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Well Being: Aspects and Evaluations

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ABOUT THE PAPER SERIES

Policy Research Reports are occasional studies that provide support or background information for wider research projects. They include reviews of scientific literature, state of the art reports, and country studies. They are works in progress and offer practical combinations of academic and policy writing.

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I. HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF WELL-BEING

Many different conceptualizations of the term of *well-being* have been created by national Governments, different civil society organizations, various scholars, and international organizations all over the world. Those conceptualizations are being used to publish the reported data on achieved human well-being on a regular basis, without a general agreement on what the term of well-being refers to. Put simply, well-being can be described as “the state of individual’s life situation” (McGilivray, 2007: 3).

In its shortest interpretation, the term wellbeing generally refers to the degree to which an individual is well. In this sense it is synonymous with ‘*quality of life*’. Sometimes, however, as Veenhoven correctly emphasized, the word is also used to indicate not only the quality of individual phenomena, but the family, a sector of industry or society as a whole as well. Wellbeing means then that the social system is functioning well and can be related to the help society provided to its needed members (Veenhoven, 2000: 93).

Throughout history, the concept of well-being has been perceived from many different angles, with different perspectives, which all have resulted in many different concepts capturing the meaning of the well-being in their own way. The oldest of those attempts can be traced back in the times of Aristotel, when well-being was perceived as *well-living*. From this perspective, people are seen as complex, rational, social, and partially moral actors, who live in groups, for finite lives with an unavoidable rise and fall. In that context well-being is seen as the fulfillment of a deep and various nature, not just one particular type of sensation (Segal, 1991).

The utilitarian’s approach and definition of well-being completely differs from this historical approach. According to them, the concept of well-being is related to everything they

perceive as a desirable, either it is related to the social, economical, psychological, or any other dimension.

Another important term attached to the concept of well-being is the term of *welfare*, which is one of the terms that is often affiliated together with the term of well-being, more precisely the term *state-welfare*. It is a common believe that the level of wellbeing is higher in welfare states, and its distribution is more equitable. Veenhovent tested this theory in a comparative study of 40 nations 1980-1990. The size of state welfare was measured by social security expenditure and the wellbeing of citizens, measured by the degree to which they led healthy and happy lives. Contrary to expectation there appears to be no link between the size of the welfare state and the level of wellbeing within it. Increases or reductions in social security expenditure are not related to a rise or fall in the level of health and happiness either (Veenhoven, 2000: 95).

While in the past the majority of research conducted that investigated the phenomenon of well-being was related to the economic or social dimension of the term, recently it is possible to witness the rise of the new approaches that involve new dimensions. One of those new dimensions is the *ecological* dimension. As it is stated within the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, “people are integral parts of ecosystems and that a dynamic inter- action exists between them and other parts of ecosystems, with the changing human conditions driving both directly and indirectly changes in ecosystems and, thereby, causing changes in human well-being” (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2003: 5).

As it can be seen from the previously mentioned research, well-being can be investigated from many perspectives, which usually differ based on how many actors the particular research involves. The most convenient way to estimate wellbeing in each country on the national level is in terms of averages (average length of life, average health and average happiness). An important dimension related to well-being measured like this is

inequality, between individuals or groups, that can be assessed in terms of the dispersion around those averages, (i.e. the extent to which disparities occur in the age people reach, how healthy they are, ...).

Beside these approaches towards well-being, there are other diverse classifications, such as *well-thinking*, *well-dying*, *life satisfaction*, *prosperity*, *development*, *empowerment*, more recently *happiness*, and much more. However, due to the limited scope of the paper they will not be elaborated here. What is important is that, no matter how the term of well-being has been classified, differences in wellbeing between individuals, groups, societies and countries can likewise be compared, decomposed, and measured. How this is done is the topic of the next section.

II. MEASUREMENT OF WELL-BEING

There are many ways to measure well being as suggested by scholars and practitioners. Similarly, many different measurements are conducted on a regular basis by national governments and the most influential and wide-spread international organizations. Some of the examples of those measurements are Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Index, the UK National account of well-being, Human Development Reports of United Nations Development Programme and the OECD project 'Measuring the Progress of Societies'. This review will show only the dominant approaches developed and applied by various research that have been dealing with this topic.

