

QUALITY AND EQUALITY IN MUSIC EDUCATION

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QUALITY AND EQUALITY IN MUSIC EDUCATION

In Norway rather: Equality and Quality

Dear colleagues,

I thank Helena Maffli and EMU for being invited as speaker to this seminar, and to participate in the follow-up of The Seoul Agenda and the Bonn Declaration. When defining quality and equality, Helena also is raising the question if one can exist without the other in music education. In my opinion it is not possible, even if I will try to discuss them separately. Helena also made a summary of the results of EMU working groups in the association's General Assemblies in Tallin, Estonia as well as Riccione, Italy. The many keywords given and actions called for in these papers are both extensive, and very relevant for me in my presentation.

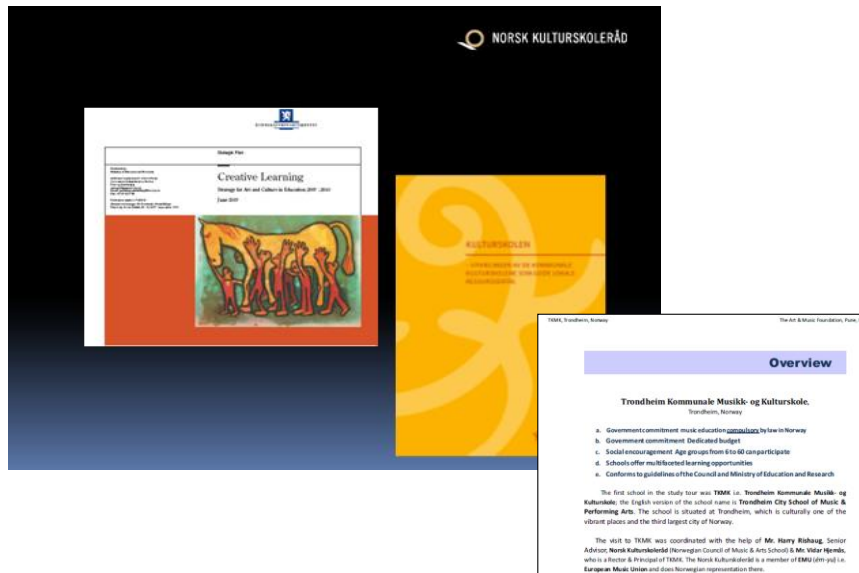
I will try to show the connections and tensions between the two expressions, but also discuss the implication of these words separately. This presentation is particularly based on knowledge of municipal music schools and their development to the present music and arts schools, or culture schools which is the name used in Norway.

It has to be underlined that quality and equality - in my context maybe in the order *equality and quality* - are words that goes precisely into the core of the discussions related to music and art school development in Norway.

Initially I will refer to three document giving a more in-depth description of the role and functions of the music and arts school than possible in half an hour.

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Documents describing Music and Arts Schools in Norway



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Creative Learning - Strategy for Art and Culture in Education 2007 - 2010

Published by Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research

Schools of Music and Performing Arts - Guidelines for further developing the schools into local resource centres

Published by National Centre for Art and Culture in Education

Trondheim City School of Music and Performing Arts

by Atul Kulkarni, The Art & Music Foundation, Pune, India.

In addition to these documents, I will make references to the present report:

