



Dear Readers,

The past few months have been particularly eventful for the Global Project on “Measuring the Progress of Societies”. We think that the amount of work underway is a reflection of the continuously increasing interest around the world in looking beyond GDP to reassess societal progress. It seems barely a week goes by without our learning of another initiative.

President Sarkozy’s Commission on “Measuring Economic Performance and Social Progress” was a major addition. Chaired by Joseph Stiglitz, and featuring several Nobel laureates and other very distinguished thinkers, the Commission has produced an issues paper (which quotes the Global Project) and is working towards a first interim report. The recent decision by the World Economic Forum to launch a Global Council on “Benchmarking the Progress in Societies” is another welcome development and the first meeting of the Council will take place in Dubai, November 2008.

The Global Project was formally approved by the OECD’s governing Council during the summer and in September we held our first Board meeting. This approval has paved the way to a range of new projects. We have, for instance, begun new research in several areas, including work to measure trust (led by Unicredit) and to develop a handbook on Local Well-being Indicators (led by the Council of Europe). Meanwhile, we are completing a first draft of a new handbook on “Measuring Progress in Practice” as well as a new “Taxonomy (or Framework) for Progress”, both of which will be shortly circulated in draft format.

Promoting discussion on these themes is another important part of our work and we co-organised two successful international conferences over the past few months - Stockholm in May, Moscow in September, and Rennes in October. We are now organising other events, including a conference for Asia and the Pacific, (Kyoto in March 2009) and of course the [World Forum in Busan, Korea on the 27-30 October 2009](#). Articles on both these events are in the newsletter. Some other very interesting conferences are planned for next year in the run up to the Busan event, including a conference on [Data Designed for Decisions - DD4D](#), which is being co-organised by the [International Institute for Information Design - IIID](#) and an expert workshop on the role of social science evidence and policymaking, run with a committee from the National Research Council of the United States. Also, there will be regional events held in Africa, the Arab Region, Latin and North America. In response to the demand for training, we ran our first Summer School in Italy this September, in collaboration with STATEC and the University of Siena. We were delighted with the results and therefore ran a second course in Jordan in November. Plans are being discussed for courses to be held in Mexico, Australia, the UK, Italy, South Africa and Japan (read more www.oecd.org/progress/training).

As the world’s financial markets and governments deal with the tumultuous events of the past few weeks and think about their immediate future, we cannot help but wonder what this might mean for the longer term. The System of National Accounts was born out of the Great Depression. We wonder whether the current troubles might impress upon all of us the need to reassess how we think about, and measure the progress of our societies. We live in uncertain times. But we are certain that, if the past few months have been busy for those measuring progress, the next few will be even busier.

Enrico Giovannini
Chief Statistician of the OECD

Jon Hall
Global Project Manager

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Training Course on “Statistics, Knowledge, and Policy: Understanding Societal Change”

By Barbara Iasiello

In September 2008, 23 people from 16 countries, and three continents, travelled to the beautiful town of Siena in Italy to attend the first Global Project Summer School. The course, entitled “Statistics, Knowledge, Policy: Understanding Societal Change”, lasted for 3.5 days and was organised in cooperation with STATEC Luxembourg and the University of Siena. It was a mixture of formal teaching, interactive sessions and a lot of group work.



Siena, Italy © Barbara Iasiello

The course was targeted at “high-flying future leaders”, from National Statistical Offices, policy think tanks, civil society, academia, and international organisations. And we were very pleased with the quality and diversity of students who signed up for the training.

The course focused on 3 main topics:

- The importance of statistics for democracy and democratic decision-making;
- The importance of developing measures of progress that go beyond GDP - and how that development can be done in practice;
- The importance of ensuring statistics are transformed into knowledge.

Guest lecturers included [Jim Ridgeway from Durham University's Smart Centre](#), who spoke about turning statistics in to knowledge using dynamic visualisation tools. Achille Lemmi and Stefano Bartolini from Siena University spoke, respectively, about the Dimensions of Deprivation and the Easterlin Paradox.

Participants worked in groups on three projects throughout the course; each was a role playing exercise that culminated in a presentation on the last day to a panel that included the Wall Street Journal's Paris-based Southern Europe Bureau Chief, and the OECD's Chief Statistician. One group played the role of a South African Parliamentary Commission charged with

increasing the role evidence plays in public debate and policy making. The second group had been asked by the new President of the USA to form a “National Roundtable for Progress” and select key measures of progress for the USA. The last group was from a policy think-tank and was advising the prime minister of “Monrazia” (a fledgling democracy) on why and how he might want to measure the progress of his society. Although it was an intensive 3.5 days, the students also found time to enjoy the cultural and culinary delights of Siena.

The feedback from the students was positive. Marc La Chance, for instance, from the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) said “*this course demonstrated the importance of indicators that challenge the minds and previous myth. It also demonstrated the importance of having clear messages*”. Konstantin Fursov, a researcher from the Institute for Statistical Studies and Economics of Knowledge in Russia, said “*these 4 days in Siena showed me that statistics can work effectively both as an explanatory tool for understanding difficult social processes and as a means for raising new topical questions*”.

We are continuing to develop a stream of training courses that will build on the Siena experience. Please see the web page: www.oecd.org/progress/training Schools next year might be arranged in Australia, South Africa, Florence and Japan. In October 2008, we ran courses in Jordan, for the Arab Region in collaboration with the Arab Institute for Training & Research in Statistics (AITRS), and in Bratislava in collaboration with the Joint Research Centre of the European Union, which will focus on the role of composite indicators in the “Statistics, Knowledge and Policy” chain.

For more information on training courses
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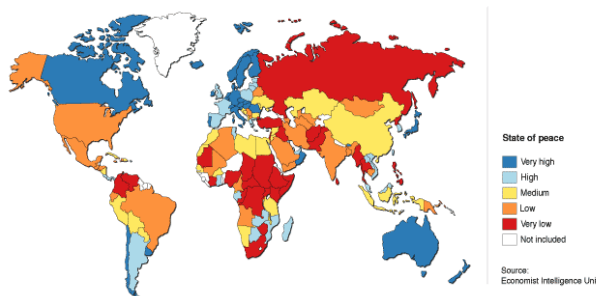
The Metrics of Global Peace

By Steve Killelea and Camilla Schippa

Since 2007, the [Global Peace Index \(GPI\)](http://www.visionofhumanity.org) [www.visionofhumanity.org] has worked to quantify the peacefulness of countries and to identify potential drivers of peace. It aims at making the data comparable over time in order to shed more light into the mechanisms that nurture and sustain peace. A few unexpected and welcome findings have emerged along the way.