At first, mainly economic indicators were used to measure wellbeing because it was assumed that wealthier people are happier people. Further improvement in research showed that this was not enough. The goal of public policy is not to maximize measured GDP, so a better measure of wellbeing could help to inform policy. Some of the most relevant recent

developments of well-being are measures conducted by the Stiglitz Commission based in France, the OECD's earlier mentioned approach, project 'Wellbebe' in Belgium, and the research conducted by European Commission, suitably called 'GDP and Beyond' (Eurostat Feasibility study for Well-Being Indicators, p. 5 – 9).

Even though there is no consensus about the ideal measurement, and all of the previously mentioned research utilizes different indicators, scholars and practitioners mainly agree and build their theories and tools of measurement upon the distinction between "objective" and "subjective" measurements. For the purpose of this report, these will be further elaborated.

Objective vs. Subjective measurement

According to the Eurostat's Feasibility study for wellbeing Indicators, there are two ways to differentiate subjective and objective indicators. Firstly, there is a distinction between indicators tapping concepts that are subjective or objective in substance. Rather than on the substance, it is possible to focus on the 'how' of the measurement. (Veenhoven, 2002: 54.)

An example that clarifies it further is related to the level of crime and people's perception about it. One could assess crime levels (objective substance) by looking at police records (objective measurement), or by asking people how high they think (subjective measurement) crime levels are.

Generally, though not always, subjective measures are more valid for assessing matters of subjective substance; whilst objective measures are more valid for assessing matters of objective substance.

One of the most fundamental problems in research on subjective well-being is uncertainty about which are the causing variables of the subjective well-being. Thus, the

consequences remain unclear as well. An additional problem is that almost all previous research has been made only about the causes of subjective well-being (Heady et al, 1991: 1). As far as this project is concerned, it is important to notice that there are differences and difficulties in translating subjective measurements into the real contribution of the grassroots organizations.

Although there are many concerns about subjective indicators, and some research claims that social policy should better not use them, as Veenhoven briefly summarised, policy makers need subjective indicators for the following reasons:

1. Social policy is never limited to merely material matters; it is also aimed at matters of mentality. These substantially subjective goals require subjective indicators.
2. Progress in material goals cannot always be measured objectively. Subjective measurement often is better.
3. Inclusive measurement is problematic with objective substance. Current sum scores make little sense. Using subjective satisfaction better indicates comprehensive quality of life.
4. Objective indicators do little to inform policy makers about public preferences.

Since the political process also does not reflect public preferences well, policymakers need additional information from opinion polls.

5. Policy makers have to distinguish between 'wants' and 'needs'. Needs are not observable as such, but their gratification materializes in the length and happiness of peoples' lives. This final output criterion requires assessment of subjective appreciation of life as a whole (Veenhoven, 2002).

Positive vs. negative measurements

Another crucial distinction to make before showing integrated approaches is the difference between positive and negative measurements. This differentiation is included explicitly in subjective, and implicitly within objective approaches because there is no conceptual framework to make such a distinction within the objective approach. Regardless of the fact that these are frequently named measures, I believe it is more appropriate to call them approaches that are combined together with the different measures, either subjective, objective, participatory, or any other.

As it is explained in Eurostat's Feasibility study for wellbeing indicators, the distinction between positive and negative measures is relevant in many areas; however, there is no consistent distinction between positive and negative indicators that holds across all the areas of measurement that are covered by the indicator set. In some cases, the wording of survey questions as either positive or negative may be somewhat arbitrary, or determined by the context of the surveys or scales they were developed in, rather than a theoretical distinction between positive and negative questions (e.g. 'feeling like a failure' and 'feeling that what you do is worthwhile'). Other issues may sit along a continuum from positive to negative (e.g. degree of indebtedness versus amount of assets), with no extra information provided by including both.

Therefore, Eurostat's Feasibility study for wellbeing indicators finishes with a recommendation how both positive & negative variables, not only within the subjective approach, but also for the objective measures should be combined in order to achieve representative and valuable results about measured wellbeing, for which that particular measurement is made for.

As well as the many diverse approaches towards the measurements of well-being, there are even more diverse aspects of well-being that have been used as a domains for measurement. Despite that, it is possible to generally classify the majority of them into three main categories: *political*, *social* and *economical*. In the next section some of these aspects will be mentioned, and only social dimensions will be further elaborated. As part of this social dimension education, its relation to well being, and its possible influence towards the changes in well-being will be introduced and analyzed.

