Whole school approach, learner well-being, social and emotional learning, and transversal competencies

UNESCO’s Happy Schools Project
UNESCO’s approaches to quality education
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4.7 Sustainable development and global citizenship

by 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development
UNESCO’s 4 Pillars of Learning

- Learning to know
- Learning to do
- Learning to live together
- Learning to be

Source: Learning: The Treasure Within, Delors et al. (1996)
**ESD** is holistic and transformational education which addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment.

**Learning outcomes**: core competencies, such as critical thinking, collaborative decision-making, and taking responsibility for present and future generations.

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**Cognitive**

To acquire knowledge, understanding and critical thinking about global, regional, national and local issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations.

**Socio-emotional**

To have a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity.

**Behavioral**

To act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world.
Transversal Competencies

What are transversal competencies?

Interpersonal skills

Intrapersonal skills

Media & Information literacy

Global citizenship

Other

Entrepreneurship
Creativity
Resourcefulness
Application skills
Reflective thinking
Reasoned decision making
Awareness and openness
Tolerance and respect for diversity
Responsibility and ability to resolve conflict
Ethical and intercultural understanding
Democratic participation
Respect for the environment
National identity and sense of belonging
Appreciation of healthy lifestyle
Respect for religious values
Ability to obtain and analyse information and media content
Ethical use of ICT
Compassion
Integrity and self-respect
Perserverance and self-motivation
Flexibility and adaptability
Self-awareness
Self-discipline
Ability to learn independently
Happy Schools Project, CIES2020 Virtual Panel Session, April 8, 2020
Whole-school Approach

- WSA incorporates all aspects of a school: curriculum, extracurricular activities, teacher training, human resources, infrastructure, operations and processes.
Happiness and well-being matter
Why Happy Schools?

- School experience is one of the most shaping experiences in life

- Global Movement to prioritize and measure happiness and well-being

- Learner happiness can be undermined by:

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<tr>
<th>External Factors</th>
<th>Internal Factors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Increased income inequality</td>
<td>Poor learning environments</td>
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<td>Growing intolerance and violence</td>
<td>Insensitivity of educators</td>
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<td>Rapid technological advancement</td>
<td>Obsolete and irrelevant curricula</td>
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<td>Environmental degradation</td>
<td>Over-focus on academic content and test scores</td>
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Why Happiness matters in schools?

- *World Happiness Report* ranked Singapore as the happiest country in Asia and PISA 2012 results indicated learners were among happiest at school.

- Schools that prioritize learner well-being have the potential to be more effective, with better learning outcomes and greater achievements in learners' lives (Layard and Hagell, 2015).

- Emotional development is the best predictor of whether the resulting adult will be satisfied with life (World Happiness Report, 2015).

- Happy teenagers are likely to earn significantly higher incomes than less happy teenagers after 15 years (Diener, 2002).
Social and Emotional Learning, Well-being, Positive Psychology

Introducing a New Theory of Well-Being

PERMA

Positive Emotions
Engagement
Positive Relationships
Meaning
Accomplishment

Social & Emotional Learning

Self-Management
Managing emotions and behaviors to achieve one's goals

Self-Awareness
Recognizing one's emotions and values as well as one's strengths and challenges

Responsible Decision-Making
Making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior

Social Awareness
Showing understanding and empathy for others

Relationship Skills
Forming positive relationships, working in teams, dealing effectively with conflict

Positive Psychology
Flourishing
Strengths

UNESCO

Happy Schools Project, CIES2020 Virtual Panel Session, April 8, 2020
Happy Schools – a holistic approach to education

- Education for Sustainable Development
- Global Citizenship Education
- Positive Psychology
- Whole school approach
- Transversal competencies
- Social and emotional learning
- Learner well-being
Three important linkages found:

1. Happiness is something collective that is obtained through friendships and relationships
2. Education is essentially holistic and multidimensional
3. Education can lead to happiness, but can also be a source of happiness in and of itself

We can learn to be happy, and we can be happy to learn!
22 criteria identified
Three overarching themes:
- **People**
- **Process**
- **Place**

Aim to *inform policy* based on school-level perspectives.
Happy Schools Pilot Project 2018-2020
Objective:
• test the Happy Schools Framework in schools
• build capacity of teachers to promote whole-school approach, Social and emotional learning (SEL) and emphasize ‘learning’ as opposed to ‘outcomes’

