



# Inner Strength

An empowering project for children and youth



**From 2022 till 2024 16 schools, 142 classes and 3,500 students will be involved covering both Jutland and Zealand.**

## Inner Strength

### Better Lives, Better Relationships

Danish children are doing well overall compared to other countries, but unfortunately there is a sharp and extremely worrying increase in mental dissatisfaction among children and adolescents.

Surveys tell us that more and more Danish children and youth are frustrated, experiencing loneliness, stress, anxiety, depression or feel inadequate. The rising discontent in children and young people today can be seen as a result of our increasingly complex and performance-oriented society, as well as events like the Corona crisis, which is disrupting plans and any sense of being in control of everyday life.

More than ever, children need to strengthen their inner guiding light and feel their Inner Strength.

This calls for greater investment in children's well-being, which from the beginning has been a catalyst for the Human Practice Foundation in developing an Inner Strength program for Danish lower secondary schools.

With Inner Strength, a program developed to fully integrate into schools and children's everyday lives, we aim to increase:

- Their self-worth and self-confidence
- Their ability to focus
- Their ability to engage in the classroom
- Strong relationships at school and in social networks outside of school.

With a trained and well-developed Inner Strength, more children and youth can live a healthy, powerful and valuable life in mental, physical and social balance.



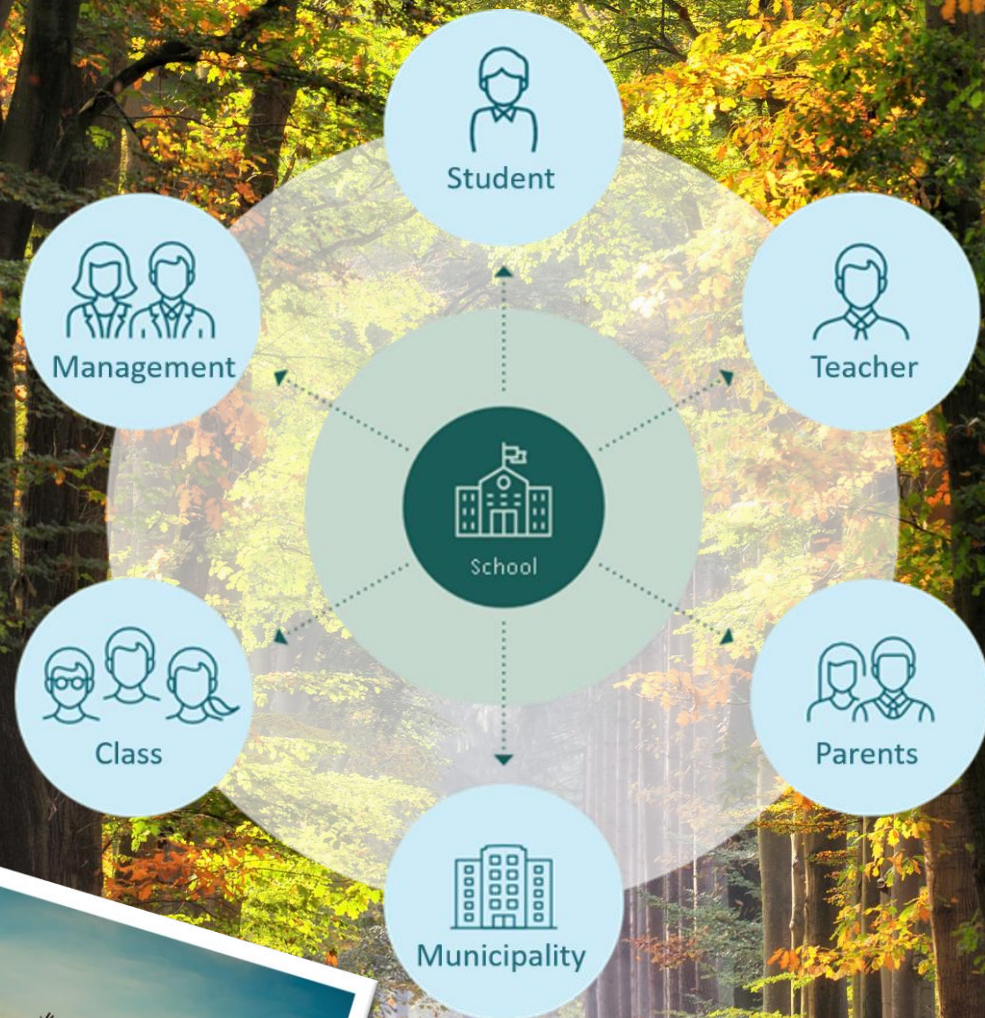
## Our holistic approach

Children who are unhappy and show signs of losing faith in themselves is supported in returning to their natural well-being. For this to happen, the children must be seen and supported in their relationships with others.

Based on a holistic approach, besides strengthening the child, we also reinforce the child's environment - the entire class, teachers and educators, school management and parents.

### We work with:

- Strengthening the individual child's self-worth, ability to engage, focus and be part of social networks.
- Developing healthy and social inclusive class environments.
- Developing and improving teachers' and educators' relational competences and making them aware of their own inner strength.
- Supporting the school management team by anchoring a strategic and cultural change at the school.
- Inspiring parents to support their children in being confident in themselves - both inside and outside school.







#### Positive effects of Inner Strength:

- Self-worth and self-confidence
- Power of action
- Inner calmness and ability to feel at ease
- Concentration and focus

## Proof of Concept and Quality Assurance

During 2019-2020, Human Practice Foundation completed two pilot projects at Humlebæk School. A total of 33 students, their parents and 22 teachers and educators participated in the project. Additionally, Human Practice Foundation ran a separate Inner Strength pilot project with 140 students at three schools, located in Fredensborg Municipality.

