

Beyond GDP: The Ongoing Search to Measure “Wellbeing”



- OLLI Fall Term 2022
- Wednesdays, 1-3pm
- Sept. 14 thru Nov. 2
- Co-facilitators:

David Carlson,
EEE Forum founder
and
Paul Belanger,
EEE Forum webmaster

Sustainable Development, Equity, and the U.N.

Session #4 Outline

- OLLI Announcements
- Highlights from Session #3 – state BGDG Overview and WEALL
- SDGs and the U.N.’s 50-year focus on Sustainable Development
- 5-minute break
- Guest presentation and Q&A: **Sheila Davis**, Office of Health Equity, Colorado Dept. of Public Health and Environment
 - ***“Equity and Public Health: It’s Not Your Genetic Code But Your Zip Code That Matters”***
- Looking ahead to Session #5 (Oct. 12th)

Some State-level Beyond GDP Programs

- [Maryland \(Genuine Progress Indicator\)](#) 2010-
- [Oregon Shines](#) (Tracking Our Progress, 1989-2009)
- [Minnesota Milestones](#) (1991-2001, 2009-2011)
- [Minnesota Compass](#) (2010--)
- [New Jersey Sustainable State](#) (1995-2007)
- [Virginia Performs](#) (2003-2017)
- [Hawai'i 2050 Sustainability Plan](#) (2005--)
- [Arizona Indicators](#) (2007--)

State BGDG program overview – takeaways

- General pattern: Most state BGDG programs have been initiated or endorsed by governors or the legislature. Goals were established and indicators developed to track progress. [MD*, OR and MN Milestones-governors; VA and HI* -- legislature.] * *program continues.*
- Some discontinued programs have been replaced by tracking indicators of wellbeing without explicit goals or shifting to a community focus. [OR TOP to OR Community Foundation; NJ ***Sustainable State*** to transitioned to ***Sustainable Jersey*** community focus; MN Compass ongoing].
- AZ Indicators: no statewide goals or annual tracking report; ASU faculty ready to respond to policy Qs

Week #3 (Sept. 28th) -- Guest Presentation: “The Wellbeing Economy Alliance (WEAll)”



**Paul
Sutton**

- Professor, Department of Geography and the Environment, University of Denver
- “Most of my research focuses on applied issues associated with the Human-Environment-Sustainability problematic.”
- ***WEAll** is a collaboration of organisations, alliances, movements and individuals working towards a wellbeing economy, delivering human and ecological wellbeing. (weall.org)*

Conventional ECONOMIC Theory

Core Beliefs about human behavior:

Homo economicus

- 1) Insatiability
- 2) Perfect Rationality
- 3) Perfect Information



It has been said that man is a rational animal. All my life I have been searching for evidence which could support this.

(Bertrand Russell)

izquotes.com

Broader Economic Behavior is simply the aggregation of decisions by rational self-interested individuals. And, an invisible hand guides these individual decisions so that we unwittingly serve the broader societal good without intending to do so and simply serving our own individual interests. Greed is good.

Psychologists like Daniel Kahneman are winning Nobel Prizes for pointing out how these flawed assumptions of economics undermine the entire theoretical framework of the discipline of economics.

Week #4 -- Sustainable development, equity, and the U.N.; how relevant are the SDGs for NGOs and other groups?





- Goal 1: No poverty
- Goal 2: Zero hunger
- Goal 3: Good health and wellbeing
- Goal 4: Quality education
- Goal 5: Gender equality
- Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation
- Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy
- Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth
- Goal 9: Industry, innovation, and infrastructure
- Goal 10: Reduced inequalities
- Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities
- Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production
- Goal 13: Climate action
- Goal 14: Life below water
- Goal 15: Life on land
- Goal 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions
- Goal 17: Partnerships for the goals

The first world conference on the environment!

- The [1972 U.N. Conference on the Human Environment](#) in Stockholm was the first world conference to make the environment a major issue.
- Participants adopted 26 principles for sound management of the environment and an Action Plan.
- The ***Stockholm Declaration*** placed **environmental** issues at the forefront of international concerns and marked the start of a dialogue between industrialized and developing countries on the link between **economic growth**, the pollution of the air, water, and oceans and the **well-being** of people around the world.

