

Learning and Well-being: An Agenda for Change

By

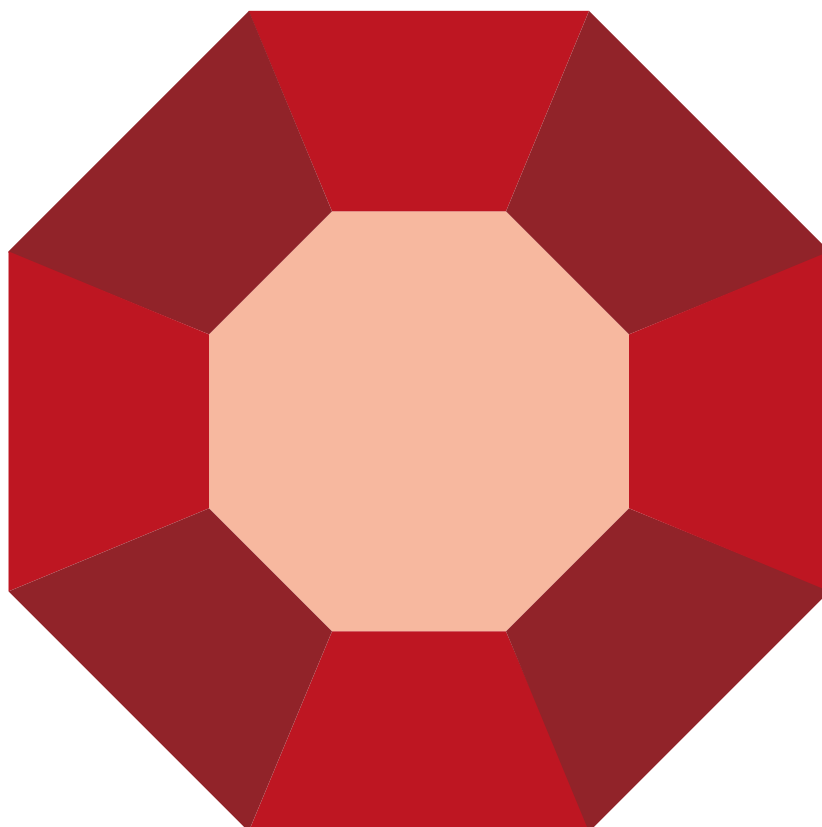
Marwan Awartani
Palestine Technical
University Kadoorie

Janet Looney
European Institute
of Education and
Social Policy

WISE

world innovation summit for education
مؤتمر القمة العالمي للابتكار في التعليم

an initiative of
مؤسسة قطر
Qatar Foundation 



European Institute of Education and Social Policy

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FOREWORD

When asked to define a person enjoying true well-being, the philosopher Thales of Miletus is reputed to have replied that such a person needed to be in possession of a healthy body, a rich spiritual life and a character shaped by good education: *Τις ευδαίμων; Ο το μιν σώμα υγιής, την δε ψυχήν εύπορος, την δε φύσιν ευπαιδευτος*. Writing several hundred years later, the Roman satirist Juvenal established the mind-body connection when he penned the phrase *mens sana in corpore sano*, a healthy mind in a healthy body.

From the earliest days therefore, well-being has featured in humanity's thinking about education. In more recent years, the concept of well-being has gained traction and recognition by policy makers and researchers. It is being increasingly recognized as a more inclusive, more balanced measure of human progress. This synergy and the potential it holds for innovation has been captured by Qatar Foundation's WISE and WISH initiatives, each of which take a multi-sectoral approach to inspiring change and innovation.

Inspired by the dynamism and interest the two panels have generated among the WISE and WISH communities, WISE took the initiative to take this one step further by commissioning this WISE Research Report that would probe deeply into the conceptual foundations of the interconnectedness of learning and well-being and to propose an innovative, well-being based policy framework for educational reform.

This report addresses the synergy between learning and well-being. In doing so, we take on a holistic approach. We unpack the complex concept of well-being, acknowledging that while it surely encompasses physical and existential aspects, it extends further and wider to include the mental, social, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. Similarly, we see learning as a personal lifelong experience / pursuit shaped and characterized by each person's own unique gifts, learning needs, and forms of expression.

Learning takes place in various environments including family, school, community, online, and elsewhere. Learning environments may be nurturing, supportive, and stimulating or limiting and stifling to one or more aspects of a child's personality. The nature of student engagement and the quality of their relationships with peers and teachers have a significant impact on learning and well-being.

Our aspiration is that this report will stimulate a dialogue among all stakeholders on reforms that address the needs of the whole child, body, mind, and soul. This goal requires true multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary collaboration.

Stavros N. Yiannouka
Chief Executive Officer
World Innovation Summit
for Education
Qatar Foundation

Marwan Awartani
President
Palestine Technical University
Kadoorie

Janet Looney
Director
European Institute of
Education and Social Policy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our focus in this report is on learning and well-being and the synergy between the two. It is this synergy that supports children's unfolding capacities to live fulfilling and meaningful lives.

The relationship between learning and well-being is, by its very nature, multidimensional, encompassing physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions (UEF, 2007). Several international institutions have developed policies to support children's learning and well-being. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has had a particularly important influence on thinking about children's participation and voice. The World Health Organization emphasizes the importance of promoting well-being as well as preventing illness. UNESCO has highlighted learning as a lifelong and life-wide process. The Council of Europe (2008) has been among the first to propose 'Well-being for All' as a common vision for multiple stakeholders.

In the research community, there has been a growing engagement regarding different aspects of children's well-being. Researchers from a range of disciplines (including health, children's sociology and social welfare, psychology, educational psychology, neuroscience, human development, and philosophy) have set out to understand better the synergies between learning and well-being.

Although these perspectives are in many ways complementary, they use very different frames of reference. What's needed is an integrative framework to illuminate a shared vision for approaches and services across sectors and to develop a common language and agenda for collaboration among partners. In this WISE Research Report, we describe a framework which brings together the various dimensions of wellbeing and also captures the dynamic nature of learning.

The report includes five sections.

Section one introduces the key issues and approach of the report and sets out the definitions of learning and well-being that shape our understanding. For the purposes of this report, we define well-being

as "... realizing one's unique potential, through the development of mental, emotional, physical and spiritual dimensions in relation to self, others and the environment." (O'Toole and Kropf, 2010).

Section two explores six key trends that are shaping thinking on learning and well-being:

- Children's agency and participation, with a particular focus on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- Systems-based approaches, which explore interaction of the child with the people in his or her life and the different contexts in which they live and learn.
- Process-orientation examples, such as UNESCO's 1996 Delors Commission report, which emphasizes a holistic approach to lifelong and life-wide learning.
- The "capabilities approach" for children, including skill development for critical thinking and reasoning, as well as the capacity to listen to and empathize with others.
- Strengths-based approaches that emphasize the importance of promoting well-being and not just preventing ill-being.
- Pluralistic approaches which recognize the diversity of learners' social identities as well as diverse ways of learning important to well-being and educational attainment.

Section two concludes with our proposed integrative framework as a way to bring together these various perspectives.

In section three, we turn to the subject of measurement with a focus on international and national indices that address children's well-being (including educational attainment and well-being in school). These indices are intended to counterbalance measures of Gross Domestic Product by providing attention on social well-being. Since these indices have a strong influence on policy, research, and practice, it is important that they measure what matters. We explore efforts to refine and improve them.

In section four, we describe six programs with "promising practices" to promote children's learning and well-being:

- Elham Palestine
- Children as Actors Transforming Society (CATS)
- Child to Child

- Philosophy for Children
- UNICEF’s Rights-Respecting Schools (RRS), and
- Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

These programs are geographically diverse, representing both community- and school-based endeavors. Each of these programs has attained a significant scale and reach. Each reflects the strong influence of the UNCRC through emphasizing children’s agency and participation.

Focusing on children’s well-being may seem unattainable in schools or community programs with significant barriers, such as too few resources or too many students, so we’ve highlighted several programs that have found practical ways to address these barriers.

Section five builds on the previous sections by setting out principles for policy. It is an ambitious agenda for change, calling for:

- An integrated framework to support collaboration across diverse agencies, academic disciplines, and on-the-ground practitioners,
- Ongoing support for the development of effective measurement to shape more effective policies at international, national, and community levels,
- Opportunities for peer learning among policy makers as well as practitioners (practitioners, in particular, need opportunities to share practical approaches to overcoming barriers), and
- Engagement of children as competent partners in matters that affect them, which means not only are their voices heard, but they participate in developing solutions or responses.

#1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

#1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Our focus in this report is on learning and well-being and the synergy between the two. It is this synergy that supports children’s unfolding capacities to live fulfilling and meaningful lives.

In recent years, international organizations have placed increasing emphasis on the importance of supporting children’s learning and well-being. This shift has been substantially influenced by the 1989 United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which emphasizes children’s right to achieve their full potential and participate in decisions that affect their lives. During this same period (since the late 1980s), other organizations have added to this conception of well-being. The World Health Organization has defined health as encompassing “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” UNICEF (2003) stresses the importance of advocating for “the protection of children’s rights and to help meet their basic needs and expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.” The Council of Europe (2008) has described well-being as a universal human right and developed its vision for “Well-being for All” to encompass individual well-being as well as societal and global well-being, extending to future generations, while actively promoting children’s participation in decisions that affect their lives.

UNESCO’s 1996 Delors Commission report, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, emphasizes learning as a lifelong process. This widely cited report suggests that “a broad encompassing view of learning should aim to enable each individual to discover, unearth and enrich his or her creative potential, to reveal the treasure within each of us.” The report asserts that education should go beyond specific aims to develop skills for work to include the “development of the complete person” (Delors, 1996). This emphasis on lifelong and life-wide learning sees learning as an ongoing process. Learning and well-being are intimately connected.

Researchers from a range of disciplines (including health, children’s sociology and social welfare, psychology, educational psychology, neuroscience, human development, and philosophy) are increasingly engaged in efforts to understand the synergies between learning and well-being. For example, researchers have found evidence that the

social-emotional aspects of learning support improved outcomes (Bonny et al, 2000; Nutbeam et al., 1993; Havlinova and Scheidrova, 1995; Blum McNeely and Rinehart, 2002). There is evidence that learning through dialogue and exchange (dialogic learning) helps build children’s sense of identity, empathy, and skills for critical thinking (Biggeri, 2015; Resnick and Schantz, 2015). These skills are vital for personal development, citizenship, and employment.

There is thus a broad and sustained interest in the subject of children’s well-being in general and, more specifically, in learning and well-being.

But the diversity of frameworks and approaches also means that there are missed opportunities to create synergies across sectors and disciplines.

(N.B. In this report, we follow the UNCRC’s definition of a “child” as a person below the age of 18.)

Box 1: Definitions

For this report, we have selected the following definitions as central references because they reflect comprehensive and expansive perspectives in keeping with contemporary thinking and practice.

Learning:

Knud Illeris defines learning as “any process that in living organisms leads to permanent capacity change and which is not solely due to biological maturation or ageing” (Illeris, 2007).

This definition is well aligned with the factors and trends we review in section two. It highlights learning as a resource of each individual (which we refer to as sense of agency), points to a process approach, and underlines the importance of context.

Learning Environments:

In considering learning as pervasive (that is, lifelong and life-wide), every environment becomes a potential learning environment. Learning occurs in formal, informal, and non-formal settings, with an increased impact of digital technology in all those settings.

Well-being:

Well-being is a complex and multidimensional concept that has been defined in many ways. We define well-being as “realizing one’s unique potential, through physical, emotional, mental and spiritual development in relation to self, others and the environment” (O’Toole and Kropf, 2010).

We have chosen this definition of well-being because it offers a simple synthesis that encompasses different perspectives and dimensions, thus becoming more holistic in the sense of involving and impacting the whole person, and points to the importance of other people and the environmental context. It relates directly to the integrative framework discussed in Section two.

While the subject of learning and well-being resonates with many, innovative policies and practices frequently rest on the margins. At the policy level, different aspects of children's well-being (physical, mental, social, emotional) are frequently addressed by separate agencies working on separate programs and projects. International indices that track children's learning and well-being have an important influence on policy development, but these measurements may not capture what really matters for learning and well-being. In schools, although curricula focused on twenty-first century skills include an emphasis on critical thinking and the social-emotional skills necessary for personal development and citizenship, educators may find it difficult to balance these 'softer' skills with core academic aims for literacy and numeracy attainment. Children frequently are not afforded the opportunity to exercise their right to participate in decisions that affect them. Although the learning and research on child well-being are enriched by multi-disciplinary approaches, they may use different methods and vocabularies, creating barriers to interdisciplinary work (Minkkinen, 2013).

What's needed is an integrative framework to illuminate a shared vision for approaches and services across sectors and to develop a common language and agenda for collaboration among partners. In this WISE Research Report, we describe a framework which brings together the various dimensions of well-being, and also captures the dynamic nature of learning.

