



BARNE- OG FAMILIEDEPARTEMENTET

Ministry of Children and Family Affairs

Report

National Report on Youth Policy in Norway

Foreword

For several years the Council of Europe has been reviewing youth policy in different European countries. In 2003-2004 it will examine Norwegian youth policy. This report has been prepared to provide a basis for the Council of Europe's review. Professor Halvor Fauske of Lillehammer University College has assisted the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs in the preparation of this report.

This report on youth policy is largely based on a report to the Norwegian parliament, Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)). It is the first comprehensive report on child and youth policy that has been published in Norway and will provide the basis for policy in the years ahead. The Report to the Storting was submitted by the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs in spring 2002 and was endorsed by the Storting in spring 2003.

Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, October 2003

Contents

Foreword	3
1 Norwegian youth policy	9
1.1 The goals of youth policy	9
1.2 A brief historical outline of youth policy	10
2 The organization of youth policy	15
2.1 Central government level	15
2.2 County level	17
2.3 Municipal level	18
3 Living conditions and the environment in which young people grow up – main trends 15	
3.1 Changes in the conditions in which young people grow up	21
3.2 The demographic situation	21
3.3 The conditions in which children and young people grow up in change	22
3.3.1 New perspectives on children and young people	22
3.3.2 Changes in family structures	23
3.3.3 Partnerships and sexuality	24
3.3.4 Material and social conditions	25
3.3.5 Health and lifestyle	26
3.3.6 Children and young people with disabilities	26
3.3.7 Identity	27
3.3.8 Politics and social issues	27
3.3.9 Cultural changes	28
3.3.10 The knowledge society	29
3.3.11 Towards greater gender equality	29
3.3.12 Consumption and commercialization	30
3.3.13 Media and communications	32
3.3.14 Globalization	32
4 Areas of youth policy	33
4.1 The interests and participation of young people in public planning	33
4.1.1 Arrangements to safeguard the interests of children and young people in the planning process	34
4.1.2 The participation of children and young people in local planning processes	34

4.2	Schools and education	35
4.2.1	The purpose of education	35
4.2.2	The current structure of primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education	35
4.2.3	Adapted education and special education	36
4.2.4	The Follow-up Service	36
4.2.5	User participation in schools – parental participation and pupil democracy	37
4.3	Health and social conditions	38
4.3.1	Health-promoting and preventive activities	38
4.3.2	Undesired pregnancy and abortion	39
4.3.3	HIV and sexually transmissible infections	40
4.3.4	Injuries resulting from accidents and violence	40
4.3.5	Suicide among children and young people	41
4.3.6	Smoking	42
4.3.7	Mental health	42
4.3.8	Eating disorders	43
4.4	The child and youth welfare service	43
4.5	Work and unemployment	45
4.5.1	Young people's contact with the labour market	45
4.5.2	The working environment for young employees	46
4.5.3	Unemployment among young people	46
4.5.4	Young long-term unemployed recipients of welfare benefits	48
4.5.5	The situation for young people from ethnic minority backgrounds	49
4.5.6	Young people with disabilities and other special needs	50
4.5.7	Focus on youth unemployment	50
4.6	Young people and housing	51
4.6.1	Where do young people live?	51
4.6.2	The situation of young people on the housing market	51
4.7	Culture and the media	52
4.7.1	Voluntary child and youth organizations	52
4.7.2	Sports and physical activity	54
4.7.3	Outdoor recreation	55
4.7.4	Artistic and cultural activities	56
4.7.5	Schools of music and the arts	56
4.7.6	Libraries	56
4.7.7	Museums	57
4.7.8	Pictorial art	57
4.7.9	Theatre	57
4.7.10	Music	58
4.7.11	The media and communication	58
5	Safe, inclusive local communities	61
5.1	Introduction	61
5.2	Meeting places and youth premises	61
5.2.1	Youth premises	61
5.2.2	Sports and local facilities	64
5.3	Young people, drugs and alcohol	65
5.3.1	Young people's use of drugs and alcohol	65
5.3.2	Challenges and future measures to combat drug and alcohol abuse	67
5.4	Youth crime	68
5.4.1	Child and youth crime in figures	69
5.4.2	Measures and challenges in efforts to combat child and youth crime	69
5.5	Racism and discrimination	72
5.5.1	Nationalist youth groups	74

6	Local challenges	77
6.1	Focus on young people in rural and urban communities	77
6.2	Migration and settlement patterns	78
6.3	Youth migration and settlement	78
6.4	Focus on targeting young people in rural areas	80
6.4.1	Central government efforts	80
6.4.2	County and municipal efforts for young people	81
6.4.3	Providing favourable conditions for youth settlement in rural areas	82
6.5	Efforts targeting young people in major urban communities	83
6.5.1	Living conditions and childhood environments	84
6.5.2	Focus on young people in major urban communities	87
6.5.3	Sports in urban communities	88
7	Young people's participation and influence	91
7.1	Participation and influence at different levels	91
7.2	Frameworks and opportunities for participation and influence	92
7.3	Participation and influence at central government level	93
7.4	Participation and influence at municipal and county level	94
7.5	The participation and influence of children and young people in municipal decision-making processes	95
7.6	Voter participation and political engagement	97
7.7	Areas of focus and future efforts	99
8	International contact and cooperation in the youth sector	101
8.1	Increased transnational engagement	101
8.2	International cooperation - under voluntary and official auspices	102
8.3	Cooperation in Nordic and international forums	103
9	Future challenges	107
9.1	Youth	107
9.2	Youth policy challenges	109

Appendix: Use of leisure time, problem behaviour, and aspirations for the future among Norwegian youth, by Elisabet E. Storvoll and Geir Moshuus, NOVA, Norwegian Social Research

1 Norwegian youth policy

1.1 The goals of youth policy

The overarching goal of youth policy in Norway is to provide secure living conditions and a safe environment for children and young people as they grow up. This goal has been stated in important political documents in recent years.

In 2002 the Government submitted two white papers on young people. They were Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)) and Report No. 40 to the Storting (2001-2002) on child and youth welfare. Both these reports were debated in the Storting in spring 2003. The reports are a follow-up to the resolutions passed by the Storting when Report No. 17 to the Storting (1999-2000) Plan of action to combat child and youth crime and Report No. 50 to the Storting (1998-1999) relating to the distribution of income and living conditions in Norway were debated in 2000. At that time, the Storting passed a resolution to request the Government to submit a Report to the Storting on a coherent policy for children and young people and on the distribution of living standards among children and young people.

In the above documents, the Government formulates the main principles of youth policy. It emphasizes that youth policy must be based on the same principles as should apply to Norwegian society in general. There is particular emphasis on principles such as:

- respect for human dignity
- equality
- solidarity with vulnerable members of society
- appreciation of personal responsibility and co-responsibility for the community
- the freedom of the individual
- the family as a community that provides security, values and learning
- tolerance, respect for diversity and difference
- freedom of choice
- freedom of expression

These principles, which must be fundamental for policy in general, must also provide the basis for youth policy.

In Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), the Government emphasizes that the goal of youth policy is to promote:

- a good, safe environment for children and young people growing up, with room for diversity
- an active family policy
- possibilities for independence and personal development
- co-responsibility for and influence on the individual's own life and in society
- solidarity, responsibility and respect for others

As may be seen from the above, young people must be given a secure environment and be encouraged to be independent and participate. Young people must be given the opportunity to take responsibility for their own lives and show solidarity with others. The report paves the way for broad-based efforts to improve the environment in which children and young people grow up through interaction between public authorities and children, young people, parents and voluntary organizations.

In spring 2003, the Government submitted a Report to the Storting on family policy in which consideration for the child was one of the main perspectives.

1.2 A brief historical outline of youth policy

When youth became a separate phase of life and young people were defined as a separate category in society, this led to the development of a separate youth policy. Norway did not have a youth policy until after World War II. This is, of course, associated with the fact that, as a result of changes in social institutions, such as education and the labour market, young people were seen as being separate from adult society. One of the main trends is that fewer young people are employed and an increasing number of young people pursue a higher education after primary, lower secondary and upper secondary school. Young people have thus acquired their own arenas and a life situation distinct from childhood and adulthood.

Although the principle of comprehensive education was laid down at an early stage in the Acts relating to the primary school (folkeskole) (grades 1-5) of 1889, many years passed before a comprehensive educational system was established for the period after seven years of compulsory schooling. Trials of 9-year education began in the 1950s, and in 1969 the Storting adopted a resolution to increase the period of compulsory education from 7 to 9 years. At the same time, the term "folkeskole" was replaced by "grunnskole" ("basic education", i.e. primary and lower secondary school). Under this Act, municipal authorities were required to introduce 9 years of compulsory education by 1975. In 1997, the period of compulsory primary and lower secondary education was increased to 10 years and children started school one year earlier, at the age of six.

In parallel with the reform of primary and lower secondary education, work was also in progress to reform upper secondary education. Vocational schools and academic upper secondary schools (gymnas) were amalgamated under the Act relating to upper secondary education, which was adopted in 1974 and entered into force two years later. In 1994, a comprehensive reform of upper secondary education took place whereby all young people were given the right to upper secondary education. It also became possible to qualify for higher education at colleges and universities after completing vocational education at upper secondary school.

The highest levels of the educational system were also significantly expanded in the post-war period. New universities and regional colleges were established and some study programmes were upgraded to college programmes. These changes provided possibilities for a sharp rise in the number of students, and in 2001 28 per cent of 20-24 year-olds were studying at universities or colleges.

In the period after World War II it was easy for young people to find work. During the years immediately after the war, the employment rate rose sharply. There was a shortage of manpower, particularly young manpower. The labour shortage was exacerbated by women marrying at an earlier age and an increase in the number of people getting married. The labour market situation continued to be favourable for young people in the 1960s. The large numbers of young people who gradually entered the labour market replaced the large numbers of older people who retired. Moreover, the economy grew strongly and there was great demand for labour. The strong economic growth of the post-war era slowed down in 1973 and since then the growth rate has been significantly lower than in the 1950s and 1960s. Parallel with this economic slowdown, unemployment among young people entered the political agenda as a special problem. In the mid-1980s and early 1990s, the unemployment rate was high. In addition to the economic situation, the demographic situation also had a certain impact on the labour market. The baby-boomers born at the end of the 1960s were faced with a situation where they were to replace smaller numbers of pensioners. The labour market had changed as well. The jobs that had previously provided a starting point for young people had disappeared, which led to growing unemployment in the younger age group. From the 1980s onwards, education and training programmes became important measures to combat unemployment among young people. As a result of the large numbers of young people embarking on upper secondary and higher education, youth unemployment has been relatively low.

In the post-war period, leisure time also became a matter of political interest. In the wake of industrialization, the labour movement had fought for and achieved a normal working day and fixed leisure time. Leisure time was intended to provide opportunities for recreation and development, and the authorities put holidays and leisure time into a social context at an early stage. It was not only a matter of the well-being of individuals, but also of public health and productivity. At the same time, the authorities feared that more leisure time would lead to idleness and problems, for individuals and for society. Many people were particularly concerned about the leisure time of young people. When all the political parties presented a joint programme in 1945, leisure time was described as "the leisure problem". The programme gave notice that the leisure problem would be the subject of a thorough political process aimed at giving young people possibilities for healthy recreation.

In 1946 the Storting established the National Office for Sport. In 1950, this office was given responsibility for youth policy and renamed the National Office for Youth and Sport, a part of the Ministry of Church and Education. An important part of its work was in the beginning related to physical education and preventive health measures. There was strong focus on the preventive aspect of leisure policy at the beginning of the 1960s. From 1951 onwards, the National Office for Youth and Sport invited non-governmental children's and youth organizations to two youth conferences each year to discuss youth policy issues and cooperation between the public and private sectors. The ministerial departments that have since been responsible for youth policy have continued to arrange national youth conferences. Until the Norwegian Youth Council was established in 1980, the national youth conferences were the most important platform for cooperation between non-governmental organizations and the designers of national youth policy.

The Government established the State Youth Council in 1953 to act as an advisory body on youth policy issues. Non-governmental organizations elected a majority of its members at the State Youth Conference. The State Youth Council was disbanded in 1986.

A committee appointed by the Government to study official support for youth organizations submitted its recommendation in 1960 and concluded that non-governmental organizations must be the cornerstone of youth policy. However, the Committee proposed that public leisure services should be provided for "unorganized youth". These services should be provided as an exception to the main policy line. The purpose of these municipal youth programmes would also be to persuade young people to join voluntary organizations. The Committee's report was followed up by political resolutions that largely conformed to the recommendations. Consequently, youth policy was formulated along two lines: public leisure activities would be provided for those who needed them, while voluntary organizations would receive funding so that they could provide services for the majority of young people.

In the 1970s, official involvement in youth policy became more direct. Politicians agreed that leisure activities must target the entire young population. Measures would be based on the needs of young people. The Committee also pointed out that prevention was complicated and should not be the objective of leisure activities, even if they might have certain preventive effects. One topic that became important in youth policy concerned the possible consequences of commercial leisure activities for young people. An official report on youth policy published at the end of the 1970s emphasized the dangers of commercial forces being permitted to fill an "opinion and identity vacuum" in the lives of young people. This view was subsequently promoted by the parliamentary Standing Committee on Education and Church Affairs, which stressed how important it was to support alternatives to speculative forms of commercialism. One measure with a clearly preventive perspective was youth clubs. The first youth club was established in Oslo in the 1950s, and from the end of the 1960s an increasing number of municipalities established clubs for both younger and older children.

In the 1980s, there was once again stronger focus on the preventive potential of non-governmental organizations. There was particular emphasis on the environment-forming qualities of organizations in areas where ties to the local

community were weak. There was stress on the ability of organizations to partially replace the lack of neighbours, friends and other local ties. When the Conservative government took over in 1981, it indicated a certain amount of opposition to strong official involvement in leisure policy. It emphasized that it is primarily the responsibility of the individual to decide how to spend his or her leisure time. In an appendix to the Report to the Storting on Youth Policy that the Social-Democratic government had submitted before it resigned, the new Government stated that central government should respect individual freedom of choice. To the extent public authorities would provide support, it must be aimed at facilitating development and activity. Even though there was a certain amount of political disagreement on youth policy, public services have been substantially expanded in the past 20-30 years. The central government has provided financial support for a variety of measures, such as music schools. Since 1998, all municipalities have been required to provide schools of music and the arts.

One important goal of youth policy is to strengthen the involvement and participation of young people. The socio-political justification for such measures has changed somewhat since the 1970s. Today, prevention is intended to be a result of measures, since integration and qualification make young people competent members of society. The main goals of youth policy are, therefore, to help ensure that the resources represented by young people are focused on and utilized in important areas of society, and that the participation and influence of young people are promoted. The most important grounds for youth policy are presented as qualifying them to participate in society, in the widest sense. Participation is a key word in this respect. The cultural and leisure activities of young people are regarded as being both a part of such qualification and an opportunity for experience and recreation. In the leisure area, the term qualification means at least as much the acquisition of qualities such as initiative, self-management and self-control as the acquisition of knowledge and skills. In Report No. 48 to the Storting (2002-2003) Cultural policy up to 2014, which was submitted by the Government in autumn 2003, the term digital competence is used to describe the ability of children and young people to make use of new media. The report points out that it is important to develop such competence so that young people are able to utilize new educational services, and in order to prevent the emergence of new social dividing lines.

2 The organization of youth policy

The Norwegian system of government has three administrative levels: central, county and municipal. The relationship between central and local government has developed in the direction of greater decentralization of responsibility, a transition to non-earmarked financing and a reduction in detailed requirements regarding the organization of activities. Today, the municipal sector has a great deal of freedom to organize municipal administration and prioritize its use of resources on the basis of local needs and conditions.

2.1 Central government level

At central government level, responsibilities in the child and youth sector are primarily related to the formulation of policy, legislation, financial transfers, allocations for research, human resource development and development, and information and advisory services.

A separate Ministry of Children and Family Affairs was established in 1991 to coordinate the Government's efforts on behalf of children and young people. Responsibility for child and youth policy was thereby concentrated in a single ministry for the first time. Although the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs has the main responsibility for coordinating central government child and youth activities, all the ministries have important responsibilities which affect children and young people, directly or indirectly.

Inter-ministerial cooperation in this area has increased in recent years as a result of cooperation on plans of action, research and development, information and conferences. In autumn 1997, a special Committee of State Secretaries on Child and Youth Issues was established. The Committee is chaired by the State Secretary from the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs and its members comprise representatives from relevant ministries and the office of the Prime Minister. The matters it deals with are wide-ranging since, in principle, the Committee can deal with any issues that concern the environment in which children and young people grow up.

In efforts to implement a coherent policy for children and young people, the central government authorities have contacts with regional and local authori-

ties working on child and youth issues through conferences and meetings, cooperation on human resource development, research and development, and the exchange of information and dialogue. In Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), it is pointed out that such cooperation must be further developed. Among other things, from 2003 onwards the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs will elect a "Children's and Young People's Municipality of the Year". This will be a municipality that has done particularly good work to improve the local environment for children and young people. One of the criteria is that the municipality has focused on good local interaction, between different agencies and services and between the public and private sectors. There will be emphasis on municipalities' efforts to give children and young people influence at the local level. In connection with the announcement of the Children's and Young People's Municipality of the Year, a regular annual conference on child and youth policy for the municipal sector will be arranged, targeting politicians, municipal employees and representatives of children's and youth groups. One important goal will be to highlight local cooperation and interaction to improve the environment for children and young people. In addition to the regular annual conference, dialogue with the municipal sector will be ensured through other conferences, seminars and meetings on child and youth policy, targeting professionals, politicians, parents, non-governmental organizations and children's and youth groups.

Contacts between central and local authorities also include central government funding for local research and development projects. Knowledge about local activities is thereby acquired that can be used in the further development of central government child and youth policy. In this way, central and local authorities cooperate on the design of youth policy.

Ombudsmen

Three Ombudsmen are responsible for matters relevant to children and young people. The Ombudsman for Children, the Consumer Ombudsman and the Gender Equality Ombud are autonomous bodies that are each responsible for their own professional areas. Norway was the first country in the world to have a special Ombudsman for Children and the office was established in 1981. Pursuant to the Act relating to the Ombudsman for Children of 5 December 1981 and associated instructions, the Ombudsman for Children was given broad responsibility for promoting the interests and rights of children in all areas of society. The Ombudsman focuses on areas that are particularly important for children growing up. The Act also requires the Ombudsman to ensure that Norwegian law and administrative practices are in accordance with Norway's obligations pursuant to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

As a spokesperson for children and young people, the Ombudsman for Children must help to ensure that their experiences and knowledge are reflected in practical policies. This takes place through consultation reports to the Storting and the Government, proposals for legislation, instructions and practices, and initiatives for debate among professionals and the general public. It is also within the mandate of the Ombudsman for Children to protect individuals from unjust and unfair treatment.

2.2 County level

At county level, both the central government's regional administration and the county authorities are important players in child and youth policy. This division of responsibilities and tasks requires a great deal of cooperation and coordination, both internally and between the central government and county authorities.

Central government administration at county level

The County Governor is the central government's representative at regional (i.e. county) level. The County Governor is required to ensure that national policies are implemented in important sectors, ensure the necessary coordination and ensure due process of law at regional level. On the basis of their knowledge of local conditions, the County Governors report back to the central government authorities on the situation in Norway's counties and municipalities.

The County Governor must ensure the greatest possible coordination of policy information and control and supervisory functions between the various parts of the central government's regional administration and the local authorities. Trans-sectoral cooperation, coordination across agency and professional borders and holistic thinking in relation to the environment in which children and young people grow up are important prerequisites for achieving good, long-term solutions for children and young people at the local level. One priority task is, therefore, to encourage municipalities to further develop trans-sectoral cooperation. The County Governor must also help to ensure that municipal and county authorities pursue policies which ensure that children and young people have possibilities for participation and influence at the local level.

Other central government agencies at county level also engage in direct exercise of authority and provide services that are important for children and young people, such as road construction, traffic safety, employment offices and national insurance benefits.

County authorities

With respect to young people, the county authorities have responsibilities in the fields of planning, upper secondary education, cultural and leisure activities, transport and communications, and social and child welfare services. From 1 January 2004, the child welfare services for which the county is responsible will be transferred to central government.

The county authorities are responsible for ensuring that the interests of children and young people are taken into account in both county and municipal planning. In the field of education, the county authorities are responsible for the operation and development of upper secondary schools. The county authorities are also responsible for county follow-up services for those who do not utilize their right to upper secondary education. All young people are entitled to upper secondary education and those who do not utilize this right and do not have a job must be offered another programme through the follow-up service (for further details, see Ch. 4.2.4). The county authorities must also ensure that educational and psychological counselling services are provided for pupils in upper secondary schools.

The county authorities are responsible for the development of county cultural policy. The main focus is on running the county's own cultural institutions, such as county libraries, arranging county cultural activities and providing information for municipalities.

Many county authorities have established county boards for disabled persons. They comprise representatives of organizations for the disabled, central government and county agencies and county politicians. The boards discuss the planning and implementation of measures for disabled persons.

2.3 Municipal level

Responsibility for the practical implementation of child and youth policy rests primarily with the municipalities. Municipal authorities have the main responsibility for providing services and translating national objectives into practical policies.

In the past decade, the growth of official services for families with children, children and young people has primarily occurred at municipal level. At the same time, through the Local Government Act, municipal authorities have been given greater freedom to organize local services for children and young people. One consequence of this is that local organization and local services vary from one municipality to the next.

Many of the national objectives for the child and youth sector have not been laid down in legislation or regulations. This gives municipal authorities greater freedom of action, but also leads to differences in the types and scope of services provided for children and young people. Reports from the municipal authorities show that variations in municipal finances and priorities have a significant impact on which services exist at the local level. The organization of the municipal authority and the way in which the views and interests of children and young people are taken into account in municipal planning and policy formulation also affect the orientation of child and youth policy. One goal is to ensure that municipal youth policy is based on local conditions. At the same time, efforts must be based on overarching goals and guidelines to ensure that services for children and young people are as equal as possible all over the country. National guidelines of this nature are imposed on the municipal authorities through interaction with county and central government authorities.

Education is a priority area in most municipalities. A greater degree of inter-disciplinary, inter-agency and trans-sectoral cooperation also appears to be an important factor in efforts to further develop a coherent youth policy. Many municipalities have also established arrangements to ensure greater user influence in the child and youth policy sector. The importance of involving non-governmental organizations more strongly in work on youth policy has also been emphasized by the central political authorities. Most municipal authorities regard continued and intensified focus on efforts for children and young people as a priority task.

Municipal youth policy affects most areas of policy and thus requires good

cooperation and coordination between the many people who work with children and young people at the local level. In recent years, several municipalities have established a special post for a Children's Representative as a result of the need to improve the coordination of services, strengthen planning for children and young people and strengthen the influence of children and young people in local planning and decision-making processes. The responsibilities ascribed to these posts vary, as does local organization.

Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)) stresses the importance of work with children and young people at the municipal level being well coordinated and of someone having the main responsibility for such coordination. It also points out that municipal authorities are free to organize this as they see fit, for example by delegating the responsibility to a specific person or agency. It also emphasizes the importance of the municipal authorities facilitating good interaction between children and young people, parents and the non-governmental sector to ensure that the work done for children and young people at the local level is satisfactory.

3

Living conditions and the environment in which young people grow up – main trends

3.1 Changes in the conditions in which young people grow up

Living conditions for young people are affected by changes, both in society as a whole and in their immediate relationships, such as the family and the local community. Development in many areas of society that affect the conditions in which young people grow up has moved more rapidly in recent decades than in any previous period.

Social changes in the last century have had significant, and largely positive, consequences for the conditions in which children and young people live and grow up. Housing standards, incomes and educational opportunities have improved substantially. Most young people live in a situation of financial security, and traditional poverty has more or less been eradicated. However, wealth is not equally distributed and there are still some young people living in families with such limited financial resources that they can be described as poor.

Social changes have been described in different ways. Terms such as the multi-cultural society, the information society and the knowledge society indicate which changes are thought to be the most significant. The multi-cultural society naturally has to do with increased immigration, but it also describes the changes that have taken place as a result of a single culture or a single system of values becoming less dominant than before. The information society and the knowledge society are also terms that focus on certain characteristics of society which have become more prominent than before. These social changes have also resulted in individuality, self-realization and participation becoming more important values for children and young people as well as adults. The “youth” period has changed in character and become more clearly distinguished as a separate phase of life. In Norway, the 1980s and 1990s were a period of major changes in the media. An increase in the number of radio and TV channels, TV advertising, video players, home computers, computer games and the Internet have totally changed the conditions in which young people grow up. The new media have also made the home an attractive place for children and young people to spend their leisure time.

Most youngsters grow up in a secure environment which provides good possibilities for development. However, there are still some children and young people who do not have such good opportunities as the majority. For some, everyday life is characterized by insecurity and loneliness. Crime, bullying, violence, drug and alcohol problems, learning difficulties and difficulty in entering the labour market are all very real problems for some young people.

3.2 The demographic situation

The under-18 age group accounts for almost one quarter of Norway's population. In January 2003, there were 1,075,711 children and young people under the age of 18 in Norway. There were slightly more boys than girls and the largest number of children were in the 11-12 age group. There were 1,457,321 young people in the 15-24 age group.

The number of children and young people in the 0-24 age group has been relatively stable for the past 30-40 years and forecasts indicate that this number will remain relatively stable up to 2020. This age group increased from approximately 1.4 million to just over 1.5 million in the period from 1960 to 1980, dropped slightly in the 1970s and 1980s, and has since been stable. Until 2020, the figure is expected to remain relatively stable for the group as a whole. During this period, however, there will be significant variations in the various age categories. The number of children under the age of 15 will decline, while the number in the 15-24 age group will increase somewhat. The 15-24 age group peaked in 1990 and declined towards 2000. The number in this age group will increase again up to 2020.

Although the number of children and young people in the 0-24 age group has been relatively stable in recent decades, as a proportion of the total population it has declined. While the 0-24 age group accounted for 40 per cent of the population in 1970, it accounted for only 32 per cent in 2000. Forecasts indicate that this percentage will remain roughly the same up to 2020. The decline in the number of young people as a percentage of the total population is due to the fact that the number of older people is increasing, partly because the post-war baby boomers have now become the older generation.

In the past 20-30 years, the "youth" period has expanded. Young people are marrying and establishing families later, partnerships and friendships are replacing marriage to a greater extent, some young people are spending more years on education and more are in higher education. As a result of the extension of the "youth" period, the parents of small children are moving into the older age groups.

3.3 The conditions in which children and young people grow up in change

3.3.1 New perspectives on children and young people

There has been stronger focus on children's rights in recent years, both in everyday life and in legislation, statistics and research. This has had consequences for the youngest groups in the "youth" category. The 1981 Act relating

to children and parents gives children and young people many rights relating to co-determination and self-determination. The view of children and young people as independent individuals is reflected in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, where the child's right to co-determination and participation is one of the main principles.

The co-determination and participation of children and young people has become a recognized principle in modern society. While children and young people have a right to be independent and decide for themselves in many areas, they also have a right to belong, to be dependent and receive care from their parents and other adults. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child confirms the right to protection and care. While parental responsibility remains firm, it is a challenge to promote a rights concept that encompasses independence, care and respect for the opinions of children.

There appear to be two parallel trends in views about children and young people: greater autonomy and greater regulation. On the one hand, the stress on individualization and rights has increased the focus on children and young people as independent, active players. On the other hand, the environment in which children and young people grow up has become more organized and regulated than before. This applies to the organization of education, leisure time and working life.

3.3.2 Changes in family structures

The family is extremely important for children and young people. Although they formally reach the age of majority at 18, a fairly large proportion of young people continue to live at home for some time after that. Moreover, moving out of the parental home is often not a final break. Some young people move to and from the parental home several times before they finally establish themselves as independent entities.

The 1998 Survey of Living Conditions shows that 87 per cent of boys and 89 per cent of girls in the 16-17 age group were living at home. From the age of 18-19, the differences between boys and girls become clear. In this age group, 52 per cent of girls were living with their parents, compared with 67 per cent of boys. By the age of 25, most young people have moved out. In 1998, 8 per cent of women aged 24-25 were living with their parents, compared with 18 per cent of men in the same age group.

Family structures have changed in recent decades. The percentage of children living with unmarried couples and single parents has increased, while fewer live in families where the parents are married. In 2003, 75 per cent of children under the age of 18 lived with both parents; 61 per cent with married parents and 14 per cent with unmarried parents. 25 per cent lived with one parent. In 1989, 82 per cent lived with both parents; 77 per cent with married parents and 5 per cent with unmarried parents. At that time, 17 per cent lived with one parent. Family splits are more frequent than before, particularly among unmarried parents, who split up two to three times more frequently than married couples.

Changes in family structures may also lead to children acquiring new sibling relationships and more family members to relate to than before. Having sever-

al sets of families can lead to contacts with more adults than in the traditional nuclear family. This can create a greater sense of belonging and security, but it can also challenge these values. The Survey of Living Conditions shows that, despite significant changes in children's families, children still appear to have a great deal of contact with adults, including across generations.

The participation of women in working life has changed in recent decades. In the 1950s and 1960s, the family with the mother and housewife at home was the dominant picture. Today, most women and mothers are in full-time or part-time employment. This has led to significant changes in the daily lives of children and young people. Some people maintain that "empty" homes and local communities represent a loss for children. Others maintain that organized activities strengthen children's possibilities for development and that this is good adaptation to changed conditions. Moreover, to a greater degree than before, the home has also become a place where young people meet and engage in various types of activities.

In today's society, parents are expected to play an active, participatory role in relation to schools and leisure activities. The demand for parents to be active may, however, lead to greater differences between the young people whose parents manage to follow up their children well and those whose parents, for various reasons, cannot do so. Not all parents give their children high enough priority or have the necessary resources to ensure good follow-up, for example in relation to school and leisure activities. Social differences may arise as a result of differences in parents' ability and willingness to stimulate and follow up their children.

Nevertheless, surveys show that young people in the 14-16 age group generally have a close relationship with their parents. Most of them feel that their parents support them and give them good feedback. Approximately half of them state that they have engaged in a specific activity, hobby, training or similar activity with mother and father in the past week. More than 90 per cent of young people believe that their parents know most of their friends. 65 per cent had visited relatives or family in the past week and 41 per cent had visited a neighbour one or more times.

3.3.3 Partnerships and sexuality

Attitudes to unmarried partnerships have changed radically in the past 20 years. The ideal of a lasting, committed relationship appears to be difficult to realize for many people. As a result of effective contraceptives, sexuality is no longer so clearly reserved for marriage and associated with reproduction. Young people usually fall in love, have boyfriends and girlfriends and many test out their sexuality in this period of their lives. Young people today are met with greater openness than before as regards sexuality. However, this does not mean that sexuality does not have its problems. As a result of open, liberal attitudes to sexuality, many young people may experience pressure to engage in sexual activity long before they are ready for it. The sexualization of daily life for children and young people, not least through advertising and the media, increases body fixation and sexual pressure on an age group that is not yet mature enough to deal with the choices and consequences sexual relationships entail. This also includes the risk of undesired pregnancy and abortion.

As a result of greater openness about sexuality in general, there is also greater openness and acceptance of the fact that some people are lesbian or homosexual. However, research results show that many young people who discover that they are attracted to their own sex experience confusion about their identity, inner unrest and uncertain ideas about their own sexuality. This indicates that openness does not necessarily mean that it is easier to be accepted and accept oneself as lesbian or homosexual.

3.3.4 Material and social conditions

The family situation has a decisive impact on the material conditions in which children and young people grow up. Through transfers of funds and the provision of services, the public authorities help to give families good framework conditions. At the same time, policy must help to reduce differences so that all children and young people grow up in good conditions. All families with children are therefore included in an active distribution policy aimed at compensating families with children for some of the additional expense of having children, or providing services or transfers to support families' care of children.