😊 4 Bamford

Arts and Cultural Education in Norway

Report by
Professor Anne Bamford

2010-2011

Published by National Centre for Art and
Culture in Education



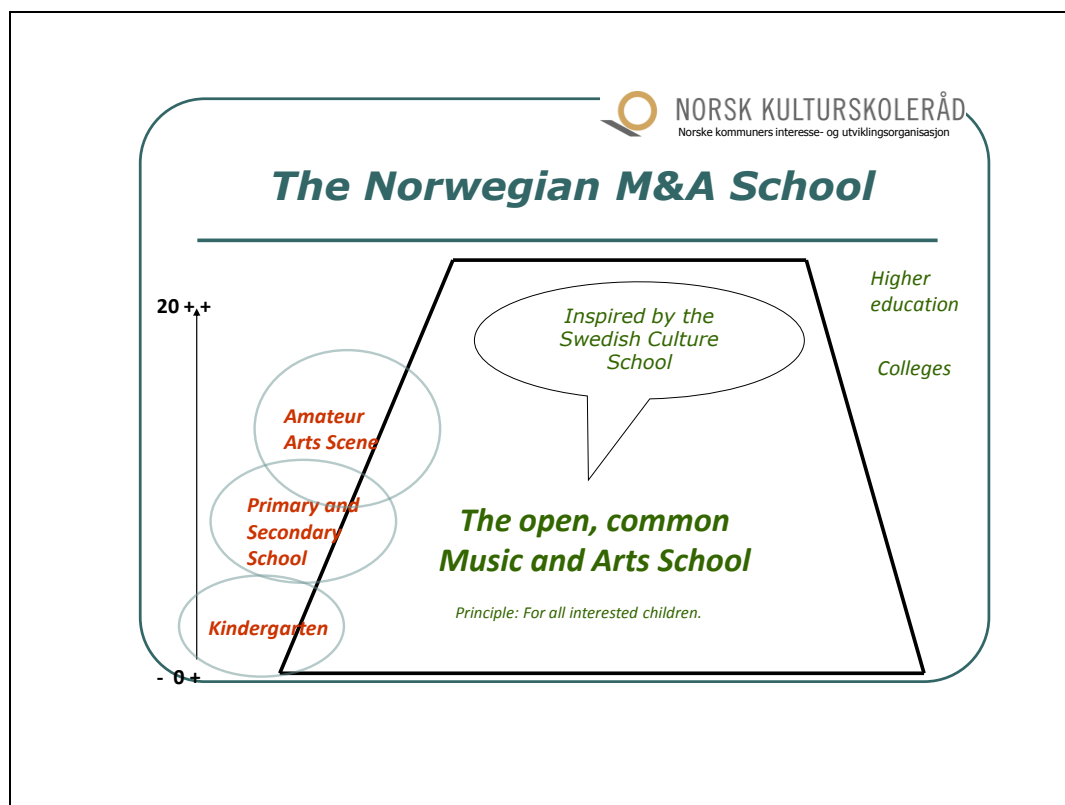
Foto: Odd Mehus

Except the Indian report, all these documents are available on EMU's homepage for downloading.

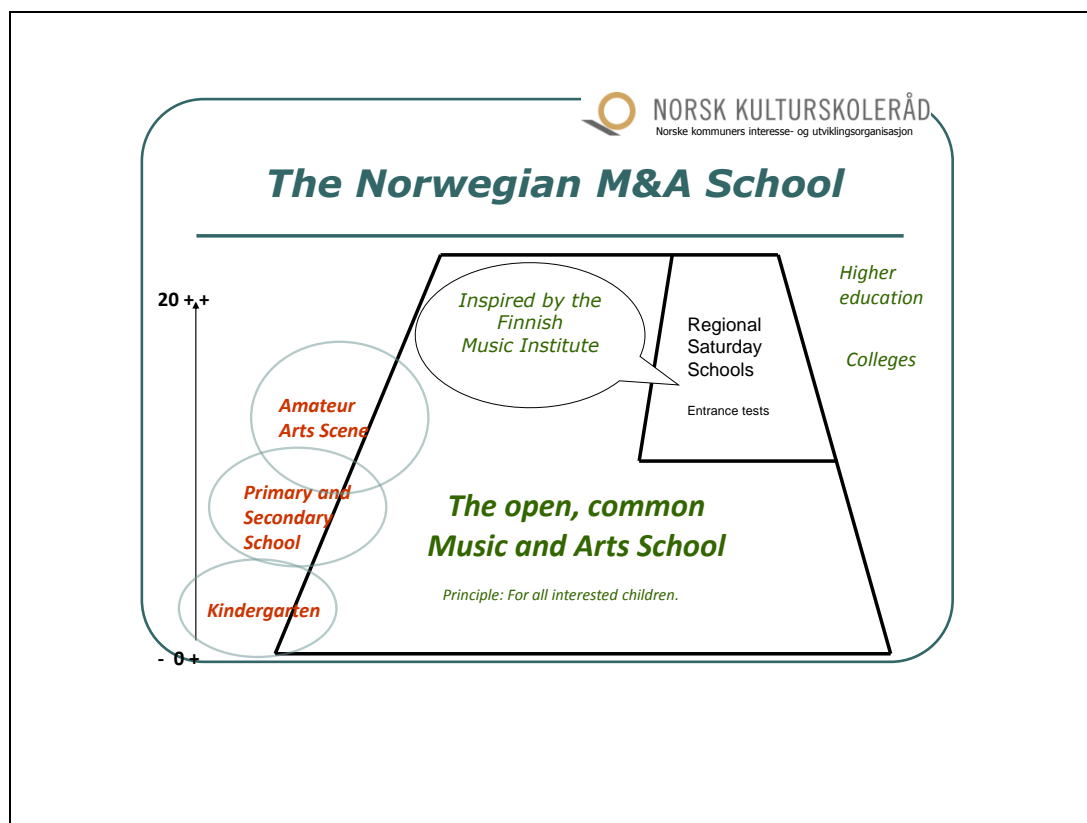
Before going on it is important for me to underline that I am well aware that experiences from one country not always can be transferred to another country. This is the case even between close neighbor countries as I have learned through my participation in both the Nordic networks of the conservatories of music and present members of EMU. Nevertheless I am a true believer of learning from others, both the positive experiences to share or to moderate for one's own use, or the bad ones to avoid or to reduce if possible.

