Participation, action and school-community collaboration

Shape Up Research Report

Case study of school-based health promotion to influence determinants of childhood obesity - Maastricht

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Background

The project

This research was conducted in relation to the European health promotion project titled: ‘Shape Up – a school-community approach to influencing determinants of a healthy and balanced growing up’ (www.shapeupeurope.net). Shape Up is a 3-year project (2006-2008) aimed at development, implementation and assessment of an innovative approach to health promotion and health education concerning overweight and obesity in children and young people. Shape Up core funding was provided by the European Commission Directorate General for Health and Consumer Affairs. Participants in the project were local authorities and schools from 19 cities in 19 EU countries. The map below shows the wide geographical coverage of the participating cities.

The age range of children and young people participating in Shape Up is 4 -16 years. A number of schools (at preschool, primary and secondary level) from each participating city were involved (see Table 1 below). In total, 73 schools, 2,300 pupils and 140 teachers took active part in the project.

The project work in each city was coordinated by a local coordinator (LC) and local facilitator (LF), appointed by the local partner organisation. Additionally, a local promoting group (LPG) was established in each city to support the Shape Up implementation.

On international level, the project has been coordinated by P.A.U. Education (Barcelona, Spain) and the Danish School of Education, Aarhus University (Copenhagen, Denmark). Additionally, five Competence Centres were responsible for different aspects of the project:

- P.A.U. Education (Barcelona, Spain): Coordination, Community building, Dissemination and Portal
- The Danish School of Education (Copenhagen, Denmark): Research and Methods
- ABCittà (Milan, Italy): Training
- Schulen ans Netz (Bonn, Germany): ICT at school and Portal
- University of Hull (Hull, United Kingdom): Evaluation

1 Additional funding was provided by the participating partner institutions as well as private organisations. For more details about the project structure, organisation and partners, see the Implementation guidebook, available online http://www.shapeupeurope.net/files/media/media32.pdf.
The fundamental premise of Shape Up is that healthier eating and regular physical activity are keys to preventing childhood obesity and promoting health and well-being of children and young people. However, healthy diet and physical activity are influenced in a more efficient and sustainable way by addressing their determinants at the school, family, community and wider societal level, rather than at an individual behaviour level. Therefore, Shape Up aimed to:

- Bring together the principles of health education, disease prevention and health promotion in an integrated programme based on research;
- Promote positive health and wellbeing;
- Tackle social and environmental determinants of childhood overweight and obesity at different levels;
- Involve schools and local communities in constructive dialogue and planning action concerning strategies to address these determinants;
- Enhance children’s and young people’s competences to carry out health-promoting actions and bring about positive changes in issues relating to healthy eating and physical activity;
- Undertake health-promoting actions at school and local level, initiated through schools by children and young people, in collaboration with local stakeholders;
- Establish and empower a European network of schools and local actors in the EU member states to share best practices, learn from experience and contribute to the evidence base in the area of healthy eating and physical activity.

The Shape Up methodological framework (Simovska et al, 2006)\(^2\) is based on evidence from research in participatory health education and health-promoting schools. The

\(^2\) available on-line: http://www.shapeupeurope.net/files/media/media332.pdf
following research findings provided the basis for the Shape Up methodological approach:

- Ownership and empowerment are key elements of effective health education and health-promotion programmes;
- In order to adopt healthy lifestyles and to acquire competence to bring about health-promoting changes, children and young people need to be guided to develop action-oriented knowledge about health, eating and body movement;
- Action-oriented knowledge is multidisciplinary and multidimensional;
- Action-oriented knowledge can only be gained through participation in concrete health-promoting actions, either individually or collectively, participation which is guided by competent adults and adequate organizational structures within the school and the community;
- Effective participatory schoolwork benefits from collaboration between school and local community and from cross-cultural exchange.

Consequently, the main focus of Shape Up has been on social determinants of health rather than solely individual health-related behaviour. The key aspects of the Shape Up methodological approach include (Simovska et al, 2006):

- A holistic and broad concept of health, encompassing both lifestyle and living conditions
- Children and young people’s genuine participation
- The IVAC (investigation-vision-action-change) pedagogical approach
- School-community collaboration
- Cross-cultural collaboration
- Self evaluation: learning from experience

The research

The research project which this report is part of has been planned and conducted by a team at the Research Programme for Health and Environmental Education, Danish School of Education (DPU), Aarhus University. The research project consists of a total of six case studies in schools in six European cities, and a cross-case analysis looking at three specific research issues: a) the IVAC approach; b) children and young people’s participation and c) school-community collaboration. The purpose is to learn from the project developments and generate new, more nuanced, knowledge about contextual factors influencing the interpretation of the Shape Up approach and its practical, real-world implementation in a variety of settings. It is important to note that, although (aspects of) the research contributed to the project evaluation, this is not an evaluation research.

This report presents the findings from the case study in Maastricht. The report begins with a ‘vignette’, which aims to bring the setting of the case study to life by providing the reader with a vivid description of a meeting where the pupils discuss the main project activities. Then, the empirical findings are considered following the ‘Context-Mechanism-Outcomes’ framework (Pawson and Tilley, 1997), which is adapted and adopted for the entire research project. First, the context is described by using information from different data sources (see Appendix 1); it includes different aspects of the school’s physical and psycho-social environment, as well as the development of the project in the city and the

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3 The research team members, in addition to the author of this report, are: Christina K. Albeck, Bjarne Bruun Jensen, Monica Carlsson, and Pernille Dehn. Their contribution to this report is gratefully acknowledged.
school. The mechanisms are operationalised through the selected aspects of the Shape Up approach and analysed in these categories: that is, the IVAC approach; participation; and school-community participation. The outcomes are analysed through the changes in the health-related determinants and the development of pupils’ action competence in relation to health as a result of the project. The report ends with conclusions concerning each of the analysed aspects and implications for future research and development. The case specific data sources are presented in Appendix 1, the research design outline and analytical strategy in Appendix 2, and the research instruments used in all case studies in Appendix 3.

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The research was made possible by the research participants: the Shape Up coordinator and facilitator in Maastricht, the school headmaster, the teachers and the pupils at the case study school, who all generously agreed to spend valuable time answering my questions and allowing me to walk in and around the school for a total of 4 days on two separate visits. A big THANKS for that. Also, thanks for responding to a number of e-mails with additional questions and for making the project documentation available for research purposes.

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Vignette
The story takes place in a small school in Maastricht, the Netherlands, at a meeting of the pupil council. The council is responsible for the Shape Up project at this school. Pupils have been following the Investigation-Vision-Action-Change structure to decide which health-promoting changes they would like to bring about as a part of the Shape Up work. There are 3 main actions Shape Up in this school focused on:

a) Improving the safety around the school;
b) Establishing a playground in the ‘gypsy-like’ community and

c) Healthy lunch at school.

The observed meeting in this vignette deals with the first two issues.

The headmaster (HM) holds the meeting with 10 pupils, members of the pupil council. Pupils are in the age range 11-14. The Shape Up local coordinator (LC) and local facilitator (LF) are present too. The LF participates in the meeting actively, while the LC translates from Dutch into English for the researcher. The meeting is in an art classroom, a large room equipped with a lot of materials. Pupils are standing around a large table, where they have all the photos taken previously in the Shape Up investigation phase.

The photographs portray the traffic around the school, with a focus on safety. The headmaster (HM) starts by asking pupils what they eat at home following the Shape Up week, if they started to eat rye bread, more fruit etc…They raise their hands if they did…Informal chat in a relaxed atmosphere. Then the HM summarises the plans for action they have made previously, which shape the agenda for the present meeting.

Safety around the school
The first issue on the agenda is safety around the school. The aim of this meeting is that pupils prepare a poster presenting the safety situation surrounding the school for the municipality, in order to lobby for their proposed changes (a new pedestrian crossing and a reduced speed limit). All the pupils gather around the table, they discuss the photos of the school’s surrounding environment. The headmaster has prepared a large poster with a map of the school environment. The pupils are asked to place each photo on the map corresponding to the real location where it was taken. The HM then glues the photos onto the poster.

HM guides the pupils step by step. First, they are asked to mark the school on the map. Then, they select from the photos the ones that show the most dangerous spots and place them on the map. Pupils look at the photos one by one and make the selection together.

The pupils seem free and all participate in the discussion. As the work proceeds, the HM asks questions related to the photos: ‘do the cars stop for you?’ etc. Formal and informal discussion takes place. Pupils make jokes recalling the situations when they took the photos: One car did not stop for them to cross, and one of the pupils said that ‘now they have their licence number and can report them to the police’ …all laughing.

One of the pupils mentions that she has a birthday that day, so they sing a song for her while working with the photos.

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4 The term ’gypsy-like’ community was used by the research participants and is therefore kept in the report too.
Another pupil suggests that they should take a photo of the poster, because it is so big, and take the photo to the municipality instead of the real-size poster itself…

They also talk about maps and coordinates as they work. The HM asks one of the pupils to explain to the others what coordinates are – because they learned about that in the class. The LF also explains about the GPS system and how coordinates are important for it to function…

The subject of their first day at school came up. Everyone tells about their first day at school.

When pupils are finished selecting and placing the photos on the poster, the HM summarises and asks them what they want to change in relation to the safety situation around the school. Now he demands more orderly talking, one at a time… so all the ideas are taken into account. Pupils agree that they want a pedestrian crossing.

HM asks pupils to show where exactly they want the crossing, and they mark it on the map. Instead of the conventional zebra-marking, the pupils suggest coloured (red) footsteps, arguing that this is a more obvious (and so safer) visualisation for younger children.

One pupil suggests that if they are going to send the poster to the alderman, they need a letter to go with it, and asks how are they going to do this…They choose one of the older pupils to write the letter. She asks if they have the address, and who is going to bring it to the post office. HM explains that the person at the school entrance will do that later today if they give the letter to him. Very detailed planning on different action steps…

They summarise again what they decided and conclude that the first point on the agenda is finished.

**Playground for the ‘gypsy-like’ community**

The playground is the next issue on the agenda. There is a catalogue of playground equipment; it was agreed previously that all the pupils in the council should select what they consider appropriate equipment for the new playground. At the meeting they need to make the final selection together. Every pupil had made a list of preferences on their own before the meeting. The HM has a list of these preferences and they discuss them one by one, look at pictures in the catalogue together and make a decision.

Even the youngest pupils participate. They discuss each item – why is it good or not good for the playground – some are too big for the playground, some are too small or not safe enough…Again, a good atmosphere, all kids participate in a lively manner. They had agreed before that some of the equipment should be for smaller kids and some for the older ones. Sometimes they disagree as to whether the equipment is safe or not…The pupils seem very involved and motivated. Some pupils jokingly suggest placing some of the playground toys over the road, so they can slide to school… everyone laughs.

HM asks if they can remove something from the list as a strategy that would make the selection easier; they eliminate one item that is too large for the space available in the playground.

One of the younger pupils makes a remark that there are too many things for the small kids and too little for the older ones… So the selection is reconsidered once again by all (in a discussion) with regard to which items are for the smaller and which for the older children. When the list is finalised, the HM asks what should be the next step. They agree
that the next step is to present the plan to the municipality and see what is possible considering the available budget.

With this, the second item on the agenda is concluded. HM summarises the meeting once more, mentioning the letter that needs to be written before the end of the day. The letter should also include the playground and their selection of equipment.

**Context**

**General information**

This section is based mainly on observation notes. Facts are taken from the project documentation (Portfolio) and the interview with the school headmaster. All photos were taken by the researcher.

The school was established in 1991, on the site of a traditional catholic school. The building where the school is now situated is a new building put in use in 2002. The school is in a welfare priority area, which means a relatively disadvantaged neighbourhood.

The larger local area is known for producing ceramics, and is in the midst of a process of revitalization, with new, mostly rental apartments, housing for the elderly etc. There are a few buildings designed by known architects (e.g. the library and cultural centre). A real estate company owns the school building so the school does not take care for its maintenance.

In total, there are 215 pupils and 15 teachers, 22 members of staff including non-teaching staff. The socioeconomic composition of the pupils’ families varies across three levels. Most of the families are from the local neighbourhood, whilst some come from other parts of the city or the surrounding villages. There are around 40 pupils from ‘gypsy-like’ communities [ethnic Dutch, but with a way of living resembling the nomadic culture]. There is such community not far from the school.

The ethnic composition of the school is predominantly Dutch, with a few pupils with another ethnic background (e.g. Turkish, Iraqi, New Zealand etc). Gender composition among pupils is balanced.

The school is a Montessori school with a specific educational approach and vision, based on the needs of the children and their independent work, where the teacher acts as guide. It is also a ‘community school’. The welfare organization Trajekt has its office at the school. They work with children, young people, and parents from the community. There is a youth centre at the school, run by Trajekt. Also, the Trajekt office provides a wide range of advisory services to parents, and in the rest of the community - from advice on taxes, banking and paperwork, to psychological support in case of divorce, unemployment etc.
The Trajekt employee at the school is the Shape Up facilitator. The Shape Up coordinator works for the Regional Institute for Public Health, GGD Zuid Limburg.

The school building also accommodates the preschool institution – which is a separate institution from the school, which parents pay for. Additionally, the after school facility is also located within the school building and is subsidized by the municipality.

Access
The traffic around the school is not very heavy, but there are streets surrounding the school. There is a parking lot close to the school entrance, which is used for the school as well as for people visiting the nearby supermarket. There are also parking facilities for bicycles. There are cycling paths on some of the streets. In general, the city seems to be cycle-friendly, and the area surrounding the school is no exception in this respect. The neighbourhood is generally quite peaceful.

Opposite the school, there is a nursing home; the school is surrounded by residential apartment buildings and town houses with small gardens.

There is a green area close to the entrance of the school, with trees and grass. Walking is allowed and the space seems to be used by the people in the neighbourhood.

The built environment
The building is new, well designed, with a simple and functional architecture, a lot of daylight and central open plan.

The school has a welcoming entrance with a small lobby, reception, and large staircase on the side. According to the headmaster, the stairs are used by pupils as seating when performances are held in the lobby. The lobby was supposed to be much larger, but the financial restrictions during the construction did not allow that. The headmaster was proud that the school has an elevator, even though there are only 2 floors, so all pupils are ensured easy access to all classrooms, regardless of any physical disability.