#2

LEARNING AND WELL-BEING: KEY TRENDS

#2 LEARNING AND WELL-BEING: KEY TRENDS

The nature of well-being has been described as a multidimensional phenomenon (Minkinen, 2013). Certainly this also holds true for learning and well-being, particularly as it relates to children. Researchers have focused largely on defining the nature of well-being and how to conceptualize the relevant domains. Increasingly, however, there has been evidence of the positive impact of well-being on learning (Goleman, 2006) as well as the influence of learning on well-being (Beddington et al., 2008). To date, the synergy of learning and well-being has been underdeveloped, but our hope is that this report will begin to focus greater attention on this symbiotic relationship.

From our review of the literature, we identified six key trends which seem particularly important to understanding the relationship between learning and well-being. These trends are complementary, offer different perspectives, and are reflected in a variety of disciplines and sectors. One criterion for selection was that the trend could be seen as functioning in the fields of both learning and well-being. A second criterion was that their convergence broadened our overall understanding about learning and well-being for children. Rather than an exhaustive listing of every possible connection, we have chosen to highlight particularly relevant examples for each trend.

The key trends that we are highlighting in this report shape current thinking on learning and well-being:

- 1)** Children's agency and participation, with a particular focus on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- 2)** Systems-based approaches, which explore the interaction of the child with the people in his or her life and the different contexts in which children live and learn.

- 3) Process-orientation examples, such as UNESCO's 1996 Delors Commission report, which emphasizes a holistic approach to lifelong and life-wide learning.
- 4) The "capabilities approach" for children, including skill development for critical thinking and reasoning, as well as the capacity to listen to and empathize with others.
- 5) Strengths-based approaches that emphasize the importance of promoting well-being and not just preventing ill-being.
- 6) Pluralistic approaches which recognize the diversity of learners' social identities as well as diverse ways of learning important to well-being and educational attainment.

These trends offer perspectives that are in many ways complementary and highlight different aspects of learning and well-being. But the perspectives use different frames of reference, as do various disciplines and sectors, so it's difficult to take advantage of their complementary strengths. What's needed is a common focus across these different disciplines in order to advance the field.

At the end of this section, we describe a framework which brings together the various dimensions of well-being and also captures the dynamic nature of learning. It can be used as a means for creating an interdisciplinary approach between partners in different disciplines and sectors, a common language for a common agenda.

Box 2: The Relationship between Learning and Well-being

The synergetic relationship between learning and well-being has been largely underdeveloped, but one way in which the fields have paralleled one another is the gradual expansion of how we define both learning and well-being and what we consider as their appropriate domains. For learning, the movement has been from a perspective focused primarily on cognitive development and acquisition of subject-matter as the domain of learning to include emotional and social dimensions and even a spiritual/ethical dimension (Hay, 1998; Miller 2007).

Similarly, the concept of well-being has moved from a perspective attached primarily to material resources and physical health to include mental-emotional (psychological), social, and spiritual/ethical dimensions (e.g. concern for future generations or the planet) (Gomez and Fisher, 2003). However, the discussions around hedonic and eudaimonic definitions of well-being are not as straight forward. The hedonic tradition is reflected in research on happiness and life satisfaction. The eudaimonic tradition, as described by Keyes (2005), "animates human concerns with developing nascent abilities and capacities towards becoming

a more fully functioning person and citizen” (Ryan and Deci, 2001). The definition of well-being we are using in this report (and the trends highlighted in this section) relate more to the eudaimonic tradition, but it may not be useful to create an either-or distinction between hedonic and eudaimonic traditions. The value of combining them, as indicators of psychological and subjective well-being, particularly in areas with poverty of resources, has been proposed by well-being researchers (Samman, 2007).

Growing evidence from diverse fields supports the assertion that learning and well-being contribute to one another (Goleman, 2006; Beddington et al., 2008; Morgan and Ziglio, 2007). Additionally, there are implications about the relationship between learning and well-being which are expressed in the vision of Learning FOR Well-being (O’Toole and Kropf, 2010) which puts an emphasis on well-being as the central purpose of learning and on learning how to generate well-being outcomes for oneself, others (including society), and the environment.

SIX TRENDS

Children’s agency and participation

We start the core discussion of this section with the concept of “children’s agency” because, as James and James (2012) note, it is the “key conceptual and analytical catalyst” which ties together the different disciplinary perspectives of children’s well-being. James and James define “agency” as “the capacity of individuals to act independently.” Individuals are assumed to have competence to act and are in an environment which enables them to do so (Hart, 2015).

UNCRC: Agency and participation

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) addresses the importance of agency through its promotion of the right to participation. The major principles of this document are relating directly to well-being: protection for all children (Article 2), primary consideration for and commitment to the best interests of the child (Article 3), the right to be alive and to lead a life of evolving and growing capacities (Article 6), and the right for children to be systematically consulted and heard in matters that affect them (Article 12) (James and James, 2012; Mauras, 2011). The Convention explicitly emphasizes well-being, specifying that the realization of the child’s rights is connected with his or her well-being and development physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, and socially in a healthy and normal manner. The UNCRC shapes much of the international thinking on child well-being and has had profound impact on research, policies, and interventions related to children’s well-being.

How children understand their rights

A few studies have explored how children themselves understand rights (Melton, 1980). Melton and Limber (1992) suggest that children's understanding of their rights reflects not only their "developing cognitive and social competencies but their experiences, including the general experience of living within a particular sociocultural environment, as well as more specific experiences associated with particular life circumstances." As an example, they note "the emphasis placed by Norwegian children on nurturance rights in comparison to American children, who respond in terms of liberty—the ability to make choices" (p. 178) and attribute this discrepancy to socio-political differences between the countries. Howe and Covell (2005) note the importance of teaching children about rights in order to protect their own rights, promote citizenship, and respect the rights of others.

Children's definitions of their learning and well-being

The child's right to participate fully in decisions connects to the right to express views and have those views given weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child (Article 12 of the UNCRC), and it also requires that adults respect and actively attend to the perspectives of the child. This has been interpreted as meaning that when strategies and approaches are developed to understand the child's well-being (through research, for example), their roles and experiences must be taken into account (Prout, 2004). Too often, research on children's well-being centers around questions posed by adults. From the standpoint of children's agency, a study by Fattore et al. (2007) was groundbreaking in that it explored how children defined their own well-being and learning, with the domains emerging from the research rather than being predefined. Aspects related to learning and well-being included children's self-concept (positive feelings are linked to concrete achievements), autonomy and agency (opportunities to make choices in everyday situations and stable secure relationships with adults), and activities (opportunities to increase mastery and capacity to do things). The Fattore et al. study included 126 children from both rural and urban locations in New South Wales who participated in the first stage of the research, 95 children in stage two, and 56 in stage three. The children were eight and 15 years old when the study started.

Well-being/well-becoming

A recurrent theme in much of the literature on child well-being is that childhood should be seen as its own life stage. This is an important point because childhood has traditionally been seen primarily as preparation for adulthood. Certainly, childhood is partly about "well-becoming" (Bradshaw et al., 2007). Children are gaining knowledge,

skills, values, and attitudes that will sustain them throughout their lives, and early childhood is a period with irreversible consequences. But learning and well-being are dynamic processes equally relevant in childhood. From birth, children are entitled to rights, dignity, and respect (Ben-Arieh, 2001). They are ready and able to participate in decisions that affect their lives and their right to participation. The double perspective of children's well-being and of their well-becoming represents an important shift in thinking about children's agency and capacity to participate. Children have important contributions to make and the exercise of agency is, in and of itself, an important part of their learning process.

However, it is critical to remember that the important themes of the UNCRC also recognize the vulnerability of childhood: the need for protection and prevention as well as participation.

Self-directed learning

We include self-directed learning (SDL) in this discussion because, as a concept and practice, it directly links children's agency with their learning and their learning environments. In general, applications of SDL involve providing some options in approaches or allowing choices to be made about the timing of certain activities, but Malcolm Knowles, an adult educator who popularized the term in the 1970s, defines it as requiring that individuals take the initiative and to be solely responsible for the process (Knowles, 1975).

Knowles' definition is more extensive than usually applied in the case of children. While there have been primary schools, in rich and poor circumstances (e.g., Summerhill in the UK; Thai school for abused and homeless children) that have been following self-directed learning principles for decades (Vangelova, 2015), the concept has not been widely adopted in mainstream schools. Increasing availability of technology, strains on educational resources, and the significant adoption of children's agency may help produce broader applications of self-directed learning. A popular testimony for self-directed learning for children and treating children as competent partners in their own learning is the "Hole in the Wall" experiment described in Box 3.

However, educators are careful to distinguish between circumstances in which children can follow their own natural paths of learning and those that are likely to require the support and guidance of teachers and other adults. The former is described by Michael Young (2015) as context-dependent learning (largely acquiring specific skills) and the latter as context-independent learning which involves knowledge-building, including "knowing that" (facts), but even more critically,

“knowing how” (concepts). The critical point, in considering the well-being of children, is similar to the discussion of well-being and well-becoming. The intersection of agency and learning is clearly self-directed learning, but this may well have different implications in childhood than it does in adulthood.

Box 3: Hole in the Wall Experiment

An example of self-directed learning that caught public attention is known as the “Hole in the Wall” experiment. Sugata Mitra, head of research and development at a computer company in New Delhi, placed a computer in the wall that separates his office from a poor neighborhood. He established a connection to the internet and watched who, if anyone, might use it. Almost immediately, children were attracted to the new machine in the wall: “Within minutes, children figured out how to point and click. By the end of the day, they were browsing”. “Given access and opportunity,” Mitra observed, “the children quickly taught themselves the rudiments of computer literacy.” Mitra eventually replicated his experiment in other settings, each time with the same result: within hours and without instruction, children began browsing the web, gaining information, knowledge, and confidence (Mitra, 2012).

Systems-based approaches

The original attempt to create a comprehensive systems-based approach is the Bronfenbrenner ecological model. It is still a reference point for subsequent contextual approaches to children’s well-being and learning. In this section, we explore this seminal model and then look at the cultural differences in how learning and well-being are experienced and expressed (the macrosystem in Bronfenbrenner’s model).

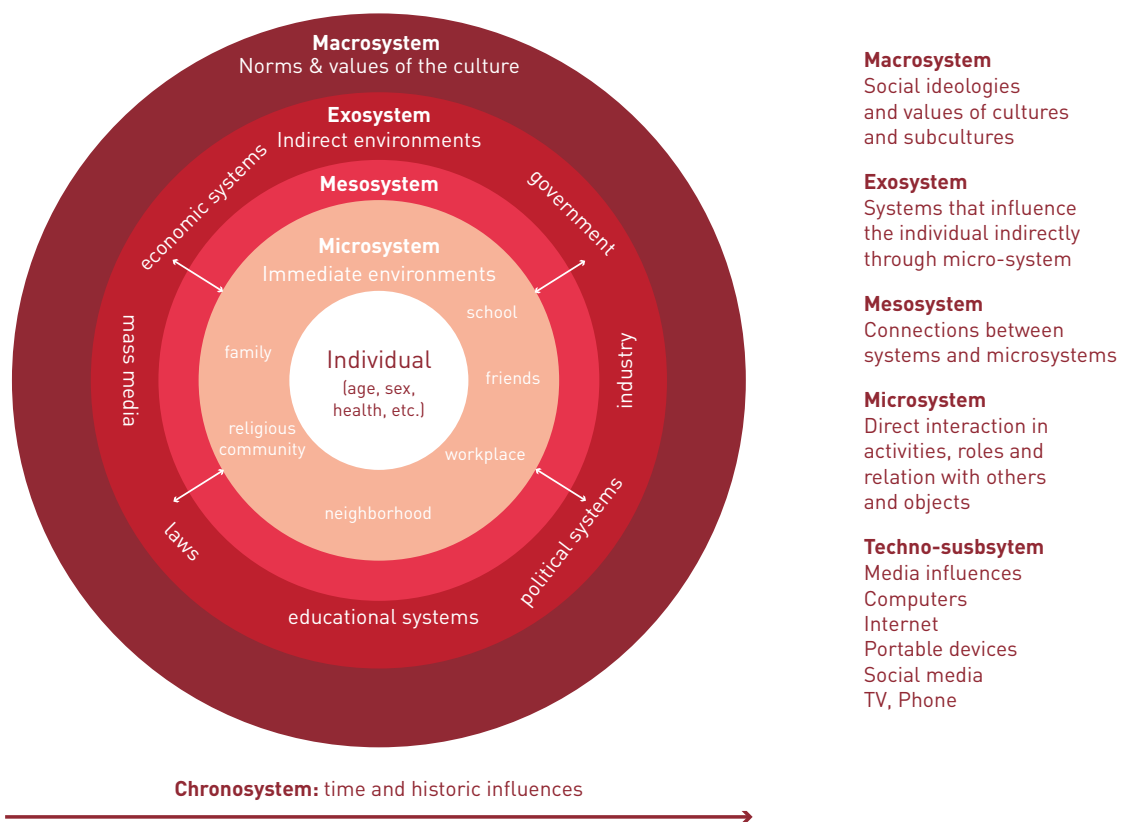
Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model of Human Development

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model, graphically represented in Figure 1, sets out the various influences and intersections of children’s daily lives. Its framing of life lived in context and as a series of relationships has had an important impact on thinking about the dimensions of well-being. Bronfenbrenner argued that prior models ignored the importance of the individual and his/her relationship to different contexts (first and most importantly, the family, but also friends, neighbors, teachers, and so on) which comprise the child’s “microsystem.” These interactions have a strong and direct influence on children. At the next level, are connections between other actors, e.g. between parents and the child’s school (the “mesosystem”). Children are also indirectly influenced by the societal context, including the community, services, parents’ workplace, and the media (the “exosystem”) and the wider societal context, culture, economy, policy, and global conditions

(the “macrosystem”). These different systems are dynamic and interdependent (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998; see also Lippman, 2004; Stevens et al., 2005).

