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National Report of Norway



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1 Introduction

This report will present a picture of the education system and developments in the education sector in Norway in the first decade of this century. The end of the 1990s and the start of the 21st century have been marked by numerous evaluations of the education system. The assessments together with international surveys and studies resulted in a critical examination of Norwegian education policy. Of special interest are the reports from two Commissions:

In the field of higher education the Mjøs Commission (named after its leader) delivered its report as early as May 2000 (NOU 2000:14). In 2001 another Commission was set up to review basic education, i.e. compulsory and upper secondary education. The mandate was slightly revised by the new government after the elections in 2001. This Commission – called the “Quality Commission” – delivered two reports, the first in June 2002 (NOU 2002:10), and the second in June 2003 (NOU 2003:16).

Based largely on the recommendations from these two commissions, two White Papers were presented to the Norwegian Parliament. White Paper *St. meld. 27 (2000-01)* – “Do your duty – demand your rights” – on higher education was presented in 2001. Most of the proposals in this White Paper have now been implemented. White Paper *St.meld. nr.30* – “Culture for Learning” dealing with compulsory education was presented for Parliament in the spring of 2004 and approved in June. It will be followed up and implemented in the coming years. These two White Papers form the basis for the development of education in Norway today.

Before going into detail, and in order to understand the background of the events of the first part of this decade, it may be useful to repeat briefly the gist of the education reforms in the 1990s. This will facilitate the description of current developments, and make it easier to refer to the reforms. The report will also attempt to review certain important new premises for education policy in the current decade, premises which provide a new foundation for policy.

Thus, Chapter 2 is a survey of the developments in the 1990s and Chapter 3 a discussion of the new premises. The report goes on to describe important reforms so far in the present decade (Chapter 4). Major achievements thus far will be presented, with section summaries of lessons learned (Chapter 5). The subsidiary points will reflect important issues in Norwegian education policy. The report will present some main challenges facing the education system at the beginning of the twenty-first century and outline the current Norwegian policy on how these challenges will be met (Chapter 6).

2 Summary of Reforms in the 90s

2.1 Reorganisation of the national administration of the sector

The national administration of education policy was reorganized at the start of the 90s. This is a necessary basis for understanding aspects of the reforms.

The grounds and recommendations for the reorganization were presented in a White Paper, *St.meld. nr. 37 (1990-91)* and a Bill, *St.prp. nr. 75 (1991-92)*. The White Paper and the proposals in the Bill aimed at introducing a more distinct *political* basis for a management by objectives system in the sector. In this way, a stronger awareness of the importance of having a tighter grip on education policy at the *national* level was expressed. This involved a certain adjustment of the balance of power, transferring power from pedagogical to political fora,

particularly in the area of management. One can say that Norway's experience is in keeping with what is happening in other countries too, and reflects a growing awareness of the importance of education policy. Progress towards the knowledge society, technological developments, internationalization and the need for structural changes in industry and public administration all make human capital our perhaps most important national resource. At the same time, the reorganization is partly based on a growing concern for quality in the education system and the need to improve it.

The result was that the Ministry of Education and Research (at that time The Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs) assumed, to a larger extent, direct responsibility for policy initiative and development of the sector. A wide range of advisory councils and committees were disbanded, on the grounds that the councils' activities had come to occupy a grey area between professionally and politically based decision making and administration.

The traditional post of Director of Education was discontinued after 150 years. In its place, eighteen new national education offices each led by a director were created, one in each regional authority. Unlike most other countries, no directorate or other administrative body outside the Ministry was established in the 1990s. The Ministry retained its administrative functions, while at the same time developing more in the direction of a political secretariat. The situation was partly changed when the Norwegian Board of Education was established in September 2000. The Board was given responsibility for the assessment and development of primary and secondary education and the conduct of national examinations.

2.2 Kindergartens, Day-Care Facilities and Cultural Education Centres

Kindergartens and day-care facilities are not part of the education system in Norway, but a brief description is included. Cultural education centres are organized as separate units by local authorities, but are seen as an important supplement to obligatory schooling. Attendance at kindergartens, day-care facilities and cultural education centres is voluntary.

Kindergartens are primarily regarded as caring institutions in Norway and are not part of the education system; they are the responsibility of the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs. It is, however, more and more common to view education in a life-long perspective, and there has been broad political agreement on stimulating the urge to learn among children, young people and adults. The development of children that takes place in kindergarten is significant. Many children attend kindergarten, and kindergarten is important for their personal development. The stimulus provided here for children's personal development lays a foundation for later life.

In May 1995 Parliament approved changes in the law concerning kindergartens. The changes included the decision that the Ministry should issue an outline programme for the management of kindergartens. The preamble to the Kindergarten Act (§ 1) states "The kindergarten shall provide children under school age with opportunities for development and activities, in close understanding and cooperation with the children's homes". Further, § 2 of the Act affirms that the kindergarten shall be a pedagogically organized institution. On 1st December 1995 the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs issued, on the basis of the Act, an of the kindergarten's activities, which also has a clear pedagogical aspect.

Since 1998 The Education Act enjoins all local authorities to arrange day-care facilities for pupils between 6 and 10 years of age. Pupils with physical or psychological handicaps are

included in the arrangements until 14 years of age. The day-care facilities shall “*arrange for play and for cultural and free-time activities based on the children’s age, level of skills and interests. The day-care facility shall provide care and supervision.*” Day-care facilities are the responsibility of the school management.

Also since 1998 The Education Act *enjoins* all local authorities, either individually or in association with other local authorities, to provide opportunities for music and cultural education. Such cultural centres receive Government support, conditional on fees being low and as many as possible being given the opportunity to be pupils. The Norwegian model of cultural centres is therefore quite exceptional, and many regard it as one of the reasons for the improved standard of Norwegian musical life and the emergence of world-ranking soloists.

2.3 Primary and Lower-Secondary Education

In the autumn of 1997, a reform of primary and lower-secondary education was introduced. In that year, compulsory education was extended from 9 to 10 years, starting the year the child becomes six. Several changes were made in the allocation of teaching periods to the different subjects, and English became compulsory from the first year of primary education. A completely new subject was introduced: “Knowledge of Christianity with Information about Religions and Life Stances”. This subject replaced and combined the two previous subjects “Knowledge of Christianity” and “Alternative Information about Life Stances” and at the same time gave more emphasis to other religions such as Islam.

A new core curriculum which was approved in connection with the introduction of Reform-94 in upper secondary education (see below) was also made applicable to primary and lower secondary education from the autumn of 1994.

Primary and lower secondary education was divided into three main stages: First Stage (Years 1-4), Middle Stage (Years 5-7) and Lower Secondary Stage (Years 8-10).

New syllabuses were designed in all subjects (L-97). These can be found in Norwegian at www.ls.no, læreplaner.

Norway has an ethnic minority, the Sami people, who are defined as an indigenous population in accordance with international conventions. The Sami people have retained three traditional Sami languages, North Sami, South Sami and Lule Sami; of these, North Sami is defined by Norwegian law as an equivalent national language. Sami pupils have the right to learn Sami, and on certain conditions to have Sami as their language of instruction. The Norwegian curriculum (L-97) exists in a Sami version. Many of the subjects are relatively alike in the two curricula, but Sami language and culture have a special place in the Sami version. Seven local authorities in the northern part of Norway have adopted Sami as their official language of administration. They use the Sami curriculum and in these local authority areas Sami is compulsory for all school pupils, irrespective of ethnic background.

Norway has a growing number of minority language pupils, i.e. pupils with a different ethnic background, children of immigrants and refugees. During the 90s the regulations governing instruction in the mother-tongue were strengthened.

2.4 Upper Secondary Education

In the autumn of 1994, the so-called Reform-94 was introduced. All individuals born in or after 1978 were given a statutory right to upper secondary education. The structure of upper secondary education was changed. General and academic subjects were even more closely integrated with professional, vocational education. In the vocational training programmes, learning in school and apprenticeship training in industry were co-ordinated. Part of the basis was an agreement with the Government entered into by the largest workers' organization and the largest employers' organization, paving the way for integrated instruction whereby industry took responsibility for training during the apprenticeship period. Upper secondary education was grouped in 13 programmes, of which three were general and academic. In the 10 vocational programmes, the normal progression was two years at school, followed by two years as an apprentice at a place of work. Those unable to gain an apprenticeship had a right to a corresponding course of training in school, leading to a vocational certificate.

Completely new syllabuses were designed for all the programmes and modules, including the training that takes place in industry. (Norwegian versions can be found on the net at www.ls.no/eway/?pid=207. Some of the syllabuses are translated into English, at [www.ls.no, læreplaner på engelsk](http://www.ls.no/læreplaner_på_engelsk).) The Ministry issued at the same time a General Curriculum containing the basic premises and directions for education at primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and adult levels. This can be found in a pdf version in several languages at the same net address.

Certain changes were made in the organization and administration of upper secondary education. The regional authorities were given overall responsibility, but the influence of industry was strong through representation in training councils, vocational boards and the regional "vocational training committees" which administer vocational training at the regional level and have an independent professional responsibility.

Sami pupils have the right to receive education in Sami, also at upper secondary level. Two upper secondary schools, in Karasjok and Kautokeino, aim particularly at providing an education based on the reindeer industry and Sami language and culture. Instruction is also given through the medium of the Sami language. And in upper secondary education generally, pupils with a different ethnic background can receive a certain amount of instruction based on their mother tongues.

2.5 New Education Act governing Compulsory and Upper Secondary Education

As early as 1995, a Government-appointed Commission proposed a new, integrated Education Act (NOU 1995:18). Parliament gave its approval to the new Act in July 1998. More time was spent before the matter was finally ready for parliamentary approval, because of the change in Government in 1997. The first Bondevik Government (composed of three parties in the political "centre"), which replaced the social democratic Jagland Government, wanted to take a fresh look at the proposals.

The new Education Act replaced the previous Acts on Compulsory Education, Upper Secondary Education and Vocational Training at Work. Links to the Adult Education Act and the Act on Private Education were also adjusted.

An important premise for the work of the Commission appointed to prepare the proposed new Act was the Revised Act on Norwegian Local and Regional Government (dated 25.09.1992). This Act made it possible for local and regional authorities to organize themselves politically and administratively more freely than before, in accordance with their own wishes and needs. As a consequence, a number of special laws, including those on education and the social and health services, were changed as early as 1993, to bring them into line with the new circumstances. For example, the previous requirement that all local and regional authorities should have their own directors and boards of education was removed in 1993. The freedom to organize themselves differently was a factor which the Commission working on the new Act had to take into account.

2.6 Higher Education

Parliament passed a new Act on Higher Education in May 1995. This Act applies to universities, specialized university institutions and state university colleges. It has a common structure for dealing with students and for the organization and administration of the institutions. The Act led to a wide-ranging consolidation and simplification of the system of higher education, in so far as the number of university colleges was reduced from 98 to 26. Central control was reduced, and the institutions gained rather more freedom. The central control is exercised by the Ministry, with the assistance of councils, committees and other professional bodies. In 1998 the Norway Network Council (Norgesnettrådet), was established as an advisory body to the Government.

A Sami college was established in 1989, primarily to recruit students with a Sami background. It offers courses in teaching and journalism, Sami language learning, practical and aesthetic subjects – particularly doudji (Sami handicrafts) – and social and media subjects, including the study of indigenous peoples. The language of instruction is Sami.

The Mjøs Commission was appointed in April 1998 and delivered its report in May 2000. Since the consequences of the recommendations belong to this decade we will deal with the report in chapter 4.

2.7 Adult Education

Comprehensive reforms were introduced in adult education in the second half of the 90s. In 1997, a Government-appointed committee presented its proposals in a Green Paper (Ny kompetanse, NOU 1997:25). After a comprehensive round of hearings, the Government published the White Paper *St.meld. nr. 42 (1997-98)*, the basis of the so-called “Competence Reform”, which had consequences in a number of areas. In 2000 the Education Act was adjusted to strengthen the rights of adults to supplementary education at the compulsory and upper secondary level. New provisions were included covering the assessment and formal recognition of practical competence. An adjustment of the Higher Education Act in 2000 required institutions of higher education to assess applicants’ practical competence as part of the basis of admission. Through the Act on the Working Environment, employees were given the right to leave of absence for education purposes, and the expenses were tax deductible. Negotiations between employers’ and employees’ organizations have resulted in a better basis for the development of competence through establishing funds and agreeing terms for leave of absence.

3 New premises for the development of the education sector in recent years

3.1 More facts about the sector

The OECD carried out a major evaluation of the Norwegian education system at the end of the 80s. It concluded that Norway appeared to have a well-developed system for planning and formulating policy goals and principles in education. But the evaluation team reacted to the scarcity of documentation about how the sector worked and what results were achieved. The recommendations pointed clearly to the need for Norway to improve documentation and acquire a stronger basis for the administration of the education sector. The conclusions were in many ways the starting signal for the work of building up a better documentary basis and for the development of what in the event can be called a national quality assurance and quality development system. The work has led in a number of directions:

3.1.1 Participation in international surveys and comparisons

Norway has participated in a number of major international comparative surveys of pupils' benefit from education. Among the important inquiries which have had a significant influence on education policy are:

- *TIMSS (The Third International Mathematics and Science Study)* from 1995, an OECD project.
- *PISA 2000 (Programme for International Student Assessment)* another OECD project.
- *PIRLS 2001 (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study)* organized by The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). In 1991 IEA was responsible for the first international reading survey that Norway took part in, a survey of 9-year-olds and 14-year-olds in 32 countries.
- *Civic Education Study* from 2001 was also arranged by IEA.
- *The Assessment of Pupils' Skills in English in 8 European Countries*, commissioned by Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and Sweden (2002)
- *SIALS (Second International Adult Literacy Survey)* OECD 2000.

There has been broad political agreement and support for this international cooperation.

As well as providing data on achievement levels, many of the reports have analysed the pupils' social backgrounds, different aspects of the teaching process and what is described as the pupils' learning strategies (PISA).

In addition to the reports' provision of new and better documented information, the collaboration has contributed to building up national competence through Norwegian groups assuming responsibility for the national contributions. The OECD has conducted several analyses of the Norwegian education system. The 1988 survey has already been mentioned. In addition, the OECD assessed the first years of higher education in 1997, the transition from school to working life in 1998, and the care and education of young children in 1998. In 2002 a report on lifelong learning in Norway was produced (UFD, F-4141). In 2001 Norway participated in the OECD study "Policies for information, guidance and counselling services".

Surveys like the OECD's *Education at a Glance* also provide background information for the planning of education policy.

3.1.2 *Developing a Norwegian system of statistical documentation*

As a direct consequence of the OECD report from the end of the 80's, work began on the development of a Norwegian statistical database system. In higher education, the Norwegian Social Science Data Service (NSD) had built up a system for the universities which was later broadened to include the university colleges (<http://dbh.nsd.uib.no>).

In the middle of the 90s the information system for the compulsory education sector, GSI, (<http://www.wis.no>) was developed. This provides information on pupils, teachers and period resource allocation, down to the school level. It also includes data on adults in primary education organized by the local authorities. It contains data neither on results, nor on the use of resources for other purposes than teaching.

