



Dear Partners and Friends,

It is a pleasure to introduce this 8th issue of the Newsletter on Measuring the Progress of Societies. The interest in measuring societal progress continues to grow with a great deal of interesting work taking place worldwide as you will see in this issue of the Newsletter. As you will see, from Australia to Slovenia, countries are putting measuring progress at the forefront of their agendas. This important issue is also attracting more and more attention from policy makers, as witnessed by the recent initiative in the UK, which we will write about in a future issue.



A new feature has been introduced in this issue of the Newsletter. At the end of each article you will notice a clickable Wikiprogress icon to access more related information and to learn more on progress initiatives.

[Wikiprogress](#) is now the main platform for all collaboration and exchanges related to the Global Project on *Measuring the Progress of Societies*. Information found on the former Global Project website www.oecd.org/progress has all been transferred onto Wikiprogress which also includes:

- Over 765 articles related to measuring progress worldwide;
- An extensive ongoing media review;
- Details on progress-related events;
- Contributions from key researchers globally; and
- Over 100 progress-related data sets.

We invite you to visit the site regularly to be kept informed on progress-related initiatives – and also contribute.

We take this opportunity to wish you all the best for the New Year and look forward to continuing to work with you.

The Global Office

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Thank you to all the authors for their contributions in this issue.

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Global Progress Research Network launches on Wikiprogress

Top progress researchers worldwide now use the Wikiprogress platform to further the progress debate in a unique new interactive forum.

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20TH ANNIVERSARY HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT

*by Eva Jespersen, Deputy Director
Human Development Report Office, UNDP &
Co-chair of the Global Project on "Measuring
Progress of Societies"*

The 20th anniversary Human Development Report titled [The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development](#) was launched at the UN in New York on 4 November and at subsequent events around the world.

The 20th anniversary has been an occasion to ascertain the robustness of the human development concept introduced by Mahbub ul Haq in 1990, and to reflect on how it has been at the vanguard of international discourse on development ever since.

It has become broadly accepted that development is about creating opportunities for people to lead lives they have reason to value while at the global level respecting the capacity of one planet.

The report celebrated the remarkable global progress over the past four decades in human development both as measured by the signature human development index (HDI), and through analysis of additional indicators of human development, including in the areas of empowerment and participation.

HDR2010 also showed that the paths of advancing human development have been highly diverse. It argued that each society can only succeed by applying the broad principles of human development to develop its own context-specific strategy, supported by more equitable global governance. Yet, the report confirmed the importance of investing in social infrastructure and systematically addressing gender inequality.

More broadly, the report identified equity, empowerment and sustainability as critical factors to advancing human development. It introduced three experimental measures that shed light on how inequality and deprivations challenge human development: the inequality-adjusted human development index, the gender inequality index, and the multidimensional poverty index.

Acknowledging, in the words of ul Haq, that the human development index is a vulgar measure of HD akin to GDP, it nevertheless comes closer to the real lives of people.

The [Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission](#) recognised the HDI as the only globally applicable alternative to use of income as a measure of progress.

Although a decision was made not to broaden the index, some key changes to the form and indicators of the HDI were introduced this year¹. Thus revised, Norway, Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Ireland topped the 2010 HDI ranking. At the bottom of the 2010 ranking of 169 countries were in order: Mozambique, Burundi, Niger, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe. Because of the changes to the methodology, the 2010 HDI ranking is not comparable to ranking presented in previous reports. Instead, the report presents recalculated values of the HDI back to 1980, wherever possible, using the new methodology.

The trend analysis of the HDI shows a broad and impressive picture of overall human progress over the past four decades. For 135 countries with complete data sets for the traditional indicators going back 40 years, life expectancy climbed from 59 years in 1970 to 70 in 2010, school enrolment rose from just 55 percent of all primary and secondary school-age children to 70 percent, and per capita GDP doubled. All regions shared in this progress, though to varying degrees. Life expectancy, for example, rose by 18 years in the Arab states² between 1970 and 2010, compared to eight years in sub-Saharan Africa.

1 Until this year, life expectancy at birth for health, gross school enrolment, and literacy rates for education, and GDP per capita in ppp for standard of living made up the indicators of the HDI. Beginning with the 2010 HDI GDP is replaced by GNI and school enrolment and literacy rates by mean and expected years of schooling (for over-25 adults and children of school-entry age, respectively). The technical note 1 to the HDR2010 explains changes to the functional form.

2 The report uses UNDP's classification of regions.

Looking at progress through the lens of the human development index produces results that are significantly different from the traditional perspective of economic growth. The “Top 10 Movers”, those countries that improved most in HDI terms compared to their peers 40 years ago³, were led by Oman, which invested energy earnings over the decades in education and public health.

The other nine “Top Movers” are China, Nepal, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Laos, Tunisia, South Korea, Algeria and Morocco. Remarkably, China was the only country that made this list due solely to income performance; the main drivers of HDI achievement for all other top movers were in health and education.

