

March 2024

YAEZ

# IMPACT REPORT

THE HAPPINESS PROJECT PILOT - GERMANY



# OVERVIEW



# OVERVIEW

## HAPPINESS MODULES

The Happiness Project offers teaching materials consisting of two interactive learning modules for students aged 10 to 13 (grades 5 to 7). The modules are accompanied by a teacher's guide, a presentation, and worksheets. The students and teachers in the pilot phase of The Happiness Project did either one or both of the following two modules, which were translated into German.

### Inside Happiness

The teaching unit is a ready-made lesson and can be used directly in the classroom. With Inside Happiness, students learn the basics of happiness in a practical way.

**1 teaching unit - 45 minutes**



### Let's Get Happier

The Let's get happier module offers a fun way to explore happiness in the classroom. In 25 small tasks the children learn different methods to improve their personal happiness every day for five weeks.

**25 small units - 5 min/day**



# OVERVIEW

## PROJECT



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33

teachers are taking part in  
THP in total

1.525

students are taking part in  
THP in total

61

classes are taking part in THP  
in total

9 to 18

year old students were  
surveyed

141

students participated in the  
baseline survey

129

students participated in the  
endline survey



# OVERVIEW

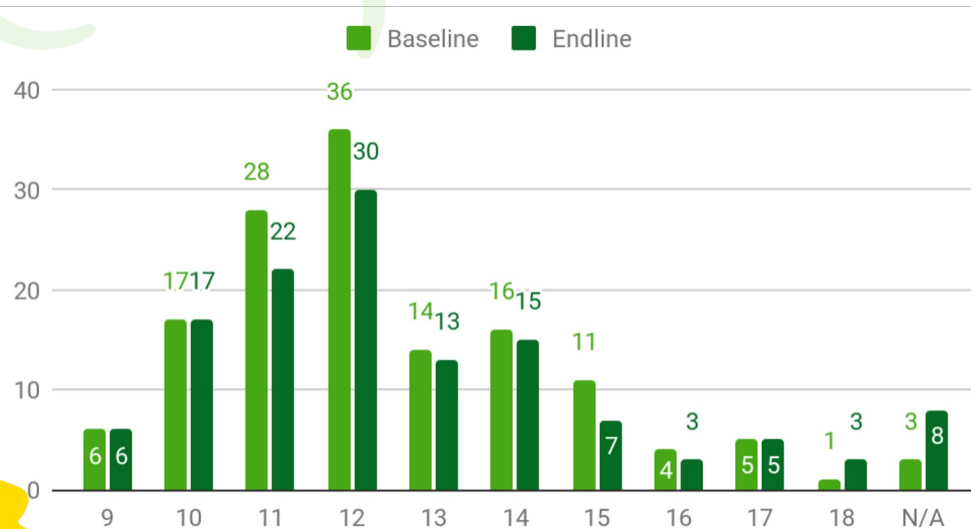
## AGE AND REGIONS



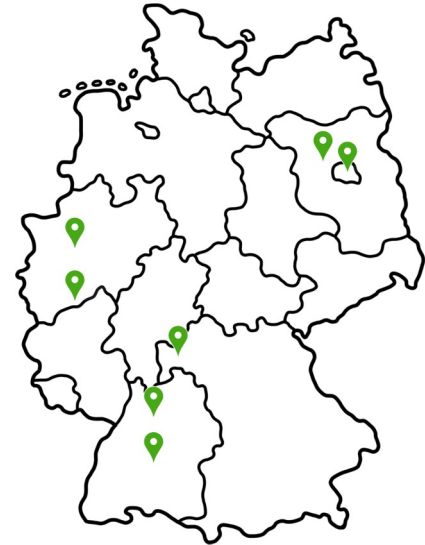
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Most students who participated in the surveys were aged 10 to 14. Schools were located in Aschaffenburg, Berlin, Eppingen, Essen, Stuttgart, Wesseling and Kremen. All seven schools that participated in the evaluation were public schools.

