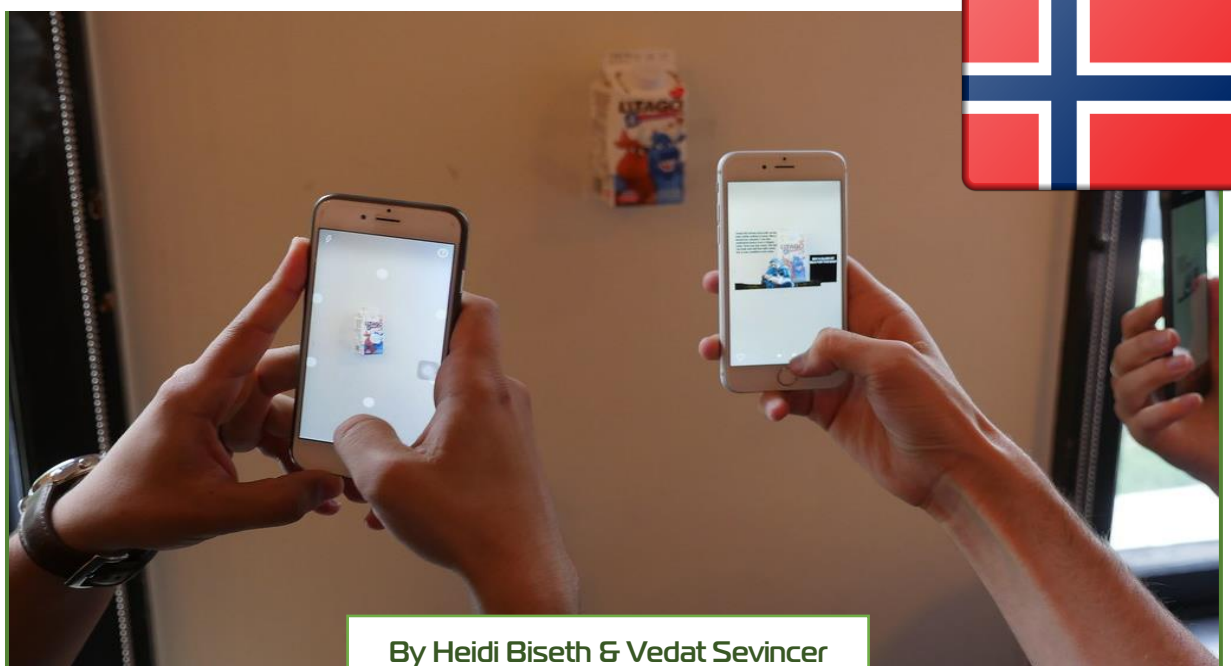


GUIDEBOOK

MEDIA PARTICIPATION & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AMONG YOUTH – GOOD PRACTICES FROM NORWAY



Guidebook for young people

Brochure prepared by:
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Oslo 2023

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1. Introduction about Norwegian context

The purpose of this work is to identify the current state of how media competence building influence civic engagement in a Norwegian context. In general, there are few research studies on media literacy combined with civic participation. As one of the first large-scale studies within this field and conducted in 23 countries, the IEA International Civic and Citizenship Study (ICCS 2016) shows that civic engagement among young people is in general low and to a little degree connected with the use of media. Here we discuss literature that has developed cross-sectoral work addressing young people's civic engagement through or with the use of media in Norway.

The role of education

Education can play a significant role in developing media participation and civic engagement, particularly in a Norwegian context where both elements are part of the National Curricula. Although dating a time back, analysis of the first national survey on media education in Norwegian upper secondary schools are significant to our topic. The subject 'media education' initially promoted critical thinking in relation to media messages, an important civic competence. However, the focus of the subject has later moved toward vocational need of content creation and digital production. Yet, it is possible to claim that the diverse media production practices found among youth in this study have an impact outside of school and may influence the youth's functioning as citizens in our society, both now and in the future.

