



Report on the second year

March 2024 - February 2025

David Rycroft, March 2025

## Introduction

Over the past year, **Teach Peace** has continued to grow and evolve, expanding its reach and deepening its impact in schools across Europe. From March 2024 to February 2025, the project successfully launched new initiatives in **Slovenia, Belgium, and Spain**, while maintaining momentum in five of the six projects initiated in the previous year. This expansion has allowed more students and teachers to experience the transformative benefits of mindfulness, emotional regulation, and compassionate communication in their daily school lives.

Teach Peace's core approach—training educators to integrate these practices into their own classrooms—has proven both effective and sustainable. In several schools, **morning meditation routines, gratitude exercises, and mindfulness corners** have become part of everyday school culture. Students have shared how these practices help them manage stress, improve focus, and navigate their emotions more skilfully. Teachers, too, have found the training personally enriching, reporting greater resilience and connection with their students.

Despite these successes, the year was not without challenges. In some countries, initial interest from schools did not always translate into sustained commitment, highlighting the need for stronger engagement with teaching staff and school leadership. Looking ahead, Teach Peace aims to **strengthen partnerships, expand its network of trainers, and increase visibility through a conference and outreach efforts**.

This report provides an overview of the past year's progress, featuring case studies from participating schools, with trainer, teacher and student remarks. It is a testament to the power of small, daily actions in creating a culture of peace in schools.

## Teach Peace Activity at a Glance

March 2024 - February 25

COUNTRY	SCHOOL	MAIN PERSON	COMMENTS
Slovenia	Sveta Ana [primary]	Sasa Kerkos / Barbara Pristovnik	First phase of teacher-training complete; whole school involved
Belgium	Orangerie [primary]	Sophie Hardy	Following-up from last year with mentoring staff
Belgium	Ile aux Trésors [primary]	Sophie Hardy	All staff trained by Sophie, who is the Head Teacher
Spain	Badajoz [primary]	Rosa Sebrían / Vicki Martin-Moreno	Following-up from last year with implementation
Spain	Buenos-Aires, Madrid [primary]	Vicki Martin-Moreno	In-depth teacher training underway
Spain	Bitàcola, Barcelona [secondary]	Germán Rodriguez	Participating staff going on retreat, March 2025
Spain	INS Antoni de Martí i Franquès, Tarragona [secondary]	Alfonso Schwartz	School has confirmed interest and is committed to starting project
England	BASVIC [secondary]	Fiona Clarke	Workshops given to 16-18 year olds
England	Bristol [secondary]	Ceri Seel	Ceri is in contact with a group of schools, and looking for a school to commit
Scotland	St. Cadoc's [primary]	Neil Fogg	Following-up from last year with empowering students to lead mindfulness exercises
Ireland	St Patrick's [primary]	Fiona Clarke	Following-up from last year with Parenting course
Ireland	ETSSW - Educate Together Secondary School Wicklow	Fiona Clarke	Many conditions already established to start a project
Ireland	Our Lady's Dublin [primary]	Elsa O'Regan	Start of teacher training planned for May 2025
Germany	Eiffel [secondary]	Tui Schrijver / Hanna Ebinger	Tui is talking to colleagues before approaching senior management
Austria	University College of Teacher Education of Christian Churches	Martin Schauhofer / Karin Ertl	TeachPeace has accepted the College's invitation to deliver a one-day workshop in 2026
France	[secondary]	Sophie Tessier	Sophie in preparatory dialogue with school
Holland	[secondary]	Reinier van der Heuvel	Project preparations paused
Italy		Valentina Nizado	Valentina attended Mind With Heart's teacher-training

## School Case-studies

### Sveta Ana Primary School, Slovenia

The school has been working with trainer Saša Kerkoš since September 2024. So far they have had 6 workshops (1,5 hour each) and a live event on 11 January 2025. They also had a short event for the entire school in which Saša participated via zoom video and guided the students with a breathing and a grounding activity. **All 31 teachers**, including the principal, participated in the training.

