

WELLBEING SURVEY

WFMH Argentina August 2013

Summary of findings

Context

The survey was conducted as part of a workshop delivered by Dr Jenny Willis and Dr N Yoganathan at the World Federation for Mental Health Congress on the theme of wellbeing and the destigmatisation of mental illness. In addition to raising individual awareness and encourage critical reflection of the issues, it was hoped to gather sufficient data to compare with two previous surveys carried out for the Lifewide Education Community. These had used the same questionnaire and indicated that there may be some cultural differences in the conceptualisation of, and response, to wellbeing. The findings can be read in the Lifewide Learning, Education & Personal Development e-Book, Chapter C3 Lifewide Learning Survey of Wellbeing, Jenny Willis. This is free to download at <http://www.lifewideebook.co.uk/>.

The survey was completed in hard copy and responses were transferred, with the respondents' consent, to the ValuesExchange (VX) website. This facilitates data analysis. However, 7 responses were anonymous so were added to the Excel spreadsheet triggered by VX by hand. The questionnaire and on-line responses can be viewed and downloaded from <http://lifewide.vxcommunity.com/> (you need first to register with VX. This is free of charge.)

Respondents

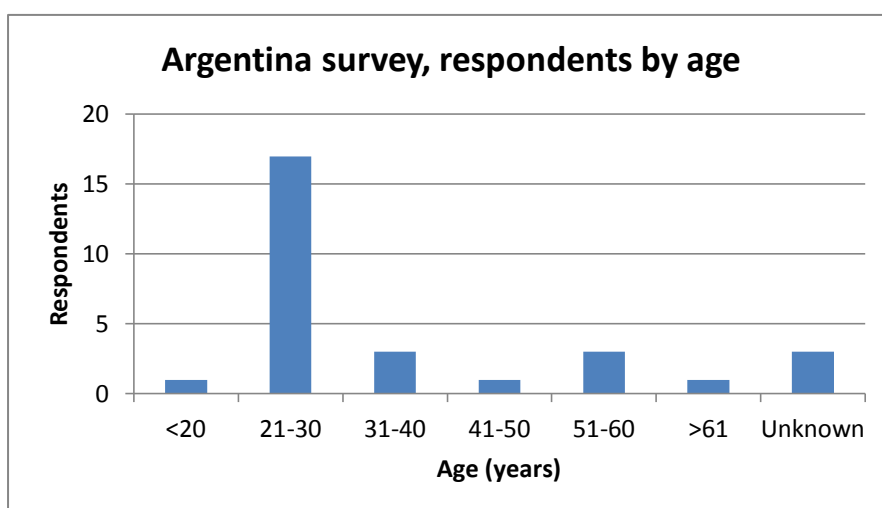
There were a total of 29 responses: one was made directly on line, 21 were transferred to the on-line database, and 7 more were copied to the summative spreadsheet.

Gender

There were 5 male respondents, 21 female, and 3 unstated.

Age

Respondents were predominantly in the age group 21-30 years.



Profession

Reflecting the age bias, nearly half of respondents were students. Most were working in the field of health. Their occupations were:

Respondents' profession

Student (unspecified)	5
Student of psychology/therapy	5
Psychologist	9
Health promotion	2
Occupational therapist	1
Psychiatrist	1
Doctor	1
Sound technician	1
Administrator	1
Unknown	3

Nationality

The majority of respondents were South American, their mother tongue being Spanish. The workshop was conducted in English, with simultaneous translation throughout. Respondents chose mostly to reply to the questionnaire in Spanish. The analyst has translated responses for this report.

Respondents' nationality

Argentinian	23
Colombian	2
Singaporean	2
American	1
Australian	1

Summary

The respondent group is atypical in that it is biased by gender, age, and professional domain. The nationality of respondents provides a valuable contrast with the two earlier surveys (UK and Chinese respectively).