Norwegian youth in general are engaged in a diverse media culture and users of media. Student's social media engagement offers possibilities and challenges in media education. Youth seems to move from users to producers of media by selecting, cutting, pasting, and combining semiotic resources into new digital and multimodal texts.

Today's media practice with online access to a multitude of sources gives youth possibilities to produce content from diverse sources. In addition, Youth media life inside and outside school is connected. A relevant question to ask is to what extent does the school make use of media competency to enhance civic engagement?

Promotion of digital citizenship in Nordic schools, including Norway, using the data from the IEA Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2016, was identified in a study^{vi}. The 14-year-old youth report to have full access to devices connected to the Internet. Such devices are also used in schools. 80 % of the students report that they rarely post political or societal issues on the internet. However, 10 % of the students share political or social issues online at least once a month. This indicates a gap between a large "never engaged" and a small "very engaged" student group. The study found only a few significant but very weak correlations between access to ICT resources in schools and with students' current and future online engagement. The study suggested a conceptual map of six major themes promoting digital citizenship in the Nordic countries. The connection between civic engagement and social media are among the weaker connections in this study, indicating a low level of youth engagement, at least on this platform.

Student teachers, that is our future teachers, tend to be young and well versed in the use of social media. In a study investigating what characterized 42 student teachers' competence in democratic engagement using social media in teaching, the student teachers were asked to use social media as an illustrative pedagogical tool during their last teaching placement period^{vii}. The student teachers conceptual understanding of democracy and democratic engagement did not trickle into their teaching plans, it seemed difficult for them to include somewhat abstract ideas into practical levels in the classroom. In addition, making use of digital tools for the purpose was seen as even harder or irrelevant by these future teachers.

2. Good examples of Media Participation & Civic Engagement Among Youth in Norway: FAKTUELL



Faktuell, a project aimed at developing media competence, an online publication for youth, combined with an ambition to enhance civic engagement^{viii}. The NGO who ran this project offered the participating youth practical media training as journalists, photographers, and video producers. One hypothesis was that the youth's digital competencies would improve through involvement in a high-quality online publication, also providing them a stronger civic voice. The training program comprised five modules: media ethics, basic journalistic skills (investigation and data collection in text, audio, video, and photo), storytelling, editing and dissemination training. All participants could interact with professional media actors and academics during the training program. Between 2013 and 2022 the Faktuell project interacted with more than 100 schools, student clubs, organizations, and 242 young people participated in the training. The project provided a rich example of how an NGO can play a significant role in providing media competency combined with civic engagement among youth.

In 2013, the youth-led non-profit media organization Norsensus Mediaforum (Norway) launched the Faktuell project. From the outset, it was conceived both as a media competence-building project and as an online publication for the 13 to 20 age group. The declared ambition was to enhance the target group's civic engagement and offer participants practical media training as journalists, photographers and video producers.

This in turn would encourage active participation and a mainstream youth perspective. At the same time, it would allow participants to improve their digital competencies through involvement in a high-quality online publication.

Faktuell is financed by Oslo Municipality, the Norwegian Children and Youth Council (LNU), the Open Society Foundation and 3. Faktuell 31 Erasmus+.



Aiming for unbiased reporting and respect for a diversity of views, Faktuell attempts not only to develop journalistic skills among youths but also to provide a fresh and quality-conscious youth perspective on public debate. To

bring about these ambitious goals, Norsensus Mediaforum has set up a project management team that is legally and financially responsible for all activities. In addition, an independent and unpaid advisory steering committee composed of academics, media professionals and youth representatives provides input on planning and policy. Faktuell consists of two main components: a comprehensive training programme in news content creation and a youth-led online magazine.

The training programme comprises five modules: media ethics, basic journalistic skills (investigation and data collection in text, audio, video and photo), storytelling, editing and dissemination training. To ensure that youths have the chance to interact with professionals and to connect different media generations, all modules are led by media professionals from mainstream media and academia in Norway. Participating youths also meet volunteer mentor journalists, academics and university-level media/journalism students in training sessions and follow-up meetings. Mentors serve as supervisors for the young journalists on language, structure and technical issues. So far, we have interacted with more than 100 schools, student clubs and organizations all over the country, and with thousands of young people through targeted social media ads. Once the applications from interested youths are processed, we carry out a participatory assessment of their knowledge of journalism and use of media. For this purpose, we use media literacy evaluation tools to map individual and collective assets and to shape the training programme. With this method, more than 100 youths have completed the Faktuell training programme since 2013.