Children actively create their own well-being within these systems. Bradshaw et al. (2007) summarize the model succinctly, noting that “the creation of health and well-being is ... a process with outcomes depending on the personal background, the inner and outer situation, strengths and capacities of the individual” (Bradshaw et al., 2007).

Figure 1: Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model of Human Development



The model accommodates a multidisciplinary and multi-cultural approach to children’s learning and well-being and continues to serve as a useful framework, including in the development of indices to track children’s well-being (see section three for additional discussion).

Significance of Diverse Cultures

In an increasingly interconnected world, differences in cultures (Bronfenbrenner’s macrosystem) become even more critical in discussions of learning and well-being. Current debates on what children should learn and the ways in which this contributes to their well-being continue

a long tradition that cuts across cultures. Contemporary forms of schooling across the world are strongly influenced by traditions from Europe and North America, but other parts of the world have their own long histories of schools. Some examples of differences between cultures are included in Box 4 on this page. Another perspective on this topic is that of Amaryta Sen who suggests that we no longer inhabit a universe where "disengaged tolerance" allows us to say "you are right in your community and I am right in mine" (Sen, 2009), instead we share a globalized world where our different cultural realities interpenetrate. As anthropologist Shanti George concludes in the box on How do different cultures approach learning and well-being? developed for this WISE Research Report: "No one culture has all the answers; we can all learn from each other."

Box 4: How do different cultures approach learning and well-being?

Learning of course begins at birth, as does concern for well-being, long before a child sets foot in school. An anthropological classic that describes child care across the world shows "why Fulani mothers place a small knife by a sleeping baby's head to keep the child safe.... why Balinese people never let an infant's feet touch the ground, whereas a Fulani woman delivers her newborn directly onto the bare earth" (De Loache and Gottlieb, 2000, p. 5), underlining the fact that "Although there is great diversity in infant care practices in the seven societies discussed in this book, babies are considered precious in every one" (p. 4).

All societies have developed their own localized visions of what well-being is and how to communicate that to children through education (formal or informal or both), and in all societies visions of well-being are constantly subject to change from within and from outside. Research reveals that school aged children in "rich" countries do not necessarily experience high levels of subjective well-being, as demonstrated by children in 15 countries across the world (Rees and Main, 2015). Similarly, psychometric research shows that a sample of children in New Delhi displays many similarities in levels of happiness and well-being with a sample in the USA (Holden et al, 2012). The full range of human diversity should therefore be addressed, for "childhood... has different meanings and definitions in different contexts" (Rees and Main, 2015, p. 4).

Around the world, we find efforts to imbue schooling with deeper insights into learning and well-being: "Among the Basotho in southern Africa, informal learning was supplemented with short intensive periods of formal instruction where young people learned life skills and history, and undertook endurance tests. For over 700 years, children in Islamic societies across much of Asia and Africa have attended Qu'ranic schools or Madrasahs" (Ansell, 2005, p. 127). Such forms of schooling have sometimes been successfully combined with new pedagogy, for example pre-schools in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda that are based within madrasahs (Zimmerman, 2004, p. 91-107). The philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti and his followers set up schools in India and abroad to encourage

learning as a positive engagement with life rather than some mechanical transmission of knowledge (Krishnamurti, 1981, p. 57). A detailed case study of one school describes achievements and challenges (Thapan, 2006).

Even where learning has been largely informal, children can make work into play and into shared learning about their natural and social environments. Cindi Katz (2004) brought this idea to life in her depiction of a Sudanese village where children learned with pleasure through domestic and agricultural tasks as well as herding, all within a “community of practice.” Attempts to introduce formal schooling into such contexts can prove successful; Katz described how water pipes freed daughters from fetching water and enabled them to attend school, although in the face of major challenges.

In her research on primary school age children in New Zealand, Bronwyn Hayward (2012) does not assume that well-being is correlated with income or status, either in positive or negative ways. Instead, she works within a varied sample of schools to highlight the different assets enjoyed by disparate categories of children. Hayward’s research implies that we need to incorporate the varied perspectives of children in today’s plural, multi-ethnic societies, rather than assume that each society reflects some homogenous cultural world.

Such a juxtaposition of cultural perspectives from across the globe allows us to enter into each other’s diverse worlds to explore different notions of learning for well-being. Respectful conversations within and across cultures enable us to gain a better grip on the complex issues surrounding diversity in relation to children’s rights and well-being (Arts, 2010). No culture has all the answers; we can all learn from each other.

Shanti George

Process-Oriented

Process-orientation simply refers to those perspectives and initiatives that view process (that is, how events, interactions, and relationships unfold) as being as important as the outcome of those events. This orientation asserts that process has an intrinsic value that is beyond or in addition to the results or the outcome of an action. In an education environment, process takes into account not simply what you learn but how you learn it. The means or ways in which an action occurs is as significant to learning and well-being as the outcome. For example, in a classroom, the outcome of a test might be your level of achievement as a percentage; the process would refer to the way in which you achieved that test result or outcome.

As a trend that impacts learning and well-being, we want to highlight two significant ways in which process orientation has been expressed, first, in the impact of the holistic approach of the Delors Commission’s

report on Learning: the Treasure Within (1996) and second, in the growing evidence for the significant role of the process of human interaction (the nature and quality of positive relationships) on both learning and well-being.

Learning: the Treasure Within

The Four Pillars of Education were first introduced in UNESCO's 1996 Delors Report, Learning: The Treasure Within. The purpose of the report was to discuss and recommend strategies for education in the twenty-first century. The Commission took a broad view and identified what they referred to as the four pillars:

- **Learning to know** centers on the need to develop cognitive capacity “to better comprehend the world and its complexities” as well as to create a foundation for lifelong learning;
- **Learning to do** highlights the importance of developing skills and competence for participation in the global economy and society;
- **Learning to be** highlights the importance for individuals to develop their potential as a “complete person.” Education should enable learners to develop self-understanding and social skills;
- **Learning to live together** centers on the importance of learning values implicit in human rights, democracy, intercultural understanding, and respect.

The four pillars of education are intended to promote “the fulfillment of the individual as a social being” (Delors et al, 1996, p. 53). The Delors Commission also emphasized the importance of a broad notion of “lifelong education” (although the term “lifelong learning” is now more frequently used), including formal, informal, and non-formal settings. Education throughout life should adapt to changes in the nature of work and also support the “continuous process of forming whole human beings” (Delors et al., p. 19). Thus, well-being and well-becoming are significant for both children and adults.

Nearly 20 years after the Delors report was published, the four pillars are still cited frequently in international education meetings and policy reports as well as the scholarly literature. However, the direct impact on educational policy is less evident. Elfert (2015) argues that the workplace “skills agenda” has overshadowed the more humanist approach of the Delors Report. Instead, education policies have offered “technocratic solutions to complex social problems” (p. 96). Carniero (2015), who served on the Delors Commission, suggests that it is possible to design more balanced policies. Education, he notes,

needs to respond to far-reaching changes that are taking place in society at large and, in particular, in the workplace. The way in which individuals put their knowledge to work depends on the capacity for empathy, for working with others and on initiative and autonomy, to evaluate and take risk, and to plan for both shorter and long-term actions.

The Importance of Relating on Learning and Well-being

Evidence seems clear that positive relationships with teachers support better learning. Teachers who show they care about students' learning and set challenging goals for learning are more effective (Bishop and Glynn, 1999; Cornelius-White, 2007; Hattie, 2009; Marshall and Wiliam, 2006). Other research bridging education and neuroscience highlights the social and relational aspects of learning (Tayler and Sabastian-Galles, 2007; Blackmore, Winston, and Frith, 2004). Likewise, studies on intrinsic motivation have contributed to understanding the positive impact of relatedness on well-being (Reis et al, 2000; Deci and Ryan, 2002).

On a practical level, the advice for teachers about developing relationships with their students can sometimes be overwhelming (Hargreaves, 1998). From the perspective of the trend of process orientation, it may help to clarify the distinction between relationships (a relatively stable set of complex interactions developed over time) and the act of relating (engaging with another through bringing full and empathic attention in the moment). Much of what we know about learning through relationships has its origins in the work of Lev Vygotsky, the child psychologist who asserted that learning is relational and that language/conversation is central to the relational aspects of learning (1962). But relating (engaging in the moment) is connected more to the ideas of Martin Buber who stressed that the best way to teach a student is to see him or her not as an "it," but as a whole, complex, and empathetic human being (Buber, 1937). This can happen in a moment, regardless of the number of students in the classroom or the circumstances of their lives. It is this action of relating that process orientation is emphasizing and trying to encourage in all learning environments.

The "capabilities approach" for children

Over the last thirty years, the capabilities approach has emerged as an important theoretical framework for well-being, human development, and social justice. The approach is based on two core principles, first, that the freedom to achieve well-being is of primary moral importance and second, that this freedom is to be understood in terms of people's capabilities, their real opportunities to do and be what they "have reason to value." (Sen, 1999).

The capabilities approach has had a significant influence on human development policy and research. A quick search for the capabilities or capability approach in the EBSCO database of academic literature yields 4,780 references (search date: August 27, 2015).

Much of the literature on the capabilities approach has focused primarily on adults. However, as discussions on children's agency have deepened, so has the thinking on the relevance of the capabilities approach to children's well-being and well-becoming (Biggeri, 2015; Hart, 2010, 2012; Robyens, 2006; Yaqub, 2008).

Nussbaum (2006), who has significantly developed the capabilities approach, has proposed three "central human capabilities" that are important to develop in education:

- critical thinking (logical reasoning, dealing with difference of opinion and taking responsibility for one's own arguments),
- the ideal of the world citizen (the ability to understand differences and shared interests among groups and nations and to identify opportunities to bridge communities), and
- the development of narrative imagination (the ability to understand the emotions and wishes of another person) (Nussbaum 2006; Hart, 2015).

Education, in Nussbaum's view (2010), should support children's ability to reason, to debate, and to empathize. The inquiry-based Philosophy for Children (P4C) program, for example, aligns well with these three central capabilities and has been Nussbaum's recommendation as an example of Socratic pedagogy, important for developing the skills of citizenship (Nussbaum, 2010). We describe the P4C program and its approach to enquiry, dialogic reasoning, and so on in more detail in section four.

Strengths-Based Approaches

With strengths-based approaches, we are looking at the resources of the individual, in terms of assets rather than deficits. It's an emerging field of interest, particularly in the field of psychology, with strong implications for learning and well-being.

Positive Psychology and Flourishing

The field of positive psychology focuses on the factors that contribute to human flourishing (Holder, 2011). This focus on human well-being

and how to promote it is a radical change from approaches that have emphasized fixing what's wrong.

Although positive psychology has experienced something of a revival since the late 1990s, the ideas are not new. The elements of positive psychology may also be found in various schools of philosophy, going back to the ancient Greeks and the “wisdom traditions” of world religions. Although these different schools of thought and traditions have different understandings about how to achieve a meaningful life, they have in common a more holistic view of human development.

Seligman (2011) has set out a framework for well-being, which he calls his PERMA model. PERMA stands for Positive Emotions, Engagement, Positive Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. This is a eudemonic understanding of well-being, that is, well-being as personal fulfillment (see Box 2). The focus on emotions, engagement, relationships, and meaning highlights the importance of social-emotional learning, while the focus on accomplishment highlights cognitive aspects, including the feeling of well-being one has as a result of having achieved an aim.

