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Road Safety Actions for a Better Environment



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Teacher Guidelines

Safety and Mobility for All Educational Approach



The YOUR **ideas** YOUR **initiatives** project has been designed and developed by P.A.U. Education and Renault in coordination with authors B. Bruun Jensen, J. Magne Jensen, N. Larsen, V. Simovska from the educational project [©]*RoSaCe Road Safety Cities in Europe* and developed with the support of the Directorate-General for Energy and Transport of the European Commission.

The Teachers Guide and Key Units have been devised and written by:

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Road Safety in a Global Perspective

Road safety education is nowadays mostly limited to traffic issues and driving behaviors, and is very much constrained by time and curriculum.

We all know however, that road safety can't be dissociated from the way we move and that mobility and safety are major indicators of life quality. Improving road safety and mobility standards should, in this context, directly improve the quality of life in the community.



YOUR ideas YOUR initiatives is an **international project** with the starting assumption that road safety education, to be sustainable, should contribute to a better understanding of the concept of mobility and positively influence the quality of life in the school and in its surroundings.



YOUR ideas YOUR initiatives treats the issue of "road safety and mobility" from a **global perspective** (beyond the conventional Traffic Engineering and/or "Driver's Education" approach). While recognizing the undeniable importance of avoiding accidents and casualties, the project aims to bring all of the actors involved to reflect deeply on safety and mobility in our lives.

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Safety and Mobility for All

In order to teach about safety and mobility in the classroom and to have students gain a better understanding of the key concepts, it is useful to focus on safety education as a whole. It is fair to say that road safety is not just about rules and regulations on the streets because it encompasses much more; it is affected by clear approaches to safety education and also, more specifically health, mobility and environment education.

The fundamental perception is that present day mobility and road safety problems are structurally anchored in society and our way of living. For this reason, it is necessary to find a solution to these problems through changes at both the societal and individual level. Therefore the aim of education must be to make future citizens capable of acting on a societal as well as a personal level. A solution to these problems is not only a question of quantitative changes (less consumption, less transport, less use of electricity, etc.), but also (and maybe more so) about qualitative changes (believing in different kinds of mobility, transport, consumption, new alternative energy sources).



The aim of education is to make pupils capable of obtaining alternative ways of development and to be able to act according to these objectives.

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At least three different reasons are often given for involving pupils in school projects and education in the areas of safety and mobility.

