

Measuring happiness – and why it matters

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Centre for Well-being
new economics foundation

Action for Happiness Brighton, 4 September 2012



economics
real wealth
means well-being

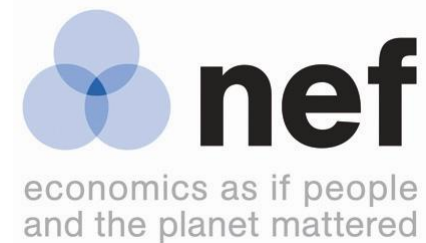


environment
lifestyles must
become sustainable



society
communities need
power and influence

About nef



- An *independent* UK think-and-do-tank – a ‘bridge’ between researchers and policy-makers
- Inspired by 3 principles
 - Environmental sustainability
 - Social justice
 - People’s well-being
- Well-being programme set up in 2001 to ask:
What would policy look like if it focused on improving well-being?

What I will cover

1. Measuring what matters
2. A new framework for measurement
3. Measuring happiness & well-being
4. Using the results for policy-making

1. Measuring what matters

The problems of GDP



Gross National Product counts air pollution, and cigarette advertising and...the destruction of the redwood and the loss of our natural wonder in chaotic sprawl. It does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy or their play...the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages. It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.

Robert Kennedy, 1968

Why measuring matters

- a) 'Framing': Indicators shape our understanding of issues
- b) Indicators create incentives for action
- c) Indicators take on a kind of 'path dependency'

The science of framing

What cognitive scientists have discovered about framing:

“The first basic result: The meaning of every word is characterized in terms of a brain circuit called a “frame.” Frames are often characterized in terms of the usual apparatus of mental life: metaphors, images, cultural narratives - and neural links to the emotion centers of the brain. The narrow, literal meaning of a word is only one aspect of its frame-semantic meaning.

“The second basic result is that this is mostly unconscious, like 98% of human thought.” (Lakoff, 2010).

Indicators create frames

“Economics now reigns unchallenged in the policy arena, as well as in media coverage of quality-of-life indicators. News magazines and daily newspapers have a section devoted to money...Economists hold prominent positions in the capitals of the world. When politicians run for office, they speak at length about what they will do, or have done, for the economy...Rarely do the news media report on how depressed, engaged, or satisfied people are.”

(Diener and Seligman, 2004).

Incentives for political action

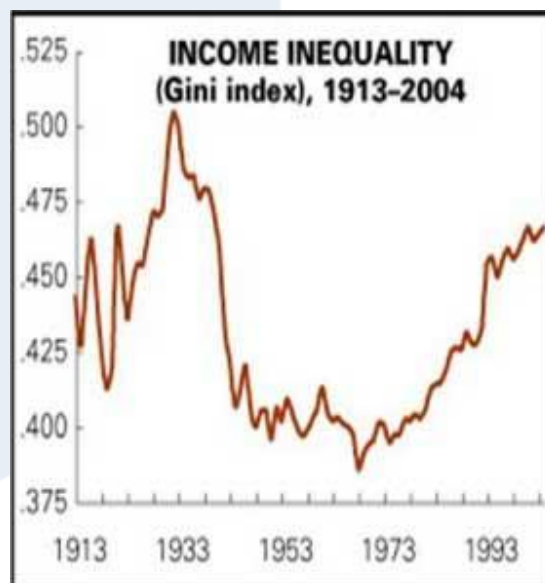


“We’re not going to save the planet by putting our country out of business”

The “burden” of “endless social and environmental goals”

Path dependency

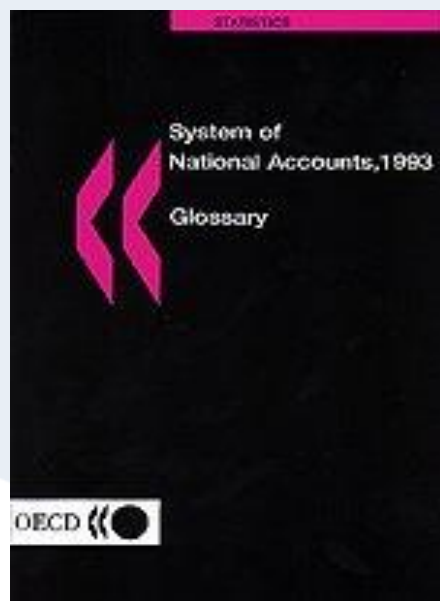
Simon Kuznets in the US wanted to 'improve the welfare of the poorest' during the Great Depression in the 1930s



“The welfare of a nation can scarcely be inferred from a measurement of national income”

