



PRESS RELEASE

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New Report "Life Beyond Growth" Describes an Economic Revolution in the Making

The Tokyo-based Institute for Studies in Happiness, Economy, and Society (ISHES) today released a groundbreaking report, ***Life Beyond Growth***, which documents the rapid rise of new economic ideas once deemed "alternative."

"In just a few short years, leading nations have moved swiftly to adopt frameworks like Green Economy and Gross National Happiness," said lead author Alan AtKisson. "A growing chorus of people, including presidents, prime ministers, and Nobel laureates are calling for better ways to define, and to measure, overall national progress. ***Life Beyond Growth*** brings everyone up to speed on these exciting and fast-moving developments."

Referring to recent statements (documented in the report) issued by high-level United Nations panels, by the head of the OECD and other sources, AtKisson noted that their common theme could be summed up in a short phrase: "The GDP just doesn't cut it anymore."

Life Beyond Growth was first commissioned at the beginning of 2011, but its completion was delayed while the authors took stock of the dramatic events of that year, including Arab Spring, the Eurozone crisis, and especially the earthquake and tsunami that shook Japan on March 11. Junko Edahiro, who serves as President of ISHES as well as CEO of Japan for Sustainability (a prominent NGO), believes that world events make the key messages in ***Life Beyond Growth*** even more relevant now.

"In the context of growing concern as conditions on Earth worsen, and especially since the Great East Japan Earthquake, more and more people are starting to ask key questions, like 'What is really important?' and 'What kind of economy and society is likely to bring us true happiness?'" Ms. Edahiro said from her home in Tokyo. "I believe this report will provide a good foundation for people of the world to think comprehensively about happiness, economy, and society."

The release of ***Life Beyond Growth*** in the English-speaking world is being timed to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the release of another pioneering study, *The Limits to Growth*, a book that sold millions of copies. In 1972, the idea that humanity's growing presence on planet Earth would eventually lead to global problems such as shortages of water and other resources, fisheries depletion, or global warming was highly controversial. *The Limits to Growth* was harshly attacked by leading economists at the time. But in recent

years, even some of its original critics — including, for example, Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz — have acknowledged the essential validity of its message.

Professor Stiglitz is now one of the leading voices (documented in ***Life Beyond Growth***) calling for new measures of progress to complement or replace the Gross Domestic Product, or GDP, which measures economic growth in terms of official financial transactions. The GDP, says Stiglitz, is "a poor measure of well-being, or even market activity." While economists have known about the GDP's many deficiencies for decades, there seemed to be no alternative to using the GDP as the yardstick for national progress ... until now.

Life Beyond Growth "traces the evolution of this revolution in economic thought," said AtKisson. Starting with a historical review, the report then provides an inventory and analysis of the "alternatives and complements to GDP-measured growth" that have taken the national and international policy world by storm in just a few short years. It also maps out the future "geo-political prospects" for ideas like National Wellbeing, Gross National Happiness, Green Economy, Green Growth, and Sustainable Development.

Written for the general reader, ***Life Beyond Growth*** is also meant to serve as a briefing paper for decision-makers. Many of them are grappling with the sudden emergence of new economic ideas and indicators, and they are trying to make sense of these rapid developments, which have the potential to redefine national economic policy in the 21st century.

The ***Life Beyond Growth*** report is intended to be the first in an annual series of updates, and will be complemented by a new website, www.LifeBeyondGrowth.org.

The PDF version of ***Life Beyond Growth*** is available for **free download** at the publisher's website: <http://isisacademy.com/resources/>

Life Beyond Growth was commissioned by the **Institute for Studies in Happiness, Economy, and Society**, Tokyo. The institute, founded Junko Edahiro, engages in activities such as research, publishing, informing public opinion, dialogue, and networking on issues related to human happiness in relationship to economic and social progress. For more information please see their website in English: <http://ishes.org/en/>
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The report was produced by the **AtKisson Group**, a consultancy that advises corporate, government, and NGO clients on sustainability and strategy. For more information on the AtKisson Group and lead author Alan AtKisson, see www.AtKisson.com.
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Life Beyond Growth is published in English by the **ISIS Academy**, which provides knowledge, training, and professional development services on issues related to sustainability and change. See: www.ISISAcademy.com, or write for more information to this address: info@isisacademy.com

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