		Social	
Denmark	5.96	Denmark	5.89
Switzerland	5.80	Norway	5.77
Austria	5.61	Spain	5.58
Norway	5.61	Switzerland	5.52
Finland	5.52	Sweden	5.44
Ireland	5.50	Ireland	5.37
Sweden	5.45	Portugal	5.31
Netherlands	5.33	Netherlands	5.30
Cyprus	5.30	Finland	5.26
Belgium	5.16	Austria	5.13
Germany	5.14	Hungary	5.10
Spain	5.12	Cyprus	4.93
UK	5.07	Belgium	4.92
Slovenia	5.04	Bulgaria	4.91
France	4.97	UK	4.90
Poland	4.79	Estonia	4.90
Estonia	4.71	Germany	4.88
Portugal	4.52	Poland	4.83
Slovakia	4.50	France	4.80
Hungary	4.41	Slovenia	4.78
Bulgaria	4.30	Slovakia	4.64
Ukraine	4.30	Ukraine	4.61

Measures can be generated and analysed at each level of the hierarchy, using a technique involving standardisation, aggregation and transformation. They allow comparisons between countries as well as within countries (e.g. between different age groups or income groups). The table below shows an example of this, by looking at the ranked scores of countries for the two top-level indicators (personal well-being and social well-being). Scores are on a 0-10 scale, where 5 is always the European average.

The *National Accounts of Well-Being* also enables a focus on specific countries or population groups, to create Well-Being Profiles identifying areas of particularly low or high well-being. The Profile below shows two age groups in France, the under 35s and over 55s. Where the profile goes outside of the grey octagon, that indicates the group has higher well-being than the European average. Where it falls inside the octagon, it has lower well-being than the European average.



Studying these patterns should help policy makers identify where they need to focus their efforts. For example, the chart above suggests that, in France, much work could be done to improve younger people's sense of trust and belonging in their communities, whilst older people may benefit from care policies that ensure they are able to maintain or build their closer relationships.

With the current global economic down-turn, there is no more important time to focus on well-being. As our economic orthodoxies collapse around us, do we struggle to prop up measures such as GDP which are obviously telling us an incomplete story? Or do we identify what truly is important to the lives of citizens, and aim to ensure that policies produce gains measured in those terms? The National Accounts of Well-Being model provides a first, urgently-needed step along the latter path.

To find out more, go to the interactive website: [www.nationalaccountsowell-being.org](http://www.nationalaccountsowell-being.org), to download the report.

## The Global Project on "Measuring the Progress of Societies"

**Mission Statement:** Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies exists to foster the development of sets of key economic, social and environmental indicators to provide a comprehensive picture of how the well-being of a society is evolving. It also seeks to encourage the use of indicator sets to inform and promote evidence-based decision-making, within and across the public, private and citizen sectors. The project is open to all sectors of society, building both on good practice and innovative research work.

### What we are doing

#### Why is our work important

#### Frequently Asked Questions

The Global Project on "Measuring the Progress of Societies" is hosted by the OECD and run in collaboration with other international and regional partners, it seeks to become the world wide reference point for those who wish to measure, and assess the progress of their societies.

### Who is involved in the Global Project

The project's network comprises a growing number of: [Partners](#) - [Associates](#) - [Correspondents](#) - [Other](#)

The next Global Project Board meeting will be in New York on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February 2009.

- [Overview of Research](#)
- [Training Courses](#)
- [International Survey](#)
- [Knowledge Base](#)
- [Information into Knowledge](#)
- [Future Events](#)

### World Forum Korea 27-30 October 2009

The online registration will be available soon. In the meantime, if you are interested in attending, please write to us stating your interest and giving some background information about your expertise and experience.

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**The Australian Treasury's Well-being Framework**  
 By Ken Henry, Secretary of the Treasury

Several years ago, a structured series of internal conversations exploring organisational identity culminated in the development of a well-being framework to underpin the Australian Treasury's policy analysis and advice. The framework is based on economic principles, but has been designed, in part, to construct a set of bridges to other disciplines of interest to policy analysts.