Using the three new indices⁴, the report shows that when inequality in achievements in each of the components of the HDI, or between men and women, is considered, all countries see their HDI discounted; countries with the lowest values of HDI also tend to have the highest degree of inequality. For example, Mozambique’s HDI value of 0.238 is discounted by 45 percent due to inequality within HDI dimensions, while the 0.841 value for the Czech Republic’s HDI is discounted by only 6 percent. But even within the different groupings of HDI countries, variations in equality are considerable. When applying the new gender inequality index, the Netherlands is ranked highest, while Yemen is ranked lowest among the 138 countries for which data was available.

The third new measure, the multidimensional poverty index (MPI), has already attracted significant attention; several governments have approached UNDP and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, which led the creation of the index, to adapt the MPI to their country contests. The MPI complements income-based poverty assessments by looking at overlapping deprivations at the household level, from basic living standards to access to schooling, clean water and health care. About 1.7 billion people – fully a third of the population in the 104 countries included in the MPI – are estimated to live in multidimensional poverty, more than the estimated 1.3 billion who live on \$1.25 a day or less.

On the occasion of the release of the 20th anniversary report, the HDR website (<http://hdr.undp.org>) was revamped with extensive

new data resources, interactive index-building tools and new country profile pages with the latest available development statistics for all UN member-states. Website visitors can now create their own development indices, explore an interactive ‘Stat Planet’ world map, and retrieve national figures on health, education, income and demographics.

Top movers in HDI, nonincome HDI and GDP, 1970–2010

Rank	Improvements in		
	HDI	Nonincome HDI	Income
1	Oman	Oman	China
2	China	Nepal	Botswana
3	Nepal	Saudi Arabia	South Korea
4	Indonesia	Libya	Hong Kong, China
5	Saudi Arabia	Algeria	Malaysia
6	Lao PDR	Tunisia	Indonesia
7	Tunisia	Iran	Malta
8	South Korea	Ethiopia	Viet Nam
9	Algeria	South Korea	Mauritius
10	Morocco	Indonesia	India

Source: HDRO calculations using data from the HDRO database.

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PROGRESS EVENTS

International Conference on Social Cohesion and Development
20-21 January 2011

Read more [here](#)

Community Indicators Consortium (CIC) On-Line Conference
11-15 April 2011

Read more [here](#)

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³ The report uses closeness of fit.

⁴ Please see HDR2010 Chapter 5 for detailed explanations

MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX: INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL EXAMPLES

by Sabina Alkire, Director
Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative,
University of Oxford

In July 2010, the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) of Oxford University and the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched an international [Multidimensional Poverty Index \(MPI\)](#) which reflects the joint distribution of acute deprivations people experience at the same time. The MPI was also featured in the 20th anniversary edition of the [UNDP Human Development Report](#) released in November 2010.

[Maria Emma Santos and I](#) and other OPHI researchers computed this acute multidimensional poverty index for 104 countries with a combined population of 5.2 billion (78% of the world total). About 1.7 billion of these people – one third – live in multidimensional poverty, according to the MPI (one-quarter live on less than \$1.25/day). Half of MPI poor people live in South Asia (51% or 844 million) and one quarter in Africa (28% or 458 million). Niger has the greatest intensity and incidence of poverty, with 93% of the population classified as poor in MPI terms.

The MPI reflects simultaneous deprivations in health, education, and standard of living using indicators such as malnutrition, child mortality, having no educated family member, having a child out of school, or not having electricity, drinking water, adequate sanitation, clean cooking fuel, adequate flooring, or assets. In a unique step, a person is only identified as multidimensionally poor if he or she is deprived in at least one-third of the dimensions.

Even in countries with strong economic growth, the MPI shows if acute poverty persists. India is a major case in point. Eight Indian states are home to more MPI poor people (421 million in Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal) than the 26 poorest African countries combined (410 million). The eight states and 26 countries each have an MPI greater than 0.32. The MPI also reveals great variations within countries: Nairobi has an MPI poverty similar to the Dominican Republic, whereas Kenya's rural northeast is poorer than Niger.

Poverty comparisons internationally usually use the \$1.25/day line and the \$2/day lines. The MPI complements these by reflecting deprivations directly using indicators related to the MDGs. In practice we find that there can be considerable – and instructive – differences. In some countries MPI

services such as water, sanitation, and schooling are provided free or at low cost; in others they are out of reach even for many working people with an income.

In terms of methodology, the MPI draws on a new approach to multidimensional poverty that [James Foster and I developed](#). MPI uses the simplest of our measures, whose formulae is: **MPI=(Incidence X Intensity)**, where incidence is the percentage of people who are identified as multidimensionally poor using our dual-cutoff approach, and intensity is the average percentage of dimensions in which they are deprived. It's that simple.

Our methodology can be used with any indicators, cutoffs and weights. And in practice national multidimensional poverty measures are being constructed that reflect the context of each country better. For example, [Mexico](#) released a measure that includes income (with 50% weight) plus six social dimensions. [Colombia](#) have one under development. [Bhutan's Gross National Happiness index](#) uses our methodology – with nine dimensions and 'sufficiency' cutoffs for each indicator. A number of other countries are constructing their own national multidimensional poverty measures. This is natural: just as countries have national income poverty measures that are used for policy; the same is happening for multidimensional poverty measures.

