

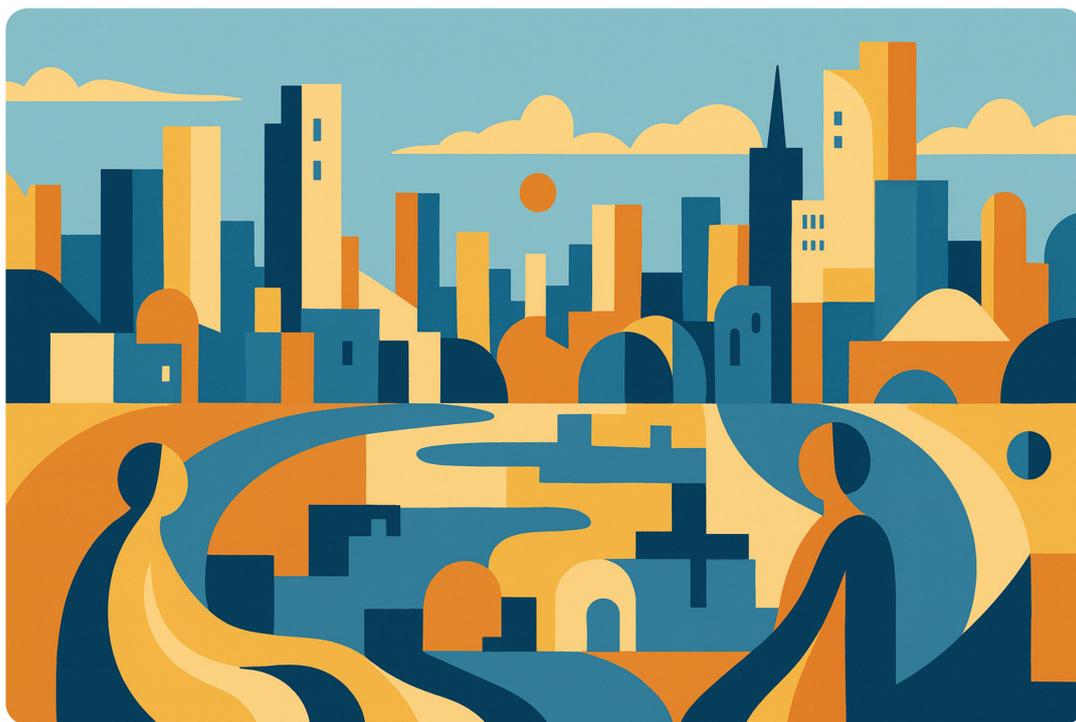


THE PONTIFICAL  
ACADEMY OF SOCIAL  
SCIENCES

WORKSHOP ON

## **NEW NARRATIVES AND METRICS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

*Exploring Measures of Integral Human Development with Theological  
Coherence, Methodological Rigour and Practical Usefulness*



18-20 February 2026  
Casina Pio IV, Vatican City



***“There is, however, a programme of the temporal order which the Church fosters today, not her programme, but your own; and to it she intends to give her moral support and also, as far as possible, her practical support: that is, the programme of the development of peoples. [...] for development is truly an indisputable exigency of justice.”***

***(Pope Paul VI, Address to the Parliament of Uganda, Kampala, Friday, 1 August 1969)***

## Concept Note

The catholic social teachings of *Laudato Si* and *Fratelli Tutti* emphasised the need to focus on integral human development, in harmony with the Creation and with a special emphasis on the poor and marginalised. Amartya Sen's writings on the capability approach has emphasised multidimensionality, substantive freedoms, and equity. These and other frameworks have given rise to research and actions focused on operationalising a richer human objective than traditional 'development' – such as the EoF and *Laudato Si*' action initiatives as well as in the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and its initiatives and networks, and in many Universities.

The emphasis on poverty was recently reiterated by Pope Leo XIV in *Dilexi Te* (13): “Looking beyond the data—which is sometimes ‘interpreted’ to convince us that the situation of the poor is not so serious—the overall reality is quite evident: ‘Some economic rules have proved effective for growth, but not for integral human development. Wealth has increased, but together with inequality, with the result that “new forms of poverty are emerging.” The claim that the modern world has reduced poverty is made by measuring poverty with criteria that do not correspond to present-day realities. This insight reinforces the need to look beyond aggregate economic progress and place human dignity and integral development at the centre of our metrics – as has been emphasised conceptually by Amartya Sen’s capability approach, which underlies policy-oriented human development paradigms.

