



From a shared vision to inclusive implementation: Innovative approaches to developing government frameworks on wellbeing

Themes from joint Carnegie UK Trust and OECD roundtable event

18 May 2017, OECD Conference Centre, Paris

Introduction

The Carnegie UK Trust and OECD share the aim of improving wellbeing through better governance. On a global scale, the OECD has been at the forefront of the development of wellbeing frameworks to measure social progress through its Better Life index and How's Life in Your Region?, as well as working with officials at the centre of governments to support the development and implementation of strategic visions to deliver positive wellbeing outcomes for citizens.

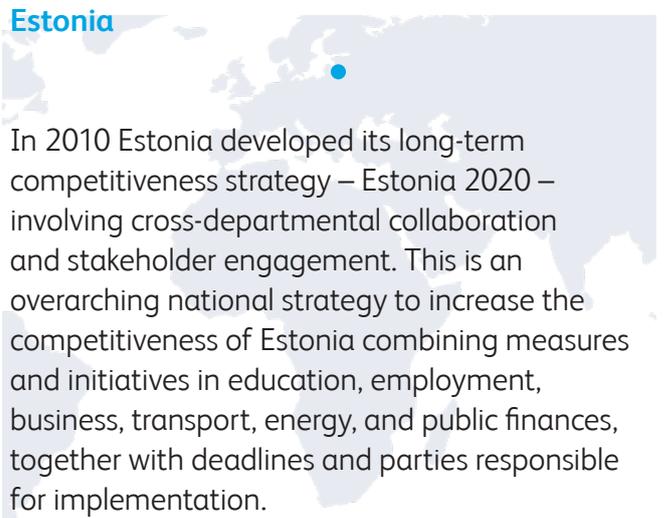
The Carnegie UK Trust has actively supported jurisdictions to develop wellbeing frameworks to guide their policymaking. In Scotland, the Trust has worked with Scottish Government on the ongoing evolution of the National Performance Framework, and in Northern Ireland established and chaired a Roundtable on Wellbeing in Northern Ireland to discuss wellbeing in the region and its links to policy, which was recognised by the Executive in its 2016 draft Programme for Government.

On 18 May 2017, the Carnegie UK Trust and OECD convened a roundtable with attendees interested in understanding and measuring wellbeing from governments at national and sub-national levels, and independent agencies. The purpose of the event was to share learning and experiences through discussing the successes and challenges of developing strategies that go beyond economic targets to embrace a wellbeing perspective on progress, and translating this into policy action.

This paper includes details on different approaches to wellbeing from around the world, and sets out some key themes that emerged from discussions that are important for furthering a wellbeing agenda.

Strategic approaches to wellbeing from around the world

Estonia



In 2010 Estonia developed its long-term competitiveness strategy – Estonia 2020 – involving cross-departmental collaboration and stakeholder engagement. This is an overarching national strategy to increase the competitiveness of Estonia combining measures and initiatives in education, employment, business, transport, energy, and public finances, together with deadlines and parties responsible for implementation.

Finland



Finland has developed a Strategic Government Programme. A tradition of coalition governments meant political agendas had become detailed and operational, focused on short-term deliverables as opposed to long-term outcomes for society. The Government has designed its programme in a more focused way based on five priority areas, and defining a longer-term 10-year vision that looks beyond the immediate government term.

Ireland



Ireland has been considering a wellbeing approach as a guide to public policy for some time, acknowledging that looking beyond GDP is important for measuring social progress. The Central Statistics Office is currently developing a set of wellbeing indicators for Ireland.

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland's outcomes based draft Programme for Government emerged from a realisation that Northern Ireland's government programmes were often disjointed, and were not improving outcomes for significant sections of society. The current difficulties forming a new Executive mean that the Programme for Government remains in draft, however there remains a strong political consensus in favour of the approach.

Somerville, USA

Somerville's 20-year comprehensive plan – SomerVision – is the City's blueprint for increasing societal wellbeing. The plan was driven by the community, and establishes goals related to mobility, small business promotion, the arts and creative economy, open space, environmental sustainability, and affordable housing. The city has a Happiness Survey that regularly measures citizen wellbeing and satisfaction with services to guide strategic planning and prioritisation.

Scotland

Since 2007, Scotland's National Performance Framework has set out a vision for Scotland, and a dashboard of indicators comprising economic, social and environmental targets to measure progress towards this. The Scottish Government takes an outcomes based approach to delivering the vision and increasing citizen wellbeing.

South Denmark

The Region of Southern Denmark has a vision of the good life, forming the basis of a growth and development strategy. This vision has taken the region on a journey from theoretical ideas to measurement, and to delivery of knowledge and intelligence that is used for policy implementation.

