



The Nordic region is doing well

Open and Innovative Nordic Countries – Equal Opportunities
to Welfare, Education, Culture and Work (“Norden 2020”)

The priority project (2016 – 2018) of the Finnish presidency
of the Nordic Council of Ministers 2016

Project report:
Findings, outcomes and suggestions

Norden
2020

#norden2020

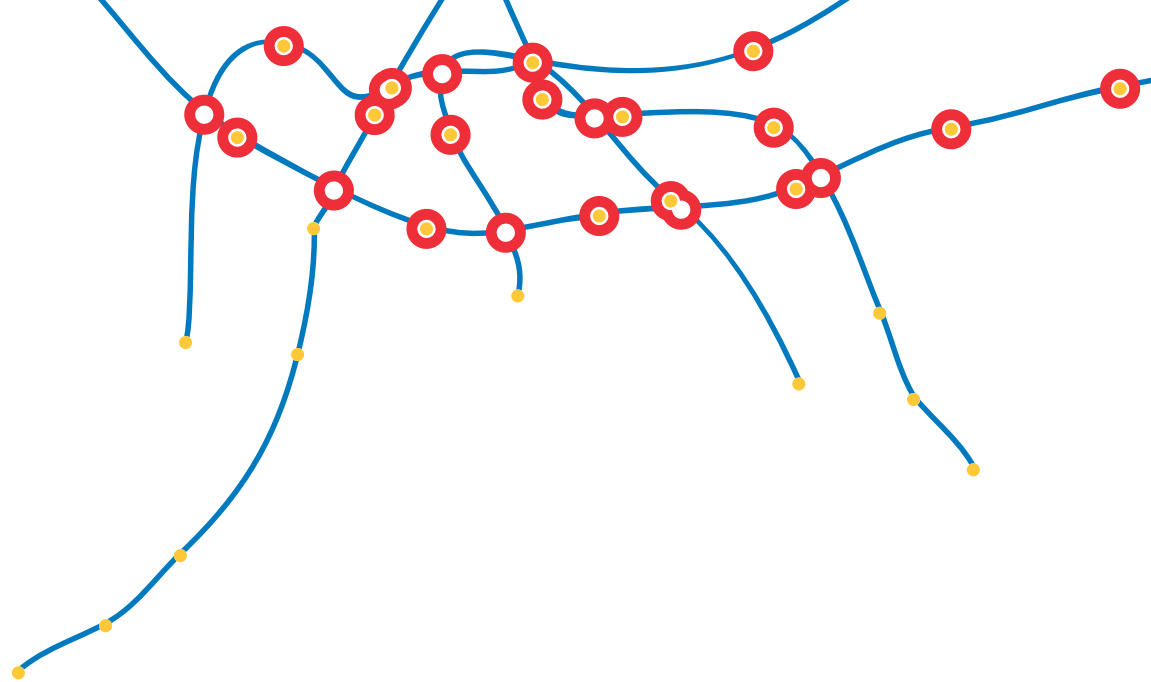
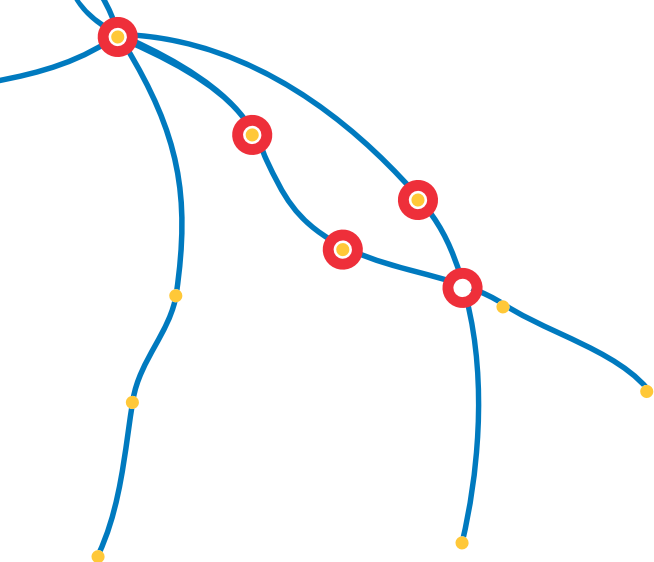


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SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES AND SUGGESTIONS

In quest of cultural innovation - intercultural dialogues and cultural awareness

- Initiating Nordic exchange of experiences and best practices on the cultural cards as a means of societal inclusion
- Initiating Nordic exchange of experiences and best practices on the accessibility work within cultural services, also as a cross-sectoral approach

The subproject "Multilingualism and diversity as a resource in the cultural field – employment and integration through literature in the Nordic countries" suggests:

- Promoting and celebrating the Nordic Multilingual Month
- Following up on the recommendations given in the research reports (Arabic 5/2017, Sámi languages 10/2018 and Kurdish 12/2018)
- Rethinking the question of literature translations published in non-dominant languages in the Nordic countries
- Supporting institutions and organisations working with multilingual issues

