

A Quarterly Review of Social Reports and Research on Social Indicators, Social Trends, and the Quality-of-Life.
News Included of Research Committee 55 on Social Indicators and Social Reporting of the International Sociological Association.

Newsletter of the International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies

QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE MENA REGION

M. Joseph Sirgy

Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, USA

It seems to me that there is a constant barrage of bad news, as reported in the news media, about the quality of life in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) countries – so much death and destruction, terrorism, people ravaged by civil strife and war, people fleeing with their lives, outpouring immigration to the West, poverty, brain drain, hopelessness, and despair. Let us put aside these “anecdotes” and examine the true facts on the ground. What is the quality of life (QOL) of the people living in the MENA countries? To answer this question with statistical facts, we turn to a book recently published by Professor el-Sayed el-Aswad (2019) titled *The Quality of Life and Policy Issues among the Middle East and North African Countries*. Not only does Professor el-Sayed address this question thoroughly he also addresses policy issues directly associated with QOL indicators. As such, this book is published under the auspices of the new book series that Springer has recently launched with the collaboration of Professor Richard J. Estes and I (Joe Sirgy). This book series (*Human Well-Being Research and Policy Making*; <http://www.springer.com/series/15692>) is dedicated to the use of QOL indicators in guiding policy at the international, national, and community levels.

But first, who is this author? Professor el-Sayed el-Aswad is an anthropologist; he received his Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Michigan (USA). He has taught at Wayne State University (USA), Tanta University (Egypt), Bahrain University (Bahrain), and the United Arab Emirates University (UAE). He has an excellent research record having published on sociological, anthropological, and cultural topics related to the people of the MENA region. He is certainly is a great

scholar and an expert about QOL issues related to MENA.

The author uses data borrowed from the United Nations Development Programme showing the MENA countries and how they are rated in terms the Human Development Index (HDI) and its components (life expectancy at birth, expected years of schooling, mean years of schooling, Gross National Income (GNI) per capita \$ (see Table 1). The table also includes each country’s population count. It should be noted that the life expectancy (in years) indicator varies from 20 to 85; the indicator of expected years of schooling (years) varies from 0 to 18; the indicator of mean years of schooling (years) varies from 0 to 15; and GNI per capita varies from 100 to 75,000. The HDI figures are scalable as 00-1.00 (with MENA countries varying from .482 for Yemen and 0.899 for Israel). As shown in the table, the MENA countries are grouped in four categories, namely “very high human development,” “high human development,” “medium human development,” and “low human development.” Countries identified as high in human development are Israel, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, and Kuwait. The countries identified as low in human development are Syria, Sudan, and Yemen. These countries are besieged by years of civil strife and ravaged by war and social chaos. Also note that countries identified as medium in human development are Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, and Morocco. The key human development problem with Egypt is its population growth. Its population has grown rapidly to 91.5 million (in 2016) and is expected to continue to rise significantly. Wide-scale poverty seems to be the culprit. Political strife and turmoil seems to be the key problem for Palestine. Compare the QOL indicators

of the state of Israel (ranked the best in QOL among the MENA countries) with that of Palestine (Palestinian Territories: West Bank and the Gaza Strip)--huge difference in health, education, and economic well-being. With respect to Iraq, the low HDI ranking may be due to the political situation and civil strife. The HDI rankings seem to correspond with happiness rankings (see Table 2). Israel and the oil-rich countries of UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar,

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Editor’s Note: This issue leads off with a review essay by M. Joseph Sirgy. The essay reviews a number of statistical facts on quality of life in the MENA countries from book by Professor el-Sayed el-Aswad (2019) titled *The Quality of Life and Policy Issues among the Middle East and North African Countries*. This is followed by a message from Outgoing ISQOLS President Mariano Rojas, a message from 2019-2020 ISQOLS President Ming-Chang Tsai, an announcement of the ISQOLS 2019 Conference in Granada, Spain, and other ISQOLS announcements from ISQOLS Executive Director

SINET

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Kuwait, and Bahrain are all ranked as best in happiness. The only exception seems to be Algeria (it is ranked 5th among the MENA countries and 38 worldwide). The countries that are ravaged by political turmoil, civil strife, war, and/or social chaos rank worst (Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Egypt, Iraq, Palestinian Territories, and Iran).