At upper secondary level, the regional authorities have a pupil data system which principally maintains personal data on progress and results, so that pupils can be followed up individually and their statutory rights to education ensured.

Statistics Norway (SSB) has national responsibility for ensuring the production of statistics and offers a special section on education covering all levels, including adult education. Towards the end of the 90s SSB developed a dedicated regional and local authority database giving information on resource use and production figures for all service areas in the regional and local authority sector (KOSTRA – <http://www.ssb.no>). This also covers compulsory and upper secondary education.

The new databases provide, in a simple straightforward manner, a quite different basis for management than earlier, and are a significant factor in making assessments and planning.

3.1.3 *Increased priority to research and evaluation*

The Ministry has in recent years made use of research and reports on the education system in a far more systematic way than previously. The reports from the Norwegian studies in connection with TIMMS, PISA, CIVIC etc. are good examples. A considerable amount of research and evaluation is commissioned by the Ministry itself:

- The Ministry has commissioned research on the use of resources in Norwegian education. Assessments have been made of the relation between resource use and pupil achievement, and research findings on this theme have been compared.
- The Ministry has commissioned inquiries into cooperation between school and home.
- Several large-scale studies of special education exist, as does a final status report into research on special education.
- Several surveys of pupil behaviour in school have been produced.
- All the major reforms have been followed by comprehensive evaluation programs.
- When the Ministry takes part in large-scale development projects, it is customary for it to fund the subsequent evaluation of the projects. Important development projects in the use of ICT, more differentiated teaching at the upper secondary level, and

enhanced competence as the foundation for a more inclusive structuring of special education (SAMTAK) are good examples.

- The Ministry has also contributed to setting up professional resource centres with ongoing responsibility for development projects and assessments. Examples include the Reading Research Centre in Stavanger, the meeting-point for work on school-based assessment at Lillehammer University College, and several state-run special education resource centres with different special fields.

The Research Council of Norway has also managed its own research programme on the education sector, KUL.

In addition, the Ministry draws on relevant research initiated by faculty members at universities and university colleges.

Far more extensive lists of references reflecting the importance of this can be found in Green Papers (e.g. NOU 2003:16 from the so-called Quality Commission) and in the Government's own White Papers.

3.2 Developing a distinctive, Norwegian quality outcome system

The development of databases, the establishment of competence centres and the funding of reviews and research projects are elements in what has come to be seen as a Norwegian quality outcome system. The Government adopted a management-by-objectives principle and procedures at the beginning of the 90s; the central authority concentrating its attention more on the goals of education as formulated in statutory and regulatory instruments and curricula, including results, and less on the manner in which school owners and schools organize their work. With this a new thinking and a new management ethos appeared in education policy-making, giving more weight to reporting and results. The disbandment of the former education directorates and the establishment of national education offices in 1992 was perhaps the first systemic indication of change.

The Ministry's first proposal on systematizing the work came in a White Paper (no. 47, 1995-96). This continued with committee work in 1997, leading to a White Paper in 1998 (no. 28, 1997-98). Parliament debated the White Paper and gave its approval for the establishment of the Norwegian Board of Education and of a more permanent foundation for conducting our own Norwegian fact-finding inquiries into basic skills in such subjects as Norwegian, Mathematics and English. Parliament also confirmed Norway's continued participation in the international comparative studies. At the same time, more emphasis was placed on the school owners' (the regional/local authorities') responsibility for reviewing their own operations and the schools' self assessment. The Education Act was adjusted in a number of areas and self assessment is now a clear requirement. The same applies to the Act on Higher Education.

As a result of the Mjøs Commission which examined the higher education system, and the "Quality" Commission which examined education at the school level (from 6 to 18 years of age) the concept of "quality" is becoming the clear guiding principle.

The Mjøs Commission's proposals

The Mjøs Commission made extensive proposals. The discussions and the implementation of the recommendations were collectively referred to as the "Quality Reform". In addition to the resulting widespread changes in study programmes and the degree system (cf. 4.1.6 and 5.5 below), the implementation of the quality aspect itself was important. The legal framework stipulated the establishment of quality systems and self assessment. In addition, the recommendations led to the establishment of a new institution in Norway, NOKUT, a professionally independent accreditation body, of which more below (cf. 4.1.7).

The Quality Commission's proposals

It was precisely new information about and experience with the school system, and increased misgivings about quality, which led to the Quality Commission being appointed in October 2001. In the autumn of the same year Norway's Government was replaced. The new Centre-Right Government renewed the mandate and composition of the Commission in December 2001.

As early as the summer of 2002 the Commission presented its interim recommendations covering the framework of a quality assessment system for education at the school level. This led to the decision to establish a new Directorate for Primary and Upper Secondary Education on 15 June 2004. Parliament also renewed its support for the policy of carrying out national tests, under both Norwegian and international administration. Parliament accepted in addition the setting up of a website – Skoleporten – where background information on all the schools in the country would be accessible to the public.

3.3 International influence and international cooperation in the education sector

Education policy has traditionally been regarded as a national concern. Nevertheless, a number of factors now point in the direction of more cooperation and coordination.

The common market in employment leads to a greater need for information about, and the comparison and mutual recognition of, the qualification procedures in the different countries. Norway has taken part in Nordic cooperation along those lines for many years. With the establishment of the EU/EEA this has been extended and made more formal.

Demands for more student exchanges and the need to simplify the incorporation and co-ordination of study components from Norwegian and foreign education institutions point in the same direction. The need to be able to present the elements of Norwegian qualification procedures in a language and within a conceptual structure that is internationally familiar and accepted has also influenced Norwegian procedures. In this area, the opening up to more international competition in the higher education system pulls in the same direction.

Through the EEA, OECD, UNESCO and other organizations, Norway is an active partner in international cooperation where education policy plays an increasing role. In a recent Bill (Ot.prp. nr. 79 (2003-2004)) on changes in the Higher Education Act we read:

- The Bologna Process is a pan-European process in which the governments of European countries aim to establish a European higher education area by 2010, cf. the Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999, the Communiqué from the European higher education ministers' meeting in Prague on 19 May 2001 and the Communiqué from the higher education ministers' meeting in Berlin on 19

September 2003. The Bologna Process now unites 40 European countries. Norway contributes and participates actively in this work.

- The European Union has launched an extensive strategy, the Lisbon Process, with the aim of becoming the world's most competitive, knowledge-based economy on a sustainable social foundation by the year 2010. As the most important institutions of knowledge, universities and university colleges form part of the core of this strategy. The EU also aims to establish a common European area for research, and will probably set up a European research council. The opening up of national programmes of research to international participation is also being discussed. Involvement in EU programmes is an important factor in Norwegian research policy and thus influences the universities and university colleges as active research institutions. In February 2003 the EU Commission sent out a memorandum on the future role of the universities (Communication from the Commission – The role of universities in the Europe of knowledge).
- Through the strategy *Education for All*, UNESCO has pointed out that well-developed higher education systems are an important means to, and a condition for, realizing the goal of universally available basic education, not least through the education of well-qualified teachers. UNESCO points to the considerably increased global growth in demand for higher education, particularly in developing countries which had an increase of 50% in the 7-year period from 1990, while at the same time these developing countries had little chance of expanding their higher education systems to meet the demand. At the UNESCO General Conference in September 2003, a Resolution proposed by Norway, Mozambique, Japan, Iceland and Tanzania was unanimously approved: "Higher education and globalization: Promoting quality and access to the knowledge society as a means for sustainable development". The Resolution gives UNESCO a mandate to redouble its efforts in the task of providing global access to higher education.
- In the international GATS negotiations under the auspices of WTO, the lowering of the barriers against mobility and commerce in education is being discussed. The debate concerns what protectionary regulations may be needed to prevent such commerce having damaging effects that are undesirable and unforeseen. Norway committed itself to giving foreign service providers general permission to offer education in Norway as early as 1995, under the Brundtland Government, in the so-called Uruguay round of talks. Few other countries have till now gone so far.
- The general globalization of industry involves multinational companies in the expanding international recruitment of highly educated staff, and localizing and relocating their R&D activities to countries and regions with high levels of research and education.

These development trends are mutually reinforcing, and lead to a faster and more comprehensive globalization of higher education than we have seen till now. The competition for students, good teachers and researchers and for research funding is intensifying, and Norwegian universities and university colleges are faced with opportunities and challenges that could not have been foreseen a few years ago. For Norwegian universities and university colleges the trend is further reinforced by the favourable financial assistance available to students studying abroad, which gives Norwegian students every possibility to apply to study in other countries.

3.4 The change of Government in autumn 2001

After the general election in autumn 2001 a Centre-Right Government took power under Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik, succeeding the Social Democratic Government of Jens Stoltenberg. Kristin Clemet became Minister of Education and Research.

With regard to the development of the education sector in Norway from 2000 to 2004, there is therefore a dividing line at the transition from 2001 to 2002. The long lines of policy and many of the basic principles of Norwegian education have been largely maintained; Norway also had a Centre Government under Kjell Magne Bondevik from 1997 to 2000. Nevertheless, important changes have taken place since 2002 as a result of the change of Government.

4 Major reforms

4.1 Legal framework 2000 – 2004

4.1.1 Adults' right to education and assessment of adults' practical competence

From 1 August 2000 a new chapter in the Education Act gave adults an individual, statutory right to education at the compulsory school level, and to upper secondary education. The decisions relating to upper secondary education were put into effect on 1 August 2000 while those relating to compulsory education came into force on 1 August 2002.

To exercise the right to education at the compulsory school level the adult had to have a need for education. This need is to be determined by the individual in communication with the municipality which is responsible for providing the education.

To exercise the right to upper secondary education, the adult had to be born before 1978 without previously completing upper secondary education. 1978 was chosen because young people and adults born after 1978 have rights in accordance with Reform 94.

The new regulations give adults the right to specially adapted education which takes into account their practical competence, experience and life situation.

Adults who have the right to education at the compulsory level will, if necessary, also have the right to special education on the same conditions as ordinary pupils. This regulation does not to the same extent apply to adults with a right to upper secondary education.

From 2003 adults were given the right to have their practice and experience – their non-formal competence – assessed and documented and included as an integrated part of the formal upper secondary education.

At the same time, a change was made in the Higher Education Act, to give adults the right to be considered for admission on the basis of their practical competence.

4.1.2 Improving the pupils' working environment

With effect from 1 April 2003 the Education Act included a new chapter on the pupils' working environment. The chapter asserts at the start that "*all pupils in compulsory schools and upper secondary schools have a right to a good physical and psycho-social environment which promotes health, well-being and learning*". The chapter specifies the requirements of the physical and the psychological environment. It expects an active effort to improve the environment, and that pupils and their parents or guardians have a say in this work. In addition, it contains relatively detailed rules concerning the school's duty to provide information about the work. It gives involved parties the right to express their views and states the rules for appeal procedures available to pupils and their parents/guardians if the school does not observe the legal provisions. The chapter also has a penalty clause stipulating fines or a prison sentence of up to three months if the law is not observed.

If the school has day-care facilities, as most primary schools have, the chapter also applies to these facilities.

4.1.3 Delegation of more responsibility from the central to the local level

In a Bill (*Ot.prp. nr. 67 (2002-03)*) the Government made a number of proposals designed to give school owners and schools more freedom in organizing their activities. This expresses the general political will to decentralize decision making and strengthen local democracy. The proposals also build on the principle of management by objectives (see 3.2 above). The proposals led Parliament to amend the Education Act with effect from 1 August 2003. The Act had formerly stipulated the maximum number of pupils per class. In schools with pupils from different levels in the same class, the permitted number of pupils diminished as the number levels in the class increased. The stipulated maximum has now been removed, and the Act has replaced it with a more general requirement that pupils should be organized in groups that are pedagogically justifiable. Formerly, each class had to have a responsible class teacher; now each pupil has a right to a contact teacher.

At the same time, Parliament changed the Education Act to make clearer the responsibility of the Ministry and school owners for following up and evaluating the education: *“The Ministry can issue regulations requiring those responsible for educational activities in accordance with this Act and those who receive such education to provide information, take part in assessments and report on conditions which are of importance for the evaluation of the educational activities covered by this Act”* (§ 14-1). This change is an element in the systematization of the quality assurance work, and it also provides a better base for management by objectives.

The qualifications required by a school principal have also been changed. The formal requirements relating to education and teaching experience have been removed. Instead, the Act now has a general requirement that a school must have a professional, administrative leader. The preliminary sections of the Act stress the responsibility the principal has for being an active, pedagogical leader.

4.1.4 New Independent School Act

On 4 July 2003 Parliament gave its approval to a new Act governing independent schools, replacing the former Private School Act. Both the Independent School Act and the former Private School Act cover the recognition of private schools which, when recognized, receive considerable public support to their running costs. The former Act included criteria which had to be met for recognition to be granted. The schools had to represent a pedagogical alternative, be based on a special life stance, or in an obvious way be a useful supplement to the public system.

These criteria were dropped in the Independent School Act. However, the Act still contains the requirement that the content must be equivalent to, and correspond to, the curricula in the public system. The Act limits the opportunity to run schools for purely commercial ends as it makes it a condition that any profit should be ploughed back and used for the benefit of the pupils.

Recognition under the Independent School Act leads to public funding. Private schools can also be approved under the Education Act, but no public funding is then available.

4.1.5 Vocational colleges

Parliament approved a new Act on Vocational College Education in spring 2003, cf. the Bill *Ot.prp. nr. 32 (2002-03)* and Proposal *Innst.O. nr. 78 (2002-03)*. The Act provides that short, practical courses of training can be approved as vocational education through the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT, cf. 4.1.7). The Act establishes a new sector within the Norwegian education system and presents vocational college education as a shorter and more professionally-oriented alternative to higher education at universities and university colleges. Vocational college education builds on upper secondary education or corresponding practical competence and lasts a minimum of six months and a maximum of two years full time.

The aim of this arrangement is to contribute to the growth of shorter forms of training, more flexible and more relevant to the needs of the labour market, and to give financial support to regional authorities which offer courses at technical colleges.

4.1.6 Higher education

The Mjøs Commission presented three Green Papers: *Practical Competence in Higher Education* (NOU 1999:17), *The Organization of Contracted Activities* (NOU 1999:18) and *Freedom with Responsibility* (NOU 2000:14). The mandate of the Commission was to review higher education after 2000. The mandate also included a broad survey of the challenges facing higher education in Norway in the coming years.

On the basis of the Green Papers and the subsequent hearings, the Government published its White Paper *St.meld. nr. 27 (2000-01) Do your duty – demand your rights*. Parliament gave its approval to the main principles, and asked the Government in addition to examine the situation for research and for recruitment to higher education. In the Bill *Ot.prp. nr. 40 (2001-02)* the Government proposed the necessary legal changes, followed up by several White papers on the various specific areas.

The work resulting from the Mjøs Commission's recommendations is, as previously mentioned, collectively referred to as the "Quality Reform", a comprehensive reform of higher education in Norway. Central to the reform is a new degree structure, closer counselling of students, new forms of examination and assessment, new arrangements for study support and increased internationalization. The goals of the Quality Reform can be summed up in three points:

- higher quality of education and research;
- more intensive education;
- more internationalization.

