

■ CHAPTER 4

SCHOOL EXAMPLES FOR INSPIRATION

4.1 SCHOOL EXAMPLE: DENMARK

Hillerødgades School, Copenhagen, Denmark
(‘all-day’ public school: grades from nursery class until 9th grade, 230 pupils)
Contact person: Marika Ouchicha Jensen

4.1.1 Background

In 2006 the city council of Copenhagen decided to try out projects with ‘all-day’ schools in areas of the city characterised by ethnic and social polarisation. The purpose of these schools is to provide a stimulating school environment throughout the day.

The school opens at 7am, classes start at 8am, the school day ends at 3pm. Then between 3-5 pm children have spare time activities and sports.

4.1.2 What did the school do?

The school was engaged in a project about health education in schools and the development of health policy. The aim was to establish health as an issue integrated into the traditional curriculum for all classes. The school started this process by creating a health team which consisted of teachers, pre-school staff, the school health nurse and the school leader.

It was agreed that the school health policy is not a set of rules of how to behave. Rather, it is an educational manifesto stating that health is an important subject that should be a part of the whole-school environment. In other words, the policy should function within the everyday life of the school as well as part of the formal curriculum. Plus, it was agreed that the school health policy should emphasise that teaching about health in our school is action-oriented, based on the Investigation, Vision, Action, and Change (IVAC) method with pupils as active participants.

4.1.3 The policy in practice: school meals

Consistent with the new school health policy it was decided that school meals could be used to create a health-promoting space where the children could

work with one of the important aspects of health; food, not only for themselves but for the whole school.

So, the school introduced school meals. The aim was for healthy meals to be embraced under and within the schools philosophical and educational aims. Pupils should become active participants in the whole process of the preparation of meals so that they could learn about healthy eating and making healthy choices.

The school meals project also aimed to encourage the development of participation and democratic competences in pupils, increase the school connectedness and social capital, improve the informal interaction between pupils and teachers and increase the general wellbeing of the whole school community.

Some physical changes had to be made at the school since it did not have a canteen or kitchen. Now, each meal is prepared in the school’s kitchen and served in the canteen. The school has employed 2 professional chefs to help prepare and serve the meals together with the children and the home economic teacher.

4.1.4 Outcomes

The school made it part of the teachers’ working timetable to join and assist the pupils during meals. In so doing, the school aimed to create a safe and warm atmosphere within which children can risk trying out different kinds of food and learning about healthy eating.

Classes always have their meal together with their teachers and each class has its own table in the canteen. Lunch is served at the table on attractive trays that the children have to pass round in order to fill their plate. In this way pupils decide for themselves how much they eat. Teachers encourage them to reflect on the content and create a ‘healthy plate’ with a variety of different food types such as vegetables, meat, fish etc.

4.1.5 Pupil participation

The school uses the production of school meals in the kitchen as a practical means of teaching health education by including pupils from grade 5 to 8 and the home-economics teachers. Pupils each participate in

the kitchen for one week; a total of 25 lessons each year. They come to the kitchen in groups of 4-5 and work together with the school chefs and home economic teacher. In educational terms, the kitchen is a ‘community of practice’, where each member takes responsibility for the task of preparing good, healthy meals for the rest of the school.

4.1.6 What did the school learn?

The school-meals project is a specific example of the implementation of our school health policy in the everyday life of the school. The idea of including children in the production of school meals has given the school more than just a place to teach and work with healthy eating and food. The pupils have developed ownership of the meals and positive attitudes towards healthy eating. So far, between 85-90% of the pupils have joined the school-meals project.

The process undertaken to get to this point has become a central part of our school day and the school culture. Pupils, teachers and parents say that the healthy meals, the way it is working and the children being involved have a positive influence on the feeling of well-being at the school. We see fewer conflicts. Pupils have much more energy and are more focussed during classes. Those who are considered academically weaker seem to have particularly gained a lot by participating in the kitchen. They are more engaged in the process and their teachers observe that this engagement follows into the more traditional classes.

In conclusion, this is an example of a school health policy helping to make the whole school a community of learning about health.