The dimensions of the well-being framework are: (i) the level of opportunity and freedom that people enjoy; (ii) the (aggregate) level of consumption possibilities; (iii) the distribution of those consumption possibilities; (iv) the level of risk that people are required to bear; and (v) the level of complexity that people are required to deal with. These dimensions are neither comprehensive nor independent. They have been chosen because they describe the aspects of well-being that have proven to be most relevant to the Treasury's policy advising responsibilities at the centre of Australian government.

**The framework**

Treasury's well-being framework adopts a generalised-utilitarian approach. Thus, in addition to income and (material) consumption, a policy relevant assessment of well-being, both at the individual and social level, will depend on health, education, social relationships, crime rates, air and water quality, biodiversity, and a myriad of other aspects of life experience that people have reason to value.

The framework is descriptive, providing a context for public policy analysis and advice that encourages a broad assessment of the costs and benefits of all policies. Each of the dimensions of the well-being framework is considered briefly below.

**Australian Treasury's Well-being Framework**



*Opportunity and freedom*

The Treasury's perspective on opportunity and freedom accords closely with Amartya Sen's (1999) articulation of the contribution (both constitutive and instrumental) to development of 'substantive freedoms that people have reason to enjoy'. In language that has become increasingly influential in Australian policy circles in recent years, the Treasury is interested in the 'capabilities' that Australians have to lead lives they have reason to value.

In the development context, the capabilities that Sen considers make an important (constitutive) contribution include: avoidance of deprivations like starvation and premature mortality; literacy and numeracy; political participation; and freedom of speech. Even in a relatively developed country like Australia, none of these capabilities can be taken for granted. Yet, in 'developed' countries, capability enhancement necessarily takes policy thinking beyond the most important work of avoiding such deprivations. Critically, the focus on capability enhancement has validity in countries at all stages of (absolute) development.

*Consumption possibilities*

The level of consumption possibilities refers to society's command over resources to obtain goods and services to satisfy the needs and wants of its members.

The concept should be considered in its broadest sense. Command over resources encompasses traditional economic concepts of income, as well as less tangible concepts such as application of political authority. The concept includes both market and non-market goods and services, both material and intangible. Thus, it sees value in voluntary and community work, personal and professional relationships, and the quality of the physical environment, education, health and leisure

*Distribution*

Distribution has both spatial and temporal dimensions. It refers to the spread of all aspects of consumption possibilities across the population, including across different societal groups, geographic regions and generations.

*Risk*

Risk refers to the intrinsic uncertainty in possible outcomes that is present in almost all decisions. In this broadest conceptual sense, risk impacts on all individuals, and is everywhere in the economy and in society (Arrow 1951).

People have different preferences towards risk. All else being equal, it would be expected that well-being would be improved if there is a better match

between risk preferences and risk borne. Achieving a better match between the risk exposure and risk preferences of citizens is complicated by the fact that contexts, paths, and perceptions matter (Kahneman 2003).

### *Complexity*

Complexity refers to the proliferation of the number of considerations, and the interconnections between those considerations, for many economic and broader social decisions. A critical difference with some of the other dimensions is that opportunities to modify exposure to complexity may be limited, especially the complexity associated with dealing with governments.

### *Interactions between dimensions*

There are strong interactions between the dimensions of the well-being framework.

Generally, policies that increase aggregate consumption possibilities are likely to enhance societal capacity to improve other aspects of well-being. But that is not the same thing as saying that those other aspects will, in fact, be improved. Thus, policies that promote faster growth in GDP per capita should not be assumed to be well-being-enhancing; a proper assessment would include an exploration of their implications for distribution, complexity, risk and (of course) opportunity and freedom. On the other hand, policies that promote opportunity and freedom (in the sense of capability enhancement) are likely to be associated with improvements in more than one of the other elements of well-being. Thus, for example, addressing capability deprivation is likely to expand consumption possibilities in an instrumental sense and alleviate poverty and social exclusion both instrumentally and constitutively.

### **Measuring well-being**

The generalised-utilitarian approach contained in the Treasury's well-being framework requires considerable information beyond that provided by traditional measures of household consumption, income and GDP.