A number of positive psychologists and other researchers in the learning sciences have also identified ways in which well-being, including the dimension of happiness, supports learning and achievement, including higher levels of creativity, better cognitive processing, greater productivity, and a broader scope of attention. Social-emotional benefits of positive well-being include improved social relationships and strong resilience (Avey et al., 2006; Cohn et al. 2009; Frey and Stutzer 2007; Hershberger 2005; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005; Mahon et al. 2005; Tugade and Frederickson 2004).

Educators may also nurture learner well-being through support for cognitive, social, and emotional development. For example, Dweck (2012) found that a “growth mindset” supports better learning outcomes than a “fixed mindset” (a growth mindset can be described as a belief that one can develop his/her basic aptitudes, interests, and initial talents through application and experience, while a fixed mindset can be described as a belief that one either does or does not have talent).

Duckworth and Seligman (2005) have focused on the importance of character for learning. They found that learner self-discipline was more important than I.Q. in predicting academic performance. Duckworth coined the term “grit” (2007a) to describe the tendency “to sustain interest in and effort toward very long-term goals.” Teachers and parents may work with children to develop their capacity to persist toward goals, encouraging them to take on challenges, to allow themselves

to fail, and to overcome failure. (Of course, as Rose (2015) has suggested, knowing when something is not working is also important.)

Costa and Kallik (2000) identify 16 “habits of mind” that students may call on to sustain or improve performance under challenging conditions. These habits support strategic reasoning, insightfulness, perseverance, creativity, and craftsmanship. For Costa and Kallik (2000), the import of these habits is that they provide a way for students to think not only about what they know but also how to act on that knowledge. Lucas, Spencer, and Claxton (2013) have distilled the research on creative dispositions and on learner progression to identify five essential habits of mind: inquisitive, persistent, imaginative, collaborative, and disciplined.

This is of course only a sampling of the research in the field of positive psychology, which is strongly focused on developing empirical evidence. At the same time, we should note that positive psychology and work in the area of social-emotional learning has not yet attained a truly global reach; more work needs to be done to understand the impact of culture on thinking about positive psychology and children’s learning and well-being. Nevertheless, the focus on flourishing and the push for more empirical data to support appropriate policies, programs, and practices are relevant to children’s learning and well-being in all regions.

Pluralistic approaches

Pluralistic approaches recognize the diversity of learners’ social identities as well as diverse ways of learning that are important to well-being and educational attainment. By pluralism, we mean those elements and activities that recognize and affirm diversity that exist within or in parallel with a dominant culture. These elements could be cultural, racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, or other identities and expressions existing within the same society or social organization. Simply stated, pluralism addresses what we generally consider when we refer to diversity within a society.

Increasingly, there is a recognition that pluralism extends beyond what could be called group diversity into the arena of individual differences. A number of disciplines have begun to address those differences. In education, we have a large response in the growth of both personalized learning (instruction, curriculum, or environments to meet the individual’s learning needs) and differentiated instruction (providing different students with different avenues or environments to

learning) (Claxton, 2006; Tomlinson and Brighton, 2003). While personalized, differentiated, and self-directed learning may have some of the same features, in practical terms they are significantly distinct. Personalized learning and differentiated instruction are controlled by the teacher; self-directed learning is controlled by the child.

Box 5, “Inner Diversity and Individual Differences”, developed for this WISE Research Report by educator Luis Manuel Pinto, describes one approach to addressing individual differences in learning. It is particularly significant in this discussion of our key trends because the approach engages aspects of children’s agency, pluralism, strengths-based approaches, process orientation, and human development (capabilities).

In addition to improvements in academic and social achievement, there is a strong link between individualized approaches (students being addressed according to their individual preferences and needs) and their subjective reports of well-being. Approaches to well-being such as those proposed by Martin Seligman (2002) and Carol Ryff and Burt Singer (2004) emphasize the importance of self-acceptance and recognition of one’s strengths, which is what pluralistic practices promote, as a foundation for well-being.

Box 5: Inner Diversity and Individual Differences

Those in relationship with more than one child, whether as educational professionals or care-givers, can observe fundamental differences in how children interact with their environments. These differences include specific ways in which individuals derive meaning and purpose from their experiences. These differences have been referred to as “inner differences” or sometimes as “patterns of inner diversity” (Gordon and O’Toole, 2015). Such characteristics tend to be observable from infancy and are consistent throughout life and in various settings. They are experienced as a necessity rather than a choice, and they have a strong impact on how individuals experience well-being and learning.

A simple pattern of inner diversity is the variation in the speed and rhythm in which students pick up new information and ideas and the confidence with which they process and use them. Research in individual difference and neurocognitive science highlights the importance of being sensitive to individuals’ differential time requirements in coping with learning tasks (Coffield et al., 2004; Tomlinson and Brighton, 2003; Yates, 2000).

Since the 1970s, there has been an emergence of approaches, models, and instruments that analyze and measure individual differences, which is a wider concept than inner diversity. This broader field of individual differences includes notions of temperament, intelligence, learning, and/or cognitive style or type (e.g. personality.) There has been evidence demonstrating a correlation between

some of these psychological constructs and well-being (Steel, Schmidt, and Shultz, 2008). Further, research on individual differences has supported a pluralist view on ways of learning and has served as leverage for educational argument for differentiation and personalized learning. The use of models and typologies, however, has also generated a few challenges: (a) creating labels which provide a fragmented view of learners and their capacities, with research remaining anchored in instrument-focused theoretical models (Ritter, 2007); (b) generating a maze of models and approaches that discourages practitioners from exploring ways in which they could cultivate environments that are respectful of inner differences (Rayner, 2011); and (c) offering little exploration of the subjective view of learners on their own patterns of learning.

Inner diversity offers a distinct perspective within the broader field of individual differences. It is an orientation that focuses on the process of how children explore, express, and recognize their own inner patterns of learning and processing. Specifically, this provides young people with ways to explore their own inner patterns, through the practice of evolving capacities. Unlike other approaches to individual differences, the focus in inner diversity is on the process of discovery; however, the understanding and use of what is discovered is an important side benefit. This perspective can be framed as an ecologic model in which experience is processed by the child's own frame of reference, which expands as the child deepens connection with herself, others, and the environment by exploring her own patterns of learning and communicating. (Geisen, 2013)

In helping young people develop skills and competencies to reflect on and act in concert with their unique ways of interacting and learning, inner diversity aligns with trends toward holistic approaches to education (Clark, 1997) and educational researchers describing sets of qualities, skills, dispositions, and habits that contribute to effective learning. Through its process orientation, inner diversity supports the practical use of research and enhances the self-esteem and agency of learners of all ages.

Luis Manuel Pinto

An Integrative Framework For Well-Being: A Process Approach

In the preceding pages, we have briefly reviewed some of the most compelling trends in the emerging field of learning and well-being. The ideas, concepts, and influences come from widely divergent sources and from multiple disciplines but all relate and add to our understanding of the nature of the relationship between learning and well-being. For the development of indicators of child well-being, Ben Arieh and Frønes (2011) have argued that there's a need for different disciplines to work from a common framework. This is certainly critical also for advancing the field of learning and well-being.

It is worth remembering that in this WISE Research Report, we are interested in research primarily to the extent that it can guide and

inform action among policy makers and practitioners. A conceptual model is important for helping to identify congruent definitions and relevant domains, but it must also be able to serve as a guide for those who want to create better lives for our children.

In response to this need for an evidence-based and practical model, we have chosen to highlight an integrative framework developed by the Universal Education Foundation ([www. learningforwellbeing](http://www.learningforwellbeing.org)).

The pragmatic advantages of this framework is that it is specifically focused on the synergetic relationship of learning and well-being; it builds on the work of contemporary international organizations while taking account of various traditions throughout the world; and it represents contemporary trends from a number of disciplines. Most importantly, however, it frames the concepts in a way that speaks to various actors in education, health, media, social welfare, justice, arts and culture, and families and communities. This allows for the possibility of developing common action around a common agenda. Indeed, partners representing these various sectors have gathered and worked together using this integrative framework for more than nine years, first in Palestine and more recently in Europe.

The Learning for Well-being Framework, depicted graphically in Figure 2, brings together key features of various models and also portrays the dynamic nature of learning and of well-being (O'Toole and Kropf, 2010). It is considered a "process" approach because it focuses on what is happening but, even more critically, on how it is happening. The underlying purpose of the framework is to cultivate capacities and environments that support children learning to lead happy, healthy, and meaningful lives.

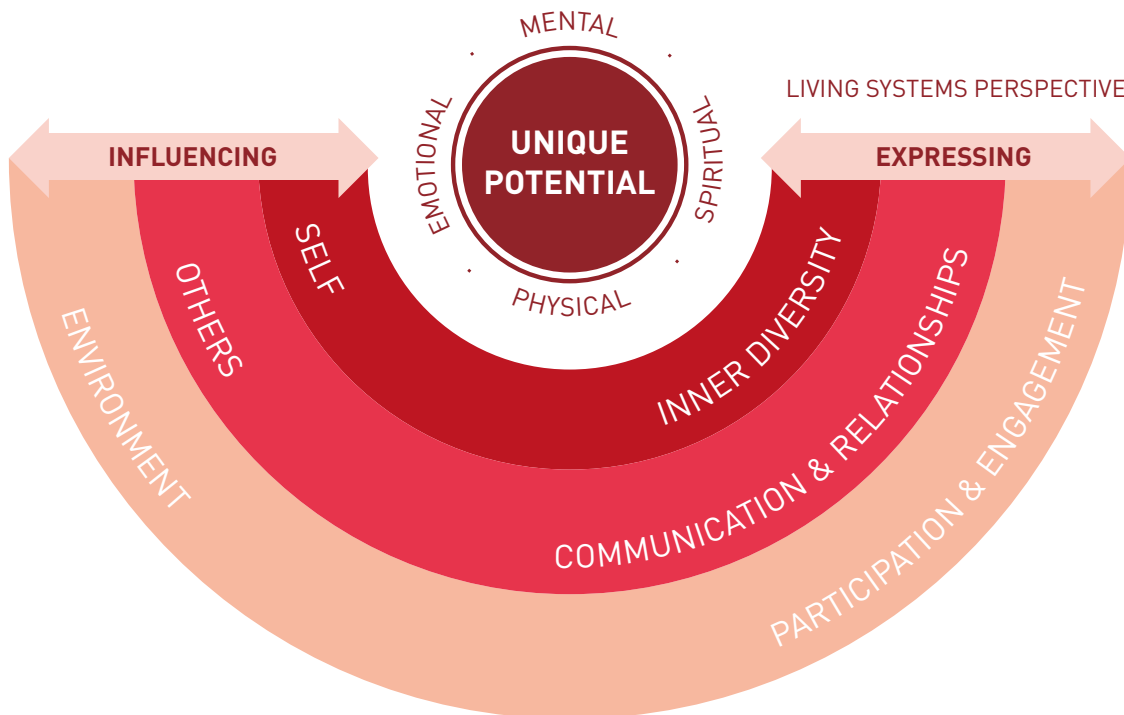
In its process approach, well-being is understood as giving a purpose to learning; mutually reinforcing learning in the sense of becoming more finely human and responsive to one's world offers a path toward greater well-being. Thus, the emphasis is on the process of learning (values, attitudes, practices, and choices) which allow children and adults to experience a sense of coherence, motivation, and self-esteem and to prepare them to address what is known and unknown in the present and future.

Acknowledging the conceptual, pragmatic, and inspirational relationship between learning and well-being allows practitioners of many disciplines to support the development of individual capacities and to design and influence environments (both micro and macro) that enhance the natural synergy between learning and well-being. The realization of each child's

well-being at the heart of the framework; additionally, it emphasizes certain points about learning that relate directly to the trends we have been discussing:

- Learning is a self-directed activity; teachers, guides, and other role models are critical to the process, but it is the learner who learns [agency, key trend 1]
- Learning is inherently a social activity, occurring in diverse environments and through interactions and relationships [systems approach, key trend 2]
- Learning is holistic, involving the whole person, mind, body, heart, and spirit [process orientation, key trend 3]
- Learning requires the development of capacities that enable learners to express their unique potential [capabilities approach, key trend 4]
- Learning is optimized through an assets-based perspective, in contexts which build on the learner's natural strengths [strengths-based, key trend 5]
- Learners have individual processes and needs that must be acknowledged and accepted [pluralism, key trend 6]

Figure 2: Learning for Well-being Framework



This framework brings in the relationship of the child to others and the environment, echoing the themes of ecological systems theory, but it also moves beyond earlier models with the inclusion of children's participation and the dynamic perspective of living systems.

The core of the model highlights the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual/ethical aspects of learning and well-being. Research on what and how children are learning, as explored in positive psychology and the capabilities approach, is important here. Finally, the element of participation and engagement highlights the importance of including children's own views of their well-being.