Challenges of the welfare state

- Integrating the gender equality perspective in all policies
- Monitoring the equal pay standards and impacts of future work on gender equality
- Doing a comparative follow-up on gender budgeting
- Focusing Nordic co-operation on cross-sectoral promotion of equality (gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation) in education and research, and taking into account disability issues
- Further enforcing Nordic public health cooperation using a multisectorial approach
- Updating a comparative analysis of Nordic health systems

International competitiveness of the Nordic region

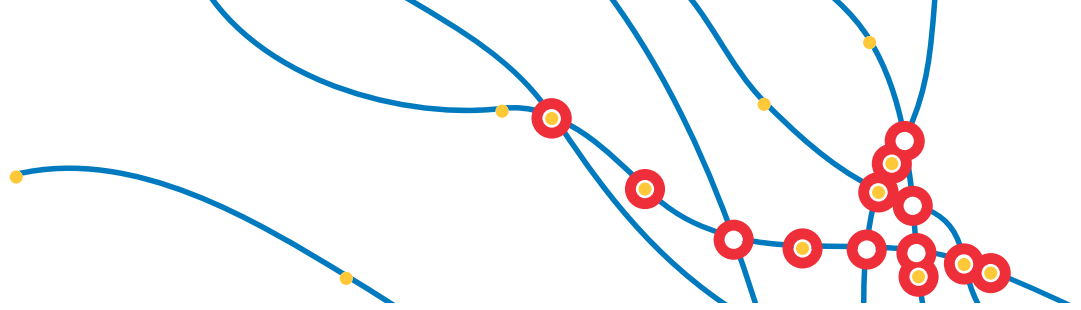
- Focusing Nordic co-operation in innovation policy to tackle societal challenges through transformative innovations

The voice of young people

- Involving youth in planning
- Recognising diversity among young people
- Taking language questions into consideration

Structural outcomes

- Finding ways to further enhance co-operation between sectors within the Nordic Council of Ministers
- Maintaining an active interest nationally in Nordic co-operation outside Nordic presidencies



INTRODUCTION

The objective of the “Open and Innovative Nordic Countries – Equal Opportunities to Welfare, Education, Culture and Work”, i.e. Norden 2020 project, was to map cross-sectoral welfare initiatives at the Nordic level, and internationally. Further, the project aimed to strengthen the structures of Nordic cooperation.

The main contextual theme in the project has been research and innovation as accelerators of social development. Other themes running through the entire project have been welfare, diversity, gender equality, accessibility and culturally sustainable development. Children and young people have formed a key priority area.

The project was based on previous themes and reports within Nordic cooperation, for example some of the proposals in Bo Könberg’s report “The Future Nordic Co-operation on Health”, the results of the multisectoral Nordic programme “Sustainable Nordic Welfare” and the Nordic Programme for Implementation of Agenda 2030. Further, in the planning process, the project took into account the “The Nordic Gender Effect at Work” and the strategy

“The Nordic Region must be the best place in the world for children and young people”. In addition, the aims and efforts of the Nordic Council of Ministers in order to modernize and enhance Nordic cooperation were taken into consideration.

Within the Nordic Council of Ministers, the project has been anchored and reported to five different Committees for Senior Officials; Education and Research, Culture, Labour, Gender Equality, and Health and Social Affairs.

This report presents the findings and outcomes of the project and makes suggestions in regards to future Nordic co-operation.



IN QUEST OF CULTURAL INNOVATION - INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUES AND CULTURAL AWARENESS

In Nordic societies, we need to rethink our educational and “bildung” strategies, and find ways to expand and/or develop the core principles of Nordic humanism into caring, multi-ethnic and multilingual notions of “home” that will revitalise the humanist norms and values that have constituted the backbone of sustainable modernity in the Nordic region.

Cultural innovation could mean updating and solidifying the unique Nordic balance between traditionally contrasting values, such as *culture* and *nature*, *communitarianism* and *individualism*, *cooperation* and *competition*, *religion* and *scientific progress*.

Cultural innovation requires the safeguarding and balancing of two cultural ideals of the Nordics, i.e. individual freedom and inclusive community. In Zygmunt Bauman’s words: “Community without freedom is a project as horrifying as freedom without community”.

In the Nordic countries, ideals of partnership, altruism and fairness have been consistently advocated as a basis of social relations. These values have been reproduced in the models of education, literature, religious practice, pedagogy and governance, over long periods of time.

The answer to the prosperity of the Nordic countries is cultural. These are societies committed to the future, to education and better life for all, to community, freedom, justice, gender equality and rule of law. Visions of a good society have been realised in the Nordic countries because these aspirations have not only been dreams or dogma of a better life but subject to public debates and constants revisions resulting in socio-political reforms.