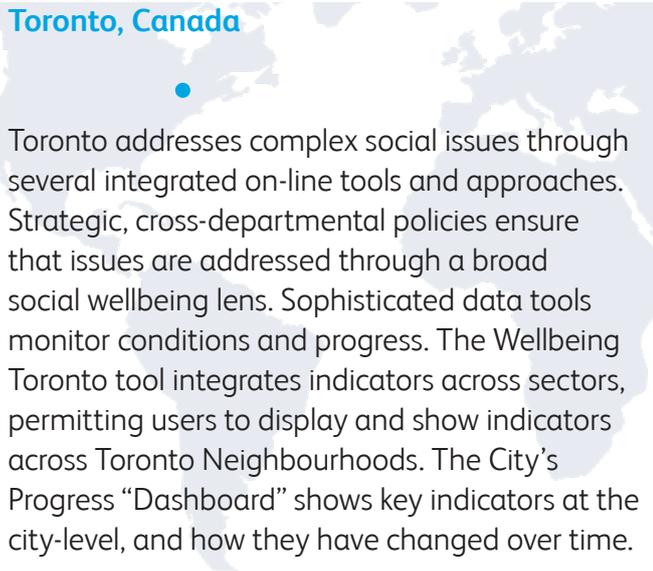
Slovakia

Slovakia is developing an integrated approach to societal wellbeing. Using the Agenda 2030 framework, the process for developing the National Infrastructure Plan is involving setting out a clear vision, integrating of all relevant stakeholders, and undertaking robust public consultation.

Sweden

Sweden is focusing on the implementation of Agenda 2030 – the Sustainable Development Goals. This is involving the modernisation of the Swedish model with a whole of government approach that joins up governance and policy implementation, and building broad and innovative partnerships with civil society.

Toronto, Canada



Toronto addresses complex social issues through several integrated on-line tools and approaches. Strategic, cross-departmental policies ensure that issues are addressed through a broad social wellbeing lens. Sophisticated data tools monitor conditions and progress. The Wellbeing Toronto tool integrates indicators across sectors, permitting users to display and show indicators across Toronto Neighbourhoods. The City's Progress "Dashboard" shows key indicators at the city-level, and how they have changed over time.

Wales



Sustainable development is integral to the Welsh national identity and devolution journey. The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 places a legal duty on public bodies to improve 'the way we achieve economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being.'

United Kingdom



The UK Office of National Statistics works to build up a holistic picture of life across the UK. ONS measures national wellbeing across the UK against a set of headline indicators including health, natural environment, personal finances and crime. ONS also captures personal (subjective) wellbeing, reporting comparatively across England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. While Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales have their own approaches to measuring wellbeing, ONS is the only body that measures wellbeing in England. The What Works Centre for Wellbeing, ONS and Public Health England have developed a set of adult Local Wellbeing Indicators, which will soon be available via a national platform.

Key themes

The key themes that emerged from the discussions as being important for furthering a wellbeing agenda were:

1. A long-term vision

Many participants observed that under past administrations, government programmes had been incoherent and focused on inputs and delivery of specific project-level targets. Having a vision for society with a focus on wellbeing (implicit or otherwise) was identified as important for locating progress made on achieving outcomes that contributed towards the vision.

An impetus for moving to an outcomes based Programme for Government in **Northern Ireland** was a recognition that while successive governments were delivering on their mandates for that electoral term, outcomes for citizens were not improving. Past Programmes for Government had been reduced to ‘laundry lists’ of project-level targets, requiring government to deliver certain programmes, or spend particular amounts of money. The new model is designed to deliver improved outcomes for all citizens, and sets out a vision with wellbeing at the heart that extends beyond any single Executive or Assembly mandate.

In **Finland**, like Northern Ireland, government programmes had become detailed and operational. The Government has for the first time set out a vision that reflects the basic values of Finnish society, and set targets and objectives for 10 years – notably, much longer than the period of the electoral cycle. Twice a month, the Committee for the Future, made up of 17 Cabinet ministers and the Prime Minister, meets to discuss progress towards the Government’s long-term strategic vision. The leadership of the Prime Minister has been instrumental in making these strategy sessions a priority.

A strict division of activities along ministerial lines in **Slovakia** was felt to have inhibited the development and use of a long-term strategic vision. Slovakia is beginning to look at how Agenda 2030 could be used as a tool for creating a national vision, and mobilising activity towards that vision.

2. Strong leadership and management

A number of participants spoke about the importance of having the right people in positions of leadership and management to drive forward a focus on shared outcomes and societal wellbeing. Others spoke about the lack of leadership making progress more difficult.

