

*WHERE WOULD WE STAND,  
IF EVERYBODY SAID  
WHERE WOULD WE STAND,  
AND NOBODY WENT TO  
LOOK, WHERE WE WOULD  
STAND, IF WE WENT?*

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Ministry  
of happiness  
and well-being

CONSCIOUSNESS.  
REDUCTION.  
SATISFACTION.

An initiative for a conscious life  
and reflection of happiness.

**WHAT DEFINES SOCIETY TODAY?  
IN WHICH SOCIETY DO WE WANT TO LIVE IN?**

The Ministry of happiness and well-being is an interactive art project and the inspiring metaphor of a multimedia campaign. The topic of personal happiness, discussed in a playful and creative way, motivates rethinking and participation across all parts of society. This campaign increases the awareness for personal happiness and asks questions in a very positive and playful way: „What makes us happy?“, „What is a good life?“ and „What can we do to realize it?“. The task of the Ministry of happiness and well-being is to change perspective, to give positive impulses, to initiate a change of social values and to actively accompany and create. The long-term aim is a positive movement in which the actions of the

Ministry of happiness and well-being significantly participate: question common attitudes and acting and redefine future values. A wide public demand to care for the important things in life: our personal happiness and well-being already exists – where does it come from, how is it possible to influence, increase or measure it?

This initiative wants to be a role model with ease and happiness and with a focus on concepts that work easily in the everyday life. With unusual, creative and wonderful alternatives and ideas, forward looking, provoking impulses and inspirations, without dogmas or forefingers – we will define what a good life is for ourselves.

The Ministry of happiness and well-being is as a campaign the medial converter and wants to provoke in a positive way – experts, scientists, organizations, like-minded people, politics and the media itself are involved. We give them the opportunity to cooperate on a joined platform as the future happiness generation.

With playful examples from everyday life we want to establish ideas and concepts to rise medial awareness for these important topics and get the people – online and offline – to realize that a rethinking of personal goals can actually be a lot of fun.

Everyone is invited to participate!  
The aim is to show as many people as possible how sustainable science about happiness and positive thinking is and how it can affect lives in general. The overwhelming medial echo and public excitement on this topic shows that there is a huge demand in this debate and the definition of what a good life is.

This initiative meets this demand and with its power we will establish our Gross National Happiness! Be part of this movement and help the Ministry of happiness and well-being to make the world a better place in small steps!



Many things within this campaign are self- and handmade. For example this flag.



Cinema-event with the movie „What happiness is“: A documentary of the happiness-survey in Bhutan. More than 300 people came: It is important to give people a chance to meet and discuss.



A picnic flashmob on the Alexanderplatz in Berlin: We created an island for slowing down, enjoying lunch and meet with nice people to show up how easy it can be to be happy.



It has taken its run and a large and active fan base was built up. This shows that this is totally hitting the Zeitgeist!



Ministry  
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Inspired by Bhutan whose system is also based on people's well-being, the metaphor „Ministry of happiness and well-being“ was established.

The fascination of the metaphor „Ministry of happiness and well-being“ is that people immediately start to smile and think – what would change if there would be something like this? What is happiness? They immediately get curious, want to know more, take part, share opinions and ideas, help and do something for the happiness of us all! The innovative idea behind is to connect the wishes and needs of society with art and politics. It is the clue to integrate important issues and big questions in our life again – not too serious or reproachful, but playful and suitable for our everyday life.

## ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA

In November 2012 the idea for the campaign was developed as part of a semester project at the design department at the University of Applied Science in Mannheim, Germany. A small team of students established the campaign during the lesson „Integrated transmedial communications“ given by Professor Axel Kolaschnik. The aim was to create a campaign which changes values in society. During research the decision was made to learn a lesson from the small country of Bhutan: We need a Ministry of happiness and well-being in Germany to start a movement and raise awareness for the important question: What is a good life and how can we determine our own lives? With the help of this provoking metaphor we were curious how Germany would react on these questions. Gina Schöler and Daniel Clarens as part of this team decided to further establish the campaign as part of their Master thesis, which was finished successfully in October 2013. Realizing the huge potential, meaningfulness and influence the campaign has, Gina Schöler decided to work as a freelancer as Minister of happiness and well-being ever since. She travels through Europe to give speeches, workshops and to meet for example politicians to talk about people's happiness.

## MEDIA

Media is very interested in this project. There were many articles on newspaper all over Germany, many interviews on the radio, even invitation by TV to talk about happiness and all the actions of this „Ministry“. For example these media already reported about this campaign:



People are interviewed, events, speeches and workshops are held in companies, schools, universities and organizations.



Gross National Happiness for everybody!



It is essentially that many people take part in this campaign, for example all the fans who are spreading the idea and take part on different actions.

## ACTIONS

Invitation to the German Parliament, congresses, fairs, workshops at schools, sold out cinema events and speeches, thousands of Facebook fans, radio and newspaper interviews, flashmobs, street actions, a painting competition for kids, hundreds of orders for happiness packages and cards, a large public participation, a successful crowd funding, interviews with experts – visionary, motivated, with heart and happiness about its own work the Ministry of happiness and well-being asks the question about a good life and happiness to the whole country.



Happiness lurks around every corner: To reach people in their everyday life, streetart and merchandise are created showing how important, funny and sustainable it is to work on your happiness.



Asking yourself this little question „What makes me happy?“ can change a lot in life!



Invitation to the German Bundestag in Berlin to get to know and interview the Enquete-Comission „Growth, wealth and quality of life“.



We collaborated with the German Parliament and organized an event for the strategy of the Bundestag „Good living in Germany – What is important for a good life“. With more than 80 people the topic of good living was discussed.



For the International World Day of Happiness (20th of March) people were asked to decorate a chair. Put it out on the street to invite people to sit down and relax. Hundreds of people participated all over Germany.

## TEAM

### Gina Schöler

Minister of happiness and well-being  
Communication designer M.A.

As a communication designer I am able to work in this field from another angle. With creativity, humor and playful interactions I challenge people to start to think about this important topic.

During the time as a Minister of happiness and well-being I talked to many people.

Once somebody told me: „Gina, you have to invent your very own job. You can't do what everybody else does.“ Sounds easy, but realization seemed very hard! A job that hasn't been there before? What is needed out there? How could this work out? Then I realized that I actually already was doing my very own, innovative job: Minister of happiness and well-being! This was the moment I realized that I had found my profession and my mission.



No one can save the world on its own, so all the experts I work with at events or workshop-projects are very important to share knowledge and ideas.

### GINA SCHÖLER

Minister of happiness and well-being  
Speaker . Trainer . Coach . Consultant

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Gina was born in 1986 in Mannheim, Germany.

My name is Gina and I am the German Minister of happiness and well-being.

You may ask yourself now: Seriously, is there a Ministry of happiness and well-being in Germany?!

Yes, this interactive project increases the awareness of personal happiness.

What do I do as a minister?

I go to schools, universities or companies to show with interactive workshops how to reorganize life towards personal happiness.

In most cases this can be achieved by focusing on small things. In other cases people change something fundamentally like their jobs.

I also organize film events, speeches and small and creative actions like street art.

All this starts a discussion about this important subject of happiness, well-being and mental health.

People are motivated to participate and create their own ideas about happiness.

The Ministry of happiness gets more attention and many people do love it.

I get many mails from people who tell me how this campaign influenced and changed their life.

This is the reason why I do this with all my heart. Contributing to society in such a meaningful way makes me very happy myself.

## NETWORK

Happiness is a wide field, everyone has its own idea about it. It was a challenge to show that this project neither wants to define happiness nor to declare that everybody has to be happy. It's not about smiling all day nor about ignoring problems of life. It's about focussing on the important things, realizing what matters most and to get in action to change something!

Many people work on the science of happiness. Burn out and mental health are very important subjects nowadays. And also politicians get more and more interested in this field, they are curious what „Gross National Happiness“ is about and what makes people happy.