Households with children are among the households that experienced the strongest rise in income in the 1990s. The incomes of both couples with children and single parents rose more strongly than average incomes during this period. However, some families are in a difficult financial situation. An analysis carried out by Statistics Norway of how many children and young people in Norway grow up in families with low or persistently low incomes showed that there are between 27,000 and 32,000 children living in low-income households in Norway (Jon Epland (2001): Children in low-income households. Numbers, development and causes. Report 2001/9 Statistics Norway). Some of these children are only in the low-income group for a short period of time. Over a 3-year period, between 1.7 per cent and 2.4 per cent live in low-income households, equivalent to between 14,000 and 19,000 children. Of the children living in constantly low-income households, many grow up with only one parent. Many live in households where the adults have only a weak link to the labour market. Moreover, children from immigrant backgrounds are over-represented.

Having a low income over a long period of time may lead to the families concerned being unable to afford luxuries that are a matter of course for most people. Children and young people from these families are often unable to take part in the same activities as others. Going away on holiday is not a matter of course, and they cannot afford the equipment that most other young people possess. Since some groups have experienced a significant increase in wealth, other parents' inability to provide the same luxuries is even more apparent. Children and young people are particularly aware of differences in the distribution of luxuries.

In recent years, the 18-24 age group has experienced a decline in income, and this age group is clearly over-represented in the lower levels of the income tables. This is partly because more young people are attending institutions of higher education, but even if students are excepted, the proportion of the 18-24 age group whose household income per consumption unit is less than half of the median income has doubled. This is a frequently used measurement

of poverty in relation to other groups (relative poverty). The 20-24 age group is also over-represented among recipients of financial welfare benefits. While the incomes of many young people increase after the age of 25, some young people are nevertheless more at risk of persistently low income than others. This particularly applies to young people with little education.

The living conditions and quality of life of children and young people are also linked to social conditions other than financial and material standards. Parents' ability to bring their children up well is particularly important. Children who grow up in families where the parents have drug or alcohol problems are a vulnerable group. These children are often exposed to such great strains in childhood that their future development may be affected. The same partly applies to children who grow up in families where the parents have mental problems. Children in such families need a great deal of help and care, which other relatives or the welfare services do not always manage to provide. There was a steady rise in the number of children receiving services from the child welfare authorities in the 1990s. At the end of 2001, just under 26,000 children were recipients of child welfare measures and of these approximately 5,000 were in care.

3.3.5 Health and lifestyle

The state of health of children and young people in Norway is generally good. However, some have chronic health problems or disabilities that affect their everyday lives and reduce their possibilities for play and social participation. According to Statistics Norway's 1995 Health Survey, 9 per cent of children aged 0-6 years had an illness, injury or health problem that affected their everyday lives to a large degree or to some degree, and more of them were girls than boys. In the 7-15 age group, the figure was 14 per cent, but in this case there were more boys than girls.

Psycho-social disorders probably constitute the health problem that is increasing most among children and young people. They include eating disorders, problems related to loneliness and isolation, neglect and abuse, behavioural problems, drug and alcohol abuse, bullying and unhappiness. Many report psychosomatic symptoms, such as headaches, depression and back and stomach pains. Statistics Norway's 1998 Health Survey showed that 11 per cent of young people aged 16-24 had symptoms of mental disorders. More women than men report that they have such symptoms.

Studies show that many young people develop a lifestyle that is harmful to their health during childhood and adolescence, which includes unhealthy eating habits, inactivity, risk behaviour, smoking and drug or alcohol abuse. All the available studies indicate that a larger number of young people than before state that they have used various types of narcotic substances, and this applies to the whole country. At the same time, studies show that there has been a significant rise in the use of alcohol among young people in recent years. The threshold for using drugs, alcohol and tobacco is lower and there is less difference between urban and rural areas.

3.3.6 Children and young people with disabilities

Between 2000 and 2500 of the children born in Norway each year are diagnosed as having some form of disability. In addition to this, some children deve-

lop disabilities and chronic diseases after birth. No overall statistics are collected concerning the number of disabled persons in Norway. If we base our calculations on the number of basic or supplementary benefits, the proportion is around 2.5 per cent of the child population between the ages of 7 and 15.

Children and young people with disabilities encounter more and larger barriers in many areas of life than those without disabilities. There may be problems in meeting the need for coherent, coordinated services. The transition from child to adult may also be more problematic for disabled persons than for those who are not disabled. Young people with disabilities who are on the threshold of adult life have, to a greater extent, been integrated into ordinary schools. They usually have the same expectations regarding education and work, but they face far more barriers than other young people in terms of physical access, transport, adaptation of teaching materials, etc. Being with other youngsters during their leisure time is an important part of daily life for young people. The level of activity of young people with disabilities is generally lower than that of young people without disabilities.

3.3.7 Identity

Young people today do not appear to rely on traditions and truths that have been passed down from earlier generations to the same extent as they did before. However, this has also been said of previous generations. Although young people have more options than before, their social background still affects their choice of values, path in life, partner, education and career. Society's demand for qualifications and competence, the values that are focused on, also affect individuals. The peer group is important for young people's choices. It has been pointed out that young people's search for identity actually takes place within the framework of their peer group's own norms for acceptable appearance, behaviour and interests. Among other things, young people's consumption patterns say something about who they are and what they are interested in. Nevertheless, the family still has a great deal of influence on children's and young people's choice of values, particularly if we look at their lives beyond the "youth" period.

3.3.8 Politics and social issues

The lack of participation by young people in traditional political activity has led to concern about a future "democratic deficit". Voter participation statistics show that young people utilize their right to vote less than older people, at both local and national elections. Among first-time voters, participation in national elections dropped from 72 per cent to 56 per cent in the period 1981-2001, while 33 per cent voted at the 1999 local elections. The school election surveys in the 1990s documented widespread mistrust of politicians. At the same time, young people find that it is extremely difficult to influence politicians. Only a small percentage believe that most politicians are credible, or that it is possible to influence policies.

The lack of support for political elections and the mistrust of politics are paralleled by the decline in recruitment to political youth organizations. The membership figures for political youth organizations have dropped from approximately 44,000 in 1977 to 23,000 in 1995. Moreover, there has been a decline in the membership figures for certain non-governmental children's and youth

organizations. This stagnation appears to be part of a trend that particularly affects political, humanitarian and religious organizations, in other words, the traditional Norwegian popular movements.

However, we must not equate social involvement with participation in elections or membership of organizations. Young people use many alternative forms of expression, such as festivals, demonstrations, campaigns, Internet messages, e-mail and text messages to parties and political leaders at various levels.

(See Ch. 7 for more information about the participation and influence of young people.)

3.3.9 Cultural changes

Norway has always been a multi-cultural society. Besides the Sami and Norwegian peoples, in the past few centuries Norway has also had national minorities such as Kvens, Forest Finns, Romani (travellers), Jews and Roma (gypsies). The composition of the population has also changed in recent years due to the rise in immigration. Growing migration is part of the globalization that is currently taking place and international migration processes also have consequences for Norwegian society and for the environment in which children and young people grow up.

Living in a multi-cultural society is a natural part of everyday life for many children and young people in Norway. This means not only cultural variation in terms of clothes, language and food traditions, but also different frames of reference, values and ideas. Children and young people growing up today are more used to relating to this type of diversity than the adult generation.

Norwegian society is in a period where the ethnic composition of the population is undergoing changes that will be permanent. The immigration from Asia and Africa that has taken place in the past thirty years has already given us a more culturally diversified population than before. A society that encompasses people from many different cultures must expect different challenges than a society with few cultures. One such challenge will be to create a foundation for mutual recognition and acceptance.

Statistics Norway's definition of the immigrant population comprises first-generation immigrants with two foreign parents and persons born in Norway of two foreign-born parents. Persons born in Norway of two foreign-born parents were formerly called second-generation immigrants. Children and young people in Norway may have varying ties with other countries. As of 1 January 2001, 84 per cent of children and young people (aged 0-18) had no immigrant background. Approximately 7 per cent of children had a foreign-born mother or father but were born in Norway. Persons born in Norway of two foreign-born parents (4.1%), first-generation immigrants with no Norwegian background (2.8%), persons adopted abroad and persons born abroad of Norwegian parents are also regarded as being part of the immigrant population in this connection (Statistics Norway 2003).

Most children and young people with immigrant backgrounds live in Oslo. This applies to both the total number of children with immigrant backgrounds and

the percentage of such children in relation to the number of children in the county. Children with immigrant backgrounds account for just over 40 per cent of all children in Oslo. The figure for Oslo is therefore far higher than for other counties. (Further information about the challenges of the multi-cultural society may be found in Ch. 6).

3.3.10 The knowledge society

In the period from the end of the 19th century until the first decade after World War II, Norway developed from an agricultural society into an industrial society. This led to major technological, economic, social and cultural upheavals. However, the period from the 1970s to the present day has in many ways been a period of equally far-reaching change. This period is characterized primarily by globalization, communication technology, knowledge and education as the basis for competence.

In the industrial society, education was desirable but not necessary. It was fully possible for young people to begin work at the age of 16, and work was their entry into the adult world. In the knowledge society, education and expertise are prerequisites for success in working life and other social contexts. Education not only gives an idea of what a person can do but also of what and who he or she is. Because the educational system is, in principle, open to all, successfully completing an education is as much a measurement of personal qualities as it is of knowledge. Success in the educational system can be regarded as a sign of self-discipline, planning ability and work capacity. Because education is so important, a lack of success at school and in the educational system may lead to new social differences.

Social background is still important for young people's choice of education and subsequent career. Regardless of their degree of achievement, the children of parents with a high level of education choose an academic education more frequently than the children of parents with a low level of education. However, social background does not appear to influence the extent to which young people complete the education they have started on.

The knowledge and competence society has brought with it greater emphasis on individuality, freedom and personal style. Self-realization and finding out what I want, what means most to me, become important. This stronger emphasis on individuality has occurred in parallel with the fact that the knowledge society has become increasingly dominated by competition and market mechanisms.

3.3.11 Towards greater gender equality

Children and young people today experience a greater degree of liberalization from established gender roles than previous generations. Boys and girls have equal rights and opportunities in most areas, and gender differences are becoming far less marked in areas such as education, participation in non-governmental youth organizations, sport and drug and alcohol abuse. However, boys and girls continue to choose an education that has been traditional for their gender. Girls stick to the service and care sectors while boys have become more dominant in technical subjects in recent years. This applies to both vocational education and university and college education.

In the 1980s, girls surpassed boys at upper secondary schools, in the sense that they achieved better grades than boys. In the 1990s, girls came into the majority at universities and colleges, and in 1993, for the first time, more girls than boys took degrees. Subjects such as law, medicine and sociology, which were previously dominated by men, were increasingly dominated by the young generation of women. In theology too, the Faculty of Theology in Oslo is no longer male-dominated. For women, the knowledge society has led to change and the gradual disappearance of the classic housewife role. Instead, they have identified more strongly with education and a career. However, there are still few women in senior positions in business and industry. Furthermore, more than 40 per cent of working women work part time.

Despite the “gender revolution” in education and careers, boys and girls systematically develop different patterns of action. For example, there is a difference in how boys’ and girls’ consumption is regarded by those around them. Because many boys have more organized, activity-oriented consumption requirements, they are given more money for consumption more easily than girls. Research shows that boys receive more money from their parents for personal consumption than girls do – they have “higher pay” on the home front as well.

Both verbal and physical harassment occur in some youth groups. Both girls and boys are exposed to sexual bullying and sexual harassment. This can be regarded as a reversal of what has been achieved over many years of struggle for gender equality and non-discrimination. One important goal will be to acquire more knowledge about this type of harassment and monitor the trend among young people.

Young people are concerned about rights and equal opportunities, but they are not concerned to the same extent about gender equality. Gender equality is often regarded as being old-fashioned and not quite in step with the times. Girls look upon themselves as individuals rather than a gender. They do well at school, they are active, and they dare to stand out. They sympathize with gender equality but regard the progress that has been made as a matter of course. In efforts to discover their identity, body and style appear to be more important for girls than for boys. It is hardly surprising that these young girls do not feature in the part of the women’s movement that reflects the political views of the previous generation.

There is still some way to go before we achieve full gender equality, and traditional gender roles still influence important decisions made by young people. This particularly applies to educational and career choices. Both home and school are important as arenas for identity-building among children and young people. They must be made aware of gender roles, and attitudes must be fostered that counteract discrimination and contravention of the ideal of equality.

3.3.12 Consumption and commercialization

Children’s and young people’s everyday lives have become increasingly commercialized in recent decades. This is reflected in the role of children and young people as consumers, and also in their self-awareness and identity. As new, wealthy consumers, children and young people have become a target

group for manufacturers and advertisers, and due to their use of and identification with various products, they represent potential and important future purchasing power for the branded goods industry.

It is a serious challenge to find measures to reduce commercial pressures on children and young people. On the one hand, children and young people should be protected from commercial influence. On the other hand, children and young people must be made aware of the consumer society in general and the impact of advertising in particular. Such awareness-raising is included in consumer education in schools. In spring 2003, the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs presented a Plan of Action to combat commercial pressures on children and young people.

3.3.13 Media and communications

The mass media play a central role in the lives of children and young people. This applies to both traditional media, such as TV, radio, films and music, and new media, such as the Internet, mobile phones and computers. The media society is global and creates common points of reference across geographical, linguistic and cultural borders. New technologies provide new opportunities for communication and the development of cultural and social competence. However, the ability of children and young people to use and utilize the possibilities provided by modern communication tools varies.

Until 1992, Norwegian children and young people grew up with the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation, which was in a monopoly position as regards radio and TV broadcasting. The number of local radio stations and commercial TV channels increased sharply in the 1990s and they soon reached a majority of the population. Surveys show that there has been a decline in the percentage of the population that listens to radio, while TV viewing has remained constant in the past ten years. The proportion of TV viewers is highest among children and the oldest group. Young people between the ages of 16 and 24 watch less TV than their parents and grandparents did. As regards the choice of channels, the commercial channels TV 2, TV Norge and TV3 are clearly over-represented among children and young people.

Newspaper reading has declined among children and young people in recent years. These age groups also spend the least time reading newspapers. Part of this reduction may be due to the fact that children read Internet newspapers rather than traditional printed newspapers.

The Internet has wide coverage and the proportion of children and young people with a home computer and access to the Internet has increased significantly. Most children and young people have access to a computer at home. Home computer coverage is highest in the 0-15 age group (more than 90 per cent). As regards access to the Internet, approximately seven out of ten children in the 9-15 age group have access to the Internet at home. In the case of both home computers and the Internet, a smaller proportion of young people over 15 have access to these communication media at home than the 9-15 age group. Boys are still more frequent Internet users than girls. Almost half of all boys between the ages of 9 and 15 log on to the Internet on an average day, and it is this population group that comprises the most frequent Internet users.

Surveys show that approximately half of all children in the 9-15 age group play computer games on an ordinary day. Almost 80 per cent in the 9-15 age group who use a home computer say that they use it for entertainment and games. Approximately twice as many boys as girls play computer games. This medium is different from media such as films and TV because most games are interactive. Computer games vary from play-and-learn games, board games, adventure and role-play to action and war games.

There has been a sharp rise in the use of mobile phones in recent years. Almost nine out of ten young people aged 16-24 have their own mobile phone. In the 9-12 age group almost 30 per cent had their own mobile phone in 2000 and the number of users has risen significantly since then. More girls than boys in the 9-15 age group have their own mobile phone. The use of mobile phones and text messages is an important means of communication, both within peer groups and between children and their parents.

3.3.14 Globalization

“The age of globalization” is a somewhat imprecise term that is often used to describe today’s reality. International decision-making forums, in both business and politics, are important elements of globalization. Migration, international trade, more rapid transport and communications, increased travel, linguistic merging and the development of communities across national borders are typical characteristics of globalization. This is not really new in comparison with previous eras. International interaction has always influenced social development. The thing that characterizes our own age and perhaps differentiates it from other eras is the fact that the impact of international mass media is greater than before and communication technology has increased the possibilities for contact across great distances. As a result of this, internationalization, or globalization, is affecting every one of us, in terms of both our values and our patterns of action.

A larger proportion of young people than before gain international experience and insight from education, the media, travel and personal contacts. Communication takes place across national borders, both as a result of the fact that more people live in other countries and because new technology makes frequent contacts and the development of a sense of community possible, even if people do not travel physically. Regardless of where they live, to a greater degree than before, young people have the possibility to orient themselves in relation to international and special interest groups. The international fashion and entertainment industry has also led to internationalization and globalization of the forms of expression of youth culture across national borders.

In recent years, international political movements have grown up which are critical to globalization, particularly in the economic sphere. Young people play an active role in these movements. Although it is valuable to criticize some of the effects of globalization, it is unhelpful to be negative to globalization in general. The crucial question is which values internationalization and globalization are to be based on. With respect to internationalization, it is important to give young people the opportunity to acquire international and inter-cultural competence, and to develop political arenas that give young people the possibility to exert influence, also on international issues.

4

Areas of youth policy

4.1 The interests and participation of young people in public planning

Safeguarding the interests of young people in public planning is an important goal for the design of youth policy. Both the Planning and Building Act and the National Policy Guidelines to strengthen the interests of children and young people in the planning process emphasize that special attention must be paid to the needs and interests of children and young people. Among other things, the National Policy Guidelines require municipalities to organize the planning process in such a way that views concerning children and young people as interested parties are expressed, and that various groups of children and young people are given the opportunity to participate themselves.

The history of municipal planning for children and young people begins at the end of the 1970s. One important difference in comparison with before is that planning for children and young people is formally linked to the municipal development plan. Some municipalities do this by preparing separate municipal sub-plans for children and young people, while others give priority to children and young people in the municipal development plan.

In recent years, many municipalities have identified children and young people as one of their most important priorities. However, there are still considerable differences between municipalities with respect to the extent to which they consider the consequences of policy formulations for children and young people in connection with their planning work, and whether the interests of children and young people are sufficiently taken into account. The possibilities for children and young people to take part in the planning process also vary.

There is also stronger focus on the interests of children and young people at county level. In most counties, the most recent county development plans, which are increasingly strategic and focused on specific issues, children and young people are either a separate topic or have been prioritized in some other way. Several counties have also established Youth County Councils, which provide inputs for county planning and make statements on matters that are dealt with in the county planning process. At county level too, however, there

is considerable variation in terms of both consideration for the interests of children and young people and the extent to which the young people themselves are ensured possibilities for participation in and influence on the planning process.

4.1.1 Arrangements to safeguard the interests of children and young people in the planning process

In 1989, two important reforms were implemented to strengthen the interests of children and young people in planning processes. The National Policy Guidelines to strengthen the interests of children and young people in the planning process were laid down by Royal Decree on 1 September 1989. In the same year, the Planning and Building Act was amended for the same purpose. The reforms were introduced because the interests of children and young people had not been sufficiently taken into account in the planning system. Despite the fact that there was widespread awareness of how a good environment for children could be achieved through planning and development, children and young people constantly lost out in competition with other interests.

The introduction of the National Policy Guidelines to strengthen the interests of children and young people in the planning process and the amendments to the Planning and Building Act are a strong signal from central government that the conditions in which children and young people grow up must be on the agenda at all levels of the planning process. These documents are instructions from central government, but it is up to local authorities to give them content and adapt practices to local conditions.

One important provision in the Planning and Building Act states that the Municipal Council has an obligation to appoint the head of one of the municipal agencies or another official to be especially responsible for safeguarding the interests of children and young people in the planning process. The Children's Representative must ensure that the interests of children and young people are taken into account in the various plans and must react if this is not the case. The Children's Representative must attend meetings, has the right to speak and the right to present proposals, which the Standing Committee for Planning Issues is free to accept or reject. The Children's Representative has the right to add footnotes to the minutes of meetings of the Standing Committee for Planning Issues, but does not have the right to appeal decisions. Any objections to a plan must come from the county authorities.

4.1.2 The participation of children and young people in local planning processes

The Planning and Building Act and the National Policy Guidelines also provide for the participation of children and young people in the planning process. Many municipalities have been working on facilitating the participation and influence of children and young people in local planning processes for some time. The methods used and the extent to which municipalities have involved children and young people vary, and we still have a long way to go before all municipalities meet the requirements for active participation laid down in the National Policy Guidelines.

Experience shows that there are many possibilities for involving children and

young people in local planning processes. Several municipalities have incorporated regular routines for the participation of children and young people in municipal planning activities. This particularly applies to physical planning. Some do this by using pupils' councils and class councils as permanent consultation bodies. Others collect systematic information from children and young people about where they play, spend their leisure time, etc., which they then use in connection with work on the municipal development plan.

4.2 Schools and education

From the 1950s until the present day, comprehensive educational reforms and other social changes have radically changed the lives of children and young people. One of the objectives of changes in the educational system has been to provide education for all children and young people, regardless of their gender, place of residence, ability, ethnic background or parents' financial situation. The equal right to education has been an overarching political goal. Compulsory education has increased from 7 to 10 years and most children now attend upper secondary schools for (at least) a further 3 years. The proportion of the population attending school above lower secondary level has risen sharply in the past thirty years. In 1970, 7.3 per cent of the population over the age of 16 had completed a university or college education, compared with as many as 21.9 per cent in 2001. There are also fewer differences between urban and rural areas and between boys and girls. Today, more girls than boys study at colleges and universities.

4.2.1 The purpose of education

The purpose of schools is to provide education and knowledge. According to the object clause of the Education Act, in addition to knowledge, the object of primary and lower secondary education is to increase awareness and understanding of fundamental Christian and humanist values and further the equal status and equal rights of all human beings, intellectual freedom and tolerance, ecological understanding and international co-responsibility. The curriculum for ten-year primary and lower secondary education strongly emphasizes the importance of developing other aspects of education in addition to the purely academic aspects, and underlines the importance of education in developing social skills and inclusive attitudes. The purpose of education is, therefore, to ensure that children and young people acquire knowledge and social skills and are prepared for life. Primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education must also encourage and be part of lifelong learning so that competence can be maintained, developed and strengthened throughout a person's life.

4.2.2 The current structure of primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education

The intention of the reforms of primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education in the 1990s was to maintain central aspects of Norwegian educational policy, with emphasis on comprehensive education, as well as to take into account new challenges. The reform of primary and lower secondary education must be viewed in conjunction with the reform of upper secondary education. One of the important purposes of these reforms was to ensure coher-

ence in the education and development of children and young people. Nevertheless, in many areas there appears to be clear potential for improvement in the connections between the various levels of education and between learning and work. There are many indications that these reforms have not been sufficiently coordinated. Among other things, there appears to be a need and potential for greater flexibility as regards the integration of theory and practice and as regards cooperation between schools and companies. Adjustments are also required in order to improve the way in which the needs of special groups, such as pupils with special educational needs and pupils from minority language groups, are met.

4.2.3 Adapted education and special education

All education must be adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of individual pupils, apprentices and trainees (Section 1-2 of the Education Act). The cornerstone of the principle of adapted education and equal educational services is, therefore, that all pupils must encounter challenges commensurate with their aptitude, regardless of their backgrounds, abilities and possible disabilities.

The principle of integration in Norwegian educational policy, combined with the goal of adapted education and the ambition to include all pupils and give all pupils the experience of meeting educational expectations, requires strong focus on targeted differentiation of education. With respect to the practical implementation of differentiated education, however, schools have not made enough progress in catering for the broad range of pupil needs. In Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), the Government points out that public schools have not been flexible enough to fully meet the needs, either of pupils who feel that school is too theoretical or of pupils who need to stretch themselves more.

Substantial resources are allocated for special education (individual tuition, small groups, teaching assistants, etc.) and other special educational measures and auxiliary services in education, including the educational and psychological counselling service and the central government's support system for special education. In addition to the above, substantial amounts of funding are provided for additional teaching resources (divided classes, two-teacher systems, etc.), which benefit all pupils, and for mother-tongue tuition for language minorities.

4.2.4 The Follow-up Service

In connection with the reform of upper secondary education, the Follow-up Service was established as a statutory service at county level for young people who are entitled to upper secondary education but do not have a school place or a permanent job. The Follow-up Service must ensure that all young people within the Service's target group are offered education, work or some other activity. The primary aim of these services is for the young person to qualify for further studies or a vocational career, or achieve qualification at a lower level. The Follow-up Service must ensure that it has full details of the target group and must follow up and contact each young person in the group and offer counselling.

Young people in the target group who do not accept the Follow-up Service's offer and are not attending school or working must be contacted and offered a programme each school year for as long as they are covered by the statutory right to further education. However, some young people are untraceable or refuse follow-up services. There are many reasons why pupils wish to make a break with the educational system, the main one being a lack of motivation to attend school.

The Follow-up Service must ensure inter-agency cooperation between the municipal, county and central government authorities responsible for this target group and pass on or coordinate offers from the various agencies. Relevant partners include lower secondary schools, upper secondary schools and school counsellors at the above, the educational and psychological counselling service, the county education authority, the Labour Market Authority and the social welfare and health services.

4.2.5 User participation in schools – parental participation and pupil democracy

Report No. 14 to the Storting (1997-98) relating to parental participation in primary and lower secondary education emphasized the desirability of more parental participation in schools. The Education Act and the general section of the curriculum strongly underline the possibilities for parents and pupils to participate in and influence the operation and development of schools.

The Education Act regulates cooperation between parents/the home and schools and provides rules for school boards, parents' councils and the working committees of parents' councils at all primary and lower secondary schools. Although class contacts in primary and lower secondary schools are no longer a statutory requirement, more than 90 per cent of primary and lower secondary schools still have class contacts. Norwegian surveys show that parents are extremely interested in what takes place at school with respect to their own children and their class environment. The National Parents' Committee for Primary and Lower Secondary Education is an independent body which advises the Ministry on matters relating to cooperation between school and home and safeguards the interests of parents in relation to the educational system. The National Parents' Committee for Primary and Lower Secondary Education is also responsible for implementing measures that will, to a greater extent than today, promote the inclusion of parents from language minorities in cooperation between homes and schools. This type of cooperation is far less comprehensive in upper secondary schools than in primary and lower secondary schools.

The Education Act sets the parameters for pupil participation and includes rules for class councils and pupil's councils in primary and lower secondary schools and provisions relating to pupils' councils, general meetings, school committees and participation on county boards in upper secondary education. The Norwegian Pupils' Organization is an independent, national organization with county branches for pupils and apprentices in upper secondary education whose purpose is to safeguard the interests of pupils vis-à-vis local and central education authorities. The Ministry of Education and Research cooperates with the Norwegian Pupils' Organization in many areas.

4.3 Health and social conditions

Although young people in Norway are healthy on the whole, many young people are struggling with problems and diseases. Some children and young people have chronic health problems or disabilities that affect their everyday lives to such an extent that they cannot take part in play or leisure activities. Surveys also show that many children and young people develop an unhealthy lifestyle during childhood and adolescence, such as unfortunate eating habits, inactivity, risk behaviour, smoking and drug and alcohol use. There are also many indications that the occurrence of mental problems and illnesses among children and young people is increasing.

In Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), the Government points out that measures to improve the conditions in which young people grow up require focus on health-promoting, preventive, curative and rehabilitative efforts within the areas of responsibility of many different agencies and sectors. In the Report, it is pointed out that the effects of such efforts will be strengthened if services and sectors cooperate more on the design and implementation of measures. This entails a re-orientation away from the health and social welfare sector towards general political and administrative solutions, both within and outside the health and social services. Health-promoting and preventive efforts to provide a good environment for children growing up must take place through broad cooperation between agencies and sectors and include both official and non-governmental activities. The challenges are related to cooperation between municipal agencies and services, between municipal and specialist health services and between the public and voluntary sectors. Problems relating to the health of children and young people are discussed in more detail in a special Report to the Storting on health policy, which the Government submitted in January 2003.

4.3.1 Health-promoting and preventive activities

Health-promoting activities aim to improve quality of life, happiness and the ability to cope with the challenges and strains to which we are exposed in everyday life. Preventive activities aim to reduce risk factors that may lead to illness, injury and premature death. These concepts are combined under the term "public health activities", which may be defined as society's overall efforts to maintain, promote and improve the public health. Throughout the 1990s, health-promoting and preventive activities have been followed up through inter-ministerial action plans, trans-sectoral measures and research. Feedback and evaluations show that these measures have resulted in good processes in the municipal, county and non-governmental sectors.

The establishment of youth health clinics was one of the priority areas in the Plan of Action to Prevent Undesired Pregnancy and Abortion and many municipalities have established youth health clinics in recent years. This service is provided for all young people, usually up to the age of 20, regardless of their place of education or work.

Youth health clinics offer advice and guidance for both girls and boys. Important topics include matters relating to sexuality, sexual intercourse and

contraception, including sexual preference, HIV and sexually transmitted infections, sexual abuse and violence, physical and mental health and health-promoting behaviour. Boys and girls are equally important target groups with respect to the prevention of mental illness, HIV and sexually transmitted infections. It is extremely important to provide guidance on contraception for both girls and boys to make them aware of their responsibility for preventing undesired pregnancy and abortion and promote ethical reflection and choices. The challenge for youth health clinics is, through dialogue, to help strengthen the self-confidence, personal care, responsibility and social skills of young people.

In connection with the psycho-social activities run by school health services and youth health clinics, happiness, sexuality, sexual intercourse and contraception, prevention of undesired pregnancy, abuse, prevention of suicide, revention and guidance relating to eating disorders and prevention of forced marriage and female genital mutilation are important priorities. Special plans of action have been formulated to combat forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

4.3.2 Undesired pregnancy and abortion

13,867 abortions were carried out in 2001, 788 fewer than in the previous year, which is equivalent to a decline of just over 5 per cent. The number of abortions has not been as low since the mid-1990s. After a rise in teenage abortions in 2000, the numbers are once again at the same level as at the end of the 1990s. Efforts to prevent undesired pregnancy and reduce the abortion rate arget both genders. Another goal of preventive efforts is to ensure that all young people have the best possible basis, in terms of knowledge of sexual intercourse, sexuality, contraception and pregnancy, for choosing when to start a baby.

In connection with the debate on Proposition No. 1 to the Storting (2001-2002) on the 2002 budget, the Storting supported the proposal that girls aged 16-19 should have access to free contraceptive pills as a measure to prevent undesired pregnancy and abortion among teenage girls. Nurses and midwives with supplementary qualifications who are employed in health clinics and the school health service have been authorized to write prescriptions for contraceptive pills for young girls who request them.

4.3.3 HIV and sexually transmissible infections

Responsibility and Consideration - a strategic plan for the prevention of HIV and sexually transmissible diseases was presented by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs in November 2001. One of the goals of the strategic plan is to strengthen health-promoting and preventive efforts in this area that target adolescents and young adults.

The incidence of sexually transmissible infections among young people is still high. Efforts to prevent HIV and sexually transmissible infections among young people have therefore been intensified, with emphasis on cooperating with the young people themselves. Schools, non-governmental organizations, youth clubs, youth health clinics and the school health service play a vital role in these information and advisory activities.

In Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), the Government emphasizes that, in connection with counselling for children and young people on sexual intercourse, sexuality and contraception, the aim is to make children and young people aware of their own bodies, development and sexuality and lay the foundations for ethical choices. Providing education and passing on values relating to sexuality and sexual intercourse to young people, will improve the ability of adolescents and young adults to make crucial, ethical life choices.

4.3.4 Injuries resulting from accidents and violence

The number of fatal accidents has been declining since 1970, for both genders and in all age groups. In 2001, there were just under 2,300 violent deaths in Norway. 74 per cent of them were due to accidents and 24 per cent due to suicide. In the youngest age group (0-14), the number of accidental deaths declined by almost 60 per cent from 1980 to 2001. Accidental injuries are still the most common cause of death among children and young people. Accidents in the home are most frequent among children (0-14). Accidents and injuries in connection with sport and training are most frequent among young people aged 15-24. In the leisure sector, there are trends that entail a major risk of accident, as may be seen from the number of injuries related to snowboards, skateboards and roller skates. There are grounds for monitoring trends in modern outdoor activities and urban leisure activities.