The MPI and our underlying methodology has a policy appeal for several reasons. First, it can show changes directly, so policy makers receive feedback quickly, rather than waiting until all changes show up in income space. Second, the MPI can be decomposed by population subgroup and broken down by indicator. This means policymakers can see how – among the multidimensionally poor – the composition of poverty varies: by nation, by rural-urban area, by state, by ethnicity or religion or other groupings of interest (data permitting) and design policies appropriately. Third, because the MPI is constructed by computing each person's intensity of poverty first, and then aggregating, it can be broken down by intensity – so the 'poorest of the poor' can be identified and targeted – which is key when resources are scarce.

In other words, the MPI is like a high resolution lens: if we know that a person/group is MPI poor we can ask 'how' they are poor, and zoom in to see exactly which deprivations they experience at the same time. This feature was commended by the Sarkozy Commission, because "the consequences for quality of life of having **multiple disadvantages** far exceed the sum of their individual effects." The Commission called for "[d]eveloping measures of these cumulative effects [using] information on the **joint distribution**" of the most salient features". The MPI

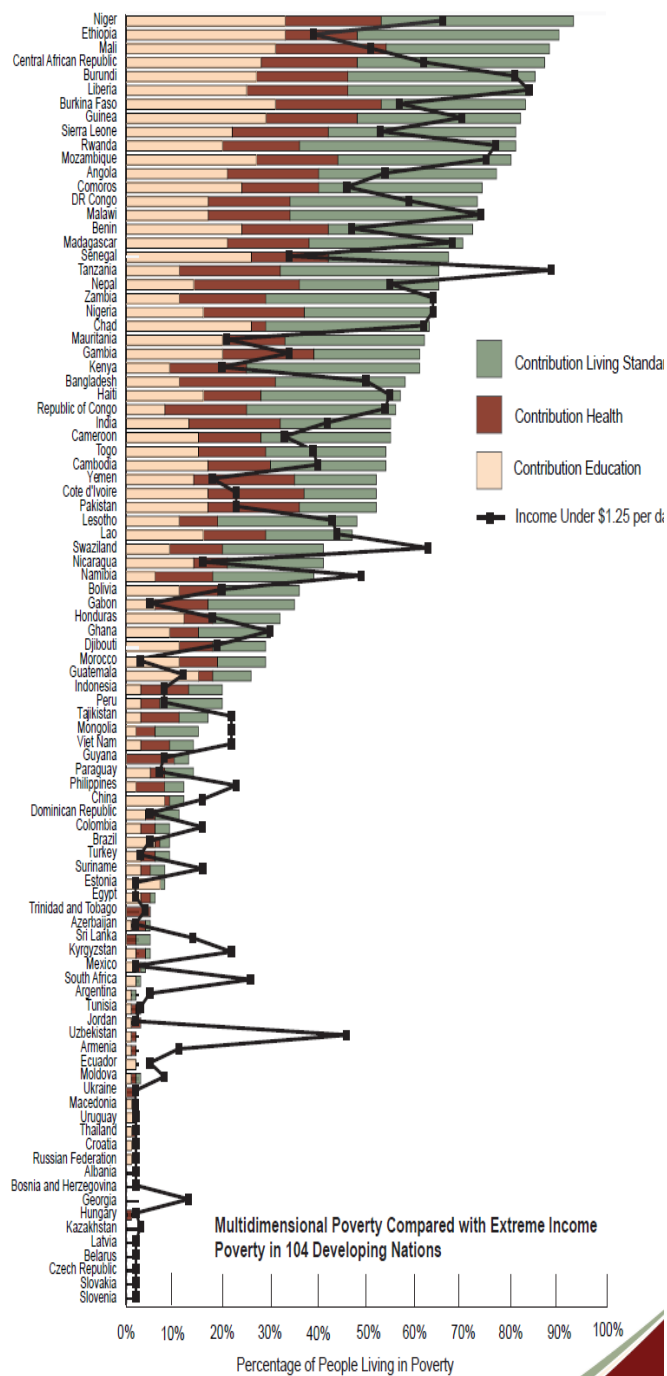
and our methodology is one clear and operational methodology for reflecting joint distribution.

Of course, the international MPI is limited: in particular by data. Because of the need to understand joint deprivation, the Sarkozy Commission called for dedicated surveys. In practice, the international MPI uses existing data from household surveys in the public domain from 2000 to 2008. These surveys did not contain income data so the MPI could not include income. They also did not include other aspects of multidimensional poverty such as work (including informal work and safety of work), empowerment, safety from violence, social connectedness, or subjective well-being. However the methodology can easily include other dimensions if data are available and are deemed relevant.

In terms of public response, the MPI was carried widely in national and international media, and the overwhelming response has been positive. A debate was sparked about the equal weights we used. We had already demonstrated that the MPI was robust to the choice of cutoffs and indicators. We re-computed the MPI giving each dimension (health, education, and standard of living) a weight of 50%, and the other two 25%. We found that 88% of the pairwise country comparisons were completely robust, that rank correlations were high, and that [the MPI was robust to a plausible range of weights](#). Because multidimensional measurement is a fast-growing area, it is vital for new measures to explicitly test their own construction. We also have developed a considerable research agenda and would warmly welcome collaboration in advancing it.