Path dependency

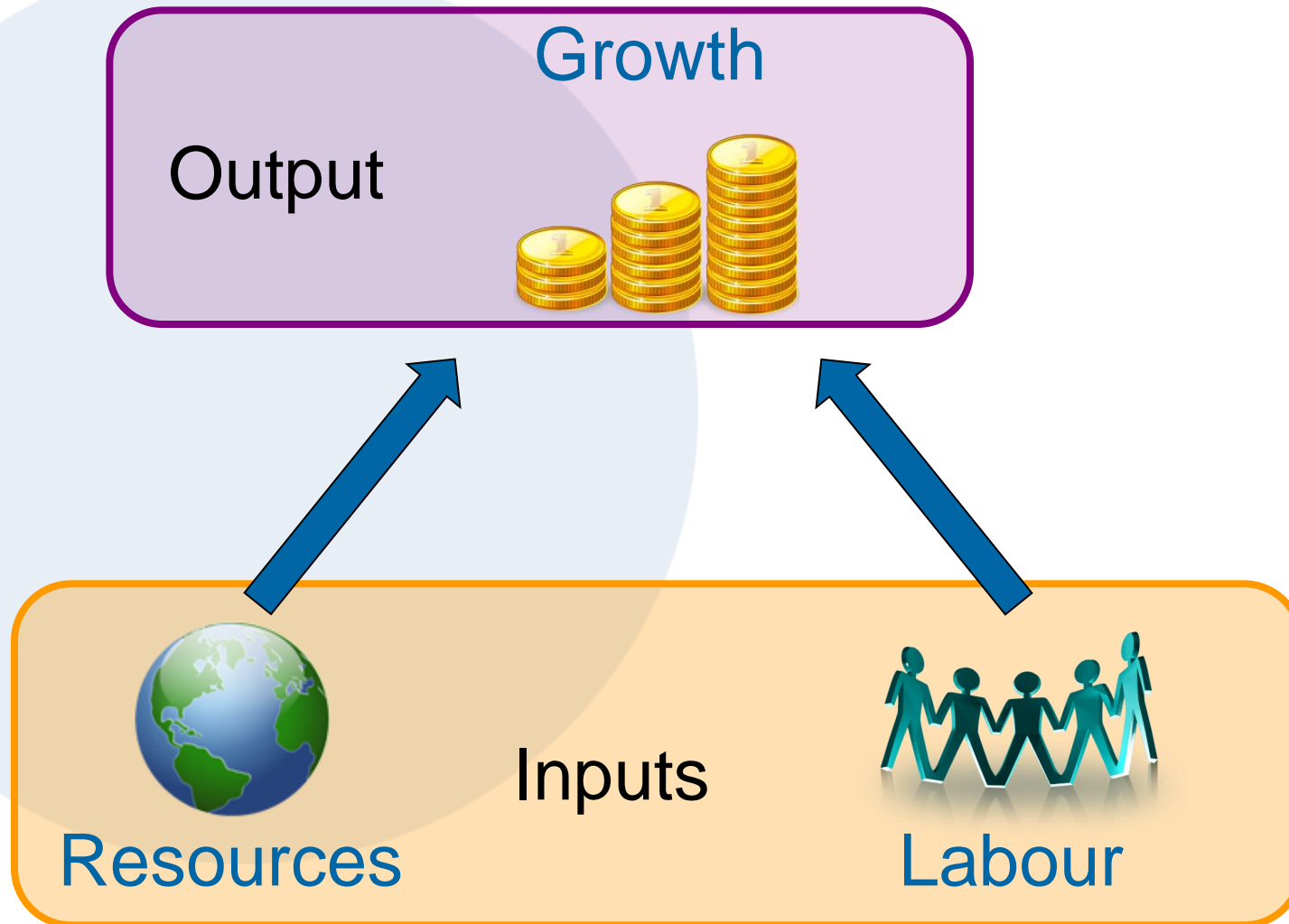
Contextual importance:
During WW2 the
militarisation process
created an almost
exclusive emphasis on
production.