The challenges in connection with the prevention of injuries resulting from accidents or violence are to strengthen the knowledge base and translate this knowledge into practical preventive measures. Traffic accidents pose a special challenge, since the average degree of seriousness of this category of injury is high. Many measures have been implemented in recent years to improve road safety for schoolchildren. They include improved barriers between motorists and pedestrians and the construction of special pedestrian and cycle paths. There is still a great deal of potential for preventing bicycle-related injuries among children and young people.

The prevention of accidents is dependent on local, long-term efforts. The World Health Organisation's (WHO's) Safe Communities concept has been widely incorporated as a working method in efforts to prevent accidents. Almost 50 municipalities in Norway are working on a systematic, trans-sectoral and long-term basis to prevent accidents and injuries within the Safe Communities framework. Work on Safe Communities is continuing.

4.3.5 Suicide among children and young people

Despite the fact that the suicide rate for the population as a whole clearly declined in the 1990s, the trend was not as favourable for the younger population. The suicide rate has traditionally been very low for young people in Norway compared with other countries, including Norway's neighbours, Denmark and Sweden. However, this is no longer the case. The suicide rate among the 15-24 age group in Norway is now significantly higher than in Denmark and Sweden, and the situation is the same for both sexes. Suicide has become the most common cause of death among boys and young men in Norway, and also accounts for a substantial proportion of all deaths among girls and young women. For each suicide, there are many attempted suicides.

Surveys also show that there is a high attempted suicide rate among young homosexuals and lesbians. Report No. 25 to the Storting (2000-2001) Living conditions and quality of life for lesbians and homosexuals in Norway particularly addresses the issue of suicide among young lesbians and homosexuals. The Report contains proposals for several measures aimed at preventing lesbian and homosexual suicide. Among other things, the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs provides funding for information activities aimed at preventing discrimination and promoting equal treatment and respect for homosexuals and lesbians in Norwegian society. There is special focus on providing preventive information for young homosexuals and lesbians who may be in danger of committing suicide.

A plan of action to combat suicide was completed at the end of 1999. A Follow-up Project - measures to combat suicide (2000-2002) was introduced in order to maintain and develop the expertise that had been established. The main goal is to strengthen the expertise of and services provided by the health service for people in suicidal crisis and to prevent suicide among vulnerable groups, including children and young people. Under the Follow-up Project, the prevention of suicide among lesbians and homosexuals is defined as a priority area. As part of this project, regional resource groups have been established, linked to the health regions. Furthermore, under this project, an inter-disciplinary training programme on prevention of suicide has been established, a contribution has been made towards improving routines for following up suicidal persons and research has been strengthened.

4.3.6 Smoking

Smoking is one of the most important risk factors and causes of cardio-vascular diseases, cancer and pneumonic and respiratory diseases. Every year, approximately 7,500 Norwegians die of smoking-related diseases because they smoke themselves, while approximately 500 people die from passive smoking. The annual surveys of smoking habits in Norway carried out by the National Council on Tobacco and Health show that just under one third of the population between the ages of 16 and 74 smoke on a daily basis. After a very positive trend in the population's smoking habits in the 1970s, the proportion of daily smokers is now declining only slightly. Gender differences in smoking habits are relatively slight in Norway.

Fewer young people are starting to smoke today than 25 years ago. The decline is probably a result of new restrictions and increased focus on and knowledge of the risks of smoking. The sharp decline in the proportion of daily smokers among young people aged 16-24 from 1973 to the end of the 1980s has stagnated, however, and the trend has been stable since the end of the 1980s. In the under-25 age group, approximately 30 per cent of women and men smoke every day. Among pupils in lower secondary schools, 10 per cent were daily smokers in 2000, compared with 16 per cent in 1975. Among pupils in upper secondary schools, approximately 25 per cent are daily smokers.

Reducing smoking among young people is a priority task. Schools are an important arena in this respect. One example of the measures taken is the educational anti-smoking programme VÆR røykFRI (VrF), which targets children in lower secondary schools. Approximately half of the lower secondary school classes in the country are taking part in the programme. VrF is the most

comprehensive anti-smoking campaign that has ever been introduced in Norway. Its main purpose is to prevent children from starting to smoke. An evaluation of the programme showed good results. VrF is being continued in lower secondary schools and involves teachers, pupils and parents. Røyksignaler (Smoke Signals) is a joint project between the Directorate of Health and Social Affairs and the Norwegian Cancer Society, the goal of which is to reduce the number of smokers in the 16-19 age group. The project aims to combine individual-based strategies with measures at group and community level. Smoke Signals is being continued in upper secondary schools according to the same principles as VrF.

Norway has extremely strict anti-smoking legislation that prohibits smoking indoors in public buildings, on public transport and in workplaces. All restaurants are required to have smoke-free zones. Smoking in restaurants, bars and cafés will be prohibited from June 2004.

4.3.7 Mental health

Mental illness in Norway varies in terms of its duration, seriousness and intensity. It is calculated that 15-20 per cent of the population suffer from a mild or more serious form of mental illness. This means that there are approximately 800,000 people in Norway suffering from mental illness. Various surveys show that approximately 20 per cent of children and young people suffer from mental illness. Researchers and clinics agree that around 5 per cent of children and young people (aged 0-18) have mental problems that are so serious that they need help from the specialist health service.

Many studies show that certain risk factors increase the probability of mental illness among children and young people. Factors that have proved to increase the risk of mental health problems include long-term family stress, educational quality and environmental factors such as poor living standards and a lack of social support. Parents' problems in connection with drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness and helplessness in conflict situations also lead to an increased probability of problems among children. Research also indicates that in many cases social stress increases the danger of mental and physical illness.

For many years, it has been documented that services for people suffering from mental illness are seriously deficient and that the deficiencies are greatest in services for children and young people. The Expansion Plan for Mental Health 1999-2006 is intended to significantly strengthen mental health services over an eight-year period. Measures targeting children and young people are a central focus of the Expansion Plan. Services for children and young people will be expanded by providing more residential and day places and more professional staff for outpatient departments. In all, the Government aims to increase services to cover 5 percent of the 0-18 age group, compared with the current 2 per cent.

4.3.8 Eating disorders

There is growing focus on eating disorders as a health problem. It is largely children and young people who develop eating disorders. There is a difference between what are regarded as eating problems and more serious eating disor-

ders diagnosed according to medical criteria. It is believed that there has been an increase in the number of less serious eating problems, but it is difficult to quantify. However, the assumption that there has been a dramatic rise in the incidence of eating disorders is not supported by recent research.

International and Norwegian surveys estimate that serious eating disorders affect approximately 2 per cent of the female population. Eating disorders primarily affect women. According to a number of studies, the gender distribution is approximately 90 per cent girls and women and 10 per cent boys and men. Due to both physical complications and suicide attempts resulting from eating disorders, the mortality rate is 6-9 times higher than for the comparable population.

A Strategic Plan to combat eating disorders was presented in 2000. The plan is based in the Ministry of Health, but the various measures are followed up by the ministries responsible for different parts of the plan. The plan focuses on increasing the prevention of eating disorders by improving competence at health clinics and in the school health service and by providing information materials for schools. Treatment will also be strengthened. Among other things, specialist treatment services will be established in each health region, and all outpatients departments in the mental health care system must have the necessary expertise to treat eating disorders.

As part of the effort to prevent eating disorders, the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research are financing the development of an Internet-based educational programme which is intended to raise awareness among children and young people of the instruments and methods used by the media and the advertising industry. Young people are actively involved in the design of the website, which targets pupils in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools. Work is also in progress to make parents aware of the problem and indicate what parents and professionals can do to prevent children and young people from developing eating disorders.

4.4 The child and youth welfare service

There have been comprehensive developments in the child and youth welfare service in the past decade. A new Child Welfare Act was introduced in 1992, and a three-year development programme for the child welfare service was implemented from 1991-1993. The new Act and the development programme laid the foundations for strengthening preventive efforts, assistance and measures in the local community. The development of the child welfare service in the 1990s was based on four main principles:

- strengthening legal protection
- focusing on assistance and the prevention of problem development
- stagnation in the provision of public institutional services – growth of private, commercial institutional services
- human resource development, research and development

One of the aims of the 1992 Child Welfare Act was to strengthen legal safeguards by providing more precise criteria for intervention and improving case

processing. The most important legal reform under the Act concerned the establishment of county social welfare boards. The provision concerning deadlines and the reporting of any failure to comply with deadlines for reports, investigations or the implementation of measures has also led to more predictable case processing and otherwise strengthened legal protection.

In the 1990s, as a result of increased personnel capacity at the municipal level and more systematic, targeted child welfare activities, there was stronger focus on developing assistance services and preventive activities. Many municipalities have established inter-agency and inter-disciplinary teams comprising schools, educational and psychological counselling services, day-care centres and health clinics. Most municipalities have formulated trans-sectoral preventive plans for children and young people. Major organizational changes have also taken place in many municipalities, which have also affected the organization of child welfare services. The 1992 Child Welfare Act reduced the age-limit for after-care services to 20. Pursuant to an amendment to the Act in 1998, this limit was once again increased to 23. The most frequently used after-care measures are financial support, foster homes, institutions, personal support contacts and housing.

The child welfare service is not only an element of the welfare system but also an element of the official control system, and it exercises a great deal of power on behalf of society. The Government wishes to ensure that the child welfare service is aware of its dual role. As far as possible, the child welfare service must provide preventive assistance for children and families. However, being able to intervene and provide measures outside the home is an equally important part of the competence of a modern child welfare system.

In 2002, the Government therefore submitted Report No. 40 to the Storting (2001-2002) on child and youth welfare. The Report concludes that the child welfare service is facing some important challenges. Firstly, the child welfare service often enters the scene too late to be able to provide adequate assistance for children at risk and their families. Secondly, cooperation with other agencies and services is not good enough. Thirdly, the legitimacy of the child welfare service in the eyes of the population is relatively low. Fourthly, there is too little political awareness and too little involvement in the work done by the child welfare service at municipal level.

The Report to the Storting contains more than 70 proposals for measures. The main goal of these measures is to:

- strengthen preventive work with families and improve services for vulnerable children, adolescents and families
- increase the focus on the potential of parents and families
- improve the follow-up of parents in cases where the child welfare authorities place children outside the home
- strengthen methods based in the local community to prevent and treat serious behavioural problems, e.g. through the Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) and Parent Management Training (PMT) methods
- strengthen cooperation between the child welfare authorities and other agencies that provide services for vulnerable children, young people and families
- improve the supervision of foster parents

- strengthen work with children and families from different ethnic backgrounds and unaccompanied minors who are refugees
- increase the focus on children's right to receive information and express their opinions
- increase the focus on transparency in the child welfare service and county social welfare boards
- strengthen the expertise of the child welfare service relating to preventive work with families and work with children and young people with serious behavioural problems.

Through the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, the central government has a general, overarching responsibility for child welfare, while the administration of child welfare is largely the responsibility of the municipal child welfare service and the county authorities. From 1 January 2004, the central government will take over the tasks and responsibilities of the county child welfare authorities. The most important objectives of the child welfare service reform are to:

- ensure improved professional and financial control of child welfare services
- ensure equal child welfare services all over the country for children and young people who need them
- develop improved cooperation and improved services for municipalities
- ensure good quality in all parts of the child welfare service
- make an active contribution towards ensuring the further development of professional child welfare services
- contribute to improve cooperation with associated services

4.5 Work and unemployment

4.5.1 Young people's contact with the labour market

Because they spend more years on education, young people join the labour market later than they did before. The proportion of young people whose main activity is work is low in comparison with the adult population. This is because most young people under the age of 20 attend upper secondary school and the percentage of young people attending colleges and universities has increased in recent years. However, since many school pupils and university and college students work part-time, a relatively large percentage of young people have contact with the labour market.

The percentage of young people in employment increases with age. 50 per cent of the 20-24 age group had work as their main activity in 2001. Since many people in this age group also work part-time alongside their studies, the employment rate was 68 per cent. The percentage of students in this age group increased from 27 per cent in 1990 to 39 per cent in 2001. There are still major differences between young women and young men as regards the type of education they choose. Educational choices are largely made in accordance with traditional gender roles. The choices young people make are the main reason why gender segregation still exists on the Norwegian labour market.

4.5.2 The working environment for young employees

Due to young people's limited experience of working life, special rules are required to protect them and ensure that they have a good working environment. Because young people have "looser" ties to the labour market, they are more vulnerable than employees who are more strongly linked to the enterprise. It is also natural that young people who lack experience of working life and knowledge of their rights more easily accept unlawful working conditions, such as the lack of a written contract, poor training, arbitrary dismissal, lack of overtime pay and withholding of holiday pay when they leave the job. There are also examples of wages being paid in the form of goods. Experience also shows that young people may often be exposed to an unfortunate working environment and their rights as employees may not be observed. Due to their "loose" connection with working life, however, these conditions are seldom noticed in connection with ordinary working environment activities at the workplace. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that the percentage of young people who belong to a trade union is significantly lower than the average. According to the 2000 Survey of Living Conditions, only 27 per cent of young people in the 16-24 age group belonged to a trade union, compared with an average of 57 per cent.

Data from the 2000 Survey of Living Conditions shows that young people aged 16-24 have worse conditions than adult employees in several areas in terms of both the organizational and the physical working environment. As well as working to a greater extent in temporary posts with no permanent contract, they also have less independence and less varied work. As regards the physical working environment, it is particularly in connection with the ergonomic working environment (lifting, the percentage walking or standing) that young people work under worse conditions than older employees. However, there is no statistical difference between the number of health problems in the 16-24 age group and in the average working population.

The Working Environment Act and the regulations relating to children and young people at work contain rules intended to protect children and young people from work that may be harmful to their safety, health or physical or mental development, or conditions that may have a detrimental effect on their education. The Labour Inspectorate reports that few employers are aware of these provisions.

4.5.3 Unemployment among young people

The extent of unemployment provides information about the problems young people face in the transition from education to employment and how society treats newcomers to the labour market. Both the structural situation on the labour market and economic cycles affect the unemployment rate. The size of the young population and educational services also affect young people's access to the labour market.

Unemployment among young people is most widespread in the 20-24 age group and it is this age group that has the highest overall unemployment rate. Figures from the Labour Market Authority show that, on average, 2,600 persons between the ages of 16 and 19 were registered as unemployed in 2001. This is equivalent to 2.4 per cent of the labour force (the total of employed and un-

employed persons). Most people in this age group are only unemployed for a short period of time. The low percentage of long-term unemployed must be viewed in conjunction with educational services and the Youth Guarantee, which ensures an offer of labour market programmes for young people who do not have a place in the educational system or an offer of work.

The higher level of unemployment among the 20-24 age group than among younger people is associated with the fact that there are more people in this age group on the labour market. In 2001, 9,300 persons in this age group were registered as unemployed, equivalent to an unemployment rate of 4.6 per cent of the total labour force. Approximately 12 per cent of them were long-term unemployed. The low proportion of long-term unemployed is partly due to the fact that people in this age group are easy to place. Young people are more mobile and adaptable to the kinds of work available than people in older age groups.

The figures for young people who are registered as unemployed show that just over 60 per cent are men. This applies to both the 16-19 and the 20-24 age group. Long-term unemployment is also slightly higher for men than for women in these age groups.

The county Follow-up Service has a special responsibility for young people in the 16-19 age group. The Follow-up Service coordinates measures to ensure that young people who, for various reasons, drop out of upper secondary school are offered a school place, a job or a labour market programme. Follow-up of these young people takes place through cooperation between various agencies, including the Labour Market Authority. Young people who have dropped out of school and apply to the Labour Market Authority are usually given information, counselling and assistance for a short period of time. If the prospects of finding work are limited, young people are offered labour market programmes. Evaluation of the need for a programme takes place in cooperation with the young people themselves and sometimes in cooperation with representatives of the Follow-up Service or the education authorities. To the greatest possible extent, young people must be offered a combination of work experience and upper secondary education.

Through the Government's Youth Guarantee, young people under the age of 20 who have neither a job nor a place at school are entitled to an offer of a labour market programme. In 2001, labour market programmes were provided for an average of 1,649 persons under the age of 20. An offer of work experience has been the most important labour market programme used to fulfil the Youth Guarantee. This programme provides experience and training through follow-up and adapted on-the-job training in public or private enterprises. A work experience place can be used in combination with a school place. This is known as a combined programme. For combined programmes, the education authorities are responsible for the formal education that leads to a qualification, while the Labour Market Authority is responsible for providing work experience places. In 1999, approximately 30 per cent of young people in the 16-19 age group had work experience places in a combined programme.

The Labour Market Authority has developed an educational guidance programme, the aim of which is to teach individuals to take responsibility for their development towards working life and cope with the transition from edu-

cation to work. This is a service for young people who need comprehensive assistance. The educational guidance programme is also used to motivate young people under the age of 20 who are entitled to upper secondary education but for various reasons have dropped out of school, to continue their education.

The main service offered to unemployed people aged 20-24 is to help them to find a job, in some cases in combination with wage contributions. Offers of labour market programmes are most appropriate for long-term unemployed persons who need qualifications and work experience to find a job. Labour Market Training Courses (AMO courses) are suitable for this group. The courses increase their chances of transition to an ordinary job or motivate people to acquire ordinary educational qualifications through training. Short-term vocational courses are the mainstay of AMO courses, which are structured in such a way that students can take some modules as unemployed persons and others in ordinary schools. In total, this will add up to a formal qualification.

The Norwegian economy is currently affected by a weak economic situation, economic growth is slow and unemployment is rising. For the first time since 1996, the number of registered unemployed persons exceeded 100,000 (figures from the Labour Market Authority, August 2003). It is normal for unemployment to reach a seasonal peak in August. This is because young people who have completed their education register as unemployed in the summer. In September, unemployment usually declines because many job-seekers find work or start school. There is nevertheless cause for concern. There are far more registered unemployed persons than there were at the same time last year, and the rise in long-term unemployment is strongest among the youngest people (under 30). At the end of August, 3,921 persons under the age of 20 and 16,073 persons aged 20-24 were registered as totally unemployed. 17,178 persons in the 25-29 age group were registered as totally unemployed.

4.5.4 Young long-term unemployed recipients of welfare benefits

When young people are unemployed for a fairly long period of time, this is usually because they have other problems as well, such as a low level of education, drug or alcohol abuse, behavioural problems or lack a permanent residence. Some of them will receive welfare benefits. It is important to strengthen labour market policies for young, long-term unemployed recipients of welfare benefits. The Labour Market Authority collaborates with other players, particularly the municipal social services and employers, to find jobs for unemployed recipients of welfare benefits.

Since many young recipients of welfare benefits have complex needs and problems, ordinary labour market programmes will often be inadequate. Some young recipients of welfare benefits with serious, complex problems may be registered as occupationally disabled on social grounds. These people may be offered some of the special labour market programmes for the occupationally disabled. Moreover, it may be necessary to have help from others to solve health and social problems.

In order to be able to offer better, more effective assistance for recipients of welfare benefits who are outside the labour market, pilot measures entailing

more coherent municipal responsibility for activating long-term recipients of welfare benefits have been initiated. The purpose is to enable the recipients of welfare benefits to become more self-reliant and to test various models for coherent municipal responsibility for employment and activation programmes for this group.

As a subsidiary project, the social welfare service and the Labour Market Authority will jointly produce a guide to their respective services. The target group comprises unemployed persons whose main source of income is welfare benefits. The purpose of the guide is to promote more coherent services for people who are clients of both the Labour Market Authority and the social welfare office. The guide covers administrative routines, cooperation agreements and other information.

4.5.5 The situation for young people from ethnic minority backgrounds

Young people from ethnic minority backgrounds are a highly heterogeneous group with different qualifications and possibilities for entering working life. The factors that influence their situation include the number of years they have lived in the country, their level of education and their Norwegian language skills, as well as prejudice and lack of knowledge about this group among ethnic Norwegians. Most young people from ethnic minority backgrounds who have grown up in Norway, in the same way as ethnic Norwegians, are able to find work without experiencing any significant problems.

However, ethnic minorities generally have greater problems on the labour market than ethnic Norwegians. Occupational frequency (the percentage in the labour force compared with the percentage of people in the group) is lower, the unemployment rate is higher and the period of unemployment longer. Furthermore, they are over-represented in low-status occupations and have greater difficulty in finding work commensurate with their educational qualifications. Among young people, this is particularly noticeable for young people from non-western backgrounds. They have more difficulty in finding their first job after completing their education than other graduates in general, are more often outside the labour force, and earn less after completing their education than ethnic Norwegians.

In the same way as other young people, young people from ethnic minority backgrounds have access to the whole range of Labour Market Authority services and programmes. However, for young people who have recently settled in Norway, the Labour Market Authority provides programmes for qualification at an earlier stage and more systematically. For this group, offers of counselling are extremely important, with a view to evaluating and approving qualifications from their country of origin and, if necessary, building on or completing an education they have already started on. It is often necessary to provide assistance during the process of having vocational qualifications assessed and approved.

The Labour Market Authority has certain programmes that are specifically designed for immigrants, mainly labour market courses. Clarification and counselling interviews and work on action plans and job applications are integrat-

ed into these courses. This has proved to bring good results with respect to both job placement and the transition to education. The choice of programmes is determined by the demand for manpower on the local labour market and the practical and formal qualifications, period of unemployment and individual qualification needs and wishes of the individual concerned. There is stronger emphasis on educational programmes for young people than for other groups of unemployed persons.

4.5.6 Young people with disabilities and other special needs

Assisted work, which may be an appropriate instrument for young people with disabilities, focuses on the transition from school to work. It is possible to use this instrument in combination with services from agencies other than the Labour Market Authority. For example, it may be part of an educational programme which, during certain periods, includes assessment or training at a workplace, and where there is a need for close, broad-based follow-up. Experience shows that this method is particularly suitable in relation to technical and ergonomic adaptation of workplaces.

Students with disabilities who take part in ordinary education under an occupational rehabilitation programme must have regular contacts with the Labour Market Authority during the rehabilitation period. The Labour Market Authority has formulated individual action plans that help to ensure that individual students receive targeted, practical guidance and follow-up. Evaluations show that cooperation with the workplace usually functions well in such cases in terms of both the flexibility of the study programme and adaptation for people with disabilities.

4.5.7 Focus on youth unemployment

In Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), the Government stated that the Labour Market Authority's active efforts to help young people find work and prevent them from being unemployed for long periods of time will continue. The Government will give priority to young people with a special need for assistance. Measures must, to the greatest possible extent, be adapted to the individual's problems and his or her need to develop competence. The Government will also strengthen individual follow-up and adaptation programmes. This type of follow-up requires considerable resources, but it is crucial for success in working with young people who have problems finding a foothold on the labour market.

The Youth Guarantee will continue. The Government regards it as important to ensure that the youngest people in this group are reached quickly and are not left in a situation where they receive no offers of work or education. In order to ensure satisfactory services for young people who, for various reasons, need to be followed up on the labour market, the Government regards it as important to further develop the routines for inter-agency cooperation that already exist. The Government regards it as especially important to provide special services for the long-term unemployed, young people from immigrant backgrounds and young people with disabilities who have problems in relation to working life.

4.6 Young people and housing

4.6.1 Where do young people live?

For many young people, the process of establishing an independent life for themselves is closely related to starting a family and entering the labour market. It often takes place in stages, entailing several moves from one temporary rental accommodation to another until the young person finally purchases his or her own apartment, house or housing cooperative unit.

Most young people under the age of 20 live with their parents. According to the Survey of Living Conditions carried out by Statistics Norway in 1998, about as many 16-17 year-old boys (87 per cent) as girls (89 per cent) lived with their parents. Among 18-19 year-olds, the percentage had dropped to 52 per cent for girls and 67 per cent for boys. Among 24-25 year-olds, 8 per cent of women lived with their parents, compared with 18 per cent of men. Based on the percentage of respondents in living condition surveys who replied that they live with their parents, there has been no change in the 1990s in the percentage of young women who move out of their parents' home. Throughout the period, approximately 16 per cent of women aged 16-39 have lived with their parents. Among younger men, on the other hand, there has been a clear decline in the percentage living at home, from 30 per cent in 1991 to 21 per cent in 1998.

Many of the young people who have moved out of their parents' home live in temporary accommodation without a lease or with a short-term lease. This can be a good solution for those who only require housing temporarily, such as students. Other young people, such as unemployed persons who are dependent on social welfare, must for financial reasons largely make do with short-term solutions on the housing market. Among one-person households, young single persons (aged 16-24) have the worst housing conditions. This primarily applies to those who live in towns. Persons from ethnic minority backgrounds have greater difficulty than others in gaining entry to the housing market, partly due to their low income level and housing market discrimination.

Students have a lower standard of housing than other young people, but for most of them it is a temporary problem. The Survey of Living Conditions carried out among students in 1998 shows that housing expenses are an important cause of students' difficult financial situation, especially for those who live in large towns. About half of the students rent a bed-sitting room or other housing. Although students have low incomes, they are fairly stable payers and are more popular tenants than persons who are socially disadvantaged. Students therefore often squeeze weaker groups out of the rental market.

4.6.2 The situation of young people on the housing market

In Norway it is relatively common to buy and own one's own home compared with other countries. About 23 % of the population rent the housing they live in. Since the 1990s there has been an increase in the percentage of persons who rent housing, particularly in large towns. Housing prices have risen sharply in the last few years in some parts of Norway, for both owned and rented accommodation. While the rise in prices has been strongest in the Oslo area,

prices have also increased significantly in other large cities in recent years. In the largest towns, therefore, the situation for those who wish to establish their own home has become considerably more difficult. This does not apply only to households with low incomes and little or no equity. Even for many households with normal incomes, it has become more difficult to acquire suitable housing that is affordable.

This situation has been documented in several reports presented to the Storting in recent years, cf. Report No. 49 (1997-98) to the Storting on housing for young people and disadvantaged persons, and Report No. 50 (1998-99) to the Storting on equalization. These reports show that there is a great need for more housing for young people and vulnerable groups, particularly in pressure areas. There is also a need for more student accommodations in order to solve students' housing problems. After these reports were presented, the situation became even more difficult due to higher interest rates and increased housing prices. In 2003 this trend has stabilized somewhat following several interest rate cuts.

Husbanken (the Norwegian State Housing Bank) is the central government's most important instrument for the implementation of housing policy. The central government provides loans and grants through Husbanken. Furthermore, Husbanken administers the state housing benefit scheme. State loans and housing benefits are key instruments for helping young people who are establishing their first home and disadvantaged persons to obtain housing. The start-up loan is intended to assist young people and other disadvantaged persons who have problems gaining entry to the housing market. The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development has reorganized the Husbanken loan schemes to target them more towards young and disadvantaged persons and less towards the general population.

4.7 Culture and the media

Young people lead an active life in their leisure time. Their recreational occupations vary, but some activities are more popular than others. The cinema, sports, music, books and television play a prominent role in the everyday activities of children and young people. Statistical surveys show that cinemas, sports and libraries are the cultural facilities used by the largest number of children and young people. The percentage who use these facilities is far higher than the percentage who make use of other facilities and has remained stable throughout the 1990s. On the whole, children and young people are more active users of cultural facilities than other age groups, both as audiences and as performers.

4.7.1 Voluntary child and youth organizations

Voluntary child and youth organizations in Norway run a wide range of activities and play a pivotal role in the everyday lives of children and young people. These non-governmental organizations serve as social meeting places and run activities ranging from choirs and theatre groups to political activities and activities based on a broad spectrum of beliefs and values. Participation in such activities helps to train young people and recruit new leaders and encourages

them to become involved and to feel a sense of responsibility for others. The organizations provide children and young people with a channel through which they can express their opinions to the authorities at all levels. The organizations' international activities offer children and young people an opportunity to have contact with other persons of their own age outside Norway and promotes international engagement, cooperation, solidarity and peace-building. This important voluntary effort deserves better working conditions and operating parameters. The organizations are arenas in which children and young people can spend time with their peers and establish and develop friendships. However, the organizations are not just important forums for children and young people, they also offer an opportunity for learning and interaction across age and generational divisions, and for important contact with adults such as leaders and interested parents.

Participation in a voluntary organization is part of the childhood experience of almost all children and young people in Norway. Around 90 per cent of all children and young people have been a member of an organization or a club. During adolescence the membership percentage decreases from around 80 per cent of 13-year-olds to just over 60 per cent of 18-year-olds. The participation rate in the activities offered by the organizations is high among both girls and boys all over Norway, although the organizations in which girls and boys are most active vary somewhat. Sports organizations have the largest number of participants, and sport is the organized activity on which members spend the most time. Apart from that, music organizations and recreational clubs have the biggest membership. Many children and young people are also members of philanthropic or belief-based organizations.

There is an ongoing debate as to whether the organizational community as a whole is changing. A number of organizations have experienced a decline in membership in recent years, and new types of organizations are emerging. Many of the traditional, idea-based organizations that took part in building up Norwegian democracy are now losing ground, and there are a growing number of organizations with more specific aims.

Non-governmental child and youth organizations were given a key role in child and youth policy as early as 1945, in the political parties' joint programme. Since 1950, central government grants have been provided for these organizations. This support has been distributed in various ways and been administered by a variety of bodies since World War II. Throughout this period, however, task-sharing between the central government and non-governmental organizations has been based on the principle that the organizations are free to carry out child and youth work on their own terms, and the central government provides financial support for this work because it has an intrinsic value for children and young people.

In Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), the Government emphasizes that it is important to promote variety and breadth in the organizational community, and to provide good financial operating parameters for the organizations' work and simplify the rules governing public funding.

In 2003 grants totalling around NOK 70 million will be provided by the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs for the central activities of voluntary child and youth organizations. The purpose of the grant schemes is to facilitate the participation of children and young people in child and youth organizations. The organizations are to be secured and strengthened as an arena for co-determination and democracy, and as tools for child and youth participation in society. The grants are intended to stimulate activity and promote diversity in organizational life. In 2002, 58 organizations with a total membership of around 300,000 received national operating grants through this allocation.

Grants for the central activities of child and youth organizations are administered by the Fordelingsutvalget (Allocations Committee), a separate body under the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs. The administration of the grant scheme is regulated by the regulations on grants for voluntary child and youth organizations. The grant scheme has a long history, but new regulations were adopted in December 2002, in which emphasis was placed on making the scheme more appropriate for new and small organizations and on simplifying the rules so as to make both the submission and processing of applications a less time-consuming, costly process.

The central government also provides funding for voluntary child and youth work at the local level. On the basis of Report No. 27 (1996-97) to the Storting on the central government's relationship to voluntary organizations and Report No. 44 (1997-98), a supplementary report on the central government's relationship to voluntary organizations, special grant schemes were established in 2000 for voluntary child and youth work in the fields of sport and culture. For 2002 a total of NOK 86 million in "gaming revenues" (surplus from the state lottery, Norsk Tipping) was allocated for grants for local sports clubs and associations. All voluntary, membership-based sports clubs that run activities for children and/or young people are eligible for funding through the grant scheme. The grant scheme in the cultural sector, the Voluntary Fund, is administered by the Norwegian Youth Council, the Council for Music Organizations in Norway and the Norwegian Amateur Theatre Council, and is placed under the administration of the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs. In 2002, funding provided by the Voluntary Fund totalled NOK 70.8 million. A majority of grants are allocated to voluntary child and youth organizations with a central headquarters, while a small proportion is provided to local clubs and groups with no connection to any central unit. Funding for local clubs and groups that are not connected to an established central organization are an important means of encouraging children and young people at the local level to launch new, voluntary initiatives. There will be a substantial increase in funding because as from 2003 the grant scheme also receives funds from the surplus from the state lottery.

