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وزارة تنمية المجتمع

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To Enhance Social Well-Being

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United Arab Emirates

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Introduction



One well-recognised approach to measuring the success of a nation is to add up its Gross Domestic Product (GDP); in other words, to count the total monetary value of a nation's goods and services. Measuring GDP is likely to remain a vital marker for economists, but it cannot capture everything that is important to people.

This is because some of the factors that determine our quality of life cannot be measured in terms of monetary value. For instance, our health, our family and relationships, the quality and nature of our work, the environment and education are all important contributors to our sense of satisfaction with our lives. If we are to measure what really matters to people, then we need to measure these factors, too.

What's more, the relationship between wealth and well-being is complex: put simply, poverty makes people miserable, but only wealth does not necessarily make people happy. When people or nations are poor (Somalia, for example, with an estimated per capita GDP of only US\$600), then differences in material wealth make a big difference to their happiness.

On the other hand, when people or nations are relatively wealthy (For instance, Luxembourg has a massive per capita GDP of US\$96,000), differences in income make a much smaller impact on levels of well-being, and other factors start to have a bigger impact.

An important aspect of wellbeing is ease of access to public service information and the ability to obtain such services without having to go through any tedious processes. This report provides several examples of cases where governments have applied innovations to make access to information, and the provision of public services as seamless as possible. In Portugal, for example, cities have digital devices installed at various streets that allow citizens to save time, energy and money, by providing a myriad of information on public services in a simple and accessible way, while also being free of cost. Users can select the public service of their choice and the public entity that is more convenient to them, receive virtual queue tickets by SMS and also SMS alerts when there are 3 tickets left for their turn. A more recent example comes from Estonia, where the government has used Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning to integrate the provision of all public services related to life events under one platform, in a bid towards more proactive governance. This means that once a family registers the birth of a child, the state itself will proactively reach out to the family and provide information on all the child benefits that the family can choose to either accept or reject. Not only do both these examples ensure the wellbeing of citizens through hassle-free provision of public services, they promote trust between the citizen and the state.

Another critical component of wellbeing is related to the design of cities. This is especially true for urban centres where lives are fast paced, and stress levels are high. The report provides examples from European cities that are working towards easing the environmental stress of urban centres to improve the sense of wellbeing amongst its inhabitants. Cities are moving towards plans that are family friendly to ensure that families with young children don't feel at a disadvantage as a result of making the choice of living and working in urban centres. For example, in the city of Ghent in Belgium, the government is committed to making public spaces child friendly. It wants its children to have safe mobility around the city to destinations such as their schools, playgrounds, museums etc. It ensures this by creating red paved paths for children along these routes with controlled traffic to ensure safety.

To design policies and programs that cater to wellbeing, it is important to use a "human centred approach," that considers citizen perceptions and expectations. You will find several examples in the cases below where governments are using innovative approaches to factor the voice of citizens in decision making and in policy design. One such example comes from the City of Kansas that uses a Community Sensemaking Approach to map families' lived experiences and create policies and programming adaptive to families' needs. In addition to factoring in citizen opinions in policy making, some governments also push for partnership with the citizens towards creating a healthy environment in cities. For example, the Korean city of Seoul uses various innovative approaches to encourage citizens to share resources in a bid to encourage community building, and lessen environmental impacts, among other objectives. In London, the city government has commissioned the University of East London to deliver a program of masterclasses to share learning and best practice on what works at the local community or neighbourhood level to develop healthy and resilient communities. Through this program, the Greater London Authority will identify and train up to 150 community leaders that would work towards improving health and wellbeing within their communities.

While there are numerous examples of innovative policies and programs that promote wellbeing globally, this report serves as an insightful snapshot of the range and varieties of such innovations.



Mental Health

Wellbeing is a top priority, and health and safety are key foundations to the wellbeing of individuals and communities. Today, the concept of health is not limited to physical health, but also includes mental health. The UAE's wise leadership pays great attention to mental health, treating it as a main priority and tool to promote societal health. It has been incorporated into the National Strategy for Wellbeing 2031 as a core pillar that supports mental wellbeing and helps individuals in the UAE prosper under all circumstances.

In view of the repercussions of COVID-19 and the social, professional and educational changes in our daily lives, an urgent need to provide psychological support and promote mental health emerged. The National Programme for Happiness and Wellbeing launched a virtual national campaign for mental support themed "Don't Worry", offering immediate mental health support to all the members of the community. The campaign bolstered national efforts to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and provided an innovative mental support model for individuals. Over 50 specialists, psychologists and social workers voluntarily participated to serve the country.

The campaign featured three main components focusing on extending psychological support to all members of society, especially that this type of support was an essential community need under the pandemic.

The first component, 'Let's Support Together', aimed to answer inquiries regarding psychological challenges, provide educational advice and support individuals in facing challenges, through daily live broadcasts on the social media networks of the National Programme for Happiness and Wellbeing. The live broadcasts covered a variety of topics, including psychological care for senior citizens, psychological care for children, psychological support for working mothers, and how to address anxiety and psychological concerns. According to scientific studies, fear and anxiety are among the strongest influences that weaken human immunity, and, therefore, it is necessary to learn about how to deal with them.

Entitled 'Let's Talk Together', the second component aimed to provide psychosocial support to specific groups of society, to enable them to talk to each other in a safe environment to discuss the psychological challenges facing them. Under the supervision of certified physicians and psychologists, the sessions of this component were targeted at those under quarantine, including working mothers, school and university students, and frontline professionals.



The third component was titled 'Let's Reassure Together'. It raised awareness of the importance of psychological resilience, sharing videos with messages of support and reassurance to the community on various social media platforms.

For two months amidst COVID-19 lockdown, the 'Don't Worry' campaign encouraged the interaction of more than 1,000,000 members of the UAE community. It gave birth to the Mental Support Line initiative, which seeks to help individuals overcome COVID-related mental challenges and their impact on life. In cooperation with elite experts, consultants and specialists in the field of psychology and volunteers, the initiative provides a dedicated helpline and messaging service that ensures callers' privacy, supported by Emirates Foundation, SEHA (Abu Dhabi Health Services Co.) and Abu Dhabi Public Health Centre.

