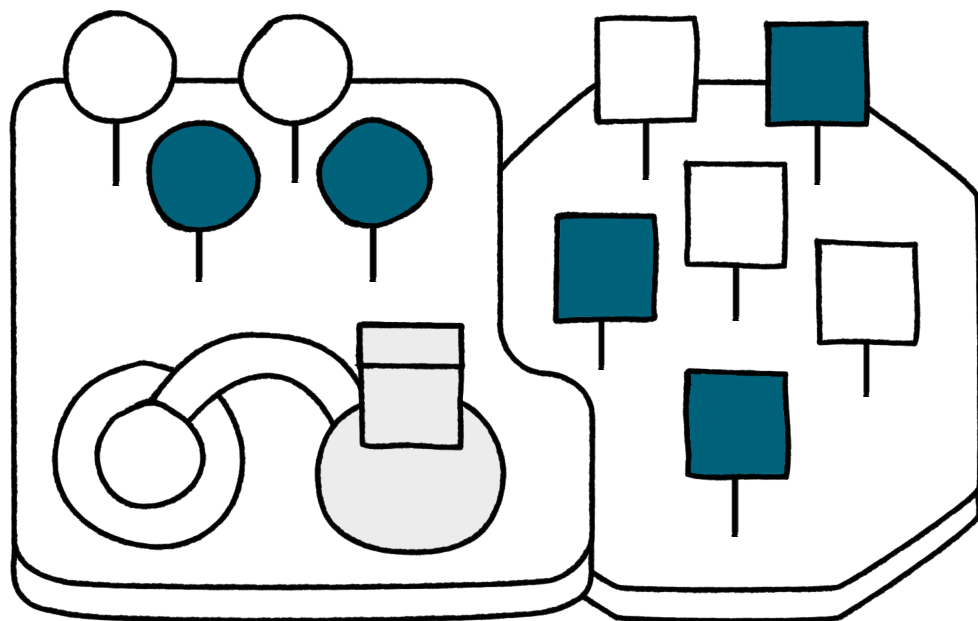


09 Breitenbach

Children's participation – on the way to the new school



Time frame

2016

Stakeholders

Political executive
Formal education
Government builders
Landscape architects
Architects
Management

Typologies (space types)

Inside space
Outside space



Design quality criteria

Designability
Opportunities to interact



Structure-related quality criteria

Designing the provisions/
living spaces
Collaboration
Participation and identification

The starting point

The municipality of Breitenbach in the canton of Solothurn was the first in Switzerland to include all its pupils, from kindergarten to secondary level, in the planning of the new school in 2016. With this participation project, the municipality wanted to make use of the experiences, opinions and ideas of all affected pupils, school heads and teachers as a resource for planning the new school. The experiences, opinions and ideas of the pupils in all classes were surveyed using age-appropriate methods and set out in planning guidelines for the inside and outside spaces as a basis for the tender.

The project was headed up by the Blue Cross youth social work agency of the Baselland canton with KinderKraftWerk and the youth welfare agency of the Solothurn canton on behalf of the municipality.

Aims

The 400 pupils of the Breitenbach school were to be given the opportunity to have their opinions and ideas included as planning guidelines in the tender specification sheet. This meant the judges could measure whether they had been taken into account or not.

Target group

- Pupils of the Breitenbach school
- Teachers
- Caretakers

Costs

The costs for the participation process and evaluation report of around 45,000 Swiss francs were mainly met by the 3FO charity and the Breitenbach municipality. The funding included the production of best practice guidelines for children and young people's participation in the school planning.

Project progression

The project began in May 2016. KinderKraftWerk headed up the project steering committee, in which the municipality, the school heads and the caretakers each also had one representative member. The workshops with the children were carried out under the leadership of KinderKraftWerk with staff from the children and youth welfare agency of the Solothurn canton, the youth work service of the Laufen region and teachers. The models, drawings and collages created in the workshops were presented to the local council and collated for the architecture tender and the builders. Guidelines for participative school building planning were then developed with children and young people and published.

Building work began in spring/summer 2018 and the schools moved into their new home in spring 2020. The pupils were invited to leave their wishes for the future in the foundation stone when it was laid. After building works were finished, the pupils were given the opportunity to help design the outdoor break areas and seating. Around thirty subsequent projects with pupil participation are being planned for the coming years and will be independently carried out by the school heads. Among other things, around 30 trees felled to make way for the new building will be dried out and the wood used for structures in the outside area and workshop lessons.

Success factors

- The initiative for children's participation came from the local council.
- Clear targets for the educational project for the schools through local council resolution.
- Good collaboration with school heads and teachers.
- Funding through the municipality, cantonal funding and 3FO charity.

Challenges

- Short planning period of just one month.
- Communication dependent on local council.
- Too few clear specifications in the expert presentation at the vernissage.
- Legal ambiguities in the pupils' participation in the tender process.

Conclusion

Collaboration between pupils, teachers and KinderKraftWerk staff was well received. They all contributed to the project's success in their own way: the pupils with their openness, creativity and enthusiasm, the teachers with their willingness to do background work and coordination, the KinderKraftWerk staff with their sensitive, purposeful attitudes. The upstream participation process made it possible to include the needs of the pupils and teachers in the tender for the architecture for the first time. If there are still some unfulfilled wishes in the design, the schools still have the freedom to further design the indoor and outdoor areas. This means there are still plenty of walls, nooks and crannies that will bear the signatures of the schools' VIPs – the children.

Contact details

Verein KinderNatur, KinderKraftWerk
Zeno Steuri
Oberalpstrasse 73, 4054 Basel
zsteuri@sunrise.ch
www.kindernatur.ch
www.kinderkraftwerk.ch

Information

<http://www.kinderkraftwerk.ch/angebote>
Practical guidelines on children's and young people's participation in building a school, PDF download.