III. INTRODUCTION TO DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF WELL-BEING

According to the various organizations measuring well-being (WB), there exist different sets of well-being domains. So far the most advanced studies in the field of well-being measurement have been carried out by the OECD, European Union, United Nations, United Kingdom's, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand's governments. Even though there are certain differences among the well-being domains measured by the above organizations and countries, all sets include economic, social and environmental aspects under one form or another. The latest developments in designing robust indicators of well-being split the social dimension into social and human or personal¹ as it was discovered that the individual level of subjective and objective well-being does not always correspond to the group or community level. Thus, distinct differences were observed in the assessment of well-being and quality of life. For example "countries with high levels of personal well-being do not necessarily have high levels of social well-being, and vice versa." (NEF 2009). In line with the National Accounts of Well-being and Australian Capital Territory (ACT) government this report adopts the position that well-being as a measurement of human and social capital has four

¹ Human and Personal aspects of well-being are used interchangeably in this study as most often they refer to one and the same thing in the well-being literature.

major domains – economic, social, human and environmental (Helyar, 2007:4). Taking this stance we are trying to capture and reflect on the various components that have an impact on both our happiness and quality of life. Moreover the selected domain framework allows an in-depth analysis of the aspects of well-being that are influenced by grassroots organizations to the greatest extent as social and personal well-being matters constitute a major concern of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

For many years both theory and practice around the world have been focused primarily on the monetary, economic aspects and have not taken into account the non-economic ones, such as subjective experiences and perceptions of one's quality of life. Using GDP as a main social indicator of well-being could not explain significantly higher levels of life satisfaction in the Scandinavian countries in comparison to France and Belgium which have similar sizes of GDP per capita (Michaelson et al. 2009). Therefore, the monetary approach toward assessing well-being results in the design of inadequate one-size-fits-all policies that are unable to address the different development issues in the various regions and countries.

Currently many scholars (Boarini et al. 2006) have challenged the social progress measuring merits of GDP. Kahneman et al. (1999: XI) argue that material measuring of well-being has three inherent deficiencies. These include, first, the inability to measure non-tradables such as “love, mental challenge or stress”. Secondly, the economic methods of quality of life assessment adopt the assumption of individual maximization of utility, which is sometimes contradictory to actual evidence. Moreover, even positive economics are diverting from this postulate. Lastly, the economic approach measures only indirectly subjective well-being (e.g. consumption, etc.). For instance, if a person consumes a certain amount of a good, which may be above the average people's consumption, this does not necessarily mean that this person is better off or happier because subjectively he or she may put more value on something else that is either not captured or is weighed less in the overall measurement.

Therefore, GDP is not a reliable sole human development indicator. For all the above reasons it is essential to include non-economic dimensions in the design of subjective well-being indices.

IV. SOCIAL ASPECTS OF WELL-BEING: THE CASE OF SOCIAL COHESION

The Social Aspect of Well-being

Social, human and environmental components of well-being measurement have already been incorporated in leading quality of life indices like EU Subjective Well-being, National Accounts of Well-being, United Nations' Human Development Index, OECD Social Indicators, Australian Personal Well-being Index and the Canadian Index of Well-being. The focus of the current report section is mainly on the social aspects of well-being, in terms social cohesion (i.e. inclusion/exclusion) and formal and informal education. This study aims to evaluate the role of social cohesion and education in contributing towards well-being. The educational aspect will be reviewed in the context of the role of formal and informal education and market and non-market returns to education whereas the social cohesion will be examined in terms of the following dimensions – social exclusion, civic participation and involvement in community, trust and belonging and supportive relationships (Michaelson et al. 2009). Most methodologies used in indicator design comprise the above dimensions because they have a major impact on well-being and happiness of the individual as well as the community (see figure 1.). In addition, social and territorial cohesion is among the most important pillars of the European Union integration. It was first introduced as a Union's priority with the Maastricht treaty and as such it is matched by an adequate funding of the Cohesion Fund, European Regional Development Fund and the European Structural Fund.