The Mental Support Line aims to provide safe and confidential mental support to individuals impacted directly and indirectly by the pandemic, including patients with their families, those who have lost a relative to COVID-19 and anyone psychologically affected by precautionary measures, such as lockdown, quarantine and testing. The support will continue even after the pandemic ends.



School of Life

Life skills are basic human skills that are often needed to deal with different circumstances in a healthy, positive way. Such skills are acquired through direct learning or life experiences. The School of Life is a community initiative launched by the National Programme for Happiness and Wellbeing with the aim of improving life skills, encouraging positive thinking, promoting self-development and communication, and boosting cohesion and social relations in line with the wellbeing agenda launched at the UAE Government Annual Meetings in November 2018.

The School of Life initiative is a key enabler of the National Wellbeing Strategy 2031, and is linked to 'Thriving Citizens', one of the basic levels of the strategy that focuses on providing all tools necessary to upgrade people's quality of life. It has four strategic objectives: promoting wellbeing skills, adopting positive thinking as a core value, promoting healthy and active lifestyles, and boosting mental wellbeing. It is also directly connected to the second level of the strategy, 'Connected Communities', as it seeks to strengthen family and community cohesion.

The initiative features a series of interactive workshops and informative sessions directed at various segments of the society and aimed to promote a culture of wellbeing, happiness and enhanced life skills. They are conducted by leading speakers who have unique experiences and inspiring stories to share in a smooth, interactive manner. The School of Life highlights an array of topics related to wellbeing skills, including mental and physical health, social and emotional intelligence, tolerance, self-development and abilities, family and social relations, communication skills, and others. The aim is to build new generations that implement the principles of wellbeing as a daily routine.

For its first session, the School of Life opted for the in-person mode. The time and place were predetermined and community members were invited to register and attend. The session attracted thousands of participants from different society groups and focused on balance in life, parental leadership, parents' role in raising children, life preparedness skills and their role in promoting wellbeing, building the future narrative of individuals, and inner peace.

Against the backdrop of COVID-19's impact, the School of Life initiative has continued its sessions, holding virtual interactive workshops led by inspirational speakers across the UAE's most popular social media platforms. The virtual sessions have seen the participation of thousands of people, proving the need to continue to offer such content to improve good life skills.



To utilise diverse communication channels and benefit everyone, the initiative is now available on podcast hosting platforms in the form of audio recordings of sessions by renowned speakers from various walks of life.

The School of Life initiative is part of the National Programme for Happiness and Wellbeing's efforts to promote good life skills among society and enable individuals to adopt the culture of wellbeing as a daily lifestyle, through interactive dialogues and workshops.



Community Design for Wellbeing Initiative

The incidence of obesity in the UAE is three times greater than the international average. In UAE, young people (ages 10-18) are a staggering 1.8 times more obese than those in the United States according to a US National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. The UAE Vision 2021 includes the admirable aim of developing a world-class healthcare system. A key indicator under this aim is a reduction in the prevalence of obesity among children. In 2010, 54.7 per cent of children in the UAE were identified as obese. A global school-based health survey by WHO conducted nationwide in UAE schools children noted that percentage of students who are overweight was 39.1% in the age group of 13-15 years, 37.3% in the age group of 16-17 years and 38.4% in the age group of 13-17 years. Around 17% of students were noted obese in the age group of 13-17 years. An alarming 59.7% of students were noted mostly inactive and spent three or more hours per day sitting and watching television, or playing computer games. 2017 figures from the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) revealed that 17.3% of the UAE population between the ages of 20 and 79 have type 2 diabetes. There are over 1 million people living with diabetes in the UAE, placing the country 15th worldwide for age-adjusted comparative prevalence. Further, the Ministry of Health and Prevention report for 2018 has revealed that Cardiovascular Diseases (CVD) is a leading cause of mortality in the UAE.

Initiatives aimed at reducing obesity are evident across the country. Doctors, academics and researchers have welcomed these efforts. UAE has been a forerunner in promoting healthy lifestyle in its citizens and residents and has now even moved towards collaborating with the community directly to devise solutions towards a healthy and active lifestyle amongst them.

In 2019, the National Program for Happiness and Wellbeing launched the Community Design for Wellbeing initiative, which is the first participatory platform for community engagement in the UAE, aiming to boost citizen engagement in designing initiatives to promote wellbeing in the UAE. It builds on the outcomes of the wellbeing team meeting held as part of the UAE Government Annual Meetings.

The initiative was aimed at designing new solutions to enhance the adoption of a healthy and active lifestyle, identifying the main challenges facing the society in this regard, and raising the community awareness on healthy living and its impact on the community wellbeing.



The engagement event took place in May 2019 and garnered participation of 700 people from different segments of the society participated in designing solutions that enhance wellbeing. The initiative further witnessed the participation of a number of ministers and government officials, including His Excellency Dr. Thani Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Minister of Foreign Trade (former Minister of Ministry of Climate Change and Environment), Her Excellency Hessa bint Essa Buhumaid, Minister of Community Development, and His Excellency Dr. Mugheer Khamis Al Khaili, Chairman of the Department of Community Development in Abu Dhabi. The Community Design for Wellbeing initiative reflects the directives of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to ensure that the government furnishes an open platform for community participation in designing solutions and developing initiatives and projects which focus on wellbeing as one of the key pillars of the society.

The event was grounded in developing ideas for boosting happiness and wellbeing through two main pillars, namely, active and healthy lifestyle. It focused on these two factors as 50% of an individual's health depends on his lifestyle and eating habits. The initiative encouraged individuals to adopt a healthy and active lifestyle through community-designed initiatives. In doing so, it not only brought the community together, but also different ministries, government entities and private sector companies. Amongst the participants and organizers were a number of government entities including: Ministry of Health and Prevention; Ministry of Community Development; Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Climate Change and Environment; Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development; Ministry of Infrastructure Development; General Sports Authority; the Office of the Minister of State for Future Food Security; Department of Community Development in Abu Dhabi; Dubai Municipality; Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority; Abu Dhabi Sports Council, Dubai Sports Council and Sharjah Sports Council. The partners' list also included a number of leading institutions in the private sector, which actively participated in implementing interactive activities and helping participants design ideas and solutions, such as Carrefour - Majid Al Futtaim Group, NMC Healthcare, Valiant Clinic, Abu Dhabi COOP and Deliveroo.