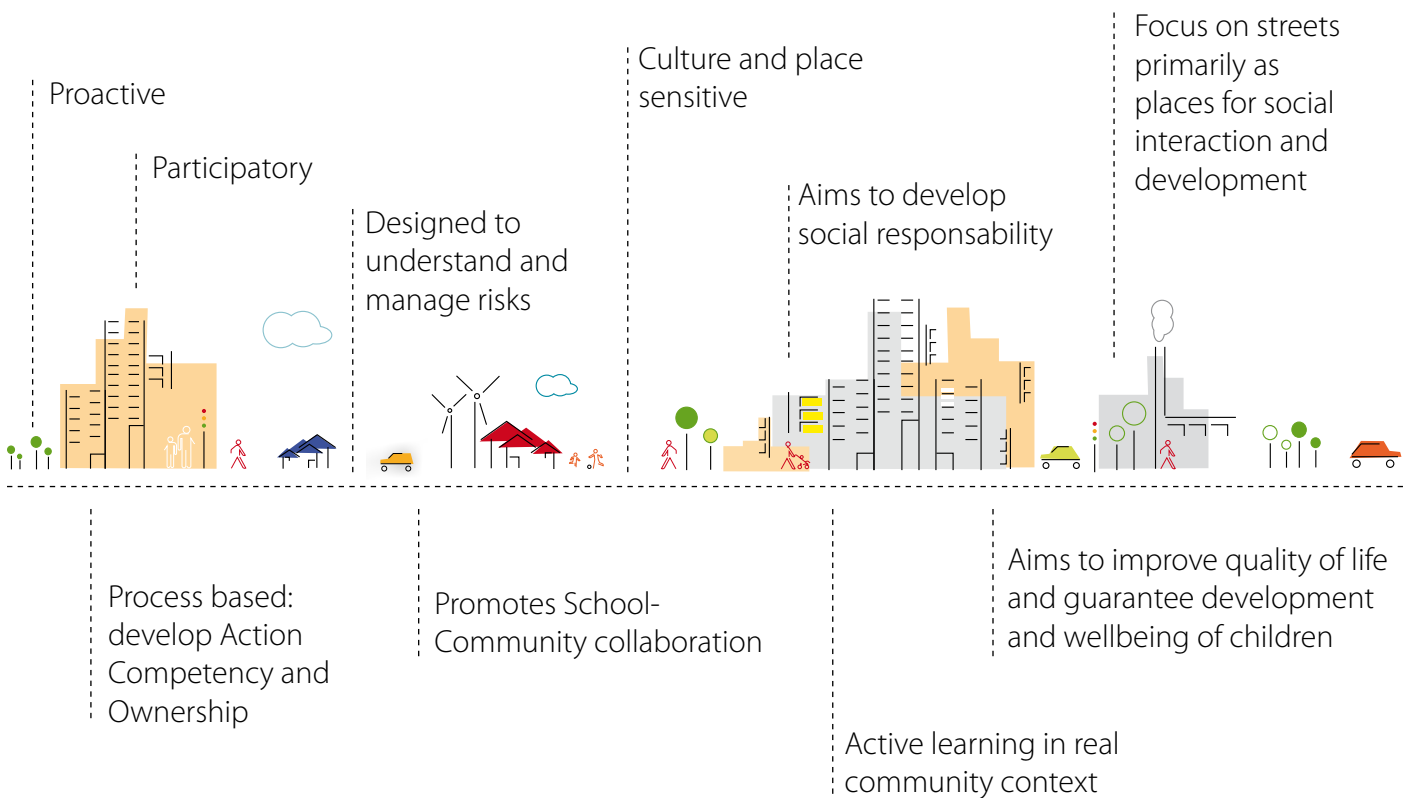
- 1 The reason most commonly put forward is linked to the effects of certain safety and health promotion activities:** if pupils are not drawn actively into the processes, there will be little chance of them developing a sense of ownership and, if pupils do not develop ownership, there is very little likelihood that the activities will lead to sustainable changes in their practice, behavior or action.
- 2 The second justification deals with the democratic nature of participatory educational approaches.** For instance, if the overall aim of the school is to prepare pupils for active participation and to become democratic citizens, then the activities at the school should build on democratic premises. Participatory methods in schools facilitate the development of democratic skills and attitudes. This policy context also implies that more moralistic activities, aiming to impose predetermined behavior of pupils, could face significant difficulties in a democratic school.
- 3 Ethical considerations concerning the obligation to involve participants in decisions about issues** (such as safety) that are centrally related to their own lives should be added to the above-mentioned rationales. Such considerations, which are related to issues of liberal education faced by schools, are also prominent within many organizations, in which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration of the Rights of the Child are often emphasized.

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The objective of safety and mobility education is thus to educate pupils to be active, democratic citizens who are able to take action collectively and individually for a safer and better life. The following diagram presents the main characteristics of the educational approach:

Safety and Mobility for All: Educational Approach



One of the overall objectives of education in these fields is to enhance pupils' ability to act and initiate change. It is therefore natural to consider how actions and working with them can become part of teaching and education in schools.

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Instead of moralizing and passing on pre-determined values and ideas about safety and the environment, the school should work developing the pupils' ability to act, building up their action competence.

This teaching differs fundamentally from the more traditional behavior-oriented education, which has different content and a completely different objective, namely changing the pupils' individual behavior in a pre-determined manner.

