

CASE STORY

Alternative food pyramid: Cross-cultural vision and action

Young Minds project

Pupils from Denmark, Scotland and the Netherlands participated in this Young Minds activity to create a joint vision. The cross-class collaboration was initiated by the Danish class: the pupils in this class invited peers in the other classes to reflect on the conventional food pyramid and to consider its revision so that it would include ideas concerning social, aesthetic, psychological and other related aspects that they had explored over the course of the project. The result was a joint food pyramid\*.

In contrast to the conventional food pyramid, the alternative pyramid emphasises the importance of taking into account the notion of meals and the atmosphere surrounding meals when discussing food and health, in addition to the nutritional quality of the ingredients.

The Young Minds pyramid was represented as a large three-dimensional model and presented in a lively workshop-like manner at two large international conferences, in which Young Minds pupils and teachers were invited to participate: (a) the ENHPS conference on Education and Health in Partnership, which took place in September 2002 in Egmond, the Netherlands; and (b) the Council of Europe conference on Eating at Schools – making healthy choices, which took place in November 2003 in Strasbourg, France.

In direct interaction with the conference participants, the Young Minds pupils discussed the importance of a balanced diet for health and wellbeing, but also attempted to raise awareness about and focus the attention of the conference delegates on other related aspects such as the social, cultural and aesthetic dimensions linked to diet. The ultimate aim of the Young Minds pupils' action at these two conferences was to influence school and local community policies concerning nutrition, food provision and safety.



The alternative food pyramid.

\* See also JENSEN and SIMOVSKA, 2005.