The event was divided into two parts - active lifestyle and healthy eating and a number of activities were designed for the community to participate and to understand what are the challenges individuals in the community face in terms of adopting an active lifestyle or eat healthy. The initiative also aimed to try and understand some of the behaviors of people such as how healthy do they eat, how often they eat out or cook at home, what kind of food they prefer and why.

On the active lifestyle side, the event looked at seeing how active people are in their everyday life, how often they exercise, and where they prefer exercising. For this, they were asked what would incentivize them to work out regularly, and what would encourage them to order a healthier option.

The whole activity aimed at asking people to propose the solutions and help the government design those solutions for them. The event helped the government in getting some valuable ideas for initiatives, policies, and regulations that it will be working on in the future.



Access to Public Services Information for all Portuguese Citizens

Getting official paper work done can be cumbersome and time intensive. Most administration offices have long ques and one has to give up substantial time at home or at work to get documents such as identification, social security, insurance etc.

To this end, in Portugal the Administrative Modernization Agency – AMA, which is the Portuguese public body responsible for the digital transformation of the Public Administration-has launched a Citizenship Module in a pre-existing public interface tool designed by TOMI World.

The tool called TOMI is a user-friendly network of interactive street kiosks that offer a unique way to promote multiple activities and points of interest, such as public services, tourism, culture and local commerce. It operates like a community/proximity service that gives everyone the same opportunities to access public services while walking on the streets, thus promoting both social and digital inclusion. The kiosks were originally installed by TOMI World in 2014 in partnership with a marketing company and had features such as news(with curated urban local information), events (aggregate everything that's happening in the city, by categories), search (helps to explore every corner of the city, listing places to eat, nearby points of interest or where to sleep), and transport (promotes mobility, allowing users to search for the routes for any destination). However, under the partnership with AMA, the feature of Citizenship module was only recently added to the devices as of June 2018.

The Citizenship module allows citizens to save time, energy and money, by providing a myriad of information of public services in a simple and accessible way, while also being free of cost. Users can select the public service of their choice and the public entity that is more convenient to them (based on location and/or queue lines), receiving the virtual queue ticket by SMS and also SMS alerts when there are 3 tickets left for their turn. Services include requesting and renewing the Citizen Card and Passport, obtaining Civil Registry certificates (birth, marriage, death) or scheduling an attendance at the Tax Authority or Social Security Services, to name just a few. The citizen can also take virtual queue tickets for services of public interest provided in the Portuguese network of Citizen Shops (one-stop-shops), namely by water, energy and telecom utilities. As such, users can wait for their turn anywhere they want and just go to the public entity when their turn is close. This feature also allows public entities to better organize queue lines and to reduce the waiting time in their physical offices, thus contributing to a better citizen experience and to improve the overall level of service.



Furthermore, the Citizenship module ensures that everyone can interact and access public services, even people who don't normally have access to technology. By providing useful and accessible information to all, regardless of gender, ethnicity or age, TOMI's network promotes inclusion and equity and contributes to more informed, educated and participatory citizens.

Another standout feature is the possibility to use TOMI's network to foster an effective citizen engagement, either by launching important alerts (such as a street being closed for works), by gathering citizens' opinions on matters of public interest, by providing relevant information or simply by collecting citizens' feedback. The solution also caters to disabled individuals and is able to readjust as per the user needs (e.g. adapting screens for people on wheelchairs).

Overall, the main objective of the Citizenship module is to bring public services closer to all people, taking advantage of TOMI's network to provide a location for e-services and public services search. In this way, it's possible to strengthen ties between people, cities and the State, by making public services more accessible and easier to use.

TOMI Citizenship module is already installed in its Portuguese network, and is registering great feedback from users and coverage from the media. Currently the Citizenship Module is available in more than 100 Portuguese cities. These include the main cities of Lisbon and Porto, and also a variety of cities in the North region (e.g. Porto, Guimarães, etc.), in the Algarve region (e.g. Albufeira, Faro, etc.), in the Centre region (e.g. Figueira da Foz, Viseu). TOMI is continuously expanding its network in Portugal, and more digital services will soon be added to it as well.



Interprofessional Emergency Services in Finland

The South Savo Social and Health Care Authority in Finland comprises 9 municipalities with a total population of 105,500 people. The population is decreasing, the rate of ageing in the region is high, and the proportion of older people in Finland is one of the highest in the world. The process of finding healthcare services, obtaining information and accessing them can be cumbersome as healthcare services are scattered across the system in a complex manner. Problems occur in allocating services and matching customers' needs. Customers are often offered help within a medical framework, regardless of their primary service need. Oftentimes, customers end up being referred onwards without the issue being fully dealt with, or they end up being turned away or offered overlapping and redundant services.

Hence, an inter-professional emergency service model was developed within a project funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (2013–2016) to support functional integration in South Savonia. A core aim of the project was to integrate the social work and healthcare emergency services into one system. As a result, the interprofessional emergency services were implemented on 1 January, 2017.

Under this model, each professional's role is a part of the whole, making the customer experience smooth. From the customers' point of view, interprofessional emergency service differs from the traditional model in that they can find all the assistance they need at one point of service instead of visiting several sites, regardless of the fact that the organisation has to divide the service needed into smaller parts. From the professional's point of view, a variety of complex services form a single, controllable whole that addresses the customer's service needs in a mutually agreed collaboration.

In the beginning of the project, the functionality of emergency services was studied. After the analyses, actual work to design the operational model began. The work progressed in phases. An important tool in the development was an interprofessional workgroup with participants representing all emergency services players namely healthcare, social services, the police, the emergency response centre and NGOs. To create the operating model, 2 major collaboration meetings were held in the summer of 2015, and an interprofessional working group met 7 times by spring 2016. The groups covered themes such as interprofessional customer situations, the core tasks of different players and the common working area, starting customer processes, crisis communication, revising experiences from the emergency service trial, and revising the draft for the model.

Between the working group meetings, the project coordinator met with different players, gathering material for the model. Meetings were also held with different



working groups such as nurses from acute workgroup, emergency social workers, the team responsible for initial evaluation in child protection, and psychiatric workgroups. In addition to working with the groups, the coordinator benchmarked the 24/7 social and crisis services in Espoo and Kouvola.

