

Foreword

Our day-to-day experience of life is essentially local. Whether people can find a job, a good school for their children or adequate healthcare depends on where they live. The availability of opportunities and access to quality public services increasingly influence people's choice of location.

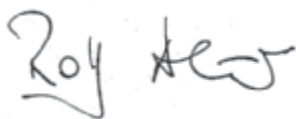
Expanding on the OECD Better Life Initiative, *How's Life in Your Region?* looks closely at people's daily experiences. It builds on the extensive statistical work on regional inequalities presented in *OECD Regions at a Glance* to provide a wider range of measures of social progress in OECD regions.

Following the launch of the OECD Regional Well-Being web tool, this report presents a common framework for measuring well-being at the regional level. It paints a comprehensive picture of well-being in 362 regions across 34 countries, covering 9 dimensions of life – income, job, housing, education, health, access to services, environment, safety and civic engagement – measured through a set of internationally comparable outcome indicators. These indicators show that well-being outcomes can differ largely between regions across OECD countries. For example, eight out of ten Japanese regions have a life expectancy of 82.7 or more years, around 12 years longer than some regions in Mexico and Turkey, and ranking among the top 5% of OECD regions. But differences can also be large within countries: people in Hawaii (United States) can expect to live six years longer than those in Mississippi. Regional disparities in well-being also have an impact on national performance. For example, countries with larger regional disparities in education, health, jobs and key services register lower well-being outcomes at the national level.

The report offers guidance for all levels of government in using well-being measures to improve today's lives and tomorrow's opportunities. Drawing from a variety of practical experiences in OECD regions and cities, the report includes an in-depth analysis of seven regional initiatives. It discusses methodological and political solutions for aligning policy objectives across levels of government, and it invites dialogue among all stakeholders, engaging citizens to promote social change.

This report can help upgrade the discussion on what matters most to people and on how to improve the lives of current and future generations. Well-being indicators provide indications to policy makers on which policy areas need improvements. Moreover, the comprehensive picture of material conditions and quality of life in a region allows us to understand whether economic growth translates into better non-economic outcomes and to identify possible synergies among well-being dimensions that policies can leverage. Income levels and availability of jobs are certainly important factors for well-being, but so are other dimensions which are covered by the data base. Information on each of these dimensions and their combination in each region allows a better understanding of where policy interventions may be required to ensure synergies and coherence among them. The

OECD will continue to assist governments and citizens in implementing policy solutions that better match realities to people's aspirations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rolf Alter". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Rolf Alter

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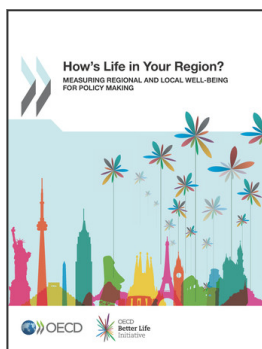
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