

Looking inside out: The Cultural Rucksack

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The Norwegian Study

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Questions

- What is being done in arts and cultural education (both in and outside schools) and how is it being done?
- What is the quality of arts education in Norway? This includes both the quality of the teaching and the quality of the learning?
- What are the possibilities and challenges currently and into the future?
- What expertise exists within education and more broadly in the arts and cultural sector?

How is it being done?

- The Cultural Rucksack began in 1998
- It spread quickly and by 2001 it had become compulsory in schools.
- Baby sack and old people walking frame!
- Its focus is to provide a universal cultural offer for all children and to provide opportunities for all children to experience different types of the arts through the involvement of high quality, professional artists.
- The Cultural Rucksack has been very good for schools and artists.









Today's weather in Kautokeino



-18°

Delvis skyet, 1.5 ms from Nord



WEDNESDAY 12-18	WEDNESDAY 18-00	THURSDAY 00-06	THURSDAY 06-12	THURSDAY 12-18	THURSDAY 18-00	FRIDAY 00-06	FRIDAY 06-12	FRIDAY 12-18
-18°	-18°	-15°	-13°	-11°	-10°	-10°	-8°	-9°

Weather forecast from yr.no, delivered by the Norwegian Meteorological Institute and the NRK

PHILIPS



Quality

- Layered quality assurance mechanism
- Extensive use of peer and 'expert' quality assessment
- Quality is not take for granted and is regularly reviewed
- Quality has continued to improve
- The longevity has meant that more time and effort can go into commissioning, rehearsal and production
- Pupils and teachers could be more involved in quality assurance

Possibilities and challenges

- The choice argument...

“I don’t really remember much about the rucksack. We maybe have things twice a year. We had an author and then someone doing country music. It is always country music!”

“It would be better if we had more say in the sort of thing that came to the school.”

- The NO choice argument...

In this Kommune we make all the schools take the rucksack. We don’t give them a choice. If we gave them a choice, a lot of principals would say they did not want it. Even making it compulsory, we battle to get two things into the school each year. The schools wouldn't take the offer. They would say they don't want it. It takes too much time or it does not fit into their schedule. They don't want it.

It's a bit weird...

- “When they present the arts it is always something a long way from where the kids are at. It then comes across as sort of weird and that only reinforces the view that is already in the school that the kids who do sport are normal and the kids who do the arts are kind of weird. So in that way, the Rucksack is really not helpful to teenagers.”
- "If you are interested in the arts then maybe the Rucksack performances are OK, but for most of the kids It is too far out... too extreme. There need to be acts that are more reachable for young people, especially for teenagers. The performances need to meet the pupils where they are at and then take them further. Most of the performances I have seen are really only for the music nerds.”

It's a bit weird for the teachers too...

- “It is usually only by accident that we know the Rucksack performance is in the school. No one shares the information. The performances need to be lower threshold... what I mean is that they are often quite challenging and difficult works. The gap between where the pupils are at and the performance is too big. The performances are clearly chosen by people with a lot of experiences of the arts, but for the pupils they often see the performances as just too weird, and this reinforces their belief that the arts are for weirdoes.”

Experience or education?

- In some ways it is OK that teachers are happy to go into the Rucksack performances totally unprepared. At least then they too can experience something that they have never known before. Has there been any research about the impact of the Rucksack on teachers?
- “I don’t mind that the teachers don’t prepare. The arts experience has to have value in its own right. Some groups produce material for teachers (such as the dance groups). I really don’t know if the teachers in this school even look at this stuff. We have to do research on this.” School principal.
- “The rucksack has been an amazing boost for culture, but I get the impression that sometimes it has too much of a pedagogic focus. The art form is being adapted to fit into the school. Every performance has to teach something and has to go for 45 minutes.”



Expertise

- Substantial expertise has been developed and could be more broadly shared internationally.
- More direct 'marketing' of the Rucksack especially amongst the pupils e.g. Pupils Association "We have not even heard of the Cultural Rucksack."
- Cultural coordinators and ambassadors – good but could be developed further.

A final thought...

- Norway should be very proud of the cultural rucksack. It provides an opportunity for pupils to be inspired and to be creative, **but** the schools should not stop there. Pupils still need skills in the arts and to have the knowledge to be able to receive the arts. That way when the Rucksack comes, they will expect a good experience and expect to learn something.