Method:
• Pilot projects in 3 countries: Japan, Lao PDR and Thailand
  • 5 schools/country (all UNESCO Associated Schools)
  • 1 school leader and 2 teachers from each school
• Partnered with local organizations
  • Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), Japan
  • Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao PDR
  • Ministry of Education and Chulalongkorn Demonstration School, Thailand
Happy Schools Pilots

**Lao PDR:** 5 Pilot Schools:
- Khangkhai Lower Secondary School
- Viengthong Lower Secondary School
- Ban Koi Lower Secondary School
- Sisavath Lower Secondary School
- Sisatanak Lower Secondary School

**Thailand:** 5 Pilot Schools:
- Ban Bangneaw Municipal Schools, Phuket
- Bencharma Maharat School, Ubonrachathani
- Jirasart Witthaya School, Ayutthaya
- Muangkrabi School, Krabi
- Suksasongkhro Chiangmai School

**Japan:** 5 Pilot Schools:
- Fukuyama Junior and Senior High School
- Minoh Kodomonomori Gakuen
- Nagoya International Junior and Senior High School
- Nishita Elementary School
- Yasufuruichi High School

[https://aspnet.unesco.org/en-us/Pages/About_the_network.aspx](https://aspnet.unesco.org/en-us/Pages/About_the_network.aspx)
Purpose of the guidebook
• Tool or resource for teachers - Not curriculum
• Something any teacher can easily understand – Not subject specific
• ‘People, Process, Place’ needed to become something more practical, not just conceptual

Pilot Workshops
• Tested the guidebook at the Capacity Development workshops in each country and gathered feedback throughout the pilot
• Emphasis on Social and Emotional Learning to help teachers build confidence in ‘soft skills’
• Suggested activities and practices teachers could use in class or schools
• Leaders and teachers assessed problems/issues in their schools
• Developed action plans and activities utilizing Happy Schools Framework, the teacher guide and Social and Emotional Learning
Happy School Pilot Activities in Japan

- strong engagement and ownership of project at school level
- schools are familiar with HS concepts in general as they are implementing ESD whole-school approach

Teacher testimonial
‘Everyday thanks creates power for tomorrow.

Teachers and students sent Thank you cards to each other to share their appreciation and feelings. This has increased students and teachers’ positive power.’
Happy School Pilot Activities in Thailand

- most schools in Thailand adopted and followed the philosophy of the sufficiency economy of the late King Bhumibol Rama IV in school’s activities similar to the ESD approach

Testimony from teacher

“Happy School is a place where the collaboration between school and community meet to create joyfully learning atmosphere. School activities, such as a live museum to organize cultural activities in cooperation with the community, also develop a happy environment in the school.”
Happy School Pilot Activities in Lao PDR

- schools in Lao PDR are familiar with ESD and GCED; HSP was well received by teachers and students

Testimony from teacher:
‘climate change is the big problem in every country in the world and therefore, my students in my school are worried about it as well. they really enjoyed and had a wonderful time to be a part of this activity’
Project Outcomes

National Level
• All three countries’ MOEs were very receptive to the project and will look to expand the HS framework in more schools

School level
• Teachers found that they were able to focus on learner well-being, but they needed support
• Schools’ ability to organize and coordinate the faculty is very important
• Pilot schools began to network to share HS activities best practices
Lessons Learned from Pilot Activities

• The tools (Happy Schools Framework and guidebook) can assist schools/teachers but needs to be much more practical for them to utilize effectively

• Capacity building workshops provided opportunity for school leaders/teachers to start conversations on learner well-being, SEL, and happiness in schools, and to brainstorm school activities.

• Challenges and misconceptions
  • Schools faced difficulties in understanding the definition of happiness and how to measure it
  • Schools found it difficult to balance the HS approach and a need to focus on ‘academics’
Happy Schools – a whole-school approach

- A holistic approach that redefines the notion of ‘education quality’
- Happiness and education quality are *inseparable*
- Learners become *agents of change* and contribute to building equitable, fair and sustainable societies
Thank You!

More Information

For more information please visit: https://bangkok.unesco.org/theme/happy-schools

Contact us:  happyschools@unesco.org