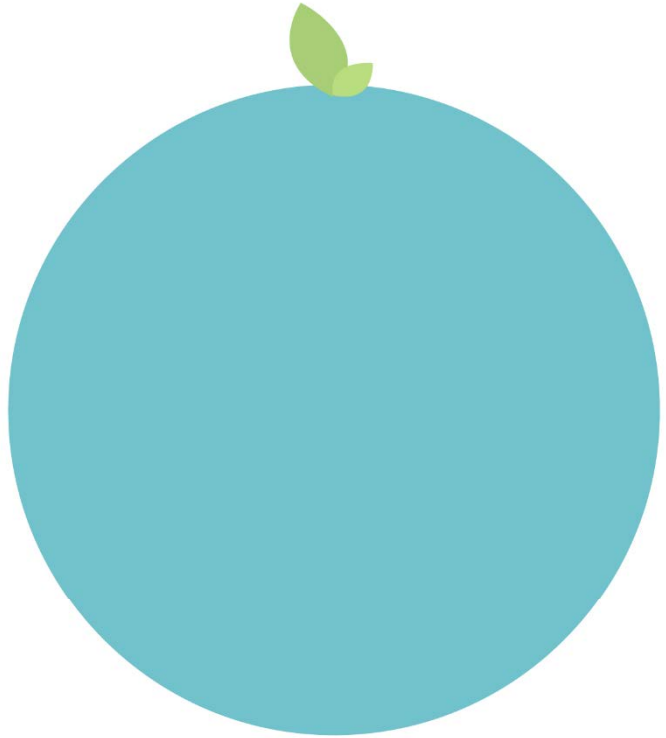




An introduction to Wellbeing





Introduction

Wellbeing is all the rage, and health and wellbeing has become a ready phrase. But for our work with cultural and other caring sectors, thinking about wellbeing has broader implications; it is not just about the health or wellbeing that

those services support in their customers, but also how organisations look after their workforce and how they make a bigger difference in communities and the wider world.

For us and a growing number of people wellbeing can be seen as the ultimate objective of humankind, including social, economic and environmental outcomes. In this booklet we call this fair, shared and lasting wellbeing – amounting together to create worldwide wellbeing.

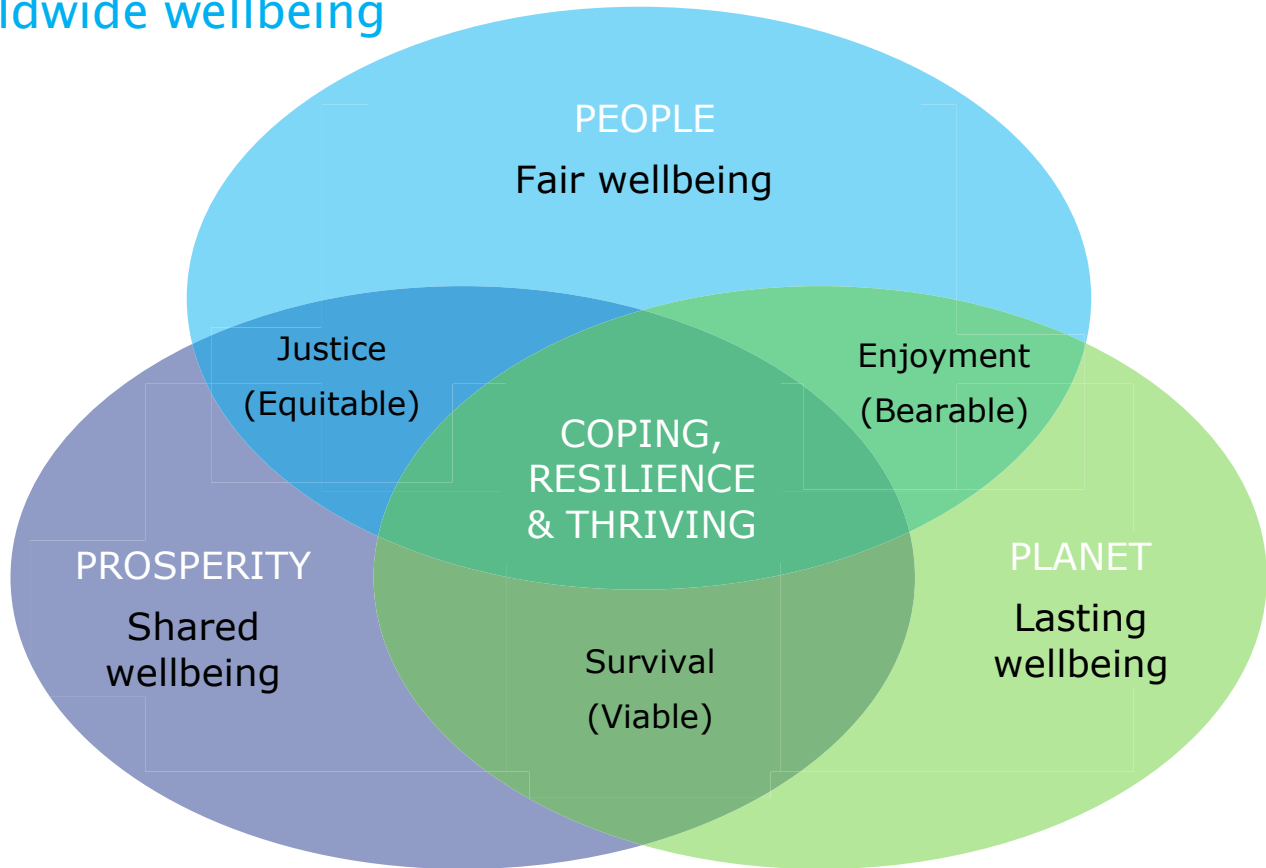
The diagram (page 6) shows how those three elements link together using ‘triple bottom line’ terms, which are the basis for Social Return On Investment thinking (see our Introduction to SROI booklet). People, prosperity and the planet (social, economic and environmental issues) need to co-exist. In combining these needs, we must consider not just enjoyment, but justice and our very survival.