#### The story so far

The Teach Peace project in Slovenia serves as a valuable case study, demonstrating how the approach can be successfully implemented in diverse European educational settings. The initiative began when Barbara, a teacher at the school, expressed interest by completing the 'Expression of Interest' form on the Teach Peace website. Following initial discussions via Zoom with David, the director of Teach Peace, the project engaged Saša, a Slovenian national based in Australia with expertise in implementing and researching compassion-based practices in workplaces.

Together, Barbara, Saša, and David designed an intervention tailored to the school's specific context. Barbara provided insight into the school environment, while David contributed knowledge of effective school-based strategies. Saša developed a structured approach that aligned with the school's needs and objectives.

A key feature of the implementation is the use of the school's existing loudspeaker system to guide a **daily two-minute mindfulness exercise** for all students. This structured, school-wide participation ensures that every student engages in the practice, reinforcing a collective shift towards mindfulness and emotional awareness. Furthermore, the involvement of all staff in the project enhances its sustainability and impact.

As the initiative progresses, the potential for **whole-school cultural transformation** is significant. With daily mindfulness exercises embedded into the school routine, Teach Peace is poised to make a lasting impact on both students and teachers, providing a model that can be adapted to other educational settings across Europe.

#### Teacher voices

*Teach Peace is a life-changing project. I can't imagine what would have become of me given recent challenges. But I carry this knowledge and these experiences with me all the time and it helps me more than I can even express. (B. Š.)*

*I was reluctant at first and even after our first session. But then in the second session, it was as if something clicked. I felt the effect and now I am even teaching my grandson how to stop and breathe instead of react. (I. R.)*

*We have experimented with the exercises individually and in classrooms since the start of the project. Presentations about the project were done in each of the older classes (age 11-14/15). On Monday, February 10, we had a school assembly in which our principal introduced the implementation of the project school-wide. On February 12, we started with our morning routine in which the entire school participated - 2 minutes of breathing in the beginning of our first period.*

### **Student voices**

*I like breathing in the morning. It makes me feel calmer and I feel I can focus better in class. (J. B.)*

*I really enjoy breathing in the beginning of the lesson. I like the silence and it is so peaceful that I feel better than before. I wish we could do it in the end of our classes, too. (Z. Z.)*



## Orangerie Primary School, Belgium

Following up from last year's training, 2 meetings were held with the two teams to draw up a schedule of trainer-visits for each class. Class visits lasted between 30 and 50 minutes each. There were 15 classes in all. Sometimes the teacher-trainer and mentor, Sophie Hardy, visited classes several times responding to teacher requests.

The school has introduced meditation techniques, relaxation and emotions-work in every class (3 to 13 years).

*The children love it and are much calmer, so we usually do it at the start of the day to get things off to a good start!*

The day usually starts with a moment of meditation and/or relaxation.

They also cultivate mindfulness in gym class.

Before exams, they take a moment to meditate.

All students have a gratitude booklet.

A 'Zen corner' has been created in classrooms for younger students (6 classes) where the children can go to relax if they feel the need.

*'In the Zen corner, I can calm down if I need to by meditating and doing my breathing exercises'.*

*'Since I've been meditating before exams, I feel I'm doing better work and concentrating better'.*

### Some anecdotes from teachers

In Loïc's class (10-11yrs) there's an autistic pupil. It's very difficult to teach her when she has a crisis and Loïc uses breathing techniques to calm himself and the class.

In Delphine's (nursery school) there's a very challenging pupil (behaviourally), and it's difficult for her to do the exercises without annoying the others, so when she doesn't want to do the mindfulness session, Delphine sends her to the other class to help the younger ones.

In Oriane's class (5 yrs), the exercises enabled her to notice that she herself was agitated.

In Séverine's class (5-6yrs) she leads a mindfulness session before or after rhythmic singing. Alternation has a calming effect on the class.

In Nancy's class (11yrs) 3 boys were disruptive and embarrassed when they did the exercises and made the others laugh. We've rearranged the class so that they look at, and distract, each other. If some of them don't want to do the meditation exercise, they don't have to, but they are asked not to disturb the others. Still room for improvement here.

In Cécile's class (10yrs), students do a gratitude notebook but one pupil wanted to do an 'ingratitude notebook' 🤔 because it's difficult for him to talk about positive things. This raised a good discussion where most students felt it was good for them to think about positive things, but it's sometimes difficult to find something positive.