In ways that resonate with integral human development, institutions working on the central measures of economics are searching for new metrics that encompass wider understanding of human flourishing. This was evident in the 2009 Sen Stiglitz Fitoussi Commission’s *Mismeasuring our Lives* that recommended measuring ‘Quality of Life’ across eight central dimensions of human well-being as well as providing a green GDP figure, and refining GDP itself, and the OECD has taken the commission’s work forward subsequently. It was evident in the International Panel on Social Progress, which convened hundreds of academics to ponder measures and definitions of progress, issuing three volumes and with ongoing activities. It inspires the Human Development Report Office of UNDP, as well as other groups with various dashboards or composite measures of well-being such as the Legatum Prosperity, Social Progress Index, Global Peace Index and the Global Flourishing Study.

Naturally, well-being conversations engage the longstanding example of Bhutan, which since the 1980s has pursued ‘Gross National Happiness’, regarding GNH to be more important than GNP. Since 2008 Bhutan has measured GNH rigorously across 9 domains.

The call for new metrics is now clearly articulated. The Pact for the Future (UN, 2024) reaffirmed that sustainable development, peace, and human rights are equally important, interlinked and mutually reinforcing, and called for the development of new measures of progress “to complement and go beyond GDP” (Action 53). In coherence with this vision, the *Compromiso de Sevilla* (2025) reaffirmed the call to consider measures Beyond GDP to reflect economic, social and environmental dimensions, in order to inform access to development finance and international cooperation.

These innovations are accruing amidst an unusually fertile season of data innovation – with innovations in survey-based and visual data, as well as unprecedented possibilities to merge these with satellite, administrative, and other ‘big’ data or analyse them using AI. Furthermore, there are structured initiatives in governments, international organizations, and fora that are aware of and preparing for new metrics (for example ‘Measuring Prosperity’ in G7, the ‘Beyond GDP’ High Level Expert Group, the ‘Global Data Forum’, the Global Alliance Beyond GDP, launched in FfD4 in Sevilla, and others).

In short, this is a dynamic period, with real potential for creativity in a short time period with regard to well-being metrics that could have a visible effect. The *Laudato Si* movements remind us that statistics are not just for the UN or professionals, but also for communities, faith communities and families to use in reflections on their own well-being (which is likely to go far beyond imperfect measures), and when considering how to contribute to the common good of their own and others’ communities. The Beyond GDP Lab provides an avenue for youth engagement. Statistics of integral human development must be designed for diverse users.

This workshop will bring together leaders from these strands: scholars working on human fulfilment within a theological framework; those working on counting-based measures of well-being or human flourishing (with poverty in view also), and experts on policy and on other types of metrics. The workshop will include presentations of trial counting-based well-being measures in Japan, Argentina, the US, Indonesia, Malawi, Peru; in Chad Iraq and Comoros as well as globally, a keynote on Bhutan’s GNH, and structured discussions of data, policy, communication, and process.

The aim will be to have a high level structured and problem-oriented exchange, in which we ground an open collegial conversation in normative and theological approaches to integral human development as a coordinating concept, reflect on concrete empirical examples, and together think quite practically about the relevance of one or a small set of counting-based metrics of well-being, which could be used for personal and community reflection as well as for official statistics.

# New Narratives and Metrics for Development: Agenda and Workshop Process

The heart of the workshop will lie not in technical discussions (although ample empirical evidence will be regularly shared and such discussions surely will ensue on the sidelines) but in catalytic discussions of what well-being measures like these – with stronger data – could add to the current well-being discussion, whether they are nationally tailored or globally comparable. Learning from past PASS workshops as well as those in other institutions, we are not requesting extensive presentations by most senior colleagues, but instead following a highly interactive (but carefully moderated and focused) approach, in which we hope each can engage and together create substantial value in a short time period. The agenda, thus, comprises two types of sessions. In addition, in one session on the Afternoon of the 20<sup>th</sup>, post-docs working with PASS will share their research on related themes. We will be joined by a wider group of PASS post-docs who are researching these and related topics.

**Empirical Sessions:** A set of empirical papers will be presented in 10-15 minutes maximum, with certain emphases per paper that relate to the themes. Given the time, the full technical results will not be presented (but are available, and the authors are participating), with two or three empirical papers per session (70 to 90 minute sessions). This will enable time to probe and deepen our understanding of the measurement methodology and its practical outworking. We have pencilled in names who we wish to invite to give around 3 minutes of reflections that informally respond to the papers presented.