Helpfully, the Australian Bureau of Statistics publication, *Measures of Australia's Progress*, brings together statistics across a wide range of economic, social and environmental outcomes to provide a better information base for considering well-being in Australia (ABS, 2006). Apart from reporting conventional economic statistics of income, consumption and productivity, it also provides information on other key indicators such as life expectancy, education levels, biodiversity levels, air pollution and levels of crime.

The ABS' work in this area has been influential, playing a role in the establishment of The Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies, which aims to create social, economic and environmental indicators that can be compared across countries and through time.

The development of quantitative indicators of progress against a full set of well-being elements will make an important contribution to the development of policies, in all countries, that allow citizens to choose lives they have reason to value.

### **References**

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Measuring Progress, Ireland © Lynda Hawe, 2008

## Sustainable Society Index (SSI), Romania-2008

By Ciprian Popovici and Geurt van de Kerk, SSI

*A new instrument for measuring and monitoring its progress towards sustainability has recently been introduced in Romania. The Sustainable Society Index – SSI – is an innovative tool, which supports the way each society is moving towards sustainable development.*

### Development of the SSI-Romania-2008

Autumn 2007 the development started of a tailor-made index for Romania, based on the worldwide Sustainable Society Index. Five partners have worked on the development: MESD – Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, NEPA – National Environmental Protection Agency and NIS – National Institute of Statistics, together with Green partners, a Romanian consultancy firm and the Sustainable Society Foundation from the Netherlands.

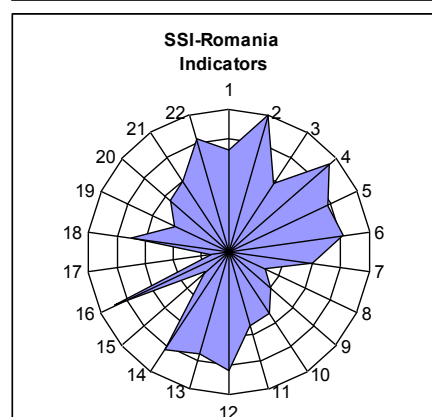
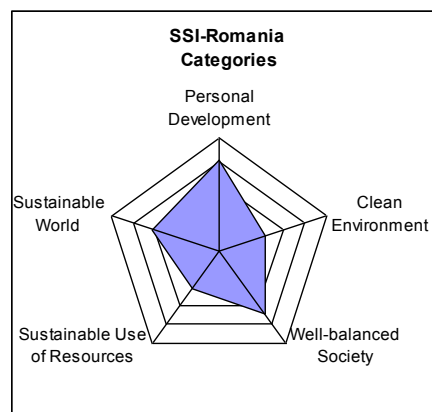
During a number of meetings and workshops the concept of the SSI and its set of indicators have been examined. To address specific Romanian conditions five additional indicators were included. Supported by all partners involved data have been collected and analysed. Universities were also engaged in the process of data collection; they have included the analysis of data in their curricula and have done extra field work.

The results were published, both in Romanian and in English, June 2008. ([www.romaniadurabila.net](http://www.romaniadurabila.net)) The publication received a very warm welcome.

### Main results

The level of sustainability in Romania is expressed by a score of **5.7** on a scale from 0 to 10. This overall index figure is composed of the scores of the 5 categories and the 22 indicators of the SSI. The spider webs show at a glance the level of sustainability of each item and the distance to target. The target is represented by the outer circle of the spider web, full sustainability, thus a score of 10, while the centre represents no sustainability at all, score 0.

The spider webs make explicitly clear which issues need attention most urgently. In that way it supports the strategy, programmes and plans of the Romanian ministries and authorities.



### I Personal Development

- 1 Healthy Life
- 2 Sufficient Food
- 3 Sufficient to Drink
- 4 Safe Sanitation
- 5 Education Opportunities
- 6 Gender Equality

### II Healthy Environment

- 7 Air Quality
- 8 Surface Water Quality
- 9 Land Quality

### III Well-balanced Society

- 10 Good Governance
- 11 Employment
- 12 Population Growth
- 13 Income Distribution
- 14 Public Debt

### IV Sustainable Use of Resources

- 15 Waste Recycling
- 16 Use of Renewable Water Resources
- 17 Consumption of Renewable Energy

### V Sustainable World

- 18 Forest Area
- 19 Preservation of Biodiversity
- 20 Emission of Greenhouse Gases
- 21 Ecological Footprint
- 22 International Cooperation

Within the framework of establishing the SSI-Romania-2008 data have been collected for neighbouring countries as well, in order to enable a comparison between the countries. This may stimulate countries to improve their performance.

