

GNHCB



ANNUAL REPORT 2016

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Message from the President



The GNH Centre Bhutan was created to inspire and promote Gross National Happiness activities in the country and, as the third principal promoter of GNH, the Centre's work is to augment the research, development and evaluation work of the Center for Bhutan studies and GNH Research on the one hand and the public policy and planning function of the GNH Commission and government agencies on the other. This is to be undertaken by providing the space and facilitating opportunities for discourse, experiential learning and living GNH for all sections of society.

Bhutan faces its own challenges today, and the transformation of the Bhutanese nation into a GNH society of citizens, families and communities that are economically sustainable, ecologically responsible, socially harmonious and spiritually content can only happen when it is the people themselves who understand and want GNH more than our policy makers and thinkers.

Towards this, the Centre launched the first GNH Fair in November 2016, to raise the importance of GNH values among our citizens, especially the young people. While the international community commemorates 20 March as the International Day of Happiness, the Centre promoted 11 November as the National Day of Happiness. The date is both symbolic and important to Bhutanese as it marks the Birth Anniversary of HM Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the Founder of Gross National Happiness. Due to its success and meaningful significance it will now be held as an annual event.

The publication of the annual report is an occasion for us to share and reflect on our achievements and the challenges we have faced as a small organization with an ambitious task. There is an expectation from the world that GNH provides a new model for change both as a development agenda and at the basic human level. The Centre will continue its efforts through various activities towards a good life, and I believe, this begins with understanding the meaning of happiness and making it a serious goal of our lives.

The Centre has been encouraged by the keen interest of many individuals and organizations in various parts of the world to start their own GNH Centres. Over the past year, our small yet symbolic efforts have been recognized nationally and by the international community. Our humble achievements going forward have received unexpected support and appreciation. The first international GNH Centre was established in Thailand in October 2016. This placed upon the Centre, the responsibility of working with business communities, and integrating GNH values in a business setting. I am particularly happy that the first international centre was established in Thailand, a country that is close to the hearts of all Bhutanese people.

We must all work together to ensure the happiness and wellbeing of our people for all times to come. I wish to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the members of the Board, our international partners, our passionate members and our staff for their most valuable contributions. It is through this joint effort and partnership that the Centre has been able to make progress against many challenges.

Her Royal Highness Princess Kezang Choden Wangchuck
President, GNH Centre Bhutan

Message from the Executive Director



We are happy to share the fourth Annual Report of the GNH Centre Bhutan. The report highlights our efforts in 2016, our challenges and our small success. This past year, our efforts have led to more partnerships internationally and nationally.

Under the wise leadership of Her Royal Highness Princess Kezang Choden Wangchuck, the President and Patron of the GNHCB, we were able to achieve both national and international success. In 2016, we successfully launched the first international GNH Centre in Thailand. This will be one of many GNH Centres that will take the work of GNH beyond Bhutan.

In the same year, we organized the first GNH Fair from 11-13 November 2016 to commemorate the birth anniversary of the Father of GNH, His Majesty the Fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuck and the National Happiness Day. It is a small effort by the GNHCB to deepen the connection between the Bhutanese people and the values of GNH towards a harmonious and sustainable society.

It was also a year of fruitful partnerships with our own Bhutanese CSO fraternity and international collaboration. We were able to introduce national youth programmes to raise awareness and towards defining a responsible Bhutanese citizen. The youth GNH Clubs will soon be created in schools and institutions to ensure every young Bhutanese is aware of their role and importance of our unique identity.

The Centre strives to propound values of GNH in the hearts of all Bhutanese and global citizens. It is the intended goal of the Centre to develop programmes that promote GNH Orientation, leadership and a happy society.

We would like to acknowledge and extend our gratitude to Clean Bhutan, Bhutan Centre for Democracy & Media, RENEW, Tarayana Foundation, Green Public Procurement, Youth Development Fund, Bhutan Nun's Foundation, National Housing Development Corporation Limited and GNH Commission for their kind support in the success of our programmes.

