

The road is made while walking Norsk Kulturskoleråd and Positive School Environment Programme

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Norsk Kulturskoleråd is a co-operational, developmental organisation for municipalities with a municipal and regional music and performing arts school. The council departments – consisting of elected representatives – attend to the interests of the municipalities. The National Assembly is the highest authority of Norsk Kulturskoleråd. Delegates of the National Assembly are elected at the Annual District Assemblies.

At the moment the organisation represents more than 90.000 student places, which represent about 16% of all primary and secondary pupils between 7 and 16 years. The number of students that come into contact with the organisation services for voluntary music activities, the educational system, neighbouring municipalities and so on, has by now passed the number of 150.000. Norsk Kulturskoleråd has its central administration in Trondheim and works also through district departments. The council also has consultants in most districts, often in co-operation with Statens Utdanningskontor, the State Education Office.

Since 1973 the organisation has been a central promoter of the establishment and development of the music and culture school system in Norway. The municipal music and culture schools have experienced an adventurous development throughout this period. In 1970 only 12 municipal music schools had been established, against 434 music and culture schools in the spring of 2003. All the municipalities in Norway offer and provide a music and art school offer. This offer is stipulated by the music school law which we proposed and since its acceptance has played a major part in our work.

Lately Norsk Kulturskoleråd has been playing a leading role in the development of new cultural and aesthetic expression forms at these schools, e.g. theatre and contemporary circus. Together with the Ministry of Education the organisation has the responsibility for national development projects in the field of art and culture for children and young people.

Organisation's usual sources of finance

Norsk Kulturskoleråd is an organisation which is partly municipal and partly a state organisation. It receives the major part of its finances through subsidies from the Kirke-, Utdannings- og Forskningsdepartement, which is the Ministry of Church, Education and Research. Furthermore the member municipalities pay an annual fee.

In addition to these some money is obtained from project activities such as courses for educational professionals and the sale of relevant course material.

Previous experience in cooperation with other organisations in other States

Norsk Kulturskoleråd organised the European Youth Music Festival - Trondheim 2000. The festival is assigned by the European Music School Union and held every two years. The festival in Norway hosted 10.000 participants from 23 European countries, also from Sweden, Denmark, Belgium and Holland. The participants, aged between 12 to 25, were pupils from music and art schools. There were more than 1000 concerts on 40 stages, various theatre performances, multidisciplinary acts, contemporary circus and many social activities.

Experience in the sector of cultural projects

Norsk Kulturskoleråd has extensive experience with the organisation of cultural projects.

In recent years, there have been exciting contemporary circus developments in Norway. The idea behind the Cirque Nouveau Project is therefore to establish a structured co-operation between music schools and those circus organisations so that young people all over Europe can benefit from this exciting new expression form. In this way newly attained knowledge will be connected with well-established cultural competence and provide the schools with a wider offer of creative disciplines.

Another example is the Positive School Environment Project which started more than 10 years ago and has become a great success.

Positive School Environment

Positive School Environment (PSM) is a national development programme (initiated by the Department of Education and Norsk Kulturskoleråd) aiming to develop an environment which helps to advance the musical and creative qualities of children. PSM wishes to create a qualitatively better society by giving children the possibility to use games and expression forms, and to participate in artistic experiences.

The goals of PSM are:

- a bigger role of art and culture in school and local environment
- building bridges between music and art schools, primary schools and the local cultural life
- to create new alliances across different scopes
- to spread experiences from earlier projects with art and culture in order to inspire developmental activities at every school

Unfortunately, it is a fact that valuable knowledge is often defined as only comprising insight into the traditional fundamental subjects. In today's technological society cultural competence is equally important for the development of a harmonious person. It has been shown that social and cultural competence mature best through a larger use of the aesthetic subjects in primary education.

Positive School Environment bases itself on the idea that - within art and cultural subjects - it is easy to create new experiences. This is important for every development, and for any learning process. A school needs teachers, artists and cultural workers who are aware of stimulating motivation with every pupil through establishing a social environment, a spirit of community and a sense of belonging. Our whole society is dependent on creative and productive people.

An organised network

Positive School Environment is built up with an organised network as a method: primary schools and music schools co-operate and this entails a strong commitment on the side of the project schools, including the school management.

The project bases itself on a common vision and aim, and the school develops its own and local activity plan. Through the network co-operation the schools exchange experiences, and they arrive at new models for organisation and content, where art and culture are put on the agenda.

Organisation

The central project management has the responsibility for the practical accomplishment of the project. This happens in co-operation with the education offices, and with an advisory group in the respective counties. The project group of the school consists of a selection of teachers who, together with the music and art schools, are responsible for guiding and carrying out the project. The project manager should preferably be a member of the school management.

This group is also responsible for the development of new structures in the established regulations, and the construction of new models and co-operation forms which promote an increased level of activity - and to arrange good conditions for the development of children's creative qualities. Teachers are responsible for the continuation of working with cultural expressions in everyday school life, and for establishing the project as a part of their educational platform. Pupils should, through more self-involvement and wider choices within the aesthetic subjects, join in creating a richer and a more meaningful school day.

The music and art schools will be a resource centre and idea box for primary schools and the local music life.

PSM motto: The road is made while walking ...