

DIALOGUE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

# MISSION ~~IM~~POSSIBLE

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4.7



# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Objective</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The project's milestones</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Young people's dialogue</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Nordic Youth Congress in Iceland</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Nordic Youth Congress – Result summary</b>	<b>8</b>
Education	8
Global citizenship	10
Peaceful culture	11
Gender equality	12
Human rights	13
Sustainable development	14
<b>The Nordic cooperation</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Cooperation partners</b>	<b>17</b>
Iceland — Samfés / Youth Work Iceland	17
Norway — Ungdom og Fritid	17
Åland — SKUNK	18
Sweden — Fritidsforum	18
Denmark — Ungdomsringen	18
Finland — Nuorten Akatemia / Youth Academy.	19
Greenland — Klub"Qaqqavaarsuk" Pisortaq	19
Faroe Islands — Barnarættindi	20
<b>The COVID-19 Effect</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>National youth meetings — Summary</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>The voices of Nordic Youth</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>24</b>



# Introduction

In light of the Nordic Council of Ministers policy to make the Nordic countries the best place in the world for children and young people, the focus, under Iceland's Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2019, was set on the UN Sustainable Development Goals with special attention on young people.

With particular emphasis on SDG 4.7 and the spotlight on young people, it was important from the start to ensure active participation and dialogue with young people's representatives from all of the Nordic countries. It is the policy of the Nordic Council of Ministers to make Nordic countries the best place in the world for children and young people.

This report presents the main project steps and results of the dialogue of young people in all Nordic countries, from national youth meetings, Nordic project meetings and the Nordic Youth Congress in 2019.

It was a great honor and recognition of the organisation's impact that the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in Iceland reached out and asked Samfés — Youth Work Iceland to lead this project. The challenge was to connect with stakeholders and youth organisations in Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Faroe Island, Åland and Greenland to ensure active participation and to ensure that young people would play a key role in the project and that would be reflected in the outcome of the whole project.



**Iceland's Presidency for 2019 will focus on three themes: the young, the sea and sustainable tourism. And the Global Goals will be our guiding principle.**

- Katrín Jakobsdóttir, Prime Minister of Iceland



## Objective

The project is threefold and involves *Mapping Education for Sustainability* in the Nordic countries, *Young People's Dialogue about SDG 4.7* and the last milestone in 2021–2022 is to create Nordic educational material and quality indicators using the informations and results from the first two milestones.

The objective of the project is that the Nordic countries will be at the forefront of the implementation of the United Nations' 4th Global Goal, **Education for All**, with a special emphasis on target 4.7.

This means that the Nordic Region must lead the way in efforts to promote the welfare of children and young people, to ensure that they are aware of their rights and are able to exercise them, and to ensure the participation of children and young people in decisions that concern them. It covers all school levels and applies to services in support of the countries' education systems that in turn must be at the forefront. It also means that individuals must have the opportunity of diverse study and work, without discrimination. In order to strengthen a democratic society, a foundation must be laid for active participation at all school levels and provide appropriate and diverse opportunities for children and young people's preparation for further studies and or employment.

Global Goal 4.7 stipulates that by 2030 at the latest, all students will have the necessary knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development, including education for sustainable development, sustainable living, human rights, gender equality, the promotion of peaceful relations without violence, civic awareness, the recognition of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development.

### TARGET 4.7

*By 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.*





# The project's milestones

From the start it was important to connect to youth organisations we know through our membership of ECYC, European Confederation of Youth Clubs, to ensure good quality communication between the three Project Milestones Groups in the Nordic countries.

Having made significant progress; finishing the first two milestones, we have now started the third milestone which is led by the Directorate of Education in Iceland. In 2021 we will continue to move towards the main goal which is to have the Nordic countries lead the way in implementing the UN's fourth Global Goal, with particular emphasis on target 4.7.

As a broad topic of the SDG 4.7, national preparation was needed to inform and prepare all of the young people who would participate from the beginning; this was achieved in the first part (milestone) of the project by mapping the Nordic implementation of the global objective 4.7 and all its sub-components. Various indicators were used including, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development, health and welfare, human rights, gender equality, peaceful relations without violence and civic awareness. This part of the project was carried out in cooperation with Nordic Universities. The work was divided into two parts.

Part 1, consisted of analyses of policy documents, existing research and other available data. Part 2, consisted of data gathering. This work was carried out in collaboration with universities in the Nordic Countries. The two parts of the project were then divided into sub-projects in the following way:

## PART 1

- Collect from laws, regulations, national curricula, and the curricula of teacher education institutions discussion about the elements of UNSDG 4.7. Are these factors mentioned and, if so, how?
- Analyse research and surveys, Nordic and international, which concern these factors. What do they tell us about the implementation of UNSDG 4.7? Do they provide any measures that can be utilized in the future?
- What information is available in surveys and external evaluation reports on pre-, primary, and secondary education? What other documents are available that might provide additional information?
- Review measures and indicators used to evaluate the success of the implementation of items that fall under UNSDG 4.7.