The national foresight programme in 2008¹ defined wellbeing in a way that edges towards this wider view:

The concept of well-being comprises two main elements: feeling good and functioning well. Feelings of happiness, contentment, enjoyment, curiosity and engagement are characteristic of someone who has a positive experience of their life. Equally important for wellbeing is our functioning in the world.

The national foresight programme in 2008

Worldwide wellbeing



A focus on wellbeing is being brought alive with movements like Action for Happiness and echoes across society from business to politics.

In 2009, the Stiglitz report² provoked deep thinking in European politics. The UK Government tasked the Office for National Statistics (ONS) with collecting data on wellbeing and established an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on wellbeing economics. The APPG's final report in 2014 concluded that wellbeing is even more important during austerity. By improving how people feel *and* function, we can reduce demand for expensive public services. The group recommended that new policy is assessed for wellbeing impact on all of us; healthy or ill.

They want:

- a high wellbeing economy and labour market,
- high wellbeing places and planning,
- mindfulness in health and education,
- and to value what matters: arts and culture policy.

The time is right to move from national wellbeing measurement to a national wellbeing strategy... Far from being an unaffordable luxury, it has the potential to improve the effectiveness of public spending, and in some cases save public money. (APPG 2014)

And as of 2013 every local authority in the UK has a health and wellbeing board designed to address inequality, make the NHS more locally democratic and join up services better, with special attention to wellbeing.

A parallel focus on social value is legislated for by the Social Value Act 2012, which means public services must think about social and environmental, as well as economic value for money when they are contracting:

Wakefield Council wanted a new milk supplier in local schools. They selected Fresh Pastures, who deliver milk and also provide local schoolchildren with lessons on healthy living and food miles. Fresh Pastures also provide work opportunities for the long-term unemployed.

The University of Northampton launched the £1 billion University Challenge. It encourages the UK's higher education sector to spend at least £1 billion of the £7 billion it spends on procuring goods and services from social enterprises.

Many in the cultural sector are well aware of the sector's wellbeing offer, with People United, Happy Museum, Fun Palaces and Who Cares? promoting cultural and creative routes to wellbeing that tend to be 'upstream'; by which we mean before problems emerge, at 'population level'.

In the children and young people's sector the focus tends to be more 'downstream' – although asset-based approaches (which focus on strengths rather than weaknesses) have long been a feature of good youth work.

With the shocking statistic that 1 in 10 children have a diagnosable mental health problem³, the need is very apparent. So at an individual level, we've a way to go. Not only is there significant need, but we are meeting it poorly – only a quarter of adults with a common mental health disorder get help, in contrast to say, cancer care.

But the wellbeing movement is becoming evident in even the most hard-headed business environments. The Social Progress Imperative, headed by business guru Michael Porter is devoted to improving the quality of lives of people around the world. The consulting giant KPMG is working with corporations on 'true value'⁴. There is also increasing evidence of the benefits of the environment on wellbeing, especially of green spaces in towns and blue spaces by the water.



Fair wellbeing

A focus on wellbeing could be seen as indulgent. So it's important to be clear that at a minimum, my wellbeing must not be at the expense of your's. At the moment, wellbeing

is not fairly spread. For example, poor people are more likely to be mentally ill than the wealthy⁵.

History and different philosophical approaches have produced different ways of talking about personal wellbeing – rights, capabilities and self-reported happiness:

- objective measures or human rights defined by society
- the idea of capabilities, including feelings and functioning
- subjective wellbeing, defined by individuals themselves.

The idea that we have a human right to certain things is a first step in thinking about wellbeing and is still worth stating. For example the UN convention agreed rights of the child internationally in 1989 that have still not been approved by Somalia, South Sudan and the United States.

Our concept of fair, shared wellbeing is well captured in ‘capabilities’ thinking^a which explores whether society and its policies offer people the opportunities to achieve wellbeing, i.e. whether there is real freedom to function well in a socially just way. This approach explores whether things are valuable as an end in themselves or as a means to an end.

^a Going back to Aristotle through Adam Smith and Karl Marx, the idea of ‘capabilities’ was developed recently by Sen and Nussbaum.

For example, capabilities thinking asks whether people are able to be healthy, well nourished, and educated; as well as whether they can access clean water and doctors, food and schooling.

Lately though, the idea of subjective wellbeing (judged by the individual) is gaining ground. It tends to ask people how happy they are and how satisfied they are with their lives. Subjective wellbeing says even more strongly than rights or capabilities that what matters is the ends more than the means, so they can be best judged by individuals.

In describing wellbeing Professor Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania talks about three kinds of life: a pleasant life, a good life and a meaningful life^b.

The capacity to have a pleasant life – enjoying yourself and feeling good in the short-term, is to a large extent inherited^c and not very easy to influence^d. There is also a

^b A pleasant and a good/meaningful life equate broadly to the academic language *hedonic* wellbeing (or experience or affect) and *eudemonic* wellbeing (or psychological or functioning/flourishing).

^c Around 50% inherited

law of diminishing returns, you get used to things and need more or better to achieve the same levels of happiness. As such it risks compromising our notion of fair and lasting wellbeing. In fact, it has almost no impact on long term life satisfaction.

A good life relates more to how you function; the idea of engagement, sometimes called ‘flow’ or ‘eudaemonia’. It can be made to work for you in any area of life, from work to parenting, or love to leisure. Whereas there is a raw feel to pleasure, when you are in ‘flow’ time stops; you are engrossed and lost in the moment.

