Children as visionary change agents in Danish school health promotion

This paper describes children’s perceptions and visions for a healthier social and physical environment in the setting of a primary school on the Danish island of Bornholm. Guided by an everyday-life perspective and applying participatory action research methods including social imagination and visual techniques within the framework of future creating workshops, the study engaged 50 children aged 6–9 years in creative processes of identifying health-related problem areas and solutions in their school setting. The study observed that the children were very capable of articulating their thoughts, ideas and visions for a better and healthier school environment. Identified problem areas and solutions differed widely and represented a broad perspective of health including social, physical, environmental and emotional aspects. The paper discusses advantages and challenges of involving children in decision-making processes and concludes that children are visionary and creative agents of change in health promotion projects provided that applied participatory methods are appealing to the children.