Back in the 1990s the European integration process was more focused and concerned with economic cohesion in terms of GDP per capita within the territorial units of the Union. Thus, a significant amount of funds were allocated to achieve this goal, but after a decade passed, it became clear that European integration and identity cannot be achieved through solely economic convergence. Hence, overall cohesion can be boosted if a social dimension is added.

First, the Lisbon Agenda acknowledged that “growth and jobs should no longer be the final objectives, but rather tools for achieving more sustainable well-being” (Ahtonen et al. 2010). Today the importance of social cohesion is underlined in the EU sustainable development strategies. For example, Europe 2020 is also an essential component of the European Union’s measure of subjective well-being. Namely, the Europe 2020 strategy sets the inclusive growth agenda, defined as one of the three priorities for the pursued European Union development. By inclusive growth the European Commission means “fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion” (Europe 2020). In addition, the definition of inclusive growth meaning “achieving a growth process in which people in different walks in life...feel that they too benefit significantly from the process” formulated by Ahluwalia (2007) reveals better the subjective well-being perspective. The document also pinpoints the leading role of NGOs’ and grassroots groups’ commitment to organizing an active cooperation to address social exclusion issues through innovative methods of civic participation.

Figure 1. Social Cohesion Elements Included in Leading Well-Being Indicators

<u>Indicator</u>	UK Opportunity for All Initiative	National accounts of well-being	Second European Quality of Life	Personal Well-being Indicator (Australia)	OECD
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			Survey		
<u>Social cohesion components measured</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in employment • Access to resources, rights, goods and services • Access to services by the most vulnerable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive relationships • Trust and belonging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived social exclusion • Reported social contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving in life • Relationships • Safety • Community connectedness • Future security • Spirituality/Religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust • Civic participation • Voluntary activities

Social exclusion

Although contemporary societies have achieved significant progress in terms of socio-economic development and welfare, the latter have not been distributed equally. There are many marginalized groups that are still excluded from the labor market, educational opportunities and certain communities etc. The phenomenon of social exclusion has proved to be resilient and has called for a complex approach to coping with it. Boardman et al., (2009:1) argue that “social exclusion refers to the extent to which individuals are unable to participate in key areas of economic, social and cultural life” due to a constraint. Furthermore, exclusion is not spread evenly among demographic groups and spaces, and this makes addressing the issue even harder as universal policy measures would be inefficient. In light of this, the NGO and grassroots sectors, characterized by high levels of flexibility, appear to be a possible solution that is particularly suitable and effective in combating exclusion.

Social exclusion has many faces and aspects. All of the presented well-being indicators strive to capture the magnitude of welfare as well as design relevant policies. However, difficulties stem from the fact that exclusion is present in any segment of our heterogeneous societies. Thus, designing policies for reduction of the “discrimination for those experiencing poor well-being” (LGID 2010) requires stronger involvement and innovation of citizens

whose initiation is a primary task of the civil society organizations (CSOs) like NGOs and grassroots. But the active participation of the CSOs in the treating social well-being issues also presupposes adequate measuring of their outcome, so that appropriate funding is provided to match their contribution. For this purpose it is of a crucial importance to establish an indicator of well-being generated by CSOs. In other words, a performance measurement indicator should be created that aims to better understand the actual contributions made by CSOs. This way active CSOs could be rewarded and supported for their work, making their initiatives sustainable and able to be expanded upon where necessary.

Civic Participation and Involvement in Community

Civic participation and involvement in community is the second aspect of social well-being that will be reviewed in the current report. The wide variety of well-being indices as well as international organizations like OECD and EUROSTAT acknowledge the central role of civil involvement in *meaningful* community initiatives in contributing to the improvement of the subjective perception of one's quality of life. Increased participation in labor, educational, political, social and cultural life of a society maximizes the personal well-being of the individual by raising his sense of belonging and personal achievements, which in turn lead to higher personal well-being.

Without a doubt, the participation in employment and education contributes the most to minimizing both social and economic exclusion. Furthermore, enhancing labor participation of women, elderly people and migrants is one of the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy which tends to match the goal with corresponding programs and funding opportunities. Global participation trends show a steady increase in the involvement of women in all the above dimensions of civic participation, which results in positive overall societal changes.

