



## CHALLENGES OF THE SPIRAL METHODOLOGY FOR WELL-BEING STUDIES<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** Well-being is an ancient issue: all societies are trying to find the best possible solution for community well-being (Boje, T.P., 2000). The *SPIRAL* methodology recently developed by the experts from Council of Europe under supervision and inspiration of Samuel Thirion and approbated in different European municipalities is representing a subjective position in researching the well-being of society which answers to the question: “What is for you the well-being/ill-being?”. As a direct result of the Council of Europe’s social cohesion strategy in issues on society involvement preparation of proposals for decision making, the *SPIRAL (Societal Progress Indicators for the Responsibility of All)* methodology is different from other society participatory methodologies: it is entirely open and systematized.

The aim of the paper is to discuss the experience of practical applications and results of the *SPIRAL* methodology, explore advantages and challenges.

Research methods used: scientific literature studies, several stages of focus group discussions of 25 homogenous groups in Salaspils municipality, statistical data analysis, *SPIRAL* methodology.

The main results and findings of the paper – the *SPIRAL* methodology could be the common basis of fundamental values, for evaluation of society’s progress towards improved capacity to ensure the well-being of all through the development of co-responsibility in society, for example, in municipality. It is extremely important to ensure the reliability of obtained results as the well-being indicators could be further used in design and preparation of development and social policies of the municipality. The well-being, including subjective well-being, should be measured not only in national level, but in the level of municipality as authorities of municipalities should promote the well-being of community.

**Key words:** *well-being, SPIRAL methodology, well-being indicators, co-responsibility*

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## Introduction

Well-being is the most relevant and right starting point to define indicators of impact on the level of living and societal progress. However the concept of well-being is not clearly measurable because it is not so simple to evaluate the level of living (Noordhoff F., 2008). Well-being indicators could be divided in two – the subjective and objective ones. Objective indicators can be found for some measurable components or factors of well-being as incomes, consumption, capital, investment, savings, stocks, import-export balance and other different economic aspects that are currently every countries and also individuals targets and main points in making strategies for future actions (Blackman T., 2001).

But most of the components of well-being cannot be measured directly by objective indicators and need subjective ones, built from the point of view of the persons themselves, which need specific methods to do so. So there is more and more indicators that social and economic science should develop and estimate, there is still factors which are not explained, however the influence is obvious (Digby A., 1998).

There had been made several researches to find out how subjective components of well-being has been evaluating (Diener E., 1999, Andrews F.M, 1976, Brunstein J.C., 1993). The research showed that there had been a mayor progress in understanding subjective well-being. For example in 70ies the happy person was considered well-paid, young, educated, religious and married person. In 90ies authors emphasized that the happy person is blessed with a positive temperament, tends to look on the bright side of the things, is living in an economically developed society, has social confidants, and possesses adequate resources for making progress toward valued goals. But as the progress in understanding well-being is remarkable, it is needed to find out what is being understood by well-being now, in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In many countries there are used different approaches for citizen involvement in municipality decision – making and attention of researchers are paid to those issues (Akgul, 2012; Gregori, D. *et al*, 2012).

The idea of measuring community well-being is relatively new. It was developed during the 1980s and 1990s. It reflects the above mentioned international activities as well as grassroots efforts by business leaders, activists, local politicians and others to develop approaches that can gather information to inform local decision-making. The idea of community indicators of well-being reflects a change in focus from the “top down” imposition of what well-being, sustainability, quality of life, etc. *should* look like to a “bottom-up” approach that emphasizes democratic participation and empowerment in the development of locally significant understandings of well-being and its measurement (Gahin, Peterson, 2001). The movement towards measuring community well-being also reflects several other recent trends including 1) the devolvement of control for many programs to the local scale (e.g. social programs), 2) the need to measure Agenda 21 achievements, and 3) the recent emphasis on the need for better performance and accountability indicators (e.g. measuring the outcome of spending on social programs) (Murphy, 2010).

