



THE *OECD BETTER LIFE INITIATIVE*: WHAT LESSONS FOR THE POST-2015 PROCESS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS?

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Wednesday 10 June 2015, 1:15 – 2:30 pm

Conference Room E, United Nations Headquarters, NYC



Structure of presentation

- A. **OECD's work on well-being**, 'now' and 'later'
- B. **Four lessons** for SDGs process
- C. **Six contributions** to SDGs monitoring process



OECD work on well-being: background

Part of broader stream of work on ‘measuring performance beyond GDP’

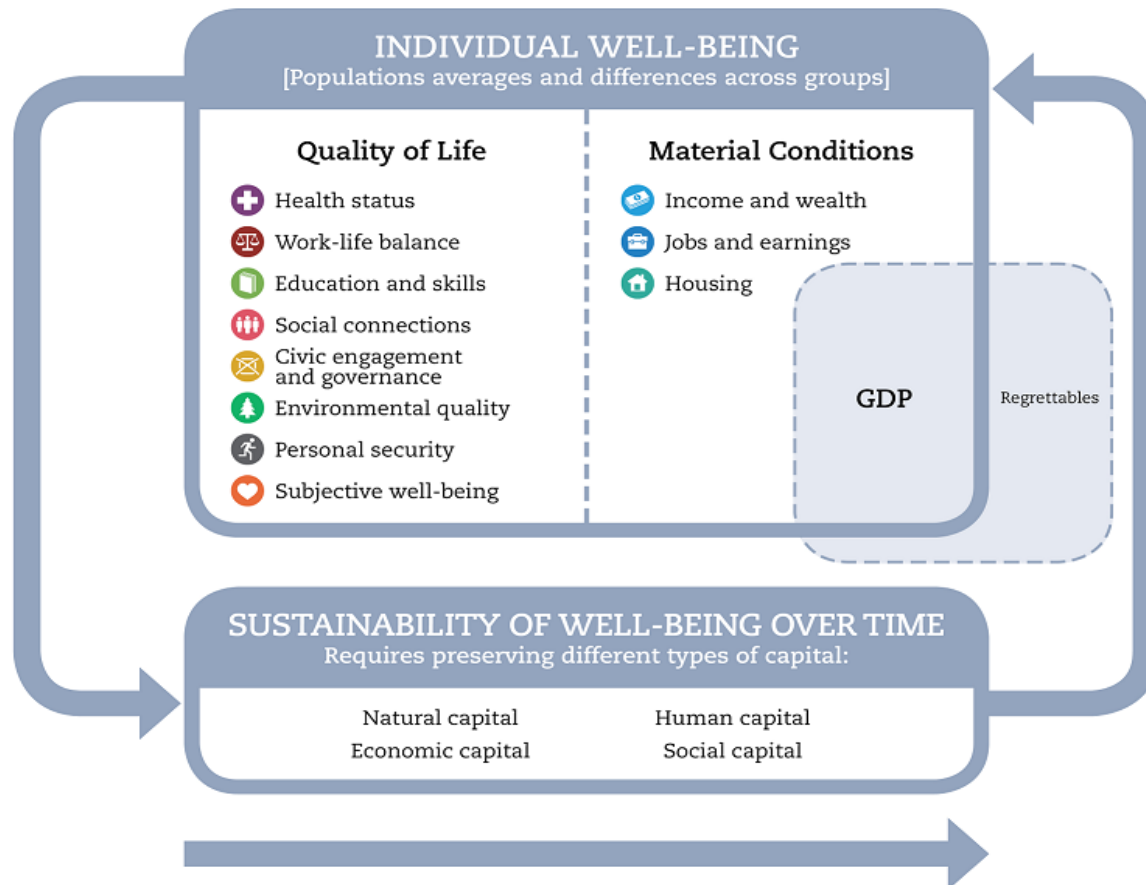
- **Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi** report (2009)
- **G20 Leaders statement** to “encourage work on measurement methods .. [to].. take into account the social and environmental dimensions of economic development” (Pittsburgh Summit, 2009)
- **UN Resolution** calling for “holistic approach to development” to promote sustainable happiness and well-being (fall 2012)
- **Rio+20 outcome document** (art. 38, FoC UNSC)
- **National initiatives** for measuring well-being (Australia, UK, Italy, Austria, Mexico, Germany)
- **EU 2020; Eurostat sponsorship** in 2012 (50 concrete actions to be implemented by 2020)