If it is possible to talk about a Norwegian model for music and art schools, it is a fact that it has similarities both to the Swedish culture school and the Finnish Music institute. Probably the result of years of close cooperation and mutual visits.

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and 😊 6



About equal rights for all to attend music and art schools

In many respects Norway is privileged. In contrast to a number of European countries today, the Norwegian Government is not struggling to find the necessary money to keep things going. The main challenge is not using too much of the enormous income from oil businesses in the North Sea. Consequently there is no financial reason not to give priority to arts education.



About equal rights for all to attend music and art schools

- no financial reason not to give priority to arts education
- investing more on this field per capita than any other country
- *Nordic welfare model* is promoted by all political parties
- Music and art school education not being regarded as important as subjects in the comprehensive school
- Considered more as leisure activities

As education is highly evaluated in Norway, the country is, according to Bamford, investing more on this field per capita than any other country¹. It is fair to add that education in Norway is expensive, the country with its 5 mill people has a similar geographical size as Japan having 130 mill inhabitants.

In particular *equality* of opportunity is considered to be a core value in Norway. The so called *Nordic welfare model* is promoted by all political parties. Each individual shall by law have the same rights to health and social care and free access to the compulsory public school system. Even studies in higher education are free for students at university level.

Bamford in her report states it is therefore surprising that arts and cultural education practices in some ways run counter to these ideals. The reality, she says, is that there are educational,

¹ Bamford: pp 56

geographic, and gender gaps in terms of active participation in formal and informal arts education. Further, she states, there is not given equitable access to marginalised and disadvantaged students in practice, despite policy and intention to the contrary².

Bamford is, in my opinion, pointing at a sad fact regarding the Norwegian music and arts school. It shows the consequence of music and art school education not being regarded as important as subjects in the comprehensive school. The decision makers seem to consider these more as leisure activities than an important part of a holistic education system.

Even so, there are quite a number of municipal music and art schools where all applicants are allowed. Some of the best schools are in very small municipalities where close relations between the music and art school and the inhabitants seem to be the key. Only one music and art school has no school fee. In the Northern part of the country schools in general have very low fees.

Quite a number of schools also have special offers to pupils with disabilities, to immigrants, to grown-ups or elderly people and others.

A vulnerable institution

To show both the strengths and the vulnerability of the Norwegian music and art schools, I will exemplify by giving you a brief summary of the schools' history.