Tashi Delek

Dr. Saamdu Chetri

Executive Director, GNH Centre Bhutan



The President and Patron of the GNHCB, Her Royal Highness Princess Kezang Choden Wangchuck (Fifth from the left) at the first GNH Fair.

3. About the GNH Centre Bhutan

The GNH Centre Bhutan (GNHCB) is a non-profit civil society organization registered under the Civil Society Organization Authority of Bhutan. The GNHCB was established in 2012, as a tribute to take forward the vision and philosophy of GNH as introduced by His Majesty the Fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuck in the early 1970s.

The GNH Centre Bhutan strives to promote the legacy of Gross National Happiness as envisioned by His Majesty the Fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuck. Under the leadership of our President, HRH Ashi Kezang Choden Wangchuck, the GNH Centre Bhutan works for transformative change towards a more meaningful, sustainable and happier life across Bhutan.

The GNHCB promotes the concept of GNH values nationally and internationally by facilitating transformational learning to achieve sustainable societal change. The GNHCB is passionate about creating a better world with true happiness and sees itself as a cultivator of compassionate GNH values. Under the people centric values of GNH, we work towards offering sustainable solutions for people and planet.

4. National Efforts in Promoting GNH

4.1. Launch of GNH Fair: “Celebrating Happiness & Wellbeing”



In an effort to raise national awareness on the importance of wellbeing and happiness, the GNH Centre Bhutan initiated the first ever GNH Fair. The three day event was held from 11-13 November 2016. The date is significant as 11th November is both the birthday of the Fourth King His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the father of GNH as well as the National Happiness Day for Bhutan.

The three day event themed, “Celebrating Wellbeing and Happiness”, promoted meditation, yoga, dance, pranic healing, and other interactive activities to encourage a participatory audience to actually experience wellness and happiness.

Her Majesty Gyalum Tshering Pem Wangchuck graced the event as the Chief Guest and was accompanied by the President of the GNHCB, HRH Princess Kezang Choden Wangchuck and members of the royal family.

In his opening statement, Dr. Saamdu Chetri, the Executive Director of the GNHCB stressed on the significance of the GNH values and its importance in today’s world. He also said the GNH Centre tries to “cultivate seeds of happiness” by learning to live with wisdom that consists of right thoughts and right understanding, with morality that consists of right speech, right action and right livelihood, and with mindfulness that consists of right meditation, right efforts and right concentration. Dr. Saamdu also stressed that on Bhutan’s National Happiness Day, we must “commit to live with compassion” and be the change we wish for.

The small effort of the GNHCB resulted in positive media coverage and attracted Bhutanese and visitors from various parts of the world. Several Ministers, Members of Parliament, international agency heads and Civil Society Organization (CSO) fraternity attended the event. It also promoted partnership with other CSOs by providing a platform for networking and collaboration.

The GNH Fair will be an annual event led by the GNHCB to persevere in promoting GNH values, transforming the self, experience mindfulness, encourage young Bhutanese to embrace traditional values and most importantly to connect the Bhutanese population to Gross National Happiness as envisioned by His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck.

4.2. 18-30 January 2016: The GNH Youth Leadership Programme



Participants at the Changjiji housing colony

The GNHCB initiated the first international GNH Youth Leadership Programme with 23 participants (14 International and 9 National). Over the course of two weeks, participants came together to deepen the practical understanding of how they could bring more compassion and wisdom to personal lives and the communities through the values of GNH.

As an exercise to experience the community vitality and culture, the participants visited the Changjiji housing colony and Bhutan Nuns Foundation. Changjiji Housing Colony is a GNH model community. The colony was designed along the 9 domains of GNH to make it inclusive and boasts a park, a community center that provides books and internet facilities, a community monastery, and a play room for children. The Bhutan's Nuns Foundation was included to experience the values of GNH as it was established to preserve Bhutan's strong, sustainable culture and spiritual heritage in this era of fast economic development.