4.2 SCHOOL EXAMPLE: GERMANY

‘All-day primary school’, Grundschule am
Hollerbusch, Berlin, Germany
(545 students, 36 teachers, 29 non-teachers)
Contact person: Karin Ronneberger

4.2.1 Background

In Germany the development of ‘all-day’ schools was promoted from 2003 to 2009 by the federal Ministry of Education. An ‘all-day’ school has contact hours until the afternoon for at least three days a week. In addition

to the school lessons the ‘all-day’ schools also offer lunch and leisure activities such as sports.

4.2.2 What did the school do?

Following the “Good and Healthy School approach” the school is very active in several health relating areas:

- *Activity, perception & relaxation:* depending on the class situation and age of pupils regular all-day activities are offered including activity games and exercises, breathing exercises, imaginary journeys, music relaxation or massage. All classes are equipped with materials for activity breaks which are done during the school day. To meet the individual needs of all pupils the school offers an area for activities and a relaxation area.
- *Dynamic sitting:* to meet the activity demands of children and to support learning, ‘dynamic sitting’ is introduced. Each pupil and teacher has a ‘back friendly’ chair to relieve the spine. Pupils can decide on their sitting posture (e.g. backwards on the chair). In addition, alternative seating options such as physio balls are offered in each class.
- *Projects:* each class is engaged in an age appropriate project day on health promotion and on violence prevention once a year.
- *Creation of a pleasant school environment:* Since pupils and teachers spend a large amount of the day at school the creation of the school environment is important. The schoolyard offers all pupils the opportunity for physical activity through an adventure playground, adequate space for playing and doing physical activities, balancing activities and relaxing activities. So in the playground there is a play hill, play tables, table tennis tables and opportunities for climbing as well as benches and a class room in the school garden
- *In addition:* the school offers a variety of leisure time activities from which pupils can choose. There are opportunities for physical fitness and self development such as yoga as well as the chance of creative activities such as ceramics.

To ensure proper planning and controls the school established a working group on health promotion which is responsible for the overall co-ordination and co-operation with partners outside the school. Regular training courses for all colleagues are organised. As part of the ‘Berlin good and healthy school network’



we began to contact other schools in our district about similar work they were doing.

Also, our school considers the participation of pupils and parents central to this work. Class representatives from grades 3 to 6 as well as parents were involved in pedagogical consultations and the planning of school events. From the 4th grade pupils prepare relaxation exercises on their own and accompany them in the lessons.

4.2.3 Why did the school choose to do this?

The school is located in a deprived area with 60% of pupils living in socially disadvantaged families. This concept of health promotion was developed to give each pupil the possibility for optimal physical and mental development. The aim being to strive for a healthy life style in which health risks such as lack of physical activity, mental strains or school stress is reduced and health related resources such as physical fitness and social contacts are promoted.

4.2.4 What actually happened?

As a 'Good and Healthy school' it is aimed to strengthen the educational quality and the sustainable development of the school through health promotion measures. Health promotion shapes the framework of the school day and has become a driving force for our school development and quality of instruction. This creates a motivational school climate, supports the

responsibility of the school, social contacts, mutual consideration, appreciates achievements and creates rules which are transparent and understandable. This contributes to the happiness and satisfaction of our pupils which in turn leads to better learning outcomes. Job satisfaction and readiness for change amongst the teachers is increased.

4.2.5 Which aspects went particularly well?

The degree of continuity and reliability of the work went particularly well.

4.2.6 What difficulties were encountered and how were these overcome?

All this work had to be undertaken without additional costs. This required the support of parents as well as the willingness of all colleagues to look at their own expenditure.

4.2.7 How do you know how successful it was?

A learning baseline test on basic skills during the first week of the first grade show that pupils come to school at different stages. The number of children who show significant problems in various areas increase due to these tests. The teacher receives a comprehensive overview on the results of the tests as a basis for the planning of supportive measures and priorities. Also, supportive leisure time activities are planned together with the child worker. All measures aim to ensure successful learning for pupils. During the third grade all pupils from Berlin do the same test which give comparisons. The results show that our school often exceeds the average. In addition, within the good and healthy school network several surveys with pupils, parents teachers and non teaching staff were conducted which yielded positive results especially with regard to our learning culture. Also, regular school audits and inspections take place within our school. To conclude, we feel that our school has a good climate which is characterised by mutual respect, tolerance and support.



