



Global Wellbeing and GNH Lab

Innovating Beyond GDP

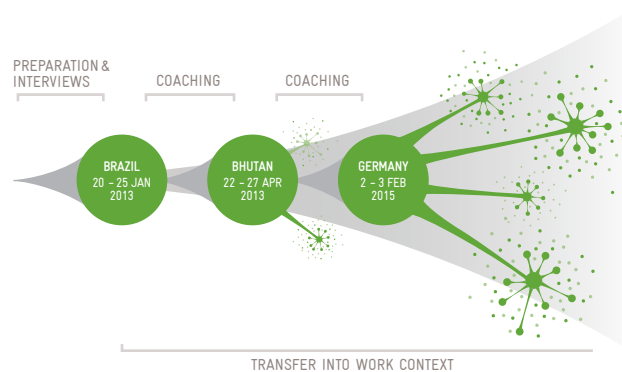
Shifting the global economy from “ego”-centric to “eco”-focused development

Our current mainstream economic paradigm is based on the assumptions that limitless growth on a finite planet is possible, and that the material consumption that drives such growth promotes sustainable happiness and wellbeing. The urgent crises facing both our environmental and social systems though are evidence of our need for a profoundly different paradigm.

A growing number of eminent economists, policy makers and government leaders are pointing to the role that metrics such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) have played in driving our current economies and societal value systems. Broadening what is measured and prioritized to include dimensions beyond GDP could provide a critical opportunity to reorient our global community towards addressing current crises while fostering greater wellbeing and sustainability. Yet, despite many approaches and methodologies for more sophisticated and accurate measures of societal progress and wellbeing, the actual impact on governmental policies and business strategies has been limited. Even if a government or business were to adopt wellbeing and sustainability principles, without a strong shift in mind-set and consciousness this would not have a deep impact. While a number of promising initiatives are emerging around the globe, little collective momentum has yet been generated.

founders, and CEOs from NGOs. The participants (56% women, 44% men) came from India, Brazil, USA, China, Germany, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and the United Kingdom and organizations such as OECD, Oxfam, Eileen Fisher Inc., and Natura Brazil.

Any economic activity aims at fulfilling the needs of society, but the Lab aimed to dive deeper into the question of what makes for human and environmental wellbeing, and what conditions are needed to increase wellbeing. The face-to-face encounters took place in Brazil (20–25 January 2013) and Bhutan (22–27 April 2013) and Germany (2–3 February 2015). The meeting in Berlin was also the start of the Global Wellbeing Lab 2.0, convening the cohorts of both Labs. Additionally, many of the Lab participants were part of a Global Wellbeing Forum in Berlin (5 July 2013).



The Lab is an action-learning platform, co-created by the GIZ Global Leadership Academy (Germany), the Presencing Institute (Cambridge, MA), and the Gross National Happiness Centre (Bhutan) and was designed on the basis of Theory U an innovation process that individuals and groups can use to suspend habitual ways of paying attention, access deeper sources of knowing, and explore the future they want to create through rapid-cycle prototyping. The first Lab meeting in Brazil enabled participants to get to know each other, develop trust and share visions for more inclusive and sustainable economies and societies. It included learning journeys to the favelas of Rio and solo nature time

25



PARTICIPANTS

8



COUNTRIES

The Process

The Lab-team brought together 25 key leaders and change agents from a relevant range of professions and sectors – politicians, policy analysts, researchers, business leaders,





in the Amazon forest to understand the economic forces that are affecting quality of life for people locally.

During the second meeting of the Lab in Bhutan at the end of April 2013, initial experiences were collated and a greater emphasis was placed on mutual dialogue and exchange. Prototyping was at the forefront and all participants engaged with this in and after Bhutan, leading to the development of 5 overarching change projects at this stage. Initial project ideas were presented at the Global Wellbeing Forum in Berlin in July 2013, where they were developed further in cooperation with a wider circle of wellbeing experts. A final meeting in Berlin in 2015 brought together the cohorts of this first Global Wellbeing Lab and the Global Wellbeing Lab 2.0, laying the basis for a vibrant and worldwide network of change agents for Global Wellbeing.