## Ecole Ile aux Trésors, Wavre, Belgium

Number of **teachers trained: 12**

The trainees took the course from October 2024 to January 2024. There were three 2-hour sessions and two 6-hour training days (18 hours in all).

The training consisted of a presentation of the project, an explanation of the benefits of meditation (+ relaxation, work on emotions), the beneficial effects on the human body, a presentation of working tools (books, audio, cards, instruments, massages) and meditation techniques (mindfulness, breath meditation, walking meditation, sound meditation, bodyscan) and exercises to develop empathy, gratitude, kindness...

Explanations on: 'how to translate these exercises to children' were given and shown in each class.

### Teacher voices

'The children love it, they clamour for the daily meditation session'.

'I was sceptical at first because I didn't believe in it, but it really works and I'm going to do it every day in class'.

'I wanted to do another day of training, it was also good for us as teachers'.

### Student voices

'When I meditate, I feel like I'm on a cloud and then I feel good'.

'Now when I'm angry, I can explain it better in words and I don't shout any more, even at home'.

## Colegio Buenos Aires, Pinto, Madrid

This college in Madrid was ready in September 2024 to start a Teach Peace project. The particularity of this school is the depth of interest and commitment amongst senior management and this ensures sustainable and thorough delivery of training and implementation.

The training was delivered by Victoria Martín-Moreno ([cocotips.es](https://cocotips.es)) to **9 teachers**. The first part of the training took place online between September and December 2024, with 6 sessions of 1.5 hours each. It focused on cultivating mindfulness and compassion skills through breathing techniques, body awareness, emotional regulation, and self-compassion. Key practices included the Dropping Technique to release repetitive thoughts, abdominal breathing to manage stress, and Tsoknyi Rinpoche's Handshake Technique to connect with emotions in a healthy way.

The second part began in January 2025 with 4 in-person training weekends where teachers learn both how and what to teach to help children develop mindfulness and compassion skills in the classroom. The training will conclude with a residential retreat in May 2025.

An inspiring initiative from the school is that teachers have independently organised a daily 20-minute meditation before the school day starts (see photo below), with more teachers joining in, even those not attending the training.



### Teacher viewpoints

- AT: The training has brought a profound shift in how she views childhood, herself, and other adults. It has helped her better understand her own emotions and those of others, especially the crucial role adults play in children's emotional and personal development.
- RG: The course has been a discovery that allowed her to connect with her students in a new way, noticing how mindfulness activities help them pause, know themselves better, and feel motivated – especially as they ask to repeat the activities. She highlights how the programme is comprehensive, varied, and adaptable to different ages and special educational needs.
- LS: The training has helped her reconnect with her meditation practice, maintain it consistently, and experience its benefits both personally and in the classroom. She appreciates how starting the day with meditation makes a noticeable difference in the atmosphere of the class.



- BS: The course is enriching both personally and professionally, helping her reestablish her daily meditation practice, which positively impacts how she supports her students. She values the clear, structured approach of the program, which has given her confidence to lead mindfulness sessions with her class.

### **Integration in class**

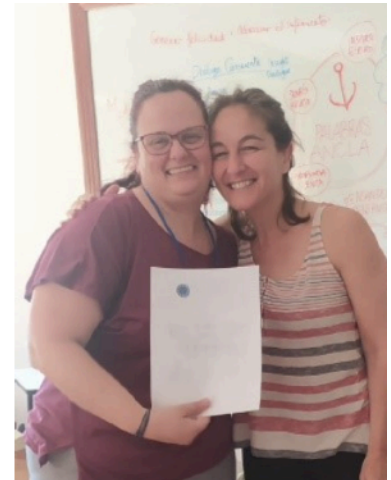
- AT: The teacher holds a weekly session with children with autism, combining mindfulness and yoga to help them understand and manage their emotions better. This session is part of their fixed schedule, and the children look forward to it. The training has also provided her with many resources to support students in specific moments when they struggle to manage situations.
- RG: The teacher works with students from Early Childhood Education to 5th grade in Pedagogical Therapy. With younger children, she practices mindful body games, pinwheel breathing, and frog (soft toy on the belly) breathing, adapting the frequency and moments depending on the group. With Primary students, she holds 15-30 minute sessions once or twice a week, including emotional time, bell listening, mindful body, breathing exercises, and body sensations. She observes that younger students see it as a game, while older ones participate out of curiosity, though all show difficulties in staying still and focused.
- LS: Every morning, the teacher starts the day with a mindfulness exercise in her 4-year-old group. They have learned about the “superpower” of attention, with children taking turns leading the group in the “Mindful Body, Please” practice with a Tibetan bowl. They enjoy the practice and are gradually improving in listening to sounds and paying attention to their breathing.
- BS: The teacher leads weekly sessions with a 4th-grade group following the Mindful Schools curriculum and another weekly session with 2nd-grade students using the Kindness Curriculum. In addition, she incorporates daily mindfulness breaks with the younger group and uses mindfulness games with students who stay with her during religion class. She notices how the energy in the classroom changes completely during these sessions.

