

## COMMUNITY QUALITY-OF-LIFE INDICATORS

## Social Indicators Research Series

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Volume 28

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This new series aims to provide a public forum for single treatises and collections of papers on social indicators research that are too long to be published in our journal *Social Indicators Research*. Like the journal, the book series deals with statistical assessments of the quality of life from a broad perspective. It welcomes the research on a wide variety of substantive areas, including health, crime, housing, education, family life, leisure activities, transportation, mobility, economics, work, religion and environmental issues. These areas of research will focus on the impact of key issues such as health on the overall quality of life and vice versa. An international review board, consisting of Ruut Veenhoven, Joachim Vogel, Ed Diener, Torbjorn Moum, Mirjam A.G. Sprangers and Wolfgang Glatzer, will ensure the high quality of the series as a whole.

*The titles published in this series are listed at the end of this volume.*

# COMMUNITY QUALITY-OF-LIFE INDICATORS

*Best Cases II*

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## Preface

This book is the second in a series covering best practices in community quality-of-life (QOL) indicators. The first was published in 2004. The editors are M. Joseph Sirgy, Don Rahtz and Dong-Jin Lee. Volume 1 is a compilation of cases of best work in community indicators research. The cases describe communities that have launched their own community indicators programs. Elements that are included in the descriptions are the history of the community indicators work within the target region, the planning of community indicators, the actual indicators that were selected, the data collection process, the reporting of the results and the use of the indicators to guide community development decisions and public policy. The chapters in Volume 1 are:

Chapter 1: Vital Signs: Quality-of-Life Indicators for Virginia's Technology Corridor by *Terri Lynn Cornwell*

Chapter 2: The Sustainable Community Model Approach to the Development and Use of Multi-Dimensional Quality-of-Life Indicators by *William T. Grunkemeyer* and *Myra L. Moss*

Chapter 3: Taking Indicators to the Next Level: Truckee Meadows Tomorrow Launches Quality-of-Life Compacts by *Karen Barsell* and *Elisa Maser*

Chapter 4: A Collaborative Approach to Developing and Using Quality-of-Life Indicators in New Zealand's Largest Cities by *Kath Jamieson*

Chapter 5: 2002 Hennepin County Community Indicators Report: Aligning Community Indicators with Government Mission, Vision and Overarching Goals by *Misty Lee Heggeness*, *Paul Buschmann*, and *Thomas Walkington*

Chapter 6: The State of the City Amsterdam Monitor: Measuring Quality of Life in Amsterdam by *Peggy Schyns* and *Jeroen Boelhower*

Chapter 7: A Three-Decade Comparison of Residents' Opinions on and Beliefs about etc in Genesee County, Michigan by *Robin Widgery*

Chapter 8: Creating an Index to Evaluate a Region's Competitiveness by *Beth Jarosz* and *Michael Williams*

Chapter 9: Toward a Social Development Index for Hong Kong: The Process of Community Engagement by *Richard J. Estes*

Chapter 10: Measuring Sustainability and Quality-of-Life in the City of Zurich by *Marco Keiner*, *Barbara Schultz*, and *Willy A. Schmid*

Volume 2 continues to build on the goal of the book series. Eleven chapters are included in Volume 2. Here is a brief description of these chapters.

Chapter 1: The Jacksonville, Florida. Experience by Ben Warner (Associate Director of the Jacksonville Community Council Inc. (JCCI), Jacksonville, Florida, USA) describes a community QOL indicators project focusing on Jacksonville, Florida. The sponsoring organization is the JCCI. He explains the origin of the QOL project, the goal of producing a QOL report, the exercise involving the definition of QOL, how JCCI involved the community in the definition and

specification of QOL indicators, the actual process involved in selecting QOL indicators and the criteria for inclusion and exclusion, finding data related to the selected indicators, presenting the indicators, and using the indicators to develop community programs to enhance community QOL.

