Jönköping municipality in Sweden is actively working towards creating a more inclusive, open, safe and creative municipality. This work can be seen in several areas, with the norm-critical and norm-creative project Normstorm being an example. The project operates in a pedagogical context and is about the creation of norm-creative pictures and art to be exhibited in public places.

The target group for Normstorm’s pedagogy are primarily youths in lower secondary and upper secondary school and the project is carried out in a school context. Parts of the project have also been performed by students from a Folk High School.

The pictures displayed in this inspirational material were created by youths who have been involved with Normstorm over the years. Thanks to them, we have fantastic images to be inspired by. We extend a huge thank you to students and personnel at Attarpskolan, Rosenlundsskolan, Junedalskolan, Stadsgårdsskolan, Per Brahegymnasiet, June folkhögskola and Södra Vätterbygdens folkhögskola.

Organisations wanting to work with the ideas of Normstorm are not confined to a set of regulations but are instead free to adjust the scope, target group, context and forms of expression to fit their specific needs. We encourage you to use the project name Normstorm followed by your city, area or school, for instance.

Good luck!
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“Honestly, I thought this was a non-issue, but now I understand that’s because I’m privileged...”

*Student*

“Normstorm has awoken many different thoughts and emotions. It’s been rewarding and fun but above all, it’s made us all aware of our privileges and how today’s society is actually structured.”

*Student*

“To work norm-critically is important but it’s difficult and we don’t do it enough. Normstorm acts as an eye-opener. The norm-critical questions should permeate more of the education.”

*Teacher*

“Hello Normstorm!

...has become a concept among students and teachers when one discovers things that reinforce limiting norms. You look at things differently and question that which you may not have been aware of previously – formulations, images, actions – both in yourself and in others. This leads to everyone constantly learning together and in the long run a more inclusive climate.”

*Teacher*

“When our daughter worked with Normstorm in school, things we did and said at home were questioned. We learned a lot.”

*Parent*
“It feels like youths are taken seriously, that our voice is important.”

Student

“Normstorm has given a voice to youths that previously had none, or who have not been able to or dared to make it heard, and each and every example is on its own worth the entire project.”

Teacher

“A long line of norm-creative images and artwork were exhibited in our school at a public place where many people passed by. One of the artworks, a pride flag with the text ‘It’s okay to be gay’, was turned around by someone so that the front faced the wall. We turned it back, and this was repeated several times every day. Eventually it happened less and less, and ultimately it was allowed to stay there, untouched. Maybe the one who turned it did not change their opinion, but maybe got used to it? That’s also a way to make a change – a small step at a time. At the same time we showed that here you stand up for everyone’s right to be.”

Teacher

“Very important work in today’s society! Good work!”

“Such an important initiative! I want more of this!”

“Very good, it’s important to include the youths’ ‘voice’ and allow them to express their opinions like you have done!”

“Hurrah, all you youths are so good, I’m happy for you. Hugs!”

“Fantastic exhibition! Inspiring and thought-provoking!!”

/Visitors
Project idea

Normstorm operates in a pedagogical context and is about the creation of norm-creative pictures and art to be exhibited in public places.

**Discover and create**
Normstorm makes it possible to discover, problematise, question and change norms in a pedagogical context. Through norm-critical discussions and analyses, youths can take part in and create norm-creative pictures and art.

**Work with values**
Normstorm is a concrete tool to work promotionally and preventively with basic values. It gives youths and personnel the possibility to increase their understanding of norms and their importance when it comes to equality.

**Be heard**
Normstorm gives young people the opportunity to present their experiences and solutions to problems. Through the act of exhibiting the images at frequently visited public places, youths get the opportunity to participate and influence, and gives them a voice in the public space.

**Influence**
Through the public images, Normstorm encourages a debate that can affect the public. In this way, the pedagogical work is given a chance to progress and influence, even outside the classroom. Normstorm can therefore contribute to a more open and inclusive municipality.
Ni är lite naiva ibland

WHEN I GROW UP, I WANT TO BE A BALLERINA!