This behavior-oriented way of teaching has proved to be ineffective, because it rarely leads to the desired behavioral changes. Therefore, an alternative framework is needed, and the action competence approach represents one of these.

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Participation

The term “participation” is associated with a number of related terms, such as “taking part”, “involvement”, “consultation” and “empowerment”, and these different terms are often used in confusing ways. In the school context, participation is often used to refer to children and young people simply being involved in predetermined activities without taking into consideration their real influence on these activities. On other occasions, participation implies sharing power in making decisions relating to school matters, as well as the learners’ influence on both the content and the educational process. It reflects a sense of self-determination, self-regulation, ownership and empowerment in relation to safety matters. This is the approach that has been adopted in this material.



¹ Simovska, V., (2005) “Participation and learning about health”: Clift, S. and Jenson. B.B. (eds.) The Health Promotion School: International advances in theory, evaluation and practice, Copenhagen: Danish University of Education Press, p173-193

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We suggest that all children, from an early age, are entitled to and capable of exercising their right to participate in decisions that affect their safety and their lives, even though the degree and form of participation may differ according to the age and changing capacities, interests and skills of the children.

Participation is one of the key values of the safety education approach emphasized in the material. More specifically, it represents the ideal of genuine, as opposed to tokenistic, participation of children and young people. Genuine involvement implies that young people are encouraged, guided and supported by adults to have a real influence on a project's content and process. Genuine participation is considered to be a prerequisite for the development of action competence and is also an outcome of that process. The expected outcomes of genuine participation are open and divergent, depending on the ideas, needs, interests and priorities of children and young people, as well as on what the environment affords. This contrasts with the behavioral changes characteristic of token participation, where children are expected to accept pre-existing lifestyles that correlate with facts describing what is healthy and what is not ².

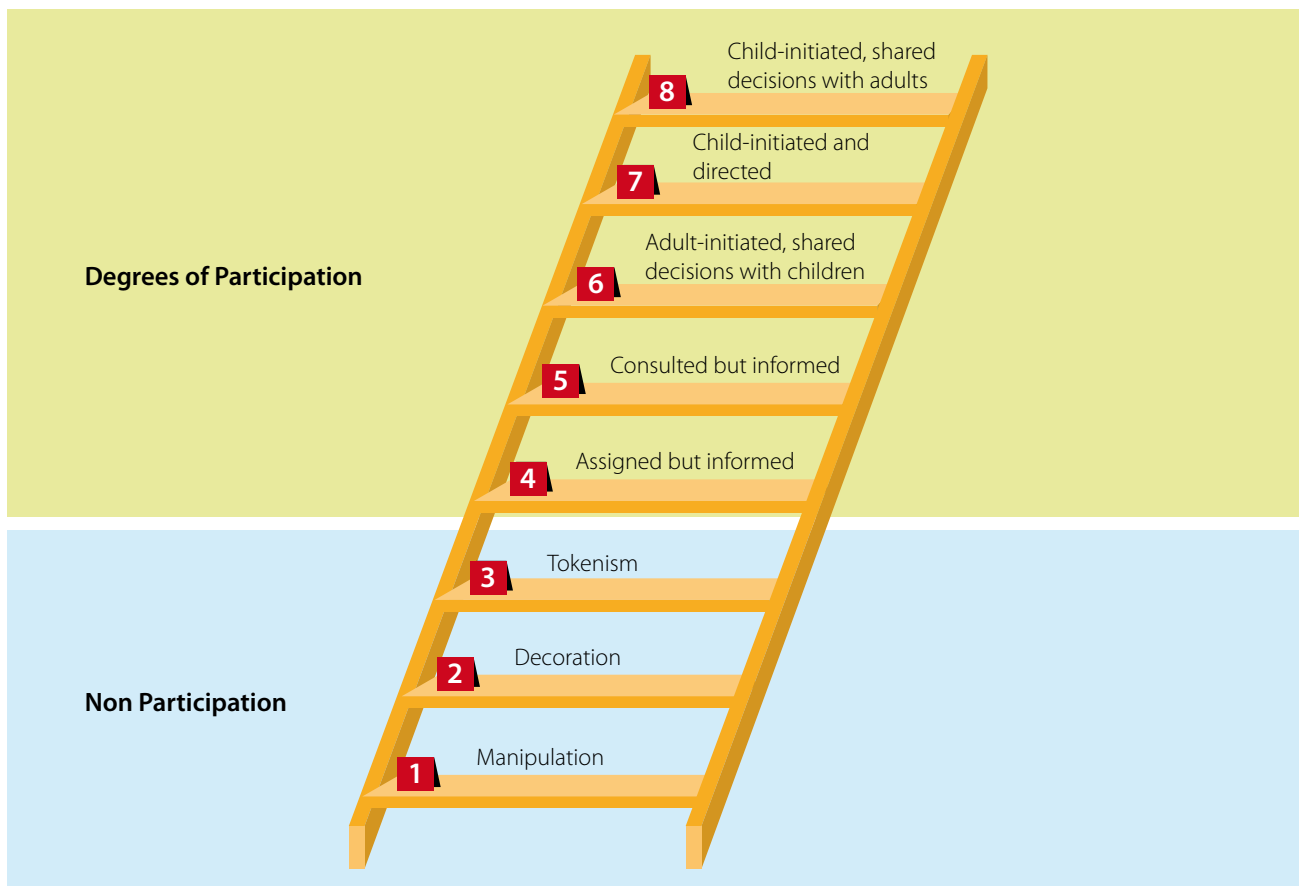
Through authentic participation, children and young people are encouraged and enabled to assume responsibility for their safety and lives, deal with complexities of change, and participate competently in social networks.