One of the reasons for the success and efficacy of the Nordic societies is that for a long period of time they evolved as relatively small, homogenous nations with norms and principles that sustained trust and reciprocity.

How do these egalitarian values, or Nordic humanism, survive and transform in to new practices when challenged by 21st century late modernity, e.g. climate change or the refugee crisis? Or do they matter? According to research, they do matter because:

- Humanism seems to increase the well-being of a society and its resilience in times of crisis;
- A humanist agenda penetrating into political and economic models creates “civilised” capitalism, high trust, cooperative politics and less corrupt institutions;
- A humanist agenda is a buffer against totalitarianism.

The cultural aspects of society are a crosscutting theme in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The overarching aim is to enable and secure the experience of participation and significance for everybody in society. There is a need for a positive culture of encounters, respect for one another and genuine dialogue between people. There is also a need to acknowledge the multilingual reality of the Nordic countries of today and to celebrate language diversity as a strength.

In the strategy of Nordic cultural co-operation in the Nordic Council of Ministers, intercultural dialogue is one of five priority areas of co-operation. In accordance with the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, Nordic cultural co-operation aims at promoting the equitable interaction and existence of different cultures. The collaboration also promotes the understanding of languages in the Nordic countries. In order to meet these goals, the cultural ministers have allocated specific funding for Nordic collaboration addressing this theme and have also put these issues on the ministers’ agenda and presidency activities.

An active and dynamic cultural life, manifested in a diversity of cultural expressions, plays a key role in an inclusive society, and must be protected. Herein, the civil society, public services, culture and arts institutions and other parties that create and disseminate art and culture play a crucial role.

Multilingualism and diversity as a resource in the cultural field – employment and integration through literature in the Nordic countries

Multilingualism and diversity as a resource in the cultural field – employment and integration through literature in the Nordic countries was a subproject of Norden 2020, and it was run by the organisation Culture for All. The main focus areas of the subproject were multilingual literature, the language rights of non-dominant authors and readers, multilingual communication and intercultural dialogue through literature.

The main target group of the subproject was “non-dominant language”, i.e. immigrant or so called minority language writers, readers, youth and children in the Nordic countries, as well as organisations and experts working with multilingualism, minority languages, integration and/or (multilingual) reading promotion. One important aspect of the subproject was to help cultural organisations to promote multilingualism and language rights, and to identify and eliminate exclusive practices based on language.

The concrete aims and results of *Multilingualism and diversity as a resource in the cultural field* were:

1. **Mapping the non-dominant literary field in the Nordic countries** especially through three language-specific research reports (Arabic 5/2017, Sámi languages 10/2018 and Kurdish 12/2018).
2. **Supporting, finding and sharing information** on writers, experts, projects and organisations linked to non-dominant language literature.
3. **Creating Nordic networks** for initiatives related to multilingualism and reading promotion through e.g. events and the administration and promotion of the Nordic Multilingual Month (yearly 21 February to 21 March).

The subproject suggests the following in regards to future work around multilingualism:

Promoting and celebrating the Nordic Multilingual Month

Nordic official collaboration could partake in the celebration of the Nordic Multilingual Month. In addition, Nordic financing instruments could be made applicable for activities addressing multilingual issues.

The idea of the Multilingual Month is to celebrate, explore and promote the possibilities of multilingualism by means of different forms of art, research, education and action in organisations, media and schools. Through the umbrella of the Multilingual Month the subproject has created a platform for spreading information on, promoting and networking around issues related to multilingualism. The Multilingual Month has been celebrated since 2017 in different parts of the Nordic countries by e.g. schools, libraries and culture centers. After the subproject ends, Culture for All will continue to work with the Multilingual Month in cooperation with partners in the Nordic countries. The themes for the Multilingual Month blog 2019 will be children and indigenous languages in the Nordic countries.

Following up on the recommendations given in the research reports (Arabic 5/2017, Sámi languages 10/2018 and Kurdish 12/2018)

Special attention should be paid to support and finance publishing of literature in non-dominant languages and to support the work of multilingual libraries and special libraries in the Nordic countries. Literature in vulnerable languages, such as the Sámi and Romani languages, or literature in exile, such as Kurdish or Somali, should receive special attention and extra support.

When it comes to literature in the Sámi languages, the subproject suggests through its 15 recommendations e.g. strengthening the knowledge of Sámi literature on all levels of education, improving the visibility of Sámi literature inside and outside the Sámi community, strengthening the future of Sámi literature through special funding to writers and publishing houses and by establishing a transnational Sámi literature exchange institution.

The research reports map the situation of authors writing in Arabic, Sámi languages (South, Ume, Pite, Lule, North, Inari, Skolt and Kildin Sámi) or Kurdish languages (Kurmanji and Sorani), and the specific obstacles they face in regards to writing, publishing, distributing and promoting their work and how they have interacted within the Nordic literary field. The reports list recommendations for how gate keepers and organisations in the literary field, funding bodies, Nordic institutions and policymakers can work to make the literary field more inclusive and to promote integration through the support of multilingual literary fields.