In **Scotland**, particular effort is made to recruit open and collaborative leaders into the civil service who can see beyond their immediate area of responsibility, and situate themselves and their work against a wider set of outcomes for all of society as set out in the National Performance Framework.

Scottish civil servants in leadership positions have a responsibility to their staff to highlight the linkages between the work they do, and improved wellbeing outcomes for citizens. Leaders have two dials – ‘challenge or cherish’ – and can focus in on one or the other depending on the environment in the team or organisation they are leading.

A lack of leadership or ownership can make progress towards a wellbeing agenda more difficult. In the **UK**, there is no clear ownership of the wellbeing agenda from central government. Similarly in **Somerville**, while there is strong local leadership from the Mayor, there is no leadership at the state or federal level, meaning Somerville’s efforts to measure wellbeing can feel disconnected from other developments.

3 An identifiable organisational culture around wellbeing outcomes

Participants spoke about the critical importance of building a strong organisational culture around holistic wellbeing and positive outcomes for citizens.

In **Scotland**, the outcomes based approach has developed over the last decade with the introduction of the National Performance Framework. A culture has developed around the ‘Scottish Approach’ to policy making, which is grounded in the National Performance Framework and the outcomes for Scotland, and values of partnership working and co-production. The Scottish Government is aware that, with new generations of civil servants, there is a need to continue to invest in and grow the culture of the organisation.

One of the key challenges **Northern Ireland** is cognisant of is that to really make their new way of working a success, significant culture change will be required. This includes within government (for civil servants and departments), and the relationship with key partners (including local government and civil society), who under an outcomes-based model will have a greater role in supporting the delivery of key outcomes.

4 Breaking down silos

All participants spoke about the challenge and importance of breaking down silos to tackle cross-sectional issues and improve wellbeing outcomes. Participants recounted experiences of siloed behaviours across government departments, across different levels of government, across sectors, and across issues.

Data and measurement is an important part of outcomes-based government, allowing progress towards outcomes to be monitored. Participants discussed the silos that can exist between analytical and policy staff within one organisation, and the importance of breaking these down so the two understand each other and speak the same language.

In **Scotland**, the decision was taken in 2007 to remove departmental structures in an effort to break down cross-departmental silos. The impetus behind this move was that the removal of these artificial divisions would help create a culture where it was everybody’s responsibility to deliver on outcomes for Scotland. While departmental structures have been removed, ‘non-joined up’ behaviour still does exist, and a challenge for the Scottish Government is to keep pushing against this by focusing on the shared outcomes for Scotland.

4 Engaging beyond government

Many participants spoke about the importance of engaging beyond government, with citizens, civil society, business and local government, about the vision and shared outcomes for society.

The **Northern Ireland** Executive was conscious that moving to a vision of societal wellbeing and improved outcomes for citizens would require involvement from actors outside of government. Previous Programmes for Government had attracted very little response when open for consultation. However, the new outcomes based draft Programme for Government attracted five times more responses when it was released for consultation in 2016.

Toronto’s Strong Neighbourhood Strategy emerged following a spate of gun violence in the city in 2005 – ‘the year of the gun.’ Subsequent planning resulted in this place-based approach to social wellbeing as a priority for the City of Toronto, which includes targeted investments in some of Toronto’s neighbourhoods along with key government-community partnerships. The City’s Strong Neighbourhood Strategy has now entered its second phase with monitoring and intended reporting in 2020, along with related strategies for seniors, racism, and poverty reduction.

Scotland is challenged on how to get real opinions from people in communities. A number of initiatives are underway to encourage greater

conversation and debate between the people of Scotland and decision makers. These include travelling Cabinet meetings, where Cabinet meets in different towns and cities across Scotland, followed by a live-streamed public meeting; and Experience Panels involving people who have directly encountered the benefits system to have a role in shaping Scotland's new social security powers.

5 Innovative governance arrangements

Participants were interested in different models of innovative governance for progressing a wellbeing agenda. While no two countries were the same, Wales offers a particularly innovative example.

Wales has taken the innovative step to enshrine wellbeing and sustainable development in legislation. The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 places a legal duty on all public bodies to carry out sustainable development, and improve and achieve economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing. The Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales was created to 'disrupt business as usual' by promoting the principles of the Act, and to support public bodies as the legislation is implemented. The Commissioner also has responsibilities for ongoing monitoring of implementation of the Act, alongside the Auditor General for Wales.