A vulnerable institution

- first municipal music schools was established in the second part of the fifties
- Today there are music and arts schools in all municipalities
- Two important reasons for the growth
 - earmarked state support
 - the law paragraph in the Education Act
- general state support to all 1982

² Bamford pp 11

The first municipal music schools was established in the second part of the fifties. A rather rapid growth occurred during the seventies when about 150 music, increasingly music and arts schools, got started. Today there are music and arts schools in all municipalities, some of them intermunicipal institutions.

There are two important reasons for the growth. One is the earmarked state support in a couple of decades, the other the law paragraph in the Education Act , decided by Parliament in 1997.

In 1982 a general state support was given to all music schools. Up to 2003 the earmarked support functioned as an incentive for the municipalities to increase the yearly budgets to the schools. By regulations the school fee had to be kept at a maximum of 200 Euro a year, financial support of salaries to conductors in local bands, orchestras and choirs employed through the music and arts school could also be given.




Earmarked state support

- an incentive for the municipalities to increase the yearly budgets
- had to keep the school fee at a maximum of 200 Euro a year
- opened for financial support of salaries to conductors in local bands, orchestras and choirs


In 1997 a new paragraph was decided by Parliament in the Education Act:

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NORSK KULTURSKOLERÅD
Norske kommuners informasjons- og utviklingsorganisasjon

5. Juni 1997




NORSK KULTURSKOLERÅD

Parliament 1997: "The law"

Education Act
*Section 13-6. Provision by municipalities of courses
in music and other cultural activities*

***All municipalities, either alone or in cooperation with
other municipalities shall provide courses in music and
other cultural activities for children and young people,
organized in association with the school system and
local cultural life.***



§13-6: Provision of courses in music and other cultural activities

***"All municipalities, either alone or in cooperation with other municipalities, shall provide
courses in music and other cultural activities for children and young people, organized in
association with the school system and the local cultural life".***

The setback

Up to 2003 the increase in number of music and arts schools had been slow, but steady. Then came a serious setback.

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The setback

- existing measures receiving earmarked state support should be integrated in the overall support to municipals,
- guidelines previously following the earmarked money were no more valid.
- The municipality could now freely decide
- a result of a superior political debate, related to the principle of strengthening local autonomy.

The Parliament decided several existing measures receiving earmarked state support should be integrated in the overall support to municipals, also the one for music and art schools. From one year to another, the former guidelines were no more valid. The municipality could now freely decide everything. The decision in Parliament was a result of a superior political debate, related to the principle of strengthening local autonomy.

😊 12 The Consequences

The consequences:

- fee level was raised considerably in most municipalities
- reduced or removed earlier moderation of fee for siblings and free access for low income families.
- The consequences are hardly visible for the politicians!
 - *number of students in the schools are quite stable*
 - *also the number of applicants*
- Reason: Most families in Norway have a sufficient income to pay the fees.

In few years the annual fee level was raised considerably in most municipalities. A number of municipalities also have reduced or removed earlier moderation of fee for siblings and free access for low income families. Regrettably, the consequences are hardly visible for the politicians. The number of students in the schools are quite stable, also the numbers of applicants. The reason is obvious. Most families in Norway have a sufficient income to pay the fees in the culture schools for one or more children.

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Social implications

- Telemark Research Institute

- Study confirmed that many children from lower social groups in reality were excluded, also children from single parents.

- The Norwegian Council has initiated several research project on this field

A study carried through by Telemark Research Institute, confirmed that numerous children from lower social groups were excluded, as children from single parents.

😊 14 The Cultural Lift

"The Cultural Lift", or "Initiative" (2005)

- a lifting of culture and a promise of culture by the Government
- a special responsibility on the culture schools



"The Government will give municipal schools of music and the arts a boost, with a view to ensure a place for every child who wishes to attend, at a reasonable price. This position is secured by state support and a solid financial situation in municipalities."

There are, however, bright spots in this picture. The introduction of "The Cultural Lift" in 2005, implied both a lifting of culture and a promise of culture by the Government. The document has a statement regarding music and art schools, revised in 2009 as the "Music and Arts School Lift":

"The Government will give municipal schools of music and the arts a boost, with a view to ensure a place for every child who wishes to attend, at a reasonable price. This position is secured by state support and a solid financial situation in municipalities."