Chapter 2: The chapter titled *Indicators as a Structural Framework for Social Change* by Charlotte Kahn (Executive Director of the Boston Foundation, Boston, Massachusetts, USA) depicts a community QOL indicators project focusing on City of Boston, Massachusetts, USA. The sponsoring organization of the indicators project is the Boston Foundation. This chapter starts out with an introduction of the Boston Foundation, its history and the inception of the Boston Indicators Project. Kahn proceeds to describe the conceptual framework guiding the indicators project. She describes ten sectors, and within each sector information is provided in relation to specific population segments (e.g., children and youth). The author then describes the project structure involving two tracks: civic agenda and indicators data and reports. In terms of indicators, she explains the goals behind each indicator, the exact measure and scales, the data source and when the data were collected. She concludes by revisiting some of the core principles of the project and lessons learned.

Chapter 3: *Indicators in Action: The Use of Sustainability Indicators in the City of Santa Monica* by Genevieve Bertone (Executive Director for Sustainable Works, California, USA), Shannon Clements Parry (Founder of Sustainable Places, California, USA), Dean Kubani (Senior Environmental Analyst with the City of Santa Monica's Sustainable City Program, California, USA), and Jennifer Wolch (College Dean of Graduate Programs and Professor of Geography at the University of Southern California, California, USA) describes a community QOL indicators project focusing on the City of Santa Monica, California, USA, and referred to as the "Santa Monica Sustainable City Program." The sponsoring organization is Santa Monica City Council. The authors describe the circumstances leading to the inception of the Santa Monica Sustainable City Program, the creation of the Sustainable City Plan, the elements of the plan, the indicators, policies related to the indicators, and performance assessment based on the indicators. Finally, they describe how these indicators are used to mobilize community development.

Chapter 4: *A Measure and Method to Assess Subjective Community Quality-of-Life* by M. Joseph Sirgy (Professor of Marketing at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University) and Don Rahtz (Professor of Marketing at the College of William and Mary) introduces the readers to a measure and method to capture subjective indicators of community QOL. The measure and method is based on a conceptual model linking community residents' ratings of their overall life satisfaction and satisfaction from other life domains. Ratings of overall community satisfaction, in turn, are determined by satisfaction with a variety of services found in the community (business services, government services and nonprofit services) plus evaluations of community conditions (e.g., environment, crime).

Chapter 5: *Perception and Evaluation of the Quality of Life in Florence, Italy* by Filomena Maggino (Researcher and Professor of Social Statistics at the Università degli Studi di Firenze, University of Florence, Florence, Italy) describes a community QOL indicators project focusing on Florence, Italy. The City of Florence (Italy)

together with the Department of Statistics of the University of Florence sponsored this project. She starts out by explaining the conceptual model underlying the indicators project, and describes the survey research methods used in carrying out the study: sampling, data collection methods, selection and development of the QOL indicators, the development of composite indicators involving the subjective image of the city, the perception of the city as a tourist destination, the perception of the cultural dimensions of the city, and perception of personal safety. Then she reports trend analyses, and breaks down the data in terms of the various districts and neighborhoods within the city. She identifies several groups of residents: the satisfied group, the critical group, the satisfied-with-little group and the integrated group, and explores the determinants of satisfaction for each group.

Chapter 6: City of Winnipeg Quality-of-Life Indicators by Peter Hardi (Senior Fellow at the International Institute for Sustainable Development, Canada) and Laszlo Pinter (Director of the International Institute for Sustainable Development, Canada) is the outcome of a collaboration involving the Strategic Planning Division of the City of Winnipeg and the Measurement and Indicators program of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). The chapter introduces the reader to the concept of QOL and a little history of the indicators project, and then describes the process involving the development of QOL indicators. The authors have built a foundation for the reader by defining basic concepts such as what is a QOL framework, what are QOL indicators, how a QOL index can be formed from individual indicators, and how indicators are reported. They proceed by describing framework development, stakeholder participation, and indicator development. Following this they report on the resulting QOL framework and provide a sample list of QOL indicators for the City of Winnipeg. They also describe data availability assessment and finally the plan used to implement the framework.