Although the book addresses the MENA region in general, six countries were used to illustrate trends in QOL, namely Egypt, Iran, Israel, Tunisia, Turkey, and the UAE. The substance of the QOL analysis begins with Chapter 4, *Indicators of Quality of Life and Well-Being in the MENA Region: A Comparative Analysis*. The indicators show that QOL indicators of freedom of expression, religious tolerance, and happiness are low; nevertheless, the region at large has achieved significant progress in overall human development, particularly in relation to health, education, and economy. Let us have a closer look at the six countries selected. These results are captured by country. Tables 3 thru 7 show the human development trends in the six countries. As shown in the tables, all six countries have made significant strides on the HDI overall and all of its dimensions, namely health, education, and economic well-being (see tables 3-8).

Chapter 5, focuses on the *Key Drivers of Well-Being and Policy Issues in the MENA Region*. It contains a discussion of public policy issues most pertinent to the major theme of the Springer book series. Professor el-Aswad explains the QOL trends in each of the six countries as follows.

Key Drivers in Egypt

As shown in Table 3, Egypt has experienced significant gains in health, education, and economic well-being. What may be the key drivers for these QOL gains? El-Aswad attributes the health well-being gains to improvements in developing the country's public health infrastructure and medical services, particularly with respect to prenatal care, child immunization, disease prevention, water and sanitation. The government managed to reform social health insurance and improve health care financing, particularly for the poor and those living in rural areas. How about the gains in educational well-being? El-Aswad attributes these gains to increased schools, compulsory education (12 years of primary and secondary education), vulnerable groups and girls having more access to quality basic education, increased public expenditures on education, and increased access to the internet. With respect to economic well-being, the demonstrated

gains may be due to foreign investments, exports, and consumption. The government has also increased subsidized food supplies and cash transfers to the poor.

Key Drivers in Iran

Table 4 shows significant gains in health, education, and economic well-being in Iran. El-Aswad attributes gains in health well-being to increases in healthcare expenditures, prenatal care, child immunization, fighting communicable and non-communicable diseases, sanitation, and safe water. Gains in educational well-being are attributed to increases in schools, expenditures on education especially in rural areas, compulsory education, training teachers to support quality education in primary schools, and increased internet access. With respect to the noted gains in economic well-being, El-Aswad notes that Iran's natural gas and oil reserves are among the largest worldwide. The government has used these economic resources wisely as is the case for increased government expenditures on consumption.

Key Drivers in Israel

In contrast to all the MENA countries, the QOL of people in Israel is the best. Table 5 shows major gains in health, education, and economic well-being in Israel. Gains in health well-being are attributed to the well-managed four official non-profit health insurance organizations known as Sick Funds. Significant gains in health well-being are also attributed to increased government expenditures on healthcare, preventative care clinics for young children and pregnant women, mandatory paid maternity leaves, children immunization, physician density, water treatment technologies, sanitation, and healthy lifestyles. Increases in educational well-being are attributed to increases in subsidized public education for children 3-5, compulsory education, lower pupil-to-student ratio, increases in teachers' salaries, and increased internet access. Gains in economic well-being may be explained by the noted reductions in the national debt and tax burden, increases in labor force participation, efforts designed to reduce the cost of living especially in relation to housing, greater innovation, and better governance.