The second component of the project is an online magazine, faktuell.no. Its aim is to motivate participants and other youths to create news content by showcasing their journalistic work and by creating a comprehensive youth-led magazine for the general public. Showcased content is syndicated with mainstream media and project partners in Norway to increase the impact and recognition of the journalistic work. The magazine has also been an experimental laboratory for observing youth content production. From editorial work to marketing, all activities are run by the editorial group of young people aged 13 to 20 from diverse backgrounds, and these are renewed every year. In addition to the core editorial team, we invite individual contributors, schools and youth clubs to contribute to the magazine.



In one of the Faktuell workshops, youths learn about photojournalism.

The project management team only provides logistic and technical support to the editorial team in addition to mentorship when needed. This relaxed editorial attitude to control has encouraged the Photo 2. Faktuell participants learn and practice visual storytelling in journalism.

Looking at the type of the content in the magazine, we can see some common tendencies regarding content creation. Despite our efforts to encourage new ways to approach storytelling, in order to use youthful social media habits while offering considerable editorial freedom, most youths imitate the style and format of well-established magazines and newspapers. Unlike their commonly assumed non-textual and short content consumption habits, they have a tendency to maintain a serious and traditional tone, writing long texts. In text-based news reporting, they usually adopt lengthy blog-style texts. Comparing the text-visual content ratio, videos make up about 65 per cent of all content. The content of most videos also carries a similar traditional tone and averages 5–10 minutes in length. Despite the tendency to film for longer and include more content, the completion rate of video news projects without mentor intervention is as low as 20 per cent. The average pitching and completion of the entry rate is, on the other hand, around 35 per cent.

One common trait in video news reporting is how young reporters prioritize equipment and tools before the story and technique, using professional equipment. Similarly, a common pattern for many young video/photo journalists is to rely on visual effects rather than content, often citing mainstream media channels such as VG and popular youtubers.