There are signs clearly showing the direction of the different classrooms and sections of the school. The classrooms are well furnished, well equipped and flexible in their design. Pupils sit in small groups around the desks, rather than in rows. There are lot of materials, books, and other visual aids available in each classroom. Each classroom has a PC and a whiteboard with the timetable for the day, which is flexible, following the needs and priorities of the individual child, as agreed with the teacher.

Centrally located on the second floor is the library and computer room. It is a large room with a large number of books suitable for the variety of ages of pupils. According to the headmaster, this is one of the largest libraries of its kind in the Netherlands. There are a lot of PCs, the room is suitable for children of different ages and it is quite child friendly.
It seems to be used a lot; in the two days I spent at the school, there were always several pupils using the computers or reading.

There are spaces in the corridors with large pillows where pupils can relax and read if they so wish.

The school has a nice gym within the premises, used by all the children.

There are also rooms for creative activities, such as pottery, painting etc.

One room serves as a staffroom, and this is the room where teachers have lunch (which they bring from home).

Children eat in their classrooms; they bring lunch from home. There is no school canteen. There are several small kitchens at different locations throughout the school, for making coffee, tea etc. There is one vending machine with soft drinks, and also the possibility for pupils to buy milk and juice at the reception.

The offices and classrooms are clearly signposted. There doors are glazed, so it is easy to see what is going on inside.

The headmaster’s office has a sign showing if he is busy or if entrance to the office is welcome. It seems accessible and pupil friendly.

The corridors are lined with hangers for pupils’ coats and different materials used in the classrooms. The walls are decorated with posters and reproductions, as well as with displays of pupils’ work, which are clearly marked and titled. There are no visible displays linked with Shape Up, except the Shape Up poster prepared for the last regional meeting in the headmaster’s office.

**The schoolyard**

The schoolyard consists of several areas: a small football pitch; a playground for smaller pupils with activity equipment; a large sand box; a seating area; and a large paved area for different games. The space is not divided according to age. However, the student council recently made rules for the use of the schoolyard so smaller pupils do not ‘disturb’ the older ones and vice versa. Two teachers supervise the break, and they actively play with pupils. This responsibility follows a rota with teachers taking turns.

There is a lot of equipment for games and play, which is brought out for the break. At the end of the break the pupils tidy up the equipment and teachers bring it inside (on the day of the visit, this was done by the headmaster). Then, they line up in class groups to go back to their classrooms in an orderly manner. There are external staircases on both sides of the school building to enter the school from the schoolyard, so pupils do not have to walk through the whole school but can go directly to their classrooms after the break.
Social aspects and the ‘feeling’ of the school

The school radiates a positive and welcoming atmosphere. Pupils walk around freely, they greet visitors with a smile, exchange small talk with the LF and the headmaster. Both LF and the headmaster know the pupils by name and seem to be very friendly. There is no sign of any special cliques among the pupils. No signs of violence or arguments among pupils during the breaks or in the classrooms.

I entered several classrooms, and the atmosphere was always busy but relaxed. It is easy to go in and out of classrooms, and teachers do not seem to mind or to be disturbed. In one of the classrooms, where a test going on when we passed by, the teacher just gave us a sign not to disturb them and we went on. Children were friendly and curious when I was taking photos; I always asked if they minded, and they gave me permission, ‘posing’ for the picture with a relaxed and friendly attitude. Pupils seem to be happy to be at the school, and proud to show it.

During the lessons, one group of pupils was practising a dance in the lobby for a performance event for the whole school which is held every six weeks. They were rehearsing on their own, with no teacher present. When we passed by, they insisted on performing the dance for us. A few boys were around, performing their own choreography to the same music, but without disturbing the ‘official’ rehearsal.

The general manner of communication between teachers and pupils is very friendly, but with clear boundaries and code of conduct. The teachers, the LF and the head seem to have authority without being authoritarian. Children know the rules and respect them. There is a lot of friendliness and humour in the communication between adults and children, and a sense of familiarity and closeness.

In two days, I felt that I got to know the school well, and had a strong feeling of being in a community. I felt that all the staff and the pupils like being there and are proud to share it with people from outside the school.

The story of Shape Up in the school

This section is based on the interview with LC and LF as well as on the project documentation – the annual project reports and self-evaluation portfolio.

Shape Up in Maastricht was initiated by the Regional Public Health Institute Zuid Limburg. They were interested in the project because of the national health policy guidelines, which prioritised tackling obesity. The Institute contacted Trajekt (the welfare organization) to be the main partner, as they had experience with school projects and participation.

All the schools in the region were contacted by post and asked to express an interest in participating in Shape Up. The letter explained the Shape Up approach and aims, and included an application form for interested schools to apply. On this basis, three schools were selected in collaboration between the two coordinating institutions.

The case school was selected because it is a community school in a ‘priority’ area, which was considered relevant for the Shape Up approach. Additionally, it was considered relevant that Trajekt had an office within the school, which provided good conditions for
working with the school-community collaboration. The headmaster of the school was interested in joining the project, and the partnership was established. The LF was a Trajekt employee, and the LC was with the Regional Public Health Institute.

There is a formal LPG, but it was not used on a regular basis. The LPG was informed about the ongoing project activities, and different members were involved in different phases of the project as required, mainly for strategic support. There was an active Shape Up working-group, consisting of the LC, LF and a member of the school. This group met once a month. The LC and LF communicated via e-mail and telephone on a weekly basis. Additionally, the health policy maker and the alderman of the city of Maastricht were informed about the project developments.

The LC changed three times over the course of the project (due to reasons unrelated to Shape Up), which was an obstacle in the development of the project. However, the LF provided stability and continuity, which balanced out the difficulties.

The LF and the school headmaster decided that Shape Up will constitute a part of the work of the pupil council. This decision was based on a realisation that the project approach – active pupil participation in influencing health determinants and school-community collaboration - would fit well with the work of the pupil council, and would avoid overburdening teachers’ everyday work in the classes. The school does not operate with separate subjects, so health education is a cross-curricular topic. The HM thought that teachers would be overwhelmed with Shape Up integrated in their regular work, so the pupil council seemed the best place to situate it.

Thus, in this school, Shape Up was planned and conducted mainly by the LF and the school headmaster, and the core group of pupils active in Shape Up consisted of the members of the pupil council.

The school has a policy on snacks and healthy food, but prior to Shape Up pupils had not been asked to discuss it.

All the teachers and pupils at the school were informed about the project, and took part in a number of school-wide project activities initiated by the LF. Main activities where the whole school took part were:

- A survey with 13 questions exploring the issues of health and well-being at school, and pupils’ ideas for possible health-promoting changes at different levels. The survey was created by the LF and LC and it was administered by the teachers with all pupils in class 6, 7 and 8 (11 – 14 years). The results of the survey provided input for class discussions, run by the LF and the teachers. Each class selected three topics to focus on in Shape Up, concentrating on changes they would like to bring about. Each class made three presentations for the whole school, and the three main actions (desired changes) were selected by voting. [The actions included: (a) Playground for a gypsy-like community; (b) Safety around the school and (c) Healthy lunch at school every day]. These three ideas were then presented by pupils at the City Hall (see next bullet).

- Presentation of the pupils’ projects at the City Hall; all the pupils from the school attended, plus invited representatives from a secondary school (also a Shape Up school). The Regional Public Health Institute provided a communication expert to come to the school and help the pupils prepare their presentations (PP) and also prepare to answer questions. A panel was a part of the programme in the city hall; it consisted of the alderman, several VIPs and pupils from the secondary school. They commented and discussed the pupils’ visions and ideas about
health-promoting changes. The city of Maastricht provided healthy lunch for all the participating children following the presentation.

- The ‘Sport Week’, which was a Shape Up week; all the pupils and teachers took part in a number of health-promotion activities. The Sport Week takes place every year in all the schools in Maastricht, as part of the national policy on physical activity. Shape Up at the school was integrated in this week, so the focus was on body movement and healthy eating. Additionally, the Shape Up week was used for the pupils to present their ideas to the policymakers in Maastricht, and to discuss the possibilities and barriers for actualisation of their ideas. Also, during the week pupils were invited to write about the question: ‘If you were the Minister of Health, what would you change in this school?’ Parents were also involved in the Shape Up week, for example they were invited to a healthy shopping tour with a dietician. Classes 6 and 7 prepared healthy lunch for the whole school. Shape Up provided 35 slices of bread, low fat cheese, chicken fillet, light jam, 35 litres of milk and 1000 pieces of fruit.
Mechanisms

Shape Up mechanisms are operationalised through the main components of the Shape Up approach: IVAC; participation; and school-community collaboration. In the following, the empirical data from the interviews with pupils and LF and LC, observation and project documentation will be summarised to highlight each of these mechanisms.

The Investigation-Vision-Action-Change (IVAC) pedagogical model

The IVAC model was used as an overall pedagogical framework for organising the project activities at the school and not as a step-by-step method. The different aspects of the model (investigation-vision-action-change) were used interchangeably, in dynamic and reiterative processes.

The LF emphasised in the interview that the model provided space for working with pupils’ dreams and imagination, but also to go a step further – to enable pupils to work towards realising their dreams. The quote below highlights this point.

\[I\ \text{discuss with teachers that kids can have dreams and we have to make sure that it does not matter if the dreams are big or small, that they [pupils] have to learn what they need to achieve the dreams, to solve the problems. (LF, interview, April 2008)}\]

Two important aspects relating to the IVAC model are emphasised in this quote: the first is the importance of pupils’ visions and imaginations in relation to health problems, and the second is the importance of developing pupils’ competence to bridge the gap between their visions and the reality by taking action and bringing about changes.

The project reports, as well as the interview accounts, show that the overall ‘investigation’ phase was planned by the LF and LC and conducted by the teachers in classes 6 - 8. All pupils at the school filled out a survey with 13 questions about health and the environment at the school and its surroundings. After this, group discussions were held by the LF and the teacher in each class, to reflect on the findings from the questionnaire and to select the topics that pupils wanted Shape Up to focus on. Thus, the selection and investigation phase of IVAC was done at a level of the whole school. The pupils were involved in: (a) outlining their ideas for health-promoting changes and (b) prioritising three of the ideas that would be in focus for Shape Up actions and changes.

Within the three selected topics, there were again investigative activities conducted by the pupils in the pupil council, facilitated by the HM and the LF. Examples of these activities are documented in the self-evaluation portfolio, in the project reports and on the web portal (www.shapeupeurope.net). Examples of investigative activities for each of the selected topics include (taken from the Portfolio, May 2008):

1. Safety around the school
   - Pupils walked around the school together with the pupils from the school magazine, and took photos together. The photos portrayed pupils’ perception of the dangerous spots on the streets surrounding the school.

2. Playground for the ‘gypsy-like’ community
   - Pupils visited the gypsy-like community area, which is near the school, and evaluated the (lack of) play opportunities for disadvantaged children in this area; they also visited the location in this area comprising a potential site for the playground to be built.
• Pupils visited several playgrounds throughout the city to explore the equipment available for other children, and take measurements;

• Pupils worked with a number of questions for investigation such as: What size will the new playground be? How much is it going to cost? What kind of playground equipment would they like there? (Portfolio, p. 10)

3. Healthy school canteen

• Pupils explored the possibilities for a healthier canteen in collaboration with a centre for elderly people nearby. Also, they explored the possibilities to get a healthy snack vending machine at the school (Portfolio, p. 10)

The observations conducted during the pupil council meeting (see the vignette) are consistent with these accounts in the project documentation. At the observed meeting, pupils used their ‘findings’ and reflections from the investigation work done in this phase, for instance the photographs of the streets around the school, to prepare the poster outlining the danger spots and suggesting changes. Also, they had explored different aspects related to the playground in the investigation phase prior to the meeting, so at the meeting they could make selections of the equipment they liked.

The pupil in the individual interview emphasises similar points, especially in relation to the playground:

First, we had to investigate what are the possibilities from these tools, and then we had to choose. […] We visited the place where we want the playground, and we got a map with all sorts of pipes for gas and water are. (M. individual interview, April 2008)

The account above points out that investigation is carried out with a specific goal, and it is closely linked to the ‘real-life’ change that the pupils had been working towards.

The group interview with the pupils shows that the investigation process was reiterative and that they returned to it several times over the course of the project. For example, in the group interview pupils describe the situation when they visited the mayor for the first time to present their idea for the playground, he asked how many children would use the new playground, and what kinds of playgrounds were in the vicinity – which meant that pupils had to go back to the investigation phase in order to find out.

The extract from the group interview below further illustrates the different aspects of investigation that were necessary for the playground action:

S: We have to take into account many things before we can decide which ones [the playground equipment] we choose, because some of the things are impossible.

M1: Because there are pipes in the area where the playground is planned to be, there are pipes so the fundament for the playing tools can not be very deep.

(Pupils, group interview, April 2008)

The extract shows that the pupils are very specific and precise in their descriptions of the issue they investigated, which signals their strong sense of ownership and increased ‘real-life’ knowledge gained in the investigation process.

The continuation of the interview account below highlights the impressively detailed knowledge expressed by the pupils following the investigation phase.

M1: The HM explained that the ground you walk on [at the location of the playground] is this high [shows the height] and the playground is that [shows lower level]. One possibility would be to put some sand on the playground so that it will reach the same level, but the architect
said it is impossible because the access to the pipes need to be ensured. They have to have access right away, so when there are problems they do not have to dig that deep.

(Pupils, group interview, April 2008)

The interview extracts demonstrate the authenticity of the investigation work that was done, resulting in strong motivation and commitment among the pupils to go into technical details and explore thoroughly the different aspects involved in any decision related to their desired changes.

The vision aspect of IVAC seems to have been closely related to the other aspects of the model. Pupils were encouraged to develop visions and creative ideas for health-promoting changes during the class discussion sessions following the questionnaire.

The evidence for pupils’ visions comes from the project reports, the portfolio and the web portal. The boxes below present a selection of the visions pupils created.