Key Drivers in Tunisia

Similar to other MENA countries, Tunisia registered significant gains in health, education, and economic well-being (see Table 6). Gains in health well-being are attributed to the well-developed physical

Table 1: Human Development Index, MENA Countries, 2015

Rank	Country	HDI	Life Expectancy	Expected Years of Schooling	Mean Years of Schooling	GDP Per Capita	Population, total (millions)
Very High Human Development							
19	Israel	0.899	82.6	16	12.8	31,215	8.1
33	Qatar	0.856	78.3	13.4	9.8	129,916	2.2
38	Saudi Arabia	0.847	74.4	16.1	9.6	51,320	31.5
42	UAE	0.84	77.1	13.3	9.5	66,203	9.2
47	Bahrain	0.824	76.7	14.5	9.4	37,236	1.4
51	Kuwait	0.8	74.5	13.3	7.3	76,075	3.9
High Human Development							
52	Oman	0.796	77	15.7	12	34,402	4.5
69	Iran	0.774	75.6	14.8	8.8	16,395	79.1
71	Turkey	0.767	75.5	14.6	7.9	18,705	78.7
76	Lebanon	0.763	79.5	13.3	8.6	13,312	5.9
83	Algeria	0.745	75	14.4	7.8	13,533	39.7
86	Jordan	0.741	74.2	13.1	10.1	10,111	7.6
97	Tunisia	0.725	75	14.6	7.1	10,249	11.3
102	Libya	0.716	71.8	13.4	7.3	14,303	6.3
Medium Human Development							
111	Egypt	0.691	71.3	13.1	7.1	10,250	91.5
114	Palestine	0.684	73.1	12.8	8.9	5,581	4.7
121	Iraq	0.649	69.6	10.1	6.6	11,608	36.4
123	Morocco	0.647	74.3	12.1	5	7,195	34.4
Low High Human Development							
149	Syria	0.536	69.7	9	5.1	2,441	18.5
165	Sudan	0.49	63.7	7.2	3.5	3,846	40.2
168	Yemen	0.482	64.1	9	3	2,300	26.8
	Total					566,010	535.6

Source: Adapted from el-Aswad (2019, p. 9); original data extracted from United Nations Development Programme (2016a)

Table 2: Country Rankings of Happiness in the MENA Region, 2015

Rank (MENA)	Rank (Global)	Country	Score
1	11	Israel	7.267
2	28	UAE	6.573
3	34	Saudi Arabia	6.379
4	36	Qatar	6.375
5	38	Algeria	6.355
6	41	Kuwait	6.239
7	42	Bahrain	6.218
8	67	Libya	5.615
9	78	Turkey	5.389
10	80	Jordan	5.303
11	90	Morocco	5.151
12	93	Lebanon	5.129
13	98	Tunisia	5.045
14	105	Iran	4.813
15	108	Palestine	4.754
16	112	Iraq	4.575
17	120	Egypt	4.362
18	133	Sudan	4.139
19	147	Yemen	3.724
20	156	Syria	3.069
NA	NA	Oman	NA

Source: Adapted from el-Aswad (2019, p. 52); original data extracted from World Happiness Report (Helliwell et al., 2016)

Notes: Countries are ranked based on the average respondents' happiness scores

infrastructure of the healthcare system in Tunisia. Increased government expenditure in the healthcare sector is another key driver. Other factors include increased growth rate of social health insurance, greater access to prenatal care, more vaccinations and immunizations, greater availability of basic services (such as physician per 1,000 people), better sanitation, and improved drinking water. Higher levels of government expenditures seem to account for increased educational well-being in Tunisia. Other factors include compulsory education, better teacher training, decreased student-teacher ratio, and reduction in school drop rate. Increased economic well-being is attributed to increased foreign investment, tourism, exports, and labor force participation.

Key Drivers in Turkey

Table 7 shows QOL gains in Turkey. Gains in health well-being can be attributed to increased efficient and equitable health service delivery, improved primary care services, better preventative healthcare and maternal-child healthcare services, increased expenditures on programs to prevent ill-health and premature death associated with non-communicable diseases. Improved healthcare infrastructure, mandatory paid maternity leaves, and immunization programs are additional factors that may account for the positive trend in health well-being in Turkey. Gains in educational well-being are attributed to increased public expenditures on education, compulsory education, decreased pupil-teacher ratio in primary schools, the use of technology in the classroom, and providing free textbooks and transportation to students. Gains in economic well-being are attributed to policies designed to boost industry, foreign trade, public services, and finance, as well as policies decreasing government regulation of business. Labor force participation as well as social assistance spending increased too.