6 Data access and collection

Measuring progress towards wellbeing outcomes is an important part of a wellbeing agenda. Participants spoke about the opportunities provided by data; but also the challenges of selecting indicators, accessing and collecting the right data, and the need to invest in workforce skills and capabilities to use and analyse wellbeing data

Toronto's approach to monitoring citizen wellbeing is grounded in the [Wellbeing Toronto "Integrated Analytics" Tool](#). The tool provides data about Toronto at a neighbourhood level

across ten domains of wellbeing, with underlying indicators. The tool is open and accessible, allowing citizens and civil society to engage with progress towards the outcomes for the city, match progress against the location of services within neighbourhoods, and define what the outcomes might be. It is also designed to increase transparency of decision making by the City of Toronto. As of October 2017, approved major funding will now be targeting towards a major update of Wellbeing Toronto scheduled for launch in late 2018/early 2019, with a new look and new features.

[The Progress "Dashboard"](#) on the other hand, monitors overall city performance across several key performance indicators through an interactive online tool. Data are automatically fed to update this public online tool.

Participants spoke about the importance of looking 'beyond GDP' to measure and understand citizen wellbeing. The Central Statistics Office in **Ireland** is working to develop a set of wellbeing indicators for Ireland by the end of 2017. The proposed wellbeing data release will be biennial and will include 8-10 domains of wellbeing, consisting of approximately 8-10 relevant sub-indicators. These indicators will include governance and basic rights, health, education, employment, relationships and surroundings, psychological wellbeing, public safety, housing conditions, natural resources and environment, and economic indicators.

Attendees from **Somerville** and the **UK** spoke about the difficulties of accessing data at the right level to build up a picture of wellbeing at a local level. Using national data sets, it is difficult to disaggregate data at a regional or city level.

Participants discussed the specific skills and capabilities required to deliver on wellbeing strategies to improve citizen outcomes, particularly technical skills related to data and evidence analysis. **Wales'** Well-being of Future

Generations legislation introduces five compulsory ways of working, one of which is planning for the long-term, which requires sophisticated data analysis to understand future trends. In the first year of implementation, it is becoming evident that.

7 Moving beyond measurement to concrete policy decisions

Participants were challenged to illustrate where a focus on outcomes and wellbeing had moved beyond measurement, to concrete policy decisions. Participants shared that one of the biggest challenges is to demonstrate how a focus on outcomes and wellbeing has a real impact on policymaking. While there was a sense that ‘believers’ were confident about the relationship between an outcomes-focus, policy decisions and positive outcomes for citizens, demonstrating this to ‘non-believers’ was more difficult.

Representatives from **Southern Denmark** shared their three-step journey to implement the vision of ‘A Good Life’ in the region.

- 1) Setting the agenda: selecting indicators and measuring wellbeing to get an understanding of the region’s baseline.
- 2) Conceptualising quality of life: involving a range of stakeholders to develop a holistic understanding of what quality of life means for people.
- 3) Policy action: the hardest step of the three. The region is beginning to factor in to policy development that the vision for ‘A Good Life’ may not result from more traditional policy decisions (prioritising cost and efficiency).

8 Relationship with international policy direction

Discussions focused on the intersection between national and sub-national wellbeing agendas, and the Sustainable Development Goals in particular. A number of countries framed their contributions in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. The OECD is developing guidance on how governments should get organised to implement the SDGs.

Sweden’s wellbeing agenda is focused on the implementation of Agenda 2030. The OECD has recently completed gap analysis to determine Sweden’s starting point for delivering on Agenda 2030, and its implications for societal challenges and wellbeing. While Sweden is in a strong starting position, particular challenges do appear around income inequality, gender equality, access to quality education and health care, and green and inclusive growth. Sweden plans to work towards Agenda 2030 in an integrated way, mobilising across government, and building broad and innovate partnerships with non-governmental actors.

9 Not letting politics get in the way

Participants discussed the impact of significant political changes (for example, Brexit and questions around Scottish independence) on outcomes approaches and wellbeing, and how they managed relationships with politicians. The key message was to not allow politics to detract from the end goal of focusing on positive wellbeing outcomes for citizens

Where next?

Participants expressed a desire to build on discussions and connections from Paris by beginning a network of like-minded actors, designed to share learning and good practice, and build the evidence base of what works and why. However, participants were also conscious of the risk of duplicating other existing global networks and alliances with similar functions.

Given this, the Carnegie UK Trust will:

- Develop links with the global Wellbeing Alliance, announced by the First Minister of Scotland at the Scottish Government Inclusive Growth Conference on Friday 20 October 2017. The Wellbeing Alliance is a partnership between seven different regions and countries that seeks to look beyond GDP to measure progress and develop a sustainable economic model focused on wellbeing, with explicit links to the Sustainable Development Goals. Members of the Wellbeing Alliance include Scotland, Slovenia and Sweden.
- Explore the potential for a multi-year project to support wellbeing outcomes at a local level in one jurisdiction of the UK, drawing on themes raised during discussions in Paris.