4.7.2 Sports and physical activity

Children and young people are key target groups for central government policy on sports. In Report No. 14 (1999-2000) to the Storting on a changing sports sector - central government's relationship to sports and physical activity and Report No. 39 (2000-2001) to the Storting on outdoor recreation, particular importance is attached to providing favourable conditions for an all-round range of sports, physical activity and outdoor recreation for children and young

people. Activities of this nature provide fertile ground for sound attitudes and purposeful engagement.

The Survey of Living Conditions conducted by Statistics Norway in 1997 shows that 82 per cent of the population aged 6-15 take part in physical activity in the form of work-outs or exercise at least once a week. According to the MMI child and youth survey, close to 60 per cent of children and young people aged 8-15 take part in sports through sports clubs. The corresponding figure for 16-19-year-olds is between 30 and 40 per cent. Thus the percentage of children and young people who practice a sport and compete within the framework of a sports club declines as they grow older. Dance/ballet and aerobics are typical activities for girls. Football, alpine skiing, telemark skiing, snowboarding and rollerblading are more popular among boys than among girls. In every age group, more boys than girls practice a sport and compete in a sports club. The percentage of children under 12 years of age who practice a sport in a sports club has remained stable in the 1990s, but the percentage of young people, particularly girls, has decreased.

In the light of Report No. 27 (1996-97) to the Storting on the central government's relationship to voluntary organizations and Report No. 44 (1997-98), a supplementary report on central government's relationship to voluntary organizations, a new grant scheme was developed for the work of local sports clubs for children and young people (6-19 years old). The grant scheme was established in 2000. All voluntary, membership-based sports clubs that run activities for children and/or young people are entitled to support through the grant scheme.

4.7.3 Outdoor recreation

In Report No. 39 (2000-2001) to the Storting on outdoor recreation, attention is focused on children and young people and their participation in outdoor recreational activities. A number of measures are proposed in the Report to encourage children, young people and families with children to take part in outdoor recreation. The most important of these measures include:

- increasing the possibilities for children and young people to develop physically, mentally and socially by playing in, walking in and experiencing natural surroundings
- maintaining and intensifying the focus on information, activities and training relating to outdoor recreation which target children and families
- strengthening efforts to motivate and encourage children, young people and families to enjoy outdoor recreation by increasing the grant for activities run by outdoor recreational organizations
- building up expertise at the municipal level with general focus on the value of outdoor recreation and special focus on its importance for children's health and development
- conducting a national campaign to promote outdoor activities in day care centres, schools and day care facilities for schoolchildren
- increasing the capacity of outdoor pursuits centres to ensure that all pupils are given the opportunity to stay at a centre in primary and secondary school
- making freshwater sports fishing cheaper and more accessible

The Storting endorsed the main elements of the Report, when it was presented to it.

4.7.4 Artistic and cultural activities

In the 1990s there has been growing focus on the communication of culture and the arts to children and young people. Children and young people are now a priority target group for most art and cultural institutions, and the availability of artistic and cultural programmes in schools has increased.

Certain groups of children and young people are dependent on extra assistance and conditions specially adapted to their needs in order to be able to participate in cultural activities like other people. This applies, for instance, to children and young people with disabilities. They are not a homogeneous group, and their activity and participation in the cultural sector vary considerably. To improve these groups' possibilities for participation, new cultural facilities that are built must be specially adapted to the needs of disabled persons.

Since 2001 the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs has allocated funds to enterprises that arrange cultural events to which tickets are sold on the condition that persons possessing official identification as accompanying person for disabled persons who purchase a full-price ticket to a cultural event are entitled to a free ticket. There is a similar arrangement for sports events. Many municipalities have now introduced a system of official identification for persons accompanying disabled persons.

4.7.5 Schools of music and the arts

Report No. 40 (1992-93) to the Storting advocated a joint programme of art, culture and music for children and young people in collaboration between day care centres, day care facilities for schoolchildren, primary and lower secondary schools, music schools and voluntary music and cultural organizations. When a statute requiring municipalities to establish schools of music and the arts was adopted in 1997, such schools existed in most municipalities in Norway. In the 2000-2001 school year, 431 municipalities had established schools of music and the arts, either individually or jointly with other municipalities. Around 70,000 primary and lower secondary schoolchildren participated in these programmes, in addition to 7,000 pre-school children and close to 9,000 pupils above lower secondary school age. A number of activities are also organized in the form of projects, such as musicals and plays, within the framework of schools of music and the arts.

4.7.6 Libraries

Public libraries have a long tradition of developing good services for children and young people. Most libraries have special departments for these groups and arrange events particularly for them. Development projects in public libraries particularly designed for children and young people are the most important area of focus for the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority. There is emphasis on efforts to stimulate the interest of these groups in reading and books, but Internet access is also an important and popular library service among young users.

Data from local youth surveys show that libraries are a facility used particularly frequently by girls from ethnic minority backgrounds. The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs supports a library service for immigrants and

refugees in Oslo through the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority. The service functions as a national exchange for inter-library lending of literature for refugees and immigrants. Municipalities in which there are more than 100 immigrants have been encouraged to establish library services for this group within the framework of existing programmes, and a number of municipalities have followed up on this request.

The Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille produces literature for children and young people who are blind or visually impaired. Talking books are produced for both user groups, but tactile books are also produced for the very youngest users, i.e. books in which the reading experience is primarily stimulated when the reader touches and feels the books' materials and less by any text they may contain.

4.7.7 Museums

340 of Norway's close to 800 museums currently receive direct or indirect grants through the central government budget. One of the goals of museum policy is to ensure that all groups have access to museum services, with particular emphasis on children and young people.

The Norwegian Museum Authority has arranged several projects targeting children and young people, with special focus on developing teaching programmes in cooperation with museums and primary and secondary schools. The national curricula for primary and secondary school have been key documents in the development of these programmes. Sami museums communicate information on Sami culture to many groups, including children and young people. The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs has initiated plans to establish a department in the Glomdal Museum in Elverum to present the culture of the Romani people and a new centre for Kven culture in Porsanger.

4.7.8 Pictorial art

Children and young people are a prioritized target group for the services of pictorial art institutions, several of which have special departments for schools or educational programmes. The National Touring Exhibitions, Norway, which is responsible for providing nation-wide services, produces, facilitates and presents exhibitions for schools which are sent from place to place in Norway.

The design and quality of buildings and construction projects express values, shape attitudes and influence behaviour. The decoration of school buildings is an important part of the activity of the National Foundation for Art in Public Buildings. A programme entitled "Schools and their Surroundings", which is run by Norsk Form, also contributes towards developing schools as local cultural centres, promoting aesthetics, quality and functionality in school buildings and emphasizing content and working methods in arts and crafts teaching programmes with special focus on architecture and design.

4.7.9 Theatre

One of the main goals is to ensure that as many people as possible have access to theatre, opera and dance performances of a high artistic quality by providing central government allocations for dramatic art institutions and independ-

ent theatre groups. Children and young people are a key target group, and institutions are expected to further develop services through which dramatic art is presented to children, young people and new groups. Several of the institutions adapt productions and performances for children and young people, partly in cooperation with schools and local and regional authorities. In 2000, theatres presented 6,450 performances. Children and young people were the primary target group of just over 40 per cent of theatrical productions.

4.7.10 Music

Through the provision of central government allocations for music institutions, the aim is to make music of a high artistic quality available to as many people as possible and to promote artistic innovation and development. Children and young people are a key target group. Institutions which receive central government funding are obliged to further develop their music services for children and young people.

Norconcert (the Norwegian Concert Institute) has a particular responsibility for concerts for children and young people. In 2000, 95 per cent of all the concerts arranged or supported by Norconcert were given for that target group. Norconcert enters into agreements with counties regarding the planning and presentation of concerts at schools and day care centres.

4.7.11 The media and communication

It is the responsibility of the Government to develop a media policy that safeguards freedom of expression, diversity and quality. This also applies to the policy for children and young people. They must be assured of access to good media services and their need for information and possibilities for expressing their views must be met, while keeping in mind the importance of protecting children and young people from harmful media content. It is also a goal to ensure that all the inhabitants of Norway benefit from new technology and new channels of communication. These are national objectives that are also underscored in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which contains a special Article on the right of children and young people to freedom of expression and information.

Many people have pointed out that where developments in the field of media and technology are concerned, young people have functioned as innovators in devising new ways of making use of available technology. They are the first to apply new technological solutions and adapt them to their own needs. Recent research shows that the way in which children and young people use new media and forms of communication has clear positive aspects, and to a greater degree than before reflects their role as participants rather than mere spectators. Their curiosity about and interest in exploring new media do not replace their active experiences, but they alternate more between different activities. Children and young people master and develop new forms of communication. They become accustomed to choosing between different opinions and become more aware of their own needs and desires. They develop new ways of dealing with information. Their identity and culture are influenced by the global communications network. Seen as a whole, the vast spread of new media

and new forms of communication has led to new and increased possibilities of obtaining information and building expertise.

Although new technology offers new, enhanced opportunities for communication, which in itself is a positive development, this trend also has some negative aspects. The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs' plan called Barn, unge og Internett (Children, Young People and the Internet) contains a number of measures designed to ensure safer use of the Internet. Norway is also involved in international cooperation aimed at strengthening efforts to prevent the presentation and distribution of unlawful, harmful content through new media. Through the EEA Agreement, Norway has participated in a programme to establish criteria for common European age limits for computer games.

5

Safe, inclusive local communities

5.1 Introduction

In Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), the Government states that secure, inclusive local communities are important if children and young people are to grow up in a good environment. The local community provides an important framework for interaction and activity and for a sense of belonging to a larger community. The Government regards it as important to foster safe, inclusive local communities through interaction between public authorities, non-governmental organizations and volunteers, parents, and children and young people themselves. Access to good, inexpensive meeting places for interaction, self-expression and activity is important. Meeting places must be designed in such a way that all children and young people have an opportunity to participate in the community. The Government takes the view that good, inclusive, attractive meeting places can help to reduce substance abuse and crime and combat racism and discrimination.

Local authorities have an important responsibility in efforts to provide a safe, inclusive local environment. To achieve satisfactory results, municipalities must plan targeted activities through interaction between local agencies and services and voluntary players. Cooperation and dialogue with children, young people and parents is extremely important. Both central and local authorities face clear challenges as regards the professional content and development of such activities and, not least, the influence and participation of young people.

5.2 Meeting places and youth premises

5.2.1 Youth premises

Premises for the exclusive use of young people are always high on the list when young people are asked what they want money to be spent on in their municipality. On the basis of requests for “somewhere to be”, many municipalities have established youth clubs, youth centres, multi-activity centres and other meeting places for young people.

Youth premises have a long history. The first youth centre was established by the Norwegian Youth Association as early as 1896. Other non-governmental organizations followed suit, and in 1950 a special central government grant scheme was established for community halls. Official involvement has increased since then.

The first youth club was established in Oslo in 1953. Other municipalities followed its example a few years later and the number of youth clubs increased sharply around 1970. The main goal was socio-political – the clubs were intended to prevent problems among young people. Towards the end of the 1970s, youth clubs also acquired a cultural policy platform and the intrinsic value of youth clubs as cultural arenas was emphasized. Today, there are almost 1,000 youth clubs, most of which are run by municipal authorities although there are also private youth clubs run by other organizations. Data from local youth surveys show that a large proportion of young people attend youth clubs in the municipalities where they exist. This underlines the importance of providing places where young people can meet and have informal contacts with their peers.

Many different activities are included in the concept of youth clubs. Their organization is based on social interaction and informal activity, and they are open to all. Many youth clubs are divided into a junior club for children under the age of 12 and a youth club for teenagers. No special skills, knowledge or fees are required to participate. The clubs attract a wide range of young people, not least those who do not feel at home in more organized activities. Youth clubs are generally run by a committee of young people and their form and content are intended to develop in step with the needs and wishes of new generations. Nevertheless, they vary widely in terms of their members' feeling of participation and how far local club democracy goes. The quality of youth clubs varies, and there are significant differences between municipalities with respect to the establishment of club activities. Experience shows that youth clubs reach many children and young people who do not take part in other organized activities and provide a base for important preventive work. In order to ensure that they do a good job, employees must have adequate expertise. Premises, staffing, opening times and internal club democracy also set important parameters for their activities. As part of the effort to improve municipalities' competence in the youth club sector, the National Youth and Leisure Association has published a municipal guide for work in youth clubs with the support of the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs. The National Youth and Leisure Association is a voluntary, nationwide organization for users, employees and voluntary workers in municipal and municipally-supported leisure activities.

Interaction and cooperation between employees in the youth club sector and municipal agencies and services are important for good local work with young people. Youth club personnel often possess a great deal of knowledge about youth groups and also have contacts with young people who participate very little in other activities and services. In many cases, club staff and leaders are able to build trusting relationships with young people who otherwise have little confidence in adults, and act as a link to other agencies (such as the child welfare service, the police or schools) and as neutral supporters. In order to ensure that young people struggling with problems receive adequate assistance, it is important for employees in the youth club sector to be well quali-

fied. Local authorities have an important responsibility to ensure that this is the case, not least by training and educating their own employees. Training and education in the youth club sector should be improved. In Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002) relating to the conditions in which children and young people live and grow up in Norway, the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs states that the Government will encourage human resource development in this area.

Multi-activity centres have been developing since the beginning of the 1980s. Their activities range from running cafés to traditional cultural activities, such as art exhibitions and theatres. While young people are the most important target group, many of these centres also cater for other groups. There is strong emphasis on personal activity. The operational methods and levels of activity in the various centres vary widely.

Youth culture is diversified and perhaps more global than before. Interest in music is one important common denominator, interest in film, computers and media is another. There are media workshops for children and young people in several municipalities. The best-developed media workshops offer all-round media production and media theory in interaction with other cultural activities, such as music, dance and drama. Some media workshops also work with local media, which use the children's and young people's products in their own publications and broadcasts. Several music and media workshops also offer alternative education for primary and lower secondary school pupils who cannot cope with ordinary school subjects, or optional lower secondary school subjects. Media workshops have been established as separate services in their own premises or are linked to youth clubs, multi-activity centres or other local meeting places for children and young people. The experience gained so far has been positive and media workshops should be established in far more municipalities than they are today.

Local and regional cultural buildings are also important meeting places for children and young people. The purpose of the central government grant scheme for local and regional cultural buildings is to ensure that good premises are provided, with space for a variety of cultural activities that are open to all. Non-governmental organizations are often responsible for the construction and operation of these buildings, in some cases in cooperation with municipal authorities. Local and regional cultural buildings are open to all age and population groups and are important cultural and social meeting places.

The need for premises varies from one municipality to the next and different solutions are required. There are many good examples of local cultural buildings, schools, day-care centres and youth clubs being located in the same place. If co-location is to be successful, the premises must be properly planned. It is also important to ensure that children and young people with disabilities have good access to the premises. The establishment and operation of youth premises, such as youth clubs, multi-activity centres and media workshops, are a municipal responsibility and there are no special central government schemes to support them. However, various aspects of these services are eligible for funding from the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs' grant schemes for activities targeting young people in larger urban municipalities and in rural municipalities (see Ch. 6), central government grant schemes for "substance-free environment" activities under the Ministry of Social Affairs' budget, and the

Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs' grant scheme for local and regional cultural buildings.

Although many municipalities have a variety of premises where young people can meet and interact, Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)) emphasizes the importance of more municipalities giving greater priority to this area. Informal meeting places are important, both for interaction between peers and cultural expression, and they play a pivotal role in preventive efforts for children and young people. In efforts to prevent substance abuse and other antisocial behaviour among children and young people, good, safe meeting places are especially important. Meeting places that are open to all, where no-one is excluded on the grounds of their ability or financial situation, also reach children and young people who participate in few other organized activities in their leisure time.

5.2.2 Sports and local facilities

Report No. 14 to the Storting (1999-2000) on changes in the sports sector states that children's and young people's possibilities for all-round sport and varied, challenging physical activity must be ensured. Priority must be given to facilities in the local community that encourage and meet the need of children and young people for activity in organized and self-organized forms. Young people must have influence on the processes where activities and facilities are planned. Facilities should function as good social meeting places in local communities. The Report also emphasizes that when ordinary activities for children and young people are developed, it should be a prerequisite that they also include disabled people. In order to improve services for children and young people, the Government will give priority to facilities such as football pitches (gravel and artificial grass), multi-purpose halls and swimming pools. Special priority will be given to large towns and urban areas (see Ch. 6).

Children and young people often ask for spaces in their local community where they can play, play ball games, skateboard and engage in various types of adventure activities. They want to be able to engage in activities on their own terms, and they want to determine the form and content of such activities themselves. Consequently, the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs has allocated gaming funds for local facilities. Since 1994, more than NOK 350 million has been allocated for simple facilities designed for various types of self-organized physical activity, primarily for children and young people. Local facilities are important instruments in efforts to encourage children and young people to engage in physical activity. Since 2000 this scheme has been expanded to include outdoor facilities on school sites.

In Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002) relating to the conditions in which children and young people live and grow up in Norway, the Government stresses the importance of young people having influence on the processes that lead to the construction of the facilities they will be using. In this connection, it will be important that young people themselves and, not least, local decision-makers develop awareness of strategies for influence and participation.

5.3 Young people, drugs and alcohol

In Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), the Government states that it is important to promote greater efforts to combat substance abuse among young people. The challenge is to mobilize the ability of children and young people to refrain from substance abuse and focus on activities that help to postpone the age of debut and reduce consumption. If we are to succeed, broad mobilization and involvement are important. Young people must encounter responsible adults who take a clear stand against drugs and alcohol, and positive, attractive meeting places for young people must be established in the local community.

Preventing substance abuse among young people has been a priority in efforts to ensure a good local environment for our youngsters. Official policies have emphasized the importance of broad mobilization and good interaction between public authorities, parents, non-governmental organizations and youth groups. In Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), the Government stresses the importance of establishing and maintaining attractive, substance-free meeting places and leisure activities under both municipal and private auspices to prevent an early debut and limit consumption.

In autumn 2002, the Government presented a special Plan of Action to combat drug and alcohol problems. This plan emphasizes both preventive measures and improved treatment for substance abusers. Children and young people are a priority target group in the Plan of Action.

5.3.1 Young people's use of drugs and alcohol

The National Institute for Alcohol and Drug Research (SIRUS) carries out annual surveys of the use of drugs and alcohol among young people aged 15-20. This survey shows that substance abuse among young people has become more widespread in recent years. Alcohol is still the most common substance, and the one that leads to the most injuries, accidents and violence, both within and outside the home. While calculated average alcohol consumption in the 15-20 age-group was equivalent to approximately 3 litres of pure alcohol in the first half of the 1990s, it has risen to 5.5 litres in recent years. This increase is surprisingly large, even though adult alcohol consumption has also risen in the same period. Although the percentage rise in average alcohol consumption was somewhat higher for girls than for boys, on average, boys still drink more than girls of the same age. The percentage rise in alcohol consumption has been greatest in the youngest age-group, although the average age of alcohol debut has remained unchanged in recent years. The average age at which young people first try alcohol is approximately 15. Today's 17-18 year-olds consume about the same amount of alcohol as the adult population. Beer is clearly the preferred alcoholic beverage and accounts for more than half of all the alcohol drunk by young people. Young people in Oslo drink less spirits and moonshine than the national average.

In the country as a whole, the percentage of 15-20 year-olds who state that they have used cannabis at some time has doubled since 1990, but it appears to have

remained fairly stable in recent years (between 15 and 18 per cent). The percentage who have used amphetamines has increased from 1.2 per cent in 1990 to 4.6 per cent in 2003, while the percentage who have used cocaine has increased from around 0.5% in 1990 to just over 3% in 2003. Ecstasy appeared on the market in the mid-1990s and just over 3% of young people in the 15-20 age-group state that they have used ecstasy at some time. For other drugs (heroin, LSD and GHB) there has been little change and very few young people state that they have ever used these substances (less than 1% for each drug). In the case of most drugs, the percentage of young people who have used them is higher in Oslo than in the rest of the country.

Most young people who use or try cannabis, amphetamines, ecstasy or other drugs do not develop a long-term addiction. However, although there is no automatic transition from one substance to another, various surveys show that the barrier against trying different drugs is reduced. Since more young people are experimenting with the less harmful drugs, there is reason to fear that more of them will become addicted to the harder drugs.

Experiments with drugs and alcohol start when people are young. Patterns of drug and alcohol use are formed in a social context; during leisure time, at parties or on trips to cabins in the country with other young people. They learn to drink alcohol – and use other substances – from other people, drink in social situations and teach others what they have learned themselves. In efforts to prevent substance abuse, it is therefore important to establish positive, substance-free meeting places that are more attractive than home-alone parties or other arenas where young people use drugs and alcohol.

It has been shown that young people tend to believe that their friends drink more than they do. This phenomenon, which has been called “a majority misconception”, may lead to a fictitious pressure to consume alcohol. This is important information that should be a topic of discussion among young people, parents and everyone in contact with and working with children and young people.

Those who make their debut at an early age have proved to be particularly active in other types of norm-breaking behaviour. Surveys show that violence often occurs when people are under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and the probability of being a victim of violence increases when a person is under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Several surveys show that around eight out of every ten violent injuries are alcohol or drug-related. Moreover, alcohol is often a factor in accidents, crime, abuse, domestic violence, undesired sexual approaches and unprotected sex.

A Norwegian survey has shown that among alcohol users, alcohol consumption is three times higher among those who were given alcohol by their parents than among those who were not given alcohol by their parents. Those who were not given alcohol at home were also intoxicated far less often. Giving alcohol to young people at an early stage to teach them to control their drinking is probably counter-productive. Consequently, it is important to further develop measures aimed at making parents aware of the importance of being good role models as regards alcohol consumption. This also means that parents must learn more about today's substance abuse problems, have a more conscious attitude to their own consumption and help promote a common

attitude and strategy in relation to young people. Forming groups of parents to discuss and exchange advice and experience on matters relating to substance abuse has proved successful. Young people can also be included in such activities.

5.3.2 Challenges and future measures to combat drug and alcohol abuse

In Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), the Government points out that it is important to realize that young people encounter drugs and alcohol. Using them may be part of the transition from childhood to adulthood, and there must therefore be emphasis on preventive measures that are aimed at giving young people the necessary tools to deal with this reality. Conversation and discussion must be encouraged, and both young people and adults must be motivated to be positive role models and opinion leaders. The responsibility of parents and their function as role models are particularly important. One of the future challenges will be to devise good methods for mobilizing the ability of children and young people to refrain from substance abuse, and to focus on activities that help to postpone the age of debut and reduce consumption. In this connection, substance-free, meaningful leisure activities and meeting places, both municipal and private, are important. It is important for young people to meet responsible adults who take a clear stand against drugs and alcohol. The leaders of voluntary children's and youth organizations and sports activities have an important role to play here, as do the employees of municipal leisure facilities. It should be a matter of course for the leaders of such groups to refrain from using such substances in the presence of young people and promote a substance-free lifestyle.

Children and young people must be actively involved in the debate on substance abuse. The best arena for this is the local community where children and young people grow up. One important method in this connection is youth-to-youth information. The involvement of young people and their own ability to promote their views in local, long-term efforts can have a greater impact than periodic campaigns.

In efforts to prevent substance abuse, the entire community, not merely the authorities, must be involved. Attitudes are formed among friends, in the family or with fellow pupils and work colleagues. It is therefore important that these groups mobilize to combat substance abuse. At the same time, through legislation and control measures, the authorities must take a clear stand against substance abuse. Stronger efforts on the part of schools, the police, the child welfare service and other agencies responsible for the local environment in which children grow up are also important areas of focus. It is also important to increase the involvement of parents. Broad-based mobilization is required if we are to succeed.

There are many indications that propaganda which exaggerates the detrimental effects of using various substances may attract rather than deter some young people. In efforts to reduce substance abuse and substance-related damage and injury, it is therefore necessary to provide balanced, objective information. Such information must be disseminated among and discussed by the young people themselves, parents and adults at school and in other arenas where young

people congregate. National and international research shows that long-term and often unpopular measures, in the form of high prices and limited availability, have the greatest impact and the most long-lasting effect in limiting alcohol abuse. Limiting access to drugs and offering positive alternatives to drug abuse are probably also the most important measures. The main challenge for the future is to maintain a restrictive alcohol and drugs policy.

5.4 Youth crime

In its efforts to ensure a good, safe local environment, in Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), the Government states that it will make a special effort to combat crime and violence among children and young people. A great deal of attention has been focused on problems related to crime and violence in recent years and the situation gives cause for concern. There is reason to ask if there has been a trend towards brutalization in some groups of children and young people.

Violence and crime occur in all parts of the country and affect many children and young people, both as victims and as perpetrators. Although the problems are more comprehensive and complex in the largest towns, violence and crime are not only an urban phenomenon. Nor is serious and/or repeated criminal behaviour limited to children and young people from obviously disadvantaged backgrounds.

The minimum age of criminal responsibility remains fixed at 15. This means that children under the age of 15 may not be punished. All research and experience indicates that punishment does not have a positive effect on this group. However, these children must be helped to stop their negative behaviour and measures must be implemented quickly. Children must not be shuttled between the police, the child welfare service, the service for alcohol and drug addicts and the health service. Among other things, the various agencies must cooperate better in order to nip a potential criminal career in the bud. Follow-up services for children and young people who have committed crimes must be strengthened and further developed, with focus on both general, primary preventive work and individual measures. In Report No. 40 to the Storting (2001-2002) on child and youth welfare, the Government states that preventive work in municipalities must be strengthened. In order to achieve this, various agencies, such as the child welfare service, schools, the leisure sector, outreach services and the police must work together. It is important to make a single agency responsible for the coordination of such cooperation. In most cases, it will be natural for the child welfare service to assume this responsibility, but municipalities must decide for themselves where such responsibility will lie. This does not mean that the child welfare service is to be responsible for other agencies, but that the child welfare service must coordinate measures so that agencies work together rather than pulling in different directions.

Both stronger preventive efforts and a clearer allocation of responsibility between the various agencies that deal with crimes committed by minors are required. The Government will, therefore, make active efforts to foster binding cooperation between the law enforcement agencies, the welfare services, parents and young people themselves so that all young criminals experience a

reaction to their crime that will help to make them responsible and thereby provide opportunities for positive development.

5.4.1 Child and youth crime in figures

Crime statistics show that only a small minority of children and young people are registered as having committed a crime – less than half of one per cent of children under the minimum age of criminal responsibility and two to three percent of young people up to the age of 20 (Statistics Norway 2001). However, it is difficult to provide exact information about the occurrence of crime among children and young people. All the sources of data have their weaknesses, whether the figures are based on registered crimes, self-reporting or surveys of victims. However, the data from self-reporting studies identifies a small group of seriously disturbed young people with extensive behavioural problems.

Although child and youth crime rates are low in Norway compared with many other countries, there has been a rise in registered child and youth crime in recent years. The number of young criminals has increased in most areas of crime, but the most serious crimes committed by young people (aged 15-20) are usually related to theft, drugs or vandalism (Statistics Norway 2001). With respect to gender differences, the crime statistics show that boys commit more crimes than girls. In 2000, the proportion of crimes committed by girls was lowest (13.9 per cent) for girls under the minimum age of criminal responsibility and highest (17.4 per cent) in the 15-17 age-group.

The trends in some types of registered crime give cause for concern. This applies particularly to the trend in drug-related crimes, but also to violent crime and robbery. The figures for the 15-20 age-group were particularly negative. There has been relatively little change among children under the age of 15, except for vandalism (graffiti), where there has been a sharp rise.

5.4.2 Measures and challenges in efforts to combat child and youth crime

As part of the effort to prevent and combat child and youth crime, in 1999 the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs presented Report No. 17 to the Storting (1999-2000) Plan of action to combat child and youth crime. The plan is being implemented over a period of five years (2000-2004). The focus is on improved coordination of preventive efforts and improved follow-up measures for children and young people with serious behavioural problems, young offenders and young criminal gangs. The plan was drawn up in cooperation between the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development.

The plan provides an overview of how efforts to prevent and combat criminal activities and improve the environment in which children and young people grow up will be strengthened and further developed. The plan identifies more than forty current or new areas of focus, and measures within six main areas:

- coherent, coordinated preventive activities
- efforts in schools

- efforts targeting leisure time and the local community
- follow-up for children and young people with serious behavioural problems
- follow-up for young offenders and criminal gangs
- development of knowledge and research

These activities and measures cover a wide field, ranging from preventive work with children and young people to sanctions for criminal acts. Municipal and county follow-up activities often take place in cooperation with central government. Central government follow-up takes place through cooperation between ministries. These activities are coordinated by the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs. The prioritization of inputs and new measures and projects are evaluated on an ongoing basis. All the areas of focus and measures contained in the plan are followed up by the ministries responsible for them.

Broad-based efforts are required to prevent and combat crime. The family and the local community are important if we are to move in the right direction. It is also important to ensure wide-ranging, inter-disciplinary work and good cooperation between the public authorities and children, young people, parents, non-governmental organizations and other groups.

Efforts to promote integration in an ordinary child and youth environment and an active local community may be one of the best ways of preventing violence and crime. Supporting children's and young people's own efforts and commitment is an especially important element of preventive efforts. Giving children and young people responsibility is a positive sign that they are being taken seriously. Schools are a vital arena, as well as non-governmental children's and youth organizations, youth clubs, sports and other cultural and recreational activities.

The educational system is a particularly important arena for preventive and awareness-raising activities and it is extremely important that teachers, pupils and parents address these problems together. Although many schools have already done a great deal to combat violence, bullying and other antisocial behaviour, more determined efforts are required in many places. Good routines to prevent and reduce antisocial behaviour in schools, strengthen the work of pupils' councils in this area and increase the involvement of parents are important for good results. As part of this effort, the Olweus anti-bullying programme is offered to all municipal authorities (who are responsible for primary and lower secondary schools). In addition to this programme, comprehensive efforts to improve the learning environment in schools are being made through other programmes, measures and projects. In 2002, the Storting also adopted a proposal to tighten up some of the provisions in the Education Act, among others those relating to the psycho-social environment, cf. Proposition No. 72 to the Odelsting (2001-2002).

A large proportion of violent crimes are committed under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This underlines the importance of strengthening efforts to prevent alcohol and drug abuse among children and young people. Good cultural and leisure activities, alcohol-free meeting places in the local community and greater efforts on the part of schools, the police, the child welfare service and other agencies responsible for the local environment in which children grow up are important, as is greater commitment on the part of parents.

Improved follow-up of young people with serious behavioural problems is necessary in order to ensure that the situation improves. New methods for working with children and young people with serious behavioural problems, such as Parent Management Training (PMT), Webster Stratton and Multisystemic Therapy (MST), are promising. These methods have been tested in the USA and very good results have been documented. The methods are home-based. The most important objectives are to provide the right help for children and young people with behavioural problems and their parents as early as possible and to prevent institutionalization of children and young people who can be helped in their family or a foster family in the local community. So far, the results of these methods in Norway have been very good. Programmes that have been proved to be effective for this group are new in Norway and give grounds for optimism. The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs and the Ministry of Health will focus on further developing these programmes so that more people can be helped. (For more information about the child welfare service, see Ch. 4.4.)

There will be focus on the further testing of new methods to prevent antisocial behaviour and child and youth crime. This will take place in cooperation between the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Justice. It is crucial to increase research and human resource development programmes for professionals. In order to help the executive agencies to select and implement the best methods, a new Norwegian Centre for Studies of Behavioural Problems and Innovative Therapy has been established at the University of Oslo. The Centre will promote human resource development and network-building between universities, colleges and centres of expertise. The goal is to build a national network to develop research and methodology in this field.

