WELLWORTH

A policy toolkit for the evaluation of wellbeing interventions

Wellworth Policy Tool

What is WellWorth?

WellWorth is an innovative online tool which helps policy and decision makers evaluate wellbeing interventions.

WellWorth is useful for both one-off projects and measuring activity over a period of time. To use WellWorth your organisation needs to be collecting wellbeing data from a recognised wellbeing data source.

When analysed, this data is converted into an overall life satisfaction score. This score, together with other information such as project duration and reach, is fed into into the WellWorth tool which converts this data into mainstream policy outcomes. The tool provides you with a choice of mainstream policy areas to select from, currently these are health, education, social relations, employment, environment and crime.

At its heart WellWorth is a management tool – helping to show which services or projects have most impact in what areas whilst also calculating the cost effectiveness of your projects.

WellWorth can inform both decision-making and strategy development.

Why this and why now?

Increasingly the idea of overall wellbeing and its impact on life satisfaction and overall quality of life is gaining traction. Various robust ways of gathering wellbeing data have been developed and there is now a significant body of academic and applied knowledge and work in the area of wellbeing. However wellbeing or life satisfaction data on its own is of limited value, and many organisations would like to extract more meaningful information from that data and show how it impacts fundamental life outcomes such as mortality rate, level of educational achievement and the ability to work productively.

To ensure the appropriate allocation of resources towards wellbeing, and to justify investment in wellbeing interventions it is helpful to have a more complete picture of the benefits of wellbeing and to value them in monetary terms. This enables a clearer comparison with the costs of wellbeing interventions. Robust valuation is central to cost-benefit analysis and to avoid undervaluing policies that promote non-market services such as volunteering which are not obviously reflected in GDP.

Who's it for?

WellWorth is aimed at policy and decision makers and commissioners in:

- local authorities
- front line organisations delivering services
- housing associations
- public health services
- national charities
- Funding bodies

How does WellWorth work?

WellWorth is an evaluation tool built on a framework of algorithms. These algorithms are based on calculations derived from an extensive academic literature review. It draws on this wide scope of research into methods of quantifying linkages between wellbeing and different life outcomes, and to place a monetary value on those. The review considered:

- Empirical evidence showing the extent to which wellbeing can lead to better life outcomes
- Valuation methods used to place monetary values on the benefits of wellbeing.

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The literature review considered both direct benefits i.e. the intrinsic value of wellbeing and also the co-benefits in the following domains: Health, Social relations, Voluntary work, Employment, Education, Environment and Crime.

WellWorth has been developed by Happy City in partnership with health economists at the University of Exeter's European Centre for Environment and Human Health. The feasibility development of WellWorth has been funded by Innovate UK 'Solving urban challenges with data' competition stream from October 2015 - October 2016.

Benefits

- Enables the intuitive benefits of wellbeing to be expressed as tangible outcomes;
- Quantifies wellbeing data into real-life impact such as increased life expectancy, higher educational achievement, improved productivity;
- Helps users to articulate the value of wellbeing interventions in tangible mainstream policy language and outcomes;
- Helps to justify the value and cost of wellbeing interventions to funders and investors.

What next for WellWorth?

DURING 2016-2017 WE WILL:

Develop of our 'final' algorithms V3 model

Develop of our 'final' V3 digital version

Do extensive piloting in partnership with a housing association, local authority, front line organisations, a national charity

Develop of the results presentation and support end of the model

Put it out there for use!

Technical Footnote

WellWorth draws on the existing empirical evidence about the relationships between wellbeing and other factors which have a value to society. The range and type of empirical evidence across the different domains varies – in a number of the domains the causal relationships (a connection between processes, where it can be proved that one event is a result of the occurrence of the other event) between wellbeing and the wider benefits to society have not yet been fully quantified. We make it clear where this is the case and if desired, users can request results only in those domains where a causal relationship has been fully established.

Our best available evidence comes mainly from experimental studies, in which the wellbeing of the individuals is exogenously influenced, or from longitudinal studies, where the same individual is followed over time and which also allow for the control of confounding factors - hence reducing their influence in the relationship.

The empirical evidence is based on a subset of studies in peer reviewed academic journals – which is the best evidence at the present time. Measurement of the value of outcomes derives from a wide pool of studies on valuing benefits.

The results of WellWorth should be seen as being indicative. As the evidence base grows, it is hoped that WellWorth may be able to draw on further studies of the interlinkages – and give even better insights to policy making.

For more information about WellWorth please contact us at measurement@happycity.org.uk