



INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR WELL BEING

GRENOBLE
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UNIVERSITY
AREA

WEALTH, HAPPINESS: What indicators to build tomorrow?

WRITTEN AND PICTURE FEEDBACK

On June 6, 7 and 8, 2018, the territory of Grenoble, France, hosted the International Forum for Well Being. During which, the eyes and experiences of the five continents met: the current document takes a look back on the lessons of this forum.

For more than 30 years, many experiments have been conducted, promoting compasses of complementary or alternatives to the economic indicators. At the international, regional, and local scales, these initiatives are shaking up the idea of infinite growth in a finite world. Their ambition is to measure and better take into account the well-being

of all, the environment, human and social development, the quality of life, the co-existing... This reflection on indicators is revealing: a fair and sustainable society suggesting a commonly built compass involving anyone concerned.

« *The indicators say and organize a representation of the world and a framework of thought. It's about collectively deciding what matters, what we want to measure, and how we organize ourselves for taking it into account.* »

Celina Whitaker, co-chair of the FAIR (Forum for other indicators of wealth), France.

« *Well-being is an absolute: everyone has a share of responsibility to achieve it. We all have this aspiration, but the conditions and the way to achieve it varies from one country to another.* »

Dasho Karma Ura, Director of the Center for Bhutan Studies, Bhutan.



« *Living well is linked to the capacity to find oneself, in a society without poverty, rich for everyone and rich with all its people.* »

Vivian Labrie, independent researcher, Québec.

The International Forum for Well Being is the fruit of a partnership work, which has been going on for several years, associating Grenoble-Alpes Métropole, the City of Grenoble, the Community of Grenoble-Alpes University, CCFD-Terre Solidaire association and the FAIR network.

The result of a shared governance, the program of this forum allowed the expression and the encounter of a diversity of international personalities, in different political spheres, universities, communities, experts, and citizens. This unprecedented alliance is one of the strong messages of the forum: it is the convergence of energies that produces the structural change of our development model.



THE MEETING BETWEEN THE WORLDS

IN NUMBERS

The particular attention paid to the diversity of forms of debate and exchange, of angles of attachment and modes of expression has been the key to the meeting between worlds that intersect little.

3 days of the forum,

130 contribution proposals received,

250 speakers and facilitators,

1 000 participants,

25 countries represented,

1 scientific symposium,

75 meetings : **5** plenary sessions, **9** scientific round tables, **52** workshops, **3** crossing times, and **6** cultural events (concerts, shows...)

But also... free exchange zones, a wall of expression, 2 debates randomly taken out of a hat...!

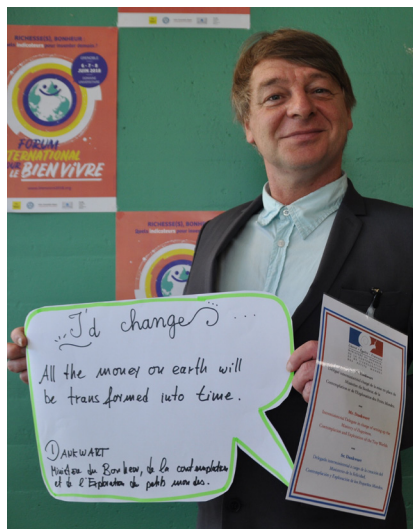
All in humor, the informal sharing times punctuated the forum: The "Minister of happiness, Contemplation, and Exploration of the little worlds" with his moments of poetry, the cartoons of Cled'12, shows, dance... so many invitations to dive into our emotions and fully experience the Well Living.*

**Fictitious character of the artist's collective "One euro does not make spring".*

The open, teeming and multi-thematic exchanges and debates, have made it possible to take «sidesteps», essential for the meeting between the public and the speakers.

Beyond geographical, institutional, political or disciplinary differences, common lines have emerged.

These convergences are the sign of a global awareness that matures and expands. Citizens, experts, decision-makers, and artists have been able to experience the complementarity of knowledge and experience, compare point of views, and experience live, moments of collective intelligence.



THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS

WELL LIVING: AN ALTERNATIVE OR A CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

Can we grow without growth? The convergence of testimonies coming from around the world around the concept of well living is powerful: from Bolivia or Bhutan, South Africa or Canada, people living in a small village or a big city... all aspire to an alternative to development based on growth, and whose social and environmental damage is palpable. But the committed actors have gone beyond the diagnosis: concrete alternatives have already been implemented. They shift our gaze and make us think outside the box.

An interdependency between humankind and nature

The opening of the forum, the reflection of Pablo Solón, Bolivian politician, on the Well Living, is binding yet questioning.

Well Living is a holistic vision, which considers human, nature and cosmos as part of a whole.

Well Living is about balancing the components of this interdependent system.

And in the face of great environmental imbalances, José Alberto Mujica, Uruguay's former head of state, questions our responsibility towards the future of the earth, humanity and the sensitive world around us.