Increasing community involvement in non-professional activities including sports and cultural events also can enhance the level of social cohesion. It is this sphere where the immeasurable assistance of the CSOs is mostly needed for achieving sustainable development. The Europe 2020 stipulates “sustainable development calls for commitment and work at grassroots level. Building such commitment calls for active cooperation from all the social partners, and from all civil society organisations”. Inspiring local citizens to take part in voluntary activities targeted at improving local living and social conditions is one of the comparative advantages of grassroots operating in the various regions. Therefore, they need to be incentivized to continue their work with adequate policies to support them.

As Ritzen (2001) argues, social cohesion is “a commitment to the values of solidarity and mutual support which ensures open access to benefit and protection for all members of society.” This interpretation of cohesion emphasizes the important role of building societal values through joint community initiatives in the both subjective personal well-being and objective measurements of the quality of life.

Trust and Belonging

According to Aristotle the human is a “social animal”. In this regard we need to belong to a community, to feel connected, to sustain a relationship (Myers, 1999: 374). Our relationships constitute important personal achievements and in this sense they account for a significant part of our well-being and happiness. The indicator National Accounts of Well-Being incorporates the component trust and belonging which refers to “people’s experiences of trusting other people, being treated fairly and respectfully by them, and feeling a sense of belonging with and support from people where they live” (Michaelson et al. 2009). Building trust and belonging within a society is process that takes much time and efforts of all

stakeholders including supranational bodies, governments, CSOs and citizens. The current debate on the topic is led by the European Union, OECD, the World Bank and the United Nations which try to find ways to promote greater trust and belonging at local community level.

The data from the last measurement of the above component in the EU shows clearly that the distribution of well-being is uneven within the Nordic countries, who enjoy the greatest levels of trust and belonging, and the new member states, who are associated with the lower levels. This variation and heterogeneity is also characteristic for within-country analyses. For example, younger people score poorer on this indicator than do older people. This unequal spread of trust and belonging proves the necessity for policies tailored specifically to vulnerable target groups. Moreover, such policy design requires accurate input information in terms of data collection and processing on social well-being aspects.

Conclusion

The various well-being indicators offer “meaningful measures of progress and policy effectiveness” (Michaelson et al. 2009) with regard to the true people’s welfare. Studying and measuring social cohesion in all its aspects allows the decision makers to design public policies that best address the needs of personal and social well-being and provide optimal preference satisfaction (Graham 2010). The fact that grassroots are mostly involved in service delivery and promoting social well-being, poses the necessity of adequate measuring of their outcome so that appropriate funding can be allocated to match their contributions. Thus, an indicator that captures and acknowledges the grassroots’ role in community development shall be designed with priority.

V. Education and Well-being

One particular measurement and social dimension of well being that plays a vital role within a community is education. Education encompasses many aspects, methods, and outcomes. In the most traditional sense it is solely academic. However, in exploring how education can increase well-being at the grassroots and community levels we must also analyze education as a social tool for inclusion, civic participation, and achievement. This includes the impacts of classical education as well as informal education on the social issues addressed above.

Formal versus Informal Education

Firstly, we look at the impacts of formal and traditional education on well-being in adulthood (school level attained, degrees, diplomas) to determine how societies perceive the measurable and economic gains from increased formal schooling. Interestingly, according to Robert A. Witter et al, educational achievements are said to measure only life satisfaction and not happiness levels. This is because happiness refers to the current state of affairs while life satisfaction refers to an individual's entire life assessment of their goals in comparison to their actual achievements (Witter 1984: 166). In most cases, formal education does in fact increase the well-being of adults once completed. However, as the demand for higher levels of formal education and for skilled work has increased over time, levels of well-being as a return to additional formal education have not increased. Therefore, as individuals attain additional formal schooling they do not perceive their subjective well-being to increase from its initial levels after completing some formal schooling. This is due to certain dissatisfaction within a work environment or with occupational status—meaning that the labor market may make it difficult to obtain a desired position, despite levels of schooling; and, even if a desired

position is obtained, issues with co-workers or superiors may hinder job satisfaction and personal well-being (Witter 1984: 166).