Major functions that supported the drafting of the operating model were trials with an acute psychiatry nurse working on weekends and social workers' on-call duty on weekends. The trials facilitated customer-facing work in future operating environments, work in interprofessional pairs and testing and developing collaboration. During the trial, customer situations were monitored using interviews carried out by the on-duty psychiatry nurse, Webropol monitoring of the emergency services and evaluation meetings between those involved in the trial and their supervisors.

A survey of emergency service personnel was also carried out during the pilot. The trial showed that a revised service provision changed the customer base structure that contacted the services, and the number of face-to-face meetings between customers and workers in social emergency services increased. Customers received a more complete service while the personnel felt that their work was easier and the customer service chain smoother. The operating model for emergency social and crisis work was finalised in spring 2016, and its implementation commenced on 1 January 2017. Mental health and substance abuse emergency services, and child protection on-call duty during office hours were also integrated into the emergency social and crisis work. The development of the model is an ongoing process that responds to any changes to the national act on emergency services.

The model has received a lot of praise throughout Finland and the leading Finnish healthcare magazine Mediutiset named the innovators social care project coordinator Katja Saukkonen and Chief Physician Santeri Seppälä as the number one influencer on Finnish healthcare on their list of 100 most influential healthcare people in Finland.



Our Tomorrows- A Community Sensemaking Approach in Kansas

The early childhood system in Kansas, USA envisions that all children will have their basic needs met and have equitable access to quality early childhood care and educational opportunities, so they are prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. In 2019, the State of Kansas received a large federal grant (the Preschool Development Grant) to conduct a needs assessment and craft a strategic plan for the early childhood system where all children can thrive. The grant leadership, a team of state agencies utilized this opportunity to harness the power of a Community Sensemaking Approach to map families' lived experiences and create policies and programming adaptive to families' needs. To this end, the State of Kansas piloted 'Our Tomorrows,' a novel framework to capture family experiences about thriving and surviving.

Through the program, members of the community can share or collect stories of struggle and perseverance in times of crises to understand how families thrived and survived in difficult circumstances.

Our Tomorrows set out to achieve three goals:

- 1- Gather stories about thriving and surviving from families across Kansas utilizing a story-based narrative research approach called SenseMaker, through which the State of Kansas can examine the patterns and stories in-depth, allowing them to gain new understanding about what families need to thrive.
- 2- Make sense of patterns that emerged from the stories through Community Sensemaking Workshops with stakeholders at various levels of the system.
- 3- Take action and ennoble bottom-up change through Community Action Labs.

From a complexity perspective, these goals translate to developing a 'human sensor network,' embedding citizen feedback loops and sensemaking processes into governance, and complexity-informed intervention via portfolios of safe-to-fail probes. The program invites the members of the community to engage in two ways:

1- To become Citizen Journalists: Our Tomorrows Citizen Journalists invite people in their community to share an anonymous story about a time when their family thrived, or simply survived. Respondents enter their own stories into a Citizen Journalist's tablet or through the Our Tomorrows website. Educators, community leaders or volunteers, parents and families with children and students constitute the program's Citizen Journalists.



2- To become Organizational Partners: Our Tomorrows Organizational Partners help lay the groundwork for positive community change. They collect stories; network within the community; host community events and Sensemaking workshops; and help carry out small, locally-determined changes that, together, make a big impact. State agencies, non-profits, school districts, and other community coalitions and networks are eligible to become the program's Organizational Partners.

Leadership from a new Governor and the support of the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas Department for Children and Families, and Kansas State Department of Education aligned to endorse the approach and call for statewide participation. This ambitious effort collected 2,666 stories from all 105 Kansas counties to include frontier, rural, and urban voices. Stories were collected online, on paper, and through interviews conducted by Citizen Journalists. These anonymous stories were then returned to people who shared their story and other early childhood stakeholders at fourteen Community Sensemaking Workshops where participants reviewed story packs and identified emerging patterns about the conditions under which families thrive. Dialogue was rooted in the ways that respondents interpreted their own story in SenseMaker quantitative metadata. Our Tomorrows then launched Community Action Labs to support local portfolios of Actionables that were quick, local, and inexpensive (up to \$2,000).

Our Tomorrows transformed mindsets by creating an avenue for everyday Kansans to shape decisions that directly affect their lives through sensemaking. The process developed trust between communities and state leaders because lived experiences were centered and translated into action.

Quantitatively, the Our Tomorrows Community Sensemaking Approach resulted in:

- 1- Twenty-four (24) organizational partners, eight citizen journalists, and many community champions shaped the collection effort that contributed to a public data dashboard and aggregated story patterns.
- 2- Forty-six (46) individuals or organizations proposed local solutions for Community Action Labs. This number doubled the expected response. The Labs allowed them to safely take a risk on new ideas without jeopardizing pre-existing funding.
- 3- Five (5) state agencies with high-level decision-makers that are interested in complexity-informed intervention strategies, innovation, and futures method

Moreover, Our Tomorrows resulted in youth engagement and new dialogue on deep cultural issues. One citizen journalist was a 13-year-old who went door-to-door asking people to "make their community a better place" by sharing a story. Upon hearing of this effort, a state legislator unexpectedly and emotionally shared the youth's story at a state meeting. This was a pivotal moment that led to an increased commitment from state leadership to center family experiences to inform decision-making.

The Our Tomorrows Story Bank provides a de-politicized lens for discussions about core issues that often devolve into partisan debates, like health care. By framing dialogue with stories of thriving or surviving, people across the political spectrum can think about problems from the perspective of families. Then, they can think about what they have the capacity to change.

The innovation has been scaled nationwide as of 2019. Future plans are in motion to institutionalize the Community Sensemaking Approach as an embedded mechanism to foster innovation in the Kansas early childhood system. The story collection effort will be deepened in 2020 through the launch of the Our Tomorrows 2.0 SenseMaker framework. A statewide Story Bank hosted at the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund will be the centralized access point for all narratives collected with the new framework. To support decision-making, the Sensemaking Analysis and Visualization (SAVVY) Dashboard will provide early childhood stakeholders real-time access to patterns emerging from narratives.