U.N. World Commission on **Environment** and **Development** (1983-87) -- objectives

- to propose long-term **environmental** strategies for achieving **sustainable development** by the year 2000 and beyond;
- to recommend ways concern for the **environment** may be translated into greater co-operation among developing countries and between countries at different stages of **economical and social development** . . .
- to consider ways and means by which the international community can deal more effectively with **environment** concerns; and
- to help define shared perceptions of long-term **environmental** issues and the appropriate efforts needed to deal successfully with the problems of protecting and enhancing the **environment**, . . .



Gro Harlem
Brundtland,
U.N. World
Commission
Chair

... The **environment** does not exist as a sphere separate from human actions, ambitions, and needs, and attempts to defend it in isolation from human concerns have given the very word "**environment**" a connotation of naivety in some political circles. The word "**development**" has also been narrowed by some into a very limited focus, along the lines of "what poor nations should do to become richer", and thus again is automatically dismissed by many in the international arena as being a concern of specialists, of those involved in questions of "**development** assistance".

But the "environment" is where we all live; and "development" is what we all do in attempting to improve our lot within that abode. The two are inseparable.

Our Common Future (aka, The Brundtland Report) 1987 **--a definition of “sustainable development”**

Sustainable development is **development** that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

It contains within it two key concepts:

- the concept of ‘needs’, in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
- the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the **environment**’s ability to meet present and future needs.

[Our Common Future](#) (p. 41)

Post-Brundtland SD Conferences: 1992-2012

- The **1992 UN Conference on Environment & Development** (aka, the 'Rio Summit' or 'Earth Summit') sought to implement the conceptual understanding of **sustainable development** in the Brundtland Report.
- The **2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development** ('Rio+10') emphasized the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development in light of the 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000. [SEE NEXT SLIDE]
- The **2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development** ('Rio+20') launched a process to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), building upon the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and converging with the post-2015 development agenda.

2000 UN Millennium Development Goals deadline: 2015



[2002 Millennium Project: Action Plan Commissioned](#)

Is the 1987 Brundtland Report still relevant today?

*How faithful have subsequent formulations of **sustainable development** been to these three original principles:*

- intergenerational equity,*
- concern for the poor, and*
- the inseparability of the environment and development?*

Sustainable Development: From Brundtland to Rio 2012

It is generally accepted that sustainable development calls for a convergence between the three pillars of economic development, social equity, and environmental protection. . . .

While sustainable development is intended to encompass three pillars, over the past 20 years it has often been compartmentalized as an environmental issue. Added to this, and potentially more limiting for the sustainable development agenda, is the reigning orientation of development as purely economic growth. . . . [underlining added]

-- from the Executive Summary

Beyond GDP: The UN's Human Development Index (1990)