Rethinking the question of literature translations published in non-dominant languages in the Nordic countries

There is a need to rethink the understanding of what counts as “Nordic” languages and “Nordic” literature, and to enable support for translations of books written in minority languages and so called immigrant languages in the Nordic countries. The translations of books written in non-dominant languages would not only help the individual writer to become visible in her/his country of residence, but it would also strengthen integration, promote intercultural dialogue and strengthen the identity of individual language groups and minorities in the Nordic countries.

Supporting institutions and organisations working with multilingual issues

Nordic financing instruments should allocate more resources to supporting Nordic initiatives and practices linked to multilingualism in general, revitalization of languages, reading promotion in a multilingual context and for developing pedagogical tools, platforms and pedagogical materials.

Financing for research on multilingualism in the Nordic countries, for example through institutions like the Unesco-center Vigdis International Institute of Multilingualism and Intercultural Understanding in Reykjavik, should be given priority. Also local initiatives such as the Unesco Cities against Racism –status held by Botkyrka should be promoted.

Social inclusion by means of culture and education

Culture is an important value in itself, but it also plays a key role in promoting social inclusion, wellbeing and dignity. Strengthening social inclusion through culture touches upon many areas and requires co-operation between different sectors. Cultural cards, enabling free or discounted access to cultural activities, advance equality, accessibility, a sense of community and the experience of users that they belong in society. In addition, cultural activities, that support persons with different possibilities to create art, illustrate the importance of doing, participating and the role of the actual process in addition to the end result.

The Norden 2020 project arranged various events to facilitate Nordic exchanges of experiences in overcoming

sector boundaries to strengthen social participation and inclusion by means of culture.

The project worked in collaboration with, among others, Culture for All and the Nordic Centre of Excellence, JustEd (Justice through Education). JustEd is a multidisciplinary, cross-national research network of 14 partners. It is coordinated at the University of Helsinki, Faculty of Educational Sciences. The centre started its activities in August 2013 as part of the NordForsk programme “Education for tomorrow”.

There were two-day workshops, including both researchers and youth representatives, on social inclusion and equality in schools and free time, as well as on positive mental health, in the youth conference Bridges in September 26-27, 2016. The workshop on social inclusion and equality in schools and free time brought forward questions on how we can prevent marginalisation and support everyone’s equal participation in society. The discussion focused on norm criticism and getting rid of the categorisation of people on different levels, such as for example ethnicity and gender. The outcome of the workshop pointed out that inclusion can be ensured through active participation, administrative representation, real participatory power, peer-learning and co-teaching. The workshop on positive mental health discussed the resources and worries of young people. It called for an end to stigmatisation, paid attention to questions surrounding LGBTQ and diversity, and noted the important role that schools and early intervention have in supporting mental health and inclusion.

The Norden 2020 priority project suggests the following in regards to future work around social inclusion:

Initiating Nordic exchange of experiences and best practices on the cultural cards as a means of societal inclusion

The network activities have already started and they are coordinated by Culture for All –service in Finland. By using the cultural card the holder can, for example, get free tickets to cultural events and venues.

Initiating Nordic exchange of experiences and best practices on the accessibility work within cultural services, also as a cross-sectoral approach



CHALLENGES OF THE WELFARE STATE

Tackling inequalities in the Nordic region

Globalisation is the word of the day. Both apt and dubious claims have been made in the name of globalisation. Many of them are hardly more than contestable half-truths. One such claim is that the Nordic welfare states are being run over by globalisation. Undoubtedly, globalisation is both a challenge and a chance for the Nordic welfare states. Almost all internationally available indicators of citizens' welfare, economic sustainability, politico-administrative performance and social cohesion exemplify the success of the Nordic countries so far, e.g. in terms of human wellbeing, equality, low poverty, life-satisfaction, stability, safety and security, trust, personal and press freedom, rule of law and reliability of elections and governance.

However, rising inequality is one of the largest social and economic issues of our time. Though all the Nordic countries still rank high in international comparisons concerning population at risk of poverty and social exclusion, there are disquieting signs of cracks in social cohesion in the Nordic region. Social cohesion represents a test for welfare societies in terms of current developments. Increase of inequalities in a society is a complex set of cause and effect with interdependence to several issues.

In times of austerity, the pressure to cut expenditures on wellbeing is high. However, wellbeing and economy are closely interlinked; investments in wellbeing generate savings, efficiency, productivity, and even economic growth. The strength and success of the Nordic countries have lied in their commitment to universalistic social security and tax-funded public services. Therefore, the Nordic countries are often described as "social investment states". Social investments are widely regarded as the key to the new social policy agenda both in the European Union and the OECD.