Table 3: QOL Trends in Egypt

QOL Dimension	QOL Indicator	1990	2000	2015
Human Development	United Nations Human Development Index (HDI)	0.547	0.642	0.691
Health Well-Being	Life Expectancy (years)	64.6	67.3	71.3
	Adult Mortality Rate, Female (per 1,000 People)	143.66	134.19	111.02
	Adult Mortality Rate, Male (per 1,000 People)	230.55	214.86	188.04
	Under-five Mortality Rate (Per 1,000 Live Births)	85.9	46.9	23.7
	Infant Mortality Rate (Per 1,000 Live Births)	63.0	37.3	20.1
	Maternal Mortality Rate (Per 100,000 Live Births)	106	63	33
Educational Well-Being	Expected Years of Schooling	9.8	11.1	13.1
	Mean Years of Schooling	3.5	4.8	7.1
Economic Well-Being	GDP Per Capita (US\$)	5,869	7,629	10,250

Source: Adapted from el-Aswad (2019, pp. 47-48); Original data were extracted from the Human Development Report issued by the United Nations Development Programme (1992, 2002, 2016b) and the World Health Organization (2016a, 2017)

Table 4: QOL Trends in Iran

QOL Dimension	QOL Indicator	1990	2000	2015
Human Development	United Nations Human Development Index (HDI)	0.572	0.717	0.774
Health Well-Being	Life Expectancy (years)	63.8	68.9	75.6
	Adult Mortality Rate, Female (per 1,000 People)	184.5	126.1	62.0
	Adult Mortality Rate, Male (per 1,000 People)	279.0	177.1	105.0
	Under-five Mortality Rate (Per 1,000 Live Births)	56.7	34.3	15.5
	Infant Mortality Rate (Per 1,000 Live Births)	44.1	36.0	13.4
	Maternal Mortality Rate (Per 100,000 Live Births)	123	51	25.7
Educational Well-Being	Expected Years of Schooling	9.2	11.1	14.8
	Mean Years of Schooling	4.2	4.8	8.8
Economic Well-Being	GDP Per Capita (US\$)	10,206	11,894	16,507

Source: Adapted from el-Aswad (2019, pp. 55-56); Original data were extracted from the Human Development Report issued by the United Nations Development Programme (1992, 2016a, 2016b) and the World Health Organization (2016b, 2017)

Table 5: QOL Trends in Israel

QOL Dimension	QOL Indicator	1990	2000	2015
Human Development	United Nations Human Development Index (HDI)	0.785	0.85	0.899
Health Well-Being	Life Expectancy (years)	76.4	78.7	82.6
	Adult Mortality Rate, Female (per 1,000 People)	70.6	54.7	49.0
	Adult Mortality Rate, Male (per 1,000 People)	107.0	102.6	72.2
	Under-five Mortality Rate (Per 1,000 Live Births)	11.6	6.9	3.8
	Infant Mortality Rate (Per 1,000 Live Births)	9.7	5.6	3.2
	Maternal Mortality Rate (Per 100,000 Live Births)	11	8	5
Educational Well-Being	Expected Years of Schooling	12.7	15.1	16
	Mean Years of Schooling	10.8	12	12.8
Economic Well-Being	GDP Per Capita (US\$)	10,206	11,894	16,507

Source: Adapted from el-Aswad (2019, pp. 59-60); Original data were extracted from the Human Development Report issued by the United Nations Development Programme (1992, 2016b) and the World Health Organization (2016c, 2017)