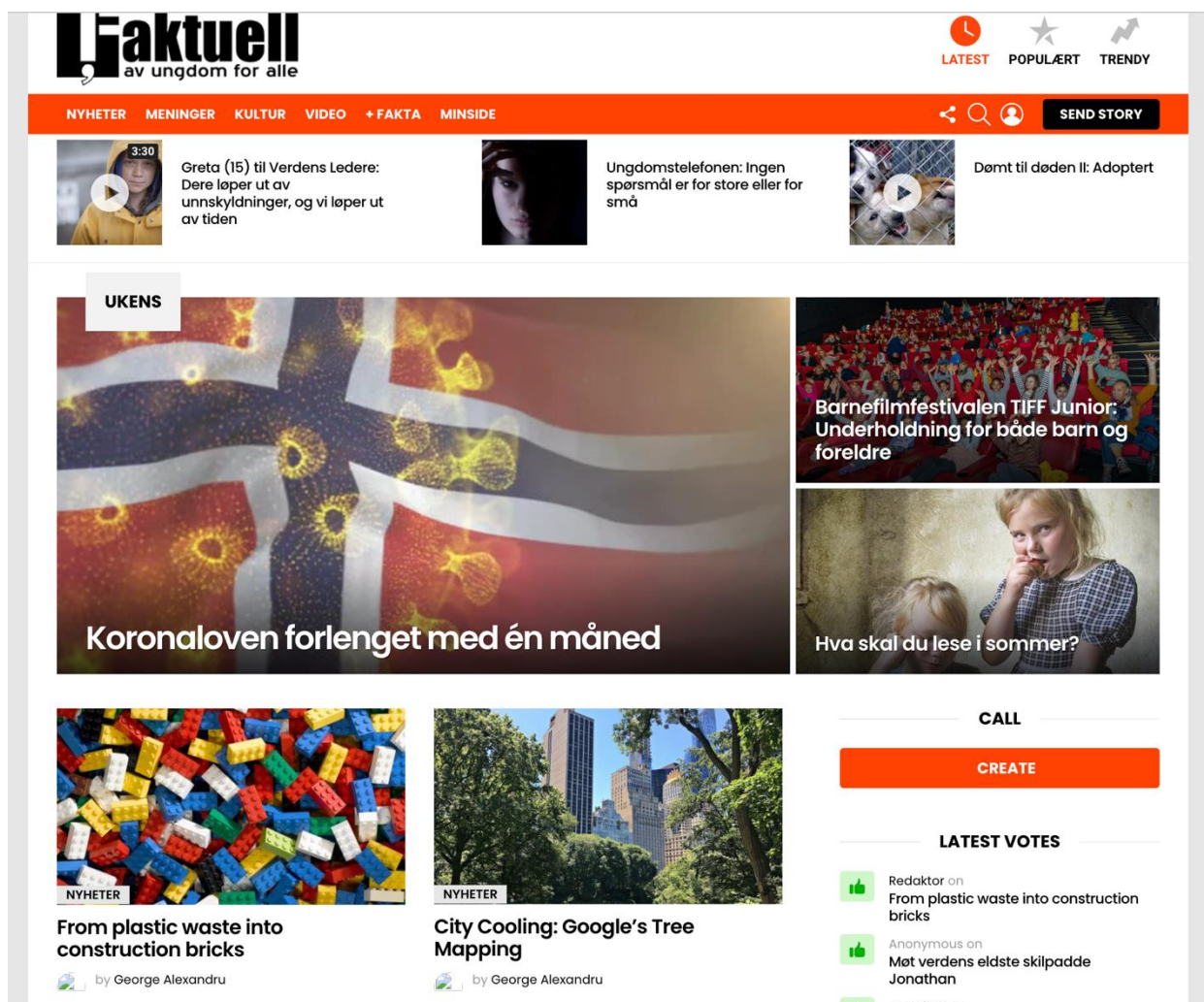
This discrepancy from their social media habits made us revise the training content and focus more on storytelling and strategic communication skills.

The training became less tool-centred. In addition, to explore transnational interaction among young journalists, we have recently initiated a dedicated collaborative content creation call under Faktuell. Here Faktuell journalists work together with young journalists from Ireland, Germany, Romania and Bulgaria to find common themes and develop content together. Youth and e-learning from a civics perspective Faktuell shows how it is possible to engage with youth and e-learning in an innovative way. The rapid increase in the use of the internet and social media among young people is considered relevant for education to such an extent that the IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2016 also investigated the school context for students' use of social media for civic engagement.



Faktuell journalists are filming for a 5 episode documentary series about the fifth anniversary of 22 July terror attacks in Norway. Youths to produce content ranging from game reviews to politically themed commentaries.

Although detailed research results are not yet available, there is a clear increase in all countries in young people's use of social media for political purposes. Additionally, the average scores on the social media engagement scale were consistently higher for those students who generally expressed interest in civic issues. Increasing access to, and use of, new technologies permits a reorganization of space, social relations and, hence, of conversation or deliberation. The internet and social media could be defined as a contemporary public sphere. These technologies allow individuals to propose new spaces for politics. The more young people learn about and are accustomed to the use of social and digital media, the more we can expect emerging digitally enabled citizens, possibly with new civic habits, occupying new political spaces.