Wellbeing and happiness

1 What does 'wellbeing' mean to you?

Responses were largely consistent with those of previous surveys, though there was a greater significance of religious faith for this group. Comments included:

- A state of personal fulfilment
- Being content
- Is related to work, social activities, sport
- Feeling good in a permanent sense, continuous
- Can derive from one or more things
- A state of balance / harmony
- Balance between personal and professional life
- Being at peace with others
- A state of contentment, feeling fulfilled with the present, at peace with past and future
- Contentment in mind and body, having good relationships, spiritual development
- Deep meaningful community

- Feeling well in all aspects of life, at the professional, personal and spiritual levels
- Is a way of life
- Is dynamic
- Ability to thrive and flourish in different settings, having social, emotional health and a good sense of self-esteem

2 Is wellbeing linked to happiness? Are they the same thing?

The majority of respondents felt the two were connected but not the same. Comments included:

- Wellbeing is linked to happiness but happiness is a byproduct of wellbeing
- Wellbeing is linked to personal satisfaction and is more general where happiness is more momentary - wellbeing is a state of being
- Wellbeing incorporates everything
- Wellbeing can be learnt through practice
- Happiness is part of wellbeing
- Wellbeing is a higher and more stable state
- Feeling well contributes to happiness
- Wellbeing is the path to happiness
- You can have wellbeing without happiness, but happiness is still valuable
- Wellbeing involves a sense of continuous growth and flourishing whereas happiness can come through doing unhealthy things which do not lead to wellbeing
- wellbeing = happiness = health = love
- I can't feel happy without feeling well

In other words, wellbeing is seen as more enduring whereas happiness is transient.

3 Which aspects of your life does your wellbeing involve or affect?

There is a clear focus on interpersonal relationships. Comments included:

- My wellbeing affects my relationships and my ability to work affectively.
- Family, friends, work, swimming, nature
- Family, values and belief
- How I live with my faith and religion, in my personal relationships (family and friends) in my work (studies, recreational activities)
- Everything
- Achieving my wishes
- Family, studies, health - physical and emotional
- Spending time with those close to me, connecting with myself, helping others
- Having essential material things for quality of life

4 What things do you do that enable you to cultivate a sense of wellbeing?

Responses again show the importance of social contact and close relationships. Spirituality and belief feature strongly, and a sense of giving to others. Enjoyment also derives from a sense of achievement. Activities tend to include a mix of physical, intellectual and spiritual.

- I am learning to play piano and I like art so I like to identify a time that is put aside for me to develop myself further.

- Taking responsibility
- Sport / dancing / yoga
- Read, socialise, listen to music, play instrument, undertake professional development
- Nature / be outdoors
- Humour
- Spend time with my family, relationship with my husband, my belief in god
- Travelling
- Work that brings me sense of learning / doing something new
- My faith and practising my religion (Adventist),
- Doing things for other people
- Spend time with others, hear their perspectives, self-reflect and adjust
- My religion (Christianity)
- Seek time to myself, take exercise, eat healthily, cultivate positive relationships
- Dreams, wishes, have goals
- Try to be well and optimistic
- Talk about what is upsetting me
- Be aware of every moment, be conscious of breathing and feeling
- Meditation
- Get enough sleep
- Music
- Photography
- doing things with other people

5 Is your sense of wellbeing something that comes from doing one thing or many things?

Respondents all agreed that wellbeing derives from many things. Further points were added, e.g.

- From many things, but with a single goal: happiness
- Many and varied
- Many and few
- Several things - a single thing does not suffice
- I believe that it is not the quantity - without depth of feeling you can't live passionately
- There has to be something from each sphere of being human
- Doing things, but doing them well
- Mostly through helping other people and developing myself
- If I have time, creating things and reading the newspaper
- Work, interpersonal relationships
- Going for walk, religion
- Studying, swimming

In short, a variety is needed, and it is the quality of the experience rather than the quantity that is important. Activities include the personal and altruistic.

