

Prosperity and good living

A discussion about similarities and differences

Overview

In two groups, participants describe their understanding of the concepts “good living” and “prosperity”. After the results have been presented to the group, the parallels and differences between the two concepts are discussed and examined in relation to economic and social objectives.

Instructions

Preparation

The following partial sentences are written on two moderation cards of different colours:

- > “To us, good living means:...”
- > “To us, prosperity means:...”

Execution

1. The participants are divided into two groups of equal size.
2. Each group receives one of the prepared moderation cards.
3. The groups now have 15 minutes to complete the sentence. As a group, they then concisely write their different interpretations of prosperity or good living on moderation cards of the same colour. Participants should observe the following points:
 - > only one idea should be written on each card
 - > ideas should be written using large and easily legible letters
 - > spelling is not important

The groups then cluster the results and come up with titles for each category.
4. The participants come together as a single group. First, the “prosperity” group presents its results, placing all its moderation cards on the floor.
5. The “good living” group then does the same, placing its cards next to those already on the floor. Where the contents of the two groups’ results overlap, the appropriate cards are placed together.



10-24



45 minutes



Moderation cards in two different colours; Background text “prosperity” & “good living”

6. The group then discusses the following questions:
 - > Looking at your results, where do you see intersections and differences between “prosperity” and “good living”, and how do you explain them?
 - > There is currently a political/social/economic focus on prosperity. Can you think of everyday examples which clearly show this focus on prosperity rather than good living?
 - > A significant example is the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), a political measurement of the prosperity enjoyed by society. What does this say about our society? What are your thoughts on this?
 - > Suggested final question: Would you have completed the sentences differently as individuals rather than as a group?

Tips for facilitators

It is advisable to have a general definition of prosperity on hand at the end of the activity. The “good living” (buen vivir) approach is currently being pursued in a number of Latin American countries, and is enshrined in the constitutions of Bolivia and Ecuador as a national objective.

Suggestions for follow-up

This method is suitable as an introduction to the topic of prosperity. It can be followed by a discussion of various different prosperity indicators, for example. A central question here might be the extent to which these indicators reflect our interpretation of a good and contented life (e.g. “Measuring the good life”, chapter 3)