

GOVERNMENT HAPPINESS POLICIES

Worldwide, there are a number of nations that take the pursuit of happiness seriously by creating policies and budgets that factor not just capital gain, but well-being as well.

“What is the purpose of government if it does not work toward the happiness of the people?”

It’s the duty and role of the government to create the right conditions for people to choose to be happy.”

OHOOB BINT KHALFAN ROUMI
Minister of State for Happiness | United Arab Emirates



Bolivia and Ecuador have constitution policies called Vivir Bien and Buen Vivir, which means “living well.” These policies value diversity and unity, harmony with nature and the community, social responsibility, reciprocity, consensus, social justice, solidarity, and peace.

“The pursuit of equilibrium among the various elements that make up the whole—a harmony not only between human beings but also between humans and nature, between the material and the spiritual, between knowledge and wisdom, between diverse cultures and between different identities and realities.” — Pablo Solón

Bhutan prioritizes “Gross National Happiness” (GNH) over the more traditional Gross Domestic Product (GDP), believing that the happiness of their citizens is their most precious commodity. Every five years they survey 8,000 randomly selected households with questions that focus on such things as spirituality, how much time and money they donate to their community, how much sleep they get, how many hours they work, how often they quarrel with their family, how much time they spend away from their family, whether they trust their neighbors, and so forth.

Venezuela has a committee called the Ministry of Supreme Social Happiness, focusing on policies that serve the poor, disabled, homeless, elderly, and children.

The United Arab Emirates has a position called the Minister of State for Happiness, which prioritizes well-being and satisfaction. This includes the “happiness patrol,” where police officers reward citizens for good behavior.

New Zealand has a “well-being budget” that prioritizes happiness over economic gain. Happiness is measured using indicators such as loneliness, trust in the government, and water quality. Using this information, policies are made to address poverty, supporting mental health programs, addressing the needs of indigenous peoples, and creating a low-emission energy grid.

“The purpose of government spending is to ensure citizens’ health and life satisfaction, and that—not wealth or economic growth—is the metric by which a country’s progress should be measured.” — Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern