





Chapter 4: Dimensions and indicators

Meeting of the Task Force on Measuring Well-being

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- Goal of the chapter
- Approach
- Recommendations
- Issues for discussion



Goal of the chapter

to provide a systematic and comprehensive list of common dimensions that together represent *current well-being* and to provide a list of core indicators for each dimension that can be used to monitor developments and compare nations and regions

Sections

1. Scope and definition of key concepts
2. Dimensions of current well-being in the main frameworks and a list of common dimensions
3. Core indicators for each dimension
4. Creation of an indicator set
5. How to measure the distribution of current well-being among population groups



Approach

- build on the frameworks that are currently considered as authoritative and that form the foundation of efforts to work towards a global Framework on Inclusive and Sustainable Development (FISW):
 - Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi (2009)
 - CES Recommendations on Measuring Sustainable Development (2014)
 - OECD Well-being Framework (2011)
 - Eurostat's Quality of Life framework (2016)
 - UN's Valuing What Counts (2022)



Scope

- Focus on current well-being as part of inclusive and sustainable development
- The guideline describes well-being from the human perspective
- Measurement of well-being should be inclusive
 - all people, regardless of status or characteristics
 - all regions in a nation
 - all (sub)dimensions that together make up well-being
- Normative valuations are left to the user

Definitions

- dimension
- indicator
- measure
- subjective indicators
- objective indicators

Common indicators



Principles

- Selection of dimensions should be systematic, based on transparent criteria, and an internally consistent theoretical foundation
- The set of dimensions should be comprehensive, covering all aspects of current well-being
- The dimensions should aim to be universal: common to all nations, regions, and cultures
- The relevance of each dimension should be carefully explained



Comparison of authoritative frameworks

Stiglitz, Sen, Fitoussi	CES Recommendations	OECD Well-being Framework	Eurostat Quality of Life framework	Fundamental human rights (UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights)
	subjective well-being	subjective well-being	overall experience of life	economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality (art. 22)
material living standards	consumption and income	income and wealth	material living conditions (income and consumption)	a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family (art. 25), right to own property (art. 17)
	nutrition			food (art. 25)
health	health	health	health	health (art. 25)
personal activities (work)	labour	work and job quality	productive or other main activity	no slavery or servitude (art. 4), right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment (art. 23)
education	education	knowledge and skills	education	education (art. 26)
	housing	housing	material living conditions (housing)	housing (art. 25)
personal activities (other than work)	leisure	work-life balance	leisure and social interactions (leisure)	rest and leisure (art. 24)
insecurity (physical)	physical safety	safety	economic and physical safety (physical and personal security)	right to life, liberty and security of person (art. 3), no torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (art. 5)
insecurity (economic)			economic and physical safety (economic security and vulnerability)	right to social security (art. 22), right to security in the event of [...] lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control (art. 25)
environment (present conditions)	land and ecosystems water air	environmental quality	natural and living environment	
social connections and relationships	trust	social connections	leisure and social interactions (social interactions)	right to marry and to found a family (art. 16), freely to participate in the cultural life of the community (art. 27), right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association (art. 20)
political voice and governance	institutions	civic engagement	governance and basic rights	legal protection clauses (art. 6 thru 12, 15), right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (art. 18), right to freedom of opinion and expression (art. 19), right to take part in the government and right of equal access to public service (art. 21), duties to the community (art. 29)

Four clusters of dimensions

- Subjective well-being (satisfaction with life; agency; affect)
- The things people do in terms of their time use particularly with respect to work and leisure
- The state in which people live, which can be interpreted as the objective outcomes and the subjective evaluation of those outcomes
- Conditions or the circumstances in which people are



Proposed dimensions and subdimensions

1. Subjective well-being	
Subjective well-being	Satisfaction with life
	Affect
	Agency
2. The things people do in terms of their time use	
Work	Quantity and quality of paid work Unpaid household services
Leisure	Cultural participation Other leisure time
3. The state in which people live in terms of objective outcomes and subjective evaluation of those outcomes	
Material living conditions	Income Consumption Economic insecurity
Housing	Quality Affordability Neighbourhood

Dimension	Subdimensions
Health	Physical health Mental health
Knowledge and skills	Education Skills
Physical safety	Crime Traffic accidents
Social connections	Social interactions Support Quality Community Trust
4. Conditions or the circumstances in which people are living	
Political conditions	Political voice Efficacy
Environmental conditions	Pollution Proximity to nature Disruptive natural events

Issues

- Income including wealth? Where to draw the line between current and future well-being?
- Which categories of time use should be discerned? What to do with unpaid work or with education and training?
- How to deal with ‘culture’?
- Which conditions should be included?

Core indicators



Core indicators

A core indicator is an indicator that provides the best (valid) description of a dimension or subdimension of current well-being and is recommended as a first candidate for inclusion in a indicator dataset

Three groups of indicators

1. achievement indicators
2. deprivation indicators
3. distributional indicators



Issues

- How many core indicators are needed?
- Do we include recommendations on the way indicators should be measured (e.g. normalised in per capita terms or percentages or in absolute numbers)?

Creating an indicator set

- a carefully composed, balanced set of indicators that properly describes all relevant aspects
- neither too many nor too few indicators
- mix of positively and negatively valued indicators
- subjective as well as objective indicators.
- enable users to select the most reliable available indicators that together provide a high-quality picture of current well-being without selection bias, i.e. independent from policy goals and political interests



Distribution



Measuring inequalities

- gaps between population groups (*horizontal inequalities*)
- gaps between those at the top and those at the bottom of the achievement scale in each dimension (*vertical inequalities*)
- *deprivation* (i.e. the share of the population falling below a given threshold of achievement)

Issues

- How to interpret changes in measures of inequality? Is less inequality always better than higher inequality?
- Which population groups should (at least) be distinguished?



125 years reliable statistics