

## **Norway**

When it comes to young people and youth work, two aspects of the welfare state are of particular interest. The first is that the upbringing of children is not solely seen as parents' responsibility. Child welfare services have the right to intervene when children and young people are living under potentially harmful conditions. Secondly, voluntary work is recognised by both the government and society at large as an important arena for young people to learn about participation and democratic processes. Voluntary youth work therefore receives substantial financial support from both national and local government.

Youth work in Norway includes activities conducted by both voluntary and public organisations. Voluntary organisations typically focus on sports, culture and recreational activities, but they can also work to improve living conditions for disadvantaged youths. Public organisations usually offer activities such as youth clubs, culture and music schools, as well as child welfare and social services. Much of the youth work in Norway is conducted in the Third Sector, with volunteers acting as significant contributors. In many cases child welfare services cooperate with voluntary organisations so that young people experiencing some kind of problem can participate in an activity (for example, sports) together with other young people.

The main action fields of youth work in Norway include voluntary work, youth clubs and child welfare services. Voluntary work consists of a broad range of organisations that focus on sports, culture, politics, religion and recreational activities. In most cases these organisations are run by volunteers. Organisations of this type are normally open to all people who want to participate. Youth clubs are owned and financed by local government. Their purpose is to give all young people the opportunity of meeting other young people. The main focus of youth clubs is not activities but rather the importance of interaction between young people. Youth clubs will normally not accept participants over 18 years of age. Not all municipalities have youth clubs. Youth welfare services encompass all the work that is done by the local and regional child welfare services to help young people with drug-related problems, criminal inclinations or any other behaviour that will cause them harm. Young people older than 18 years will in most cases no longer receive support from the child welfare services.