

Health, Wellbeing and Happiness: from Local Action to Global Change

29th June – 1st July, 2008, 3rd biennial Social Futures Institute
Conference, University of Teesside, Middlesbrough, UK

In the 18th century, philosopher Jeremy Bentham argued that one of the main aims of a government should be to bring as much happiness to as many people as possible. But what is happiness? In the last 50 years people in Western countries have become much richer, work less, have longer holidays, travel more, live longer and are healthier, yet, they are not happier.

Some studies of less affluent Asian, African or South-American countries suggest that people who live in less secure environments, who are less wealthy and have poorer health - and yet they are reported to be more happy than Westerners claim to be?

Titled "**Health, Wellbeing and Happiness: from Local Action to Global Change**" this conference will bring together leading social scientists and humanities scholars from around the world to present and evaluate contributions to the rapidly growing academic field of health, wellbeing and happiness studies.

Confirmed **keynote speakers** include:

Professor Frank Furedi, University of Kent, UK

Professor Michael Murray, University Keele, UK

Dr Dimitris Ballas, University of Sheffield, UK

Dr Daniel Nettle, University of Newcastle, UK

Dr Iain Wilkinson, University of Kent, UK

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Key questions

What is happiness? How do we measure happiness? What could be done to increase the amount of happiness in the world? Can we construct meaningful statistical indicators of happiness and life satisfaction?

Measures of happiness and policy: Can subjective well-being indicators help shape policy? And what does satisfaction with different domains of life imply for policy-making?

What makes us happy? What do we know about the factors determining happiness and what don't we know? How can government policy contribute to happiness?? What is the relationship between consumption, wellbeing and happiness?

Is it all in the mind? Science has recently embraced the notion that the mind can be trained. Could it be that we could train our mind to be happy – to enhance our ability to think positively, diminish our negative emotions and be less affected by the events going on around us?

Health and Wellbeing: Health and wellbeing is taken to be an essential element of the good life and a necessary condition for happiness. Is the good life limited only to able-bodied people with good health?

Proposed conference work streams

We welcome contributions in the form of papers, posters or other forms of presentation in the following streams:

- **Working lives**
- **Measuring happiness and wellbeing**
- **Global health, healthcare systems, wealth and happiness**
- **Consumption, leisure and tourism**
- **Misery, boredom and moaning**
- **Laughter, excitement and pleasure**
- **Family, education and relationships**
- **Placemaking and environmental sustainability**

Abstracts

Abstracts should be 250-350 words long and will be refereed by the conference committee. It is our intention to publish the most original contributions in an edited volume. All conference abstracts will be made available on the Social Futures Institute website www.tees.ac.uk/socialfutures prior to the conference.

Deadline for abstracts: Please send abstracts and poster descriptions to Catherine Iles (c.iles@tees.ac.uk) by **1st December 2007**.

Further Information

Further details regarding the registration for the conference will be released **after 30th November 2007** on the following website: www.tees.ac.uk/socialfutures/events.cfm

For further information, queries or questions regarding the work streams, abstracts and presentations please contact either Professor Anna van Wersch (A.Van-Wersch@tees.ac.uk) or Mark Cieslik (M.Cieslik@tees.ac.uk).

Organising Committee

Professor Anna van Wersch, Dr Mark Cieslik, Catherine Iles, Dr Tony Chapman, Dr Andrea Abbas, and Dr Graham Dean

Social Futures Institute Conferences

In 2004 our conference was entitled 'A Place to Call Home: connecting people, households, neighbourhoods, and cities'. Guest speakers included Polly Toynbee and John McCarthy.

Our 2006 conference 'Sustaining Life, Designing Life' featured guest speakers, Sally Jane Norman, Tom Shakespeare and Ken Rinaldo.

You can find out more about the activities of Social Futures Institute at www.tees.ac.uk/socialfutures.