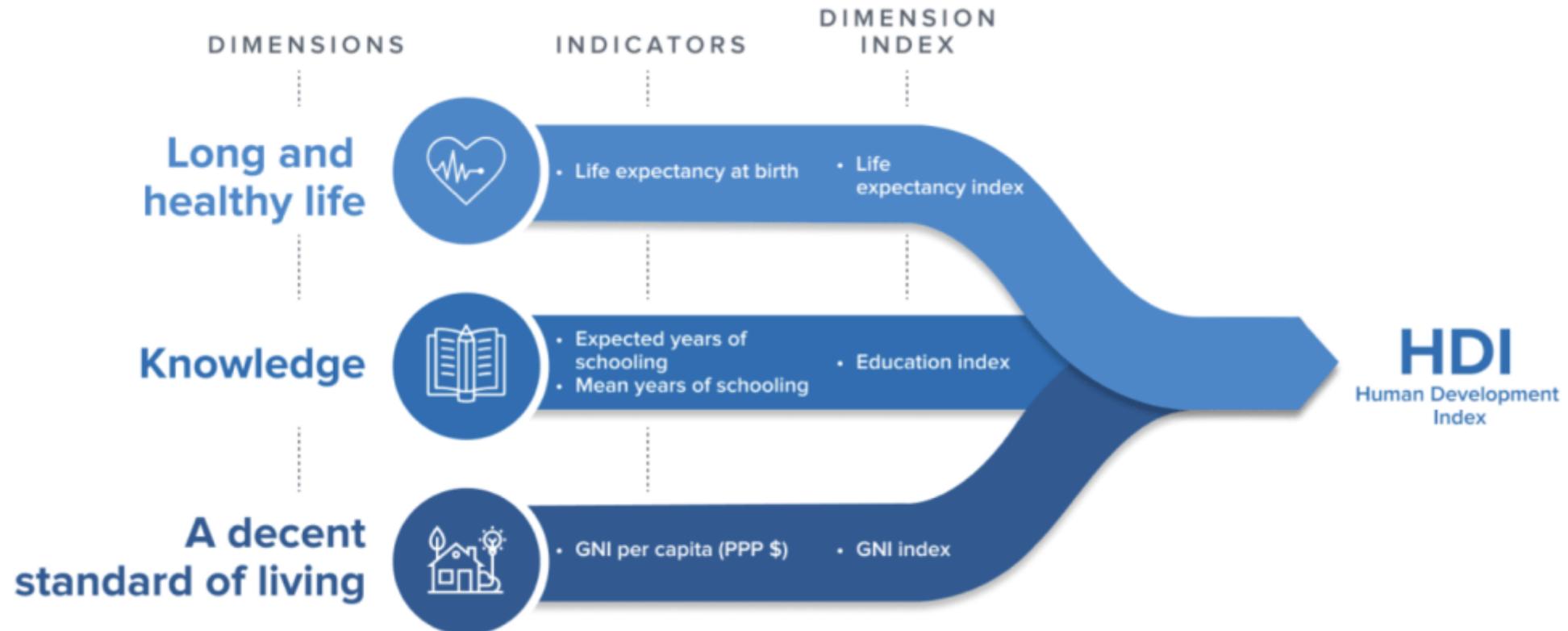


**Mahbub
ul Haq,
Pakistani
Economist**

- The **Human Development Index (HDI)** is a statistic composite index of [life expectancy](#), [education](#) (mean years of schooling completed and expected years of schooling upon entering the [education system](#)), and [per capita income](#) indicators, which is used to rank countries into four tiers of [human development](#). A country scores a higher level of HDI when the [lifespan](#) is higher, the [education](#) level is higher, and the gross national income [GNI \(PPP\) per capita](#) is higher. It was developed by Pakistani economist, [Mahbub ul Haq](#).

The Human Development Index (UN Development Programme)

HDI Dimensions and Indicators



For more about HDI, visit [Human Development Index \(UNDP, 1990\)](#).

Latest HDI rankings by the UN Development Programme. For more information, visit [UNDP HDI data.](#)

The United States ranks 21st out of 191 countries.

| Rank | Country | HDI Value | Change from 2020 |
|------|--|-----------|------------------|
| 1 |  Switzerland | 0.962 | ▲ 0.006 |
| 2 |  Norway | 0.961 | ▲ 0.002 |
| 3 |  Iceland | 0.959 | ▲ 0.002 |
| 4 |  Hong Kong, China (SAR) | 0.952 | ▲ 0.003 |
| 5 |  Australia | 0.951 | ▲ 0.004 |
| 6 |  Denmark | 0.948 | ▲ 0.001 |
| 7 |  Sweden | 0.947 | ▲ 0.005 |
| 8 |  Ireland | 0.945 | ▲ 0.002 |
| 9 |  Germany | 0.942 | ▼ -0.002 |
| 10 |  Netherlands | 0.941 | ▲ 0.002 |
| 11 |  Finland | 0.940 | ▲ 0.002 |
| 12 |  Singapore | 0.939 | ▲ 0.000 |
| 13 |  Belgium | 0.937 | ▲ 0.009 |
| 13 |  New Zealand | 0.937 | ▲ 0.001 |
| 15 |  Canada | 0.936 | ▲ 0.005 |
| 16 |  Liechtenstein | 0.935 | ▲ 0.002 |
| 17 |  Luxembourg | 0.930 | ▲ 0.006 |
| 18 |  United Kingdom | 0.929 | ▲ 0.005 |
| 19 |  Japan | 0.925 | ▲ 0.002 |
| 19 |  Korea (Republic of) | 0.925 | ▲ 0.003 |
| 21 |  United States | 0.921 | ▲ 0.001 |
| 22 |  Israel | 0.919 | ▲ 0.002 |

Equity and the SDGs

*As we embark on this great collective journey, we pledge that **no one will be left behind**. Recognizing that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, we wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. And we will endeavour to reach the furthest behind first.*

--from the Declaration of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)

*“**Leaving no one behind** lies at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This principle is mentioned at least seven times in the Agenda itself, and has been a recurrent theme in documents, pledges, call to actions, interventions and statements delivered since - by Member States, the UN and civil society.” ["Realizing the SDGs for All"](#)*



Hawai'i 2050 Sustainability Plan

This recently-updated Plan lists pertinent legislation and aligns the state's goals, policies, and actions with the SDGs across **8 focus areas** (with 38 strategies and 250 recommended actions).