The MPI is now in the public domain as a new international measure of multidimensional poverty – which complements income poverty, which provides simple and policy-relevant information, and which can be used to develop national poverty measures that carry the colour and priorities of their own people. We hope that, in collaboration with others in the 'measuring progress' community, we can explore new and interesting applications and innovations so that measures of poverty and well-being enable effective action.

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PROGBLOG: THE BLOG ON PROGRESS

Progress blog posts from top bloggers worldwide.

Educated in the School of Life: Education through a Well-being Lens, by Jon Hall

[Click here for this and more blogs](#)

SLOVENIA REFLECTS ON NEW AND BETTER MEASURE OF PEOPLE'S WELL-BEING AND THE PROGRESS OF SOCIETIES

*by Irena Krizman, President,
Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia*

On 29 November 2010, the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, under the auspices of H.E. Dr Danilo Türk, President of the Republic of Slovenia and the OECD Secretary-General, Angel Gurría, organised a [Round Table on the Measurement and Use of Data on Social Progress and People's Well-Being](#) in Brdo, Slovenia.

The Round Table brought together different stakeholders, including political leaders, policy-makers, the academic community, statisticians, civil society and users of statistics. The objective was to identify interconnections between better statistical information, better policies and better outcomes, so as to increase people's well-being and enhance the progress of societies. The Round Table provided an opportunity to exchange views on conceptual and strategic issues, as well as to discuss ways and means for enhancing cooperation between stakeholders. The challenges for national statistical offices were shared with the participants in order to build consensus on priorities and resources required to move forward.

The Round Table was organised in two sessions. The first, entitled "Progress and well-being in Slovenia", focused on the various aspects of well-being: not only material living standards, but also health, education, personal activities including work, political participation, social relationships, environmental quality, and insecurity of an economic and physical nature. Both current well-being and its sustainability were considered. This discussion helped to strengthen awareness of the need to consider the wider notion of well-being and progress when preparing Slovenia's national

development strategy, determining priorities and objectives, using data and designing indicators. The second session, entitled "Statistics and communication", presented some of the challenges faced by national statistical offices and other data producers, including:

- Improving methodologies and coverage in areas such as wealth, the volume of government output, time use, perception of happiness and satisfaction of people.
- Improving methods for collecting qualitative data and building composite indicators, and monitoring the quality of statistical products and services.
- Strengthening the responsibility for better data presentation, prevention of misuse and greater cooperation with analysts and researchers.
- Improving communication to the media and the wider public by preserving trust in statistical information.

The presentations and exchanges were very fruitful with some key messages emerging. The first was that there is too much emphasis on measuring what we produce, principally through gross domestic product (GDP), and not enough on assessing our well-being and progress. Although GDP is an important measure of the production of market goods, it does not take into account the productive activity which occurs at home. It ignores leisure, and the environmental damage that production may cause. It does not show how resilient and supportive our communities are, nor measure the living standards of households. We therefore need new complementary indicators that measure what we value as a society. We need to raise living standards and confidence, not just GDP.

We then need to ensure that these new measures inform policy. Giving policy-makers the necessary tools to make truly informed decisions is key to improving people's well-being. As the OECD Secretary-General said during the Round Table, "measuring progress is not an end in itself. It is a means to improve policies that affect the well-being of people."

Beyond developing new measures, another key message that emerged was the need for improving the communications of statistics, the statistical literacy of society as a whole. Understanding statistical concepts and methodologies is essential for the proper and efficient use of statistical data collected and published by statistical offices and other institutions. The Slovenian Statistical Office is aware of this and is already putting a lot of effort into improving the way it communicates its

statistics. With the new technologies now available, including easy to use interactive tools to visualise statistics, there are many innovative ways to address these issues.

I would like to thank President Türk and the OECD Secretary-General for participating in this important event and for continuing to foster this essential debate in Slovenia. About a year ago, at the 3rd OECD World Forum in Busan, President Türk stressed that “the search for better, more comprehensive and more convincing ways of measuring progress is a vitally important task of our era”. This Round Table marked an important step in this direction and contributes significantly to the objectives of the OECD-hosted Global Project on *Measuring the Progress of Societies*.

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SUCCESS FOR THE INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO TURN STATISTICS INTO KNOWLEDGE SEMINAR IN AFRICA

by Trevor Fletcher, Head
Statistical Information Management and Support
Division, OECD Statistics Directorate

We are in the age of “Big Data” – there are TeraBytes, PetaBytes, Exabytes and Zettabytes out there and more being made available every day. Before we know it, there will be Yottabytes (a number too big to even imagine) of data floating around. We need tools to make sense of this data deluge.

A recent seminar on “[Innovative Approaches to Turn Statistics into Knowledge](#)” attempted to address this issue. It was held in Cape Town on 8-10 December 2010 and co-hosted by Statistics South Africa, OECD and the World Bank. It showcased new software tools to help us make sense of the vast quantities of data that we are bombarded with today.

A major goal of the seminar was to promote solutions for making data easily available to decision makers and the public for evidence-based decisions contributing towards a stronger, cleaner, fairer world economy, which is the OECD vision. This is especially important in light of the OECD’s 50th anniversary which we are celebrating this year with the mission of “better policies for better lives”.

