



eTwinning stories: Building wellbeing at school



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Foreword

Iliana Ivanova

European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth



In today's world, characterised by increasing stress and complex and rapidly changing challenges such as climate change, war, and global insecurity, and increased polarisation, the importance of personal wellbeing is more critical, particularly in the realm of education.

Wellbeing is at the core of every person's health - both physical and mental - and constitutes the basis for personal growth. Wellbeing in schools is crucial for improving academic performance as it directly affects learners' motivation, engagement and capacity to learn, as well as educators' capacity to effectively accompany them. Both learners and teachers need to feel well in order to perform well at school.

Moreover, wellbeing at school extends to the systemic level, influencing the quality of school life, learning environments and the school climate. It fosters respectful relationships among learners, between students and their teachers, and among teachers themselves. Core values such as empathy, compassion, integrity, resilience, problem solving and a respect for others cultivate a sense of belonging and safety.

Education should therefore aim at a holistic approach, paying sufficient attention to social and emotional intelligence, respect and collaboration.

Together with the EU Member States, the European Commission has launched several initiatives to improve the wellbeing of learners and teachers across Europe. The Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success, adopted in 2022, promotes better education outcomes for all, joining up wellbeing of learners and their teachers with school success. In May, the Commission's expert group

on supportive learning environments and wellbeing at school published [guidelines](#) for policymakers and educators on promoting wellbeing and mental health at school, providing recommendations that follow a whole-system and whole-school approach.

In addition to our policy initiatives, eTwinning is undoubtedly one of the actions that can bolster wellbeing in our schools. By selecting wellbeing at school as the eTwinning theme for 2024, the community has clearly acknowledged its potential to foster meaningful connections. Through eTwinning projects, teachers and

students can share their challenges and insights on wellbeing, thereby stimulating empathy, resilience and respect for others. eTwinning also empowers students and their teachers to voice their personal perspectives and actively contribute to their communities.

I extend my gratitude to all educators who have participated in eTwinning projects and events, on wellbeing and beyond. The exemplary practices and projects showcased in this book are certain to inspire efforts to cultivate wellbeing in schools across Europe in the years to come.



Introduction

‘Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.’ — John Dewey

Among other things, education involves **fostering safe environments for personal growth** and **providing spaces for the social and emotional development** of young people at school. This also applies to teachers, whose wellbeing is crucial for creating healthy learning environments. Educators need to experience a state of wellbeing themselves to be able to contribute to ensuring the wellbeing and mental health of their pupils.

The **European Commission** has long recognised the importance of wellbeing in education, as evidenced by initiatives such as [LifeComp: The European Framework for the Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Key Competence](#). The framework provides a comprehensive understanding of wellbeing within the context of personal, social and learning to learn key

competences. Moreover, in the [Pathways to School Success Council Recommendation](#) – a flagship initiative aimed at promoting better educational outcomes for all learners – wellbeing takes centre stage as a key element for educational success. Most recently, an expert group on promoting wellbeing at school concluded policy [recommendations and guidelines](#) for Member States, national stakeholders and schools. Numerous publications, including [Promoting supportive learning environments and supporting wellbeing at school](#), a systemic, whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing in schools in the EU and [Teachers in Europe: Careers, Development, and Wellbeing](#) address mental health and wellbeing in schools and propose strategies for building positive learning environments for all learners, regardless of their socio-economic, cultural or personal background.

Promoting pupils and teachers’ wellbeing deeply resonates with **eTwinning** values, particularly as



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we explore the annual theme of 2024: *Wellbeing at school*.

By recognising the **crucial impact that wellbeing has on pupils' and teachers' holistic growth and overall life satisfaction**, eTwinning is committed to providing the community of educators with **targeted professional development opportunities**. These include workshops, webinars and courses centred on various dimensions of wellbeing, ranging from digital safety to the cultivation of social-emotional skills and the prevention of bullying.

Furthermore, the existence of a **dedicated featured group** and the design of **annual campaigns centred on a whole-school approach** facilitates constant dialogue and exchange of reflections about the topic. The eTwinning Weeks Campaign 2023 and the Spring Campaign 2024 provided opportunities to align various community activities and outputs with the new annual theme. They fostered a culture of collaboration at school and proposed tips and tools for

designing impactful learning experiences for pupils.

This book is part of the eTwinning activities dedicated to the theme of the year and aims to inspire educators on how eTwinning can support the wellbeing of both teachers and pupils. It showcases school practices and eTwinning projects from across Europe that address physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

What does this book offer?

The discussion on wellbeing starts with Divina Frau-Meigs, a professor at Sorbonne Nouvelle University. She focuses on how young people handle the digital world, adapting to its fast changes, which greatly affects their lives. Key ideas include the '4Ss' (stories, selfies, series and streams) and media and information literacy. It suggests teaching online wellbeing in schools and training both teachers and pupils in navigating information and being active citizens offline. This is crucial for ensuring future wellbeing online (Frau-Meigs 2024).

The third chapter discusses a paradigm shift in education towards prioritising wellbeing alongside academic success. It emphasises the need for comprehensive approaches to address challenges such as early school leaving and underachievement, as highlighted by OECD's Programme for International Pupil Assessment (PISA) results, culminating in the adoption of the Pathways to School Success initiative by EU education ministers in 2022.

The fourth chapter presents **five eTwinning projects** (one per category – early childhood education and care, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and initial vocational education and training), aiming to highlight the collaborative activities carried out and the most relevant outcomes connected to the emotional, physical and social wellbeing of pupils. The focus of this section is on collaboration leading to increased wellbeing and the strategies to nurture it in education, as shown by the numerous activities that saw the cooperation of pupils of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds.

In the fifth chapter, the focus shifts from the projects to the educators themselves, describing six **case studies from eTwinning teachers**, where they share their experiences of and insights on fostering wellbeing in educational settings. The teachers involved were interviewed to investigate how wellbeing is addressed in their schools and how eTwinning contributes to this.

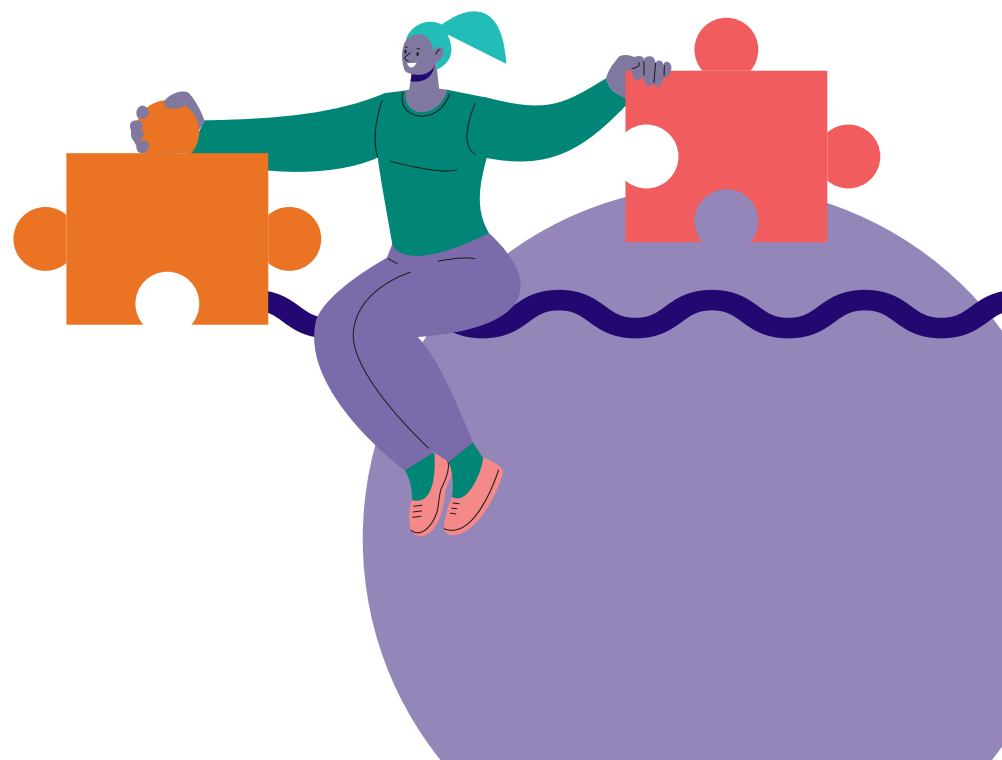
In each case study, you will learn about:

- the initiatives designed and implemented to promote the wellbeing of pupils and teachers,
- how physical, mental and emotional wellbeing is nurtured through teachers' everyday teaching practice,
- the most common challenges in promoting pupils' wellbeing and the strategies put in place to tackle them,
- the features that eTwinning provides to support educators in building collaborative and inclusive environments,

- and the importance of the involvement of parents and other stakeholders in creating positive school experiences for pupils.

Finally, the book contains a sixth section dedicated to **activities on wellbeing at school**, which teachers can adjust and implement in their classrooms. These involve a variety of tools and ideas for activities according to different age categories, which can help young learners develop long-term attitudes towards wellbeing.

Collectively, these *eTwinning stories* on wellbeing paint a picture of a more collaborative, inclusive and resilient school experience for everyone involved. We hope these narratives will inspire you in prioritising wellbeing in education. Let's share best practices and innovative ideas on how to foster inclusive, collaborative environments in schools!



Online wellbeing in the information society

In this section, sociologist Divina Frau-Meigs depicts the cyber-baroque 'presentism' (*if you are not online, you do not exist*) created by stories, selfies, series and streams – the '4Ss' – and argues for a stronger role of media and information literacy in the core curriculum to shield young people from the intrusive – and somehow totalising – power of social media platforms and the virtual worlds they generate.



**Divina Frau-Meigs – Sorbonne
Nouvelle University**

*Divina Frau-Meigs is professor
of media sociology at Sorbonne*

Nouvelle University, France. She is a specialist in media and information literacy, cultural diversity and internet governance. She is a world renowned researcher in the media uses and practices of young people and information disorders (e.g. radicalisation, disinformation, hate speech). She holds the UNESCO chair 'Savoir-devenir in sustainable digital development: mastering information cultures' (2013-present). She is an expert with UNESCO (MIL, AI, social media), the Council of Europe (MIL, Digital Citizenship Education) and the European Union (MIL, digital education, online disinformation). She is the author of over 300 research articles and over 30 books including 'The Handbook of Media Education Research' (Wiley, 2020) and 'Disinformation Debunked' (Routledge, 2024 forthcoming).

When exploring online wellbeing, in terms of young people, the research data go in both directions, pointing either to excessive use of ICT

(Klapp 2023) or to enriched social interaction and inclusion (Kardefelt 2017). Risks of harm due to digital technologies can lead to a negative effect on wellbeing (cyberbullying, screen addiction, sleep deprivation and media manipulation). The benefits of digital technologies can have positive effects on wellbeing (life satisfaction, self-expression, participation). More neutrally, Burr and Floridi (2019) define it as 'the impact of digital technologies on what it means to live a life that is good for a human being in an information society'.

What is missing from approaches that are focused on individuals and their psychology is the comprehensive mediascape – social media, the web, online meetings, etc. – of the 'information society' and how young people are socialised into it in times of uncertainty caused by global crises (climate, health, warfare), and 'liquid fears' (Bauman 2006) that permeate the real-life information of the 21st century. Looking for indicators of 'wellbeing' then requires **shifting the focus to 'being' online to consider the social and cultural capital that young people construct to cope**

with and participate in a fast-changing online world that has consequences IRL (in real life) – an acronym often used in opposition to the virtual life on the internet (URL).

Being online: The cultural capital of the 4Ss

Online cultural capital in the information society is constructed with media formats, themes and networked audiences. The formats can be summed up as **the 4Ss: stories, selfies, series and streams**. Available on Instagram, TikTok, Twitch and other social media, these formats are fragments that foster short narrative forms and mix and remix infinite variations of the same memes and emojis. They correspond to basic units of information, not necessarily news, that can be exchanged and replicated beyond borders. These units make sense by referring to other fragments found online and relate to the felt experiences of single individuals that can be shared. The iconic example is the Gangman Style YouTube video by South-Korean K-pop singer

Psy (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bZkp7q19f0>) in 2012, which generated two billion views and led to flash mobs in real life, from Seoul to Paris. Many echoes of this allegorical horse dance have been found since, on *Fortnite* or *Minecraft* for instance.

The themes of the 4Ss are related to stories as self-narratives. Using masks and accessories, the same person can play on avatars and pseudonyms, adopting many fractal identities, some of them engaged in IRL (in real life), others staying in URL (virtual life online). They tend to be performative and active, improvised or seemingly so, shared live via streams and commented on by others in tweets, posts and reels etc. The main

technique shared by the 4Ss is sampling, a collage method that reuses a short sample of a speech, melody or painting and re-pitches it, like in the global success #Selfie by the Chainsmokers in 2014 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZuwfZGDW0io>). As for series, they may look like long narrative forms, but they lend themselves to many multiple arc scenarios, splintering the codes of epic narratives, with divergent choral heroes like in books and films like *The Hunger Games* or *Game of Thrones* or games such as *Dark Genesis* or *Halo*.

The youth audiences for the 4Ss are also fragmented, globalised and heterogeneous. **They are organised into groups of**



Stories: short self-narratives shared live via streams and commented on by others on social media.

Selfies: self-portrait photographs or short videos that are based on self-recording to be shared on social media.

Series: episodic narratives composed of scenarios with multiple arcs, often featuring divergent choral heroes, all of whom exist in the same 'verse' (or universe), with the option to view immediately (or 'binge', rather than waiting for the release of each episode) via streaming services.

Streams: an activity (for instance filming yourself while gaming) shown online with comments and constant interactions with other viewers via chat.

fans that meet as online communities and use streams to socialise. The streaming experience incorporates an activity (filming yourself while gaming online), comments (on the gameplay) and constant interactions with other viewers (via chat), as exemplified by the Twitch platform (an Amazon subsidiary), which also offers music broadcasts, creative content and 'in real life' streams. **These audiences are not passive; they are critical and candid at the same time, enjoying the pleasure of gaming and masquerading while passing on comments about their reality that can be stark and cynical** (Frau-Meigs 2021).

From being to wellbeing

Media and information literacy (MIL) is literacy that pays critical attention to the 4Ss and those who produce them. Media and information literacy as transliteracy analyses the current mediascape as a composite of information cultures dealing systemically with news, documents and data, from books to games to metaverses (Frau-Meigs 2023). Media and information

literacy also considers the cultural context, with historical distance. This fragmented cultural capital harks back to the baroque era, equally subject to major upheavals and in a state of flux, where no master narrative could dominate or convince. The online version is like a cyber-baroque, with formats and themes that are like sense-making mechanisms to cope with the flows of information cultures.