On the project website [www.romaniadurabila.net](http://www.romaniadurabila.net) one can download the full database for all the indicators for Romania and 150 other countries.

### Implementation

So far, we have organised several meetings, seminars and workshops with politicians, public servants, representatives of non-governmental organisations, students and teachers and other interested persons, to whom we have introduced the SSI concept and the publication SSI-Romania-2008. Furthermore, we have explained different approaches towards using SSI in the daily practice. In this respect, the project opened new cooperation possibilities among different stakeholders and it offered a new approach for tackling the issue of sustainable development in Romania. It was one of the project's aims to involve as many stakeholders as possible and to make them more aware of the challenges Romania has to face on its way towards a sustainable society.

### Usage

SSI-Romania-2008 addresses a large target group. It is designed to be a powerful instrument, which can be used by politicians, in their political discourses, political agendas and for setting political objectives. It can be used by technical experts from each field of science for clarifying, expressing and presenting data about progress in their own field of expertise to the public at large. Civil society can use the SSI for many purposes, from increasing public awareness about sustainability to lobby and advocacy in general or for a specific field covered by the index.

Many stakeholders have already started to use SSI-Romania-2008. The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, the National Environmental Protection Agency and the Ministry of Development, Public Work and Housing highly appreciate the SSI. One of the first goals for using the SSI is to monitor progress with respect to the implementation of the recently approved National Strategy for Sustainable Development. Moreover, the ministries use SSI for communication with the public at large about sustainability and for monitoring various policy implementation processes. Several universities in Romania, such as University of Agriculture and the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca are using SSI as an educational tool. NGOs are interested in the SSI because they very much appreciate its clarity and transparency. They are already considering SSI as a possible monitoring tool

for sustainable development and they would like to continue this initiative of measuring the progress of Romanian society.

### Regional SSI

After developing the SSI-Romania-2008, Romanian authorities decided to continue the efforts of monitoring the progress towards sustainability. Now the SSI is available on national level, the need for a similar instrument on regional level grew. Thus a new regional SSI will be developed during the coming months. The process started with a pilot project in Region North-West. All regional authorities as well as NGOs and Universities are involved from the very beginning. The process will include a full analysis of all 8 regions of Romania and a comparison of the developments in these regions. It will be the first of its kind in the world. The publication will be available spring 2009.

### Websites

More information about SSI-Romania-2008 can be found on [www.romaniadurabila.net](http://www.romaniadurabila.net). All information about the SSI and the recent update from SSI-2006 to SSI-2008 is available on [www.sustainablesocietyindex.com](http://www.sustainablesocietyindex.com)



During the first day of the [PARADISO](#) Conference over 20 [keynote speakers](#) shared with the audience their vision of today's global challenges and of how to address them to ensure a true sustainable future (particularly thanks to Information and Communication Technologies).

During the second day, after opening addresses from the European Committee of the regions and from the European Economic and Social Committee, 25 other speakers introduced the different sustainable future initiatives funded by the European Commission and discussed possible future directions for EU ICT research.

The event can be considered as having reached its two main objectives: further developing and validating the PARADISO vision (in this context, a revised version of the PARADISO [reference document](#) will be produced, and made available on this web site, before the end of February) and bringing the message towards, if not having it endorsed by, the various political instances of the European Union.

The conference proceedings can be accessed [here](#): they include the final programme, speakers' bios, speeches and presentations in pdf format, and videos extracted from the live broadcasting of the event. A photo album can be accessed [here](#) as well.

## Beyond GDP: Building a QOL Index for Mexico

By Dr. José de Jesús García Vega  
Universidad de Monterrey

Presumably, the objective of every society is to achieve progress. This term may imply several things for a community: more infrastructure, better quality of life, democracy, employment, etc. For an individual, progress means better health, more income, a better community, etc. Through the years, GDP has been one of the most popular measures of progress. And this is not undeserved: GDP is an understandable indicator and it is very widely used in every country, so it can be used as a basis of comparison among countries. However, using GDP as the only measure of progress has recently been discussed and frowned on of by several international experts and organisations.