Secondly, we look at less traditional education, which includes both informal life learning through reading, conversation, or other media outlets as well as social and emotional development within the formal schooling systems. “Recent studies have shown that research-based social, emotional, ethical, academic, and educational guidelines can predictably promote the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that provide the foundation for the capacity to love, work, and be an active community member” (Cohen 206: 202). Such guidelines offer proper behavioral responses to an emotional situation, especially those that occur in a social setting. Such skills include “self and social awareness, identifying and labeling feelings of self and others, self-management (monitoring and regulating feelings), decision-making skills, and relationship skills” (Hoffman 2009: 538). In order to achieve such socio-emotional competence certain educational guidelines must be followed. This is particularly important because “social-emotional competence affects academic performance of children,” particularly those in minority group or disadvantaged communities (Elias 2008: 487). Having social and emotional skills as well as support from teachers aids in better school integration and increased academic performance of low-income, disadvantaged, or ethnic minority children (Elias 2008: 488). Once these skills are honed, these students were also “more socially prominent and accepted by peers, and less likely to have school adjustment problems (e.g. aggression, attention problems, involvement in bullying” (Farmer 2009: 315). Thus, we see that certain levels of academic achievement, integration, and inclusion are tied to social and emotional education. These skills tend to be especially important to the students most prone to exclusion and therefore must be taught in a culturally and individually relevant way (Hoffman 2009: 541).

We see that combining typically informal learned social and emotional skills into formal

school settings aids in instilling certain characteristics within individuals and communities. It ensures equal socio-emotional development within schools for better academic achievement and learning, which in society fosters civic participation. “When evidence-based social, emotional, and ethical education is integrated into traditional teaching and learning, educators can hone the essential academic and social skills, understanding, and dispositions that support effective participation in a democracy” (Cohen 2006: 202).

Thus, it is important to pinpoint what skills are required to create participatory citizens who actively engage in democracy and in their community. Such skills include the ability of discernment, analysis, reflection, self-knowledge, and cultural and contextual awareness (Elias 2009: 840). These capabilities can be integrated into a school curriculum from a young age to foster personal and community well-being. The goal is to teach children to use “patience, interest and skills to think about complex issues all citizens face and to have the knowledge, inclination and skills needed for civic participation” (Elias 2009: 840).

Research indicates that those who are most satisfied with their lives are those who nurture a sense of meaning and engagement (Cohen 2006: 203). They are developed through character education and socio-emotional learning which teaches proper ethical views, the importance of “doing good” and having caring relationships (Cohen 2006: 205). Such views empower students to see that they can be socially active and have decision-making power in their lives. “It focuses on coordinating the systemic with the pedagogic dimensions of social, emotional, ethical, and cognitive learning” (Cohen 2006: 206). When we integrate these two overlapping processes into school life, we give students the wherewithal to become real learners, to be related members of the community, and to participate in a democratic society (Cohen 2006: 209). Thus, “social-emotional competencies and character and ethical education are the foundation of democratic participation and engaged citizenship (Elias 2009: 840).

Non Market Returns To Education

Students usually underestimate their potential gains from education because they rarely take into account its nonmarket returns—things that will increase their well-being and be important to them but that are not accounted for in occupational status or earnings (Haveman 1984). Such non market impacts include: a “do-it-yourself attitude, increased individual productivity, health, more investment in children, crime reduction, attainable desired family size, leisure, labor market search efficiency, marital choice quality/efficiency, consumer choice efficiency, charitable givings, social cohesion, and access to technology” (Haveman 1984).

Educating males increases occupational status and income more than it does for women, while educating women demonstrates positive externalities in the form of social well-being gains greater than those of men (Hill 1995). While occupational status and income are a part of well-being, interestingly, education increases well-being more when directed towards women than towards men. This is because women share their returns more than men. This well-being often goes unnoticed as it manifests itself in a diverse range of non market returns such as “increase in family health, child survival, investment in children's human capital, extending the average life expectancy in the population, and improving the functioning of political processes” (Hill 1995: 22).

In many cultures, especially in the developing world, men are the focus of educational attainment and support because of their economic gains from education, particularly in light of gender wage gaps. However, educating women may prove to have longer term effects because of its outreach in community and social development, which will also spur economic

development. Thus, it is important to encourage and work towards increased enrollment rates and educational attainments of females in addition to males.