During the last few years the network of the „Ministry of happiness and well-being“ grew and there are many people from very different fields we are in contact with, we collaborate and work together. Here are just a few, have a look:



**Daniela Kolbe**

Head of the Enquete-Commission „Growth, wealth, quality of life“ of the German Bundestag, 2013



**Karma Tshiteem**

Secretary of State for the Gross National Happiness Commission Bhutan, 2013



**Prof. Dr. Tobias Esch**

Medical and health scientist and professor for integrative health promotion



**Claudia Roth**

Head of the Party 2004-2013: Bündnis 90/Die Grünen  
Member of the German parliament

## OFFERINGS

In addition to the actions and the campaign itself, services as workshops, speeches, interventions, action days or happynings are offered to companies, private persons, schools or cities. Together with the participants I feel out the personal happiness of each and of society.

In interactive speeches and creative workshops the participants get a creative view over on the field of happiness and well-being. The audience is getting involved by playfully visualizing insights and facts from happiness research and positive psychology. That's how happiness comes alive and people quickly learn in an interactive way and with a lot of fun how to integrate happiness in everyday-life. So everyone becomes a happiness ambassador themselves!

The topics happiness and quality of life are of a large public interest, people are searching for new ways of life, new ideas, impulses and inspiration. We let them become active managers and designers of their own lives and become what they really want to be: individuals, fulfilled and – happy.

Happiness, attentiveness to ourselves and the people around us, as well a positive attitude towards life have a huge impact on the physical and mental well-being. Refocus and concentrate on the positive things and learn to deal with frustrations and negative experiences is an important step in this process. Happiness does not depend on material matters, ranks, beauty or even health, happiness is a product of our thoughts. It is possible to learn a positive state of mind and to increase satisfaction in a sustainable way.

Our network contains cooperation partners and experts on coaching, neurobiology and psychology, all working together to integrate the mindset of positive thinking in every day (working) life.

Our key objectives and success factors are: happiness, well-being, mental health, positive psychology, team building, mindfulness, feedback culture and appreciation.

We achieve those objectives with services of various dimensions and ranges:



The aim of the workshop and seminars is the sensitization of the participation for the topic "happiness and well-being"



They are motivated to reflect about their private understanding on what happiness actually is and what they need to be happy.



Our seminars are not like any other. We get very creative and it helps a lot to visualize your thoughts and ideas about happiness!



People get to know each other, have fun together and help each other through tough times.



By exploring these personal definitions, the participants get to know themselves and their environment better and they are encouraged and motivated by their own satisfaction and a positive atmosphere.



Such workshops is in some way also a preventive measure since positive and happy people affect others and spread ideas themselves.

## HAPPINESS TO GO

Enabling employees by motivating impulses such as events, interactive impulse speeches or a creative workshops.

## HAPPINESS ADVANCED

Enabling employees by motivating impulses such as events, interactive impulse speeches or a creative workshops. Follow up-Event or workshop for implementing ideas and mindsets. Parallel there are small reminders such as online-impulses, gamification, interventions, give-aways or merchandise.

## HAPPINESS TRANSFORMATION

Culture change within an organization is initiated, moderated and designed during a period of time.

By applying design thinking methods we develop social strategies and social innovations within programs, that are tailor-made to the client.

The client is actively integrated in the whole process. Teams are built to create innovative ideas to improve a healthy and sustainable culture within the organization. This is accompanied by trainings and educational programs for employees. The participants become happiness ambassadors within their own companies. Learning and practicing insights into happiness research. Employees are involved and motivated. As a result they become experts and spread the mindset and spirit to build up a new happy culture within the client's company.

## REFERENCES

Many companies and organizations are excited about our objectives, for example: City of Mannheim, Goethe Institut Rom, Deutsche Bahn, Coca Cola Happiness Institute Germany, Federal Ministry of Justice Germany, Universities in Germany and Switzerland, Mental Health Network Switzerland etc.

## FEEDBACK

“Thank you from our class, which had a great day with your ingenious workshop!”

– Students on facebook

“Thus you already prepared the topic graphically, it simplifies the access.”