The third type of happiness – a meaningful life – we describe below in our section on shared wellbeing.

The growing industry of wellbeing measurement collects data across these three types of wellbeing. For example tools like WEMWBS^e collect personal data on feelings and functioning. At a national level the ONS collects data on subjective wellbeing (how happy are you?) on capabilities (do you feel safe walking after dark?) and on objective measures such as the human right to live crime free (the number of crimes per 1,000 people).

^d Up to 20% malleable

^e Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale



Shared wellbeing

If we can achieve one person's wellbeing at no cost to another's, then the next step might be to reap the extra rewards of shared wellbeing.

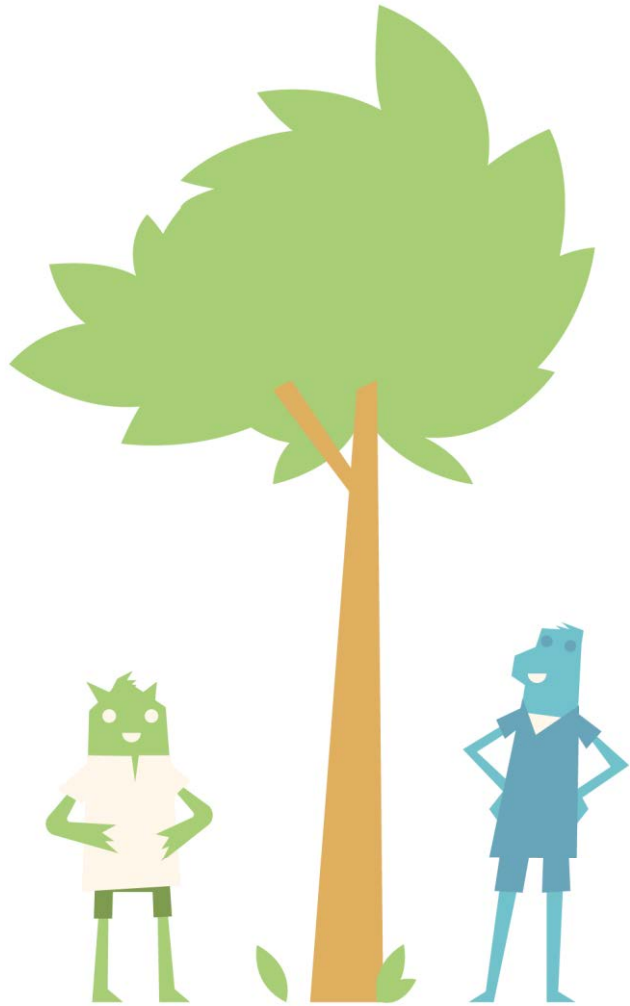
On a personal level, the third of Seligman's types of wellbeing he calls 'a meaningful life'. It is similar to a good life, but the idea of engagement or flow is applied for the greater good. The good news for both individuals and society is that in terms of life satisfaction, his research has shown it is much more rewarding than a pleasant life.

The Western world is increasingly self-centred, as the ground breaking book *Bowling Alone* by Robert Putnam describes. He shows how people have become more disconnected from family, friends, neighbours and our democratic structures. Our 'social capital' has plummeted; in his example, more Americans are bowling than ever before, but they are bowling alone not in leagues.

This solitariness is combined with high inequality in many countries with some significant knock-on effects. We now have sophisticated ways of measuring how happy people are, and the evidence shows that on average people have grown no happier in the last fifty years, even as average incomes have more than doubled. In fact, the developed world has more depression, alcoholism and crime than fifty years ago. This paradox is true of Britain, the United States, continental Europe, and Japan⁶.

It doesn't have to be like this. Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett explore in detail in *The Spirit Level* how shared wellbeing, in the form of greater equality and trust, leads to a better life all round. Communities with high equality have less drug misuse, obesity and violence, and better relationships, mental health, educational performance, social mobility and even life expectancy. This is astonishingly consistent across nations.

“Increases in life expectancy for civilians during the war decades were twice those seen throughout the rest of the twentieth century. Although the nation’s nutritional status improved with rationing in the Second World War, this was not true for the First World War, and material living standards declined during both wars. However, both wartimes were characterised by full employment and considerably narrower income differences – the result of deliberate government policies to promote co-operation with the war effort. During the Second World War, for example, working-class incomes rose by 9 per cent, while incomes of the middle class fell by 7 per cent; rates of relative poverty were halved. The resulting sense of camaraderie and social cohesion not only led to better health – crime rates also fell.” *The Spirit Level*



