

Leadership in the new Norwegian kindergarten

- from a teacher union's point of view



What I'll talk about

- Short description of The Union of Education Norway
- Leadership on a structural level
 - The *structural quality* of leadership influences the *process quality* and the *result quality*
 - To categories of leaders:
 - The managers
 - The kindergarten teachers
- A loyalty shift among the leaders
- The 'new' (or re-organized) Norwegian kindergarten

Union of Education Norway

- Union of Education Norway is Norway's largest trade union for teaching personnel. It's currently the country's second largest trade union.
- Our 160.000 members are working as teachers or leaders in
 - early childhood education
 - primary and secondary education and training
 - the college and university sector
 - Educational Psychological Service,
 - special education centers
 - adult education
 - administration
- Union of Education Norway shall strive to protect the interests of its members in issues regarding salaries, working conditions, and in professional matters and in relation to educational policies.
- Union of Education Norway shall strive to provide children, adolescents and adults with quality education and training and work to make education play a vital role in society.

A hypothesis

Is there a loyalty shift among the leaders?



A traditional kindergarten

Up to the year 2000 (ca.) a traditional Norwegian kindergarten was organized as follows:

- One kindergarten usually had 1-6 departments.
- One manager in every kindergarten
- Each department had a kindergarten teacher and two assistants
- Departments with children aged 1-3 contents 9 children, and the departments of children aged 4-6 contents 18 children

A 'new' kindergarten

The last decade there has been a shift in how a kindergarten is organized. From the more traditional kindergartens, it's now more common with:

- Larger kindergartens
- Larger units (one unit represents more than one kindergarten)
- Larger groups of children: Kindergartens organized in bases (ca. 24-36 children) or zones (ca. 36+ children) in stead of departments (9-18 children)
- Centralization of the leader groups
- The teacher ratio is almost the same

New leadership – meetings has become a time-thief

Time-Thives in Kindergarten (FaFo, 2012)

There is a struggle
between the
professional perspective
and the administrative
perspective in a
structures where
leadership have
changed.

Meetings and planning time is used
to coordinate the staff / spread
information in a bigger organisation
– not to discuss and assess practice.

New leadership – less contact with children and the teachers

Different studies (ex: FaFo, 2012; Seland, 2010) and feedback from our members about new ways of organizing kindergartens shows that:

- Managers identify themselves less as kindergarten teachers, and more as leaders for a firm
- They also say they've less contact with the rest of the staff, and that they don't have the same overview of the pedagogical work in the kindergarten
- They also claim they don't have the same knowledge about each and every child.

New leadership – from children to economy?

- The evaluation of the new national manager education also shows that the topics about children's play, learning and development, is by the students rated as less interesting than the leadership and economy.
- These changes are threatening for the quality of each kindergarten.
- It might leads to less functional professional communities among the leader group

The new financing-model (funding) seems to reward quality reduction

From January 2011 the funding of Norwegian kindergartens was changed.

Financing-model pre 2011:

- Earmarked funds from state to municipality. Ensured equality of the funding.

Financing-model post 2011:

- Block funding: The municipality are in charge of funding their own kindergartens, both private and public.

For every Norwegian crown (Norwegian currency) the municipality save in their own kindergartens – they also save one extra crown in spending on private kindergartens...

If the municipality employs one extra teacher in public kindergartens, they have to spend extra money to private kindergartens - but have no guarantee that these money are used for more teachers

Back to the hypothesis

Is there a loyalty shift among the leaders?



Responsibility

- Rooted in a professional mandate
- Professional and moral reasoning
- Situational assessment
- Autonomy and personal responsibility
- Trust

Accountability

- Defined by contemporary politics
- Economical and juridical reasoning
- Standardized routines
- Obedience to employer
- Control

Summary – main challenges

Main challenges according to structure quality leadership in Norwegian kindergartens:

- The managers are re-organized, and their responsibility for professional learning is changing
- A low percentage of kindergarten teachers (31 % of the total staff)
- The changed financing-model

Summary – Our policy

The Union of Education Norway is working for:

- One manager in each kindergarten
- A law requirement that ensure one employee per children under the age of three, and one employee per six children over the age of three
- A law requirement that ensure that at least 50 % of the staff are educated kindergarten teachers
- Enactment of the right and duty to further education for kindergarten teachers