The inclusive nature of the Nordic societies, and the challenges related to it, have served as a baseline in the Norden 2020 project. Like everywhere, the Nordic countries also have individuals and groups that confront barriers that prevent them from fully participating in their society. The concept used in the Norden 2020 project has been social inclusion as a process of improving the terms

on which individuals and groups can take part in society by improving their ability, opportunity, and dignity.

The Norden 2020 project has especially addressed inequality in regards to gender perspectives in economy, education and equality as well as socio-economic differences in wellbeing.

Gender perspectives in economy – positive impacts but also risks for increased inequalities

Gender equality is a crucial part of inclusive and sustainable growth. Economic activity of women and their participation in the labour market is important for both economic and social development: it can help to increase the overall employment and productivity rates, and to reduce the risk of poverty and social exclusion. The Nordic countries present a showcase of these positive impacts. On the other hand, economic and budgetary policies may have different effects on women and men and gender equality. Gender equality is not a permanent status but changes in society could also have negative gendered impacts, if they are not evaluated and taken into account.

Although the Nordic countries score high in global indexes measuring gender equality, the picture is not as straightforward when we focus on economic gender equality. While both women and men participate in the labour markets, and can be found in many professional roles, Nordic women still suffer of the gender pay gap. As the labour market in the Nordic countries remains relatively gender segregated, the changes of future work will probably have varying impacts on the female and male dominated sectors.

The Norden 2020 priority project suggests the following in terms of future work around tackling inequalities in regards to gender equality:

Integrating the gender equality perspective in all policies

A good way to reach positive impacts is to integrate the gender equality perspective in all policies. This approach is already adopted by the Nordic Council of Ministers although the implementation still requires some im-

provement. Together with gender mainstreaming, the promotion of economic gender equality in the Nordic countries should focus on the discussion and exchange of good and innovative practices on promoting equal pay and economic gender equality, e.g. the equal pay programmes and standards and gender equality laws. Further, it should ponder on the impacts of the changes in work life and structural reforms on gender equality in the Nordic societies.

Monitoring the equal pay standards and impacts of future work

The equal pay standards and impacts of future work should be monitored further within Nordic cooperation. Special attention should be paid to vulnerable groups in society, for instance, single parents, migrants, old women in poverty and male school-drop outs.

Doing a comparative follow-up on gender budgeting

Decisions regarding fiscal policy, i.e. national taxation and expenditures, can have a great negative or positive impact on gender equality. If and when gender budgeting of all public spending is implemented in the Nordic countries, the project suggests a comparative follow-up within Nordic co-operation.

Education and equality

All the Nordic countries participated in the Nordic analysis of the results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) surveys. In the report, "Northern Lights on PISA and TALIS", researchers from all the Nordic countries performed in-depth analyses on different policy-relevant themes based on the results presented in 2016. According to the report, high levels of educational inequality in a country can be a sign of insufficient support structures and negative learning environments for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and the relationship between social origin and educational attainment has received insufficient attention in the Nordic countries. It is important to analyse the results, and differences between countries, also from a gender perspective. For example, over the last ten years, gender differences in learning outcomes have increased.

Norway, as part of their presidency in the Nordic Council of Ministers, initiated the Nordic 0-24 project in 2017 and

will continue it until 2020. The project is about improving services in the Nordic countries directed at vulnerable children and young persons between the ages of 0 and 24 years by the means of improving cross-sectoral collaboration. The project was presented at the "Tackling inequalities in the Nordic region" seminar on 28 August 2018, arranged by the Norden 2020 priority project.

The Norden 2020 priority project suggests the following in terms of future work around tackling inequalities in regards to education and equality:

Focusing Nordic co-operation on cross-sectoral promotion of equality (gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation) in education and research, and taking into account disability issues

Socio-economic differences in wellbeing

Social inclusion is about being a part of a community, bonded together by common identity and shared values. Poverty in the Nordic region is one of the main reasons why people feel, and are considered excluded. A major social policy issue and concern in the Nordic countries has been the promotion of public health, defined broadly as "Health in all government". Promotion of health, prevention of illness, and protection against various forms of health threats have been core issues contributing to the sustainability of Nordic societies. The recently (2016) launched Nordic Arena for Public Health will also concentrate on these issues.