The implementation puts into practice important aspects of the Bologna declaration.

In connection with the Quality Reform, Parliament approved the recommendation to set up a new accreditation body, NOKUT (cf. 4.1.7). The amended Act requires institutions to build up their own quality assurance systems and put into practice student assessments of teaching.

The Act emphasizes the improvement of the students' learning environment and mentions in particular disabled students' prospects of completing their studies. The Act requires study plans to be developed:

“Introducing the study plan requirement will ensure a closer and more committed relationship between the institution and the individual student. The plan will show how the institution makes it possible for the student to reach a defined learning goal in the standard time. The plan will make clear the student’s responsibility for satisfying the study requirements of the institution, including participation, compulsory assignments and study progression.

“The study plan must show the individual student’s planned course of study in relation to the central guidelines in the Act, the examination requirements of the institution, the service declaration, and the syllabus for the field of study or course of study on which the student is enrolled. It is expected that the institution and students cooperate in developing outline frames for the study plans, and that the individual student has a say in the content of his/her own plan. Both the institution and the individual student may, provided reasonable notice is given, request that the study plan be changed” (Ot.prp. 40).

In 1991 Parliament expressed the view that there was then no need for more than four universities in Norway. The Mjøs Commission proposed opening the way for other higher education institutions to gain university status, after assessment by an independent expert body and on meeting certain criteria. This is followed up in the Bill *Ot.prp. nr. 40 (2001-02)* which makes NOKUT responsible for such assessment.

After the changes in the law, the new Universities and Higher Education Act places more emphasis on:

- the dissemination and application of research;
- the responsibility of universities and university colleges to society;
- the professional freedom and self-government of the institutions.

The Quality Reform has also been followed up in more specific areas. In the White Paper *St.meld. nr. 16 (2001-02) The Quality Reform - On new Teacher Education: Complex – Demanding – Relevant*, the Ministry proposed amendments to teacher education. The four-year structure was largely maintained. But the links with the new degree system were clarified to make it possible to obtain a bachelor’s degree during the course, with further study leading to a master’s degree. Two types of master’s degrees have been introduced, one relating to the course of study, the other based more on occupational factors, placing more emphasis on practice. The general focus on quality awareness is also emphasized here. In the wake of the parliamentary process, the Ministry has issued new outline programmes for all areas of teacher education.

In the White Paper *St.meld. nr. 34 (2001-02) The Quality Reform – On Higher Sami Education and Research* the relation to Sami culture and education was examined. The measures proposed are explicitly seen as a recognition of the Sami people as indigenous, and Sami language and culture will be supported through building up the Sami research environment at Tromsø University and the Sami University College in Kautokeino. A large number of measures are proposed. One is that the Sami assembly will have authority to determine outline teacher education plans for special Sami subjects such as Sami and duodji.

In the White Paper *St.meld. nr. 35 (2001-02) The Quality Reform – On Recruitment to Teaching and Research Positions in the Higher Education Sector* the Government presented the survey Parliament had requested on research and recruitment to universities and university colleges. The White Paper and the debate in Parliament confirmed once again the goal of expanding Norwegian research activities at least to the average OECD level by 2005. In 1999 the total research and development (R&D) budget for Norway represented 1.7 per cent of GNP, while the OECD average was 2.2 per cent. This means, in part, that the annual R&D

budget will increase by at least one billion NOK by 2005. The Government will also play a part in increasing the efforts of commerce and industry in research and development.

4.1.7 Organization

The organization and management of the education sector has been debated several times since 1990. Central control at the Government level is ensured through legal prescriptions and regulations, and by the Ministry's right to determine the content of education through national curricula and outline syllabuses, except where higher education institutions have the right to make decisions themselves, within their own areas of expertise.

In school education, responsibility for implementation lies locally with the 435 local authorities at the compulsory level and the 19 regional authorities at the upper secondary level. Traditionally the Education Act, in common with many other acts dealing with specific areas, has stated in detail how administration at the subordinate level should be conducted. However, since 1990 there has been a clear tendency to remove such detailed regulations. The general Act on Local and Regional Government of 1992 allows local and regional authorities to make their own decisions as to which political and administrative organs should be set up. A certain amount of deregulation has taken place in specific laws and directives, both as a response to the Act on Local and Regional Government and as an expression of the general wish for more decentralization.

The establishment of the Directorate for Primary and Secondary Education

Norway has traditionally had a large Ministry of Education which has performed most of the administrative tasks at the central level. A Commission which submitted a report in December 1997 on a national quality assessment system proposed establishing an independent administrative organ under the Ministry, to relieve the Ministry of day-to-day matters. The Commission suggested that a directorate would be the solution. In autumn 2000 the Norwegian Board of Education was set up (cf. Bill *St.prp. nr 38 (1999-2000)*). It was not called a directorate, but performed a number of tasks which often belong to a directorate:

- The management of all national examinations;
- The development of assessment procedures and surveys;
- The collection and publication of statistics;
- Secretariat assistance in connection with work on syllabuses etc.

In summer 2002 the Quality Commission issued its first interim report. There the establishment of a directorate was recommended. The Ministry undertook at the same time a broad review of its own organization, and came to the conclusion that a directorate should be set up. The aim was that the Ministry should concentrate more on its function as a political secretariat while the new directorate should take over more of the administrative tasks.

The proposal received the approval of Parliament in connection with the debate on the Bill *St.prp. nr. 65 (2002-03)*. The Directorate for Primary and Secondary Education became operative on 15 June 2004. The directorate is an executive body, a professional and administrative organ under the control of the Ministry of Education and Research, with subject-related and administrative tasks. Personnel have been transferred to the directorate from the Norwegian Board of Education, the National Support System for Special Education (Statped) and the Ministry of Education and Research.

The principal goal of the Directorate for Primary and Secondary Education is to contribute to continuing quality development of compulsory and upper secondary education in Norway.

The main tasks of the directorate are:

- Analysis and assessment;
- Development, guidance and support;
- Supervision and administration

NOKUT

As a result of the changes in the Act on Higher Education in 2002, a new organ for accreditation and assessment of higher education was set up. The preamble to the Act states:

1. *The organ will be an independent national body which through accreditation and assessment will oversee the quality of Norwegian institutions offering higher education, and give its approval to courses offered by institutions not covered by this Act. The accreditation and assessment activities will be designed in such a way that institutions can gain benefit from them in their quality assurance and development work.*
2. *Accreditation is understood, in the terms of this Act, as a professional evaluation of whether a higher education institution and the courses it offers meet a specific set of standards. Accreditation shall be based on an assessment made by external experts appointed by the organ. Accreditation is a prerequisite for an institution offering courses of education under §§ 45 and 46.*

Through the Quality Reform an accreditation system has been set up which establishes clear professional standards for accreditation in the categories of state university colleges, specialized university institutions and universities. A system has thus been created which establishes professional and not political criteria as the basis for assessing whether an institution shall gain or lose accreditation in the individual category. The Ministry has a regulatory function through determination of the overall standards on which professional accreditation is based.

4.1.8 Employment negotiations system

Until 2004 the central authority has played the employers' role in negotiations on teachers' pay and conditions, despite teachers being employed by their respective local and regional authorities. The Education Act states that the King in Council determines who teachers shall negotiate with in matters of pay and conditions (§10-10). With effect from the 2004 negotiations, the central authority is no longer the teachers' counterpart. Now the employers or their organization, the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, negotiate directly. This transfer is also a stage in the policy of transferring more responsibility and authority to the local level.

4.2 Curricular policies

Small changes have been made in the organization of upper secondary education on the basis of the assessments that were carried out at the end of the 90s. . After the Quality Commission submitted its findings in 2002 (*NOU 2002:10*) and 2003 (*NOU 2003:16*) and the Government presented its considerations to Parliament in a White Paper, *St.meld. nr. 30 (2003-2004)* – (hereafter *St.meld. nr. 30*), Parliament has now debated the White Paper (June 2004) against the background of a report from the parliamentary Committee for Research and Education (*Innstilling S. nr. 268, 2003-04*). On the basis of the Quality Commission's recommendations

and the debate in Parliament on the White Paper, more considerable changes will be implemented at both compulsory and upper secondary levels during the coming year. This will be discussed in Chapter 6 below.

In the case of private schools which are approved and given financial support in accordance with the Independent School Act, it is a condition that the education they provide is equivalent to that given in public schools, and the Ministry shall approve the syllabuses.

In higher education the institutions themselves now have a higher degree of responsibility for the content of the syllabuses. The Ministry determines the outline programmes for professional courses of study.

4.3 Objectives and principal characteristics

The basic principles and philosophy behind the Norwegian education policy remain unquestioned: equal opportunity for equivalent education in an inclusive school system where education, as far as possible, is adapted to the abilities and needs of the individual, and where the population can realize a programme of lifelong learning. As a follow-up to the Dakar Declaration, the Ministry of Education and Research has prepared a national overview of initiatives and policy areas relevant for Education for All (EFA). The report has been made in collaboration with the Ministry for Children and Family Affairs. (*Education for All - National Action Plan for Norway in accordance with the World Education Forum Declaration, Dakar, 2001*).

The work towards gender equality has come a long way and consciousness of the equality issue is present. There are still, however, many areas where the question of equality arises. This is discussed below. In recent years the situation of ethnic minorities has been in focus.

The paragraphs above and below will, it is hoped, indicate the priorities which characterize the efforts of the last few years, particularly since the change of Government. In brief, the following trends can be indicated:

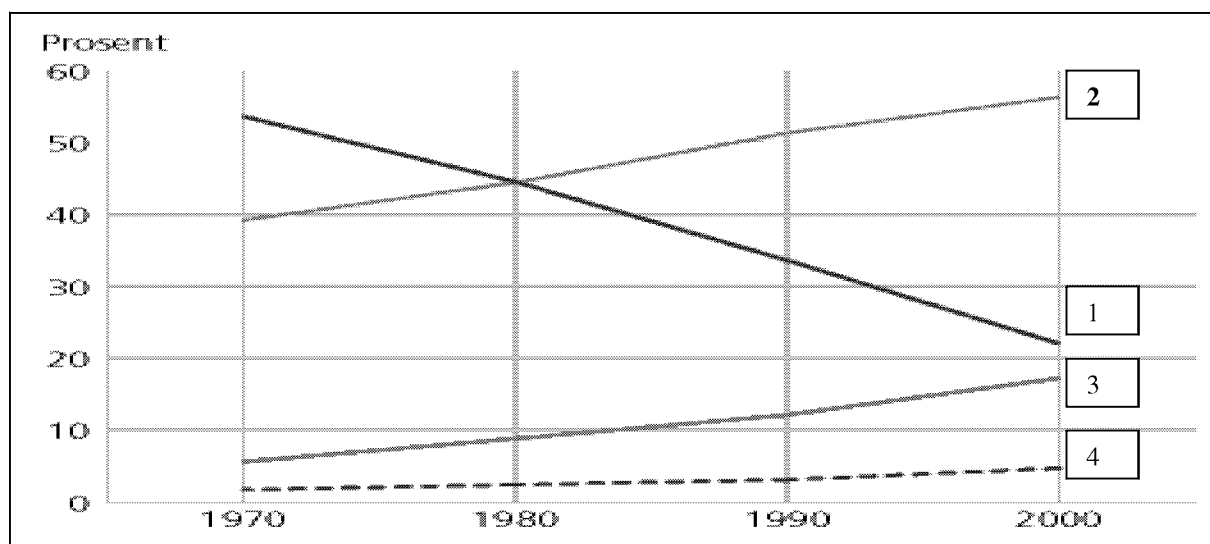
- Sharper awareness of quality at all levels, and a greater willingness to take part in discussions on quality.
- Strong pressure to set up quality assurance systems.
- More determined efforts towards the development of competence in institutions, and the establishment of an organizational culture for learning.
- A more professional and research-based approach to many of the problems in the education sector.
- More emphasis on creating the preconditions for flexibility and opportunities for the individual.
- Greater emphasis on decentralization.

5 Major achievements

There is broad political agreement in Norway on the main goal – to ensure equal educational opportunities irrespective of gender and social, economic or ethnic background. Norway's education ranking level was statistically low in the first post-war years. As late as 1960 approximately 80% of the population had no more than compulsory schooling, roughly 16% had upper secondary education, while only just over 4% had higher education. In 2002 the

figures were 20%, 57% and 23%, placing Norway at the top of the OECD statistics on the population's education level.

Percentage of persons 16 years of age and over according to highest completed education level 1970 – 2000.



1. Compulsory School level	2. Upper Secondary level *	3. University and univ. college level, short **	4. University and univ. college level, long ***
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Excluding persons with unreported or incomplete education.

* Including the level "Extended upper secondary education", which includes courses based on the upper secondary level but are not recognized as higher education.

** "University and university college level, short" covers higher education of up to four years.

*** "University and university college level, long" covers higher education of more than four years, and researcher training.

During recent decades Norway has therefore succeeded in realizing one main goal of education policy on which Parliament has been in full agreement. The figure shows only changes as they have affected formal education. In addition further education and more informal adult education has been widespread in Norway. The trend continues. But the current improvement in the figures is due largely to older generations with a low level of education dropping out of the statistics. Nevertheless, the end-of-century reviews, assessments and experience have uncovered aspects that must be examined more closely if progress is to be made.

5.1 Compulsory education

5.1.1 Pupil numbers and structure

Reform 97 was implemented and has now been in force for some time. Assessments have been made. The Quality Commission discussed the situation and certain changes are being worked on. But before returning to this in Chapter 6, the situation in 2004 will be summed up.

Pupil numbers in compulsory school 2000/01 and 2003/04

	Number of pupils	Number of schools	Number of teacher work years	Pupils per teacher work year	Gross costs per pupil in NOK	Percentage special educ. pupils*
2000/2001	592 394	3350	52 811	11,2	56 240	5,6
2003/2004	619 732	3284	51 085	12,1	62 804	5,7

Source GSI og SSB, Kostra

* Pupils with special needs who as a result of expert evaluation (Ed. Act §5) are entitled to special education and receive it in an ordinary school.

The number of pupils per teacher work year has risen primarily because a new work agreement has increased the number of periods taught per teacher per year. The figures are nevertheless extremely low in an international perspective, a fact linked to the decentralized school structure (see below). The increase in costs is largely due to higher teacher salaries. Salary payments account for almost 80% of local authorities' education budgets.

The 121 private schools in 2003/2004 have a total of 12,350 pupils, roughly 2% of all pupils. 75 pupils receive teaching at home. Only just over 2000 pupils attend special schools for pupils with special needs.

School structure (figures from 2002)

Number of pupils	Number of schools	Number of pupils	Percentage of pupils
- 40	478	9 500	1,7
41- 160	1 076	103 000	17
161 – 320	914	217 000	36
321 -	659	271 000	45

Source: GSI

The table shows that Norway's school structure is highly decentralized. The 50 per cent of schools with the fewest pupils have in total less than 20 per cent of all pupils, while the sixth of schools with more than 320 pupils take in 45 per cent of all pupils.

