

# YOUNG SINGAPOREANS CONFERENCE

IPS INSTITUTE OF POLICY STUDIES  
NUS NATIONAL UNIVERSITY of SINGAPORE

WEDNESDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2012  
NUSS KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE



MR. AARON  
MANIAM



DR. NATTAUUDH  
POWDTHAVEE



DR. TAMBYAH  
SIOK KUAN



DR. NG WEITING



AP PAULIN  
STRAUGHAN



MR. LIM SOON HOCK



MDM. MOLIAH  
HASHIM



DR. CHANG  
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MR. TAY  
LAI HOCK



MR. HUZIR  
SULAIMAN

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# MR. JANADAS DEVAN

DIRECTOR  
INSTITUTE OF POLICY STUDIES

HAPPINESS COMES FROM  
INTERACTION WITH  
OTHER PEOPLE

## "ARE YOUNG SINGAPOREANS Happy"?

### I DON'T AGREE WITH THIS TITLE.

THE PURSUIT  
OF HAPPINESS  
IS THE MOST  
IMPORTANT.  
NOT THE GUARANTEE  
OR REALITY OF IT.

HAPPINESS AS A  
GENERAL HUMAN  
CONDITION IS A  
RARITY

ALMOST EVERYTHING  
YOU DO IN YOUR  
LIFE MAY NOT  
MAKE YOU HAPPY.

"YOU'VE NEVER  
HAD IT SO GOOD"  
MACMILIAN

PROGRESS IS QUANTIFIABLE  
PROGRESS OVER LONG PERIODS  
OF TIME MAKES NO ONE HAPPY.



ENDLESS  
CYCLE  
PURSUING  
"HAPPINESS"

# DR. KANG SOONHOCK

RESEARCH FELLOW  
INSTITUTE OF POLICY STUDIES

THE ISSUE WAS BROUGHT  
UP BY PARLIAMENT:  
"HAS SINGAPORE BEEN TOO  
FOCUSED ON GDP GROWTH  
AND LESS ON HAPPINESS?"

HOW CAN OTHER SECTORS  
OF SOCIETY CONTRIBUTE  
TO OVERALL HAPPINESS  
OF SINGAPOREANS?





# your Money <sup>OR</sup> your Life



## DR. NATTAVUDH POWDTHAVEE

PRINCIPAL RESEARCH FELLOW // LSE.  
PROFESSORIAL RESEARCH FELLOW // UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE.

**THERE'S A SECRET TO A HAPPY LIFE**

- 1) FIND WHAT YOU LOVE DOING**
- 2) FIND SOMEONE WILLING TO PAY YOU TO DO IT.**

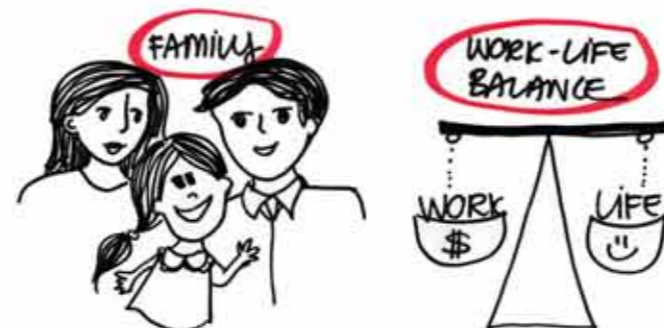
LIFE IS A SERIES OF CHOICES.



MONEY HAS BEEN USED TO INCENTIVIZE HUMANS TO DO MOST THINGS.



BUT ARE WE WILLING TO SACRIFICE THE THINGS THAT MAKE US HAPPY?



RICHER COUNTRIES WITH HIGHER GDPs TEND TO BE HAPPIER.  
"HAPPIER PEOPLE EARN MORE MONEY?"



MONEY IS ALSO GREAT FOR THE HEART  
BEATS FASTER BASED ON INCREASE IN INCOME.



PEOPLE ADAPT QUICKLY TO INCREASE IN INCOME (INCOME ASPIRATIONS RISE AS WELL)



MONEY BUYS HAPPINESS BUT ONLY IN SMALL UNITS. (SHADOW PRICING)



PEOPLE KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT MONEY BUT ACT AS IF THEY DON'T.