Indicators of community-well-being, sometimes called “benchmarks” or “vital signs”, are now used extensively by nation-states, regional governments, urban and rural areas, and even neighbourhoods.<sup>19</sup> The Community Indicators Consortium lists and provides links to community well-being projects from around the world, including sixteen from Canada alone (Frey, Shutzer, 2002). In the United States there are over two hundred municipalities, using some form of community well-being measurement (Christakopoulou et al, 2001). One of the earliest and ongoing examples of efforts to track well-being is Jacksonville, Florida’s, Community Council Quality of Life indicator program. The council tracks one hundred indicators of well-being covering nine themes (Murphy, 2010). Other well known examples include Sustainable Seattle<sup>23</sup> and Sustainable Calgary<sup>24</sup>. Thus the current state of knowledge about indicators is both in depth and extensive. What still remains challenging is how to “more effectively translate knowledge and commitment into action” in order to achieve the desired changes to community well-being (Ramos, Jones, 2005).



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The *SPIRAL* (*Societal Progress Indicators for the Responsibility of All*) methodology, recently developed by the experts from Council of Europe under supervision and inspiration of Samuel Thirion, is a way to define and measure well-being from the subjective point of view of the persons themselves. It is a common basis of fundamental values, for society's progress towards improved capacity to ensure the well-being of all, through the development of co-responsibility. Also this methodology to secure such progress jointly developed with inhabitants and other social stakeholders at local level, tying in with the regional, national, European and global levels. Involved in developing this methodology was a community of experimenters (governments and other local and regional players, companies, hospitals, schools, associations, NGOs, researchers, etc.), which expanded little by little in order to produce the methodology and make it available to as many people as possible (Council of Europe, 2008).

The *SPIRAL* methodology (in the sense of acronym – as spiral methodology is widely used in technical and engineering sciences, as well as medicine) was approbated in 8 different European municipalities within URBACT II programme project “TOGETHER for territories of co-responsibilities” – Salaspils (Latvia), Mulhouse (France), Braine-L’alleud (Belgium), Pergina (Italy), Kavala (Greece), Covilha (Portugal), Botkyrka (Sweden), Debica (Poland). After approbation in these cities there has been increased range of the cities where also this methodology was used (URBACT II Programme Manual, 2009).

As the well-being of society is the ancient issue – all societies are trying to find the best possible solution for community well – being and recently is being developed new approach to study it, it very important to analyze the process of evaluating well-being. The aim of the paper is to discuss the experience of practical applications and results of the *SPIRAL* methodology, explore advantages and challenges.

The main tasks of this research:

- to research the *SPIRAL* methodology;
- to undertake a critical analysis of the *SPIRAL* methodology;
- to identify the advantages and challenges of the methodology.

As this methodology is being used for evaluating the well-being of society in municipalities and the results of it in being used to make certain activities for development of the municipality, the findings of this research contribute to public administration for decision making.

The research question: if the *SPIRAL* methodology could be nominated as reliable research methodology for evaluating well-being in society?

Research methods used: scientific literature studies, several stages of focus group discussions of 25 homogenous groups in Salaspils municipality, statistical data analysis, *SPIRAL* methodology.

As the *SPIRAL* methodology is developed recently and actually is open to improvements, it is important to make a research for possible improvements.

For facilitation of research of *SPIRAL* methodology, the main study object would be research that was organized in one of the Municipality – Salaspils (Latvia) in 2011.

## Research results and discussion

### 1. The research of *SPIRAL* methodology – the main aspects for practical application

In 2000 the Council of Europe adopted a Social Cohesion Strategy; it was revised in 2004, 2007 and 2010. It defines social cohesion as society's capacity to ensure the well-being of all its members, minimizing disparities and avoiding polarization, to manage differences and divisions, and to acquire the means of ensuring the social welfare of all its members. From 2002 to 2005 a first Methodological Guide



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for Designing Concerted Social Cohesion Indicators was developed with the different services of the Council of Europe and various governments, laying down the conceptual and methodological groundwork of Social Cohesion. Following its publication in 2005, collaboration with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities took place in the pilot town of Mulhouse and an increasing number of other towns. Several applications have been carried out at local level in specific geographical areas (communities, neighborhoods, municipalities, regions) and institutions (businesses, schools, hospitals, public administrations, etc.). Now stakeholders from almost 20 countries are today taking part in using the SPIRAL methodology (New Strategy and ..., 2010).

The SPIRAL methodology is organized:

**a) In the bottom-up approach**

- a methodological reference framework with three cycles of eight phases, serving as benchmarks for conducting the processes. A “fast” first cycle (preparing the process with a focus on reducing poverty and better use of existing resources), an intermediate second cycle (mobilizing citizens and actors in an action plan of co-responsibility for the well-being of all) and a comprehensive third cycle (territories of co-responsibility project with well-being indicators).
- Actions relating to co-responsibility for the well-being of all coming up in these processes can be:
  - 1) in the co-ordination of processes,
  - 2) in the management of resources,
  - 3) in the sustainable production of goods and services,
  - 4) in life paths, and
  - 5) in relations between different sections of society.