Defining, measuring and monitoring progress are very important tasks for every society. First of all, progress definition allows understanding what has to be measured. According to the quality philosophy, if you want to improve something you need to be able to measure it and you need to define it before you can measure anything. Monitoring progress serves to evaluate the public function and allows checking if the society is moving on the right direction. In defining progress, the participation of the constituents is very important, so they will monitor what they really care about. In this definition several indicators should be included, both objective and subjective.

As mentioned before, GDP has been the most utilised measure of progress. This indicator was introduced to help politicians to have basis for public policy decisions. A few of the problems with GDP are that it doesn't distinguish between positive and negative activities, nor considers wealth distribution or measures environmental destruction. But this situation is hardly the designer's fault: GDP was never meant to be used for anything else but as an economic performance indicator. Therefore, new measures for progress are needed.

Quality of life of a community may be expressed as a single number in which several components or life domains are integrated to build a composite indicator. According to the definition provided by the OECD, composite indices are quantitative or qualitative measures derived from a series of observed facts that can reveal relative positions in a given area. If evaluated regularly, an index permits pointing out the direction of changes over time. In that sense, indices are very useful to mark trends and draw attention to particular issues. We can see the use of these composite indices every day. Some

examples are: inflation (CPI), unemployment index, consumer confidence index, human development index, etc.

We propose the quality of life of a community as an alternative measure of progress. The concept includes both, objective and subjective indicators, and goes beyond economic measures. As stated by the WHO:

*"Quality of life is an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad-ranging concept, affected in a complex way by the person's physical health, psychological state, personal belief and social relationships to salient features of their environment".*

Making a move in that direction, the Center of Well Being Studies of the University of Monterrey launched a proposal to create an index of quality of life for Mexico. The project was welcomed by the Center of Social Studies and Public Opinion of the Mexican Congress and together delineated a year-long set of activities looking to obtain results for the first stage of the project. The defined activities were:

- Form a quality of life (QOL) research team and an advisory team
- Organize an international seminar on quality of life
- Discuss the key elements to be included on the QOL index
- Build a structural framework
- Gather data to construct the QOL index
- Draw preliminary results and discuss them with the advisory team
- Present the final results by Spring 09

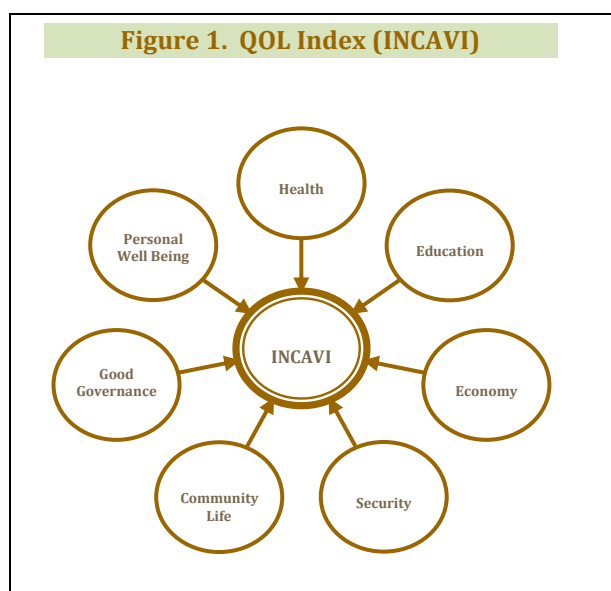
The first stage included building a national QOL index for the country as a whole allowing for comparisons among groups with different demographic characteristics, i.e.: age, community size, social class, education level, gender, etc. The second stage aims to measure different cities in Mexico, ideally the 30 largest and it is to be launched in 2009.

The framework of the QOL index shows the different domains that are included in the index. This framework follows the top-down approach and it is the result of the contributions of the research team and the analysis of previous literature (see figure 1). This is just the first attempt to reflect the needs of the population which needs to be revised and validated by the constituents.