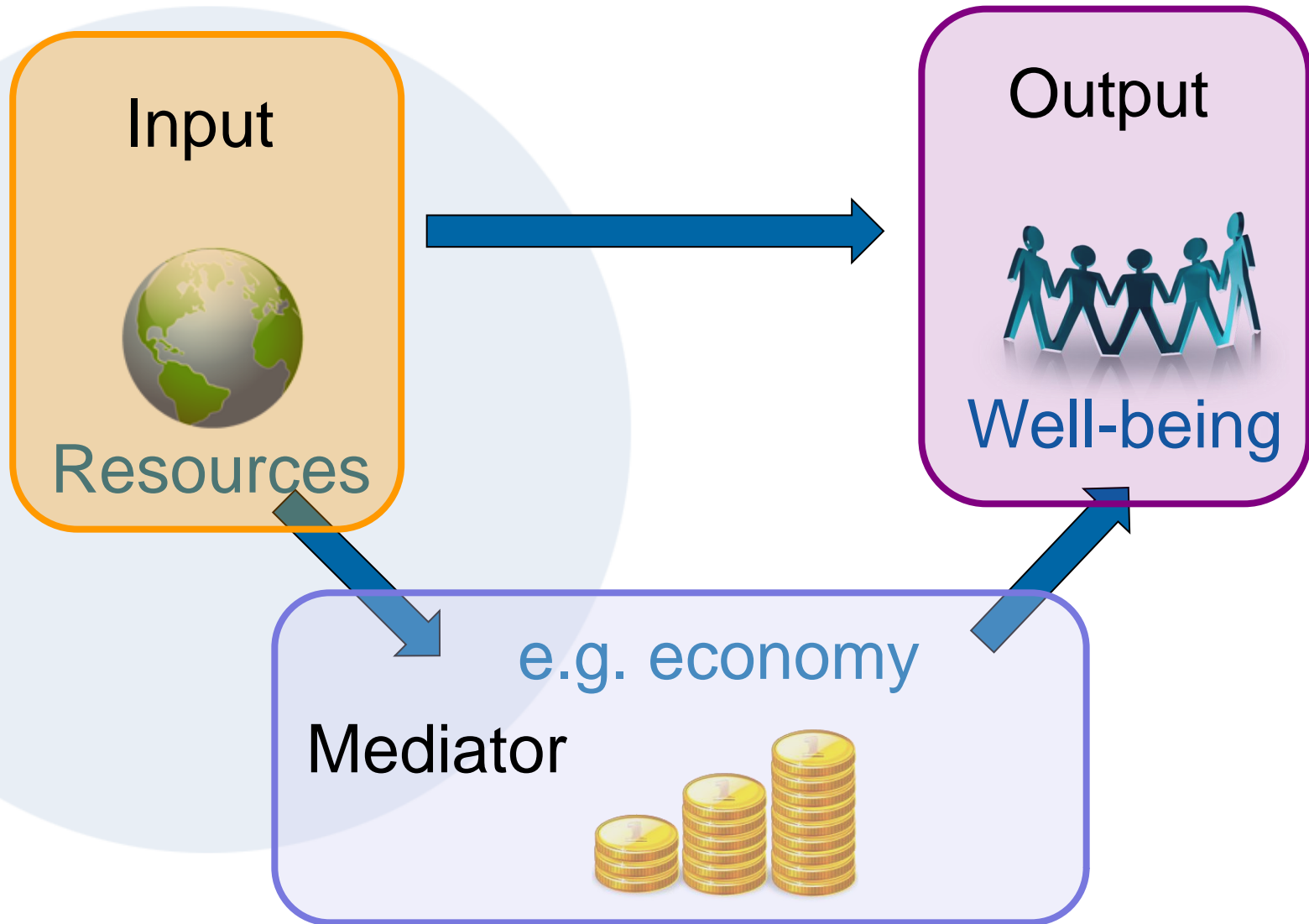
Institutionalisation: UN
System on National
Accounting (1953). Currently
1993 standard being used
most widely

