The Sodexo Institute for Quality of Life

2016 Retrospective
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The Sodexo Institute for Quality of Life is Sodexo’s in-house ‘think-tank’. It is inspired by Sodexo’s conviction that improving Quality of Life leads to the progress of individuals and contributes to the performance of organisations. The Institute’s role is to gather and develop insight to help Sodexo understand better what it means to improve Quality of Life and the impact this has on individuals and organisations.

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Introduction

Welcome to the Sodexo Institute for Quality of Life retrospective for 2016, a varied and fruitful year for the Institute. This Retrospective is divided into four sections that aim to provide an update on the Institute’s own activities and share external insights from the past twelve months:

- **Research and publications**: the first sub-section within this part takes a look at the reports published by the Institute based on its round-table Dialogues during the year. This features a report on memory care which was published in October following a Dialogue held in Washington in May, as well as a report on the world of work in the 21st century which was published in November following a Dialogue held in Montigny-le-Bretonneux, France, in June. The second sub-section gives an overview of segment-specific research conducted for Energy & Resources, Schools, Seniors, Sports & Leisure and Universities.

- **External conferences and seminars**: the Institute participated in a number of conferences this year to share insights with both business experts and academics on topics ranging from wellbeing in higher education to age-friendly business.

- **2016 Quality of Life insights and trends**: this section presents key findings from surveys and reports:
  - Sodexo Benefits and Rewards Services – the results of research on SME leaders’ perception of Quality of Life;
  - United Nations – an update on the state of happiness around the world in the World Happiness Report Update;
  - Deloitte – key human capital trends identified as part of this year’s report which surveyed 7,000 people in 130 countries;
  - Terra Nova (a French think-tank) - invaluable insights on Quality of Life at work;
  - World Economic Forum - the Human Capital Report outlining the necessity of re-thinking learning and employment;
  - OECD – an analysis of the situation of young people, particularly those who are neither employed nor in education or training (NEET);

Lastly, this section looks back on the speakers who shared insights at Sodexo’s 50th Anniversary on the future of Quality of Life.

- **Looking forward to 2017**: in this section we give an overview of the Institute’s projects for the coming year.
I. Research and publications

I.I. Dialogue Reports

“Treat me like a person because that is what I still am”

In October, the Institute published a report on the meaning of Quality of Life and the progress of individuals for people living with dementia, their relatives and their carers. Inspired by the Institute Dialogue that took place in partnership with Planetree (the global leader in advancing person-centred care) in Washington D.C. in May, this report draws on experiences from carers and patients and academic knowledge from pluridisciplinary research to offer a non-stigmatising lens through which to address questions around the preservation of personhood in the context of dementia. To gather and develop insight, we asked our Dialogue participants to explore the following key questions:

- what is ‘dementia’?
- how are different stages of dementia characterised and what are their impacts on Quality of Life?
- what are the factors and range of responses to dementia by those living with it, their relatives and carers?
- which aspects of Quality of Life can mediate responses to dementia by those living with it, their relatives and carers?
- what should we prioritise from a Quality of Life perspective for those living with dementia, their relatives and carers?

The report highlights the critical role of language used in the context of dementia and the need for care to benefit from a new narrative to underpin a renewed shared sense of purpose. A short video is also available.
“Work in the 21st century: agile and mindful”

In June, the Institute held its sixth research Dialogue with internal and external experts in Montigny-le-Bretonneux, France. To gather and develop insight on the world of work today, we asked participants to consider the following:

- the recent evolution of organisational typologies
- the breakdown of barriers to agility
- mindfulness as a grounding reference point to support agility

The report highlights the practice of mindfulness as a way to facilitate agility in an organisational and behavioural context characterised by its uncertainty and relentless information and communication technologies.

I.II. Segment Research Collaboration

Energy & Resources

In September, the Institute was approached by the Energy & Resources to carry out research on the importance of choice as a factor of Quality of Life for offshore workers.

Schools

The Institute has undertaken a number of research projects for the Schools segment, notably to better understand the relationship between the school physical environment as a factor of Quality of Life of school students and their academic performance.

Seniors

The Seniors segment approached the Institute for research to understand better the contribution of facilities management to the Quality of Life of older adults bearing in mind age-related sensory decline of the five senses in older adult years.