Box 1: Innovative ideas for a cleaner neighbourhood (www.shapeupeurope.net)

Box 1 presents a team of pupils introducing their innovative idea for a trash-can that would make it easier to collect dog excrement and keep the neighbourhood clean. Pupils argued that their play would be safer and healthier in a clean environment.

Box 2 below shows a different vision, relating to body movement and health. This team of pupils imagined a number of alternative games and body movements that could be done during the school breaks to improve the physical activity of all pupils.
Creative sports and body movement activities after school and during the breaks. Another group of pupils developed the idea about different body movement activities after school (in the school) or during the breaks. They expanded the ideas of sports to many interesting activities, which they demonstrated for their peers.

Box 2: New forms of body movement (www.shapeupeurope.net)

As shown in the photo, the pupils demonstrated their visions to their peers in a lively and active manner.

The third box (Box 3) presents another vision created by the pupils – a girl-friendly playground.

Box 3. Girl-friendly playground (www.shapeupeurope.net)

The argumentation of this team of female pupils was that a lot of playgrounds in the neighbourhood are more suitable for boys, while the interests and preferences of girls are different. So, they came up with an idea for a new type of a playground which would meet the needs of the girls, and result in increased physical activity.

Other examples of visions, reported on the web portal include: a parking lot for bicycles; a new healthy vending machine; a school canteen with a lot of fruit and vegetables and a nice atmosphere for eating together; a playground for the youngest children etc.

It is worth noting that the photos documented on the web portal and in the portfolio show that pupils were guided and encouraged to use a wide range of creative methods and forms to represent and share their visions with their peers.

During the Shape Up week, a vision activity was organised in the form of a competition to find the most interesting answer to the question: ‘If you were the Minister of Health, what
would you change in this school?" Box 4 below outlines the three ideas that won a prize, taken from the web portal.

Nr. 1: If I were minister I would say: everybody has to do sports 4 times a week and every month a match with a lot of nice things so that everybody participates!

Nr. 2: I would place in every school a fruit machine with healthy fruit.

Nr. 3: The coca-cola should go and the candy also and all the sweet things have to go. So those were my ideas.

Box 4: If I were a Minister… (www.shapeupeurope.net)

The first vision above emphasises the pupil’s idea that body movement should be fun (‘nice’), and inclusive (‘everybody participates’) if it is to be done frequently (‘four times a week’). The second vision imagines a fruit vending machine at the school, highlighting the idea that healthy food should be provided at the school for all pupils. This is a vision not only about the case school, but about all schools. The third vision imagines a school without fizzy drinks and candy vending machines, making it easier for the pupils to make healthy choices.

The visions, their representations, the descriptions and the rationale provided by the pupils demonstrate their imaginative approach to health and health-promoting changes at the school and in the local environment. They also highlight pupils’ commitment – they seem to have invested a lot of energy and enthusiasm in developing the visions, and were pleased to share them with peers. Furthermore, the content of the visions points to pupils’ serious considerations of the issue of health in a holistic sense. They link a clean and hygienic environment with the level of motivation for physical activity; gender preferences and activity; the atmosphere in the canteen with healthy eating; they think about ease of access and inclusiveness etc.

The pupils focused on two main actions in Shape Up: safety in the area around the school, and the playground. It is these actions that they talk about most in the interviews. Obviously, initiating and implementing real-life actions was the most exciting and motivating aspect of the IVAC approach for the pupils in Shape Up. The observations of the pupil council meetings, the project documentation and the interviews provide consistent records about these two actions.

The core of the action for local safety is the request submitted to the municipality for a reduction of the speed limit on surrounding roads, and for a new pedestrian crossing. The action concerning the playground consists of a detailed map of the new playground, drawn up by children and delivered to the alderman, showing all the play equipment selected by the pupils and the exact location in the playground.

These action plans were presented by pupil representatives to the members of the city hall and the alderman on two separate occasions: firstly as vision ideas, then later, in more detailed form. Pupils also sent several letters elaborating on their action plans, and took the alderman on a visit to the playground in order to discuss the matter in more detail.

In the interviews, pupils seem to be very enthusiastic about the opportunity they got in Shape Up to take action and initiate changes:

I like it because we do things which are different from what we normally do every day at school.
You do not get to, for example, write a letter to the alderman every day. (Pupils, group interview, April 2008)
In the individual interview, the pupil (M) talks in detail about the presentations they made to the Municipality:

M: We presented three ideas in the city hall: what we would like to change, the playground, the safety around the school and the school canteen. I presented the playground.

I: How did you feel?

M: I was very nervous because I had to do the presentation by myself, and it was my first one.

I: How did you prepare?

M: With a few pupils from the council, we discussed about what we want to say and how are we going to say it.

(Pupil, individual interview, April 2008)

The extract shows that, even though the presentation in the city hall was made by one pupil, they prepared for it together.

Pupils also got help from the adults involved in Shape Up as illustrated in the interview account below:

We got help in the process by Mr. J. [HM] and a social worker working in the community. Pupils in the council decided that there should be a letter, I wrote the letter. I asked for a final ‘go’ to the HM. Then we visited the place where the playground would be, the HM was there, the social worker was there and someone from the municipality too. We discussed about the playground.

(Pupil, individual interview, April 2008)

The account shows that the pupils were supported by the adults involved in Shape Up. The HM, in collaboration with the pupil council, has been in touch with different people from the municipality that could support the action. Also, the LC and LF contacted the members of the LPG and other people to support pupils in taking the action.

As a part of the support in taking action, pupils were provided with specific training sessions on Power Point presentations and communicating ideas. The LC stated in the interview that the Regional Public Health Institute provided pupils with a communication expert to help pupils prepare the presentations for the city hall.

We invited her [the communication expert] and she came to the school to tell children what they need to think about when they present, and how to ask and answer questions.

(LC, interview, April 2008)

The interview accounts by the pupils show that the support was effective. The extract from the conversation in the individual interview illustrates this:

I: Were there questions after you presented?

M: Yeah, the alderman asked questions.

I: How was that?

M: There were heavy questions but we have heavy answers so…

I: In what way were the questions heavy, can you tell more?

M: In one way, we expected some of the questions, but in another way we did not expect some of the questions. But we had a lot of information in the presentation because we thought maybe that is what he is going to ask and we have told him about that.
I: But the alderman also surprised you with some questions? Did you manage to cope?
M. Yeah . And he was pleased, at least we thought so.

(Pupil, individual interview, April 2008)

This section taken from the interview clearly demonstrates the competence and the confidence that the pupil felt when managing a quite complex situation – making a public presentation for the first time, answering questions concerning the action, and arguing for the changes pupils want to bring about by anticipating criticism and responding to it.

It is important to note that pupils seemed to be well aware of the difference between taking action and bringing about change. At the time of the interviews, the actual changes had not happened yet. When asked about this, pupils had positive, but cautious and realistic reflections about the changes; they did not expect that the changes would be provided for them.

I: Do you think the changes you asked for will happen?
All: Not yet.
M: We have to wait for a letter from the alderman with his reaction.
I: What do you expect?
M. That we will have to convince him [alderman] more.
I: Why?
W: When we were at the city hall with the presentations he was very positive about the ideas, but when he visited the playground location with us for example, he was not so enthusiastic, so we have to do more to convince him.
I: So are you prepared to convince him, to fight for what you want?
All: Yeah.
I: How?
M. If people from municipality think the things we want to change cost a lot of money, right now we are learning how to raise funding by writing letters to companies.
S: Yes, so when the alderman says it costs too much money we can say we have raised funding.

(Pupils, group interview, April 2008)

This remarkable interview extract highlights the pupils’ competence, enthusiasm and commitment to working harder in order to achieve change. It is also evident that they are quite realistic in their expectations, and they do not take for granted that change will simply happen. Rather, they have been taught to consider the financial aspects of the changes and to work to provide funding themselves. Obviously, through these processes they learn a lot about how changes are brought about and how to work together to this end.

**Potentials and challenges in the work with the IVAC model**

The LC and LF pointed in the interview to a few challenges in working according to the IVAC model. One of the most important barriers, in their view, was the teachers’ reaction to a new pedagogical method, and their perception that working in this way would take time away from the main educational aims of their teaching. The teachers could not immediately see the potential for IVAC to be integrated in the curriculum for
different subjects, they saw it instead as a new ‘project tool’, and, of course, were therefore not keen to accept it.

IVAC looks like it has to take a lot of time to do the method. It is difficult to organise, because pupils have different lessons [subjects]. The second difficulty was that the teachers’ main aim is education; they want to ensure good results for the pupils. Especially in the secondary school, they say: ‘when my pupils leave my math class, I want them to have a good grade in math’. I personally think, even then it would be good if pupils learn about policy but… (LF, interview, April 2008)

So the challenge that this extract points to is: how can IVAC be adapted to fit the school structure and curriculum without overloading teachers with too much work?

In the case school, the challenge was addressed by using the IVAC model in a flexible way, which is elaborated in the quote below:

We used it but not in a strict way. Not in steps. … I think IVAC is a nice way to do a process, a changing process with kids, but we did not describe to them this is IVAC. Also, because of the teachers. They would be scared if I asked them to do two weeks Investigation, then two weeks Vision and so on. So I structured the process. (LF interview, May 2008)

The quote shows that the LF, LC and HM decided that IVAC should be planned by them, as an overall project structure, and the teachers would not be asked to plan, but rather invited to participate with their pupils in different phases of the project following the model.

The action phase was identified by the pupils as the most challenging, because it involves people from the local community, which means a certain amount of unpredictability.

Sometimes pupils are taken seriously, on other occasions less so, and this affects their motivation and enthusiasm.

S: Last time when we visited the playground location, he [the alderman] was not that nice. He was a little bit strict
I: How did that make you feel?
M1. Disappointed.
W: Yeah. At first he was very enthusiastic, and after that at the second visit, he was not, we did not expect that.

(Pupils, group interview, April 2008)

The LC and LF point to the same problem in the interview.

LF: The kids recognised that the alderman was not that friendly and enthusiastic the second time they met him, when they visited the possible location for the playground.
LC: Yes, I was also there, and I saw that he was very busy and had other things on his mind, not really there… I noticed that the kids saw that too, and they were very disappointed and frustrated. But after that we discussed what could be the reason for that, and how should we deal, what are we going to do. That was good. (LF and LC interview, April 2008)

The extract above shows that the pupils were not left alone with their feelings of disappointment and disillusionment. Rather, the LC and the HM discussed with them and utilized the frustrating situation as a learning experience.

Similarly, the quote below from the individual pupil interview shows that the frustrations were clearly used as a learning experience and as motivation to work harder and attract the alderman’s interest.
At the beginning when we visited the gypsy-like community we thought he did not take us seriously, he was not interested. Right now we have got more a good feeling because we have worked harder on this and I have got a better feeling with the contact with the alderman. (Pupil, individual interview, April 2008)

Both the LC and LF emphasised that in order for IVAC to be employed in a school, it needs to fit the educational philosophy and mission of the school, which it obviously does in the case school.

However, they expressed scepticism as to whether the model is applicable in a more traditional school, with separate subjects, lessons and so on, and in a secondary school.

LF: If you want to work in that way in a secondary school, you have to change the whole system, or make it as a project for several classes, but it is very difficult.

LC: It is the whole structure that needs to be re-structured and that is the problem. It is very fixed system and they have more aims on the educational level. There is a bell, and in 15 min. there is another lesson, and pupils need to move to another classroom, that makes IVAC very difficult.

(LF and LC interview, April 2008)

Thus, this case shows that employment of IVAC is possible if certain conditions are met, and if there is space within the curriculum and the regular school work. The main challenge is to link the method (IVAC) to different school subjects, especially with respect to integrating health issues across the curriculum in a manner which is clear and understandable to teachers from the very beginning.
Participation

The analysis related to the mechanism of participation resulted in the following themes, emerging from the data:

- Participation and partnership: key principles of Shape Up
- Pupils participate actively
- Different pupils participate differently
- Challenges

Participation and partnership: key principles of Shape Up

The project documentation, as well as the interviews with the school HM, LF and LC, clearly shows that participation was perceived as the main feature of Shape Up from the very beginning. In the first Project Report in 2006, the LC states that one of the achievements at the start of the project was that they had managed to shift the traditional focus of the coordinating institution (Regional Public Health Institute) and the Municipality from an ‘ordinary health promotion, to health promotion through participation’ (LC, Project Report, 2006: p.1). Furthermore, the accounts of the LC in the same report show that the rationale for the choice of the social welfare organisation (Trajekt) as a coordinating partner of the project was to ensure that participation, the main feature of Shape Up, would be included as the guiding principle in the project. In the words of the LC:

‘The social welfare organisation knows participation; the public health service knows health promotion’

(LC, Project Report, 2006).

These extracts from the project report show that the issue of participation was treated seriously from the beginning, and that a structural framework was provided which was conducive to participation.

Similarly, in the interview, the HM of the school emphasised the participatory nature of Shape Up as its key characteristic:

[Shape Up is about] ‘pupil participation, giving pupils a voice, letting them to decide and to have a real influence’ (HM, Interview, June 2008)

Also, the LC and LF stated in the interview that Shape Up is different from similar health projects in the area, and it is the emphasis on participation that makes it unique. They both pointed out that the importance of participation is not only related to pupils, but also to the different types of collaboration and partnership between the two coordinating organisations (the Regional Public Health Institute and the Social Welfare Organisation Trajekt). The following extract from the interview illustrates this point:

Shape Up is a unique project because there is an equal collaboration between our two organisations, and the school and the municipality; For example in our Institute [Public Health] there are a lot of health projects also in schools, but the participation, that is very unique, that is very special. (LC, interview, April 2008)

The local facilitator elaborates further in a similar spirit:

Yes, the equal participation. I think there is a difference in participation. A lot of programmes and projects are not based on equal participation…there are a lot of health programmes where the Institute [Public Health] gets an idea and they say to us — here you are — and we have to do it. In this programme, we do it together. (LF, interview, April 2008)
Clearly, in Maastricht, the participative nature of Shape Up was embraced from the very beginning and the project coordinating organisation created structures conducive to implementing a genuine participatory project. It is interesting to note that this required that the coordinating institution (RPHI) revise its primary objectives for the project.