2. A new framework for measurement

The standard model



Thinking differently about progress



A new framework for measuring progress

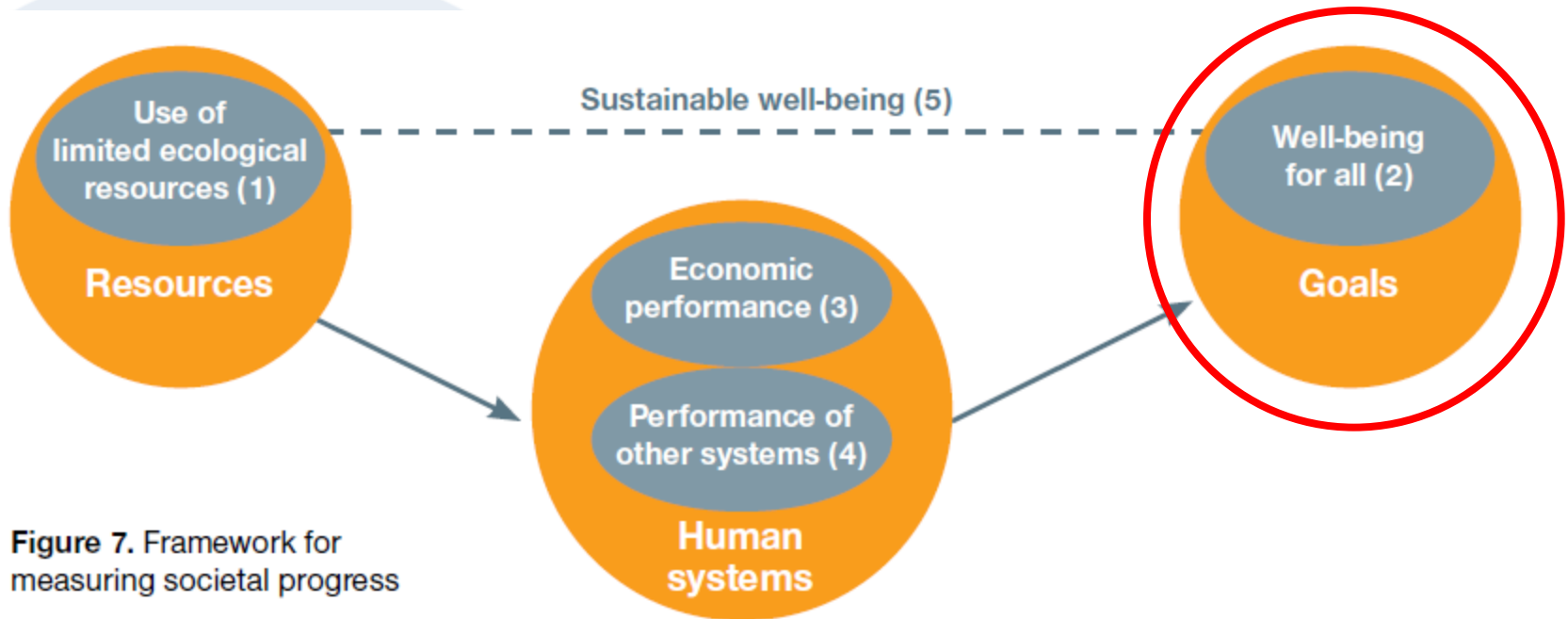
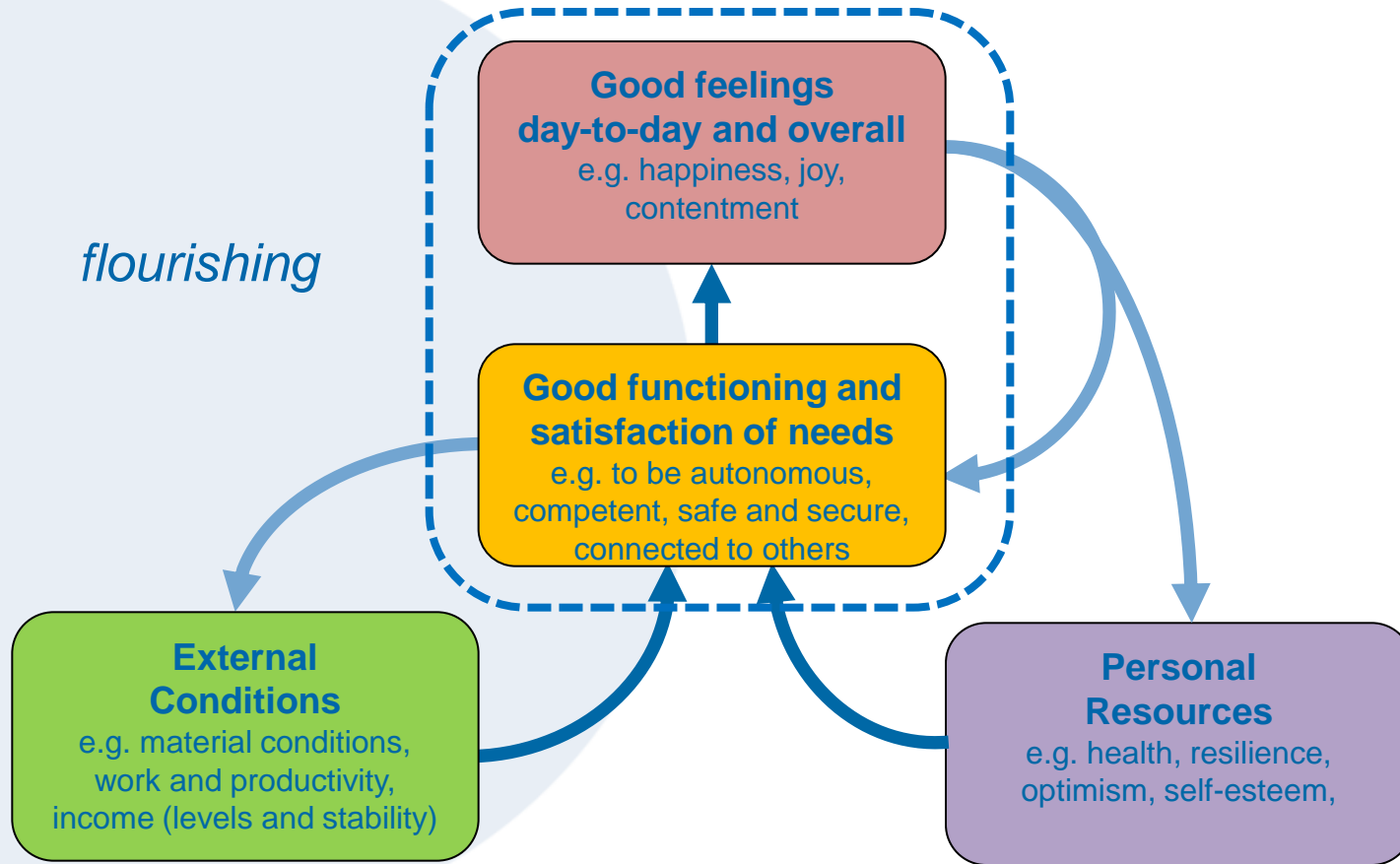