Peace is a powerful concept. However, perhaps surprisingly, the notion of peace and its value in the 21st century is poorly understood. Historically, peace has been seen as something won in war, or else as an altruistic ideal. There are competing definitions of peace, and most research into peace is, in fact, the study of violent conflict. It is interesting to note how peace is not a subject of study that is considered essential in Economics, History, Literature, Political Sciences or International Relations.

The difficulties in defining the concept of peace may partly explain why, until 2007 (or before the GPI), there had practically been no attempt to measure states of peace across nations. The starting point (success) of the [GPI](#) lies in its definition of peace “the absence of violence”, this is a definition most people will agree to which can also be measured.



The [GPI](#) was founded by Steve Killelea, an Australian international technology entrepreneur and philanthropist, with the aim to contribute significantly to the public debate on peace. The importance of the initiative stems from the fact that the major challenges facing humanity today are global – climate change, lack of fresh water, ever-decreasing bio-diversity and over-population, and as such call for global solutions. These solutions will require cooperation on a global scale unparalleled in human history. Peace is the essential prerequisite because without peace we will be unable to achieve the levels of cooperation, inclusiveness and social equity necessary to solve these problems, let alone empower the international institutions needed to regulate the challenges.

The Index, which ranks 140 countries covering 98% of the world’s population, is produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace, a global think-tank dedicated to the research and education of the relationship

between economics, business and peace. An international team of academics and peace experts has overseen its development while the data is collated and calculated by the Economist Intelligence Unit.

The Index is composed of qualitative and quantitative indicators from a wide range of highly respected sources, including the International Institute of Strategic Studies, The World Bank, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, various UN entities and peace institutes and the Economist Intelligence Unit. It combines factors internal to a country and external to it. The indicators are divided into three key thematic categories. All of the indicators have been banded on a scale of 1-5 and qualitative indicators in the index have been scored by the Economist Intelligence Unit’s extensive team of country analysts.

- **5 measures of ongoing conflict** such as: number of conflicts fought 2000-2005 and number of deaths from organized conflict
- **10 measures of societal safety and security** including: number of displaced people, potential for terrorist acts, number of homicides, number of jailed population
- **9 measures of militarization** such as: military expenditure, number of armed service personnel, ease of access to small weapons.
- Overall score weighted **60% for internal peace** and **40% for external peace**

Establishing the peacefulness of nations is important but what is more important is to understand what creates peace. The index has been tested against a range of potential "drivers" or determinants of peace as well as correlated with a number of other indexes. This research has yielded interesting results.

As could perhaps be expected, well-functioning government, low levels of corruption, mean years of schooling and freedom of the press all correlate strongly with the Global Peace Index. There are also strong correlations between the [GPI](#) and the World Bank’s Ease of Doing Business and Knowledge Economy Indexes, the Global Competitiveness Index of the World Economic Forum and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index. Regarding the latter,

analysis of this relationship may indicate that through increased commitments or better targeted commitments to development, the peacefulness of nations may be improved.

Global Peace Index 2008

Iceland	1
1.176	
Denmark	2
1.333	
Norway	3
1.343	
New Zealand	4
1.35	
Japan	5
1.358	
Ireland	6
1.41	

Perhaps the most interesting findings relate to the strong correlations between the Global Peace Index and various economic indicators which support the positive effects of peace on business. One of the most striking findings is that the Gross Domestic Product, on a per capita basis, increases on average by approximately US\$3,145 for every 10 places a country rises up the Global Peace Index. This association does not necessarily mean causation, although it is plausible to suggest that the more peaceful a country is the richer it is likely to become providing other things are equal. In addition, for every 10 rank improvements on the Global Peace Index the following is observed on a per capita basis: spending on footwear and clothing increases by approximately US\$79; spending on food and non-alcoholic beverages increases by approximately US\$166; and spending on communications increases by approximately US\$371.

The Institute for Economics and Peace intends to deepen this research with the aim of calculating the impact of improved peacefulness on companies' markets, costs structures and profits. It believes that if the economic benefits of peace could be clearly demonstrated to industry it would then be in industry's self interest to proactively work with government and industry associations to create the conditions necessary for them to prosper. Within our increasingly interdependent world, it has in fact become apparent that self interest must also go hand in hand with ethical business practices for business to survive and prosper.

The GPI will continue to be reviewed and released annually, be based on further improved data sources, and use the 2007 data and results as a base for time series analysis.

Measures of ongoing domestic and international conflict

1. Number of external and internal conflicts fought: 2001-06
2. Estimated number of deaths from organised conflict (external)
3. Number of deaths from organised conflict (internal)
4. Level of organised conflict (internal)
5. Relations with neighbouring countries

Measures of societal safety and security

1. Level of distrust in other citizens
2. Number of displaced people as a percentage of the population
3. Political instability
4. Level of disrespect for human rights (Political Terror Scale)
5. Potential for terrorist acts
6. Number of homicides per 100,000 people
7. Level of violent crime
8. Likelihood of violent demonstrations
9. Number of jailed population per 100,000 people
10. Number of internal security officers and police per 100,000 people

Measures of militarization

1. Military expenditure as a percentage of GDP
2. Number of armed services personnel per 100,000 people
3. Volume of transfers (imports) of major conventional weapons per 100,000 people
4. Volume of transfers (exports) of major conventional weapons per 100,000 people
5. UN Deployments 2007-08 (percentage of total armed forces)
6. Non-UN Deployments 2007-08 (percentage of total armed forces)
7. Aggregate number of heavy weapons per 100,000 people
8. Ease of access to small arms and light weapons
9. Military capability/sophistication

For further information visit:

www.visionofhumanity.org

Announcement

3rd OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy

October 27-30 2009, Busan, Korea
Charting Progress, Building Visions, Improving Life

The 3rd World Forum on “Statistics, Knowledge and Policy” will be held in [Busan](#), Korea on 27-30 October 2009. The Forum will attract some 1 500 high level participants with a mixture of politicians and policy makers, opinion leaders, Nobel laureates, statisticians, academics, journalists and representatives of civil society, from over 130 countries.



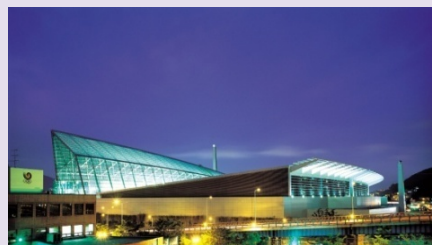
Kwang an Bridge, Busan, Korea.