Sports & Leisure

In October, the Institute supported a research project at Hampden Park, Scotland’s national stadium in Glasgow by providing insights from a Quality of Life perspective which could help enhance the fan experience.
Universities

The Institute welcomed the results of research commissioned by the Institute from Professor Andy Smith of Cardiff University. The report entitled “Studying away. The wellbeing of international students studying in the UK”, presented the results of a survey designed to integrate three areas: studying away from home, wellbeing and quality of student life. Two surveys were conducted with samples of international students at universities in Wales and the west of England. The first was aimed at students in their first year in university and the second at students in subsequent years. The initial analyses showed that the measures of wellbeing, Quality of Life and studying away had good psychometric properties. Wellbeing was highly correlated with quality of student life. Those who were proactive in their strategies associated with working away reported greater wellbeing and quality of life. The research confirmed the ‘psychological wellbeing away’ model developed by the Institute following a round-table Dialogue in 2014 that sets our five phases of being away from pre-departure preparation to post-return and actions to support wellbeing in each.
II. External conferences and seminars

**OECD Forum Discovery Lab**

**31 May – 2 June**

In partnership with Sodexo Benefits and Rewards Services, the Institute took part in this year’s OECD Forum entitled “Productive Economies, Inclusive Societies” with a presentation on “The Business Case for Quality of Life”.

**University of Limerick**

**September**

The Institute gave a presentation at the University of Limerick on “Internationalisation and Wellbeing in Higher Education” on the occasion of a symposium convened in collaboration between the University of Limerick and the Embassy of France in Dublin.

**Sodexo Panama and ANREH (the Panamanian organisation for HR professionals)**

**October**

The Institute gave a presentation on the need for, benefits and results of Quality of Life programs in the workplace with reference to the results of the 2015 Quality of Life Leader Survey and the Quality of Life Index developed by Sodexo in Chile.

**OECD – LSE Centre for Economic Performance – CEPREMAP Wellbeing Observatory – What Works Centre for Wellbeing**

**February**

Professors Andrew Clark (Paris Schools of Economics), Nick Powdthavee (London School of Economics) and Andrew Steptoe (University College London) presented findings aimed at building an overall model of wellbeing over the life-course. Lord Gus O’Donnell and Professors Richard Layard (London School of Economics) and Tim Besley (London School of Economics) also co-hosted a session on a wellbeing approach to public policy.
The ‘Age-Friendly Business Initiative Forum’ was the first of its kind in bringing together decision makers from large private corporations, the public sector and research to discuss a great challenge: the demographic transformation caused by aging populations. As in the rest of the world, Canada’s population is ageing. The 80 years and over age-group is currently the fastest growing and 25% of those aged 65-69 years remain active in the workforce. Within 20 years, those aged 65 years and over are expected to represent 25% of Canada’s population.

The idea behind the Forum was to move from a relatively description-focused perspective to a more intervention-oriented perspective.

The key objectives of the Forum were to:

- identify the most important areas for new knowledge (research) for developing complete age-friendly businesses;
- identify the most important areas for policy development that will ensure the creation of age-friendly businesses;
- obtain suggestions for action from the participants and identify clear outcomes.

The focus of the Forum was to dismiss ageing-related myths such as:

- is ageing only about decline, disease and death?
- are age-friendly goods and services also attractive to other consumer groups? Do older consumers also adopt new technology?
- are older workers less productive or do they add value in a multi-generational workplace?
III. 2016 Quality of Life insights and trends

Quality of Life: A Big Asset for Small Business Leaders

Sodexo Benefits and Rewards Services published the results of a survey conducted to better understand the daily challenges of SMEs and their perception of Quality of Life in the workplace. More than 4,800 small business leaders in seven countries (Brazil, Chile, France, India, Mexico, Romania and Turkey) were interviewed. Results unveil key levers SMEs can use to boost performance while improving employee Quality of Life. Among key findings from the survey:

- SME leaders believe their companies perform as well or better than large corporations in key Quality of Life aspects:
  - atmosphere at work, cohesion between teams;
  - recognition of employees’ performance and efforts;
  - balance between work and private life;
  - flexible work organisation;
  - versatility of tasks/projects.

- SME leaders are well aware of the positive impact that Quality of Life at work has on their businesses. They highlight six key drivers which they believe will improve performance:
  - 95% think that valuing the efforts of their employees and recognising their performance will increase their company’s performance;
  - 92% value improving comfort and safety in the working environment;
  - 91% value promoting the personal development and training of their employees;
  - 87% value helping their employees take care of their health;
  - 84% value helping their employees to better balance their work and personal life;
  - 70% value promoting access to culture and leisure.

- As more Quality of Life measures are introduced, SME leaders notice improvements in reputation, employee productivity, ease of recruitment and even financial turnover.