Approximately 2000 of the schools are purely primary schools (years 1-7), approximately 550 are purely lower secondary schools (years 8-10), and approximately 750 are combined primary and lower secondary schools.

5.1.2 Lessons learned

Virtually all Norwegian children complete primary and lower secondary school and 95% of them continue to upper secondary education.

The evaluation reports and experience from Reform 97 can be summed up in the following points:

- Norwegian pupils are by and large happy at school. They are also in general well satisfied with their teachers. The reasons for this contentment can vary, since questions about pupils' motivation, attitudes to subjects and involvement in the process of learning do not yield the same positive answers.

- Pupils' parents and guardians have on the whole confidence in the school. They are also fairly well satisfied with their contact with the school. But questioned whether there is close enough cooperation on school work and progress in subjects, many say that this could be better.
- Bringing six-year-olds into school has been largely successful. So also has the process of introducing more varied forms of work. Nevertheless, the reports show that forms of work designed to activate the pupils do not of themselves produce the anticipated learning gain. The decisive factor appears to be that the teacher sets clear goals for the activities and is firm in directing them. Six-year-olds have greater learning potential than the teaching programmes suppose.
- The learning outcome in primary and lower secondary school varies too much from class to class and school to school. Norwegian education has embraced adapted learning in an including school environment as a central principle for several decades. One has, nevertheless, clearly failed to adapt the teaching to the individual pupil's starting-point and needs. This affects not only the weakest but also the gifted pupils. At the individual level, the spread between strong and weak pupils is greater in Norway than in many other countries.
- Norway expends considerable resources on schooling. Some of this expenditure can be explained by the school structure, some by the fact that Norwegian teachers have a moderate teaching load. Nevertheless, the level of resource use is high. This increases the concern that pupils' learning outcome, as documented in surveys, is not greater.
- The learning environment in Norwegian classes is probably neither better nor worse than in other countries. But in the knowledge that schools have since the curriculum of 1987 worked especially on including, caring and responsibility, it is perhaps somewhat surprising that the documented incidence of bullying and behavioural problems is so high.
- The lower secondary school needs renewal. On the one hand there is little scope for pupils who are disenchanted with school to be given interesting and meaningful tasks. On the other hand, able pupils are given little opportunity to do more absorbing work.
- Science and foreign languages do not have the status one would wish for. Norwegian pupils in primary and lower secondary schools have shown poor results in science surveys. Norway has no specific topics in technology in the curriculum. English is a compulsory language from the first year of primary school. Norwegian pupils did well in the "8-country" European assessment. In lower secondary school a second foreign language is optional. Sami and Finnish pupils can choose Sami and Finnish as their second foreign language. Immigrants can choose their native language.
- Entrepreneurial skills are rapidly entering the classroom, often in the form of project work where the pupils set up and run their own companies, often with a view to financial profit. This has been a success where it has been encouraged. There is potential here for school co-operation at an international level.

5.2 Upper secondary education

5.2.1 *Figures and statistics*

Reform 94 had several important aims:

- Securing an individual right to upper secondary education;

- Improving quality in education;
- Introducing a new model to strengthen cooperation between the school and the workplace in vocational education;
- Establishing a new structure that would aim at improving flow-through in vocational education.

One of the main problems before 1994 was that too many pupils in vocational areas of study were prevented from progressing to the next stage of training, and so never managed to take their trade certificate.

Pupils in upper secondary education: autumn 2000 and autumn 2003

	Number of pupils	%-age 16-18 yr-olds in upper sec. educ.	%-age of Column II	%-age of girls	Gross running costs per pupil (NOK) *	Number of apprentices	%-age of women	%-age of special educ. pupils
2000								
General subjects:	94 383		57,5	54,4	**			
Vocational subjects:	69 650		42,5	46,7	**	29 945	31,4	
Total:	164 033	89,1						
2003								
General subjects:	90 064		50,6	51,1	43 405			
Vocational subjects:	87 710		49,3	48	63 824	28 490	30,0	
Total:	177 774	89,3						

Source: SSB, Kostra

* Average for the country excluding Oslo, which has not returned data

** Data unavailable

The distribution across the different areas of study can be found in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 shows the number of apprentices by gender and field of study.

95/96% of pupils who complete compulsory schooling proceed to upper secondary education. Approximately 85% attend schools run by the regional authorities. Just under 15% attend independent, private schools.

5.2.2 Lessons learned

- Reform 94 has been a success insofar as:
 - There is broad acceptance of the main organizational model – 3 years' education preparing for further study, and 2+2 years in vocational education.
 - Almost all pupils who complete compulsory schooling enrol in upper secondary education.
 - The flow-through of pupils in vocational areas of study is considerably better than before 1994.

- The number of apprentices is appreciably higher than before 1994.
 - Apprentices are on average considerably younger, i.e. they begin in paid employment as qualified workers much earlier.
 - Industry takes its responsibility for apprentice training seriously.
 - More girls choose vocational subjects than before 1994.
- Statistics, reports and *St.meld. nr. 30* indicate factors that need to be more closely looked into:
 - The average figures disguise that fact that girls on the whole choose traditional women's work in areas like health subjects and social studies (91,1% girls), arts and crafts (85,9%), hotel and food science (56,4%) and sales and service (60,4%) (See Appendix 3).
 - The number of apprentices has slowly decreased since the top year, 1998, when there were 32,350 apprentices
 - Well over 90% of apprentices gain trade certificates. The proportion of pupils who gain certificates after receiving their vocational training entirely in school is somewhat lower, approximately 75%, but this is the alternative that pupils must choose if they do not find an apprenticeship place. The OECD commented in the 1998 report that pupils without apprenticeship places are exposed to a big risk.
 - It is difficult to find suitable apprenticeship places for everyone, especially for pupils with a minority ethnic background. There is a structural imbalance between the pupils' wishes and the places industry and commerce offer.
 - Although around 80% complete their courses within the stipulated time frame (Norwegian Institute for Education Research and Statistics Norway), the drop-out rate during the course period is too high. It is 12-13% in general studies and the net drop-out rate in vocational subjects is approximately 10% . For young immigrants the drop-out rate is higher.
 - The link between theory and practice must be made more flexible in relation to pupils' abilities and interests.
 - The evaluation of Reform 94 showed that important aspects of what is called the "content reform" – more varied teaching procedures, more pupil activity, and that the pupils should take more responsibility for planning and carrying out their own work – have not been realized to the desired extent.
 - Too few pupils choose courses of study involving advanced science units..
 - The OECD's *Review of career guidance policies* of March 2002, in the country note on Norway, points out that the counselling programme has many weaknesses.

5.3 Folk high schools

Folk high schools have played an important role in the history of Norwegian education. Folk high schools offer mainly one-year examination-free courses to pupils who have completed upper secondary education, traditionally a year of maturing. Folk high schools often have their own special fields; music and other cultural activities have had a strong position, as has the open-air life. Two of the schools have concentrated on pupils with special problems. Folk high schools now also offer shorter courses.

Number of pupils in folk high schools, 2000-02

Year	2000/ 01	2001/ 02	2002/ 03	2003/ 04
Pupils*, longer courses (spring and autumn) 16.5 – 33 weeks	5 657	6 049	6 049	6 170
Pupils, shorter courses, 3 days – 16 weeks	16,844	19,083	20,727	21 767
Pupils, total	29,146	30,335	32,605	37 937

St.prp.nr 1 (2003-04)/ Statistics Norway

* Full academic year equivalents

There are a total of 77 folk high schools.

5.4 Adult education

Adult education activities in Norway are comprehensive and are undertaken by a number of organizations. The introduction of the Competence Reform improved conditions for adult learning. With effect from August 2000, adults born before 1978 gained the right to free upper secondary education. From August 2002, adults who need it have the right to free primary and lower secondary education. Local authorities (responsible for compulsory education) and regional authorities (responsible for upper secondary education) receive central support through the general transfer of funds. Private schools approved in accordance with the Independent School Act and in receipt of state support can also have adult participants.

In connection with the treatment of a White Paper (*St. Meld. nr. 42, 1997-98, the Competence Reform*) the Storting requested the Government to establish a system which gives adults the right to document their non-formal learning without having to resort to traditional methods of testing. A three-year Non-formal Learning Project (1999-2002) was established with the target group to comprise all adults who wished to have their non-formal learning assessed in relation to the educational system, working life, and organizational activity. Adult immigrants who wished to have their competence documented and assessed through vocational tests were part of the target group. In light of the experience gained in the Non-formal Learning Project, and of the introduction of non-formal learning assessment in higher education, a system has been established for the documentation of non-formal learning.

Various documentation standards have been developed for use in the assessment process in working life and the tertiary sector. Their primary focus is on actual skills regardless of the learning arena. Also, a new instrument for surveying competence acquired in the voluntary sector was launched at the end of 2003. Work in voluntary organizations and leisure activities can thus be defined more clearly as an important contribution to increased competence in working life and education. Evaluation shows that the Non-formal Learning Project has largely achieved the goal set with regard to the introduction of a national non-formal competence system. The goal has been reached with respect to the education system, but not yet in relation to working life and the voluntary sector.

In addition, widespread adult education activities take place under the auspices of the independent study organizations and distance learning institutions. Approved organizations

receive direct financial support in accordance with the Adult Education Act. This activity is extensive (see Appendix 4).

Other private schools and institutions offer courses which are dependent financially on the payment of participant fees.

The Department of Municipal and Regional Affairs arranges centrally financed courses for employment seekers, through its Directorate of Labour.

A relatively extensive programme of education in Norwegian language and the Norwegian social context for adult immigrants is administered by local authorities, with central support. The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (KRD) has the financial and legal responsibility for this training, while the Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for the curriculum.

5.4.1 Some key figures

- 4 208 participants were registered on examination preparatory courses for adults at compulsory school level in autumn 2003. Of these, 2 360 were women, and a total of 2 354 spoke a minority language (source GSI - Information system for the compulsory education sector).
- In addition, 6 700 receive other forms of adult education at the compulsory education level organized by local authorities. The majority are physically or psychologically handicapped and need special education (source GSI).
- 26,000 pupils in upper secondary education in Autumn 2003 were 20 years of age or more. 14,700 of those were over 25 years of age (source Statistics Norway).
- Approximately 30,000 immigrants and refugees attended courses in Norwegian language and the Norwegian social context (source Statistics Norway).
- Approved organizations had altogether 735 000 participants, 52% of whom were women. They delivered 1 352 000 lessons with a teacher and organized 378 000 lessons without teacher (Appendix 4).
- The most recent figures available from the Directorate of Labour are from 2002. They show that approximately 6,000 participated in employment-related courses and approximately 9,400 in upper secondary courses not covered by the Education Act (Statistics Norway). Slightly over 50% were women. Enrolment on these courses varies widely in keeping with the employment situation, as central authorities give increased support in periods of high unemployment.
- A total of 12 distance learning institutions receive state support. The object is to provide examination preparatory courses at upper secondary or higher level. In 2003 the institutions had a total of 20,000 participants, half of them women, of whom 10,500 followed courses at upper secondary level (Statistics Norway).
- Employers in both the private and public spheres spend considerable amounts on further education and in-service courses for their staff. No official figures are available for these programmes, but costs are estimated at well over ten thousand million NOK.

5.4.2 Lessons learned

Norway is among the countries with the most extensive range of adult education. Creating opportunities for lifelong learning is a goal of education policy which attracts broad political agreement.

- Developing the assessment of non-formal competence has reached a constructive phase. The principle is accepted both by employers and by education institutions. The challenge is to arrive at appropriate frameworks and routines.
- The OECD inquiry shows that Norwegians are less inclined to regard lifelong learning as desirable and necessary than people in other countries.
- The OECD study on lifelong learning states that the system in Norway is still supply-oriented, and that most public money is spent on financing the right of adults to upper secondary education.
- The OECD report on career advisory services states that the information and counselling service for adults is extremely unsatisfactory.
- Surveys show that there continue to be too many adults with weak basic skills in reading and numeracy (SIALS).
- The situation within adult education too is that those who have most to start with get more. This effect was noted as early as at the end of the 70s, when Norway's Adult Education Act came into force and an Adult Education Institute was established. The reforms in adult education between 2000 and 2002 have not succeeded in attracting relatively disadvantaged groups so far.
- A number of pioneer projects have shown that employers in both the public and private spheres need more competence and training in developing appropriate in-service training programmes for their organizations and their employees.
- More effective measures are probably needed to persuade adults to choose in-service training and/or further education in areas where the country needs more competence.
- The system of assessing non-formal experience and learning should be better coordinated between the official education system and the private sector.
- It is a challenge to move some of the informal, non-qualifying adult education activities over to examination-preparatory courses, particularly at the upper secondary level.

5.5 Higher education

5.5.1 Figures and statistics

Norway has currently around 210,000 students in higher education. The figure was under 100,000 early in the 80s. Growth was particularly strong from 1988 to 1990 when the number of places rose from approximately 110,000 to 133,000. The universities now have c. 80,000 students, of whom c. 44,000 are women. The university colleges have c. 130,000 students, of whom c. 82,000 are women. Of the total number in university colleges, c. 30,000 students are enrolled in private institutions. The proportion of female students has grown strongly in the long term, but women choose by and large to study subjects related to health and civics, the arts and social sciences. The table below shows the distribution.

Students by subject area and gender, autumn 2003

Subject area	Total	% of Total	Men	Women	% Women
Total	209,770		84,097	125,673	59,9
General subjects	181	0.1	147	34	18.8
Arts and aesthetic subjects	28,247	13.5	10,352	17,895	63,4
Teacher education and pedagogics	30,879	14.7	7,498	23,381	75,7
Social sciences and law	30,578	14.6	12,006	18,572	60,7
Economic and administrative subjects	37,790	18.0	17,982	19,808	52,4
Physical sciences, technical and practical subjects	35,470	16.9	24,755	10,715	30,2
Health, civics and sports	42,109	20.1	8,578	33,531	79,6
Primary production	1,272	0.6	682	590	46,4
Transport, security and service-related subjects	2,348	1.1	1,767	581	24,7
Undeclared area of study	896	0.4	330	566	63,2

Source: Statistics Norway and Education Statistics

Almost 9,500 courses of study were completed at the country's universities and specialized university institutions in the academic year 2002-03, 12 per cent more than the previous year.

In the whole university and university college sector, 29,400 courses of study were completed in the academic year 2002-03. More than 15,900 courses of study were completed at the university colleges. Completed doctorates are not included in these figures.

Women were responsible for 50 per cent of the 6,659 completed courses of study at the higher level and for 63 per cent of the 22,717 completed courses at the lower level (Appendix 5). Courses at the higher level last more than four years, while courses at the lower level last up to four years. Women completed twice as many courses as men at the university colleges.

5.5.2 Lessons learned

Norway has a high educational level and has now the capacity and diversity in the higher education system to ensure the ability to build further on it. Furthermore, the system is geographically decentralized. This has proved to have a positive effect on the development of competence at the local level. Norway has also a state-based system of financing studies which ensures that everyone has the opportunity to study. An alteration to the system means that students now have more to gain by completing their studies in the normal time. In addition, state higher education is free of charge. Students must buy their books and other materials. Gender differences are in the course of being eradicated, although the choice of subjects is still powerfully influenced by gender.