The 3rd Forum, organised by the OECD and the Government of Korea, builds on the outcomes of the previous World Forums (held in November 2004 and June 2007) and the “[Istanbul Declaration](#)” signed by a wide range of international, regional and national organisations. See also: <http://www.measuringprogress.org>.

The World Forum is run as part of the [Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies](#), which is hosted by the OECD in collaboration with the European Commission, the World

Bank, the United Nations Development Program and United Nations’ regional commissions, regional development banks, research institutes and non-governmental organisations.

During the [3rd OECD World Forum](#) important initiatives will have the opportunity to share their experiences and influence policy agendas at national and global levels. The Global Project’s outputs will also be presented, including a handbook on measuring progress in practice. The second International Exhibition on Tools to Transform Statistics into Knowledge will also take place, showing the best ICT solutions for bringing data to people.



[BEXCO \(Busan Exhibition and Convention Center\)](#)

This World Forum is by Invitation only.

Visit web page: www.oecd.org/progress/Korea
For more information write to us: Korea2009@oecd.org

Measuring Gross National Happiness (GNH) in Bhutan

By Tobias Pfaff

The aim of this article is to shed light on the current efforts of measuring and making operational the Gross National Happiness (GNH) in Bhutan. At the beginning, we shall clarify at what time and under which conditions the concept of GNH evolved. After delivering a definition for GNH, approaches for data collection and measuring are presented. In conclusion, we will briefly talk about GNH outside of the Bhutanese context.

The birth of Gross National Happiness

Bhutan is a small, landlocked country located in the Himalayas between Tibet (China) and north-east India. Only 700,000 people are settled in this country, which is about of the size of Switzerland. The terrain is rough and mostly situated above 2000 m. Bhutan has never been colonized and its development was cut off the rest of the world until the late 1950's. Society was – and still is – deeply rooted in Buddhism. The main income source of the country was agriculture, undertaken in the villages without any use of modern technology or infrastructure.

Politically, Bhutan became a hereditary monarchy in 1907. Under the sovereignty of the third King cautious steps were initiated in the 1950's and 60's towards opening up the country to the outside world and to modern development. The fourth King came to power in 1972 at the age of 17 after the sudden death of his father. And it was mainly him who had the foresight to realize that uncontrolled progress could not only do well for his country.

The King did not have to look far to learn his lessons. Bhutan's close neighbour Nepal had similar conditions when it opened up for modern progress in the 1960's. Nepal neither tried to foresightedly control the direction of progress, nor limited outside influence. Policies focused mainly on infrastructure and communication until the 1980's. Thus, negative consequences were predestined and can still be felt nowadays: lack of skilled people, soil erosion, corruption, to name just a few.

Such examples, Bhutanese tradition and Buddhist influences might have motivated the young King of Bhutan to draw his conclusions. He was cited by an Indian newspaper in 1979 with the words, that in Bhutan "*Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross National Product*". How can this be translated into policy-

making? Ecology: 26% of the area is protected (e.g., within national parks), and a minimum of 60% of the country has to be covered by forest. Education: enforced construction of schools even in the remotest areas. Tourism: controlled quality tourism instead of mass and individualistic tourism.

Indicator	Bhutan	Nepal
Unemployment rate ¹	3%	42%
Inflation ¹	4.9%	6.4%
Life expectancy ¹	65.5 years	60.9 years
Literacy rate ^{1,2}	59.5% (2005)	48.6% (2001)
Corruption Perceptions Index ³	46 th	131 st

(1st = lowest corruption)

Sources: 1 - CIA World Factbook; 2 - Bhutanese National Statistics Bureau;
3 - Transparency International

These are just examples, but they show how GNH was understood long before its actual measurement was discussed. Certainly, Bhutan's development could have been faster in technological terms. But when it comes to crucial indicators of the progress of society, Bhutan's relative success is getting obvious. Compared to Nepal, unemployment rate, inflation, life expectancy, and literacy rate are some of the indicators that speak in favour of Bhutan. And the development concept of GNH could very well be one of the main reasons for the different development of the two countries.

The core of the concept

Based on the classical economic viewpoint of progress, the core of GNH is the equilibrium of economic and non-economic goals of development. Many texts about GNH conclude that "economic growth is not an end in itself but rather a means to achieve more important ends", for example collective happiness. One definition has been formulated by Marc Mancall of Stanford University: "GNH is an integrated and systemic approach to change, with certain particular objectives, into which economic development must be consciously integrated as one, but only one, component."

"What gets measured gets done"

So far, the country has been doing relatively well under the stable and straightforward reign of the Kings. In recent years, the fourth King of Bhutan has deliberately chosen to decrease his own power and give power to democratically elected institutions. Earlier in 2008, the new parliament has ratified the first constitution of Bhutan. In article 9 it says: "*The State shall strive to promote those conditions that will enable the pursuit of Gross National Happiness.*"

The question of the future will be how GNH can be operational in a democracy. Specifically, how the stability of GNH-policies can be guaranteed with changing governments and changing parties. Politicians need to be informed about the GNH-enabling conditions that are claimed in the constitution. And the old management principle “What gets measured gets done” comes into play.

The measurement of GNH had already been discussed at the occasion of workshops and conferences in the 1990’s (for conferences on GNH cf. Hans van Willenswaard’s article in Issue 1 of this newsletter, and check <http://www.bhutanstudies.org.bt> for the announcement of the 4th Int’l Conference on GNH in Thimphu, Bhutan, November 24-26, 2008). Later in 2005, a government planning document has called for the construction of a “GNH index”.

The main executing agency is the Centre for Bhutan Studies, a small autonomous research institute in the capital Thimphu. It has been commissioned with the design and realisation of nationwide surveys, the establishment of GNH indicators, and the development of a national GNH index.

Collecting data with surveys

The design of the survey was done along nine domains that had been previously identified as essential to GNH:

1. Psychological well-being
2. Health
3. Education
4. Time use and balance
5. Cultural diversity and resilience
6. Good governance
7. Community vitality
8. Ecological diversity and resilience
9. Living standards

The thematic areas are covering a broad perspective of human life within society and its environment. This reflects the Buddhist foundations of GNH. Foundations that are encompassed by a holistic worldview, and the conviction of the interdependency of everything. Happiness could easily be seen as the main dependent variable of the GNH model, but the major part of the survey questionnaire with its 290 questions deals with the various aspects that can provide fertile ground for personal and societal happiness.



Nun with camera Bhutan 2008 ©Ian Bell

The pilot survey was conducted in the winter of 2006/07. The second survey was carried out one year later. The number of observations captures 0.14% of the Bhutanese population. Compared to the German Socio Economic Panel (www.diw.de/english/soep/29012.html), a large household survey which covers 0.02% of the German population, the relative sample size in Bhutan is a lot bigger.