Until this year, the Government has been giving short-term support to projects involving music and art schools, primary school and the after-school programs.

😊 15 A new turning point

A new turning point?

- all children in the age of 6 - 9 years next year will be offered music and art school lessons free of charge in school time or in the after-school program.

-If continued

it could fulfill the vision of the Council
"Music and arts school for all!"

- If not

applications to music and art schools
probably will increase,
as will the waiting lists !

2013 may be a turning point. Two weeks ago, the Minister of Education, when presenting the state budget 2013 for education and research, announced that all children in the age of 6 - 9 years next year will be offered music and art school lessons free of charge in school time or in the after-school program. If this in coming budgets will include pupils at higher grades in the compulsory school, it could in due time fulfill the long time vision of The Council - "Music and arts school for all". If not, the free lessons for children in the lower grades will most likely increase application to the music and art schools, probably also make the waiting lists even longer!

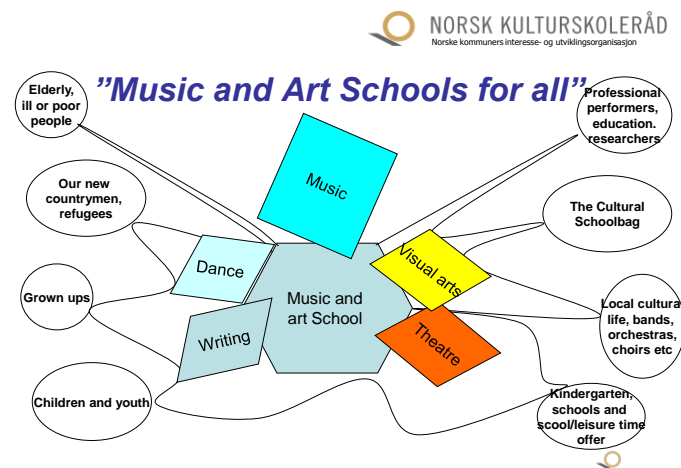
The resource centres

According to the law music and arts schools are given a role as supporters of the primary and secondary schools and the amateur arts scene, defined as "a local recourse centre".

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The resource centres

- music and arts school is given a role as supporter of the primary and secondary schools and the amateur arts scene



A number of music and arts schools already have developed this to a high level, also cooperating with kindergartens, high schools, health institutions, asylum receptions, elderly homes etc . Several of the schools also organize the "Cultural Rucksack" in their community, a program bringing professional arts and culture to children and youth all over the country.

Demonstration music and art schools

Four music and arts schools were selected by the Ministry of Education as demonstration schools, each to act as good examples for other schools by presenting their way of working to others.

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Demonstration music and arts schools

- Four music and arts schools were selected by the Ministry of Education as demonstration schools.
- Guidelines made describing success criteria for how to achieve a good school of music and arts for all, and develop schools into good local resource centres.
- A number of municipalities have changed their practices in response to this document. (Bamford)

The principals of these schools participated in making the Guidelines for how to achieve a good school of music and arts for all, also develop into good local resource centres. According to Bamford these guidelines already have had an impact reaching most localities in Norway.

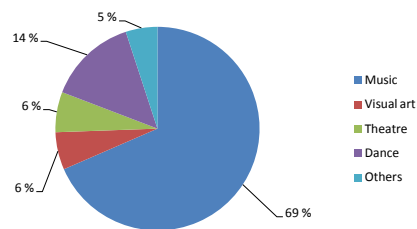
All art forms included

Music is the dominating subject with 70 % of all students.

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All art forms included

- visual art schools merged into the local music schools, theatre and dance were included. Circus, creative writing, animation and local handicraft are offered by some schools
- Music dominating – 70 %



- Reaches out to other social groups (Telemark Research Institute, 2005)

The report made by Telemark Research Institute states that schools with a broad offer of music and other art forms reach out to other social groups than a school limited to music.

The quality challenge

Quality cannot be properly discussed without related to equality. Quality in the teaching of a group of beginners of course is something else than teaching a youth at an advanced performing level.

