

NORWAY

Norsk kulturskoleråd

(The Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts)

As the member organisation of municipalities – the owners of the law-decided schools of music and performing arts – Norsk kulturskoleråd has a strong professional and political position in Norway. Since the last report to EMU, Norsk kulturskoleråd has even increased its position by achieving more financial support from the state to the organisation's development programmes for the music and art schools. Included the international peace programme 'Umoja' the 2008-budget of Norsk kulturskoleråd of odd NOK 39 mill (€ 5 mill) makes it possible to have a staff of 14 full-time employee at the headquarters and 13 consultants at county level. The capacity to organise both national and regional programmes consequently is good.

In Norway the situation for the music and art schools is a political topic at national level, even if these schools are fully owned by the municipalities. The present Government share the ideology of Norsk Kulturskoleråd, stating 'Music and art schools for All!'. The music and art schools are at state level the responsibility of the Minister of Education, but also the Minister of Culture is promoting these schools heavily in his very ambitious programme 'The Cultural Leap'. Just recently Norsk kulturskoleråd together with the organisation 'Save the Children Norway' have got grants from the Ministry of Education and the largest labour organisation in Norway to carry through a research programme evaluating the effect of rising fees, removal of family moderation and the too long waiting lists in the music and art schools.

Even if music and art school fees in Norway are low compared to some other countries (differs from €125 to €500 for one year studies), the rapid increase in too many municipalities the last years have resulted in a political debate about some regulations. This year Norsk kulturskoleråd together with all the national organizations for amateur music, supported by a number of other art and labour organizations, has been forwarding a proposal of national regulations giving the municipalities some guidelines for their music and art schools. The organisation has established a close cooperation with the amateur music organisations like The Norwegian Music Council, The Norwegian Band Federation and The Norwegian Choir Association. Norsk kulturskoleråd was asked to present the Norwegian model of cooperation between music and art schools and the school bands at the European Championships in Oostende, Belgium, May 1.th 2009.

An agreement with the National Music Academy has also been signed, including cooperation on many areas: music education in general, conductor education, research programmes, etc. A report related to talent education in music in Norway also is published last year by a mutual committee also including representatives from a private music institute in Oslo. Norsk kulturskoleråd participate with the same institutions planning the international Menuhin Competition for violinists in Oslo in 2010.

In June 2007 the Minister of Education presented 'Creative Learning - Strategy for Art and Culture in Education 2007 – 2010.) Of the 27 measures, Norsk kulturskoleråd is involved in the implementation of more than half of them, in close cooperation with the newly established Norwegian Centre or Art and Culture in Education and the Directory for Primary and Secondary Education and Training. An important aim of this strategy is to develop music and art schools as resource centres for kindergarten and primary and secondary education and training. Increasingly music and art schools are involved in the organizing of 'The Cultural School Bag' – a prestigious national programme contributing to all pupils in the schools being offered professional art and culture. (Concerts, exhibitions, theatre performances etc.) A special network programme (Creative School Environment) is offered regionally for leaders and teachers of music and art schools, kindergarten, primary and secondary schools to stimulate and improve key professionals in cooperating related to 'The Cultural School Bag'.

Every year Norsk kulturskoleråd is responsible of 'Kulturskoledagene', a two day's meeting with speeches, seminars and exhibitions of teaching material for headmasters and teachers in music and other art forms from music and art schools all over the country. Last year, at a hotel close to Trondheim city, about 500 persons participated. There is no participation fee.

Regularly every autumn the staff of Norsk kulturskoleråd offer courses in class singing and dance for teachers in primary and lower secondary schools all over the country. These courses are very popular, and about 2000 persons participate.

In addition to this, the organisation continuously presents courses in music technology and regional projects in visual arts (exhibitions). A book with ideas of projects within visual arts has been published. The magazine 'Kulturtrøkk' is send to all member schools, but also authorities, cooperation organisations etc. quarterly.

Norsk kulturskoleråd is directly involved in the making of a guide to the municipalities based on success criteria from the four 'demonstration music and art schools' appointed by the Directory for Primary and Secondary Education and Training. The headmasters from these schools are participating in the work together with the senior adviser from Norsk Kulturskoleråd. The guide is planned published later this year.

The 'Umoja' programme, based on the cooperation between Norwegian music and art schools, The National Music Academy, The University College of Performing Arts and similar education institutions in six African countries is continuously very successful. Starting mainly as a music and art programme where youngsters meet and produce performances, exhibitions etc, it has recently more been defined as a peace programme. The € 1 mill budget is totally financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Every year Norsk kulturskoleråd together with the Norwegian National Lottery at June 5.th present 100 young performers as winners of the 'Dream Scholarship'. Every winner is invited to a ceremony where quite often the local mayor presents the diploma and the cheque of € 1.250 assisted by representatives from Norsk kulturskoleråd and the Lottery. Even more important, the winners are normally well presented in the local newspapers and other media.

Norsk kulturskoleråd is participating close with the other Nordic members of EMU. We meet regularly twice a year, inform each other of new from our countries and discuss important issues. Still we are working for the realization of the Nordic cooperation programme 'The Cultural Greenhouse' – where the intention is to develop a dialogue between our organisations and research institutions in every country. Together with our Finnish sister organisation, Norsk kulturskoleråd represented the Nordic members in the meeting with EMU's Presidium in Riga, discussing 'The Future of EMU'.