

Groups aim to find way of measuring happiness

PUBLICATION: The Province
DATE: 2005.06.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A16
SOURCE: Canadian Press
DATELINE: HALIFAX

HALIFAX — Happiness, it seems, is something that can be measured.

Hundreds of academics, farmers, environmentalists, business people, entertainers and health professionals are trying to figure just how to do it and to convince others it is just as an important indicator of a country's success as its economic well-being.

They will meet in Antigonish, N.S., today for the second International Conference on Gross National Happiness, a movement that is attracting a varied mix of adherents around the world.

"We don't claim to measure well-being directly, but rather what are some of the social, economic and environmental conditions which are likely to produce higher levels of well-being," said Ron Colman of GPI Atlantic, a non-profit research group in Nova Scotia that is organizing the meeting.

Colman and other delegates contend that a better way of determining a person's well-being is by looking at several factors — environmental preservation, sustainable economic development, cultural promotion and good governance.

Colman said the old model of thinking that it was either jobs versus the environment no longer works, since the two can be inextricably tied. For example, there can't be uncontrolled fisheries without considering how that's going to affect jobs in the future, he said.