

IMPROVING CHILDREN'S ACTION COMPETENCE

Action competence is the ability to act, initiate and bring about positive changes with regard to health. The development of children's action competence is seen as one of the key aims of democratic health education and health promotion, and it is also one of the main objectives of Shape Up.

Promoting the pupils' council in Maastricht

In the pupils' council at Poort Primary School in Maastricht, pupils have the opportunity to stand up and argue about ideas during a debate. The elected **pupils' council** is a great success and a good example of making decisions in a **democratic way**. The children at another primary school in Maastricht heard about this council and wanted to know more about how it works. Therefore, a meeting at the other school was arranged. The Poort pupils' council visited the other school, at which a meeting was held to discuss important issues (for example, the **gypsy community playground**). 50 children from the other school attended the meeting to find out how it worked.

BUILDING DEMOCRACY

Demokratiewerkstatt (Democracy workshop) in Vienna

At the Demokratiewerkstatt, promoted by the Austrian Parliament, Shape Up students wrote a newspaper about the Shape Up actions and principles. The other half of the class interviewed politicians about issues related to Shape Up. The children's proposal to introduce changes at the school canteen was rejected by the owner, and new strategies were needed. This democratic workshop served as a neutral meeting place to discuss some of the proposed changes.



Students' parliament makes improvements in Turku

The students' parliament meeting addressed key issues relating to the students' daily life. One of the major concerns was what the students could do during their breaks and how school rules and infrastructures were responding to their needs. The staff of Vasaramäki School considered the decisions of the students' parliament and decided the following:

« Gum chewing cannot be allowed because it causes extra work for cleaners. The caretaker and school carpenter will check all constructions and make necessary repairs. Two m2 of sand will be supplied for the cottage surroundings. Listening to music is not allowed. Bringing audio devices to school is still forbidden. They are expensive and, if they disappear, it is hard to deal with the issue. Football can be played on the playground. The ball must be kept under control, and there should be no reckless kicks. »