

Happiness

Giving students a refreshing perspective about global issues with an example that triggers thinking is an activity that must be conducted regularly, apart from what is there in the prescribed syllabus.

Here is an example that talks about **Gross National Happiness**.

Prelude to the example:

Students can be asked the following question before the discussion

- What if happiness is an index to measure a country's prosperity?
- Will this make the world a better place?

Bhutan

The Kingdom of Bhutan is a landlocked country in South Asia at the eastern end of the Himalayas. It is bordered to the north by China and to the south, east and west by India. To the west, it is separated from Nepal by the Indian state of Sikkim, while farther south it is separated from Bangladesh by the Indian states of Assam and West Bengal. Bhutan's capital and largest city is Thimphu.

Source : <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhutan>

*“Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross Domestic Product”
– His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, 4th King of Bhutan*

With his famous declaration in the 1970s, the former King of Bhutan challenged conventional, narrow and materialistic notions of human progress. He realized and declared that the existing development paradigm – GNP (or GDP) – did not consider the ultimate goal of every human being: happiness.

Perhaps inspired by age-old wisdom in the ancient Kingdom of Bhutan, the fourth King concluded that GDP was neither an equitable nor a meaningful measurement for human happiness, nor should it be the primary focus for governance; and thus the philosophy of Gross National Happiness: GNH is born.

Since then this pioneering vision of GNH has guided Bhutan's development and policy formation. Unique among the community of nations, it is a balanced 'middle path' in which equitable socio-economic development is integrated with environmental conservation, cultural promotion and good governance.

Source: <http://www.gnhcentrebhutan.org/what-is-gnh/the-story-of-gnh/>

Deep in the Himalayas, on the border between China and India, is the Kingdom of Bhutan, which has pledged to remain carbon neutral for all time.

In the link given below, Bhutan's Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay shares his country's mission to put happiness before economic growth and set a world standard for environmental preservation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXIbHtMwQXo>

Reflection

- Students can be encouraged to talk or write their responses to the following questions
- Are we moving towards progress? What does progress mean to you? How do you think a country should progress?
- It would be interesting to see an infographics of this comparison for all nations.