Local capacity for SenseMaker data analysis and community-led sensemaking workshops will be developed by the Our Tomorrows team to encourage bottom-up change. Over time, the Community Action Lab structure could continuously stimulate complexity-informed intervention by sourcing safe-to-fail experiments from community members. Along with supporting the state's early childhood innovation portfolio, this bottom-up change will align with policy and program decisions at all levels. To scale the Community Sensemaking Approach beyond Kansas, a likely step will be to replicate the process for other recipients of the US Preschool Development Grant implementation award



Singapore -Kampung Admiralty Integrated Senior Living

Singapore's elderly poor are not short of assistance schemes by the State to meet their material needs: From heavy medical subsidies and food vouchers, to long-term financial assistance, and even rental waivers for those on Public Assistance.

But the greater problem for many of them is social isolation. According to the Singapore Longitudinal Ageing Study in 2012 by the National University of Singapore's Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, seniors living alone and feeling isolated were twice as likely as their peers to develop depressive symptoms as a result of loneliness. Interaction and emotional support are key to prevent vulnerable seniors from suffering depression.

The number of seniors living alone in Singapore is going up. The Department of Statistics estimates that 83,000 elderly persons will be living alone by 2030 as compared to the 47,000 seniors aged 65 and above in 2016.

In 2013, the government turned to an innovative policy approach targeted towards providing housing for seniors such that it provides them with all important facilities, while keeping them integrated with the society at large to prevent isolation.

Located on the north end of Singapore, Kampung Admiralty is a public housing development targeted at elderly residents that integrates healthcare, public facilities, community space, and commercial amenities in a dynamic, vertical format. Designed by the Singaporean architecture firm WOHA, the small-scale development was awarded World Building of the Year in 2018.

Kampung Admiralty is a fine example of public policy and design coming together to foster communities, particularly by including the aging generation. Spearheaded by Singapore's Housing Development Board—the city-state's public housing authority that provides residences for over 80% of the population—the project, a prototype model that could impact future developments, was inspired by the desire to create a modern kampong, which means “village” in Malay.

WOHA's design saw typical aspects of Singapore public housing—community spaces, food centers, residence and park space—transformed into a layered vertical format. These elements are traditionally operated as silos, and never combined.

There are four distinct components of the project which are layered vertically. In the first layer, there is the lower-ground carpark and retail, with the second layer comprising of the ground level “community living space”, where an open plaza and hawker center is located. The third layer is a large medical center footprint, which functions like an umbrella that shelters over the plaza.



In the final layer, Kampung Admiralty features a childhood learning center, which is located alongside an active aging hub where seniors can enjoy communal activities ranging from music sessions and cooking classes to simply just hanging out. Above that, an extensive landscaped area, which includes a community farm and vertical garden, provides a bounty of wheelchair-accessible green space to support an active and healthy lifestyle. Rather than just being confined to just residents, all of Kampung Admiralty's community and garden spaces are open to the larger public.

What's most notable in the project is that social and intergenerational interaction is fostered at multiple scales. There are interstitial spaces like shared entryways to studio apartments, which have been all fitted with features like barrier-free access, induction hobs and slip-resistant tiles in the bathrooms, to facilitate neighborly relations. There is also special programming created to encourage volunteerism and foster micro-job opportunities by working at the supermarket or hawker center below for short periods of time. In all, a great deal of thought has been given towards keeping the older residents active and involved.

The project provides an environment for active aging and promoting community bonding. Unfortunately, however, the facility only has 100 units for elderly living at this point. Regardless of its size though, Kampung Admiralty is a powerful example of how tackling the universal issue of housing seniors can be turned into a community meeting point.



ThriveNYC

In New York City, at least one in five adults are likely to experience a mental health disorder in any given year in the city. Suicide incidence in public schools is as high as 8%. Moreover, major depressive disorder is the single greatest source of disability in NYC. At any given time over half a million adult New Yorkers are estimated to have depression, yet less than 40% report receiving care for it. This has resulted in annual productivity losses of up to \$14 billion for the city.

In 2015, the city launched a project called ThriveNYC, committed to closing the critical gaps in mental healthcare in the city. The project partners with 12 city agencies to reach out to citizens with the highest need by supporting over 54 initiatives towards improving mental well-being. These initiatives span six core principles that underpin ThriveNYC's mental health strategy.

Firstly, the project adheres to the principle, "Change the Culture." This principle challenges the stigma and misinformation around mental health. An example of an initiative under this principal includes the Mental Health First Aid program, that trains 250,000 New Yorkers in dealing with citizens facing mental health challenges and also to diminish stigma and improve self-efficacy to address mental health issues.

The second principle, "Act early" describes the need for more investment in early intervention and prevention. It addresses the partners, practices, and infrastructures needed to implement and secure those investments at scale. This includes earlier opportunities for people to identify and treat schizophrenia in young adults and depression in perinatal women. An example of an initiative under this program is the School Mental Health Consultant Program, that assigns mental health clinic resources to all public-school campuses.

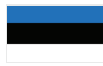
Thirdly, the project focuses on the principle, "Close treatment gaps." This principle challenges assumptions about how care can be originated and organized. Gaps include not just inadequate levels of coverage and access but also gaps in quality, use of best practices, and cultural and linguistic diversity. For example, one initiative under this principle is the formation of a Learning Collaborative launched with the Greater New York Hospital Association across 30 NYC hospitals to universalize the identification and connection to effective care of all women with perinatal depression.



The fourth principle called, "Partner with communities" is intended to describe how a range of community organizations, leaders, members, and social networks are integral owners of promoting mental health and closing gaps in care. An initiative under this principle provides a web-based learning portal to accelerate the spread of task-shifted skills and topical knowledge to community actors often turned to for mental health and substance use issues (e.g., clergy, social service staff, other trusted organizations or city agencies).

The fifth principle, "Use data better" understands that these directions for a public health strategy require better information. It is difficult to collaborate with community-based organizations and networks; set and meet goals to close gaps or be responsive to those most endangered when they fall through gaps; focus action on key groups, risk factors, or specific neighbourhoods; or capture the potential social and other overall health benefits without more comprehensive, precise, real-time maps of needs, outcomes, and resources. Hence initiatives under this principle aim at using underused tools, such as crowd-sourced methods, pooling of provider data systems, geomapping, and big data strategies to fill in the information gaps when it comes to solving mental health problems within the city.