The participants also visited, Youth Development Fund (YDF) and Voluntary Artists' Studio Thimphu (VAST) –organizations which support and empower people, especially the youths by providing platforms in line to employment, build leadership skills, trainings, participation in community development projects, etc.

Partnering with fellow CSO Clean Bhutan, the GNH Centre Bhutan organized a session on what challenges Bhutan faces and how efforts on keeping Bhutan clean work. These were demonstrated by the efforts taken by Clean Bhutan on their advocacy and outreach programmes.

The session also included a visit by two past participants who shared their experiences and how they are taking this forward in their lives and at their work place.

With daily activities like meditation, reflection circle, connection to nature, mindfulness practices, group work, dialogue, solo time designed into their program, the participants were able to learn and experience the values of GNH in a successful and applicable manner. Designed as a retreat, the program also included travelling through the country. It was a journey which helped the participants to understand how effective and authentic social change goes hand in hand with inner transformation.

4.3. 16-22 February, 2016: Journey Through GNH

Fourteen participants attended the Journey through GNH. The programme provided a platform to experience GNH principles in daily life and to reflect on how to implement these principles in their own context in a practical way.

The programme created a space to reflect on purpose of life and progress under the values of GNH. Designed to raise self-awareness, the course also focused on mindfulness, meditation and value based leadership training.

As part of the community vitality exercise under the program, participants visited Punakha and Wangduephodang, where they volunteered for the Dzong reconstruction. This gave them the exposure on how Bhutan's community life plays a major role in conservation of culture and traditions.

The Journey Through GNH is a yearly programme which takes place four times a year.



Participants volunteer at the Wangdue Dzong reconstruction

4.4. March 20, 2016: International Happiness Day



GNHCB celebrates International Happiness Day.

To commemorate the International Happiness Day, the GNH Centre Bhutan celebrated the day with 33 teachers and 186 students at Norbuling Central School, Gelephu, Sarpang Dzongkhag. The event actually started on 19 March as part of a three day GNH advocacy event.

On March 20, the students presented their views on GNH and their perceptions of GNH values. There was an interdependence circle where students shared their insights. This activity made the students realize how we are connected to each other, our communities and the environment around us. It also promoted self-reflection and concluded with a guided meditation session.



4.5. 4-15 May, 2016 : The Right Livelihood Programme - Finding Deeper Purpose Module IV

Started in 2013, the Right Livelihood Programme - Finding Deeper Purpose Module IV is a yearly collaborative programme between the GNH Centre Bhutan and Schumacher College, London.

It is aimed to develop and experiential understanding of GNH by living in, and co-creating a conducive environment that is fully aligned with GNH principles and values. The programme engaged the participants in a learning process through dialogue, introspection and self-reflection leading to a deepening of their understanding of GNH philosophy, principles and values. The programme also created a base to implement GNH inspired projects in their families, communities, villages, businesses, organizations, societies and/or countries.

Eighteen participants from Sweden, Austria, Japan, Norway, Brazil, USA, UK, Colombia and Germany are taking part in the program.

The Right Livelihood Programme is a 12 month programme including 3 residential modules in the UK and one in Bhutan, supported by an on-line programme of study and mentoring.



Participants having a dialogue session.

4.6. 2-3 June, 2016 : Transformation through GNH and Mindfulness



Students attending a GNH values session

A two day youth workshop on Inner Transformation through GNH and Mindfulness, in partnership with VITA Foundation (Germany) was conducted at the Sonamgang Middle Secondary School, Phuentsholing. A total of 270 students and 5 teachers attended the two day program. The program offered in depth learning on GNH, its values and mindful consumption. Activities offered to the participants were mindful movements, guided meditation, deep relaxation, journaling and role play. At the end of the program the students presented in groups for what they learnt during the course and pledged to apply the GNH values for the betterment of oneself and community at large.