# Singapore

## A HAPPY STATE OF MIND?

### WHAT DO OTHER PEOPLE SAY ABOUT US?

SINGAPORE IS ONE OF THE HAPPIEST COUNTRIES



## HAPPY PEOPLE LIVE HERE!



## DR. TAMBYAH SIOCK KUAN

SENIOR LECTURER  
NUS BUSINESS SCHOOL // NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

WE HAVE TO BE WILLING TO ACCEPT THAT THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT WAYS TO FIND HAPPINESS.

CAN MONEY BUY HAPPINESS?

MONEY GIVES ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE & EDUCATION

WHO ARE THESE HAPPY PEOPLE?

NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN GENDER.

MARRIED > SINGLE



IN 2011, SINGAPOREANS AGED 25-35 WERE THE LEAST HAPPY.

CAN THE GOV. MANUFACTURE HAPPINESS?

THIS WAY TO HAPPY FACTORY

SATISFACTION WITH LIVING  
- SAFETY  
- CLEANLINESS

DISSATISFACTION  
- COE  
- COST OF LIVING  
- HEALTH CARE  
- QUALITY OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

### ROLE OF GOV.

- NEEDS OF AGING POPULATION
- PROVIDE MORE HEALTHCARE NEEDS
- PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM
- EDUCATION
- POLICING AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

WHAT MAKES US HAPPY?

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS



STRONG SENSE OF SINGAPOREAN IDENTITY



THE WAY THE GOV IS RUNNING THE COUNTRY.

ACCEPTING THAT THE GOV CAN'T SOLVE ALL THE PROBLEMS.

### MORAL OBLIGATION OF GOV.

WE'VE BEEN LOOKING A LOT AT GDP BUT THERE IS A MORAL ECONOMY TO FOCUS ON.

BHUTANESE — GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS (GNH)



# Does Money make you Happy?



## DR. NG WEI TING

SENIOR LECTURER  
PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAMME  
SIM UNIVERSITY

### EASTERN PARADOX

RISING INCOME IS NOT MATCHED BY INCREASES IN HAPPINESS?

RISE IN GDP IS RELATED TO RISE IN INCOME & HAPPINESS.

### URBAN PLANNING



BUILD CLUSTER FACILITIES AROUND HOUSING AREAS.

### MONEY IS IMPORTANT & LEADS TO HAPPINESS

SELF-DETERMINATION  
- PSYCHOLOGICAL NEED TO ACHIEVE (INCOME \$)

### CAN MONEY BUY YOU EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING?

INCOME SHOWS WEAKER ASSOCIATIONS WITH POSITIVE & NEGATIVE FEELINGS.

### WHAT IS IMPORTANT FOR HAPPINESS THEN?

STRONGEST PREDICOR

SECURITY  
RESPECT  
TRUST

### RICH PEOPLE ARE HAPPIER

### RICH NATIONS ARE HAPPIER

### MONEY MATTERS FOR HAPPINESS BUT IT'S NOT EVERYTHING

WHAT IS HAPPINESS?  
HAPPINESS IS GOOD BUT IS IT REALLY BENEFICIAL?

#### BROADEN & BUILD MODEL

- BROADEN SCOPE OF ACTION
- IMPROVE PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE.

#### SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES IN LIFE



### ASSOCIATION BETWEEN INCOME & LIFE



# SESSION 1

Money is [Really] Not Everything?



MR. AARON MANIAM

DIRECTOR INSTITUTE OF POLICY DEVP. CIVIL SERVICE COLLEGE (SESSION CHAIRPERSON)

IS HAPPINESS SOMETHING WE SEEK DIRECTLY?

### HAPPINESS IN EDU & LABOUR FORCE ?

**NICK**  
TAUGHT BOTH SINGAPOREANS & BRITISH STUDENTS. BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM. SINGAPOREANS EMPHASIS ON EXAMS. REFER TO SIR KEN ROBINSON'S VIDEO ONLINE "CREATIVITY + EDUCATION".

### QUESTION 1

- (A) WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF ALTERNATIVE VALUES (HERITAGE LOCATIONS) ?
- (B) AND WHAT IS GOV'S ROLE IN THESE VALUES ?

**NICK**  
(A) DIFFICULT TO MEASURE OTHER VALUES LIKE SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS. INCOME IS THE EASIEST TO MEASURE.

