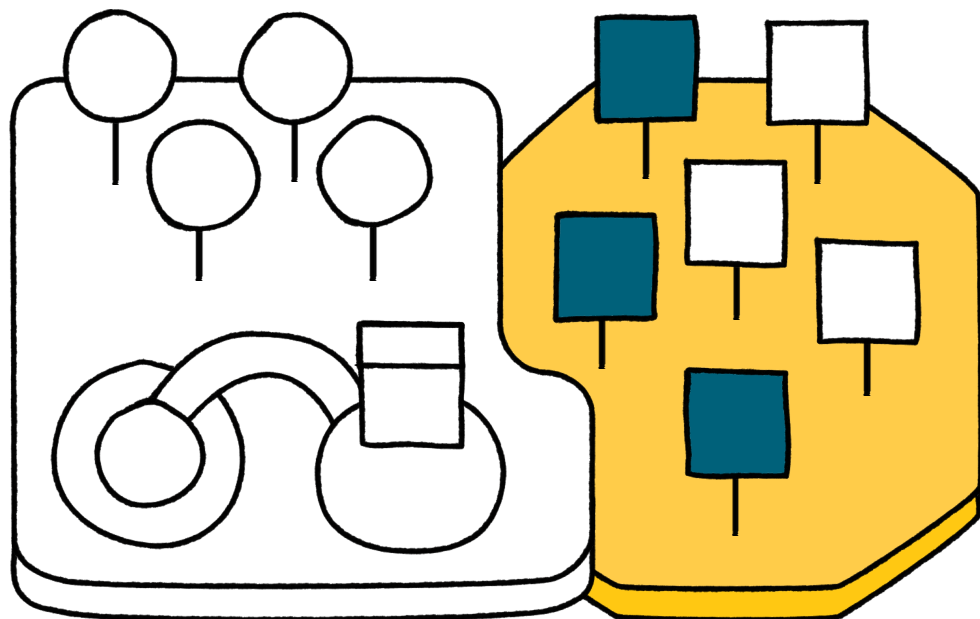


14 Hitzkirch

“Participation of learners” label



Time frame
Not specified

Stakeholders
Political executive
Formal education
Civil society

Institutional framework

Structure-related quality criteria
Strategic orientation
Collaboration
Participation and identification

The starting point

The external cantonal review of secondary schools carried out a survey on pupil satisfaction in 2013. According to the school, the secondary school level showed dissatisfaction about the school council's participation options. Existing participation structures had not proven successful. It remained unclear which issues could be participated in and in which way, where the options for participation and where the limits were, and how the finances were arranged. As a result, pupils had become frustrated, and it was difficult to find volunteers who wanted to get involved in their class council/school council.

Aims

Development of joint principles on pupil participation and clarification of the rights and obligations of all participants, voting procedures and finances.

Target group

Pupils of the Hitzkirch schools from kindergarten to upper school.

Costs

Not specified

Project progression

The Hitzkirch schools' guidelines include statements about teaching confident and responsible behaviour to pupils, giving them the skills to help them thrive in our society, and about collaboration. At the secondary level, a working group of teachers and heads alongside the Forum for Human Rights took on the task of reviewing the principles within the guidelines for implementation in the secondary school's participative field. The voting procedure was also adjusted at the same time. The principles were submitted to the elected school council for review and adjustments made. The next step was for the heads of the schools' various years and sites to collate the principles of all sites and years into one overall concept in 2018.

These "pupil participation" principles comprise the aims, voting process, participative vehicles, rights and obligations of all those involved. They also set out the finances and their use for pupil participation, the options for applying to various committees from class council to local council, and pupil participation through a survey as part of the quality management strategy.

The Hitzkirch schools were awarded the "learner participation" label by the primary education agency of the Lucerne canton in 2019.

Success factors

- Networking between the various heads of the various school years and sites.
- Great engagement on the part of the teachers responsible.
- Suggestions via the cantonal network.
- Pupils trusting that it will be a success.
- Some pupils who helped the teachers responsible to launch the new start at the secondary level.

Challenges

- Taking the risk of a new start with pupils who had a frustrating experience.
- Clarifying responsibilities within the staff.
- Providing resources for paying the teachers responsible, as the new implementation required more time.
- Clarifying the adjustment frequency for the principles, which count as a working paper for a constantly developing project but have binding force. Shortly after implementation, there was indeed a need for expansion towards political education in the secondary level.
- The problem of equitable yet unequal treatment of pupils in various years. The secondary level year 7, for example, is directly and actively involved from the start in more all-school projects. Pupils in primary level year 6, however, are not and this cannot be justified by personal maturity levels, or only to a certain extent.

Conclusion

Setting out the rights and obligations of the various committees such as class councils, school councils and the general meeting, and enshrining them into the principles, meant that pupils' and teachers' uncertainties were resolved. It was easy to find volunteers for the school councils and the new 2018 external evaluation demonstrated the satisfaction of the various school councils. Now, pupils provide advice and have a say in the design of various projects, such as reorganising sports day, environmental design of the break area, school family days, new playground construction, school grounds signage, new multi-purpose hall. These days, the school councils submit their concerns, and solutions are then developed in a participative way and included in the responsibility for implementation.

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Information

The school will be happy to provide the principles on request.