WORKSHOP

“Social inclusion, quality of life and happiness”

TARGET AUDIENCE: Everyone, 3-88 years - Civil society in general

DATE: 28/04/2015

DURATION OF SESSION: From 14h00 to 15h30 (London time) (90 min).

LEADER DC: Lisbon

OTHER PARTICIPATING DC’s (tbc): DC Rio, DC Novi Pazar, DC Florence, DC Evora, DC Northampton, DC Beirut, DC Cleveland, DC Wroclaw, DC Amsterdam

CONTEXT

The third World Happiness Report has been released on April 23rd, 2015. In order to celebrate its release, the Dialogue Café Lisbon and Dialogue Café Rio de Janeiro are proposing a unique session combining reflection and practical activity that will increase your feeling of happiness!

SOME FACTS – Do you know that ...

- Bhutan is the only country in the world that has a ‘GNH.’ You may think GNH is just another statistically based term with no real life application, but it refers to “Gross National Happiness”. The process of measuring GNH began when Bhutan opened up to globalisation. It measures people’s quality of life, and makes sure that “material and spiritual development happen together”. Bhutan has done an amazing job of finding this balance. Bhutan has continually been ranked as the happiest country in all of Asia, and the eighth Happiest Country in the world according to Business Week.

- The word “happiness” is ... tricky....! And it is not used lightly. Happiness is an aspiration of every human being, and can also be a measure of social progress.
- In a way there are two basic ways of using the word happiness: the first as an emotion ("Were you happy yesterday?") and the second as an evaluation ("Are you happy with your life as a whole?").

- Respondents to surveys clearly recognise the difference between happiness as an emotion and happiness in the sense of life satisfaction. The responses of individuals to these different questions are highly distinct. A very poor person might report himself to be happy emotionally at a specific time, while also reporting a much lower sense of happiness with life as a whole; and indeed, people living in extreme poverty do express low levels of happiness with life as a whole. Such answers should spur our societies to work harder to end extreme poverty.

- Because of the Reports made on this topic, we have assembled a good deal of international happiness data on how people rate both their emotions and their lives as a whole.

**PRACTICAL APPROACHES**

One of our biggest advances in life has been in figuring out what causes happiness — and what doesn’t. For example, everyone wants to be happy. By increasing your level of happiness within yourself, you can affect your relationships in a more positive way.

But have you ever noticed how some people have few material possessions, yet seem very happy, while others have an abundance of material wealth, yet seem very unhappy? How can some people remain strong through many crises, while others fall apart over nothing? If money and possessions don’t determine happiness, what does?

1. **Change negative statements to positive ones.**

   Changing the way you think is difficult because thoughts are intangible; you can’t see them. So it’s easier to start reprogramming yourself for happiness by changing the way you speak. After all, if you’re saying it, then you know you’re thinking it, too, right? Start listening to the way you talk. When you hear yourself making a negative statement, change it to a more positive statement.

2. **Change negative thoughts to positive ones.**

   Once you’ve mastered your verbal remarks, try changing the thoughts you don’t say aloud. Start noticing how you think. If you catch yourself thinking negatively, stop yourself. Say: “Stop it!” Then say the exact opposite of what you were thinking.
3. **Grieve when necessary, and then go back to being positive.**

No one can deny that bad things happen to good people. When something bad happens, admit that you don’t like it and you’d have preferred something else. But don’t rant and rave or leap into a chasm of suffering. Instead, face the pain head-on and grieve. Allow yourself to vent; get it off your chest. Then get up the next day and pull yourself back together again.

4. **Sell yourself on life.**

See the positives and beauty all around you. You can find millions of reasons to be happy to be alive. When they don’t instantly come to mind, go outside and let them come to you.

People tend to get neurotic when cooped up, and these days, almost everyone gets cooped up inside more than they should. When you’re surrounded by pressure and demand after demand, escape to the country and let everything settle out. Get the cobwebs out of your brain by getting close to nature.

Take a drive, sit on a riverbank, and let your feet dangle in the water. Watch the squirrels and birds play. Walk and get some fresh air. The oxygen will help you think better, and the exercise-fired endorphins will help you feel better, too. Then write down what’s good about your life. Add to this list daily, and when you’re not feeling so great, reread the list.

5. **Make every day count; take charge of your destiny.**

When people are dying, they don’t dwell on the car, house, or education they should have acquired, or the places they should have visited. Instead, they think about the people in their lives — the ones they should have been nicer to, the ones they should have married, and so on. It’s all about people, not material objects.

Dying people are in a unique position to review life. By emphasizing their people experiences, they demonstrate what’s really important. Don’t walk around in a fog; live every day like it could be your last. Notice every experience — feel it, savor it, appreciate it — and make it an occasion for joy and wonderment.

**AIMS TO BE ACHIEVED**

This session aims to reflect upon this topical issue and...to gain some practical insights about what to do live...**happier life!!!** As you will see at the end...it might happen that all DCs will join on a GLOBAL SMILE DANCE!
PROGRAMME

14h00  Introductory Speaking Points

14h05  Reflection and debate on happiness

DC Novi Pazar

- Zehra Skrijelj, children’s educator
- Albin Skrijelj, Djuristan Choir (would like to sing a traditional sevdah song)
- Mirsad Jusupovic, City Council Member

DC Lisbon

- Cristina Baptista, Association Sorrir

15h00  Global Smile Dance between DC Lisbon, DC Rio de Janeiro and DC Novi Pazar and the participation of DC Évora.

- Coordinated by Cristina Baptista, Association Sorrir, in DC Lisbon.

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Dialogue Café (DC) is the first public high quality video collaboration network specifically designed for civil society – open to individuals and organizations with a social, educational or cultural mission - including foundations, civil society organizations, grassroots community groups, universities, schools, social enterprises, social entrepreneurs and innovators, artists and cultural organisations, public sector bodies and agencies and so on. We also seek to ensure diversity amongst our participants, paying particular attention to gender, age, and ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.


(For more details see: www.dialoguecafe.org)

Dialogue Café Session: social scientists, designers, architects, policy makers and civil servants discussing ageing with London, Lisbon, Amsterdam and New York.