Communities may get a high note on the QOL index as a whole, but that doesn't mean they have no room for improvement. High score in one or several domains may give them a high note as a whole, but there is always opportunity for improvement on the rest of the domains. Although a ranking may evolve from this exercise, the main objective is to provide basis for the decision making at the community level. At the same time, better positioned communities may share best practices with others; therefore progress may be possible to every community.

### Preliminary Results

A national survey was conducted in October of 2008. The value of the first QOL index for Mexico in 2008 was 7.23. However, a single number may not say much. It is necessary to have a time series to evaluate the performance through time or cross sectional data to compare the number among the different actors. Preliminary results were drawn for the first stage in which comparisons were made across a few demographic characteristics.



Results may be analysed looking at the whole index and/or the components of it. For example, comparing the QOL index per community size tells us that small communities have a better quality of life than the rest. Going one step further, we find that security, good governance and well being are the domains that help small communities to perform better, but the economic domain still lags behind that from the largest community. On the other hand, looking at the social class we find that mid-low and mid-high social classes have a QOL index above average, while the rest of the social classes perform lower than the average. When the domains are taken into account, we can see that the high social class scores very well on health, education and community life, but the scores on security and good

governance are the lowest among all the social classes. It is important to remember that for this first exercise the domains were selected according to the findings of previous literature and the weights for every domain were the same. All of this has to be validated by the citizens before launching the second stage.

We are proposing a QOL Index for Mexico (INCAVI) with three objectives in mind: provide an alternative way for measuring progress, enhancing democracy, and promoting accountability. Monitoring and making public the results of the INCAVI will allow everyone to see if we, as a society, are progressing and advancing in the right direction; participation of the citizens on the definition of the life domains will enhance the democratic exercise; and the advancement or the lack of it, towards the goals of the society will provide elements to evaluate the public function.

Are you interested in attending a **training course** run by the Global Project? We are running a number of courses around the world in 2009 and welcome applications from people to attend.

**Training course on Measuring the Progress of Societies "Statistics, Knowledge and Policy: Understanding Societal Change" March 25th to 27th 2009, Kyoto (Japan)** It will accompany the international conference on "[Measuring and Fostering the Progress of Societies: Key Issues for the Asia and Pacific regions](#)", to be held in Kyoto on March 23-24, 2009. The [training course](#) will be run directly after the conference.

Courses on Measuring the Progress of Societies "**Statistics, Knowledge and Policy: Understanding Societal Change**", organised by the Global Project, will also be held in:

**Ottawa (Canada) - May 11th to 15th 2009**

The course will be run in association with the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL-CCA).

**Monterrey (Mexico) - June 15th to 19th 2009**

Summer school organised in partnership with the Centro de Estudios sobre el Bienestar, Universidad de Monterrey.

**Florence (Italy) - July 14th to 17th 2009**

To accompany the [IX Conference of the International Society of Quality of Life Studies \(ISQOLS\)](#).

Website: [www.oecd.org/progress/training](http://www.oecd.org/progress/training)

Please [contact us](#) for more information.

## GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS CREATES A SENSATION IN BRAZIL

By Susan Andrews, GNH Coordinator Brazil

What happened in Brazil recently superseded all expectations. When Dasho Karma Ura and Michael Pennock were invited to participate in a series of conferences about Gross National Happiness in São Paulo, a few hundred people were expected to attend. To the organizers' mounting astonishment, as the days and weeks passed, the news of the coming events reverberated throughout countless networks, verbally and electronically, like a positive virus, and many people received the announcement five times, from five different sources. GNH became a positive virus in cyberspace!



GNH, Brazil © Susan Andrews

By the time the various events took place, from the 28<sup>th</sup> of October to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November, more than 2000 seats had been booked, and when the visitors arrived in Brazil - the Bhutanese delegation composed of Dasho

Karma Ura and Dorji

Penjore of the Centre for Bhutan Studies and Rinzin Dorji of the Gross National Happiness Commission, and Population Health Epidemiologist Michael Pennock from Canada - there was a total waiting list of hundreds of people.