Chapter 7: Sustainable Seattle: The Case of the Prototype Sustainability Indicators Project by Meg Holden (Assistant Professor of Urban Studies and Geography at Simon Fraser University, Canada) focuses the indicators project on the City of Seattle, Washington, USA. The sponsoring organization of this indicators project is Sustainable Seattle. The chapter is structured to reflect the organization's life cycle. The author starts out by describing the inception phase (1990–1991), then proceeds to describe the early phase (1991), the heyday (1991–1998), the changeover and downturn (1996–1999), the near-death experience (1998–2001), and finally the torchbearers and reorganization (2001–2004). Managers of new indicators projects can benefit significantly from the many “lessons” inherent in the Sustainable Seattle story.

Chapter 8: Using Community Indicators to Improve the Quality of Life for Children: The Sacramento County (CA) Children's Report Card by Nancy Findeisen (President and CEO of the Community Services Planning Council Inc., Sacramento, California, USA) starts out by describing how the Community Services Planning Council was formed. The sponsoring organization is the Community Services Planning Council Inc., Sacramento, California, USA. The focus of this indicators project is children residing within Sacramento County. The author turns her attention to the 2000 Children's Report Card, the primary goal of the Community Services Planning Council. She describes the process involving

collecting the needed information for inclusion in the report card. Then she devotes considerable energy in describing the content of the report card. The format and presentation of the report card are also described. She discusses the public response to the report card, the resulting summit and the events following the summit, and concludes by highlighting future challenges in this area.

Chapter 9: *Living in a Post-Apartheid City: A Baseline Survey of Quality of Life in Buffalo City* by Robin Richards (Senior Researcher at the Community Agency for Social Enquiry, Johannesburg, South Africa) and Ellen Kamman (Senior Data Manager/Researcher at Development Research Africa CC in Durban, South Africa) focuses this indicators project on Buffalo City, South Africa. The authors describe a major survey (the Buffalo City 2001 QOL Survey) designed to help city planners monitor the QOL of the city residents and conditions that can improve community QOL. They explain the survey in some detail (sampling, data collection, and survey instrument). The results are reports broken down by four geographic regions, and cover demographics, material living conditions (income, employment status, employment blockages, work seeking strategies, dependency ratio, transportation, type of tenure and housing access to basic household services, access to community services), perceptions of QOL (domain satisfactions, perceptions of safety, perceptions of community improvements, and global satisfaction with life).

Chapter 10: *Making Community Indicators Accessible Through the Census Information Center* by Rodney Green (Executive Director of the Howard University Center for Urban Progress, Washington, DC, USA), Maybelle Taylor Bennett (Director of the Howard University Community Association, Washington, DC, USA), Haydar Kurban (Assistant Professor of Economics at Howard University, Washington, DC, USA), Lorenzo Morris (Professor and Chair of the Political Science Department at Howard University, Washington, DC, USA) and Charles Verharen (Graduate Professor in the Philosophy Department at Howard University, Washington, DC, USA) aims to show how universities especially Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are increasingly taking on partnership roles through service learning and community-based research. University students, faculty, and administrators are all involved in that endeavor. It describes a model that other universities can use to set up their own community university partnership programs.

Chapter 11: *Quality Indicators for Progress: A Guide to Community Quality-of-Life Assessments* was originally written by Marian Chambers (who was a civic leader in Jacksonville, Florida, USA from 1975 until her death in 1996). The chapter has a foreword by David Swain (currently a consultant, retired from the Jacksonville Community Council Inc., Jacksonville, Florida, USA). It provides community planners with practical guidelines on how to plan and implement community indicator projects. It introduces the reader to QOL projects (motivation, definitions, components, etc.), and proceeds by taking the reader through a step-by-step approach to planning and implementing a QOL indicators project. Chambers specifically describes how early decisions (e.g., adopting a QOL model) are made. The chapter explains the processes of citizen participation, selecting indicators, compiling indicators, designing and using a telephone survey, establishing priorities, setting targets, preparing the publication, distribution and public education, encouraging citizen action, and the annual review.