➤ In 2011, OECD launched its **Better Life Initiative** as part of its new mission to achieve **Better Policies for Better Lives**



A. OECD work on well-being

OECD well-being framework



➤ **People** rather than economic system or GDP

➤ **Outcomes** rather than inputs and outputs

➤ **Both averages and inequalities**

➤ **Both objective and subjective aspects**

➤ **Both today and tomorrow (as well as elsewhere)**



A. OECD work on well-being

‘Populating’ the framework through a set of ***indicators***:



- A dashboard of 25 **headline indicators**, ~ two per dimension
- ~ 30 **secondary indicators** to complement on specific topics
- Discussed by **OECD Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy**
- Covering **OECD countries and selected emerging economies**
- Emphasis on **valid, clear, comparable and policy-relevant data**



A. OECD work on well-being



OECD
Better Life
Initiative

Report: ***How's Life? 2011; 2013 ; next in 2015;*** measures well-being in 11 dimensions



Communication: ***Your Better Life Index*** www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org

Improving metrics (e.g. ***subjective well-being, wealth distribution, job quality***)

Using well-being measures in OECD country reviews: ***OECD Economic Surveys, How's Life in Israel?***

Wider applications: ***well-being for development, How's Life in Your Region?, How Was Life?***



B. Four lessons for the SDGs process

1. **Advantages of a conceptual framework**
 - Provides **structure** to indicators (e.g. distinguishes high-level **goals** from **means** of implementation, **outcomes** from **outputs /inputs**)
 - Helps **identifying links** between elements of the framework (overlaps, duplications, gaps)
 - Forces **clarification of concepts** and terminology
 - Distinguishes between **temporal** ('now' vs. 'later') and **spatial dimensions** ('here' vs. 'elsewhere')
 - Highlights need to should measure **inequalities** for each well-being dimension



B. Four lessons for the SDGs process

2. **Use today's information while developing better metrics tomorrow**
 - **Place-holders** from unofficial sources until quality-statistics become available
 - **'nowcast'** data on a provisional basis to address challenge of timeliness
 - Apply unit-record linkages between sources to assess **joint distribution of outcomes**
 - Mobilise **additional sources** (private, administrative records, Big Data) with robust **'quality checks'**
 - Develop metrics for new fields (e.g. governance statistics): ***SDGs won't end tomorrow!!***



B. Four lessons for the SDGs process

3. Differentiate communication

- To policy makers: hierarchy of indicators (e.g. headline indicators backed up by more detailed secondary indicators)
 - E.g. one headline indicators for each SDG goal?
- To the public through *OECD Better Life Index*
 - to engaging citizens (over 6 millions users since 2011)
 - As source of information (users can share info on their characteristics, responses can be ‘reweighted’ to reflect population of different countries)