Key Drivers in the UAE

Table 8 shows QOL gains in the UAE too. Gains in health well-being are attributed to health-related policies such as making health insurance mandatory for all residents in the UAE. Other factors include increased total health expenditure (both public and private) of GDP, the expansion of health facilities, increased access and quality of healthcare to children and pregnant mothers, progress with the control and prevention of communicable diseases with a particular focus on immunization, surveillance, mandatory reporting, and effective treatment. Furthermore, there are policies directed to reducing obesity, improving water quality, and sanitation. Gains in educational well-being are attributed to increased public spending on education, policies that ensure educational opportunities for all and increased student proficiency in technology as well as quality education in general. With respect to the economy, the UAE has made significant gains here too. The UAE is a large-scale producer of hydrocarbon and the government has used revenue from hydrocarbon sales to develop all other industries and sectors of society through its policy of economic diversification. Its policies related to economic liberalization have been equally successful. The UAE is also credited in ensuring long-term economic security for all its citizens.

Conclusion

In sum, the image of the MENA region and the QOL of its people as presented in the news media is far from what is happening on the ground, the true reality of the living conditions. The lesson learned here is that we need to go beyond what is reported in the news media to better understand what's true and what isn't. The news media customarily focuses on anecdotes that are sensational, thus distorting our understanding of the big picture. Professor El-Aswad's book is a countervailing force in this regard; the book does an excellent job providing us with a *reality check*.

Table 6: QOL Trends in Tunisia

QOL Dimension	QOL Indicator	1990	2000	2015
Human Development	United Nations Human Development Index (HDI)	0.568	0.722	0.725
Health Well-Being	Life Expectancy (years)	68.8	73.2	75
	Adult Mortality Rate, Female (per 1,000 People)	137.3	83.7	70.7
	Adult Mortality Rate, Male (per 1,000 People)	185.1	140.1	112
	Under-five Mortality Rate (Per 1,000 Live Births)	56.8	31.7	13.6
	Infant Mortality Rate (Per 1,000 Live Births)	40.2	13.3	10.9
	Maternal Mortality Rate (Per 100,000 Live Births)	131	84	62
Educational Well-Being	Expected Years of Schooling	10.5	13.1	14.6
	Mean Years of Schooling	3.4	4.9	7.1
Economic Well-Being	GDP Per Capita (US\$)	5,503	7,386	10,249

Source: Adapted from el-Aswad (2019, pp. 62-63); Original data were extracted from the Human Development Report issued by the United Nations Development Programme (1992, 2016a, 2016b) and the World Health Organization (2016d, 2017)

Table 7: QOL Trends in Turkey

QOL Dimension	QOL Indicator	1990	2000	2015
Human Development	United Nations Human Development Index (HDI)	0.576	0.742	0.767
Health Well-Being	Life Expectancy (years)	64.3	69.8	75.5
	Adult Mortality Rate, Female (per 1,000 People)	129.5	100.2	71.5
	Adult Mortality Rate, Male (per 1,000 People)	229.4	191.2	140.1
	Under-five Mortality Rate (Per 1,000 Live Births)	74.2	39.2	13.6
	Infant Mortality Rate (Per 1,000 Live Births)	55.6	31.9	11.7
	Maternal Mortality Rate (Per 100,000 Live Births)	97	79	16
Educational Well-Being	Expected Years of Schooling	10.5	13.1	14.6
	Mean Years of Schooling	4.5	5.5	7.9
Economic Well-Being	GDP Per Capita (US\$)	10,494	12,974	18,705

Source: Adapted from el-Aswad (2019, pp. 65-66); Original data were extracted from the Human Development Report issued by the United Nations Development Programme (1992, 2016a, 2016b) and the World Health Organization (2016e, 2017)

