

Societal well-being and its domains can serve as a framework for a better understanding of addictive substances and behaviours, resulting in more effective and beneficial policy and governance.

**Well-being framework
 OECD
 societal progress**

There has been a growing academic and political interest in using measures of well-being in public policy as a complement to traditional measures of success and progress, such as gross domestic product (GDP). In the fields of addictive products and drug policy, ALICE RAP scientists argue that a well-being frame is particularly appropriate to enhance the understanding of the drivers of use and harm, and the potential of policies to mitigate harm and enhance resilience.

Societal well-being, as captured, for example, by OECD (Figure below) provides such a frame for improved governance. Well-being has various dimensions, including quality of life (health, education and skills, social connections, civic engagement, and personal security), material conditions (income, employment and housing) and sustainability over time. There is a 2-way interaction between all of these dimensions and drugs and drug-related harms. Analyses using this frame find that, whilst some drug policies may reduce health harms, they often come at the expense of adverse side effects including criminalization, social stigma and social exclusion, all of which also independently exacerbate health harms. A well-being frame calls for whole-of-society approaches that avoid criminalization due to drug use.

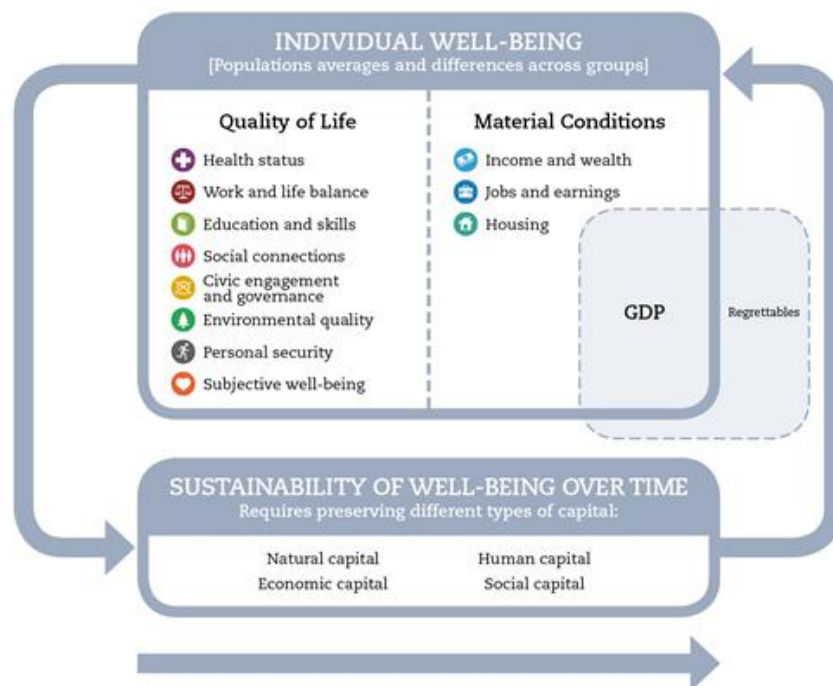


Figure OECD societal well-being frame. Source: OECD (2011).

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