Smarter 2020 Conference: 3 December
Sustainable urban development and innovation:
Aligning policies for change

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Overview

- Cities & the Pandemic
- The Wellbeing Economy
- Cities in the multilevel polity
- The foundational economy lens
- Urban innovation in practice
- Mission-led innovation... needs a stronger spatial sensibility
Cities & the pandemic: peak density?

• COVID-19 - triggered new debates about the future of cities

• Agglomeration, density and F2F communications - normally associated with innovation and prosperity

• Now they are associated – in the public mind - with mortality and morbidity

• But density per se is not the problem – high density cities have low mortality rates, low density areas (North Dakota) the highest

• Hard to distinguish ephemeral v enduring changes, but C-19 has certainly caused us to view and value things anew – especially wellbeing!
# Measuring the Wellbeing Economy: How to Go Beyond-GDP

## Conceptual foundation
- Economic concepts (Green Accounting)
- Measure of Economic Welfare
- Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare
- Genuine Progress Indicator
- Genuine Savings/Adjusted Net Savings/Comprehensive Wealth (World Bank)
- Inclusive Wealth Index (UN)
- Depletion/Adjusted Net Value Added

## Stakeholder/ Mathematical foundation
- Wellbeing concepts
  - Subjective Well-being
  - U-Index
- Biophysical concepts
  - Ecological Footprint

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure of Economic Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genuine Progress Indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genuine Savings/Adjusted Net Savings/Comprehensive Wealth (World Bank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive Wealth Index (UN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depletion/Adjusted Net Value Added</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR DASHBOARD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stiglitz-Sen-Fleurbaud Commission (OECD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference of European Statisticians (CEB) Recommendation on Measuring Sustainable Development (UN/OECD/EC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Life Initiative (OECD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Standards Framework (New Zealand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor of Wellbeing (The Netherlands)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellbeing concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Life Dashboard (Eurostat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures of National Well-Being Dashboard (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biophysical concepts/Social Flows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planetary boundaries (Stockholm Resilience Institute)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doughnut Economics (Kate Raworth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder/Political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals (UN)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wellbeing Economy Government (WEGo) Network

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

New Zealand Government
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

Government of Iceland

Government of Canada
Gouvernement du Canada

FINNISH GOVERNMENT
Multi-level governance concept

• The multi-level governance (MLG) concept is a useful way to highlight the inter-dependence between institutional levels.

• But it doesn’t explain very much!

• Key problem – it implies the subnational level is the lowest and least important level.

• But in impact terms it is the most important because it is where policies are implemented and where citizens are most directly engaged.
Horizontal and vertical alignment

• The MLG concept implies that the vertical axis is all important in terms of power relations and policy networks.

• But the horizontal axis is equally important if we want to design and deliver policies that are genuinely aligned.

• All 3 levels of the multi-level polity – the European, the Member State and the Sub-state – struggle to align their horizontal policy networks.

• Robust horizontal networks are essential for co-production.

• Co-production is essential for European Green Deal, RIS4, SDGs, and the Wellbeing Economy (e.g. Foundational economy).
The foundational economy focuses on place-based wellbeing and consists of 2 key components:

i. **Providential services** like health services and care, universal primary and secondary schooling, public food provisioning

ii. **Material infrastructure** of pipes and cables connecting households to systems which make everyday life safe, sound and civilised (and added an extra 20 years to urban life after 1880)

The FE constitutes the infrastructure of everyday life that has something to offer everyone everywhere (unlike the spatial competition for FDI which pits places against each other)
Urban innovation in practice

Cardiff Capital Region Challenge Fund

The £10m Challenge Fund aims to build local wealth through creating commercial opportunities for organisations across the CCR, by inviting them to propose solutions to Public Sector challenges in and around the foundational economy.
Cardiff Capital Region Challenge Fund

Three priority themes

i. Supporting, enhancing and transforming communities

ii. Accelerating decarbonisation

iii. Improving health and well-being of citizens
Horizon Europe

• Research & innovation policy in the EU is informed by the mission-oriented perspective

• Suggested missions include:

i. conquering cancer
ii. climate-neutral cities
iii. plastic-free oceans
iv. healthy soils/food
Future missions for cities?

- The report said certain conditions were crucial to the success of mission-led R&I policy, especially:

  i. **public participation** is vital in the selection and for the sustained political commitment to societal missions
  
  ii. **public institutions** at all levels need to have the capacity and expertise to design, deliver and coordinate missions

- Missions are clearly **multi-level experiments** in which cities, regions and municipalities are key players

- Aligning policies – vertically and horizontally – will be the biggest challenge
Missions need a stronger spatial sensibility

• Multi-level governance highlights the challenge of forging more effective **vertical** policy alignment - from supra-national to the subnational level of cities, regions and municipalities

• But **horizontal** policy alignment is just as important – especially for place-based outcomes

• Subnational govts need to be **empowered** - to deploy local knowledge and harness civic engagement

• If **power and knowledge** are divorced at the subnational level we will never deliver on the promise of the European Green Deal, RIS4, SDGs, and the Wellbeing Economy
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