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The Quality Challenge

The Norwegian music and arts school faces a limitation of resources.

- Visible implications:
 - a high school fee and
 - waiting lists
- More hidden implications related to quality of teaching:
 - too large groups in group teaching
 - too short time for the individual lessons.
 - Priority of resources between the average pupils and obvious talents, possible future professional musicians or artists.
- A particular responsibility for the talents
 - Paradox: Talents on a waiting list

Also the structure or methods used by the schools as well as the ideology behind also are quality matters. In a similar way, the waiting lists in the music and art schools could be considered as a shortcoming of quality.

The Norwegian music and arts school faces a limitation of resources. The implication is a number of challenges, the most revealing and visible is the high school fee and the waiting lists. The more hidden ones, directly related to quality aspect, are too large groups in group teaching or too short time for the individual lessons. An even more basic quality question is how the schools share resources between the average pupils and the fewer with an obvious talent - the possible future professional musicians or artists.

This is far from easy, and there is no simple solution - probably except the most obvious - local or state support to secure a place for all! Since this too often not is the case, the schools have to make some priorities, also take actions to secure quality.

In my opinion the music and arts schools have a particular responsibility for the obvious talents. To this I have to add: One of the great paradoxes, and obviously weaknesses, of the Norwegian model

for music and arts schools is that even the most exceptional talent could be on a waiting list. Returning to the former entrance tests to try to sort out talents seem to be out of the question.

For schools with limited resources there are actions that should be taken:

Group teaching

To reach as many children as possible, music and arts schools have to practice group teaching methods making better use of the available resources.

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Actions that should be taken:

- **group teaching**
 - Instrumental and vocal teachers should regularly be given possibility to attend courses in group teaching.



Too many teachers, however, do not use group methods. This should be thought-provoking both to principals as well as to institutions within higher education in music. In her report Anne Bamford states young students in many music and arts schools are thought individually in their weekly instrumental lessons less than 30 minutes, even down to 20 minutes. This of course is much too short time, even for beginners.

Saturday Schools

The first Saturday School for music students was established in Trondheim in 1986. Contrary to the no-test basic entrance to the school, applicants to the Saturday school have to go through a test both of their performing level and general ability in music. The subjects offered are individual instrumental training, chamber music, ensembles, orchestra and music theory. Both classical music, band and jazz can be studied, also conducting.

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Actions that should be taken:

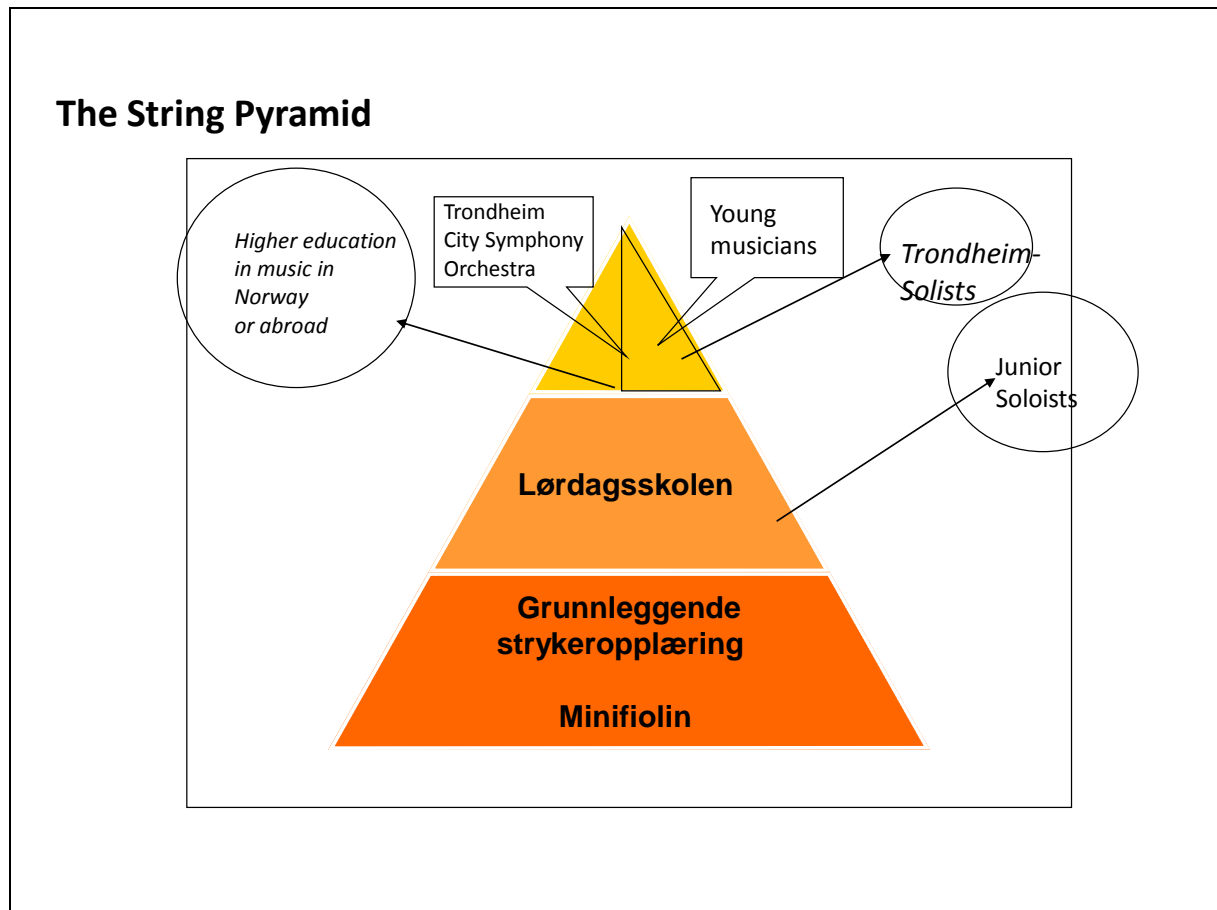
- talent programs
 - Early start lead to need for a talent program
- Saturday Schools
 - The String Pyramid
"From mini violinist to Trondheim Soloist"



The string pyramid

The Saturday School is an important partner making the "string pyramid". A considerable number of players from the "pyramid" have been recruiting the city symphony orchestra, The Trondheim Soloists, and ensembles and orchestras outside the country.

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The Trondheim Soloists with Anne-Sophie Mutter – these weeks



Teachers

Music and arts Schools are in need of teachers with different qualification. Of course in music and the arts, but also to work at the different levels, even - particularly in small municipalities - with a double competence including classroom teaching.

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Actions that should be taken:

- **talent programs**
 - Teachers with different qualifications
 - National talent programs

Most of the teachers in music and arts schools are well educated. Four to six years of higher education is a quite normal background. Some teachers, like the ones working with mini strings may have a music kindergarten or primary school teacher background, and a basic training in string playing. Teachers to exceptional young talents may come from higher music education or from professional orchestras or military bands.

National talent programs

Nowadays most of the largest music and arts schools in the cities in Norway have Saturday Schools. Like the one in Trondheim, they also can be attended by students from neighbor municipal schools.

The Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo organize a supplementary talent program for young performers within higher music education, and the private Barrat Due Music Institute is offering highly appreciated in-depth studies for young classical musicians.

The importance of a strong national association

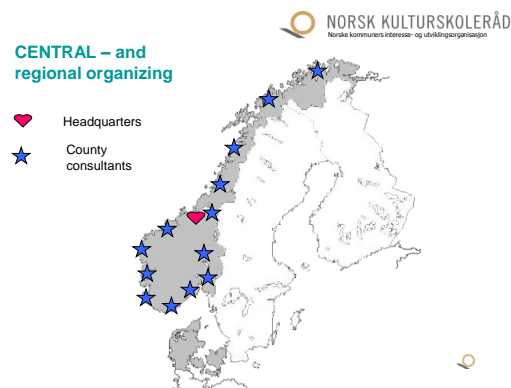
Through all these years The Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts has been a prominent actor at the political scene, also a strong "spokesman" for high quality education at all levels.