A new tempo

The western vision of «doing more and better» refers to the idea of infinite progress, in which time is linear.

On the contrary, Well Living requires the search for balance in the movement.

Time is spiral: it suggests that everyone should accept cycles of advances and setbacks, which are never backtracking.

« *Our fundamental role is not to grow infinitely, but to find a balance in this whole.* » (Pablo Solón).

And to get out of the race ahead of Western time, one of the keys is to know how to stop, to appreciate « *the art of living at the right time and the art of the full presence* » (Patrick Viueret, philosopher, France).

The relations as wealth

The relations – between one another, the world, and oneself – are a central dimension of Well Living, a source of wealth in its own right.

ANCESTRAL KNOWLEDGES, A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION...

« In Timor-Leste, protecting the environment for future generations is enshrined in the constitution.

To build a society based more on Well Living, we were inspired by the Tara Bandu method.

This customary law is a traditional instrument used by our ancestors. It aims to help people, to respect nature, the environment, and animals.

We seek to promote this social code and enrich it with more modern regulations so that people live in harmony and peace. »



Jenito Santana, educator and activist of the KSI NG, Timor-Leste

« *To live well is to build a society in which every person has a place, is connected to others and is recognized by them as someone who has value, who has something to bring and [something] to receive from other.* » (Elena Lasida, economist, France).

This fundamental attention to what binds us draws a clear line of action for Freddy Ehlers (Ecuadorian politician) and Raffi Duymedjian (Thinker in Chaire paix économique, mindfulness, et bien-etre au travail): Peace becomes the prime objective.

Peace with nature, peace within the community and peace with oneself.

WELL LIVING: A COLLECTIVE NARRATIVE TO BE BUILT TOGETHER

Well Living is a universal course. To make it a common course, it is important to define it. Who is eligible to do so? The forum confirmed the importance of citizen expertise, articulated with scientific and political expertise to answer this demand.

At the crossroads of scientific and citizen expertise

The ability to define and measure has long been reserved only for scientific experts. This exclusivity has prevented contradictory debate and, with it, the enrichment and appropriation of ideas.

« *The acceptance of transversality of knowledge*

is on the way, as well as the co-responsibility for Well Living. (...) We must develop even more participative research around the data coming from academic expertise, and places of transition to communicate, listen, and debate. »

(Claudine Offredi, researcher, France).

One point of the debate remains: what should be the actual place of citizens in

the process of constructing an indicator? Should they be consulted from the initial stages to co-construct the targets and criteria guiding the measure, or should they be associated in the technical construction of the indicators as well? This last option would allow them to be vigilant on all the micro-technical choices that can mask pre-supposed policies.

One thing is certain: the «black box» of indicators – which magically gives the instructions that should be followed – can no longer exist.

Sharing the power of thinking and acting: a condition of Well Living

« *Any profound change will come from civil society, on a global scale.* » (Sylvie Bukhari-de Pontual, President of CCFD-Terre Solidaire, France).



Between two conferences, the minister of happiness suggests solution for measuring collective happiness. What was the result by the end of the third day? The people are less happy because the forum was ending!

The collective production of indicators is only a pointer – but a powerful pointer – of power-sharing (of thinking and acting).

« Citizens are invited to take part in debates on topics which concerns them. The goal is not to separate those who will produce the numbers from those who are going to use them. » (Florence Jany-Catrice, economist, France).

With the poorest and the marginalized

« We must pay attention to those who are marginalized from our collective standards. » (Vivian Labrie, researcher, Quebec-Canada).

Faced with growing inequalities, Quebec society has defined, with the

poorest, a social minimum to cover the basic needs of everyone. Income is only one dimension of this social minimum, which also integrates public or private solidarity, the networks and communities, as well as all the non-monetary wealth.

« To fight against extreme poverty, first we must meet those who live it and walk along with them. » (Xavier Godinot, ATD Fourth World, France).

An arrangement between « I » and « we »

« We often have the idea that individual well-being is opposite to collective well-being.

The small revolution to be made is to say that individual well-being and collective well-being

go together and are complementary. » (Elena Lasida, économiste, France).

This calls for a change of representations.

« If we think that the problem comes from others, we are in a condemnation strategy: the others are wrong, and we hold the truth. » (Jacques Lecomte, Psychologist, France).

Referring to Nelson Mandela, Jacques Lecomte calls for « making one's opponents his allies ».

This demanding plea, which encourages people to come out of «between themselves», is the condition of the change of scale.



« Well-being is the three harmonies that must exist between nature, community, and with oneself. »



Freddy Elhers,
Journalist and Ecuadorian politician.

« Everyone is already acting, on his or her own scale, in favor of Well Living. »

INDICATOR FACTORY: TOWARDS A COMMON FRAME OF REFERENCE

Many alternative indicators have emerged around the world. Why such diversity? Some indicators have meaning on a large scale, such as the human development index, but no longer have any relevance at the level of the smallest administrative unit or a district. Another example: the indicator of the «success of fishing a landlocked Atlantic salmon» is very telling for the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region of Quebec, but much less so for other territories!