**NICK**  
(B) AT AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL, WE MAKE CHOICES AND SOMETIMES THEY DON'T ALWAYS WORK OUT. WE SOMETIMES WAIT FOR DIRECTION. THE GOV'S ROLE IS TO GUIDE/NUDGE US. (SAVING \$ FOR THE FUTURE)

**SINGAPOREAN IDENTITY. TAMBYAH**  
THE US HAS A STRONG IDENTITY AND THEY HAVE A VOICE WHILE SG DOESN'T HAVE THE SAME LEVEL OF PRIDE & IDENTITY.

### QUESTION 2

GIVE THE PEOPLE MORE POWER TO MAKE CHANGE. (SMALLER GOV ?)

**TAMBYAH**  
LKY AND GOV ARE SEEN AS "HAPPINESS ARCHITECTS. IF YOU WANT TO BE SELF-SUFFICIENT, GET UP AND DO IT!"

### QUESTION 3

**TRANSPORTATION + HAPPINESS**  
**NICK**  
PEOPLE ADAPT TO RISE IN INCOME BUT NOT TO CROWDING (CONSTANTLY ON OUR MINDS) THERE'S NEVER GOING TO BE A POLICY THAT SATISFIES EVERYBODY.

### QUESTION 4

HOW CAN WE HELP PEOPLE IN THE LOWER INCOME CATEGORY ?  
BY HELPING THEM FIND WORK THAT MAKES THEM HAPPY. (PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS) **WEITING**

SINGAPOREANS HAVE BEEN DEPENDENT ON GOV FOR SO LONG, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO BE INDEPENDENT.



# The Good Life

FAMILY COMMUNITY WORK & HAPPINESS



MR. LIM SOON HOCK

CHAIRMAN // NATIONAL FAMILY COUNCIL

NATIONAL FAMILY COUNCIL

ADVOCACY  
- RESEARCH  
- PUBLICATIONS

ENABLING  
- YOUTH CONNECT  
- MARRIAGE

CONNECTING  
- CELEBRATIONS  
- SOCIAL + ONLINE  
- TV COMMERCIALS

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS



COMMUNITY LEGACY

WORK PASSION

FAMILY LOVE & BELONGING

SELF FOUNDATION



A STABLE FAMILY LIFE CREATES AN ENDURING FORM OF CONTENTMENT FOR FAMILY & CHILDREN.



IN ALL YOUR PURSUITS, INCLUDE FAMILY IN YOUR PLANS.

TOP 3 LIFE GOALS (SG YOUTH SURVEY)

96% HEALTHY FAMILY LIFE

60% SUCCESSFUL CAREER

94% NEW SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

# HAPPINESS

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?

FAMILY LIFE IS NOT A COMPUTER PROGRAMME THAT RUNS ON ITS OWN. NEEDS INPUT.



THE MORE SUCCESSFUL YOU ARE, THE MORE HUMBLE YOU SHOULD BE.





**MDM. MOLIAH HASHIM**

CEO // YAYASAN MENDAKI

IMPORTANT FOR YOUTH TO UNDERSTAND HAPPINESS & STRIVE TO ACHIEVE IT IN THEIR LIFE. HAPPINESS SHOULD BE TRANSLATED INTO EVERYTHING THEY DO.

CAN WE MEASURE HAPPINESS?



**HAPPINESS**  
?

**HAPPINESS QUOTIENT**  
OUR YOUTH  
OUR COMMUNITY

I'M HAPPY AND IT'S OK



NOT BE APOLOGETIC ABOUT BEING HAPPY.

**HAPPY PLANET INDEX** 😊  
SINGAPORE NO. 90/196



28 YRS  
13 YRS  
My 4 CHILDREN

**DEFINE YOUR OWN HAPPINESS**

SPECIAL NEEDS BUT IN MAIN-STREAM SCHOOL. I'M WORRIED ABOUT HIS FUTURE



# SESSION

# 2

## The Good Life FAMILY, COMMUNITY, WORK & HAPPINESS



A/P  
**PAULIN STRAUGHAN**

VICE DEAN // FACULTY OF ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES  
DEPUTY HEAD // DEPT OF SOCIOLOGY, NUS  
(SESSION CHAIR PERSON)

DO YOU AGREE THAT THERE IS A HOMOGENEOUS SORT OF DEFINITION OF "HAPPINESS"?