Read more [here](#).
Equality of Happiness Within Society Leads to Happier Individuals

The World Happiness Report 2016 Update was released in March in advance of the UN World Happiness Day. It includes three chapters authored by Professors John Helliwell (University of British Columbia, Canada), Lord Richard Layard (London School of Economics) and Jeffrey Sachs (Columbia University, US) respectively. Professor John Helliwell looks at the distribution of world happiness and the fact that people do care about the happiness of others and how it is distributed. Indeed, new research suggests that people are significantly happier living in societies where there is less inequality of happiness. The report argues that inequality of wellbeing provides a better measure of the distribution of welfare than is provided by income and wealth, which have thus far held centre stage when the levels and trends of inequality are being considered. Lord Richard Layard argues the need for promoting secular ethics in a world that is experiencing a global decline in the impact of religious ethics. Professor Jeffrey Sachs discusses the close connection between happiness and the recently agreed UN Sustainable Development Goals with evidence showing that happiness is higher in countries closer to realising these Goals.

The New Organisation: Different by Design with Culture as a Competitive Advantage

At the beginning of the year, Deloitte released its report on the global human capital trends which surveyed 7,000 people in over 130 countries. The theme of this year’s report reflects a major finding: after three years of struggling to drive employee engagement and retention, improve leadership and build a meaningful culture, 92% of the executives surveyed rated the redesign of the organisation itself as a critical priority. This “new organisation” is built around highly empowered teams, driven by a new model of management and led by a breed of younger, more globally diverse leaders. To lead this shift toward the new organisation, CEOs and HR leaders are focused on understanding and creating a shared culture, designing a work environment that engages people and constructing a new model of leaderships and career development.

The report identified human capital trends for 2016 ranging from the rise of a new organisational model through a network of teams to the importance of culture and engagement as separate yet intimately linked concepts to the new mandate of the HR profession.
Quality of Work: A Determining Factor for Quality of Life at Work

A French report published in October on Quality of Life at work identified the quality of an individual’s actual work as key determinant of that individual’s Quality of Life. The report presents an interesting review of the literature and overview of the historical development of the concept of Quality of Life at work from the beginning of the 20th century. An essential aspect of Quality of Life at work is the autonomy of employees, which can take diverse forms in terms of organisation and processes. The second part of the report is a selection of case studies to analyse four types of organisational model: the lean management organisation, the liberated organisation, the responsible organisation and the empowering organisation.

The Necessity of Re-Thinking Learning and Employment to Prepare for the “Fourth Industrial Revolution”

In June, the World Economic Forum published its Human Capital Report which seeks to serve as a tool for capturing the complexity of education, employment and workforce dynamics so that various stakeholders are able to make better-informed decisions. Professor Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, argues that the confluence of new technologies (artificial intelligence, robotics, the internet of things, 3D printing, biotechnology and so on) will amount to the fourth industrial revolution¹. The latter will lead to profound shifts across all industries, reshaping production, consumption, transportation and delivery systems, among other factors. In parallel, the nature of work is changing largely due to new technologies which are impacting on business models while creating new ways for talent to connect to markets. Managing these transitions for optimal outcomes for our societies will require visionary leadership and a wide range of new knowledge and skills. The report examines how to maximise learning and development throughout the life-course. The World Economic Forum has also published a complementary report: “The Future of Jobs” to look in more detail at the evolution of employment trends and their implications for the skills landscape in particular industries and regions.

¹ Professor Schwab defines the first three revolutions as: the transport and mechanical production revolution of the late 18th century; the mass production revolution of the late 19th century and the computer revolution of the 1960s). He accepts that some people might consider the fourth revolution as an extension of the third but argues that the scale, speed and impact of the latest technologies mean they deserve a revolution of their own.
² http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/#/11111111511
OECD Society at a Glance 2016: A Focus on Youth

In the eighth edition of its Society at a Glance report, the OECD addresses the impact of the Great Recession on young people. Eight years after the beginning of the crisis, still about 40 million young people remain neither employed nor in education or training (NEET). The total gross income that could have been generated by NEETs in 2014 was estimated between USD 360-605 billion. Job and income uncertainty can keep young people from reaching other traditional markets of adulthood and can lead to serious long-term effects on health, fertility and crime, eventually endangering social cohesion. Helping young people transition into further education or employment is therefore at the top of the policy agenda in the OECD. The aim of the report is to shine a light on the situation of youth – particularly NEETs – in OECD countries with a view to better understanding the specificities of the group and thus develop better policies to support it.

