COMMUNITY QUALITY-OF-LIFE INDICATORS
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 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 for-
mat and presentation of the report card are also described. She discusses the pub-
lic 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, employ-
ment 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 com-
nunity 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 administra-
tors 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 chap-
ter 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 com-
nunity indicator projects. It introduces the reader to QOL projects (motivation, def-
initions, 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 indi-
cators, compiling indicators, designing and using a telephone survey, establishing
priorities, setting targets, preparing the publication, distribution and public educa-
tion, encouraging citizen action, and the annual review.
The Jacksonville, Florida, Experience

J. BENJAMIN WARNER
Associate Director, Jacksonville Community Council Inc.

In 1985, the Jacksonville Community Council Inc. (JCCI) and the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce created a unique tool to measure and promote improvement in the quality of life (QOL) in Jacksonville, Florida. The Quality of Life Progress Report, published annually for the last 20 years, has required a series of community decisions about the process of determining, quantifying, and evaluating community well-being. As such, it has provided significant opportunities for community learning about measuring and improving the QOL in a community.

Background and History

About Jacksonville

Jacksonville, Florida, is a consolidated city-county government with an estimated population of 850,000 in 2005, anchoring a five-county Northeast Florida region of 1.2 million.1 Jacksonville covers 840 square miles, reaching to the Atlantic Ocean on the east and bisected by the St. Johns River, which supports commercial seaport activities, two U.S. Navy bases, and recreational activities. Jacksonville’s economy is primarily service-based, with financial and health care institutions predominating, with a strong construction industry.2

Jacksonville’s population is younger than most Florida cities, with 26% aged less than 18 years and 10.5% above 65 years. Of the population 65% is White, 28% Black/African American, and 4% identify themselves as Hispanic. The population has been growing by an estimated 1.7% annually for the last 20 years.3

About JCCI

JCCI was created in 1975 to serve as an independent citizens’ voice in examining and finding solutions to pressing community issues. The nonprofit, nonpartisan citizens group adapted a consensus-based study model to create recommendations for change, and soon added an implementation process using citizen advocates to ensure that the recommendations received the proper audience and, with optimistic advocacy, action.

JCCI’s mission is to engage diverse citizens in open dialogue, research, consensus building and leadership development to improve the QOL and build a better community in Northeast Florida and beyond. For more information, visit the JCCI website at www.jcci.org.


Origins of the Quality-of-Life Project

JCCI, from its inception, was charged with identifying community needs and developing solutions across a broad range of issues. The Amelia Island Community Planning Conference, which spawned JCCI, defined ten priority areas for community dialogue and action: downtown development, education excellence, open housing and housing supply, land use, transportation—mass transit, utilities, work opportunities as a basic human and economic need, additional revenue, strong joint civic effort, and cultural enrichment.4

The Community Planning Council, which became JCCI (together with the Commission on Goals and Priorities for Human Services and the Amelia Island Community Planning Conference), issued a report identifying goals for the community in December 1974, which was expanding on the earlier list of priority areas. These included economic opportunity, education, public safety, the natural environment, health care, racial harmony, and sufficient resources to address these issues.5

In JCCI’s first year, it issued a report, Learning About Jacksonville. This 1975 report asked, “Is Jacksonville a good or bad city?” The report directly discusses the QOL in the community, compiling “data briefs” on 11 areas: community (including governance issues and opportunities for citizen involvement), criminal justice, employment/financial assistance, energy, environment/land use, health, housing, learning, public service, recreation/culture, and social services.6

JCCI next turned to citizen-based studies on priority areas of community need, developing recommendations for action and a citizen implementation advocacy process for these study recommendations.7 A 1981 study, Coordination of Human Services,8 led to the creation of the Human Services Council, a coalition of the primary regional funders (public and private) of health and human services in Northeast Florida, with JCCI providing staff support. In 1983, this effort produced a report, Indicators of Human Needs in Jacksonville,9 using both survey and empirical data to measure and prioritize social indicators.

These events provided JCCI with a background in research and citizen involvement and a holistic perspective of the interrelated issues that need to be addressed to achieve the desired community QOL. At the same time, the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce, which had been involved with JCCI since its beginning, set as a goal to “monitor and help improve those elements of Jacksonville which affect the quality of life.”10 Its specific objectives included an action step to “develop a measurable quality-of-life assessment for Jacksonville for the purpose of influencing strategic and operational planning.”11

This objective was realized in 1985 when the chamber and JCCI came together to measure the QOL in the community, expanding beyond economic indicators to measure the breadth of what was important to the Jacksonville community. The project was informed by the national conversation about the importance of addressing QOL issues as part of an economic development strategy, with the following quote being representative of the material shared at the early planning meetings:
Money is just one factor in attracting high-tech companies. Unlike smoke-stack industries that need access to raw materials, energy, and transportation, high-tech plants locate where the quality of life is high enough to draw a skilled work force.