This event was the fourth in a series of seminars dedicated to “turning statistics into knowledge”. Previous seminars were held in [Rome](#) (2007), [Stockholm](#) (2008) and [Washington DC](#) (2009). These seminars are organised in the context of the OECD-

hosted [Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies](#) which has as key objective the development of indicators in a wide range of policy areas that allow assessment of economic performance, people’s well-being and sustainability.

Background on previous seminars

The first seminar in Rome (“Dynamic Graphics for Presenting Statistical Indicators”) focused on importance of presenting key societal phenomena to modern audiences in an interesting and understandable way. The goal in Rome was to gather the developers of leading-edge products to showcase their solutions and identify good practices allowing organisations to advance further in this field.

The second seminar was hosted by Statistics Sweden in Stockholm. It showed the evolution in this area by moving from Dynamic Graphics software towards the use of videos, participative “Web 2.0” and “story-telling” applications.

The third seminar of the series was held in Washington DC in 2009. The presentations in Washington DC demonstrated new and ground-breaking visualisation tools that crossed the barrier into visual arts.

The Cape Town seminar

The Cape Town seminar continued to develop and build on the themes covered in the Rome, Stockholm and Washington DC events and featured a wide range of presentations from Africa, Europe, North America, Asia and Australia that covered “storytelling”, the use of maps in understanding data, data discovery and analysis software and other visualisation techniques.

Participating presenters came from a mix of backgrounds, including Statistical Offices, International Organisations, research bodies and private companies.

The meeting was organised around four main themes and covered topics such as:

- **Using maps to visualise your data** – software making use of maps to select and visualise the data;
- **How to get the most out of your data with Discovery and Analysis software** – using ‘data mining’ together with other analytical software to exploit statistical data;
- **Using data and storytelling to get a message across** – the ability of the tool to describe a sequence of events using the data, graphics and descriptive text saved and viewed as a ‘story’ that can be shared with others; and

- **Visualising data in innovative ways** – viewing data and graphics in a way not covered by the other themes.

In addition there were presentations by young African statisticians on a variety of subjects related to data visualisation.

The seminar also included a preview of the BBC film “The Joy of Stats” which featured Hans Rosling describing statistical visualisation methods of the past 200 years as well as today’s cutting-edge tools. There were some 30 presentations in total. For more information, see here for the [agenda](#) which includes links to these presentations. A video of the event will also be made available on the website shortly.

Main conclusions of the seminar and where do we go from here?

The seminar was successful with the following main conclusions emerging:

- The innovative use of graphical and mapping software for ‘storytelling’ continues to evolve, particularly in allowing users to create and visualise their own data;
- The messages of the seminar reinforced those of the BBC film ‘the Joy of Stats’, suggesting that data should be made available to a wider audience together with tools that allow them to better understand the world they live in and help them make their decisions accordingly;
- Good stories require good narrators. Storytelling software alone is not enough – the challenge is to find the experts who can communicate their stories in a compelling way; and
- The trend for organisations to join forces and share software and ideas for data visualisation is continuing.

We expect the seminar to yield positive results in sharing ideas and software and to inspire others to develop even more innovative data visualisation tools. These tools will help make statistical data more easily available and understandable to all audiences, not just for experts. These developments testify Hans Rosling’s recent statement that “Statistics are now the sexiest subject on the planet...”

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wikiprogress.Stat

The database of progress indicators, [Wikiprogress.stat](#), has recently grown to include datasets from UNESCO on the **2010 Global Education Digest**.

Further information and datasets [available here](#)

MEASURING AUSTRALIA’S PROGRESS – AN UPDATE

by Imogen Wall, Assistant Director Social Progress & Reporting, Australian Bureau of Statistics and Mike Salvaris, Adjunct Professor, RMIT University, Melbourne

The Australian Bureau of Statistics – Measures of Australia’s Progress

Measures of Australia’s Progress (MAP) is a flagship ABS publication. It presents an accessible selection of indicators designed to help Australians determine whether life in Australia is getting better. MAP brings together measures from across social, economic and environmental domains, so these can be assessed side by side for a balanced view of national progress.

MAP 2010 – MAP goes online

In 2010, MAP was released as a comprehensive online product, with summary data on 17 headline dimensions and 5 supplementary dimensions. MAP 2010 provides extensive links to contextual information, such as information about the relative wellbeing of particular groups in society. In this way, MAP provides insight not only on the progress of Australia, but also Australians.

To enhance the accessibility of the information and raise the profile of progress measures, the MAP home page summarises the information using a dashboard. This shows a green tick for progress, a red cross where conditions have regressed, and an orange tilde where there has been no change. A grey box indicates there is not yet a time series or reliable data.