Key issues

In this section, we have addressed the synergetic relationship of learning and well-being by selecting six key trends that are influencing current thinking about the underresearched field. The trends we identified are: children's agency and participation, systems-based approaches, process orientation, capabilities approach for children, strengths-based approaches and pluralism.

Within each of these trends, we have highlighted those elements we consider to be particularly illuminating for understanding the nature of learning and well-being. We concluded the section by discussing an integrative framework that promises to function as a useful conceptual model and a means for researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to come together around a common agenda and common language.

In the next section, we will explore how the trends explored here are reflected in international and national indices that track learning and well-being. Several of these indices incorporate concepts of children's agency and the importance of context for well-being in their design. In section four, we highlight selected promising practices, concrete examples of how different trends are being put into practice, in schools and communities.

#3

MEASURING LEARNING
AND WELL-BEING:
INDICATORS

#3 MEASURING LEARNING AND WELL-BEING: INDICATORS

Societies are increasingly driven by measurement. Numbers provide an easy way to track progress, and for this reason, also attract the attention of media and policy makers. In recent years, there has been increasing attention on the development of social indicators to track the well-being of children. These indices are intended to counterbalance economic indices and to track social progress (UNICEF, 2007). The multi-dimensional design of indices, which include different measures of children's education, may potentially provide insights on more effective interagency working to support learning and well-being and influence the allocation of resources. International indices also provide a gauge of each country's different strengths and weaknesses and provide an idea of what is possible.

There are now a number of high profile annual indices and frameworks for reporting on well-being, including the UN's Human Development Index, launched in 1990, the more recent UN World Happiness Report, launched in 2012, and the OECD Better Life Index launched in 2011. Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Index, implemented in 2010 and 2012, surveys individuals 14 years old and older regarding different aspects of their lives, including learning. Bhutan's GNH was among the earliest efforts to counterbalance Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measures of economic progress with measures of social well-being. However, it does not include measures of children's subjective well-being in school (respondents are 14 years of age and older), but the measures for spiritual, physical, social, and environmental health, have had an important influence on the national curriculum.

Indices focused on children include UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys and Innocenti Report Cards (300 surveys have been carried

out in more than 100 countries since 1995) and Save the Children’s Child Development Index (nine reports have been published since 2002). There are examples of one-time regional and national indices, including the Index of child well-being in the European Union (Bradshaw, Hoelscher, and Richardson, 2007; Bradshaw and Richardson, 2009) and a study of Child Well-Being Indicators on the Pacific Rim (Lau and Bradshaw, 2010).

In this section, we discuss concepts and methods underlying selected international and national indices of children’s well-being. We are particularly interested in models which reflect the key trends related to learning and well-being discussed in section two of this report. These indices use a combination of objective and subjective measures (i.e. observable data versus personal viewpoints) to better understand interrelationships and impact.

In the following sections, we’ll explore:

- Conceptual frameworks and the key trends,
- Subjective measures, and
- Missing elements and challenges.

It’s important to note that indices of child well-being, and more specifically of learning and well-being, are still relatively new, and there are continued discussions on how to refine and improve them.

Conceptual Frameworks And The Key Trends

As we have emphasized, well-being is a holistic, multi-dimensional concept. It incorporates children’s activities, needs, material well-being, thoughts and emotions, and the quality of their relationships (Ben-Arieh et al., 2001). Indices to measure children’s well-being bring together large sets of heterogeneous data. They may report separate domains of well-being or be reported as a single composite number. Domains included should be supported by a clearly defined theoretical construct and organize large sets of data into logical categories (Liddle and Carter, 2015; O’Hare and Guitierrez, 2012).

The indices included in Box 6 represent some of the more visible current efforts to measure children’s well-being. They are also particularly pertinent to discussions of learning and well-being.

Box 6: Six indices that track children’s learning and well-being

Index	Domains	Survey Aims
Children’s Worlds Survey (Rees and Main, 2015)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The home and the people they live with 2. Money and things they have 3. Relationships with friends and other people 4. The area where they live 5. School 6. Health 7. Time management and leisure time 8. Self 	Data from 53,000 children around 8, 10 and 12 years of age in 15 countries across four continents. The survey allows comparative insights regarding the context of children’s lives, how they spend their time, and how they feel about their lives.
Child Well-Being on the Pacific Rim (Lau and Bradshaw 2010)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Material situation 2. Health 3. Education 4. Subjective well-being 5. Living environment 6. Risk and safety 	Comparison of child well-being in 13 countries of the Pacific Rim. The index follows Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological view of a child’s well-being, which is understood as multidimensional (see section 2 of this report) The inclusion of subjective well-being indicators (children’s responses to questions about their health, education, relationships, and life satisfaction) follows the UNCRC emphasis on child participation and voice.
An Index of Child Well-being in Europe (Bradshaw and Richardson 2009)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health 2. Subjective Well-being 3. Personal Relationships 4. Material Resources 5. Education 6. Behavior and risks 7. Housing and Environment 	<p>Comparison of child well-being in the 27 countries of the European Union and Norway and Iceland. Principles guiding selection of indicators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focus on outcome rather than input and direct rather than indirect measures of well-being, to the extent possible • The child, rather than parents or the household, the unit of analysis priority to indicators of current child well-being now, rather than indicators how a child might do in adulthood • In line with the UNCRC, indicators of children’s subjective well-being

Index	Domains	Survey Aims
A Microdata Child Well-Being Index: Conceptualization, Creation, and Findings (Moore et al., 2008)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family economic well-being 2. Health 3. Safety/behavioral 4. Community connectedness 5. Educational Attainment 6. Social relationships 7. Emotional/spiritual well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures well-being of US children aged 6 to 11 using individual children (micro-data) rather than population-based data. • Explicitly separates outcomes (measures of child well-being) from contextual measures (seen as measures of risk or inputs). • Develops separate indices for children age 6 to 11 and those aged 12 to 17.
UNICEF Innocenti Report Card 7 on Child Well-Being in Rich Countries: A Comprehensive Assessment of the Lives and Well-Being of Children and Adolescents in the Economically Advanced Nations (2007)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Material well-being 2. Health and safety 3. Education well-being 4. Family and peer relationships 5. Behavior and risks 6. Subjective well-being 	<p>A comprehensive assessment of the well-being of children in 21 industrialized nations. The conceptualization of the index was guided by the UNCRC.</p> <p>This index was an early effort to move beyond poverty measures as a proxy for child well-being. It includes both objective and subjective well-being measures (e.g., average achievement in reading, mathematics and science literacy, and transition to employment).</p>

(Source: Authors)

To some extent, these indices capture key trends in policy and research related to learning and well-being, as outlined in section two. For example, in line with the UNCRC’s emphasis on agency, prevention, and participation, indices they include measures of children’s subjective well-being (that is, their own views, and not those of their parents or teachers) and support children’s agency (key trend 1). These subjective measures also ensure a focus on how children feel about their current lives and well-being and not only their preparation for adulthood (i.e., their educational attainment) (key trend 3).

In line with the ecological model of children’s well-being (key trend 2), there are several context-related measures across the different indices, such as living environment (home, school, neighborhood) and relationships with parents and peers. As Lippman et al. (2009) note, contextual indicators are inputs critical to the well-being of children, such as the neighborhood environment or services available, but they are not themselves measures of child well-being. They caution that conflating individual and contextual variables makes it impossible to

determine what kind of policy or program interventions may be needed. If contextual conditions are tracked separately, it will also be possible to determine whether improvements in context are linked to improvements in child well-being (Moore et al., 2008).

Lippman et al. (2009), in their discussion of conceptual and methodological issues related to the inclusion of positive indicators of child well-being, argue that it is vital to include relationships in well-being indices. They contend that research in the area of social capital formation shows the impact of relationships on well-being and supports the idea of developing a separate category. They propose that relationships including family, peers, school, and the community should be assessed within different domains as well as the larger macrosystem (key trends 2 and 6).

Child development encompasses both positive and negative elements. Although traditionally indicators of child well-being have focused on negative elements (child mortality, drug use, teenage pregnancy, and so on), the UNCRC, with its emphasis on children's participation, as well as new thinking in educational psychology, the sociology of childhood, and on human and social capital have all supported a push to include more positive indicators of development (Lippman et al., 2009). Positive indicators need to capture several aspects of children's lives including their individual behaviors and qualities, their relationships and social connections, and the contexts in which they live (key trends 2, 5, and 6). However, positive constructs at each of these levels are challenging to develop. While what counts as either positive or negative involves a value judgment, there tends to be greater consensus on the negative constructs (Peterson and Seligman 2004). In addition, positive and negative states are not binary (i.e., either you are happy or you are not) but fall on a continuum, and indicators may or may not capture more complex states.

Indices typically include education data from the OECD's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), and from the WHO's Health Behaviors in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey. For PISA, the main focus is on educational achievement of 15 year-old students (also the main focus in the media and policy makers). But indices also draw on PISA data related to student engagement and happiness at school and the quality of student-teacher relations. The WHO's Health Behaviors in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey includes children's responses to questions about whether they feel pressured by school work, a likert scale on rating their feelings about school, how they rate their health, the quality of their relationships with parents and peers, and so on (see <http://www.hbsc.org>) (key trend 5).

Incorporating Subjective Measures

Keyes (2005) defines subjective well-being as “an evaluation or declaration that individuals make about the quality of their lives that is based on the review, weighting and summation of the quality of experiences, accomplishment, relationship and their functioning across multiple domains of living.” Keyes notes that subjective well-being is concerned both with short-term feelings of happiness and satisfaction (emotional well-being), as well as with developing abilities and capacities as a fully functioning person and citizen (psychological and social well-being; see also see also box 2 on the hedonic and eudemonic definitions of well-being).

Until recently, many of the major indices on child well-being included only objective measures (e.g. years of education, immunization, etc.). If they have included subjective measures, these have often used proxy measures, based on parent and/or teacher perceptions of child well-being, or have only included data on adolescents (Tomy et al. 2011; Casas et al. 2013) as input from children younger than ten years of age, at least in early efforts to construct indices of subjective well-being, were deemed unreliable (Land, 2000). Other researchers have countered these objections. For example, Ben-Arieh (2005) notes that concerns regarding response rates and reliability of young children are unfounded, and, indeed, they are sometimes better than for adults. For example, Funk et al. (1999) found that parents do not know how children spend their time. Nor can parents or teachers report on children’s perceptions (Ben-Arieh, 2005). Researchers now accept that children’s reporting on their subjective well-being is reliable. There is still some concern, however, that children’s reporting on objective measures, such as household income, resources or parents’ occupations may not be reliable.

Ben-Arieh (2005) and others have also suggested that children have cultural and social frameworks of their own (“youth culture”). Children, they recommend, should be involved both in the conceptualization of outcomes, as well as data collection and interpretation. Children from minority and disadvantaged groups should also be included, in order to ensure representativeness (Andrews and Ben-Arieh, 1999). Bianchi and Robins (1997) found that from the age of eight, children may be consulted directly for information. In Ireland, for example, children eight to 12 years old were included in a national consultation on the national well-being indicators (Nic Gabhainn and Sixsmith, 2005). The children highlighted the importance of relationships and positive activities or things to do, each of which has implications for well-being and learning.

Other debates have focused on the relevance of children’s subjective well-being for policy making. For example, the 2009 OECD report on child well-being excluded indicators of children’s subjective well-being, which were seen as not “policy amenable” (OECD, 2009). We agree, however, with Lau and Bradshaw (2010) who argue that subjective well-being does provide important information for policy makers and should be included. Many of the more nuanced aspects of children’s learning and well-being cannot be captured through purely objective data.

Several international indices now include a mix of objective and subjective well-being measures (see Box 6). The developers of these indices share the view that the best way to capture what matters to children is to ask them directly and that children can indeed serve as valid and reliable sources of information.

Missing Elements and Challenges

As noted, international indices bring together data from existing national and international surveys and assessments. Although the measures of children’s learning and well-being described do reflect several elements of key trends in policy and research, as noted above, important elements are still missing. For example:

- Surveys of children’s subjective well-being ensure that children’s own views about their well-being are included. However, the survey questions do not necessarily include information on whether children are aware of their rights or that they have the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them (key trend 1).
- Although studies of children’s own views of their well-being have highlighted the importance of learning beyond school, including positive activities that provide opportunities to master competencies are important for their well-being, these elements are not fully explored. New thinking on how to measure learning outside of schools is needed (key trends 2 and 3).
- In spite of efforts over the last decade to develop positive indicators, the research base on children’s positive well-being is still very thin (Holder, 2011; Liddle and Carter, 2015). There is a need for further theoretical development as well as empirical research (O’Hare and Gutierrez, 2012; Holder, 2011). Further efforts to define positive well-being should also engage a broader set of stakeholders, including children (Ben-Arieh, 2005; Fattore et al., 2007) (key trend 5).

