



Relational Wellbeing (RWB) is an integrative approach to understanding, assessing and advancing wellbeing.

RWB Brief 1 gives a basic introduction to the approach and to the RWB Collaborative

RWB: The Very Basics

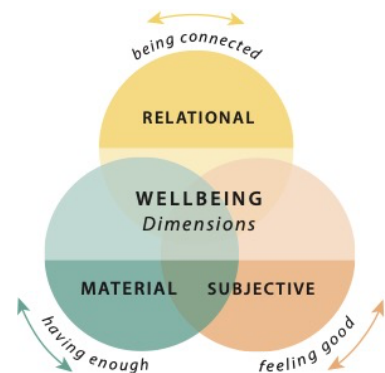
RWB builds on 20 years' research on wellbeing in the Global South. This shows that relationships are central to wellbeing, giving life meaning and helping people get by and get on. Wellbeing is not just about feeling good (**subjective**) but also having enough (**material**) to care for families and share with others (**relational**). These comprise the three interlinked dimensions of wellbeing.

Assessing Wellbeing Outcomes

We reflect these dimensions of wellbeing in three core questions:

- Do people have enough of what they need? (**material**)
- Are people connected, and are the terms of these connections enabling and fair? (**relational**)
- Are people feeling good about their lives and their futures (**subjective**)

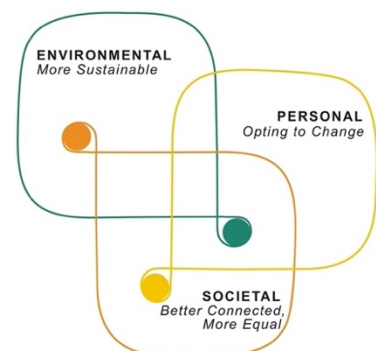
We answer these using both objective and subjective forms of data.



Targeting Wellbeing Drivers

RWB goes beyond the *experience* of wellbeing to address the underlying conditions that promote healthy environments and happy lives. It targets three forms of underlying drivers of wellbeing to achieve systemic change.

- **Personal drivers generate variability between individuals.** They include factors such as personality, personal history, direct interactions with others and the immediate context
- **Societal drivers generate variability between social groups.** They include factors such as the organisation of the economy, social difference and inequalities, policy and politics, technologies, social norms and culture
- **Environmental drivers recognise the interdependence of all living beings and the earth.** They draw attention to issues such as space, place, built environment, climate and biodiversity, pollution and ecological sustainability.



Like the material, relational and subjective dimensions of wellbeing, these drivers are interlinked and interactive. Positive shifts in the drivers of wellbeing will help shape future contexts that will be more likely to sustain or promote, rather than undermine, wellbeing.

RWB sees change as powered by interaction, rather than by individual actors or factors.

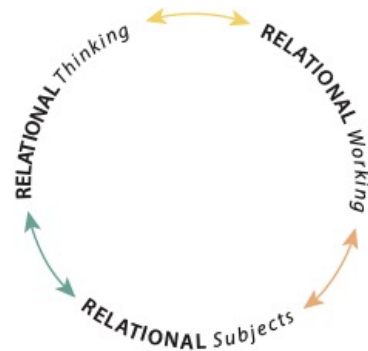
Taking a Relational Approach to Wellbeing

At the core of RWB is **relational thinking**. This emphasises flow, movement, and the interplay between actors and diverse factors that are conventionally separated into different domains or sectors or disciplines.

Programmatically, this makes us alert to unintended consequences and potential spill-over effects beyond a particular intervention. It also raises awareness of synergies, tensions and trade-offs between outcomes for different aspects of life, different kinds of people, people and the planet, and present and future generations.

Relational working involves engaging co-operatively with the people who are subjects of the change sought and collaborating with other initiatives to build broader coalitions. It means that **how** we work matters: we aim to promote virtuous circles of impact, through interactions that foster dignity and respect and strengthen local capacity and/or resilience.

Approaching people as **relational subjects** involves adopting a person-centred approach, seeing people as subjects of their lives, not objects of our interventions. It means recognising how people are embedded in their contexts and understanding how relationships structure the opportunities they face and the decisions they make.



The RWB Collaborative

The Relational Wellbeing Collaborative uses a **relational approach** to co-design and operationalise sustainable wellbeing strategies. **Wellbeing outcomes** build on programme outputs and intermediate outcomes, but speak to the broader improvements in quality of life that interventions aim to achieve. **Wellbeing drivers** constitute the underlying endowments that advance or hinder wellbeing. A successful programme will spark ongoing cycles of interaction between wellbeing outcomes and drivers, with the potential to generate systemic change.

Grounded in twenty years' research on wellbeing in the global South, our creative and collaborative approach emphasises ongoing reflexive learning to enable self-sustaining change.

We offer:

- Wellbeing strategy and programme design
- Context-specific, mixed methods wellbeing impact assessment
- Developmental evaluation and applied social research

For more on the theory and practice of RWB see:
[RWB Briefs](#)

The RWB Approach



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