

GNH CENTRE NEWSLETTER



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“Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross Domestic Product.”
His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck,
The Fourth Druk Gyalpo

Welcome to the fourth edition of the newsletter from the GNH Centre!

The newsletter is a small effort to share with you the world of Gross National Happiness.

Wishing you a very happy read!

The Slow Change Experience Programme



With an objective to provide an experience of positive development and wisdom to create change in ways to serve their higher values and the needs of the communities, twenty participants from Australia, Germany, Netherlands and the UK took part in the Slow Change

Experience Programme. It was a practice of change driven by the values Gross National Happiness.

The 11 day programme started in Thimphu, took the participants to Bumthang, where they home-stayed at the local community and ended with a hike to Taktshang (Tiger's nest). On the way back, the participants visited the Trongsa Dzong. Besides the lectures, followed by questions and answers on GNH, the participants also experienced walk in the nature, solo time to contemplate and reflect one's paths in life and storytelling, among others.

The Slow Change journey left a mark in the hearts of the participants. The program brought a deep connection and positive energy for future collaboration. It was well designed and presented which brought a true delight. The program was grounded with values to see the changes that we want to see in the world deep within ourselves, allowing them to be brought to life through our actions and values.

Glen Norris, one of the participants from Australia said, "I was recently very fortunate and privileged to visit the captivating nation of Bhutan and participate in the very first Slow Change Experience (SCE) hosted by the GNH Centre Bhutan. To say the SCE program was life-changing is an understatement. I had little exposure and understanding of GNH prior to this trip, and my efforts to learn as much as I could before embarking for Bhutan only yielded minimal insights. I did however know one thing for certain: I wanted to learn from the Bhutanese community that there is another way and I needed to experience this first-hand."

The Slow Change Experience programme was the first programme conducted at the newly built GNH Centre in Bumthang. The GNH Centre looks forward to continue hosting more programmes at the Centre to offer a nourishing space for both inner transformation and social innovation. The programme was held from November 12 – 22, 2016. It was designed by the GNH Centre, Humankind Enterprise and Digital Storyteller, Australia.



GNH – The Path to Happiness

When the Fourth King His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck propounded “GNH is more important than GDP” in 1970s, the concept grabbed the attention of the world. It is a holistic approach that gives an equal importance to non-economic aspects of wellbeing. The concept of GNH has often been explained by its four pillars: good governance, sustainable socio-economic development, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation. Further, four pillars have been classified into nine domains. The nine domains are: psychological wellbeing, health, education, time use, cultural diversity and resilience, good governance, community vitality, ecological diversity and resilience, and living standards.

Furthermore, it is best described by His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, *“Today GNH has come to mean so many things to so many people, but to me it signifies simply – development with values. Thus for my nation today GNH is the bridge between the fundamental values of kindness, equality and humanity and the necessary pursuit of economic growth. GNH acts as our National Conscience guiding us towards making wise decisions for a better future.”*

The GNH Centre, through our programmes, intends to bring the social transformation in an individual by making them realize the wisdom of GNH. It is conceived with the confidence that all human beings have the innate wisdom to define true wealth and prosperity, the pursuit of which will give rise to well-being and sustained happiness.

Our ability to bring change in the world is only narrowed by our competence to act on our values and beliefs. The GNH Centre’s programmes are based on social transformation to uphold the values of compassion, mindfulness and how we respect and value nature, and preserve culture, while at the same time maintain good governance and sustainable socio-economic development.

Mike Davis says, “For me GNH means elevating the humanness in whatever policy, program, proposal or interaction we are creating and implementing. Any good GNH application must start with compassion, mutual understanding and respect. Approaching things this way makes them infinitely easier to carry out, develop, co-create and implement.”

Stephanie Wong says, “GNH is a holistic development network, taking into account social, economic and environmental sustainability. At its very core is the happiness and wellbeing of the people –something that is easily overlooked in the world’s endless economic growth model, and particularly easy to forget in our endlessly busy lives.”

Happiness is the ultimate desire of every human being and thus it is a major focus in assessing happiness in Bhutan. GNH is based on the belief that the purpose of development must be to

create conditions that enable society to pursue happiness – our innermost human desire. As human beings have needs of

both body and mind, those conditions go beyond the economic and material to include the mental, emotional, psychological and spiritual needs within a peaceful and stable environment. In Bhutanese culture, spiritual development is as important as external material development. The knowledge of the self is important to attain individual liberty and freedom, to gain happiness. GNH is thus a holistic, sustainable and inclusive approach to human growth and societal progress.

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