### Age of Evaluated Students



### Locations of Participating Schools



# HIGHLIGHTS

## FINDINGS



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100%

of participating teachers would recommend THP

100%

of participating teachers agreed that their students enjoyed working together

97%

of students could express their feelings better

98%

of students practiced kindness more often towards their peers

86%

of teachers said that there was a sense of togetherness in the classroom after participating in THP



# STUDENT SURVEYS

FINDINGS



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM STUDENT SURVEYS



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Participating students were asked to complete baseline and endline surveys.

The results showed that The Happiness Project had the biggest impact on helping students to understand themselves better. The activities enabled them to feel **more confident expressing how they feel (10 percentage point increase)** and **practice kindness** towards themselves **(13 percentage point increase)**.

Following the impact on themselves, the next biggest increases were seen in how **students collaborate** with one another.

There was a **12 percentage point increase** in the number of students who said they **share their ideas and feelings** during group work. THP also enabled students to learn more about each other, with a **6 percentage point increase** in students saying they had learnt 3 new things about their friends.

The above results reflect the impact that only participating in Module 1 and 2 (out of 5 modules) had on students. Module 1 and 2 are the introductory modules that are focused on helping students to understand what happiness means to them as individuals and practice daily challenges to build these habits.



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM STUDENT SURVEYS

## EXPLORING SELF

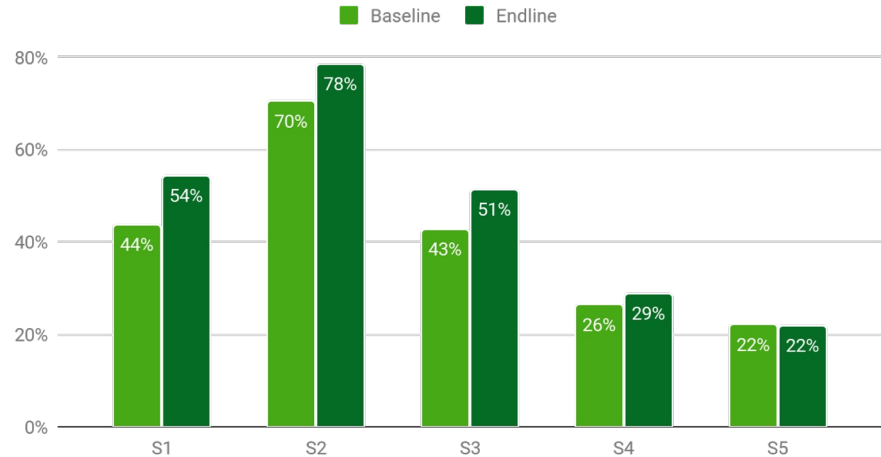


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On average a 6 percentage point improvement can be seen with children being able to develop a stronger sense of self-expression as well as ideation.

- S1: I can express how I feel
- S2: I can say what makes me happy
- S3: I can think up new ideas and work on them
- S4: I like going to school
- S5: I have fun at school

### Exploring Self



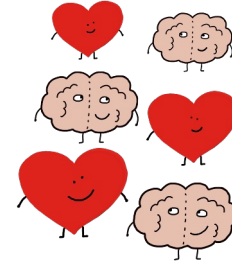
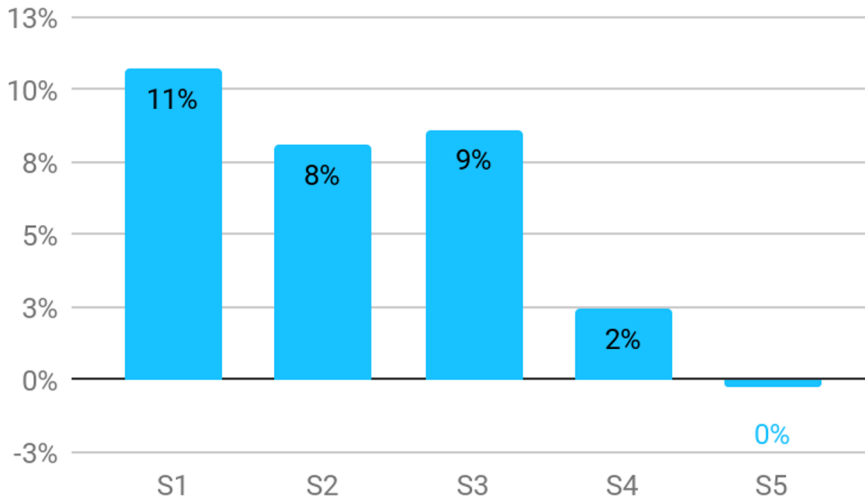
# HIGHLIGHTS FROM STUDENT SURVEYS



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## EXPLORING SELF

The biggest increase was seen in students feeling able to describe how they feel. There was an 11 percentage point increase in students agreeing with “I can express how I feel”. This was followed by a 9 percentage point increase in students saying they can think up new ideas and work on them. The third biggest increase (8 percentage point) was students being able to identify what makes them happy.



- S1: I can express how I feel
- S2: I can say what makes me happy
- S3: I can think up new ideas and work on them
- S4: I like going to school
- S5: I have fun at school

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM STUDENT SURVEYS

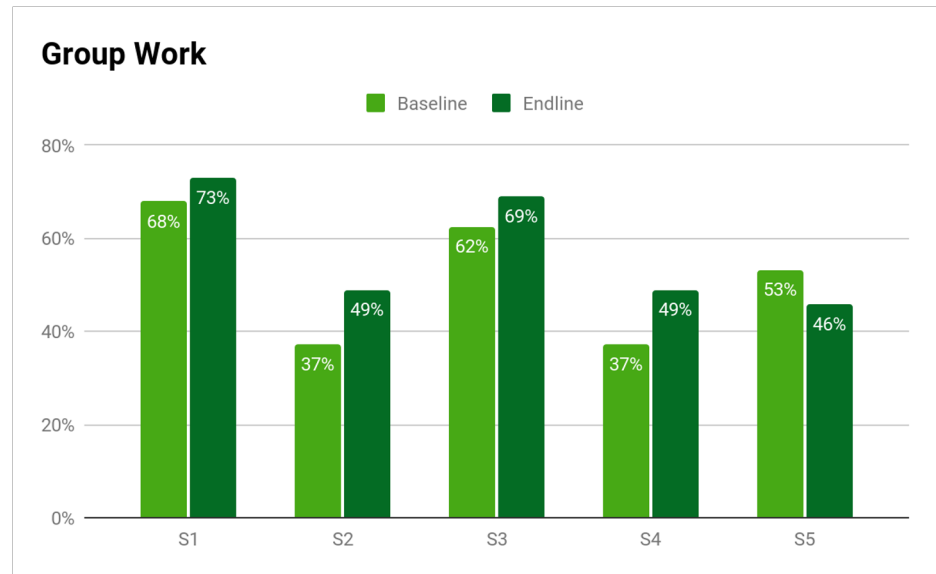
## GROUP WORK



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On average an increase of 5.5 percentage point can be seen with children being able to express their feelings and ideas with one another, develop ideas together, and generally enjoy group work more.

- S1: I enjoy working with others
- S2: In group work I talk about my ideas and feelings
- S3: In group work, I help to find solutions to problems
- S4: I take part in conversations in group work
- S5: I learn from others in group work



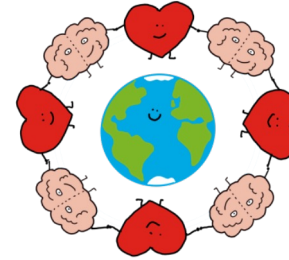
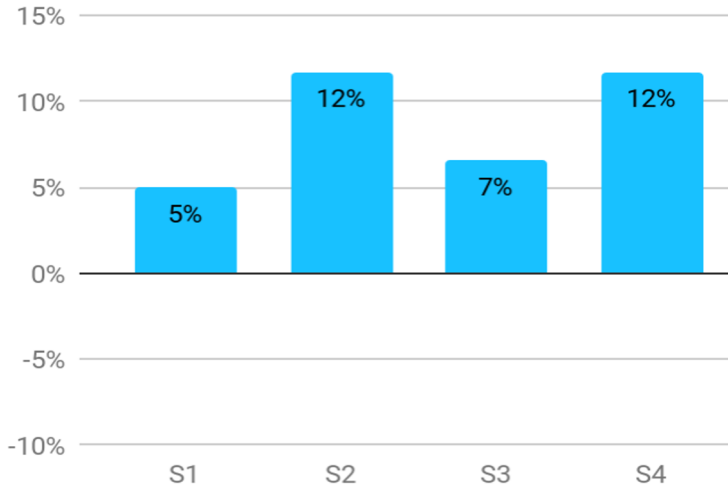
# HIGHLIGHTS FROM STUDENT SURVEYS



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## GROUP WORK

The highest increase can be seen in students feeling confident to talk about their feelings and ideas with others, and to participate in group work. Both these points increased by 12 percentage point.



S1: I enjoy working with others

S2: In group work I talk about my ideas and feelings

S3: In group work, I help to find solutions to problems

S4: I take part in conversations in group work

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM STUDENT SURVEYS

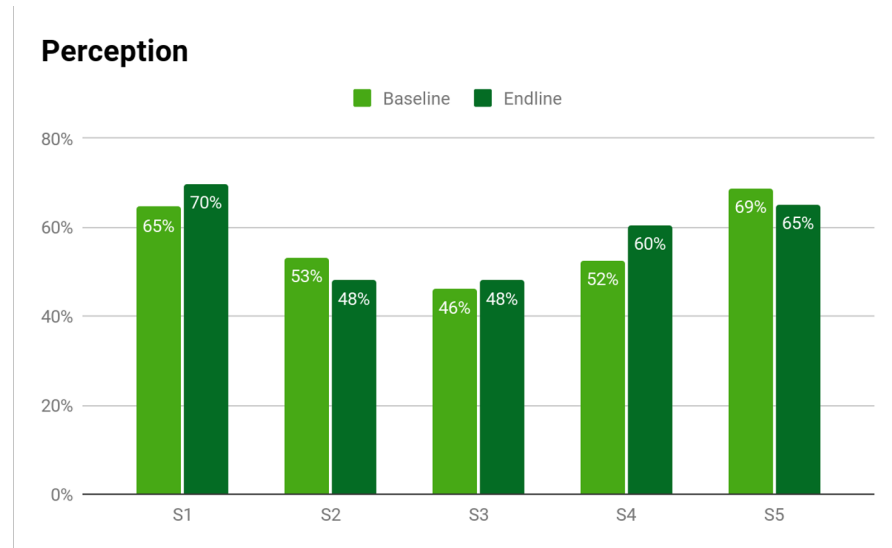
## PERCEPTION



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The biggest increase was seen by students making their classmates feel better (8 percentage point S4). This was followed by a 5 percentage point increase in students saying that they listen carefully when someone talks to them (S1).

- S1: When someone talks to me, I listen to them carefully
- S2: When someone talks to me, I ask them things
- S3: When someone talks to me, I think about how they feels
- S4: When someone talks to me, I say something to make them feel better
- S5: When someone talks to me, I say thank you for explaining things to me



# TEACHER SURVEYS

## FINDINGS



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM TEACHER SURVEYS



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Participating teachers were asked to complete an endline survey, and join a focus group discussion.

The findings show that The Happiness Project is really needed in German schools. Our research shows that 43% of teachers think their students cannot express their feelings. However, after participating in two short interventions from The Happiness Project, teachers can already notice a positive impact on students, with **100% of teachers saying that their students were now more aware of their emotions.**

Teachers also noticed a positive impact in student communication and motivation. With 72% of teachers agreeing that **communication between students** is developing well and that they are **more motivated to take part in lessons.**

# FINDINGS FROM TEACHER SURVEYS

## PERCEPTION

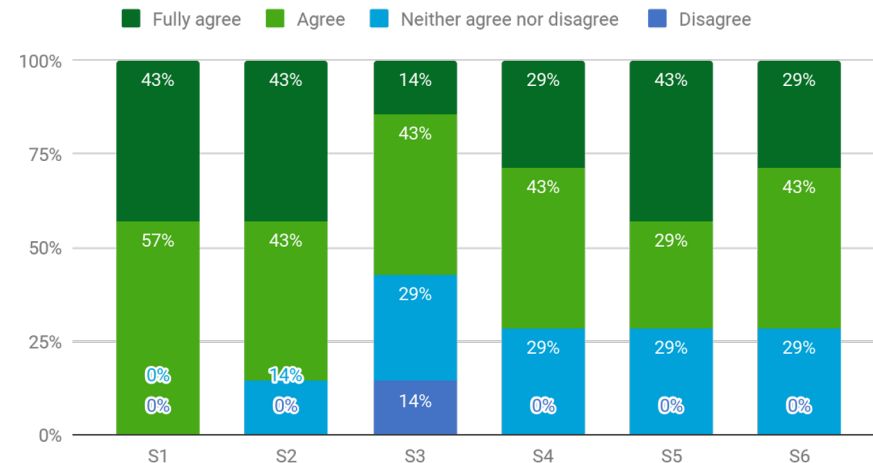


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Overall the teachers perceive their students to be motivated in class, that they could follow THP activities well, and that they had fun during the project.

- S1: The activities of The Happiness Project were easy to carry out
- S2: My students were able to follow THP activities well
- S3: My students can express their feelings
- S4: My students can develop and work on new ideas
- S5: My students are motivated to take part in lessons
- S6: My students have fun in class

### Perception





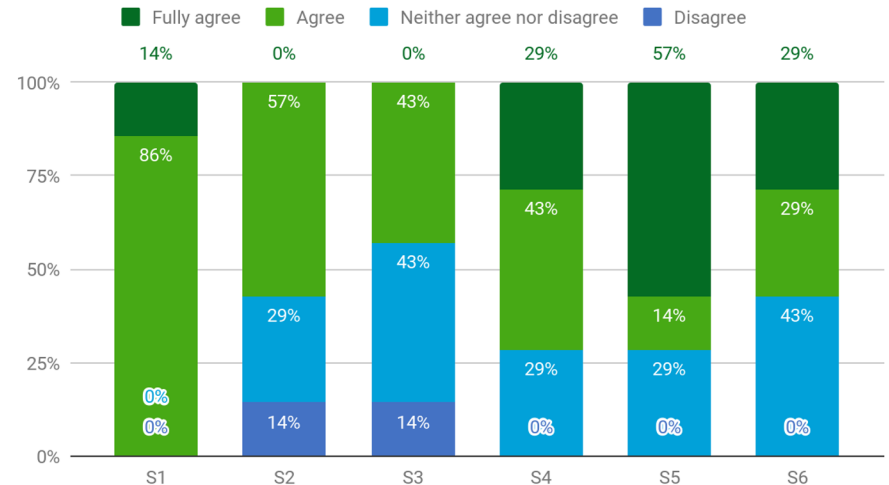
# FINDINGS FROM TEACHER SURVEYS

## EMOTIONAL UNDERSTANDING

Overall the teachers perceive their students to be more aware of their feelings, have a better emotional understanding of their peers.

- S1: I have the feeling that my students are more aware of their feelings
- S2: My students express more gratitude towards each other and me
- S3: My students have a strong sense of empathy
- S4: Communication with and among my students is developing well
- S5: My students come to me with their problems
- S6: I can understand the emotions of my pupils better

### Emotional Understanding



# SPOTLIGHT ON LVR HELEN-KELLER SCHOOL



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## INCLUSIVITY FOR THE HAPPINESS PROJECT

LVR Helen-Keller School is a special education school that caters to students with diverse support needs, in particular those with physical and motor development challenges. The school participated in THP with its senior students (aged 16-18).

The project received positive feedback from both the teacher and students. This suggests that it may also be appropriate for older students, particularly those with special needs.

8

points given on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest) from the teacher

33%

increase in students being able to talk about their ideas and feelings

100%

of students are thankful and express this after THP

88%

of students are kinder towards friends, family and others after THP

50%

compared to a previous 17% of students were more talkative in group work after THP



# TEACHER TESTIMONIALS

## VOICES



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"We were in class council and discussed a concern that one child had insulted another. And then one student spoke up and said, that we've only just learnt from the project we did that we should actually be nicer to each other and say kind things to each other."



4th Grade Teacher

"I particularly enjoyed capturing the feeling of happiness in a school lesson and can therefore highly recommend the project."



4th Grade Teacher

# FOCUS GROUP DiSCUSSIONS

FINDINGS



# FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

## OVERVIEW



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4

teachers took part in the FGD

100%

of those teachers enjoyed doing  
THP with their students

100%

of those teachers would  
recommend THP to their colleagues

100%

of teachers said their students  
want to continue THP

4th to 9th

grade teachers participated in the FGD



# FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

## EXPERIENCE, STUDENT IMPACT AND FEEDBACK



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### Overall experience

- Teachers mentioned that all their students accepted THP and worked well together
- Some teachers are still doing THP, since their students wanted to
- Teachers mentioned that it works for young students (4th grade), but also for older students (9th grade)
- The materials are really well presented and easy to understand

### Teacher-reported student impact

- Climate in the classroom changed positively since the children were more daring and opened up more
- Especially useful for children in VKL classes (classes with children who don't speak much German) since they were able to connect with their classmates
- Teachers shared instances of students using the skills they learned during the project like empathy, kindness and collaboration

### Feedback

- Teachers reported that the 5-10 minute time frame for the activities in Let's get happier were a bit short and should be kept more flexible
- Teachers recommend for the project to be communicated earlier and then implemented at the beginning of the school year
- Teachers mentioned that the names of the modules should be translated into German
- Certain terms (z. B. Sinn und Zweck, Deine Basis) were a bit difficult for the children to grasp

# TEACHER TESTIMONIALS

## VOICES



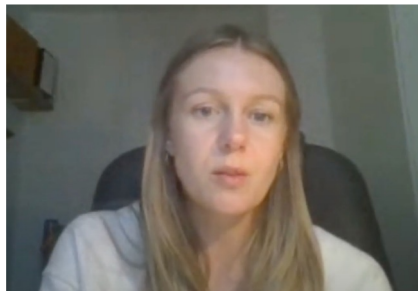
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**"From an organisational point of view, it wasn't possible for me to do a challenge every day, so I often organised it openly as group work. That worked very well. Overall, it was fun. I found it particularly useful for my class"** - Grade 5 Teacher



**"One highlight for me was the dancing. A lot of kids thought they were too cool for that at the start, but then they all performed a turkish wedding dance together. The ones who knew the dance taught the ones that didn't. The whole class is doing this together and having fun, that was great."**  
- Grade 6 Teacher



**"I have a few pupils in mind right now who have found such great tasks that I've noticed it's very beneficial for them. That they can show what they're good at in this task."** - Grade 5 Teacher



**"I realised, especially when I made them aware, that it is the negative that you remember first. And that's why it's cool to remember the positive, which we symbolised with the ice cream. If you keep reminding yourself of this then you really realise "Oh right, there was something". I think that helps those in the puberty phase to feel happier."** - Grade 9 Teacher

# STUDENT STORIES

STUDENT EXPERIENCES





# STUDENT STORIES

## STUDENT EXPERIENCES



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A female student eloquently described the transformative power of The Happiness Project, which not only brought her class closer together but also deepened their connections in ways they never imagined.