**Pupils participate actively**

The participation of pupils was likewise taken seriously. According to the opinions of the LF and the HM, participation was already a key element of the school’s everyday practice and teaching methods employed. However, participation interpreted as pupils’ influence and bringing about ‘real-life’ changes both within and outside the school setting was seen as a new perspective that Shape Up brought to the school.

*I think kids in the Netherlands know what participation is. Also, in this school --they talk that everyone is equal, Shape Up fits into the vision of the school; but I think through participation in Shape Up kids learned that if you want something you have to work for it…not to expect from others to fulfil their wishes.* (LF, interview, April 2008)

This reflection points to the difference between participation as a simple involvement in activities and participation as influence. It is the latter that was endorsed in Shape Up, and according to the LF, it was beneficial for pupils’ learning. Participation is seen as closely linked with taking action and achieving goals (‘fulfilling wishes’) that pupils set for themselves.

The discussion in the interviews about the specific developments within Shape Up further highlights the active involvement of pupils. Even though the initial questionnaire (as described earlier, aiming to explore pupils’ ideas about desired health-promoting changes) was compiled by the LF and LC, the activity did provide pupils with an opportunity to have their say; to discuss their ideas; and finally, through a democratic process, to select several topics for Shape Up to focus on. Thus, within the framework outlined and provided by the adults, pupils had a choice in shaping the content of the project.

For example, as the interview excerpt below shows, they chose to reduce the initial nine changes to three, by merging several smaller action-suggestions together.

*I think kids in the Netherlands know what participation is. Also, in this school --they talk that everyone is equal, Shape Up fits into the vision of the school; but I think through participation in Shape Up kids learned that if you want something you have to work for it…not to expect from others to fulfil their wishes.* (LF, interview, April 2008)

The reflections of the pupils in the interviews substantiate this. In the individual interview, the pupil (M) describes that sometimes pupils made decisions independently and sometimes together with teachers.

*The most things we do [take action about] are ideas from the pupil council; sometimes a teacher has a good idea and we manage it together.* (Pupil M, individual interview, April 2008)

Also in the group interview, pupils seem to be able to clearly describe which decisions they made independently, and which decisions were made by the teachers, other adults involved in Shape Up, or the HM. For example, in the action focusing on safety around the school, some decisions were made by the HM and some by the pupils. When describing this project activity, pupils were very specific about the decision-making processes. The conversation below, taken from the group interview, illustrates this:

I: *Whose idea was that you should take photos?*

M2: *Mr. J.* (The HM).
I: What did you decide?
M1: We stood on the one side of the road, and the photographers [from the pupil press at the school] on the other side of the street, and then we told them where and how to take the photos.
I: Who decided what would you do with the photos?
M1: We did at the meeting. We decided that we would make a poster for the alderman.
I: Why?
M1: So that he will see how it looks like when you want to cross the street. Not only on a map at home but in a real life.
I: Did you make any other decisions in relation to this action?
S: Yeah, a zebra. Actually, we would like footprints on the street so the kids would know it is dangerous.
W: That was our own idea. The footprints, as a signs of the crossing. We thought it would be easier for them [smaller pupils] to see that this place is dangerous.
M2: They don’t know the traffic signs. We need to make it easier for them. We discussed and said – when we have red footprints for example – the younger kids will know this is a scary spot in the neighbourhood. (Pupils, group interview, April 2008)

It is evident that pupils have precise perceptions of the decision-making processes in this project activity. Also, they seem confident with their own decisions, and can give rational reasons for their choices.

Pupils also seem quite confident with the guidance provided by the HM. They convey a clear sense of ownership and conviction that they can get support if they need it. The extract below highlights that:

I: Can you tell me specifically, what is it that you decided and what were the decisions made by Mr J. [HM]?
M1: We decide, but Mr. J. gives his opinion about our decisions.
S: He gives us tasks to do, and sometimes he does do something to make sure that things are going to happen.
W., S, all add: We have to do everything ourselves, and if we don’t understand something we go to the HM or to M [older pupil in the council]: but we do everything ourselves. (Pupils, group interview, April 2008)

The individual interview with one of the pupils is consistent with the pupils’ accounts in the group interview.

He [HM] takes care of all the things, what the possibilities are in the process and what can help us. Like this book, for example [the catalogue with playground equipment]. He found it and gave it to us to select the equipment. (Pupil, individual interview, April 2008)

Evidently, the interviewed pupils perceive the HM’s guidance to be supportive rather than controlling. The feeling of confidence, a safe framework and a clear direction provided by the HM is reflected in their accounts.

Pupils express positive attitudes towards participation. They state that they liked working in this way, because they ‘do things differently compared to what they normally do every day at school’ (Pupil, group interview April 2008).
Examples of activities pupils were involved in during Shape Up that, according to pupils’ accounts, are not part of their regular schoolwork involve: planning changes; investigating problems that need to be solved; planning a budget; preparing presentations; writing applications and letters to decision-makers in the municipality; presenting and arguing for their ideas and plans.

**Different pupils participate differently**

According to the LF and LC, there are noticeable differences in the extent and form of participation depending on pupils’ academic performance. The difference mainly concerns the level of nuanced reflection and awareness relating to the activities in which pupils participated. For academically less successful pupils, as well as for younger pupils, participation solely takes the form of taking part in activities, without apparent consideration of their broader aims and objectives.

The LF highlights this point in the following quote:

_Weaker kids, I think they do not always recognise that this is Shape Up…they participate in activities but without awareness – it is abstract for them. For them, participation in Shape Up is about sports and healthy food. For them, this is enough. The participation aim is for the stronger kids, for them it is more interesting._ (LF, interview, June 2008)

Similarly, the LC elaborates further:

_[…]For the stronger kids it is more reflection about their own learning process. They are able to see what they learnt, and how to hang on…_ (LC, interview, June 2008)

Nevertheless, they both agree that even participation understood as taking part or simply being involved in activities is beneficial for the less resourceful pupils due to the learning processes involved:

_I think maybe weaker kids learn to be stronger during the project._ (LC, interview, June 2008)

The HM shares their view in general, but seems to be more confident that the less resourceful pupils are capable of meaningful participation too, and that they gain valuable competences in the process. In the interview extract below, he gives two examples to support this point: the first is an example of the influential participation of an academically strong pupil coming from socioeconomically disadvantaged family, and the second is an example of the intensification in participation of an academically weak student.

_We have weaker and stronger pupils in the council […] We have had a very strong pupil in the council last year, and she is still acting as secretary now…and she does not come from a strong family [in terms of socio-economic background]. She is very smart, very articulated – and most importantly—she did not become arrogant with the ‘power’ she got. She is willing to help and teach other kids._

_Also, we have had a very quiet and not very strong [academically] boy. But, he was encouraged to make a presentation in the Municipality, and everybody was surprised to see how confident he became. In this process, less resourceful pupils have a chance to get attention, to feel important, to achieve something and to build up their skills._ (HM interview, June 2008)

Clearly, the mode of participation and its effects differ for the two pupils; while in the case of the resourceful student, participation is about influencing the matters of concern and helping peers, for the less resourceful pupil, participation is about trying out new skills and gaining a sense of achievement and self-confidence.
Variation in the mode of participation was mainly attributed to academic ability. Neither the HM or the LC and LF reported differences in participation related to pupils’ gender.

Concerning socioeconomic background and participation, the interviewees shared the opinion that, even though the socioeconomic background does have some influence, it is not crucial. All interviewees pointed out the example of the brightest pupil in the student council who comes from a disadvantaged family.

In more general terms, the LC and LF, as well as the HM, thought that pupils with disadvantaged backgrounds can participate actively if provided with the opportunity and appropriate support by adults.

*I think it depends on the skills of the kids, and on us, the adults, and welfare and health organisations, to give kids opportunities to experience something new, that they are not used to. [...] It is important for them to get in contact with other people. For example a teacher, a social worker, someone from the sports club. You have to provide these kids with opportunity.* (LF, interview, April 2008)

This account points to the importance of adult guidance and structural support if socially less advantaged pupils are to be actively involved and benefit from participation.

In this respect, the HM emphasises that the pedagogical vision on which the school is based is that all children have a capacity to develop if provided with adequate support and guidance:

*We have weaker and stronger children in the pupil council; [explains how are pupils selected for the council – they volunteer, then there is a campaign, each pupil writes down why they want to be members of the pupil council, and what would they like to do – then each class votes]. It is in the philosophy of this school that all the pupils should develop academically, but also as persons, as human beings.*. (HM, interview, June 2008)

Hence, active and meaningful participation definitely figures highly among key values and educational priorities at the school.

In Shape Up, the notion of participation has been interpreted as pupils’ influence in the decision-making processes and in initiating health-promoting changes. The pupils’ and adults’ accounts on participation in Shape Up are mutually consistent and complement one another.

Pupils have experienced that they were involved meaningfully in Shape Up. They made some decisions independently, and some together with the HM and LF/LC. They express a strong sense of confidence in the framework within which they were participating in Shape Up, and in the guidance provided by the adults.

Although the level and extent of participation differed considerably between pupils, the LF, LC and HM viewed participation as beneficial to pupils with a variety of skills and competences, and from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

**Challenges**

Participatory work with pupils has also been experienced as demanding and challenging. This is stated as the main reason why in this school Shape Up was not implemented as a whole school project but only with the pupil council.

Both the LC and LF state that participation takes time and it is difficult, especially if teachers are asked to work in this way. The support for the teachers is pointed out by both LC and LF as being crucial when introducing participatory projects in schools:
I think it is very important not only to ask teachers and schools to do things in a certain way [participatory], but also to bring things into school. Not only another project that teachers need to do because of this or that… All the different organisations look to find their entrance in schools, and teachers feel like slaves working for others’ agendas. It is important to ask teachers what support they need. If my organisation cannot provide it, perhaps another can, and we will look for you and support you… (LC, interview, April 2008)

This account is critical to the tendency of many organisations to treat schools as an ‘easy’ setting to reach children and young people and to endorse their own (well intended) agendas. It emphasises the importance of ensuring two-way collaboration with schools and providing support for teachers.

Another barrier mentioned in the interviews, specifically linked to Shape Up organisation, was the lack of ownership by the teachers. This was attributed to the HM planning the Shape Up work on his own or together with the LF. This was particularly noticeable during the Shape Up week, because only the LF and the HM knew the plan for the week; the teachers did not participate in the planning, which had a negative influence on the commitment of the teachers to the Shape Up participatory processes. In the words of the LF:

*If you want a successful participatory project you have to make sure it is like an oil stain, spreading at the whole school.* (LF, interview, April 2008)

The additional comment by the LC points to the power imbalances influencing the sense of ownership and commitment of the teachers, particularly when the project activities are taken out of the classroom:

*And K [LF] provides a kind of relief from their [teachers’] workload. The headmaster is in a way equal, but he is their boss. When it comes to this kind of work, real work in the class then it is the teachers.* (LC, interview, April 2008)

It seems that participatory processes challenge the existing power relations at the school; according to the opinions of the LF and LC, one of the conditions for a sustained participatory work with pupils is ownership on behalf of the teachers, and support for the teachers.

The case study, however, showed that the HM is aware of these challenges and prepared to address them. The interview account below points to specific plans for future developments in the direction of increasing teachers’ ownership and involvement:

*We will have a teacher running it from next year. One teacher will get reduction in teaching so she can run after-class activities and the pupil council.* (HM, interview, June 2008)

It is interesting to note that Shape Up in the school was perceived as an extracurricular project with no possibility of integrating it within the curriculum. The accounts of the HM as well as the LF and LC on this issue are consistent: On the question of whether Shape Up could be integrated in the regular curriculum, the HM states:

*Shape Up cannot be in regular classes. We discussed with teachers yesterday and concluded that Shape Up will be integrated in after class activities, but teachers will have more ownership.* (HM, interview, June 2008)

In a similar line of thinking, the LF and LC’s reflections concerning the teacher’s role in Shape Up seem to divide project-work from the pedagogical role of the teacher.

*No. A teacher cannot be Shape Up coordinator. Because I think it is a hell of a job, and they would be too much involved, they do not have the objective approach. The main aim of the teacher is education.* (LF, interview, April 2008)
And the LC adds in a similar vain:

*Yes, and perhaps the teacher does not have distance enough to give people tasks…* (LC, interview, April 2008)

It seems that Shape Up was perceived as a participatory project that goes beyond the school’s primary task, that is, education. Partly, this is because of the perceived additional workload for the teachers, and partly because the project work was seen as beyond the social ‘power’ position of the teachers in the community.

The pupils’ accounts in the interviews do not point to any barriers related to participation. Perhaps this is due to the structured step-by-step guidance they received from the HM, so they felt confident at every step along the way. Pupils talk about difficulties in the sense of the specific actions they are taking [which was addressed in the IVAC section above]. But, as the extract below shows, they do state that participation transforms with time, and that they learn in the process:

*It is easier now than in the beginning, because during the time you learn a lot about it and you know what you need to do.* (Pupil, individual interview, April 2008)

In summary, the Shape Up ‘mechanism’ of participation seems to be adopted fully in the case school, and interpreted as genuine participation (i.e. influence) not only by the pupils, but also by the partner organisations and adults involved in the project. The focus on participation in the project method created difficulties at the beginning of the project; the coordinating institution had to change their view on the project objectives. This was resolved in a positive manner, and could be seen as one of the important outcomes of the project.

The pupils’ experiences with participation seem to be positive, well articulated and precise. The interviewed pupils could clearly distinguish between and discuss the decisions made by them independently, the ones made by the HM or LF, and the decisions made jointly. They express a sense of ownership and transformative learning in the process of participation. The learning seems to have taken place in a secure ‘scaffold’ framework provided by the HM’s guidance.

The HM emphasises the pedagogical role of participation, and its compatibility with the overall educational philosophy and vision of the school.

The LF and LC highlight the positive views on participation in terms of equal collaboration and distributed influence between the partner institutions, as well as the benefits of active participation for the pupils. The main perceived benefit is that pupils learned to set goals and work to achieve these goals rather than solely to imagine and expect adults to realise their desires.