①



**MOLIAH**  
THERE SHOULD BE AN ENSURED MINIMUM LEVEL OF SHARED HAPPINESS.

②

SINGAPORE IS IN TRANSITION, MORE ARE INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY WORK AND MORE ARE ALSO COMPLAINING. WHAT WILL THE FUTURE BE LIKE?

**MOLIAH**  
FROM THE BENEFICIARY SIDE, THERE IS GENUINE APPRECIATION. FOR THE PEOPLE WHO FIND FAULT, "WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT IT?" AS VOLUNTEERS, CONTINUE WHAT YOU ARE DOING, NOT FOR RECOGNITION BUT FOR THE PASSION TO SERVE.

**PAULIN**  
ARE SINGAPOREANS PREPARED TO PAY MORE TAXES TO EQUALISE?

③

"IT'S NOT DIFFERENCES THAT CAUSE PROBLEMS, IT'S THE INTOLERANCE TOWARDS DIFFERENCES THAT IS DEVISIVE."

**SOON HOCK**  
I AGREE THAT THERE SHOULD BE FREEDOM TO EXPRESS VIEWS.

**TAMBYAH**  
"FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES" ARE DEFINED TOO NARROWLY. TAKE IN TO ACCOUNT SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES, EXTENDED FAMILY ETC.

④

**DESIRE VS. MEANS TO DO SO (EXECUTION)**  
96% YOUTHS PRIORITISE FAMILY LIFE  
- LOW BIRTH RATE  
- HIGH COST OF HDB

- WHAT SUPPORT IS GIVEN?

**SOON HOCK**  
NATIONAL FAMILY COUNCIL (NFC) HAS SUBMITTED 21 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOV. CONCERNS REGARDING GOV SUPPORT IS NOTHING NEW. IT IS A SERIOUS ISSUE AS YOUNG PEOPLE MAY FIND IT DIFFICULT TO LIVE IN SINGAPORE & CHOOSE TO IMMIGRATE.

**MOLIAH**  
THERE IS CONCERN THAT THE RESOURCES ARE RUNNING OUT, THERE IS A LIMIT. WHAT ARE THE POLICIES THAT SHOULD BE PRIORITISED? (INFRASTRUCTURE ETC)



There is  
Another Way  
HAPPINESS, LIVE &  
BE CREATIVE



WENT AROUND  
THE WORLD  
FOR 4 YEARS.

HAPPINESS IS  
AS EASY AS  
ABC

A-BEAUTIFUL-CONNECTION



MR.  
TAY  
LAI HOCK

FOUNDER & PRESIDENT  
GROUND-UP INITIATIVE (GUI)

"ONE OF THE FIRST  
CONDITIONS OF  
HAPPINESS IS THAT  
THE LINK BETWEEN  
MAN & NATURE  
SHALL NOT BE  
BROKEN."

- LEO TOLSTOY -

SINGAPORE  
SLIPPED TO  
NO. 90 ON  
THE HAPPINESS  
INDEX.

STARTED  
GUI

CREATE SENSE  
OF OWNERSHIP

SURF  
INITIATIVE  
APRIL 2009

BUILDING THE  
SUSTAINABLE

Living  
Kampung



iBam

iBam 2  
HALF THE SIZE  
DOUBLE THE SOUND

ENGAGING THE  
COMMUNITY TO  
WORK TOGETHER.





PLEASE EXCUSE  
MY HARD TRUTHS  
FROM A SOFT HEART.



MR.  
HUZIR  
SULAIMAN

CREATIVE DIR // STUDIO WONG HUZIR

SINGAPORE,  
I ASK YOU TO  
CREATE, RESIST & CONNECT.

# CREATE

HOW TO QUANTIFY  
HUMAN QUALITIES.

IT'S NOT STOPPING  
THE MEASURING  
OF THINGS, IT'S  
UNDERSTANDING  
THAT NOT EVERYTHING  
CAN BE MEASURED.

THE ARTS PROVIDE  
IMMENSE COMFORT &  
MEANING.

ACKNOWLEDGE  
THAT IT IS  
IMPOSSIBLE  
TO PLEASE  
EVERYONE.  
IT'S LIBERATING!



# RESIST

SINGAPORE HAS AN  
AVERSION TO CONFLICT.



WHICH LEADS TO  
SUPPRESSED ANGER.