Measures to follow up young criminals and criminal gangs play a pivotal role in efforts to combat youth crime. Rapid reaction, rationalization of the criminal justice process, improved probation services and increased use of victim-offender mediation are particularly important. Furthermore, in 2001 Youth Contracts were tested in seven Norwegian municipalities. Youth Contracts are an alternative form of sanction for criminal behaviour that particularly targets young people in the 15-17 age-group who have not yet developed a permanent pattern of criminal behaviour. The Youth Contract is an agreement between the young person, with the consent of his or her parents or guardian, on the one hand and the police and the municipal authorities on the other. Under the contract, the young person promises to engage in specific activities provided that the judicial authorities refrain from further prosecution. The crime must be of a type that normally results in a waiver of prosecution, a suspended sentence or a fine. The contract must contain measures aimed at changing the young person's behaviour and support to develop a positive lifestyle. This trial project is being run in cooperation between the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs in the period 2001-2003, after which the two ministries will consider whether to continue the project on the basis of the experience gained.

As a follow up to Report No. 17 to the Storting (1999-2000) Plan of Action to combat child and youth crime, a proposition on child and youth crime was submitted in 2002, entitled Proposition No. 106 to the Odelsting (2001-2002)

concerning an Act relating to amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act and the Police Act, etc. (legal measures to combat child and youth crime). The purpose of these proposals is to ensure more appropriate follow-up of crimes committed by children and young people and improve cooperation between the official agencies involved. These measures are intended to prevent young people from developing criminal behaviour. The proposals were adopted by the Storting in spring 2003.

5.5 Racism and discrimination

In Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), the Government states that efforts to combat racism and discrimination are important in order to provide a good local environment for children growing up. One of the Government's primary goals is to ensure that everyone, regardless of origin or gender, has equal opportunities, rights and obligations to participate in society and utilize their resources. Nevertheless, immigrants, national minorities and Sami people still experience discrimination, even though it may differ in nature from one group to the next. Children and young people from minority backgrounds may experience bullying, harassment, neglect and exclusion, both at school and elsewhere in their everyday lives. In efforts to provide equal opportunities for all children and young people, measures to combat racism and discrimination therefore play a crucial role.

Giving everyone equal opportunities may entail special measures for certain groups to ensure that no-one experiences discrimination or exclusion. Efforts to include different groups of children and young people are a prerequisite if everyone is to be able to participate on equal terms. Efforts to promote integration and participation particularly focus on access to education, employment and housing, and generally improving the conditions in which children and young people live and grow up. There is a close connection between measures to promote integration and measures to combat discrimination because the aim of both is to ensure equal opportunities for all. Discrimination and racism are obstacles to integration, and if we manage to reduce the discrimination suffered by certain groups, one of the important results will be improved integration.

In efforts to combat racism and integration it is important to mobilize broad-based local involvement and good interaction between local and central government authorities. Authorities at all levels are responsible for combating racism and discrimination and ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in all areas of society. It is the responsibility of the public authorities to ensure formal equality, that everyone has equal rights and is equal under the law. Furthermore, the authorities must ensure genuine equality between minorities and the rest of the population by helping to remove the barriers to participation in society. Efforts to combat racism and discrimination are dependent on cooperation between central government, counties, municipalities and non-governmental organizations as well as coordinated, proactive efforts on the part of several central government agencies. It is necessary to implement measures to ensure genuine equality so that everyone actually has the same possibilities to participate in society and utilize his or her resources.

Continuous, long-term efforts are required to combat racism and discrimination. In 2002, the Government presented a new Plan of Action to combat racism and discrimination. The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development is responsible for coordinating work on the Plan of Action, which focuses on the following priority areas:

- working life
- schools/education
- documentation/monitoring
- the Internet
- police/prosecuting authority/judicial system
- public services
- the local community
- strengthening legal protection from ethnic discrimination and racist expression

Awareness-raising activities in schools are an important part of this effort. All pupils in primary and lower secondary schools have been asked to formulate guidelines for a culturally diverse Norway, characterized by tolerance and freedom from racism and discrimination. The guidelines were presented in June 2002. The Government will follow them up by preparing teaching materials on the basis of pupils' inputs and disseminating information about good examples. Pupils will be made aware of the values inherent in fundamental human rights, and of the fact that human rights are constantly being abused. In order to strengthen awareness-raising activities, Holocaust Memorial Day (27 January) will be observed in schools each year. On this day, a prize will be awarded to a school that has excelled in its efforts to combat racism and discrimination.

Many children and young people are actively involved in anti-racism activities, and the activities of non-governmental children's and youth organizations and youth groups are vitally important. Many children's and youth organizations have participated in awareness-raising activities to combat discrimination and many are working on practical anti-racism and anti-discrimination projects at both national and international levels. The day-to-day activities of these organizations are especially important because they can help to provide positive meeting places for children and young people from different cultural backgrounds – meeting places which make cultural diversity a matter of course and help to give children and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds a natural foothold in the local community.

Both local and central government authorities support the efforts of children and young people to combat racism and discrimination. Among other things, the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs provides funding for multi-cultural activities for children and young people through the grant schemes for non-governmental children's and youth organizations. Other schemes to encourage children and young people to actively combat racism include the Ideas Bank and Urban Youth Projects (for further information about urban youth projects, see Ch. 6). Through the Ideas Bank, which is currently administered by the Norwegian Youth Council, grants have been provided since 1998 for multi-cultural activities for children and young people run by non-governmental organizations or local youth groups. The purpose is to encourage activity and dialogue between children and young people from different cultural backgrounds. The Ideas Bank is also responsible for storing and passing on infor-

mation about measures and projects to combat racism and discrimination. Experience has shown that limited funds generate a multitude of activities. The Ideas Bank has been a contributory factor in ensuring that multi-cultural activities run by children's and youth organizations have higher priority, and the scheme has encouraged many small organizations for young people from ethnic minority backgrounds. The scheme has also led to cooperation and the exchange of ideas between traditional Norwegian children's and youth organizations and youth organizations for ethnic minorities. Our experience has been positive and in Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)) the Government states that it will continue to provide central government funding for these activities.

In Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), the Government underlines the importance of helping to promote greater awareness among children's and youth organizations about the vital role their work plays in combating racism and discrimination and supporting the involvement of children and young people in this issue. There must be open arenas in which children and young people from different cultural backgrounds can meet, but there must also be possibilities for young people from minority backgrounds to establish their own organizations and raise awareness of these groups in society. Moreover, we must encourage cooperation between these organizations and groups and the more established children's and youth organizations.

5.5.1 Nationalist youth groups

In Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), the Government states that in efforts to combat violence, crime, racism and discrimination, special measures are required to combat nationalist and neo-nazi gangs and youth groups. The growth of and recruitment to these groups is a serious problem, both for the children and young people who become involved in such movements and for their families and local communities. Membership of a group of this nature can quickly lead to isolation from other young people, marginalization and exposure to violence and crime. The road back to a "normal youth" can be long and difficult because ties with other young people have been broken and the members of nationalist and neo-nazi groups are stigmatized. These extreme and sometimes violent groups may also pose a threat to the safety of others, both young people and adults, who are either identified as enemies or come into contact with them by chance. In efforts to prevent the recruitment of young people to such groups and help those who have been recruited to leave them, broad-based efforts are required on the part of parents, non-governmental organizations and official agencies.

Despite the fact that, sooner or later, most members wish to leave such groups, many of them find it difficult. This may partly be because they have positive ties to fellow members and feel that they have nowhere else to go. Some may also fear that they may be left alone, vulnerable to old enemies. Others may fear that their friends will regard someone leaving the group as a traitor and a security risk. In order to overcome these barriers, it is very important to offer possibili-

ties for obtaining practical help during a transitional phase. They may include help to move to another school or another place of residence, work, training, housing, or the opportunity to belong to a more positive social environment.

Parents play a pivotal role in efforts to help young people leave nationalist groups. Many parents find it difficult to tackle this task alone and need the support of others, whether they be schools and teachers, child welfare services, educational-psychological services, the police, youth workers, non-governmental organizations or good neighbours and relatives. One model that has been developed consists of networks where the parents of children who are members to violent, racist groups can be given social, moral and practical support by others in the same situation.

Although few local communities are affected by nationalist or neo-nazi gangs and groups today, it is important to monitor developments and be prepared to provide guidance and support for local measures. As part of this effort, the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs has provided support for a research project, the purpose of which is to support municipalities' efforts to combat racially-motivated violence and serious conflicts between youth groups, and to split up nationalist youth groups. This project covers a three-year period (2001-2003) and is concentrated on certain municipalities that have had long-term problems with nationalist youth groups.

The challenges in this area must be viewed in an international perspective. To encourage greater cooperation between the Nordic countries, Norway will contribute to the establishment of a Nordic forum of experts on racism, neo-nazism and criminal gangs.

6

Local challenges

6.1 Focus on young people in rural and urban communities

Ensuring that children and young people all over Norway have a good childhood environment and living conditions poses a significant challenge for families, the general population and central and local authorities. For several years, central government authorities have conducted special campaigns targeting young people in rural and urban communities. The goal of these campaigns is to stimulate positive forces and initiatives at the local level and make both young people and their parents aware of their own responsibilities. The main focus of these campaigns is on the target groups' own efforts and joint responsibility.

Children and young people in large towns often encounter challenges and problems that differ from those of their peers in other parts of the country, and many of them may grow up in difficult conditions. Although most of them do well, the percentage of urban children and young people who are affected by a poor childhood environment and unsatisfactory living conditions is higher than the percentage for the country as a whole. In towns, moreover, a larger percentage of children and young people live in low-income households. Living conditions vary in the largest towns, and unfavourable living conditions are more prevalent in certain districts and neighbourhoods. Examples of such unfavourable conditions are crime and insecurity, social isolation and loneliness, low material standards of living and strained finances, unemployment and loose ties to the labour market, poor living environments and traffic problems. It is when adverse living conditions of this type mount up in certain districts and neighbourhoods that they become a problem and a special challenge to the community at large.

While high living costs, environmental problems, loneliness and insecurity are characteristic drawbacks of urban life, many people are attracted by the greater range of options as regards culture, services, jobs and education. In rural areas, many people feel a greater proximity to nature, the local economy and their living environment and perhaps feel a stronger sense of shared responsibility for their local community, which offers increased opportunities for social contact and communal efforts.

Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)) affirms that focus on the conditions in which children and young people grow up is a decisive factor in efforts to secure settlement. Without children and young people, rural areas will become depopulated. A good childhood may make a young person wish to continue to live in or move back to the municipality in which he or she grew up.

6.2 Migration and settlement patterns

Seen in a 20-year perspective, the population of every county except for Finnmark, Nordland and Hedmark has grown. The number of inhabitants in every region of Norway, except for North-Norway, has increased between 1980 and 2000. Within the various counties and regions, however, the trend is towards centralization. Growth has been strongest in regions with large towns and built-up areas. In the past few years, the Oslo region has experienced the greatest population growth. Almost 80 per cent of the Norwegian population now live in urban regions (with access to centres with at least 15,000 inhabitants), and 40 per cent of them live in major urban regions (with access to centres with at least 50,000 inhabitants). The number of inhabitants in the most peripheral regions has stagnated or declined in the past few years.

Given the new population situation, with declining birth rates and a more skewed age distribution in several rural regions, the consequences of people moving away are greater than before. Many municipalities will experience a decline in population even if no one moves away. Population projections indicate that the population of between 126 and 224 of Norway's municipalities will decrease in the next decade. In efforts to preserve the main settlement patterns, therefore, it is particularly important to focus attention on the preferences of young people as regards their place of residence.

6.3 Youth migration and settlement

Migration and settlement must be perceived from a life stage perspective. The choices and desires of young people as regards their place of residence vary according to their age, interests and life situation. For the youngest, recreational activities, meeting places and educational opportunities are the most important factors. For young people in the process of establishing their own home, a wide range of job opportunities, reasonably priced housing, good cultural and recreational facilities, service and welfare facilities and a good environment for children are key factors in their choice of residence.

In general, people now tend to establish a more permanent residence later in life, because more people are pursuing a higher education and starting a family at a later age. Most people move one or more times between the ages of 15 to 35, but significantly fewer move after the age of 35. Women move more than men. Between the ages of 15 and 35, as many as 75-80 per cent of all women and 65-70 per cent of all men move.

Education is a factor that affects migration patterns. In the last few decades, the level of education among the Norwegian population has risen significantly.

When young people move in order to obtain an education, their ties with the municipality in which they grow up are weakened and they form new ties to the place where they study. While people with higher education have always moved more than less educated people, this does not mean that everyone with a higher education moves away from rural areas. Education does not have a uniform impact on young people's desires as regards their place of residence. The level of education in rural municipalities has also risen steadily.

Young people's choice of where to live is still affected by their wish to have a sense of belonging to a local community. Many young people choose to move back to their childhood municipality, and in the past decade the percentage of young people aged 15-35 who do not change residence has tended to increase, despite the increase in their level of education.

Studies show that it is often a lack of job opportunities on the local labour market that is a young person's greatest obstacle to realizing the desire to settle in his or her home region. The more specialized a person's education, the bigger, more diversified labour markets he or she will have to look to in order to find relevant jobs, particularly if a couple is trying to find employment.

Access to employment and the choice of the "right" education are necessary, but not determinant conditions for a young person's choice of residence. Even young people with the "right" educational background choose to settle elsewhere than in their childhood municipality. Municipalities also find that, on average, half of those who move in later move away.

A young person's choice of residence can also be seen in the context of his or her values, roots and identity. Today, very few young people who grow up in urban areas choose to settle in a rural municipality. For young people who have grown up in a less centrally located municipality, a similar municipality is as attractive a place to settle as the central urban communities.

Measures that might entice new graduates to return to their childhood municipalities in rural areas could be low housing costs, day care services and contact with their relatives. These factors are important for many people. Recent research has focused on what people who are in the process of establishing a home and who choose to move to a small place cite as the reasons motivating their choice. For many people, the decision is linked to a desire for a lifestyle that is different from the life they would have led in a large town. An active local community, a good environment for their children and a good neighbourhood are grounds given by people for settling there. By comparing individual municipalities and regions, research has also identified the natural advantages linked to climate and natural surroundings, proximity to a town and well developed services and cultural facilities as important factors for municipalities' attraction as a place of residence. There are municipalities in which the number of residents has increased despite the fact that there has been no increase in local employment opportunities. Similarly, there are municipalities where there is labour market growth but no increase in immigration.

6.4 Focus on targeting young people in rural areas

6.4.1 Central government efforts

Central government efforts targeting young people in rural areas range from integration of youth policy in general rural and regional policy to special campaigns aimed at that group.

The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development has largely sought to integrate efforts targeting young people into the general policy on rural and regional development. The Ministry transfers funds for rural and regional development measures every year, emphasizing that the various administrative agencies should focus particularly on young people.

Youth-related efforts directed towards business and industry are primarily focused on providing job opportunities for young people in rural areas, and providing the necessary conditions to enable them to establish their own businesses. Emphasis is on facilitating entrepreneurship, creative ideas and innovation.

In the education sector, work has been in progress for several years on developing entrepreneurship in the educational system. The Ministry of Education and Research has played a key role in this effort, which has also involved extensive cooperation between several ministries and other players. Examples of projects include pupil and youth enterprises, Internet-based teaching programmes for rural schools and school-private sector partnerships. Several ministries have now joined forces to substantially strengthen the efforts of the Young Entrepreneurship programme to develop entrepreneurship and youth-run enterprises in primary and lower secondary schools and colleges. In future, far more pupils and students will be offered an opportunity to develop the skills required to establish a company.

Adequate recruitment to the agricultural sector is essential to achieving the agriculture policy goals of a viable, sustainable agricultural sector throughout Norway. Through rural development funding schemes, it is possible to obtain grants for minor investments relating to generational transitions in the agricultural sector. Support is also provided for an agricultural trainee programme (to cover trainees' wages, employers' national insurance contributions, etc.) Farmers who are interested become trainee hosts, and a contract is entered into between host and trainee. The training programme is linked to the Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry programme offered by upper secondary schools. Rural development funds are administered by the County Department of Agriculture.

The Ministry of Fisheries has implemented measures aimed at recruiting more young people to Fishery Trades training programmes in upper secondary school. These measures target young people directly, as well as providing training for teachers. Exercise books and other materials have been prepared to enable primary and lower secondary schools to link teaching and project work more closely to fishery and marine trades. The Ministry also takes part in an international exchange programme, in which jobs are exchanged in order to create market contact. The programme's target group includes young people.

Since 1999, the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs has had a special grant scheme for measures targeting young people in rural areas. Through this scheme, rural municipalities that experience a strong decline in population have been invited to apply for grants for local youth programmes in the cultural and recreational sectors. When allocating funds, the Ministry has been concerned to ensure that activities and projects are planned locally, and that municipalities adopt a coherent approach in their efforts to strengthen the local environment for young people through interaction between young people and the municipal authorities. The purpose of the scheme is not only to promote youth activities in the municipality, but equally to foster dialogue between the municipal authorities and young people. The scheme has generated considerable interest in rural municipalities and many young people are actively involved. The relatively small amounts granted have produced significant results, because they have stimulated young people to make an effort themselves. The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs will maintain its focus on young people in rural areas. Future challenges will be to continue to strengthen cultural and recreational services for and with young people in small local communities, in order to promote a creative, stimulating environment in which young people thrive and can put their resources to use in the local community.

In 2001, the Ministry of the Environment initiated a programme to promote environmentally sound, attractive rural towns. This five-year programme is being implemented in cooperation with six other ministries. The programme is part of the Government's rural development policy, and the participation of children and young people is a key element.

6.4.2 County and municipal efforts for young people

Young people have been a priority area of focus for county authorities since the 1990s, and special strategies and plans of action have been developed in which a cross-sectoral, wide-ranging approach has been adopted. In surveys carried out by certain counties, young people are regarded as a strategically important group for the employment and recreation sector, and as a stabilizing factor for settlement patterns. Making the local community an attractive place for young people to live and improving their quality of life have also been considered an important objective. Some counties have given very high priority to efforts targeting young people and have prepared special county sub-plans for this group.

Regional development programmes are an important tool for coordinating county efforts more effectively, a process that was initiated by the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development in the mid-1990s. The main purpose was to improve interaction, better adapt policy instruments to meet regional challenges and promote target-based, rather than rule-based, management. Certain strategies and measures are a consistent component of the programmes where youth-related efforts are concerned. Focus on the relationship between schools and business and industry is a key factor, and includes both training in entrepreneurship and measures to provide information to schools on local and regional business and industry. Measures aimed at creating a sense of belonging to the local community and strengthening local identity, for instance through local development projects, are also common. On the whole, the programmes reflect the desire to integrate a youth perspective into general development programmes.

Many local communities and municipalities try to stay in touch with young people who have moved away, for example by inviting them to take part in communal activities when they come home on holiday. Other municipalities have established special grant schemes for young people pursuing courses of study in order to encourage them to settle in the municipality when they have completed their studies. Young people are also a priority target group for certain policy instruments. For instance, the administrators of municipal business development funds have been required to give priority to young people. Many rural municipalities also make active efforts to promote the participation of young people in the local community.

Through a special campaign for outlying municipalities carried out by the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development during the period 1997-2001, special attention was focused on the involvement and participation of young people in local communities. The measures that were initiated involved both young people who lived in the municipality and those who had moved away, and innovative projects were developed based on holistic strategies aimed at encouraging young people to settle in the municipalities. Acknowledgement of the fact that jobs are not a sufficient incentive in the competition for young people as future residents has been a significant factor. The lessons learned in the campaign for outlying municipalities show that there will be keen competition to attract young people to those municipalities in the future, but that municipalities that develop a full range of services and facilities, thereby rendering themselves attractive, are likely to emerge as winners.

6.4.3 Providing favourable conditions or youth settlement in rural areas

Young people's choice of residence is determined by a number of factors, such as varied job opportunities, reasonably priced housing, good cultural and recreational facilities, health and welfare services and a good environment for children to grow up in. Municipalities play a pivotal role in efforts to meet these needs. They establish important framework conditions and provide necessary services, both to inhabitants and to business and industry. Municipalities that can offer their population a good range of services and facilities have a far better chance of being perceived as dynamic, attractive communities.

Municipal policy has emphasized the fact that a happy childhood and youth can make a young person want to remain in or move back to his or her home municipality. Rural municipalities have therefore sought to promote positive experiences for children and young people and provide them with a good environment in which to grow up, partly by ensuring that they have ample opportunities to participate and exert influence on their local community. In rural municipalities, participation is not just a question of assuring the democratic rights of children and young people - it is also a question of assuring the future of the municipality. Being invited to give their opinion, being taken seriously and seeing that their suggestions are acted on give young people a positive impression of being important to their municipality. If young people have influence, it might lead them to envisage a future in their local community and wish to settle in the municipality.

Many municipalities will be dependent on newcomers, particularly young people establishing their first homes, in order to be vibrant local communities, and to be able to fill positions in the private and public sector with the right expertise. These municipalities will face the challenge of having to recruit both persons with ties to the region and persons who have not grown up there. The fact that the labour market in rural areas does not correspond to young people's job aspirations makes renewing the labour market a pivotal challenge.

Almost all aspects of central government policy have implications for regional and rural development policy goals. In the process of further developing the rural development policy campaign targeting young people, emphasis has therefore been placed on ensuring the broad-based involvement of central government, county and municipal authorities. Interaction and cooperation, combined with fruitful dialogue with young people, are key elements.

Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)) indicates that the Government will continue to focus on young people in rural and regional development policy. Potential innovators will be the main target group for selective, business-oriented policy instruments. The business-oriented youth programmes are mainly aimed at providing job opportunities for young people in rural areas and facilitating young people's establishment of their own businesses. Providing favourable conditions for entrepreneurship, creative ideas and innovation will be a key objective. The Government underscores the importance of increasing the ability and willingness of young girls and boys to be innovative by giving school pupils practical knowledge of what the process of establishing a company actually entails and by encouraging an active, creative environment for young people in rural areas. At the same time, young people are expected to benefit from the reorientation of policy instruments towards a stronger focus on expertise and innovation, since many of them acquire a higher education.

6.5 Efforts targeting young people in major urban communities

To ensure a good childhood environment all over Norway, it is important to focus special efforts on the largest urban municipalities. Certain large towns are afflicted with adverse living conditions, which may create a difficult environment for children and young people and make local neighbourhoods unsafe. This applies especially to the three largest towns and to Oslo in particular.

For several years the central government has assumed a special responsibility for improving the conditions in which children and young people grow up in major urban communities. Important measures include the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs' grant scheme for urban youth projects, the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs' focus on sport in large cities, and cooperation between central and municipal government on a plan of action for the inner eastern district of Oslo. Moreover, the central government has for years contributed substantial funding for housing and urban renewal in the three largest towns. This has resulted in the renovation of many housing areas and the provision of good, safe play areas, building courtyards, parks and outdoor spaces.

In spring 2002, the Government presented Report No. 23 (2001-2002) to the Storting on a better environment in towns and villages, which lays down principles for the good physical design of urban structures and local neighbourhoods. The goal is partly to promote safe, beautiful and stimulating towns and villages with high environmental and housing standards for inhabitants and urban structures that foster a healthy lifestyle. Designing towns and local communities to include communal urban spaces, green structures, sports facilities and environmentally sound means of transport has a significant impact on children's and young people's opportunities for play, physical activity and a healthy childhood environment.

In spring 2003, the Government presented Report No. 32 (2002-2003) to the Storting on the development of policy relating to major urban centres. In the Government's opinion, major urban centres are a significant factor for the growth of their surrounding areas. It is therefore important to see the role of such centres in both a national and a regional perspective. The report also deals with the special problems of major urban centres, particularly the social challenges. Particular attention is focused in the report on the conditions in which children and young people grow up.

6.5.1 Living conditions and childhood environments

Population trends show that a large percentage of children and young people grow up in large towns and the surrounding municipalities. In addition to the children and young people whose childhood arena is a major urban centre, large towns attract young people from rural areas. Seen as a whole, this means that the transition from youth to adulthood is increasingly taking place in a large urban environment.

An important characteristic of large towns is the fact that they serve as centres in their respective regions of the country and have a common housing, labour, cultural and educational market. In the past few decades, large towns and the surrounding municipalities have grown significantly and are increasingly becoming unified urban communities. It has therefore become necessary for large towns and surrounding municipalities to cooperate on efforts targeting children and young people.

Large towns have traditionally had sound finances, and they have been ahead of many other small local communities in terms of providing their inhabitants with good living conditions. Typical "urban benefits" are often defined as a good financial situation, fewer low-wage workers, more educational opportunities, more job opportunities, a broader range of services and more cultural and recreational facilities. Urban problems are often associated with various aspects of housing and local neighbourhoods such as noise and pollution, cramped housing or poor housing standards, fewer social relationships and more crime and insecurity. The actual situation in major urban communities is very complex, and there are both advantages and disadvantages to living in large towns in Norway.

High density, neighbourhood segregation and a heterogeneous population are some of the characteristics of large towns. In such towns there is a greater possibility for groups with the same background and life situation to live in a concentrated area. Surveys of living conditions show that social and economic dif-

ferences are considerably more pronounced in large towns than in small municipalities. This is particularly the case in Oslo. While some parts of the city offer the best living conditions in Norway, other parts have the worst conditions.

A concentration of unfavourable living conditions in a particular geographical area does not necessarily mean that the same is true at the individual level, and most children and young people do well in large towns. For young people, growing up in a large town may give them extensive freedom of action and ample opportunities to develop and experience life on their own.

An urban environment offers a diversity of recreational activities, but also entails the possibility of children and young people being exposed to a negative environment of violence, crime and substance use that may generate insecurity. The town, and particularly the town centre, attracts many young people, especially on weekends and in the evening. The tendency of young people to commute between their homes and the centre of town gives cause for concern, particularly in relation to young people who do not feel at home in their own neighbourhood, whether it be an urban neighbourhood or a neighbouring municipality. Young people who drop out of school, jobs and traditional recreational activities and who avoid contact with adults have a tendency to drift towards the town centre where they can easily come into contact with a negative environment characterized by substance use, violence and crime. This calls for close cooperation between outreach services, the child welfare service and the police in large towns and the surrounding urban neighbourhoods and municipalities.

In its efforts to ensure a good recreational environment, in Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), the Government emphasized the importance of good, reasonably priced, youth activities where alcohol and drugs are prohibited, both in local communities and in town centres. The provision by both voluntary organizations and municipal authorities of good meeting places for social contact and activity is an important objective. There must be greater focus on the numerous voluntary organizations and they must be given good operating parameters. Good results have also been achieved through youth centres or multi-activity centres, where young people can become involved in constructive activity through labour market, employment or training programmes.

In recent years, youth gangs that engage in violent or other criminal behaviour in large towns have attracted considerable attention. While these gangs are not large, their members repeatedly appear in crime statistics for violence, robbery, crimes of gain and drug-related offences. The gangs spread fear and anxiety among children and young people and in local communities. Such gangs also seem to have a tendency to attract young people who feel out of place in society. If there are no positive, attractive arenas in which young people can find support and put their resources to constructive use, they will be at greater risk of being attracted to criminal groups and violent gangs. It is therefore important that towns support inclusive, safe and meaningful recreational activities where children and young people can make use of their resources in a positive way. Negative trends in young groups must be combated through targeted efforts and effective cooperation between local agencies and services and with

voluntary groups. The participation of children and young people is essential. Experience shows that preventive efforts are effective, and that the best method in the long term is to improve the conditions in which children and young people live and grow up.

A special characteristic of some large towns, particularly Oslo, is the high percentage of children and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds in certain urban neighbourhoods and districts. Many of them come from families whose living conditions are poorer than those of the rest of the population. This gives rise to challenges in relation to schooling, work, housing, health and recreation, and calls for broad-based, targeted efforts to promote the integration and inclusion of such groups. The situation in Oslo is exceptional as regards the percentage of children and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds. In 2000, over 31 per cent of primary and lower secondary pupils came from a minority language group. However, this varies from around 90 per cent at some schools to around 5 per cent at others.

Children and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds face special challenges relating to language, schooling and work. They participate to a lesser degree in organized recreational activities and more of them drop out of the educational system than children and young people with a Norwegian background. Studies show that a smaller percentage of young people from ethnic minority backgrounds have completed primary and lower secondary school and attend upper secondary schools than young people with an ethnic majority background, and that they have greater difficulty in making progress and advancing through upper secondary school than their ethnic majority peers. This poses significant challenges for schools and local neighbourhoods in urban municipalities. It is the responsibility of schools to provide all pupils with education adapted to their needs and it is important to develop local schools. Educational qualifications are a resource on the labour market and are important for both an individual's personal development and for his or her standard of living. Young people who have poor literacy skills, cannot keep up at school and have difficulty obtaining an education or a job are among the most vulnerable, at-risk groups in society today.

Some ethnic minority parents participate little in everyday school life. A school that facilitates good cooperation with pupils' homes so that parents can support their children in day-to-day school activities promotes integration. Experience of school-home cooperation shows that it is possible to achieve good results even at schools where a high percentage of the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. However, it is important that more schools take steps to ensure good cooperation with minority parents.

Girls from ethnic minority backgrounds take little advantage of available recreational activities. Some girls and young women live in isolation and have no contact with Norwegian society. Isolation, forced marriage and female genital mutilation have been topics of debate in the past few years. It is important to support efforts to strengthen the identity of young girls from ethnic minority backgrounds and prevent them from being isolated, marginalized and discriminated against. For several years, therefore, the central government authorities have supported programmes and projects aimed at increasing the participation and integration of young girls from ethnic minority backgrounds. In the report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people live and

grow up, the Government affirms that efforts in this field will be intensified and further developed. As regards forced marriage and female genital mutilation, plans of action have been prepared and renewed with the aim of maintaining dialogue and identifying these practices as unlawful and offensive acts of abuse.

Surveys show that children and young people who have experienced war are over-represented in certain large towns, whether they be unaccompanied refugees or came to Norway with their family. This is a vulnerable group who require special follow-up and who pose major challenges for the authorities. Among other things, it is important to ensure that these young people are followed up closely as regards housing, school, work and recreation. There is also an unmet need for psychosocial assistance and support. Children and young people who have experienced war should be offered the opportunity to take part in a conversation group or other specially adapted activities and psychological therapy tailored to their individual needs.

Another characteristic of large towns is the larger percentage of child welfare cases than in small municipalities. Some problems are exacerbated in major urban centres, both because the large towns have a tendency to become a refuge for young people who do not fit into local communities in smaller towns, and because certain aspects of a major urban community can have a marginalizing effect on some young people. It is also easier to hide away and avoid contact with welfare services. Since the social monitoring system and social safety net seem to be weaker in large towns than in small municipalities, it is important to have programmes targeting children and young people. Employment and services that can give children and young people care and support, thereby enabling them to cope with the problems in their lives in the best possible way, are required. Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)) therefore emphasizes that policy instruments must be designed to promote self-help and independence, and prevent children and young people from becoming social clients. This requires close follow-up and low-threshold programmes if the needs of children and young people who drop out of school, jobs or recreational activities are to be met. Close interdisciplinary and inter-agency cooperation is particularly important if young people are to receive the necessary help and support.

6.5.2 Focus on young people in major urban communities

In 1982, a special central government grant scheme was established for young people in major urban communities. This scheme, called Urban Youth Projects, is administered by the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, and comprises the ten urban municipalities of Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, Stavanger, Kristiansand, Drammen, Tromsø, Skien, Fredrikstad and Sandnes. The scheme also comprises a special programme currently being carried out in Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim.

The goal of the grant scheme is to improve the conditions in which young people in major urban communities live and grow up. The scheme is partly designed to address the adverse living conditions in a major urban community, which in turn exacerbate social problems.