## PART 2

- Teacher education: How are UNSDG 4.7 factors addressed in teacher education in the different Nordic countries? Data will be gathered by reading curricula and course descriptions together with focus groups with university teachers. (Part of this could already be available in existing research.)
- Elementary schools: What do principals and teachers say about the implementation of UNSDG 4.7? How has the implementation been carried out? In what subjects? Is there any organized work on school culture? Are there focus groups with principals and teachers?
- Elementary schools: What support do the schools need to work more constructively with UNSDG 4.7?
- Elementary schools: Find examples of good practices and describe them.

The project work was divided between the participants and drafts made for a presentation of preliminary results at the Nordic Educational Research Association (NERA) conference in Turku, Finland at the beginning of March 2020. There were four lectures on different aspects of the project during this conference and participants also had a meeting about the progress of the project and the work ahead.

### [Report - Mapping Education for Sustainability in the Nordic countries](#)

## Young people's dialogue

The second project milestone was the young people's dialogue and discussion on SDG 4.7 in the Nordic countries, this played a very important role in the project as there was a strong emphasis on the active participation of young people at all levels of education in a democratic society and that they are given appropriate preparation and diverse opportunities for further study and work.

After contacting national experts and cooperation partners in the Nordic countries, our first meeting with the project partners was held at the office of Ungdom and Fritid in Oslo on 10th of May 2019. At the meeting the project partners introduced their organisations, personal background and experience in youth work. This was followed by a discussion about the SDG 4.7, the project details, participation of young people, the main dates and the next steps.

From the beginning, we at Samfés, endeavoured to ensure that all the Nordic countries would participate in the project. Each project partner organized five youth meetings with 15–25 young people in the age of 13–25 years old, to ensure that all Nordic youth voices would be heard in this part of the project. The project partners



used different ways to approach young people on the national level, some like Samfés had their Youth Councils participate, others advertised and/or contacted participants through the school system in order for the first youth meetings to start in August 2019.

In the first stages all project partners organised their national youth meetings in collaboration with youth clubs, schools and youth councils where young people learned and talked about the World Goals and target 4.7. This was in order to prepare all participants for their national meetings and the large, main event of this part of the project which was the Nordic Youth Congress in Iceland on 4.–6. October 2019 to participate in the Youth Parliament “Mission imPossible 4.7.”

## Nordic Youth Congress in Iceland



In cooperation with all of our Nordic partners, Samfés youth councils and young participants we organised the National Youth Congress in Iceland on October 4th–6th, 2019 where 450 young people from Iceland and all the Nordic countries came together. The congress was organised and led by young people participating in the project in collaboration with the Samfés Youth Councils. All participants at the Nordic Youth Congress were informed of the theme and had time in their national groups to prepare and talk about Education for All and World Goal 4.7 before arriving at the congress in Mosfellsbær.

The National Youth Congress of young people is held as a part of Landsmót Samfés, where more than 450 young people from all over the country have gathered every year since 1990. Democratic working methods and empowerment are dominant at Landsmót Samfés, but the final day of

the Congress is dedicated to the National Assembly of Young People. At the National Assembly, young people get the opportunity to express themselves on the various issues and topics they are interested in. The issues and topics emphasized and addressed at the Landsþing are decided and prepared by the Youth Council of Samfés. Examples of issues that have been addressed previously are; adolescent mental health, alcohol and drug use, sex and sexual health, finances and taxes, human rights, online communication, the labor market, transport, increased participation of young people of foreign origin, equality, education without barriers and activities. Following the Youth Parliament, the Youth Council gathers the results and sends resolutions to the ministries, local authorities, the media and all Samfés’ member associations.

An important turning point in the history of Samfés and recognition of Youth Work in Iceland was when the President of Iceland, Mr. Guðni Th. Jóhannesson addressed and actively participated at the Nordic Youth Congress in Mosfellsbær in 2019. 2019 saw a record number of participants at Congress with approximately 450 young people aged 14–23, from community centers and youth centers around the country, together with representatives of young people from Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.



The Congress and seminar were organised and led by young people. During this time the project leader from each partner country also used the time for meetings to reflect, organise and plan the next steps in the project.

All participants at the Nordic Youth Congress were informed, received presentations and had time in their national groups to prepare and talk about Education for All and World Goal 4.7 in preparation for their visit to Iceland during the congress.

A video documentary and information video was made by the Samfés Youth Council as part of the Congress evaluation and information for the participants. The project partners were all experienced and experts in working in the field of Youth Work and working with young people.





# Nordic Youth Congress – Result summary

In this section you can read the results from the participants' discussions at the Nordic Youth Congress.

## EDUCATION

Everyone deserves to get educated, because we consider education to be a human right, not a privilege. Without public education civilization wouldn't thrive, there would be no jobs and no production. Here are a few points we'd like to get across when it comes to the Icelandic educational system.