Realizing the interviews in Bhutan is difficult due to both the mountainous terrain and the lack of a fully developed infrastructure. Furthermore, more than 20 different dialects are spoken throughout the country, thus making on-the-spot translations necessary.

Selecting indicators and creating an index

The work on selecting specific GNH indicators from the entity of the survey variables is currently being done. Possible data analysis methods for this selection process are distribution analysis, correlation, regression analysis, factor analysis, non-response analysis.

Also, the work on constructing a GNH index has not been finished to date. Important criteria for the selection of an index model would be that it is decomposable, robust, simple to communicate to the public, and have consequences of non-responses (a general example of an index model was given by [Sabina Alkire in Issue 1 of this](#)

[Newsletter](#)). Justified objections regarding the sheer maximization of happiness within a state have been uttered. However, officials in Bhutan have expressed that the current efforts do not aim at maximizing subjective happiness, expressed by a single number. Rather, each of the nine domains has an influence on happiness, and should be looked at individually as well as in connection with the other domains.

Gross National Happiness, only in Bhutan?

It is too early to assess all the impacts of this Bhutanese approach of measuring progress. And it is especially too early to reach a conclusion about the functioning of this system in other societies. When following the future development of GNH, I would remark that the specific GNH model should always be read in the context of cultural, religious, and political factors that have made and still make Bhutan a unique country on our planet.

Luckily, we have come to a position where we are indeed concerned about the quality of our lives. And the growing number of efforts in the world to rethink about measuring progress – and I would call Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness a veteran here – is the manifestation of this.

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Sustainable Society Index – SSI
A novel tool for measuring progress towards sustainability
By Geurt van de Kerk and Arthur Manuel

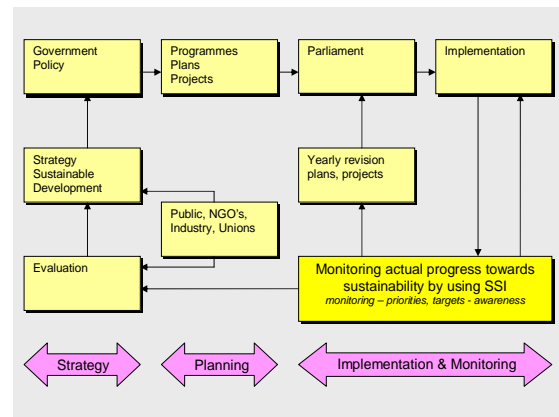
Many sets of indicators on the theme of sustainability have been developed over the last decades. However, none of them show at a glance the actual level of sustainability of a country, and none allow a comparison between a large number of countries. A transparent snapshot enlarges people’s awareness of sustainability and show people which aspects need attention most urgently.

In view of this objective the Sustainable Society Index – SSI – has been developed, showing the state of the art of sustainability for 150 countries. The SSI has been presented in 2006 for the first time. The first of two-yearly updates will be published end 2008. [See the SSI World Maps](#)

1. Need for a new tool?

The notion of what is meant by sustainability differs strongly among people. Even among

scientists there are numerous definitions of sustainability. However, to be able to adequately manage our efforts in achieving a sustainable way of living on our planet, a clear definition of sustainability is required. Since none of the numerous indexes that have been developed until now show at a glance the level of a country’s sustainability, we developed a new measurement tool: the Sustainable Society Index, SSI.



2. Design of the Sustainable Society Index – SSI

The SSI is based on a solid definition: the world-wide respected Brundtland definition. In order to express that sustainability includes human well-being, we have extended the definition of Brundtland by adding a provision so that the qualitative aspects of human life are explicitly included. We have formulated the Brundtland+ definition as follows:

A sustainable society is a society

- that meets the needs of the present generation,
- that does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,
- and in which each human being has the opportunity to develop itself in freedom, within a well-balanced society and in harmony with its surroundings.

Starting from this definition, 22 indicators have been determined, covering this comprehensive definition of sustainability in its broad sense. The 22 indicators are clustered into 5 categories as shown below.

The most well-known indicator, GDP per capita (Gross Domestic Product per capita), is not included since only few people still consider GDP per capita to be a useful indicator for development towards sustainability.

The Sustainable Society Index has been calculated for 150 countries. This offers the option for comparison between countries using various viewpoints: neighboring countries, more or less similar countries, regional comparisons, comparisons between rich countries like the OECD-members, comparison between “North” and South” etc. 43 of the existing 193 countries had to be left out due to lack of data. For the calculation of the indicators of the SSI only data from public sources has been used, each indicator has been expressed on a scale from 0 to 10. A ‘10’ expresses full sustainability; a ‘0’ no sustainability at all. This quantitative approach requires that it should be defined what full sustainability for each indicator means. For some indicators this is very clear; for example the percentage of people with access to safe drinking water should be 100 to receive a score of 10. For some other indicators where this is not obvious, one can make an educated guess as to full sustainability and for some others even that is not possible. For the latter group the highest score in any of the 150 countries has received a 10 and the lowest score a 0. One has to bear in mind that the sustainability value of an indicator might be subjective to some extent. Moreover, it is likely to change over time. A more detailed description of the calculation methodology and all results can be found on www.sustainablesocietyindex.com.

3. Results

As could be expected, the world at large is far from sustainable. The average SSI score of all countries on our planet is only 5.5. See Figure 1. Does that mean half-way down or half-way up? When updates of the SSI become available in the coming years this question can be answered. Norway is currently topping the SSI ranking list with a 7.0. Though being the best in class, even Norway is way below full sustainability.

4. Examples of using the SSI

The SSI can be used in many ways:

1. To enlarge the awareness of people of the level of (un)sustainability of their own country.
2. As a policy instrument for all government levels. For instance at national level, each indicator can be assigned to a specific ministry. This ministry will then be responsible for the development towards sustainability with respect to this indicator. Frequent monitoring of progress will stimulate to reach the objectives set according to an agreed time schedule.
3. By NGOs to help them with their strategy towards sustainability.

4. To compare the scores of countries in order to learn from, and to stimulate each other to make progress on the way to sustainability.
5. For educational purposes at all levels.

The SSI monitors the results of projects and programmes with respect to the contribution to sustainability. For example, what is the actual progress towards sustainability? Or will the targets set by the government be met in time? This will be an input for the revision of projects and for the revision of strategies.

