

The Sodexo Institute for Quality of Life **2017 Retrospective**



The Sodexo Institute for Quality of Life

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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Contents

Welcome! | 5

Institute research and publications | 6

 Institute reports | 6

 Segment research collaboration | 10

External conferences and seminars | 12

2017 Quality of Life insights and trends | 13

Looking forward to 2018 | 17

This year's Dialogue reports explored two pressing issues for public health and tomorrow's world of work

Welcome!

What a productive year 2017 was for the Sodexo Institute for Quality of Life! This Retrospective gives you a flavour of the projects we undertook and shares our insights from external research. Here is an overview of the Institute's year and the sections of this Retrospective:

- **research and publications:** we feature the reports produced this year from our round-table Dialogues, also an independent project with an expert in intercultural relations. This year's Dialogue reports explored two pressing issues for public health and tomorrow's world of work:
 - (1) the social and economic costs of obesity in Latin America
 - (2) workforce Quality of Life in the advent of intelligent roboticsA collaboration with University College London led to the production of a guide to thinking about identity in the 21ST century. Following eight months travelling across ten countries to explore quality of life through a multicultural lens, a French expert in intercultural relations shared her insights with us and we distilled them into a report that provides a sample of the multiple interpretations and components of quality of life across cultures. We also present our research with Sodexo's Seniors, Defence, Sports and Leisure segments.
- **external conferences and seminars:** the Institute spoke at a number of conferences and seminars this year exploring topics such as the impact of new technologies in the workplace at events organised by the Institut Esprit Service in Paris (the think-tank of the French employers' union, MEDEF), InspireFest (a tech, science and arts festival) in Dublin, and the France-Ireland Chamber of Commerce.
- **2017 Quality of Life insights and trends:** the Institute looks mainly externally to gather and develop insights to advance our understanding of quality of life. During 2017, we continued to collect insights from a variety of conferences and publications including Sodexo's second Quality of Life Conference, Deloitte's Human Capital Trends report, the UK Taylor Review on 'Good Work' and McKinsey's report 'A future that works'.
- **looking forward to 2018:** this section gives an overview of projects in the coming year.

Institute research and publications

Institute reports

'The social and economic costs of obesity in Latin America: a call to action'

In March, the Institute published a report on the social and economic costs of obesity in Latin America to serve as a call to action to tackle the region's biggest public health challenge: obesity. Inspired by the Institute Dialogue that took place in November 2016 near Santiago de Chile, this report draws on expert insight from academia, civil society and business from Mexico, Chile and Brazil to better understand:

- what is 'obesity'?
- what are the social and economic costs of obesity and where are they seen?
- what does 'obesity' mean in Latin America?
- what is the difference between adult obesity and child obesity?
- what are the responsibilities and successes of the public, private and NGO sectors?
- what are the most significant risks and opportunities?
- what should be done?

There is no shortage of statistics on obesity in Latin America; they paint a complex picture of development in relation to nutrition and diet, behaviour, public policy, marketing, advertising and health programs in the region. The report highlights the main hurdles to tackling obesity which range from a lack of perception and awareness of overweight and obesity to inadequate governance and a lack of cross-sector collaboration. Each hurdle requires a complex combination of planning for the long term and immediate action, also individual, community and population level engagement. At the same time, they are highly political and include significant resource allocation trade-offs but not one of them is a majority election vote winner. Indeed, one of the best ways to tackle obesity in Latin America may be to look 'beyond the navel' to other similar challenges – to climate change and demographic change – to work together and achieve the *popular support* necessary to inspire *new forms* of governance that will feel *empowered* to address these pressing 21st century challenges to our Quality of Life. This is precisely what the follow-up Dialogue which took place in Brazil in November 2017 addressed.

One of the best ways to tackle obesity in Latin America may be to look 'beyond the navel' to other similar challenges – to climate change and demographic change

The Institute held its ninth research Dialogue to explore how to prepare for a successful integration of intelligent robotics in the workplace from an employee quality of life perspective

Click [here](#) to read more in the full report or get an overview of the main ideas in the executive summary and infographic (also available in Spanish).

A short [video](#) of the Dialogue in Santiago de Chile is also available.

‘Intelligent robotics and Quality of Life at work: compete, control or collaborate?’

