



HAPPINESS CHALLENGE

Case Study

Emma

Jessica 佳仪

Dalida Turkovic

邓子稷

王勤的 iPhone

Jelena

Tania Lam

Angela

Zenith

Meg Rudy

Tera Nam

Cathy

Chuan Fan

Giannina

PIM Global

Joanna Cheung

Lexie

18516563553

Violeta

Jasmine Lau

Xiao Jie

Niama

Ruzica Vukovic

Mio Rudnicki



PIM | 益启未来

PURPOSE IN MOTION

OVERVIEW



The Situation

In 2020, the COVID-19 coronavirus spread around the world, forcing billions of people into quarantine. Data suggests an increasing global trend of mental vulnerability during this unprecedented time: the World Health Organization has cited surveys showing an **increasing prevalence of distress** among 35% of the population surveyed in China, 45% in the US, and 60% in Iran. In China, a recent study of 1,210 participants from 194 cities reported that 53.8% had experienced a moderate or severe psychological impact, with 31.3% experiencing depression, 36.4% experiencing anxiety and 32.4% reporting some level of stress.

OBJECTIVES

The Happiness Challenge is a series of **gamified activities** based on concepts scientifically proven to boost happiness and well-being, designed to help communities better manage the socio-emotional effects caused by COVID-19 disruptions. Featuring **daily seven-minute challenges**, multimedia content by positive psychology experts including Dr. Laurie Santos of Yale University, and digital peer support groups, the Challenge **impacted more than 1,500 participants** around the world. PIM launched the pilot program in April 2020, generously supported by crowdfunding donors and the Rockefeller Brother's Fund.



APPROACH

Science-backed Content On Well-being And Positive Psychology

We approached a **world-renowned positive psychologist**, Dr. Laurie Santos from Yale University whose **"The Science of Well-Being"** course on Coursera had reached over 1 million learners. Dr. Santos granted us permission to translate her course video materials into Chinese and localize the content for our China-based audience. We also supplemented her videos with other local content and resources.

Gamification to Incentivize Engagement

We designed the Happiness Challenge so that each day involved a **short challenge** that could be completed in 7 to 10 minutes. These activities were grounded in happiness science, focused on six core concepts including **savoring, meditation, gratitude, kindness, physical wellness, and social connection**. Examples of challenge activities include:

- Write a letter of appreciation to your future self
- Give a friend or family member a random gift or letter expressing what you most admire about them
- Mediation live-event led by the founder of the Beijing Mindfulness Center
- Online giving circle event supporting grassroots projects tackling the effects of COVID-19

Mobile-Friendly Interface Within Social Media Platforms

We used a **mobile-friendly platform** – Xiaotong - which integrates with WeChat, China's most popular social media platform. In doing so, participants were able to receive daily reminders, watch video content, and share their completed challenges easily from their WeChat account or mobile device. This vastly reduced the barrier to entry, as compared to logging onto more formal online course platforms.

Peer Support Network And Accountability Mechanisms

For a select test group of participants, we assigned them into **small groups with an accountable mentor**. Mentors were responsible for checking in with participants and facilitating an informal group discussion on each day's daily challenge. The mentor-led groups added an additional layer of community, helping participants digest the concepts and put them into practice while forming supportive personal connections.



RESULTS

In our pilot launch, the Happiness Challenge brought together over **1,500** people from China and more than 33 other countries. Participants overwhelmingly reported that the program had a **positive impact on their mental well-being** during a time of unprecedented uncertainty worldwide, boosting their happiness and productivity, while helping them to re-discover meaning in their everyday life and work. Beyond that, the challenge helped community members form new relationships and strengthen existing ones, turning a digital platform into a space for family members, colleagues and classmates to develop lasting social connections by completing challenge activities, sharing their experiences and learning together, which led to:

89%

reported that the Challenge **changed or challenged their existing perspective** of happiness

88%

reported that they **developed new habits** related to practicing happiness as a result of the Challenge.

86%

reported a **positive shift in their general happiness level**, helping them to better manage the socioemotional effects of the pandemic.



"The Happiness Challenge helped with tracking and maintaining good mental and physical health especially during this special period of stress and anxiety. I have become more aware of **keeping the habits of appreciations**, kindness, meditation. Very grateful for PIM and the Happiness Challenge!"
- Program Participant

"As the pandemic sparked an extended period of uncertainty and social distancing, PIM's global happiness challenge helped social innovators find **new ways to build community connections** that will help sustain China's philanthropic and non-profit sector for the long term."
- Nick Lo, Program Assistant, Rockefeller Brothers Fund

Looking Forward

Moving forward, we aim to expand the program to larger audiences, refining it to meet the needs of diverse communities. To date, **a corporation** has approached us to develop this for employees, clients and their families, with children and parents taking the challenge together as a way to learn and build healthy, happy habits. **A university** is interested offering this as part of their curriculum to help students and alumni develop healthier habits.

ABOUT PIM

PIM empowers young people with the education, resources, and networks to become mission-driven leaders and effective changemakers. We partner closely with stakeholders (including universities, foundations, social organizations) to provide education and leadership programs and capacity building initiatives founded on a **"learning by doing"** model for investigating and solving social problems.

Interested in creating an experiential leadership development program for your community? PIM can help. With experience leading transformative education programs for over **2,900** young leaders since 2014, and a network of over **160** innovative social innovation partners in **China, Rwanda, India, San Francisco, and more**, PIM can help you tailor impactful professional development experiences for your community of young leaders that transfer back to positive community impact.



PIM | 益启未来

PURPOSE IN MOTION



www.pimchina.org
partnership@pimchina.org