

Composite Indicators & Scoreboards Explorer

Explorer Lab: Building stories with data | 29-30 September 2022 | Ispra, Italy

KEY TAKEAWAYS

BUILDING STORIES WITH DATA

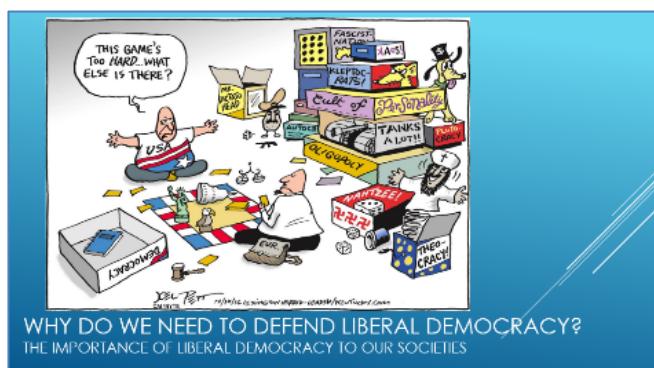
This workshop was organised in the frame of the European Commission's [Composite Indicators & Scoreboards Explorer](#) – a new online interactive tool to explore and visualise data from over 100 indices, scoreboards and dashboards. This project is an initiative of the [Competence Centre on Composite Indicators & Scoreboards](#) at the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission.

Over two half days, a group of practitioners experimented and explored the data and charts of the Composite Indicators & Scoreboards Explorer tool with the objective of creating new **data-driven articles – “data stories”**. There were numerous insightful and inspirational ideas presented and different approaches on how to build a data story. Navigating the complexity of data and their interlinkages to find a story is not easy, but participants definitely set the bar high. We ended up with a great line up of data stories presentations. Here is a flavour of what the stories were.

Why do we need to defend liberal democracy? The importance of liberal democracy to our societies

By blue team

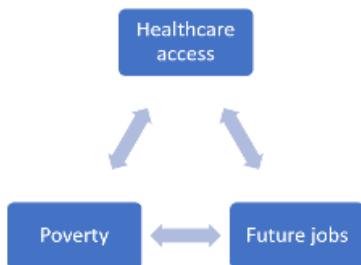
The team explored how liberal democracy impacts three aspects of our society: prosperity, people and planet. They looked at the correlations between different indices, deep dived in specific ones and even went beyond the global sphere to zoom in into particular countries and offer different insights. The initial data discoveries pointed out that liberal democracy is positively associated with environmental performance, green economy, ocean health, innovation and gender equality. However, no correlation was found with the Ecological Footprint.



Healthier jobs for Kenya!

By orange team

Turn a vicious circle into a virtuous circle!



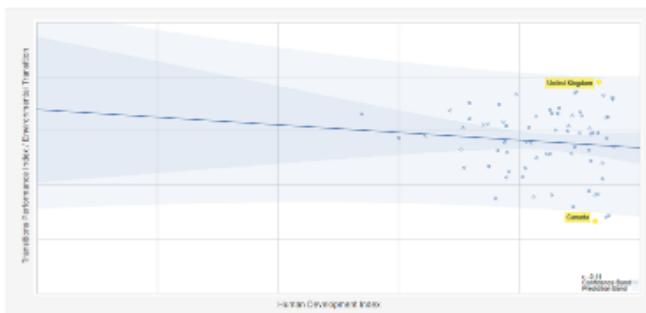
The team's goal was to speak directly to the hearts of people and use actionable messages. A member of the team was from Kenya and they saw here a starting point for their story. He actually started about speaking about his country and connecting to the audience in this way. The team explored correlations between healthcare access and quality, poverty prevention, future of work and other indices and dimensions. They have concluded with a catchy sentence: "Turn a vicious circle into a virtuous circle" referring to healthcare access, poverty and future jobs, and that wherever you start it will improve your position in the three of them.

Green transition: trade-offs or synergies?

By green team

Perhaps inspired by the name of their team, this team decided to investigate how the green transition relates with all the other transitions. For this, they started from the Transitions Performance Index developed by one member of their team and from here they chose other relevant indices to relate with: Planetary-pressures adjusted Human Development Index and SDG Index. Many synergies popped-up, but it was not the case between green transition and development, in which there is a trade-off overall. They also looked for outliers and gave a different perspective to the story. Not all is bad news, there are some countries which are doing better at the environment and at human development and these are the ones the world should learn from.

Some countries show that synergies are possible between development and environmental transition



The process of creating the data stories also led to numerous comments, feedback and suggestions from all participants. We have put together some key takeaways from this workshop.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- There is not a single way to start a data story. While some teams started by exploring the data available and look for interesting facts in the data, others started from conceptualising an idea/hypothesis and after look for data that could provide the answer.
- Data stories need to consider carefully the audience. If we want to reach the wider public, we need to avoid too technical language, such as correlations or confidence bands. We should always explain the key concepts used.
- There are stories to tell beyond the averages. We should not undervalue outliers as they can also offer a different perspective for a story.
- There are stories to tell beyond the global sphere. We can zoom in into specific countries to highlight best practices. This is inspiring and shows that change is possible.
- The story is only completed if complemented by further literature research. It is not enough just to look at the relationship between different indices.
- Be critical with the data and do some fact-checking with experts, country nationals, literature, news, etc.
- Data should never be manipulated to get a story, otherwise it will become a fake story.
- Be careful with correlation and causality.
- Highlight that there are real people behind every story. Bring a human voice to the data story. Ask ourselves how to make people change their behaviour based on the data story.
- The story should make the reader ask questions.

GOING FORWARD

- This workshop built momentum and set the stage for new collaborations across different organisations to prepare data-driven articles about topics they are passionate about. The JRC team will be happy to offer guidance and collaboration on this. Contacts of participants as well as a Word template for data stories will be shared among participants of the workshop.
- The data story blog feature and the Synergies & Trade-Offs page will be launched on 16 November 2022 during a [side-event](#) at COP27.

PARTICIPANTS



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