The coping response is 'presentism' (immediacy, simultaneity, mobility), which, online, translates as presence, not distance. The liquid (over-pervasive) fear resides in absence or silence. The 4Ss are an attempt at creating a social and cognitive ePresence (CoE 2020). The circulation of cultural fragments of self-narratives, like the 4Ss, calls for the 'sharing' of responses and corresponding fragments. This circulation can produce several immersive realities, not to mention alternative ones, that can run parallel in 'compossible spaces' (realities with their own norms that co-exist, Badiou 1988), as exemplified particularly in the dystopian 'verses' of series, be it in

games or films that embark their communities in cosplay ('costume plays') and IRL comic-cons.

With this basic participation, young people quell their 'fear of missing out' (FOMO), a key to feeling less lonely, if not necessarily more secure. They build their reputation among their peers, which is part of the 'cost-benefit' ratio that is specific to their teen yearning for social utility and recognition. Their sense of agency allows them to try and balance gains and losses. The global influencers that get the most followers are those who harness this situation and make people laugh, dance or sing, rarely bearing judgment on politics. They reap some of the rewards of the 4Ss and play the role of super peers to their fans, while refusing the status of leaders, with too many connotations in real life.

But the ones that stand most to win are the digital platforms, created by young men (Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg, Larry Page etc.) who are still in control of their innovation and active in their desire to acculturate young people as

future users and workers to their own chain of value. They seized the cyber-baroque flux of fears as an opportunity to sell accessories, artefacts and more services on their portals. Imitating each other, they are the ones that articulated the 4Ss of self-narrative with the sampling technique and the sharing practice. And they designed them as part of their systems to ensure their users' loyalty. This results in a cognitive and social ePresence that is sustained by a designed ePresence, with some constraints, like giving away data for free (Frau-Meigs 2023). The recent rise of generative AI (GAI), incorporated into social media platforms, is also based on sampling and re-pitching, as large language models are trained on the online content of databases and exchanges on social media. They remix them in their answers to prompts, to the point where writers and painters are suing for breach of copyright.

Addressing the 4Ss in schools

The full effects of the 4Ss (+2Ss if sampling and sharing are added) need to be ascertained and verbalised by teachers and pupils so they can then ask questions related to wellbeing online.

Learning how to manage and master your cognitive, social and designed ePresence is essential to growing up in this connected world. Young people often do not grasp the full magnitude of the cyber-baroque economy in which they live. They find it difficult to have a long over-arching view and are ill at ease sharing their experiences with adults that are not in the same compossible spaces as they are (Livingstone et al. 2022). Conversely, **teachers feel they are not trained enough in digital cultures** or that they contravene their own scholastic efforts at eliciting long narrative forms (such as essays and dissertations), which are the norm in school evaluations.

The 4Ss themselves do not create a predictable positive or negative effect. Some pupils will avail themselves of them successfully, while others will fall victims to

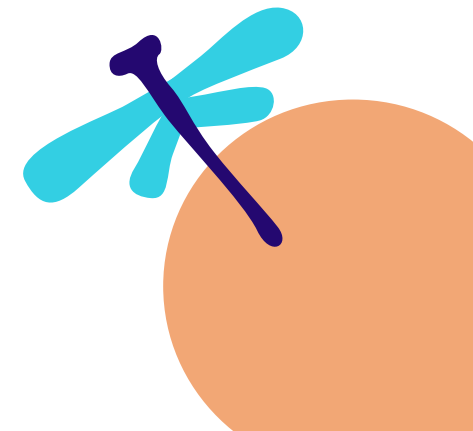
cyber-harassment or information overload. Special attention should go to scopic panics (the fear of being looked at and judged), associated with pathologies of seeing, as the act of looking/being looked at, which is embedded in the 4Ss. Identifying these issues can be done with media and information literacy competence, knowledge, attitudes, skills and values) for teachers and learners (CoE 2020).

Additionally, school policy makers should think in terms of the 4Ss and their associated practices to address the platforms' lack of sincerity and actual responsibilities in the face of wellbeing issues, as denounced by Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen (2023). **They should enhance the positive effects on wellbeing by moving media and information literacy into the core curriculum and training teachers, librarians and their pupils in information search and navigation, active citizenship and engagement 'in real life'.** They should also shield young people from the intrusive power of the platforms and balance their individual responsibility with their dependence on the design

of platforms that entail risks of exploitation and surveillance.

Finally, looking forward to generative artificial intelligence (GAI) systems, the cyber-baroque 4Ss can easily accommodate the added interaction of young people with non-human agents such as robots. This is already the case with some smart apps that appear as extensive and intrusive prostheses. Building a future-proof wellbeing online involves mastering co-dependent immersive strategies between humans and connected

objects (Frau-Meigs 2024). The role of these remote digital agents, based on flows controlled by connected objects and driven by engagement metrics, is likely to bring its own array of information disorders and opportunities. Anticipatory measures are needed to ensure that these mediations are highly transparent and that platforms are held accountable, which also entails including them in designing media and information literacy interventions in schools.



A new chapter in education: Attention to wellbeing for school success

Annalisa Cannoni and Oana Felecan, European commission

Reimagining education as a foundation for growth

Access to quality education and training is a fundamental right and a precondition for personal and professional development. It is key for Europe's competitiveness, prosperity and autonomy, and for making our societies fairer and more cohesive. However, we cannot overlook the fact that a significant number of European pupils are failing to reach their full potential due to flaws in current education systems.

The disappointing results of the OECD's PISA 2022 bring to light the **urgent need for stronger investment in equity and inclusion and the promotion of wellbeing in schools.**

A bit of history

The challenge of early school leaving has been a persistent concern on the EU policy agenda for decades, reflecting a collective commitment to ensuring that all young Europeans successfully complete their educational journey. In 2003, EU education ministers set an ambitious benchmark to reduce the average rate of early school leaving across the Union to no more than 10 % by 2010. This goal, rooted in a shared vision for a more inclusive and equitable education system, highlighted the critical link between education and the broader objectives of social cohesion and economic prosperity.

However, progress was slower than anticipated. By 2009, it became evident that the initial target would not be met on schedule, prompting the Council to renew



its commitment with an adjusted deadline of 2020. At this juncture, the scale of the challenge was stark: more than six million young people, or 14.4 % of those aged 18 to 24, had prematurely exited the education system, armed with, at most, lower secondary education qualifications. This figure concealed significant disparities among Member States, from those who had already met or were close to meeting the benchmark, to others where rates exceeded 30 %, highlighting the diverse educational landscapes and challenges within the Union.

The response from EU institutions and Member States was multifaceted, marked by the adoption of the Council Recommendation on policies to tackle early school leaving in June 2011. This moment catalysed a series of concerted efforts to address the root causes of early school leaving, encompassing a broad spectrum of policy tools at EU level – from funding opportunities and peer learning initiatives to the dissemination of good practices and additional policy guidance.

Despite these efforts and the notable progress achieved – evidenced by the reduction in early leavers from education and training to 9.6 % in 2022 – the issue remains a concern. This challenge is compounded by the **worrying trends in basic skill proficiency among European learners**, as highlighted by the PISA results in 2018 and 2022. The decline in the basic skills of mathematics, reading and science, particularly among disadvantaged pupils, highlights the persistent influence of socioeconomic factors on educational outcomes and signals the **need for a comprehensive strategy**.

Recognising the intertwined nature of underperformance, early school leaving and pupil wellbeing, the EU's approach to education policy has evolved to embrace a more holistic perspective. Research supports this broader view, illustrating that effective solutions to these challenges require a systemic approach that integrates efforts to enhance academic performance with initiatives aimed at promoting pupil and teacher wellbeing, preventing bullying and fostering

a positive and welcoming school climate.

A broader understanding of school success

Recognising these challenges, in 2022, the education ministers of the 27 Member States adopted a new [Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success](#). This initiative moves away from focusing solely on academic achievement and instead takes a more comprehensive view on educational success. It acknowledges that **for pupils to succeed in school and life, a balanced set of cognitive, social and emotional competences are required**.

Pathways to School Success aims to promote reforms and investments at national level to improve educational outcomes by offering a policy framework for systemic action, based on a balanced mix of prevention, intervention and compensation measures.

The Pathways initiative is ambitious in its scope, aiming to address the dual challenges of early leaving from education and training (ELET) and underachievement in

basic skills by the year 2030. It champions a proactive stance, encouraging Member States to adopt comprehensive and systemic strategies to foster educational environments where every learner can thrive. This includes emphasis on preventive actions that anticipate and mitigate the risks associated with ELET and underachievement, and the promotion of policies that support the development of a balanced set of competences essential for the modern world. By integrating measures that focus on engagement, achievement and wellbeing, **Pathways to School Success seeks to cultivate conditions conducive to learning and personal development, thereby enhancing the prospects of all children and young people, particularly those in disadvantaged situations**.

The initiative also leverages a broad array of tools and resources to support its implementation, from policy cooperation and peer learning to the deployment of digital platforms like the European School Education Platform and the enhanced European Toolkit for Schools that includes [resources](#)

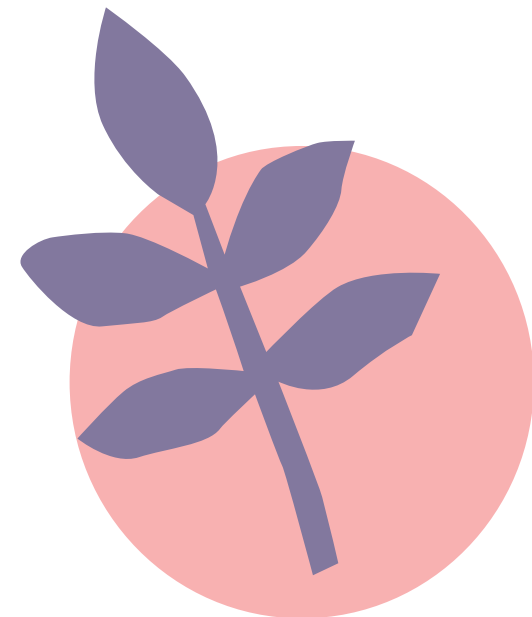
on wellbeing and mental health at school. These tools are designed to facilitate the exchange of best practices, foster collaboration among stakeholders and provide targeted support for reforms at both national and institutional level. In doing so, the Pathways to School Success initiative highlights the EU's commitment to not only addressing the immediate challenges facing its education systems but also to laying the groundwork for a future where every learner's potential can be fully realised.

Importance of wellbeing at school for education

The school environment plays a pivotal role in the overall development of children and adolescents. It is therefore crucial to **create a supportive and engaging learning environment that nurtures wellbeing at school**. Research has repeatedly indicated that learners' wellbeing is fundamental to improving academic performance as it influences their motivation, focus and capacity to learn. Moreover, promoting wellbeing in schools is not only

about individual learning outcomes but also about fostering empathy, integrity, problem-solving skills and a sense of belonging. It's about empowering learners to let their voices be heard and to actively engage them in the decision-making process. **By integrating wellbeing into the core objectives of education, we can foster a holistic learning environment that nurtures the full potential of every pupil.**

The Pathways to School Success initiative represents a new era in education policy. It acknowledges the vital role of wellbeing in academic success and strives to create an inclusive and equitable education system where every learner can thrive. The focus is not just on preventing problems but also on equipping learners with the ability to flourish both academically and personally. The vision behind the Pathways to School Success initiative is to create an education system that values the wellbeing of pupils while keeping a strong focus on improving their academic achievement.



eTwinning projects on wellbeing

In this chapter, we present five eTwinning projects implemented across Europe and beyond focusing on the topic of wellbeing. These projects (one for each age category – early childhood education and care (ECEC), primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, initial vocational education and training (IVET)) have been selected based on the activities carried out to foster the different aspects of wellbeing, with the aim of inspiring other teachers. The full list of partners involved in each project is available in the annex. To have access to more material in the TwinSpace of the projects, you need to have an eTwinning account.

A Rainbow of Emotions

Age category: ECEC/Primary

Countries involved: Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain.

Subjects: Art, Drama, Foreign languages, Language & literature, Music, Primary school subjects

Duration: 1 school year

Link to the project page: <https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/en/networking/projects/130627>

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The topic of the project is young learners' emotional development. Pupils could explore emotions and feelings, realising that it's normal to experience different mental states and that there are different ways of dealing with them.

This project focused on promoting emotional and social wellbeing among pupils. It included activities to help them identify and manage emotions, improve teamwork skills and foster a positive attitude towards school.



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'The moment I saw the pop-up version of "El Monstruo de Colores" by Anna Llenas, I fell in love with it. And when I learned the profile of the first graders I was going to teach, I knew it, The Colour Monster would guide us through the labyrinth of emotions. I'm happy that we could pursue this exciting adventure alongside pupils from Italy, Spain and Germany.' Joanna Mach, teacher, Poland.

COLLABORATION AND PROJECT OUTCOMES

Children took part and collaborated in several workshops, including drama, songs, arts and craft, coding and STEAM activities and games. The main activities and their outcomes are listed below:

Exhibition of collaborative paintings: In this activity, pupils from various project groups worked together to create artworks representing different emotions. Each group focused on one emotion, working together to produce unique and expressive paintings, and sharing them with the other partners so that they could add their contributions. This

process encouraged creativity and teamwork, [with the images evolving significantly](#) as they circulated. The finished pieces were showcased in a [dedicated exhibition](#) at all schools, providing a platform for children to express emotions through art while developing creativity and teamwork skills.

Jars of emotions: After reading *The Colour Monster* by Spanish author Anna Llenas, pupils in one class met with a psychologist to explore emotions using the 'jars of emotions'. They were asked to fill 'jars' with coloured descriptions of their emotions, observing how the jars were changing and cumulating feelings during the year. They identified emotions like happiness, sadness, anger and calmness. Teachers recorded the number of cards in each jar and used a Canva web tool to create graphs summarising the emotions expressed by the pupils and shared them with their partners.

Glossary of emotions: Children worked in different national groups on adding the translation of the different emotions in their mother tongue. They could translate

simple sentences like 'I'm calm' or 'I'm scared' and in the meantime, they also prepared illustrations for those emotions. The 'glossary of emotions' supported pupils in improving their ability to learn and correctly use the names of emotions in English. The outcomes of all groups were collected in a [collaborative eBook](#).

Podcast 'What's your emotion like?': Pupils collaborated to create emotion rhymes. Each national team selected an emotion, wrote two verses and illustrated them with drawings for the [podcast](#) cover. All teams expressed emotions such as happiness, calmness and anger, linking them to vivid images, like 'Calm is like the wind that makes me fly'.

STEAMy emotions: In this activity, pupils created and painted clay plates following Picasso's technique. They strengthened their creativity and imagination skills, and at the same time they discovered the artist and his works. The outcomes were collected in a [final presentation](#).

Museum of emotions: In this activity, pupils explored a digital

museum, viewing paintings from old masters and sharing their emotions in an online poll. The [results](#) highlighted how the same artwork evoked diverse emotions among pupils. For instance, Van Gogh's 'Starry Night' evoked both happiness and calmness in some, while others felt anger and fear. This exercise enhanced pupils' skills in recognising and labelling their own emotions.