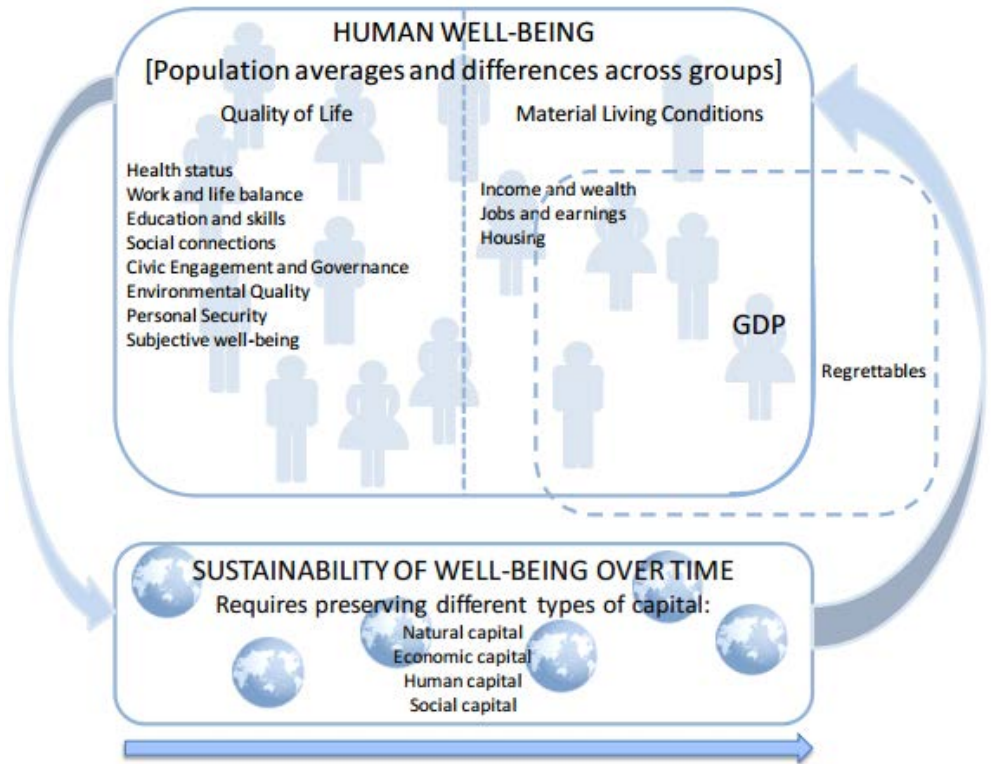
Lasting wellbeing

If shared wellbeing considers wider prosperity, then lasting wellbeing looks to the future. In fact the notion of shared wellbeing is more likely to lead us to also consider the wellbeing of our children.

A study of 20 wealthy nations showed that in nations that value fairness, less advertising was directed at children, maternity leave was more generous; children's wellbeing is higher and even less CO² was emitted.⁸

The latter is important because lasting wellbeing will be generated in large part through an acceptance that we cannot use resources in pursuit of our own happiness to the detriment of those living in the future. This is recognised (though slow to be acted on) at the highest levels. For example the Stiglitz' report differentiated current wellbeing from lasting wellbeing, which it concluded depended upon whether natural, physical, human and social capital could be passed on to future generations. The OECD⁶ has developed a framework which identifies four types of 'capital' necessary to sustain wellbeing over time: natural, human, social and economic.

⁶ Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development – a forum of 34 countries founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade.



Framework for OECD wellbeing indicators

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment⁹ also described how wellbeing cannot be considered in isolation of the natural environment.



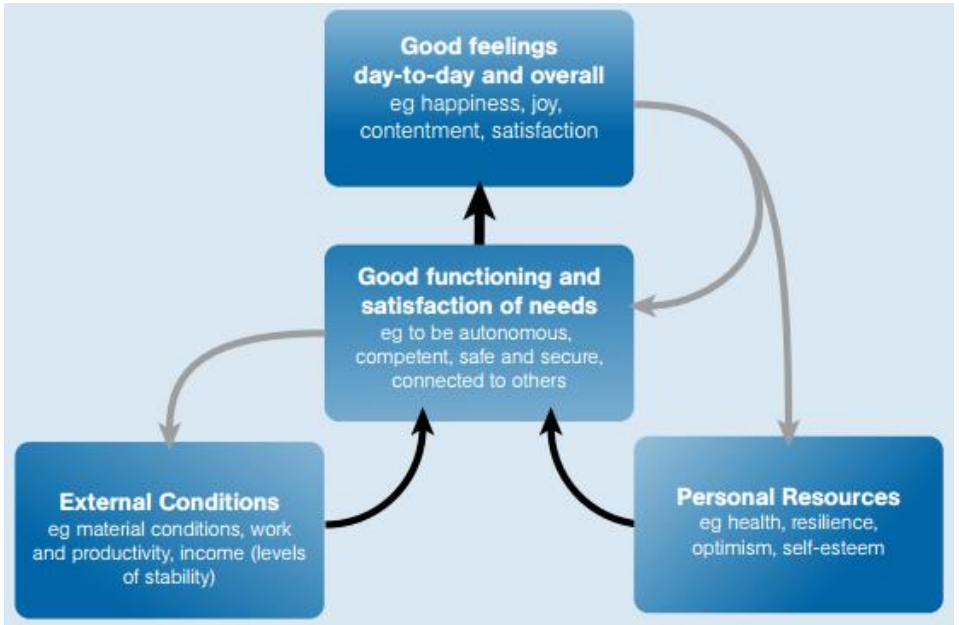
The benefits of wellbeing

It's easy to see that wellbeing matters, what can be more important than being happy? But with 70 years of measuring success by GDP⁷ to contend with, presenting

⁷ Gross Domestic Product, the sum of what the country produces

wellbeing in quantifiably beneficial terms is essential in changing the way we create policy and society norms.

To make the case we need to be clear that it's not just about good feelings, it's also about good functioning.



New Economic Foundation (nef) dynamic model of wellbeing

It doesn't take an academic to tell us that good relationships can make us happy, and it might be intuitive to think that happiness can help us have good relationships. But it does take academic research to prove that happiness can also help us to earn more and be more physically healthy.

Links and causes

There are two statistical approaches that are key to understanding the benefits of wellbeing: correlation and causality. Simply put correlation is when two things are linked by more than coincidence, for example, if you read more about wellbeing you are likely to understand more about wellbeing; these two things are correlated. Causality shows which comes first and causes the other.

Understanding more about wellbeing doesn't cause you to read more about it, these things are linked in one direction; the reading causes the understanding. (Although this example shows how hard it can be to establish causality, as so often things are part of a virtuous or vicious circle).