I Personal Development
1 Healthy Life
2 Sufficient Food
3 Sufficient to Drink
4 Safe Sanitation
5 Education Opportunities
6 Gender
II Clean Environment
7 Air Quality
8 Surface Water Quality
9 Land Quality
III Well-balanced Society
10 Good Governance
11 Unemployment
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

5. Further development of the SSI

The concept of the SSI has been developed by the Sustainable Society Foundation. It was published late 2006 and presented in May 2007 at the Amsterdam Conference 2007. The SSI received a warm welcome, and at the same time, as could be expected, questions and criticism.

- The SSI has played a role in the international Peer Review of the Netherlands’ sustainability policy and the planning and monitoring of the

sustainability policy of the Netherlands Government.

- For Romania a tailor-made SSI has been developed: SSI-Romania-2008. This is now being extended to an index on regional level for all eight regions of Romania. It is the intention to use the SSI as tool for planning and monitoring sustainability policies in the country, both on national and regional level.
- Based on the SSI a sustainability index for greenhouse culture has been developed and is now being put in practice.
- Contributions to a number of international conferences have been given.
- End 2008 the SSI-2008 will be presented, the first two yearly update of a further developed and improved Sustainable Society Index.

Comments and suggestions from the readers are most welcome **Sustainable Society Foundation** geurt@nederlandduurzaam.nl.

UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge
Knowledge Societies: Ensuring Relevant Measurement

By Mary-Louise Kearney

Common Concerns

In July 2007, the UNESCO Forum took part in the OECD's 2nd World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy, entitled *Measuring and Fostering the Progress of Societies*, hosted by the Turkish government. On that occasion, we were addressing the issue of human capital which is at the heart of the UNESCO Forum's mission. However, the common concerns of these two major initiatives are more numerous than this topic alone – crucial though it may be. Consequently, since 2007, our contacts have become very regular as we seek to explore how knowledge societies affect and enhance the development process of all nations.

The 21st century is now widely referred to as the Knowledge Society because of the emphasis placed on education, expertise and skills and on ground-breaking discoveries through research. Moreover, its counterpart, the Knowledge Economy, is driven by these domains. Thus, measuring such societies and their socio-economic performance has quickly emerged as a priority for governments so as to gauge their ranking in the global scale of sustainable human development. Measuring knowledge societies is now a critical subset of the overall assessment of social progress.

Measurement documents the widening gap between the industrialized nations and middle and low income countries, leaving the latter group increasingly vulnerable as rapid advances in high-level knowledge require sound systemic capacity to harvest the resulting social benefits. For this reason, search systems – related to higher education, to science, technology and innovation and to social development – must be nurtured to generate and underpin the essential national expertise. The UNESCO Forum promotes research by drawing lessons from successful practice and by helping to map and analyse contexts where these systems need immediate and major reinforcement.

About the UNESCO Forum: Systems and Issues

Organised by UNESCO and supported by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), the Forum provides a platform for researchers, policymakers and relevant stakeholders to engage critically with the key elements unpinning research systems: *policy trends, infrastructure, human capacity, and investment*. Since 2001, the Forum has widened understanding of these aspects so as to strengthen capacities which contribute to effective development policies. This project has assured follow up action for two major UNESCO conferences, the *1998 World Conference on Higher Education* and the *1999 World Conference on Science*, and links closely to the programme for the Management of Social Transformation (MOST), located in the Sector of Social and Human Sciences. "Research on the state of research" necessitates the mapping and analysis of systems to acquire an understanding of their functioning and of their future requirements.

This systemic approach also involves the study of specific issues, *inter alia*, the role of ICTs in relation to knowledge production and management, factors such as increasing demand for higher education and training which are helping to globalize knowledge, new modes of knowledge production to better understand complexity, ethics and research, the growing challenges of social engagement for higher education, knowledge and the struggle to overcome poverty and inequality of access which is endangering the effectiveness of development-related policies in emerging countries, cultural diversity and its many facets, the gender dimension, and – last but not least – the multiple aspects of social change which are transforming communities at both local and

global levels and necessitating fresh approaches to public policy-making to elaborate effective solutions.

The UNESCO Forum, operating across disciplinary boundaries, seeks to underpin the “bottom-up” ownership of development policies. It contends that there is no single answer as to what constitutes the most appropriate structures, systems, or policies for research in fields vital for underpinning the development process in developing countries. This is particularly important when in the era of globalisation an overall trend is toward worldwide uniformity. The prevailing thought here is that higher education and research in key development-related disciplines are embedded in varying historical, socio-cultural, economic and political contexts, which function in an integrated manner, thus generating a synergy to continuously shape outcomes, debates and policies.

Because the UNESCO Forum has the long-term goal of helping to reduce the gap between developing and developed countries, it emphasizes the need to understand the contexts in which the Knowledge Society is operating and the national commitment to social equity and change. These features clearly link the UNESCO Forum to the overall concerns of the United Nations, including the current major commitment to attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), notably Goal 1 (poverty reduction) and Goal 8 (building a global partnership for development).

The Challenges of Measurement: The UNESCO Forum Template

Throughout 2006-7, the Forum has conducted a project entitled the Special Initiative which has mapped research capacity in 52 middle and low income countries:

- Africa: Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe (17)
- Arab States : Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates (12)
- Asia: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam (10)
- Latin America and Caribbean : Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela (13)

The major outcome of this project has been a template of indicators especially geared to measuring the specific socio-cultural and economic conditions in this type of country. This template is being compared with the methodologies used by organizations such as the OECD for higher education and STI reviews, WHO for health research, FAO for agricultural research and NEPAD (the New Economic Partnership for Africa) which is developing its own approach for these domains in the region. The objective is three-fold:

1. to demonstrate that diverse methodologies exist
2. to ensure that these are appropriate for analysing widely varying contexts
3. to encourage country ownership of the measurement process which is an essential step towards deeper government commitment to strengthening their knowledge systems.

The **template** developed by Johann Mouton of Stellenbosch University, South Africa and Roland Waast of the Institut pour la Recherche sur le Développement in Paris, consists of 10 indicators:

1. Contextualization of the science systems within broader political, economic, educational and social systems
2. Some considerations about the history of science in the country or region under review and especially the development trajectory
3. The governance of science in the country and available policies (especially S and T, R and D and Higher Education)
4. Knowledge and R and D performers (such as research centers, institutions, universities, NGOs)
5. Informal S and T structures academies, associations, scientific journals and the scientific community
6. S and T human resources (statistics and data on the profession and status of researcher)
7. Research funding (public and private, national and international, trends in this area)
8. Research output (postgraduate degrees awarded, publications, patents)
9. Scientific cooperation and agreements
10. Tensions, dynamics and challenges (public support for science and its usefulness for social development)

This instrument comprises three different kinds of information and data to be collected:

- *statistical indicators* (social, demographic, bibliometrical and those related to health, education, science and technology);
- *descriptors* which are quantitative or visual descriptions that present the facts of a certain category of entity or event;

- *narratives* which are more elaborate and profound historical and contemporary descriptions of aspects of the research system in a country.