Figure 7. Framework for measuring societal progress

3. Measuring happiness and well-being

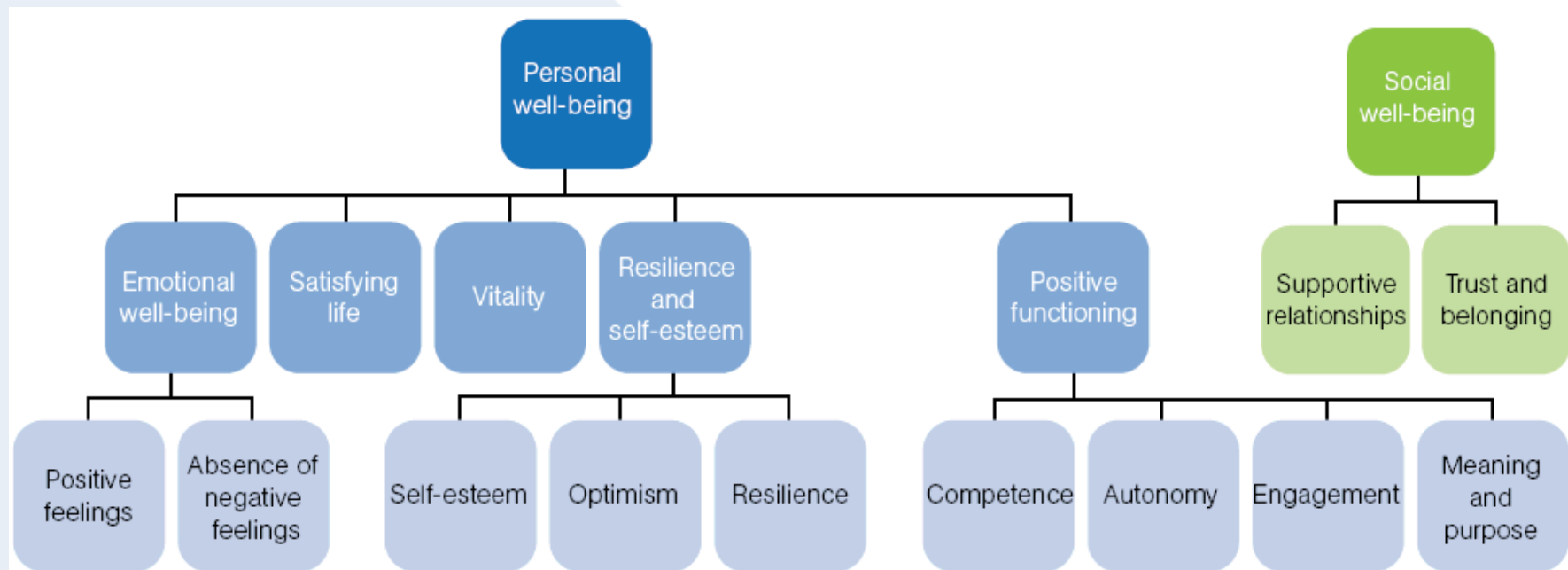
The dynamic model of well-being



The 4 ONS measures

- Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?
- Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?
- Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?
- Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?

National Accounts of Well-being prototype framework



Flourishing measures

e.g. Operational definition of flourishing

- Emotional stability
- Vitality
- Resilience
- Optimism
- Happiness
- Self-esteem
- Engagement
- Meaning
- Positive relationships
- Competence

Huppert and So (2011) Social Indicators Research

Measures of psychological well-being

Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale

- I've been feeling optimistic about the future
- I've been feeling useful
- I've been feeling relaxed
- I've been dealing with problems well
- I've been thinking clearly
- I've been feeling close to other people
- I've been able to make up my mind about things