Social media has lowered the threshold of becoming a sort of journalist to the extent that we can now use the concept of citizen-journalist. One result of this

development is the acceleration of many kinds of communication and flows of information – to and from sources and audiences different from before. 13 New kinds of, and places for, civic engagement are available in our societies, and e-learning should be an important part of school in order to promote this. Yet, it is noticeable that the relevant practices are not permeating all elements of our education system. The Faktuell project, however, illustrates clearly the significance of the NGO sector in empowering young people with civic competencies for a digital future. With regard to the future, there are two main actions we are planning to take to sustain the relevance of the Faktuell project: 1) to introduce more interactive and immersive forms of reporting with the use of new content creation technologies (including virtual reality and artificial intelligence); and 2) to increase cross-border collaborative reporting projects with an emphasis on intercultural competence building and a better understanding of media ethics and literacy. In addition, the Faktuell project could be promoted as a showcase in the education sector to demonstrate how social media can be used to enhance civic engagement among young people.

Quick Facts

Officially started on 1 September, 2013 by Norsensus Mediaforum (Norway), a non-profit media organization in Oslo, working to promote media and information literacy and financed by public grants and media services to public institutions and NGOs.

- The Faktuell project is financed by Oslo Municipality, the Norwegian Children and Youth Council (LNU), the Open Society Foundation and Erasmus+.
- 242 young people from Norway have participated in Faktuell media training workshops.
- 64 per cent of all participants are female and 52 per cent have immigrant or minority backgrounds.
- 20 journalist/media professionals have participated in the project as tutors and/or mentors.
- The project has inspired similar youth media projects such as Youth & Media by Stuttgart Media University in Germany and the Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre.
- The Faktuell magazine editorial team is composed of six to eight young people and renewed annually.
- The editorial team is responsible for the coordination of content creation, the social media strategy and marketing.
- 355 entries have been pitched of which 107 have been published in Faktuell.

3. Good examples of Media Participation & Civic Engagement Among Youth in Norway: Nordic Youth Media Allies for SDG 2030 Goals



The project aimed and succeeded to support young people (13-19 years old) from Norway (Norsensus Mediaforum), Sweden (Awesome People) and Finland (Helsinki Municipality), to influence and participate more in their community, by working with and promoting the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs through youth-owned media projects. The project reached directly over 300 people and 106 youth organizations in these three countries, the majority being young people and young leaders from youth organizations from Norway, Sweden and Finland.

The most important results of the SDGs Youth Media Allies project are those achieved for and with the young people involved in the project's activities. More specifically, the young people participating in the project developed creative and digital skills, which allow them to have a stronger voice in the community for the causes they believe in, but also to better promote the SDGs. Also, by providing them and their organizations with training and specific tools

on solutions journalism and youth media projects we enhanced youth participation and influence in these communities.

Also, the partners involved in the project strengthened their partnership, and actually during the implementation of the project, new projects were developed with some of the partners, targeting young people in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland.

As the main outputs of the project, we mention here: a networking meeting with young people and partners' representatives; a two-day Nordic level workshop on storytelling, visual storytelling, solutions journalism, online content creation, photojournalism, youth media projects and SDGs; 56 young people from Norway, Sweden and Finland developing 23 media projects covering relevant SDGs through stop motion animations, articles, posters, collages, etc.; an online published Guide on Solutions Journalism (<https://libre.norsensus.no/solutionsjournalism/>) and another guide on Youth Media Projects (<https://libre.norsensus.no/youthmedia/>), made available to youth organizations and young people.



This networking opportunity through the first meeting and the workshop led to closer contact building among the active young people from three Nordic countries. They still keep in contact even after the workshop, through social media. As a more local level impact example is that the young people coming from Sweden continued their work on SDGs also as volunteers of Awesome People organization: they prepared and held workshops on SDGs through the Be Awesome Camp opportunity, making other young people aware of the 2030 Agenda and solutions that exist there for supporting the SDGs.