Here & now with art and mindfulness at school

Age category: Primary

Countries involved: Croatia, France, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Türkiye, Romania

Subjects: Art, Informatics/ICT, Language & literature, Music, Primary school subjects, Psychology

Duration: 1 school year

Link to the project page: <https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/en/networking/projects/130477>



ABOUT THE PROJECT

The focus of this project is developing pupil's attention, fostering their ability to stay in the moment and enhancing their self-awareness. To achieve this, several classroom activities and individual exercises were prepared, allowing pupils to get familiar with the concept of mindfulness and its applications.

'How can we practise mindfulness with children in the rushing world and help them focus on the "here



and now"? This question has been bothering me for a long time because there are too many stimuli causing problems that we all face today. That's why I decided to look for teachers who would be willing to work with me. In this project, we developed and tested specific tools and activities thanks to which teachers and children can practise mindfulness, gain awareness of their emotions and develop acceptance of themselves and others. Mindfulness is a competence of the future that can be learned by both teachers and pupils.' Aneta Kleisa, teacher, Poland.

COLLABORATION AND PROJECT OUTCOMES

Pupils took part in different collaborative activities, including:

How can we be more mindful at school? Different groups of pupils created their own mindfulness rules at school and shared them online with their partners. Suggestions included 'Remember about your breath' or 'Dance to the rhythm of your favourite song' or 'Draw your favourite moment of the day'.

Here and now – a space to share short mindfulness exercises.

This activity involved taking part in different [collaborative exercises](#) aimed at increasing the focus and ability to concentrate of pupils from all partner classes by helping them recognise their own and other people's emotions and cope with stress. One example is the exercise called 'Let's feel the breath', which focused on encouraging children to take the time to pay attention to their breathing in the moment. The pupil puts their palm and fingers in front of their nose and feels the breath on their skin, then takes a deep breath through their nose and gently, slowly exhales through their mouth, feeling it on their palm or fingers. Another example is the 'Worry Box: Useful Coping Tool for Kids'. This exercise allowed pupils to write or draw their worries onto



a piece of paper and then feed it to their worry box, providing a 'place' to store away feelings that may overwhelm children.

Here and now calendar of art, kindness and mindfulness: Pupils from each school created a small scene representing each month through painting, graphics, collage and installations. They crafted a [printable calendar for 2023](#) where they could include their personal ideas about what each month could look like, linking it to the emotions that they were feeling.

Colourful mandalas: Mandala is a method of meditation and an art therapy activity that consists of colourful designs created with various patterns. The work process behind this form of art requires keeping the right and left-brain functions in balance, which respectively represent the areas of intuition and logic. With [mandala exercises](#), pupils were able to control their emotional states, reduce their exam anxiety and discover the richness of their creativity and imagination.

Mindfulness matters

Age category: Lower secondary

Countries involved: Croatia, Italy

Subjects: Citizenship, Foreign languages, Health studies

Duration: 1 school year

Link to the project page: <https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/en/networking/projects/130270>

ABOUT THE PROJECT

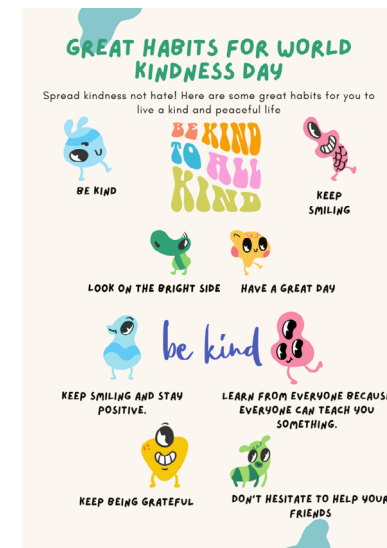
The topic of the project is mindfulness as a form of awareness and explores various strategies to nurture it among pupils. Mindfulness, defined as the practice of intentionally focusing one's attention on the present moment without judgment, has gained significant recognition for

its profound impact on mental wellbeing, emotional regulation and cognitive performance. In this project, pupils learnt the basics of mindfulness and connected it to their curricula.

'I think this project helped pupils become more aware of their skills, let them get to know each other better and even engage more in studying English. The activities we carried out both in class and with the other partner schools helped us to create a more relaxed and meaningful learning environment where everyone was willing to try to do their best to learn more and enhance their and their schoolmates' and teachers' wellbeing.' Chiara Sabatini, teacher, Italy.

COLLABORATION AND PROJECT OUTCOMES

World Kindness Day: World Kindness Day, celebrated annually on 13 November, provided an opportunity for the project to reflect on the universal principle of kindness. Pupils collaborated on creating posters in mixed nationality teams. Their ideas ranged from

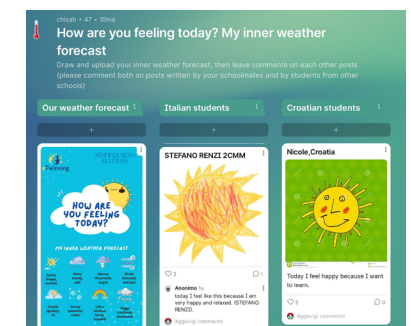


teaching computer science to the elderly, to random acts of kindness and donations to healthcare associations. They also curated a section on 'stories of kindness from the web', gathering inspiring examples of kindness from various online sources.

'Goals for the new year': The new year resolution tradition offered pupils a great opportunity to think about ways of improving themselves and goals to achieve and discuss with their peers. They used a colourful worksheet suggesting five key inputs:

- List five words you want your 2024 to stand for...
- List four people you are grateful for...
- List three strategies for coping with stress...
- Write one positive statement to yourself to start the year...
- List two ways you hope to improve...

Pupils mainly concentrated on goals like self-reflection, active listening, forgiveness and acts of kindness. The outcomes were collected in the [digital book](#) created at the end of the project. This exercise supported pupils in paying attention to everyday good practices, setting personal goals and improving their behaviour starting from the new year.



How do you relax best?: In this activity, pupils were encouraged to reflect on what allows them to relax and release their emotions. They shared their answers with their friends in the other countries through a dedicated [Padlet](#), and focused on a variety of activities such as riding their bike, reading a book in silence, going out for a walk in the nature, dancing and observing things through a microscope.

How are you feeling today?: In this classroom activity, pupils were asked to reflect on the emotion they were feeling and connect it to an 'inner weather'. They first relaxed and then visualised their emotions as weather conditions, explaining their choices. Contributions, ranging from sunny to rainy, reflected diverse emotions like happiness and stress. The contributions of the pupils from each partner school were shared on a [collaborative Padlet](#). A [digital book](#) containing all the results was also created at the end of the project.

RRH: respectful responsible healthy online communication

Age category: Upper secondary

Countries involved: Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Spain

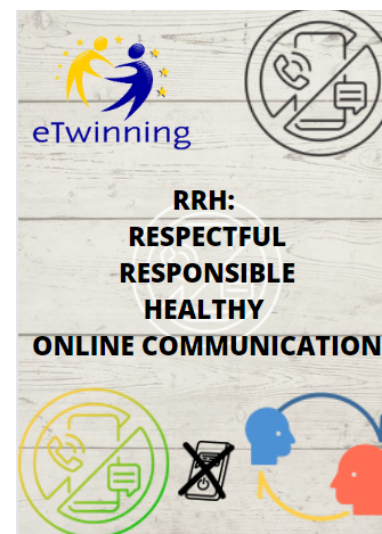
Subjects: Informatics/ICT, Foreign languages, Cross curricular, Citizenship

Duration: 6 months

Link to the project page: <https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/en/networking/projects/121132>

ABOUT THE PROJECT

This project deals with analysing teenagers' behaviour online. More specifically, it aimed to make pupils aware of the risks they may face when they are exposed to the wrong



use of technology, and then reflect on their online behaviour by trying to find an appropriate response to the problem. The project addressed social wellbeing, prompting pupils to critically examine their digital habits. Specifically, pupils were tasked with engaging in discussions and sharing their viewpoints and personal experiences related to unhealthy digital behaviours such as phubbing¹, nomophobia² and hate speech. They were then encouraged to explore positive counter-reactions to these situations, providing examples of constructive responses.

1 - Phubbing, a contraction of 'phone snubbing', is the act of ignoring a companion in favour of using a smartphone.

2 - Nomophobia (short for 'no mobile phobia') is a word for the fear of, or anxiety caused by, not having a working mobile phone.

'As smartphones increasingly dominate our lives, there's a worry they could harm how we connect with others. That's why we launched an eTwinning project to teach pupils how to better interact online. Through engaging tasks, the pupils reflected on the meaning of respectful, responsible, healthy online communication using critical thinking and creativity. The outcome is the awareness of the risks and benefits of online communication with a strong emphasis on individual wellbeing.' Daisy de Giovanni, teacher, Italy.

COLLABORATION AND PROJECT OUTCOMES

Creation of infographics referring to the concepts of phubbing and nomophobia. In this activity, pupils reflected on their digital habits and became aware of issues like phubbing and nomophobia. After accessing some informative materials on the topic, they discussed their 'ideal' netiquette with their peers in the partner classes and worked



collaboratively to craft their first infographic about respectful, responsible and healthy online communication. Some of the suggestions offered included practical tips such as 'Set a time limit when you use your phone' or 'Try to talk to people in real life and not on your phone' or 'Turn off your notifications whilst with other people'.

Creating interactive images referring to the 'Manifesto of Non-Hostile Communication': The second activity started with reading the [Manifesto of Non-Hostile Communication](#), a document listing a series of rules to follow in the digital world (for example 'You are what you communicate' or 'Listen before you speak'). Afterwards, pupils in international teams were asked to

focus on one point of the manifesto, and based on that, use their creativity in crafting an interactive image. In their outcomes, they had to include a short video (in English), some explicatory lines, some pictures and an explicit reference to the point they were dealing with. Pupils focused on points like '[Share with Care](#)' or '[Virtual is real](#)', associating these concepts with significant and powerful images and symbols.

Creating a motivational video/presentation on digital detox: Pupils were asked to address their peers and stimulate reflection on teenagers' online behaviour, giving advice on how to prevent and solve screen addiction problems. To achieve that, they created videos and presentations highlighting some of the problems of spending too much time online and giving some suitable suggestions for the respectful, responsible and healthy use of the online communication. Some groups



of pupils created videos listing [key tips for digital detox](#), others presented their work in the form of interactive [online interviews](#), and others, original presentations about the benefits of responsible digital habits.

The three activities together resulted in a collective reflection on digital detox through brainstorming sessions and the creation of memes on the topic and online collaborative presentations about the ways pupils can improve their social and emotional wellbeing in their daily routine by focusing on using their digital devices respectfully and responsibly. The outcomes were also integrated into a [3D showroom of the project](#).

The happiness project: be active, be inclusive!

Age category: IVET

Countries involved: Poland, Moldova, Romania, Türkiye

Subjects: Citizenship, Cross curricular, Design & technology, Environmental education, Ethics, Foreign languages, Health studies, Informatics / ICT, Media education,



Physical education, Psychology, Technology

Duration: 5 months

Link to the project page: <https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/en/networking/projects/132801>

ABOUT THE PROJECT

This project focused on raising awareness about how to build an environment of 'happiness' among IVET pupils and focused on creating a healthier, more productive, more creative and more responsible life for everyone. Pupils from four different countries focused on 'How can we live happily at this age?' by examining the concept of happiness personally, within their close environment (family, friends, public)

and in relation to their natural environment, the planet.

Pupils enhanced their awareness of technology addiction and developed good mental and physical wellbeing habits and empathy for others. The project particularly emphasised emotional wellbeing, encouraging pupils to contribute to their human and physical environments, promote the shared welfare of their community and develop skills to manage their feelings and behaviours effectively. This included realistic self-assessment, the development of autonomy, coping strategies for stress and maintaining overall care of the body while meeting the demands of daily life.

'The Happiness Project was like a cure for me to heal my wounds at a very critical point in my life. The activities planned in the project made me find new ways to make myself and the people around me happier and mentally healthier. It was also very nice to make new friends from other countries.' Meral Ergün, teacher, Türkiye.

COLLABORATION AND PROJECT OUTCOMES

Pupils took part in several collaborative activities and created [collaborative work](#).

Acrostic poem of happiness: In this activity, pupils analysed the concept of 'happiness' by writing an acrostic for this word. All the outcomes were collected in a poem, which highlighted key actions related to wellbeing. For example, the Moldovan school produced *'Have a sense of purpose driven by an attitude that is resolute and positively charged by a burning passion in your chosen career that is ignited by loved ones' love and support. Never taking anything for granted, engage to contribute to the lives of others with a sense of commitment to serve, creating a better world'*. This activity allowed pupils to reflect on the ingredients that can contribute to a happy life,



cultivated imagination and creativity by shaping their ideas as acrostics.

The project went beyond analysing happiness at a personal level, as pupils also researched what can be done for the wellbeing of our planet and our social environment. They reflected and worked on the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#). Split into four mixed-nationality teams, each focused on a specific aspect of planetary health, for example:

Climate action: One team reflected on climate change and global warming, and collaboratively tried to answer to the question 'What can we do for a better world?' by filling in a dedicated [Padlet](#). Pupils suggested actions to prevent climate change such as 'plant trees' or 'invite other people to preserve the environment' or 'reduce the use of private vehicles'. This activity encouraged pupils to become environmentally aware and think collaboratively about how to take care of our planet and community. They especially reflected on the connection between wellbeing and sustainability as the way we

feel is strongly connected to the environment we live in.