### GRADING

With the addition of letter grades to our system we lose comparability between all schools in the country and thereby it is harder to see exactly what each student's grade is. We would like the grading system in Iceland to be the same everywhere, using numbers only.

### LANGUAGE CLASSES

We think the Danish we learn in school is not benefiting us in real life, many of us have tried to use our school-Danish in Denmark, but the Danes always answer in English. We want to have more say in which language we learn and get more time to learn Spanish or French instead, which would benefit us much more.

### SUBJECTS WE THINK ARE MISSING

Many of the things we learn in school are surely useful, but we still need to focus more on life skills and education that is beneficial in our society.

- We want more sex and gender education.
- More "hands-on" classes.
- More working in groups.
- We also think it is incredibly important to teach financial classes where we would learn what taxes are and how they work, how we can save money and how we go about buying our first apartment. Many of us start paying taxes this year, but we have little to no idea what that means or how it all works.
- In addition to this, we would also like to learn how to better prepare for a test, which can often be a very stress-inducing process.
- We would also like to have the chance to study more arts, such as acting, music, or visual art.

## COMPARISON OF ICELANDIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

We don't think there are comparable competence measurements [i.e. hæfniviðmið] in all schools in the country, which makes it so that not all students are evaluated equally. This makes it troublesome when it comes to applying for secondary schools. We want there to be stricter competence measurements, which all Icelandic schools must follow.

## HOMEWORK

We think it's strange to spend up to eight hours per day in school and at the end of the day still have to finish homework. In Denmark students get a few hours per week to finish their homework. We suggest everyone get the chance and assistance to finish their homework during school hours.

## PHONE BAN IN SCHOOLS

We understand not being allowed to have phones in class, but we do not understand why we cannot have and use them during recess. Many of us go home during recess to use our phones and are therefore late for class. We would like to be allowed to have our phones during recess.

## LENGTH OF SECONDARY SCHOOL IN ICELAND

It is strange in our opinion that secondary schools were shortened by a year but elementary school is still ten years. Those of us who are now in our first year of secondary school can barely complete the assignments we have, because the curriculum is so jam-packed. We suggest this will be reconsidered, since secondary school students are under too much pressure.

## THE LEAP FROM ELEMENTARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

The gap between elementary and secondary school is very large and scary. We cannot go to our youth clubs [félagsmiðstöðvar] any more as a lot of us go to school outside of our neighborhood. We want more assistance during this time as a lot of changes are taking place. There isn't a 16–25 year old youth club [ungmennahús in every town, which means we don't have anywhere to meet new kids outside of school.

**We consider opportunities for education are 84.7% equal in Iceland. We hope you consider these suggestions of ours. Children and Young People should have a say in the educational system!**



## GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

We consider global citizenship as being aware of matters around the world and how they affect us. We think it is very important to have a sense of global citizenship, because we have so much to learn from each other and must make sure we don't isolate ourselves, especially on a small island like Iceland. Being aware of other countries and cultures makes it easier for us to travel to new places without being rude or disrespectful towards the local customs and traditions.

### HOW DO WE INCREASE GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP?

We want to learn more about this in school, especially since a lot of us didn't know what the term meant until we had these discussions. Sure there are people who help us learn more about these things, such as Greta Thunberg, but we think it is important for the school to also play a role here. Another thing we can do is watch documentaries such as "What have we done?" [i.e. Hvað höfum við gert], where the subject is the climate crisis. We could watch shows like that in class and have discussions after. Diversity is also important, because if we are surrounded by people from different countries and origins, we are more likely to have extensive global citizenship awareness.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF NO ONE HAS GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP?

Prejudice would increase and we would have a harder time understanding other cultures. We could, or even would not assist nations at war and would be in a much worse place in the climate crisis fight. We think the world would really perish, because global citizenship is such a huge part of modern society.

### GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AND CLIMATE CHANGE

When it comes to the fight against global warming, it's important we all stay alert and on the same page. If we nurture our global citizenship, we can aid in eliminating prejudice and ignorance.

We think Icelanders are 63% aware of other countries' standing.

## PEACEFUL CULTURE

To us, peaceful culture is where everyone lives together in harmony, no wars are going on and peace is all around. Everyone can be themselves and are accepted as they are by others around them. Peaceful culture is strongly tied to equality and human rights. If we think about non-peaceful culture however things such as hunger, violence, war, rudeness; Russia where it is illegal to be gay, bombings, and police with weapons comes to mind.

When talking about police having guns on them the opinions are split. Some want police to be armed just in case, since it could be bad to face someone with weapons. However, this would completely depend on how these guns were to be used. Many of us get scared when we see an armed policeman or woman because we have heard horrible stories of abuse of power. If police in Iceland should carry guns it would be very important to teach them how to use the guns properly. The public should however under no circumstances carry guns on a daily basis. If you are not using the gun to hunt, we see no reason to have it at all. You also wouldn't need to own a gun to defend yourself if no one else has one. If everyone had guns, illegal activity would spike and danger would be posed to our society. A strict approval process to buy guns in Iceland is very important and it is clearly paying off since very few people own or carry guns here.