The Norden 2020 priority project suggests the following in terms of future work around tackling inequalities in regards to socio-economic differences in wellbeing:

Further enforcing Nordic public health cooperation using a multisectorial approach

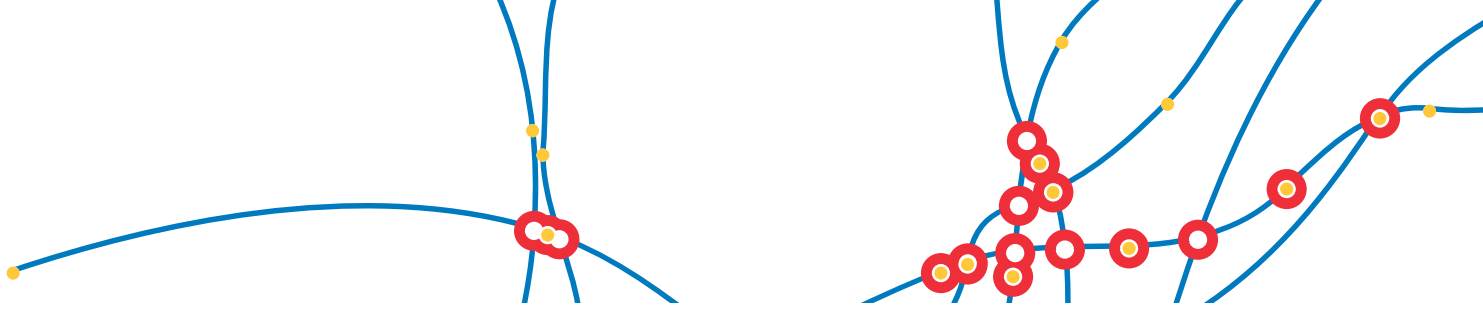
Lately, governments have paid increasing attention to policy issues related to equity, social determinants of health and wellbeing, and to the growing differences among socio-economic groups. As public health includes all aspects of health, both physical and mental as well as the social dimension, the project suggests that Nordic cooperation in this field should be further enforced using a multisectorial approach.

Updating a comparative analysis of Nordic health systems

Peer review and benchmarking are useful approaches to Nordic multisectoral public health cooperation. These themes have also been included in the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The project suggests

that the comparative analysis of the Nordic health systems, published by the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies in 2009¹, should be updated, keeping in focus especially the broader SDGs and the new threats to societal cohesion.

1 http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/98417/E93429.pdf



INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS OF THE NORDIC REGION

The Nordic region forms an economic and industrial stronghold even from a global perspective. Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark are among the twelve most competitive countries in the world, with Iceland ranking high on the list as well. The country brands of all five Nordic countries also fare strongly in international comparisons. The Nordic region has many assets it can rely on and use as building blocks for future growth. The foundation of the region's competitiveness is the socially sustainable development of its societies. The Nordic welfare model is based on all people having equal value, respect for human rights, justice, equality, good administration, low level of corruption, democracy, and promotion of health and wellbeing. Gender equality, openness and commitment are other important elements.

The Nordic countries have well-developed welfare services, relatively small differences in income, and effective public institutions. As a result of long-term investments in human wellbeing, female labour market participation is high and children score above the average in the PISA rankings for reading, mathematics and natural sciences.

Changing innovation policy

Furthermore, in all of the Nordic countries, the proportion of employees involved in research and development is higher than in the rest of Europe. The key to innovation is having a wide variety of skills backed up by high-quality education and an empowering way to organise work. The Nordic region has good prerequisites for this. The Nordic countries are among the most digitally advanced countries in the world. Sweden, Denmark and Finland are innovation leaders among the EU28 member states.

The main strengths of the region in European comparison are human resources (a high level of education and lifelong learning) and an innovation-friendly environment (extensive broadband penetration and opportunity-driven entrepreneurship).

All five Nordic countries have taken steps towards a re-defined innovation policy framework in recent years. This has led to the emergence of a variety of new concepts,

such as "broad-based", "challenge-driven", "mission-oriented", "sustainable" or "transformative" innovation or innovation policy. Included in all of these concepts is the idea of broadening the scope of targets and approaches adopted in innovation policy and expanding the group of actors participating in innovation processes in society.

Shared values a strong basis for collaboration

One important challenge for innovation policy is how to mobilise the innovation environment for challenge-driven change. The world is facing a number of global societal challenges related to climate, energy, the environment and demographics, but also to social security, health and education. The thing these challenges have in common is that they are all clearly international in character and they transcend sectorial and disciplinary boundaries.

Agenda 2030 is key in establishing a foundation of shared values for engaging in dialogue and collaboration, not only between the different Nordic countries but also with countries in the developing world.

The Norden 2020 project suggests the following in terms of future work around the international competitiveness of the Nordic region:

Focusing Nordic co-operation in innovation policy to tackle societal challenges through transformative innovations

In order to achieve the SDGs, it will be necessary to revise at least to a certain extent our economic policy thinking and principles. One way to advance in this direction is to direct innovation activities towards solving societal challenges. Nordic joint effort on transformative innovation policy exists at the research collaboration level (Transformative Innovation Policy Consortium TIPC for the years 2018 - 2022). It would be useful to co-operate at the policy level as well. For instance, to benchmark the needs of renewal in different policy sectors, in order to align them with Agenda 2030 goals. Mission-oriented innovation policy is one example of the new kind of cross-sectoral policy with a systemic perspective needed.



