

## **Procurement in Technical and Planning Co-Creation Case**

– Procurement of a kindergarten with children’s involvement

### **Introduction**

A municipality needs to build a new kindergarten, and the project is to be put out to tender. In this context, the relevant working groups consider how they can ensure that the citizens' voices are heard during the process. In this specific case, this means: the children. It is the children who are the end users of the kindergarten and, in the end, the ones who should take ownership of the kindergarten. The working groups begin a process to explore the possibilities.

### **Curiosity about the Case**

At the outset, the working group is curious about the question of how the children's voice can be heard. Since none of the group members typically have citizen contact, it is not immediately clear how this can be achieved within the scope of their job descriptions. It is the educators who are supposed to create the relevant environment in the institution that will allow the children to feel ownership of the place. However, through internal discussions and reflections, it becomes clear to them that the procurement process itself can help set the framework for citizen involvement. So, despite not having direct citizen contact, they realize there is untapped potential in considering the structure of the procurement itself. In the usual procurement process, all bidders are assessed based on a variety of criteria. These criteria could be quality, economic profitability, and sustainability. The working groups begin to explore how a new criterion could be introduced in the upcoming tender—namely, citizen involvement. They work together on how much this criterion should weigh percentage-wise in relation to the other relevant criteria, and how its fulfillment should be assessed. They decide on a model where bidders must specify how they will ensure the involvement of children during the process of building the kindergarten, which can then be assessed by the procurement consultants on a scale from 1 to 5. They also specify a requirement for “play and learning” in the tender. By including these elements in the procurement, they ensure that the ambition to involve the children does not become an empty declaration of intent that is left up to each individual educator to implement in practice. Instead, a concrete structure and framework for involvement are provided, which the bidder must address. Due to the conditions in the procurement, the contractors must allocate time to teach the children how to build a kindergarten and assist them so that they can actively contribute, such as by laying stones on the gable, assembling benches, etc. However, it is up to the bidders themselves to propose how they will concretely involve the children while still ensuring safety.

### **Exploration of solutions**

In this example, the exploration of solutions consists of the staff evaluating the incoming bids based on the specification described in the procurement. In this sense, the citizens are not directly involved in exploring specific solutions, but the solutions are assessed, among other things, based on the degree of involvement of the children in the construction of the kindergarten. To what extent do the activities described by the bidder meet the goal of involving the children and strengthening their psychological ownership? The working groups ultimately choose the candidate they believe best meets the relevant criteria.

### **Co-determination**

Co-decision making in this case does not involve the children in choosing the winning bid. Instead, the co-decision is in the fact that the children’s voice has been incorporated into the process. This is because the relevant bids were specifically evaluated based on how well the bidders managed to involve the children’s voice in the process. Through the children’s actual work in building the kindergarten, they also master specific skills—e.g., by screwing a bench together. Moreover,

involving the children's voice is relevant because, by virtue of being children, they have privileged knowledge about what constitutes a good childhood. Since the kindergarten is fundamentally for children, it makes sense that their voice should carry special weight. Co-decision making means that the children have the opportunity to leave their mark on the new kindergarten, both through their preferences and through the concrete activities where they assist the contractors in building the kindergarten.

### **Co-responsibility**

The children have a clear shared responsibility for the solution since they are directly involved in building parts of the kindergarten. This shared responsibility, combined with the development of their craft skills, creates a high degree of psychological ownership—few things can instill more psychological ownership in a child than having helped build their own kindergarten. Therefore, the working groups are also aware of how their procurement process can help create a framework for solutions that foster a greater sense of community and make the municipality a place where we share and work together on the task.