Of the 52 country studies undertaken, very few possess detailed statistics that could give a full response to this template, thus attesting to the huge challenges related to the collection of accurate data in this type of context. Rather, the purpose of this exercise has been to design a comprehensive measurement tool which can be applied by a variety of interested experts from researchers to policy-makers so as to benchmark their particular national research system in relation to a wider range of contexts.

Conclusion

Since 2001, the UNESCO Forum has consolidated its efforts to bridge research and policy in a number of ways through facilitating and broadening the space for critical debate and through revisiting the established and dominant views so as to reconceptualise future directions. To date, its various components for attaining these goals - *mobilizing experts, stimulating global and regional debate, producing and disseminating research, promoting strategic partnerships, facilitating communication and strengthening the systemic approach* - have yielded creditable results. "Research on research" has become, therefore, even more crucial and is now well recognized as a major field of enquiry for international organizations.

The UNESCO Forum will continue to pursue a systemic approach to the analysis of research so as to address strengths and weakness, as well as specific issues and concerns, in a critical manner. This work will embrace research and in both industrialized and emerging contexts, as well as researchers whether reputed or at the start of their careers. The central aim is to promote ongoing research and to place significant results in the public eye. Consequently, research may be more original, innovative and effective, thus leading towards more sustainable human development.

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Establishing Indicators for Measuring Social Progress in Hungary

By Dr. Eszter Bagó

User needs

Similarly to the new Member States of the European Union Hungary also experienced major socio-economic changes over the past decade. On the one hand these changes are characterized by a rapid pace, on the other hand by structural rearrangements. Besides economic transformation and growth, and strengthening competitiveness, the changes occurring in social processes are more contradictory: real incomes show an uneven growth, the unemployment is high, the income discrepancies are significant and the demographic processes are unfavourable. The need of a comprehensive analysis of these complex processes is a natural requirement.

In November 2007, parallel to the approval of the National Statistical Data Collection Programme of 2008, the Hungarian Government requested the HCSO to elaborate a complex indicator system for measuring social progress. Besides a comprehensive assessment of social progress, the indicator system will make possible the preparation of decisions concerning the modernisation of social provision systems, the systematic study of the changes of living conditions and the analysis of changes taking place in the situation of different social groups.

The experts of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office are of course well aware of the initiatives of international organizations (UN, EU and OECD) concerning the complex measurement of social progress. The objectives of the Istanbul Declaration, as the most up-to-date and internationally largely supported initiative, have

been followed with attention in Hungary too. We have taken into account these international experiences when we started the work related to the establishment of the indicator system.

Why an indicator set?

Several approaches to measure social progress are known:

- *“One number” approach:* in this approach progress can be presented by using a composite indicator. Nevertheless the use of composite indicators presents the difficulty that a long time is required to reach the necessary consensus for their acceptance; the different individual indicators are available in different measurement units and their harmonization is further hindered by the weight of certain individual indicators.
- *Account-based approach:* in this framework the data of the different subfields are presented in a uniform account system. However, the high complexity of the system does not make possible a good usability and makes interpretation difficult, moreover the establishment of account systems is a time and resource consuming task.
- *“Indicator set” approach:* it allows to present the different aspects of progress by determining key indicators. With this approach users can evaluate national progress on the basis of independent preferences and values too. This approach is able to establish a balance between the possible oversimplification of the “one number” approach and the complexity of the account based approach.

Considering the different approaches, we have come to the conclusion that the establishment of an indicator set not only provides an option for a rapid solution, but also ensures the possibility for the most flexible use.

What kind of indicator set?

The Hungarian Central Statistical Office does not provide an exact definition of what progress means; this cannot be the goal of the statistical office. Its task is rather to provide factual data to assess how Hungary is progressing. This requires that:

- The system should provide a comprehensive picture on development processes.
- The selected indicators should be objective measures: during the selection process we

have avoided subjective indicators which have no standard measurement method.

- The indicators applied should be based on sound methodological foundations and the good quality of indicators should be ensured.
- The system should be suitable to measure national specificities.
- The system should possibly be apt for international comparisons too.
- A longitudinal time series should be available if possible back to 2000.
- The applied indicators should be timely, i.e. if possible, data should refer to the year preceding the publication.

How the system was established

The three major fields used for the measurement of social progress are: economy, society and environment.

1. In the three fields, we have defined with the contribution of experts the aspects that have to be analyzed from the point of view of the complex measurement of social progress. At the same time, we have compiled in the different fields on the basis of the aspects defined a wide range of possible available statistical indicators.
2. The long list of indicators was further structured along the dimensions of progress, it was compared with international indicator systems and finally the indicator list was restricted. The headline indicators have been selected.
3. For the selected indicators, we collected the basic meta-descriptions which help the interpretation of the indicators and the identification of the relations of the system, and indicate the frequency, timeliness and data source, as well as the availability of time series back to 2000.

The structure of the indicator set

The indicator system has a hierarchical structure. In line with international practice, it contains three major modules including: economic, social and environmental indicators. The major modules are further structured in subject areas. The so-called headline indicators (primary indicators) are linked to these subject areas. Secondary indicators, which are at the bottom of hierarchy, serve the purpose of detailed analysis.

Headline indicators highlight the dimensions of progress, and do not explain the depth of the causes leading to changes. These indicators are primarily about “yes or no” not about “whys”.

Characteristics of headline indicators:

- They highlight essential components of progress.
- Where possible, they focus on the results of progress components (e.g. improvement of health status is not linked to the related expenditures).
- They show the “right” and the “wrong” directions of change, (respectively called “progress” and “regression”).
- They are sensitive to the perception of changes occurring in the basic phenomena of progress components.
- They are of a comprehensive nature.

The indicator system is composed of 206 indicators; including 23 selected headline indicators. Meta-descriptions related to the indicators of the system have also been elaborated. They contain the definition, frequency, and timeliness of the indicators; they provide information on the availability of a time series back to 2000, on related concepts, indicator sources and the smallest unit of territorial breakdown.