4.7. 12 – 22 November, 2016 : Slow Change Experience



Our joyful international participants after completing the GNH programme

19 participants from Australia, Germany, Netherlands and the UK took part in the Slow Change Experience Program. The participants were provided with an immersive experience of positive development and wisdom to create change in ways to serve their higher values and the needs of the communities. It was a practice of change driven by innate human values and wisdom, using the principles of GNH.

Bron Roberts from Australia said “it is one of the best programmes I have experienced. A brilliant program, well designed and presented, a great group of people, and the GNH hosts – each and every one of them a true delight. I know we can never repeat experiences but if it could be done, I would be back in heart beat. I look forward to future connections with Digital Storytellers, Humankind Enterprises and the GNH Centre.”

Flo Scialom from the Netherlands said “the Slow Change program in Bhutan was a truly inspiring experience! I learned so much about GNH and how it shapes the policies and practices in Bhutan, and I met some very lovely people from Bhutan, Australia and all over the world. I am very grateful to all involved.”

The participants visited Bumthang, Trongsa Dzong and Paro. The program ended with a hike to Taktshang (Tiger’s Nest) and sharing circle.

The Programme was designed by the GNH Centre, Humankind Enterprise and Digital Storyteller, Australia.

4.8. March 18, 2016: Incorporating GNH in Bhutan Hydropower Service Limited (BHSL), Gelegphu



Dr. Saamdu, Executive Director was invited by the Bhutan Hydropower Service Limited (BHSL) in Gelegphu to deliver a talk on Ethics- incorporating GNH in BHSL. He called on the implementation of GNH values in our daily lives.

4.9. March 21, 2016: GNH at Jigmecholing Lower Secondary School, Gelegphu

The GNH Centre Bhutan was invited by the Jigmecholing Lower Secondary School, Sarpang Dzongkhag, to deliver a talk on GNH for deeper understanding. Dr. Saamdu Chettri delivered an in depth presentation on GNH and conducted guided meditation. It was attended by 20 teachers and 200 students.



5. GNH - OUR INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS

5.1. Establishment of the GNH Centre Thailand

On the 12 October 2016, HRH Princess Kezang Choden Wangchuck, President, GNHCB, signed a MoU to establish the first GNH Centre Thailand. Since its conception in 1972, GNH has been deeply rooted in Bhutan. In partnership with the BGRIMM Group of Companies, the GNH Centre Thailand will be the first of its kind and will conduct GNH Training of Trainer courses and events.



Mr. Harald Link of the BGRIMM Group is a keen advocate of GNH and the company holds compassion as a key ingredient of success in conducting its business. As both organizations share similar values, it is the ideal partnership to take GNH beyond Bhutan.

5.2. Sustainable Brands Conference Thailand

HRH Princess Kezang Choden Wangchuck was the Key Note Speaker for the Global Sustainable Brands event held in Bangkok in October 2016. Her Highness delivered a statement titled, "Can Happiness be a Business Purpose?"

In her statement, Her Highness stressed on the values of GNH and that the real meaning and value of any endeavor lies in the extent to which it can create genuine happiness. Her Highness also encouraged that business models need to change and that business cannot go on as usual. Over 300 people from various countries and business organizations attended the session.

5.3. Taking GNH Abroad

Programme Director and Senior Programme Advisor, international staff of the GNHCB, conducted numerous GNH courses and programmes in countries such as Germany, Austria, Costa Rica, Thailand and Vietnam. Furthermore, several talks on GNH took place in India, Phillipines and Hong Kong.



6. Partners

We would like to thank our partners in promoting GNH and we look forward to continued collaboration.

1. Schumacher College, United Kingdom
2. VITA Foundation, Germany
3. Punakha Central School, Punakha
4. Early Learning Centre, Thimphu,
5. CSOA Authority
6. BGRIMM Group of Companies, Thailand
7. Human Enterprises, Australia
8. Digital Storytellers, Australia

**Schumacher
College**



vita



**Humankind
Enterprises**

*Digital
Storytellers*