In May, the Institute held its ninth research Dialogue in Singapore with internal and external experts to explore how to prepare for a successful integration of intelligent robotics in the workplace from an employee quality of life perspective. To gather and develop insight, our starting point was to think about intelligent robotics in a practical sense, as workplace ‘tools’, as we asked our Dialogue participants to consider the following key questions:

- what is the essence of our historical relationship with the tools we use?
- how is it changing with the advent of intelligent robotics?
- are these changes different from those we’ve seen with past technological change?
- what future scenarios can we envisage?
- how desirable are they in terms of workforce quality of life?
- how might we reach such scenarios?

The report highlights the importance of framing the discourse in terms of ‘value’, in particular what is the value to workers if their roles and tasks are supported and enhanced by intelligent robotics? Read more by clicking [here](#) to access our various report formats.

A short [video](#) is also available.

‘Safety culture: assessment tools and techniques’

In May, the Institute published the findings of a literature review surrounding the assessment of safety culture in organisations. The report begins by explaining the difference between safety ‘climate’ and safety ‘culture’ as the research revealed some inconsistency and confusion around the use of the two terms. It then analyses three angles for approaching safety culture - academic, analytical and pragmatic – and outlines a variety of existing methods and tools for assessing safety culture and climate in organisations.

‘A brief introduction to thinking about identity in the 21st century’

To date, the corporate diversity and inclusion discourse has been framed in terms of characteristics that are largely unchangeable as primary characteristics protected by law (e.g., gender, race, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability). This approach has been fine-tuned over decades of progress based on moral and philosophical convictions. It underpins the legislative framework that governs companies in many legal systems. The Institute was asked to help inform Sodexo's approach to diversity and inclusion by supporting its quest to understand (1) the dynamics of identity and (2) their influence on perceived drivers of quality of life. To do this, the Institute held a round-table discussion with experts in the field of anthropology from University College London¹ in March. This discussion inspired the production of a **guide**: a brief introduction to thinking about identity in the 21ST century which sets out some of the helpful frameworks and models that can be used to navigate identity.

‘Quality of Life around the world: an introduction’

Sodexo has identified six dimensions of Quality of Life² through which its services and offers have the greatest impact. They help the organisation to understand and track how it improves the quality of life of Sodexo employees and all they serve. However, while the dimensions are a very useful prism, they are not ‘universal’; they are seen and experienced in different ways by different people in different situations. As we continue to develop an increasingly sophisticated and versatile understanding of quality of life, we must remain mindful that with better knowledge of our own cultural frame of reference and the changes that it is undergoing at any point in time, we are better equipped to understand those we perceive to be different.

In 2016, the Institute sponsored a project led by a French expert in intercultural relations who set out to explore the multiple interpretations and components of quality of life across ten countries: South Africa, Namibia, India, the Philippines, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Australia, Chile and Brazil. She conducted interviews with professors, administrative staff and students of all origins and generations to find out how they perceive quality of life through their own local

The Institute was asked to help inform Sodexo's approach to diversity and inclusion by understanding the dynamics of identity

¹ Professors Sandra Wallman, Daniel Miller, Ruth Mandel and Dr. Susie Kilshaw

² The physical environment, health and wellbeing, personal growth, social interaction, recognition, ease and efficiency

The Institute sponsored a project led by a French expert in intercultural relations who set out to explore the multiple interpretations and components of quality of life across ten countries

culture. Through her journey, we take a closer look at the variety of ways in which quality of life is conceived of and experienced across cultures in three sections:

- our place in the world (perceptions of time, space, nature, religion and body)
- our relation to other (the importance of family, the balance between the individual and the collective, relation between male and female in society)
- our work culture (our attitude towards work, conflict and money)

Read more in our **report** *'Quality of Life around the world: an introduction'*.

'Universal Basic Income: an old idea for a new age?'

Among policy-makers and commentators worldwide, there is a growing conversation around the concept of a 'universal basic income' – at its simplest form, a non means-tested universal weekly or monthly payment to eligible citizens. To inform Sodexo's understanding and engage a discussion, the Institute produced an introduction to the concept:

- where it comes from,
- why it is noteworthy today,
- which experiments have taken place, and
- the diverse critiques.

Segment research collaboration

Seniors

Following the publication of an Institute report on the importance of sense-sensitive services in long-term care communities commissioned by the Sodexo Seniors segment, the Institute led the launch of a research collaboration between Seniors and the University of Ottawa to advance its understanding of sensory changes in older adults. The collaboration's aim is to inform the design of residential care environments and facilities management services in older adult care. Click [here](#) to read more and download the full report.

Defence

Today, expectations around wellbeing in the military are increasing at the same time as a growing level of interest around healthy workplaces. The Defence segment approached the Institute for research to understand better the state-of-the-art in relation to wellbeing initiatives in the army and the perceived links between these wellbeing initiatives and the performance of military personnel.