Finally, under the principle "Enable Government to Lead," the project works on initiatives that build capacity in key government bodies in leading public health approaches to mental health.



Life Event Service Design in Estonia

Many countries are redesigning their public services by the life event-based logic, but most of these countries consider life event services as one-sided way of providing information about the services organised according to the needs of users on a central website. Estonia has a more complex and ambitious approach. Their objective is to automatically and proactively offer a person, in case of a life event, services related to that event through web applications as one user experience.

In the end of 2018, Estonian Government Cabinet approved the action plan for life and business event service redesign, which has a target of 7 event-based services live by the end of 2020. In Estonia, life and business event services are defined as public services that are provided jointly by several authorities and with a maximum of one user interaction so that a person would be able to perform all the obligations and exercise all the rights conferred on the person due to an event or situation. An event service compiles several services related to the same event into a single service for the user.

The family benefits service is the first automated and proactive event-based service in Estonia. Before, parents had to apply for the family benefits after the registering the birth of the child, now once the birth is registered in the population register and the child is given a name, the Social Security Board will send an e-mail about the family benefit offer that parents can either accept or reject.

There are 12 public services related to having a child from the registration of the pregnancy to the family benefits provided by 7 different public sector organisations. Most of these services can be applied for after the birth of a child – the time when parents need the most to spend time with their new-born. Hence the services lacked proactivity – users had to apply for the services and if the user missed the deadline of the application, they would become ineligible for the services later or it required extra effort afterwards. Services related to having a child were fragmented between different authorities and service channels and hence it was difficult to have a wholesome overview of all the services related to having a child life event. In some cases, the same information had to be provided to different authorities (e.g. bank account number), hence making the process tedious. Moreover, some service processes were paper-based, making them more difficult for users to navigate. Finally, different service maturity between authorities and central and local governments made the whole process even more time consuming and inefficient.

In 2019, the complete having a child event service was redesigned and prototyped. As a result, the future having a child life event will differ from current situation as follows:



1) services related to having a child are integrated into one user experience, 2) all the services will be provided proactively or automatically to the user, and 3) the user's interaction with the state will decrease from 10 to 4 interactions (the registration of pregnancy; the acceptance of paternity; the approval of family benefits and parental leave; the naming of child).

The life event service was designed by considering the perspectives of expecting families and parents of new-borns through workshops in order to map user needs and validate the prototype. In addition to this, government officials from 3 hospitals, 2 local governments and 5 authorities were involved throughout the design process.

The next step is to automate rest of the services related to having a child in the same way and start a similar process with all the other event-based services. At the moment, 4 other life event services (death of a relative, getting married, retiring and going into the military service) are being redesigned and prototyped like the having a child life event service

These automated services will use artificial intelligence (AI), and Estonia plans to design a legal framework that allows this technology to be developed in an ethical and sustainable way across any industry. Estonia has put together a task force to identify the legal implications of AI and lead AI strategies across government. Moreover, to further ease interactions between citizens and the government throughout these life events, Estonia is also building a virtual assistant to guide citizens through any interactions they have with the government.

The end goal for Estonia is to build a "human-centric data governance" structure that improves transparency between government and citizen, and boosts trust. Proactive services such as the one described above, can significantly boost citizen well-being allowing for a positive experience with the state.



Child Friendly Spaces in Belgium and Spain

Child-friendly urban planning is a critical field. It advocates a coherent and systematic approach to planning and designing cities that improves children's development, health and access to opportunities, moving well beyond simply providing playgrounds. It recognises the fundamental importance, not just of independence and play, but of the built environment as a whole in helping to shape a child's development and prospects, and hence their adult lives.

The benefits of a child-friendly city go beyond children to add value to all citizens' lives. The amount of time children spend playing outdoors, their ability to get around independently, and their level of contact with nature are strong indicators of how a city is performing, and not just for children but for all city dwellers. Perhaps uniquely, a child-friendly approach has the potential to unite a range of progressive agendas – including health and wellbeing, sustainability, resilience and safety – and to act as a catalyst for urban innovation.

Urban childhood environment is not only about schools and playgrounds. In a larger scale approach, what are safe and playful paths for children's daily mobility?

In Ghent, Belgium, a child-friendly action plan – adopted in 2015 – reaches all parts of the administration, from planning to tourism, even to cemeteries. Revealingly, the plan enjoys support across the political spectrum and is led by a former play space officer, Marianne Labre. A concrete example of child-friendly urban planning in the city is the Rode Loper or Red Carpet – a 2-km traffic-calmed linear route through Brugse Poort, an urban renewal area. The road is so named because it is marked with red bricks, connects two parks with buildings such as a school and a kindergarten. Cars aren't permitted to travel at more than 30km/h down its entire length. Children are able to travel between the important places in their life, and play safely as they do so. The project involves extensive 'woonerf'-style traffic calming (with distinctive red stones laid out in a herringbone pattern), a new traffic-free bridge, a new multi-purpose public space including informal sports facilities and – remarkably – a new 24/7 pedestrian walkway that runs right through Pierkespark, a historic building.

The origins of the "speelweefselplan" concept — loosely translated as a "play layer", or "playspace-web" — lie in Ghent in 1997, when Marianne Labre, then a planner for the city, began developing a comprehensive play area policy. To create a city's speelweefselplan, urban planners map the places children go to and the roads they use to get there. A basic intervention would be to widen the pavement, or put in crossing points. But planners also weave "play stimuli" into the fabric of the streets themselves.



Play stimuli could be as simple as a concrete stepping stone, not even a play device. But when children find it on their route they know that it's fun, that they can sit on it, lie on it, jump on and off of it — it makes the route more attractive and more child friendly.

Wider and slower streets limit access to cars, which can be politically difficult. An initial attempt to pedestrianise Ghent's city centre led to its mayor being sent a bullet in the post. In Brussels, pedestrianisation schemes have encountered bitter opposition from drivers. Despite this, Ghent is pushing on with a plan to make its streets safer, reducing car access to built-up sections of the city.

Another example of a child friendly initiative is found on the streets of Barcelona. In 2017, the city introduced something called superblocks. These are square sections of the city's grid made up of nine actual blocks, with a combined area of just under 40 acres, where through traffic is permitted only on perimeter roads. While the main purpose of the idea was to cut pollution, it has significantly improved the mobility of families with children.