*(Business Week, March 18, 1983)*

The chamber referred to the QOL project as “a source of information for developing its own goals and objectives for each year.” JCCI saw the project as a tool to identify problems that required community attention. Both organizations anticipated that the project would lead to an improved QOL for Jacksonville.

The project built on a series of efforts across the country to measure or rate the QOL. Models for QOL measurement used by JCCI included Midwest Research Institute’s Quality of Life in the U.S. (1970), an attempt to compare metropolitan areas using five QOL components; a *New York Times* article comparing New York City in 1975 and 1983; and a 1972 community social-environment audit conducted by the First Bank of Minneapolis. In addition, the indicators developed by the Places Rated Almanac and a new “quality-of-life” section in the statistical reports coming from the Bureau of Economic and Business Research at the University of Florida informed the project.

However, these reports did not meet the community’s needs, as seen by JCCI and the chamber. They looked for an approach that brought citizens together to define their own vision for the community and develop indicators that measured, across some set of elements, how well the community was reaching that vision. From the beginning of the QOL project, the emphasis was on measuring Jacksonville against itself, not in comparing Jacksonville to other communities, and institutionalizing this self-reflection as part of how the community moved forward.

The 94 volunteers who joined in the effort to describe, define, and then seek to measure the community’s QOL searched unsuccessfully for a model that accomplished their purposes. Forging a new path, they proclaimed:

As far as we can determine, no other city has attempted a task such as this in such a comprehensive manner with the intent of annual review and monitoring. There has been no effort nationally to develop or standardize such data. Jacksonville can be proud of this project for it signifies tangible evidence of a forward looking Chamber of Commerce, with a strong commitment to monitor and improve the livability of our city.

The value of this project will increase over the years, as trends become apparent. If used properly, it will become a yardstick for community improvement. It sets forth both the implicit and explicit needs of the community and the resources currently allocated to these needs, providing community decision-makers and leaders with the capability of further improving what is already a highly attractive quality of life.

**Decision Points**

In creating the report, JCCI encountered a series of decision points that shaped the report and, in so doing, helped shape the efforts to improve the QOL in Jacksonville. The methodology of the report will be described through examining
these decision points, identifying the course of action JCCI took, and finally discussing some of the observed ramifications of those decisions. A time line of major improvements to the indicators can be found in Appendix B.

Purposes of the Quality-of-Life Report

Perhaps the first decision that shaped the QOL project was its purpose—the reasons behind creating the document. The original purpose was stated (in a 1985 memorandum) as follows:

The purpose of this project is to develop an annual or bi-annual objective assessment of Jacksonville’s quality of life, to be published in a brief and readable format. This would provide a self-evaluation tool of Jacksonville and its progress over time, but not a comparison of Jacksonville’s quality of life with that of other cities. The uses of the assessment would be many. For the Chamber of Commerce it would supplement the 2005 vision and assist in establishing Chamber priorities and work programs. Those areas which show evidence of improvement in the assessment would be highlighted to continue the high level of civic pride which the Chamber has fostered in recent years. For the Jacksonville Community Council, the assessment would be useful in pointing out areas deserving further research, analysis, and community action. For the city government, the assessment should assist in establishing priorities and budget items. As one indicator of community needs, the assessment should be important to the United Way when those needs are related to human services.

When JCCI published its *Quality Indicators for Progress: A Guide to Community Quality-of-Life Assessments* manual in 1994, it had extended the purposes of QOL reports to include all of the following:

- To produce an annual report card on community progress
- To serve as a planning tool for government and private institutions
- To educate the residents about their community and the factors they consider important to their QOL
- To increase awareness of the many components of progress and their interrelatedness, the connections between people and their environment
- To highlight community success stories and give credit for work well done
- To identify areas of decline or concern where community action is needed
- To help focus community resources and efforts in the areas of highest priority
- To encourage residents to take an active part in addressing community problems
- To promote accountability of local government
- To stimulate new and better ways of measuring progress

Significantly, even though the chamber was a coinitiator of the project and a partner throughout (at first financially, then providing leadership for the citizen review panel annually), the purpose of the QOL document has never been to market the community to incoming businesses, though the document has been used successfully to provide a thorough picture of the community to interested companies. Sometimes jokingly referred to as the “wart report” (because it shows the