It’s also important to note that other methodologies (aside from large scale surveys or assessments) are more appropriate to measure

aspects of key trends, such as the capabilities approach for children, which emphasizes the ability to reason and to listen to and empathize with others' points of view as an essential element of well-being (key trend 4), as well as the relationship between children's emotional well-being and learning or of social identities and learning (key trends 5 and 6).

There are also practical issues to consider in regard to construction of indices, first and foremost being the availability of quality data. This has an impact on both conceptual and methodological choices. For example, positive indicators of child well-being are still scarce and more data may be available for some domains than others or not available at all (e.g., countries and regions typically have more data on health than on children's social relationships; Moore et al., 2008; see also Amerijcx and Humblet, 2014). Data collection may be difficult in contexts where countries lack the expertise and/or resources to collect, store, and analyze data (Carboni and Morrow, 2011).

Cultural differences across countries may in some cases present another challenge for the development of global indices of child well-being. Different communities may not identify the same constructs of positive well-being or may place more value on some than others (Carboni and Morrow, 2011). Views on well-being may also vary within communities, between genders, generations, and socio-economic status. These views may also change over time, as individual and social values shift (Carboni and Morrow, 2011; Pollard and Lee, 2003). International organizations attempt to address these challenges through pre-agreed national conventions on definitions.

Well-being indices, as noted at the beginning of this section, are really still in the early stages of development. More research will be needed to identify which models predict children's general well-being most effectively, including domain-specific well-being (e.g., the relationship of children's learning and well-being; Moore et al., 2008).

As suggested in UNICEF's (2007) first multi-dimensional overview of children's well-being:

When we attempt to measure children's well-being what we really seek to know is whether children are adequately clothed and housed and fed and protected, whether their circumstances are such that they are likely to become all that they are capable of becoming, or whether they are disadvantaged in ways that make it difficult or impossible for them to participate fully in the life and opportunities of the world around them. Above all we seek to know whether children feel loved, cherished, special

and supported, within the family and community, and whether the family and community are being supported in this task by public policy and resources. (p. 39)

Key issues

This section has described recent efforts to develop international and national indices to track children's well-being and, in particular, domains related to learning and well-being. We have focused on indices that incorporate the idea of children's agency (primarily through the inclusion of surveys of children on their subjective well-being) as well as their learning in different contexts. These indices potentially provide a way to track progress across countries and to understand better the factors that impact children's learning and well-being. These indices are still in the early stages of development. More attention is needed in regards to improving the quality and availability of data and also to address missing elements, such as children's learning and well-being beyond school.

In section four, we explore promising practices in schools and communities. These cases show how different stakeholders in very different settings are placing well-being at the center of their work and where children are full partners.

#4

PROMISING PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES

#4 PROMISING PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES

Introduction

In this section, we set out concrete examples of programs and practices to promote children's learning and well-being. The "promising practice" cases featured in this section include:

- Elham Palestine
- Children as Actors for Transforming Society (CATS)
- Child to Child
- Philosophy for Children (P4C)
- Rights Respecting Schools (RRS)
- Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

An important criterion for selecting these particular cases has been that they provide concrete examples of the trends set out in section two. They are all focused on promoting children's participation and ensuring that their voice is heard and taken into account. One of the shared characteristics is that children and adults work together to define needs and find effective approaches to address them. Empathy and critical thinking, strengths-based approaches and pluralism as described in section two are also important features of these programs. Several of the case studies also highlight how partners from different sectors may work toward a shared vision to support the synergy of learning and well-being.

A second criterion for selection has been to highlight policies and programs that address the barriers mentioned in section one. We want to illustrate that approaches to support learning and well-being are not reserved for programs or schools with generous resources, highly-trained professionals, and/or who are working with small-groups of children. Partners, including the children themselves, have found creative approaches to address these challenges.

A third criterion has been to demonstrate a multiplicity of ways for enhancing learning and well-being. The cases include programs

implemented in communities as well as in formal education systems, are geographically diverse, and illustrate a diversity of approaches at many levels, from localized programs to national frameworks. All of them have achieved scale and reach, albeit within specific contexts. It's important to note, however, that these program and policy approaches are still more the exception than the rule. Where available, we note the results of program evaluations since evidence of impact is vital.

(NB: A list of websites with further detail for each of these programs is included in the Annex)

The Promising Practice Programs

Elham Palestine

Elham Palestine is a nationwide program, extending throughout Gaza and the West Bank, that engages young people in advocacy and dialogue with education decision makers to systematically consider ways to reshape their learning environments to be more conducive to well-being. The approach is based on a comprehensive process that stimulates, identifies, supports, and disseminates innovative initiatives that make a difference in children's learning environments. The aim is to enhance social cohesion, individual and collective initiative, entrepreneurship, creativity, and a spirit of hope.

Elham was initiated with the Voice of Children (VoC) survey. The survey used both quantitative and qualitative research instruments to capture young people's perceptions on how school affects their well-being. The VoC survey was undertaken in Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine between April and June 2006, with approximately 1,500 students ages 15 to 16 in each of the three countries. The report on the findings was used as the basis for a series of national and local consultations (Awartani et al., 2008).

Crafting a partnership carrier for Elham that was national and inclusive has been a key strategy. It began with strategic partnership agreements with the Ministries of Education, Social Affairs, and Health and with UNRWA, in addition to three of the largest business groups and the largest foundation in Palestine. Although all regions of the country have been involved in Elham partnerships, an important lesson has been the need for widening the Elham Palestine local stakeholders' base and providing training to district coordinators and local committees. More can be done in the coming years to extend the program and to establish an evaluation process that will measure systemic impact, including a second edition of a national VoC survey.

The Elham network continues to expand, most recently to include the significant media outlets of Palestine. This has resulted in launching a televised “Learning for Well-being Forum.” More than 40 one-hour episodes, addressing holistic topics related to well-being, have been produced by AlQuds Educational TV and are broadcast four times a week by Maan-Mix Satellite Station.

From its inception, Elham has engaged children in most phases, seeking their views through the VoC survey, soliciting advice on how to improve schools and communities, and involving them in ongoing programs. During each nominating cycle, a panel of youth has convened to evaluate initiatives submitted by their teachers and principals. In the last year, criteria for those eligible to submit initiatives have broadened to include young people, individually and in groups.

One recent example of a student-led initiative is the Children Combat Internet Addiction initiative, developed by three boys in Qalqilya Basic Boys School. The boys received training from a local NGO on developing questionnaires and conducted interviews with Internet café owners, parents, members of civil society organizations, and students using the Internet. As a result of intensive advocacy, Internet cafés now limit the time one person can use the computers and no longer allow students access during school hours or late at night. Officialdom responded by approving bylaws that prohibit Internet cafés from catering to minors after 7 pm.

Key messages

Since its inception, children’s participation and voice has been a central feature of Elham Palestine. Children have played a key role in defining needs, as well as in designing, implementing, and evaluating programs. The shared focus of a broad set of community stakeholders on children’s learning and well-being, including formal agreements with various government ministries and civil society organizations, has been important for the program’s sustainability and reach. Additionally, Elham has benefited from a sophisticated online platform that has provided nominating and evaluating information in an accessible and transparent way.

Children as Actors Transforming Society (CATS)

CATS is a global program that provides a space for children and young people to engage and exchange perspectives with adults on how to work together achieve a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society where all can realize their fundamental human rights and potential

and, in other words, transform society. Its flagship event, the annual CATS conference, offers an experiential, inclusive, and fun program, co-designed and co-led by children and adults, which has, in its first three years, brought together almost 1,000 children, young people, and adults from more than 40 countries. The conference gathers diverse groups committed to children's agency and participation at all levels of decision making worldwide. The group of associated partners includes, among many others, international organizations such as UNICEF, Save the Children, World Vision, and the Council of Europe.

CATS aspires to model quality relationships between children and adults that enable mutual and meaningful learning across generations. The program focuses on creating learning environments that engage the whole person, build on everyone's sense of agency, and are stimulating, in spite of age, language, and cultural differences. The CATS conference is an opportunity to share knowledge and good practices of child participation, as well as to cultivate children's and adults' capacities to respect each other as competent partners, so that together they are better able to advocate for environments where children's voices count.

An example of a collective experience during the 2015 edition was the "Human Library," an experience in which participants of all ages were able to "read" personal stories on themes such as protecting children's rights, influencing policy, overcoming obstacles, and dreaming of what society could be like. Liv (age nine) shared her experience of visiting Namibia and learning about the country's inequalities; Umesh (age 13) spoke about children's efforts to raise awareness on illegal alcohol sale and use in a remote village in India; Zgjim (16) openly talked about his experience in war stricken Kosovo. Adults too, had many stories to share, from Susie Morgan's work with the Council of Europe, to Claire O'Kane's experience as a children's rights consultant. Activities such as the "Human Library" give participants the opportunity to express themselves openly and freely, creating a safe space for meaningful participation and cooperation.

The development and implementation of strong monitoring and evaluation is a critical component for CATS, with particular focus on both process and outcomes:

- the quality of relationships experienced
- individual participation and expression, in ways that suit
- capacities and competencies developed as a result of workshops
- integration of the experience into their daily lives and work

In addition to the conference, CATS has been cultivating a global community of child and adult activists prompting several organizations to review and improve the ways children are involved in decisions that affect them. It has also drawn the attention of policy-makers such as members of the European Parliament, that have taken CATS as an example of good practice that can inspire a greater direct engagement of children in European institutional settings.

Key messages

CATS is an experiment of working and living together in one space over a week long collectively organized conference. The focus is on the process of intergenerational and intercultural respect and collaboration. This process orientation (living the principles of the UNCRC) permeates the approach. In the relatively enclosed time and space of the conference, professionals, parents, and young people directly work, share, and live together and indirectly confront their own wishful thinking, biases, and blind spots about child agency and participation. They also develop capacities and strategies for individual and collective action. Additionally, CATS has taken monitoring and evaluation seriously, seeing it as opportunity to continue children and adult collaboration and the development of capabilities necessary for fully implementing the principles of the UNCRC.

Child to Child

Child to Child is a UK-based international NGO promoting children's rights and working to mainstream child participation in society.

Recognizing that there are numerous barriers to the realization of this fundamental human right (Child to Child, 2014; Tristram and Young, 2015), Child to Child's strategy is based on a "theory of change," establishing what must occur for children's participation to be mainstreamed and institutionalized:

- The recognition that children are capable of making a meaningful contribution
- The creation of an enabling environment, providing decision making opportunities to children and young people
- Adults and children recognizing that all children have equal rights
- The development of appropriate policy and legal frameworks
- Governments and donors placing children at the heart of their agendas

While Child to Child seeks to actively influence all five areas, its predominant focus is on the first three. Through participation in Child to Child activities, children learn how to take part in decision-making processes and how to bring about change on issues which concern them. A recent example of this is a program in London, the aim of which is to promote the inclusion of marginalized secondary school pupils. Children participating have identified various issues that concern them on which they have taken a range of actions, including fundraising for a local homeless shelter and making a short film on bullying.

Child to Child supports community stakeholders to recognize the contribution that children can make and enhances their ability to incorporate ways in which they can work meaningfully with children. Programs incorporating Child to Child have been implemented in over 70 countries, impacting millions of children worldwide and have been found to be of particular benefit in communities where children experience significant disadvantage.

As part of a global network with an international outreach, Child to Child works together with its partners to advocate to governments, policy makers, donors, and others for greater social change on children's rights. In recognition that advocacy is more effective when underpinned by a robust evidence base, Child to Child is actively promoting uptake of a monitoring and evaluation framework and toolkit for children's participation. The framework and toolkit enables agencies to monitor and evaluate children's participation in programs, communities, and in wider society in partnership with children themselves.

The projects that Child to Child implements, with and for children, are designed so that they are easy to organize within any context and require minimal resources. First, a local children's organization (for example a school or youth club) where Child to Child activities can take place is identified and an enthusiastic adult is selected to support the children. Simple tools and manuals are provided as well, but these act as guides for awareness and action rather than step-by-step instruction manuals. Child to Child activities emphasize taking into account culture, environment, and the local context, whether the activities are taking place in the U.K. or in Asia or Africa.

Child to Child recognizes that it is essential to equip adults that play a significant role in children's lives with the knowledge, skills, and understanding to support and/or facilitate participation. When working in formal education settings, its programs will necessarily include training and capacity development for teachers. In low income settings, these teachers may be untrained, unqualified, and sometimes unpaid.

A key challenge in these contexts is creating an attitudinal shift, a long-term process requiring investment of time and resources (for example, for on-going training and support).