- 1. Promote a sustainable Economic Recovery*
- 2. Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions*
- 3. Improve Climate Resilience*
- 4. Advance Sustainable Communities*
- 5. Advance Equity*
- 6. Institutionalize Sustainability Throughout Government*
- 7. Preserve the Natural Environment*
- 8. Perpetuate Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Values*

Economy

Goal: Be a national leader in the preservation and enhancement of our economy.

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|----|
| Personal Income | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| Employment Growth | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| Poverty | → | 🏛️ |
| Unemployment | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| Business Climate | → | 🏛️ |
| Workforce Quality | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| Economic Diversity | → | 🏛️ |
| Innovation/Entrepreneurship | ↑ | 🏛️ |

Health and Family

Goal: Inspire and support Virginians toward healthy lives and strong, resilient families.

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|----|
| Adoption | → | 🏛️ |
| Child Abuse and Neglect | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| Foster Care | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| Health Insurance | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| Health Risk Factors | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| Mortality and Longevity | → | 🏛️ |
| Teen Pregnancy | ↑ | 🏛️ |

Education

Goal: Elevate the levels of educational preparedness and attainment of our citizens.

| | | |
|------------------------|---|----|
| School Readiness | ↓ | 🏛️ |
| 3rd Grade Reading | ↓ | 🏛️ |
| 4th Grade Reading/Math | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| High School Graduation | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| High School Dropout | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| College Graduation | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| Educational Attainment | ↑ | 🏛️ |

Public Safety

Goal: Protect the public's safety and security, ensure a fair & effective system of justice, and provide a prepared response to emergencies & disasters of all kinds.

| | | |
|------------------------|---|----|
| Crime | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| Emergency Preparedness | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| Juvenile Intakes | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| Recidivism | → | 🏛️ |
| Traffic Fatalities | ↑ | 🏛️ |

Transportation

Goal: Ensure Virginia has a transportation system that is safe, allows the easy movement of people and goods, enhances the economy, and improves our quality of life.

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|----|
| Infrastructure Condition | → | 🏛️ |
| Land Use | → | 🏛️ |
| Multimodal Transportation | → | 🏛️ |
| Traffic Congestion | → | 🏛️ |

Government and Citizens

Goal: Be recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|----|
| Bond Rating | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| Civic Engagement | → | 🏛️ |
| Consumer Protection | ↓ | 🏛️ |
| Government Operations | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| Internet Access | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| Taxation | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| Voter Registration and Turnout | → | 🏛️ |

Natural Resources

Goal: Protect, conserve and wisely develop our natural, cultural and historic resources.

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|----|
| Air Quality | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| Energy | → | 🏛️ |
| Historic Resources | → | 🏛️ |
| Land Preservation | ↑ | 🏛️ |
| Solid Waste & Recycling | → | 🏛️ |
| Water Quality | ↑ | 🏛️ |

VIRGINIA
PERFORMS
(2003 – 17)
*“Measuring
What Matters to
Virginians”*



ARIZONA INDICATORS

A Project Managed by Morrison Institute for Public Policy

- Began in 2007 by Arizona State University with several community partners. Still ongoing.
- Purpose: to serve as a central resource for data and insights to help support policy making and public awareness of the state's competitiveness and other issues.
- [Arizona Indicators](#) presents interactive data visualizations and mapping tools, public opinion data, and timely policy analysis.

Broad content areas

1. Economy
2. Public Finance
3. Education
4. Innovation
5. Sustainability
6. Culture
7. Health
8. Human Assistance
9. Criminal Justice
10. Transportation

Week #4 (October 5th) -- Guest Presentation: “Equity and Public Health: It’s Not Your Genetic Code But Your Zip Code That Matters”



Sheila Davis

- Director, Office of Health Equity; Colorado Dept. of Public Health and Environment

Equity is...

when everyone, regardless of who they are or where they come from, has the opportunity to thrive. This requires eliminating barriers like poverty and repairing injustices in systems such as education, health, criminal justice and transportation.

Week #5 (Oct. 12th) -- Guest Presentation: “Food Insecurity: Post-Pandemic and Climate Change Challenges”



**Patricia
 (“Patti”)
Iwasaki,
MSW**

- Adjunct Instructor, Graduate School of Social Work—DU (“Food Systems, Food Justice”)
- Steering Committee, Food Justice NorthWest Aurora

“Some estimates concerning increased food insecurity in Denver are that rates have tripled from previous (pre-2019) estimates--one in seven or one in ten in certain areas.”