Further information about the lab:
www.we-do-change.org/what-we-do/global-wellbeing-lab/

Impact

"Many of us come from organizations that might be described as technocratic, or policy, or research, kind of top down, 'we just fix the numbers and the world will be better'. This is quite delusional, I think. Something I've begun to realize through the lab ... much more so than [before is that] inner transformation is really the ground of societal transformation. Without that, nothing will stick. And arguably without that, nothing is possible."

Lea Daly, Demos, Senior Fellow and Project Director at Demos, a public policy research organization based in New York City.

Stories of change

Among the change projects developed during the Global Wellbeing Lab were the "Wellbeing in Business Lab" and the Gross National Happiness (GNH) Centre Prototype:

Wellbeing in Business Lab

The idea behind this prototype was to change the way we frame and conduct the economy to a business value proposition, which builds community by better serving society and nature and engaging the creativity and potential of all citizens. Individuals driven by their life purpose build communities based on *coma*, which then transforms larger systems. The goal of the prototype was to develop processes and practices that support large numbers of business leaders and entrepreneurs. To start, this Lab prototyped transformational leadership forums with dozens of top business leaders in various countries, as well as widely accessible workshops and events for hundreds or thousands of community entrepreneurs.

Further information:

The Oakland Wellbeing in Business Lab is an outcome of this prototype: <https://vimeo.com/168121323>

Gross National Happiness (GNH) Centre Prototype (Bhutan)

The GNH Centre's purpose is to manifest in living practice Bhutan's unique balanced development philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH), which seeks to integrate equitable and sustainable socio-economic development with environmental conservation. GNH Center indeed flourished since GWL 1 and expanded their international programme.



70%

improvement of innovation and leadership skills



60%

received significant impulses for tackling current challenges in their home systems



50%

were able to initiate innovation and change in their institutions and organisations

March 2016

Further information about our impact:
www.we-do-change.org/our-impact



The convening organisations

Presencing Institute

The Presencing Institute is an awareness-based action-research community that creates social technologies, builds capacities, and generates holding spaces for profound societal renewal. This community tries to contribute to shifting the economy from ego to eco and toward serving the wellbeing of all.

The first phase of the Presencing Institute began in 1996 with a ten-year research project conducted by Otto Scharmer and his colleagues at MIT, including Joseph Jaworski and Peter Senge. The study resulted in the development of a consciousness-based framework of leadership and change. That framework, referred to as Presencing or Theory U, posits that the quality of the results that a system creates is a function of the awareness from which the people in that system operate. The findings were published in the books Theory U and Presence.

The second phase of the Presencing Institute focused on many applications that resulted in a global ecology of laboratories, projects, programs, and initiatives that link partners in business, government, and civil society. Throughout this period, the online community of PI grew to over ten thousand members.

The third phase has started with the publication of Leading From the Emerging Future which introduces the 4.0 framework and the concept of the U.School as a global platform for helping a new generation of 4.0 eco-system entrepreneurs to act more creatively and intentionally and to be more connected.

www.presencing.com

Gross National Happiness Centre, Bhutan

The GNH Centre, a non-governmental organization (NGO), aims to manifest in living practice, Bhutan's unique holistic development philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH), which integrates equitable and sustainable socioeconomic development with environmental conservation, cultural promotion, and good governance.

The Centre offers a diverse range of national and international programmes, all of which are designed to enable participants to:

- 1) Engage in a transformative experiential process through dialogue, self-reflection, and action – leading to a deepening of their understanding of GNH philosophy, principles and values;
- 2) Be immersed in a living experience of GNH by inhabiting, and co-creating a conducive environment, fully aligned with GNH principles and values; and
- 3) Implement GNH inspired projects and practices in their own personal and professional contexts.

Key collaborating partners of the Centre include: the GNH Commission, the Royal University of Bhutan, the Centre for Bhutan Studies and GNH Research, the Early Learning Centre, BMZ/GIZ, The Presencing Institute, Schumacher College, the Mind and Life Institute, and the Global Peace Initiative of Women.

www.gnhcentrebhutan.org

The Global Leadership Academy

The Global Leadership Academy offers interdisciplinary and practice-oriented programmes aimed at improving the innovation capacity and leadership skills of decision-makers from the fields of policy-making, business, higher education and research, and civil society. In the Lab they come together to look at global issues from a completely different angle. Gaining fresh perspectives allows them to implement the necessary change processes in their spheres of influence.

The Global Leadership Academy, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), is a central component in GIZ's range of services for international human capacity development.

www.we-do-change.org

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