The grant scheme targets young people aged 12 to 25. The programmes and projects that receive support are intended to form part of a coherent, overarching youth policy, and efforts targeting young people with special needs will be given priority. Priority will also be given to promoting young people's participation in and influence on planning and implementation. Emphasis is to be placed on preventing undesirable social behaviour such as violence, bullying, crime, substance use and racism, combating prejudice and discrimination, and promoting mutual respect, the participation of groups of young people who make little use of available cultural and recreational facilities, inclusion and the establishment of alternative learning arenas, equality and equal opportunities for girls and boys, equal opportunities for disabled persons and work and programmes aimed at reaching young people with poverty problems.

Priority will be given to projects and programmes in which young people themselves are the initiators and prime movers and are involved in designing and managing the measures, and to efforts targeting young people from ethnic minority backgrounds and groups of young people at risk. The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs wishes to promote greater cooperation between and coordination of the work of municipalities, urban neighbourhoods, voluntary organizations and youth groups and private institutions to improve childhood environments.

Young people from ethnic minority backgrounds have been a priority target group for the past decade, and their needs are largely addressed through the measures and activities that have received funding.

Central government policy instruments that target young people in large towns are administered by many different ministries. The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs is responsible for coordinating youth policy. The Ministry will initiate efforts to coordinate measures targeting children and young people in major urban communities, partly through the establishment of an inter-ministerial working group in this field.

Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)) emphasizes that the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs will further develop and strengthen the urban youth projects scheme. Young people from ethnic minority backgrounds face special challenges, and particular importance will be attached to programmes and projects that promote integration. There will continue to be special focus on the selected urban municipalities of Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim. Young people at risk will have priority in the urban youth projects scheme, and efforts will to a greater degree be directed towards towns and areas where the needs and adverse living conditions are the greatest. Cooperation between large cities and the surrounding municipalities will also be encouraged with a view to solving common challenges relating to young people.

6.5.3 Sports in urban communities

The largest towns also face special challenges in relation to sports, as regards both activities and facilities. They have too few sports facilities and the ones they have are generally poorly maintained. Furthermore, in several areas of the

towns the general population takes little interest in sports, and human and financial resources are limited. It is difficult, for instance, to recruit coaches and leaders. This problem is particularly prominent in urban districts with a large ethnic minority population.

In 1993, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs started a special urban project in the field of sports. The project's main target groups are children and young people and women from ethnic minorities. The activities are designed for persons who do not belong to an organization. The towns that have been involved are Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Stavanger (up to 1995), as well as two municipalities in the county of Akershus (Oppegård and Lørenskog).

Through the urban sports project, attention has been focused on the role of sports in building a community and in bridging the gap between different cultures. Activities must be low-threshold services, in which people take part according to their own abilities and needs. So far, the project has succeeded in generating greater interest in activities among children and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, and has resulted in more members of this group being recruited to sports teams and clubs. However, this in no way means that the clubs have managed to retain them over time as greater emphasis is placed on skills, performance, regular attendance, equipment, the support and voluntary efforts of parents, etc.

Report No. 14 (1999-2000) to the Storting on changes in the sports sector stresses that the Government wishes to continue the urban project as far as sports activities are concerned. Since the distribution of gaming revenues for 2001, grants for sports in major urban communities have been placed under the item "Physical activity, local belonging and social integration". The Norwegian Confederation of Sports and Olympic Committee have been required to coordinate efforts on the basis of past experience, and to assume responsibility for further development of the project. The target groups will be children and young people (aged 6-19), children and young people with behavioural problems and immigrants. Other urban districts besides those already mentioned may also apply for funds for activity programmes.

7

Young people's participation and influence

7.1 Participation and influence at different levels

For several years the public authorities have given priority to efforts to ensure that children and young people have an influence on the way society develops. Both through legislation and by ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Norway has affirmed the principle of the right of children and young people to state their opinion and to be heard. Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children are entitled to express their views freely in all matters affecting them, and that these views shall be given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. Being given influence assures and stimulates the ability of children and young people to become actively involved, assume responsibility and think innovatively.

Several statutes contain provisions that safeguard the right of children and young people to express their views on matters affecting them. This is stated in the Act relating to Children and Parents (the Children Act) and in the Child Welfare Act, while the Education Act contains provisions concerning pupil democracy at the various levels of schooling.

In school, children and young people are required to learn what democratic principles mean in practice through the system of pupil democracy and the work of the pupils' councils. Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)) emphasizes the need to facilitate cooperation with other municipal agencies, so as to give pupils a possibility to participate in municipal planning and in shaping child and youth policy at the local level. Time must be set aside in school schedules to enable pupils to discuss the appearance of their local neighbourhood, be it the design of their schoolyard, traffic safety for children making their way to and from school, the location of the football field or the desire to establish youth clubs or other recreational facilities in the municipality. This is also in line with the intentions on which the reform of primary and lower secondary education was based, and the principles and working methods laid down in the core curriculum for the ten years of primary and lower secondary school.

In the cultural and recreational sector as well, children and young people must be ensured possibilities for taking part in planning, designing and directing services and activities. An important goal of youth policy is to ensure that young people have greater influence in voluntary organizations, municipal recreational programmes, youth clubs and other recreational activities at the local level. Through public policy on culture, the public authorities are concerned to fulfil the needs and interests of children and young people. This is first and foremost a county and municipal responsibility, but the central authorities also have a responsibility to support efforts to promote the participation of children and young people in the planning and implementation of cultural and recreational activities. One way that this can be achieved is by requiring municipalities to ensure that children and young people take part in preparing applications for funding from grant schemes.

For several years the central authorities have supported local efforts to stimulate the participation of children and young people in municipal planning and decision-making processes. Although there has been marked progress in recent years, there are still significant variations from one municipality to another as regards opportunities for youth participation, and as regards whether account has been taken of their wishes. There are probably still many municipalities that must comply more closely with the provisions that have already been adopted to ensure that the needs and interests of children and young people are met and respected.

Participation is important when learning about democracy, and has resulted in young people becoming more involved in political activities and taking greater interest in local democracy. Giving young people influence may determine whether they can envisage a future in their local community and wish to settle in the municipality. Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)) points out that the participation of children and young people also has its limitations. It emphasizes that adults play an important role in providing guidance and must ensure the fruitful participation of children and young people through supervision and clear definition of responsibilities. Young people must be taken seriously, but must not be given more responsibility than they are able to tackle, according to the Report.

7.2 Frameworks and opportunities for participation and influence

Ensuring that children and young people influence the formulation and implementation of child and youth policy is regarded as an important goal at all levels of public administration. However, the progress that has been made towards achieving that goal, and the frameworks and opportunities that exist, vary. Issues and topics that are a part of daily life for children and young people offer the greatest opportunities for influence, and so far attention has mostly been focused on efforts at the municipal and county level. In Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), the Government emphasizes the importance of strengthening efforts at all levels of public administration to ensure that children and young people have good opportunities for participation and influence.

The participation of children and young people can take place in various forms and through varying degrees of influence. There is a clear distinction between active and passive participation, and four forms or levels of participation can be identified:

- children and young people are used as sources of information for other persons who do the planning and make the decisions - passive participation
- children and young people contribute information and views in a dialogue - participation through dialogue
- children and young people participate in a process and contribute solutions and proposals - active participation
- children and young people order priorities as regards the use of resources and the design of measures - participation through self-determination in defined areas

Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)) emphasizes that work at all levels of public administration should be organized in such a way as to ensure that children and young people have the opportunity to participate and exert influence through all the above four forms of participation.

7.3 Participation and influence at central government level

At central government level, children and young people participate little in political processes, but have the opportunity to present their views through spokespersons and through dialogue with politicians and the authorities. Dialogues with child and youth representatives (at conferences, discussions, brainstorming sessions, hearings, consultations, etc.) and representatives of public councils and committees are the most common ways in which politicians and authorities at the central level obtain the opinions of children and young people. Political youth organizations are a channel through which young people present their views directly to politicians. Knowledge of the opinions of children and young people is also acquired through child and youth surveys and research on these groups. Children and young people also have opportunities to provide input for policy formulation at the central government level through the media, the Internet, letters, campaigns, meetings and other forms of direct contact.

To ensure good dialogue with child and youth representatives, the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs arranges annual conferences for voluntary child and youth organizations and youth groups. An important purpose of these conferences is to exchange information and obtain views on current child and youth policy issues. Besides these regular annual meetings, there is ongoing dialogue and regular contact at the central government level with voluntary child and youth organizations and youth groups, who are invited to submit consultative comments on matters affecting children and young people. In some cases, the ministries have also arranged special hearings or meetings with children and young people to sound out their views and obtain input for policy formulation

in fields of significance for children and young people. For instance, the Norwegian Pupils' Organization meets regularly with both the senior political staff and the administrative staff of the Ministry of Education and Research.

A form of dialogue often used by organizations and groups is to invite key politicians to hearings and other forums to answer questions prepared by children and young people. While experience from such hearings varies, when they have focused on finding solutions they have proved useful to both parties.

To obtain input as to what the authorities can do to strengthen the influence of children and young people in civic life, the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs established the Youth Forum for Democracy in December 1998. The aim of the Forum was to ensure that young people have more avenues for participation and influence in the development of society, and to provide advice and information in this respect to the political authorities at both the central and local levels. The Forum was composed of 16 young people aged 15 to 26 from all parts of Norway, with an equal number of representatives of each sex. The members came from different child and youth organizations and youth groups and thus represented a wide range of child and youth interests.

The Forum presented proposals in a number of fields: a study of power in society, youth representation, voter participation, the rights of young people in working life, school issues, information for young people, local democracy, and numerous child and youth policy issues at the local and central levels. One lesson learned from the Forum was that attention was focused on unexpected areas and proposals were put forward that would probably not have been presented through other channels. Another lesson was that the establishment of a forum of this nature at central government level has also had implications for the involvement of the municipal authorities in efforts to promote child and youth influence, such as through the establishment of local forums. Furthermore, the Forum has had an important signalling effect.

When concluding its work in summer 2001, the Youth Forum for Democracy proposed that the Government maintain the system of a youth forum for democracy as a source of regular input as to how to give young people greater influence. In the Forum's opinion, there is a long way to go before children and young people acquire the influence that they should have, and there is a need for a forum that can play a proactive role in this field in future. Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)) states that the Government does not consider it appropriate to establish another youth forum for democracy at this time, but will follow up the dialogue with young people through more systematic direct contact with voluntary organizations and youth groups.

7.4 Participation and influence at municipal and county level

So far, child and youth participation has had the greatest impact in municipalities, which is where children and young people have the greatest opportunity to exert influence on planning and policy formulation. This is also the only level of public administration where it is possible to involve a large number of

children and young people. Efforts to promote child and youth participation and influence in municipalities have developed considerably since the first experiments with participation in relation to local neighbourhoods were initiated in the 1970s. The engagement of municipalities has been particularly strengthened in the 1990s, both in terms of the number of municipalities involved and the methods and work processes applied. However, even though considerable progress has been made in recent years, there is still a long way to go before every municipality fulfils the requirements for active participation by children and young people, including the requirements laid down in the Planning and Building Act and in the National Policy Guidelines to strengthen the interests of children and young people in the planning process (cf. chapter 4.1).

At county level, too, there has been growing focus on this area in recent years. Participation has been assured through a variety of methods and at several levels, ranging from obtaining the views of children and young people through questionnaire surveys and the Internet to active participation where young people themselves put forward proposals and order priorities through the Youth County Council, participation in conferences, workshops on the future, etc. Although a growing number of counties are focusing on increasing the participation of children and young people, many have still not involved these groups directly in county planning (cf. chapter 4.1). Moreover, few counties have developed permanent arrangements that ensure that children and young people systematically participate in and exert influence on policy formulation and prioritization.

7.5 The participation and influence of children and young people in municipal decision-making processes

An important prerequisite for a vibrant local democracy is ensuring that the inhabitants are given the opportunity to influence the way in which the municipality organizes its activities and determines its priorities. Experience shows that the participation of children and young people has a positive effect in local communities, and that these groups make valuable contributions to local planning and decision-making processes. Giving children and young people opportunities to participate and exert influence is also an important way of teaching them about democracy and significant for their further involvement in local politics.

In the course of the past decade, special bodies through which children and young people can exert influence have been established in some 340 of Norway's 434 municipalities. These bodies have titles like municipal board for children, municipal board for young people, child and youth councils, municipal pupils' council, liaison committees between young people and politicians, etc. There are significant differences from one municipality to another as regards mandates, opportunities for participation, spheres of authority, degree of influence, possibilities for contact and cooperation between children, young people and the municipal authorities, and results. Some municipalities attach little importance to influence and more to instruction in democratic principles. Others are conscious of the need to ensure that children and young people have real influence and can see the results of their input. In Report to the

Starting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), the Government underscores the importance of tailoring measures to local conditions, making use of a variety of working methods and arrangements and allowing children and young people to participate on their own terms and in their own arenas. Moreover, it is important to ensure the broad-based participation of children and young people in this work. In addition to establishing special bodies of influence, it is also important to facilitate the participation of children and young people in existing municipal structures.

An overarching principle in efforts to promote the participation and influence of children and young people is ensuring genuine influence that produces visible results, in both the short and long term. It is important that the basic premises be clearly defined, so that participation does not lead to frustrated young people who have lost faith in the idea that getting involved can make a difference. Efforts must be organized in such a way that it is possible to follow up some of the desires and needs expressed by children and young people. It is also important to ensure rapid feedback about follow-up efforts.

Another important principle is ensuring that different age groups have the opportunity to participate and exert influence. The participation of children and young people will necessarily differ somewhat depending on their age, and the methods and frameworks for participation must be adapted to the various age groups. So far, few municipalities have involved younger children in such efforts, but experience shows that it is possible to begin the process as early as in day care centres. In future efforts, it will be important to focus on ways of providing more age groups with opportunities for participation.

Experience shows that it is important to establish a systematic work process that is followed up and further developed from one year to the next. It is in municipalities where the mayor or principal municipal executive has played an active role in the process, and where routines have been established for obtaining the views of children and young people, that these efforts have been best integrated into the municipality's other work. The success of the process depends on such factors as clear guidelines/terms of reference for the work, contact with and backing from the administrative staff and politicians in the municipality, availability of earmarked resources, genuine influence in certain matters, clear routines as regards feedback, contact with the other members of the youth community and information on municipal activities.

One form of systematic participation that many municipalities have adopted in recent years is to give children and young people a chance to decide how funds are to be spent each year on improving the local community. After discussing the matter in class, pupils submit specific proposals, which are ranked by order of priority by the pupils' council and presented at an annual meeting at the town hall which is also attended by politicians and professionals. Experience shows that children and young people are realistic and know that they cannot achieve all their goals in one year. The Government intends to urge all municipalities to allocate some funds whose use may be decided by children and young people, within certain limits.

Experience shows that municipalities that have introduced a permanent form of participation by children and young people do not directly copy models

from other municipalities. Municipalities learn lessons from one another, and further adapt the form and content to their own needs. There is a constant process of change as regards the types of matter in which children and young people are allowed to participate, and how much influence they are given. In some matters they are a consultative body or their advice is requested, while in others they have the right to make proposals or recommendations. In certain cases, children and young people also have decision-making authority. This applies particularly in municipalities where funds have been allocated for uses to be decided by children and young people themselves.

Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)) emphasizes that the challenge in future is to incorporate efforts to promote child and youth participation and influence so well that they become a part of ordinary work at all levels of the municipal administration. It also points out that this work must undergo continuous development in order to ensure that children and young people have influence.

7.6 Voter participation and political engagement

Concern has been voiced in several connections about young people's lack of engagement in political parties and their low voter participation. Surveys cited in Official Norwegian Report 2001:3 on voters, the electoral system and electees show that membership of political youth organizations has declined from around 44,000 in 1977 to 23,000 in 1995. Moreover, voter participation among young people is lower than among adults. The questions that can be raised are whether this means that young people are not as engaged in politics as the adult population, and whether this is a growing problem.

Voter participation statistics show that young people exercise their right to vote less than their elders, both in local and in general elections. Among first-time voters, the percentage who voted in general elections declined from 72 per cent in 1981 to 56 per cent in 2001. First-time voter participation is lower in local elections than in general elections, where 33 per cent voted in 1999 compared with 53 per cent in 1971. Broken down by gender, there were approximately as many women as men among first-time voters who exercised their right to vote, in both the last general election and the last local election.

Although voter participation is traditionally much lower among first-time voters than in other groups, studies of voter participation in general elections by young people during the period 1981-1997 show that it generally increases in subsequent elections - to be sure, when overall voter participation remains stable. Thus the low voter participation among first-time voters can be explained from a life-cycle perspective, and there is little indication of a generation gap in relation to participation in general elections. No corresponding studies have been carried out for local elections.

Young people's low voter participation is partly ascribable to the fact that, to a greater degree than their elders, young people use different political instruments and alternative forms of political expression to the traditional system of voting. Studies show that there is a clear tendency for younger people to par-

ticipate more frequently in direct campaigns than older people. On the other hand, however, there is no tendency for those who fail to vote in elections to participate more frequently in direct campaigns. There are many indications that young people who become engaged in the political process do so across a broad front, while there are groups of young people who do not engage in any form of political activity.

The political parties face clear challenges when it comes to recruiting young people and establishing frameworks and opportunities for engagement which enable young people to see the value of parties' political activity. The public authorities, too, face challenges in their efforts to ensure the broader participation of young people in politics. Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)) underscores the importance of municipalities and counties actively seeking to strengthen the participation and engagement of children and young people in local planning and decision-making processes.

Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)) points to several measures that might increase young people's political engagement. For instance, municipalities can appoint a person with special responsibility for contact with young people, making it easier for young people to find out about municipal policy. It must not be necessary to understand the political system in order to be able to put forward one's views. Furthermore, mention is made of binding cooperation between the county council and the youth council or a similar body of influence for children and young people in the municipality. To ensure such cooperation, the municipal council can host an open meeting on child and youth policy early on in its term of office. At the meeting, it can take stock of matters raised by young people and matters on which the municipal council has worked. The most important purpose is to determine the matters on which there can be cooperation during the council's term of office. It is also important that the municipal council and municipal boards and committees make it possible for the inhabitants of the municipality, including children and young people, to put forward questions and views. This can be done, for instance, during an open questions session in connection with council meetings.

Young people can be elected as representatives with full rights to sit on boards and committees even though their names were not included on an electoral list in municipal council or county council elections. There is no minimum age limit for eligibility to popularly elected bodies other than the municipal council or county council, but young people under 15 years of age should not be given access to confidential information. Today, however, few municipalities or counties appoint young people to such bodies. The Youth Democracy Forum has proposed that a pilot project be initiated to establish quotas for young people on municipal boards and committees, and that committees that deal with matters affecting children and young people should have at least one representative under 25 years of age. Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)) states that the Government does not consider it appropriate to initiate a pilot project of this nature under the aegis of the central government authorities.

At central government level, too, there are few youth representatives on councils, boards or committees. In 2000 around three per cent of the members of central government boards and committees were aged 16-29 years, whereas that age group accounted for 19 per cent of the population. The Youth Democracy Forum has proposed that when central government boards and committees are appointed, the Norwegian Youth Council must be consulted as to whether the board or committee should have a youth representative. The Government considers it important to increase the proportion of youth representatives, and the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration has urged ministries to take account of this objective when appointing members to councils, boards and committees. However, it must be up to individual ministries to contact the Norwegian Youth Council or make use of other groups with which they are familiar when they seek youth representatives.

7.7 Areas of focus and future efforts

Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)) emphasizes that both the public authorities and voluntary organizations should make it easier for children and young people to exert influence. This does not mean that children and young people must make decisions regarding important areas of society entirely on their own, but that account must be taken of their ideas, thoughts and proposals in planning, policy formulation and day-to-day work in various arenas.

The Report to the Storting also underscored the importance of both central government and municipal authorities following up further efforts to secure the participation and influence of children and young people. The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs has a special responsibility for ensuring a holistic approach in these efforts, and for initiating measures to strengthen inter-ministerial cooperation. Effective follow-up is dependent on counties and municipalities also following up through practical efforts at the local level.

Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)) presents the following measures aimed at strengthening and further developing efforts at local level:

- Intensified efforts to secure the participation and influence of children and young people. Greater account must be taken of the ideas, thoughts and proposals of these groups in planning, policy formulation and day-to-day work in various arenas, at municipal, county and central government level.
- Increased dialogue with youth groups. The Government intends to strengthen its dialogue with youth groups through more systematic, direct contact with voluntary organizations and groups of young people.
- Systematic participation at municipal level. The Government intends to promote an increase in the number of municipalities where children and young people participate on a systematic basis, and to help ensure that this becomes an important, routine element of work at municipal level.
- Funds whose use may be decided by children and young people. The Government will urge all municipalities to allocate certain funds for use by children and young people for their own activities and the improvement of the local community.

- Support for local pilot projects and development work. Pilot projects will be initiated to focus on the influence of children and young people in political decision-making and processes at municipal level.
- Exchange of information and experience. Central government authorities will also support local efforts by arranging conferences and providing information and guidance material. This will include a booklet of ideas containing examples of local work to promote the participation and influence of children and young people. Systematic evaluations will also be initiated to study lessons learned from municipal and county efforts to increase the participation of children and young people.
- Youth networks and database. Efforts will be made to stimulate exchanges of ideas and experience between children and young people in different municipalities. This will be followed up by building networks and establishing an up-to-date database of youth councils or similar bodies of influence in municipalities.
- Increased youth participation in public boards and committees. Municipal and county authorities are urged to ensure that young people have a greater opportunity to present their views through participation in boards and committees and at municipal and county council meetings. It is also important to increase youth representation on central government councils, boards and committees. Ministries are urged to take this consideration into account when appointing members to such bodies.
- Improved contact between children, young people and politicians. Municipalities are urged to secure more binding cooperation between the municipal council and the youth council or similar bodies of influence for children and young people. It is also important that the municipal council and municipal boards and committees make it possible for local inhabitants, including children and young people, to put forward their questions and views. One means of doing this is by having an open questions session in connection with meetings.
- Youth liaison. To ensure that young people have more influence in local politics, municipalities are urged to have a special youth liaison officer.

These measures are designed to ensure that children and young people have greater influence on developments in their own municipality.

8

International contact and cooperation in the youth sector

8.1 Increased transnational engagement

The development of society today is influenced by a multitude of economic, social and cultural factors that transcend national boundaries, with the result that these boundaries have increasingly less significance. New communications technology, increasing mobility, an ever-growing number of supranational decisions and closer transboundary cooperation require us to become more actively involved in international and global issues. The internationalization of society poses new challenges for Norway.

As a result of the globalization of the international community, in future we must have knowledge of situations in other countries and experience of cooperation with people from other cultures and backgrounds. It is difficult to obtain such knowledge and experience through education and a theoretical approach alone. The best way of acquiring knowledge of conditions in other countries, cultural traditions and religions is by experiencing them directly. It is therefore important that children and young people be given a better opportunity to participate in international cooperation and that they acquire knowledge and understanding of the cultural and social traditions of other countries.

A growing amount of knowledge is required in terms of both language and cultural understanding. International youth cooperation leads to increased knowledge and gives participants experiences from other countries. This knowledge and experience can make an important contribution to the development of Norwegian society, particularly in the cultural sphere.

The fact that cooperation gives individuals a better understanding of the situation in other countries and promotes greater tolerance of other cultures and groups is also important. Youth cooperation across national boundaries is an effective means of preventing xenophobia. Personal contacts and cooperation between young people from different countries lay the foundation for reducing intolerance and can therefore play a vital role in preventing racism.

International cooperation is also important in relation to the formulation of official child and youth policy. In a globalized world, public authorities in different countries often encounter the same problems and challenges.

Cooperation on research, education policy and the development of methods in efforts targeting children and young people are fields in which the Norwegian authorities participate actively in international forums.

8.2 International cooperation - under voluntary and official auspices

Young Norwegians have always sought contact with and knowledge and inspiration from other countries. In many ways, this has influenced developments in Norway both in the cultural sphere and in the agricultural, industrial and other business sectors. Norway's history as a trading and shipping nation, and as an exporter of young seamen to other European countries, is one example of this tradition, as is Norwegian emigration to escape from overpopulation and poverty. In all eras, moreover, young Norwegians have sought higher education abroad.

The Norwegian authorities have traditionally left much of the work relating to international cooperation on youth issues to non-governmental child and youth organizations. In 1958 the organizations established the National Committee for International Youth Cooperation as a common platform for their international cooperation. In 1980, the Committee was expanded and transformed into the Norwegian Youth Council as a joint body for both national and international cooperation. Through this organization, the efforts of the voluntary child and youth organizations at the national and international levels were more strongly coordinated.

Today, too, much of the organized international cooperation in the field of children and youth takes place through non-governmental child and youth organizations. International cooperation and alliance-building is a central, natural part of the activities of many organizations. In most cases, Norwegian organizations that share the same ideological or practical goals as organizations in other countries have become affiliated with international child and youth organizations. Cooperation offers youth leaders and members of organizations in Norway valuable opportunities to take part in international conferences, seminars and study trips. In this way, young Norwegians gain experience and knowledge and come into contact with young people from other countries. This requires them to have an awareness of their own culture, tolerance in encounters with other cultures and a sense of solidarity with poor and oppressed people.

The central government authorities contribute funding for the child and youth organizations' international cooperation through a variety of support schemes. In Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), the Government affirms that it will continue to provide support for the international cooperation of voluntary child and youth organizations. This will be done without government interference and with respect for the diversity, distinctive character and priorities of each organization. It is also important to encourage Norwegian organizations to hold conferences, seminars and other international events in Norway. The general allocation for the organizations' international cooperation has remained unchanged for many years. Even if

schemes like the EU youth programmes offer new and alternative possibilities for financing contact between youth groups, there is a need to increase involvement in the organizations. In Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people grow up and live in Norway (Report No. 39 to the Storting (2001-2002)), the Government states that it will take a closer look at the form in which public funding should be provided and revert to this matter in connection with the annual budget proposals.

Even if international cooperation between non-governmental organizations is the key focus, international contact in a less organized form between individuals also plays a central role for many people. It is therefore important to facilitate both international cooperation through non-governmental organizations and groups, and opportunities for the initiatives of and contacts between individuals. It is also important to promote high-quality content in the cooperation projects. Human resource development and leadership training are key elements of both national and international work.

In addition to cooperation between voluntary organizations, it is also important to develop international cooperation between authorities who work in the field of child and youth policy. The mutual exchange of methods and lessons learned from child and youth work, and knowledge of the situation of children and young people, will be useful in developing national child and youth policies. This applies, for instance, to issues related to the participation and influence of children and young people in civic life, measures to prevent racism and extremist groups, the life style and value choices of young people, issues related to the development of a civil, democratic society, and ways of giving young people credit in the labour market for the non-formal education and training they acquire through youth work.

8.3 Cooperation in Nordic and international forums

The Nordic countries have many aspects in common, thereby making it natural for young people from these countries to cooperate with one another and establish contact. The traditional ideological basis for Nordic cooperation between young people is weaker than it was a few decades ago. Nevertheless, it is still important to promote contact between the Nordic countries, strengthen their common history and cultural heritage and develop the spirit of the good neighbourhood between these countries.

In the field of youth policy, the Nordic Youth Committee, which is the Nordic Council of Ministers' advisory body, has been the driving force. The Committee administers the Nordic youth allocation scheme which provides financial grants for Nordic cooperation projects and funding for cooperation between voluntary organizations. In addition to stimulating Nordic cooperation, the allocation plays an increasingly important role in cooperation on youth policy issues with the surrounding areas, i.e. in the Baltic Sea region and the Barents region.

In the field of education policy, the Nordic Council of Ministers has established the Nordplus Junior and Nordplus Mini programmes. Nordplus Junior was

established in 1989 to increase mobility between the Nordic countries by promoting exchanges of upper secondary school pupils (aged 16-19) and teachers. The aim of these programmes is to strengthen cooperation between upper secondary schools and increase pupils' understanding of Nordic languages and a sense of fellowship. Individual schools apply for support within the Nordplus Junior programme. The main idea is that a school in one Nordic country agrees on a project with a school in another country, after which groups of pupils and teachers participate in programme activities culminating in a 2-8-week exchange period. Nordplus Mini, the Nordic Council of Ministers' most recent programme, is a grant scheme for primary and lower secondary school classes which cooperate with other Nordic classes. The scheme targets pupils aged 13-16.

Through the EEA Agreement, Norway has participated in the work of the European Commission in the field of youth since 1994, on a par with EU member states. EU youth work has primarily been concentrated on an extensive youth exchange programme. The EU programme YOUTH aims at promoting contact and cooperation between young people in member states and increasing the European dimension of international cooperation. The programme has also focused on cooperation with third party countries, mainly in the Mediterranean area, Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe. The goal is to provide financial support to promote exchanges of youth groups, either bilaterally or at the multinational level. The programme targets young people aged 15-25, and the content of cooperation projects must foster long-term contact and be in line with programme goals. Moreover, the programme offers young men and women aged 18-25 an opportunity to spend 6-12 months in another country and participate, on a voluntary basis, in a local project in the field of youth work, environmental protection, social work or some other form of service for the local community.

Through the EEA Agreement, Norway has participated in the EU's educational programmes, Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci, since 1994. The Socrates programme covers general education, while the Leonardo da Vinci programme focuses on vocational and professional training. The programmes encompass pupils, students and teachers at all levels and include both cooperation on projects and exchanges.

Participation in European cooperation on education contributes towards fulfilling the intentions in the national curricula for both primary and lower secondary and upper secondary education. Cooperation leads to greater orientation towards projects and foreign language training, as well as to more extensive use of ICT in teaching. Reports and evaluations of cooperation in the field of education show that it has also led to increased international understanding, ideas, innovation and, not least, the establishment of networks that play a valuable role in laying the foundation for future cooperation. By opening the education programmes to all candidate countries, a good basis has been provided for cooperation on education with most of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe as well.

The Council of Europe has been involved in international youth cooperation since the end of the 1960s. The Council of Europe's approach to youth issues differs from that of other intergovernmental organizations in that it is based on

cooperation and joint management in the decision-making process between the authorities in member states and representatives of voluntary organizations, national youth councils and non-governmental international organizations.

Cooperation in the field of youth through the Council of Europe was initially concentrated on training youth leaders and providing financial support for international youth events. Language training was also offered for youth leaders, and the Council of Europe provided an important platform for cooperation between non-governmental child and youth organizations in Europe. Gradually, closer cooperation also developed between the national authorities responsible for youth policy in member states. Today, special cooperation structures have been established, and the Council of Europe arranges regular conferences for ministers responsible for youth policy in member states. The Report to the Storting on the conditions in which children and young people live and grow up in Norway emphasizes that Norway will continue its work in the Council of Europe.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN in 1989 and ratified by Norway in 1991. In 2000 the convention had been ratified by 197 states. The goal of this UN convention is to secure the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children. The term "children" is defined as the age group up to 18 years old. The convention is based on four main principles: all children are entitled to life and health, education and development, participation and influence, and care and protection.

The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and cooperates with the ministries concerned on reporting, information activities, programmes and individual projects. The UN has appointed a special committee of experts who monitor the way the convention is implemented by the countries who have ratified the text. These countries must report to the UN at regular intervals on the development of national policy in the fields covered by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In April 2003 Norway submitted its third report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Norway is also involved in efforts to improve the rights and childhood and living conditions of children and young people through other international forums and organizations. In 1992 the International Labour Organization (ILO) established a special programme to combat child labour. In 1998 Norway decided to provide financial support totalling NOK 66 million over a four-year period for this work. Norway also contributes actively to efforts targeting children and young people under the aegis of the UN Population Fund, the World Health Organization and the World Food Programme.