Due to the organisation of Shape Up – its set up within the pupil council-- teachers were not particularly involved in the participatory work with pupils. This was done either by the HM or the LF. As a consequence, when whole-school project activities were organised (such as the Shape Up week), teachers did not feel a sufficient sense of ownership. This was recognized and acknowledged as a barrier by the LF, LC and HM. There was a clear intention expressed by the HM that this will be addressed next year, and that a teacher will be in charge of the work. Shape Up in general was perceived as suitable for extracurricular activity, and the adult interviewees expressed doubts that it could be integrated in the regular school work.
School-community collaboration

In general, the school-community collaboration mechanism of the Shape Up approach was not a novelty that Shape Up brought to the school. The school operates as a ‘community school’ in the city of Maastricht and this was one of the main reasons it was selected to participate in Shape Up by the coordinating organisation.

As already mentioned, the welfare organisation Trajekt has its office at the school. The organisation works with children, young people, parents and other adults from the community. There is a youth centre in the school, run by Trajekt. Also, the Trajekt office provides a wide range of advisory services to parents, and other people in the community - on issues ranging from tax, banking, paperwork, to psychological support in case of divorce, unemployment and other issues.

The HM emphasised in the interview that, in addition to Trajekt, there are several other organisations that use the school building, e.g. a cheerleader organisation, a basketball team using the gym, the women’s guild etc. These organisations rent rooms in the school for their activities, and this helps the local community to perceive the school as part of it; people of all ages are used to coming to the school, and the school represents a kind of meeting place for the community.

The observations made during the case visit confirm that the school operates as a meeting place for the community. It was evident that people from the local community make use of the school building for various purposes, holding meetings after school hours etc. The extract from the observation notes in Box 5 illustrates this point.

- The displays on the walls show the organisation’s name, contact person and contact hours for each organisation utilizing the school building;
- There is clear information displayed about the time schedule for activities by different organisations and the occupancy of the classrooms;
- There is no restricted entrance to the school, people freely move in and out; there is a reception desk at the entrance but visitors are not obliged to register or show an ID;
- Visitors seem to be familiar with the building; they greet the LF and one another friendly and chat briefly among themselves or with the pupils when they pass through.

**Box 5: Observation notes, April 2008**

The project documentation shows that the collaboration between the case school and the local community was very dynamic; even though the LPG did not meet on a regular basis, its members were regularly informed about the project development and contacted in relation to support needed for specific actions initiated by the pupils. For example, the communication expert (mentioned in the examples earlier) who came to the school to prepare pupils for their presentations was a member of the LPG.

The two main actions taken in Shape Up, the safety around the school and the playground for the gypsy-like community, involved collaboration with a number of external partners from the community. Traffic experts, architects, experts in city planning (and maps), communication experts etc. were mentioned in the interviews by both pupils and adults as members of the local community that provided different kinds of support for the pupils in different phases of the IVAC approach.

A number of people from the municipality were mentioned too, as well as the alderman. The alderman seems to have had a crucial role, and he is the person that pupils communicated with the most, and whom they perceived as a decision-maker in the areas where they planned to bring about change.
On a number of occasions, pupils spent time outside the school, for example at the city hall, to present their ideas for actions to the alderman and other decision makers from the municipality. They also took the alderman to visit the neighbourhood where they suggested that a new playground could be built.

The Shape Up week was organised together with people from the local community and a number of people were invited to attend the sports and other events during these days.

Communication with the media and dissemination of the project were also a part of the collaboration with the community. There were a number of articles about Shape Up in the local press, with a view to informing the community about the project developments. The following articles are mentioned in the Project report (LC, 2007):

- Shape up featured in the newsletter published by GGD and Trajekt
- Article in the school newsletter
- Several newsflashes on the local TV
- Shape Up article in the national daily newspaper ‘De Spits’

Both the HM and the LF express in the interviews a strong feeling that the close link between the school and the local community is one of the crucial factors in addressing health or other social problems.

[...] You have to create this link [school-community] if you want to be effective. Isolated centers for solving health or other social problems will never work, because they do not connect the community, and they are not connected with the community. You cannot ‘give’ tasks to school, to solve obesity or any other problem. The school and the community have to have a shared vision, and work together to achieve it. In this school, we have that. (HM, interview, June 2008)

This account emphasises that not only health, but also other social issues should be addressed in partnership between schools and community organisations if they are to be effective. Isolated projects or initiatives cannot produce positive outcomes. But he also emphasises once again the important point of working in equal partnership with the schools, rather than putting external pressure on schools to solve different problems or coming with ready-made projects in the school.

The HM states in the interview that even though collaboration with the community is embedded in the tradition of the school, the new aspect relating to school-community collaboration that Shape Up introduced was the involvement of pupils in actions outside school and with people from different organisations in the community.

The most specific about Shape Up was communication with the community and the organisations from outside the school, and giving pupils voice. (HM, interview, June 2008)

It seems that before Shape Up, the school-community collaboration had been considered and organised among the adult partners and Shape Up inspired pupils’ involvement in these processes.

Also, the pupils point out in the interview that the most interesting thing about Shape Up was the involvement in the real life action with people from the municipality.

It [Shape Up] is very different because this is different from how you normally would learn, you go out of the school, doing presentations and all; you learn how to learn and how to present. (Pupil, individual interview, April 2008)
The extract from the individual interview above shows that, in the view of this pupil, the specific strength of Shape Up was that pupils could take action in the community, and through that develop a meta-perception of their learning.

Pupils in the group interview also emphasise the new skills and competence that they develop by taking action outside the school context:

* I like it because we do things which are different from what we normally do every day at school. You don’t get to, for example, write a letter to the alderman every day. And you do not know how to do it. (Pupil, group interview, April 2008)

According to the LF, the community partners need to be motivated too in order to get involved in collaboration with school, because it is often time demanding and without real acknowledgement.

* You have municipalities that are under a lot of pressure to improve health. They give credit to schools that are involved in health-promotion programmes. Also, the municipalities need to get extra credit for these kinds of activities, I think then collaboration will work. (LF, interview, April, 2008)

This extract mentions municipalities as partners in the school-community collaboration, and emphasises the pressure as well as the need for recognition that municipalities experience in relation to health promotion and collaboration with schools in this respect. Clearly, it is considered that the collaboration should be beneficial for both partners. Later in the interview, the LF specifically points to the need for mutuality and benefit for all partners in the collaboration, both in terms of acknowledgement and resources. The quote below emphasises that the schools also need to see the benefit of the collaboration and to get support if collaboration should be high on their agenda.

* In order for this collaboration to work, projects like Shape Up need to bring something to the school. It is important that teachers do not see it as extra work. When it brings something to the school, for example extra sports lessons with an expert from outside, extra toys for outdoor play, fruit once in a while…when the school gets credit as a reward for the work, the collaboration will work. If you have a school in Shape Up that does not have an office like ours at the school, you can still provide external people to come and support the process. Like when we provided the communication expert to prepare the kids to present at the city hall. This is also support for teachers. (LF, interview, May, 2008)

The support, as the quote shows, could be financial or through external experts that would support teachers in the project work. Moreover, in the opinion of the LF, in projects involving school-community collaboration, there should always be an external support structure for the school represented by an organisation linked to the municipality, which is able to provide co-funding.

Most important of all, according to the views of the LC and LF, is the mutual trust and shared concern for the wellbeing of the children.

* It is very important that there is a lot of trust in each other among all the partners involved, to make sure that the kids are in the centre. (LF, interview, April 2008)

The interviews also point to a very important issue – the need for preparation of the pupils to go out of the school and take action in the community.

* Pupils need to guided to do things themselves and to make the report and evaluate what happened. The kids have to be well prepared to go out in the community. (LF, interview, April 2008)

Again, as emphasised before, the guidance from teachers and other adults involved in the project is seen as necessary. While the LF and LC thought that there should be an
external coordinator of this kind of school project to work with the pupils, the HM thought that teachers could do it too.

In the opinion of the LF and LC, it is crucial that teachers have ownership in this kind of project, but they should not be left alone, particularly with regards to school-community collaboration. Teachers do not have a strong enough position in the local community to support pupils’ actions in terms of logistics etc. so that they would ensure success. They also both agree that such a task would be too demanding for the teachers, and it would add an additional burden to their already overloaded teaching responsibilities.

*Do they [teachers] know enough how to manage and organise all the things, in addition to the task as a teacher…* (LF, interview, April 2008)

The HM on the other hand holds that the personality of the teacher is crucial.

*A teacher needs to believe in participation, and to believe that every child can participate. It is this, and the personality of the teacher that is crucial. Also, the teacher needs to know how to listen. Teachers have contacts with the parents; parents would be their link to the community.* (HM, interview, June 2008)

Thus, in the opinion of the HM, the position of the teachers in the community could be strengthened by their links with the parents; furthermore, their position in the community would not present a barrier if they have a strong personal belief in participation.

Pupils articulate mostly positive experiences with collaborating with people from the community. There are only a few examples where they felt the persons involved were not interested in their work or did not respond appropriately to pupils’ actions.

*In the traffic safety – we thought that he [the person responsible] was ignoring the signals from the kids, and we thought that he does not take us very seriously with our problems. But after we explained what is the problem with maps and all, it was much better.* (Pupil, individual interview, April 2008)

However, these experiences were used by the pupils as a learning opportunity rather than solely a source of frustration. Later in the same interview, the pupil states:

*We learned ways how to get people interested, and we learned ways to work harder.* (Pupil, individual interview, April 2008), clearly demonstrating transformative learning and enhancement of competence to deal with barriers.

Also, pupils reflect on the communication with the people from the community in the group interview:

*I: So, you get to talk with a lot of people outside the school, you mentioned the architect? Can you tell me more about that?*

*M1: Yes, a little difficult. On every question they have got a different answer and we have to think on a lot of things to manage our ideas.*

*S: It is difficult also because every time there is a different answer we have to write a very good letter to different people; we have to be polite and make sure we formulate it the right way so that the others could understand*

(Pupils, group interview, April 2008)

This extract also shows that the obstacles in the collaboration with the people from the community were used by the pupils as an opportunity to learn, as a chance to sharpen their ideas and to better articulate their action plans.
Appropriate support and adult guidance is obviously crucial for the pupils to gain this feeling of empowerment and learning. Once again, pupils mention that the support from the HM was invaluable in this respect. The extract from the group interview illustrates this:

*In a group it is easier than when you are alone. The HM knows a lot of people from the municipality and that makes it easier for us to make changes and solve problems.* (Pupil, group interview, April 2008)

The quote also shows the importance of peer support. Pupils felt that working in peer-teams is easier than working on their own.

In summary, the school-community collaboration was perceived as very important in addressing health and other social problems through school projects. Mutuality, trust and support for the teachers and the schools were seen to be crucial for the effectiveness of the collaboration.

Schools should not be seen by community partners as a convenient setting to reach large numbers of children and to achieve their agendas. Rather, there should be a shared agenda or vision, where children are in focus and where community partners and schools mutually benefit from the work and receive credit and acknowledgement.

Pupils need to be well prepared and adequately guided to take action out of the school and communicate with partners from the community. The emerging dilemmas from this case study concern the teachers’ role as coordinators of the project work that involves school-community collaboration. It seems that these kinds of projects are perceived as too complex and beyond the teachers’ main pedagogical role.
Outcomes
The case study focuses on two categories of outcomes:

a) Determinants of health and
b) Pupils’ action competence in relation to health

Determinants
Determinants are defined as conditions at the school or local community that influence the health and wellbeing of pupils and staff. The focus of the study is not on individual behaviour and lifestyle as one of the determinants of health, but rather on social determinants. In particular, the focus is on the social determinants for which change through school-based health promotion projects is possible. Thus, Shape Up does not focus on general socioeconomic determinants but on the aspects of the health-related conditions in the micro-environment of the school and school surroundings. The project documentation as well as the methodological guidelines (Simovska et al, 2006) outline different levels of determinants, e.g. school level, local community level, family level etc.

In the case school, Shape Up worked with a number of determinants on a school, local community and family level. The initiated changes at a community level are already described earlier in this report (e.g. the playground in the gypsy-like community and the safety around the school). At the time of the case visits, the two actions were completed by the pupils, and the final changes were awaiting further action by the municipality.

In addition to these two health-promoting changes, an example of influencing determinants on school and, eventually, family level is the change of the school policy concerning food that children bring to school. The HM states in the interview that, inspired by the Shape Up work, and especially by the Shape Up week where fruit and healthy food was offered to all pupils, the pupil council recommended a school policy that bans candy and sweets at the school. This was accepted by the school management and the new policy was implemented. In the words of the HM:

“This was actually the result of Shape Up and the work of the council; the pupils suggested that candy should be forbidden and there should be fruit in the breaks. We had this during the Shape Up week, so now we will try to make it permanent. Pupils liked having fruit available very much.”

(HM, interview, June 2008)

In this account the HM emphasises two things. The first is the school policy on sweets, which also concerns birthdays (pupils tend to bring cake from home to celebrate their birthday with classmates). The new policy suggests that sweets and candy should be replaced with healthier food. As parents are normally involved in preparing the celebration of pupils’ birthdays at school, it could be expected that this policy would initiate changes in family patterns too. The second change HM mentions in the extract above is providing fruit for all pupils at the school. This change had not yet taken place at the time of the interview, but the school management was working on securing funding.

The pupils’ interviews highlight a number of additional changes at the school level initiated by pupils, for instance new rules concerning different health related matters. The pupil in the individual interview outlines these changes:

“We made rules about healthy food and exercise and for Shape Up. There is a rule that you cannot eat candy during the small break; there are rules about where and how to play on the [school] playground, so that bigger kids do not have any bother from the younger kids who are running...”
around the school. Now there are areas for younger and for older kids. (Pupil, individual interview, April 2008)

The changes pupils initiated concerned the two main topics addressed in Shape Up -- eating and body movement. It is interesting to note that the changes concerning the use of the school playground were motivated by the interests of the older rather than younger pupils. It would probably be fair to expect that, if teachers or the HM were in charge of this action, it would be the younger pupils who would have been in focus. These points to the authenticity and genuine nature of the pupils’ work in the council.