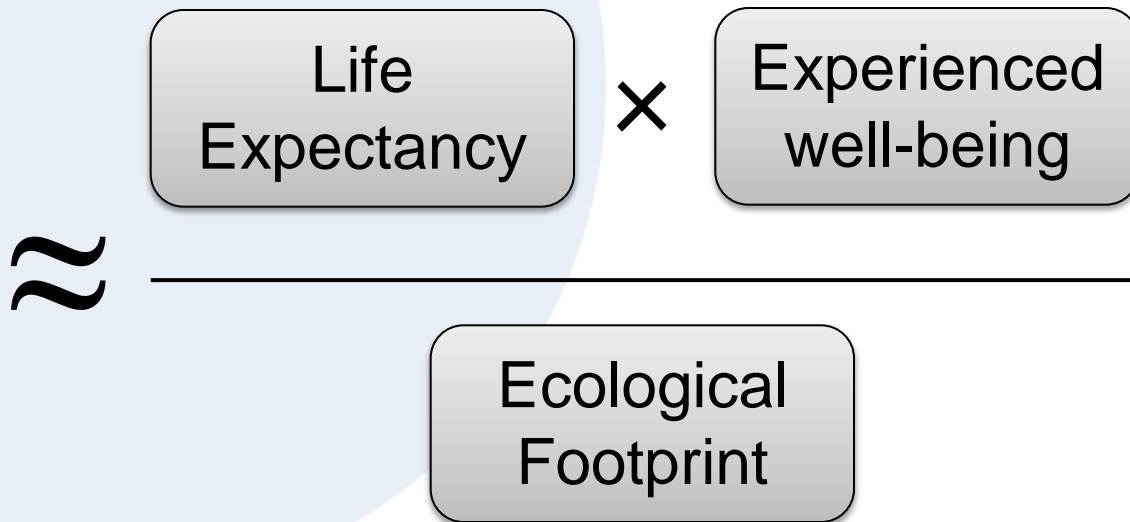
Measuring sustainable well-being



Figure 7. Framework for measuring societal progress

The Happy Planet Index

**HAPPY
PLANET
INDEX**



WHICH ECONOMY IS MORE EFFICIENT?



USA

VS



COSTA RICA

78

YEARS

LIFE
EXPECTANCY

79

YEARS

7.2

/10

AVERAGE
HAPPINESS

7.3

/10

7.2

G HA

ECOLOGICAL
FOOTPRINT
PER PERSON

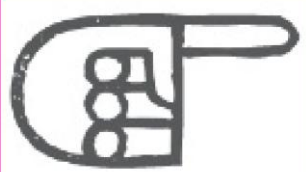
2.5

G HA

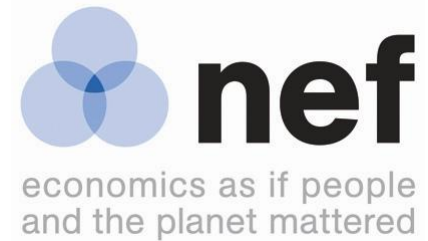
SEE HOW OTHER COUNTRIES COMPARE:

WWW.HAPPYPLANETINDEX.ORG

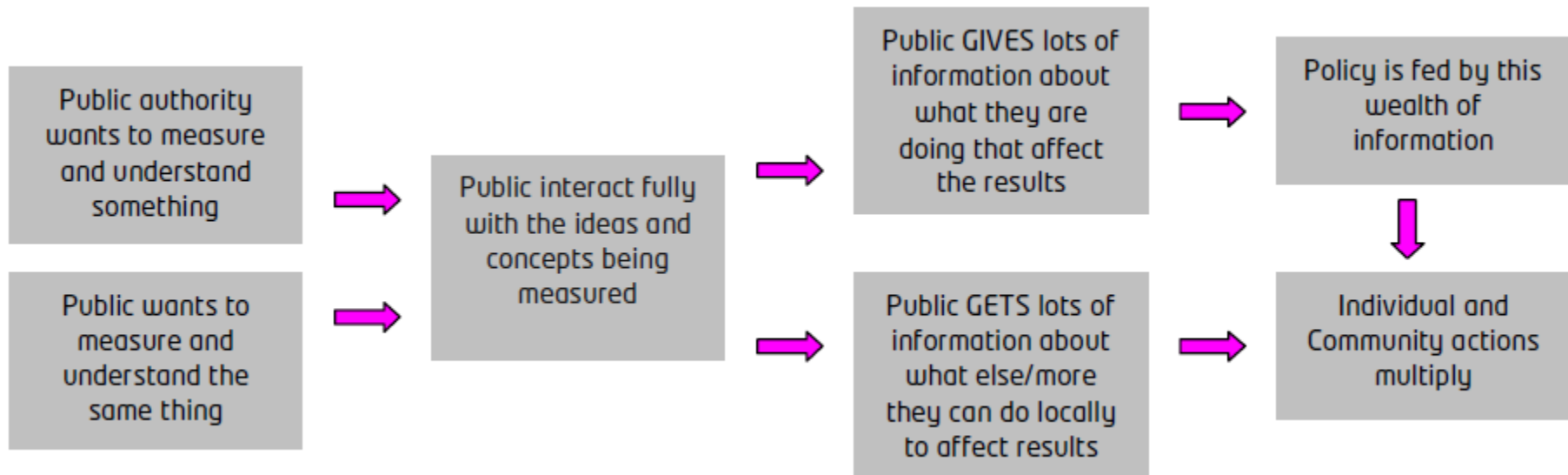
HAPPY
PLANET
INDEX



the
HAPPY CITY
initiative



economics as if people
and the planet mattered



www.happycity.org.uk

Happiness at work survey



Our
people

6.3



Our people
at work

6.1



Our
jobs

5.5



Our
relationships

7.6



Our
organisation

5.6



Social
impact

7.0

www.happinessatworksurvey.com

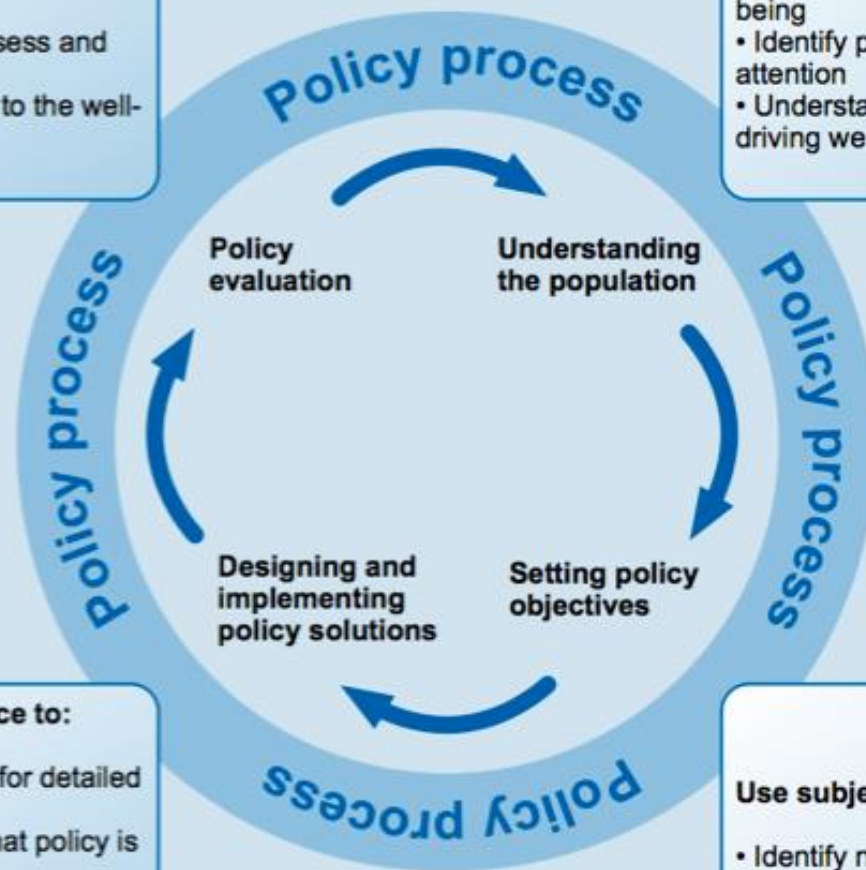
4. Using the results for policy-making

Use subjective well-being measures to:

- Estimate effects of policy outcomes on overall well-being
- Provide a common currency to assess and compare different policy impacts
- Compare the costs of intervention to the well-being outcomes

Use subjective well-being evidence to:

- Assess overall levels of and changes in well-being
- Identify population groups in need of policy attention
- Understand key policy-relevant factors driving well-being



Use subjective well-being evidence to:

- Create evidence-based principles for detailed policy design
- Pay attention to how as well as what policy is delivered
- Provide a common currency to assess and compare different policy impacts
- Compare the costs of intervention to the well-being outcomes

Use subjective well-being evidence to:

- Identify new priorities
- Make trade-offs between existing priorities

Areas for policy focus

- Reconsidering existing priorities for external conditions of people's lives
e.g. unemployment, income, air pollution
- Policies which impact on time use and activities
e.g. time balance, volunteering, sleep quality, commuting/transport
- Policies which aim to build personal resources
e.g. early years education, resilience training
- Attention to the *way* services are delivered
e.g. co-production, the Five Ways to Well-being

Five ways to well-being

Commissioned by the Foresight Project – the brief was to “build on the findings of the outputs of the Mental Capacity and Wellbeing Project, and develop an evidence-based wellbeing equivalent of the health promotion dictum “five fruit and vegetables a day”.



Five ways
to wellbeing

Connect...

Connect with the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

Five ways
to wellbeing

Be active...

Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

Five ways
to wellbeing

Take notice...

Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

Five ways
to wellbeing

Keep learning...

Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.

Five ways to wellbeing

Give...

Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

Liverpool Year of Health and Well-being

2010 Year of Health and Wellbeing - About Year of Health & Wellbeing - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by NEF

http://www.2010healthandwellbeing.org.uk/index.php?page=about

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...// About Year of Health & Wellbeing

About 2010

2010 is the Year of Health and Wellbeing in the Liverpool City Region and is a great opportunity for everyone to join together and make positive changes to their health and the way they feel about themselves.

Building small actions into your daily life can make you feel good, and feeling good is an important part of being healthy.

There are five ways to wellbeing that are proven to make a real difference to your life so throughout 2010 we will be asking you to build these into your daily routine.



Connect... with the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.



Be active...
Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.



Take notice...
Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you

Pledge your Support

What would you Pledge to do?

If you are keen to pledge to take action to improve your health and wellbeing then we want to hear from you. It can be something small, the important thing is that it makes you feel good!

You can either make a personal pledge or a joint pledge with friends, your workplace, your school or community group....