Attention is now being more strongly given to quality in education. The Mjørs Commission carried out a comprehensive survey of the university and university college sector, and the Government has now by and large implemented the proposals which Parliament approved. The Government summarizes this in the Bill *Ot.prp. nr. 79 (2003-04)*:

- The costs of the Quality Reform have been fully met, at 1,144 mill. NOK. Impressive work has been and is being done to fulfil the ambitions of the Quality Reform.

- Norway is well on the way to implementing the Bologna Declaration.
- That the costs of the Quality Reform have been wholly met is also to the credit of the higher education sector itself. The institutions have made a great effort and also had a constructive dialogue with the authorities on the implementation of the Reform.
- In the short term, the introduction of the Reform will also mean extra tasks which can reduce the effort in other areas, including research work.
- The Government plans a total increase in R&D growth of 1.1 billion NOK in 2004.
- The OECD goals remain fixed, and the growth plan is being adhered to. The Research Council of Norway has recently estimated Norway's investment in R&D at 2 per cent of GNP in 2004. The OECD average is 2.33 per cent.

Other than this, it is too early now to draw any clear conclusions about the results of the Quality Reform. Recent concerns are linked to:

- Too few students – particularly women – choose to study mathematics and natural science.
- The flow-through in the free studies is too slow.
- There are still too few women who choose longer studies at university. The majority of women take shorter, employment-oriented courses in the health and social services sector at university colleges.
- It is desirable that more students should take part of their studies abroad.

There is also concern over too little research in Norway, and that much research is of too low a standard. The Government plans to present a White Paper on research in spring 2005.

6 Main challenges in the years ahead

In this chapter a number of general topics common to several educational levels will first be presented. The report will then look into concrete challenges at the different educational levels.

6.1 Principles

With the Competence Reform, the Quality Reform, and the up-coming reform of basic education, the work of realizing important basic principles continues. The education system shall be accessible to everyone, regardless of background, and the authorities shall ensure that everyone has the chance of gaining an equivalent education. One of the consequences of this is that all public education shall continue to be free of charge. The national systems for the transfer of funds shall ensure that all local authorities, responsible for compulsory education, and all regional authorities, responsible for upper secondary education, shall make an equivalent education available. The opportunities individuals have are now to an increasing extent safeguarded through individual, statutory rights.

6.2 Economic adjustments and “sustainable social development”

The motives that drove forward the Norwegian reforms during the 90s are still operative.

Norway has in recent decades emerged from being an industrial society based on raw materials with a generally low level of education, to being a high-cost welfare society in which knowledge-based activities play an steadily more significant role. The country has been through, and is still subject to, extensive structural changes and adjustments that emphasize this trend. Against this background, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that education policy has a positive effect. At the same time, clear socio-economic effects of the adjustments are apparent. Although the country as a whole has never had so strong an economy as today and the inhabitants are, for the most part, well off, social and political tensions can build up as a result of new and growing differences. It is incontrovertible that unemployment and a low level of educational attainment go together. A challenge lies in the possible emergence of new, marginalized groups, and in these groups developing antisocial subcultures. To move towards a knowledge-based working environment supported by an educational programme which also ensures sustainable social development will be important in the years to come. Here Norway is in line with the EU's social agenda from the NICE meeting in 2000, also included in what has been called the Lisbon process.

In Norway, the first task is to promote the motivation for learning in a lifelong perspective, and continue the development of a more flexible education system which to greater extent can fulfill diverse expectations.

6.3 Globalization and social inclusion

Globalization, through the internationalization of the economy and politics, is also a determining factor in the content of education. Education, both basic and professional, must accept that more and more of what happens in the country has international aspects.

Norway too has in recent years become more multi-ethnic and multicultural through immigration. Immigration is not a new phenomenon, but what is new is that immigration takes place from a greater number of countries than before. While previously immigrants came predominantly from the European/American cultural sphere, many immigrants now come from Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa. In the Compulsory Education Information System (GSI), the data show that mother-tongue teaching in a total of 112 languages was given to 19 712 foreign-language speaking pupils in 2003-04.

Against this background, the debate about what it means to develop a multicultural society is constant and public. Norway has previously been relatively homogenous, and this issue is therefore new and unaccustomed for many.

The urgency in work for internationalization and multicultural meetings has been given a startlingly tragic dimension in the problem of terror and the wars and crises of recent years in different places – the Balkans, the Middle East and Africa. There have been wars and crises before, but for many people the crises of recent years have come closer, partly through more thorough coverage in the media, and partly because Norway as a country has been involved politically. These developments have also made organized crime more visible.

To build international understanding, sound ethical standpoints based on multicultural tolerance, positive social attitudes and an appreciation of the meaning of democracy appears therefore to be a central task for the future.

6.4 Inclusive and adapted education

6.4.1 General

In Norway, an inclusive school and teaching adapted to the pupils' abilities and needs have been guiding principles for many decades.

The vast majority of pupils attend public schools. Less than 3% attend private schools. At the compulsory level, all pupils have a statutory right to go to their neighbourhood school. This applies also to pupils with special needs. Parents must give their approval if handicapped pupils are to be moved to special schools or specially created groups or classes. Children and young people who for a variety of reasons have been placed in children's homes also normally attend the nearest school. It is, however, quite possible to allow all or parts of the educational programme to follow individual learning plans with special activities, if it is wished to give the pupil more time to himself/herself for a spell of time. In the case of extreme behavioural problems, the Education Act allows for pupils to be moved irrespective of the views of the pupil or the parent/guardian, out of regard for the other pupils.

In upper secondary education after Reform 94, all pupils have the right to a place on one of three chosen areas of study. The statistics show that close to 95% of pupils have their first choice fulfilled. The regional authority, as owner of the school, decides if pupils shall attend a school with a clear geographical recruitment area, or if pupils can choose freely within the region. In the latter case, grades from lower secondary school will decide the ranking, if there is competition for places. Several studies have been undertaken of the flow-through in upper secondary education. Studies by the Norwegian Institute for Studies in Research and Higher Education (NIFU) show that the flow-through has improved considerably since 1994 (cf. 5.2.1). Despite this, changes are now planned to adapt the programmes even better to the wishes and needs of the pupils (see below 6.4 and 6.10.2).

Children from immigrant families also have the right to attend their neighbourhood school, and they shall be offered mother-tongue teaching and extra classes in Norwegian to ease the transfer to the Norwegian school system.

6.4.2 Better adapted learning

Evaluations and result analyses indicate that there nevertheless is a long way to go. It appears from the PISA survey that Norwegian pupils' performance is spread over a wider range than is the case in other comparable countries. Classroom research also indicates that Norwegian teachers struggle to make a success of differentiated and adapted teaching strategies. In upper secondary education a large-scale countrywide project, the "Differentiation Project", has been carried out; the main aim of the project was the development of adapted learning. White Paper *St.meld. nr. 30* asserts that the evaluation of the project shows that improved adaptation of study programmes is necessary, particularly at the upper secondary level. The White Paper also discusses in considerable depth ways in which the requirements of pupils with special needs could be better met.

In the view of the Ministry, the insufficiencies in adapted learning and the considerable variations in the use made of special education can be put down to:

- insufficient insight into the results of the learning process.
- that some school principals make too little use of the aggregate competence of the staff in organizing the teaching around the pupils' needs.
- an inadequate level of competence among school owners, principals and staff where learning difficulties and the methods available for teaching pupils with different learning difficulties are concerned.
- poor knowledge about ways of preventing and dealing with behavioural difficulties.
- too little use of system-focused processes.
- too little development of expertise in this area in many local authorities.
- too little knowledge of how adapted learning procedures should be carried out.
- lack of knowledge of regulations and the freedom of action allowed by the regulations.
- models for the distribution of resources to schools.
- schools do not to the desired extent equalize social differences

6.4.3 Minority language pupils

The situation for pupils from language minority groups (e.g. children/youth with immigrant background) has recently been directly addressed. In December 2003 the Government presented a strategy plan "*Equivalent education in practice – a strategy for better learning and more participation of language minorities in kindergartens, schools and education 2004-09*" (F-4154). The document describes the situation thus (excerpt from p. 4):

- Children from language minority backgrounds are underrepresented in kindergartens.
- Research shows that well-organized measures for minority language children in kindergartens have a positive effect on the children's first response to school.
- A broad-based study of pupils in lower and upper secondary school indicates that fewer minority language pupils achieve above-average results, and that more are in the group of lowest achievers.
- The multicultural perspective is little in evidence in syllabuses and textbooks.
- There is a considerable lack of qualified mother-tongue teachers and bilingual teachers in schools.
- Surveys show that minority pupils have a positive attitude to school, and that their parents and the pupils themselves have high educational ambitions.
- There is no difference in the extent to which minority pupils are involved in problem behaviour at school, compared to the majority. However, more of the minority pupils are often apprehensive about going to school, partly because they are more prone to harassment than others.
- A smaller proportion of minority language pupils enrol in upper secondary education than majority pupils.
- Newer surveys indicate that minority language pupils showed a considerable improvement in progress in upper secondary education between 1994 and 2002, particularly in the general (academic) area of study.
- Young people from a minority language background are underrepresented in Norwegian higher education.

- Adult immigrants are offered classes in Norwegian language and civics. In one study, 84% said they had attended Norwegian classes, while 41% said they had completed the Norwegian course.
- Women complete the Norwegian course less often than men, despite a larger number of women enrolling. Time-consuming caring tasks are suggested as an important reason for non-attendance.

The strategy plan has five main goals:

- Better language understanding among minority language children at the pre-school level.
- A higher level of school achievement among minority language pupils.
- An increased proportion of minority language pupils and apprentices starting and completing upper secondary education.
- An increased proportion of minority language students in higher education.
- Better Norwegian skills among minority language adults.

Through the strategy plan a number of measures are implemented. Some of the most important are presented below:

- Improve language understanding among minority language children at pre-school level.
- Change the Education Act.
- Test different models for special language learning.
- Strengthen the multicultural perspective in syllabuses and textbooks.
- Establish a national centre for multicultural education.
- Introduce grants for minority language teachers who lack formal qualifications.
- Take steps to strengthen cooperation between home and school.
- Spread experience through demonstration schools and annual conferences.
- Set up seminars, web-based services, case descriptions.
- Improve recruitment to and increase awareness of higher education.
- Strengthen the multicultural perspective in higher education.
- Introduce measures directed towards adults – the right and duty to Norwegian classes and the introductory programme.

6.5 The gender issue

Norway has its own Gender Equality Act. Equality is in addition a requirement of many other specific Acts. Norway also has an ombudsman to oversee the implementation of the Gender Equality Act. At regular intervals the different Ministries reinforce the principles of the Act with different kinds of action plans.

The principles expressed in the concept of gender equality are broadly accepted by the people. A substantial levelling-out has taken place in connection with education. The situation is now partly turned on its head, with girls dominating and in consequence a need to look more closely at the situation for boys. The statistics indicate aspects of the situation that are being worked on:

- At the compulsory level girls now perform better than boys, apart from in physical education. In the case of reading and writing skills in particular, the performance of boys, especially the weaker boys, demands attention.
- The figures for pupils formally recognized as requiring special education show a strong preponderance of boys. The question of the extent to which this has individual causes or is linked to schools failing to care as much for boys as for girls is under debate.
- In upper secondary education the majority of pupils are now girls, and they perform better than boys in academic subjects. The statistics also show that the distribution of pupils in vocational subjects is determined largely by gender (see Appendix 2). This is also reflected among apprentices.
- In higher education, the strong increase in the number of female students has arisen primarily in the health and social studies sectors of the university college system, where women represent almost 2/3 of the growth in student numbers. There is also a strong increase in the number of women attending the private colleges. Furthermore, changes have occurred in other subject areas (see Appendix 2 and 3). Women are still underrepresented in senior posts in universities and university colleges. One of the reasons is that women till now have been less interested in choosing the longer courses of study. In 2002-03 there continued to be a very weak preponderance of men completing longer courses of study (see Appendix 5).

6.6 Working environment and learning environment

6.6.1 *Improved working environment*

As part of the work on quality Norway has put a lot of effort into developing a good working environment and a stimulating learning environment for pupils and students. This work goes on at all levels and is also articulated in changes in the law. It has become customary to distinguish between the conditions which are needed to bring about a pleasant, inclusive, safe and healthy environment, and the factors which contribute to an effective and productive learning environment. Many Norwegian surveys show that even when pupils are happy and have a healthy environment, it does not follow that the learning returns are satisfactory. Other factors play a part: the school's approach; the teachers' qualifications; the teachers' ability to stipulate positive goals and expectations; the pupils' motivation and learning strategies, etc.

It has been a long-term ambition to strengthen the legal requirements for the learning environment and so improve the physical and psychological working environment:

- Many school buildings are not satisfactorily maintained and do not meet today's environmental requirements.
- Pupils and students have not been included under the general provisions of the Working Environment Act.
- Norwegian surveys have shown that behavioural problems are on the increase, although the incidence of serious behavioural problems is relatively small (Ogden, 1998, and Sørli and Nordal, 1998).

It has therefore been a long-term ambition to strengthen the legal requirements and so improve the physical and psychological working environment.

As mentioned earlier, a new chapter in the Education Act dealing with the pupils' working environment came into effect on 1 April 2003. The chapter enhances pupils' rights, tightens up routines and regulations governing how matters shall be handled, and includes penalties which can be applied if the school owner does not act accordingly. Monitoring this in the future will be an important task.

In July 2002 new regulations in the Higher Education Act dealing with the students' working environment came into effect. New, more demanding routines are now imposed on institutions to ensure a physically and psychologically safe and secure environment and allow the Labour Inspection Authority to exercise control in accordance with the new regulations. In the changes in the law proposed in the Bill *Ot.prp. nr 79 (2003-04)* the regulations are further defined and made fully applicable also to private colleges.

6.6.2 Pupil behaviour and the psychological working environment

Pupil behaviour and the psychological working environment have been paid increasing attention to. As mentioned above, a number of researchers have presented new, and perhaps somewhat surprising, research results. Care and responsibility have been central areas of concern in compulsory schooling since the National Standard Curriculum for Basic Education of 1987. Ogden (1998) has used some of the same questions as in a report from The Department of Education and Science and the Welsh office (1989) about the situation in England and Wales. Ogden concludes that conditions in Norway do not seem to be markedly different from those in England and Wales. Some types of undisciplined behaviour were reported more often in England and Wales, while Norwegian teachers more often complained about verbal harassment. What we are in the course of discovering is perhaps the reverse side of a process of development characterized by child-centred upbringing, freedom of action and negotiation strategies in the adult-child relationship. "Discipline" has in many ways been a foreign concept in Norwegian pedagogics in recent decades. Foreigners who visit schools often react to the classroom culture in Norway. As early as 2000 an expert group appointed by the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs and the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs presented their proposals in *Assessment of programmes and measures to reduce problem behaviour and develop social competence*.

