



Subjective well-being: new paradigm for measuring progress and public policies.

Sauwalak Kittiprapas
Happy Society Associate

At 3rd OECD World Forum, Busan, Korea,
Oct. 27-30, 2009

Rational

- Need new development paradigm to capture human happiness and social quality
- Need measuring progress beyond economic prosperity. GDP and objective well-being are not enough.
- Subjective well-being is essential for development toward happiness and well-being.

The Paradox

- Increasing income overtime can not lead to the rise in happiness
- High level of objective well-being not correlate with high level of subjective well-being
- Both income and objective well-being are not sufficient to represent subjective well-being or happiness
- Need further step of measuring development progress.

Moving forward...

- Measuring progress covering higher aspects of quality of life
- Go beyond economic elements
- Conceptualize progress involving other life aspects: physical, mental, environmental, social and spiritual well-being
- Need to develop suitable measurement for subjective aspects.
- Progress indicators should capture both OWB and SWB

Develop measurement

- Subjective well-being indicators, sensible to policy intervention- to be used as a policy goal.
- Good data, Longitudinal data, frequencies of data collection, measurement techniques, inter-disciplinary tools, etc
- Good measures of well-being. Challenges for policy makers to use subjective indicators with confidence.

Placing SWB in policy goals..

- Subjective well-being measurement should also be integrated to guide public policies
- Research on domain satisfaction and policy implications
- Both economic and non-economic factors influential to SWB

Drawing from “Happiness and Public Policy” Int. Conference

- Reducing poverty, socioeconomic equality
- Providing basic needs, enhancing people’ quality of life, keeping healthy and educated.
- Utilizing technology to improve people’ well-being, improving labor market and workplace, cooperative work and peer-production, providing social insurances.
- Promoting social capitals, trust, unity, freedom, positive values, mind development and spiritual well-being, and good environment

Many challenges ahead...

- Design policies fit with country/ society contexts.
- Shift policy focus from high GDP growth to poverty and disparity reduction
- More research on causal relationship and policy evaluation
- How public policy keep increasing happiness of people in the long run
- Good statistics and measurements