Psychology professor at the University of California Sonja Lyubomirsky has looked happiness in these terms and much of what we include below comes from her work *The Benefits of Frequent Positive Affect: Does Happiness Lead to Success?*¹⁰

Lyubomirsky's intention was to explore if happiness bred success, rather than if success made people happy. She looked at three elements of success; health, work and relationships. She found that study after study showed that happiness preceded important outcomes. Happy people tend to be more successful in all three.

Benefits for the individual

Health

The effects of happiness on self-care and coping have a knock-on effect on health, and happy people tend to consider themselves more healthy too. The various studies Lyubomirsky considered also showed that happiness reduces the pain that patients report and the subsequent need for costly medication or time off work. It can impact on physical health on a day-to-day basis, for example reducing A&E visits the next day¹¹.

But perhaps more surprisingly it can also impact on physical health in the long term; reducing respiratory infections in the next two weeks¹², sports injuries within a season¹³ and the likelihood of having a stroke six years on¹⁴. Optimism (the sister of happiness) affects the likelihood of having heart problems up to ten years later¹⁵ and it has even been shown that optimistic mothers are less likely to deliver low-birth-weight babies¹⁶.

These tangible physical benefits of happiness have been clinically researched, looking at brain activity and showing for example, effects on the chemical balance of the immune system.

At Derby Silk Mill the University of Derby tested the saliva of participants in their Re:Make project for the stress protection hormone cortisol and antibodies that are linked to stress relief. They found a significant increase.

Perhaps most surprising of all, in a study over 37 countries, we see happy people are less likely to die in a car crash¹⁷.

More obviously, happy people have better mental health. They tend to look after themselves better, take health advice more readily, and are less likely to behave in a way that could trigger mental ill health. For example, happy teenagers are less likely to drink too much or take drugs¹⁸. Happy adults are less likely to suffer from depression if they are made redundant¹⁹.

Mental disorder affects one in four of us over our lifetime²⁰ and the World Health Organisation predicts that depression will be the second largest cause of ill health by 2020. Depression is not just miserable in itself, it reduces life expectancy by around 10 years²¹ – and it costs. The NHS spent 11% of its budget on mental disorder in 2011, a small proportion of what it needs to spend to deal with all cases. Including the costs of knock-on impacts on absenteeism and lost taxes, the cost to the country was £105bn that

year²² – more than twice the cost of heart disease and obesity put together, and more than the cost of crime. So thinking of happiness as a preventative measure certainly makes sense.

Almost a decade ago Richard Layard noted “Mental illness accounts for as much suffering as all physical illnesses put together. The resulting loss of output can be calculated as £17bn or 1 ½ % of GDP. There are over 1 million mentally ill people receiving incapacity benefits, more than those on unemployment benefits.”

School, work and the economy

Happy people do better at work because of these health benefits but that is not the only effect of happiness on the workforce.

They are less likely to suffer burnout²³. Their success is in part because they are more likely to be adaptable and have skills to meet new challenges.

The happiness benefits apply at all life stages; happy people are more likely to do better at school²⁴, to graduate, to get better jobs, do better in work and to feel job satisfaction. Job satisfaction leads to people going above and beyond in work, which might be why happy people also tend to be judged well by the boss.

There is an element of virtuous circle²⁵ but there is also some evidence that happy students earn more later in life²⁶ – showing the happiness preceding the successful behaviours.

Not surprisingly given what we've just said, happiness is also linked to individuals' higher earnings.

Benefits for families and communities

Relationships

One of the most robust findings on the benefit of wellbeing is that it is highly correlated to good relationships; happy people tend to be more sociable and trust and affection play an important part in wellbeing²⁷.

In looking for causality, we can see that it starts at birth; smiles between babies and carers build attachment and as a result a commitment to caring²⁸. Happy people tend to like people better and be less jealous. This in turn relates to more trust and kindness. It affects antisocial behaviour, crime and violence. The wellbeing effects of the natural world reduce aggression too, even amongst Alzheimer patients²⁹.

Several studies show that happy people are more likely to be happily married. They are also likely to have more friends, be more highly esteemed, and judged more attractive by others too³⁰. This in turn is linked to higher self-esteem³¹; another virtuous circle with individual and community benefit.

But it's not just about love relationships. Happy people are also more likely to get support from colleagues, and happy CEOs are more likely to have happy employees³². The culture of an organisation in which the workforce has high wellbeing can make a difference to productivity and profit³³.

Benefits for the wider world

Coping, resilience and thriving

Happy people tend to be happier with their lot – even with things they have little influence over, like housing and transport. But as opposed to being complacent, happy people also tend to want to learn new skills, or more about culture or politics³⁴.

Although this area is not so well evidenced, there is some research showing that happy people are more efficient and independent thinkers, with higher self-esteem and coping skills. As a result they can be more resilient and prepared for future challenges³⁵ – although this tends to be a virtuous circle rather than a clear causal relationship. As happiness is correlated to optimism, this also promotes hope in difficult times.

From the cultural sector's point of view, long term happy people tend to be more creative, and creative people tend to be more self-confident. Real excitement generates high levels of curiosity and innovation but the effects can be on ordinary lives too. Happy (or at least not unhappy) people also tend to use more 'everyday creativity'³⁶.

For children and young people, this manifests in a focus on 'asset-based' youth work and the strategy of providing 'positive activities'³⁷. Though the evidence for the

effectiveness of youth work is thin, what there is tends to show the most impact on elements of self-control and self-fulfilment including the ability to make a difference in the world³⁸.

Resources and consumption

As independent thinkers, happy people might be less susceptible to negative influences from advertising³⁹. As a result they might choose to consume differently, and so have the ability to affect political and market forces; consumer power has been exercised with significant impact from the boycott of businesses in South Africa to people buying sustainably caught fish⁴⁰.