### **Student voices**

AT: Her students have communication difficulties, but their actions reveal the impact of the sessions. An 8-year-old boy asked his mother to breathe and guided her through the “Pepe the Climber” exercise to help her calm down. A 4-year-old non-verbal child with low social interaction spontaneously engages in body awareness exercises, repeating parts of an animal massage song. A 10-year-old boy uses the “River Meditation” to release negative thoughts.

- “I really liked the frog exercise, when will we do it again?” (9-year-old boy)
- “I felt something in my neck and chest, I liked it.” (9-year-old boy)
- After the frog exercise, a 6-year-old girl gave the teacher a heartfelt hug without saying a word.

## Colegio Santa Amalia, Badajoz, Spain - Year 2



### Continued Teacher Training

A residential retreat was held from April 12 to 14, 2024, in Badajoz (Spain) to deepen the participants' personal practice. Teach Peace certificates (see images above) were given on completion of the retreat.

### Integration in class

#### *Practices in 4th grade with RC*

- Anchor Breathing: We practice it daily when switching activities between LANGUAGE and MATHS to become aware of our bodies. (Duration: 2 minutes)
- Emotions Refuge: A space available for any student who needs to reconnect with themselves. (Duration: as long as needed)
- Anchor Breathing or Pepe the Climber: We use this technique to manage incidents or moments of nervousness, helping to calm down through breathing. (Duration: as long as needed)
- Well-being Thursdays: Breathing, warm-up, a yoga asana, and a guided visualisation narrated by a classmate. (Duration: 20 minutes)
- Kindness: We focus especially on being kind to others and to our environment.

### *Practices in 5th grade with PN*

Last year we integrated exercises with 3rd and 4th grade students and this 2024/2025 school year with 5th grade students, as they are part of my tutor group. I can say that we practice meditation once a week by listening to an audio, and we also have a meditation corner in the classroom where students can go when they feel an emotion and need to channel it.

Students are already familiar with some explanations such as the anchor (breathing) and posture. Even the most reluctant students manage to stay in silence. Little by little, they are learning attention and active listening.

### **Student voices**

- Carla: I use the emotional refuge to relax after doing my homework.
- Paula: I use the breathing anchor at home when I can't fall asleep at night.
- Noa: When I'm at home and I get angry, I breathe so I don't misbehave or break anything.
- Joel: I use Pepe the Climber when I'm stressed at home and when I'm angry.

## Institut Martí i Franqués, Tarragona, Spain

Since March 2024, Alfonso Schwartz has been liaising with a university in Tarragona, the Institut de Ciències de l'Educació de la Universitat de Tarragona Rovira i Virgili. However, due to unforeseeable internal organisational issues the Teach Peace project is yet to materialise. The institute with whom Alfonso is liaising is responsible for the training of teaching staff at the University.

Alfonso has also been working to develop a Teach Peace project at the Institut Martí i Franqués, one of the largest secondary schools in Tarragona, with more than 1,200 students and 100 teachers. The school has now signed an agreement and we plan to start the project in June 2025.

## Bitacola, Barcelona, Spain

Following up from the training conducted with the teachers between September 2023 and January 2024, 5 working groups emerged that developed (and were evaluated by the trainer) “Teach Peace” activities that were and are being implemented in 1st to 4th grade classrooms. These activities are based on work done by FDCW on the 16 Guidelines; the film “The Altruistic Revolution”; Nonviolent Communication; and Restorative Practices.