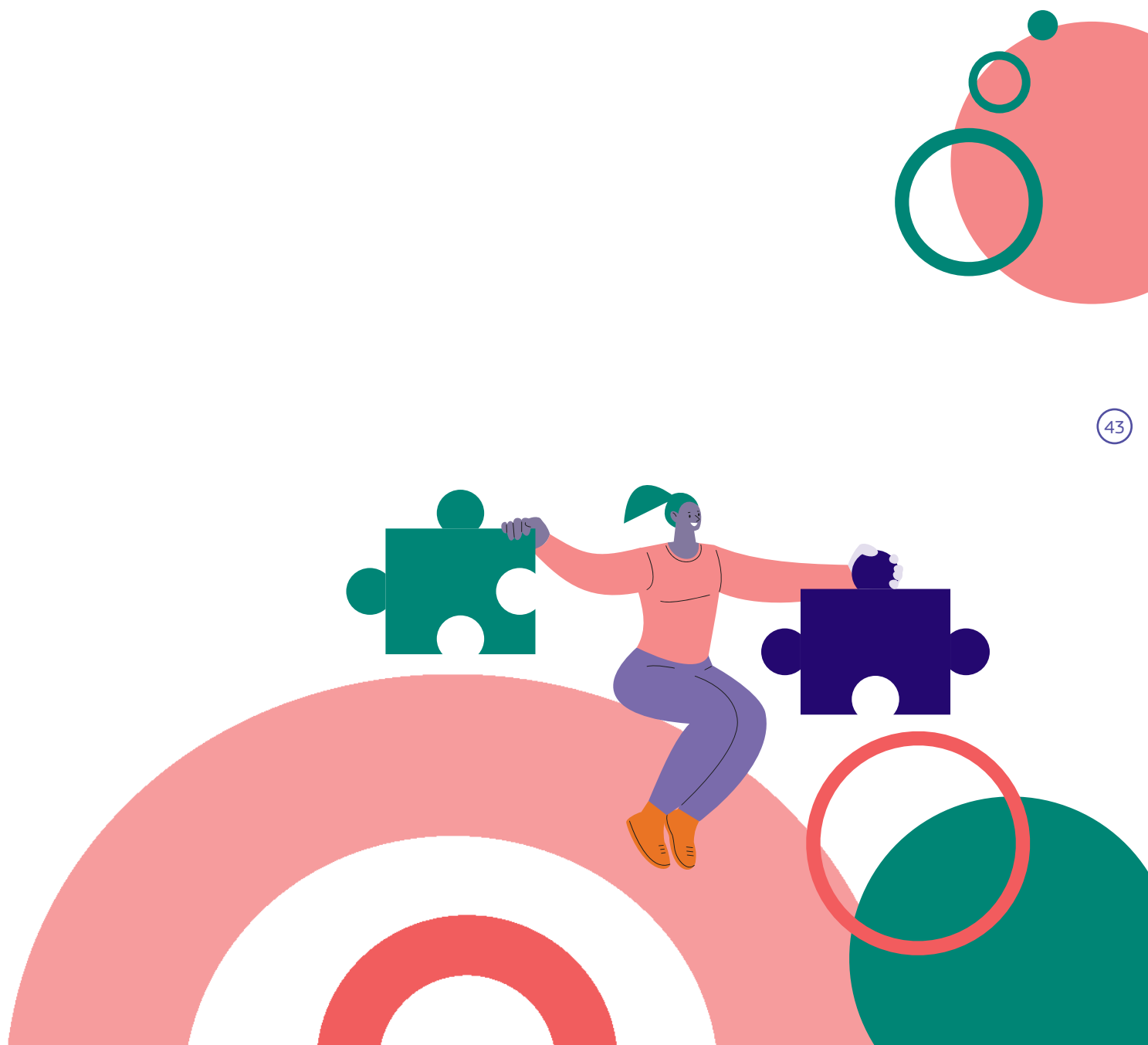
Affordable and clean energy and sustainable cities: A second mixed team worked on green energy and models of sustainable cities and communities. For this purpose, they conducted research on some important definitions when addressing the topic of sustainability and created an infographic. The second stage of this activity continued the reflection on how wellbeing is closely connected on the health of our planet. Pupils could explore how sustainable cities can contribute to creating 'happier' communities.

Reduce/reuse and recycle for a better world: A third group reflected on responsible consumption and reducing production by creating a collaborative [Padlet](#) where pupils could share what reducing, recycling and reusing mean in their everyday life. In a specific section of the Padlet, pupils could include photos of their personal application of these concepts. For example, a Turkish school showed how they created birdhouses from

recycled materials. This activity offered pupils the opportunity to effectively work in a team. Moreover, it supported them in developing empathy and respect for other people and environments, by constantly exchanging ideas about what the same concept could mean for different individuals.

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Teacher stories on wellbeing

Across various educational levels, from pre-primary to upper secondary and IVET, teachers demonstrate a holistic approach to nurturing the wellbeing of pupils and themselves. They address physical, mental and emotional aspects through diverse strategies, facing challenges with resilience and creativity. They involve parents and communities to create inclusive, supportive learning environments. Participation in eTwinning fosters the wellbeing of pupils and sometimes even the wellbeing of teachers. Below, you can find six stories where eTwinning teachers share their experiences and insights into fostering wellbeing in educational settings and eTwinning projects.

Kristiine-Teele Satsi – Tallinna Lasteaed Pääsusilm, Estonia

Kristiine Teele Satsi is a pre-school teacher in a pre-primary school in Tallinn, Estonia. She's been teaching there for 10 years and she's now part of the management team. The

pre-primary school consists of 12 groups of pupils and 49 members of teaching staff. The pre-school accommodates pupils from one and a half years old to seven years old. In Estonia, where primary school begins at the age of seven, the pre-school curriculum extends to reading, writing and arithmetic.

The school received the eTwinning School Label in 2023 and six teachers are involved in eTwinning projects. They do projects with the older children and with the little ones, for example, a project about emotions with two-year-olds. It's all about making learning fun and helping children grow.

PHYSICAL WELLBEING

At Kristiine's pre-school, physical wellbeing is a core focus for both pupils and teachers. The school has embraced the 'Health Promoting Kindergartens' programme, emphasising not only physical health but also mental wellbeing. A dedicated team of teachers organises various activities aimed





at promoting healthy habits throughout the school community. One initiative involves tracking physical activity through step counts, encouraging pupils and teachers to stay active. Monthly challenges encourage walking to school or work, fostering a culture of physical movement. Additionally, parents are involved through the 'Walk for Your Health' initiative, where they engage in fun activities on a track up to three kilometres long, promoting exercise and earning rewards like apples.

To instil healthy eating habits, the school has equipped classrooms with kitchen supplies like blenders and smoothie-makers etc., allowing children to prepare nutritious meals. Cooking sessions not only promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables but also encourage pupils to make healthier food

choices. Some of these activities are part of eTwinning projects like creating colourful smoothies and meals with colourful vegetables on the colour project.

Physical education is integrated into the curriculum with two weekly classes, one indoor and one outdoor. The school also has a swimming pool, where every group enjoys a weekly swimming lesson starting from age three. The school also organises winter Olympic games and mini-Olympic games in collaboration with other district schools and they celebrate sports week – in which they start each day outdoors with different exercises.



For teachers, the health team organises events such as dancing sessions and nature road trips to prioritise their physical wellbeing.

Breaks are incorporated into teaching activities to allow pupils to stretch or engage in brief dance sessions. By making outdoor playtime a daily ritual, pupils have many opportunities to run and play, ensuring a balance between active learning and screen time.

Although eTwinning is about online collaboration, the school attempts to minimise screen time for pre-school pupils. Online meetings and activities are combined with physical exercises like yoga or dance, making learning engaging while promoting movement. Kristiine said, 'In pre-school, it's natural for children to move and they cannot stay still for a long time, so our collaborative eTwinning work includes lots of active learning activities'.

MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

At Kristiine's pre-school, the staff takes many actions for the mental and emotional wellbeing of their pupils. They understand that young children often express their feelings openly through their behaviour and actions. To address this, the school has implemented various programmes and practices aimed at supporting pupils' mental and emotional health. One such initiative is a '[Free of bullying](#)' programme designed to prevent bullying, which places a strong emphasis on understanding children's behaviour and addressing any underlying issues. Regular meetings are held with pupils to discuss their behaviour and emotions, providing them with a safe space to express themselves and seek support.

The school also integrates the principles of emotional wellbeing into their eTwinning projects. Teachers actively involve pupils in project discussions, allowing them to express their thoughts and preferences. This inclusive approach helps pupils feel valued and listened to, contributing to their overall sense of wellbeing.

In addition to promoting mental wellbeing, the school prioritises emotional wellbeing through various mindfulness and relaxation activities and practices to help pupils manage their emotions. Some teachers incorporate meditation sessions with quiet music, allowing pupils to listen to their bodies and focus on their breathing. Others practise 'quiet minutes,' where pupils are encouraged to lie down and focus on their breath, helping them calm down and refocus their energy.

To further support pupils' emotional wellbeing, teachers practise the 'bag of joy and worries' method. Pupils are encouraged to write down their worries or concerns and place them in a bag. During group meetings, pupils share their worries and joys with their peers, fostering a sense of support and empathy within the classroom community. Kristiine said, 'It is really important and pupils learn how to support each other. However big or small the worry is, it is important and everyone can help. **Also, during their participation in eTwinning projects, they have opportunities to understand that other children in other**

countries have the same worries as them and feel happy about similar things.'

Furthermore, the school places importance on supporting the emotional wellbeing of teachers. Emotional wellbeing [questionnaires](#) are conducted yearly, allowing teachers to receive feedback and support. One-on-one conversations with the principal provide teachers with a confidential space to discuss any concerns or issues they may be facing.

Participation in eTwinning projects has also facilitated collaboration among teachers, creating a supportive environment where they can share knowledge and resources. This collaborative approach helps foster open communication and a sense of community among staff members. The school adopted a team-based approach to enhance teachers' wellbeing. Teachers frequently meet to exchange insights and successful methods, enabling the integration of wellbeing activities school wide.

ETWINNING PROJECTS AND WELLBEING

When reflecting on the 'You feel... I feel!' project, centred around wellbeing, Kristiine expressed enthusiasm for its impact, particularly in nurturing emotional awareness and expression from an early age. The project, conducted in a nursery group of two-year-olds, emphasised the importance of learning to identify and express emotions, a fundamental skill cultivated from the nursery stage. A notable aspect of the project was the implementation of weekly wellbeing or mindfulness activities by each partner involved. These activities, including meditation, quiet moments and yoga sessions, significantly enriched the group's experience of working as a team and positively influenced its wellbeing. Moreover, the project fostered a culture of collaboration



among teachers, where they shared their activities and exchanged ideas. This collaborative approach allowed for activities to be adapted to suit individual classroom dynamics while still promoting shared goals of emotional wellbeing. Kristiine highlighted the diversity of activities undertaken, ranging from outdoor games to soap bubble sessions.

A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH TO WELLBEING

The school also engages in a gardening project, which aims to promote physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. The pre-school maintains a small garden area where children grow vegetables. As the weather in February is chilly, they plant seeds indoors, which will later be transferred outdoors. This process instils patience, emphasising that good things take time to grow – a valuable lesson in today's fast-paced world. Gardening serves as a



sensory activity, grounding children in nature and reducing anxiety. Across different age groups, pupils participate in various gardening activities. The younger ones plant flowers for Mother's Day, while the older children take care of their own individual plots. Kristiine added, 'When the pupils harvested potatoes, they decided to sell them at an autumn market hosted by the pre-school, with proceeds donated to an animal shelter. This hands-on experience taught compassion and community spirit, as the children learn to nurture both plants and those in need.'

Amela Alic Ertl – Volksschule Waltendorf Primary School, Graz, Austria

Amela Alic Ertl, originally from Rijeka, Croatia, began her career as a theatre nurse, looking after both adults and kids. She later trained to become a teacher in Croatia before moving to London to study play therapy. After two years working as a play therapist in primary schools, she now teaches pupils aged six to 10 at the Volksschule Waltendorf Primary School in Graz, Austria.

Besides teaching, she coordinates eTwinning and Erasmus+ projects, connecting her school with others worldwide, and helps with using technology in lessons through the IT-Pilot Project, initiated by the city of Graz. Waltendorf Primary is an Erasmus-accredited eTwinning School hosting 306 pupils between six and 10 years old, 31 teachers and 20 non-teaching staff members. The school is also an Ecology School and a [Climate Alliance School](#) and tries to create a healthy and active lifestyle among learners.

PHYSICAL WELLBEING

The school prioritises the physical wellbeing of its pupils through a variety of initiatives and programmes. For instance, it



participated in the 'Happy Children' Erasmus+ project, aiming to promote physical activity through integrative learning in classrooms, integrated lessons helping pupils make connections across the curriculum. Additional activities include providing extra physical education classes for pupils aged three and four, offering afternoon courses like football, badminton, yoga and dance, and organising special project days throughout the year such as skiing, tennis, climbing and aerobics.

Collaboration with health professionals like school doctors and dentists ensures comprehensive healthcare and healthy habits for pupils. Also, the school playground serves as a space for outdoor activities like football, climbing and basketball. Health education is also integrated into the curriculum to

instil healthy habits and pupils also have the opportunity to take part in first aid workshops.

Additionally, various short break activities are available to promote movement and engagement, both indoors and outdoors. The school's commitment to environmental consciousness is evident through eco-friendly practices such as city trips on foot and initiatives like 'Autofasten', encouraging sustainable transportation options. Pupils earn leaf stickers to place on a tree for each day they travel to school on foot, scooter, bike or public transport. As an environmentally conscious school, they actively engage in outdoor projects such as 'Frühlingsputz' (spring clean-up), contributing to the upkeep and improvement of their surroundings.

Last but not least, the teachers use the playground for outdoor lessons, weather permitting, a setup that fosters interactive learning and prompts pupils to actively interact with their environment.

Amela said, 'It's important to balance screen time with more active learning'. eTwinning projects

bring a lively vibe to primary school classrooms. For example, two classes worked together, with one group researching and presenting online, and the other group doing hands-on activities like making videos and baking cookies. These projects boost teamwork and confidence, making learning a fun adventure beyond just screens.

From the activities in the Happy Children eTwinning project, teachers have learned how to integrate active breaks into their teaching routines. They participate in workshops aimed at enhancing their wellbeing and have access to a range of facilitators and counsellors when needed.

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

As stated on the [school website](#), there is a great focus on the education of the heart by helping pupils strengthen their resilience, love themselves, deal with their emotions, create a connection with their body and develop social skills.

There are many activities in the school that promote the emotional wellbeing of pupils. One of the teachers offers workshops for pupils



with her trained therapy dogs, Amy and Neela. These sessions not only encourage active learning but also enhance school satisfaction by fostering pupils' self-confidence.

Furthermore, pupils have the opportunity to participate in the after-school 'jeux dramatiques' workshops, where they can explore and cultivate their creativity. In these workshops, participants have the freedom to select roles, embody them through movement and engage in reflective discussions within a secure environment to explore their emotions and experiences.

The school also takes part in the campaign of the Office for Youth and Family and the Department of Education and Integration of

Graz called 'Ich hab' Mut' (I have courage), which encourages children to talk about violence they may have experienced or witnessed. The aim is to sensitise all Graz residents to child protection. Teachers hand over the 'encourager', a soft toy, to children in the third grade of primary school. This little toy helps children articulate their problems, overcome their sadness, stand up against injustices and speak out about what they previously couldn't speak about. It's also a way for adults to get through to children so that children find the courage to talk about their worries and fears.

eTwinning projects also play an important role in pupils' emotional wellbeing. These projects require pupils to work together, encouraging teamwork and sharing ideas. Pupils are not confined to their screens; they often venture out into the school to conduct interviews, take photographs and engage in the real world. Amela said, **'What I find particularly commendable in these projects is the pupils' new-found confidence to ask questions and actively engage with their peers.'** In traditional classroom settings, pupils may

be reluctant or too reserved to participate, but in the dynamic environment of eTwinning projects, they eagerly embrace the opportunity to showcase their work and share their experiences as they are usually involved in activities for which they are intrinsically motivated and they realise that their work is being seen by peers in other schools. **eTwinning projects defy the notion of passive screen time, and we wholeheartedly embrace this dynamic approach to learning.'**

MENTAL WELLBEING

Perceiving pupils' mental wellbeing involves starting the day by inviting them to share thoughts, fostering open discussions throughout the day and implementing practices like class councils and recognising achievements. At school, using



children's books to explore topics and having dedicated mental health support, such as counselling and mental training sessions contribute to pupils' wellbeing.