Table 8: QOL Trends in the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

QOL Dimension	QOL Indicator	1990	2000	2015
Human Development	United Nations Human Development Index (HDI)	0.726	0.812	0.84
Health Well-Being	Life Expectancy (years)	71.5	75	77.1
	Adult Mortality Rate, Female (per 1,000 People)	117.8	85.9	56.6
	Adult Mortality Rate, Male (per 1,000 People)	146	111.6	80.5
	Under-five Mortality Rate (Per 1,000 Live Births)	16.6	11.2	7.8
	Infant Mortality Rate (Per 1,000 Live Births)	14.2	9.6	6.7
	Maternal Mortality Rate (Per 100,000 Live Births)	17	8	6
Educational Well-Being	Expected Years of Schooling	10.7	13.1	13.3
	Mean Years of Schooling	5.6	8.3	9.5
Economic Well-Being	GDP Per Capita (US\$)	27,256	33,071	66,203

Source: Adapted from el-Aswad (2019, pp. 69-70); Original data were extracted from the Human Development Report issued by the United Nations Development Programme (1992, 2016a, 2016b) and the World Health Organization (2016f, 2017)

PRESIDENT-ELECT 2019-2020, MING-CHANG TSAI,

WELCOME MESSAGE TO ISQOLS

Due to health-related problems, Liz Eckermann, ISOQLS's President-Elect for 2019-2020, took the decision of withdrawing from the position. We hope for her complete and prompt recovery. In order to fill the President-Elect position, ISOQLS's President (2017-18), Mariano Rojas, in coordination with ISOQLS's Board of Directors, called for an extra-ordinary election and asked the Nomination Committee to start the process of nomination candidate(s) for the President Elect position.

The Nominating Committee (Graciela Tonon, Habib Tiliouine, Joe Sirgy, Daniel Shek, Kai Ludwigs) nominated Ming-Chang Tsai as a candidate for the ISOQLS President-Elect in replacement of Liz Eckermann.

The President-Elect is the position of the person elected by the general membership to assume the presidency after the completion of the term of the current president. The general membership officially voted with majority approval for Ming-Chang Tsai.

Letter to the ISOQLS Community from Ming-Chang Tsai

Dear ISOQLS members,

It is a great honor, and a privilege as well, to serve the Society as President for the coming two years (2019 and 2020). The main ideal interest of our society is to study the well-being and quality of life across the globe from a multi-disciplinary approach. In the past decades, we have firmly established a strong academic community benefiting from our numerous members, whose enthusiasm, efforts, engagement in exploring how human societies can advance in happiness and providing policy suggestions to achieve that desirable goal. The relay goes on. We are gathering here to contribute our research inputs. We surely know it helps make the world a better and happier planet. And this job cannot be done if we do not provide evidence-based suggestions from our scientific research.

We still have missions ahead. First, we need to mobilize a new generation of researchers to work with us. Young cohorts indicate fresh ideas, high dynamics, and of course, new friends. Any organization will not make progress without new members joining in. It is not just about the increase of size, but what matters is to keep the momentum at a high level. I hope we all assist the Society to grow this way.

Second, we also can strength our Society as a venue of sharing new ideas for academics. Our annual meetings have been very successful in gathering interested scholars. Less paid attention are our webinars. In the digital era, we have to take advantage of communicating online. Our community surely benefits from more of this sort of exchange activities. I believe it also is a good way to talk to colleagues and maintain connected when being present is not possible. We need to mobilize more volunteers to share their ideas online.

Third, our society can advance when we provide services and advices to practitioners. We have a long tradition in offering policy opinions for people working on community well-being. In addition to certificate programs, we also need to develop other modules that help realize better quality of life in community, city and even larger regions. Moreover, we encourage our members to design social indicators for specific fields, be it for urbanites, children, women, or the poor. We should actively offer social reporting to see where we stand now and where to go in next phases.

I wish to work with all of you to accomplish these important tasks. Your involvement and contribution make the Society a truly worthy union. We will feel very proud of ourselves because we work and study together to contribute to make a better and happier future.