In line with the HM’s account discussed above, the interview with the LF and LC highlights the close links between the determinants at a school and family level. Action and change at school could motivate changes at family level. For example, the Shape Up week showed that healthy lunch and fruit available at school was a big success, which initiated a positive response by the parents, who, as result, were more motivated to participate in supporting the new school policies on candy etc. In the words of the LF:

“We saw in Shape Up that lunch and fruit at school was a success. The kids filed in a survey, parents did the same, and some parents said that their kids linked going to school more now…We also see that younger kids now bring fruit to school. (LF, interview, April 2008)

This account signals a clear influence of the school initiatives on the family patterns concerning lunch pack and food that pupils bring to school.

Furthermore, the change in determinants at school level – establishing a school canteen – is more likely to be realised due to the positive response from parents to the Shape Up developments and pupils’ reactions.

“The idea is that the parents should provide funding so that the kids will have lunch at school. We would like to establish the canteen in the nearby building. There, it is possible to arrange that younger and older pupils will meet. The parent council will be involved in this and have a role. (LF, interview, April 2008)

According to both the LC and LF, this action is taken on the initiative of the pupils; it brings together the pupil council, the parent council and the housing board, who will act jointly to establish a school canteen.

The quote above also shows that the change in a determinant (school canteen) is considered not only in relation to providing healthy lunch for the pupils, but also in relation to improving the social relations and atmosphere relating to eating (bringing younger and older pupils together).

In summary, three main health-related determinants were addressed in the case school: the playground; the safety around the school; and a school canteen. All three are closely linked to the main topic-focus in Shape Up – body movement and eating. The first two required more comprehensive action by the pupils following the different aspects of the IVAC model. The third one is initiated by the pupils, but its realisation is of a more logistic nature, that will be done by the parent association and the school management.

**Action competence**

Health-related action competence is defined as pupils’ capacity to work alone or in collaboration with others to bring about health-promoting change. The competence embraces multidimensional knowledge about health, visions about healthier alternatives, motivation to take action, critical thinking, self-confidence etc.
Empirical evidence for the development of action competence in this study comes from the interviews with pupils, as well as with LC, LF and the HM focusing on questions related to ‘what did pupils learn in Shape Up?’

In answering this question, the HM stated that pupils learnt (HM, Interview June 2008):

- how to make difficult decisions
- to articulate themselves
- how to express their opinion in front of a group
- to represent the group in the school and other places (the city hall), in a room with people they do not know
- most importantly, to realise that the path from their dreams and wishes to reality is difficult, and it takes a lot of work and skills to bridge the gap.

Evidently, all of the new skills, reflections and knowledge that the HM mentions could be seen as important components of action competence. The last one emphasised by the HM as the most important clearly points to action experience as one of the crucial factors in the development of action competence. Genuine participation of pupils in decision-making processes seems to be seen as very significant too.

Similarly, pupils outline a few new skills and capacities they gained as a result of Shape Up. Asked what they learnt from Shape Up, each of the participating pupils states:

- M1: how to make contacts with people from the municipality
- W: how to solve problems
- S: how to use in the best way the money we have
- M2: when there is a problem how to look for a solution

(Pupils, group interview, April 2008)

So, pupils report enhancement of their competence for communicating with decision-makers, tackling real-life problems, managing budgets, solving specific problems. These are all considered as components of action competence.

Similarly, in the individual interview, the pupil states that the most important thing that she learnt was ‘thinking about health, safety at school and changing things’:

[…] When at first you think nothing can be changed and that you cannot come far in changing things, and then you see that it is possible. (Pupil, individual interview, April 2008)

According to this account, the experience of taking actions seems to be crucial for the developing sense of self-efficacy and action competence.

In the mini-survey that was part of the interview, LC and LF stated that the pupils’ knowledge about health improved moderately, and their lifestyle changed slightly. Significant changes were reported in pupils’ knowledge about health determinants, their motivation to work with health issues and their competence to bring about change.

Similarly, pupils reported positive changes in different aspects of action competence as operationalised in the interview mini-survey presented in Table 2 below (average from 11 pupils; scale 1-3, where 1 means no experienced change and 3 is max. experienced change).
Table 2: Pupils’ self-reported personal changes as a result of Shape Up (N=11)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Change</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your knowledge about health related to your lifestyle is now</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your knowledge about things at school important to health is now</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your knowledge about things in your neighbourhood important to health is now</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your knowledge about things in society as a whole important to health is now</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your wish to learn more about health is now</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your motivation to live a healthy life is now</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your commitment to work with others to change things important to health at school and outside school is now</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your ‘readiness’ to change things important to health in your life or in community?</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pupils’ self-reported personal changes point to clearly increased engagement and commitment to dealing with health matters, in and out of the school. Also, pupils feel that they are ‘prepared’ to initiate changes. Their knowledge increased slightly less, and there is more variation in their responses concerning knowledge about school, neighbourhood and community matters relating to health.

One of the clear indicators of the pupils’ increased engagement and commitment is the following extract from the closing conversation with seven pupils in the pupil council; they are asked what their message is to other pupils in other schools working in similar ways:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract from the transcript of the meeting with the pupil council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Box 6:</strong> Extract from the transcript of the meeting with the pupil council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You need to fight, with arguments, for what you want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not give up if it gets difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep on working</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pupils in the group interview expressed similar determination concerning the actions and changes they initiated. The following extract from the interview illustrates the commitment and persistence of the pupils in the face of difficulties:

> [. . . when things do not go as planned . . .]
> I: Then what do you do?
> M1: Fight (Laughs) Not physically. Not with fists!
> I: How do you fight?
> M2: By continuing our work.
> (Pupils, group interview, April 2008)

In summary, the case study shows that in general, the three Shape Up mechanisms resulted in the desired outcomes – influencing health determinants and developing pupils’ action competence.
Conclusions and perspectives
Returning to the research questions guiding the case study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The IVAC approach
The IVAC model was not used as a comprehensive approach with four reiterative aspects or phases (as in the model below) which should structure each of the main project activities. Rather, it was used as an overall framework for the Shape Up project as a whole.

Box 7: IVAC approach, in Simovska et al. (2006)

It was interpreted as a framework for the overall project planning and implementation: the LC and LF used it as a planning tool. The study documented examples of Investigation, and Vision, and Action/Change activities.

The investigation was used at several stages: first in selecting the specific project topics, and then within each of the actions planned in connection to the changes that pupils wanted to initiate.

The vision aspect was used only at the beginning of the project, to inspire pupils to reflect on alternatives to the problem-areas at the school and in the community that they wanted to change. In this sense, the vision aspect of the model was used in connection to selection and investigation rather than in relation to action/change.

IVAC was perceived as suitable for extra-curricular activities rather than as a more comprehensive pedagogical method which could be embedded in the school curricula. Perhaps due to fact that the LF and LC have backgrounds outside the educational sector, with objectives and priorities other than teaching, the potential of IVAC as a teaching framework was not realised in this school. It was considered to be time consuming and beyond the core pedagogical responsibilities of teachers.

Nevertheless, the IVAC approach was viewed by the LF and LC as a useful project framework, particularly in guiding pupils to realise that their visions and wishes can be actualised only through systematic planning, investigation and joint work. In other words, the model was considered useful in guiding pupils to influence health-related determinants on different levels. The LF, LC and the HM all shared the opinion that by influencing determinants following the different aspects of IVAC, pupils learn more than solely about health matters.
Participation

Participation of pupils was perceived by the project leaders as an essential feature of the Shape Up approach. Participation was interpreted as pupils’ influence on the project content, that is, action and change ideas. Pupils were involved in different ways and forms, depending on the stage in the project development and the issue at hand. There was a clear framework provided by the adults which delineated the participation room for the pupils at every stage.

The main arena for pupils’ influence was the pupil council. The project leaders interpreted the main goal of participation as the development of pupils’ capacities to act and actualise their own dreams. Health matters and related knowledge were seen as secondary to this goal. The analysis showed that more generic decision-making and problem solving competence were in focus in the project.

Pupils themselves expressed a clear positive perspective on their involvement and experienced ownership over the actions taken in the project. Their experiences with active participation seem to have empowered them, through the feeling of efficacy and achievement in working with ‘real-life’ problems and bringing about real-life changes. The case study documented the following main indicators of pupils’ ownership and empowerment:

- Pupils were able to make clear distinctions between the decision that were made by them independently, the decisions made by the adults, and the ones made together between themselves and the adults.
- They had realistic perceptions of the difficulties involved in initiating health-promoting changes and were aware of the necessity and usefulness of the assistance provided by the adults.
- Pupils had a clear idea that these participation experiences provided them with opportunities for learning and gaining new competences and skills, which go beyond everyday school learning.
- Finally, they expressed persistence in the face of difficulty.

I use the non-hierarchical participation model which was used as a starting point for the project development (Box 8 below) to summarize the forms of participation that were employed in this case school.

![Non-hierarchical forms of participation: the Shape Up approach](image)

Box 8: Forms of participation, in Simovska et al. (2006)
The empirical analyses showed that the full range of the five participation forms presented in the model was employed in the project. In other words:

- Some of the project activities were decided by adults; children were assigned but informed about their aims;
- In some of the activities pupils were consulted and informed;
- Some activities were initiated by the pupils or by the adults respectively but the decisions were made jointly; and
- The pupils took some decisions independently.

The adults guided pupils through the various forms of participation depending on their assessment of pupils’ capacities to succeed, or the development phase of the project, or the complexity of the activity at hand.

The type of participation employed in the project could be characterised as ‘pedagogical (i.e. instructive)’, for two reasons:

a) pupils were guided step by step in the process and the adult facilitators ensured a feeling of success and achievement among the pupils through a scaffold style of guidance;
b) the pupil participation was focused on learning and development of pupils’ capacities through exercising influence and taking action;

In addition to participation of pupils, genuine partnership and distributed influence among the partner institutions involved in the project was also perceived as a valuable feature of the Shape Up approach. The participatory nature of Shape Up was considered to be important for the collaboration between the partners, particularly in terms of collaboration between the external organisations on the one hand and the school on the other. The indicators of the genuine partnership among the involved organisations in the project that the case study documented include:

- Symmetrical (horizontal) partnership from the start of the project;
- Shared vision about the well-being of pupils in focus;
- Joint decision-making over the course of the project;
- Clear distribution of roles and responsibilities concerning aspects of the project.

The case study also showed that teachers had a marginal role in Shape Up processes; the project leaders felt that participatory project work with pupils would add to the teachers’ workload, which would incite their resistance. This was not only anticipated but also experienced by the project coordinator and facilitator at the beginning of the project. Therefore, the participatory processes emphasising pupils’ influence in making decisions and initiating changes were seen to be more appropriate for extra-curricular activities than in regular teaching.

At the same time, the lack of involvement and ownership on behalf of the teachers was seen as an obstacle to the participatory processes. The LC, LF, as well as the HM pointed out the need for a more substantial involvement of teachers in the future. Appropriate support for teachers was emphasised as being crucial in this respect.
School-community collaboration

The school-community collaboration in this case was clearly put into practice as a two-way process (the last example in the model in Box 9 below); the project was organised from the very beginning as horizontal collaboration between the Regional Public Health Institute, the welfare organisation Trajekt and the school.

Box 9: Models of school community collaboration, in: Simovska at al. (2006)

The school already operated as a community institution prior to Shape Up, and had a tradition of close interaction with the community. The welfare organisation’s office is located within the school, which ensured good links between the school and the community, with a flat partnership organisation.

The new aspect in the school-community collaboration was the involvement of pupils in the collaboration with different partners from the local community. Thus, the focus of school-community collaboration in Shape Up shifted from ‘adults’ and institutions collaborating together for the benefit of the school pupils, towards adults and institutions collaborating together and with the pupils, for the benefit of the school and community health.

A number of experts from the community and organisations were involved over the course of the project, mainly in supporting pupils in investigating the issues at hand, developing their action and change ideas, and presenting and actualising these ideas. The main partners were the city hall and the alderman.

The LF and LC shared the opinion that the school-community collaboration was of mutual benefit to all the partners involved. Even though they both come from ‘external’ organisations collaborating with schools, they emphasised that the benefits to the school of collaborating in health-promoting projects need to be clear, and that the external partners need to provide suitable support for the teachers and the school, rather than using schools to achieve their pre-determined (health promotion or other) agendas. The challenges concerning school-community collaboration involve:

- The position of teachers in the constellations of power in the community: teachers are generally not in a strong position to lobby for pupils’ influence at the community level, or to ‘assign tasks’ to members of the community.
- The necessity to prepare pupils to communicate with people from the community: pupils need to be well prepared to go out of school and take action that involves people from the local community, and such preparation is time consuming and complex. Moreover, community members collaborating with
schools should also be prepared for their encounter with pupils and respond to them adequately, which is often an additional burden to teachers.

- The workload involved in pupils initiating changes at a community level: following the previous two challenges, it is clear that school-community collaboration involves additional work for the teachers and they are not always motivated to accept that. New forms of incentive and rationale need to be provided, primarily towards integrating projects within everyday school practice.

**Outcomes**

The case study demonstrated that pupils could be guided to successfully bring about health-promoting changes in a number of health-related determinants, such as the establishment of a new playground for a disadvantaged community; a reduced speed limit and new pedestrian crossings on the streets around the school; healthier food consumption at school; new forms of body movement etc.

Furthermore, the study showed that in the process of visualising and initiating changes, pupils develop a wide range of new skills and competences, for instance: making difficult decisions together with others; communicating with people from the community; articulating and arguing for their own ideas and visions; creating and following through action plans involving several consecutive steps that bring them closer to realising ideas; planning budgets and fundraising; writing official letters and applications; making public presentations and responding to questions related to their action plans; persisting when faced with difficulties; overcoming obstacles. All these skills and competences could be considered as constituting components of action competence, or the ability to act and initiate positive changes. However, it is important to note that action competence operationalised through these components is not specifically related to health but is of a more generic character: it represents a general competence to take action and initiate changes in ‘real-life’. It is part of the general personal development of pupils, enabling them to become active members of the democratic societies in which they are growing up.