THE VOICE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

In order to achieve a socially sustainable life with welfare, diversity, multilingualism and gender equality, there is a need to include the voices and secure the participation of young people. In the Nordic region, youth policy is by its nature a cross-sectoral and integrated policy aimed at young people, with young people, and has as its starting point the needs of young people.

The Nordic Council of Ministers' advisory and coordinating body for matters relating to children and young people is the Nordic Committee for Children and Young People (NORDBUK).

The Nordic Council of Ministers has had a cross-sectoral strategy for children and young people since 2016. The strategy lays down the vision for the Nordic Council of Ministers' efforts relating to children and young people: that the Nordic region must be the best place in the world for children and young people.

The objective of efforts relating to children and young people in the Nordic region is to establish good living conditions and improve young people's opportunity to influence issues. These objectives must be promoted equally for all children and young people regardless of their gender, ethnic, cultural or socioeconomic background, age, place of origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

The overarching goals of the strategy are: (1) the better integration of the perspective of children's rights and young people into the work of the Nordic Council of Ministers as a whole, thus better highlighting and taking into consideration the voices of children and young people; and (2) a greater focus by the Nordic Council of Ministers on the three strategic focus areas that this strategy identifies as central to its efforts up to 2022.

The strategic focus areas are:

- enhanced support and inclusion for disadvantaged children and young people;
- continued collaboration with and support of civil society; and
- improved knowledge-sharing and efforts to enhance skills.

The Norden 2020 priority project has had several initiatives that have included young people and enhanced the dialogue between different stakeholders and youth. These include:

- a youth café on 27 January 2016 in connection with the kick-off conference "Hur mår du Norden?" Participants in the café created messages that they brought to the main conference.
- the Sillat-Broar-Bridges youth conference 26-27 September 2016.
- a side-event, "Young Nordic voices: how do I shape my future?," at the session of the Nordic Council, 30 October 2017.
- co-operation with vlogger Sita Salminen: a YouTube video, two Instagram posts and 12 Snapchats. In total, the campaign reached 296 400 persons, with 58% being in the 18-24 age bracket. The YouTube video was watched over 35 000 times during the first week immediately following its publication. Comments to the video focused on career choices, finding one's voice and courage to make decisions about one's future as well as being a role model for young women. The Snapchats were viewed 150 000 times in total.
- video interviews with five young people about the significance of the Nordic welfare state, the challenges of welfare societies and how young people see their futures.
- working with upper secondary school students to hear their views on the SDGs and the Nordic welfare state. The students participated in the seminar "The Nordic region – an attractive place for advanced businesses?" on 22 May 2018, and were provided with a stand to present their ideas and work.
- highlighting the work of NORDBUK in supporting children and young people at the seminar "Tackling inequalities in the Nordic region" on 28 August 2018.

The co-operation brought up a number of challenges facing young people in the Nordic region today. Overall, the discussion centred on how young people could shape their futures in welfare states in flux and whether young people face the same challenges across the Nordic region. Inequalities, in regards to, among other things, socio-economic differences, gender and age, were high on the agenda.

The Norden 2020 priority project suggests the following in terms of future work around the voice of young people:

Involving youth in planning

Listen to young people to hear what they are interested in. In the words of the participants of the Bridges youth conference: "Don't do for the youth, do with the youth!" The dialogue must be visible throughout the process and visible in the end results.

Recognising diversity among young people

"Young people" and "youth" should not be treated as umbrella terms covering a multitude and variety of individuals, subgroups, life situations and circumstances. The term "young" is a fluid and variable concept both when discussing social and biological categories. It is important to be aware of broad generalisations and stay away from othering young as a category.

Taking language questions into consideration

The project used a number of different language approaches in the events; simultaneous interpretation between Scandinavian languages, "Scandinavian" without any interpretation, Finnish, and English only. Whatever the language choice, and without taking a stand on the broader question of language(s) within Nordic co-operation, it became clear that co-operation with young people required flexible, adaptable and effortless language solutions. Reaching young people who are new to Nordic co-operation called especially for solutions in national languages and/or English and not only "Scandinavian".



STRUCTURAL OUTCOMES

One of the main aims of the Norden 2020 priority project was to strengthen the structures of Nordic co-operation. How to better meet the requirements for comparative information, knowledge and analyses about challenges, trends and development in the Nordic welfare states? How to better share and market this information? How to improve co-operation between the sectors and involve new target groups?

Árni Páll Árnason's recent (2018) report, "Knowledge that works in practice. Strengthening Nordic co-operation in the social field", also highlights similar issues. The report notes the structural weaknesses "in dealing with complex societal challenges that require co-ordinated action across sectors, regardless of whether these concern health, the labour market, education or housing." It goes on to discuss the "weak knowledge base for our social initiatives" and calls for, among other things, more systematic co-operation in sharing and exchanging knowledge.