Ming-Chang Tsai

ISQOLS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jill Johnson
Executive Director
International Society for Quality-of-Life
Studies

<http://www.isqols.org>

ISOQLS President Elect for 2019-2020 is
Ming-Chang Tsai

2019 ISOQLS Membership Renewals are
available online at <http://isqols.org/join>

We've made some upgrades to our ISOQLS website and membership registration! Our new site will allow members to better communicate and stay connected with our organization. Our *NEW* ISOQLS Membership Registration system will allow you to register both as an ISOQLS 2019 member and pay your 2019 Conference Registration fee at once. (please note we are using a new system and all current members are required to set up a new profile and password)

2019 ISOQLS Annual Conference in Granada, Spain Registration available online at <http://isqols.org/events>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

How do I submit an abstract for the conference?

Abstracts must be submitted on the conference website: <http://www.isqols2019.com> (Deadline December 20, 2018)

How do I register and pay for the conference?
Conferenceregistrationandpaymentisavailable on the ISOQLS website: <http://isqols.org/events>
Early bird registration deadline: May 15th, 2019

How do I get the ISOQLS members discount for the conference?

We strongly encourage you to join/renew your ISOQLS 2019 membership and pay your ISOQLS Conference fees at once! ISOQLS members receive significant registration fee discounts. To join or renew your membership, visit: <http://isqols.org/join>

Do I have to pay for the conference at the same time as I renew my ISOQLS membership?

No, this is totally optional. You can choose to join/renew your ISOQLS membership and pay your conference fees at once, or you can join ISOQLS and pay your fees at a later time.

Join/renew membership: <http://isqols.org/join>

Register for conference: <http://isqols.org/events>

More questions? Email office@isqols.org

ISQOLS President's Message

It has been a privilege to serve ISQOLS as its President

Mariano Rojas

I have been a member of ISQOLS since 2000, and my academic career has substantially benefited from participating in its conferences and in related activities. My life has been enriched by interacting with so many warm, enthusiastic, and learned scholars from so many countries and disciplines. It has been a privilege to serve ISQOLS as its President during the years 2017 and 2018. I am grateful to all members of ISQOLS for giving me the opportunity to serve; it has been two wonderful years which allowed me to contribute to ISQOLS.

ISQOLS gives great opportunities to all scholars – young and old – to keep growing up as researchers and I am planning to be fully involved in the Society in the future. ISQOLS is an international and multidisciplinary society that relies on scientific knowledge to contribute to people's well-being around the world. I do strongly believe that ISQOLS has a noble and very relevant mission and that its best years are ahead.

ISQOLS is an international society that puts into contact researchers from all parts of the world. Coming from Latin America, I do feel very strong about this international scope of ISQOLS. Bringing together researchers with different life trajectories and cultural backgrounds is very important for the study of quality of life, well-being and happiness. The multicultural background of ISQOLS is important for a better understanding of people's well-being by recognizing the relevance of values, beliefs, and traditions. It also shows that it is possible to interact in a globalized world with respect, appreciation, and understanding of diversity.

ISQOLS is a society that favors evidence-based knowledge. The desire for a world where people's well-being is high is not new; this desire has been common in political discourses for centuries. In fact, the desire for a better world has inspired many utopias; unfortunately, many of them have usually ended up as dystopias. ISQOLS gathers a large group of scholars who rely on scientific research – rather than on doctrines and ideologies – to address issues regarding people's experience of being well. Databases, qualitative and quantitative techniques, methodologies and approaches, hypotheses and corroborations, and respectful discussions are necessary in order to provide sound knowledge to guide personal decisions and private and public policy in the pursue of well-being.

ISQOLS gathers scholars from many disciplines. It seems that the current compartmentalization of knowledge is very limited to fully understand the experience of being well that concrete human beings – of flesh and blood – have. Hence, disciplinary-based academic societies are not well-positioned to make substantial contributions to people's well-being; ISQOLS provides the space for multi, inter and even transdisciplinary research.