### DOES EDUCATION AFFECT PEACEFUL CULTURE?

We think education plays a big role in a peaceful culture. When you educate yourself you build up a library of information, which will help you in life. We often see more disruption of peace in lower-education societies.

### DO IMMIGRANTS AFFECT PEACEFUL CULTURE?

This depends more on the person itself and not where they come from. Immigrants are after all just regular people, but it is important to welcome them to our society and teach them our language.

### IS YOUR HOME COUNTRY PEACEFUL?

Yes, Iceland is the most peaceful country in the entire world. There are so few of us so we experience more integrated trust in our culture. We can walk outside at night by ourselves without having to worry too much.

### WHAT CAN WE DO TO SUPPORT PEACEFUL CULTURE?

We must obey the law, make sure not to be rude or disrespectful to others and talk things out rather than resorting to violence.

We consider Icelandic culture to be 80% peaceful.



## GENDER EQUALITY

To us, gender equality is very simple - everything equal between all genders. All genders should have the same opportunities, salary and rights. The biggest problem when it comes to gender equality in Iceland is pay inequality, sexual harassment and how certain job positions are staffed. We do however agree that gender equality has improved significantly in the past few years, with the implementation of the equal pay certification.

### GENDER PAY GAP

We think it's absurd that men can get paid more than women, this is something that should not even be a problem. If people complete the same amount of work, at the same time, under the same pressure, they should get paid the same as well. In some fields, such as sports, it is unfortunate that men almost always get a higher salary than women. This could be because more people watch men's sports, but they are also much more advertised. By this we are belittling women's sports, which does not at all support their battle for equal pay. Many have decided women's sports are not as fun or entertaining, but that is far from the truth.

### GENDER EQUALITY FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT IDENTIFY AS THE GENDER THEY WERE BORN IN.

This is where we are lacking greatly, because this is something we don't talk about much, if at all. We want more education on these things so we can help people struggling, we don't want them to feel isolated. These people's rights are equal to those who are born in their identifying gender.

### DO YOU EXPERIENCE CERTAIN EXPECTATIONS BECAUSE OF YOUR GENDER?

Yes! Boys should be muscular and are not allowed to cry, while girls should be "proper" and hardworking in school. If we take boys' feelings as an example, it can be hard for them to feel okay with showing emotion in a society which does not accept that. Showing emotions is a learned behaviour and therefore it would be great to have role models who are not afraid to break out of that box.

### OTHER

We have noticed ice cream shops won't hire boys to work, but we think that is a very strange decision. We don't care whether we buy ice cream from a boy or a girl. We want more education on how important gender equality actually is! Often we don't realize how bad things are until we learn about it.

We consider gender equality to be 66.7% in Iceland.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights in our opinion are rights every human on earth should gain at birth. Everyone should have the right to live their life, be themselves, get equal opportunity, food, housing, and so on. This also means everyone should have access to education so we can support a thriving society.

### WHO HAS HUMAN RIGHTS?

Everyone should have human rights, but unfortunately the level of it depends on where you live. In Iceland we enjoy human rights such as good access to education, universal healthcare, we all have the right to vote, can get a driver's license and have laws on freedom of speech. We can be ourselves, dress the way we want without breaking any laws or being harrassed.

### WHY DOES EVERYONE NOT HAVE EQUAL HUMAN RIGHTS?

Some countries are behind in development and therefore people's human rights are not respected. We do however not think any country is perfect when it comes to these matters. Iceland is doing good, but there is room for improvement, for example by not deporting children.

### WHY SHOULD WE RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS?

We all want to keep our human rights and therefore it is important to respect others as well. The golden rule "treat others as you would like to be treated" is very valid here.

### DO WE HAVE ANY RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARDS HUMAN RIGHTS?

Yes, we are responsible for treating all humans with respect and respecting their human rights at the same time. In Iceland we are legally obligated to attend school, which means we learn how to respect people and their rights. We are obligated to help those who get their human rights violated.

### ARE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS ONLY A PROBLEM IN COUNTRIES WITH NO DEMOCRACY?

No, this is something that happens all over the entire world. In Iceland people are sometimes wrongfully sentenced to prison, bullied or made to be the victims of violence. We also sometimes discriminate against immigrants, especially when it comes to pay, since they are often paid much less than their Icelandic coworkers. Human rights violations are certainly not only a problem in third world countries.

### WHERE CAN WE GATHER INFORMATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS?

Places we can think of are Amnesty International, The Ombudsman for Children [Umboðsmaður Barna], The Icelandic Mental Health Alliance [Geðhjálp], and Unicef. We think all schools should have education on these matters, not just a select few. This education should be mandatory and during school hours.

