

Project **#Demokratie macht Schule**: If it's about them, don't do it without them

Austria

www.yep-austria.org

DESCRIPTION

#Demokratie macht Schule/ "If it's about them, don't do it without them" is an **innovative project launched in 2023** under the leadership of the Ministry of Education, Science and Research in Austria. The project **aims to enable young persons to actively participate in the implementation of curricula**.

Initially, the project focused on **new curricula for commercial schools**. This was based on a campaign and a social media strategy developed together with students, and with the cooperation of schools and other organisations to improve young people participation. The data collected served as the basis for deciding the new generation of commercial schools' curricula.

A so-called *Jugendbeirat* ("**Youth Advisory Council**") **accompanied the whole process of curriculum development**.

Among the questions asked to the students involved in the process:

- "What do you want to learn and what do you not want to learn?" (Competences, Content)
- "What do you want to be prepared for your work life?" (Guidance, Practical abilities, Choice of school place)

"Which are the framework conditions and methods that would help you to be enthusiastic, effective and goal-oriented?"

REFLECTIONS

- 77% of young people say that are not heard by policymakers; 49% say that they learn about participation and cooperation; 92% would like to participate actively in school/curriculum decision making; 47% of students are dissatisfied with guidance and counselling in classes and school life.
- Students want to be involved in the planning of the teaching lessons; they prefer learning in smaller groups and in project-based learning and give presentations instead of doing tests. They also express an interest in learning Life Skills.

IMPACT

17.524 pupils participated, with 7.238 coming from commercial schools:

- within the qualitative data collection 25 students from business schools and colleges were engaged in workshops, focus groups with an explorative work process, part of the participative process;
- 51 students participated in the so-called "inclusion check", a method to improve understanding, accessibility and the inclusion of low thresholders in the curriculum development process;
- Involvement of different and disadvantaged young people before the publication of the curricula to ensure an equal access for all;
- 280 pupils took part in workshops and co-creation events;
- 660 pupils of commercial schools took part in the toolkit preparation