In Sierra Leone for example, Child to Child was active in a teacher training program on child participation. They started a dialogue with the teachers about the feasibility of introducing more participatory approaches in classes, which typically have around 70 students. Teachers had the opportunity to learn new skills on how to create more space for child participation within the class. Some of the specific techniques they learned included asking open questions (rather than presenting yes or no choices), encouraging group work (as opposed to lecturing or requiring individual study) and critical thinking (where underlying concepts and principles are explained so that children are better able to understand the information they are being given.) After this training, teachers who had been trained began to advocate for more child-centered approaches with other teachers.

Key messages

We take away two key messages from this case study which involves both a bottom-up approach (through its programs in disadvantaged settings) and a top down approach (through a practical yet sophisticated way of monitoring and evaluating a variety of efforts regarding child participation.) First, child-centered approaches can be very simple but impactful in creating deeper engagement of children. This is demonstrated both by children actively working together to identify and address community needs and in classrooms where teachers trained in simple techniques leads to child-friendly classrooms where children can actively participate in their own learning. Second, it is essential to more rigorously monitor and evaluate the participation work of various organizations and to ensure that children themselves are stakeholders in this process.

Philosophy For Children (P4C)

Philosophy for Children (P4C) is an educational movement that, since its beginnings in 1979, has received significant interest in over 60 countries worldwide. P4C's primary goal is to encourage children to think philosophically through the use of two core ideas, philosophical novels and the community of inquiry (The P4C Co-operative, 2013). The selected stories are intended to make philosophical novels relevant for school-age students by highlighting fictional characters who are dealing with the kinds of complex questions that students might also encounter. Students, engaging in a community of inquiry

with their peers, share opinions, give reasoned arguments, and consider the arguments and views of others. P4C is based in the principles of UNCRC which include an emphasis on children's right to think and express themselves freely.

The aims of the P4C approach are first, to create "a special form of community" in the school (Williams, 2012), and second, to foster children's reasoning abilities, to teach them to think for themselves and make informed choices (Trickey and Topping, 2004; Williams, 2012). Teaching children to philosophize through the community of inquiry also supports social and emotional development, through fostering empathy, imagination, and compassion. Martha Nussbaum (see Section two for a discussion of capabilities) underlines the critical role of programs such as P4C in enhancing what she names as the three central capabilities important for education and participation in community life: critical thinking, citizenship, and the ability to understand the emotions and wishes of others. P4C has been used with learners of all ages and abilities but most frequently in primary schools.

A UNESCO (2007) report underlines that P4C, in its capacity to recognize the importance of intellectual stimulation and moral development of children from a very young age, is likely to fill a significant gap in contemporary education. The P4C model has also been translated and adapted to diverse cultural contexts. Adaptations have focused on connecting the methodology with local contexts which is particularly relevant for the story-telling traditions of many cultures.

Evaluation of the P4C methodology in primary and secondary schools has been particularly strong, demonstrating significant improvement in student's children's cognitive, emotional, and social skills for students participating in P4C as compared to children in control groups (Trickey and Topping, 2004). Results from a comprehensive study of primary schools in Scotland using the P4C approach suggest that even one hour's use of an inquiry-based method each week can make a significant impact on children's reasoning ability and demonstrate that the approach is conducive to promoting self-esteem in learning situations (Trickey, 2007). Additionally, students perceive the P4C process as leading to an increase in their participation in classroom discussion and to gains in their social/emotional development and thinking.

Key messages

The messages from P4C we want to highlight are its global reach and appropriateness for diverse cultures and contexts. We particularly

note how well teaching children how to philosophize through fictional characters and situations and using a collaborative dialogue fits with cultures that are rich in communal story-telling traditions. External studies have demonstrated significant improvement in student's children's cognitive, emotional, and social skills from the development of communities of inquiry in the classrooms and have shown that the impact of even brief exposure to the approach (one hour per week) tends to persist over time. Further, the simplicity of the approach in terms of time and materials required could make it accessible for communities with limited material resources.

Rights Respecting Schools

Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) is an approach driven by UNICEF that implements the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into practice in the daily life of formal education settings. The principles and values of the UNCRC are applied in every aspect of the school such as curriculum planning, policy, practice, and the school's vision and ethos. The overall aim of the approach is to create a participative, inclusive, and safe school culture. This leads to a school culture where respect for every member of the school community is guaranteed. The approach influences relationships between every actor in the school environment and is applicable in any school context. RRS does not seek to control children's behavior, but aims to positively transform the learning environment through implementing in practice the strong values of the CRC (UNICEF, 2014; Wernham, 2015).

The whole-school approach of RRS involves learning about rights (through training or curriculum interventions), learning through rights (putting child rights into practice in daily school life and on a strategic level), and learning for rights (learning and taking actions to realize and promote rights in every situation.)

The UNICEF Child Rights Education (CRE) Toolkit provides building blocks as an inspiration on how to become a rights respecting school: inclusive, democratic, child-centered, protective, sustainable, and actively promoting the rights of the child. These may be adapted to different school contexts, in widely different ways. To date, Rights Respecting Schools are found throughout Europe and Canada. As an example, UNICEF UK has been running this project since 2005 and implemented the RRS in 3,300 different primary and secondary schools. Other European countries are in the early stages of implementing the approach such as Slovakia, Spain, Germany, France, Sweden, and Denmark (Wernham, 2015).

The frame of the toolkit acts as a central organizing principle for the entire school and, by extension, for the families and community in

which the school is situated. Within its operating methods, there is a way to address values and relationships and an approach to the curriculum itself. An optional external standardized assessment process, leading to an RRS Award, also involves internal evaluation and can serve as a monitoring system within the school.

An evaluation was conducted of 31 RRS schools in England and their impact on children's well-being and achievement was measured (Sebba and Robinson, 2010). The evaluation found that the majority of RRS schools had a significant impact.

- Children, staff, school governors, and some parents had a deep understanding of the UNCRC, reflected in "a major shift in attitudes and behaviors" (p. 2).
- Evaluators found that relationships between and among pupils and staff were very positive. They found that "listening, respect and empathy were evident and there was little or no bullying or shouting" (p. 3).
- Children reported they felt empowered to respect the environment and rights of others.
- Children demonstrated positive attitudes toward social inclusivity and diversity.
- Children actively participated in decision-making in schools.
- There was evidence of improved learning in two-thirds of the schools evaluated, including improvements in attendance and attainment. These gains are attributed to classroom climates "conducive to learning" (p. 4).

Key messages

RRS provides a broad framework to implement the principles of the UNCRC in the school curriculum and potentially the community through its focus on the agency of each individual, emphasizing relationships and process, and giving attention to holistic context. Evidence on impact has shown significant positive changes in relationships between children, parents, and teachers. The framework guides but can be adapted easily to specific contexts and settings. Further, the focus on rights serves as a centralizing principle for the curriculum, addressing the concern that various programs add to the weight of what must be taught in a day.

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), Scotland

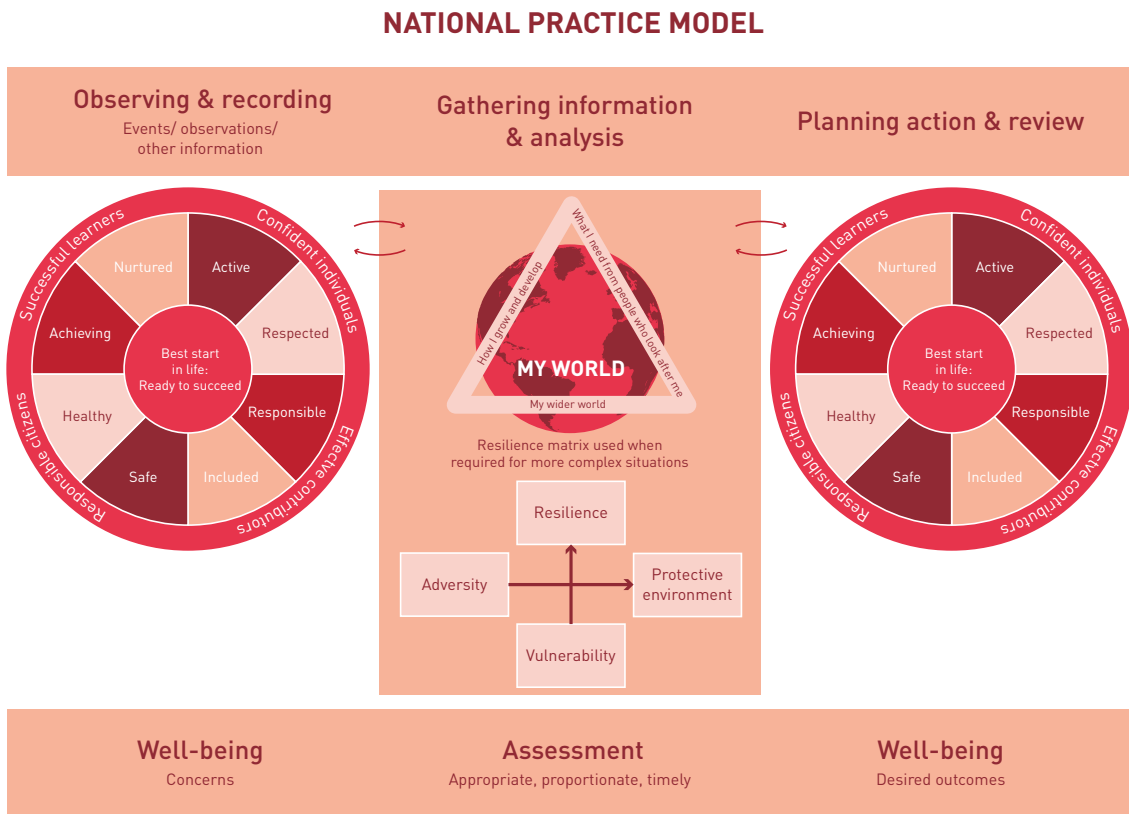
Scotland's Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is a holistic, child-centered framework focused on ensuring children's well-being across all sectors that are involved in the lives of children. Grounded in the principles of the UNCRC, it has also been influenced by developmental "ecological" practice models and recognizes the importance of addressing the needs of the whole child.

Other principles embedded in the framework are to promote opportunities and value diversity, highlighting the importance of inner diversity and children's voice in all circumstances and promoting the same values across all working relationships, with emphasis on respect, patience, honesty, reliability, resilience, and integrity among all children, young people, their families, and colleagues (Scottish Government, 2012).

GIRFEC is being integrated in all existing policy, practice, strategy, and legislation affecting children and their families. There is a strong emphasis on joint responsibility and working across all government agencies, including health centers and hospitals, nurseries, schools and leisure centers, family centers, social work services and housing offices, and civil society organizations (Scottish Government, 2012). The aim is to change culture and systems of practice so that all agencies are focused on enabling all children to reach their full potential.

In the GIRFEC framework, well-being is seen as dynamic rather than static; practitioners use the tools of the national practice model to track children's developmental progress (Forbes and McCartney, 2014; Scottish Government, 2009). The National Practice Model is composed of four key steps which are to be followed. In the first step, practitioners refer to the Well-being Wheel (Figure 3) and use eight indicators to record and share information. The eight indicators are: a child is safe, active, healthy, respected, achieving, responsible, nurtured, and included. In the second step, practitioners apply My World Triangle, a tool which helps them understand the wider picture of the child's world and identify any specific needs and risks. The third step, the Resilience Matrix, has been developed for children with more complex needs. When all needs of a child are identified, practitioners develop a concrete action plan (the fourth step) to address the individual child's needs (Scottish Government, 2012).

Figure 3: The GIRFEC model



GIRFEC aligns with Scotland’s Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), which moves beyond privileging scholarship and academic achievement as assessed by examinations to also include children’s broader well-being and resilience (Forbes and McCartney, 2014). The new curriculum takes an inclusive approach to addressing, for example, the needs of children whose families are in difficult circumstances or those for whom English is a foreign language (Sutherland and McCulloch, 2015). In schools, collaboration has been among the most challenging aspects of implementing the GIRFEC. Frustration and anxiety among teachers due to a growing number of changes does not always leave them enough opportunities for exchange with colleagues (Sutherland and McCulloch, 2015) or the time necessary to reflect before acting.

Evaluations of GIRFEC have shown a significant impact on child well-being in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2010). Professionals say that GIRFEC has provided them with a sharper focus on children’s needs and has contributed to a culture of shared responsibility and improved communications among education, health, and social work providers (Blane, 2012). Despite the fact that GIRFEC is still in fairly early stages of implementation, one of its biggest successes is the legislative link to the national curriculum (Sutherland and McCulloch, 2015). This

has facilitated the implementation process for schools and allows them and their partners to address issues of children's resilience and autonomy, which are included both in GIRFEC and the curriculum (Scottish Government, 2010).