Barcelona envisions to eventually have 500 superblocks covering the entire city. The system enables less car-encumbered streets, extending pedestrian space and allowing for amenities such as playgrounds. Most superblocks consist of playgrounds, and picnic tables. Moreover, the superblocks cater to a number of pop ups that allow for creative play for children.

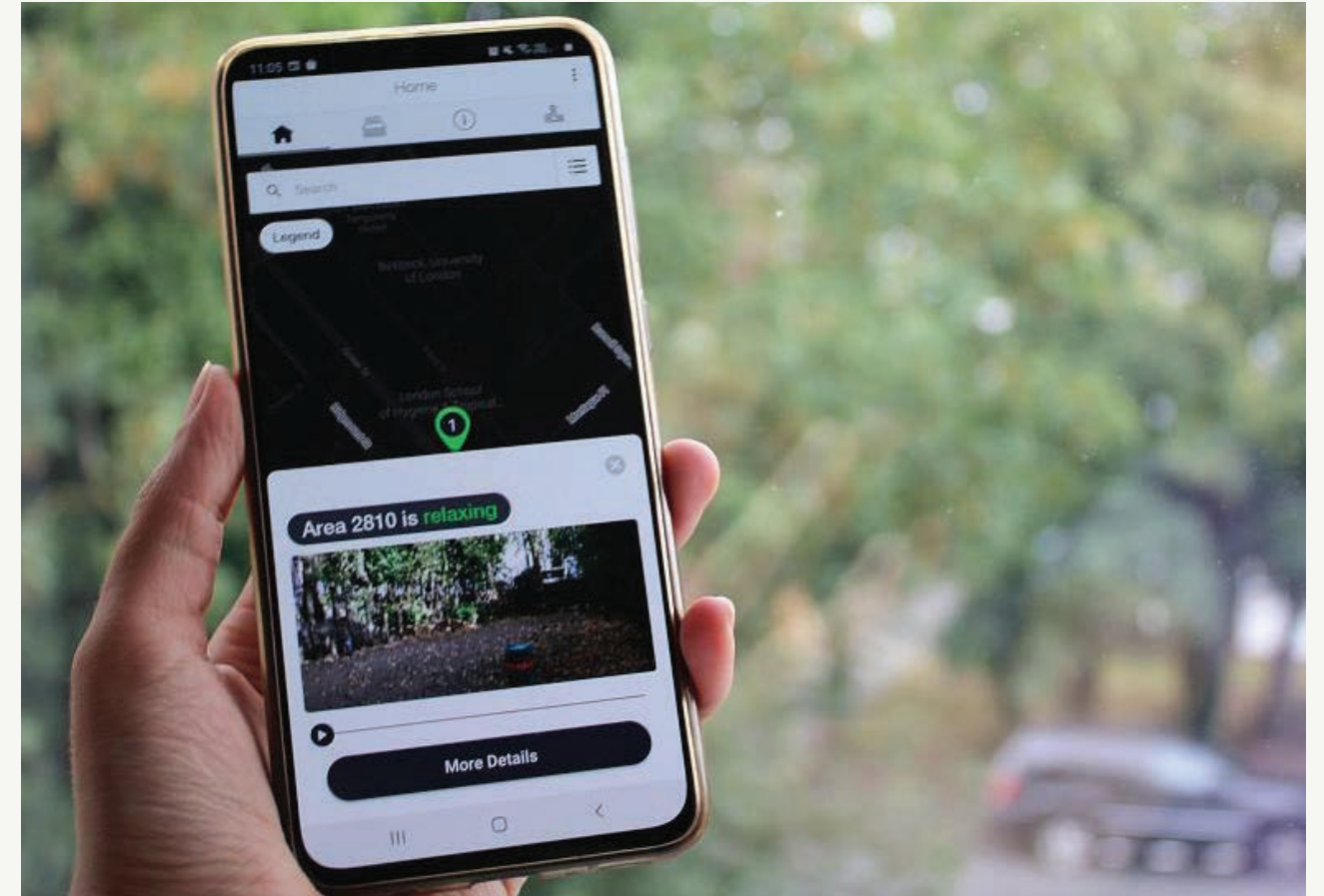
A number of cities around the world are now integrating children into the process of street designing. This allows planners to fully grasp how children see streets and what they perceive as safe, fun mobility. Cities are now increasingly working towards creating innovative ways for children participation in urban planning. For example, in Brazil in the town of Tirol, Minecraft was applied to urban planning with children by visualizing the town through the game. Tirol's rural center was modeled in Minecraft using open geospatial data in which children were invited to play a significant role in the game narrative and gameplay.



The Hush City App-Berlin

Today, cities are becoming increasingly noisier: only in Europe, according to the European Environment Agency, over 125 million people are affected by noise pollution from traffic every year, which represents the second environmental stressor in Europe after air pollution. The harmful effects of noise arise mainly from the stress reaction it causes in the human body, which can also occur during sleep. These can potentially lead to premature death, cardiovascular disease, cognitive impairment, sleep disturbance, hypertension and annoyance. To act against noise pollution is therefore imperative. At the European policy level, in 2002 the Environmental Noise Directive (END) was adopted with the aim of establishing a common approach to avoid, prevent, and reduce the harmful effects of noise pollution among the Member States.

To this end, the city of Berlin developed and launched an app called the Hush City app. Hush City is a free, citizen science mobile app, which empowers people to identify and assess quiet areas in cities as to create an open access, web-based map of quiet areas, with the potential of orientating plans and policies for healthier living, in response to issues framed by European environmental policies. The most innovative aspects of the Hush City mobile application regard both the data collection and the data consultation processes. In regard to innovation in data collection, the Hush City app allows the sequential collection on the same location and by the same user of a complex set of mixed data in a limited timeframe (approximately 3 minutes). The mixed collectable data consists of audio recordings and related noise pressure levels; pictures of the place where the sounds are recorded; user feedback on the location where the sounds are recorded. The importance of collecting and evaluating both qualitative and quantitative data is also conveyed through the design of the app's icon, in which the profile of an ear is placed on a heart to represent this ideal combination. The heart also refers to the impact of the sonic environment on our mental and physical hear. The Hush City app also offers the possibility to collect multiple datasets on the same location by the same user or by different users, therefore allowing for further comparative evaluation according to time variation (e.g. seasonal and/or day/night variations). With regard to innovation in data consultation, the Hush City app allows to filter the "everyday quiet areas" identified and evaluated by the users according to a number of filters, such as: perceived quietness, sound pressure levels, semantic descriptors, sense of security, accessibility, quality of the landscape. Hush City also offers open access to the data collected by the users by means of a web-based platform.