These topics are chosen so as to promote exchanges between practitioners faced with the same questions and to capitalize on and transmit skills and knowledge (see “discussion topics”).

- databases of experiences in the field (processes, pilot co-responsibility activities) and their results: well-being criteria, indicators, survey results, etc.;
- dissemination/extension methods (communication on SPIRAL, training, formation of a pool of volunteers, etc.)

**b) In the top-down approach**

- systematized information on existing public policies enabling local players to find ways to ensure ownership/enhancement of these policies;
- areas for debate and putting forward proposals to adapt policies to the needs emerging from local issues and key topics (Council of Europe, 2011).

The Municipalities more often had been organized the bottom-up approach. Further the Figure 1 is showing all process how the SPIRAL methodology has been implemented in territories (including Salaspils Municipality).

The first cycle is called “Emerging Territory of Co-responsibility, which is:

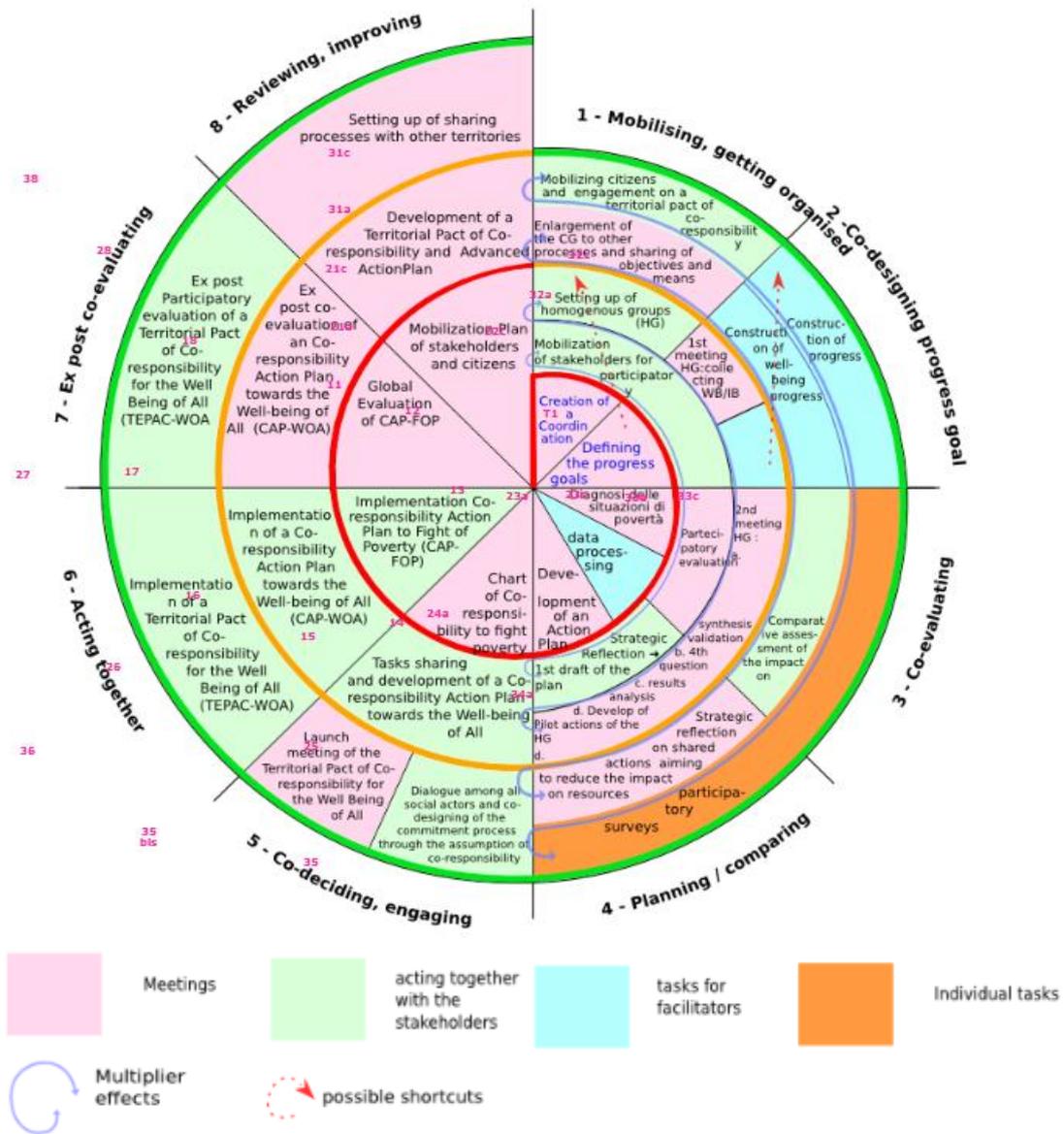
- creating and implementing the Coordination Group (CG) (Local Support Group in Urbact) with the local actors of the local area;
- appropriating collectively in the CG the objective of well-being of all through co-responsibility;
- drawing and realizing axis and first demonstrative/pilot actions through a mutually inclusive approach;
- empowering through participative co-evaluation of the actions;
- preparing the mobilization of all citizens and actors in the second cycle (defining homogeneous groups and inviting them to participate).