In working with this, it is important that the school does not take action that can bring it into conflict with the parents' responsibility for upbringing. The school's perspective is that behavioural norms, values and attitudes must be seen in relation to its responsibility for ensuring a learning environment where the work of learning can be as effective as possible. The school has therefore legitimate grounds for establishing its own norms here.

In the area of behaviour, bullying is a special problem which is now in focus. In Scandinavia it was the Swedish Professor Olweus who first methodically researched bullying in school. Later, Norwegian groups have entered the field, and the centre for Behavioural Research in Stavanger now issues both research papers and pedagogical programmes. Studies show a high number of pupils who experience bullying. At the same time, bullying at the workplace has also been taken up.

To underline the importance and seriousness of the bullying problem in school, several instances issued a joint Manifesto against bullying. It was signed in September 2002 by Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik, the Children's Ombudsman, the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, the Education Union and the Parents Council for Basic Education. The Ministry of Education and Research has had principal responsibility for

following up the work since then. In March 2003 the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs joined the other bodies in support of the Manifesto, and the venture was strengthened by action in kindergartens and in children's and young people's leisure settings. The focus on schools takes place at the same time as the effort to identify and reduce bullying in working life.

The action against bullying is taking place in compulsory and upper secondary schools. For example, a Guide on dealing with bullying in upper secondary education has been produced.

After over a year's work the results can be summed up thus:

- Those involved in the Manifesto have produced extensive material for the use of teachers, pupils, staff in kindergartens, and parents/guardians.
- All mayors have been urged to sign a local manifesto against bullying.
- The follow-up of the Manifesto against bullying was the main theme at the 2003 Conference on Violence in Bergen, organized by the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities and the insurance company Vesta.
- 381 schools will have introduced the Olweus programme in the 2002-04 period, and 184 schools are taking part in the academic year 2003-04 in the "ZERO" programme, developed in Stavanger – two anti-bullying programmes which have produced results.
- There has been broad support for anti-bullying measures in local and regional authorities (169 local authorities and 9 regional authorities had approved local goals in the fight against bullying before 1 January 2003. Kindergartens and leisure centres for children and young people have been covered by the Manifesto against bullying since March 2003.
- The media have shown considerable interest in the action.

But anti-bullying work is a continuing concern. The action continues; it demands the constant attention of school owners and each individual school.

6.6.3 *A more effective learning environment*

Another important aspect of the work on quality at all educational levels is that the effect of the learning process must be improved and the right conditions must be established for a better learning environment in that sense. Ogden uses the expressions "learning-inhibiting" and "learning-alienating" behaviour. Assessments of learning efficiency at all levels have revealed that Norway has much to gain from introducing more effective forms of work and a more structured and controlled follow-up of pupils' and students' progress. The PISA survey contained thought-provoking data on Norwegian pupils' learning strategies and their attitude to school work.

This is an important aspect of quality work at all educational levels. It is discussed in other parts of this report.

6.7 More local autonomy

6.7.1 *The local authority level*

The policy of the current Government is to transfer more authority to local levels. This is in part a feature of the general policy of strengthening local democracy and reducing detailed directives from the central level where there is no need. Local democracy, which underpins

traditional and important values in Norway, is under threat in different ways. In the growth of the welfare state, Parliament has throughout recent history laid down powerful provisions in relation to local and regional authorities by stipulating standards in laws and regulations and incorporating important conditions relating to equality of services. This limits local freedom of action. The traditional division into local and regional authorities is, perhaps, no longer so appropriate. Norway, with only 4.5 million inhabitants, still has 335 local authorities. Considerable demographic changes have taken place, with a certain movement away from outlying areas. The industrial structure is also changing, with less emphasis on primary industries. Many local authorities are very small; the smallest have less than 1000 inhabitants. At the same time, systems of communications have radically improved.

As far as finances are concerned, a widespread equalizing procedure takes place among local authorities. Large sums are collected at the centre and then redistributed to local authorities in accordance with key tables. The consequence is that very many local authorities have most of their budgets met by direct and indirect transfers from the central authority. This represents, as a whole, the biggest challenge facing local democracy. Inhabitants are concerned that services and welfare meet the necessary standards, and for many it is irrelevant whether the services are provided by central or local authorities. Participation in local elections is not as high as could be desired, and considerably lower than in general elections.

A revitalization of local democracy and local decision-making is sought. Effectiveness, responsibility, competence and quality are key terms. The revision of laws and regulations has drawn up new and clearer limits for the local implementation and follow-up of education at the compulsory level. The debate on the division into local and regional authorities continues, but so far few changes have taken place, and the local authorities that amalgamate do so freely. In the 1988 OECD report, the evaluation panel wanted to see a closer examination of the ambitious decentralization policy. The panel asked first if the central authority had retained enough power over policy making. In this area, a distinct change took place after 1990, with the adoption of a much clearer policy of management by objectives in education and the deliberate use of legal provisions, regulations and syllabuses. The panel also questioned whether units as small as those in Norway would be able to fulfil their responsibilities.

An administrative structure of many small authorities can have difficulty in implementing national education policy, giving schools enough support, conducting self-assessment, and providing development opportunities for the staff (quoted from the summaries in the Report on Lifelong Learning). This is where the challenge lies in Norway today.

The problem is partly solved by the central authority becoming more active in the work of assessment and supporting development measures, in the in-service training of teachers and in the training of school administrators. The development which gives the individual school and principal greater authority also helps. Nevertheless small authorities will have a problem of competence and capacity, and work is in progress to do something about this.

At the same time there is increasing awareness that quality assurance and development are not possible without commitment, understanding, responsibility and follow-up at the local level. Establishing competent school management at local and regional level and in the individual school is therefore important. In addition to the comprehensive administrative responsibility which rests on the local school management, it is also expected to communicate and assist in realizing the predominant national goals and requirements. Further, it must develop its own

plans and goals, where local needs are incorporated as elements in the overall strategy. All education touches on people's fundamental values and needs. It is therefore natural and positive that both ordinary people and experts have their own opinions – often strong opinions – about the organization and quality of education. It is important that the local school administration also contributes to channelling the different opinions into constructive and professionally tenable processes. If they do not succeed, stagnation and perhaps a feeling of impotence can be the consequence, and the management of education will collapse into fragmentary systems where strong schools, teachers, pupils and parents determine the course on the basis of their own priorities.

6.7.2 Information

A democratic society presupposes openness. Schools have traditionally been relatively closed to ordinary people and they have also often enveloped themselves in a language which outsiders, including the local politicians responsible for school administration, have had difficulty in understanding. A new tendency is now clear – more openness. This is in part an important aspect of the ongoing debate about the publication of assessment findings. Schools are challenged by parents who want better contact with, and more information about the school. They are challenged by the media which takes up current issues, discusses assessment findings and demands comments.

The local school management must be able to satisfy the need for information, develop information strategies and build up a school culture which can tackle the new openness in a professional way without ignoring professional standards or the rights of individuals.

6.7.3 The role of the principal

In connection with the latest changes in the Education Act, the role of the principal and the competence requirements of the post were discussed. In the Bill *Ot.prp. nr 67 (2002-03)* the Ministry proposed that a number of the formal requirements for appointment as principal should be dropped. At the same time, it was clearly underlined that the principal should be pedagogical and administrative leader, and that the school should be organized in such a way that the principal has sufficient perspective to function as pedagogical leader. Pedagogical leadership has to do with quality understanding, and the assessment and growth of the school as an organization. It means possessing the ability to establish a positive school culture and build a system of guidance and support for teachers in their individual development.

The role of the principal has been substantially changed and expanded in recent years. Building up a competence development and support apparatus that can contribute to providing the country with the school administrators it needs will therefore be an important task.

In White Paper *St.meld. no 30*, strengthening school management is given importance. In chapter 5.4 we can read:

“Learning organizations make particularly great demands on plain and powerful leadership. Experience shows that good school management is decisive in the work of quality development in schools. Principals have the overall responsibility for the teaching in their own schools and for the work of developing and improving the learning environment and the profit the pupils’ gain from the learning. The school owners are responsible for the leadership training of their own managers, including school administrators. The development and training of school administrators has been given high priority by the central authorities

for a considerable time and is an important instrument in the work of achieving the national goals for schools.

“On the initiative of the Ministry and in collaboration with the Norwegian Association of Regional and Local Authorities the Ministry has partly financed the development of flexible in-service courses and further training courses in school management at a number of university colleges and universities. The further training courses have the goal of making school administrators better able to lead their schools as places of learning. The main themes of the courses are quality in the school’s activities, pupil learning, a quality development strategy and effective use of resources. Master-level studies have also been developed at a number of institutions where further education courses can form a part. The measures were implemented in spring 2003.”

In the list over concrete recommendations we find the following (p. 101):

- The central authority shall give financial support to the development of the competence of school administrators, teachers, instructors, advisers and other staff linked to basic education.
- In cooperation with the Norwegian Association of Regional and Local Authorities, a special programme will be developed to develop competence among school owners and school administrators in connection with the introduction of the reform.
- The Ministry will arrange for the further education courses set up for school administrators to continue.

6.8 Quality assurance

As already mentioned in this report, the task of building up a national quality assessment system is given priority and is being pursued in many areas.

Something has already been done. The cooperation on international comparative surveys continues. A Directorate for Primary and Secondary Education was established on 15 June 2004. Parliament has given its approval to the use of national tests. An extensive pupil and student assessment system has been set up, and in higher education student assessment has been given a legal basis.

In the work to be done, it is important to give weight to a basic understanding of the concept of quality itself.

Seen from the outside, quality is connected with profit from learning, the effect of learning, in relation to the needs of society and the individual. Quality, however, is not a fixed, objective standard, but is relative and linked to expectations, political priorities and an ethical standpoint. Clear conflicts also arise between the understanding of quality to which the authorities give expression through legislation, syllabuses and sector plans, and the expectations and aspirations which the individual embodies. It is therefore not possible to undertake quality assessments without relating them to clarified and justified goals. Making this clear, justifying the choices, generating understanding for the determined priorities, and not least, explaining the compromises that are unavoidable at the point where the public interest intersects with the individual, this will be a very important task if the assessments are to acquire legitimacy.

Seen from the inside, from the perspective of the educational institutions, quality is linked to the way the job is done, pedagogical competence, didactical adaptation, the methods aspect of the choice of forms of work, the use of teaching materials, and the follow-up of pupils and students. It is therefore important for institutions and teachers that assessment activities are designed to be helpful in the day-to-day work, and that those who take part in the assessments find them meaningful and give them their support. Without this, many sources of error can arise and the assessments lose value.

All assessment and research indicates that the wider context plays an important role. Pupils' and students' achievements and educational career are linked to their socio-economic background and influenced by their environment. It is not possible, therefore, to work on quality improvement without dealing with this area, and the interpretation of assessments must allow for these factors.

Many countries experience difficulties in the way in which assessments and results are handled in the public debate. Ranking lists of schools in the media provide striking examples of how assessments and surveys can be misinterpreted and misused. In democratic communities information must nevertheless be public, as long as it does not unreasonably reveal sensitive personal data. The problem cannot therefore be solved by limiting the flow of information. The only alternative is to join the discussion in an objective manner, expose misuse and misunderstandings, try to improve the understanding of the media and the public about what the results tell us and do not tell us, and contribute to a gradually more enlightened public debate. This process has begun. It is important that school personnel themselves take part in the process and do not unilaterally oppose the surveys and the information because they can have negative aspects.

"The Student Inspectors" is an Internet-based survey introduced in 2001, obligatory for students in grades 7 and 10. Students reply to questions regarding motivation, student democracy and participation, psychosocial issues and physical learning environment. Individual respondents cannot be traced. The service was introduced in order to assist schools, training centres and school owners in carrying through a systematic school evaluation and quality development.

6.9 Learning for sustainable development - a challenge

In 2002 thirty years had passed since the environmental conference in Stockholm marked the humble beginnings of the Rio process. Eleven years later, the UN World Commission on Environment and Development was established, led by Gro Harlem Brundtland. The Commission's report, *Our Common Future*, was published in 1987, launching the concept of "sustainable development".

With the launching of this concept, issues linked to the environment, economics and social development were brought together. The three elements cannot be considered in isolation; they must be seen as mutually dependent. Justice and solidarity – in time and space – come into focus.

The UN report GEO3 points to a paradox. The world's environmental problems increase, but not attention to the problems. Poverty in the third world and excessive consumption in rich countries continues to put great pressure on natural resources.

The 2002 Johannesburg conference, to which Norway contributed, is a fresh example of what can be achieved by committed environmental cooperation. The report "State of the World 2003" from Worldwatch Institute shows that the campaign for the environment can be effective. Acid rain and ozone-destructive gases are examples of serious threats which have been considerably reduced. However, the accumulated environmental trend, on a global basis, is negative. Deforestation, CO₂ discharges, urbanization and waste of water are growing problems, the report states.

In the Norwegian school system the concept "sustainable development" has mainly been perceived as environmental education. A main tool when working with questions relating to sustainable development, has been a web-based network, "Network for Environmental Education" (<www.miljolare.no>). A broader perspective, also including social and economic dimensions, has recently been initiated, and will be accessible for all Norwegian schools and pupils in a revised version of the network mentioned later this autumn (2004).

Issues relating to environment and sustainable development need to be ranked higher on the agenda and be given a prominent place in educational policy again.

6.10 Challenges at the different educational levels

In this chapter the report will draw attention to the circumstances to which Norway will pay particular attention in the next few years. The debate lays the foundation for the concrete changes that will come in compulsory and upper secondary education in the near future.

In the case of higher education, the Government has recently presented a Bill to Parliament (*Ot.prp. nr. 79, 2003-04*) concerning certain changes in the Higher Education Act. The background for the Bill is the recommendations from the Ryssdal Commission (*NOU 2003:25*) which was presented in September 2003. The Parliament Committee for Education, Research and Church Affairs will not deliver its report until February 2005, so the commentary below takes the recommendations in the Bill as its starting point. In addition, the Government now has a White Paper on research in preparation.

6.10.1 Compulsory education

The main principles underlying the organization of compulsory public education are stable. Such principles as equal access to education, equivalence of provision and adapted education in an inclusive school which is free of charge and open to all are unchanged. Nevertheless, a need for certain changes and adjustments has been recognized.

Curriculum policy

The Norwegian curriculum is divided into a common, general section and syllabuses in the individual subjects. The general section was approved as early as 1994, and shall be kept. There is agreement that the syllabuses in the separate subjects are too comprehensive. They will be simplified. A greater capacity for flexibility and adapted learning will be incorporated, as far as possible. Adapted learning will both answer the needs of the weaker pupils and provide for those who need a greater challenge than the average. This can be achieved partly by incorporating subject matter at lower secondary level (grades 8 – 10) that anticipates the content of upper secondary education.

Norwegian syllabuses have contained a number of provisions on methods and forms of work. In keeping with the wish to distinguish more clearly between the national authority's specification of the goals that steer the learning process, and local freedom to organize and adapt according to local needs, the syllabuses shall now be altered and the provisions on methods removed.

Arrangements for more flexible organisation have already been made by removing from the Education Act the regulations on class size based on when a class should be divided. This is now being followed up by substituting a system permitting the redistribution of up to 25 per cent of the periods at the individual school, replacing the regulation which determined the number of periods in each subject. The separate subjects will still be allocated an annual total of periods, and pupils' tuition rights will be assured through a guaranteed minimum number of periods.