4.2.8 What could be learnt?

A holistic concept of health promotion not only makes a contribution to physical and mental health, it has also a significant impact on the learning success of pupils. By connecting health promotion and educational quality successful theoretically sound work can be done which is highly accepted and effective. The work is process related and can be extended in the future.

4.3 SCHOOL EXAMPLE: POLAND

Primary school nr 5: Gustaw Morcinek School,
Myslowice, Poland
(primary school, 86 students, aged 7-13)
Contact person: Renata Boba

4.3.1 What did the school do?

The school has been involved in health-promoting activities since 2006 when a three-year health education programme was developed. In 2009 the school joined the nationwide “Keep Fit” project, whose objectives are; developing students’ responsibility for their own and others’ health, the ability to take care of their physical condition, as well as healthy eating.

4.3.2 The main activities undertaken at our school are:

Concerning healthy eating:

- All pupils have milk or yoghurt each day – the school takes part in the nationwide “Glass of Milk” programme funded by the EU

- Every Wednesday students and teachers have a healthy fruit and vegetable breakfast together
- Pupils aged 10 to 13 attend a workshop entitled “What, how much and how to eat”
- Students’ parents attended a workshop on eating related disorders, such as obesity, bulimia and anorexia
- Students aged 7 to 10 come to the Squirrel Club meetings where they learn to select healthy foods for their “health baskets”

Concerning physical activity

- The school is surrounded by an area with lots of green space and a low volume of traffic. The students have access to an outdoor volleyball and basketball court and there are modern sports facilities including a football pitch, a full-size gymnasium and a work-out room. This gives opportunity for different kinds of physical activity.

The activities are popular among the students, their parents, the teachers and other school staff, as well as the community. Every year the entire school celebrates World Health Day which gives an opportunity for students to prepare a healthy smorgasbord of fruit and vegetable salads and juice, as well as sandwiches made with appetising and colourful fillings. All students and teachers, divided into groups, prepare and present mini stage plays about healthy food and physical exercise.

The school’s annual tradition is the Open Day, which brings the community together and gives an opportunity for a presentation of their health-promoting activities.

4.3.3 Why did the school choose to do this?

Prior to the formulation of the health education programme, school coordinators conducted an assessment taking into account the characteristics of the school and the students’ needs. Individual activities were decided by all teachers and based on the outcome of the assessment, observations made at breakfast breaks and conversations with students. The collected data indicated that there were unhealthy eating habits, free time spent in sedentary pursuits and a considerable percentage of pupils suffering with obesity. At the beginning of each school year students’ and parents’ expectations of the school, are explored. Our suggestions in the area of health promotion are approved of by 90% of parents and students.

4.3.4 What actually happened?

All of the above activities continue as part of our school timetable. The range of after-class activities has been extended to include aerobics and aikido. The youngest students can take part in snow games and sledging in winter and outdoor games and hiking in summer. We are planning to implement:

- the EU-funded nationwide “Fruit at Schools” programme. Students aged 7 to 10 will be given fruit, vegetables and fruit and vegetable juice every day
- “Colourful Week”, a project connected with the celebration of World Health Day on 7 April. Each day of the week will be assigned a different colour and on each day students and teachers will eat fruit and vegetables of that colour.

4.3.5 Which aspects went particularly well?

Thanks to the involvement of the students, head teacher and all employees and the parents’ acceptance and help, in 2008 the school was awarded the Silesian health promoting school network certificate and the 3rd place in the province in the “Keep Fit” project. Our other achievements are:

- the healthy breakfast: the students have been seen to bring more fruit and vegetables on other days
- Participation by pupils in all sports activities on offer and free time is being spent in active ways. Pupils are themselves suggesting new ways to use recreation time actively. Siblings and parents are frequently being involved.
- Open Day for the community
- holding workshops, in which active teaching methods, such as project work, are used

4.3.6 What difficulties were encountered and how were these overcome?

The main area of difficulty was communication between the school and the parents added to by some parents’ opinion that our activities served no purpose. Through posters, bulletins, meetings and conversations the entire school community was involved and initial difficulties were overcome by teachers’ commitment, parents’ approval and continuous evaluation of the projects.