Incorporating Social and Emotional Learning Into Policy

One particular model that could advocate for the promotion of educational attainment and the development of participatory skills is the European Union's Open Method of Coordination (OMC). The OMC addresses specific goals, timetables and benchmarks for goals, and peer reviewed monitoring and evaluation, all while taking into account regional and national differences to promote a mutual learning process (Gornitzka 2006: 3). For example, member states must create public national action plans if they are to become involved in a project. Member states can receive recommendations and feedback on their action plans from other member states as well as the EU. Because all the action plans are published, member states can also learn from each others strategies (Gornitzka 2006: 14, 24). This novel method of coordination and cooperation, shows educational benefits on a large scale on account of its open dialogue. Such a strategy has opened up political spaces for educational stakeholders, and not only those involved in policy or politics. They use democratic methods to ensure participation and transparency. Thus, utilizing the open method of coordination or a similar approach would be a useful tool in getting the voice of grass roots educational advocates heard in European level policies. While the OMC structure could be used, we must ensure that grassroots voices are being heard by the EU and not influenced by the EU.

An important part of implementation would also be monitoring and evaluation. Certain indexes can be used to measure emotional development: the Devereux early Childhood assessment (DeCa) for preschool settings, the Behavior and emotion Rating Scale (BeRS), and the youth version of the Bar-on emotional Quotient Inventory (eQ-i: YV) for primary,

middle, and secondary schools (Cohen 2006: 218). However, these existing tests solely measure emotional capacity without being specifically tailored to measure for the full skill set that would indicate participatory and democratic individuals. However, such a framework of measurement could be constructed. For example the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) drew from a wide variety of extensive source to identify “teachable skills essential for educating students [and making them] positive resources for their families, schools, workplaces, and communities” (Elias 2009: 834). The complete list of these skills is as follows:

Knowing and managing one’s emotions; listening and communicating carefully and accurately; recognizing strengths in self and others; showing ethical and social responsibility; greeting, approaching and conversing with diverse others; taking other’s perspectives; perceiving other’s feelings accurately; respecting others; setting adaptive goals; solving problems and making decisions effectively; cooperating; leading and also being an effective team member; negotiating and managing conflicts peacefully; building constructive, mutual, ethical relationships; and seeking and giving help (Elias 2009: 834).

Similarly, measurement is still not concrete and numerous questions exist as to which data will be used to evaluate individual student progress, school climate, cultural differences and the process or outcome of school wide efforts. However, despite such measurement discussions, CASEL has also been able to identify schools that have successfully implemented emotional and social learning in the United States. All of these schools had the following characteristics in common, which can be useful in educational policy development:

- 1.They have a school climate articulating specific themes, character elements, and/or values.

- 2.They have explicit instruction in social-emotional skills ...needed to negotiate complex interactions in school, the workplace, and life...to achieve the depth of learning required for internationalization.
- 3.They have explicit instruction in health-promotion and problem-prevention skills.
- 4.They have systems to enhance coping skills and social support for transitions, crises, and resolving conflicts.
- 5.They have widespread, systematic opportunities for positive, contributory service (Elias 2009: 835-936).

Reicher provides a similar set of criteria for successful integration of social and emotional learning into the school system. He emphasizes supportive learning environments, responsive relationships, service learning with experience in the community life, and a focus on informal learning at morning meetings, during extracurricular activities, or on the playground (Reicher 2010: 223). Such integration should include both a classroom and community “hands on” experience. Students will require a focus on problem solving and decision-making in the classroom and then see how its application can be used to change a community. Even by forming emotional connections in the classroom or working to understand the emotions of characters in literary works through reflection and discussion would help to hone such skills. Essentially, small changes in schooling systems can encourage proper social and emotional development, which post-schooling will contribute to democratic, inclusive, and involved citizens, increasing the well-being of a community.

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APPENDIX I:

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. MISSION AND CONTRIBUTION

1. Meaningful Participation

—What kind? Labor market, education, community activities, political

2. Empowerment

— Deciding on what, of whom and why?

3. Community mobilization

— When, why and with what effects?

4. Integration and inclusion

—Subjective or objective approaches, belonging and identification in what?

2. SELF ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

Resources:

1. Are you satisfied with the support received from local and central government? (scaled).

a. If yes, please specify what support you received.

b. If no, what type of support would be most useful?

