Participating in creating open spaces with and for children and its impact on health

Nadine Käser

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Where would you like to play?
Why Participation?
Designing healthy environment needs Participation!

- Acknowledge children as experts of their lifeworlds
- Ensure children of all ages, backgrounds, income, and abilities have equitable access to good health and wellbeing
- Involve children in designing and planning to give them ownership and social-spatial identification
- Work together through cross sectoral and multi-level partnerships to build an inclusive culture of health in cities
What is research saying?
QuAKTIV
Background of the research project

- Child-friendly open spaces which are close to nature are becoming increasingly rare.

- Specialization and functionalization of public open spaces -> fragmentation, domestication and mediatisation of children's living environments.

- Investing in participatory processes, to design and implement open spaces close to nature for and with children.
Research Project

- 3-year program including three community based pilot projects
- External evaluation:
  -> contributions of these participatory processes for democracy

--> Practice-oriented guideline
   (in German: Fabian et al., 2016
   -> www.quaktiv.ch)
Arguments for Participation

Participatory processes ...

... support the **healthy development** of children.

... strengthen the **competencies and resources** of children.

... enable **encounters and collaboration**.

... support the **identification** with a space or place.

... encourage people **to tune in to nature and landscaping**.

... allow to experience **democracy**.
Understanding of participation within QuAKTIV

Participation begins in the development process of open spaces as e.g. playgrounds or parks.

Those in a position of power (local authorities or local administration, schools, etc.) enable and organize participation.

Participation means children help shape and are involved in the decision making process.
Different steps of Participation

- Inform
- Contribute & Collaborate
- Be part of the decisions
- Co-responsibility

Fabian et al., 2016, p. 16
Child-friendly – Participation in each project phase

I. Analysis of the initial situation

II. Plan, design & concept

III. Realization / implementation

IV. Operation & maintenance

V. Evaluation & permanent adoption

Project cycle

Fabian et al., 2016
How is participation related to health?
Participation and health

Participative processes can stimulate several health-related effects factors on an individual level:

• empowerment & autonomy
• self-efficacy
• sense of coherence
Questions?
For further Questions:

Nadine Käser
Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz
Hochschule für Soziale Arbeit
Institut Sozialplanung, Organisationaler Wandel und Stadtentwicklung ISOS
Thiersteinerallee 57
4053 Basel
Tel.: 061 337 27 75
nadine.kaeser@fhnw.ch