Result: Seeds of empowerment



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Source: Council of Europe, 2012 (contribution of Joël Obrecht)

Fig. 1. The process of implementation the SPIRAL methodology in territories

The second cycle is called “Upward Territory of Co-responsibility” which is:

- building with the citizens (in homogenous groups) a collective vision of the well-being of all as an objective;
- enlarging and multiplying participation in co-responsibility actions design and implementation;



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- empowering through integration of the actions in a shared action plan, its implementation and its participative co-evaluation;
- establishing a pact for an integrated territorial project of co-responsibility for the well-being of all (preparation of the third cycle).

Result: Real empowerment

The third cycle is called “Consolidating Territory of Co-responsibility”, where is:

- building indicators of progress in well-being and progress in using resources for the well-being of all;
- inviting all the inhabitants and local actors (public and private) to sign the pact and to use the indicators of progress for their self-evaluation and their participation in the territorial project;
- building together and implementing the territorial project of co-responsibility for the well-being of all.

Result: Sustainable empowerment

In those 3 cycles are described all needed actions for organizing the SPIRAL methodology and goals.

## 2. The approbation of *SPIRAL* methodology in Salaspils Municipality

The research on well-being in Salaspils Municipality started in 2010 within URBACT II programme project “TOGETHER for territories of co-responsibility”. The working group with experts from University of Latvia made scientific literature studies about well-being theory and practice and statistical data analysis about the municipality, its population, social and economic situations.

The main developer of project in Salaspils is head of Development Department in council of Salaspils Municipality. The process went directly to the second cycle of making homogenous groups. So it was important to constitute first the Coordination Group with different social groups, so all NGOs, pupil run organizations, associations and others was spoken. After that all population of municipality was invited to first meeting of presentation of project, to reach all identified society groups in municipality, there was list of NGOs, other different organization, associations, population was divided in age structure, in education structure, in employment structure, in place of living structure etc. Statistical data was also used to make this base of structure of municipality population. All people were invited through different communication channels, mobile phones, e-mails, and letters; there was also notice in local newspaper, cultural houses, social houses, schools, sport clubs etc.

Some of the groups that have participated in homogenous (focus) group work were:

- two scholar groups – “Student Council of Salaspils first high school” and “Student Council of Salaspils second high school” – it is so important because one group is from school with teaching in Latvian and another school is school with teaching in Russian, communication with scholars with different nationalities could be made;
- group named “School for moms with babies” represents the interests of new families and moms;
- several groups in which participants are people over 50/60 years, there are Russian- speaking groups and the Latvian- speaking groups;
- all other groups that were not mentioned respecting ethical issues.

The homogeneous group representatives in general reflect all Salaspils municipality society and includes different points of views and different scales of values, different material conditions but all they live in the same community and participation in homogenous group work is the possibility to find out the best solutions for all Salaspils municipality development.



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As a result in Salaspils were created 25 homogenous groups which participate in URBACT II “Together for territories of co-responsibility” project 2010/2011 (The URBACT II Local ..., 2009). In table 1 is showed the analysis of homogeneous groups in Salaspils Municipality.