Sports & Leisure

The Institute supported the segment with research on evolving air passenger demographics and the future of air travel. It also looked at the role of sensory perceptions in the recollection of memories.

The Institute led the launch of a research collaboration with the University of Ottawa to advance our understanding of sensory changes in older adults

Results published in 2017 showed a strong relation between perceived wellbeing linked to nutrition and the global potential of antioxidant defences in healthy people

Perceived wellbeing linked to nutrition

In 2013, the Institute sponsored a three year project led by a French consortium made up of three SMEs from the food technology industry, two research laboratories and eight larger companies from the food and food service sector including Sodexo. With reference to a person's age, sex and body mass index, the research aimed to highlight links between perceived wellbeing, healthy eating habits and two potential biomarkers: the global potential of antioxidant³ defences and the lipoprotein⁴ profile. The results published in 2017 showed a strong relation between perceived wellbeing linked to nutrition and the global potential of antioxidant defences in healthy subjects. Results also showed a correlation between global antioxidant defence and differed health benefits derived from nutrition through the quality of metabolism, energy and morale.

³ An antioxidant is a substance that reduces damage due to oxygen, such as that caused by free radicals

⁴ Lipoproteins are complexes of lipid and protein, the way lipids travel in the blood

External conferences and seminars

Institut Esprit Service: *Work in 2030: Hello Mr and Mrs Robot!*

February & June, Paris

The Institute took part in two panel sessions to imagine the world of work in 2030 by exploring questions such as: what will be the impact of the digital revolution and the emergence of new technologies? how should we prepare for interpersonal relations in this digital world? how should we accompany internal transformations of different organisations and what place should we give to the human factor?

InspireFest 2017: *How we will work in 2020?*

July, Dublin

The Institute was invited to take part in a panel at this year's **InspireFest** event to explore how we will work in 2020. Insights shared included the different ways for cultivating agility and the need to prepare the workforce for the advent of intelligent robotics in the workplace.

International Society for Quality of Life Studies: 15th Annual Conference – Towards a better society

September, Innsbruck

In September, the Institute attended the 15th conference organised by the **International Society for Quality of Life Studies** in Innsbruck. These conferences provide a space for scholars from around the world, from many disciplines, with different methodological and theoretical perspectives to present research findings on quality of life, wellbeing and happiness. This year, keynote lectures included Prof. Antonella Delle Fave from the University of Milan who argued that while the vast majority of researchers look into the wellbeing of individuals, research reveals that finding a certain balance, a sense of tranquillity is actually more important. This need for harmony is manifested in both Asian and Western countries. Prof. Delle Fave argued that wellbeing research should look beyond an individual's ability to have positive feelings. Research presentations ranged from the role of resilience to achieve societal wellbeing to the biology of happiness and many more topics. Click [here](#) for the book of abstracts from the conference.

While the vast majority of researchers look into the wellbeing of individuals, research reveals that finding a certain balance, a sense of tranquillity, is actually more important

Professor Sir Cary Cooper talked about how to convince CEOs or CFOs that wellbeing is not a ping-pong table in the office, but a business issue that increases productivity

2017 Quality of Life insights and trends

Sodexo 2017 Global Workplace Trends

The Institute sponsored four of the ten trends in Sodexo's first **Global Workplace Trends report**. From agility in the workplace to intergenerational learning, also the workplace as a wellness destination and the role of business in the UN Sustainable Development Goals to 2030, the report draws on expert insight to determine how each trend is shaping tomorrow's world of work and the implications for today's organisations.

The Second Sodexo Quality of Life Conference 2017

Taking place in London in October, Sodexo's second Quality of Life Conference explored new solutions for tomorrow's needs. From Jane Fonda's experiences of designing life through the ages to Ray Kurzweil's predictions about the future of robotics and life extension technologies, also Barefoot College founder Sanjit 'Bunker' Roy's accounts of developing an education system focused on practical training for disadvantaged, illiterate populations, the conference explored measurable and realistic ways to make progress through the eyes of thinkers, influencers and consumers from across the globe. The Institute sponsored the 'Trailblazer Challenge', an intimate dialogue between seasoned leaders and rising change makers on their quality of life challenges. Thomas Jelley moderated the panel, made up of:

- Wendy Luhabe, a serial entrepreneur who wondered how to build an organisation where younger generations can blossom
- Sissel Hansen, a pioneer of the Nordic startup scene who asked about the disadvantages of the gig economy and how it will affect young workers, who miss out on job security, good working hours and fair benefits
- Takunda Ushe, the founder and director of an entrepreneurship accelerator hub for youth who looked for advice on how to develop and implement sustainable practices within his social enterprise which is made up of young volunteers with limited skills
- Professor Sir Cary Cooper, a professor of psychology at the University of Manchester who talked about how to convince CEOs or CFOs that wellbeing is not a ping-pong table in the office, but a business issue that increases productivity

Click [here](#) to watch the video of this 'mini Quality of Life hackathon'.