## DO YOU KNOW THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILDREN? [BARNASÁTTMÁLINN]

We have heard of it, but do not know it by heart.

We consider human rights to be 68.5% respected in Iceland.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

We weren't all sure what sustainable development meant when we first heard the question, but after a short discussion we came to a good conclusion. Sustainable development means, amongst other things, to take care of nature, use its resources wisely to ensure the human rights of generations to come. Sustainable development means doing things without harming nature or other people. We can support sustainable development by planting trees to replace the ones we chop down, use our cars less, use things wisely and re-use what we already have. Making sure we use as little as possible of single-use products is an investment in our future.

### ICELAND

In Iceland, large manufacturers can be more mindful of how they produce their goods and what packaging they are using. We as consumers can also make sure to always choose Icelandic when shopping to avoid unnecessary importation.

In our school curriculum we would like to see education on the effects of global warming, what is actually going on, what we can do and what is environmentally friendly and what is not.

Iceland's advantage when it comes to sustainability is our geothermal heat and natural electricity generators. This is how we can cost and energy-efficiently light our homes and keep them warm. We could be a lot better at recycling. In Malmö, a city in Sweden with roughly the same population as Iceland. They recycle everything they use, we should be doing so as well.

### GLOBAL WARMING

If people aren't sufficiently aware of sustainable development it makes it that much harder to fight global warming. We need to use less plastic, drive less, import less oil, not fly so much, and put a stop to cruise ships.

### WHERE IS THE LARGEST DEFICIENCY IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN OUR SOCIETY?

A large part of the responsibility certainly lies with the large corporations, but we as consumers must also change our habits. If we keep using all this plastic for example, the companies will keep producing it - supply and demand. Politicians are also mentioned, but without pressure from us, nothing will ever happen. We are all in this together.



## WHAT CAN INDIVIDUALS DO TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Use less plastic, use public transport and bikes, recycle, eat less meat, and so on. We use and throw away a lot and are always buying everything new, when we don't always need to. We control the market with what and where we shop.

### EDUCATION

We would like environmental education in school, where we get to know more about the situation in the world and what we can do to help the planet.

We consider Icelandic production to be 53% sustainable.

## THE NORDIC COOPERATION

In the beginning of 2020 the project partners were having their national youth meetings working on the topics, with implementation and planning for the next meetings. Then the next step within this part of the project was to plan a meeting with both the young participants and the project partner leaders.

Samfés, Youth Work Iceland organized the first Iceland youth meeting in Akranes on 7th-8th of June, where representatives of the Youth Council of Samfés (13–16 years old), the Samfés Youth Council of Youth houses (16–25 years old) and the Youth Council of SDG in Iceland participated in a two day event where the group stayed together in a local youth club.

The main aim was to discuss SDG 4.7 as well as organize a Nordic Youth Congress and a special seminar on World Goals 4.7 in connection with the Landsmót Samfés and the National Youth Congress. The Mayor of Akranes visited the group and talked about the importance of their active participation and the SDG's.



After that meeting the young representatives were asked to make presentations on the project on several different occasions, the Youth Councils of Samfés and our project partners have presented the project within their work on a local and national level. The Youth council of Samfés visited the Ministry of Education in Iceland where they talked about the project and the importance of active youth participation.

In order to get more answers and ideas regarding the educational material in the third milestone of the project, the Nordic youth participants decided to create a youth survey.

**The United Nations Global Goal 4.7 states that education should inform and educate students, about:**

- Human rights
- Gender equality
- Global consciousness
- Cultural diversity
- Sustainable development

**The following questions were asked:**

1. Which of these do you think you need to learn more about?
2. Which of the following do you think is the most important thing to learn?
3. What do you think is stopping the school from teaching you more about these issues?
4. In what form would it be best to have the educational material? A textbook, an electronic book with videos, videos, instructions for teachers, websites or just something else?

The majority of the youngsters wanted to learn more about human rights and gender equality. They felt it was important to learn about all of the topics but the schools did not have the right educational material, the teachers may also have insufficient knowledge about the different topics. The young people would prefer the educational material to be sustainable and fun in the form of a mix of educational videos, informal methods, web based online seminars and information. The message is clear, no text book, more lectures, discussions and practical learning.

## Cooperation partners

We at Samfés, Youth Work Iceland are honored and grateful to manage this project. With our extensive network of Nordic youth work partners, we were able to contact and secure great partners from all of the Nordic countries. Without this close network and great cooperation of Nordic project partners it would have been hard to sustain the work during Covid 19, and to also ensure a consistent youth work approach during the process to the end of this milestone “Dialogue of Young People”.

### ICELAND — SAMFÉS / YOUTH WORK ICELAND

**Project manager: Victor Berg Guðmundsson, CEO of Samfés**

Samfés, Youth Work Iceland is an Icelandic non-governmental organization founded on the 11th of December 1985 at Fríkirkjuvetur 11 in Reykjavík. Samfés has 128 members, who consist of youth clubs and youth houses all over Iceland working with young people in the age 10–25.

