

## WELL-BEING: THREATS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

EDITORIAL

GLOCALISM  
*Globus et Locus*  
[info@globusetlocus.org](mailto:info@globusetlocus.org)

Were one to be asked to think about well-being, his or her mind would probably wander among images of harmony, happiness or satisfaction. Others might focus on physical health, conjecture on the achievement of personal goals or conceive of well-being by negation: as the absence of illness, negative emotions or worries. Yet, this would be all but a complete picture.

It is in fact possible to think of well-being as a far more complex phenomenon: something other than comforting and fleeting emotions, and different from mere individual feelings of joy or vitality. Well-being may be considered first and foremost as a social issue, pertaining to the composition of conflicting values and the fulfilment of collective needs. All the more so, against the background of global phenomena such as climate change and economic inequality, well-being cannot be reduced to a patchwork of good emotions or to the absence of disease or social unrest. The interconnected and quick transformation of contemporaneity calls for a trans-individual and multidimensional understanding of the concept: encompassing the fields of physical, mental, and social health.

Yet, while commercial integration, technological developments and cultural exchanges certainly fostered innovation and improvements in each of those contexts, the process of globalization also casted long shadows for those who did not happen to find themselves on the lucky side of the barricade. Unequal

distribution of economic and material benefits can leave entire nations and communities struggling with poverty and a lack of basic resources. Cultural homogenization can erode traditional values and identities, leaving individuals feeling disconnected and lost. Technological advancements and automation can be a potential source of economic insecurity and social unrest. And finally, though not less importantly, the relentless pursuit of economic growth often comes at the expense of well-being on a planetary scale. Climate change and environmental degradation threaten food security, scourges entire regions, displaces populations, and contributes to social and psychological turmoil.

Within this context, the necessity to harness the potential of well-being rests on several shifts in focus: from a mere individualistic perspective to a collective and globally-oriented understanding of the concept; from a narrow definition to a more nuanced comprehension of the various layers and articulations of well-being; from a purely economic conceptualization of progress to a comprehensive consideration of human needs and goals; from the emphasis on well-known and prominent issues to peripheral phenomena and contexts, by no means unworthy of attention.

The four papers that open this issue employ such thematic and methodological efforts in different ways by observing several definitions of well-being through different practical lenses and conceptual frameworks.

Teresa Toldy, Łukasz Urbaniak, Thelma Divry, Dipisha Bhujel and Md. Hasnain Ansari address an often-neglected aspect of women's health: the social significance and management of the menstrual cycle. The paper concentrates on Nepal, where an enduring taboo surrounding menstruation hinders the full participation of women in societal life. Building on these premises, the authors offer a comprehensive understanding of women's experiences and preferences on menstrual health management and introduces the *Sparśa Project* as a viable way to both meet women's needs and fight discrimination.

The issue of challenges and accomplishments in the field of civil and social rights also animates the contribution by Varun Chhachhar and Niharika Kumar, who offer an interesting comparison between the condition of the transgender communities

in Argentina and India. The authors examine the historical and legislative milestones that have made the South American country a torchbearer in defending transgender rights, and conversely denounce the limits of the Indian legal framework in promoting well-being and inclusion.

The Indian context is also central to the contribution by Praveen Kumar Kolloju, Naveen Kolloju and Naveen Siriman, which focuses on a markedly tangible aspect of well-being: the availability, accessibility and affordability of alimentary resources. Building on a state-of-the-art review of the concept of food security, the authors examine in detail the policy measures put forward by the Indian governments in order to implement optimal nutrition, and discuss their limits and strengths in relation to the targets set by the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Another paper by David O. Abraham, Kabir Abdulkareem and Sunday I. Oyebamiji focuses on the impact of Covid-19 on social stability in Africa, with particular reference to how the pandemic worsened living conditions in Nigeria. The authors take into account the pre-existing social and political issues that characterize the African region, analyse the response of the Nigerian government (resulting in increasing protests and police brutality) and highlight how pre-crisis vulnerabilities can impact a nation's response to global crises.

The section *Some experiences on the topic* hosts the overview of an original project realized by Jonathan and Angelo Hankins. Their contribution describes a theatre-based performance lecture centred on the presentation of a fictional product (a longevity drink containing nanobots) to an audience of high-school and university students, with the aim of promoting reflexivity on the potential social and ethical implications of such technological advancements on human life.

Finally, Baira Ganjan Dash embarks on a comprehensive re-evaluation of tribal history in colonial Orissa. From the vantage point of subaltern historiography, the author examines the Orissan struggle against colonial rule in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and integrates oral histories, vernacular sources, and museum artifacts in order to achieve a more nuanced and accurate understanding of this period. On a different note, A. K. Nirupama's paper focuses on the way local governments can

play a critical role in formulating and implementing climate change adaptation strategies. Against the usual recourse to top-down approaches, the author discusses the project of carbon neutrality implemented in Meenangadi (Kerala) as an example of the practicability and value of a multilevel governance based on inclusive and participatory decision-making.

Whether they focus on well-being or other phenomena, all these cases challenge us to confront the inextinguishable tensions between micro and macro, local and global, individuality and collectivity – tensions that are indeed difficult, sometimes fruitful, but undoubtedly worthy of further reflection.