Varför är det mer okej för en kvinna att klä sig mer manligt än tvärtom?
ALLA HAR EN ÅSIKT

STEP OUT OF THE SHADOW OF FEAR
AND IN TO THE LIGHT OF LOVE.

BOYS DON'T CRY

Bild:
Ida Hallman, Emilia Helmersson, Nathalie Andersson, Clara Isaksson och Emma Wåhlin
It storms around norms

Photo: Estelle Pihl, Lova Sandwall, Julia Lagerstrand, Ida Nordström och Linn Klasson
Norms
A norm typically signifies the “normal”, often implicitly accepted behaviour in a social group. Norms can be seen as unwritten rules and as the invisible framework that regulates how we are supposed to act in the grocery store or in a queue, or how we should greet each other, for instance. In this regard, norms are enabling and are needed in a society. But there are also norms that can limit people’s potentials and lead to discrimination and personal violations. These limiting norms are in focus when working with Normstorm.

Norm criticism
Norm criticism includes theory, methods and tools that displace the perspective from focusing on deviants to instead illuminate the norm that is taken for granted.

In norm-critical work, the starting point is that the existing norms are the problem, not the group(s) being discriminated against and violated. As such, the problem is looked at from a holistic perspective which enables change on a larger scale. Norm criticism is the central analytic tool of Normstorm to help visualise which norms are problematic and in need of change.

Norm creativity
The term “norm creativity” brings the norm-critical analysis into a creative (re)construction. Norm creativity can be seen as the process of change after the norm-critical analysis that creates new action, patterns and new ways of thinking. Norm criticism helps us to visualise that which we may not want, while norm creativity helps us examine, and practice, what we actually do want instead. This is a central part of Normstorm because the purpose of the work is not only to analyse and problematise but also to create something new and innovative.
Photo: Johannes Souma, Anton Johansson, Anton Lennings, Fabian Falknäs och Emil Holmgren
Normstorming in your organization

Normstorm's project idea enables active work with basic values and can contribute in preventing discrimination and promoting equality in various areas. To challenge the norms that are the basis of discrimination and exclusion can contribute in securing everyone's personal rights, while simultaneously increasing the quality of the organisation.

To you who are in charge and administer developmental work (politicians, administrative management, executives and strategists)

(The work with Normstorm can...)

Arbetet med Normstorm kan...
...contribute in creating more open, inclusive and creative areas, cities, municipalities or regions.
...contribute in ensuring that our public spaces are for everyone and that all inhabitants can feel safe and be the way they want to be.
...be opinion-forming, lead to debate and encourage civil dialogue.
...open up for youths to participate and influence.
...open up for collaboration between various actors.
The work with Normstorm can...
...give you a concrete tool and a structure to work systematically with values and equality.
...be a concrete effort in systematic quality work with the purpose of developing more inclusive learning environments concerning the education’s contents, social treatment and physical environment.
...give your students the possibility to participate and influence.
...give you the opportunity to identify and map out problem areas and direct the work towards the specific challenge at your school.
...give your personnel the courage and knowledge to discuss these questions with students, guardians and colleagues.
...be a catalyst to get processes of change underway and to open up in order to think and do things in new ways.

To you who are pedagogues or work in other ways with youths
(teachers, recreation leaders, after-school teachers, social fieldworkers)

The work with Normstorm can...
...be a way to work with group climate and values.
...develop critical thinking and reflectivity.
...contribute in making sure everyone can feel safe and be the way they want to be.
...improve teaching methods and lesson contents.
...contribute to the development of the pedagogical approach and the pedagogical practice, both as it relates to the socialising mission as well as the didactic mission.
...illuminate parts of the central content in different subjects as well as the overriding values ambitions.
Images have power

Power is manifested in images. Who is allowed to be seen where, and how? Who is rarely or never allowed to be seen?

The image has a direct route into our conscience without having to worry about vocabulary or intellect. Images affect us even when we are not aware of it. Images impact how we think about ourselves and the world around us. Images that we see daily show us what is possible, what we can be and what we can become. To have role models and see oneself represented in different contexts, or not to, means something for our identity.
The public space

The city is for everyone. But what and who is allowed to be seen where? Who is in charge of how the public space will be formed and used?