The main goals of Samfés are to promote active youth participation, increase communication and cooperation between youth clubs and youth houses on domestic and international forums and mediate information about youth work and its importance to modern society. To take the lead in the discourse about national youth work, legislation concerning youth in Iceland and participate in projects that promote prevention and other pedagogical values

Samfés also places great emphasis on supporting two active and influential Youth Councils that have an important role in the organisation’s work and decision making processes.

Samfés hosts a number of diverse annual events, where youngsters from all over Iceland, as well as youth workers, get a chance to meet up, exchange best practices and take part in seminars and workshops. Our events include, for example, song, dance, rap and design contests, educational conferences, national congresses and a two-day music festival in the capital of Iceland where over 4500 youngsters from Iceland come together in Laugardalshöll.

<https://samfes.is/>

### NORWAY — UNGDOM OG FRITID

**Contact person: Amund R Heggelund**

Ungdom og Fritid is a national, non-profit organisation which organizes over 600 youth clubs. Ungdom og Fritid arrange seminars and courses within the field of youth work — both for young people as well as for professionals and volunteers.

Ungdom og Fritid also aims to produce relevant literature and to coordinate and upgrade education for professional youth workers in order to increase both the quality and the



status of their profession. As members of our organisation, the youth clubs can also obtain information, campaign material and activity equipment at low costs.

To ensure that every child under 18 years has a youth club to attend, and to develop and improve already existing youth clubs, we have for several years been working to make youth clubs mandatory by law. Our demand is supported by many young people, youth workers, organizations and politicians.

<https://www.ungdomogfritid.no/>

## ÅLAND — SKUNK

**Contact persons: Emelie Hanstrom**

SKUNK is an organisation that cares for the interests of youths in the Åland archipelago. The target group is 7–25 years old, but foremost for the ages 12–20. SKUNK is a youth organisation which builds on the youth's own ideas. The organisation is mainly built on the idea that "young people lead young people", but also that the organisation involves competent adults for different purposes. SKUNK is led by a Board where the participants are between 15–25 years old.

<https://www.skunk.ax/>

## SWEDEN — FRITIDSFORUM

**Contact person: Mediha Ahmadi**

Fritidsforum is an idea-driven, non-profit national organization in Sweden. We believe in young people's own strengths and resources and advocate for, and act for open democratic meeting places for all ages. The leisure centers and the open meeting places in Sweden are meeting places that give children and young people the opportunity to develop, in a context with other youths and leaders. Fritidsforum works to support the leisure centers - through training, initiatives and projects that make children and young people's voices heard. We support young people's self-organization, participation, empowerment and autonomy.

<https://fritidsforum.se/>

## DENMARK — UNGDOMSRINGEN

**Contact persons: Kenneth Poulsen and Martin Schouw.**

Ungdomsringen — The Danish Organisation of Youth Clubs is an independent interest organisation of recreational junior and youth clubs. Members also include a number of other associations that work with children and adolescents.

Ungdomsringen has three main tasks: To develop and implement activities in cooperation with the members — for example major music events and festivals, PC tournaments, motor sports tournaments, theater and dance festivals and nature and outdoor activities.

To offer skills development for employees in the field of children and young people — for example: leadership development, targeted training for municipalities, professional training for staff groups through process development and networking, advice and guidance in the field of children and young people, organisation and delivery of conferences and theme days.

To ensure the quality and holistic thinking when performing tasks for children and young people by participating in the public debate.

Ungdomsringen is represented in many important organisations, networks and committees working with participants who relate to children and young people's leisure time. [www.ungdomsringen.dk](http://www.ungdomsringen.dk) is updated daily with the latest news on children and adolescents and activities for the members and others interested in adolescents.

<https://www.ungdomsringen.dk/>

## FINLAND — NUORTEN AKATEMIA / YOUTH AKADEMY.

**Contact persons: Maija Vuorjoki and Johanna Teerijoki**

We are a non-profit organization that builds bridges between young people and society. We work with partner organizations in Finland and internationally to: Support young people's own projects, ambitions, learning and participation. Provide tools and training for adults who work with young people.

Our projects are firmly based on the needs and trends of today's society: themes range from climate change to sexual health and from personal development to traffic safety. Our projects are funded by organizations of different shapes and sizes. The Ministry of Education and Culture and Finland's Slot Machine Association are among our most important partners. In addition we cooperate with a number of other public institutions, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Finnish Transport Agency and the European Union. We also receive funding from private trusts and companies. Our member organizations include the largest Finnish youth and sport associations.

<https://www.nuortenakatemia.fi/en/>

## GREENLAND — KLUB"QAQQAVAARSUK" PISORTAQ

**Contact persons: Marie Egede Isbosethsen**

Marie is a leader of a leisure and youth club which is for children who have time off from school. The club is also open in the evening for young people aged 14–21 years. In the youth club we employ 3 youth workers.