Throughout the end of 2024 and beginning of 2025, the school outlined the next stage of programme implementation with the goal of deepening the contemplative practices. To this end, Germán Rodríguez offered a session to all 24 teachers to explore the benefits of meditation according to neuroscience. He will lead a teacher retreat in March 2025. Nine teachers will participate in the first part of this retreat (which will be more contemplative) and 19 in the second part which will be more orientated to how contemplative exercises could be established in the classroom.

## APPENDIX : BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Articles

There is a new page on the Teach Peace website with links to PDF articles elucidating its vision and approach. See <https://www.teach-peace.org/articles>

### Context : the importance of creating conducive circumstances

Teach Peace recognises the need in contemporary society to transmit and cultivate the central human values of *peace* and *benevolent connection*. Teach Peace also recognises the importance of mainstream secular education as a powerful vehicle for transmitting and cultivating values.

Teach Peace proposes an evidence-based approach for transmitting and cultivating the human values of *peace* and *benevolent connection* in today's mainstream secular education.

Many circumstances and contributory conditions need to be brought together for a successful project to be developed. Based on many years of working in schools, Teach Peace adopts the following logic:

- If you want to transmit something to students in a sustainable way, the best is for it to come through the school's own teachers.
- For a school's own teachers to be transmitting *peace* and *healthy connection* to students, they need to be embodying these values, such that students experience these values through 'osmosis' and 'contagion'.
- For teachers to embody these values, they need to have a thorough training in how to cultivate them.
- For a thorough training in cultivating these values to be effective, a significant cohort of teachers, with the support of senior management, need to be inspired to come together, commit to the project and create the conditions at a logistic and practical level.
- For a cohort of teachers to be inspired and committed, a major factor is to have a respected colleague in the school who is already familiar and committed to these values. This colleague, a Peace Champion, will facilitate the project and be the main connection between the school and Teach Peace.



## A 'typical' Teach Peace project - the first year, step by step

Every school has a unique set of circumstances and every Teach Peace project is different. Having said this, significant similarities can be drawn out across schools. These similarities show us good practice and effective ways to develop a project focusing on human values within the complex and challenging life of a school community. Here are some of the events that strengthen a whole-school culture of *peace* and *healthy connection*.

- Teach Peace sends out *calls for interest* every six months via email networks of school teachers and Buddhist practitioners.
- A school teacher [who is already a practitioner of mindfulness and compassion and who wishes to develop a project in their school] responds to the *call for interest* and completes the 'Get Started' form on the [teach-peace.org](https://teach-peace.org) website. S/he adopts the role of 'Peace Champion'.
- In dialogue with the Peace Champion, Teach Peace makes a feasibility study and accompanies the Peace Champion in their initial steps to presenting a project to the school's senior management.
- Over about two months, the Peace Champion talks with colleagues and together they form a cohort of between 8 and 30 teachers who commit to receiving a training of about 18 hours.
- The school signs a Memorandum of Understanding with Teach Peace which outlines the key points of the first year of the project.
- Teach Peace finds an experienced trainer who is available to lead the training and they, together with the Peace Champion, co-design the initial training. This could, for example, start with a 12-hour training over 8 weeks by Zoom, introducing the 8 - 30 staff members to the practices of mindfulness and compassion.
- The school organises a training day for the 8 - 30 teachers in which they become familiar with different ways of introducing simple exercises to students. During this day, teachers practise delivering exercises, and receive feedback from peers.
- After teachers have begun introducing exercises to students, the trainer visits the school again to observe teachers leading exercises with students. Teachers gather after school for discussion, mentoring and feedback with the trainer.
- At least 150 students are introduced to one simple *peace* exercise, e.g. mindfulness of breathing, and one simple *healthy relationships* exercise, .e.g. cultivating loving kindness.
- The Peace Champion gathers photos, questionnaires and video interviews with the students. These inform how the project continues.
- Participating teachers decide how they wish to continue, for example attending a retreat to deepen their own understanding and experience, and planning events to involve more of the school community.