Table 1

**The Analysis of Homogeneous Groups in Salaspils Municipality**

Society group	Homogeneous groups	Number of participants	Level of participation	Level of importance	Level of influence
Youth	The Student Council of Salaspils First High School; The Student Council of Salaspils Second High School	5	Medium	Medium	Low
Parents	School for mothers and babies; The Board of parents of Salaspils preschool education institutions; Society of large families in Salaspils „Martinsala”; Salaspils Women’s Club “Spiganas”	8	High	High	Medium
Cultural/ sport/ religion workers	Russian song ensemble „ОТРАДА”; Middle age dance group „Usa” of Salaspils culture house „Rigava”; Education, culture and sport department in Salaspils region council; Sporta klubs „Egoisti”; Lutheran church of Salaspils; The Roman Catholic Church in Salaspils	8	High	High	High
Science workers	Technical Universities of Riga Institute of Inorganic Chemistry, Universities of Latvia Institute of Physics and Institute of Biology	3	Low	Medium	Low



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Society group	Homogeneous groups	Number of participants	Level of participation	Level of importance	Level of influence
Municipality workers	Salaspils Social service; The Union of Salaspils Municipality workers; Council of Salaspils region	3	High	High	High
Disabled people	The association of children and young people with disabilities in Salaspils "Zelta Atsledzina"; Society of disabled persons of Salaspils	3	High	Medium	High
Seniors	Society of Russians of Salaspils; The Board of Salaspils retired people; Club "Discovering Latvia" of society „Salaspils' Pensioners Set"	3	High	Medium	Medium
Representatives from rural territories	Society „Partnership of Stopini and Salaspils"; Initiative group of citizens of Dole island	2	High	High	High
Σ	25	35			

Source: author's construction based on observations during the meetings with homogeneous groups

Further would be described the process of data collection in Salaspils Municipality.

### Data collection

*First meeting:* The aim of first meeting was to clarify what is well-being and ill-being for inhabitants of Salaspils plus what they are doing to improve well-being in their municipality. Each homogeneous group was asked to write down to sticky notes their responses. After each question group manager (from University of Latvia) read off all sticky notes with design to encourage discussions and grouped them on the large sheet of paper that was sticked to the board, for example, the most popular groups were "Infrastructure", "Education", "Health care" and so on. After meeting group managers used special software to input data.

*Second meeting:* The aim of second meeting was to present the results of first meeting and to find out what is the vision of well-being for future generations. Each group wrote down their answers and like the last time the group manager read off them and grouped. During the reading session everyone was welcome to comment answers. After meeting group managers continued input data in programme.



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When all data for each homogeneous group were input in their own file, they were sent to one member of team of University of Latvia to combine all files in one to see common situation. The programme also formulated the well-being indicators, for example, programme described very bad, bad, medium, good and ideal situation for health, education and other indicators.

*Third meeting:* The aim of third meeting was to present the indicators and to formulate activities that will improve well-being situation in Salaspils municipality. Each of homogeneous group was asked to write down activities which particular group will put into effect. Then the group manager read off them and asked to choose 2 activities for this year and 2 activities for next year which they agree to put into effect. After groups were asked to write down activities that municipality should put into effect. After reading off all activities and discussions each group had to choose priorities that the municipality should do this year and next year.