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The importance of a strong national association:

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

- organisation for principals
- formally a member organization for the municipalities
- regular meetings with politicians in Parliament and Government
- 30 employees



The association was from the beginning an organisation for principals. It still is, but today primarily defined as a member organisation for the municipalities. The implication is quite a number of politicians participate in the boards at national level and in the counties. This has strengthened the association considerably as a political tool.

The staff

The Council has about 30 employees, some are advisors in music and other arts, some project managers, and 13 are consultants spread out in at county level.

The former director is leading an extensive program in changing African countries, where youngsters from Norway every year produce performances, also tv-programs together with young African artist.

TV-programs

The value of the close cooperation over years between the Council and the National Norwegian broadcasting company making television programs has probably been considerable.

Talent shows - and for 12 years - "Happy New Music Year", the 1st of January, gathered hundreds of thousands of families in front of the screen. Ministers, even the Prime Minister entered the scene to present awards to young talents.

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The importance of a strong national association:

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

- Television programs presenting young music, dance or theatre talents
- "Happy New Music Year"

*The Council in cooperation with
The National Broadcasting Company
TV programme for 12 years:*

**"Happy
Music-NewYear"**



NORSK KULTURSKOLERÅD

Drømmestipendiet fra Norsk Tipping til Tine Thing Helseth



*NRK og Norsk kulturskoleråds
"GODT MUSIKKÅR 2006"*

The in-service training programs

The council has contributed heavily to the in-service training of teachers and leaders, also to regional network programs over 3 years involving both music and art schools and compulsory schools. Nowadays also kindergartens and high schools are included in these programs.

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The importance of a strong national association:

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

- in-service training of teachers and leaders, both from music and art schools and compulsory schools
- regional network programs over a period of 3 years



Cooperating and building networks

One of the most important part of the Council's national strategy, has been building networks with other institutions and organisations. A written agreement is made between the Council and the Norwegian Academy of Music. Regular meetings, national conferences and seminars for music researchers have so far come out of this, also the annual Youth Musical Championship, taking place in the Academy's magnificent premises.

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The importance of a strong national association:

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

- building networks together with other institutions and organisations
- agreement between the Council and the Norwegian Academy of Music
- regular meetings with the National organisation for amateur music, including the large Norwegian Band Federation and The Norwegian Choir Association.

In 2006 a committee was established were The Council regularly meet the heads of the National amateur music organisations, including the large Norwegian Band Federation and The Norwegian Choir Association. Representatives from this group often meet Ministers and Parliamentary members, and have significant influence "talking with one voice". Representing the most extensive users of music and arts schools, topics related to these are given the highest priority by the group.

Contributing to research

The Council has constantly been promoting research on all areas of the music and art schools, and in particular related to the social implications of high fees. National statistics have been analyzed and published by the Council, also instant mappings done when needed.

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The importance of a strong national association:

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

- constantly promoting research on all areas of the music and art schools



- *"The Cultural Greenhouse"*
initiative by the Nordic group of EMU members and the Nordic Association for Music Educators.

The program "The Cultural Greenhouse" was an initiative developing within the Nordic group of EMU members and the Nordic Association for Music Educators. The idea was to have an experienced international researcher do an neutral, broad external evaluation of music education in each of the Nordic countries. Such a report was considered a first step, the next should be more thorough investigations by national researchers.

Professor Anne Bamford was invited to a meeting with the group, later asked to do surveys on Iceland and Norway. She had some year ago published a report on Denmark. This autumn results from the Faroe Islands will be presented.

Final conclusions:

The music and arts schools have not - at least so far - reached the ambitious visions forwarded by the stakeholders. Even if Bamford is pointing at weaknesses and serious challenges for the music and art schools, she claims that Norway has a world-class reputation for commitment to arts and cultural learning that it should be possible to maintain and enhance.

This is a confirmation that at least some of the work done and actions taken in Norway throughout the years seem to have been according to the recommendations given by the Seoul Agenda and the Bonn Declaration.