

The participation of children and youths in public decision making in Norway

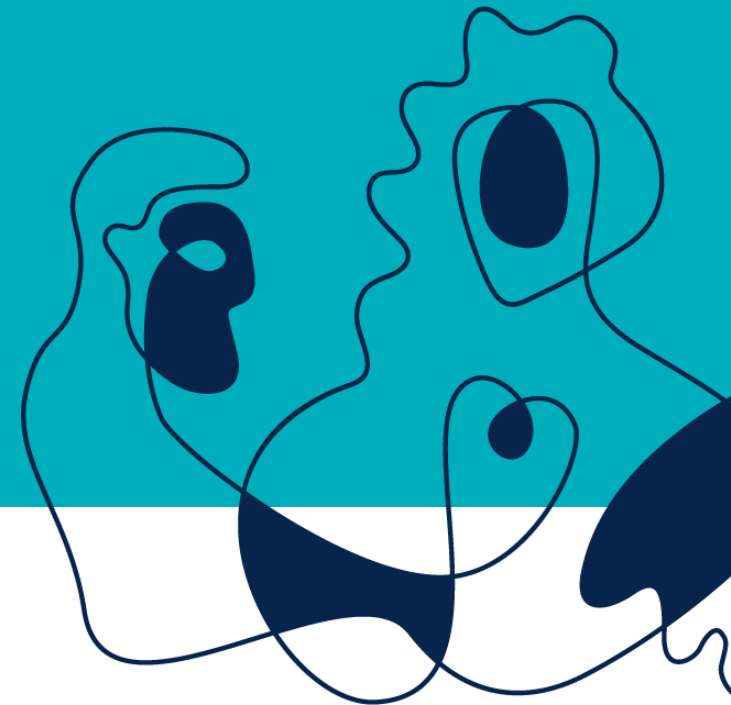
Eivind Pedersen

National coordinator for implementing the UNCRC in Norwegian Municipalities and County Governors offices



Fylkesmannen i Troms og Finnmark

*Romssa ja Finnmarkku fylkkamánni
Tromssan ja Finmarkun maaherra*



11.11.2019





The population

1.1.2018:

Population all ages: 5 300.000

Age 0-19: 1 255 000 (23%)



Norwegian municipalities and regions

Municipalities:

1.1.2018: 422

50% < 5000 inhab.

biggest OSLO 670 000 inhab.

smallest UTSIRA 228 inhab.

After municipality reform:

1.1.2020: 356

Counties/Regional municipality:

1.1.2018: 19

After regional reform 2020: 11

County Governors (local state)

1.1.2018: 18

1.1.2019: 10



The bigger, the better?

- Not always in the light of a child's possibility to participate, especially in small districts
- A large amount of Norwegian communities don't have Highschools, the amount of Highschools are also reduced in line with the new reforms
- This means that youths 15-16 years old have to move to a city center to live in dorms or halls of residence
- To secure interest for and participation in public decision-making for youths is also in addition to this - a big challenge in Norway

The new reform and policies relates to:

- Municipalities
- Regional municipality
- And regional state's offices, among them the County Governors



Norwegian policies and programs

- County Governors in Norway has the task to implement **Sjumilssteget (The Giant Leap)**
- It is based on a self-survey and local analysis done in Municipalities based on seven steps and control issues derived from twelve UNCRC-articles,
- Step 1 is about child and Youth participation (art. 12 nr. 1 and 2).
- Every step demands local analysis of the Municipality's ability to consider children's rights in local proceedings

The Giant Leap is

- partly funded by the Ministry for children and families, and
- professionally supported by the Directorate for children, youths and families



New Municipality and County Municipality Act from 2020

In Norway, two different councils (for elderly people and for persons with disabilities) has been imposed for many years in every Municipality.

A third council – for Youths, has been voluntary established in 80-90% of our Municipalities. A lot of them «*just on the paper*»

From 2020 a council for Youths will be a **duty** for every Municipality and Region in Norway.

§ 5-12 (2020)

Council for elderly people, persons with disabilities and a council for youths

- Shall be elected by the Municipality and Regional county
- The council for youths shall be elected for a period of two years.

The Ministry is now working with new regulations for all three councils



Criteria for participation success

1. Youths is given real influence
2. There is a contact person with knowledge and interest for child participation in the Municipality administration
3. The local body/council for Youths has a clear mandate
4. Participation is anchored and supported by the Mayor and the chief of Municipality administration

Criteria are formulated by:

**The Norwegian Ministry of
Local Government and
modernization (2018)**



Other ways to participate

Through local Bodies:

- Councils for Youths (14 -18/19 years)
- Children and youths Municipality councils
(10 – 18/19 years)
- By membership/election in local district committees
- By student councils for primary schools (imposed by law)

Or:

- Through membership in interest groups
(for example:

Association for children in child protection services

«Forandringsfabrikken» (The Fabric of change),
Press (Save the children)

- Through «Barnetråkk» – in public planning
- Through «expert groups» established by «ombudsmannen» for children