The Hush City app has been developed in order to achieve a set of ambitious goals such as increasing civic awareness of the importance of safeguarding urban quiet areas in cities; facilitating access to existing quiet areas, by allowing people to identify quiet areas shared by the community, where they can find relief from the hectic life experienced in big cities; boosting public participation in the evaluation, protection and planning processes of quiet areas by providing people with a free and participative tool to crowdsource mixed data related to their favorite quiet spots; exploiting data collected through the Hush City app in integrated city planning processes, in order to develop policies and planning guidelines grounded on people preferences, and therefore filling a gap in literature; and finally, to favor the building of a bridge between the noise level-oriented approach practiced by acoustic planning and a qualitative and people-oriented one, applied in soundscape research.

Using the Hush City app allows for the bottom-up production of informative and descriptive datasets of the way people experience quietness in cities in everyday life. Despite the fact that maps constructed with such datasets may be less statistically relevant, they could still give useful information for investigating specific and context related issues; moreover, they could constitute a resource to complement conventional methods for the assessment of urban noise (e.g. noise maps).

The assumption of “quietness as a commons” and the active involvement of people in the identification and evaluation of quiet areas on the local scale can have also a positive impact on environmental and social justice issues. In the case of the official Plan of Quiet Areas of Berlin, for instance, the adoption of combined acoustical and land-use based criteria for the identification of quiet areas mainly led to the overlapping of quiet areas with “landscape and nature protected areas” under the Berlin Conservation Law, without bringing any significant improvement in neighborhoods affected by environmental and social injustice levels. By using the Hush City app, people have identified a conspicuous number of “everyday quiet areas” which don’t necessarily overlap with the main ones identified by the Berlin Quiet Areas plan, therefore contributing to the creation of an additional network of “everyday quiet areas”, more equally distributed on the city scale.

Hush City is now used internationally and available in 5 languages: English, German, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese. Hush City is adopted by the City Councils of Berlin (2018) and Limerick (2020-2021) within the context of creation of the Quiet Areas Plans.



Digital Wellbeing Helpline

In the cyber world, children can be subjected to inappropriate content, cyberbullying and online predators. Using applications and websites where kids interact, predators may pose as a child or teen looking to make a new friend. They might prod the child to exchange personal information, such as addresses and phone numbers, or encourage children to call them and access their phone number via caller ID. Extensive exposure to violent games may also push vulnerable players to act out behaviors observed in those games. Parents around the world are concerned about children sharing their personal information with strangers online, as we have all read recent stories about online games that have unimaginable and dark consequences, some of which not only harm the players themselves, but other victims in the real world.

In 2018, a study by Norton Cybersecurity revealed that parents in the UAE lacked the experience to deal with their children's online activities. Nearly 90 per cent of parents said their children spent too much time on the internet, while 31 per cent said their children were bullied online. The study also revealed that 66 per cent of families said they put no controls in place to limit children's online access.

The UAE leads the world in terms of internet user penetration at a staggering rate of 98%, as well as smartphone penetration of 82%. It also comes out on top in terms of the penetration of user accounts of Facebook which stands at 83%, frequent users of Whatsapp which are also around 83% of the population, and Instagram account penetration at 53%. The average daily time spent online per person in the UAE is 8 hours, with 3 hours per day on average spent on social media.

The UAE government is committed to maintaining family stability and social cohesion, and children are at the top of its agenda. Their safety is key for promoting overall well-being in the UAE, maintaining social stability, empowering positive and active citizens, and raising generations with a firm grasp on the digital world.

To promote online safety and digital wellbeing, the UAE Cabinet approved the establishment of the UAE Council for Digital Wellbeing in 2020. The Council of Ministers, in a session chaired by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, approved the Digital Wellbeing Council in an initiative in support of the government's directions to establish the concept of a comprehensive quality of life that focuses on people and society, with the aim of enabling the community to adopt a healthy relationship with social media and technology. It does this by enhancing the capabilities of individuals to interact positively with the digital world, and raising the level of community awareness of its challenges and ways to prevent and confront them.



As the Digital Wellbeing Council's first initiative, Lieutenant General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior and Chairman of the Digital Wellbeing Council, launched the digital wellbeing helpline to support parents with the aim of protecting children and youth and enhancing the quality of their digital lives. The helpline has been launched in cooperation between the Ministry of the Interior, the National Program for Happiness and Quality of Life and the General Authority for Telecommunications Regulation. It is a specialized call center, run by experts and specialists who provide advice, guidance and support to parents and community members about the challenges of the digital world through a toll-free phone number (80091). The line was launched on the World Safe Internet Day and forms part of the Digital Preparedness Fifty Initiatives.

The Digital Wellbeing Helpline represents an initiative that realistically anticipates the future of community safety in light of a digital life, as the challenges increase with the rising adoption of digital solutions in the daily life of individuals and societies.

Previously, in 2019, the UAE launched its "Child Digital Safety" initiative – a joint effort between the Ministry of Interior and the National Programme for Happiness and Wellbeing, which aims to raise awareness among children and school students about online threats and challenges, and promotes safe and constructive use of the internet. It also familiarizes parents and educators with solutions they can use to address these challenges and ensure the safety of their children and students. The initiative seeks to help parents protect their children, ensure their online safety, and monitor their exposure to websites and social networking platforms. It targets children aged 5 to 18 and seeks to educate them on how to safely and constructively use the internet, and how to deal with potential abuse or risks. This initiative consists of 4 main sub-initiatives, namely: Interactive Children's Camp, where 5-to-18-year-olds can learn how to safely use the internet and social media; Digital Wellbeing Portal, to provide tools and information to help parents face the challenges of the digital world; Training Workshops, where parents and teachers can be trained to address digital challenges and threats; and a Support Platform to answer urgent queries from parents regarding digital safety.