Since new syllabuses will now be designed in all subjects, new textbooks will also be produced. The production of textbooks in Norway is the responsibility of private publishers. The approval of textbooks by the national authorities was discontinued when the new Education Act came into force in 1998, in line with the national authorities' wish to determine the learning goals through the syllabuses, leaving the way open for more professional freedom in the choice of subject-related resources. The only requirement is that textbooks must be available in the two official forms of the Norwegian language. School owners and the schools themselves are responsible for choosing appropriate textbooks.

Boosting basic skills

It has already been acknowledged that Norway is surprised by the international and national surveys which have shown that Norwegian pupils score under the average OECD level in the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy. Perhaps even more surprising is the discovery that the spread between strong and weak pupils is greater in Norway than in many other countries. Surveys have indicated that, among young people and adults too, far too many have not mastered the skills in the way needed in a modern society.

Training in the basic skills of reading, writing, numeracy and the use of ICT will be given more emphasis. These are seen as skills that are a necessary precondition for learning in all subjects, and syllabuses will therefore be changed to emphasize this in all subjects. The number of teaching periods at the primary level will be further increased, the increase going to Norwegian and mathematics. Teacher education will be strengthened by making basic training in reading, writing and mathematics obligatory in general teachers' education.

Norway will continue to conduct national and international surveys of basic skills. The question being discussed is how the results should be made public. In Norway, too, there is a reaction to the manner in which the media present the material, including inappropriate comparative lists and simplified concepts of quality. On the other hand, it is considered highly desirable that information about schools should be available to the public in a democratic system. The Ministry and the new Directorate for Primary and Secondary Education are now looking more closely into how this can be arranged. A web site (www.skoleporten.no) has been launched as part of a national quality assessment system. "*Skoleporten*" provides results from quality assessments and information on the four areas of quality: resources, learning environment, learning outcome and completion rate. The main target group is policy makers in the education sector, but the web site also provides useful information to parents, pupils, apprentices and other stakeholders.

The development of pupils' learning strategies will also be integrated into training in basic skills and subjects. Learning strategies are defined as the ability to organize and regulate one's own learning, employ time effectively, solve problems, plan, execute, evaluate, reflect on and absorb new facts and knowledge, and adapt and utilize this in new situations at school, work and leisure.

The Ministry will in addition specify certain fundamental principles and requirements which shall be binding features of all schools and other places of training. These are defined as "The Framework for Quality". The principles are laid down in a document which the White Paper *St.meld. nr. 30* calls "The School Poster":

The school and the company offering apprenticeship training shall:

- 1. Give all pupils and apprentices equal opportunities to develop their abilities and talents;*
- 2. Stimulate pupils' and apprentices' desire to learn, perseverance and curiosity;*
- 3. Stimulate pupils and apprentices to develop their own learning strategies and their capacity for critical thought;*
- 4. Stimulate pupils' and apprentices' personal development, social competence and capacity for understanding of democracy and democratic participation;*
- 5. Prepare the ground to enable pupils and apprentices to make purposeful choices of training and future work;*
- 6. Support teachers and instructors in showing themselves to be confident leaders and examples to children and young people;*
- 7. Stimulate, utilize and develop the individual teacher's competence;*
- 8. Promote differentiated learning and varied work patterns;*
- 9. Ensure that the physical and psycho-social working and learning environment promotes health, well-being and learning;*
- 10. Prepare the ground for the meaningful involvement of parents and the local community in the educational process.*

These principles shall make up the framework for quality at the place of learning and shall be the foundation for the development of the school and the apprenticeship training company as learning organizations.

Giving added weight to mathematics and the natural sciences

The action plan "Science, of course" (*Realfag, naturligvis*) gives a current description of the position of the sciences in Norway and internationally. Within the OECD area, Norway has the lowest number of periods at the compulsory school level. Norwegian 15-year-olds have an average level of achievement in mathematics and the natural sciences, and the spread between able and weak pupils is large. There are greater gender differences in attitude towards and interest in the sciences than in most other countries, particularly at the lower secondary level. Compared with many other countries, far fewer pupils in upper secondary schools choose the more advanced science courses, and the proportion of pupils taking the advanced courses has

fallen in recent years. Teachers at the compulsory level in Norway have limited competence in science subjects, and the first-year standard in mathematics in higher education is weak, especially in teacher education institutions.

The diminishing prestige of science subjects can be one reason why pupils with considerable potential often decline to choose these subjects in upper secondary or higher education. In an international study, *Science And Scientists (SAS)*, almost 10,000 13-year-old pupils from 21 countries answered questions about science teaching. The pupils have answered questions about their experiences, interests and priorities, and what they think of science and researchers. From the report it appears that Norwegian children are somewhat less interested in learning about scientific topics than children from other countries at the same level of development. Norway has the lowest proportion of science students in the whole OECD area. Only 16 per cent of the student body study sciences, while the average for the OECD is 24 per cent. The proportion of science graduates entering education fell from 30 per cent at the end of the 70s to under 10 per cent during the 80s, and has since remained at the same low level. In an OECD study into the number of science graduates per 100,000 aged 25-34, Norway comes third last, after the Netherlands and Denmark. Norway has approximately 750, while the OECD average is 1,250.

Several action plans and development measures have already been taken on the problem. It is, in particular, work on developing new approaches in didactics and methods which can make the subjects more down to earth and interesting to the pupils. The syllabuses will be examined again.

As mentioned above, digital competence is regarded as a basic skill to be practised in all subjects. How to give more weight to the technological aspect in education has also been discussed. Norway does not want to introduce technology as a separate subject. Instead, it will be boosted within the framework of the existing natural science subjects, and partly the craft subjects in relation to design.

The General Assembly of the UN has declared 2005-2014 to be the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. This will give further opportunities to strengthen the practical usefulness of the sciences. The Norwegian Environmental Education Network is based on cooperation among schools, the environmental protection administration, research institutions and voluntary organizations. It is judged to be a useful tool for teaching science and for strengthening the links with the social sciences.

Giving more weight to foreign languages

Internationalization, increased travel and the multicultural element in Norwegian society give foreign languages increased importance.

The 1997 curriculum made English compulsory from the start of primary school, and it is as a rule the first foreign language for Norwegian pupils. In lower secondary school, pupils can choose a second foreign language, generally German or French, but it is also possible to choose other languages, e.g. one connected with the pupil's ethnic background.

In connection with the 1997 curriculum it was discussed whether a second foreign language should be made compulsory at the lower secondary level, but the idea was dropped. It has

now been revived, and Parliament has given its approval to the proposal. As before, the second foreign language will generally be German or French, but other languages can be chosen. Pupils whose language of instruction is Sami, Finnish or sign language can be given exemption. Schools with the necessary capability may introduce the teaching at the primary level.

According to the EU's information network on education, Eurydice, many countries have more years of instruction in two foreign languages than Norway. The EU action plan for languages 2004-2006 has the goal of everyone learning two foreign languages in addition to their native language, and one of the ways in which this is to be achieved is by an early start to foreign language learning.

Experience from many multilateral programmes shows that contact with a country where the foreign language is spoken is important for the learning outcome. Participation in language projects and exchanges will be a suitable contribution to strengthening foreign language learning here too. Norway has entered into bilateral agreements on pupil and apprentice exchanges with Germany and France. With the introduction of a second foreign language, agreements with other countries will be considered.

The syllabus for the second foreign language will be changed to ensure that the learning goals emphasize a practical approach and communication skills of different kinds at different levels. The mark obtained in the subject will count in admission to upper secondary education. If modifying the subject in the direction of practical language skills is to succeed, teachers will need to be assisted in acquiring new competence and new teaching aids will have to be developed. It is planned to give this priority from the coming year.

Philosophy

Philosophy is not, at present, a separate subject in compulsory education. At the upper secondary level philosophy is an optional subject which can be made available to all pupils regardless of area of study, and a number of schools are conducting trials in the subject. In the general curriculum the value of a philosophical approach to understanding and an outlook on life is endorsed. In addition, philosophy and philosophical method are incorporated in several syllabuses at the compulsory level, including Knowledge of Christianity with Information about Religions and Life Stances (KRL), Norwegian, Mathematics, and Civics. Philosophy is a particularly important part of KRL.

In White Paper *St.meld. nr. 30* the Ministry states that philosophy can strengthen pupils basic ability to deal with other school subjects and constitutes a useful preparation for active participation in the community and working life. Philosophy will provide perspectives on the foundations of other subjects, both by showing how central issues have developed historically and how issues can be systematically examined.

The Ministry says it will consider how to strengthen philosophy in connection with work on the curriculum.

6.10.2 Upper secondary education

Reform 94 implemented broad structural reforms in upper secondary education, including a considerable reduction in the number of foundation (first year) courses, from 113 to 13, and

fewer advanced I courses (second year). The reform had as its goal the creation of clear and straightforward study programmes, so that all the paths should lead to recognized competence and at the same time safeguard the skills demanded by the individual apprenticeships.

Further simplification and quality enhancement

After the introduction of Reform 94, extensive evaluation was carried out. The results were summed up in White Paper *St.meld. nr. 32 (1998-99)* and a number of adjustments were made.

The current course structure comprises 12 vocational areas of study and three areas of study leading to matriculation qualifications. Within the vocational areas there are still 102 Advanced I courses which lead to 224 different vocations, most of them involving apprenticeship training with instruction both at school and in industry. In addition, three courses of training in the vocational areas of study lead to matriculation. Pupils who begin on a vocational course have, in addition, the opportunity to achieve matriculation qualifications by taking a one-year general studies supplement either in their third year or after completing their apprenticeship.

White Paper *St.meld. nr. 30* reviews recent years' research and experience thus:

"Reform 94 succeeded in the first years in removing the structural barriers in the way of pupils and apprentices achieving academic or vocational qualifications. In the vocational areas of study, progression was improved by almost 100% during the first three years after the introduction. Later years' developments have shown, however, that certain aspects of the course structure impede recruitment to certain vocations and areas of competence. In connection with the debate on White Paper St.meld. nr. 32 (1998-99) Upper Secondary Education, Parliament drew attention to the fact that the course structure at Advanced I level has become a serious barrier to recruitment to working life, because a consequence of the division into so many courses is that pupil numbers are insufficient to set up classes in each region. Development trends in recent years also show that progression has deteriorated and that the degree of switching courses has increased, particularly between the foundation course and Advanced I course in vocational areas of study. The evaluation of Reform 94 and the evaluation of the differentiation project show further that upper secondary education is not sufficiently adapted to the individual pupil's abilities and needs, as required by the initial paragraphs of the Education Act."

Parliament has given its approval to this assessment, which in turn becomes the premise for future work. The main goal is to remove structural barriers to pupils completing upper secondary education. A further goal is to enable pupils as far as possible to live at home. At the same time, the disturbing results of Norwegian and international surveys concerning pupils' learning outcome, and the specific Norwegian problem of recruiting competence in science subjects, will have consequences. It is also evident that many pupils who enter higher education could have been better prepared.

Parliament has now given its approval to the following:

- New syllabuses will be developed for all study programmes and courses. In connection with the revision of syllabuses, new textbooks and teaching materials will be written.
- More mathematics will be compulsory in the academic areas of study

- It has been suggested that able pupils at the upper secondary level could be allowed to take subjects or parts of subjects from university level. This has not yet been decided. The Ministry will continue to work on the idea.
- Although the main structure will be maintained, reorganization will open for greater flexibility. The flexibility will allow not only more practical training of pupils who have difficulty with theory and more theoretical depth in academic programmes, but also more depth in practical procedures at an earlier stage in certain vocational subjects.
- The structure will be further simplified. There will be fewer vocational programmes and far fewer in the second year. Parliament has accepted a reduction to between 35 and 50.

The biggest challenge to come will be to secure a flexibility which meets the needs of the pupils who want, first and foremost, practical training, while at the same time incorporating the increase in quality needed in a system of vocational education which must respond to a working life which makes increasing demands on knowledge.

More internationalization

Norway is concerned with internationalization and interested in Norwegian pupils receiving part of their education abroad. In White Paper *St.meld. nr. 30* the Ministry declares its intention to strengthen this priority area.

Internationalization of upper secondary education includes both increased mobility, more emphasis on language learning, new methods of work, and school owners taking responsibility for the international perspective in education. Norway participates in European cooperation on vocational training and vocational qualification based on the Copenhagen Declaration of 2002. Norway also takes part in the exchange of pupils and apprentices through the EU's education programmes Leonardo da Vinci and Comenius, and through bilateral agreements with Germany and France. The Ministry plans turn a pilot scheme involving the exchange of individual pupils through approved educational organizations into a permanent arrangement. There is, however, a need to pay more attention to the vocational subjects in order to increase the percentage of apprentices participating in exchanges.

Reorganization of the links with industry

Reform 94 and the structure of upper secondary education in Norway rest on cooperation with the two sides of industry. Vocational education in schools and companies has its foundation in common syllabuses developed in cooperation with industry. The apprenticeship scheme is designed in such a way that half the period of apprenticeship is regarded as training while the other half is work, giving the apprentice the status of employee. This cooperation makes possible training demanding the use of equipment involving considerable capital investment at the work place, which undertakes the continual renewal that is needed.

The cooperation between the public sector and industry takes place in different committees and boards. This central principle is maintained. But in keeping with the simplifications and changes in the training structure, the pattern of cooperation will be adapted. A reorganization is currently being put into effect, and a new, central cooperative body is being set up. At the same time, a smaller number of vocational boards representing a broader range of trades will be instituted.

The situation for adults

It has been shown that the Competence Reform has not had the desired effect, particularly at the level of upper secondary education. The number of entitled adults who have been offered courses is lower than expected. At the same time, statistics show that approximately half of those who register as unemployed lack upper secondary education.

The OECD has drawn attention to the need in Norway for better coordination of projects and for a closer look at the financial assistance available, particularly in respect of support towards living costs.

No major changes are planned soon. The Ministry will examine certain legal aspects. Priority will be given to better information on adult entitlements. In addition, the pilot projects relating to the assessment of non-formal competence will now be reviewed, to achieve a more uniform practice.

6.10.3 Higher education and teacher training

As indicated above, the implementation of the Quality Reform is largely complete. Both the Government and Parliament wish, therefore, to await the results before introducing new measures. The changes made recently have had primarily three goals: More independence for the higher education institutions; more appropriate governance structures; and uniform rights and obligations for students and institutions throughout private and public higher education institutions, including implementation of the same quality assurance measures. Through changes in upper secondary education it is hoped to strengthen students' preparedness for higher studies.

The remainder of this chapter will focus on challenges related to the role of the teacher, teacher education and school management.

The role of the teacher

The comprehensive scrutiny of basic education and determination to raise standards have consequences for the teachers.

