



Paper Proposal for the Second International Conference on Gross National Happiness – Local Pathways to Global Well-being

“The Science of Well-being:
its potential to inspire political change at many levels in the UK & beyond”

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In 2001 the well-being programme at **nef** was founded to address the question:
What would government policy look like if promoting people’s well-being was one of its main aims?

Since then we have worked with the concept of people’s well-being at many different levels:

Individually:

- Health and well-being: Project with a Scottish Health Authority designing a diagnostic tool for individual psycho-social interventions (in contrast to medical ones) to promote people’s well-being.

Locally:

- With a City Council demonstrating the power and potential of well-being indicators by assessing the well-being of young people across the city.

Regionally

- Economic Development and Well-being: Project with a Regional Development Agency exploring the potential of creating both objective and subjective Quality of Life Indicators to guide their Regional Economic Strategy.

Nationally

- Lobbying successfully to the UK Treasury and Sustainable Development Commission for the inclusion of well-being indicators in the new UK Sustainable Development Strategy.
- Launching a ‘well-being manifesto’ with eight policy ideas for promoting well-being.

Internationally

- Preliminary work with a global environmental NGO on creating a new global index of sustainable well-being – to be launched in November 2005.

This paper will explore the fact that the concept of people’s well-being, happiness and/or Gross National Happiness seem resonate at all these levels and that they appear to have the potential to inspire a fundamental shift in the political process towards a more humane and sustainable society.

The speaker is from a leading UK think tank – **nef** – the new economics foundation. Nic Marks is Head of Well-being Research at **nef**. Nic was author of *The Power and Potential of Well-being Indicators* and a co-author of *A Well-being Manifesto for a Flourishing Society*, both of which are available at www.neweconomics.org. Nic was also co-author of the UK Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare in 1994 which was re-launched last year as MDP – Measure of Domestic Progress – it is the UK equivalent of GPI. Nic attended the First International Conference on GNH in Thimpu, Bhutan.