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Nordic Council of Ministers

Strategy for Children and Young People



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Nordic co-operation

Nordic co-operation, one of the oldest and most wide-ranging regional partnerships in the world, involves Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. Co-operation reinforces the sense of Nordic community while respecting national differences and similarities, makes it possible to uphold Nordic interests in the world at large and promotes positive relations between neighbouring peoples.

Co-operation was formalised in 1952 when the *Nordic Council* was set up as a forum for parliamentarians and governments. The Helsinki Treaty of 1962 has formed the framework for Nordic partnership ever since. The *Nordic Council of Ministers* was set up in 1971 as the formal forum for co-operation between the governments of the Nordic countries and the political leadership of the autonomous areas, i.e. the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.

Vision





Vision: To make the Nordic Region the best place in the world for children and young people

Children and young people are a top priority for the Nordic Council of Ministers. The follow-up work done based on this strategy document will reiterate their importance in all sectors of Nordic co-operation.

Youngsters have long been a political priority in the Nordic countries and Autonomous Territories, where work has been based on shared values such as justice, equality, democracy, openness and partnership. Consistently close co-operation between the Nordic countries has brought greater gains than the individual countries would have achieved on their own. The definition of children and young people covers everyone aged 0–25. The range does, however, vary according to the context.

Main objective

The main objective of the Nordic Council of Ministers' policy on children and young people is to promote opportunities for the young to enjoy a decent standard of living and exert influence over their own lives, irrespective of gender, ethnic, cultural or socio-economic background, age, place of residence, sexual orientation or disability.

This work is based upon a human rights perspective, i.e.:

- The human rights of the young are protected and promoted. All work involving people under 18 years of age is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Children and young people have a right to education and training, to social and financial security, good health and personal growth.
- Children and young people should be involved in, and exert influence upon, their own lives, their immediate surroundings and their social development.

Prioriti





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Priorities

Most of the work done by the Nordic Council of Ministers has a bearing on children and young people. As a result, each of the Council of Ministers' sectors must incorporate a youth perspective into all of their activities. The priorities for the next few years will be:

Food: Promoting improvements to health and the quality of young people's lives through food and exercise and by reducing commercial pressure on them.

The environment: Promoting knowledge of natural resources and encouraging respect for nature among children and young people.

Culture: Promoting opportunities for youngsters to participate actively in culture and develop their own cultural idioms, guaranteeing access to high-quality Nordic content in digital media such as computer games, making sure that children and young people possess the requisite skills to use modern media, and ensuring that the Nordic Houses and institutions make greater efforts to communicate and stimulate children's and youth culture.

Health and social services: Working with vulnerable youngsters, improving the health of all young people and preventing patterns of abuse. Work with vulnerable young people in the Baltic States and North-West Russia will remain a top priority.

Gender equality: Equal opportunities and quality of life for girls and boys.

Education and training: Improving educational and training opportunities for young people. Promoting research into the quality of education and training at all levels in order to reinforce the reputation of the Nordic Region as a role model for the development of human resources. The success of many activities is determined by their quality assurance and evaluation procedures. Other quality enhancement activities in the education and training sector include international co-operation on performance indicators and following up on the Copenhagen Process, including the recognition of vocational qualifications and credit transfer in vocational training.

Nordic Children's and Youth Committee (NORDBUK): NORDBUK acts in a consultative capacity on Nordic issues, providing input on new methods of participation in democratic processes, diversity, human rights, international co-operation on youth policies and the co-ordination of research.



Roles, responsibilities and follow-up

Roles, responsibilities and follow-up

A joint responsibility

The joint strategy makes each of the Nordic Council of Ministers' sectors responsible for incorporating a children and youth perspective into all of its activities. It is up to the Council of Ministers to make sure that this political focus generates tangible results.

MR-SAM

The Nordic Ministers for Co-operation (MR-SAM) and the Nordic Committee for Co-operation (NSK) have overall responsibility for co-ordinating Nordic co-operation on children and young people. The individual councils of min-

isters are responsible for the specific content of measures adopted in their sectors.

Defining and delegating responsibility

The Nordic Council of Ministers is responsible for achieving the overall strategic goals and for incorporating a children and youth perspective into all relevant action plans. The Council of Ministers analyses how decisions and actions might affect youngsters and defines quantifiable strategic goals.

Nordic Children's and Youth Committee (NORDBUK)

NORDBUK is the Nordic Council of Ministers' advisory and co-ordinating organ for Nordic and international co-opera-

tion on issues affecting the young. NORDBUK's activities are guided by this strategy document, the action plan and the priorities set out by the annual programme for the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers. NORDBUK is responsible for co-ordinating and following up on this strategy in accordance with the action plan.

An overall progress report will be submitted to MR-SAM each year. The report will first be processed by NORDBUK, which is responsible for evaluating the content and proposing amendments.

This strategy was adopted by the Nordic Ministers for Co-operation at their meeting in Copenhagen on 1st March 2006.





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