Of all the resources in schools, teachers' qualifications are the factor which most strongly influences pupil achievement. Many different demands are made on teachers. They must have competence in their subjects as well as pedagogic and didactic competence to guide pupils' learning, and they must be able to draw on a broad repertoire of forms of work and pedagogical tools. Teachers need personal competence in changing and developing, to be able to reflect upon and if necessary alter their own teaching practice. They need social competence, to be able to cooperate and communicate with pupils, parents and colleagues. And they must have work-related ethical competence, to be able to reflect on their own choices and attitudes as professional workers. Teachers must also make a contribution to ensuring that children can grow up and become members of a society based on equality and equal rights between women and men. The recruitment to teacher training of more men and people with immigrant backgrounds will contribute to pupils having diverse role models.

Increasing the competence of teachers

A survey of teachers' competence at the compulsory school level shows that many teachers have had little formal study in the subjects they teach, including central subjects like

mathematics, English and Norwegian. Among teachers who taught mathematics in primary school, more than 70 per cent reported that they had less than 30 credits in the subject. Corresponding figures for English and Norwegian were under 70 per cent and around 50 per cent respectively. At lower secondary level, rather more than 40 per cent of those who taught mathematics had less than thirty credits in the subject, and the corresponding figures for English and Norwegian were barely 25 per cent and around 30 per cent respectively.

The survey also shows that a majority of teachers at the compulsory school level had not taken part in the in-service courses linked to Reform 97 in the subjects they taught, and that the courses of most of those who participated lasted from one to three days. Situation reports for the period 1997-2000 show, however, that almost all teachers took part in shorter in-service programmes in one or more areas. At the same time, research indicates that short courses that are not placed in the context of the individual school often have little effect.

As of the autumn of 2003, more than 1000 teachers were awarded state grants to take further education in Norwegian, Sami or mathematics.

In the years 2001-04 the Ministry financed the development and operation of *LærerIKT*, an in-service course in the pedagogical use of ICT. The goal was to give 40,000 teachers the opportunity to develop competence in the pedagogical use of ICT during the period 2002-04. So far around 33,000 teachers have taken this or a corresponding course.

As a follow-up to the efforts to strengthen basic education, the Ministry will now give priority to a three-fold strategy for competence development:

- Provide support for formal, examination-related further education in mathematics, science, Norwegian, Sami, English and a second foreign language
- In cooperation with the school owners who are the teachers' employers and responsible for in-service training, give priority support to in-service training in:
 - the introduction of new syllabuses;
 - a second foreign language;
 - physical training;
 - the use of the national quality assessment system;
 - teachers, instructors and vocational test board members in upper secondary education;
 - better adapted learning
- Guidance of newly qualified teachers. Taking two successful trials as a basis, the Ministry will consider how to expand an arrangement by which newly qualified teachers receive guidance and follow-up from the teachers and administration of the school they are coming to. The Ministry will look into how this guidance can be supported by the staff of teacher education institutions.

Strengthening teacher education

Since the results of the Quality Reform are awaited, the Government will not propose large-scale changes in teacher education for the present. The existing outline programmes are in any case so flexible that it is possible to introduce local variations. White Paper *St.meld. nr. 30* nevertheless points to a number of steps that will be taken to strengthen the education:

- The Ministry will give priority to R&D work in teacher education where the focus is on practice.

- The Ministry will strengthen the quality of practical training in teacher education.
- The Ministry will introduce special admission requirements for general teacher education and invite comments to proposals in which different models are discussed.
- The Ministry will carry out an evaluation of general teacher education.
- The content requirements in the pedagogical further education of kindergarten teachers who shall teach in the first four years of primary education will be more rigorous.
- The Directorate for Primary and Secondary Education will work with the teacher education institutions and through different measures contribute to strengthening the teacher trainers' knowledge of and cooperation with schools and school owners.

Strengthened school management

The principal has the leading responsibility for the teaching at her/his own school and for developing and improving the school's learning environment and the pupils' learning outcome. The school owners have responsibility for the management training of their own managers, including school administrators. The development and training of school administrators has been given high priority by central education authorities for some time. On the initiative of the Ministry and in agreement with the Norwegian Association of Regional and Local Authorities, the Ministry has partly financed the development of in-service and further education courses in school management at several universities and university colleges. The main topics on the courses are: quality in the school's operations; pupils' learning; quality development strategy; and effective use of resources. Master's studies have also been launched at several institutions where further education courses can be incorporated. The measures were introduced in spring 2003.

In White Paper *St.meld. nr. 30* a number of measures are announced to strengthen school management. Among them are:

- The central authority will contribute to financing the development of competence among school administrators, teachers, instructors, counsellors and other staff connected with basic education.
- In cooperation with the National Association of Regional and Local Authorities, a specific programme for the competence development of school owners and school administrators will be drawn up, as part of the introduction of the reform.
- The Ministry will make it possible for the further education courses that are established for school administrators to continue.
- The Ministry will take the initiative in changing the regulations where necessary to allow local authorities to appoint school administrators for a term of years where this is seen as appropriate.

The Government, with the support of Parliament, indicates that a total of 2-3 billion NOK over a period of time will be spent on capacity building in this area.

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Appendices

1. Pupils in upper secondary education, gender and field of study. 1. October 2003. Preliminary figures.
2. Apprentices, by gender and field of study. Preliminary figures. 1. October 2003.
3. Pupils in upper secondary education, by gender and field of study. 1. October 2003. Preliminary figures.
4. Number of courses, participants and lessons, by organization. 1998-2003. (Adult education.)
5. Graduates by gender and educational level. Preliminary figures. 1997/1998, 2001/2002 and 2002/2003. (Universities and university colleges.)

Education statistics. Pupils in upper secondary schools

3 Pupils in upper secondary education, by type of education, gender and field of study. 1 October 2003. Preliminary figures

Gender and county of residence	Total	Basic courses	Advanced course I	Advanced course II		
				Total	Pupils in vocational study in school	Other education
Males and females						
General fields of study	177 774	66 783	56 191	48 438	2 968	3 394
General, economics and management studies	90 064	28 207	25 028	36 692	28	109
Music, dance and drama	77 668	23 376	21 079	33 076	28	109
Sports and physical studies	5 219	1 967	1 718	1 534		
	7 177	2 864	2 231	2 082		
Vocational studies	87 710	38 576	31 163	11 746	2 940	3 285
Health- and social studies	20 039	7 126	5 764	6 070	1 079	
Agriculture, fishing and forestry	4 003	1 644	1 368	945	46	
Arts, crafts and designs	12 714	5 636	4 594	2 231	253	
Hotel and foodprocessing trades	7 008	3 828	2 960	3	217	
Building and construction trades	7 000	3 597	3 128		275	
Technical building	2 344	1 086	1 033	133	92	
Electrical trades	9 779	4 593	3 810	997	378	1
Engineering and mechanical trades	11 604	6 136	4 697	405	366	

Chemical and processing trades	905	480	413	12	
Woodworking trades	575	331	206	3	35
Media and communication	3 911	1 594	1 357	959	1
Sales and service	4 544	2 525	1 833		186
Technical vocational school	3 284				3 284
Males					
General subjects	86 956	34 671	28 831	18 805	1 447
	41 356	13 271	12 041	15 920	27
					97
General, economics and management studies	35 717	11 048	10 296	14 249	27
Music, dance and drama	1 382	529	460	393	
Sports and physical studies	4 257	1 694	1 285	1 278	
					97
Vocational educational studies	45 600	21 400	16 790	2 885	1 420
					3 105
Health- and social studies	1 788	922	425	288	153
Agriculture, fishing and forestry	1 811	761	645	371	34
Arts, crafts and designs	1 799	801	588	379	31
Hotel and foodprocessing trades	3 058	1 706	1 256	2	94
Building and construction trades	6 889	3 523	3 100		266
Technical building	2 136	1 022	936	93	85
Electrical trades	9 427	4 426	3 668	969	363
Engineering and mechanical trades	10 981	5 785	4 470	389	337
Chemical and processing trades	643	341	293		9
Woodworking trades	488	287	169	3	29
Media and communication	1 678	725	561	391	1
Sales and service	1 798	1 101	679		18
Technical vocational school	3 104				3 104

Females	90 818	32 112	27 360	29 633	1 521	192
General subjects	48 708	14 936	12 987	20 772	1	12
General, economics and management studies	41 951	12 328	10 783	18 827	1	12
Music, dance and drama	3 837	1 438	1 258	1 141		
Sports and physical studies	2 920	1 170	946	804		
Vocational educational studies	42 110	17 176	14 373	8 861	1 520	180
Health- and social studies	18 251	6 204	5 339	5 782	926	
Agriculture, fishing and forestry	2 192	883	723	574	12	
Arts, crafts and designs	10 915	4 835	4 006	1 852	222	
Hotel and foodprocessing trades	3 950	2 122	1 704	1	123	
Building and construction trades	111	74	28		9	
Technical building	208	64	97	40	7	
Electrical trades	352	167	142	28	15	
Engineering and mechanical trades	623	351	227	16	29	
Chemical and processing trades	262	139	120		3	
Woodworking trades	87	44	37		6	
Media and communication	2 233	869	796	568		
Sales and service	2 746	1 424	1 154		168	
Technical vocational school	180					180

Explanation of symbols

Education statistics. Apprentices

1 Apprentices, by gender and field of study. Preliminary figures. 1 October 2003

	Field of study	Total	Men	Women	Per cent women
1995		19 375	15 192	4 183	21.6
1996		27 216	20 085	7 131	26.2
1997		31 983	22 311	9 582	30.0
1998		32 350	22 710	9 640	29.8
1999		31 446	21 728	9 718	30.9
2000		29 945	20 533	9 412	31.4
2001		29 325	20 311	9 014	30.7
2002		29 085	20 394	8 691	29.9
2003		28 490	19 931	8 559	30.0
Fields of study 2003					
	General, economics and management studies	716	664	52	7.3
	Health and social studies	3 081	283	2 798	90.8
	Agriculture, fishing and forestry	680	486	194	28.5
	Arts, crafts and designs	2 538	122	2 416	95.2
	Hotel and food processing trades	2 757	1 304	1 453	52.7
	Building and construction trades	4 806	4 749	57	1.2
	Technical building trades	1 724	1 627	97	5.6
	Electrical trades	5 129	4 960	169	3.3
	Engineering and mechanical trades	5 104	4 815	289	5.7
	Chemical and processing trades	266	167	99	37.2

Woodworking trades	382	298	84	22.0
Media and communication	243	119	124	51.0
Retail and service	1 064	337	727	68.3

Explanation of symbols

Education statistics. Pupils in upper secondary schools

4 Pupils in upper secondary education, by gender and field of study. 1 October 2003. Preliminary figures

Areas of study	Total	Males	Females	Per cent females
All fields of studies	177 774	86 956	90 818	51.1
General fields of study	90 064	41 356	48 708	54.1
General, economics and management studies	77 668	35 717	41 951	54.0
Music, dance and drama	5 219	1 382	3 837	73.5
Sports and physical studies	7 177	4 257	2 920	40.7
Vocational studies	87 710	45 600	42 110	48.0
Health- and social studies	20 039	1 788	18 251	91.1
Agriculture, fishing and forestry	4 003	1 811	2 192	54.8
Arts, crafts and designs	12 714	1 799	10 915	85.9
Hotel and foodprocessing trades	7 008	3 058	3 950	56.4
Building and construction trades	7 000	6 889	111	1.6
Technical building	2 344	2 136	208	8.9
Electrical trades	9 779	9 427	352	3.6
Engineering and mechanical trades	11 604	10 981	623	5.4
Chemical and processing trades	905	643	262	29.0
Woodworking trades	575	488	87	15.1
Media and communication	3 911	1 678	2 233	57.1

Sales and service	4 544	1 798	2 746	60.4
Technical vocational school	3 284	3 104	180	5.5

Explanation of symbols

Education statistics. Adult education organized by popular education organizations

1 Number of courses, participants and lessons, by organization. 1998-2003

Popular education organization	Courses	Participants			Lessons		
		Total	Males	Females	Total	With teacher	Without teacher
1998	61 428	681 359	298 167	383 192	1 841 942	1 476 948	365 110
1999	61 319	681 845	303 471	378 374	1 853 855	1 466 116	387 739
2000	60 326	666 729	296 472	370 257	1 831 222	1 469 244	361 978
2001	54 530	614 356	273 145	341 211	1 681 367	1 315 084	366 283
2002	52 181	667 727	292 123	375 604	1 729 920	1 351 963	377 957
2003, total	50 083	735 162	354 793	380 369	1 657 221	1 324 129	333 092
The Workers Education Association of Norway	6 750	70 101	28 997	41 104	246 668	178 806	67 862
The Rural Association of Adult Education	3 453	28 323	19 673	8 650	60 582	42 573	18 009
The Association of Adult Education of the Free Church Movement	1 837	18 714	9 128	9 586	39 551	35 755	3 796
The Education Association of the Conservative Party	950	7 994	2 905	5 089	46 034	46 034	-
The Adult Education Association of The Christian Democratic Party of Norway	38	490	241	249	767	111	656
Populus - The Adult Education Association of Family, Health and Culture	1 274	9 185	1 149	8 036	25 492	21 296	4 196
The Sports Education Foundation	2 564	31 231	20 355	10 876	50 227	48 498	1 729
The Council for Music Organisations in Norway	3 588	45 360	19 857	25 503	176 962	103 144	73 818
The Norwegian Council of Christian Study Activity	2 595	29 784	11 432	18 352	63 330	36 917	26 413

The Sami Adult Education Association	130	616	216	400	12 191	9 842	2 349
The Adult Education Association of the Centre Party	138	842	511	331	2 090	-	2 090
The Socialist Adult Education Association	481	4 323	1 228	3 095	17 567	16 120	1 447
Folkeuniversitetet - An Adult Education Association	14 361	321 784	172 244	149 540	625 097	550 993	74 104
The Adult Education Association of Nature and Environment	1 834	18 053	10 359	7 694	40 615	36 856	3 759
The Adult Education Association of Peoples Learning	1 094	8 425	3 336	5 089	31 430	26 504	4 926
The Adult Education Association of the Liberal Party	133	1 159	676	483	2 357	634	1 723
YS Education and Development Centre	591	8 098	2 352	5 746	10 652	6 438	4 214
The Academic Association for Adult Education	1 526	70 662	30 896	39 766	30 616	29 703	913
The Association for Adapted Adult Education in Norway	2 727	25 772	8 295	17 477	56 646	40 971	15 675
The Association of Folk Culture	3 679	30 252	8 084	22 168	113 875	88 741	25 134
The Adult Education Association of the Progress Party	333	3 937	2 829	1 108	4 217	3 938	279
Norwegian Coast Sami Study Association	7	57	30	27	255	255	-

Explanation of symbols

Degrees from universities and colleges

1 Graduates by gender and educational level. Preliminary figures. 1997/1998, 2001/2002 and 2002/2003

	1997/1998	2001/2002	2002/2003
Total	29 871	29 344	29 376
Males	12 558	11 688	11 653
Females	17 313	17 656	17 723
Tertiary education, short and medium	22 385	22 624	22 717
Males	8 535	8 200	8 318
Females	13 850	14 424	14 399
Tertiary education, long	7 486	6 720	6 659
Males	4 023	3 488	3 335
Females	3 463	3 232	3 324

Explanation of symbols