In summary, the case study showed that the Shape Up approach, characterised by the mechanisms of pupil participation, IVAC-pedagogical design, and school-community collaboration, has a potential to be effective in involving, as well as enabling pupils to address the obesogenic environments at school and local community level. The case’s conclusions point to a number of dilemmas:

1. Shape Up in the case school was not employed as a health-pedagogical approach focusing on pupils learning about health as well as health-related determinants, but as a more general democratic project focusing on guiding a group of pupils to initiate health promoting changes. Consequently, the learning and competence development that resulted from the project is of a more general, rather than a specifically health-oriented nature. It seems that the strong focus on health determinants have diminished the focus on the subject-content -- that is, health, food, and physical activity. So, the question arising is:

- How to focus on health-related social determinants, and still maintain the pedagogical, that is, educational character of the project? In other words, what is the crucial distinction between projects focusing on, for example, citizenship skills, or democratic competences on the one hand, and health-pedagogical projects focusing on health-related action competence on the other?
2. The project in the case school was employed with a group of pupils, and it was facilitated by the HM and LF, with limited involvement of teachers. Furthermore, the perceptions of the LC and LF indicate that, even though ownership by the teachers is needed and should be ensured in future projects, such projects should be coordinated by external project facilitators. This points to a clear perception of the Shape Up approach as something that cannot be part of the everyday teaching at the school. A similar opinion was expressed by the HM of the school. This leads to the following question:

- How to modify, adjust and utilize the Shape Up approach so that it can be integrated and sustained in the regular schoolwork?

3. Even though clearly categorised as genuine rather than trivial, pupil participation was employed in a didactic (scaffold) manner: pupils were guided step-by-step and success was ensured by the adults at every stage. Also, even though pupils had a say in the changes that are to take place as part of Shape Up, the final realisation of the actual change remains in the hands of the municipality and the city hall. The success or failure of the changes is not ‘owned’ by the pupils. The question in this relation is:

- How ‘real’ pupils’ lived experiences are and what are the possibilities for transfer of the competences gained in the project? In other words, what will happen when pupils endeavour to take action more independently without the shelter provided by the adults?

**Implications**

On the basis of the case study findings and related challenges, the following suggestions and recommendations could be made for the further conceptual and organisational development of Shape Up:

- Better preparation of the project ‘entry’ in schools, including curriculum analysis and recommending places in the curriculum where the project could be integrated.
- Ensuring project organisation that allows for direct rather than indirect training and capacity development of teachers and other adults that are expected to work with the pupils.
- Suggesting or guiding pupils to select actions and changes that are realistic for the given project timeline and the available budget, so that pupils can follow up on the changes and evaluate the entire process. This means that pupils’ reflective evaluation should be added as an additional aspect of the IVAC model.
- Integrating the criteria of the whole-school approach to health promotion and health education in the Shape Up approach, which would allow the Shape Up approach to be integrated in regular schoolwork in general, and in health education in particular.
- Ensuring that the subject-content of the project, in the case of Shape Up eating and body movement, is an integral part of the project work, so that pupils not only learn how to take action, but also gain health-related knowledge and insight. This means that the learning outcomes in terms of both competence and subject knowledge should be clearly defined at the outset of the project.
Appendix 1: Data generation and data records

I. Project documentation
- Project report 2006
- Project report 2007
- Project report 2008
- Self-evaluation Portfolio 2008
- Content summary of the Portal following IVAC categories, done by the research team on the continuous basis
- Web material: www.shapeupeurope.net (Maastricht-news section and IVAC section)

II. Interviews
- Two interviews with LF and LC (April 2008 and June 2008)
- Walk and talk with LF and LC (April 2008)
- Interview with an individual pupil (April 2008)
- Group interview with 4 pupils (3 boys and a girl) (April 2008)
- Two interviews with the HM (April 2008 and June 2008)
- Conversation with 10 pupils members of the pupil council (June 2008)

III. Observation
- Two separate rounds of observation (April 2008 and June 2008)
  - Guided tour through the school by the HM, including classroom visits (April 2008)
  - Guided tour through the school by the LF and LC (April 2008)
  - Independent walk throughout the school, including entering different classrooms and observing class-lunch, lessons etc (April 2008, June 2008)
  - Lunch with all the teachers (April 2008)
  - 2 meetings of the pupil council (April 2008, June 2008)
  - The school break in the playground (April 2008, June 2008)
  - The cycling test for 7 and 8 grade pupils (April 2008)
  - Meeting of the LF with teachers evaluating the Sports week (April 2008)

The project documentation as well as the web material was printed out and used as data record.

The observation and other research notes were taken immediately after each day spent at the school, and verified with the LF and LC.

The interviews with the adults were conducted in English. Each lasted for about 1,5 hour.

The interviews with the pupils were translated simultaneously from English to Dutch and vice versa. Each lasted about 1 hour.

The meetings of the pupil council were in Dutch; simultaneous translation was provided by the LC.

The interviews, the meetings and the conversations were recorded on a digital recorder (with the consent of the interviewees) and transcribed verbatim in English. Minor language corrections were made in the quotations used in the report, with a view to improve the clarity of the message.
Programme for the case visits

(General programme for all the case visits, which were adjusted in each particular case)

Day 1

Arrival in the afternoon, eventually diner or a drink with the local facilitator/coordinator

Day 2

09:00–10:00
Meeting with the local coordinator/facilitator, talk about the project developments, challenges etc, support with project development

10:00 – 11.30
Interview with the Local coordinator and Local facilitator

11:30 - 12:00
Initial walk through the school

12:00-13.00 Lunch (at the school cantina if possible)

13:00-15:00
Interviews with pupils (one hour interview, the time is loose for informal talk with pupils, establishing contact, walk through the school etc).

15:30-17:00
Interview with teachers and/or the school headmaster

Day 3

09:00–12:00
One or more of the following depending on the needs and the researcher’s estimation:
- additional interviews with teachers or pupils;
- additional talks with the local coordinator/facilitator;
- Shape Up class activity
- walk through the school; insight into project material if possible (local exhibitions, posters, leaflets etc)

12:00-13.00 Lunch

Departure
Appendix 2: Research design

Case study – a study of singularity

As Stake (1995; 2003) has suggested, the decision to use a case study is more a matter of choosing the object of study than a matter of methodological choice. One of the essential features of a case study is that it is empirically based. However, echoing the spirit of qualitative research practice, interpretation holds a critical place in case study research: the emphasis in a case study is on the direct interpretation of events treated holistically, rather than on measuring the separate characteristics of these events and interpreting the measurement data.

This means that sufficient data should be collected for the researcher to be able to explore significant aspects of the case and to generate interpretations of what is observed. Case study is a method of generating data in a “localised boundary of space and time” (Bassey, 1999: 59) and exploring these data in depth. Thus, a case study is a study of singularity, i.e. the focus of the research is on a particular event, activity, set of events, educational activities, or programme, school, classroom etc. (Bassey, ibid.).

Correspondingly, Stake (1995) describes a case as an integrated, coherent and bounded system, which could consist of people, programmes, processes or events, with differing levels of complexity. A case could concern a child, a teacher, or a classroom with a number of children and teachers in dynamic relationships. A case can be considered unique as well as common: understanding a case demands understanding other cases, as well as having an insight into its uniqueness, which is critical to the understanding of the particular case.

Stake (1995; 2003) outlines three main types of case studies depending on the aims of the research: (a) intrinsic case study, (b) instrumental case study and (c) collective case study. The purpose of the intrinsic case study is the particular case itself rather than a broader or more general issue. The instrumental case study aims to provide an insight into a larger issue or phenomenon, or to refine, test or build a theory. The collective case study is instrumental study of a number of cases in order to explore a more general issue; its aim is to use the collection and analysis of individual cases to better understand, theorise and explain certain phenomena common to all the collected cases.

In a similar line of thinking, Bassey (1999:62) holds that the case study in educational research could aim at: (a) theory-seeking and theory-testing, (b) story-telling and picture-drawing, or (c) evaluating. Theory-seeking and theory-testing case studies are particular studies of general issues. The case is considered to be typical for a more general issue. Story-telling and picture-drawing case studies are analytical accounts of educational events, projects, programmes or systems aimed at illuminating theory. Evaluative case studies aim to explore single educational events, projects and programmes with a view to assessing their quality against a set of criteria.

Arguably, the Shape Up case studies could be categorized as instrumental according to Stake and picture-drawing (or story-telling) according to Bassey. The purpose of the study is to explore and refine the implementation of a theoretical educational approach into practice as well as to assess the educational process (Shape Up) against a set of criteria (the Shape up approach conceptualised as a participatory and action-orientated).
Aims of the study

- In-depth knowledge about the Shape Up processes, including the employment of the IVAC approach, school/community collaboration, and genuine pupil participation.

- In-depth insight into participants’ perspectives and interpretations of the above mentioned Shape Up processes.

- Insight into how barriers and possibilities in the socio-cultural conditions in the different educational contexts in the different cases influence the Shape Up processes (the IVAC approach, school/community collaboration and pupil participation).

Research focus and guiding research questions

The IVAC approach
How is IVAC adopted, adjusted and employed in the different contexts involved in Shape Up? Or more specifically:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the IVAC approach in addressing the determinants of childhood obesity?

- What are the potentials and challenges concerning IVAC in the different contexts, according to the teachers?

Children participation
How is the concept of children (and young people) participation perceived, interpreted and put into practice in different contexts involved in Shape Up? In particular:

- Which models of children participation can be identified in the different project activities in Shape Up, within the different contexts involved?

- What are pupils’ “embodied perspectives” (i.e. arising from their lived experience in Shape Up) on participation?

- What are the teachers’ perspectives on pupil participation?

- What are the barriers and challenges for genuine student participation in different contexts?

School-community collaboration
How is the school-community collaboration perceived, interpreted and put into practice in different contexts involved in Shape Up? Specifically:

- Which models of school-community collaboration can be identified in the Shape Up project? (e.g. one way or two way processes)

- Which understandings of collaboration are the school-community models underpinned by (e.g. hierarchical or flat organization)?

- What are facilitator and coordinators roles in relation to strengthening school-community collaboration?

- What is the role and function of community partners in collaborations with schools on health issues?

- Which socio-cultural founded barriers and possibilities can be identified in working with a school-community approach?
Data generation, research quality criteria and research ethics

Data generation

- Documents: project reports; project documentation; descriptions of local context; coordinator/facilitator reports and evaluation portfolios
- Content on the Shape Up web portal (www.shapeupeurope.net)
- Observations made during school visits
- Interviews with project participants, both children and teachers: group interviews with 6 children in each city (age 12 – 17 years) and individual interview with 1 or 2 teachers.
- Interview with the Local Coordinator and Local Facilitator

Table 3 below outlines the data generation matrix which also provides the main framework for the analysis. Inspired by Pawson and Tilley (1997) the research attempts to explore the links between the context (operationalised as the characteristics of the conditions under which Shape Up project was implemented, as seen by the research participants as well as the development of the project as documented in the project materials); mechanisms (i.e. the main aspects of the Shape Up approach) and outcomes (i.e. changes in health-related determinants and children’s action competence). The table defines in more details each of these research dimensions as well as the data sources respectively.

Quality criteria

The principle of crystallisation (Richardson, 1994) is used to complement data triangulation and validate the findings. The crystal metaphor implies that there are more than three angles to understanding the research issues. The perspective chosen in a particular moment determines what is a figure and what a background in the analytical discussion. Additionally, consistent with the tradition of the constructivist epistemological paradigm, the research quality criteria of explicitness, consistency, transparency and relevance (Simovska, 2005) are used to guide the study. The transcripts and the data analysis were verified with the LC and LF and their comments were integrated in the report.

Research Ethics

The research attempts to respond to three main ethical ideas (or ideals), relating to educational research (Bassey, 1999): respect for democracy; respect for truth and respect for persons. Further, the traditional ethical principles of confidentiality, non-deceptive practice and minimisation of possible harm shape the data generation method. The participants in the study, both adults and children, were provided with detailed information about the research and gave their consent. The school authorities provided written permission. The school management assumed the responsibility of informing, and where necessary, obtaining the consent of the parents according to school (or national) policy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions taken into account</th>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Data generation method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History of SU in the city</td>
<td>Local coordinator/facilitator</td>
<td>Conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of the project at a local level</td>
<td>Local coordinator/facilitator; teachers</td>
<td>Conversations; Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International organisation and how did they relate to it</td>
<td>Project documentation; global coordinators</td>
<td>Document analysis; telephone interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School health policies (informants’ perspectives)</td>
<td>Local coordinator/facilitator; teachers</td>
<td>Conversations; Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum and links with the Shape Up (informants’ perspectives)</td>
<td>Local coordinator/facilitator; teachers</td>
<td>Conversations; Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School ‘culture’, especially re participation, innovation (IVAC) health and school/community collaboration</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils participation (genuine)</td>
<td>Pupils; Teachers; I.C./L.F; Project material, documents; Portal</td>
<td>Interviews Conversations Observations Document analysis Portal analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVAC model</td>
<td>Pupils; Teachers; I.C./L.F; Project material, documents; Portal</td>
<td>Interviews Conversations Observations Document analysis Portal analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/community collaboration</td>
<td>Pupils; Teachers; I.C./L.F; Project material, documents; Portal</td>
<td>Interviews Conversations Observations Document analysis Portal analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils’ action competence; Influences on determinants of health (actions taken and changes brought about</td>
<td>Pupils; Teachers; I.C./L.F; Project material, documents; Portal</td>
<td>Interviews Conversations Observations Document analysis Portal analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Research dimensions and data sources
**Analytical strategies and interpreting procedure**

Basically, data analysis means searching for new meanings, connections and making sense of the data. This process involves dissecting the process into smaller instances (analysis) and putting it back together again (synthesis) in a more meaningful way in order to arrive either at direct interpretation or categorical relationships (Stake, 1995) related to the research questions. It is very important to emphasise that the analysis is embedded already in the “reading” of the data and in the selection of examples to be described. Consequently, any description of empirical material includes interpretation (Simovska, 2005).