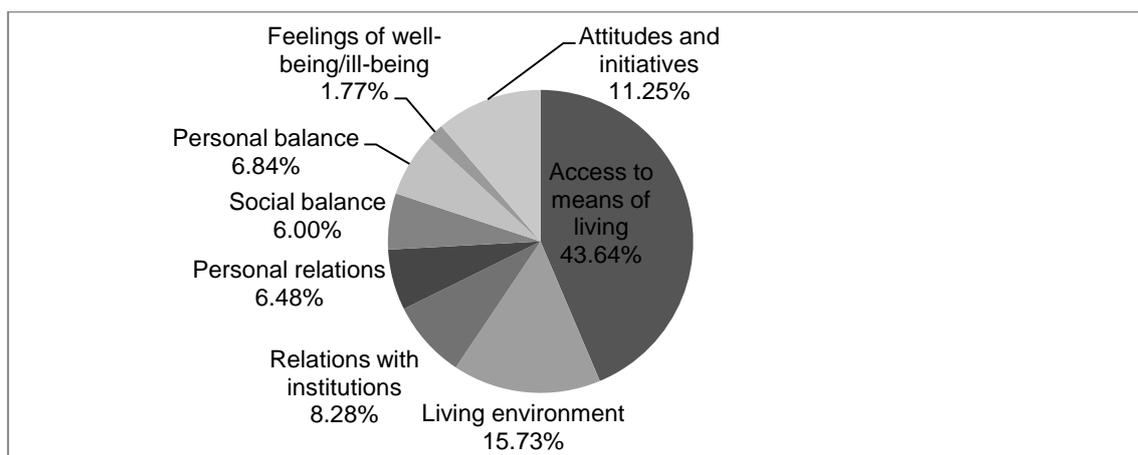
## Research results

The output that is of *SPIRAL* method (which data collects in excel in specially made functions) is indicators and those evaluations. The indicators divided in 8 main groups: 1. Access to means of living; 2. Living Environment; 3. Relations with Institutions; 4. Personal relations; 5. Social balance; 6. Personal balance; 7. Feelings of well-being/ ill-being; 8. Attitudes and initiatives (The URBACT Guide on ..., 2010).

The collected criteria's in first and second meeting with homogenous groups are entered by research group in specially designed excel program and putted in indicator group according which group the criteria belongs to. Criteria used for grouping: condition; having; quality; sustainability (The URBACT Guide on ..., 2010).

After performing the mentioned two steps (people written criteria grouping by indicator groups and their estimations) the output is table for every indicator, where the criteria is grouped as: very bad situation; bad situation; average situation; good situation; ideal situation (The URBACT II Guide to ..., 2010).

The software designed in Council of Europe updates the results of homogenous group findings, the people work is to put in the people written criteria data, to allocate them in the right indicator group and to give estimates. After automatically output, the final report is written, it can be done for every homogenous group separately or for merged similar society groups or for all society together. The results of research in Salaspils Municipality are showed in Figure 2.



Source: Results of Salaspils 25 homogenous groups – results gained from 3 meetings September, 2010 until May 2011 (from 2867 answers)

Fig. 2. Indicators Synthesis of all homogeneous groups in Salaspils Municipality in 2011, %



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The results showed that for citizens also are very important subjective well-being – factors like attitudes and initiatives, personal balance and personal relationship. Not only objective factors – like income, certain goods are determinant as were announced before research in municipality.

43.64% from all answers were included in “A” block – *Access to means of living*. The most popular indicators were: **Education/training** (249 answers), **Health** (234), **Employment/economic activities** (216) and **Leisure/culture/sports** (177).

The reason why *Education/training* indicator is so popular is due to the fact that in Salaspils there are just 2 schools and a lot of parents send their children to Riga (in a very close distance from Salaspils) because in capital of Latvia there are wider possibilities to get good education. But in the following years it is decided to build new school in Salaspils. Although there are different support from the municipality for out – school and free time activities (sport groups, dancing group, singing groups, etc.). Homogenous group representatives noticed that in Salaspils also adult persons do not have very many opportunities to improve their skills, education and spend free time in educational/cultural activities (circles, lifelong learning programs). A lot of representatives from the homogenous groups mentioned that medical care should be improved – this is pressing concern in Latvia, especially in rural territories. The same situation is with *Employment* – during the meeting the unemployment rate was 17% (average in Latvia). Also in Salaspils there are problems with visiting (not organizing) sports, culture events because municipality is very close to Riga where there are wide possibilities to spend free time. The biggest part of the Salaspils population just stay overnight in Salaspils but the active life is focused in processes in schools or work as well as free time activities in Riga (capital city of Latvia).

Second most popular block in Salaspils is B – *Living environment* with 15.73%. The most mentioned indicators were: **Basic infrastructures** (178 answers), **Environmental equilibrium** (67), **Facilities for physical security** (60).

There was often mentioned bad quality of roads (especially after winter), lack of proper sidewalks, bicycle paths, benches, and public toilets. Also citizens are not satisfied with environment – water bodies are polluted (especially river Daugava), due to the factory in Saulkalne (rural territory of Salaspils), Salaspils inhabitants are concerned about air pollution. Plus the waste collection issue is not solved. People are worried about physical security, there is not enough lightening.

Third most popular block is H – *Attitude and Initiatives* (11.25%). The most mentioned indicators were: **Private activities and initiatives** (122 answers), **Engagement in civic life** (62), **Responsibility** (46).

People in Salaspils showed that they want to participate in decision making to improve level of well-being. That's why they make different organizations to join forces.

Other blocks (*Relations with institutions, Personal relations, Social balance, Personal balance and Feelings of well-being/ill-being*) were mentioned rarely.