The pilot projects included courses for students, teachers and educators, including a parent workshop with the participating students and teachers.

Utilizing experience from previous pilot projects, Human Practice Foundation enrolled Inner Strength at three full schools at all grade levels in Fredensborg Municipality.

## Inner Strength at Humlebæk School

At Humlebæk school, Inner Strength became something children talked about, related to and liked to be part of. According to the head of the school department, Jan Niemeyer, the core work of Inner Strength fell nicely in line with their work on general education and the well-being of the children. He stated:

*"Inner Strength is relevant to young people today because it is relevant for everyone. Young people struggle with a whole lot of different things in their lives. There is an immense amount of pressure on them to be correct and good enough and it becomes crucial for them to find something within themselves, which can support them in being confident in these matters."*

## Development of Inner Strenght

Inner Strength is constantly being adjusted and tailored to fit the Danish schooling system. This is done in corporation with a professional Advisory Board, a follow-up and development group of teachers, research units from The University of Southern Denmark and of course students themselves. This way we can ensure, that Inner Strength will remain relevant and topical for Danish children and youth empowering them to gain control over their own lives and future.





## Self-worth and Power of Action

The twin siblings, Phillipp and Ammalie, once struggled with low self-belief. They were introverts and had a hard time expressing themselves at school. Not feeling self-confident and struggling with various matters in everyday life, they decided to participate in the Inner Strength program at their school in Humlebæk. It changed their view of themselves, their awareness of their potential, their self-worth and their ability to act. The Inner Strength course has had a significant impact on their lives.

*"Inner Strength has changed the way I think, the way I am, and the way I react to things. It has given me the willpower to do things in everyday life I didn't feel capable of doing before. It helped me find the courage to do exactly what I want,"* says Phillipp, and Ammalie continues:

*"Inner Strength is very much about self-confidence, strong self-worth, and listening to your inner voice. I have become more open to other people and have gained more self-worth."*

*"Working with Inner Strength at schools also addresses the culture of the school. By focusing on relational investments, it positively affects people's ability to thrive both socially and academically."*

Anne Nielsson Poulsen, Chief Consultant, Fredensborg municipality.

