

# **Outdoors and Health Network**

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# Summary of this talk

- My background
- Definitions of health and wellbeing
- Outdoor use and users
- Behaviour change

# Jin Park

- Rural community participation in voluntary nature conservation projects
- Incremental landscape change in the protected areas, Mobile Phone Masts in the Peak Park (environmental attitudes; socio-demographic factors; planning)
- Attitudinal measurement scales for landscape change and English rural landscapes (environmental attitudes; educational attainment; young people)
- Scottish local government's reactions to the introduction of Single Outcome Agreement
- Periodical Review of Biosphere Reserves
- use both quantitative (surveys) and qualitative (interviews, observations) methods.

# Understanding Health (wellbeing)

- **Human health**

‘a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (**WHO, 1948**)’

- Contemporary definitions of **health** include multiple aspects of wellbeing: emotional, spiritual, physical and social (Dunkley, **2009**).

- ‘**Wellbeing** is a positive physical, social and mental state; it is not just the absence of pain, discomfort and incapacity. It requires that basic needs are met, that individuals have a sense of purpose, that they feel able to achieve important personal goals and participate in society (DEFRA).’

# Understanding Health (wellbeing)

- **Multidimensional phenomenon**
- **Objective dimensions**
  - capturing the material and social attributes that contribute or detract from an individual or community's wellbeing
  - the level of wealth, provision of education and health care, infrastructure, etc.
  - usually measured at the population level

# Understanding Health (wellbeing)

- **Subjective dimensions** capture an individual's assessment (thoughts and feelings) of their own circumstances.
- **Happiness**: about what makes life pleasant in terms of mind and body: life satisfaction, presence of positive mood, and the absence of negative mood (Diener & Lucas, 1999)
- **Psychological mental health**: about achieving a sense of purpose and meaning in life; autonomy (having a sense of control over one's life), competence (a sense that one is functioning effectively) and relatedness (having positive interactions with others) (Ryan and Deci, 2000, Self Determination Theory)

(Newton, J. 2007. Wellbeing and the Natural Environment: A brief overview of the evidence.)

# What's been measured: health

- General physical health information
- Recovery rate from illness
- Longevity
- General psychological health
- Mental health: self-esteem and mood status
- Perceived health
- Stress and anxiety level
- Sense of empowerment
- Job satisfaction, productivity
- Personal fulfilment, etc.

(St Leger, 2003; Maller et al., 2005; Pretty et al., 2007; Tzoulas, et al., 2007)

**Are we clear what 'we' mean by health?**

# Outdoors and Outdoor Use

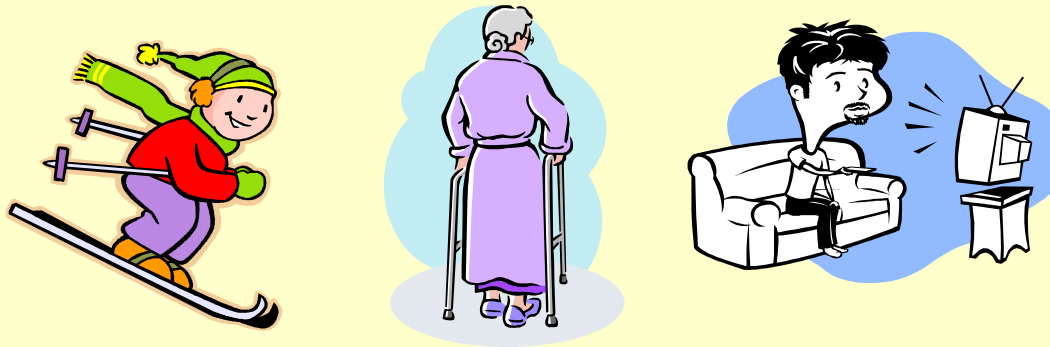
- Viewing nature (flora & fauna, e.g. even potted plants!)
- Being in natural environments (garden, allotments, urban parks and derelict lands, woodlands, rural areas, wilderness areas)
- Activities in the outdoors: recreation, leisure, educational activities, activities concerning management and maintenance, etc.



- **Are we clear what the outdoors indicate and what types of outdoor use are concerned in this network?**

# Outdoor (non) users

- People who are already active outdoor users
- People who are interested but find it difficult to become outdoor users
- People who are not interested in the outdoors at all
- All of these?



- **Who are the potential research users?**

# Behaviour: Why some people use the outdoors and why some don't

## Influencing factors

- **Characteristics of (non) outdoor users:** socio-demographics, the availability of time, money, transportation, physical health and companions (other people or dogs), lifestyle, childhood experience, etc.
  - **Characteristics of the outdoors:** facilities and features, maintenance condition, design, aesthetics, safety, access, information, etc.
  - **Spatial and institutional factors:** proximity to the outdoors, transportation, information, access, etc.
  - **Environmental factors:** climate (change), pollution??
- (de Hollander & Staatsen, 2003; Bedimo-Rung, et al., 2005; Ward Thompson, 2008)

**Identifying barriers and motivators is important but not enough.....**

# Changing behaviour

- Once it is certain that outdoor use is beneficial, the next step should be to figure out **how to promote and sustain outdoor use...**
- **Community-based social marketing** (McKenzie –Mohr, 2000)
  - a. uncovering (internal and external) barriers to behaviour and selecting which behaviour to promote: more difficult to alter and maintain repetitive behaviour change
  - b. designing a strategy to overcome the barriers to the selected behaviour: removing barriers, using incentives
  - c. piloting the strategy
  - d. evaluating it once it is broadly implemented: use the direct measurement of behaviour or its consequences rather than relying on self-report measures.

‘Our relationships with nature are a fundamental component of building and sustaining good health.’ (St Leger, 2003)