The interpretations and conclusions in this study are formulated in the manner of fuzzy assertions or “fuzzy generalisations” adopted by Bassey (1999). Fuzzy assertions or generalisations are types of conclusions arising from qualitative empirical inquiry, which hold that something may be the case but without giving any measure of its probability. The essential idea embedded in fuzzy logic is that “everything is a matter of degree” (Kosko, cited in Bassey, 1999: 46). Unlike statistical generalisation characterising the positivist research paradigm, fuzzy assertions and generalisations are interpretations with built-in uncertainty. In other words, fuzzy generalisations are “qualified generalisations, carrying the idea of possibility but not certainty” (Bassey, ibid.:46).

**References**


Appendix 3: Research instruments

Observation guide

General information about the School
(Leaflets, documents, website or info from the LF and LC)

- Number of pupils
- How old is the school
- Socioeconomic composition
- Ethnic composition
- Gender composition
- Number of teachers/staff
- Area (location)
- Other relevant info
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Dimension</th>
<th>Main observations</th>
<th>Elaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access</strong></td>
<td>The traffic, noise; parking facilities, collective traffic distribution, cycle paths etc.</td>
<td>Safety; location; possibility for walking or cycling to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The physical (built) environment</strong></td>
<td>The buildings, classrooms, IT rooms, corridors.</td>
<td>Well kept or trashed; the lighting; wall decoration; signs; space orientation etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green spaces</strong></td>
<td>Are there green areas – are they possible to use or just for look at?</td>
<td>Aesthetics; usability; general feeling; student-friendly etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social aspects</strong></td>
<td>Displays at school (if readable) Communication: do they say “we”, “our” school” or alike? Are there obvious groupings at school, during lunch, breaks, P.E.? Do teachers’ and principal’s office appear inviting, well sign posted, easy to access? Do pupils and teachers communicate, do pupils often ask teachers things as they pass by?</td>
<td>Who are they made by? Who are they made for? How do they speak about each other at school, is there any indication of exclusion – felt exclusion? Gender, age Subcultures; dress codes, Ethnicity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The schoolyard, sport facilities and other areas for physical activities</strong></td>
<td>How are they organized; structured, Are there marked spaces for games/play, Are there quiet places etc.?</td>
<td>Are there different areas for younger/older pupils, areas particularly inviting for boys or girls? Supervision; toys; equipment..?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cantina, eating facilities</strong></td>
<td>Facilities for cooking? How does the cantina appear; inviting, clean, noisy, separated sections, and small – big, light, decorated, smell - how?</td>
<td>If no cantina – where do they eat and how does this space appear?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shape Up at school</strong></td>
<td>Are there any displays for Shape Up activities? Is Shape up visible at the school?</td>
<td>Look into classrooms, teachers’ office, schoolyard, cantina Posters, working papers, invitations, offers for/from the local community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview Guide

Local coordinators (LC) and Facilitators (LF)

Introduction
Personal introduction, briefly about yourself; Explain the aims of the research, emphasise that the intention is NOT to evaluate the project but to learn from it so we can further develop the approach and advise teachers working with it in the future…

Research ethics
Clarify the ethical principles of the project, confidentiality and anonymity; explain that names will not be identified in the research reports. Explain that if they wish so, they can read and comment the interview transcripts and the analysis before they are published. Ask for permission for tape recording; explain why and how it will be used.

Establishing rapport and trust
Demonstrate clearly that you have read the material on the Portal and the project documentation linked with this particular school, that you are familiar with their work and that you appreciate it. Mention specific examples of project activities.

Introduction to the interview
Clarify the main topics we are interested in, what are the questions about…what is expected in terms of extension of their answers… (Experience oriented answers, their actions; as well as opinions and attitudes)

Interviewees’ information:

- Name, age and sex
- Institution
- Educational background
- Years of work experience
- Experience with participatory methods with schools and young people
### Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Dimension</th>
<th>Main question</th>
<th>Elaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History of SU in the city</td>
<td>Please tell the ‘story’ of Shape Up in the city</td>
<td>How did the project come around? How were the schools selected (and by whom)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local health policies (participants’ perspectives)</td>
<td>What are the local plans/policy issues linked to the project topic?</td>
<td>Project topic: health in relation to food, eating and physical activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synergies</td>
<td>What are the links between Shape up and other, similar projects in the city?</td>
<td>Is SU an umbrella project; or it is a part of a larger project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of the project on a local level</td>
<td>How are the project decisions made?</td>
<td>relations between the LC/LF; and between the two of them and: a) the schools b) the Local promoting Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture of innovation and change</td>
<td>How did you introduce the schools/teachers to the Project’s philosophy and methodological approach?</td>
<td>How was Shape Up received? How does it fit in the school culture? Was it supported? Opposed? Parents?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape Up training</td>
<td>How were you introduced to the methodology and the philosophy of Shape Up? Do you have previous experience with a similar (participatory) ways of working with health? How did you train the teachers to work with the Shape Up approach?</td>
<td>Training sessions? Methodological guidebook? Other?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mechanisms: Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Dimension</th>
<th>Main question</th>
<th>Elaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choice</td>
<td>How were pupils selected to be involved in Shape Up?</td>
<td>Who did it; criteria?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about the project</td>
<td>How were the pupils introduced to the project?</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genuine vs. token; forms; models of participation</td>
<td>How were decisions (e.g. about specific topics, methods of work etc) made over the course of the project?</td>
<td>How was the Shape Up work organized? Examples of decisions made by the LC and LF; teacher, by the pupils, in collaboration between them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformation of participation</td>
<td>Do you see any change (development) in the ways pupils participate in Shape Up over time?</td>
<td>How? Examples; different pupils; gender, age, background, achievement etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potentials; barriers</td>
<td>In general, how would you characterize pupils’ participation in Shape Up?</td>
<td>What are the potentials of this way of involving pupils? What are the barriers?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mechanisms: IVAC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Dimension</th>
<th>Main question</th>
<th>Elaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementation; adoption; adaptation</td>
<td>Did you use the four ‘phases’ in the IVAC model in a linear, or another way?</td>
<td>Please describe; examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potentials, barriers, competences needed</td>
<td>How would you characterize your experience with this model? ‘Does is work’? For whom?</td>
<td>Potentials; barriers? Competences a teacher needs in order to use this model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example (Potentials)</td>
<td>Can you identify a phase that worked the best for pupils?</td>
<td>Please explain (how and why); ask about vision phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example (Barriers)</td>
<td>Can you identify a phase that did not work well for pupils?</td>
<td>Please explain (how and why) ask about vision phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action and change</td>
<td>Can you give examples of actions and changes in the conditions for children’s health, taken by pupils?</td>
<td>Determinants (away from life style)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflectiveness; barriers to action; coping strategies</td>
<td>What were (if any) the obstacles in relation to action-taking and initiating changes in relation to health (eating, body movement);</td>
<td>What are the possible ways to overcome them; What kind of help is available in Shape Up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mechanisms: School-community collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Dimension</th>
<th>Main question</th>
<th>Elaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Models of collaboration (one)</td>
<td>Can you give examples of project</td>
<td>How did it happen, who initiated it, what</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example: activities involving collaboration with local community?</td>
<td>happened; what were the outcomes; what did pupils learn from it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles and competences</td>
<td>What is, in your view, your role in the school-community collaboration? The role of the teacher?</td>
<td>What are the competences needed for school-community collaboration to work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potentials and barriers; who benefits etc</td>
<td>What are the potentials and barriers of school-community collaboration in health-related projects like Shape Up?</td>
<td>Benefits/challenges for both sides, the school and the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations to peers</td>
<td>Your advice for teachers who would like to work with local community, involving pupils in the process?</td>
<td>What should they ensure? Be careful about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations to partners</td>
<td>Your advice to other local partners who would like to work with schools, involving pupils in the process?</td>
<td>What should they ensure? Be careful about?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Outcomes: Action competence and determinants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Dimension</th>
<th>Main question</th>
<th>Elaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action competence</td>
<td>What is, according to you, the most important learning for pupils though their involvement in Shape Up?</td>
<td>The dimensions of knowledge, engagement, and action experience pupils gained through the project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action competence and determinants</td>
<td>What is the extent of the changes you can identify as a result of Shape Up If possible, give a 1-3 grade: 1 lowest, 3 highest: a) pupils’ knowledge about health matters and root causes of health problems (conditions for health) b) pupils motivation and engagement to deal with health matters c) pupils competence to initiate changes in relation to health matters d) the conditions at school that have influence on health e) the conditions in the local community that have influence on health f) pupils’ health-related behaviour (lifestyle); g) other, please add (unintended outcomes)</td>
<td>Write down individual assessments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview guide

Pupils

Introduction

Personal introduction, briefly about yourself, explain the aims of the research, emphasise that the intention is to learn from pupils’ experiences and perspectives in order to make it easier to work on Shape Up activities and there are no right answers; we are interested in their point of views.

Research ethics

Clarify the ethical principles of the project, confidentiality and anonymity; explain that names will not be identified in the research reports. Explain that if they wish so, they can receive a summary from the interview transcripts to read and give comments. Due to potential language barriers and confidentiality, this will have to be organised with the local facilitator or another relevant person. Ask for permission for tape recording; explain why and how it will be used. Explain that they can withdraw from the interview at any time without having to explain why.

Establishing rapport and trust

Demonstrate clearly that you have read the material on the Portal and the project documentation linked with this particular school, that you are familiar with their work and that you appreciate it. Mention specific examples of project activities. Agree with the pupils to think about 1-2 Shape Up activities to focus on during the interview, to create a joint platform for your talk, thinking about and giving examples etc.

Introduction to the interview

Clarify the main topics we are interested in, what are the questions about…what will be expected in terms of extension of their answers… (Experience oriented answers, their actions; as well as opinions and attitudes). Also mention that we might have to interrupt them sometimes, due to the time available for the interview and that we will try to support all pupils to give their contribution e.g. by asking the participants in turns, encouraging quiet ones to talk etc.

Note: Chose one or a few good examples of Shape Up activities – before the interview (from the Portal) and relate all the questions to these activities to make the questions more concrete to the pupils. Mention these activities at the beginning of the interview – to remind the pupils and to make sure you are thinking about the same examples. If pupils give you new examples, use them in your questions too.

Interviewees’ information: names, age, sex, grade
### Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Dimension</th>
<th>Main question</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School culture; curriculum</td>
<td>Please tell about the Shape Up project? What have you been doing in the project? Would you say that Shape Up is similar to or different from how you normally learn about health at your school?</td>
<td>Examples, mention project activities you [the researcher] know about. Describe; specifically, health education, P.E. curriculum…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health policy – pupils' involvement (participants perspective)</td>
<td>Does your school have rules for how to support people to eat healthy food and do sports? Do pupils have a say on these rules? (Explain when, in what ways)</td>
<td>Policy on vending machines? Lunch pack policy? Extra emphasis on motivation for body movement during breaks?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy – culture of change (participants perspective)</td>
<td>Do you think the Shape Up project will influence these rules?</td>
<td>Please explain; how</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mechanisms: Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Dimension</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choice</td>
<td>How did you get involved in Shape Up? Did you have a choice NOT to participate?</td>
<td>Motivation - engagement Any criteria for selection? Involvement of specific types of pupils; language/IT, psychical skills, obesity, gender, especially engaged pupils?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about the project</td>
<td>Who told you about the Project? What did they tell you?</td>
<td>Examples of information given to the pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genuine vs. token; forms; models of participation</td>
<td>Can you give examples of decisions in Shape Up made by the teacher? (about what to do and how to do things) Can you give examples of decisions made by pupils on their own? Can you give examples of pupils and teachers deciding things together?</td>
<td>If possible ask if other adults than teachers have been engaging pupils in decisions making e.g. facilitator, people from the local community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Transformation of participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is it easier to decide and plan things in Shape Up now compared to the beginning of the project?</td>
<td>Does the participatory approach of Shape Up get embedded at school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think more pupils take part in deciding things now than at the beginning of the project?</td>
<td>Decisions making getting easier – a habit of working participatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you get more used to plan project activities together with teachers compared with before Shape Up?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Potentials; barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What was the easiest to discuss and decide?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was most difficult?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you use the teacher? Please describe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mechanisms: IVAC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Dimension</th>
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<th>Elaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IVAC phases – no linear data collection</td>
<td>Tell about the [investigation activity] project..? How did you work to explore … [example from the portal]</td>
<td>Find specific examples before the interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tell about the [vision activity] project..? How did you work to envision… [example from the portal]</td>
<td>Get as much info on the pupils’ experiences from the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tell about the [action activity] project..? How did you work to change… [example from the portal]</td>
<td>What, how, with whom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What did you find the most exciting/unexpected in working in these ways?</td>
<td>How did they explore the topic:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What did you find the most difficult?</td>
<td>traditional teaching, books, visits to institutions, computer information, observation, interviews, health professionals, other young people etc.?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mechanisms: School-community collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Dimension</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Models of collaboration (one way; two way etc)</td>
<td>Did you work with other adults or young people from outside school?</td>
<td>Examples…Parents?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td></td>
<td>Who? How was contact established?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Collaboration on what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exchanges – outcomes?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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## Potentials and barriers

Can you give examples of when the collaboration with people outside the school was a good experience?

Can you give examples of when it was less easy/less good experience?

People not keeping their promises, not taken seriously, difficulties to establish contact, disagreements etc.

## Outcomes: Action competence and determinants

<table>
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</thead>
</table>
| Action competence    | What did you learn from participating in Shape Up? | Examples
The dimensions of knowledge; lifestyle, determinants
Experience from taking action |
| Action competence: lifestyle and determinants | Please rate the following by giving a ‘grade’:
1= no change  
2= better  
3= a lot better
  a) Your knowledge about health related to your lifestyle is now  
b) Your knowledge about things at school important to health is now  
c) Your knowledge about things in your neighbourhood important to health is now  
d) Your knowledge about things in society as a whole important to health is now  
e) Your wish to learn more about health is now  
f) Your motivation to live a healthy life is now  
g) Your commitment to work with others to change things important to health at school and outside school is now  
g) Your ‘readiness’ to change things important to health in your life or in community? | Ask the pupils to think about what they have learnt from working in the project
Give all pupils a pen and a piece of paper with the letters of all questions indicated; ask them to individually rate each question |