ISQOLS is also financially sound; thanks in great part to the excellent work of the Development Committee and the philanthropic will of many endowed-track honorees. Revenues have also exceeded our expenditures during the past years, and we have been able of generating some surplus which could be used to finance special programs: in fact, we are using some of this money to support the PhD-dissertation-awards program and to offer conference-participation grants to young scholars. I believe it is important for ISQOLS to invest in people, in particular in young and enthusiastic people who may come to ISQOLS who may find in the Society the appropriate place to enrich their academic life and who in the near future could take the leadership and make ISQOLS stronger.

Professor Ming-Chang Tsai will become our President in January 2019; I have had the honor of knowing him for many years and I wish him all the best. During the next weeks we will be involved in the election of the Board of Directors and the President Elect 2019-2020. The Nomination Committee has already started this task. Four ISQOLS conferences are already in the horizon: Granada, Spain in September 2019; Rotterdam, The Netherlands in 2020; Vermont, The United States in 2021; and Sabah, Malaysia in 2022.

If I may have a seasons' wish it is for ISQOLS to keep the sense of community that shows that people from different disciplines and from many corners of the world can come together with the single purpose of contributing to the well-being of people.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the members of the Executive Committee and of the Board of Directors as well as to the Executive Director for their support during the past two years. They made my job easier and they contributed to make ISQOLS stronger.

Thanks . . . many thanks.

Call For Papers

Applied Research in Quality of Life

The Official Journal of the International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies

Applied Research in Quality of Life (ARQOL) presents conceptual, methodological and empirical papers dealing with quality-of-life studies in the applied areas of the natural and social sciences. It aims to publish papers that have direct implications for, or impact on practical applications of research on the quality of life. The articles are crafted from interdisciplinary, inter-professional and international perspectives. ARQOL guides decision making in a variety of professions, industries, nonprofit, and government sectors, including healthcare, travel and tourism, marketing, corporate management, community planning, social work, public administration, and human resource management. It helps decision makers apply performance measures and outcome assessment techniques based on such concepts as well-being, human satisfaction, human development, happiness, wellness and quality-of-life. ARQOL is the official journal of the International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies (ISQOLS). www.isqols.org

Daniel Shek is the Editor-in-Chief of ARQOL, who is assisted by Editors A. C. Michalos and J. Sirgy. Authors interested in submitting manuscripts for publication should consult the Website <http://www.editorialmanager.com/ariq/>. Further information may be obtained by contacting one of the journal's Editors: Daniel Shek, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HK), daniel.shek@polyu.edu.hk; Alex C. Michalos, Emeritus, University of Northern British Columbia (Canada), Michalos@BrandonU.CA; M. Joseph Sirgy, Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University (USA), sirgy@vt.edu.

**International Society for Quality-of-life
Studies**
ISQOLS 2019 CONFERENCE
Happiness in a Multicultural World
Granada, Spain, September 4-7, 2019

The International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies (ISQOLS) is holding its 17th Conference in the city of Granada, Spain. The 17th ISQOLS Annual Conference will be co-organized by ISQOLS and the Universidad de Granada from September 4th-7th 2019 (Thursday to Saturday) in Granada, Spain. The ISQOLS 2019 Conference will offer a forum for discussion of the research findings concerning quality of life, well-being, and happiness.

The theme of the Conference is Happiness in a Multicultural World. Many cultures have been dwelled in Granada during history, and many cultures do coexist peacefully right now. Taking this into consideration, we would like that the Conference would be an inspiration for happiness and quality of life towards peace and tolerance and understanding between different peoples. Guest speakers and lecturers include Christian Welzel, Martine Durant, Stefano Bartolini, and Michael Marmot.

Abstract submissions will open September 15, 2018.

Information about the Conference will be posted on the conference website: <http://www.isqols2019.com/>

Liz Eckermann, ISQOLS, President 2019-2020
Jorge Guardiola, Chair of the Local Organizing Committee

SINET

Social Indicators Network News

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SINET

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