Rewriting the rules for the digital age

At the beginning of the year, Deloitte released its fifth annual **Global Human Capital Trends report** and survey which represented input from more than 10,400 business and HR leaders across 140 countries. Following last year's theme around the redesign of organisations, this year's report focuses on the challenges ahead for business and HR leaders in a dramatically changing digital, economic, demographic, and social landscape.

World Happiness Report 2017

The first World Happiness Report was published in 2012 in support of the UN High Level Meeting on happiness and wellbeing. Since then, then, happiness and wellbeing have been weaved into public discourse as they are increasingly considered the proper measure of social progress and the goal of public policy. In June 2016, the OECD committed itself "to redefine the growth narrative to put people's wellbeing at the centre of governments' efforts". In March, the **World Happiness Report 2017** was launched at the United Nations. Co-edited by Professors John Helliwell (University of British Columbia), Richard Layard (London School of Economics) and Jeffrey Sachs (Columbia University), this year's report focuses on the role of social factors in supporting happiness.

In 2018 the report will focus on the issue of migration.

This year's Global Human Capital Trends report by Deloitte focuses on the challenges ahead for business and HR leaders in a dramatically changing digital, economic, demographic, and social landscape

A more proactive approach to workplace health needs to be developed for the benefit of firms, workers and the public interest

Good Work: the Taylor Review of modern working practices

In July, Matthew Taylor (British former political strategist and current Chief Executive of the **Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce**) published an independent **Review** of modern working practices in the UK. The report explores key policy approaches towards fair and decent work with realistic scope for development and fulfilment, including:

- Government needs to be held accountable for good work⁵ but we all need to take responsibility for it
- platform-based working should be protected while ensuring fairness for those who work through these platforms and those who compete with them
- a more proactive approach to workplace health needs to be developed for the benefit of firms, workers and the public interest

Loneliness and the ageing population: how business and governments can address a looming crisis

In May, the IBM Institute for Business Value published a report to explore how organisations can act to help older adults strengthen their social fabric and reconnect to others. Medical literature reveals strong linkages between loneliness in older adults and declining health rendering loneliness as an emerging risk factor that has implications for personal, economic and societal wellbeing. Without countermeasures, older adults face continued detachment from the mainstream, even as their numbers grow.

A future that works: automation, employment, and productivity

In January, the McKinsey Global Institute published a new report analysing the automation potential of the global economy, the factors that will determine the pace and extent of workplace adoption and the economic impact associated with its potential.

⁵ “Good work is shaped by working practices that benefit employees through good reward schemes and terms and conditions, having a secure position, better training and development, good communication and ways of working that support task discretion and involve employees in securing business improvements”
The Commission on Good Work

Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce: *Tackling global challenges through mission oriented innovation*

February, London

A special panel discussion was held to mark the launch of a new collaboration between the RSA and University College London's new Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose to develop mission-oriented innovation policy in practice. The panel explored how public policy can be used to steer innovation towards tackling the kinds of global complex problems we face today from climate change to managing chronic health conditions, to the challenge of ageing populations, to meeting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Catch the full discussions on replay by clicking [here](#).

The panel explored how public policy can be used to steer innovation towards tackling the kinds of global complex problems we face today

We look forward to a new year of gathering and developing insight to advance our knowledge on quality of life through cross-discipline research and engaging collaborations

Looking forward to 2018

As the Institute reflects on a rich and fruitful year in 2017, we look forward to a new year of gathering and developing insight to advance our knowledge on quality of life through cross-discipline research and engaging collaborations. In our first big report in 2018 we will learn from successes (and failures) in addressing obesity, demographic ageing and climate change in Latin America. Following the round-table Dialogue held in November 2017 in Sao Paulo, the Institute will publish a report to address the following questions:

- what examples exist of communications / marketing that have inspired individual awareness and sustained behaviour change in relation to obesity / climate change / demographic change?
- what examples exist of popular support that has inspired public policy-makers to feel empowered in relation to these challenges / others that are similar?
- what would a framework for intelligent governance look like? what examples already exist and what have they achieved?

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