Key messages

GIRFEC is an ambitious, multi-sectoral strategy using a holistic approach to children's well-being. The approach recognizes the importance of the different contexts in which children develop. GIRFEC is aligned with the national Curriculum for Excellence, which integrates several trends at the core of learning and well-being, including recognition of children's inner diversity as well as social diversity and the "softer" outcomes of social emotional learning. It stresses the value of a simple framework that can be used to provide a common language to a variety of sectors in order to promote the well-being of children. Early evaluation results are positive but full implementation of the program and a deeper shift in professionals' mindsets will take time.

Promoting Children's Learning And Well-Being

The cases set out above describe a range of approaches to promoting well-being in different contexts and show that positive changes are possible even in very challenging circumstances. Among these cases, we find several common characteristics:

Children are seen as competent partners.

All of these programs are grounded in the principles of the UNCRC and promote children's agency (key trend 1). The experiences of Elham, CATS, Child to Child, and Rights Respecting Schools described above, for example, show that when children are given the space to express themselves, not just in school but in their various environments, they may bring fresh perspectives and concrete proposals to strengthen community social cohesion.

There are clear aims to support the synergy of learning and well-being.

The case studies illustrate the synergy of learning and well-being as educators have shifted thinking about the what and how of learning (key trend 3, a process orientation). P4C, for example, has shown that it is possible to make sophisticated concepts accessible to children and to help them to build capacity to reason and to understand different views of the world (in line with the human development capabilities

approach, key trend 4). Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence and GIRFEC also play on the synergy of learning and well-being, with the focus on learning and inner diversity as well as social diversity (i.e., pluralism, key trend 6). GIRFEC also emphasizes the importance of supporting children's social-emotional development and understanding the different contexts in which children learn (strengths-based and context trends 2 and 5).

It is possible to overcome barriers even in the most challenging circumstances.

We've emphasized that programs to support learning and well-being do not require a lot of resources and highly trained professionals. Indeed, difficult circumstances have inspired real creativity. We can see this in Elham Palestine and Child to Child's approach to innovation with and for children. For example, Child to Child in Sierra Leone shows that teachers working with up to 70 children in a class have found ways to integrate interactive methods that support children's engagement.

There is a strong emphasis on joint working and partnerships.

The involvement of many institutional stakeholders with a common focus on learning and well-being (the family, schools, and community) is vital for the success of these programs. Elham Palestine continues to expand its stakeholder base and to deepen and consolidate its systemic integration in both the education and health systems. Moreover, it has successfully established localized Elham structures in each district across Palestine, ensuring wider and deeper community engagement. Such involvement is seen as vital if there is to be a real culture shift across Palestine. GIRFEC's holistic, whole-system approach ensures that children's well-being is the main focus across all aspects of their lives. This shared vision has been important for ongoing efforts to shift culture toward a real focus on child well-being.

International networking is a core strategy for several of these programs. These networks have inspired new synergies and opportunities for peer learning. P4C and RRS also have achieved international scale, which means that on-the-ground practitioners may find support and ideas from peers around the world.

Key issues

This section has described a select number of promising on-the-ground practices that promote the synergy of children's learning and well-being. Although none of these programs incorporates all six trends identified in section two, they do have a common focus on children's agency and promote children's learning and well-being as their main aim.

While these different programs have been adopted and adapted in a range of contexts, they do not represent the norm of school or community practice. More peer learning and policy support are needed. In the next and final section of this WISE Research Report, we discuss principles for policy to support a broader and deeper focus on learning and well-being.

#5

LEARNING AND WELL-BEING:
AN AGENDA FOR CHANGE

#5 LEARNING AND WELL-BEING: AN AGENDA FOR CHANGE

This WISE Research Report has set out to explore the synergy of children's learning and well-being. At the heart of this work is the goal to ensure that all children and young people have the opportunity to realize their unique potential, that is, to flourish.

In what follows, we propose a set of four policy imperatives that collectively constitute the basis of a reform agenda inspired by the learning for well-being framework. This agenda emphasizes the need to create synergy and complementarity among various stakeholders in the well-being of our children.

POLICY PRINCIPLE 1:

Apply an integrated framework to support collaboration across diverse agencies, academic disciplines and among on-the-ground practitioners.

Throughout this report, we have highlighted the complex and multi-dimensional nature of children's well-being and, particularly, key trends related to learning and well-being. We have also noted the broad and sustained interest among policy makers, researchers, practitioners, and other stakeholders in promoting children's well-being, as well as the many barriers to progress.

Perhaps one of the biggest barriers is the degree to which the work on learning and well-being has been fragmented across sectors and disciplines. For example, the practitioner working in child welfare, the physician, the communication specialist, and the educator are all likely to view the needs of children in very different ways and to suggest different approaches to meeting those needs. Researchers may get caught up in tracking data while losing sight of children's lives. Indeed, children themselves may (and often do) have very different ideas regarding their well-being. There are few opportunities for any of these

stakeholders to consult with each other or to coordinate and leverage their efforts. Progress in this field is likely to be slow so long as different stakeholders continue to work primarily in their own domains.

International and national agencies can provide the necessary leadership to promote a vision of learning for well-being for all. As suggested earlier in this report, such an approach can draw inspiration from the approach of the Council of Europe (2008) and elevate it to a global level, reinforcing well-being as a universal human right and further developing a vision of “well-being for all” to encompass individual well-being as well as societal and global well-being and extending to future generations. Making this happen, however, will require real political will, sustained focus, and tolerance for the risks inherent in innovation, all of which are needed to see reforms through.

Beyond this, the integrative framework described in section two can help to organize joint work across sectors and disciplines. At the national level, GIRFEC (section four) serves as an example of how an integrated framework focused on child well-being can shift the discourse across entire communities and change the ways in which agencies and stakeholders work together. Elham Palestine (section four) has shown how an entire program can be developed around children’s voices, beginning with a survey asking for their views and continuing with their central involvement in designing, implementing, and evaluating programs to support learning and well-being.

Deep changes of the kind promoted through GIRFEC, Elham Palestine, and other ambitious multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary program require regular communication, support, and openness to new ideas and perspectives, as well as persistence. The proposed integrative framework can facilitate this work and provide a way for all stakeholders to see how their own work contributes to the whole.

POLICY PRINCIPLE 2:

Support ongoing development of measurement to shape more effective policies at international, national and community levels.

In this report, we have focused on high-visibility international and national indices of well-being and, more specifically, on domains that include measures of children’s learning and well-being. Measurements need to capture what matters; in other words, they need to encompass the broad range of the factors important for children’s well-being. The multi-dimensional design of indices, which include a range of objective

and subjective measures of children's well-being in different contexts, including education, may also potentially provide insights on more effective interagency working to support learning and well-being and influence the allocation of resources. There are ongoing efforts to strengthen the quality of indices and to be sure that models include those variables with the most predictive power.

But it's important to remember that indices are only one approach to understanding the factors that affect children's learning and well-being. Currently, indices do not capture important dimensions, such as children's learning outside of school or their social-emotional development. Data may be gathered infrequently and can only provide a snapshot of the state of children's lives. Indicators are merely, as the word implies, indicative.

Beyond the international indices, there is a need for further attention to measurements that capture finer-grained detail on the quality of children's lives and which can be used in a more systematic and timely manner to identify and meet children's needs. Indeed, given the challenges involved in measurement, important decisions should not be based on a single index. National and local systems should incorporate a range of measurements, which are based on different methodologies. More qualitative data may also support a more holistic view of children's well-being. Small-scale empirical research can also help deepen understanding of interrelationships and help refine models used for indices.

Ultimately, the usefulness of indices, or of any measure for that matter, is whether it provides information that helps target need and develop appropriate responses.

POLICY PRINCIPLE 3:

Create opportunities for peer learning among policy makers as well as practitioners.

Peer learning is invaluable for policy makers as well as practitioners. Broader networking provides opportunities to learn more about what has worked, for whom, and under what circumstances and, for the very brave, to share information about what hasn't worked. Stakeholders working in different contexts may identify some common principles of effective approaches that may then be adapted as needed for local contexts. This kind of peer learning can also support a culture of entrepreneurship and initiative.

The integrative framework proposed in section two is an important way to bring together key players from different levels, where peers may include individuals from other sectors and disciplines as well as children. Two of the programs described in section four, CATS and Child-to-Child, are excellent examples of networks that bring together a broad set of international stakeholders. There is peer learning regarding specific initiatives, and there are also opportunities to develop competencies and skills. Children have a prominent role in these networks. They are developing capacities to work for themselves.

Finally, peer networks may contribute to defining the broader agenda for change. Those working at different levels and in different contexts can identify shared priorities toward the vision of a children's well-being.

POLICY PRINCIPLE 4:

Engage children as competent partners in matters that affect them.

Children's agency is the main thread running through all of the key trends, the international indices, and the case studies of promising practices highlighted. Children need to be involved as competent partners in matters that affect them. This means not only are their voices heard but that they are also taken into account. The participation of children (the young citizens) and their effective and meaningful engagement in the life of their schools and communities is fundamental to their well-being and the development of their personalities. It helps children expand their awareness, boost their self-confidence, deepen their sense of belonging to their school and society, increase their love for and desire in learning, and further their ability to live in harmony with others. Indeed, as Garborino, Stott et al. (1989) have suggested,

“[t]he point is not whether children are competent or not to provide relevant information to adults, the point is whether adults are competent enough to obtain from children the relevant information they have.”

Opportunities for education and learning should be focused on the goal of helping children to fulfill their unique potential. Since each child has unique characteristics and attributes that distinguish his/her learning style, developmental needs, and forms of self-expression, the learning environment should be more inclusive, catering to the needs of all children and to their inner diversity, enabling each of them to grow and realize his/her potential to the fullest extent possible.

In Conclusion

Moving forward, it will be important for different stakeholders to reach greater consensus on definitions and concepts and to work toward a shared vision and goals for children’s learning and well-being. It will also be important to develop a better understanding of the state of the art in policy, research, and practices internationally in order to address the gap between the reality of and aspirations for children’s lives.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Prof. Marwan Awartani

President, Palestine Technical University Kadoorie

Professor Marwan Awartani is President of the Palestine Technical University. He has served as Chairman of the Arab Foundations Forum, Acting President of AlQuds University, Co-Founder of the Palestine Academy of Science and Technology. Professor Awartani has served as Secretary General of the Universal Education Foundation, Founder of Elham Palestine, Founding President of Alpha International for Research, Polling and Informatics, a member of the Supreme Council on Innovation and Excellence, Chairman of the Palestinian European Academic Council and a member of the selection committee of the WISE Prize and of the Arab Achievement Awards.



Ms Janet Looney

Director, the European Institute of Education and Social Policy

Janet Looney is the Director of the Institute of Education and Social Policy and Joint Editor of the European Journal of Education. Ms Looney has worked internationally as a consultant with several public and private sector organizations. Between 2002 and 2008, she worked at the OECD, leading two major international studies on assessment and evaluation. She began her career as a program examiner in the Education Branch of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President (1994-1996).

About the Palestine Technical University Kadoorie

The Palestine Technical University Kadoorie was founded in 2007 as the first full-fledged governmental university focusing on scientific, technological and technical disciplines. Founded on the premises of the renowned Kadoorie Agricultural College in the city of Tulkarm, PTUK is comprised of four academic colleges: Engineering and Technology, Science and Education, Management and Business, and Agricultural Sciences.

PTUK provides education in niche disciplines and multidisciplinary degree programs that contribute to the technological foundations of the Palestinian knowledge-based economy. PTUK works closely with business, industry and government through a variety of university-business links and industrial and governmental partnership schemes.

About the European Institute of Education and Social Policy

The European Institute of Education and Social Policy is a non-profit organization with 40 years' experience in the analysis of education and training policies in Europe and partner countries of the European Union. The portfolio of projects of the institute covers all the different aspects of lifelong learning.

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Disclaimer

Any errors or omissions remain the responsibility of the authors.

About WISE

Qatar Foundation, under the leadership of its Chairperson, Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, established the World Innovation Summit for Education in 2009. WISE is an international, multi-sectoral platform for creative thinking, debate and purposeful action that contributes to building the future of education through innovation and collaboration. With a range of ongoing programs, WISE has established itself as a global reference in new approaches to education. The WISE Summit brings together over 1,500 thought leaders, decision makers and practitioners from education, the arts, business, politics, civil society and the media.

The WISE Research Reports bring key topics to the forefront of the global education debate and reflect the priorities of the Qatar National Research Strategy.

These publications present timely and comprehensive reports produced in collaboration with recognized experts, researchers and thought-leaders that feature concrete improved practices from around the world, as well as recommendations for policy-makers, educators and change-makers. The publications will focus on topics such as system-level innovation, teacher education, early-childhood education, new ways of financing education, entrepreneurship education, well-being, twenty-first century skills and education reform in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries.

This report has been reviewed by

Dr. Antony Morgan, The School of Health and Life Sciences, Glasgow Caledonian University

Dr. Dominic Richardson, Senior Education Specialist, UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti

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