

# Is Life Getting Better?

*A beginners guide on measuring the progress of societies*

Produced by

The Global Social Change Research Project  
<http://gsociology.icaap.org/>

## **Is Life Getting Better?**

This is the second in a set of pamphlets about measuring well-being and progress of societies.

In this pamphlet we briefly discuss why we should measure well-being and progress.

How could measuring progress be useful?

Easy to use, publicly available, reliable, valid measures can:

- Help to show how well countries are doing.
- Help us look at what countries are doing to make life better and see if those attempts are working.
- Help politicians, policy makers, researchers, and the public make decisions based on evidence.
- Help to objectively check up on or validate nationally generated reports or indicators.
- Help promote transparent and accountable public policy making.

## Is Life Getting Better?

Many societies lack access to a comprehensive and intelligible portrait of whether life has improved or where it has or has not improved.

Without such information, it is difficult for citizens to determine where to best direct their efforts, and to evaluate whether efforts to improve have had any impact.

Thus, this set of pamphlets can help to encourage the open development and distribution of reliable, valid and easy to understand indicators of well being and of progress.

By developing and distributing valid, reliable and easy to understand indicators, it becomes easier for everyone to participate in the decision making process.

## Is Life Getting Better?

### **Terms of use:**

Copyright by Gene Shackman, December 2009. Revised March 2011

Prepared by Gene Shackman, Xun Wang and Ya-Lin Liu.

This pamphlet can be freely distributed without need for permission, provided it is distributed as is. Distribution for any commercial purpose is strictly forbidden. This pamphlet cannot be sold under any circumstances.

This pamphlet is only for education purposes. It does not represent any guidelines, recommendations or requirements. The only purpose is to provide information about measuring the progress of societies to the general public, to researchers, or to anyone with interest in this subject.

Gene Shackman's, Ya-Lin Liu's and Xun Wang's contributions to this project were on their own time, at home, and were not supported by any organization. They do not represent or speak for any organization except The Global Social Change Research Project.

The most recent version of this pamphlet is available at  
<http://gsociology.icaap.org/progress.html>  
and is also available at:  
[http://www.wikiprogress.org/index.php/Global\\_Social\\_Change\\_Research\\_Project](http://www.wikiprogress.org/index.php/Global_Social_Change_Research_Project)  
The pamphlets will also be placed on the appropriate Wikiprogress pages.