Society	Economy	Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Health ✓ Education and training ✓ Work ■ Crime ■ Family, community and social cohesion ■ Democracy, governance and citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ National income ✓ National wealth ✓ Household economic wellbeing 📄 Housing 📄 Productivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Biodiversity ■ Land ■ Inland waters ■ Oceans and estuaries ✗ Atmosphere ■ Waste

'MAP 2.0' – Future directions for MAP

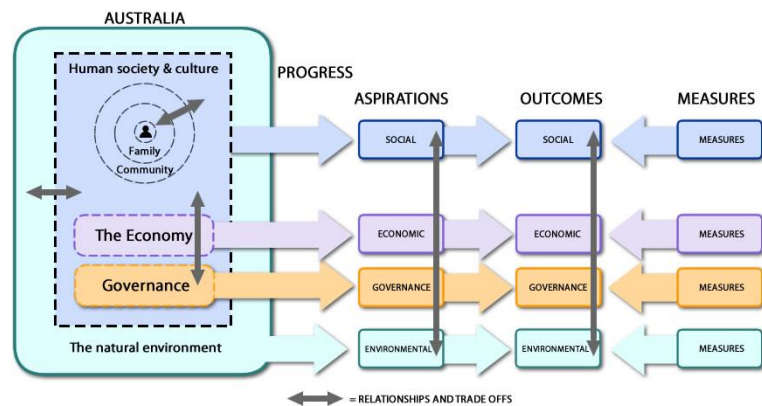
The ABS first produced MAP in 2002. In 2011, we are launching a wide consultation to discover whether MAP continues to be relevant to Australians. The MAP Team hope to generate a national discussion about what Australians care about in terms of progress, and whether our progress statistics reflect those priorities.

We will work with existing ABS user networks and with organisations involved in gathering community views, and be guided by experts from government, business, academia and the community. For example, we will tap into the Australian Community Indicators Network and into work being done by a group of individuals and organisations on an Australian National Development Index (ANDI). Further information on this initiative can be found below. Individuals will also be able to provide views through a range of social media and engagement forums.

To support and structure this consultation, the ABS has developed a model which clarifies the major themes we would like feedback on. We hope this model will generate discussion around some key questions, such as:

- What important dimensions of Australia need to be considered in measuring progress?
- How should progress be defined?
- What are the important aspirations of Australians in the areas of social, economic, governance and environmental progress?
- What concrete outcomes most effectively demonstrate progress towards those aspirations?
- What important trade-offs between these dimensions or aspirations should be examined?
- What measures best describe the extent of progress in these areas?

The feedback collected during 2011 will assist in developing a statistical framework that we hope will reflect many different perspectives and guide the process of measuring progress, identifying gaps and allowing new, targeted measures to be developed.



For more detailed information, access the MAP 2010 Feature Article 'Future directions for measuring Australia's progress' via the MAP website www.abs.gov.au/about/progress.

ANDI: an Australian community initiative

In May 2010, Australia launched a new citizens' initiative in measuring progress: the Australian National Development Index (ANDI).

ANDI's partners are a historic coalition of non-government organisations in Australia representing a diverse range of citizen interests and expertise, supported by a team of universities. Partners range from trade unions and business groups, churches and local government to organisations in the environmental, social welfare, human rights and youth fields. ANDI will also have some government partners, but funding and governance will be provided predominantly from the Australian community.

ANDI will be a strong national voice in support of the 'paradigm shift' now being urged around the world – to redefine progress, from increased economic production to equitable and sustainable well-being.

For nearly 15 years now, a wide range of progress measurement initiatives have been developed across Australia, from neighbourhood and local government to state and national levels.

Three of the best-known examples are: the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) pioneering 'Measures of Australia's Progress' (MAP); the state of Tasmania's 20 year community planning project, Tasmania Together; and Community Indicators Victoria, a community progress and planning framework for 79 local governments.

Two years ago, former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd convened a national 'Ideas Summit' with over 1000 participants, and one of the ideas that emerged with the highest priority was for 'a national index ... to measure Australia's economic, social and environmental progress' based on 'engaging with the community in discussions about what is important Australia's progress and development'.

ANDI will take this idea a few steps further. Taking the advice of the OECD⁵ and the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission⁶, it will aim to promote a debate about what progress means to Australians in the 21st century.

In structure and planning, it will follow the model of the world-leading Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW). Australians and Canadians get on pretty well and there was real delight when CIW agreed to be a partner. Hopefully there will be mutual benefits through the exchange of ideas, people and practices.

ANDI will also work closely with the ABS and will support MAP, by drawing on its key data and new measurement framework and feeding back community priorities. We expect this to be a strong and complementary relationship. In particular, the community discussion promoted by the ANDI project will feed into ABS plans for the future directions of MAP; ANDI's exploration of the use of indexes in this context will complement the dashboard approach used by the ABS in MAP as mentioned earlier in this article.

The initial goals are ambitious: to consult half a million Australians; and to develop a quarterly index of national well-being. This index will be built around 12 key dimensions of progress, such as health, education, indigenous well-being, children's well-being, justice and human rights, etc. Each 'progress dimension' would itself have an index, and indexes will be released annually during different months. It is hoped that this will enable a continuous

⁵ "To measure progress, one needs to know what it looks like. Progress undoubtedly means different things to different societies, and we will encourage and help societies to have a dialogue about what progress means to them. (OECD, 2008, 'Measuring the progress of societies: what is the relevance for Asia and the Pacific?', Report to UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific).

⁶ "The Commission believes that a global debate around the issues and recommendations raised provides an important venue for a discussion of societal values, for what we, as a society, care about, and whether we are really striving for what is important." (Stiglitz, J., A. Sen and J-P Fitoussi. 2009. 'Report of the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress', Paris)

discussion in the media and the public about the quality of Australian life and what Australians believe are the priorities for national progress.