### **The Most Problematic Areas in Salaspils**

Analysis of the indicators showed that people in Salaspils have two different groups of problems:

1. Problems that are common in Latvia,
2. Problems that apply to inhabitants of Salaspils.

In **first group** we can include like as: Access to means of living, Alimentation, Employment/economic activities, Basic infrastructure, Economic balance, Demographic balance.

Due to the economic crisis in whole Latvia access to means of living is major problem, there are not enough workplaces (it leads to emigration), there is great inequality between incomes. Also economic crisis exacerbated birth rates.

In **second group** (most characteristic problems in Salaspils) there are included such concerns like: Health, Personal development.

In Salaspils there is rather poor medical care – the doctors are not in sufficient amount, plus doctors' visits are unreasonably expensive. There are no pharmacies in sufficient numbers in rural territories, long waiting lists for visits to doctors.



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Salaspils citizens often mentioned the unreasonable price of utilities, especially for heating. This problem is already in process of solving.

In rural territories of Salaspils Municipality aren't enough possibilities for qualitative free time activities. Salaspils provides wide possibilities for free time activities (theatre performances, concerts, hobby groups, etc.) but it is quite difficult to visit events from rural territories (transport issue, extra expenditures). The most concerned in it are families with children and retired persons

During the meetings there were some individual problems that have risen. For example, some groups (parents of large families, disable persons) mentioned that they need some place where they can meet and organize some events. In culture house "Rigava" interest groups can book place but they find it too expensive. Also understandable is fact that every group talks more about issues that are more relevant to their identity, for, example, disabled people about infrastructure and mobility, retired persons about more events for old people and organizing interest groups, pupils about free time spending etc. But the most important that thanks to the different homogenous groups that represents all society, all other society participants can be acquainted with problems of other social/interest groups in Salaspils and as a result they can talk about all problems that is common to all population in Salaspils, to evaluate the priorities and prepare proposals for decision making.

The obtained results were used in Development programme of Salaspils Municipality, in Action Plan to combat poverty, in working plans and other documents. Also in plan after around 5 years is to repeat the *SPIRAL* methodology to include new society members and to look if some changes are needed.

### 3. The main challenges and advantages of *SPIRAL* methodology

At first in analyzing process of the *SPIRAL* methodology the main advantages would be revealed.

1. The main advantage of the *SPIRAL* methodology by itself promotes Social cohesion which is main goal of Social Cohesion strategy of Council of Europe. In the research process is participating large amount of local actors who came together to improve the level of well-being.
2. The methodology by itself intends to include wide range of participants, for example, in Salaspils Municipality were involved 350 participants (population – 23 000).
3. It is developed integrated software "ESPOIR" which allows to systemize all qualitative data and demonstrate them, using charts and diagrams.
4. As qualitative data could be systemized, it is possible to repeat the research to see the dynamic development of certain indicators. But this is possible only if the research sample is representative and the methodology is not changed.
5. As co-responsibility approach and the *SPIRAL* methodology is quite new, Council of Europe ensures the trainings, tool-kit and the web page for using this methodology, creating of network of trainers across Europe who provides help to everyone who would like to introduce this approach in their community.
6. The methodology is open for developing – it is possible to improve it (including soft-were "ESPOIR"), add some certain criteria of well-being, etc.
7. During the application in Salaspils since 2010 several improvements have been introduced in *SPIRAL* methodology and Salaspils Coordination Group has participated actively in these improvements. Namely the definition of pilot actions by the homogeneous groups themselves in coming from Salaspils experience. The first and third cycles have been introduced during these last two years, that's the reason for which the process begun in Salaspils directly to homogeneous groups (second cycle), while the first cycle (identifying poverty situation and launching an action plan for poverty reduction) has been realized later. Today cities which are initiating *SPIRAL* are invited to start with the first cycle which is important to prepare well the Coordination Group and the mobilization of homogeneous groups citizens. Also building indicators and measuring them are done in the third cycle as presented before.



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The main challenges of SPIRAL methodology are included in table below.