6 What things erode your sense of wellbeing?

These respondents were more voluble and wide-ranging in the sources of erosion to their wellbeing. Comments included:

- When I can't get what I want
- Constant negative people that I work with - they suck your energy.
- Weather
- Lack of skills, poor performance

- When transport not working properly
- Instability, social unrest
- Difficulty in planning ahead
- Injustice
- Too much work
- Being inactive
- Thinking only of myself
- Keeping away from god
- Stress (work, study)
- The unexpected
- Lack of respect, not being appreciated
- Unpleasant nursing jobs
- When important relationships are having a rough patch
- When I don't feel a sense of purpose in what I do
- Being excluded
- Being criticised for malicious reasons
- External problems e.g. economy, illness
- The pressure to be good in many areas
- Inhibitions
- Conflict
- Lack of time to talk about what I enjoy
- Violence
- Discrimination, prejudice
- Despair
- Worry about things beyond my control
- Discourtesy
- Knowing that someone I love is ill
- Boredom
- The news

7 If you are unhappy about your state of wellbeing how do you change it?

Actions relate to identifying the cause of unhappiness and the specific activities then triggered. These include both social and individual pursuits:

- Identify what is bothering me
- Try and get rid of the causes
- Identify what I need to do
- Try and improve things
- Think about the causes, change things for the better
- Seek help from friends and work
- Find company - friends or family
- Undertake activities that connect me to myself and my body
- Find something else to do, e.g. if I am very tired, sleep earlier and better
- I'm pretty happy but if I could change anything I would like more time to spend doing/ not doing anything so that I can be more creative in my thinking
- Be outdoors
- Listen to music
- Through humour
- Read a book
- Take exercise
- Take time to engage in the activities that improve my wellbeing
- Change routine

- Conclude things
- Meditate
- Accept what I can't change
- Breathe deeply to calm down my body and emotions
- Trust
- Pray
- Take a bath
- Say yes to everything

8 Is there a relationship between learning and developing and your sense of wellbeing?

Respondents all answered affirmatively. A few examples are:

- I think it's very important to develop yourself and in doing this you will feel a sense of fulfilling one's potential
- Through studying
- Doing things that make me feel a sense of achievement and pleasure
- For me, wellbeing (personal) comes from discovering new things and different ways of thinking
- Learning = increasing my knowledge about the world and myself. But some knowledge does not affect wellbeing
- Writing, reading, being creative
- Having good family role models leads to forming own values
- Provides a sense of looking forward and having a sense of optimism for the future - towards self-actualisation
- If I am satisfied I want to go on
- There is a connection but it is processes that lead to wellbeing

These replies highlight the importance of self-actualisation in motivating us, and the intrinsic pleasure we derive from learning, developing and creating.

9 Is there a relationship between wellbeing and achieving things that matter to you?

Only two respondents answered 'no' to this question. One explained the reason as follows:

- No, because to do is to learn

Some of the reasons for answering 'yes' and illustrations were:

- I have a religion which supports me
- A sense of achievement is important - if you work toward something you need to feel success sometimes. You don't need to succeed all the time but to feel like you are working toward some improvement would help you keep trying.
- Achieving my objectives, especially at work
- Stability at work
- I can't have wellbeing if there is an imbalance in things
- Because things that matter to me are closely linked to what motivates me
- I try to do well in an exam but if I don't succeed, I am not depressed - put up with the frustration, taking part in future projects
- I perform better at work and at home when my life is more balanced and when I feel a sense of control and accomplishment and purpose and meaning in my life

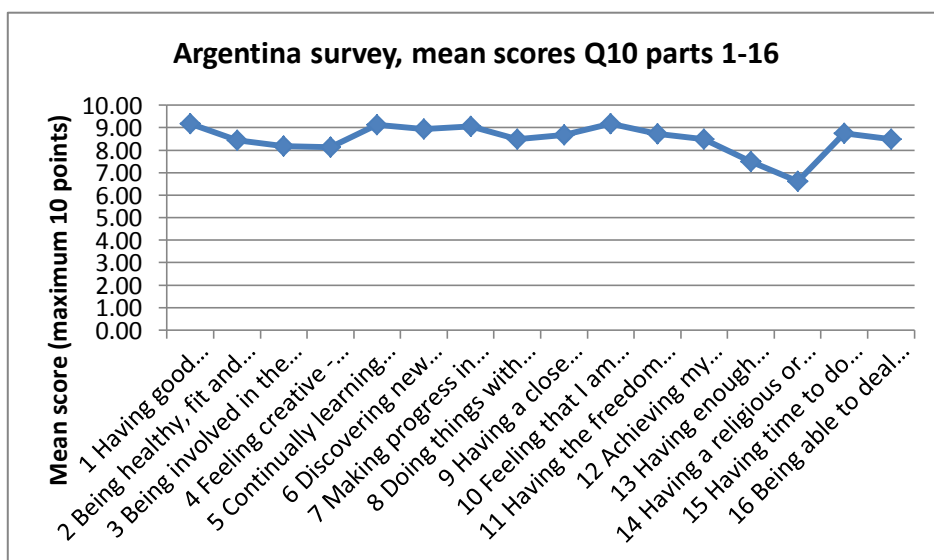
10 On a scale of 1-10 where 1 is least and 10 is most important, how important are these things in creating your sense of wellbeing?