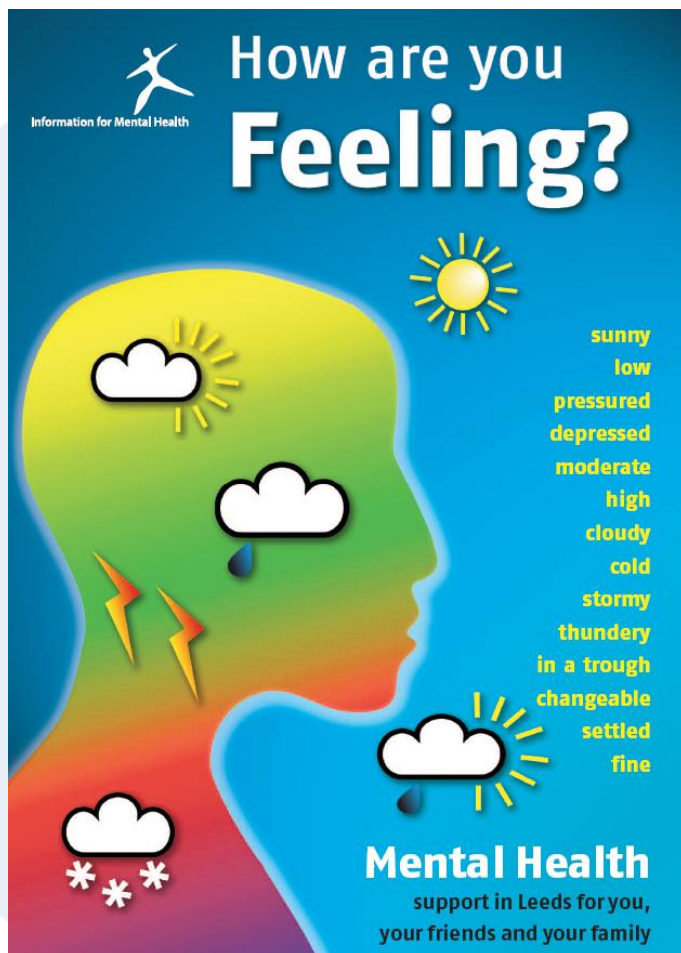
[Find out more](#)

The Year of Health & Wellbeing

- 2010 Events Calendar
- Media Centre

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Mind Leeds



Help is also available for particular groups of people, including:

- Black people, and people from other minority ethnic communities
- disabled people
- lesbians, gay men and bisexuals
- women and men
- young people and older people
- people who are caring for others

You may also be able to do some things in your life which help keep you mentally healthy

Five ways to wellbeing

Connect ... with the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community.

Be Active ... Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance.

Take Notice ... Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons.

Keep learning ... Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course.

Give ... Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in.

For the full version of "five a day" go to http://neweconomics.org/gen/well-being_fiveways.aspx

LEEDS MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORY

Information for Mental Health

UEA Well-being week

Wellbeing Week - University of East Anglia (UEA) - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by NEF

http://www.uea.ac.uk/services/students/wellbeingweek

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★ Favorites ★ Free Hotmail Web Slice Gallery Suggested Sites Customize Links Windows Windows Marketplace Windows Media

http://www.dius.gov.uk/ass... 2010 Year of Health and Well... Wellbeing Week - Univers... X

Page Safety Tools

Childcare and Family Life
Health and Wellbeing
Fairtrade
Student Services Available Abroad
Travel and Expeditions
Healthy and Sustainable UEA
Feedback

Beckie Davies
Mental Health Co-ordinator
Dean of Students' Office

5 ways to wellbeing

with kind permission of www.foresight.gov.uk

Connect... **Take Notice...** **Be active...** **Keep Learning...** **Give...**

MONDAY

Happy and Successful - Learn to be Your Own Life Coach
Simple Changes to make you happier and more successful. Workshop with Luke Jeffries.
Library Conference Room 10.30-12.15
(click [here](#) to book)

Fast Track to Calm and Confidence
Learn quick and easy skills to ensure that you feel able to tackle challenges such as exams and interviews
Library Conference Room 12.30 - 14.30
(click [here](#) to book)

Climbing Wall Taster Sessions
Try your hand at scaling the wall- free session with trained instructor Paul Hartzler
Sportspark 10.00 - 16.00
(click [here](#) to book)

Live Acoustic Music
Short Unplugged Sets
Waterstones 12.30 - 14.00

Mindfulness Workshops
An introduction to meditation techniques
Dean of Students' Office Meeting Room 13.00-14.00
(click [here](#) to book)

Connect... **Take Notice...** **Be active...** **Keep Learning...** **Give...**

TUESDAY

start 2 Micr... 2 Inte... Win... 3 Micr... Micro... Micro... Desktop My Computer My Network Places EN 100% 13:53

Further reading



Thanks for listening



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[@nefwellbeing](https://twitter.com/nefwellbeing)

www.neweconomics.org
www.happyplanetindex.org