After a day of preparations at the Ecovillage of the Future Vision Institute which organized the conferences, the programs began with a presentation at the Banco Real – Santander, one of the largest banks in Brazil and world renowned for its commitment to sustainability. The major event took place in a grand auditorium whose 1000 seats were completely reserved one week before the event! The program was opened by the São Paulo Minister of the Environment, who has publicly pledged to apply GNH in this largest city of the world, with its population (including satellite cities) of 25 million inhabitants. "In this way São Paulo can contribute to the international effort to apply GNH in practice," the Minister stated.

An extra dose of happiness was provided by the "Doctors of Joy", a group of clowns who bring happiness to children in cancer wards throughout the country. The lecture of Dasho Karma Ura, the Director of the Centre for Bhutan Studies, described the origin, philosophy and statistical application of GNH in Bhutan, and then psychologist Susan Andrews, the coordinator of GNH in Brazil, spoke

about the new Science of Hedonics, the latest scientific research on happiness and the illusion of the "American Dream". Michael Pennock, who spent three months in Bhutan helping to prepare the GNH survey, lectured on the application of GNH in Canada and the western world, and Brazilian economist Ladislav Dowbor explained the deficiencies of GNP and the need for a new path to progress.

Before the event, the visitors were practically mobbed by a battalion of television crews and press reporters, and after 5 hours of non-stop interviews, the news of GNH received full page coverage in the major newspapers, magazines and sites of Brazil. The event was attended by more than 50 journalists.

Further events were hosted by the Catholic University of São Paulo and the University of Campinas, considered to be the best and most progressive universities in Brazil. In all the lectures, that what most aroused the interest of the public was the conjunction of objective and subjective approaches developed by the Centre for Bhutan Studies, its careful elaboration of indices which guide the implementation of all development programs in Bhutan, and the application of GNH in the west, especially in Canada.

Finally the whole group of lecturers returned to the Future Vision Ecovillage to a weekend seminar program, where they advised a select group of 200 Brazilian mayors, business people, NGO leaders, journalists and opinion-makers on the implementation of GNH in Brazil. The inspiration of the group was inexpressible. As someone commented, now Brazilians have another motive to be happy - not just the carnival and football, and not only because their country is becoming a major superpower in the world, with its vast resources of water and energy, food and forests. The GNH events mobilized a far more profound source of satisfaction – the application of a new paradigm for progress which takes into account not only material, external factors, but also the subtle and most precious aspects of life: trust and generosity, interpersonal harmony, and inner peace.

Even after the events, the organisers are receiving a shower of emails from people all over the country, with ideas, suggestions, and actions plans to apply GNH in their areas. No one could have expected this. It seems, as French philosopher Victor Hugo once said, "There is no more powerful force in the world than an idea whose time has come."

## Future events organised in the context of the Global Project

### Seminar on "Innovative Approaches to Turn Statistics into Knowledge"

**15-16 July 2009, Washington D.C.**

The OECD and the US Census Bureau are jointly organising this seminar, to contribute to the development of tools to help people transform statistics into knowledge and decisions. A first condition for statistics to be used this way is that relevant statistics become known, available, and understood by wider audiences.

While dynamic graphics and communication tools are at the heart of the seminar, it will also focus on a broader range of tools. The seminar will include the use of videos, as explored by Gapminder and others, and participative approaches, as seen in some web 2.0 initiatives; and – although innovative tools are themselves of great interest, and worthy of being presented at the workshop – the focus of the seminar will be on innovative applications of tools, for example, so-called story-telling applications.

Participation is free of charge, but the number of participants is limited to 350. You can read more about the seminar, propose a presentation and apply for participation at:

[www.oecd.org/progress/ict/statknowledge](http://www.oecd.org/progress/ict/statknowledge)



### Measuring and Fostering the Progress of Societies: key Issues for the Asia and Pacific Regions

The Conference will be held at the University of Kyoto (Japan), on March 23-24, 2009.

The OECD, in collaboration with the University of Kyoto and the Nissan Leadership Program for Innovative Engineers (LPIE), will also run a training course on "[Statistics, Knowledge and Policy: Understanding Societal Change](#)". The course will be run after the Conference on 25-27 March.