...And back to the individual

The good news is that sometimes what's good for the world is good for the individual too. Containing conspicuous consumption itself can impact on wellbeing⁴¹ and market research has shown a growing number of consumers are tired of over-consumption⁴². The flipside of which brings us to thinking about nature.

The benefits of nature

The sheer volume of writing on the link between nature and wellbeing should convince us that there is a link⁴³. The research refers to physical wellbeing – we are more likely to walk or cycle in green space; mental wellbeing – nature makes us feel better about ourselves⁴⁴; and social wellbeing – urban green space encourages people to mix⁴⁵.

The natural world can also be a catalyst for behaviour change, encouraging healthier lifestyles. An impact on physical wellbeing alone – say, a 10% rise in physical activity for example – would save the UK £500M a year, but more importantly save 6,000 lives⁴⁶.

There is a role here for public services which is about sense of place as well as leisure activities. The UK National Ecosystem Assessment identifies various ‘services’ supplied by our ecosystem and contributing to wellbeing; those that are fundamental for physical wellbeing (like enough food to eat), and ‘cultural services’ which contribute to mental wellbeing.

The concept of ‘ecotherapy’ is now accepted mental health treatment, promoted particularly by the charity Mind. Faced with the risks of urbanisation to children’s wellbeing through poor food and air quality, and limits to playing outside⁴⁷, initiatives like Forest Schools also have a part to play. They can help create a generational virtuous circle as

children who spend time outside are more likely to care about the environment as adults⁴⁸.

The mental health charity Mind tested environmental – as opposed to just physical – therapy by comparing a walk in the country with a walk in a shopping centre. Afterwards, 90% of the country walkers reported increased self-esteem. 44% of the indoor walkers reported *lower* self-esteem. (Mind 2007)

One research project showed the impact of a view of nature from a hospital window for patients after gall bladder surgery. Patients with a view of trees had a shorter hospital stay and needed less medication. (Ulrich 1983)

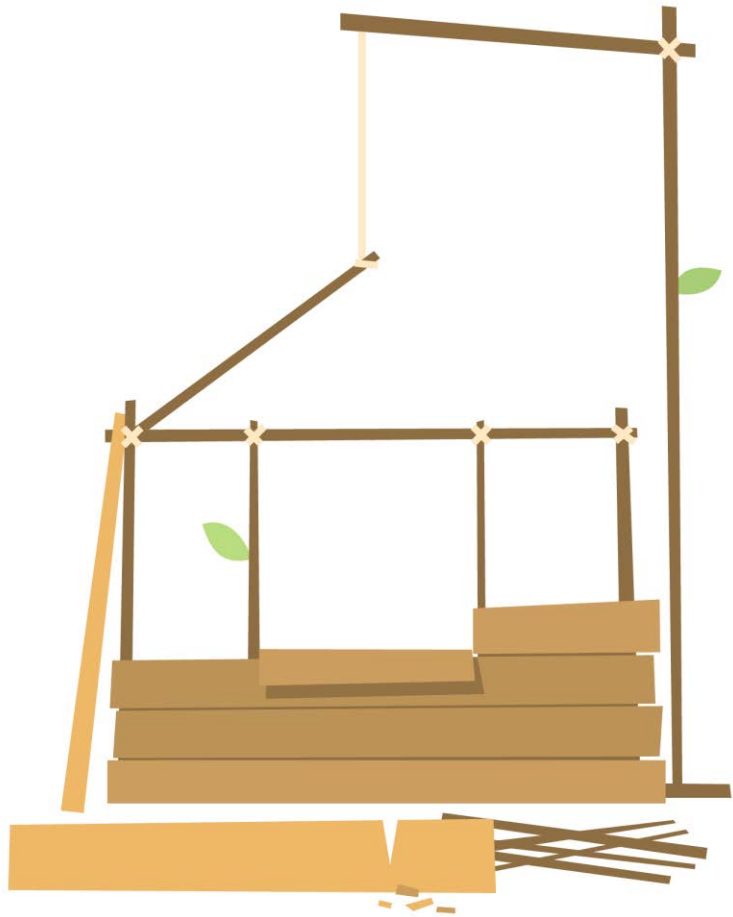
The value of wellbeing

Better wellbeing generates savings to the public purse and benefits in more productivity too.

With the rise in interest in subjective wellbeing, research has also focused on impact on the individual, allocating real and proxy values so that these can be compared with those that are easier to measure in the economy.

Happy Museum has commissioned subjective wellbeing valuation from leading expert, Daniel Fujiwara. This method of valuation uses national datasets to find a correlation between, say, going to museums and increased happiness. It then assesses what increase in income would create the same increase in happiness, and concludes that the value of museum going is equivalent. In the report *Museums and Happiness*⁴⁹, Fujiwara found that visiting museums is worth £3,200 a year to people (in wellbeing terms). Being in the audience for the arts is worth £2,000, whilst participating in arts or sport is worth £1,500. His work continues to update these findings⁵⁰. In simple terms visiting museums makes people as happy as a £3,200 pay rise.

Other research recognises that there are huge benefits offered by our natural space, for example living with a view of a green space is worth up to £300 per person per year, and living close to rivers, coasts and wetlands benefits residents by about £1.3bn a year⁵¹.



Making wellbeing

Personal wellbeing

There is much we can do as individuals to improve our own wellbeing using positive *feelings* to broaden awareness and

building on that with skills and resources for better *functioning*⁸.

With some evidence that the brain can't tell the difference between reality and imagination⁵² we can use the power of positive thought for our own benefit⁵³.

Professor Seligman has tested various techniques to develop multi-layered happiness⁵⁴:

- 1 For a pleasant life, learn to amplify the effect, for example savouring mindfulness.
- 2 For a good life, know your strengths and re-craft your life to use them as much as possible⁹.
- 3 For a meaningful life, know your strengths and use them for the greater good. This is not a way to sneak altruism in through the back door; tests of fun versus philanthropy show the benefits of the latter last longer.