She emphasized how the **Inside Happiness** activities played a pivotal role in this transformation. Through these engaging exercises, they were able to delve into meaningful conversations and truly get to know each other on a deeper level.

As a result, she recounted a personal journey of overcoming animosity towards a classmate whom she once viewed as an adversary with the help of the Happiness Project. Yet, through the magic of the project, they forged a genuine friendship, rooted in understanding and empathy.

„Ich fand das Projekt richtig cool und ich will es nochmal machen, weil wir so auch die anderen Kinder verstehen. Obwohl wir vorher Feinde waren, haben wir uns besser kennengelernt und sind jetzt Freunde und sehr glücklich.“

“I thought the project was really cool and I want to do it again because we understand the other children that way. Although we were enemies before, we got to know each other better and are friends now.”



# STUDENT STORIES

## STUDENT EXPERIENCES

One female student recounted how The Happiness Project helped her overcome her feelings of loneliness. She mentioned how the project helped her in feeling happier and how to work collaboratively.

Since the project promotes coming together as people and sharing one's feelings with one another she was able to open up to her classmates about her feelings and experience fun activities together.

Working in teams was definitely her favourite part of the project. She ended up feeling liberated from the thing that had been weighing her down.



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„Mir hat das Projekt sehr gut gefallen, weil man sich bei einigen Aufgaben entspannen kann und wenn man sich allein fühlt, kann man solche Übungen machen.“

"I really liked the project because you can unwind with some of the tasks and if you feel alone, you can do exercises like this."



# STUDENT STORIES

## STUDENT EXPERIENCES



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Another student story entails the relationship and connection fostered with the environment. One male student talked about one of the activities of the **Let's get happier** module where the students got together to pick up trash outside.

He mentioned how it is important to him to protect and value the environment and doing this with his classmate elicited nice and warm feelings within him. He's much more aware of his surroundings and his own shortcomings now and will be more mindful to throw away his own trash and others' if fit.

He and all other students who shared their stories would like to do The Happiness Projects again.

„Die Aufgabe den Müll zu sammeln, fand ich besonders gut. Es hat sehr viel Spaß gemacht.“

"I particularly liked the task of collecting the rubbish. It was a lot of fun."



# GLIMPSES FROM THE GROUND

ON-SITE INSIGHTS



# GLIMPSES FROM THE GROUND

## STUDENTS AND TEACHERS



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# GLIMPSES FROM THE GROUND

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS





# GLIMPSES FROM THE GROUND

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS



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# KEY LEARNINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



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## NEXT STEPS

### Key Learnings

Teachers reported that their class environment benefited from the project and that **students quickly applied their newly learned skills** in class and towards their classmates.

Where as in this period the main group we analysed were in grade 4 to 6, **students of all ages** were excited to experience this project in class and to try out new things. Students in VKL classes or special education classes benefited greatly from The Happiness Project.

Adapt some **terms** used for younger students and **more time** was needed for certain activities (e. g. outside activities).

### Recommendations

It was made clear that older students also enjoy and learn a lot from THP. We suggest **expanding the project to higher grades** as well as **special education schools**.

We recommend **extending the delivery period** of THP and **adapting it to the desired time frames** of teachers (around the beginning of the school year). This also entails starting the communication of the project earlier.

While 100% of the teachers in the evaluation stated that the materials were easy to understand and to conduct. However, **translating** the module names into German and leaving the **timings** to be **more flexible** should be taken into account. So that there is no restriction in the developing of peer relationships.





WE ARE ON A MISSION TO  
MAKE THE WORLD A  
HAPPIER PLACE