Celebrating 50 Years of Sodexo by Reimagining the Future of Quality of Life

Sodexo’s 50th Anniversary on 4 October marked a unique opportunity to look back on its achievements and explore future developments for Quality of Life through discussions with a panel of international experts.

Trust is key for freedom to be ourselves and therefore being happy

Malene Rydahl – Author, Speaker and Coach

Malene Rydahl shared some insights from Denmark as the country continues to lead in life satisfaction (OECD Better Life Index 2016). She described the three key fundamental factors in the Danish landscape that are also applicable to organisations as trust, freedom to be oneself and individual responsibility for shared objectives.

Our schools need to prepare children for the future by producing happy, healthy and productive people

Professor Sugata Mitra – Global Educational Researcher, Professor of Educational Technology at the University of Newcastle (UK)

Professor Mitra shared insights from his research on Self-Organised Learning Environments (SOLE) which began in 1999, in New Delhi, after he introduced a computer to a group of children and saw that they had taught themselves
how to use the computer and surf the Internet with no IT or language teaching. By 2013, SOLE went viral around the world. From his research, Professor Mitra has concluded that the education system should subsume the three basic skills (reading, writing and arithmetic) currently taught in school into three wider domains: comprehension to include reading; communication to include writing; computation to replace arithmetic. He even suggests fitting the curriculum into a matrix made up of comprehension, communication, computation on the one side and happy, healthy and productive on the other side.

**Leaders should serve their employees by creating an environment where they can be free**

Professor Isaac Getz – Professor of Leadership and Innovation at ESCP Europe Business School.

Professor Getz spoke about the importance for leaders to cater for their employees’ three basic needs in order to make them more engaged in their organisation:

- all employees should be treated equally and trusted in terms of their intelligence and ability to find solutions;
- employees need to achieve self-fulfilment in their work;
- employees should have freedom of initiative in their work activities.

The liberation of organisations which leads to higher employee engagement levels does not involve a one-fits-all formula. Professor Getz highlighted the need for leaders and managers to work on their ego and trust their employees more to identify with solutions to business challenges.

**The future impact of food with technology on our health should not be neglected**

Dr. Laurent Alexandre – Entrepreneur and Author of “The Death of Death”

Doctor Alexandre spoke about the revolution brought about by the development of nanotechnologies, biotechnologies, information technologies, cognitive science, neuroscience, artificial intelligence and robotics which is impacting medicine and will eventually alter the organisation of the healthcare system. He predicted that Sodexo would be a big player in terms of delivering customised foods to people as part of a specific cure.
IV. Looking forward to 2017

As the Institute looks back on 2016, we are already anticipating a new year of cross-discipline research and insight on Quality of Life from across the world:

- **2017 Sodexo Global Workplace Trends Report**: Since its launch in 2012, the Workplace Trends Report has continued to attract attention and notoriety to the fields of work represented and to its contributors. Each year, thought leaders from among Sodexo clients, from academia, NGOs and the media are invited to share their insights and expertise in relation to the trends presented in the articles. These cover the working lives of people, their workplace environment and the community, lending a fresh perspective into the issues faced by C-suite leaders and other decision-makers globally. The 2016 Workplace Trends Report, the 5th US edition of the report, was seen by over 170 million people across the globe. The Institute has sponsored a number of insights for the 2017 Workplace Trends Report which will be global for the first time and launch in February 2017.

- **Obesity in Latin America – Economic and Social Impacts**: Following its Dialogue on obesity held in November in Santiago (Chile), the Institute will be working on collecting the insights provided by the participants to produce a report relating to the evolution of obesity trends in adults and children; the estimated causes of the pandemic; the initiatives from the private, public and NGO sectors and the prospects for future development in Chile, Mexico and Brazil.

- **Robotics and Quality of Life of Individuals in Frontline Services**: The Institute will hold a Dialogue to consider a diversity of views, knowledge and experience with insight from academia, civil society and business to explore the characteristics and worker impacts of technological change over time, and the likely consequences of these changes in terms of Quality of Life and the progress of individuals with a focus on frontline and facilities management services workers.
The Second Sodexo Quality of Life Conference

Following the success of the first Quality of Life Conference held in New York City in May 2015, the Institute will support the organisation of the second Quality of Life Conference which will take place in London in October 2017. The Conference aims to engage a collective movement of global leaders who believe that focusing on people’s Quality of Life is a largely unexplored but powerful driver of social and economic performance.