Missing indicators

Our intention is to provide the indicator set to the users as a menu, offering them data that can currently be produced. In the process of compiling indicators it became clear that there are processes which could be further key areas of social progress, however, their statistical measurement is not solved yet (e.g. the ratio of social service recipients and potential beneficiaries, share of unreported employees, the situation of the Roma people, issues of deviation). The decision concerning the indicators missing and their measurement must be taken in the framework of a consultation process.

Consultation process: selection from the menu

The indicator system elaborated by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO) for the purpose of the objective measurement of social progress is subject to further professional and social consultations. According to international experiences, a broad acceptance of the indicator system by the wider public is needed. In this way the indicators of social progress and the ensuing analyses, evaluations can really promote fact-based social debates and

the dialogue between political decision makers and the public. The consultation process is divided into two phases.

- Researchers can ensure stable scientific foundations for the establishment of a system of variables on social progress. The consultation with researchers is initiated and coordinated by the HCSO. The indicator system established as a result of the consultation process shall be submitted to the Government by the HCSO as a professional proposal.
- For political decision makers, intra-governmental and socio-political consultations are also required; but these are not organized by HCSO.

Accessibility of indicators

On the homepage of the HCSO, we would like to present the indicators and the related meta-descriptions in a separate database, in which all data of the complete and continuously enlarging time series are available for the users. The database would be updated and the analyses published once a year – taking into account the availability of the most up-to-date data – in September.

The consultation process has been conducted with institutions (scientific committees and institutes) of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The members of the academic scientific committees are well known, recognized researchers of their scientific fields and the academic institutions are leading institutions of their respective scientific fields. During the consultation process we have requested and received comments from these institutions.

Results of the professional/scientific consultations

The objectives, major directions of the Proposal, the structure of the indicator-system and the overwhelming part of its content met with agreement. Many comments drew the attention to the fact that the Proposal did not clarify and in some cases did not separate enough the concepts of *growth*, *development* and *progress*.

The opinions confirmed the necessity to establish and apply an indicator set in Hungary, referring to the Global Project of OECD, the [Istanbul Declaration](#) of June 2007 and the “evidence based policy” principle of the European Union. Among the basic principles of

compiling the indicator set, two are contested by many comments; these refer to the exclusion of the use of *subjective indicators* and *composite indicators*. The comments underline that -in spite of their known limitations and uncertainties – they play a growing role in international practice. Subjective indicators show in many cases a considerably different picture of the perception of well-being, satisfaction, happiness and its change as compared to traditional indicators. This can be neglected neither by policy, nor by politics and much attention is paid to this by the civil society and its organizations too. In the case of composite indicators, the important initiatives of major international organizations (first of all the HDI), should be disseminated together with information on how to access them.

According to other comments, in many cases the statistical indicators do not indicate *quality* levels and frequently do not reveal significant differences in quality. When measuring inputs the indicators do not provide information on the results and the different degrees of their utilisation.

Several comments expressed the opinion that 206 indicators were too much to be observed, but at the same time they missed a lot of other indicators from the list. They also proposed in the three groups of indicators further breakdowns by regions; for the economic indicators also by sectors and small regions; for social indicators by sex, age groups, educational levels and incomes. All this would enrich and make more nuanced the picture provided by the indicator system, but would jeopardise the transparency and manageability of the system.

The proposed list of indicators contained also several sub-areas, which are not yet surveyed regularly. Many comments missed these data and proposed further data to be included in the system, (e.g. data on the political, public situation, public security, community functioning and the non-profit sector). This however goes at present beyond the possibilities of the HCSO, and the introduction of these surveys can only be done in a gradual manner.

Only few proposals to delete indicators were formulated, in several cases with the justification that they do not measure progress. Contrary to these opinions, we consider important that the indicator set should aim to measure all essential dimensions of progress, using also indicators that do not characterize

social progress directly, but refer to the evolution of one of its important dimensions.

It is a noteworthy idea that the value and change of many indicators should be taken into account when analyzing different themes, phenomena and relations; therefore, the disclosure of so called “cross section syllabuses” is recommended.

It is also an important goal that the *civil society* be familiar and applies the indicator system. Several remarks proposing a more detailed theoretical introduction aim at promoting it. It was noted that it would be advisable to mention the previous similar initiatives (UN 1971, etc.), researches and their results. As the Proposal mentions several international sources also, it was raised that it would be useful to present them in an annex together with their accessibility. It might also be useful to publish besides detailed meta-descriptions, shorter, and more simple explanations of the content of the indicators.

How to continue?

As the next phase of the scientific professional consultation process on the indicator set measuring social progress, a conference is held in Budapest on 18 September 2008 organised by the HCSO. The aim of the conference is to discuss the results already achieved in the consultation process and try to reach consensus as regards the open issues:

The major objectives of the indicator system should be further specified.

- What can/should be the size of the indicator-system; can it be extended, what limits should be determined?
- Which are the missing indicators that should absolutely be included, which indicators should be modified or deleted?
- The role, inclusion and management of subjective and composite indicators
- Further cooperation with research units and the civil society.

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British Columbia Atlas of Wellness

Available electronically as well as in hard-back cover and consists of over 270 maps depicting 100 indicators related to wellness.

With a supplement that focuses on seniors wellness. www.geog.uvic.ca/wellness

Global Project Meets Information Design
A series of events in 2009 supporting
evidence-based decision-making

By Veronika Egger

“Modern democracy requires the general population to be educated about the facts of production, emigration, child mortality, trade, unemployment, the fight against tuberculosis and alcoholism, nutrition, the importance of sports, physical and emotional nurturing, forms of education, social housing, location of industries.”

Does this sound familiar?

It may remind you of some passages of the [Istanbul Declaration](#): (...) *the availability of statistical indicators of economic, social, and environmental outcomes and their dissemination to citizens can contribute to promoting good governance and the improvement of democratic processes. It can strengthen citizens’ capacity to influence the goals of the societies they live in through debate and consensus building, and increase the accountability of public policies. (...)*

The first quote is by Otto Neurath, who was an Austrian national economist born in 1882. As an eminent socialist he headed the “Forschungsinstitut für Gemeinwirtschaft” (Research Institute for Collective Economy), which was dedicated to promoting a social economy in the difficult years following the First World War and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Also a promoter of public, affordable housing, he supported the comprehensive building program in Vienna of the 1920s. He was driven by the vision that the progress made in the city and the position of Austria in the new world order would have to be communicated to all citizens. Neurath understood that an informed public would be better able to support reforms and visions for the young Austrian republic than an ignorant public. He convinced the City of Vienna to establish the “Museum für Siedlungs- und Städtebau” (Museum of Urban Planning) as a place of general education, where people with limited formal education could learn much about complex relations between economy and society in their own city and country and in other parts of the world. It was there, where the Vienna Method of Pictorial Statistics began to be systematically developed, later to become ISOTYPE.

