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# THE GLOBAL ANALYSIS OF WELLBEING REPORT 2018

*From Measurement to Policy and Practice*



An Oxford Foundation of Knowledge Exchange Report

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## 2.6 Denmark

Statistics Denmark was inspired by the Stiglitz Commission, Eurostat and the OECD, to create quality of life indicators for the nation. The Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress[4] highlighted the necessity of shifting emphasis from GDP to measuring wellbeing. Furthermore, it advised national statistical agencies to measure both subjective and objective wellbeing using dimensions such as health, education and social relationships.

In Denmark, there is a focus on measuring wellbeing at the local level of municipalities. Denmark is divided into 98 municipalities, whose governmental responsibilities include health care, social services, employment, integration and environmental planning. Due to this devolution of power over policy areas that have direct impacts upon wellbeing, it is pertinent to Danish policy makers that the wellbeing of municipalities is measured, so that direct and relevant comparisons may be made. During preparatory dialogues, Statistics Denmark found that it is at the municipality level that politicians and other organisations are most interested in knowing about the wellbeing of the population. This will provide more information on how policy differences between municipalities affect wellbeing amongst different sectors of the population, and assist in identifying issues that should be prioritised for improvement in particular municipalities, as well

as revealing which municipal policy approaches are best at promoting wellbeing.

The first wellbeing measurement study of this kind is now underway in Denmark, with results and analysis due to be published on 15th September 2016. The survey, which covered aspects of subjective wellbeing such as satisfaction, sense of meaning, emotional states, perceived economic situation, self-assessed health and feelings of safety, was conducted by Statistics Denmark in late 2015/early 2016. This survey had over 40,000 respondents.

Denmark has the advantage of being able to cover objective measures through registers, and to get more detailed analysis from these. This current project is taking advantage of data that has already been registered from the entire Danish population. This includes data on income, education, health, longevity and the labour market, which can be taken as relating to objective wellbeing. Statistics Denmark then supplements this data by surveying 38,000 people about their subjective wellbeing. The statisticians are able to begin with the objective measures they already have data for, such as whether someone has a university degree, and then expand on this with subjective questions, such as "To what extent do you think this will help you achieve your goals in life?". There are currently 18 objective indicators, and 39 subjective ones.

The Region of Southern Denmark (RSD) has already measured quality of life in its own 22 municipalities in cooperation with the OECD, therefore Statistics Denmark has been able to partner with this region to include all RSD municipalities in the new project.

Currently 38 of the 98 Danish municipalities are being studied in this project, and it is hoped that in the future, with greater funding, all will be included. It would be expensive to survey all 98 municipalities with enough statistical certainty to enable comparisons across subgroups.

#### **Funding for the project comes from three different sources:**

- Statistics Denmark finances the majority of the surveys
- A grant from TrygFonden, a private Danish foundation
- and other funding comes from arrangements with one of the regional administration units in Denmark (of which there are five). One of the administration units approached Statistics Denmark about this, as they wanted all of the municipalities in their region to be covered.

Statistics Denmark is trying to make a good economic deal with the municipalities, so that they will have enough funding to regularly cover all 98 in the future, with each municipality paying for its own data collection.

Statistics Denmark has appointed a national advisory board to involve different stakeholders in the project. This board includes social scientists from Danish universities and research centres, representatives from NGOs, a mayor, TrygFonden's research director and a chief analyst from the Region of Southern Denmark. These board members have extensive knowledge about quality of life research and insight into different user's interests. Advisory board meetings have influenced the design of the survey questionnaire and the selection of objective indicators, and have discussed how to communicate results in a way that is useful to users and how to use the data in the future. The board members have become ambassadors for the project.

The results of the first survey were ready for dissemination in late 2016. Diverse platforms were used for dissemination to broad audiences: an interactive infographic targeted at the general public, StatBank Denmark (a section of Statistics

Denmark's website where people can customize tables), analytical research papers, information about methodology and results documented online, micro level data made available for researchers and local dissemination events in each region.

Statistics Denmark is now in close dialogue with the Tryg Foundation on a possible follow up that covers all 98 municipalities. They will submit an application in September. If there is a positive answer in December they will be able to publish subjective data for all municipalities in late 2018.

#### **2.7 Israel**

Israel has been a pioneering state in developing national wellbeing, sustainability and resilience indicators. In 2012, the Israeli government made a resolution to develop a set of wellbeing indicators. Since then, there has been a thorough process of consultation with government ministries, diverse sectors of the public and the relevant agencies on what these indicators should be. Nearly all government ministries are involved. There has been a process of public deliberation about the importance of different themes, and to acquire suggestions for further indicators.

The process of public deliberation about themes and indicators was led by the National Council of Economics in the Prime Minister's Office. Two main questions were put to the nation: 'Does this seem right to you?' and 'What would you add?' There were two key forms of public deliberation. Firstly, there was an online questionnaire that was open to all Israelis. Questions addressed each proposed domain and its subthemes, for example, in the section on health there were questions about the importance of healthy lifestyles, subjective measures of health and physical disease. 2136 people answered this questionnaire over a period of 56 days (March-May 2014). 64% of respondents were aged 25-44, 81% had a university education and 46% were female. In addition to the online questionnaire there were face-to-face workshops with people who had limited access to the internet, for example: Bedouin in the south of Israel, elderly people, ultra-Orthodox women, youth at risk, and single parents. Discussions were also held between representatives from local authorities. There were 23 workshops for a total of 420 participants (with around 18 participants in each group).

This process of making decisions about the domains took around 2.5 years. It initially resulted