ANDI will also aim to build a national network and resource base for the growing national movement to develop community well-being measures at local, state and national level, and to become a participant in the OECD-hosted Global Project. An early priority will be to develop a high quality and community friendly website linked to the Global Project's Wikiprogress site, and a national education and communications program.

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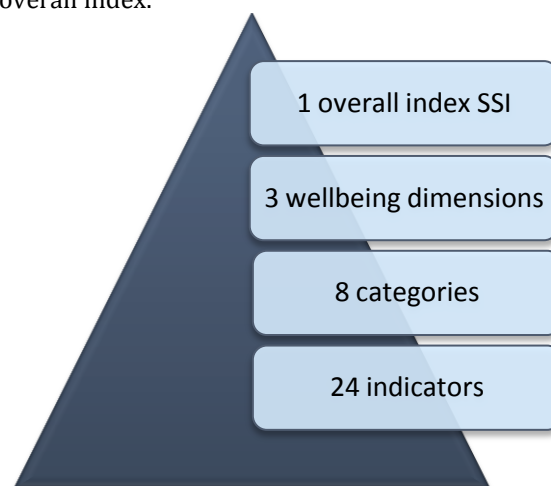
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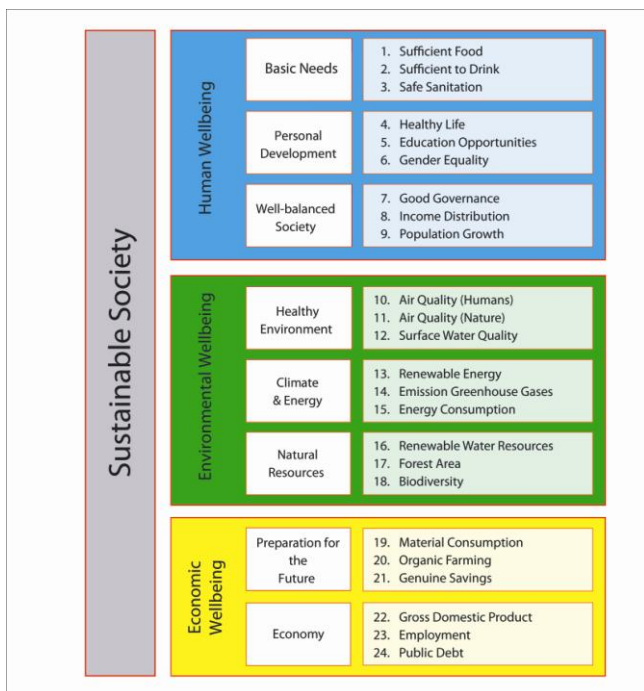
SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY INDEX

by Geurt van de Kerk, Chairman Sustainable Society Foundation

The Sustainable Society Index, SSI, is one of the very few indexes which includes all three wellbeing dimensions: Human Wellbeing, Environmental Wellbeing and Economic Wellbeing. And it is the only one that is published every two years for 151 countries. The SSI is based on the well-known Brundtland definition and is built up by 24 indicators. These can be aggregated into 8 categories, 3 wellbeing dimensions and finally into one overall index.



The framework of the SSI, redesigned after a thorough evaluation, is shown in the figure below.



The SSI measures the actual level of sustainability and the distance of each country to achieving full sustainability. It monitors progress over time on the way towards sustainability.

The recent third edition of the SSI shows that the world at large has a long way to go to achieve full sustainability. The average score of all 151 countries is 5.9 on a scale of 0 to 10. Could this mark be satisfying in school, it certainly is not at all satisfying with respect to sustainability: it is 40% below the required level. Moreover, the world has made little progress over the past four years since the first edition of the SSI: the overall SSI-score increased from 5.8 in 2006 to 5.9 in 2010. At this pace, it would take 160 years to achieve full sustainability. This is not a happy prospect. We'd better speed up now, it is still possible.

Main results SSI-2010

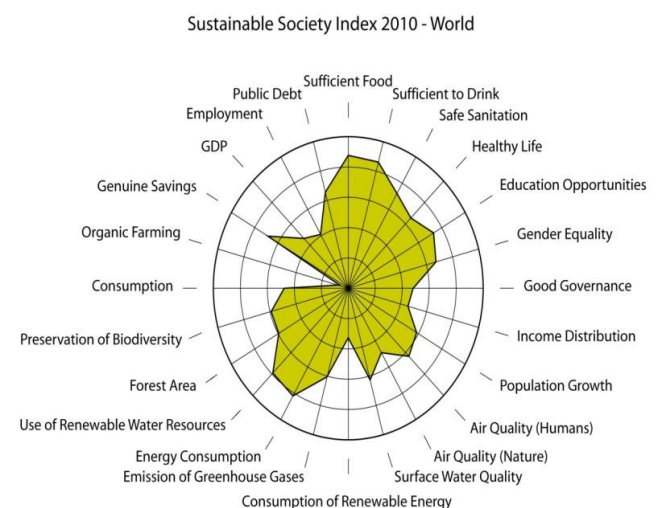
Let's briefly summarise the main results, presented by the SSI-2010.