## FAROE ISLANDS — BARNARÆTTINDI

### Contact person: Alice Simonsen

Educated in social pedagogy and communication, Alice has been part of many social development projects in the Faroe Islands, and outlines the most relevant youth projects that she had the responsibility for.

Having a background as a social worker, she has worked with youth in many different ways, where together with other social workers and politicians she has been active in helping the locals creating more and more youth clubs in as many towns and villages as possible.

Over the past 4 years, Alice has been the head of a project together with Nordic House of the Faroe Islands, where 2 events are held each year with the headline 'Children's Rights when you are 13 years old'. All students of 7th grade are invited to hear and discuss children's rights.

## The COVID-19 Effect

The year 2020 will be remembered in the future as the year that had a profound and life changing effect on the public and especially children, young people and Youth Work in general due to the coronavirus, COVID-19. Due to new challenges and the different pandemic regulations in the countries during this time each partner had to find, adapt, learn and use the best ways to communicate and ensure active youth participation throughout the project even in the times that the youth clubs and schools were closed. For all partners to be able to adapt and continue to communicate and connect with the young people locally, nationally and internationally on the project topics the partners used new and innovative online tools, digital workshops, question surveys, online mobile games, online questionnaires, meetings online, in youth clubs, schools and with different stakeholders.

The world pandemic created unprecedented conditions around the world, with far-reaching consequences for the lives and finances of individuals, families, companies and nations. It is clear that the long-term effects will be great, but young people will bear the weight of those consequences in the future.

### HOW, DURING THIS TIME, DID WE MANAGE TO ENSURE CONTINUED DIALOGUE AND ACTIVE COOPERATION DURING THE NATIONAL REGULATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS?

We gave all of the partners extra time, space and opportunity to use different creative ways to work with the young people in the project. During the times of closed schools, youth clubs and restrictions we, and our partners, used known digital youth work methods and online tools to communicate and involve the young people. The methods used were, for example, roleplay, film making, workshops, digital workshops, climate camps, software and apps like Google Jams, Google Docs, educational games and so forth. This has had a tremendously positive effect on the cooperation between the partners and all of the young people involved.

## ONLINE MEETINGS

“The future of Youth” where young people shared their thoughts and ideas about what they want to see implemented from this project and how they see the future arrangement on the continued dialogue of young people in the Nordic countries? Examples included:

- Annual Nordic Youth Conference.
- Regular youth partner meetings to ensure an active and regular discussion of young people in the Nordic countries.
- A strong unified Nordic voice.
- Organize a Nordic survey on the SDG 4.7 also addressing the changes during Covid and more.

# National youth meetings — Summary

## EDUCATION

The common theme was that schools should adapt to the students’ needs rather than the students adapt to the schools and the school system. Special care needs to be taken in making schools accommodating for all individuals with regard to their needs in learning abilities, physical abilities and other special needs. Dropout has to be dealt with and solutions like study-help, language education for foreigners and combating bullying put forward. Other common issues were increased focus on racism and climate change education, sex education as well as social initiatives to assist those in need of help with social issues like housing and financial support to be able to afford and attend good education.

## GENDER EQUALITY

The Nordic Countries have a good reputation when it comes to gender equality, but full equality has not been reached. The following matters were a common theme with the panels of young people:

- First of all the gender wage gap must be abolished as well as gender stereotypes in employment.
- We must acknowledge that inequality still exists and that equality is a social issue, not just women’s issues.
- Political gender equality has to improve and gender equality education is lacking in the school system.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

According to the panels there are indications that progress is being made in regards to the use of plastics and that public awareness is increasing. However there are serious issues that need to be addressed and governments need to take a stronger stance.



### Most of the groups mentioned the following issues to be very important:

- Better education on environmental matters.
- More use of 0 emission transportation and public transportation as well as increasing the use and production of renewable energy and cutting down and closing down fossil fuel consumption and production.
- Food waste must be reduced and consumption of material goods must be reduced by buying more second hand.
- More emphasis should be put on organic and local food production and less consumption of meat.
- Governments need to have a better understanding of environmental issues which will lead to better and more relevant environmental legislation.

### HUMAN RIGHTS

There was a general consensus that the Nordic Countries are doing well in regards to human rights but the main issues to address were cultural diversity and migration. All countries had the common theme of better migration policies, better education for locals on ethnic, religious and cultural diversity, and better education for migrants in regards to language and human rights. The tendency to focus on racism as the main issue can cause discrimination against other minorities, like LGBTQ, to be overlooked. Other common areas were gender equality and the rights of children to have a say in matters concerning them.

## The voices of Nordic Youth

"Offer more practical learning and increase connection with non-formal learning."

"The leap from elementary to secondary school: The gap between elementary and secondary school is very large and scary. We cannot go to our youth clubs [félagsmiðstöðvar] any more and a lot of us go to school outside of our neighborhood."