4.3.7 How do you know how successful it was?

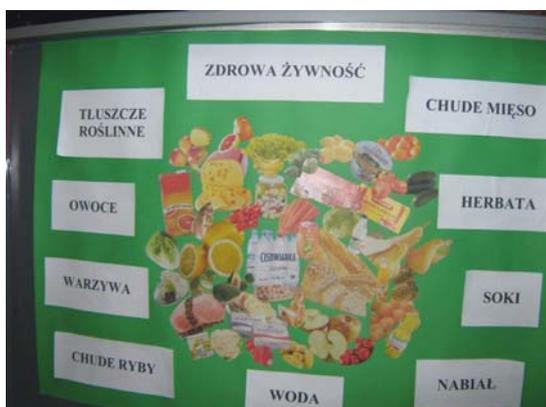
Only 86 students attend the school. The teachers know all parents and the local community. It enables the assessment of undertaken activities based on conversation and observation. Each year the two school health promotion coordinators conduct opinion polls and questionnaires in order to assess the level of approval by parents, students and teachers. 90% of them enjoy the activities and would like them to continue. Evaluation of the health education programme is planned for September 2011.

4.3.8 What could be learnt?

The knowledge gained by the coordinators, head teacher and teachers was put into practice. The school learnt that the only way to success is through consistency, determination and teamwork. The school feels the students, parents and teachers:

- have learnt about healthy eating guidelines and understand about the impact that unhealthy eating and lack of exercise can have
- have learnt to plan their free time to include sports and outdoor activities
- are more diligent and organised
- have learnt to plan their actions and work in a team





4.3 SCHOOL EXAMPLE: PORTUGAL

School EB2, 2/Sec, Moimenta da Beira, Portugal
(secondary school: 10-12th grades with also 7-9th grades, 847 students)
Contact person: Helena Correia

4.4.1 What did the school do?

- “Health Day” and “Apple Day” are held every school year
- School meals have improved with 3 meat meals and 2 fish meals a week and an increase in the consumption of vegetables and fruit to the point that now every lunch includes vegetables and also soup
- provides seasonal fruit for sale in both the students and teachers’ cafeterias
- has cut down the amount of fried food and salt generally in the food at the canteen
- has checked cholesterol, diabetes and blood pressure weekly at our “Health Room”, with the support of the Local Health Centre
- has created an extra curricular subject in 9th grade named “Healthy eating” (90 minutes a week);
- a group of 9th grade students have joined our health promotion project and has presented about healthy eating to primary students with success.
- With the collaboration of other institutions or personalities the school is continually developing different activities throughout the school year, including physical activities.

4.4.2 Why did the school choose to do this?

The school consists of all different sorts of people; teachers from different disciplines, students, school nurs-

es, parents and we are an institution which practices child protection.. We all believe that we can make a difference in helping to build up healthier people, because to us healthy means happy.

4.4.3 What actually happened?

It has all been a success! The enthusiasm of students is an observable fact and local products have become more visible.

4.4.4 Which aspects went particularly well?

The consumption of vegetables and fruit has doubled. Students and parents are more aware of the benefits of healthy eating. Some individual problems have been solved or are being treated and sustainability is in progress.

4.4.5 What difficulties were encountered and how were these overcome?

No difficulties. We know these changes take time.

4.4.6 How do you know how successful it was?

The number of pupils who eat regularly at the canteen has increased, the school has noticed that they are eating apples every day; the feedback from parents, students and teachers is positive and the enthusiasm from all involved is great.

4.4.7 What could be learnt?

A motivated group of people with the will to work for the benefit of a school community can make a difference.