

Notes from Busan GPRN Workshop.

Mike Salvaris. 29 October 2009.

Welcome and short introductions from each person.

Mike Salvaris

- Background to the writing of this paper: network already exists de facto, now needs to be formalised.
- Brief summary of main ideas on GPRN paper circulated before workshop.
- Suggested order of business: brief discussion on and response to the paper; see if there is in principle agreement on ideas in it and if people might be interested in participating in such a network; what auspices or support from key bodies there may be; what might be the key themes.

Enrico Giovannini

- Serious academic research is important to policy making.
- The question we need to ask is: Do we really want to change people's mindsets?
- There has been good news since this paper was written: Florence conference, the Layard Centre for Happiness, the Stiglitz Commission, the Oxford poverty initiative, the GNH network, the World Bank contribution of \$200,000.

Yves Franchet

- Strongly supports this initiative.
- There are windows of opportunity to establish a new paradigm. There is growing number of voices but still not strong enough. So the question is how to build and strengthen the movement.
- Although it starts with statistics, the major problem is ideas and culture.
- It should be a 5 to 10 year project.
- The question of who owns the project is essential: it must be owned by a network of networks rather than the OECD. Networking is not telling people what it wants them to do.
- If the OECD remains as a secretary of the project, it must be supported at the highest level.

Fiona Stanley

- Very excited by this initiative.
- We need to have a network to build capacity. We should start with a conference.
- The OECD is very influential as the leader of the project.

Steve Killelea

- A collaborative platform is the way of the future. There is a social collaboration laboratory at Stanford University.
- The Wiki progress idea is a good one and could support the GPRN.
- The key question is how to get information that people can see. We have to take the debate to ordinary people, not just measuring progress. It needs clear examples.
- We should ask: What is the target market?

Shailaja Chandra

- In India, quality of life issues are changing values, and traditional values will be lost. To capture the change would be a vital academic task
- We need an important body in India that can accept this role.

Fiona Stanley

There is a huge difference in capacity in different countries.

Jon Helliwell

- If these questions are to be raised in developing countries, we need a different template.
- The network for a start must establish a base in China and Africa.

(Unidentified contributor)

- Thanks for preparing this paper
- Supports the idea of a network of networks.
- There is a need for a scientific approach
- Currently there is a window of opportunity.
- We do need different types of association, ecological economists should be involved.

Laszlo Pinter

- This initiative is very timely and the paper is well constructed.
- But it positions the network primarily as an academic one. We need to include what it means for practitioners. There is a lot of momentum behind this issue.
- Supports integrating national and regional networks. For example in Canada, there is a sustainable indicator network.
- A key issue is how to move the agenda closer to policy and government.

Soogil Young

- Commends the proposal.
- The Sarkozy Commission has called for a rethinking of the meaning of progress. Yet East Asian countries have been engaged in maximising their GDP, and since 1989 APEC has focused on liberalised trade and investment; as a result the work of most researchers focuses on trade and investment. Korea is the classic example: there is a national research network of economists but it just talks about trade and investment.

- There is the start of a discussion in Asia and Pacific on how to rebalance growth, because of the entrenched values in countries such as Korea, China and Japan. Doubts and rethinking our emerging.
- Policymakers need to first learn about what we want to do. To carry these discussions further we have to think about what kind of progress we want to promote.
- An Asian think tank should carry forward this cause. The role should be to engage people in the debate. His Korean colleagues would be very pleased to participate. But first we need to identify possible feasible steps. We need to form a cyber space for collaboration.

Maja Goepel

- Enthusiastic about the paper.
- We need to talk with statisticians at the start and at the end of the process. A balance needs to be kept between statistics and academics.

(Unidentified contributor)

- Comes from a political economy background.
- The paradigm (of 'redefining progress') cuts across many dimensions. We can reach out to many different disciplines by such a network.
- We should put out study guides.

Robert Cummins

- We don't like GDP, but we know what it is.
- But we don't know exactly what we are talking about with new progress and social indicators. We should aim first of all to be clear about meanings.

Anat Itay

- The cyberspace idea is a good one.
- Having a conference is also a good idea, hopefully in the near future.

Tani Hall

- Group learning through cyberspace is an important concept.

Steve Killelea

- We could run a competition for the best new indicators through the Wiki progress site

Jon Hall

- The cyberspace idea can already be supported thru the Wiki website.
- Standardising definitions is important
- We need to promote a broader debate on progress.
- The Bertelsmann trust could be a major supporter for this to this debate.

Enrico Giovannini

- We should commission someone to write a business plan for the network.
- We should tap into existing networks of researchers.
- A future forum needs to be discussed. We should build a scientific committee to organise this.
- On the funding side, UNDP and the UN University are important, and so is the UNESCO network
- Agrees with Jon Hall that the Wiki progress site will be an important element.
- Building a strong research network is crucial; but it should include practitioners.

Michel Renault

- The network must have legitimacy.
- It should be auspiced at a high level by international organisations such as the OECD, UNESCO, EU, ASEAN etc.

Laszlo Pinter

- The idea will be very big.
- The strategic problem will be reconciling a formal statistical approach with a community development approach.
- But Enrico is right to say that this 'movement' does need very strong scientific and research underpinnings - this is strategically important.

Mike Salvaris (concluding)

- There appeared to be general support to take the next steps to establish a Global Progress Research Network.
- Those attending this workshop were invited to indicate their willingness to act as members of an interim GPRN organising committee. Representations would be made to the OECD to clarify the nature of the support and auspice it would provide.
- Some simple steps over the next two months that could be considered might include: a list of subscribers, an interim working group, an interim website or list server, an interim organisational base (perhaps including Australia, Canada, France and South Korea), provisional regional nodes or universities, and ideas of funding.
- After the meeting we propose to develop a list of e-mails, send notes from the meeting distribute the paper more widely, agree on some initial agenda and perhaps send a questionnaire to possible participants about their ideas response other participants and support.