In the eTwinning world, Amela mentioned that two main features stand out in promoting pupils' mental wellbeing. One is curiosity and engagement: **eTwinning ignites curiosity among pupils by exposing them to diverse cultures, languages and perspectives through collaborative projects.** This curiosity encourages pupils to ask questions, seek answers and actively engage with the learning process. As they explore new ideas and concepts, pupils develop a sense of wonder and excitement, which stimulates their cognitive development and fosters a positive attitude towards learning.

The other is collaboration and hands-on learning. eTwinning emphasises collaborative and hands-on learning experiences where pupils work together to solve problems, create projects and achieve common goals. This collaborative approach cultivates

teamwork and communication skills. By working collaboratively, pupils not only deepen their understanding of the subject but also develop essential social and emotional skills such as empathy, resilience and self-confidence. The tangible outcomes of their collaborative efforts, such as a completed project or presentation, instil a sense of pride and accomplishment, boosting pupils' self-esteem and overall mental wellbeing. Moreover, the opportunity to connect with peers from different countries and cultures broadens pupils' perspectives, fosters empathy and understanding and may even lead to lasting friendships, enhancing their sense of belonging and social connectedness.

In this school, eTwinning projects play a crucial role in fostering a positive and inclusive classroom environment to support pupils' mental wellbeing. Through these projects, pupils are given the chance to choose topics, plan activities and create final products, granting them a sense of control over their learning journey. This empowerment allows pupils to express their interests and pursue

personal passions, enhancing their autonomy and self-esteem. When pupils feel heard and valued, they feel more confident and this significantly contributes to their overall wellbeing.

Also, as pupils showcase their work and receive recognition from peers and teachers, they feel appreciated and motivated to develop further. This positive reinforcement strengthens pupils' self-confidence and feelings of accomplishment, vital aspects of maintaining positive mental wellbeing.

COLLABORATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS THROUGH ETWINNING HELPS TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES

When addressing the challenges of promoting pupils' physical, emotional and mental wellbeing, the school faces several obstacles. With large classes and pupils from diverse backgrounds, meeting individual needs can be demanding. Moreover, there's often a stigma surrounding mental health issues, hindering early interventions, particularly when parents are reluctant to acknowledge their child's challenges.



Nevertheless, all teachers are dedicated to cultivating a supportive and inclusive school environment. The school prioritises open communication among staff, regularly discussing strategies for each pupil. Recently, the school updated their child protection policy with the support of the leadership team. Involving parents at their comfort level is crucial, and teachers also seek external support, such as workshops provided by organisations like the ARGE Jugend gegen Gewalt und Rassismus.

Participating in eTwinning projects can help tackle the challenges. The projects that encourage collaboration often yield enthusiastic participation and a sense of freedom among the pupils.

In supporting pupils' wellbeing, the school places great importance on engaging parents. Regular and transparent communication acts as a pivotal link between home and school, fostering collaboration in nurturing the welfare and academic advancement of pupils. Workshops are occasionally arranged for parents, offering them valuable insights and a platform to exchange ideas. Collaboration with the school's parents' association further strengthens the provision of a supportive atmosphere for all pupils.

In addition to parental involvement, the school collaborates with diverse local stakeholders such as sports associations, healthcare professionals and youth centres, enriching the support available to both pupils and teachers. Continuous professional development is also prioritised, with teachers attending various courses and workshops to remain updated on effective strategies. Furthermore, partnerships with nurseries and secondary schools ensure a seamless transition for pupils, promoting continuity in their wellbeing support.

Dimitrios Nikolaidis – 13th Helioupolis primary school, Athens, Greece

Dimitrios Nikolaidis is an English teacher at the 13th primary school in Helioupolis in Athens. He has a master's degree in educational leadership and management and he is doing his PhD in the field of innovation in education. He is a newly appointed teacher and he joined eTwinning in 2023 with the encouragement of his head teacher, who has worked on eTwinning projects for several years. At the moment, the school has 11 teachers registered in eTwinning. Two of them run eTwinning projects with foreign partners as part of the syllabus while the rest follow the active eTwinners' lead in facilitating class work on eTwinning activities and organising online events with partner schools.

PHYSICAL WELLBEING

Although the school is in an urban area, almost 20 minutes away from the centre of Athens by metro, it has a spacious playground that includes a five-a-side football field, a basketball court, a covered area



with benches for pupils to sit on and have a snack and a patch of land around half of the school building with pine trees and carob trees. This setting facilitates physical wellbeing activities such as music, dancing and art classes.

The school organises different initiatives to support pupils' physical wellbeing. Dimitrios pointed out that 'prioritising pupils' physical health is a fundamental element of our approach.' He elaborated, describing how pupils are encouraged to explore outdoor learning opportunities. 'One of our main initiatives involves embracing the natural environment', he explained. 'We often conduct classes, especially science and art sessions,

in the nearby forest as part of school trips.' He emphasised the impact of this approach, noting how it nurtures creativity and fosters physical activity as pupils traverse the forest terrain. In addition, outdoor learning activities make the pupils feel more relaxed away from the stressful conditions they have associated with class life. They therefore feel at ease and enjoy the learning process, which leads to successful knowledge acquisition.

Further illustrating their commitment to holistic wellbeing, Dimitrios recounted a collaborative [dance programme](#) led by the physical education teacher and him. 'We organised a dance-focused programme as part of an eTwinning project called Wellbeing through STREAM', he explained. 'Pupils were taught traditional Greek dances like *hassapiko* or *sirtaki* in our school playground.' As part of this



project, they created videos of these performances and shared them with partner schools across Europe to promote cultural exchange and physical engagement among pupils.

Transitioning to the wellbeing of the teaching staff, Dimitrios mentioned that there is not a dedicated programme for teachers, but they have informal opportunities that help them get in touch with each other, relax and promote their physical and social wellbeing.

MENTAL WELLBEING

‘When it comes to fostering mental wellbeing’, Dimitrios began, ‘our main goal is to cultivate resilience.’ He elaborated on this, emphasising the teachers’ role in preparing pupils to cope with a changing world. ‘We’re dedicated to equipping them with the skills needed to thrive as active citizens’, he explained. ‘At the



core of this effort is helping them become more resilient.’

In the morning, some pupils come to school before classes start. The school offers these pupils meditation classes that help them relax and focus on positive aspects of their lives. ‘Through guided discussions,’ said Dimitrios, ‘pupils are encouraged to express and address any sources of distress, which helps them improve their resilience skills.’

Another initiative that came from an eTwinning project is focusing on celebrating happy memories. According to Dimitrios, ‘Pupils reflect on joyful incidents from their school experiences, sharing these memories with classmates.’ He emphasised the transformative impact of these activities, fostering a sense of self-esteem and promoting resolution skills among pupils.

Exploring the role of eTwinning in fostering pupils’ mental wellbeing, Dimitrios noted that **‘The essence of eTwinning lies in collaboration. This aspect is closely connected to pupils’ mental wellbeing.’** He

elaborated, citing examples of how collaborative eTwinning projects enable pupils to share their learning experiences and memories with partners from different countries. ‘Through these projects,’ he explained, ‘Pupils understand that their emotions are not unique but shared with their peers. They develop a sense of connection with peers abroad, realising that they share interests and concerns. For example, they realise how much they have in common when they go through the profiles of their partners during ice-breaking activities. They are astonished that kids hundreds of miles away are fond of the same Netflix series or like the same singers or play the same video games.’ This realisation, Dimitrios noted, encourages pupils to overcome personal obstacles and adopt a team-oriented approach.

He further highlighted the transformative power of collaboration within the European community. **‘By participating in eTwinning projects,’** Dimitrios said, **‘pupils learn to explore beyond their personal boundaries. They work together to solve problems and**

draw from a pool of shared knowledge and experiences.’

He concluded that this fosters a sense of collective intelligence and empowers pupils to face challenges with resilience and a broader perspective.

Dimitrios also reflected on the impact of eTwinning in creating a positive and inclusive classroom environment. **‘eTwinning projects have played a significant role in fostering inclusivity and boosting pupils’ confidence.’** He recounted the story of a timid girl in his class who found her strength through eTwinning activities. ‘This girl, who was previously hesitant in class, discovered her talent in working with digital tools during eTwinning projects,’ he explained. ‘It was a transformative moment for her, as she realised she was good at something. **Through eTwinning, pupils feel liberated from the pressures of traditional classroom dynamics,**’ he noted. ‘There’s a sense of freedom and joy in pursuing activities they genuinely enjoy.’

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Reflecting on the importance of pupils' emotional wellbeing, Dimitrios shared insights into various school practices aimed at supporting pupils' emotional development. 'One notable initiative,' Dimitrios explained, 'Involves workshops conducted by the school psychologist.' These workshops provide pupils with a space to express negative emotions, fostering problem-solving skills and positive relationships among peers. One activity is called the 'Island Activity,' where pupils reflected on what they would bring if stranded on an island, showing what's important to them.

The availability of the school psychologist is limited as she is responsible for four more schools in the area, but the school maximises her impact through targeted projects. 'We've designed three six-week projects' Dimitrios added, 'to address emotional needs and discipline and behavioural issues that would potentially lead to bullying incidents if not taken care of right from the beginning.' Being proactive as well as caring

and supportive has enabled the school to smooth out relationships among pupils (and, subsequently, among parents), teaching pupils to handle conflicts in a healthy way. In addition to psychologist-led initiatives, Dimitrios described another initiative from the 'Wellbeing through STREAM' eTwinning project. As part of the project, they had the opportunity to experiment with various reading, technology and even engineering tasks to find ways that would make school life enjoyable, therefore motivating pupils to learn and feel that attending classes isn't a duty or a burden but a fun way to spend your day. One activity, black-out poetry, requires pupils to focus on words on a page that stir positive feelings such as happiness, joy, fun, appreciation, respect, contentment, etc. and black/blue out any other word. The product is a poem that can cheer pupils up. In addition, for the engineering task, the pupils designed a cube and on each side wrote a piece of advice that would boost happiness at school and home. Beyond the classroom, Dimitrios highlighted the extracurricular activities designed

to promote emotional wellbeing. 'The "Our Cinema Boards" project offers pupils an opportunity to connect through curated film screenings proposed by the Ministry of Education', Dimitrios explained. These screenings, aligned with educational guidelines, provide pupils with a platform for shared experiences and emotional growth.

Finally, Dimitrios highlighted the importance of fostering good relationships among teachers to promote their wellbeing. 'We spend time together, both professionally and socially,' he explained. 'We discuss difficult cases during meetings and then spend relaxed time together with snacks and drinks. It's informal but effective in promoting teacher wellbeing.'

WELLBEING AND COLLABORATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

To support pupils' wellbeing, the school actively involves parents in various ways. Regular meetings are held between teachers and parents to emphasise their role as active participants in their children's education and wellbeing at school. The school aims to build a sense



of joint responsibility between teachers and parents, encouraging them to work together for the benefit of the pupils. Joint initiatives are organised in collaboration with the parents' association, fostering active participation from parents without intervening in school proceedings. For example, teachers participate in after-hours events organised by parents, such as participating in eTwinning projects or inviting parents to prepare and serve treats at school performances or participating in welcome events for foreign teachers that do job shadowing at the school.

Furthermore, the school engages with other stakeholders, such as the local community and municipal authorities, to support

pupils' and teachers' wellbeing. By participating in local cultural events and environmental campaigns organised by the municipal authority, teachers and parents feel connected to the broader community. This involvement fosters a sense of belonging and strengthens bonds within the local community. Moreover, the school seizes every opportunity given by the municipal authorities to promote the pupils' wellbeing. For example, the school embraced the local 'Bench of Friendship' initiative and welcomed a multi-coloured-pencil-patterned bench for reading and art activities. Additionally, the school collaborates with experts and organisations, such as the school advisor, an artist-interpreter and the Japanese embassy to enrich pupils' experiences. For instance, pupils participated in an art project on emotions with the embassy, and their work will be showcased in an upcoming art exhibition.

Moreover, the teachers have researched and scheduled meetings and workshops with experts either to cope with burn-out and promote their wellbeing or to develop professionally and find ways to deal

with pupils' mourning and grief after the loss of a loved one. Overall, the school's efforts to involve parents and other stakeholders contribute to creating a supportive environment for pupils' wellbeing.

Miguela Fernandes – Agrupamento de Escolas de Batalha, Portugal

Miguela Fernandes has been a computer science teacher for more than two decades and she works at the Agrupamento de Escolas de Batalha, an eTwinning School in Portugal. The school caters to pupils from pre-school to secondary school, including vocational education with professional courses. Currently, Miguela teaches 11th and eighth graders, who are around 16-17 and 12-13 years old respectively. Despite no longer serving as an eTwinning ambassador (after 15 years in action), she continues to have a mentoring role in her school and she also taken on the role of citizenship coordinator of the school. This role involves coordinating activities related to citizen development, integrating them into the curriculum

where possible. Additionally, she volunteers as a mindful yoga teacher, providing support to both teachers and pupils and oversees the 'Movement through the Pause' project, which allows pupils to relax and engage in activities for relaxation during breaks.

PHYSICAL WELLBEING

In Miguela's school, there are several initiatives and programmes in place to address both pupils' and teachers' physical wellbeing. Like most schools, they have physical education classes, but they also offer additional opportunities through clubs and activities.

On Wednesday afternoons, pupils can participate in various sports and physical activities outside of regular classes. These activities are organised by the physical education teachers and cover a wide range of options, including running, badminton, tennis and more. The school encourages participation in these activities to promote physical health among pupils.

For teachers and school staff, there are also designated times for physical wellbeing activities.

One teacher volunteers her time to lead sessions in meditation and yoga. These sessions take place once a week, providing teachers and staff with an opportunity to relax and focus on their physical health. Additionally, there is another colleague who leads similar sessions on a different day of the week, ensuring flexibility for participants with varying schedules.

In Miguela's teaching approach, physical activity is integrated to enhance pupils' physical wellbeing. She explained that she tries to include quick breaks for stretching and breathing exercises during lessons. Additionally, team-building activities are utilised to keep pupils active and engaged while improving their teamwork skills.

When it comes to balancing screen time and sedentary activities with active learning experiences, particularly in the context of being an ICT teacher, Miguela adopts various strategies. While acknowledging the predominant use of computers in her classes, she recognises the importance of incorporating diverse activities. 'I use methods such as project-

based learning and team-building activities that don't necessarily require computers, providing pupils with opportunities to engage in physical movement and we do simple stretching and breathing exercises, including occasional yoga practices, to break up long periods of sitting and stimulate physical activity,' she said.

Reflecting on her teaching, Miguela always tries to align her methods with the preferences and needs of the pupils she has every year by incorporating problem-based learning and interactive discussions. This way, she creates a dynamic learning environment that nurtures pupils' physical health alongside their academic growth.