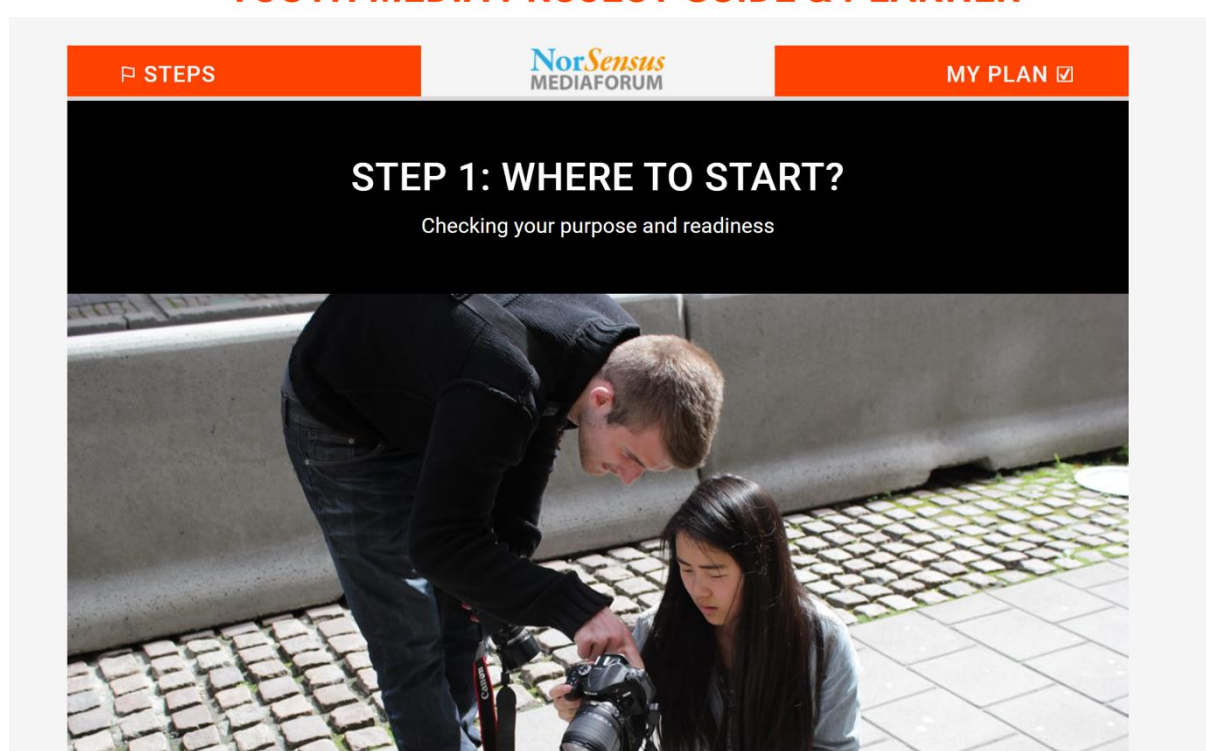
The project aimed to empower young people to speak for themselves and to give them the tools to promote SDGs and other causes they believe in for their own groups and communities. During the project implementation, the young people participated and influenced the project's development. Thus, they were involved in co-designing the process of the proposal, of the networking meeting, of the workshop agenda, of the selection process of young people participating in the Nordic workshop, but also of the evaluation of the project's activities. Also, they were fully engaged in co-production and co-delivery of the networking meeting, the Nordic level workshop, the guides - they developed and delivered some networking meeting and workshop sessions, they contributed to some chapters of the guides, delivered and published their own media projects, and participated in the implementation of the evaluation activities during the Nordic level workshop and the networking meeting. Thus, throughout the project the young people were encouraged and supported to fully participate and influence activities targeting their own groups and communities, developing and practicing essential skills for better participation and influence, such as communication, persuasion, negotiation, solving problems, generating solutions, etc.

Within this specific empowerment goal, the project had a specific focus to involve vulnerable or underrepresented young people. This focus was manifested in the recruitment process of the project activities and management. In the core main project management team, more than half of the people in all the countries had an immigrant background. Also, both the networking meeting and the workshop included participants with very diverse profiles, in terms of underrepresented groups or vulnerable young people.

For example, in the Nordic level workshop, 15 of the 18 participants had immigrant or refugee backgrounds, while there were also a couple of sexual minority background young people. Also, this diversity in the young people was replicated in media projects' teams run by the young people participating in the Nordic level workshop.