For this question, respondents were asked to rate 16 issues individually, on the scale 1 = of very little, to 10 = of very great, personal significance to their wellbeing. The 16 issues were:

- 1 Connecting with/having good relationships with people I come in contact with everyday
- 2 Being healthy and fit, physically active - walking, sport, dancing etc
- 3 Being involved in the world - being curious and aware of the world around me - looking and finding new opportunities
- 4 Feeling creative - doing things that give me a chance to be creative, inventive or resourceful
- 5 Continually learning and developing myself
- 6 Doing new things that interest me
- 7 Making progress in the things I am doing
- 8 Doing things with and for other people
- 9 Having a close relationship with someone I trust & can discuss anything with
- 10 Feeling that I am valued by the people that matter to me
- 11 Being able to do the things I want or need to do
- 12 Achieving something that I think is worthwhile
- 13 Having enough money to do what I need to do
- 14 Having a religious or spiritual belief
- 15 Having time to do what I want and need to do
- 16 Being able to deal effectively with difficult situations

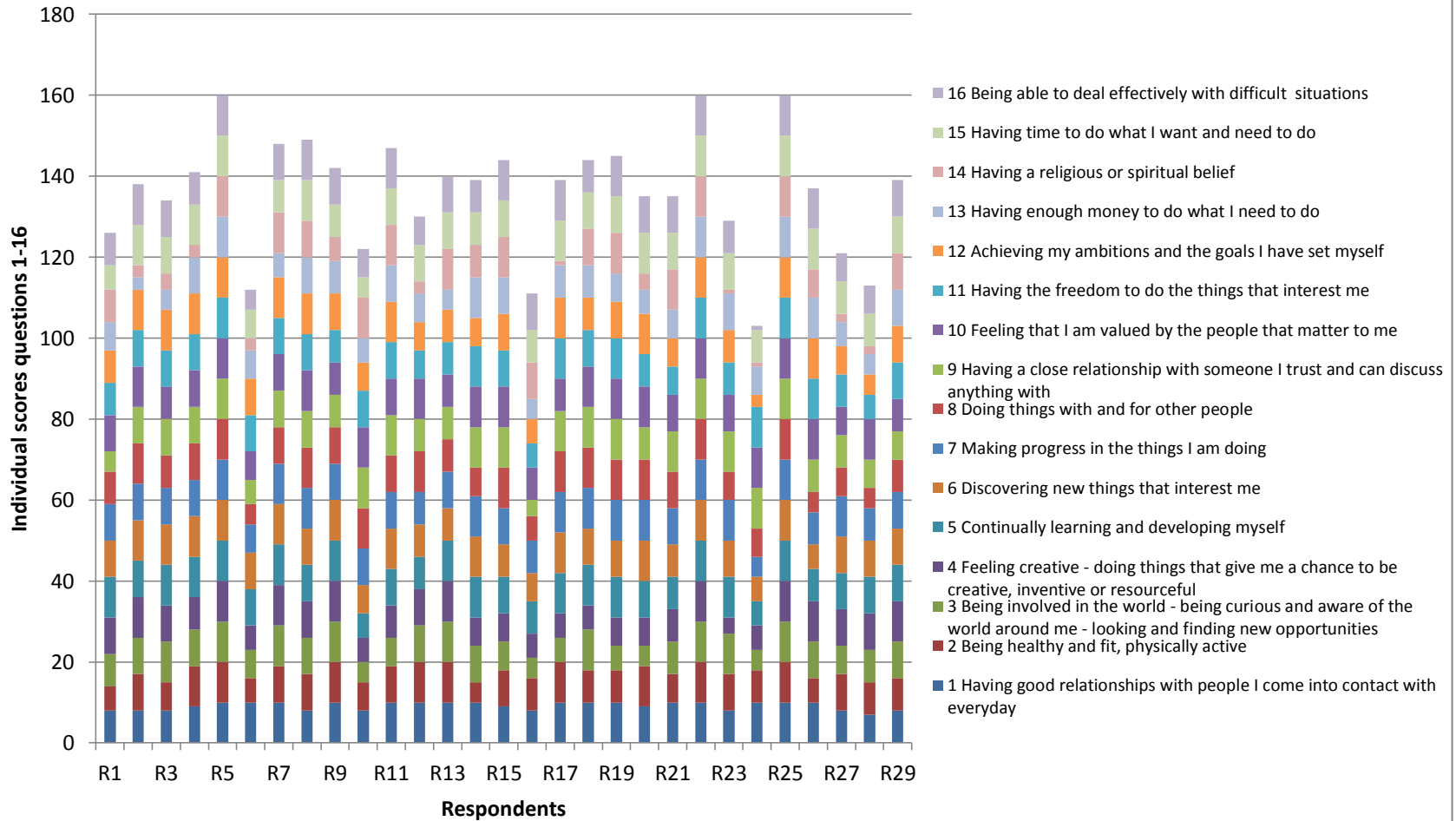
The score have been analysed both collectively and individually. Collectively, the graphic below shows the mean score for each of the 16 issues. This enables us to identify the degree of positivity as a whole and by issue. The points to note are:

- Scores are very positive, ranging from 6.62 to 9.17
- The issue scoring least was (14), having a religious faith (for individuals, it scored either very high or very low)
- The highest score was achieved by issues (1) and (10), having good everyday relationships and feeling valued by the people who matter to me. Issue (5), continually learning, comes close behind these, with a mean score of 9.14



On the next page, we can see the scores for each of the 29 respondents, by issue.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES QUESTION 10, sub-questions 1-16



The figure above indicates that the three most positive respondents were R5, R22 and R25. Anonymity was promised, so their identities are not revealed. R5 is a female Argentinian in the age range 21-30; R22 is a male Argentinian aged >61, and R25's gender and age are unknown. The findings would suggest that positivity is not bound by age or gender.

The least positive respondent was R24, a male Argentinian aged 21-30. Our sample is too small to be able to draw any conclusions from this.

This comparative data will be analysed further and will feature in a forthcoming chapter of the Lifewide Education Community's e-book (see page 1, above).

11 Why are the things that you rate most important to your wellbeing?

Responses to this question returned to the question of feeling valued and the importance of relationships with others e.g.

- People and developing myself are important because I get a sense of achievement by developing myself and helping people
- Because they contribute to my personal development; I am curious to learn new things
- Because they give purpose and meaning to my life
- Because I find lots of motivation from loved ones and sense of purpose
- Having good relationships
- Because feeling good with others is very important, I could not live in isolation

12 Is anything that is important to you missing from the list?

The following additional issues were proposed:

- Health and unity of my family
- Sense of gratitude
- Forgiveness/being able to forgive

Acknowledgements

Finally, on behalf of Dr Yoganathan and myself, thank you once more to those who attended our workshop and who have provided us with such rich feedback.

Thank you to Professor Norman Jackson, Director, Lifewide Education Community, for agreeing to our sharing data with the WFMH congress.

Your feedback is always welcome. We can be contacted by email at drnynathan@blueyonder.co.uk or jjenny@blueyonder.co.uk.

The wellbeing survey is still available on the VX website, should you have any friends or colleagues who would like to take part. Go to <http://lifewide.vxcommunity.com/>. Our findings will be updated to include any new responses.

Dr Jenny Willis

10 September 2013