2. Are you satisfied with the support received from citizens in terms of volunteering? (scaled).

3. Are you satisfied with the support received from citizens in terms of monetary donations? (scaled).

Achievements:

1. How would you rate the quality of your contribution to the community? (On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent).

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent

2. How do you view your contribution to the community?

3. How would the community rate the quality of your contribution? (On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent).

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent

4. How does the community view your contribution?

3. Describe your most successful project.

- a. What were the objectives and location of this project?
- b. What were the implemented activities?
- c. Who was targeted group of recipients?
- d. What was the budget of this project?
- e. How was the project financed?
- f. Did the project continue after the financing had ended?
- g. Did your project meet its aims, go beyond them, or cause you to re-evaluate them?
- h. What do you think most contributed to the project's success?

4. What do you think would have made this project more successful:

- ¢more money
- ¢more volunteers
- ¢more time
- ¢other resources (please specify)...

5. Is there a strategy or method that you learned from this project that could be expanded upon and transferred into other projects?

6. Did the project create possibilities for replication or extension of its outcomes?

If yes, please describe how...

Constraints:

1. What barriers do you believe hinder people in your community from participating in voluntary community initiatives sponsored by your organization?

2. Do you find problems reaching your target groups?

- a. If yes, what are the most common reasons for not reaching them?
- b. What could be done to improve your success in reaching targeted groups?

3. PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC DECISION-MAKING

1. Our organization is able to participate in the public decision-making process.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- No Opinion
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

2. Our organization participates in the public decision-making process.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- No Opinion
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

3. Our organization has participated in the public decision-making process through:

- Public consultations
- Voting
- Media
- Petitioning
- Meetings with public representatives
- Using an intermediary organization
- Public demonstrations
- Other _____

4. What constraints does your organization face in having its voice heard in public decision-making?

- I do not know how.
- I am not interested in being involved in public decision-making.
- I am not consulted.
- I was consulted, but my opinion was not taken into consideration.
- Other _____

5. In what ways is your organization publically visible or active in media?

- Attending networking and community events
- Hosting classes, seminars, or presentations
- Writing articles in newspapers or magazines
- Writing a blog
- Place booklets and flyers in strategic locations
- Creating a website or other social media site
- Partner with other organizations
- Other _____

APPENDIX II:

COMMON STRUCTURE OF THE COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

1. Country context (Max. 1500 words)

- a. improved version of country descriptions of the NGO sector (*Country NGO questionnaires prepared for the application*)
- b. historical development of the NGO sector with focus on the pre-accession and post-accession situation
- c. legal framework with a strong focus on grassroots organizations
- d. data from the national reports on volunteering

2. Contribution of education grassroots to the local wellbeing

Challenges based on focus group discussions and meeting reports),

- a. Relations with community they work for and those that they would like to work for in the near future **1000 words**
- b. Relations with other civil sector participants, civil networks, **500 words**
- c. Relations with the public sector (funding, public consultations, partnerships) based on the event reports, **800 words**
- d. Relations with the private sector (CSR), **500 words**

Opportunities, best practices based on focus group discussions and conclusions of the event reports

- e. Relations with community that they work for and those they would like to work for in the near future **1000 words**
- f. Relations other civil sector participants, civil networks, **500 words**
- g. Relations with the public sector (funding, public consultations, partnerships) based on the event reports, **800 words**
- h. Relations with the private sector (CSR), **500 words**

3. Perspectives and policy recommendations, concluding remarks, 1000 words

To who and about what?

About nature of communication between grassroots and policy makers, about what grassroots contribution, about legal framework and financing, about what?

Differentiate between ones they are in contact now, representative agencies at local or national level. Are you interested in others? Could go a little left field and target chambers of commerce, enterprise development bodies, rural development promoters such as LEADER group, regional development agencies. If such an approach was preferred then different recommendations would be needed for different bodies

Structure of the cross-country study

1. Introduction (Grassroots project description, project aims, context)
2. PART 1
 - a. Literature review on grassroots and volunteerism (prepared by Agora)
 - b. Policy analysis on the Europe 2020 process (prepared by CENPO)
 - c. Review on the topic of wellbeing indicators (prepared by CEU)
3. PART 2: Country case studies (prepared by each partner)
4. PART 3: Comparative study
5. Conclusions