The Government's Foresight project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing⁵⁵ recommended these Five Ways To Wellbeing¹⁰, creating a 'five-a-day' for mental health:

⁸ Broaden and Build Theory

⁹ www.authentichappiness.org offers some guidance.

¹⁰ See the Foresight project for the evidence and rationale for the Five Ways, drawing on a wealth of psychological literature.



PEOPLE. Connect... with the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours.



BODY. Be active. Stand up. Move. Play a game. Dance.



PLACE. Take notice. See the beautiful; savour the moment. Be aware of the world and your feelings.



MIND. Keep learning. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.



SPIRIT. Give. Do something for a friend or stranger. Thank someone. Smile.

‘Take notice’ has much in common with mindfulness and flow. Mindfulness is not only encouraged by the NHS for patients, it is taught to some staff, and the wellbeing APPG recommends it is taught to teachers too. Apps such as Headspace and Calm are useful reflective mindfulness tools. Another route to flow is through creative making.

In a Happy Museum project in Abergavenny, young carers described flow through making as the “busy with your hands thing”, a way of experiencing ‘flow’, identified by Mihály Csíkszentmihályi as a mental state in which a person is fully immersed in ‘energised focus’. As one young person said, “I’m so chilled here. It’s the atmosphere here, the concentrating on doing something, more than the people.”

And as happy people tend to enjoy their hobbies and social lives more than others, and to experience more flow⁵⁶, this is another virtuous circle.

Wellbeing at work

Wellbeing tips can be applied at work as well as at home, but the labour market also needs large scale intervention.

Richard Layard pointed out some time ago that though monetary wealth has for a long time been our measure of prosperity, in fact it offers diminishing returns. But at the same time, evidence shows that unemployment is hugely damaging, outweighed only by crises like a family death.

Nef’s analysis of ONS data shows that uncertain, too little or too much work are all bad for wellbeing. Working more than

55 hours a week for example creates more anxiety than getting divorced.⁵⁷ The APPG's report picks up the theme suggesting that as wellbeing tails off with increased wealth anyway, tackling work–life balance, poverty and inequality matters more than increasing national income. And that the absence of recession is more important to wellbeing than growth⁵⁸.

Wider wellbeing

Arts and creativity⁵⁹, volunteering, access to green space and physical activity all serve us well, by enabling us to use many of the Five Ways techniques.

But as the Ecosystem Assessment identifies, our wellbeing is about a sense of place as well as leisure activities. Shaping the places we live for wellbeing is a recommendation of the APPG where our natural and cultural worlds are critical.

The role of culture and place

Whilst culture features implicitly in the idea of shaping place, it is also explicitly recommended as a priority for wellbeing, particularly participatory arts in deprived areas.

People United promote the arts as a route to kindness, and Happy Museum makes the explicit link between wellbeing and sustainability. They are focused on very similar areas of wellbeing^{60 61}:

People United	Happy Museum
Learning – practising thinking; reflecting on social responsibility	Learning and being mentally active
Connections – attachment theory and social capital	Interaction with others
Emotions – mood, empathy, but also ‘moral outrage’	Feeling happy, worthwhile and active
Values and moral reasoning	Environmental care and care of surroundings

The natural world and lasting wellbeing

In 2014 a sixth ‘way to wellbeing’ was launched by South London And Maudsley Mental Health Trust (SLAM) within the www.wheelofwellbeing.org website.

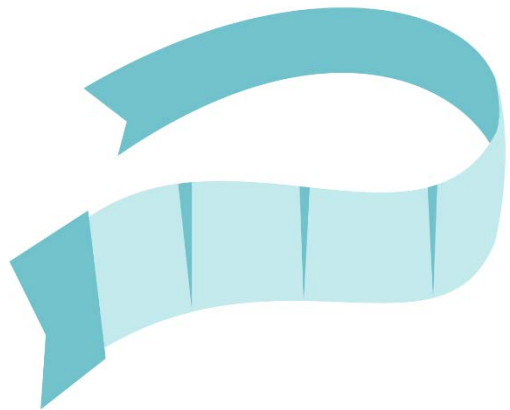


PLANET. Care. Water the plants in your house, get rid of some clutter, save energy, love your trees.

Exposure to natural space is in part beneficial by providing areas for exercise but also because simply looking at nature lifts people's spirits. ‘Blue space’ – proximity to water – seems to have particular benefit⁶². But cultural organisations are starting to link cultural and natural capital, so those who can’t live by the sea can reap benefits closer to

home. Happy Museum links care for the environment and immediate surroundings through the stewardship role of museums. The National Trust measures success using visitor numbers, but also the 'Spirit of Place'.

Like the labour market, this needs global attention too. The UK National Ecosystem Assessment of 2011 urges that natural capital goods should be taken into account in policy decisions. Moving towards measures of wellbeing above consumption can only help.



Measuring wellbeing

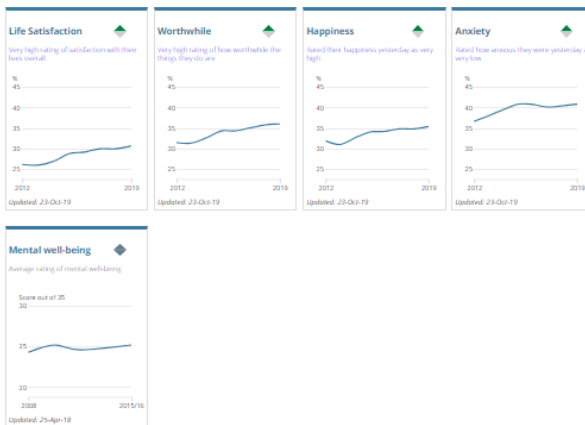
Stiglitz's international report acknowledged that people value things differently. Its update in 2014 showed 41 individual measures and ten 'domains' of wellbeing:

- Personal wellbeing
- Our relationships
- Health
- What we do
- Where we live
- Personal finance
- Economy
- Education and skills
- Governance
- Natural environment

These ideas are reflected now by the Office of National Statistics, in its [dashboard](#) of measures:

Personal Well-being

Includes individual's feelings of satisfaction with life, whether they feel the things they do in their life are worthwhile and their positive and negative emotions.



