CAN IMPROVEMENTS TO COASTAL ENVIRONMENTS IMPROVE THE WELL-BEING OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES?

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1. BACKGROUND AND QUESTION

- Marine plans and policies are increasingly scrutinised for their potential to contribute to greater well-being for people.
- Interventions may help to capitalise on numerous opportunities to gain well-being benefits from coastal environments.
- Despite this, there is limited evidence on the impacts of coastal interventions on well-being.
- Research question: What is the impact of a coastal regeneration project (Plymouth, UK) on the well-being of local residents?

2. CASE STUDY

- Teat’s Hill (Plymouth, UK)- deprived coastal urban area with green space and playground.
- A regeneration project improved the site (access, environmental quality and facilities) and assessed the benefits of the regeneration.
- The project was co-ordinated by Plymouth City Council and involved a range of stakeholders (including the BlueHealth project).

3. METHOD

- The PhD project assessed the well-being value of the regeneration using two methods:
  1. Contingent Valuation Method (preferences, through willingness to pay for the regeneration).
  2. Life Satisfaction Approach (experience of the regeneration, based on reports of life satisfaction).

4. HEADLINE FINDINGS

- Willingness to pay was interpreted as a well-being measure and complemented the Life Satisfaction Approach.
- The estimates from the two methods were dissimilar.
- But, together the findings were indicative of a positive effect of the regeneration on the well-being of local residents.

Contingent Valuation Method

- £7.97
- Amount that people were willing to pay for the regeneration per person as a one off payment.
- The % increase in life satisfaction (before vs. after).
- The value of the 3.89% increase in life satisfaction. This represents the value per person per year.

Life Satisfaction Approach

- £2,354
- The % increase in life satisfaction (before vs. after).
- The value of the 3.89% increase in life satisfaction. This represents the value per person per year.

5. IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS

- Business case for blue spaces. The evidence is being used to ensure ongoing investment to improve the quality and accessibility of blue spaces in Plymouth and the wider area.
- Public health. Reaffirms evidence that natural environments may have important specific properties in terms of the benefits that they might convey for well-being and therefore public health.

6. TAKE HOME MESSAGES

- There was a positive effect of the coastal regeneration on the well-being of local residents in Plymouth (UK).
- This is one of the first studies to assess the impact of a coastal intervention on human well-being.
- The research has implications for the future funding of coastal interventions, public health research and policy and planning.

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