Policy Framework

This section describes the policy framework existing in Norway, which applies to social and civic competences and their development.

Norway does not have a designated national strategy on citizenship education, but as an integrated component of the Education Act, and the National Core Curriculum.

The framework of reference for social and civic competences:

1. Act No. 61 of 17 July 1998 relating to Primary and Secondary Education and Training (the Education Act) [1] [Lov om grunnskolen og den vidaregåande opplæringa (opplæringslova) [2]].
2. The National Core Curriculum [3] [Nasjonale læreplan].

See also: The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training on the National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training: The Quality Framework [4].

**Defined target groups:** children and youth in primary (ISCED 1), lower (ISCED 2) and upper secondary (ISCED 3) education.
Formal learning

In Norway, the social and civic competences are incorporated in curricula for general and vocational education at upper secondary level.

The principles of citizenship education are integrated into the curricula of many different subjects in Norway, rather than being a separate subject.

How citizenship education integrated in Norway's national curriculum

The principles of citizenship education are integrated into the curricula of many different subjects in Norway, but in lower and upper secondary school it is also taught as a separate subject.

Figure 5.6, 5.7, and 5.8 give an overview of:

- Citizenship Education in Norwegian Schools.
- Separate subject on citizenship education.
- Citizenship education integrated into wider subjects/learning areas.

Figure 5.6: Citizenship Education in Norwegian Schools.

[UNABLE TO UPLOAD IMAGE: NORWAY5 Figure 5.6 Citizenship Education in Norwegian Schools 2017]

Figure 5.7: Separate subject on citizenship education.

[UNABLE TO UPLOAD IMAGE: NORWAY5 Figure 5.7 Separate subject on citizenship education]

Figure 5.8: Citizenship education integrated into wider subjects/learning areas.

[UNABLE TO UPLOAD IMAGE: NORWAY5 Figure 5.8 Citizenship education integrated integrated into wider subjects learning areas]
Main learning objectives (with reference to the National Core Curriculum):

Social studies (ISCED 1, 2, 3): (From the curriculum description) Knowledge about society and politics is valuable in itself while at the same time being a prerequisite for participation in democratic processes. Knowledge about the political system in Norway and in international society allows pupils to learn how politics is characterised by cooperation, conflict, influence and the use of power in different forms. The subject of Social science provides pupils with the tools to analyse, discuss and elaborate on questions about historical and contemporary societies and to identify and discuss the balance of power.

Norwegian (ISCED 1, 2, 3): (From the curriculum description) “By actively using the Norwegian language, children and young people are introduced to culture and society and become prepared for participation in working life and democratic processes. Norwegian language tuition provides an arena in which they can find their own voice, express themselves, and be heard and get answers”

“By seeing Norwegian language, culture and literature in a historical and international perspective, the pupils can gain a better understanding of the society in which they live.”

Knowledge of Christianity, Religion, Philosophies of life and Ethics (ISCED 2, 3): (From the curriculum description) Knowledge of religions and Philosophies of life, and the function these have as traditions and as actual sources of faith, morals and understanding life are central themes in the subject. The subject shall be a meeting place for pupils from different cultures and backgrounds, where all shall be met with respect. Teaching in the subject shall stimulate general education, making room for wonder and reflection. Furthermore, the subject shall help the pupil learn to talk with other people that have different views of the world where questions of faith and philosophies of life are concerned. This involves respect for religious values, human rights in general and the ethical foundation of all human rights.

Democracy in practice (ISCED 2 - optional): The subject consists of two areas (From the curriculum description):

Democracy: The main subject area deals with values and skills. Knowledge about human rights and democratic values are essential tools for participating in a democratic society. The main subject area also deals with practicing democratic skills such as source criticism, forming own opinions, argumentation and the ability to speak out and express oneself. Knowledge about methods used to deal with and resolve conflicts is also included in the main subject area.

Contribution: The main subject area covers understanding the democratic decision-making processes at different levels. Furthermore, the main subject area deals with assisting the pupil council to improve the learning environment. It aims to motivate pupils to participate in democratic processes in their local community. Creating interest in discovering and counteracting violations to human rights is also included in the main subject area.

Non-formal and informal learning
Participative structures within formal education settings (e.g. pupils' participation in school councils)

Top-level policy regulations or guidelines requiring or encouraging pupils'/students' participation in decision-making in their educational institution:

1. Participation in the running of their school (budget, optional subjects in curriculum, decision related to common room facilities):

   - **§ 11-1 Education Act:** At each primary and lower secondary school there shall be a coordinating committee with two representatives for the teaching staff, one for other employees, two for the parents’ council, two for the pupils and two for the municipality. One of the representatives for the municipality shall be the head teacher of the school.

   - **§ 11-5 Education Act:** At each upper secondary school there is to be a school committee consisting of representatives for the staff and the county authority and two representatives elected by the pupils’ council. The head teacher of the school is to be a representative for the county authority.

2. Participation in student bodies (pupils' parliament, pupils' councils):

   - **§ 11-2 Education Act:** At each primary and lower secondary school there shall be one pupils’ council for grades 5–7 and one for grades 8–10 with pupil representatives. The municipality shall determine the number of pupils’ representatives.

   - **§ 11-6 Education Act:** At each upper secondary school there is to be a pupils’ council consisting of at least one member for every twenty pupils. The pupils’ council shall be elected by written ballot.

   - Principles for the Education (part of the Common Core Curriculum) also give prescriptions on pupil’s participation.

3. Mock Elections [Skolevalg].

   Most upper secondary schools hold mock elections a couple of weeks before general elections to encourage young people to become familiar with the political system and develop an interest in politics.