"Schools must adapt to young people, and not always the other way around"

"An active conversation between young people and government"

"Accepting everyone as who they are and respecting other cultures."

"We want more assistance for young people aged 16+"

"It must be possible to give students more freedom in their learning process by making their learning more independent. This can help them focus and become more interested in the subject which also makes the student learn much more, as the student learns by doing. With some small periods of blackboard instruction or the like, if the class does not understand the topic."

"Offer more vegetarian food in school cafeterias."

"We want more sex and gender education."

"I don't think humans are born with racist opinions. Therefore I think it is important to have knowledge and understanding about equal value for all human beings early in young people's education and to develop and improve this education throughout the school."

"Makes us more responsible for our own education."

"There is not a youth club for all young people in the age 16-25 years."

"Acknowledge student councils as something serious."

"Equal pay for equal work"

"More emphasis on mental health, social skills, more training on current topics and diverse education like arts etc."

# Conclusion

Informations from the Mapping report and results and proposals from the youth meetings and the Nordic Youth Congress will be used for the publication of common Nordic content with quality indicators on SDG 4.7 at all school levels. The project partners have presented the project on many different occasions as have the Youth Councils of Samfés. Here are some of the main points:

- The result of this project could be used in making a policy paper for the Nordic Council of Ministers about youth ideas and wishes.
- Involve the young people in decisions regarding the national and Nordic educational systems.
- Ensure active participation of young people when educational material is being made and published.
- Have Samfés organize a Nordic Youth Council with young participants from all of the Nordic countries. Making their voice heard so that politicians will take them seriously and hear youth's voices, for real.
- Host an Annual Nordic Youth Congress like the one held in Mosfellsbær in October 2019 but with 1000–5000 young participants starting 2022. The countries will alternate in hosting the congress with active involvement of the Nordic Youth Council.
- Decision on arrangements for continue the dialogue between young people and the Nordic authorities in the future.
- Ensure active youth participation and a strong, united Nordic youth voice.
- It is important to ensure continued dialogue between young people in the Nordic countries.

This project has given many young people in all of the Nordic countries an opportunity to:

- Meet and get to know other young people in the Nordic countries
- Learn from each other and share their local and national views, experiences and languages
- Learn about the SDG 4.7 and make positive changes
- Actively participate in the project, share thoughts and talk about sustainability with other youngsters
- Learn new skills such as facilitating groups, networking with others, using foreign languages and more



## EXAMPLES OF THE PROJECT PRESENTATIONS:

- Presentations for International cooperation partners visiting Samfés, Youth Work Iceland.
- Rotary Iceland, Nauthóll Restaurant. 26. ágúst 2019.
- Samfés Educational days at Varmaland 2019.
- NORDISK SEMINAR -Fremtidens Kompetencer 17. september 2019
- National Educational Assembly. Skólaping sveitarfélaganna. Á réttu róli? Grand Hótel Reykjavík, 4. nóvember 2019. "Framtíðarskólinn, ungt fólk í lykilhlutverki".
- Let's work together at strengthening democracy and inclusive education for all in schools 9.–10. December 2019.
- Presenting the project in youth clubs 2020.

## BYPRODUCTS OF THE NORDIC COOPERATION:

- Increased dialogue and other joint projects between the project partners.
- Nordic Esport United, an online Esport tournament for youngsters from Iceland, Norway, and Denmark of the age 13–25.
- Nordic Youth Podcast – Young people from all the countries will work together creating a Nordic podcast, where topics relating to young people will be discussed.
- Gamified Agenda 2030. Co-creating a new game with youngsters from 3–4 Nordic countries.
- T.A.L.C. Trans-Atlantic Language Congress, November 28th–30th, 2019. Varmaland, Iceland. Nordic Youth Cooperation.

## LINKS TO PROJECT MEDIA:

Nordic Youth Congress: <https://youtu.be/Xd3gxLhlnEM>

Message from the congress participants: <https://youtu.be/XDd v zLohg>

Iceland's President at the Youth Congress: <https://youtu.be/QfSvV8-0cUo>

Congress preparation video: <https://youtu.be/RSvj2otLmQs>

The Voices of Youth Sustainability\_1: <https://youtu.be/FAEDHYsSqR0>

The Voices of Youth Sustainability\_2: <https://youtu.be/QkUVAw60M6U>

The Voices of Youth Sustainability\_3: <https://youtu.be/X K8uare2Q4>

Nordic Language Congress: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vx isGLwm8Q>

# SAMFÉS — YOUTH WORK ICELAND

Norðlingabraut 12, 110 Reykjavík

[www.samfes.is](http://www.samfes.is)

<https://www.facebook.com/samfes>

<https://www.instagram.com/samfes/>

<https://twitter.com/samfes>



Government of Iceland  
Ministry of Education,  
Science and Culture