



City of Reykjavík

**SOCIAL
PROGRESS
IMPERATIVE**

Reykjavik the First City in Europe to Use Social Progress Index to Advance Wellbeing for All Residents

News Release: The Mayor of Reykjavik, Iceland and the Social Progress Imperative

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The Social Progress Imperative and the City of Reykjavik announced today that the capital of Iceland will be the first city in Europe to use the Social Progress Index to map and improve the wellbeing of all its residents.

“Iceland is already a leading country in the world on social progress, and we’re used to thinking that life is pretty good in Reykjavik,” said Dagur Eggertsson, Mayor of Reykjavik. “This new effort to map what is and is not working for people in different parts of our city will allow us to make sure that there is a chance for *all* residents to enjoy social progress. This initiative should also give renewed confidence that government exists to improve the lives of residents.”

The Social Progress Index is a flexible tool that uses dozens of specific indicators to measure social and environmental outcomes—such as shelter, health, lifespan, and education—and serves as a complementary measure to traditional economic measures such as employment and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It has been used to map social performance in a variety of places, including for 161 countries at the national level, the entire European Union at the NUTS2 level, cantons in Costa Rica, municipalities in Brazil, cities in Colombia, and districts within the city of Bogota, Colombia.

“Traditional economic measures are useful to guide economic development,” said Michael Green, Executive Director of the nonprofit Social Progress Imperative. “But this new data will guide social development by providing a single, detailed understanding of how well the city as a community is meeting the needs and fueling the aspirations of its people.”

Creation of the new index for Reykjavik will include identifying local organizations across government, business, civil society, and academia to support research, use local understanding of Reykjavik’s unique characteristics to choose appropriate indicators, and commit to building on that new understanding to improve social progress across the city.

The Index’s methodology allows communities to use indicators that make sense in their local context, including those that directly impact government policy and areas where local businesses and civil society can better engage in activities that promote the health and wellness of its citizens.

The announcement of plans to create the new index was made at the end of the international “Social Progress-What Works?” conference at HARPA, which gathered social progress experts from 6 continents to examine how communities around the world are using the Social Progress Index to achieve better social outcomes for their residents than economic indicators alone would suggest.

The Social Progress Index for Reykjavik will be the first city-level use of the tool in Europe. The Social Progress Index has previously been used to examine social progress in different parts of the city of Bogota, Colombia, itself a standout performer compared to other cities in Colombia. Results for a comparable assessment of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil will be released on May 16, 2016.

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About the Social Progress Imperative

The Social Progress Imperative’s mission is to improve the lives of people around the world, particularly the least well off, by advancing global social progress by: providing a robust, holistic and innovative measurement tool—the Social Progress Index; fostering research and knowledge-sharing on social progress; and equipping leaders and change-makers in business, government and civil society with new tools to guide policies and programs. Learn more at <http://socialprogressimperative.org>