² Simovska, V., Jensen, B.B., Carlsson, M. and Albeck, C. (2006) "Shape-Up Europe. Towards a healthy and balanced growing up: Children and adults taking action together" Barcelona: P.A.U. Education

Genuine participation does not mean reducing the responsibilities of teachers and other adults working with children and young people. On the contrary, their responsibilities may even increase.

Roger Hart, is a sociologist for UNICEF who developed a model for participation, called the ladder of participation. This model contains eight steps, each step representing increasing degrees of pupil participation and different forms of cooperation with adults (Figure 1). Hart calls the three lowest steps on the ladder “non-participation”, and emphasizes that many projects claiming to involve children could be characterized as non-participation, rather than belonging to the higher steps on the ladder, or what he calls “real participation”.

The Ladder of children’s participation by Hart



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Contributing experts

The following experts have contributed to the development of this educational material:

■ Ray Lorenzo

Ray is an urban planner who specializes in developing participatory strategies for working with children in urban environments. He works as a consultant for UNICEF International Child Development Center.

■ Jean-Pascal Assailly

Jean-Pascal Assailly has been working in the field of alcohol and drugs for the past 25 years, and is a member of ICADTS since 1992. In charge of the young drivers issue in France, he has written several reference books on the psychology of risk-taking and on young people fatalities. He is very active in the guidance of French national traffic safety policies and in media campaigns on traffic safety prevention. He also often collaborates in European collaborative projects. He is now building the educational continuum in Vietnam for a World Bank project.

■ Søren Breiting

Educational researcher with a focus on the environment and sustainable development in education for the Danish School of Education, Aarhus University. He specializes in Education for Sustainable Development and Participatory approaches in education.

- Other experts from the **Danish School of Education** including Bjarne Bruun Jensen. His research has focused on the intercultural development of key concepts in health and environmental education (e.g. empowerment, action competence, health and environmental literacy and student participation). He has written 27 books over the years and some 200 articles.

■ P.A.U. Education

Specialized in participatory educational projects. P.A.U. has developed European Projects focused on Road Safety such as ROSACE and on healthy living such as SHAPE UP. P.A.U. is the operator of the European Road Safety Charter.

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