**Dialogue Sessions:** We respectfully request all senior participants to contribute to the topics. We took the liberty to assign two persons to lead off each discussion with a presentation of 5-7 minutes each. With both moderators finished within 15 minutes this will allow time for free flow exchange of ideas (with each participant contributing up to 4 minutes only) and then a few minutes for concluding reflections and questions. The themes are as follows:

## Communication Dialogue Question:

**If a counting-based well-being measure (which we are temporarily calling MWI – Multidimensional Well-being Index – hoping for a better name to be proposed) is adopted as an official national or global measure, how can it be communicated?**

## Preliminary Observations:

1) **The MWI App:** One feature that an MWI has that a dashboard and composite lack, is that identification of who enjoys various gradients of well-being is at the level of each person. As such, when an official MWI is published, it is possible to replicate the survey questions

(simplified) in an app, to enable persons to see where they fall on the well-being gradient, where they have and lack sufficiency. If this app were made soon, then feedback on a trial MWI by users could help shape the final measure.

- 2) **The need to seed knowledge and use:** GDP is widely-known and while its technical details are not understood, it carries public weight. It is taught in schools and universities; statistics are regular and carried in the media; academics and international institutions analyse it. For an MWI to gain such visibility, acceptance, technical rigour and credibility requires activities to a) teach; b) communicate statistics; c) support research and analysis and d) embed in international institutions.
- 3) **Weights and Pluralism:** In the first round of well-being indices governments were reticent about setting the weights required for aggregation; in fact technically MWIs can be constructed such that they are demonstrably robust to a range of weights – whether these are technically applied or gathered from surveys and community groups. Dashboards/composites also face the challenge of perfectionism, but in MWIs, each person can ‘opt out’ of indicators and still have recognised well-being.

## Policy Dialogue Question:

**How could the MWI inform policies – and how does this compare to dashboards / composites?**

## Preliminary Observations:

- 1) **The MPI:** Mathematically the MWI is equal to  $(1-MPI)$  where MPI is the Multidimensional Poverty Index. The MPI has become popular because it delivers user-friendly headlines (the percentage of people who are poor), disaggregations (by state, age, area, ethnicity) and indicator details for every category showing the number of people with precise deprivation bundles. MPIs are now widely used for policy planning, budgeting, targeting, multisectoral policy design, social protection, and M&E. So MWIs could improve upon this legacy (and would already be familiar in the 60+ countries that now have official MPIs or pilot, plus those who know global MPI).
- 2) **The Limits of Policy:** Bhutan uses its GNH Index to identify persons for whom the ‘causes and conditions’ of well-being are lacking – which may address issues of adaptive preferences etc. Is this a good frame? Even so, some aspects of well-being (mental emotional and spiritual aspects, certain aspects of relationship; physical exercise, perceptions) are less commonly core areas of public policy: how could this be addressed (perhaps by overtly acknowledging the role of other actors)?

- 3) **Priorities and Social Conversations:** An MWI would be able to articulate ‘priorities’ for action nationally and by subgroups – in a way that a dashboard with undetermined weights cannot. An MWI could show how ‘growth’ might have been comprised by significant improvements in some indicators but deteriorations in others – in a way that GDP cannot. Do these features add value for policy, for political discourse or social conversations?

**Data Dialogue Question:**

**Given current data challenges, is there any possibility of national or global MWIs?**

*Preliminary Observations:*

- 1) **Global:** Ideally, a strong and policy-relevant MWI across Bhutan’s 9 domains (or the 7 of HLEG) could be computed in the short term, to give a visible (if imperfect) example. However data are lacking. Many countries are building data systems that merge data by individual identification codes, but their indicators are limited and nowhere near global. An app could in theory gather the data (and could add facial data which would greatly expand the depth of insight; and geospatially add in environmental data) but none at that scale and quality has yet occurred. Are there any real possibilities to break the data prison and obtain:
  - a. Data across 7 to 9 domains of well-being (something like 15-35 indicators)
  - b. That is rigorously sampled, and disaggregated by major policy groups
  - c. That covers all indicators for each respondent?
- 2) **National:** Some countries do have well-being surveys from the past or at present. Could these countries be ‘pioneers’ following Bhutan in developing their MWIs and showing their policy uses and political contributions?
- 3) **Poverty and Well-being:** Given the transitions in data collection at present, is there a large value in trying to ‘add’ very limited well-being questions to surveys that give rise to MPis (e.g. psychological WB and social connectedness) or not?

