



Putting people's well-being at the top of the agenda

The OECD has strived for many years to put people and their well-being at the centre of public policy. Right now COVID-19 is reshaping our world and affecting each and everyone's well-being across all dimensions, from health and financial security to social relations and trust in others and in institutions. The crisis is also drawing attention to the many socio-economic divides fracturing our societies, and deepening these divides by hitting the most vulnerable hardest.

The **OECD Centre on Well-being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity (WISE)** aims to ensure that delivering better lives for all, both now and in the future, remain at the heart of COVID-19 response and recovery strategies. In these unprecedented times of recession and uncertainty, WISE's mission includes strengthening the measurement of well-being, inequalities, inclusion and sustainability, as well as better understanding the impact that policies and business actions have on people's lives today, and on the sustainability of well-being over time. WISE strives to deliver timely responses to today's challenges while keeping long-term objectives in mind as we enter the "decade of action" for the SDGs.



Measuring what matters

How well are our economies doing for people? How sustainable is our way of living? Are societies thriving with purpose? While the *OECD How's Life 2020* report shows that life has improved in some ways since 2010 (we live longer, have safer lives), nevertheless insecurity, disconnection and despair affect some parts of the population, and risks across our natural, economic and social systems threaten future well-being. Using innovative methodologies and new data, WISE is investigating what drives our well-being beyond GDP.

Improved statistical measures at more granular levels are being used to fill the gap between standard macroeconomic statistics and indicators that have a more direct bearing for people's lives. Building on the pioneering OECD Well-Being Framework and other OECD tools, WISE is developing guidelines and improving the metrics used to assess more accurately the inclusiveness and quality of workplaces and jobs, environmental quality, subjective well-being, trust, safety, and many other important aspects of our lives.

Getting people and governments on the same page

WISE's ambition is to reduce inequalities and bridge the gap between people's expectations and the actions of governments and business by applying well-being metrics and policy approaches to make a tangible difference in outcomes and life chances. Through pioneering tools like www.compareyourincome.org, WISE is collecting new information on people's perceptions of where they stand in society to ensure public spending reflects the priorities of all. OECD evidence confirms that people's concerns with income disparities have risen over the past decades and risen more sharply in countries where inequality has increased the most. To deliver change on the ground through reduced inequality

and greater social opportunities, governments must put the right policies in place. They must also respond to evolving expectations and demands, notably in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and build strong public support for these policies to yield their social and economic benefits. To help achieve these objectives, WISE is conducting important analysis to understand how people's perceptions of inequality influence their demand for redistributive policies. It is also conducting innovative work on the public acceptability of reforms to ensure that people and their well-being remain at the centre of key policy debates in the recovery.

Keeping up the SDGs ambition and making a fair transition to a green economy

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, OECD work showed that the road toward the SDG targets remained long. With less

than 10 years left to implement the 2030 Agenda, it is therefore crucial to accelerate progress. The COVID-19 crisis is impeding

progress on some SDGs, yet making their achievement even more critical. By aiming to transform the systemic conditions that perpetuate the vulnerabilities of our societies, the 2030 Agenda can serve as a blue print to “build back better”.

Preventing climate change, ensuring a diverse ecosystem, preserving natural resources and other natural foundations on which people’s well-being relies needs

to be fully integrated in economic policy. However, transitioning to a green economy must also be fair and inclusive.

Through its *Inequalities-Environment Nexus: Towards a People-Centred Green Transition* report, WISE is mapping inclusive and green policy packages, outlining the main challenges, and identifying possible solutions for countries to enable them to make a fair green transition.

Giving everyone a stake in the economy and addressing inequalities

Economic growth as we know it does not work for everyone: well-being is far from being distributed equitably across households, societies and regions. WISE aims to suggest options for overcoming the perceived trade-off between efficiency and equality in policy, and to make inclusive growth a reality. WISE is studying and addressing the root causes of inequalities across socio-economic outcomes such as income, education, health, and many others. The Framework for Policy Action on

Inclusive Growth encourages governments and other actors to invest in people and places left behind; build inclusive labour markets, spur business dynamism, create fairer tax systems, and achieve innovation policies that allow disadvantaged groups, small businesses and remote regions to thrive. It also calls to develop inclusive institutions and make policy-making fully inclusive and participatory. Going forward WISE intends to start new analysis of ethnic and racial inequalities and inequities.

Changing the odds from the outset

One of WISE’s priorities is to create conditions that allow everyone to start life on an equal footing. Inequalities in our societies are very often rooted in early-life disadvantage. In 2019, the OECD’s *Changing the Odds for Vulnerable Children* report demonstrated the decisive role childhood experiences play in shaping adult outcomes and the need to provide vulnerable children with comprehensive support to create a level playing field. Through the OECD Child Well-Being Data Portal, WISE is monitoring child well-being and investigating how children can be better supported and provided with opportunities to improve their life chances,



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and that of generations coming after. In anticipating the enormous challenges of the post-COVID-19 decade, WISE is engaging OECD countries on shaping a common vision for children's well-being and the policy responses required to achieve their highest possible well-being.

Connecting governments, private sector and the civil society

OECD initiatives like Business for Inclusive Growth (B4IG) and the OECD Forums on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy have been providing a vital space to foster the international debate through shared knowledge and experiences. Bringing businesses, academics, policy-makers, foundations, civil society and other key actors together is critical to ensuring that this important agenda is being considered from different angles. WISE's most powerful resource remains its direct contact with people.

By further developing its network and using innovative tools like the www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org, where people can have a say on what matters the most to them for their well-being, WISE continues to build a strong community and partnerships to promote inclusiveness, solidarity and sustainability. These will help to support WISE and the OECD in their ultimate goal of delivering better policies for better lives.



A group of major international businesses has pledged to tackle inequality and promote diversity in their workplaces and supply chains as part of a G7 initiative led by French President Emmanuel Macron and overseen by the OECD. Photo credits: ©OECD



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