World

1. The world at large is – with an SSI score of 5.9 – only just over halfway towards a sustainable world.
2. Two indicators show alarmingly low figures: "Consumption of Renewable Energy" has a score

of only 3.2 and "Organic Farming" a still much lower score of 0.7.

3. "Basic Needs" scores highest of the 8 categories. The score of 8.2 – unweighted for a country's population size – implies that 18% of the world population, i.e. over 1.2 billion people, still lack adequate basic needs. The more justified weighted figure is even more alarming: 21.9%, i.e. over 1.5 billion people.
4. "Economic Wellbeing", which reflects not just GDP but economy in a much broader sense as well as preparation for the future (i.e. transition towards a sustainable society), is lagging behind the other two wellbeing dimensions. "Economic Wellbeing" only scores 4.6. "Environmental Wellbeing" (6.1) and "Human Wellbeing" (6.7) are performing better, though are still way below full sustainability.



Regions

5. North and West Europe show the highest SSI score of all regions, 6.9, whereas Sub Saharan Africa has the lowest score of 5.3.
6. The same applies for "Human" and for "Economic Wellbeing". However, for "Environmental Wellbeing" Sub Saharan Africa scores best of all regions.

Progress

7. Many indicators show progress over the past 4 years, especially those concerning "Basic Needs" and "Personal Development"; "Gender Equality", an indicator in the "Personal Development" category, is an exception.
8. "Air Quality (nature)" improved steadily while "Air Quality (humans)" is quite volatile; the same applies to many of the other indicators, especially those for "Economic Wellbeing".

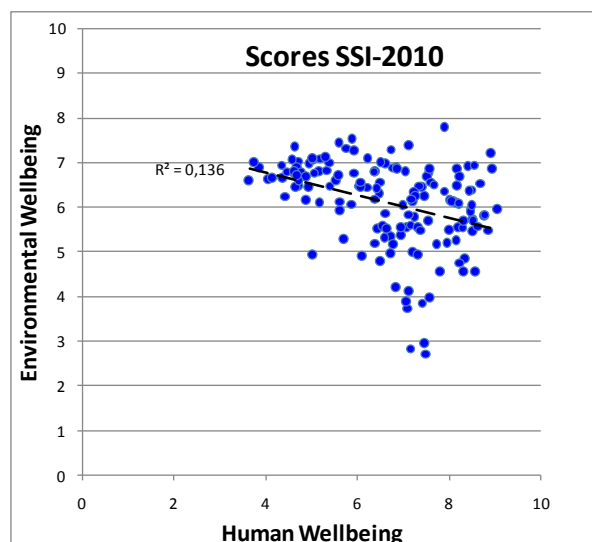
Progress (continued)

9. Three categories show significant progress: “Basic Needs”, “Healthy Environment” and “Economy”, though the latter decreased over 2008-2010.
10. In spite of the widely felt urgency, the score of “Climate & Energy” declined over the period 2006-2010.
11. All changes resulted in a slight positive development of “Human Wellbeing” and “Environmental Wellbeing”. “Economic Wellbeing” made progress over 2006-2008, but has declined in the next period, and we can expect a further decline over the period 2010-2012.
12. One needs a magnifying glass to notice the progress of the overall figure of the SSI, from 5.8 in 2006 to 5.9 in 2010, or to be more exact, from 5.76 to 5.94. However, we’ve chosen to express this figure using only one decimal point as the accuracy of the underlying data is too inadequate to justify a second decimal point.

Conclusions

The figures underline the feelings of many people, who are worrying about the future of mankind and of our only planet. Another 160 years to achieve a sustainable world will be much too long. Moreover, the question is whether we will ever be able to achieve a sustainable world. Many people fear the consequences of the rapid development of emerging countries, achieving the same level of consumption and depletion of natural resources as rich countries do nowadays. It is undeniable that rich countries have a high level of Human Wellbeing but are spoiling Planet Earth. This makes no sense in the long run.

The SSI data offer the opportunity to study the correlations between the 3 wellbeing dimensions and to answer the question: is it unavoidable that Human Wellbeing and Environmental Wellbeing are on a collision course?



The graph above seems to confirm the commonly held opinion that there is a trade-off between Human Wellbeing on the one hand and Environmental Wellbeing on the other hand. Though the correlations are weak, they are statistically significant, which means that it is unlikely that this correlation occurs by chance.

However, looking more closely at the graph, it appears that many countries show results which do not conform with the overall pattern. The most important observation is that several countries combine high scores for “Human Wellbeing” with high scores for “Environmental Wellbeing”, though – it must be said – both are still below sustainability level. Apparently, there is not always a trade-off between the two wellbeing dimensions. How can that be? To answer that question, we are now studying the characteristics of these ‘extreme’ countries in more detail. Our preliminary results suggest that whether a country shows a trade-off between “Human and Environmental Wellbeing” or not is mainly a matter of policy. Should this conclusion stand after further research, it will be up to us to urge our politicians to make the right policy choices in order to achieve a sustainable world and do so, on short notice.

The idea that our future is up to us, is both reassuring and threatening. We can no longer stand aside and wait for things to come. It is a chance all of us should seize this very day.

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