– In conversation with a student

“We didn’t know what was awaiting us, but are impressed how you realized the topic and turned into a fantastic workshop”

– In conversation with students

“Her federal eagles laughs. And certainly not about its creator, but with you about his impact.”

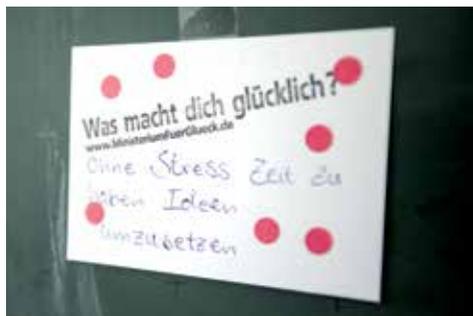
– Rheinpfalz am Sonntag, Newspaper, May 12th 2013

“Great project, madam secretary of state.”

– Claudia Roth  
Federal Chairwoman 2004 – 13 Bündnis 90/Die Grünen

„The idea behind your project is powerful and one which time has come. I think it is a wonderful initiative for many reasons but mainly because it brings the focus on what people really and ultimately want from their lives.“

– Karma Tshiteem  
State secretary of the Happiness Commission Bhutan, 2013



What makes you happy? Answer of a pupil: Without any pressure having more time to create ideas.

“Congratulations for her effort and her great commitment. The idea of the MoH has also enriched the debate within the commission. The question, whether subjective surveys with citizens should be a part of wealth indicators or not, was an important contention. Her project is a strong metaphor, to hold up a mirror to society with the question what really matters when discussing wellbeing and prosperity.”

– Hermann Ott  
PhD. Climate Speaker of Bündnis 90/Die Grünen  
Member of the commission of inquiries WWL



Children were asked what makes them happy: Here are the colorful answers to this question.



Merchandise like these playing cards are very popular. Thousands of them were already ordered. People get inspired what to change and give them to others to make them happy.

„Germany has always surprised the world. It is time to do so again. I think being in the heart of Europe, any move made by Germany would impact the continent – so it is the right place to start with such an initiative. Time is right for the change – your project is timely and its future is real.“

– Dr. Saamdu Chetri  
Executive Director of the GNH Centre Bhutan

“For the future, I wish for the MoH that still more people join, who not only dare to imagine how happy things could be, but also simply try it. New ways only arise, if you take them.“

– Boris Woynowski  
Chairman of Wachstumswende e.V. and strategic advisor in the sinnwerkstatt GmbH

“Design is also the draft of a different, better world – and the work on realizing such a world.“

– Prof. Axel Kolaschnik  
Professor for Corporate Identity, Corporate Design, Branding and Brand Communication in Mannheim

“I find the logo with the federal eagle to be slightly aggressive, but otherwise the campaign is exactly what we need. It also addresses people who haven’t dealt with the happiness discourse yet.“

– Daniela Kolbe  
Chairperson of the Enquete-Comission „Growth, wealth and quality of life“ of the German Bundestag

“Stay with your utopias, we need them!“

– Bernd Wagner  
Lecturer for philosophy, expert on Corporate Social Responsibility

“The longing seems great for the escape from the hamster wheel!“

– Rheinpfalz am Sonntag, Newspaper, May 12th 2013

“I hope the intention of the two students from Mannheim to establish a ministry for happiness and wellbeing was meant satirically. I find it dangerous to have a state institution which is supposed to ar-

range for my wellbeing. When the state and politics declare themselves responsible for the happiness of the people, we are quickly back to a dictatorship. There are as many perceptions of happiness as there are people. The responsibility of the politics already ends before the thoughts of people, and way before the hearts. The state shall secure the freedom of the people, to find their happiness in their own ways, how it is stated in the declaration of independence of the United States from 1776.“

– Wolfgang Schäuble  
German politician CDU and acting minister of finance  
Rheinpfalz am Sonntag (newspaper), May 12th 2013



Lots of interviews have already been done about people’s happiness. For example with the German Minister of Justice Heiko Maas.



The aim of this campaign is to inspire and motivate in creative ways to reflect what really matters in life: to do more of what makes us happy!

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