Young people in Norway have the opportunity to take part in international work through the Norwegian Peace Corps, which recently has been reorganised. This service seeks to promote exchanges between the North and the South and to enable young people from different parts of the world to meet and work together. Participants must mainly be between the ages of 22 and 35. The Norwegian Peace Corps supports cooperation between organisations and institutions in Norway and developing countries and assists with recruitment

and training. The vision underlying the Norwegian Peace Corps is to promote development through transfers of expertise and mutual cooperation. It also aims to create agents of change in Norway and abroad, and several volunteers from developing countries are currently in Norway.

9

Future challenges

Young people are undergoing a transition from childhood to adulthood. In a society where social structures are less rigid than in the class society of earlier times, it has become more difficult to identify where the transition to youth begins and ends. Since it is hard to pinpoint precisely at what age this stage starts and finishes, youth is often a rather imprecise concept. It is common to regard gradually increasing independence and autonomy as characteristics of the passage from youth to adulthood. Independence means that a person becomes increasingly less dependent on parents or other guardians with regard to decisions of significance to himself and others, and autonomy is determined by a person's ability to support himself. It might seem as though the stage of youth has been extended at both ends today since children are more independent than before, and since young people do not establish their own homes until they are in their late twenties or early thirties. This extension of the youth stage is typical of the knowledge society, which has acquired a special stage that can be called "young adults". In many contexts, however, youth is usually limited to the 16-24-year age group. A great many young men and women of this age are in the educational system and as such are clearly making the transition to adulthood.

9.1 Youth

Youth is a period in which many young men and women pursue their studies and put off establishing a home with a partner and having children. This means that it takes longer than in the 1950s and 1960s for young people to establish a home for themselves, with the result that young people are not tied to a particular residence as early in life. Young people today function in the interface between the global and the local community, and have greater opportunities both to remain mobile and to establish a fixed residence than earlier generations. Although the possibilities in many areas are greater than before, the degree to which young people have options still varies significantly from one individual to another. A knowledge society makes great demands as regards training, qualifications and expertise. The ideals of autonomy and individual freedom are widely accepted, yet many of the social disparities of the industrial society have been maintained.

Some of the main characteristics of the situation of young people in today's society:

- Young people become established later in life than before: they establish their first home, enter into partnerships or get married later, have children later and join the workforce later.
- Young people have looser ties to working life than before.
- Young people have had slower income growth than other groups in society
- Young people's consumption has increased

These general traits conceal individual differences between young persons, while describing a situation full of contrasts. Becoming established in a first job or home gives a person the opportunity for greater freedom, yet a low income places limitations on what he or she can do with that freedom. Growth in consumption is also an expression of freedom, yet at the same time it can lead to strained finances and reduced freedom. To some extent, the traditional social differences seem to continue to exist while new ones begin to emerge. As far as education is concerned, a majority of students in institutions of higher education and in many subjects are girls. This disparity between girls and boys applies all over Norway, but it appears to be greater in rural municipalities than in more central areas. Although girls have entered the educational system in earnest, many of them are still making quite traditional choices as regards the subjects they study. In upper secondary school, girls choose subjects tending towards a career in teaching, health and social services, humanist subjects and arts and crafts, while boys stick to subjects associated with industry, craft trades and technology. Thus, to some degree, boys are oriented towards traditional branches of agriculture and industry, while girls' choice of subjects points to a future in the service industry.

Few young people have a full time job. A great many of them work part time in addition to school and studies, many work at times of the day that are outside normal working hours, and many have a relatively loose connection with their job. On the whole, young people have poorer conditions on the labour market than other age groups. A larger percentage of them have temporary jobs, inconvenient working hours and a poor working environment. Young people also lag behind financially, compared with other age groups. This is linked to the fact that many of them combine work with studies and that unemployment is relatively high among young people, but it also has to do with the fact that the labour market has changed so that young people with no education have a far poorer chance of finding a job than before. A low, uncertain income does not provide a good basis for acquiring a place to live, as may be seen in the decline in recent years in the percentage of 16-29-year-olds who own their own homes. Young people have a slightly more risky lifestyle than older age groups. This applies to their use of alcohol or drugs, the degree to which they are exposed to accidents, and to psychological and social problems of various kinds. The risk is greatest in relation to traffic, where young people are particularly prone to accidents.

9.2 Youth policy challenges

The challenges as regards youth policy are to give young people the necessary conditions to enable them to spend their youth in such a way that their transition to adulthood is instructive in the sense that they can acquire experience that will prove valuable later in life. This means that the measures implemented must not relieve young people of all their problems and worries, but give them the possibility of solving problems and coping with the transition to life as an adult. In this connection, it is important to be aware of developments in the educational system and on the labour market, and the fact that young people have in many ways become more marginalized in the 1980s and 1990s. It also means that those who are the least successful in school and working life may have greater problems than before. Inherent in this observation is an emphasis on the importance of being alert to variations among young people as a group, and on the fact that not everyone needs the same type of assistance and support. For instance, the situation of young people who work is significantly different from that of young people who are pursuing an education and who often live outside what is formally regarded as their municipality of residence.

Many people are interested in the situation of young people, the problems they experience, their attitudes and how they will fare in life. This interest in, and in some cases this concern for, young people is of course related to the fact that youth is a stage of life characterized by a severance of ties. As young people's dependence on their parents grows weaker, their autonomy and independence increase correspondingly. The protection provided for them by their parents, day care centre and school is gradually replaced by a life in which they must stand on their own feet. For the vast majority of young people, this process of separation is relatively undramatic, or at least it appears that way to those who are watching it all from the outside. Even if outwardly the events do not appear particularly dramatic, things look different to young people themselves, who are being put to the test in relation to their own development, friends, school or work. It is also important to be aware that the use of general concepts such as young people and youth can detract attention from the fact that one person's experiences are not necessarily the same as those of other persons in the same age groups. Due to individuals' differing backgrounds, different family experiences and varying financial, social and cultural circumstances, the social frameworks established for young people vary.

Youth is experienced in different ways because it is significantly affected by social conditions, environmental factors and the resources that individuals have acquired as they were growing up. In this context, resources mean the ability that young people have developed to cope with their existence more generally, to solve problems and resolve conflicts, and to create meaning and coherence in their lives. Environmental factors refer to relations with family members and persons in the local community, and the way a person gets along with his or her peers in a day care centre, school and recreational activities. Social conditions relate to the way education, work and leisure are organized and arranged. More fundamental economic, social and cultural factors are also a part of this picture. The factors and circumstances mentioned above also affect persons in stages of life other than youth, but it is generally assumed that the influence is particularly strong in a person's youth because the options open to that person are greater at that time than both earlier and later in life.

The above list of factors that influence the way young people cope with their life also indicates where measures must be implemented in order for youth to be perceived as a positive stage of life.

The public authorities have a responsibility for providing the necessary conditions to ensure a good childhood, regulate the risks to which young people are exposed or to which they may expose themselves, and help ensure that each young man or woman acquires the best possible qualifications. Policy is a question of choosing courses of action and values, and the policy instruments selected must be perceived in the light of the kind of goals that are targeted and the kind of values on which these goals are based. When it comes to the use of instruments, there is a general tendency in our society towards a shift from measures aimed at social change to measures tailored to meet the needs of individuals. Behind this shift of focus lies not only a political value choice, but also the recognition that society cannot be controlled to the degree the public authorities believed possible before the stability of social development in the post-war era was disrupted in the early 1970s. The changes in the type of measures implemented may be described as shown in the following table.

Society	Up to the 1970s Planning, organization and regulation	After the 1970s Providing favourable conditions for economic, social and cultural development
School, work, leisure	Upbringing, control and protection	Providing favourable conditions for learning and experience
Individuals	Adaptation to social norms, measures targeting groups such as young people	Providing qualifications, equipping individuals to cope, measures targeting individuals

The table distinguishes between past and current thinking as regards instruments and goals, expressed in a streamlined, simplified form in order to accentuate the differences, which largely consist in the fact that planning, control and regulation have been toned down and replaced by various forms of facilitation. Of course, these are general trends and in practice there will always be a mixture of these two types of measures, but the point is to make it clear that there has been a change in the emphasis placed on the various measures in the direction suggested above. Based on this reasoning, measures can be implemented at the following levels:

- Social conditions: influence the general development of society, provide appropriate services and facilities in the school, work and recreation sectors
- Environmental factors: influence relations between members of society through measures in the family, school and recreation sectors
- Individuals: influence the expertise, qualifications and ability of individuals to cope with their life situation.

In the 1980s and 1990s official policy shifted towards a greater focus on the individual. There are many good arguments in favour of strengthening the qual-

ifications of individuals, but there is nonetheless a challenge in finding the right balance between measures at the various levels.

Historical data show that the size of age groups has implications for their welfare, opportunities and limitations in society. The current generation of youth is relatively small. The youth generation in the 1950s and 1960s were the baby boomers of the 1940s who accounted for a large proportion of the population. Demographics undoubtedly played a role in the attention and position that young people acquired during these years. However, the consequences for small youth cohorts are not entirely negative nor positive. Being young in an ageing society may mean that, to a greater degree, young people will have to adjust to a society that is run on the terms of its older members. As pointed out, in a book on young people resulting from the study of power in Norwegian society, society is designed for those who have been there a while¹. Young people live in the interface between autonomy and adaptation, and the growth force inherent in the younger generation may be much in demand by many local communities who will be competing to attract young people.

1) Fredrik Engelstad (ed.) and Guro Ødegård (ed.): *Ungdom, makt og mening*. Gyldendal, 2003

Use of leisure time, problem behaviour, and aspirations for the future among Norwegian youth

Appendix to report to the Council of Europe
about Norwegian youth politics

Elisabet E. Storvoll
Geir Moshuus



Norwegian Social Research

August 2003

This appendix has been written jointly by the authors. Geir Moshuus has been mainly responsible for part 1-8, Elisabet E. Storvoll for part 9-12. The statistical analyses were done by Elisabet E. Storvoll. Elisabeth Backe-Hansen and Elisabet E. Storvoll have translated the appendix to English.

Contents:

1 INTRODUCTION	5
2 METHOD	6
3 PARTICIPATION AND INFLUENCE IN POLITICAL ISSUES	7
4 LEISURE TIME	10
5 PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES.....	12
6 RELIGION.....	15
7 PLANS FOR FUTURE EDUCATION AND PLACE TO LIVE.....	16
8 PART-TIME WORK	18
9 TOBACCO	18
10 ALCOHOL.....	20
11 ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR.....	22
12 EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE	26
13 FINAL DISCUSSION	27
REFERENCES.....	29

Use of leisure time, problem behaviour, and aspirations for the future among Norwegian youth

1 Introduction

This appendix contains a description of how most young people of today spend their time, building on data from the new questionnaire study "Young in Norway 2002". To be more specific, NOVA was asked to present results pertaining to participation and influence in politics, how young people spend their time and what organizations they are members of, religious attitudes, plans for the future concerning education and where they want to live, and whether they work part-time. Further, we were asked to present results about tobacco and alcohol consumption, antisocial behaviour, and exposure to violence by others. To answer these questions we distinguish between girls and boys, and between students in junior high and high school. Where possible we have compared the descriptions of today's situation with what we know about studies from the 1990ies. In particular we have made comparisons with publications based on "Young in Norway 1992" since the present study is based on this. Both are cross-sectional studies of the population of 13-19 year olds¹ in Norway.

There were several reasons to repeat a new, large-scale study of young people in 2002 (Rossow and Bø, 2003). First, it was of interest to study stability and change in young peoples' living conditions and ways of life over a ten year span. During these years we have seen several probably significant changes, amongst other things two comprehensive school reforms². The age cohorts have become significantly smaller, the labour market is tighter, and the availability and use of information- and communication technologies have increased greatly. It is supposed that changes have taken place in youth cultures, as well as in how leisure time is spent, value orientations, and consumption patterns. Second, we wanted to test the hypothesis that traditional social structures like gender, class, and ethnic affiliation have lost some of their former significance for young peoples' possibilities and choices. And thirdly, we wanted to survey important aspects of young peoples' living conditions and daily lives that had not been covered in

¹ Covering the three years of junior high school and the three years of high school.

² "Reform 94" covered high school, while "Reform 97" covered primary school and junior high school.

former Norwegian studies, like availability and use of information- and communication technologies, poverty, and gambling with money.

Ingeborg Rossow (2003) has recently published a preliminary analysis of results from “Young in Norway 2002”. Her conclusion is that a large majority of Norwegian teen-agers do well enough at school, their relationships with parents as well as friends are good, and their leisure activities are varied. These results can be a useful corrective to the picture that is often drawn in public debates, where both media and social researchers focus on problems and risk. Rossow’s publication and the results we will present here should serve to modify this picture. Actually, the dominating patterns that have been revealed combine to form a picture of stability over time: In 1992, young people in Norway mainly were well and did well. The same is the case in 2002.

In the following we present results for the selected themes. We start with a general picture of how most young people spend their time, and what plans they have for the future (parts 3-8), and go on to present some more problematic aspects (parts 9-12). Finally we sum up some of the main findings in part 13.

2 Method

For “Young in Norway 2002” 73 schools were selected, 47 junior high schools and 26 high schools. The original sample included 12.394 students, of whom 11.928 participated, giving a response rate of 92 %³. The response rate was a little higher in the junior high schools (94 %) than in the high schools (91 %). Also, the response rate was a little higher among students in theoretical streams in high school (92 %) than amongst those following work-related streams (90 %)⁴.

Among the participants 51 % (N=5784) were girls and 49 % (N=5505) were boys, 51 % (N=5842) were students in junior high school and 49 % (N= 5564) in high school. The analyses covering part time work outside school, educational aspirations, and where the young people want to live when they are grown up were just done on the high school sample. In this sub-sample 48 % (N=2668) were boys and 52 % (N=2869) were girls.

The distributions in the final sample in “Young in Norway 2002” have been compared with some variables that are known for the total population (cf. Statistics Norway). These include sex, age, type of community, family status, ethnic affili-

³ The response rate had probably been 95 % but for an influenza epidemic that hit one of the participating schools hard while data were collected.

⁴ Former studies of attrition in school-based survey studies among young people have shown that absence from school on a particular day is systematically associated with different types of problem behaviours (e.g. Bakken 1998). 56 of the participating schools conducted a second data collection. This made it possible to include an added 696 students, probably increasing the number of participants engaging in problem behaviour. Without this effort the response rate would have been 87 %.

ation, and country of origin. These comparisons confirm that “Young in Norway 2002” draws a representative picture of students in junior high school and high school⁵.

The study was anonymous, thus no formal registering of the data in accordance with the Norwegian data protection legislation was necessary. Written consent was gained from the parents of the junior high school students, while the high school students (mostly between 16 and 18 years of age) consented on their own behalf. Information about the study was sent to their parents as well, however⁶.

Results concerning different types of activities, how the young people judge these activities, reports concerning plans for the future and different events, are presented as percentages. When we present results about alcohol consumption and being drunk mean values are used. The results are cross-tabulated by sex and school type, or comparisons of mean values. We have chosen not to present results from statistical tests of group differences, as even small differences will be statistically significant in a sample as large as this one. We have rather chosen to highlight group differences of substantial interest in our efforts to understand the lives of young people in today’s Norway. However, what constitutes small and great differences also depends on the prevalence of a phenomenon. A difference of five percentage points can be considerable if the phenomenon under consideration is rare, but of little significance if it means for instance a participation rate of 50 versus 55 % in a particular activity.

3 Participation and influence in political issues

In public debates it seems as if there is an increasing worry about young peoples’ level of political interest and activities. Are we actually confronted with a generation of young people who distances itself from participation in our political system?

“Young in Norway 2002” contains questions about participation in 11 different political activities. More than half (59 %) had participated in at least one of these. We have divided the responses into three categories: conventional activities, action-oriented activities, and illegal actions (see Lidén and Ødegaard, 2002; Ødegaard 2001 and 2003). The same categorization is used by Sletten (2001 and 2003).

⁵ However, the response rate was much lower among those in their final high school year. This is related to two things. First, students attending work-related streams spend much time in their work-places during this year, and are not at school that much. Second, more students attending work-related streams drop out during their second and third years. Thus representativity is slightly lower among the oldest teen-agers.

⁶ See Rossow and Bø (2003) for a more comprehensive description of methods, ethical considerations etc.

Table 1 shows that participation in action-oriented activities (45 %) was greater than in conventional activities (33 %), while participation in illegal actions was limited (9 %). The most important action-oriented activities were signing petitions (37 %) and political demonstrations (19 %). Within the category called conventional activities being active in the school council was by far the most important type of participation (25 %).

Table 1: Participation in different political activities, by sex and school type. Percentages.

	All	Sex		School type	
		Boys	Girls	Junior high school	High school
Active in a youth organisation of a political party	10	10	10	9	11
Active in other political organisation	5	5	5	3	6
Active in the school council	25	21	28	24	26
Participates in a youth council	8	8	9	9	8
Participation in conventional activities altogether	33	29	36	31	34
Media coverage on a political issue	7	7	7	6	8
Signed petitions	37	32	42	25	49
Political manifestation (popular meetings, demonstrations)	19	16	23	12	27
Boycott of particular products or firms	12	12	12	7	16
Participation in action-oriented activities altogether	45	41	50	34	57
Illegal actions	6	9	3	6	6
Written opinions on walls	4	5	3	4	4
Damaged public or private property in protest	4	6	2	4	3
Participation in illegal actions altogether	9	13	5	9	9

When all these categories are combined it emerges that the girls participated a bit more than the boys (62 versus 55 %). This mostly reflects participation in action-oriented activities, which pertains to 50 % of the girls and 42 % of the boys. The situation is the opposite, however, where participation in illegal actions is concerned. Far more boys (13 %) than girls (5 %) answered that they had participated in such activities.

The table indicates that participation in political activities increases with age. Such participation was higher in high school (66 %) than in junior high school (51 %), particularly with regard to action-oriented activities (57 % in high school versus 34 % in junior high school). Whereas about one fourth of the students in junior high school had signed petitions, this pertained to about half of the students in high school. There is a marked difference where participation in political demonstrations is concerned as well; 27 % of the students in high school and 12 % of the students in junior high school reported such activities. Finally the number who had boycotted certain products or firms was much larger in high school (16

%) than in junior high school (7 %). Where conventional activities and illegal actions are concerned, there were hardly any differences between the older and the younger teen-agers.

Compared to results from “Young in Norway 1992” the analyses show that the patterns that were found in young peoples’ participation in political activities were the same as 10 years earlier. According to Tormod Øia (1995) the girls were for instance more involved in concrete political issues than the boys, and political commitment was more firm among the older youth than the younger. The picture still looks like this. Young people are as concerned with political activities now as those who grew up 10 years ago. The most important finding is that young people now seem more concerned with specific issues than with the political system.

Young peoples’ interest in political influence was measured with the help of seven questions. The participants were asked to assess the significance of different activities if the objective is to influence the development of society. The response alternatives were “Great significance”, “Some significance”, “No significance” and “Don’t know”. Since we are concerned here about the types of activities young people think would make a difference we have just included those who thought the different activities included here are very significant. As in table 1 we distinguish between conventional activities, action-oriented activities, and illegal actions.

As table 2 shows, the picture painted in this way is fairly similar to the one demonstrated in table 1. It is worth noticing that not more than one third of the young people thought voting in municipal or national elections are of great significance. To have media attention was seen as equally important. The proportion thinking that participation in political manifestations is of great significance (20 %) equals the proportion thinking the same of participation in a youth organisation of a political party (18 %). On the other hand few thought that boycott of particular products or firms has much impact (9 %). Nor did many think that participation in illegal actions is very influential (10 %).

Table 2: Belief in different political activities, by sex and school type. Percentages.

	All	Sex		School type	
		Boys	Girls	Junior high school	High school
Conventional activities					
Active in a youth organization of a political party	18	14	22	19	17
Active in other political organisation	16	13	20	15	17
Voting in municipal or general elections	33	28	39	30	37
Action-oriented activities					
Media coverage on a political issue	32	32	33	26	39
Boycott of specific products or firms	9	9	9	9	9
Participation in political demonstrations	20	17	23	19	21
Illegal actions					
Participation in illegal actions	10	13	6	10	10

Where conventional, political activities are concerned, more girls than boys believed that participation in a youth organisation of a political party, working for other political organizations, or voting has great significance. In addition they had a little more confidence in action-oriented means than the boys. On the other hand more boys than girls believed in illegal actions as a political means.

Where school level is concerned, it is worth noticing that far more students in high school than in junior high school attached great significance to media attention, with the proportion increasing from 26 % to 39 %. In addition the proportion of students attributing great significance to voting increased from 30 % to 37 % between the two school levels. Otherwise the differences between the older and the younger sub-samples were small.

Based on the same data set, political participation and interest in matters of importance to society are more comprehensively discussed by Guro Ødegaard (2003). One of the things she discusses is the prevailing view of today's young people as not very politically interested or active. Ødegaard argues that the fact that young people participate relatively often in action-oriented activities necessitates a revision of such standpoints.

4 Leisure time

What has happened to the ways young people use their leisure time? Since 1992 young people have had access to mobile phones, personal computers are far more common, and most in this age group are Internet users. Does this change the traditional patterns among Norwegian youth where the use of leisure time is concerned?

To develop more knowledge about young peoples' use of their leisure time participants in "Young in Norway 2002" were asked how often they had taken part in a series of activities during the preceding week. It was evident that most of them spent much time together with friends (cf. table 3), a large majority reported that they are together with friends in their own home (85 %), and almost as many are out with friends (79 %). Most of them also spend much time at home, helping out (77 %) or just being home, alone or with the family (75 %). However, far fewer have actually done something together with their mother or father (34 %).

If we look more closely at leisure time activities, it appears that many had been active in a sports club (43%), while even more had done some exercise on their own (53 %). A far greater proportion had been to a café or snack bar (47 %) than participated in meetings in some organisation or other (26 %). About as many had used gambling machines (18 %) or hung out on a corner (19 %) as been to a youth club (18 %). An even greater proportion had visited a health studio (25 %). Finally, their reports about their reading habits show that newspapers were read far more often (85 %) than books (44 %).

Table 3: The proportion who had engaged in various kinds of leisure activities during the preceding week, by sex and school type. Percentages⁷.

	All	Sex		School type	
		Boys	Girls	Junior high school	High school
Been to a café or snack bar	47	42	51	38	55
Exercised in a sports club	43	47	38	51	34
Been to a health studio, squash, aerobics etc.	25	24	26	19	30
Done martial arts or self-defence	10	14	6	12	8
Exercised on their own	53	51	54	56	50
Been to a youth club	18	21	16	27	10
Meeting or rehearsals in a group or an organisation	26	23	28	28	23
Done something together with mother or father (hobbies etc.)	34	33	34	37	31
Spent most part of the evening with friends elsewhere	79	77	80	73	84
Worked on a car, motorbike or scooter	13	23	4	13	14
Been shopping	63	51	73	63	63
Helped out at home	77	71	83	80	74
Together with friends at home	85	86	85	85	86
Home alone, or with the family	75	71	79	78	72
Read a book (not a schoolbook)	44	37	51	48	40
Read a newspaper	85	85	84	80	89
Hung out on a street corner, outside a kiosk etc.	19	22	17	24	15
Used a gambling machine (with possibilities of winning money)	18	30	7	17	19

More boys than girls visit cafes, they do more shopping, they help out more at home, and more girls read books. The boys do more physical activities in sports clubs, do more martial arts, use gambling machines far more often, and work more frequently on cars, motorbikes, or scooters. A slightly larger proportion of boys visit youth clubs as well. Otherwise there were few sex differences in the results presented in table 3.

Students in high school differed from students in junior high school in that they visited cafes more often, more of them were out all evening with friends, or exercised in a health studio. Compared to the juniors they were more rarely seen on street corners, at meetings or rehearsals in a group or an organisation, at youth clubs, or exercising in a sports club. They did not exercise as often on their own. They read fewer books, but more newspapers.

These results indicate that in spite of the fact that young people use new technologies in abundance much remains the same. During the last decade, few

⁷ The columns covering school type have been published previously in Rossow (2003).

changes can be observed in the ways young people use their leisure time. The patterns we find in 2002 are about the same as the ones found in 1992 (Øia, 1994). Being with friends is as important now as then. The 1992 survey as well as the one from 2002 show that the proportion of young people active with hobbies, sports, outdoor activities or activities in different kinds of organizations was lower among the older than the younger teenagers participating in the studies. Øia's conclusion at the time was the “..The development from younger to older teenager can be described as a path from being together around common activities, to being together as the point of departure for cultivating common identities” (1994:9). The situation is the same today.

Participants were asked if they do sports regularly. More than half reported that they do so, either by exercising but not participating in organised activities or contests, or by both exercising and participating.

Table 4: Participating in sports activities, by sex and school type. Percentages.

	All	Sex		School type	
		Boys	Girls	Junior high school	High school
Not doing sports of any kind	18	16	20	16	20
Not doing sports now, but did before	23	22	24	18	28
Doing sports, but not participating in organised exercise or contests	22	20	24	21	24
Exercising and participating in contests	37	42	32	45	28

More boys than girls do competitive sports. However, the sex differences become smaller if we look at those who do sports without participating in contests. In addition participation in competitive sports is more frequent in junior high school than in high school. If we look at results from “Young in Norway 1992”, it does not seem as if the patterns of doing sports have changed much (Øia, 1994).

5 Participation in organizational activities

During the last decade young peoples' participation in organisational activities has been much focused on. Detection of organised cheating on the number of members in some youth organisation in order to increase financial support from the State has led to negative attention. Do we find large changes in the level of participation in 2002 compared to 1992?

To paint a picture of young peoples' participation in organisational activities we asked whether they had been members of different types of organizations since they were 10 years old. For the sample as a whole we found that the majority (61 %) were members of one or more organizations (cf. table 5). One third had been members formerly, while very few answered that they never had been members.

These results clearly show how extensive membership in organizations is among Norwegian youth.

Table 5: Membership in different types of organizations after 10 years of age, by sex and school type. Percentages.

	All	Sex		School type	
		Boys	Girls	Junior high school	High school
A member at present	61	64	58	65	56
Have been a member, but have quit	33	30	35	28	38
I am not a member, nor have I ever been a member	7	6	7	7	6

Table 5 shows that the majority of both sexes are members of different kinds of organizations. Only 6 % of the boys and 7 % of the girls never had been members. All over the sex differences are small within this area. The table also indicates that membership in organizations decreases somewhat with age, but the differences are not very large even here. More students in junior high school (65 %) were members at present, compared to students in high school (56 %). At the same time the proportion who had been members increased, to 38 % among the participants in high school compared to 28 % of those in junior high school.

According to Øia (1994) the level of participation in different types of organizations had decreased in 1992 compared to Lars Grue’s study from 1982 (Grue, 1982). The results for the different age groups that are included in Øia’s analysis indicate that this decrease has continued. In 1992 between 79 % and 83 % of the 13 to 15 year olds were members of one or more organizations, compared to 61 % in the present study. Comparisons between high school students at the two points in time show the same tendency, which may indicate that active participation in organizational life may have decreased even further. However, the level of participation is still high, which gives rise to the assumption that spending their leisure time doing organised activities still means much to Norwegian youth. The results from “Young in Norway 2002” also show that almost all are members at least some of the time while they grow up. Thus, it may appear that the greatest challenge for the organizations is not to recruit new members, but to keep the ones they have.

The participants in “Young in Norway 2002” were also asked to concretise the types of organizations they were members of, through a series of questions. Table 6 shows that most of them replied that they were members of sports clubs (40 %). 9 % were members of youth clubs and brass bands, choirs or orchestras. Between 4 % and 6 % were members of supporter clubs, political or religious organizations, youth organizations, or clubs for hunting or fishing. For the rest 3 % or less replied that they were members.

According to table 4 a majority of Norwegian youth participate or have participated in sports organizations. Thus, it is not surprising that many were also

members of such organizations. The study also shows that no other type of organization comes near to being as popular as sports organizations where membership is concerned.

It also seems reasonable that whatever type of organization the level of participation will exceed the level of membership. This pertains to sports as well. If we lump together those who just participated in sports activities with those who competed as well in table 4, we find that about 6 out of 10 participated in sports, compared to just 4 out of 10 being members of such organizations. This difference becomes even more distinct if we look at the youth clubs, where only 9 % replied that they were members while 18 % participated.

Table 6: Membership in different types of organizations, by sex and school type. Percentages⁸.

	All	Sex		School type	
		Boys	Girls	Junior high school	High school
Motor club	2	4	1	2	2
Teetotal organization	1	1	1	1	1
Youth club	9	10	8	14	4
Sports club	40	45	36	45	35
Supporter club	6	10	2	6	7
Political organization	4	4	5	2	7
Religious organization	5	5	6	5	6
4H, rural youth organisations etc.	4	4	5	4	5
Red Cross etc.	2	2	2	1	2
Brass bands, choirs, orchestras	9	6	12	11	7
Clubs for keeping pets	3	1	5	3	3
Clubs for hobbies (stamps etc.)	2	2	1	2	1
Scouts	2	3	2	3	2
Clubs for hunting or fishing	4	7	1	3	5
Live role playing clubs	2	2	2	2	2
Environmental work organizations	1	1	2	1	2
Other organizations	11	11	10	11	11

If we look more closely at the types of organizations it appears that members of supporter clubs, clubs for hunting or fishing or motor clubs are mostly boys. More boys than girls are members of sports clubs as well, while the girls dominate in brass bands, choirs, and orchestras, and in clubs for keeping pets. Otherwise the sex differences were small.

Tables 3, 4, and 5 all indicate that participation in organised leisure time activities decreases with age. This is the case for sports clubs, youth clubs, and brass bands. The opposite pertains to membership in political organizations or

⁸ The columns covering school type have been published previously in Rossow (2003).

clubs for hunting and fishing, where there is a marked increase between junior high school and high school. However, there are still relatively few who are members even in high school; 7 % in the former and 5 % in the latter.

The patterns remain fairly stable between 1992 and 2002 concerning the types of organization young people are members of. Sports organizations attracted most of them both in 1992 and 2002, followed by youth clubs and brass bands. At the same time we again find the tendency to an all over decrease in membership. The decrease is smallest where sports clubs are concerned (from 50 % to 45 % among the boys) whereas the contrast is greatest where youth clubs and brass bands are concerned. In 1992 19 % of the boys were members of a youth club. The corresponding proportion in 2002 had decreased to 10 %. In 1992 20 % of the girls were members of brass bands, choirs, or orchestras, compared to 12 % in 2002.⁹ This strengthens our impression that the real challenges for the organizations in the future will be to keep their members. Both in 1992 and 2002 most young people had tried participating in one or more organizations. However, more had left them again in 2002.

6 Religion

The participants were asked about their religious affiliation. In the sample as a whole 71 % saw themselves as Christian and 3 % saw themselves as Moslem (table 7). As the table shows there are no great differences according to sex or school type where religious affiliation is concerned.

Table 7: Religious affiliation, by sex and school type. Percentages.

	All	Sex		School type	
		Boys	Girls	Junior high school	High school
Christian	71	68	75	70	73
Moslem	3	3	3	3	3
Other religious affiliation	3	3	2	2	3
No religious affiliation	23	26	21	25	22

Not more than 6 % of the total sample replied that religion means much in their daily lives (cf. table 8). Even though the large majority of the sample considers themselves Christians religion still has little (30 %) or no (53 %) significance.

⁹ The results from 1992 are from Øia (1994).

Table 8: The significance of religion in daily life, by sex and school type. Percentages.

	All	Sex		School type	
		Boys	Girls	Junior high school	High school
Very significant	6	7	6	6	7
Quite significant	10	10	11	11	9
Means little	30	27	33	32	29
No significance	53	56	50	51	55

Table 8 shows that there were few sex differences at this point. Nor were there any clear signs that religion changes its significance with age in any direction, the differences between students in the two school types were small.