RESISTANCE FOR THE SAKE  
OF RESISTANCE IS IMPORTANT.

RESIST IN ORDER TO  
CONNECT.

# CONNECT

LISTEN FOR THE POSSIBLY  
OF CHANGE

WE ALL DEEPLY FEEL THAT  
WE NEED TO MATTER.  
BUT WE SHY AWAY AT THE  
IMPORTANT MOMENT TO  
CONNECT.

DON'T BE SHACKLED BY  
NORMS BUT INSTEAD CREATE.

EMBRACE CONFLICT &  
RESIST.



# SESSION 3

## Happy Place

HAPPINESS, LIVEABILITY & CREATIVITY

HOW DO YOU SEE SINGAPORE'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP MANIFESTING ITSELF IN FUTURE?

HUZIR

SINGAPORE HAS BEEN RUN IN A LOW RESISTANCE WAY SINCE THE 70'S.

THE NEW LEADERS THAT WILL TAKE OVER WOULDN'T HAVE THE EXPERIENCE TO LEAD A COUNTRY THAT IS FACING INCREASING RESISTANCE FROM ITS PEOPLE.



DR. CHANG JIAT HWEE

ASST. PROF // DEPT OF ARCHITECTURE  
SCHOOL OF DESIGN & ENVIRONMENT, NUS  
(SESSION CHAIRPERSON)

- "MESSINESS" TOLERANCE
- CHANGE IN "MENTAL" SPACE
- DON'T FOLLOW A "MODEL", CREATE YOUR OWN

HOW DO YOU SEE THE "LIVING KAMPUNG" MOVEMENT AFFECTING THE LANDSCAPE OF SG?

LAI HOCK

WOULD LIKE TO CREATE A FIFTH UNIVERSITY. WE HAD GOV EMPLOYEES COME TO THE "LIVING KAMPUNG" TO UNDERSTAND WHAT WE DO. MAJORITY OF THEM COULD NOT WRAP THEIR HEAD AROUND IT. "EH LAI HOCK, YOU RUN THIS PLACE WITH QM STRUCTURE BUT EVERYTHING SEEMS TO WORK... HOW AH?"

WE ALSO NEED "MENTAL SPACE".

HUZIR

THE NEW GENERATION'S ABILITY TO CONNECT HAS BEEN IMPAIRED AS THEY CONNECT THROUGH TECHNOLOGY MEDIUMS. CAN'T LOOK A PERSON IN THE EYE AND HAVE A CONNECTION.

IDEAL	REALITY
CREATE	FOLLOW
RESIST	ABIDE
CONNECT	DISCONNECT

HOW WILL THIS AFFECT THE FUTURE OF SG?

WE TEACH OUR STUDENTS TO BE "GROUND LEADERS".  
(THINKER ⊕ WARRIOR ⊕ FARMER)

ART CANNOT BE DIVORCED FROM THE MARKET. WHY IS THE SG CREATIVE INDUSTRY STUNTED?

HUZIR

THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY IN SG IS IN A GOOD PLACE. BUT THE RESTRICTION OF SPACE & HIGH COST MAKES IT DIFFICULT.

LAI HOCK

SINGAPORE'S GOV GIVES TOO MANY HAND OUTS. MAKES THE TECH/CREATIVE/STARTUP SCENE TOO COMFORTABLE. THERE NEEDS TO BE SOME STRUGGLE TO SUCCEED SUSTAINABLY.

SINGAPORE HAS A "ME FIRST" ATTITUDE

HUZIR

YOU LEARN MORE ABOUT YOURSELF WHEN YOU HELP OTHERS.

SCHOOLS IN DENMARK & FINLAND ALLOW THE STUDENTS TO TAKE CARE OF FACILITIES ON THE SCHOOL GROUNDS. CREATING A SENSE OF OWNERSHIP & TEAMWORK. THIS DOES NOT EXIST IN SG.

SINGAPORE'S FEAR OF CONFLICT STEMS FROM BEING A POST-COLONIAL COUNTRY & STRUGGLED TO BUILD ITSELF UP. HOW TO MAKE SPACE FOR "MESSINESS"?

HUZIR

APPROACH "MESSINESS" FROM A PHILOSOPHICAL ANGLE.

ACKNOWLEDGE THAT "MESSINESS" HAPPENS AND UNDERSTAND WHEN IT IS NECESSARY.