Cross-sectoral co-operation

Throughout the Norden 2020 priority project, the aim was to work across sectors and find new co-operation partners that might benefit from Nordic co-operation. Therefore, the project organised various events to facilitate networking, cross-sectoral co-operation and the exchange of ideas between new partners. These events included:

- the kick-off conference "Hur mår du Norden? – Hållbarhet genom välfärd, kultur och jämställdhet", 27 – 28 January 2016 in Turku, for civil servants, researchers, academics, NGO's, politicians and the general public. The seminar brought together representatives from the culture, welfare, health, employment, research, education and gender equality sectors. A separate seminar report can be downloaded on the project webpage.
- the conference "Sillat-Broar-Bridges", 26 – 27 September 2016 in Helsinki, for young people, researchers, academics and civil servants. The seminar brought together representatives from the culture, health, welfare, employment, research, education and gen-

der equality sectors. A separate seminar report can be downloaded on the project webpage.

- a Nordic round table discussion, "The Social Dimension of the EU: Where Are We Heading?", 6 November 2017 in Helsinki, for civil servants from the social and finance sectors.
- the seminar "Kulturens roll i social delaktighet och socialarbete", 11 December 2017 in Espoo, for NGO's, civil servants and academics. The seminar brought together representatives from the culture and welfare sectors. A separate seminar report can be downloaded on the project webpage.
- a working seminar, "How to shape the Nordic agenda?", 26-27 September 2018 in Copenhagen, for Nordic and national senior officers and leaders of Nordic institutions. The seminar brought together representatives from all the Nordic countries and all five civil servant committees of the Nordic Council of Ministers involved in the Norden 2020 project, as well as various Nordic institutions. A separate seminar report with suggested outcomes can be downloaded on the project webpage.
- a seminar, "In Quest for Sustainable Europe: The Economy of Wellbeing", 19 October 2018 in Brussels, for civil servants and NGO's from the social, gender equality and finance sectors. Conclusions from the seminar can be downloaded on the project webpage.

As a result of the Norden 2020 project, cross-sectoral Nordic co-operation was strengthened between various national and Nordic stakeholders in Finland and in the Nordic region, for example, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, the Finnish National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), Pohjois-Norden, Culture for All, Hanaholmen Culture Center, and various schools and NGO's.

Furthermore, the project discovered new co-operation partners, that have gone on to initiate their own cross-sectoral Nordic co-operation. These include the Culture for All service and co-operation around cultural cards.

The Norden 2020 priority project suggests the following in terms of future work around cross-sectoral co-operation:

Finding ways to further enhance co-operation between sectors within the Nordic Council of Ministers

Methods of working and processes vary significantly between sectors in the Nordic Council of Ministers. This hinders co-operation between sectors and raises questions about continuity and the transfer of information. We need to find ways to further enhance co-operation between sectors within the Nordic Council of Ministers. The role of the Secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers is of vital importance. Practical solutions could be, for example,

- creating mutual electronic platforms for working groups, projects etc.
- creating possibilities for the newly recruited advisers in the Secretariat to visit countries, ministries etc.
- using Nordic reference groups representing a variety of sectors.
- streamlining the ways in which the various sectors grant project funds.
- organising joint or back-to-back meetings of the various ministerial or civil servant committees of the Nordic Council of Ministers as well as informal events.

Finally, cross-sectoral co-operation could also be looked at further from an international perspective. The Nordic region cooperates actively together in various international organisations but it could be worth analysing whether a deepening of international collaboration between the Nordic countries in certain areas might be useful.

Maintaining an active interest nationally in Nordic co-operation outside Nordic presidencies

Nordic visibility and national interest in Nordic issues have over the recent years posed a particular challenge in Finland. This was recognised during the Finnish presidency in 2016, which aimed to address the issue and raise awareness among the general public.

The Norden 2020 priority project made it possible to maintain an active, visible interest towards Nordic co-operation in Finland also outside the presidency period. This was done by a mixture of events aimed at the general public, publication of various material and a social media (Twitter, blog post) presence. In addition, the project helped to secure continuity between the activities of the Finnish presidency (2016) and Nordic projects in 2017-2018.

The Norden 2020 priority project suggests the following in terms of maintaining interest in Nordic co-operation also outside the presidencies:

- See and think outside national borders. Engage in genuine dialogue about the programmes of the presidencies and publish the programmes earlier to enable long-term planning of activities and projects.
- Dare to be practical and avoid dogmatic (language) solutions. It is possible to use a mix of languages depending on the target group.
- Co-operate with actors outside the official scope of the Nordic Council of Ministers, such as embassies or national competency centres.
- Focus on branding of the Nordic region also inside the region. Make Nordic co-operation more visible on national (political) arenas, and/or start with schoolchildren by engaging them about the practical importance of Nordic co-operation.
- Make use of new digital solutions in events to make them more inclusive and interactive.



Ministry of
Education
and Culture



Ministry of Economic Affairs
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