

## Measuring What Matters for a Local Wellbeing Economy

### Join our international Learning Community

We are a group of researchers and practitioners affiliated with the University of Amsterdam who are passionate about Wellbeing Economics and its operationalization on multiple scales in order to make economies more inclusive and responsive to the needs of under-served communities. By means of a democratic measurement tool - the [Amsterdam Wellbeing Dashboard](#) - our initiative aims to give residents more influence over local development efforts, encouraging residents, policy officials and other stakeholders to collectively improve the wellbeing of neighbourhoods.

While this initiative developed a robust method for credible measurement of residents' wellbeing needs and priorities in a co-creative process and voicing these to policy officials in dialogue sessions, *the challenge now lies in scaling and translating broader measurements towards realising tangible impact.*

Therefore, we started this learning community, facilitated by [The Broker](#), to exchange lessons learnt and good practices with other practitioners, researchers, community groups and wellbeing initiatives, guided by the overarching learning question:

***How can economic wellbeing measurements be translated towards creating a local economy that is inclusive of marginalised communities?***

***Are you a professional or community leader working on one or more of the following themes?***

- (i) local economic wellbeing indicators and comparative measurement frameworks;*
- (ii) participatory and inclusive governance approaches with marginalised citizen groups;*
- (iii) social impact initiatives for a local wellbeing economy.*

***If you would like to learn more about these topics and exchange good practices with other like minded experts, make sure to submit this short [\[Registration Form\]](#) to indicate your interest in joining our community!***

*\*It is also possible to only join and just listen in during individual work sessions, please indicate your preference using the form above.*

### Our Vision: A locally anchored Wellbeing Economy

We envision a Wellbeing Economy that puts human wellbeing and planetary health at the centre, instead of economic growth. An economy that revolves around communities' wellbeing recognizes growth only as a means to achieve quality of life and enables people to meet their livelihood needs, in relation to each other and their environment.

A thriving Wellbeing Economy requires an inclusive society in which everyone has the equal opportunity to participate as well as local anchoring of social, economic and environmental values in the community. This not only implies consulting communities in policies and local development plans that will affect them, but also measuring the economy more broadly than in terms of monetary welfare alone. Therefore, we need to make room for other economic, social and environmental indicators at community level and ensure they reflect local priorities in a way that citizens feel represented and are part of the process .

In neighbourhoods and communities where many households struggle with low welfare, it is even more important to measure what matters in their daily lives. Often their lives take place at the interface between the formal and informal economy without being captured in official statistics. Moreover, marginalised communities often perceive existing participation processes as inadequate because they are consulted too late in the process and have no decision-making power. This makes residents feel that policies are made about them, rather than with them.

### Democratising Measurement: The Amsterdam Protocol

The long-term vision behind the [Amsterdam Wellbeing Dashboard](#) is the bottom-up development and permanent embedding of a democratic measurement tool aimed at improving wellbeing and the local economy. The priority of this project are neighbourhoods where livelihoods are at stake - this is where the biggest challenges lie with regard to wellbeing, participation and inclusion. Ultimately, this initiative should lead to a stronger social infrastructure and greater resident satisfaction with the liveability of their neighbourhood.

Together with residents, neighbourhood partners and community connectors in *Venserpolder*, researchers from the University of Amsterdam drew up a protocol that serves as a behavioural agreement and standardised procedure for developing a Community Wellbeing Dashboard. This is a long-term reciprocal learning process for residents, the Municipality and involved professionals with a focus on needs for capacity building, knowledge exchange, neighbourhood support, and conditions and mechanisms for community-based work.

Commissioned by an urban planning strategy of the municipality of Amsterdam ([Masterplan Zuidoost](#)), the Dashboard Protocol for Venserpolder, being the first of its kind, forms part of a series of neighbourhood-specific protocols to develop a neighbourhood platform around the dashboard and embedding it as a democratic instrument in local policy practice. The protocol formulates the preconditions of cooperation, identifies the different roles of all parties involved and includes a concrete roadmap, as well as the common values in which the working method is secured. This serves as a strong basis to roll it out across neighbourhoods and aggregate citizen data and their priorities on district and city level.

### In a Nutshell: Why does every neighbourhood need a Wellbeing Dashboard?

- ☑ Measures the economy in relation to citizens' wellbeing through a broader range of indicators.
- ☑ Provides insights into the basic needs and social cohesion of "people on the margins" who are facing economic inequalities and struggle with low welfare.
- ☑ Complements top-down national-level wellbeing frameworks with local context-specific indicators, taking local-level knowledge as a starting point.
- ☑ The bottom-up approach gives residents ownership and control by having them identify neighbourhood specific indicators for measurement and decide on policy priorities.
- ☑ Concrete action points are determined by residents in dialogue with local entrepreneurs, social agencies and urban development professionals.
- ☑ Scaling the approach across neighbourhoods and districts serves to give the municipal administration a better picture of trade-offs, synergies and critical areas of improvement.