Our Relationships

Positive relationships have one of the biggest impacts on our quality of life and happiness. This domain includes satisfaction with personal relationships and feelings of loneliness.



ONS data has identified that health, work and relationships are the domains most strongly associated with personal wellbeing,¹¹ the areas Lyubormirsky focuses on. The national debate also identified economic security and job satisfaction, work–life balance and local and natural environment as being important.

In 2014 in the UK $\frac{3}{4}$ of adults rated life satisfaction as ‘high’, with the lowest being the age group 45–54, just over half of adults were happy with their health and 9 out of 10 were happy with their housing. 40% of household waste was recycled and 16% volunteered. 1 in 10 found it hard to get by financially, and the same percentage of young people had no qualifications and slightly more had no-one to rely on. Only a quarter of people trusted government.

The UK ranks above the European Union average in life satisfaction, housing, recycling rates and trust in Government. It is below the EU average in making ends meet, perceived health and having someone to rely on.

Whilst the ONS holds data for the country, there are measurements of wellbeing collected by many different

¹¹ There is some sense that these correspond with our three big public services, the NHS, our education system and our cultural services, indicating perhaps that the main purpose of cultural investment should be to develop good relationships, starting with the relationship with ourselves.

organisations, including universities and services around the country. For example data from www.Mappiness.org.uk devised at the LSE was used in both the UK National Ecosystem Assessment and with the DCMS work we mention in this booklet. There is an attempt to ‘harmonise’ wellbeing research so data can be compared but there remain different questions. Some of the most relevant to us are the:

- ONS wellbeing questions produced quarterly on a 0–10 scale (and also asked in the Annual Population Survey and Crime Survey amongst others):
 - “Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?”
 - “Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?”
 - “Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?”
 - “Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?”
- Two yearly Understanding Society survey on a 1–7 scale:
 - “How satisfied are you with your life overall?”
- Taking Part survey:
 - “Taking all things together how happy would you say you are?”

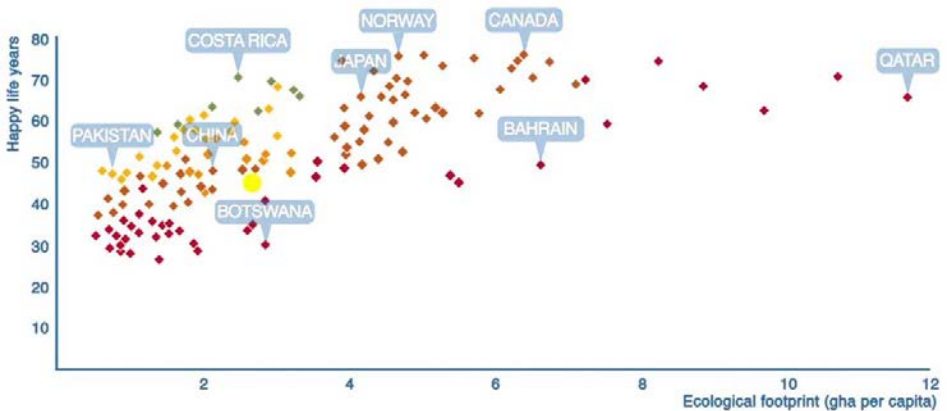
Others include⁶³:

- Measures of ‘functioning’ – such as Satisfaction With Life Scale and Personal Wellbeing Index
- Measures of ‘feeling’ – such as Positive and Negative Affect Scale, Day Reconstruction Method
- Measures of mental health, resilience and flourishing – such as the Rosenberg’s Self-esteem Scale and the Rutter Child Behaviour Questionnaire
- Combined measures – such as General Health Questionnaire and Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS)
- Preference satisfaction measures – such as Quality Adjusted Life Years (QALYs)
- Sector specific measures – such as NPC’s wellbeing survey for young people and the one developed by us for Happy Museum on Learning, Interaction, Feelings and Environment (LIFE). Another approach is being developed by UCL’s museums department.

How things are measured can be highly political. For years Bhutan has been motivated by ‘Gross National Happiness’ rather than ‘Gross National (or Domestic) Product’. Activists use measures like ‘Earth Overshoot Day’, the date each year when globally we have used up the Earth’s resources for that

year, to illustrate overuse of our natural capital⁶⁴. (It was, by the way, 19 August in 2014).

In an attempt to measure how fairly we use up the planet, nef started National Accounts of Wellbeing⁶⁵ using questions from the European Social Survey to compare nations. They then produced the Happy Planet Index which highlights the tension between the good life now and in the future. Rather than looking at economic turnover (GDP) it is a measure of progress that compares the resources people use (ecological footprint) with the wellbeing it achieves (happy life years). On this picture, the yellow dot is the average. The objective is to move the yellow dot up (more happiness) and left (less use of resource).



The key challenge is to create happier more prosperous people, in a way that is fair, shared and lasting.

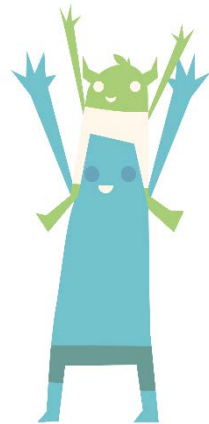
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