

How to run a Community Wealth Evaluation

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Real Wealth and Poverty

In Human Scale Development real wealth is the adequate satisfaction of a need without doing harm to any of one's own needs, the needs of others or the needs of the earth. Poverty is not lack of money, but the absence of adequate satisfiers for any of the nine needs, so, for example, a person can have multiple poverties of affection, participation and identity, even when financially rich.

Design and illustration
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Gather

- Bring together members of your community with an interest in exploring alternative definitions of wealth.
- Find a room that is big enough to walk around in and stick stuff on the wall.



Tell a story

- Introduce the Human Scale Development approach developed by Manfred Max-Neef and his colleagues in Latin America.
- There's some useful videos you can show. (link to video)



Nine fundamental needs

- Write or print cards with the Nine Fundamental Needs:

Subsistence
Freedom
Affection
Participation
Protection
Creation
Understanding
Idleness
Identity

- In pairs, ask participants to reflect on the meaning of these needs by answering the following questions: What do I do to meet this need? What gets in the way of meeting this need? What does it feel like to meet this need?

Needs vs Satisfiers

Explain the difference between needs (universal and finite) and satisfiers (culturally specific and infinite), and explore which satisfiers satisfy several needs at once (synergic satisfiers) and which ones pretend to (pseudo satisfiers) or even do damage (violators).

Your community

- In small groups explore how your community meets each need: Are there enough adequate opportunities, people, places and institutions available to meet that need? If so, mark those as your community wealth.
- Are there certain needs that are not being met? Or even harmed? Describe what is happening to those needs and what is missing. These are the poverties your community is suffering.



Discuss your economy

- How does looking at your community through the lense of Human Scale Development change your perception of your local economy?
- Who or what seems more important? Who or what less?
- Are you wealthier or poorer than you thought?
- If you have discovered any new sources of wealth (for example a strong sense of identity and multiple spaces for participation and creation) what should you do with it?
- Is there a way to harness these resources to alleviate one or more poverties?



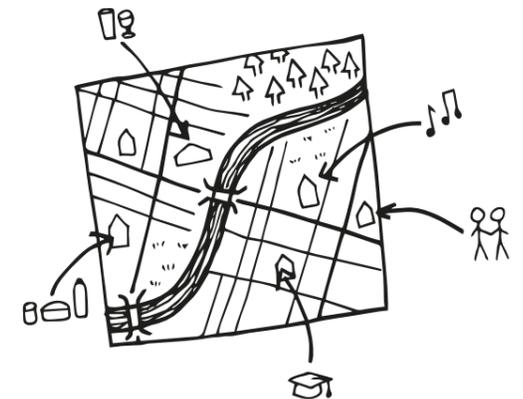
Celebrate!

You have just completed your real wealth assessment! Use it to remind you what really matters, what your community's strengths are and to inform your plan of action.

You can find out more about HSD and real wealth assessments at growinggoodlives.com

Make it visual

Use creative ways – drawing, mapping, writing, making – to represent the different forms of wealth and poverty in your community. Small groups may choose to each focus on one or two needs and then share their findings with the larger group, allowing them to make further suggestions and explore connections between the different satisfiers. For example, the closure of a local school may be seen by one group as causing a poverty of understanding while another group noted the impact on people's sense of identity and ability to participate.



Make a plan

- Decide on next steps, however small.
- Look at who is in the room and see what wealth you each bring. If there are people who make your community strong who are not, make a pledge to invite them next time.
- Promise to meet again.