The method, a visual system for displaying quantitative information, quickly became

famous around the world. One key role in the development of easy to understand information was the “Transformer” between raw data and its graphic representation, the first Information Designer in the modern sense.

85 years ago, pictorial statistics were developed by an economist who wanted to communicate the state of the world. This spirit is now reflected in the co-operation between the International Institute for Information Design (IIID) and the OECD Global Project.



Data Designed for Decisions

Data tells its own story, but it needs intermediaries to find it, to visualise it, to communicate it, to help understand and act on it. We mostly base our decisions on our own experience, gut-feeling, social pressure, cultural environment, economic circumstance or habit just as much if not more than on actual data available. Whether we distrust data or we are persuaded by it depends to some extent on who presents it and how it is presented. According to a survey only 10 % of Europeans are convinced that political decisions are based on statistical evidence, 46 % think that this is probably the case. In some European countries up to 60 % of people tend not to trust official statistics. And even if we do understand the data, this still does not mean that we act on the evidence. This opens up a whole can of worms where data integrity and trust are as much an issue as visualisation, culture, user involvement, technology, communication and behavioural change. While we will not be able to solve all these issues, the cooperation between IIID and the OECD will investigate selection, visualisation, interpretation and communication of data, and how it can be effectively used to:

- help understand complex issues,
- make data relevant at a personal level,
- close the gap between objective measurement and perception,
- and take decisions based on evidence.

Our joint conference [DD4D – Data Designed for Decisions](#) – will be the main event in 2009, three days in Paris for intermediaries between data, knowledge and empowerment, 18-20 June.

The three sessions “**Finding the Story**”, “**Telling the Story**” and “**Living the Story**” will

be going full circle, joining the disciplines between data collection, communication and understanding. We expect an exciting event with space for discourse and conversation; with excellent speakers in the fields of economics, statistics, social and cognitive science, information design, visualisation, the media, or development planning; and with participants from a variety of fields who equally contribute to the quality of the conference. The **T42** (Tea for Two) sessions are a structured meeting place within the conference format, with the chance of 20 exclusive minutes with five fellow participants or speakers, a marketplace for unexpected knowledge, unusual encounters and opportunities.

Global Activities

Accompanying the conference we are preparing a student project – **DD4me** – that will investigate the role statistics play the lives of young people, as well as a series of workshops around the world. These **Reality Check** workshops will be organised by IID and its members in countries around the world. They will link up with existing projects named by the

OECD or other organisations involved in enhancing progress in societies, looking at real applications in various cultural contexts.

Placed at local community level the workshops will use a framework of information design methods to facilitate evidence-based decision making and communication. The resulting case studies will report on the success of the methodical framework and the various solutions for data access, communication and visualisation within the projects. The goal is to gather evidence on communication, visualisation and understanding of data, which can be further developed into a “toolbox” on evidence-based decision making at a micro level.

The website www.dd4d.net provides more information about the conference and other activities. We invite you to contact us at participate@dd4d.net if you are interested in contributing to the activities in any way, be it with topics and ideas for workshops, as a sponsor, as a speaker or participant in the conference or simply by spreading the word.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Charting Progress, Building Visions, Improving Life

A Conference for Asia, “Measuring the Progress of Societies: Key Issues for the Asia and Pacific region” 23-24 March 2009, Kyoto, Japan

On March 23 to 24 2009, the OECD is organising a regional conference on “Measuring and Fostering the Progress of Societies: Key Issues for the Asia and Pacific region” at the Kyoto University in Japan.

The rapidly industrialising and growing countries of Asia will significantly determine many aspects of the world’s future. The sheer scale of population and economic growth in Asia itself guarantees that the progress of the world will be heavily influenced by that of Asia. Many countries in Asia have a long history of thinking about progress, a history that the rest of the world can learn from. It is important to have a clear concept of development and of how to view the understanding of progress in Asia, especially versus the European view.



Cherry Blossom, Kyoto, Japan

The conference will bring together 200 high level participants from all over South and East Asia. The audience will comprise statisticians, economists, policy makers, sociologists and political scientists as well as leaders from NGOs, the business world and the media: in short all those who share an interest in promoting a stronger facts-based discussion on whether and how their societies are progressing.

Representatives from important international agencies, including UNESCAP, UNDP, ASEAN and the World Bank, among others will also be invited. The agenda will consider issues such as globalisation, climate change, energy security, poverty and social stability. It will question the following: the meaning of progress in an Asian context; the key challenges that will affect Asia's progress over the next 50 years; the role of new technologies and how they encourage broad social change; and finally, the place of evidence in fostering lasting change for the better.

Attention will be paid to developing smarter measures of progress in these areas that capture the issues at the heart of 21st century development. Consideration will also be given to the linkages between these areas and the policies needed over the medium term to tackle them.

For further information: www.oecd.org/progress

ISQOLS Offers an Online Certification Course in Community Indicators Research

The International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies (ISQOLS) offers a curriculum on community indicators research leading to certification as **Community Indicator Researcher**. The complete curriculum is provided on ISQOLS Web site at www.isqols.org.

This course presents information designed to help community indicator researchers (and those who are stepping into this position) enhance their professional knowledge of the subject matter and become certified as Community Indicator Researchers by ISQOLS (upon successfully passing an exam). The course contains five modules. The first module discusses the theoretical foundations of community indicators research. Five theoretical concepts are described guiding the formulation of community indicator projects. The second module provides an example of a community indicators project as an illustration of the entire process without delving too much into details. The third module describes the planning process: how to identify sponsors, secure funding, develop an organizational structure, and select a quality-of-life model, select indicators, and so on. The fourth module focuses on data collection. Two types of data collection are described: secondary and primary data collection. The process of these two data collections is described in some detail. Finally, the last module describes the last stage of the project, namely dissemination and promotion. Specifically, the module describes how public and research reports are developed and distributed, and how they are promoted through public relations, E-marketing, and other forms of promotion.

This course is designed to be easy to use and understand. Each module has a list of learning objectives. Use the objectives to further guide you to the major points in these chapters and track your progress. In addition, the progress checks provide a list of questions that help you study for the certification exam. There are also answers to the questions pertaining to the Progress Checks at the end of each module. After learning the course material, applicants can take the exam on ISQOLS website at www.isqols.org.

The applicant is now officially certified by ISQOLS as a **Community Indicator Researcher**.

For additional information about qualifications, cost, and other details, visit website www.isqols.org and click on Certification Programs.

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

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