**Procedure Dialogue Question:**

**The Beyond GDP discussion is in full flow; EOF is engaging the youth; The Catholic Social teachings are advancing integral human ecology; etc. How can this MWI workshop contribute?**

*Preliminary Observations:*

- 1) **The MPI:** It may be that the only feasible contribution would be for the Beyond GDP conversations to include the global MPI and national MPis in the well-being dashboard, and to mention Bhutan’s GNH index as an option where data permit. This would provide familiarity and recognise that this avenue may be worth developing.
- 2) **Voice from the South:** It might be creative to introduce to the Beyond GDP conversation Bhutan’s voice and expertise – via its Prime Minister and GNH leaders

The actors in the room will have far more insights into possible procedures to take this discussion forward.

**Objective**

The aim across these 4 dialogues will be to have a high level structured and problem-oriented exchange, in which we ground an open collegial conversation in normative approaches to integral human development as a coordinating concept, reflect on concrete empirical examples, and together think quite practically about the relevance of counting-based MPis, which could be used for personal and community reflection as well as for official statistics.

The ‘Closing session’ will enable each person to share what they might be able to contribute practically or wish to do, or to mention resources that should be looked into further, networks to engage, events or experts to learn from, and so on. It could also be useful to hear if there are concrete suggestions for written outputs from this event (note-takers will be listening keenly).

# Programme

## WEDNESDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2026

- 9:00-10:00 Intro – All
- 10:00-11:00 **Maria Emma Santos, Mario Biggeri**
- 11:00-11:20 **Coffee Break**
- 11:20-12:30 **Putu Natih, Jakob Dirksen**
- 12:30-14:00 **Lunch**
- 14:00-15:00 **Jhonatan Clausen, Sabina Alkire, Lhachi Selden**
- 15:00-16:00 **Yoshi Takahashi, Rizwan Ul Haq**
- 16:00-16:30 **Coffee Break**
- 16:30-18:00 All
- 18:00-20:00 **Dinner**

## THURSDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2026

- 9:00-10:00 Intro – **Sr Helen Alford**, All
- 10:00-11:00 *Method*  
**James Foster, Sabina Alkire, Maria Emma Santos**
- 11:00-11:20 **Coffee Break**
- 11:20-12:30 *Communication*  
**Özge Aydoğan, Luigino Bruni**
- 12:30-14:00 **Lunch**
- 14:00-15:00 *Empirical 1*  
**Tshoki Zangmo**
- 15:00-16:00 *Policy*  
**Shantanu Mukherjee, Steve Killelea**
- 16:00-16:30 **Coffee Break**
- 16:30-18:00 *Empirical 2*  
**Rizwan Ul Haq, Marrio Biggeri, Jakob Dirksen**
- 18:00-20:00 **Dinner**

- 9:00-10:00 *Empirical 3*  
**Putu Natih, Jhonatan Clausen**
- 10:00-11:00 *Process*  
**Nora Lustig, Marta Pedrajas**
- 11:00-11:20 *Coffee Break*
- 11:20-12:30 *Empirical 4*  
**Yoshi Takahashi, Sabina Alkire, Lhachi Selden**
- 12:30-14:00 *Lunch*
- 14:00-15:00 *Data*  
**Enrico Giovannini, Christos Makridis**
- 15:00-16:00 *Post-doc Session*
- 16:00-16:30 *Coffee Break*
- 16:30-18:00 *Closing Circle*  
**Kim Samuel, Stefano Zamagni**
- 18:00-20:00 *Dinner*

## List of Participants

### **Sr. Helen Alford**

President, Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences (PASS)  
Vatican City

### **Prof. Sabina Alkire**

PASS Academician – Director, Oxford Poverty  
and Human Development Initiative (OPHI)  
United Kingdom

### **Dr. Özge Aydoğın**

Director, Beyond Lab, Office of the Director-General  
Switzerland

### **Fr. Albino Barrera**

PASS Academician; Professor of Economics and  
Theology, Providence College, Rhode Island  
USA 📞 via Zoom

### **Prof. Mario Biggeri**

Associate Professor of Development  
Economics, University of Florence  
Italy

### **Prof. Romina Boarini**

Director of the Centre on Well-being, Inclusion, Sustainability  
and Equal Opportunity (WISE) at the OECD 📞 via Zoom

### **Prof. Luigino Bruni**

Professor of Political Economy, Department of  
Law and Economics, LUMSA University  
Italy

### **Prof. Jhonatan Clausen**

Professor, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Lima  
Peru

### **Mr. Jakob Dirksen**

Senior Research and Policy Officer, Oxford Poverty  
and Human Development Initiative (OPHI)  
United Kingdom

