

THE REAL WEALTH OF NATIONS PUBLIC POLICY INITIATIVE

A Strategy to Advance Healthy Economic Priorities

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If we value only what we measure, what can we say about our values when we assess our economic health by only calculating GDP, overlooking the real wealth of our nation: our people and our natural environment?

Now is the time for new thinking and new strategies to address our economic crisis and the poor prognosis for our economic competitiveness – a new approach that avoids the marginalization of women and children, the majority of our population. A forward-looking economic analysis must direct attention to policies needed for a better quality of life and to the huge return on investing in human infrastructure.

That is the reason for The Real Wealth of Nations Public Policy Initiative, which the Center for Partnership Studies is developing in collaboration with the Urban Institute and a distinguished Advisory Council. This initiative will advance more inclusive and accurate indicators. These new indicators are critical to ensure policy makers shift funding priorities in healthier and more realistic directions that take into account:

- *The urgent need to invest in human capacity development, starting in early childhood, for our nation's economic health and success, especially as we move into the postindustrial knowledge and information era, as well as for strengthening families, communities, democracy, and civil society;*
- *The imperative to give greater visibility and value to the work of caregiving, still primarily done by women in both the market and non-market economies, if problems such as chronic poverty, hunger, and unemployment are to be effectively addressed; and*
- *The opportunity for change offered by current economic dislocations.*

Sample components of alternative metrics – in comparison with other nations' indicators – as measures of U.S. global competitiveness and quality of life include:

1. Health
 - pre-natal and childhood health
 - infant and maternal mortality
 - mental stress and drug and alcohol dependence levels
 - workforce stress levels
 - unwanted pregnancies and reproductive health care availability
 - food and drug safety and national nutritional standards
 - availability and quality of elder care
2. Families
 - availability of parenting education in schools

- family violence levels and types of discipline in families
 - teenage pregnancy rates and family planning programs
 - equality between women and men
 - nontraditional families recognized in law
 - tax credits, benefits, and retirement security for family caregivers
3. Education
- early childhood education: funding and participation in quality pre-school
 - after-school and other youth programs
 - access to education based on race, gender, class, ability, age, geography, etc.
 - school teacher pay and benefits, retention, job training, and continuing education
 - comprehensive sex education and education for mutually respectful relations
4. Workplaces
- paid vacation time, sick days, and parental leave
 - childcare availability at worksites
 - paycheck fairness and equal pay for comparable worth
 - workplace recycling programs and environmental hazard protections
 - right of workers to organize
5. Elderly
- programs to support community engagement of elders and continuing education
 - local facilities, agencies, and other resources for aging with dignity
 - adequate Social Security benefits that are equal and fair between women and men
 - support for home care, chronic care, and coordination of care programs
6. Democracy and Equality
- education for democracy in schools
 - free media, including internet
 - representation of women in national legislatures
 - levels of voter registration, voter participation, and reliable vote counting
 - entertainment and news media that do not perpetuate stereotypes and inequality
 - fair credit and lending practices for equality of opportunity
7. Other Key Measures of Quality of Life
- poverty and hunger levels, broken out for women and families
 - crime levels, broken out for violent and non-violent crimes
 - quality of environment including toxicity levels, water quality, etc.
 - enforcement of antidiscrimination laws on gender, race, ability, age, etc.
 - equal valuing of “feminine” and “masculine” activities
 - comparison of military spending with funding for human needs and opportunities

*The Real Wealth of Nations Public Policy Initiative brings awareness to policy makers and grassroots communities of the benefits of investing in human capacity building. It shows that we must quickly catch up with other nations (see <http://www.rianeeisler.com/documents/912RWNUSFactsheet.pdf> for comparisons). Based on Riane Eisler's **The Real Wealth of Nations: Creating a Caring Economics**, it will support a more caring and healthy economy through new measures of economic health. For more information, please contact Kimberly Otis at kotisdc@verizon.net.*

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