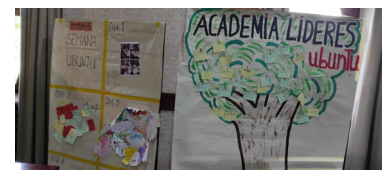
MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

In her approach to promoting pupils' mental wellbeing, Miguela reflected on the challenges faced by pupils, particularly those aged between 10 and 13, who experienced heightened levels of stress during the pandemic. Recognising the need for additional support in this regard, she mentioned the

importance of proactive measures within the school community and shared examples of school practices aimed at nurturing pupils' mental wellbeing, drawing from her own experiences.

One notable initiative implemented in her school is the [Ubuntu](#) week, which has been in place for the past four years. During this week-long programme, 10th graders engage in activities focused on self-knowledge, empathy, resilience and self-confidence. These pillars are integral to fostering a supportive and empathetic school environment where pupils learn to understand and empathise with each other's challenges. Through reflective exercises and team-building activities, pupils develop a sense of solidarity and mutual support.

Miguela has noticed that pupils often find themselves during the Ubuntu programme, delving deeper into their own thoughts and emotions. This self-reflection



allows them to better understand themselves and their feelings, which is a unique experience for many of them. At the same time, they learn empathy and begin to view their peers in a different way. They gain insight into their classmates' struggles and challenges, leading to increased respect, support and understanding among pupils. This shift in perspective helps pupils refrain from judgment and encourages them to actively listen to others.

Miguela also explained that the Ubuntu programme extends beyond a single week, with ongoing activities and opportunities for pupils to engage further. These include participation in the Ubuntu club, attending events like [Ubuntu Fest](#), and presenting their school's initiatives to broader audiences. This continuity ensures that the programme's principles and lessons have a lasting impact on pupils' personal and social development.

She finally explained that their school has a sizeable team of teachers involved in the Ubuntu programme and this team-based approach allows for greater flexibility in organising activities and ensures that the programme reaches a broader spectrum of pupils.

Building on the success of the Ubuntu week, similar activities have been introduced for fourth graders. This week-long programme offers younger pupils opportunities for self-discovery and teamwork, contributing to their overall wellbeing and social development. Despite initial challenges in accommodating the week-long activities within the curriculum, pupils have recognised the benefits of providing pupils with dedicated time for informal learning and personal growth.

Additionally, the school has implemented the 'Movement through the Pause' initiative, which offers pupils regular opportunities for mindfulness and relaxation. Through this programme, pupils can participate in guided meditation sessions and breathing exercises to

relieve stress and promote mental clarity. While logistical constraints have limited participation in these sessions, efforts are underway to integrate mindfulness practices into the school day more effectively.

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

When discussing emotional wellbeing, Miguela underlined the significance of observing pupils beyond their superficial interactions. By 'looking through' them, she explained that a deeper understanding of their emotional condition can be acquired gradually. In the classroom, she relies on intuition and empathy to detect when a pupil may be experiencing emotional distress. Changes in a pupil's behaviour or response patterns, particularly if they deviate from their usual behaviour, serve as red flags for her. When these signs are observed, she makes a conscious effort to reach out and offer support, acknowledging that a simple inquiry can sometimes

provide an opportunity for pupils to open up about their feelings.

In terms of support systems within the school, Miguela mentioned the availability of school psychologists and speech therapists. While formal channels exist for pupils to access these resources, time inside the classroom is limited. Even brief interactions during breaks or moments between lessons can offer pupils a sense of comfort and reassurance.

Reflecting on the role of eTwinning in promoting pupils' emotional wellbeing, Miguela emphasised the importance of engaging pupils in projects that excite them and foster a sense of community. For her, **'The primary goal of eTwinning is to provide pupils with enriching experiences that broaden their perspectives and foster meaningful connections with peers from around the world.'**

In discussing the ways eTwinning contributes to creating a positive and inclusive classroom environment, she highlighted that, by engaging in collaborative projects with peers from different locations, pupils have

the opportunity to interact with individuals they might not encounter otherwise. This inclusivity extends beyond geographical boundaries, as pupils of varying socio-economic backgrounds participate equally. This inclusivity contributes to a positive emotional atmosphere where pupils feel supported and appreciated.

One other key aspect of eTwinning's inclusivity is the emphasis on pupils' interests and strengths. The teacher observes that within the collaborative projects, pupils are encouraged to showcase their talents and preferences, whether this is through writing, video creation or other creative outlets. This approach allows for a more personalised learning experience, where each pupil's unique abilities are recognised and valued.

Furthermore, Miguela emphasised the importance of eTwinning projects in broadening the scope of classroom activities beyond traditional academic subjects. By focusing on topics that resonate with pupils' interests and passions, teachers can create a more dynamic and engaging learning environment.

COLLABORATION TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES

When pupils face challenges, such as emotional or behavioural issues, it's crucial to address them promptly. Miguela described a protocol where the school contacts parents to inform them of any concerns and works collaboratively to find solutions. Additionally, the school offers support from psychologists and counsellors, for pupils and, ideally, for teachers as well.

Involving parents in supporting pupils' wellbeing is vital. The school maintains regular communication with parents, informing them of any issues their child may be facing and seeking their involvement in finding solutions. Activities such as workshops and training sessions help parents understand how to support their children's development and wellbeing effectively.

While there are mechanisms in place to support pupils' wellbeing, Miguela noted a lack of formal support for teachers' mental health. However, the school fosters a culture of peer support among teachers, encouraging them to



seek assistance from colleagues or the school director if needed. Additionally, the Ubuntu club coordinator serves as a resource for both pupils and teachers, offering guidance and support when necessary.

The school collaborates with external organisations, such as mental health centres, to provide additional support and resources for pupils. These partnerships include inviting guest speakers to address various topics relevant to pupils' wellbeing, such as sexuality, adolescence and addictive behaviours.

**Laura Laborda-Martínez –
CIPFP Ciutat de l'Aprenent,
Valencia, Spain**

Laura Laborda-Martinez is an English teacher in one of the biggest vocational schools in Valencia, CIPFP Ciutat de l'Aprenent. The school has around 2,100 pupils and 230 teachers. They offer different vocational courses, including technical, beauty and cooking. One of the headmasters is involved in eTwinning projects and collaborates with Laura and

other teachers at the school, which has received the eTwinning School Label. Laura also has experience on Erasmus+ projects. Pupils at her school are mostly between 16 and 18 years old, some just out of compulsory secondary school and others pursuing specialised courses.

WELLBEING FOR TEACHERS AND PUPILS

According to Laura, the school has made some efforts to address the wellbeing of teachers. The headmaster organises online and on-site activities focusing on topics like mindfulness, healthy eating and exercise. They also organise fun events like the annual labyrinth outing, where in 2023 they biked through scenic spots, and this year, 2024, they are planning a walk along the river.



Addressing pupils' wellbeing is a bit trickier. With a tight schedule and limited break times, they do not have much chance for formal physical education classes. They do have a small area for games like football, volleyball and basketball during breaks, and there's a special day each year for a football tournament. However, Laura said, 'It's tough to fit in more physical activities with their busy schedules and limited facilities.'

Regarding mental wellbeing, Laura stated, 'In Spain, and at our school, there's a general belief that younger generations face more mental health issues compared to older ones. However, I believe that the frequency of mental health issues hasn't necessarily increased, rather, there's now a tendency to label every emotional state or behaviour with a diagnosis. In the past, feeling low or anxious might have been translated to temporary stress or personality traits. Nowadays, these experiences are often pathologised, leading to an increased perception of mental health issues among young people.'

One concerning trend she has noticed is the idealisation of mental health struggles on social media platforms. Some young people share their struggles openly online, gaining attention and followers by portraying themselves as victims of conditions like depression, anxiety or eating disorders. 'As educators', says Laura, 'it's crucial for us to mitigate these negative influences by promoting positive associations, motivating pupils to engage in activities that boost their self-esteem and wellbeing. We need to encourage them to lift their heads up from their screens and focus on building healthy, fulfilling lives rather than perpetuating a culture of suffering for attention'.

In their school, one of the primary challenges they face is its considerable size. Until recently, there were just two members of counselling staff responsible for addressing the needs of over 2,000 pupils, a difficult task given the range of pupils' issues, from suicidal ideation to gender transitions and familial struggles. Despite the addition of two more counsellors this year, the needs of the pupils

require more resources in order to be addressed effectively.

Also, while it's crucial to prepare pupils for the realities of the job market, fostering an environment of encouragement and support is equally vital. However, according to Laura, many teachers lack training in identifying and addressing mental health issues, sometimes resorting to disciplinary measures that may worsen the situation. She explained that over the years she has learned the importance of establishing emotional connections with pupils. Taking the time to listen, show genuine interest and create a supportive classroom environment can significantly impact pupils' wellbeing.

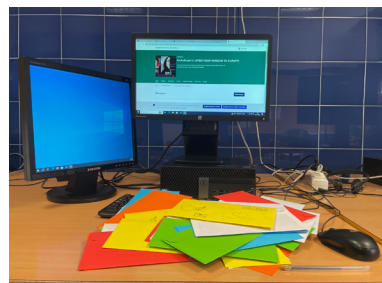
To this end, she dedicates the beginning of her classes to informal conversations, allowing pupils to share their weekends or any concerns they may have. This investment in building relationships reduces conflicts and promotes a sense of belonging among pupils.

Regarding parental involvement in supporting pupils' wellbeing, Laura explained that communication is primarily conducted through online

platforms. While face-to-face meetings may be arranged for more significant issues, she emphasised the importance of maintaining a respectful and understanding approach when interacting with parents. Collaboration with other stakeholders, such as community organisations and school coordinators, is also essential in creating a supportive network to address pupils' diverse needs, but logistical challenges and other priorities could pose obstacles to creating strong partnerships.

ETWINNING: A TOOL FOR PROMOTING PUPILS' WELLBEING.

eTwinning has proven to be a valuable tool in promoting pupil's wellbeing, providing an alternative to traditional teaching methods and textbooks. 'In Spain, where emphasis often falls heavily on exams and grammar', Laura



pointed out, **'eTwinning provides a refreshing alternative that encourages pupils to engage with the curriculum in a more dynamic and collaborative manner.'**

Through eTwinning projects, pupils are given the freedom to explore topics beyond the confines of grammar rules and exam formats. Instead, they work together on real-world tasks such as designing logos, motivating their peers or even preparing Kahoot questions about cultural stereotypes. These projects not only enhance their language skills but also foster a sense of curiosity and cultural awareness.

Moreover, eTwinning allows pupils to interact with peers from different countries, breaking down geographical and cultural barriers. This exposure to diverse perspectives not only enriches their

learning experience, but also boosts their confidence as they see their questions being answered and their contributions valued by pupils from other parts of the world.

Participating in eTwinning projects gives pupils a sense of agency and ownership of their learning journey. They become active participants rather than passive recipients of knowledge, which can have a positive impact on their overall wellbeing. By providing a platform for collaboration, creativity and cultural exchange, eTwinning empowers pupils to take charge of their education and fosters a sense of belonging in a wider community.

'For instance, if a pupil struggles with English-speaking tasks', Laura explained, 'I don't pressure them to engage in individual conversations with peers from other countries. Instead, I assign them tasks that make the most of their skills and interests, such as brainstorming ideas for a logo. This approach allows them to contribute meaningfully to the team while also boosting their confidence and sense of worth'.

72 eTwinning also plays a crucial role in fostering a supportive and empathetic classroom environment, particularly in supporting pupils' emotional wellbeing. It provides a safe space for emotional expression. Unlike traditional classroom settings, where time constraints may limit opportunities for discussion, eTwinning projects allow for more extended and meaningful exchanges. This gives pupils the chance to share their thoughts, feelings and concerns in a supportive and non-judgmental space. At the same time, it encourages creativity and collaboration. Laura explained, 'In the structured environment of traditional lessons, pupils who may not excel in English or other subjects may feel ignored. However, **eTwinning projects provide an opportunity for these pupils to shine by using their diverse talents and abilities.** Whether it's organisational skills or artistic talent, every pupil has something valuable to contribute. **This inclusive approach fosters a sense of belonging, encourages collaboration among peers**

and supports their emotional wellbeing.'

Laura gave some examples of eTwinning activities to explain further. Teaming up with the graphic arts pupils and the subject teachers, they worked on an innovative Erasmus+ project to create a guidebook about Valencia. While the subject teacher provided technical insights on book publishing, pupils contributed with their content ideas. Pupils worked on drafts, which they reviewed and corrected before granting approval for the final version and crafted the layout for the final edition.

Laura said, 'The outcome was truly impressive. The pupils produced captivating books showcasing Valencia and various international experiences. Through this collaborative endeavour, they not only developed their graphic design skills but also gained invaluable insights into different cultures and perspectives, enriching their learning journey.'

To evaluate the impact of eTwinning projects on pupils' overall wellbeing, Laura considers various criteria. These include levels of participation,

improvement in language skills and social interaction, ongoing communication with pupils from other countries and pupils' perceptions of the project. Positive indicators, such as increased self-confidence, proactive engagement and a sense of belonging suggest that pupils have benefitted from meaningful interactions and activities within the eTwinning community.

As a final word, Laura highlighted that, 'Promoting pupils' wellbeing requires a multi-faceted approach that encompasses teacher-pupil relationships, cultural sensitivity, collaborative projects and community involvement. Despite the challenges faced, teachers remain committed to creating a supportive learning environment where every pupil feels valued and empowered.'

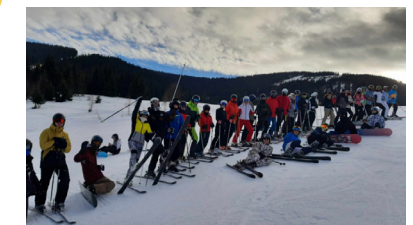
**Zuzana Polónyová –
Gymnázium P. J. Šafárika,
Akademika Hronca 1, Rožňava-
Slovakia**

Zuzana Polónyová is an English teacher at Gymnázium P. J. Šafárika, Akademika Hronca 1, Rožňava, an upper-secondary eTwinning

School in Slovakia. She has also been an eTwinning ambassador for the last five years and she organises training sessions to teach her colleagues how to use digital tools and work collaboratively on eTwinning projects. Her school actively promotes the wellbeing of pupils and teachers by organising and participating in a wide range of actions and activities and offering support when it is needed.

PHYSICAL WELLBEING

73 Physical wellbeing is a top priority at Zuzana's school in Rožňava, Slovakia, where a variety of initiatives cater to both pupils and teachers. Regular physical education classes form part of the curriculum, offering activities like sports games, gymnastics and dance to promote fitness among pupils. Beyond structured classes, the school fosters an environment that encourages holistic wellbeing, incorporating extracurricular





activities like hiking, ice skating, skiing trips and rollerblading. Health education is also emphasised, with initiatives such as 'Healthy Eating Week' aimed at educating pupils about nutrition and healthy lifestyles.

To further promote physical activity, the school organises challenges and events for both pupils and teachers, fostering teamwork as much as possible. These initiatives extend beyond the school, with annual team-building activities held in different parts of Slovakia. Collaboration with community organisations, including sports clubs and fitness centres, enriches the physical education experience, providing pupils with opportunities to explore interests outside of their class. Feedback from pupils drives the implementation of new initiatives, with the school administration actively supporting

collaboration with external organisations and local authorities. This collaborative approach ensures that pupils' needs are met and that initiatives are tailored to promote wellbeing effectively.