### **Ms. Maya Evans**

Head of Communications, Oxford Poverty and Human  
Development Initiative (OPHI)  
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### **Prof. James Foster**

Professor of Economics and International  
Affairs, George Washington University  
United States

### **Prof. Enrico Giovannini**

Professor, Department of Economics and  
Finance, University of Rome “Tor Vergata”  
Italy

### **Dr. Steve Killelea**

Australian IT Entrepreneur and Founder,  
Institute for Economics and Peace  
Australia

**Mr. Diego Lavado**

Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Lima,  
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**Judge Joy Cossich Lobrano**

head of the U.S. Chapter of COPAJU

**Prof. Nora Lustig**

Samuel Z. Stone Professor of Latin American  
Economics, Tulane University  
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**Dr. Christos Makridis**

Well-being Lead, Gallup World Poll  
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**Ms. Corinne Mitchell**

Executive Director, Oxford Poverty and  
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**Dr. Shantanu Mukherjee**

Acting Director, United Nations Statistics Division  
United States

**Dr. Christian Oldiges**

Senior Economic Affairs Officer at UN ESCWA

**Dr. Marta Pedrajas**

Beyond GDP Alliance and Government of Spain  
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**Prof. Riccardo Pozzo**

PASS Academician  
Professor of the History of Philosophy,  
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**Dr. Lavinia Natih Putu Geniki**

Lecturer, Faculty of Economics and  
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**Ms. Kim Samuel**

Founder and Director, Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness  
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**María Dolores Sánchez Galera**

PASS Councillor; Senior Research Advisor,  
Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development,  
Vatican City

**H.E. Msgr. Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo**

Former Chancellor, Pontifical Academy of Sciences  
& Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences

**Dr. Maria Emma Santos**

Research Associate, Oxford Poverty and Human Development  
Initiative (OPHI), United Kingdom; Post-Doctoral Fellow,  
National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET)  
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**Ms. Lhachi Selden**

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**Dr. Yoshi Takahashi**

Cabinet Office, Government of Japan  
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**H.Em. Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson**

Chancellor, Pontifical Academy of Sciences (PAS) and  
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**Prof. Tyler VanderWeele**

PASS Academician; Professor of Epidemiology,  
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**Msgr. Dario E. Viganò**

Vice-Chancellor, Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences (PASS)  
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**Prof. Stefano Zamagni**

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**Dr. Tshoki Zangmo**

Researcher Oxford Poverty and Human  
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**POST-DOC JPII**

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# Memorandum

## Attendance

- Pickup schedule from the *Domus Sanctae Marthae*:

On 18, 19 and 20 February a bus will leave the *Domus Sanctae Marthae* at 8.45am to accompany participants to the Casina Pio IV where the meeting starts at 9.00am. The same bus will leave the Casina Pio IV to take you back to your hotel after dinner at 8:00/8.30pm.

Lunch and dinner for the participants will be served at the Academy on 18, 19 and 20 February. If you are a vegetarian or have any dietary restrictions (food allergies, and/or religious restrictions), please let us know as soon as possible.

## Access instructions to the Vatican Casina Pio IV

- You can come through the entrance called Perugino (Via della Stazione Vaticana, no number, it's a very short street). Instructions to the Casina Pio IV, headquarters of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, can be found in the following link:

<http://www.casinapioiv.va/content/accademia/en/about/contacts.html>

Just inside the gate there is a Vatican Security checkpoint. The Vatican Gendarmes already have the names of the invitees and will make sure everyone reaches us.

## For more information

Please refer to [www.pass.va](http://www.pass.va) for further information on the Academy, the Academicians, and current and past events.

- Dress code: is formal business attire.
- Invites are strictly personal. Please remember to bring a valid ID.
- Please refer to [www.pass.va](http://www.pass.va) for further information on the Academy, the Academicians, and current and past events.



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**Password:** G@rdens1936





**Chiesa di Santo Stefano degli Abissini**  
*St Stephen of the Abyssinians Church*

**Sede della Pontificia Accademia delle Scienze Scienze Sociali**  
*Seat of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences*  
**(Casina Pio IV)**

**Ingresso del Perugino**  
*The 'Perugino' gate*

**Ingresso Musei Vaticani**  
*Entrance gate to the Vatican Museum*

**Domus Sanctae Marthae**

**Altare Tomba S. Pietro**  
*Altar of St Peter's Tomb*

**Ingresso Sant'Uffizio**  
*The 'Sant'Uffizio' gate*

**Ingresso Sant'Anna**  
*The 'Sant'Anna' gate*



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