The question about religious affiliation was formulated somewhat differently in “Young in Norway 1992”, making direct comparison difficult. In 1992 more girls than boys answered that they were practising Christians. In addition this pertained to more students in high school than in junior high school. Could it be that sex and age differences have decreased in this area compared to ten years ago?

7 Plans for future education and place to live

Our presentation of young peoples’ plans for future education and where they want to live are based on the answers given by the high school students who participated in “Young in Norway 2002”. For this subsample as a whole 59 % planned to go to University or University College (cf. table 9). A mere 1 % among those who followed the theoretical streams planned to end their education by the end of high school, while 18 % of those following the work-related streams had made such plans. Quite a lot did not know their future plans.

Table 9: Plans for future education, by sex. Percentages.

	All	Sex	
		Boys	Girls
University or University College	59	52	66
No future plans – theoretical streams	1	2	1
No future plans – work-related streams	18	26	11
Other plans	4	4	5
Don't know	17	16	18

Table 9 shows that just above half of the boys and close to two thirds of the girls planned to achieve higher education. Independently of sex there are few who plan to end their education by the end of high school. The majority of those who did so were boys attending work-related streams in high school.

In addition we asked the participants from high school about where they wanted to live in the future. In “Young in Norway 2002” the question is whether

they want to remain living in their present locality when they have finished their education. Not more than 14 % answered that they would very much like to do this (cf. table 10). Just above one fourth would like to do so if things went like that, while one fourth did not want to do so. One third did not know where they want to live in the future.

Table 10: A wish to remain living in present locality, by sex. Percentages.

	All	Sex	
		Boys	Girls
Would like to very much	14	17	10
If it happens that way	27	28	26
Don't know	34	34	35
Wish to live somewhere else	25	21	29

More boys than girls answered that they would very much like to remain living in the same place, while more girls than boys answered that they would like to live somewhere else.

Kåre Heggen (2002) cites Ivar Frønes (1996) in his description of a quiet “revolution” that has taken place within the field of education. In the aftermath of the sexual revolution girls have become leading where higher education is concerned, according to Frønes (op. cit.). This is confirmed by our findings, as we also find that more girls than boys plan higher education. However, Heggen (op. cit.) points out that there has been a change based on geography as well. Based on official statistics about education from 1999, he shows that the girls from rural areas are most concerned with achieving higher education. There were no great differences between counties where the boys’ plans were concerned, while the proportion attempting higher education was larger among the girls from Norway’s most sparsely populated counties.

What, then, do the results from “Young in Norway 2002” show? How does degree of urbanisation in the place they lived influence the young peoples’ plans for where they want to live in the future? For both sexes it appeared that among those who lived in large towns on the one hand and small, rural villages on the other hand a larger proportion would like to come back to live, while this was not the case for those living in smaller towns or medium-sized localities.

How does degree of urbanization influence young peoples’ plans for further education? Our results show that more girls than boys from large towns or small, rural villages wanted higher education. There were no such sex differences for those coming from smaller towns or medium-sized localities.

Heggen (op. cit.) analyses where young people from different parts of the country live while they go to school or study. We measure young peoples’ aspirations for the future. This makes direct comparisons difficult. However, our results do not indicate that girls from the smallest communities mostly wish to live elsewhere, even though more of them plan to achieve higher education. On the

contrary they were among the girls who would really like to remain living in the same place. In addition just as many girls from the big towns planned to achieve higher education.

8 Part-time work

Only the students in high school were asked about whether they were working outside school hours during the school year. About half did, more girls than boys (cf. table 11).

Table 11: Work outside school during the school year, by sex. Percentages.

	All	Sex	
		Boys	Girls
Yes	49	42	55
No	51	58	45

In addition the young people who answered affirmatively were asked how many hours they worked each week (cf. table 12). Most answered that they worked part time from four to nine hours a week. Then followed between 10 and 15 hours a week. Not more than a small proportion (11 %) worked more than 16 hours a week. Although more girls than boys worked part time, there were no sex differences in how much they worked once they were working.

Table 12: Number of working hours a week, by sex. Percentages.

	All	Sex	
		Boys	Girls
1-3 hours	21	19	23
4-9 hours	41	43	39
10-15 hours	27	27	28
16 hours or more	11	12	10

In other words the main tendency is that part time work is usual among high school students, and that sex doesn't seem to influence the amount of working even though more girls than boys do part time work.

9 Tobacco

According to table 13 most teenagers neither smoke nor use snuff. About one in ten smoked occasionally and one in five smoked daily. Among the daily smokers, it was most common to smoke between 10 and 20 cigarettes a day (47 %). 17 % smoked 20 cigarettes or more. Only a few teenagers used snuff, both occasionally

(5 %) and daily (4 %). Among those who used snuff daily, most used about three boxes a day (44 %).

Table 13: Smoking and using snuff, by sex and school type. Percentages.

	All	Sex		School type	
		Boys	Girls	Junior high school	High school
Smoke					
Do not smoke	71	74	69	80	62
Smoke, but not daily	11	10	13	10	13
Smoke daily	17	16	19	10	25
Use snuff					
Do not use snuff	92	84	99	93	90
Use snuff, but not daily	5	9	1	4	5
Use snuff daily	4	7	0	3	5

The proportion that smoked both occasionally and daily was slightly higher among girls than among boys, but this sex difference was not large (cf. table 13). This corresponds to data from surveys conducted among junior high school students by the National Council on Tobacco and Health, which indicate that the proportion of daily smokers is somewhat higher among girls (11 %) than among boys (9 %) (Norwegian Directorate for Health and Social Affairs, 2003a). That young women smoke more than young men is claimed to be a myth (Op. cit., 2003a). Data from Statistics Norway indicate small sex differences in the number of daily smokers during the last 30 years. According to their survey from 2002, 29 % of the women and 26 % of the men smoked daily (Norwegian Directorate for Health and Social Affairs, 2003b). In sum, these studies indicate gender similarity in the number of daily smokers. Moreover, the reported levels of smoking are pretty similar. The survey from the National Council on Tobacco and Health shows an almost identical prevalence as we find among junior high school students. The level of daily smokers reported by Statistics Norway is somewhat higher than the level among the high school students. This is probably due to an older age group in the first study (age 16-24 years).

As regards use of snuff, the sex difference is more substantial. About one in ten boys and one in hundred girls used snuff occasionally (cf. table 13). A similar gender-ratio appeared among those who use snuff daily. Surveys from the National Council on Tobacco and Health and Statistics Norway also indicate that very few women use snuff. Statistics Norway reports that 9 % of the boys from 16 to 24 years used snuff daily (Norwegian Directorate for Health and Social Affairs, 2003b), and the National Council on Tobacco and Health reports that 3 % of the boys at junior high schools use snuff daily (Norwegian Directorate for Health and Social Affairs, 2003a).

A large proportion of those who both smoke and use snuff daily seem to start doing so during adolescence. This is indicated by the findings showing that use of tobacco is far more common among students at high schools than at junior high schools (cf. table 13). While one in four of the oldest student smoked daily, this was the case for one in ten of the youngest. Moreover, 5 % of the oldest and 3 % of the youngest teen-agers used snuff daily. Occasional use of tobacco varied little with age.

According to the "Young in Norway"-studies the proportion of daily smokers has been stable from 1992 (18 %; Storvoll et al., 2003) to 2002 (17 %). This is also the case when girls and boys are studied separately. In 1992 the prevalence was 19 and 17 % respectively (Storvoll et al., 2003), and in 2002 19 and 16 %. As well Statistics Norway reports that the proportion of daily smokers among young people (16–24-year olds) has been stable the last decade (Norwegian Directorate for Health and Social Affairs, 2003b). The surveys conducted by the National Council on Tobacco and Health indicate that the number of junior high school students who smoke daily has decreased since 1975. However, there was a small increase from 1995 to 2000 (Norwegian Directorate for Health and Social Affairs, 2003a). On the other hand the proportion of young men (16-24-year olds) who used snuff increased considerably from 1985 to 2002 according to Statistics Norway (Norwegian Directorate for Health and Social Affairs, 2003b). The National Council on Tobacco and Health also reports an increase in the number of boys using snuff the last decade (Norwegian Directorate for Health and Social Affairs, 2003a). According to these findings, the concerns about young people of today can not be due to an increased number of daily smokers. However, one should be aware of the increased number of young boys who use snuff.

10 Alcohol

The young peoples' experience with alcohol was measured by asking whether they ever had been drinking alcohol and whether they had been drunk. Those who answered affirmatively were asked how old they were the first time this happened. Seven in ten had tried drinking alcohol (cf. table 14). In comparison, Norwegian Institute for Alcohol and Drug Research (SIRUS) (2002) finds that eight in ten 15–20-years olds had tried drinking alcohol. That the prevalence reported by SIRUS is somewhat higher than the one found in our study is probably due to an older sample in their study. Six in ten participants in "Young in Norway 2002" had been drunk. The mean age for the first time the adolescents both tried alcohol and became intoxicated was about 14 years. This is in accordance with SIRUS's findings which indicate that the alcohol debut is around 14,5 years of age (Skretting, 2003).

Table 14: Experience with alcohol, by sex and school type.

	All	Sex		School type	
		Boys	Girls	Junior high school	High school
Ever been drinking alcohol					
Proportion who asked yes (percentages)	72	72	73	58	88
Age the first time (mean (standard deviation))	13,6 (3,5)	13,5 (4,3)	13,8 (2,7)	-	-
Ever been drunk					
Proportion who asked yes (percentages)	63	62	63	43	83
Age the first time (mean (standard deviation))	14,3 (3,4)	14,2 (4,3)	14,3 (2,3)	-	-

According to table 14 similar proportions of girls and boys had both tasted alcohol and been drunk. Nor does SIRUS (2002) report any sex differences as regards the number that had ever tasted alcohol. Moreover, table 14 indicates that the age of the first experience with both alcohol and alcohol intoxication is similar for girls and boys. As expected, a larger proportion of older teen-agers (88 %) than younger teen-agers (58 %) had ever tasted alcohol. Moreover, about twice as many of the oldest students had been drunk. In other words, a large proportion starts both to drink alcohol and become intoxicated during adolescence.

Moreover, the participants in “Young in Norway” were asked how often they had been drinking alcohol during the last year (the last twelve months). Two in three had been drinking alcohol last year (cf. table 15). Almost one in five had consumed alcohol once a week. Only 3 % had been drinking more than once a week.

Table 15: Frequency of alcohol consumption last year, by sex and school type. Percentages.

	All	Sex		School type	
		Boys	Girls	Junior high school	High school
Have not been drinking	30	31	28	45	14
1-4 times	22	21	22	28	15
5-10 times	14	14	15	12	17
About once a month	15	14	17	7	24
About once a week	16	17	16	6	27
More than once a week	3	4	2	1	4

Table 15 indicates few sex differences in the frequency of adolescents’ alcohol consumption. However, twice as many boys (4 %) as girls (2 %) had been drinking alcohol more than once a week. The alcohol consumption varied considerably according to age. Older teen-agers had more often consumed alcohol at least once a month (55 % versus 14 %). On the other hand, the youngest students more often answered that they had not been drinking alcohol or had been drinking from one to four times last year (73 % versus 29 %).

Finally, the participants in "Young in Norway" were asked how often they had been intoxicated by alcohol during the last twelve months. This pertained to more than half of the students (cf. table 16). About one in five had been drunk between ten and fifty times. Only a few (6 %) had been drunk more than fifty times.

Table 16: Frequency of alcohol intoxication last year, by sex and school type. Percentages.

	All	Sex		School type	
		Boys	Girls	Junior high school	High school
Never	44	44	44	64	23
1 time	8	8	8	9	6
2-5 times	14	13	15	12	17
6-10 times	11	10	12	7	15
10-50 times	17	18	17	6	29
More than 50 times	6	8	5	3	10

The frequency of alcohol intoxication is, according to table 16, almost similar among girls and boys. However, a larger proportion of the boys (8 %) than of the girls (5 %) had been drunk more than fifty times the last year. A considerable larger amount of older than of younger students had been drunk (77 % versus 36 %). This difference was most explicit as regards frequent alcohol intoxication, i.e. to be intoxicated at least six times a year (54 % versus 15 %).

The frequency of young people's alcohol intoxication increased from 1992 to 2002. According to the "Young in Norway"-studies the proportion who had been intoxicated between ten and fifty times last year increased from 12 % to 17 %. Moreover, twice as many of the participants in 2002 than in 1992 had been drunk more than fifty times (6 % versus 3 %).¹⁰ The increase in the amount that had been drunk more than ten times last year was similar for girls and boys. In 1992 the prevalence was 18 % among boys and 14 % among girls (Storvoll et al., 2003), and in 2002 it was respectively 26 % versus 22 %. The surveys conducted by SIRUS also indicate an increase in young people's alcohol consumption during this period (Skretting, 2003). However, the proportion who had tasted alcohol was similar in 1992 and 2002 (SIRUS, 2002).

11 Antisocial behaviour

Involvement in antisocial behaviour was measured using 24 questions, ranging from behaviours that are most likely not problematic when low in frequency to behaviours that are serious even when infrequent. Subjects reported the frequency of their involvement in these behaviours during the previous 12 months. Based on earlier analyses of the dimensionality of antisocial behaviour in "Young in Norway

¹⁰ The data from 1992 were published by Ketil Skogen and Lars Wichstrøm (1995).

1992”, such behaviour was divided into the three sub-dimensions: ”theft and vandalism”, ”school opposition” and ”drift” (Pedersen og Wichstrøm, 1995; Storvoll et al., 2002). The first dimension includes different kinds of stealing and violence against objects, whereas the second includes school related conduct problems. The last dimension reflects avoidance of arenas under adult control. In addition, we have added two sub-dimensions labelled ”violence” and ”illegal drugs”. The first reflects both violent threats and violent behaviour. The last is composed of use of illegal drugs, solvents and medicine to become intoxicated.

Table 17: Involvement in antisocial behaviour last year, by sex and school type. Percentages.

	All	Sex		School type	
		Boys	Girls	Junior high school	High school
Refrained from paying on the bus etc.	35	38	31	32	37
Played truant	54	51	57	35	73
Stayed out at night without consent	26	26	26	16	36
Involved in some kind of “drift”	66	65	68	51	82
Sever quarrel with a teacher	26	29	24	28	25
Sent out of class	25	33	17	30	19
Cursed at a teacher	46	54	38	48	43
Summoned to the principal	16	23	8	21	10
Involved in some kind of “school opposition”	56	65	48	60	53
Stolen from the family	21	21	21	24	17
Stolen less than NOK 500	12	16	9	13	11
Minor vandalism	14	21	6	15	12
Stolen car or motorcycle	3	5	1	3	3
Stolen more than NOK 1000	4	7	1	4	5
Major vandalism	7	13	2	8	7
Burglary	3	6	1	4	3
Involved in some kind of “theft and vandalism”	33	39	27	36	30
Hit or treated to hit someone	23	32	14	22	23
Fought with a weapon (e.g. knife)	4	6	1	4	3
Hit or kicked someone	37	43	31	45	29
Scratched or pulled someone's hair	31	18	43	39	22
Violent threats	25	35	15	26	24
Involved in some kind of “violence”	54	56	51	62	45
Used solvents	6	7	4	5	6
Used cannabis	11	14	9	6	17
Used hard drugs (cocaine, LSD, heroin, etc.)	4	5	3	3	6
Used tablets (medicines) to get intoxicated	5	5	5	4	6
Used some kinds of “illegal drugs”	15	17	13	10	20
Been in contact with the police	11	16	6	9	12

Two in three had been involved in at least one of the antisocial behaviours categorised as “drift” during the last year (cf. table 17). Truancy was the most common

kind of "drift" (54 %). Moreover, about half of the adolescents had been involved in "school opposition". Here, cursing at a teacher was reported most frequently (46 %). Half of the adolescents also reported "violence". The most common kind of "violence" was to hit or kick someone (37 %) or to scratch or pull someone's hair (31 %). Only a few (4 %) had been involved in more serious kinds of violence like fighting with a weapon. The prevalence of "theft and vandalism" was smaller. This was reported by one in three. The most common kind of such antisocial behaviour was theft from someone in the family (21 %). Only a few (3-4 %) replayed that they had been involved in serious theft as stealing a car or motorcycle, burglary, and theft of something worth more than NOK 1000. "Illegal drugs" had the lowest prevalence (15 %). It was most common to use cannabis (11 %). Only a few (4 %) had used hard drugs as cocaine, LSD, ecstasy, amfetamin or heroin. One in ten had been in contact with the police during the last year due to illegal behaviour.

"Drift" was as common among girls as among boys (cf. table 17). Nor were there sex differences in the prevalence of "violence". However, the picture is somewhat different if we look at the different kinds of violence which are included in this category. About twice as many girls as boys had scratched or pulled someone's hair. On the other hand twice as many boys had threatened to hit or hit someone and threatened to hurt someone. The male preponderance was even more pronounced as regards fighting with a weapon. This was reported by 6 % of the boys and 1 % of the girls. Moreover, slightly more boys than girls used "illegal drugs". The prevalence of "school opposition" was also higher for boys (65 %) than for girls (48 %). In addition, "theft and vandalism" was more common among boys (39 %) than among girls (27 %). This male preponderance was most pronounced as regards the most serious kinds of theft and vandalism. These were reported more than five times as often among boys than among girls. Moreover, considerably more boys (16 %) than girls (6 %) had been in contact with the police because of illegal behaviour.

The revealed male preponderance in antisocial behaviour, and especially in the most serious kinds of deviance, is in accordance with the findings presented in publications from "Young in Norway 1992" (see for example Pedersen and Wichstrøm, 1995; Storvoll og Wichstrøm, 2002; Storvoll et al., 2003; Wichstrøm, 1994). Similar sex differences are also found in other Norwegian studies (see for example Bakken, 1998; Bendixen and Olweus, 1999) and in registered criminality (Falck, 2002; Storvoll, 1997). Moreover, this male preponderance is well documented in the international literature (see for example Loeber et al., 2000; Rutter et al., 1998).

The distribution of "theft and vandalism" vary little according to age (cf. table 17). Also the prevalence of "school opposition" is similar among younger and older teen-agers. However, if we look at the different items which measure "school opposition", it was more common for younger than older student to be summoned to the principal and sent out of class. "Violence" seems to be more common among younger (62 %) than older teen-agers (45 %). This difference reflects that young

students more often scratch or pull someone's hair and hit or kick someone. On the other hand "drift" was more prevalent among older (82 %) than younger teen-agers (51 %). This difference reflects that older students more often had played truant and been out one or more nights without consent. Moreover, use of "illegal drugs" was more common among older (20 %) than younger teenagers (10 %). This finding reflects a higher prevalence of both cannabis and hard drugs among high school students. Finally, a larger part of the oldest (12 %) than the youngest teen-agers (9 %) had been in contact with the police due to illegal behaviour.

The comparison of junior high schools and high school students only gives a rough picture of the age distribution of involvement in antisocial behaviour. It is well documented that such behaviour is more common in mid-adolescence than in other age groups (Moffitt, 1993; Smith, 1995). A similar picture was found in the data from "Young in Norway 1992" (Pedersen og Wichstrøm, 1995; Storrø og Wichstrøm, 2003). Since the distinction between younger and older teen-agers is drawn at the age group (around 16 years old) where the involvement in such behaviour is most frequent, much of the variation according to age is hidden in this presentation. Willy Pedersen and Lars Wichstrøms' (1995) analyses of the 12-18-years olds who participated in the study in 1992 indicate that the sub-dimensions studied in this appendix have different age distributions. According to their findings "school opposition" is most prevalent among 14-16-years olds, and "theft and vandalism" among 16-years olds. "Drift" continues to increase with age.

Hilde Pape and Sturla Falck (2003) have used the "Young in Norway" studies to describe stability and changes in antisocial behaviour from 1992 to 2002. They find that the involvement in such behaviour has been relatively stable the last ten years. However, they report some small changes indicating a decrease in the prevalence of simple larceny and refraining to pay on bus etc. Moreover, it has been less common to hit or threaten to hit someone. In contrast, there has been a considerable increase in use of illegal substances. Also the yearly surveys conducted by SIRUS indicate that the use of illegal drugs have increased in this period (Skretting, 2003). Moreover, the "Young in Norway" studies indicate a little increase in vandalism. Pape and Falck (2003) primarily studied adolescents who had broken the law last year, i.e. fought with weapon, stolen a car or motorcycle, serious theft, burglary, and major vandalism. The proportion who had been involved in at least one of these behaviours increased slightly from 1992 (9 %) to 2002 (11 %). The same group differences (gender, age and ethnicity) were found in both surveys. The proportion that had been in contact with the police because of illegal behaviour was also stable. However, this proportion increased among those who had broken the law at least two times. This may indicate that the most antisocial adolescents of today are picked up by the police to a greater extent than formerly. Pape and Falck found that the sex difference in the probability of being picked up by the police was smaller in 2002 than in 1992. This seems to reflect that law-breaking girls are picked up by the police to a larger extent than before.

12 Exposure to violence

Exposure to violence is measured by questions about violent threats as well as different kinds of violence. Almost one in five had been exposed to violent threats (cf. table 18). The proportion who had been victims of violence varied from one in four to one in twenty, depending on whether we talk about being hit without getting visible marks or receiving an injury requiring medical assistance.

Table 18: Exposure to violence last twelve months, by gender and school type. Percentages.

	All	Sex		School type	
		Boys	Girls	Junior high school	High school
Violent threats	16	19	13	15	17
Hit without leaving visible marks	23	29	18	23	23
Violence which resulted in visible marks or injury, not requiring medical attention	12	16	9	11	14
Injury requiring medical attention	5	6	3	5	4

Table 18 indicates that boys are somewhat more exposed to both violent threats and violent behaviour than girls. For instance, twice as many boys as girls had been exposed to an injury requiring medical assistance. Similar sex differences were reported in a study among young people from Oslo (Pape and Pedersen, 1997 og 1999). Also Statistics Norway reports that men are more exposed than women to violence resulting in injury (Stene, 2003). As regards violent threats, however, they found that women are more exposed than men. Younger and older participants in "Young in Norway 2002" had similar experiences with both violent threats and violent behaviour.

Moreover, the adolescents were asked: "If you have been exposed to violence resulting in injury, who did it?". According to table 19 it was most common to be hurt by one or more students at the same school (6 %) or unknown adolescents (6 %).

Table 19: Who perpetrated the violence, by sex and school type. Percentages.

	All	Sex		School type	
		Boys	Girls	Junior high school	High school
Students at the same school	6	9	3	8	3
Unknown adolescents	6	9	3	4	7
Siblings	4	4	5	5	3
Others in the family	2	1	3	2	2
Girlfriends/boyfriends	2	1	2	1	3
One or more friends	2	4	1	2	3
One or more girls	1	1	2	1	1
One or more boys	5	7	3	5	5
Others	6	7	4	6	6

Boys who had been exposed to violence most often reported that the violence was conducted by one or more students at the same school or unknown adolescents (cf. table 19). Girls most often reported that the violence had been conducted by siblings. The answers indicate that boys more often than girls are exposed to violence by peers, whether they are friends or not. On the other hand girls seem to be more exposed to violence by someone in the family or a boyfriend. Moreover, there is a tendency indicating that boys are hurt by other boys, while girls are hurt by other girls.

Younger teen-agers (8 %) had more often than older teen-agers (3 %) been exposed to violence by students at the same school. On the other hand, a larger proportion of the older (7 %) than the younger students (3 %) answered that they had been hurt by unknown adolescents. Whereas the youngest students (5 %) more often than the oldest (3 %) had been exposed to violence by siblings, older students more often had been hurt by a girlfriend or a boyfriend (3 % versus 1 %). Our findings indicate that younger adolescents more often than older adolescents are exposed to violence by students at the same school or siblings, whereas older students more often are hurt by unknown adolescents or a girlfriend/boyfriend. Such differences probably reflect that the oldest teen-agers have a larger radius of action than younger teen-agers, and thus have more contact with unknown adolescents. Moreover, it is more common for the oldest students to have a girlfriend or a boyfriend.

Questions about exposure to violence were not included in "Young in Norway 1992". Thus, it is not possible to analyse stability and change in this area. According to Statistics Norway the proportion of the adult population that had been exposed to violent threats or violent behaviour was stable from 1983 to 2001 (Stene, 2003). However, if we just consider the youngest participants in their surveys (16-24-years olds) there was a small increase in the level of exposure to violence in 1995 and 1997. In 2001 this level had decreased again. There was a similar increase in violent threats in 1997.

13 Final discussion

In public debates about youth problems and risks are highlighted repeatedly, as well as statements proclaiming an ongoing, negative development. In this appendix we have presented some preliminary analyses of how young people of today spend their time. These show that today's Norwegian youth seem to be in about the same situation as ten years ago.

Young people have not left the political arena during the last decade. They are interested in specific causes. Many sign petitions and participate in other types of action-oriented activities, and many believe that media attention is important. However, they are more interested in specific causes than in the political system.

We must suppose that new technologies influence the way young people use their leisure time. Still we find similar patterns to those of a decade ago, with similar sex differences. Girls go to cafés, they shop and help out more at home. Boys are more often members of sports clubs, they use gambling machines more often, and work with cars.

Almost all young people try out one or more types of organizations while they grow up, and organised leisure activities are still important. However, the organizations face great challenges where keeping their members is concerned. Fewer remain active today than ten and twenty years ago.

It is worth noticing that like ten years ago, less than one in five teen-agers smoke daily. One of ten boys uses snuff. Except for an increase in the use of illegal substances, the prevalence of antisocial behaviour has remained relatively stable during the last decade as well. About half the young people had been involved in more trivial antisocial acts like absences from school without permission or swearing at a teacher. Less than one in twenty had been involved in more serious behaviours like fighting with weapons, serious theft and use of substances like ecstasy, heroin, etc. Boys are still more involved than girls, particularly in the most serious behaviours. In addition there had been an increase in the proportion who had been drunk often. Here, too, the boys dominated.

References

- Bakken, A. (1998). *Ungdomstid i storbyen*. NOVA-rapport 7/98. Oslo: Norsk institutt for forskning om oppvekst, velferd og aldring (NOVA).
- Bendixen, M. & Olweus, D. (1999). Measurement of antisocial behaviour in early adolescence and adolescence: Psychometric properties and substantive findings. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, 9, 323–354.
- Falck, S. (2002). *Barne- og ungdomskriminalitet i Norge på nittitallet*. Oslo: Det kriminalitetsforebyggende råd.
- Frønes, I. (1996). Revolusjon uten opprør. Kjønn, generasjoner og sosial endring i Norge på 1980-tallet. *Tidsskrift for samfunnsforskning*, 1, 71-86.
- Grue, L. (1982). *Den organiserte ungdommen: en empirisk analyse*. Oslo: Institutt for samfunnsforskning.
- Heggen, K. (2002). Utkantjentene sin stille revolusjon. *Tidsskrift for Ungdomsforskning*, 2, 3-20.
- Lidén, H. & Ødegård, G. (2002). *Ungt engasjement. Ungdoms samfunnsengasjement og lokalpolitiske deltakelse*. NOVA-rapport 6/2002. Oslo: Norsk institutt for forskning om oppvekst, velferd og aldring (NOVA).
- Loeber, R., Burke, J. D., Lahey, B. B., Winters, A. & Zera, M. (2000). Oppositional defiant and conduct disorder: A review of the past 10 years, Part I. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 39, 1468–1484.
- Moffitt, T. E. (1993). Adolescence-limited and life-course-persistent antisocial behaviour: A developmental taxonomy. *Psychological Review*, 100, 674–701.
- Pape, H. & Falck, S. (2003). Ungdomskriminalitet – et fenomen i endring? *Tidsskrift for Ungdomsforskning*. I trykk.
- Pape, H. & Pedersen, W. (1997). Voldsofre i den generelle ungdomsbefolkningen. En longitudinell studie av risikofaktorer. *Tidsskrift for den Norske Lægeforening*, 23, 3347-3351.
- Pape, H. & Pedersen, W. (1999). Dangerous victims of violence? *Studies of Crime and Crime Prevention*, 8, 88-106.
- Pedersen, W. & Wichstrøm, L. (1995). Patterns of delinquency in Norwegian adolescents. *British Journal of Criminology*, 35, 543–561.
- Rossow, I. (2003). Ungdommen nå til dags – tall fra “Ung i Norge 2002”. *Tidsskrift for Ungdomsforskning*, 1, 89–97.
- Rossow, I. & Bø, A. K. (2003). *Metoderapport for datainnsamlingen til Ung i Norge 2002*. Oslo: Norsk institutt for forskning om oppvekst, velferd og aldring (NOVA).
- Rutter, M., Giller, H. & Hagell, A. (1998). *Antisocial behaviour by young people*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- SIRUS (2002). *Rusmidler i Norge 2002*. Oslo: Statens institutt for rusmiddelforskning (SIRUS).

- Skogen, K. & Wichstrøm, L. (1995). Kriminalitet og klasse. *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Kriminalvidenskap*, 82, 32–47.
- Skretting, A. (2003). *Ungdomsundersøkelsen 2003*. www.sirus.no.
- Sletten, M. (2001). *Ung i Tromsø. Om problematferd, fritid, framtid og samfunnsengasjement*. NOVA rapport 12/2001. Oslo: Norsk institutt for forskning om oppvekst, velferd og aldring (NOVA).
- Sletten, M. (2003). *Ungdomsundersøkelsen i Stavanger 2002. Hva gjør de? Hva vil de?* NOVA rapport 4/2003. Oslo: Norsk institutt for forskning om oppvekst, velferd og aldring (NOVA).
- Smith, D. J. (1995). Youth crime and conduct disorders: Trends, patterns, and causal explanations. I: Rutter, M. & Smith, D. J. (red.) *Psychosocial disorders in young people. Time trends and their causes*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 389–489.
- Norwegian Directorate for Health and Social Affairs (2003a). *Tall om tobakk 1973-2001*. Oslo: Sosial- og helsedirektoratet.
- Norwegian Directorate for Health and Social Affairs (2003b). *Tobakksbruk i Norge 2002*. www.tobakk.no.
- Stene, R. J. (2003). Vold og trusler i 20 år. *Samfunnsspeilet*, 1, 2-7.
- Storvoll, E. E. (1997). *Barn og unge med alvorlige atferdsvansker. Hvem er de, og hvilken hjelp blir de tilbudt?* NOVA-rapport 21/97. Oslo: Norsk institutt for forskning om oppvekst, velferd og aldring (NOVA).
- Storvoll, E. E. & Wichstrøm, L. (2002). Do the risk factors associated with conduct problems in adolescents vary according to gender? *Journal of Adolescence*, 25, 183-202.
- Storvoll, E.E. & Wichstrøm, L. (2003). Sex differences in changes in and stability of conduct problems from early adolescence to early adulthood. *Journal of Adolescence*, 26, 413-429.
- Storvoll, E. E., Wichstrøm, L., Kolstad, A. & Pape, H. (2002). Structure of conduct problems in adolescence. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 43, 81-91.
- Storvoll, E. E., Wichstrøm, L. & Pape, H. (2003). Sex differences in the association between conduct problems and other problems among adolescents. *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, 3, 194-209.
- Wichstrøm, L. (1994). *Mental helse blant ungdom i Norge. Oslo som særtilfelle?* UNGforsk Rapport 3/94. Oslo: UNGforsk.
- Ødegård, G. (2001). *Ungdomstid i Fredrikstad*. NOVA-rapport 3/01. Oslo: Norsk institutt for forskning om oppvekst, velferd og aldring (NOVA).
- Ødegård, G. (2003). Samfunnsengasjement blant dagens unge. *Tidsskrift for Ungdomsforskning*. I trykk.
- Øia, T. (1994). *Norske ungdomskulturer*. Vallset: Opplandske bokforlag.
- Øia, T. (1995). *Apolitisk ungdom? Sjølbergingsgenerasjonen og politiske verdier*. Oslo: Cappelen akademisk forlag.