   The mock elections have become an important indicator of new political trends, and young politicians and candidates in elections travel across the country to attend political debates at
schools. The mock elections are supported by the government.

The Norwegian Children and Youth Council (LNU) together with several other non-governmental organisations typically organise campaigns aimed at encouraging young people to participate in the mock elections. Such campaigns sometimes receive funding from the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development.

4. Other:

1. § 11-1A Education Act: At each primary and lower secondary school there shall be a school environment committee. The pupils, the parents’ council, the employees, the school management and the municipality shall all be represented on the school environment committee. The school environment committee shall be composed in such a way that the representatives of the pupils and the parents together comprise a majority.

2. § 11-5a Education Act: At each upper secondary school there is to be a school environment committee. The pupils, the employees, the school management and the county authority shall all be represented on the school environment committee. The school environment committee is to be composed in such a way that the pupils’ representatives constitute a majority.

**Top-level or large-scale programmes aimed at training school staff and pupils to enhance their skills to participate in decision-making structures.**

(i) Pupil training: Norway has no separate top-level, or large scale programme to enhance pupil skills to participate in decision-making structures.

(ii) Teacher training:

1. **The Strategy “Competence for Quality”** aims to provide teachers and school leaders with Professional development opportunities.

   The competence development is provided by the University Colleges and financed by The Directorate for Education and Training. The teachers and school leaders can apply for scholarship and the local school authorities can apply for grants for substitute teachers. Local school authorities make the decision and distribute the grant and the scholarships.

   The main goal for the strategy is to improve learning outcomes for the pupils.

   The subjects prioritised are Norwegian, English, Mathematics, Norwegian sign language and Sami.
2. **The European Wergeland Centre**[5] – (The Council of Europe) is located in Oslo.

   The European Wergeland Centre (EWC) is a resource centre for education professionals, researchers, civil society, policymakers, parents and students. It was established by the Council of Europe and Norway to support member states to bridge policy and practice in the field of education for democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural understanding.

   EWC provides long-term systematic programmes in education for democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural understanding, involving a wide range of stakeholders from policy, research and practice.

   EWC cooperates with national authorities in order to adapt programmes to national education systems, their needs and priorities, and build stronger national ownership and responsibility.

   The centre supports local and national capacity building through training and networking and contribute to policy development in the Council of Europe, Norway and other member states.

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**Measures to encourage student participation in the local community and wider society**

**Generally:** Norway has no national programmes supporting extra-curricular activities. However, many municipalities have established local youth councils for participation and inclusion of youth into the political life of the community. Read more on to [5.3 Youth Representation Bodies][6].

**Through teacher training:** The framework plans for ITE (Initial Teacher Education) mention “the ability to contribute to innovation processes within the school and facilitate the involvement of local working life, communities, arts and culture life in the teaching” as one learning outcome.

   The framework plans for ITEs also refer to the current Core Curriculum for primary and secondary school. Participation of local community, parents and peers are mentioned in connection with the context for learning in the school curriculum. ITE institutions must see to that their own programmes, plans and curriculum for ITE match these documents.

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**Partnerships between formal education providers, youth organisations and youth work providers**

Norway currently has no policy/legal framework for partnerships between formal education providers, youth organisations and youth work providers.

The National Curriculum encourages co-operation with civil society and organisations but does not prescribe any particular partnerships for contributing to citizenship learning outside school.

Albeit partnerships like these are not formalized in Norway, the partnership that is encouraged is described in the official reports on volunteering and youth volunteering.

Norway has currently no specific policy initiatives aiming to encourage the formation of such
partnerships.

Norway has no specific public fund scheme available to support the formation of such partnerships.

**Supporting non-formal learning initiatives focusing on social and civic competences**

Norway has no national/top-level programmes establishing, encouraging or supporting education projects related to the promotion of civic and social competences (non-formal learning).

Non-formal learning initiatives focusing on social and civic competences are described in the official reports on volunteering and youth volunteering:

- Official Norwegian Report 2006: 13 Meaningful leisure time – government policy and support of child and youth voluntary organizations. See [2.3 National Strategy on Youth Volunteering](#) [7].

- Report No. 39 to Storting (2006-2007) Volunteerism for all. See [2.3 National Strategy on Youth Volunteering](#) [7].

**Quality assurance/quality guidelines for non-formal learning**

Norway has no existing system dedicated to quality assurance of non-formal learning activities/projects.

The principles of citizenship education are integrated into the curricula of many different subjects in Norway, rather than being a separate subject. Therefore the principles may be tested indirectly in national tests, but there are no dedicated national tests for this area.

**Educators' support**

Continuous training and certification related to the development of social and civic competences is not something that is offered separately in Norway, as citizenship and democracy is not an isolated subject in Norway, but integrated in all subjects taught.

A certification programme that has a significant focus on developing social and civic competences is the strategy “Competence for Quality.”

The Strategy “Competence for Quality” ([Kompetanse for kvalitet - Strategi for videreutdanning for lærere og skoleledere frem mot 2025](#)) aims to provide teachers and school leaders with Professional development opportunities.

The competence development is provided by the University Colleges and financed by The Directorate for Education and Training. The teachers and school leaders can apply for scholarship and the local school authorities can apply for grants for substitute teachers. Local school authorities make the
decision and distribute the grant and the scholarships.

The main goal for the strategy is to improve learning outcomes for the pupils.

The subjects prioritised are Norwegian, English, Mathematics, Norwegian sign language and Sami.