

Is Life Getting Better?

*A beginners guide on measuring the
progress of societies*

Produced by

The Global Social Change Research Project
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This is the fourth in a set of pamphlets about measuring well-being and progress of societies.

In this pamphlet we briefly discuss the general approach used in these pamphlets to introduce indicators of well-being and progress.

There are many possible indicators. For example, typically, an indicator of economic progress might be measured by average economic wealth per person, poverty or inequality.

However, there may be many issues involved in measuring the indicators. For example, there might not be universal agreement on which measure to use, how to define the measure, or even how to define the indicator.

Thus in these pamphlets, we give brief overviews of the indicators of progress, and discuss some of the main issues involved in measuring/defining/using the indicators.

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For each indicator, we review the most recent literature, including reports and papers from major researchers or organizations. We then summarize major points about the indicators and their measurement, what the current thinking is about the indicators, major problems and solutions, if available.

These pamphlets are introductory and brief overviews. In general, we try to focus on the major issues, and provide, where possible, links to additional resources which may provide more comprehensive views and may also be useful for research.

We also ask scholars in the field to review the pamphlets and then we revise the pamphlets according to the feedback. We also invite any other interested individuals or organizations to review the pamphlets and provide feedback.

As mentioned in the previous pamphlet, these pamphlets can be used as a springboard for further discussion by those involved in measuring progress, and we would be happy if this set of pamphlets could reflect diverse viewpoints, from the many scholars involved in measuring progress.

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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.

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