Having this diversity mindset, from management to participation, has enabled to implement the co-design, co-production and co-delivery objectives effectively, while this approach gave the participants ownership of the project.

YOUTH MEDIA PROJECT GUIDE & PLANNER



Also, having in the project a very diverse group of young people encouraged and enhanced better dialogue and inspiration among the young people from different backgrounds, and it has worked very well with both educational and social activities we have designed.

First, the project strengthened the partnership between the main partners - they shared their experience in working with young people, in developing young people's creative and digital skills and knowledge & awareness on the 17 SDGs. Also, during the project implementation, the main partners

developed together other projects involving young people, some of which received already financing and are currently in implementation.

Second, the project was designed so that it involved in the project activities other youth organizations from Norway, Sweden and Finland - as associated partners. The associated partners were involved in the promotion of the Nordic level workshop provided to young people; in reaching out to young people that participated in media projects; in the use of the Solutions Journalism Guide for Young People and Youth Media Guide, to further support youth-led media projects. Through these “meetingness” points with the youth organizations, the initial partnership developed its network, providing more opportunities for young people, and involving the local organizations in Nordic level cooperation. Through financing obtained from another grantor, the Norwegian partner (Norsensus Mediaforum) had the opportunity to also meet with other organizations from the Nordic countries in an international network and cooperation meeting organized in January 2020 in Iceland. There, new project ideas were developed and a new Nordic project got funded and started in October 2020.



Be an SDGs Hero

Create Content

Are you passionate about creative media and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? Do you want to make an impact and raise awareness about SDGs with your story? Team up with friends, choose a topic and send to us.

CREATE YOUR TEAM

Find someone to help you. Create your creative team with two or three friends. Then register your team.

CHOOSE A TOPIC

Choose a topic related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and register the topic.

CREATE MEDIA CONTENT

Create a text/video/photo or animation story as a team, send it to us and make an impact.

The diversity of the participants coming from three different Nordic countries, improved the outcomes of the project, helping young people to:

- Challenge themselves to interact and learn about other countries, communities, cultures, perceptions, attitudes, behaviors, etc.;
- Develop new contacts, at the Nordic level, that will help them to better connect to different social or working environments;
- Act together on promoting and contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Raising awareness on gender equality among the people of the Region was one of the directions the young people were interested in supporting through their media projects. Young people also became aware of SDG5 through the knowledge gained on the 2030 Agenda, in the Nordic-level workshop.

At the same time, throughout the project, the project made sure that the young men, young women and transgender young people had equal access to the opportunities provided by the project; and moreover, that they had equal saying and representation in the decision-making process. While running the

networking meeting and the workshop, from the beginning of the activities, we presented our zero-tolerance approach to gender-based hate speech, promoting the recommendations of the “Together for Gender Equality – a stronger Nordic Region Nordic co-operation programme on gender equality 2015–2018”.

Also, the project gave young people the tools to speak better for themselves, for any social, political or cultural cause they believe in. By having the necessary knowledge, and creative media skills and tools, the young people can better support causes related to the 2030 Agenda. During the networking meeting and the Nordic level workshop’s sessions, but also through the media projects, the young people directly expressed their interest in topics related to the following specific SDGs: 1-No Poverty; 4-Quality Education; 5-Gender Equality;7-Affordable and Clean Energy;10-Reduced inequalities;11-Sustainable Cities and Communities;12-Sustainable Consumption and Production; and 13-Climate Action.

Through the involvement of the youth organizations working with inclusion and diversity, the project itself promoted the core values of the Nordic welfare model described in the “A Good Life in a Sustainable Nordic Region. Nordic Strategy for Sustainable Development”, such as equal opportunities, social solidarity for everyone, no matter the gender, ethnicity, religion, age and sexual orientation.

Brochure prepared as part of the project
„We turn on ZERO WASTE!” / „Włączamy ZERO WASTE!”



Project implementers:



Iceland 
Liechtenstein
Norway

**Active
citizens fund**

Project financed by
Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway
from the EEA Grants under the Program
Active Citizens – Regional Fund

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