### Monitoring Italy 2009: Measuring the Progress of Italian Society

The [Institute for Studies and Economic Analyses \(ISAE\)](#) and OECD will host a Conference on "Measuring the Progress of Italian Society" on June 3rd and 4th, 2009 at the ISAE premises in Rome.



### Data Designed for Decisions

The [DD4D](#) Conference is organised by the OECD and the International Institute for Information Design and will be held in Paris on 18-20 June 2009. The conference will investigate **selection, visualisation, interpretation and communication of data**, and how it can be effectively used to take decision based on evidence, help understand complex issues, make data relevant at a personal level and close the gap between objective measurement and perception.



### Evidence-Based Policy: International Experiences

On the 9th March 2009, the OECD and the National Research Council of the National Academies of the United States will be jointly hosting this conference in Paris (France). The event provides an opportunity to learn about international efforts to promote evidence-based policy. This conference is by invitation only. Please [contact us](#) if you are interested and we will consider your application.



### Quality of Life Studies: Measures and Goals for the Progress of Societies

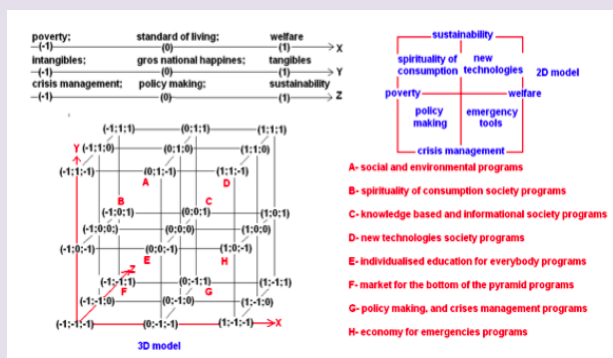
International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies (ISQOLS) is pleased to announce the [IX Conference of the International Society of Quality of Life Studies](#) that will be held from 19-23 July 2009 in Florence (Italy).

## Sustainability Modelling

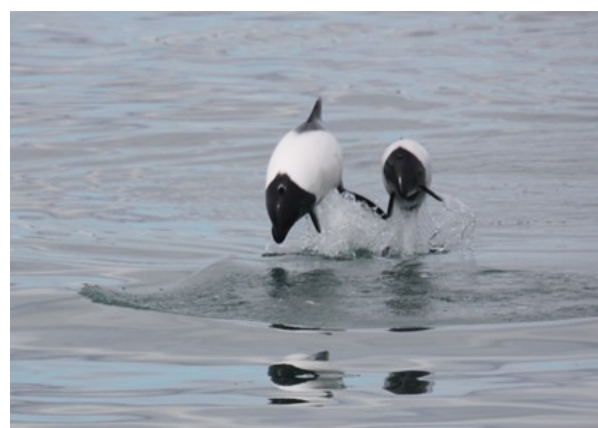
By Florian Colceag, Club of Rome

Throughout history, the three-dimensional perception of reality produced thinking models that allowed the creation of models of reality that included models of adaptation to reality.

The structural tendencies of current programs follow three main directions: prosperity, development, leadership. If we attribute them the values: - 1, 0 and 1, we obtain complex models, capable to explain the tensions and polarizations that we are currently witnessing in the world. Read more: <http://www.sustainability-modeling.com/>



Marine Otter, Chile (Endangered) © Jon Hall, 2009



Commerson's Dolphins, Chile © Jon Hall, 2009

## Latest Web Traffic

The Global Project on 'Measuring the Progress of Societies' website [www.oecd.org/progress](http://www.oecd.org/progress) has considerably increased the number of traffic in the past 2 months, with a significant rise on the number of hits per day. It peaked on the 28<sup>th</sup> of October with 477 hits and on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January with 429 hits on those days. A total of 5062 pages were visited during the month of January 2009, by 1536 people. Our audience breakdown is 47% from Europe and 20% from both North America and Asia.

The [Knowledge Base](#) on Measuring Progress has 200 registered users, with 3000 pages viewed every month, and it includes 444 documents.

This Newsletter on "[Measuring the Progress of Societies](#)" is published by the OECD in collaboration with other international and regional partners of the Global Project.

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For further information please contact: [progress@oecd.org](mailto:progress@oecd.org)  
Deadline for articles for the next issue: 30th of April 2009