BLI based on weights set by users



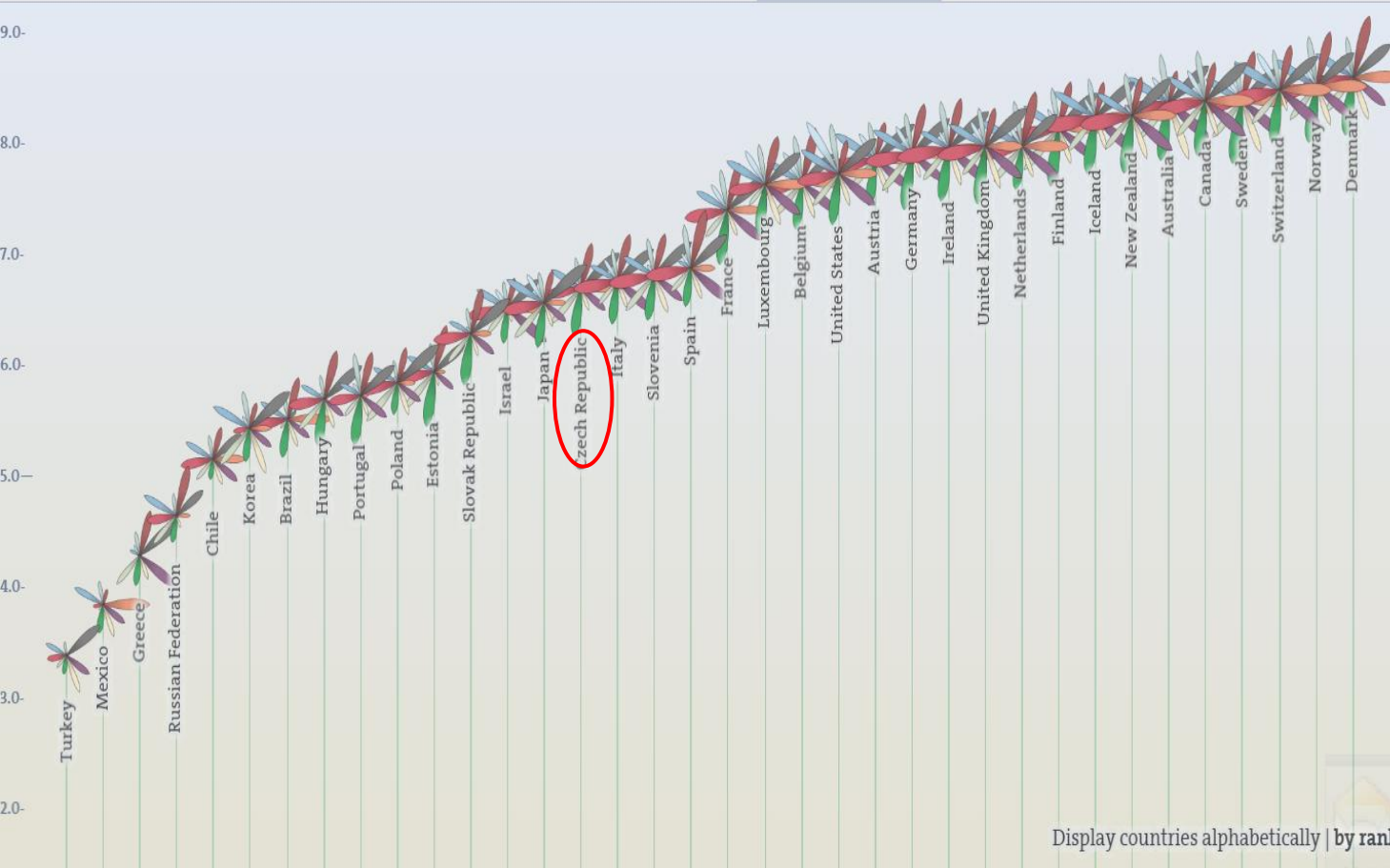
Index

Responses

Countries ▾

Topics ▾

FAQ



Create Your Better Life Index

Rate the topics according to their importance to you:

	Housing	<input type="range"/>
	Income	<input type="range"/>
	Jobs	<input type="range"/>
	Community	<input type="range"/>
	Education	<input type="range"/>
	Environment	<input type="range"/>
	Civic Engagement	<input type="range"/>
	Health	<input type="range"/>
	Life Satisfaction	<input type="range"/>
	Safety	<input type="range"/>
	Work-Life Balance	<input type="range"/>
Reset		Help

Display countries alphabetically | by rank

Let us know what

Gender differences



B. Four lessons for the SDGs process

4. **Policy use: proof of the pudding is in the eating**
- Indicators should **not just** be used for monitoring performance *ex post* but also *ex ante*, e.g. :
 - **Strategically**, when setting budgetary priorities
 - **In policy design**, i.e. to assess the impact of planned policies on all relevant dimensions
 - **At programme level**, linking programme objectives to higher-level goals, articulating ‘theories of change’
 - But indicator sets that are **too large** won’t be used to proof policies *ex ante*!!