Local indicators are essential because they relate to the realities of a territory. They allow everyone to feel concerned and to be able to take action in their daily lives. However, a common set of criteria is essential to create «socio-political agreements» and to act on a large scale; the one at which social and environmental crises occur.

The forum strongly pointed to the need to establish a common repository on a global scale. Thus, the territories could rely on such a repository to build their approach, and adjust it to their peculiarities, while remaining on the wavelength of the global challenges.

Well Living, a universal concept with local colors

And precisely, the forum has helped to reinforce or reveal « universal dimensions » of the Well Living.

Under different names, common criteria can be found in many international experiences: conviviality, social bond, solidarity, connection with nature, governance, relationship to time, psychological well-being, self-affirmation, culture, access to fundamental rights, health, education ... Each of them has a degree of importance that varies depending on the cultural or local specificities.

These consensual dimensions can form the basis of a shared frame of reference. One of the challenges is to keep a global, holistic approach. In concrete terms, the idea is to measure the impact of a given action

on each of the essential dimensions for Well Living.

Sustainability thresholds

Indicators such as sustainable and territorialized well-being (IBEST) in Grenoble or Gross National Happiness (GNH) in Bhutan have defined a

threshold of sustainability.

In Bhutan, it invites everyone to ask themselves the question of « How much is enough? » rather than « How to have more? ».

The threshold of sustainability aims to collectively define what is fair in terms of living well and what allows each



and every one to live with dignity. It sets objectives to be achieved for a territory, according to its particularities, on previously defined themes.

For example, regarding health, the goal set by the IBEST is that 100% of people in poor health are medically monitored. This technique brings a change of concept; that of overcoming comparability with «the neighbor» through scores, and focusing on achieving a sustainable situation for all. It consists of surpassing the temptation to «live well at home ... at the expense of others» and to, the contrary, think in terms of interdependence between territories.

Taking into account economic, social and environmental flows and externalities from one territory to another is therefore essential

The numbers have an ethic...

Researchers, and in particular economists present at the forum, argued for an ethic in numbers. What is its safeguard? Co-construction with organized civil society. The presence of collectives, intermediate bodies, alongside politicians and scientists, provide the conditions for power sharing.



THE RIGHTS, A TOOL AT THE SERVICE OF WELL LIVING

Making the indicators operational and giving them the force of law is the ambition of the bearers of new models of society. The establishment of a legal framework is one of the stages of this rise in the indicators. This is a major yet insufficient step, and for good reason, France, with the Eva Sas law, requires the government to publish a report on new indicators each year and assess past and future reforms to their ell! But Eva Sas, a former member of the Essonne, notes the restraints, «resistance» to take into account these indicators in the development of public policies. Bhutan, Bolivia, and Ecuador have gone further: they have incorporated the concept of Well Living into their Constitution, and have complimented it with legal tools. In Bhutan, the GNH National Commission examines the various draft laws before their adaptation, and the 8 dimensions of GNH are inscribed on the pediment of the schools.

Plenary "From Growth to Good Living: How to bring about a change of course?" with (from left to right):

Dasho Karma Ura, Director of the Center for Bhutan Studies (Bhutan), **Jésus Sanz**, State Counselor (Ecuador), **Philippe Frémeaux**, Editorialist at Alternatives Economiques and President of the Veblen Institute

THE FORUM... AND THEN?

« These three days have written the positive story of the transformation of today's world. »

(Jean-François Caron, Mayor of Loos-en-Gohelle, France).

To write a common story is already a big step forward: it is to make understandable and shareable a future, oriented towards this model of development, more just for humans and nature.

To do in common, it supposes to continue the delicate exercise of the « co »: co-construct, collaborate, reconcile, correspond... The debates of the forum demonstrated the importance of the crossing of the knowledge, on all the scales.

« The big challenge is to adopt a posture that combines creative resistance and anticipatory experimentation, driven by a positive and transformative vision. The goal is to go as

far as possible in what is proposed as a form of social organization, consistent with Well Living. » (Patrick Viveret, Philosopher and member of the «Happy days» movement, France).

Other courses remain to be crossed. In particular to define «who» is eligible to carry and frame this approach at the global level. This question calls on the big institutions such as the OECD, or the European Commission... One thing is certain, the alliance between citizens, researchers and actors in the public sector is fruitful and powerful. It is a necessary condition for a change of scale.



Closing plenary of the forum.

« The discussions and debates during this forum confirm the importance of strengthening the power of civil society, local processes that are citizen-based and central and inclusive. But also, the need to experiment, take risks and make decisions, before others make them for us. »

Asier Ansorena (at the right), member of Banco Palmas Institute, Brazil

This Forum has given everyone the material to continue on its journey: in Grenoble, the collegial dynamics of territory on the subject continues.

Find the works from the Forum on:
www.bienvivre2018.org



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