

The Nordic Welfare Watch Final Conference

PROPOSALS



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Ministry of Welfare

1. Nordic Welfare Indicators

A system of 30 Nordic Welfare Indicators (NOVI) will be established to be used for monitoring welfare trends and policy making in the Nordic countries.

The guidelines in the report “A Nordic Welfare Indicator System (NOVI)-Report for the Nordic Council of Ministers” will be the road map for the establishment.

The work of the project in the report was carried out in collaboration with NOSOSCO (Nordic Social Statistical Committee) and NOMESCO (Nordic Medico-Statistical Committee) and involved national experts from the research community, governments and national statistical institutes.

- The NOVI system presented has targeted specific Nordic features and challenges and is a comprehensive yet user friendly system that could be easily and quickly implemented and maintained.
- NOVI will bring an added value to the monitoring of Nordic welfare and will be an important tool for analysing the impacts of crises on individuals' welfare in the Nordic countries and with a focus on e.g. gender, age or vulnerable groups in the population.
- NOVI can increase the sharing of experience between the Nordic countries about which policies can respond effectively to negative trends and crises. The project has not found any examples of comparative indicator systems that provide a comprehensive presentation of indicators with such a detailed presentations that are suggested for the NOVI, let alone covering the Nordic countries. The system can be a powerful tool that easily could be implemented and to a relatively low cost.

The structure for the 30 NOVI's will be the following 9 dimensions:

1. Health
2. Educational skills
3. Employment
4. Work-life balance
5. Income and earnings
6. Housing
7. Social network and participation
8. Personal security
9. Subjective well-being

The 30 NOVI's will be:

1. Self-reported health status
2. Self-reported unmet need for medical care (examination)
3. Self-reported unmet need for dental care (examination)
4. Deaths from circulatory diseases
5. Cancer mortality rate
6. Deaths from suicide
7. Early leavers from education and training
8. Educational attainment
9. Employment rate
10. Unemployment rate
11. NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training)

12. Long-term unemployment rate
13. Involuntary part-time
14. Childcare
15. Parental leave
16. Average number of actual weekly hours of work
17. Mean and median net income
18. Distribution of disposable income
19. Relative at risk of poverty rate (also by illustrative AROP threshold)
20. Persistent low income
21. Material deprivation

22. Arrears on mortgage, rent payments, utility bills and hire purchase
23. Median share of housing cost in disposable income
24. Self-reported financial burden of total housing cost
25. Social network
26. Social support
27. Social participation
28. Crime, violence or vandalism in the area
29. Deaths from accidents and/or assault
30. Life satisfaction

NOVI's will be presented at specific day annually and are expected to generate debate and political focus. The venue for publishing them will be the Nordic Welfare Forum, wich will be held every second year.

In the years when the Nordic Welfare Forum does not assemble, the NOVI's could be made public, e.g. in connection with the meetings of the Council of Ministers for Health and Social Affairs or other relevant meetings if possible.

2. Nordic Welfare Forum

A Nordic Welfare Forum will be held biannually. A formal joint Nordic forum does not exist today for addressing future challenges in the welfare systems.

The Nordic Welfare Forum will be divided in two arenas:

- One will be a venue for entering into discussions on urgent welfare issues which are at the top of the list of the political agenda (pressing issues/urgent themes).
- The second one will be a platform in which to introduce results from academic circles regarding impending challenges which have not as yet risen to the top of the political agenda.

The agenda will contain issues to which the countries should respond most urgently, e.g. predictions on the quality of life, future challenges such as the refugee crisis, social integration, care of the elderly, teenage issues, child poverty and others (top down). The themes are determined by the Council of Ministers of Health and Social Affairs and Senior Officials Committee for Health and Social Affairs.

The Nordic Welfare Forum will also be a channel for discussions on future challenges which are less apparent (bottom up). This could be implemented, e.g. by having an open window in discussion groups for introducing research and making open calls for papers from academics. This way the Nordic Welfare Forum will become a popular platform in which research in the field can be aired.

A Nordic Welfare Forum will be the venue for publishing the Nordic Welfare Indicators (NOVI), i.e. approximately 30 joint indicators that are expected to generate debate and political focus. In the years when the Nordic Welfare Forum does not assemble, the NOVIs could be made public, e.g. in connection with the meetings of the Council of Ministers for Health and Social Affairs.

The participants in the Nordic Welfare Forum would be representatives from the welfare institutions, the public administration, major interest organisations, academics, non-government organisations, politicians and others.

The Nordic Welfare Forum will be a joint Nordic cooperative project with the Nordic Welfare Center (NWC) being responsible for arranging and organizing practical matters.