C. OECD 'lessons' for SDGs monitoring process

Similarities/differences between OECD/UN process

- Similarities: common focus on people's well-being, though approach that is 'global', 'holistic' and 'measurable'
- Differences:
 - OECD approach based on 'conceptual categorisation' of issues at stake (e.g. averages vs inequalities, 'now' versus 'later', outcomes vs outputs/drivers)
 - UN approach based on 'thematic categorisation', i.e. areas for policy action by international community
- But the two categorisations are easily linked (ref. *CES Recommendations on Measuring Sustainable Development*)



C. Six OECD contributions to the SDGs monitoring process

1. Inputs to global monitoring

- In some areas, OECD can provide world-wide data (ODA, TiVA)
- In other areas, the OECD has developed metrics and collected data for aspects of SDGs (e.g. PISA measures of learning outcomes for students)
- These data can feed SDGs global monitoring with extended coverage when needed (e.g. PISA for Development)



C. Six OECD contributions to the SDGs monitoring process

2. Inputs to regional and thematic monitoring

- SDGs will be **directly relevant** for **OECD countries**, who will have to **report on progress** in attaining them
- The OECD collects **indicators**, hosts **dialogue platforms** and develops **policy tools** for each of the 17 SDG areas
- OECD ministers on 3-4 June “*called on the OECD to support governments’ efforts to implement and monitor the achievement of the SDGs, including by sharing its evidence-based tools and by further enriching its platforms for dialogue*”
(Chair’s Summary of OECD MCM, June 2015)



C. Six OECD contributions to the SDGs monitoring process

3. **Extending measurement to new areas**
 - Many policy goals in SDGs lack statistical measures (e.g. governance, urban sprawling) and will require new measurement instruments (e.g. geospatial observations, Big Data)
 - The OECD is already pioneering measurement in new areas such as trust, health inequalities, job quality, distribution in SNA
 - These activities could either be accelerated or more explicitly tailored to the needs of SDGs



C. Six OECD contributions to the SDGs monitoring process

4. Using OECD guidelines as intermediate standards

- Developing statistical standards takes time (e.g. adoption of SEEA central framework as standard in 2012 took more than a decade)
- OECD has developed guidelines that are used by NSOs as basis of their measurement initiatives (e.g. micro-statistics on household wealth, subjective well-being)
- OECD guidelines can advance data collection and improve comparability until formal standards are adopted by UNSD



C. Six OECD contributions to the SDGs monitoring process

5. **Developing a simplified version of OECD data dissemination platform**
 - **OECD.Stat** disseminates most OECD statistics and is used by many NSOs (NZ, AUS, IT, EST, UK) and agencies (e.g. UNESCO, IMF) [[SISCC.OECD.ORG](https://siscc.oecd.org)]
 - Recognised by **UNECE High-Level Group** for Modernisation of Statistical Production in 2014 as “*potential dissemination tool*” by international community
 - As most developing countries lack simple dissemination platforms, an “**OECD.Stat Light**” cloud-based platform could be developed



C. Six OECD contributions to the SDGs monitoring process

6. **Helping build statistical capacity in developing countries**
 - **Goal 17** (means of implementation) includes targets to increase support for statistics (indicator on countries' capacities to monitor targets through indicators that are annual and timely?)
 - **OECD-hosted PARIS21** has identified elements for a successful data revolution, and developed database of countries statistical capacities
 - NSOs should produce SDG statistics as part of their routine activities. **Financing for statistics should be a priority in the Financing for Development agenda to be discussed in Addis Ababa**



Thank you!

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