To give youths a chance to influence and participate promotes the development of social life. Partly from a democratic perspective and partly because youths are an important resource that can contribute with knowledge and experiences to benefit society. Youths’ participation is needed in the creation of a public space that is branded by creativity, openness and respect.
Photo: Elin Ohlsson och Agnes Magnusson
Fotograf: Elin Ohlsson
The power of Communication

Images and art have huge potential to influence. But whose ideas are given space? Whose voice is being heard?

The image is an important source of communication. Images evoke emotions and lead to debate, they can deliver messages and inspire new ways of thinking through their aesthetic expression. Through the aesthetic creations in Normstorm, voices from the classroom and the school reach out to the surrounding area and to the public space. There, they have the power to influence other people’s thoughts, perspectives and actions. Normstorm gives us the tools to recreate, innovate and change limiting norms.
Step 1: Collaboration

In Jönköping, Normstorm is being performed to various degrees in different schools while the municipality together, with a number of partners, offers lectures, technical equipment and exhibition places. The project is a part of the municipality’s work towards equality.

There is a collaboration between participating lower/upper secondary schools and various municipal departments (Urban Planning Department, Education Department, Culture and Leisure Department, Women’s shelter and girl’s empowerment centre, Jönköping county museum and Mediacenter Jönköping county). The Folk High Schools June folkhögskola and Södra Vätterbygdens folkhögskola have also participated in the collaboration. The work is coordinated in a project group with representatives from participating stakeholders.

Step 2: Norm-critical preparatory work

The project begins with a preparatory phase where both personnel and youths get theoretical knowledge and tools to think and to relate norm-critically. The work compromises everything from lectures to pedagogical exercises in the context of a classroom.

The personnel get support to critically start to examine their own position in relation to various norms and how norms affect the school and the learning environment through peer learning and guidance. In this way, the norm-creative and norm-critical approach can be developed in the daily pedagogical practice.
Step 3
Norm-creative process
The norm-critical preparatory work is followed by norm-creative work, either individually or in groups, where the youths’ creative process and production of images and art are in the centre. Photography has always been the leading form of expression but throughout the years we have also had, for example, sculptures, paintings, graffiti, digital illustrations, installations and audio files.

Step 4
Public exhibitions
The work concludes with public exhibitions in various places – from museums, train stations and bus stops to school corridors and school libraries.

The exhibitions are also used as a material for discussion and further pedagogical work. For example, personnel and students not involved with the project have visited the exhibitions. Additionally, the images have also been exhibited and used at youth centres.
References and further reading


Skolverket (2013) *Förskolans och skolans värdegrund – förhållningssätt, verktyg och Metoder*

Skolverket (2009). *Diskriminerad, trakasserad, kränkt?*

Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten (2017) *DATE lärmaterial do.se*
The work to systemise and document the project idea of Normstorm and to produce textual material has been carried out by Joanna Isaksson, development manager and Annika Johansson, pedagogue and method developer.

The process has occurred in collaboration with Tomas Gunnarsson, known as “Genusfotografen” ("The gender photographer"), who is a photographer, journalist and specialist in the field of gender studies as well as Lotta Björkman, pedagogue and expert in norm-critical and creative pedagogy. The material has been reviewed by Hannah Lemoine, consultant in equality and inclusive communication.

The production of this inspirational material has been made possible by the help of a one-year effort by the Swedish government, through the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL), to spread knowledge and methods to strengthen the work with masculinity and equality.

A huge Thank You to the Women's shelter and girl's empowerment centre Jönköping, Jönköping county museum, Mediacenter Jönköping county, June folkhögskola, Södra Vätterbygdens folkhögskola, participating lower/upper secondary schools, Normstorm's project group and especially Gender equality strategist, Åsa Thörne Adrianzon. We also want to thank Agnes Magnusson and Elin Ohlsson for their photographs and valuable input in the work.

Last but not least, this project and the material would have amounted to nothing had it not been for all the norm-creative photographers. A special thank you to all of you who have contributed with photographs within this inspirational material:


NORMSTORM

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