The school adopts a hybrid learning approach to balance screen time with physical activity, incorporating hands-on experiences, outdoor exploration and relaxation activities. Challenges and contests, including step challenges and creative contests, encourage pupils to stay active while reducing stress through relaxation activities. Teachers play a vital role in promoting physical activity, integrating movement-based learning strategies into their lessons. Activities like role-playing, drama classes and outdoor learning engage pupils physically while enhancing learning outcomes. Furthermore, teachers actively participate in physical challenges and activities alongside pupils, fostering a culture of wellbeing and inclusion.

MENTAL WELLBEING

Mental wellbeing is also a key focus at Zuzana's school, where distinguishing between mental wellbeing and emotional wellbeing is crucial. Mental wellbeing encompasses the perception of thriving in work and life, supported by a network of friends, family and colleagues, while emotional wellbeing centres on self-regulating emotions. Observing changes in pupil behaviour is essential for early intervention, with teachers actively monitoring signs of distress or vulnerability. These signs may include withdrawal, irritability, declining academic performance or difficulties in peer interactions. Collaborative efforts involving a team of teachers address various aspects of pupils' wellbeing, ensuring timely support and intervention.

In promoting mental wellbeing, collaborative learning and social interaction are prevalent. Projects like eTwinning facilitate connections with peers from other countries, fostering friendships and cross-cultural understanding. Zuzana said, 'This year we have a project

with Spain, Greece and France and we were really surprised at how they perceive certain things in a different way. For example, we sent them crocheted snowflakes to decorate their Christmas tree and the French pupils thought they were earrings!' These collaborations expose pupils to diverse cultures, promoting inclusivity and respect for differences. Through activities like pen pal projects, pupils gain insights into different cultural norms and practices, promoting a positive and inclusive learning environment.

Moreover, eTwinning encourages peer support, teamwork and positive relationships, enhancing pupils' overall wellbeing. Despite being online collaborations, these experiences have a lasting positive impact, with pupils maintaining friendships and supporting each other beyond the confines of the project.

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Emotional wellbeing is carefully monitored at Zuzana's school, where changes in behaviour serve as indicators of underlying emotional challenges. Observing pupils'



emotional responses helps identify signs of distress or anxiety, such as withdrawal from social interactions, mood swings, changes in appetite or sleep patterns and difficulty forming friendships. Teachers play an important role in guiding pupils on how to foster empathy and kindness towards others, even in online interactions.

In promoting pupils' emotional wellbeing, eTwinning projects serve as invaluable tools. Collaborative learning across different countries encourages peer support, teamwork and positive relationships, reducing feelings of loneliness and fostering a sense of belonging. By exposing pupils to diverse cultures and perspectives, eTwinning projects

promote empathy, tolerance and intercultural understanding. For instance, pupils learn to appreciate cultural differences, challenge stereotypes and build empathy towards others through cross-cultural collaborations.

Moreover, eTwinning projects create opportunities for pupils to express themselves and share their ideas and feelings in a supportive and respectful manner. Zuzana said, 'They feel valued, they feel respected and this helps them feel well.' Setting ground rules for online interactions fosters a safe space where pupils feel valued, understood and supported. Challenges and conflicts encountered during collaborative tasks are navigated with guidance



and encouragement from teachers, further enhancing pupils' emotional resilience and problem-solving skills.

Furthermore, collaborative practices extend beyond pupil interactions to include collaborative decision-making among teachers. Teachers collaborate on addressing school-level decisions or problems and leveraging each other's expertise and resources to find solutions. This collaborative culture, fostered in part by eTwinning projects, promotes a supportive and empathetic school environment where pupils' voices are heard and valued.

At Zuzana's school, pupil participation and expression of opinions are encouraged through various practices and educational activities like gardening projects and the Duke of Edinburgh Awards, a challenge for young individuals committed to volunteer work, personal development and adventure. During this expedition, teams of young people plan and undertake hiking trips in nature, developing their skills, learning collaboration and mastering challenges. UNICEF initiatives,

pupil parliaments, quizzes, proms and community service projects empower pupils to take ownership of their learning and contribute meaningfully to their school community. These activities not only enhance pupils' emotional wellbeing but also promote a sense of responsibility, leadership and civic engagement. Pupils are given opportunities to propose projects to improve the school environment by actively participating in budget allocation, decision-making and evaluation. One example is the implementation of the 'Buffet upgrade' project, where they painted the walls and bought new chairs and seating in the hallways, with the support of parents and sponsors.

CHALLENGES TURNED INTO STRATEGIES

Also, at Zuzana's school, addressing the physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of pupils presents several challenges, primarily revolving around academic pressure, social issues and mental health concerns. Pupils feel the weight of academic expectations as they prepare for university entrance exams, leading



to heightened stress and a desire to excel academically. Additionally, creating supportive environments, fostering positive relationships and providing access to resources like counselling services are essential but challenging tasks.

To tackle these challenges, the school deploys various strategies such as:

- implementing mental health awareness campaigns;
- mindfulness activities and peer support programmes;
- collaborating with other schools and educators, leveraging platforms like eTwinning to share best practices and resources;
- regularly assessing pupils' wellbeing through surveys, observations and feedback sessions;
- gathering input from pupils and stakeholders, resulting in the adaptation of strategies to better meet pupils' needs and preferences over time;
- empowering pupils to take an active role in promoting their own wellbeing.

Involving parents and other stakeholders is crucial in supporting pupil wellbeing. This is achieved by:

- maintaining open communication with parents through newsletters, parent-teacher meetings, workshops and social media platforms. Parents are encouraged to participate in school activities, support networks and decision-making processes;
- collaborating with community organisations, sports clubs, local authorities and sponsors to provide resources and

support for pupil wellbeing initiatives;

- involving former pupils as mentors, guest speakers or volunteers to support current pupils' wellbeing.

Overall, this eTwinning school follows a holistic approach to promoting pupil wellbeing that encompasses collaboration, cultural awareness, assessment and stakeholder engagement, ensuring that pupils feel supported, valued and empowered in their educational journey.

Wellbeing activities for eTwinning projects

Schools have an essential role to play in supporting pupils' wellbeing. The social and emotional skills, knowledge and behaviours that young people learn in the classroom can help them develop long-term attitudes towards wellbeing. In this chapter, we will look at some activities to use in your eTwinning projects to support pupils' wellbeing.

These were inspired by activities carried out by experienced teachers and shared in dedicated groups. They are set according to the age range of the pupils involved. They show the collaboration between two partner classes, but they can be adapted and carried out with more partners.

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Soothe yourself!

Age category: ECEC

Young children's development in their early years of education significantly predicts later success in their academic career. Building a supportive and inclusive classroom environment is a key part of children's learning. It builds the steppingstone for all their schooling. The following activity is suitable for very young children and can be adjusted for your specific classroom needs.

DESCRIPTION:

Two classes organise an online meeting where they play the following games:

- Pupils from each class have a pack of picture cards or illustrations depicting various emotions (happy, sad, angry, surprised, scared, etc.). It would be nice if the pupils did the drawings. Pupils from each class show their cards to their

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peers and their peers have to recognise the emotions.

- Once they go through all the cards, pupils from each class choose a card in turns. A pupil from one class will be the 'actor', while the others from the other class will be the 'guessers'. The actor will secretly choose an emotion card without showing it to the others. They will then use their body and facial expressions to portray the chosen emotion without speaking, while the guessers from the partner class observe and try to guess which emotion is being acted

out. After the actor has finished portraying the emotion, the guessers take turns guessing which emotion they think it is. They can express their guesses by saying the name of the emotion or by mimicking the facial expression and body language themselves. The pupils name the emotion in their own language and learn how to say the same emotion in the language of their partners. After the video call, the teachers can take a moment to discuss the different emotions and to ask the children to share times when they felt those emotions

and what caused it. This helps reinforce their understanding of emotions and provides opportunities for emotional expression and empathy.

The classes then move to making a self-soothe box. In this box, they put things that can be taken out in times of need. This can be when they are very angry, when they miss home or when they need to relax or calm down. The children are encouraged to take things from home, such as a picture of family, pets, happy memories or a small toy like a teddy bear, playdough, fidget toy, a small puzzle etc.

The pupils will also make a hug jar to put in this box. The children draw and cut out many tiny hearts. They can draw on the hearts or paint them. After the hearts have been cut out and decorated, they will hand them out to each other, and each pupil will fill a jar with these hearts. The idea is that when the pupil has very big feelings and they become overwhelmed, they can go to the self-soothe box and take out a heart from the jar. They can give this heart to a person they would like a hug from to signal that it's

time to stop for a moment and help a friend out.

When the self-soothe box has been filled, the teacher can take pictures of them and upload them to TwinSpace. Teachers can share the pictures with their class and discuss similarities and differences. Then, they can ask their pupils to decide on:

- visual reminders of people, places, pets and memories that are important to them;
- sounds or songs that soothe or calm them;
- smells that calm them;
- items that calm them when they touch them.

All this can be compiled into an e-book that can be shared with the whole-school community and parents and can be a nice guide for ideas to soothe yourself.

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Dance for your wellbeing

School-level: Primary school

Primary schools play an essential role in supporting their pupils to make healthy lifestyle choices and understand the effect their decisions have on their wellbeing. Childhood is a critical period for the development of long-term attitudes towards wellbeing. The social and emotional skills, knowledge and behaviours children learn at this age help them build resilience and set the pattern for how they manage wellbeing throughout their lives. The following activity can be done with children of primary school level.

DESCRIPTION:

Two classes organise an online brainstorming session where they discuss what they think wellbeing is. Pupils from both classes share

their thoughts and ideas, which can be documented in a shared digital space (e.g. Padlet, digital map, word cloud).

The two classes add to the brainstorm by discussing how 'dancing' may be good for their wellbeing.

Suggested answers:

- It is good because you are active and that is good for your body;
- It can help to make you feel less stressed;
- It is fun to do with your friends so it can make you happy.

The teachers divide their pupils into small international groups

and assign each group a specific aspect of the benefits of dance for wellbeing. For example, physical health, mental health, social connections, self-expression, etc. The teachers provide resources for pupils to conduct research on their assigned topics, either through books or online sources and encourage the groups to brainstorm ideas for their section of a poster, considering both text and visuals.

Once each group has completed their section of the poster, the teachers bring the groups together to integrate their work into a cohesive whole. In an online meeting, each group presents their part of the poster explaining the

benefits of dance on wellbeing as depicted in their section.

Teachers can encourage pupils to share examples from their own experience. They can also find exemplary videos on the internet and discuss how they relate to the benefits of dancing for wellbeing.

Lastly, the two classes individually create a playlist. Each child adds a song to the playlist. It can be a song that they like to listen to when they feel happy, sad, when they want to dance, etc. The classes upload the playlist to their TwinSpace and listen to each other's playlist. The classes can have a video call to end the activity with a dance party!

Move to happiness

School-level: Lower secondary school

Supporting learners is vital through this critical period of development, marked by rapid cognitive, emotional and bodily changes. Helping pupils understand themselves and develop a positive

sense of wellbeing helps them develop resilience and mental health skills. The following activity is suitable for pupils in lower secondary school and can be adapted to suit the needs of your pupils.





DESCRIPTION:

Two classes work on a shared Padlet and discuss what wellbeing means to them. The teachers encourage them to talk about five different strands of wellbeing:

- Emotional wellbeing;
- Physical wellbeing;
- Mental wellbeing;
- Social wellbeing;
- Digital wellbeing.

The classes are encouraged to share their own experiences of the different strands of wellbeing. How does sleep affect their ability to manage stress? Do they have any strategies to support their wellbeing? How do strong social connections contribute to their emotional wellbeing? Have they had

instances where digital technologies have had a negative impact on their wellbeing? Or has it only had a positive effect on their wellbeing? The classes discuss this and make a digital mind-map that can be shared on TwinSpace.

Separately, the classes engage in a movement-oriented wellbeing activity in a big space (e.g. gym, playground, empty classroom). The teacher draws a line in the middle with chalk or makes a line with duct tape. The teacher emphasises that this activity will only be successful if the pupils treat each other with respect, kindness and trust. During the activity, the teacher will say a statement related to wellbeing. When a pupil feels this question/statement resonates with them, they cross the line. This activity is meant to make pupils aware of how

wellbeing affects themselves and their peers. The following questions and statements can be asked: 'Cross the line if:

- (As a test run) You go to school at (insert name of your school).
- You have ever felt overwhelmed by your emotions.
- You have never been bullied.
- You have low self-esteem.
- You don't feel comfortable sharing your feelings with friends.
- You have felt like you feel different to others on social media.
- You have ever been told that you should not cry, show your emotions or be afraid.
- You have ever felt that you do not have enough time to relax and recharge.
- You have ever felt alone, unwelcome or afraid.
- You have ever dealt with stress or sadness by eating unhealthy food.

- You have ever felt pressure to sound or seem better than how you felt in that moment.'

Think of more questions that are suitable for your specific class.

The classes first reflect on this activity separately to encourage group connection. Later, in a video call, the two classes reflect on the activity together. Did each class learn different things? What did it make them realise? How do they view the wellbeing in their class and their peers?

After the discussion in the video call, the classes are divided into smaller international groups. Each group gets one of the three activities described below. Each group is asked to come up with an activity they can do based on this framework and what they learned from their reflections in the earlier video call. They do this activity in an online format and each group presents their own idea. The pupils are free to design any activity they like.

Activity 1:

Create a social media campaign that promotes a positive self-image.

Activity 2:

Design a collaborative art project that encourages physical activity.

Activity 3:

Come up with an idea for a digital game that teaches pupils mindfulness exercises.

After the activity presentations, both classes can carry out the activities and each share their experiences with them on their TwinSpace.

You have to do it by yourself, but never alone

School- level: Upper secondary school

Educational transitions can be a risk factor for pupils' academic motivation and wellbeing. How well a pupil fits into their school environment is crucial to their wellbeing. When pupils are motivated for their academic success, their self-improvement goals and growth are also positively affected. In return, this positively

influences their social-emotional behaviour, and therefore their wellbeing. The following activity can be done and adjusted for pupils in upper-secondary education.

DESCRIPTION:

Two classes are divided into smaller international groups of four to six pupils. The teachers explain to the groups that their wellbeing is very much affected by how well they

deal with stressors in their life. One way people deal with challenging or stressful situations is coping strategies such as problem-solving or seeking help. The pupils explain that as children they may have had different kinds of comfort strategies they liked to use to soothe and calm themselves such as playing their favourite game, watching a film, cuddling their soft toys, etc. The pupils in groups are now asked to go down memory lane and think of the strategies they used as children. They record this on a digital platform such as Padlet, Google Docs, etc. Teachers can encourage them to share why they used these strategies and how they were helpful. When they have done that, the groups move on to adding coping strategies they now use as teenagers. Are there similarities? Do their coping strategies still serve the same purpose? Again, their answers should be recorded on a digital platform.