Table 2

**The main challenges of the SPIRAL methodology**

No	Challenge	Risk	Level of Risk	Activities to reduce risk
1.	Representativeness of sample	If the aim is defined to research level of well-being of all society, the research sample must represent all society not only some part of it (like social risk categories)	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To define certain target group/ -s if the aim is to research the level of well-being of certain groups (youth, elderly people, etc.)</li> <li>To prepare a social-economical research of research territory which would be the basis for forming the sample</li> </ul>
2.	The subjection of understanding criteria	In process of processing the data in soft-ware “ESPOIR”, analyst can not understand the context of each answer and input it in wrong indicator	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the person who collected the date also input them in soft-ware</li> <li>Before processing the data, all analyst come together to discuss some answers and agree on common approach</li> <li>During the meeting with respondents the manager of the group should promote discussion about every answer to make sure that there is consensus between respondent and group manager</li> </ul>
3.	Systematic faults in input data	During the processing the data, there is possibility that some of the answers wouldn't be input or input in wrong indicator because of the large amount of input data	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure that another analyst is checking the input of data, afterwards both are discussing some doubtful parts</li> </ul>
4.	Risks – political, administrative	The is a risk that because of the political or administrative government change there wouldn't support for using the co-responsibility approach and wouldn't use the outputs of the research	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure the participation of different political forces in the research</li> <li>To prepare and realize systematic programme of activities to promote the co-responsibility approach</li> <li>To involve different stakeholders in implementation the methodology</li> </ul>
5.	Size of sample	During the research it is important to define the size of sample to ensure that the results are representative	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using different statistical methods to evaluate needed size of sample</li> </ul>



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No	Challenge	Risk	Level of Risk	Activities to reduce risk
6.	The monitoring of realization	After identifying certain activities to ensure that the main aim of research – improving well-being – would be achieved, it is need to ensure sustainability of the results	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that gained results are integrated in different development documents which are approved by government</li> <li>• To create work place or using existing which responsibility would be to ensure sustainability of results</li> </ul>
7.	The professionalism of researchers	It is not defined who must implement the methodology – professional researchers or staff of Municipality, or members of NGOs	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If it is possible ensure that personal who is responsible for the implementation of the methodology are experienced professionals</li> <li>• In the trainings of the methodology should be participating not only developers of the methods but also different experts (for example, of quantitative and qualitative methods)</li> </ul>

Source: authors' summary based on research made in Salaspils Municipality in 2011

As we can see in table 1, there are a lot of challenges the implementers of the SPIRAL methodology should face with. The proposed activities are defined based on different activities which were realized or proposed during the research in Salaspils Municipality held in 2011.

## Conclusions, proposals, recommendations

1. In a context of economic crisis, the solutions that are needed cannot only be based on economic resources but should also take into account the citizens themselves for innovative solutions based on local needs. Academic research as well as practical research in Salaspils municipality has proved that great importance for decision making on municipality level has discussions in homogenous groups on understanding issues important for all in municipality. Discussions in homogenous or focus groups help to lead for preparation of joint plans for municipality development and society involvement and it makes need to think also about other interest and social groups in the municipality.
2. Meetings with homogeneous groups showed that there are particular subjective needs for each group and these needs should be respected, groups discussed problems together so every social group could be informed about situation in other groups that helped to range problems by priorities. During the meetings of homogenous groups became known main guidelines for Development Program of Salaspils. In this way municipality ensures that the most part of citizen needs will be taken into account and Municipality will develop those sectors where people are really interested in, not those sectors which are usually developed in municipalities.
3. One of the case that is obvious, we cannot evaluate the well-being in society without asking people questions about their own opinions – not only objective components of well-being are determinant. The subjective well-being must be researched also in the level of municipalities.



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4. For the last decade there has been developed a new methodology – the SPIRAL – for evaluating the well-being using subjective approach. The SPIRAL methodology is initiated by Council of Europe and it is one of the instruments in realizing Social Cohesion plan.
5. As the SPIRAL methodology could be realized using bottom-up and top-down approach, also there are fast, intermediate and comprehensive cycles of using it, plus there are prepared different instruments (methodological guide, tool-kit, webpage, etc.), it could be considered, that the methodology is developed for wide purposes and there is wide range applications.
6. In Salaspils Municipality in the process of realizing the SPIRAL methodology was involved the expert team from University of Latvia who provided the approbation of new methodology and also proposed many possible improvements.
7. The SPIRAL methodology could be nominated as reliable research methodology for evaluating well-being in society with condition of all mentioned challenged would be considered and activities to reduce risks would be undertaken. The most important challenge is to ensure the representativeness of sample and sustainability of gained results.
8. For development of the SPIRAL methodology for researching well-being of society it is needed to supplement the methodology with different quantitative methods for evaluating the size of sample, errors of assessment, prevent the multicorelation between different factors, etc. – those aspects would be researched in further papers.

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