

Introduction to the Norwegian policy context

Area-based policies in urban areas:
how to promote good living
conditions for children and youth

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Disposition

1. Context and historical background
2. Groruddalen and the Action Plan
3. Free core time in Kindergartens

Context and historical background

- Poverty high on the agenda
 - action plan in 2002
 - labour market participation and education key
- Equal rights and opportunities
- Prevent class-divided society
- White paper on income distribution policies in 2011
- Sector responsibility and mainstreaming

Groruddalen



Groruddalen (cont.)

- 613 000 inhabitants in Oslo as of 2012
 - 1 in 5 live in Groruddalen
- High proportion of immigrants
 - between 29 and 41 per cent
 - Oslo in total 20 per cent
- Three thoroughfares through Groruddalen
- Fear of "white flight" and ghetto
- Poorer health conditions
- Survey indicate good social relations

The Groruddalen Action Plan

- Joint initiative between the State and the Municipality of Oslo, 2007-2016
- Committed to NOK 50 mill annually
 - in reality higher
- Four program areas (PA)
 - PA 1 – Environmentally-friendly transport in Groruddalen
 - PA 2 – The river Alna; Green areas, Sport and Culture
 - PA 3 – Development of Housing and Local Communities
 - **PA 4 – Social Inclusion and Standards of Living**

The Groruddalen Action Plan (cont.)

Program Area 4 – Social Inclusion and Standards of Living

- 4.1 Pre-school children should have sufficient knowledge of Norwegian language to manage when they are enrolled in school, and parents' involvement shall be strengthened;
- (4.2 *School results should be as good, and school completion rates (non-drop-out) as high, in schools in Groruddalen as in schools in Oslo on average. Models to improve cooperation between homes and schools should be developed further*);
- 4.3 More persons from vulnerable groups should participate in employment. Rates of unemployment and non-employment in Groruddalen should not be significantly different from the average for Oslo;
- 4.4 Differences in health among the population in Groruddalen should be reduced. Health conditions should not be significantly different from the average for Oslo;
- 4.5 Activities for youth in Groruddalen should be maintained, and be developed as attractive and inclusive places to meet. Young people should be able to participate in positive activities and have the opportunity to make contact with adults;
- 4.6 A diverse and inclusive cultural and organisational life is to be developed and maintained, with broad participation from all groups of residents in Groruddalen. Voluntary organisations should be given space and opportunities to develop.

The Groruddalen Action Plan (cont.)

Program Area 4 – Social Inclusion and Standards of Living

- The Peer Review only PA 4
 - context of other PAs important
- Six goals on:
 - knowledge of Norwegian language, school results, employment, health, participation in activities, voluntary organisations
- The Directorate of Integration and Diversity coordinates PA 4

Free core time in kindergartens

- Key measure in PA 4
- Five aims
 - reimburse parental payment
 - increase participation
 - language stimulation
 - increase staff competence
 - measures for parents, particularly mothers

Free core time (cont.)

- First experiment in 1998
- Since 2006/2007 offered in five city districts in Oslo
 - covering children four and five years old
- Evaluations and mappings
 - Recruiting through personal contact most effective
 - Most parents aware of the scheme

Free core time (cont.)

- Evaluations and mappings (cont.)
 - Proximity to home criteria for success
 - Numbers in kindergarten increased, for several reasons
 - Services for parents very popular
 - Parents more eager to follow up school-age children
 - More awareness of importance of Norwegian skills among staff