The teachers explain to the pupils the importance of seeking help as a coping strategy. The teachers can do a reflection exercise with them to get them thinking about how they seek for help and who from. They

can organise it online (Kahoot, Slido, etc.) or as a plenary discussion.

The following questions can be asked:

- Who do you go to first when you are stressed or upset?
- Why do you go to that person for help?
- When do you ask for help? Only when you are feeling negative emotions or also when you feel positively about something?
- Who in this school might a pupil with mental health concerns go to for help?
- To provide good peer support to a friend who is dealing with mental health issues, what would you need?

Next, the classes go back into the groups of four to six pupils they were divided into earlier and organise a video call or use a collaborative tool to write down their answers. Each group receives two scenarios. Each scenario is centred around an individual who needs help from either an adult or



a friend. They discuss each scenario with questions such as:

- Is this a serious situation?
- Should the character talk to someone? If so, who?
- What actions might follow?

The groups make an online action plan for what the characters should do. When the plan is finished, each group presents their scenario and action plan in a plenary video call. When all groups have presented, the groups can be encouraged to give feedback to each other and discuss all the plans. The action plans are collected and shared on the TwinSpace afterwards.

The following scenarios can be used as a starting point, but pupils are also encouraged to come up with their own scenarios:

- Ash has had the same close group of friends since the start of year seven. The four of them always hang out at lunchtime. Over the last week though, Ash's friends have been leaving him out – not waiting at the lockers or going off with another group and leaving him out. Ash also found out that some kids in his class posted some negative comments about him on Facebook and that his own group of friends added comments to the post.
- Lola was allowed to go to her friend's older brother's birthday party. She was excited to be allowed to go, as usually, her mum refused to let her go out with older kids. One of the older boys was really nice to her and she danced with him a lot, and they kissed when she thought no one was watching. The next morning when Lola checked Instagram, someone had posted a photo of them kissing. She felt embarrassed and worried that everyone would be looking at them and making comments about her.
- George has started missing school a lot and is falling behind with his work. He stays home to look after his mum who is suffering from depression and recovering from a problem related to the use of alcohol. He has not told his friends what is

wrong with his mum, but they know he has some kind of home duties. His friends notice that the teachers think he is just skipping school.

- Francesca has been on a long diet and is now really skinny and never seems to eat. She thinks she's overweight and won't wear shorts or a swimsuit. She always seems to be moody and unhappy. One hot day, all the

girls in the group go to a friend's house to swim. Francesca feels left out but doesn't want her friends to see her in her swimsuit.

- Jannus got a new haircut over the weekend. As soon as he gets to school, some of the older kids start teasing him about the haircut. His friends don't say anything to make him feel better.

Are you mentally aware?

School-level: Initial vocational education and training

When we talk about wellbeing in school, we mean that pupils have the ability to develop their natural talents and enjoy learning in a creative way. As young adults

spend a considerable amount of time in school, this makes school a key space for promoting mental and physical wellbeing. Additionally, incorporating socio-emotional learning, mental health, wellbeing and bullying prevention programmes in schools is one of the most effective ways to support the



psychological wellbeing of young people. The following activity can be adjusted and used in IVET classes.

DESCRIPTION:

The teacher starts by sharing how wellbeing impacts job satisfaction, productivity and overall quality of life. They do a meditation exercise where they visualise their ideal work life. What would their work-life balance look like? Where would they like to work and what position would they like to have? What would their relationships look like? What challenges may they face? They create a digital vision board based on this visualisation afterwards. This digital vision board can be a digital poster/infographic with images, text and videos or it can be made as a word cloud. This is uploaded to their TwinSpace and shared with the other class. After this, a video call is held where the two classes discuss common themes in their vision boards and what is needed to make their visions happen in their lives.

The teachers explain that the pupils will be divided into smaller groups, involving pupils from both classes, and they will collaborate to make

a virtual awareness campaign. This awareness campaign can be based on the following topics or the challenges that came out during the visualisation exercise, such as:

- Stress management;
- Anxiety;
- Depression.

International groups are assigned to research a topic and gather information, statistics and personal stories. They then create informative posters, flyers or digital graphics to share key messages and resources about the topic, including descriptions, identification methods, coping strategies and support sources.

Each school then organises an awareness event where groups present their campaigns, distribute the resources and materials they made and engage in discussions about mental health, inviting relevant experts to contribute.

During this awareness campaign, pupils should be encouraged to share their own experiences or strategies for coping with mental health challenges, fostering

empathy and understanding within the school community. This can be done in the form of panel discussions, a podcast where the pupils interview each other or pre-recorded videos.

Conclusion

This publication investigated and analysed the various facets of how eTwinning projects can be connected to the wellbeing of pupils and teachers. 'Wellbeing at school' is defined in the European Education Area as 'a state in which pupils are able to develop their potential, learn and play creatively'. Concretely, wellbeing at school means:

- feeling safe, valued and respected;
- being actively and meaningfully engaged in academic and social activities;
- having positive self-esteem, self-efficacy and a sense of autonomy;
- having positive and supportive relationships with teachers and peers;
- feeling a sense of belonging to their classroom and school;
- feeling happy and satisfied with their lives at school.

We started with policies and theories, then we presented some eTwinning projects and we involved practitioners via eTwinning stories.

We then concluded with activities that can be carried out by any teacher.

The examples from eTwinners show that teachers across various educational levels prioritise a holistic approach to nurturing the wellbeing of pupils and themselves. These teachers are dedicated to addressing physical, mental and emotional aspects through diverse whole-school strategies, demonstrating resilience and creativity. There is a wide range of activities organised at schools from gardening and outdoor learning to meditation and yoga classes. The schools encourage physical activity through step counts and monthly challenges or integrate movement-based learning strategies into lessons. They also conduct workshops for pupils with therapy dogs and creative after-school workshops or focus on activities on self-knowledge, empathy and resilience. In many cases, collaboration with parents and other stakeholders offers extra support for pupils' and staff's wellbeing.

According to teachers, participating in eTwinning projects facilitates the

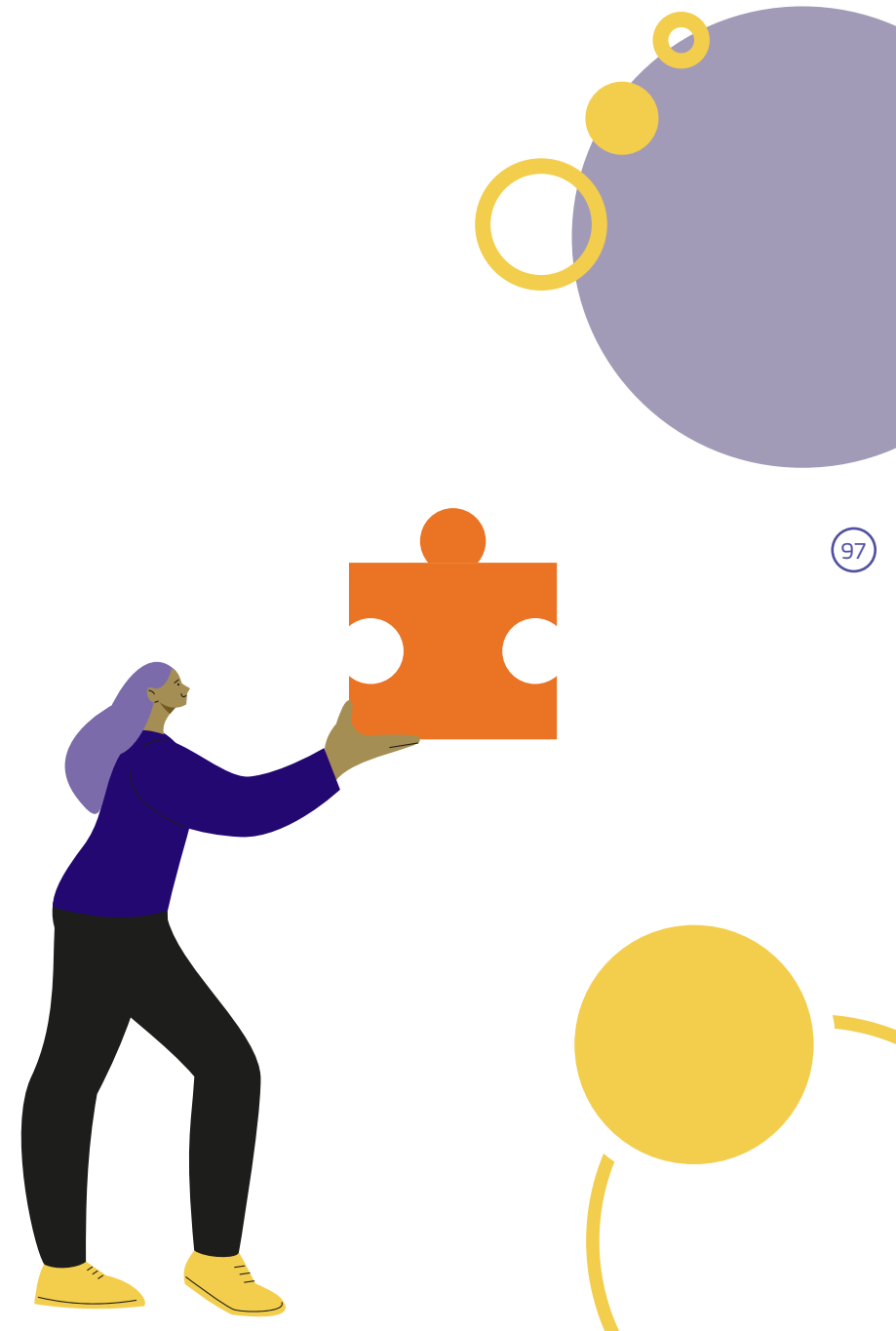


aforementioned wellbeing elements. Therefore, eTwinning projects emerge as a means of promoting wellbeing and fostering curiosity, collaboration and hands-on learning experiences that enhance pupils' cognitive, social and emotional development. These projects not only empower pupils to take control of their learning but also strengthen their sense of belonging and connection with peers from diverse backgrounds and different countries. Many teachers try to incorporate emotional wellbeing into their eTwinning projects, encouraging expression and inclusivity.

Addressing wellbeing at school is a long journey and there are several challenges, including the size of the school, the limited support staff such as counsellors and psychologists and the lack of training for teachers. However, the schools organise activities during school hours or extra-curricular activities, either as an initiative from individual teachers (like the example of Estonia with healthy meals and sports week) or by involving community organisations, sports clubs, local authorities and other stakeholders (like the

example of the Austrian school that participates in the campaign of Graz city, 'Ich hab' Mut' (I have courage)).

Most of the teachers highlighted that the most important strategy is building emotional connections with pupils through informal conversations and fostering a supportive classroom environment, a safe space where every pupil feels valued and empowered. According to their views, one of the best ways to achieve this is through eTwinning. We hope that these examples will inspire educators to continue integrating wellbeing into their teaching practices and further engage in eTwinning projects centred around it.



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Annex

Below are all the partner teachers by eTwinning projects and their schools.

A Rainbow of Emotions

- Paola Schettin, Neue Grundschule Potsdam, Germany
- Kristin van der Meer, Neue Grundschule Potsdam, Germany
- Maria Nicoletta Pinto, ICS 'Marconi-Michelangelo' di Laterza, Italy
- Maria Mortato, ICS 'Marconi-Michelangelo' di Laterza, Italy
- Monia Bagnardi, ICS 'De Amicis-Milizia' di Oria, Italy
- Joanna Mach, Szkoła Podstawowa im. ks. Stanisława Słotwińskiego w Kamieniu, Poland
- Renata Wieczorek, Szkoła Podstawowa im. ks. Stanisława Słotwińskiego w Kamieniu, Poland
- Marisol Montanes, CPEIP Huertas Mayores, Spain
- Marisa Garde, CPEIP Huertas Mayores, Spain
- ## HERE & NOW with Art and Mindfulness at School
- Sonja Pribela-Hodap, Dječji vrtić Viškovo, Croatia
- Jasmina Puž, Dječji vrtić Viškovo, Croatia
- Laurence Bessiere, EEPU Anne-Laure, France
- Χριστίνα Μπακόλα, Ολοήμερο Δημοτικό Σχολείο Λάρισας, Greece
- Ελένη Κροθιανάκη, 37ο Νηπιαγωγείο Ηρακλείου, Greece
- Αθανασία Ζηκύρη, Δημοτικό Σχολείο Αρμενίου, Greece
- Evrim Acet, Gürçeşme Leman Alptekin İlkokulu, Türkiye
- Lina Seferoglu, Panevėžio pradinė mokykla, Lithuania
- Laura Liepinė, Panevėžio pradinė mokykla, Lithuania

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Florentina Băncănu, Scoala Gimnaziala Nr. 9 Resita, Romania

Mindfulness matters

Alenka Miljević, OŠ Braće Radića, Croatia

Anita Simac, OŠ Petra Preradovića, Croatia

Debora Girard, ICS 'Papa Giovanni XXIII' di Savigliano, Italy

Chiara Sabatini, ITT 'Allievi-Sangallo' di Terni, Italy

RRH: Respectful Responsible Healthy online communication

Αθανασία Καββαδία, 3ο Γυμνάσιο Κέρκυρας, Greece

Daisy De Gioannini, Licei 'Giolitti-Gandino' di Bra, Italy

Stasele Riskiene, Šiaulių r. Kuršėnų Lauryno Ivinskio gimnazija, Lithuania

Conxita Payán, Jesús, Maria i Josep, Spain

The Happiness Project: be active, be inclusive!

Joanna Muszalska, II Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Marii Konopnickiej w Inowrocławiu, Poland

Lacramioara Fira, Seminarul Teologic Liceal Ortodox „Sf. Ioan Gura de Aur”, Romania

Ieșeanu Dumitru, Instituția Publică Liceul Teoretic „Mihai Eminescu”, Moldova

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For questions about eTwinning, please contact us by email:

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About the European School Education Platform

Launched in 2022, the European School Education Platform is the meeting point for all school staff (from early childhood education and care to primary and secondary education, including initial vocational education and training), researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders in the school education field.

The European School Education Platform is the new home of eTwinning. Since its launch in 2005, eTwinning has grown from a grassroots initiative into an active school community, and has involved more than one million school staff across Europe and beyond.

eTwinning specific services on the platform are only accessible to validated school staff. This means that eTwinning provides a safe digital platform including resources, projects kits and pedagogical guidance where teachers are engaged in various activities from designing and implementing European collaborative projects to networking, participating in virtual groups and peer learning. In addition, the platform offers many professional development opportunities, such as webinars and training courses, many of which are designed specifically for eTwinners.

The European School Education Platform and the eTwinning community are funded by Erasmus+, the European programme for education, training, youth and sport. They are initiatives of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture. The eTwinning community also exists thanks to the support of the National Support Organisations, funded by Erasmus+ under grant agreements with the European Education and Culture Executive Agency, and the platform's Supportive Partners.

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