



EVALUATION

Ungdommens Folkemøde NORD 2023



UNGDOMMENS
FOLKEMØDE | **NORD**

Evaluation Report

An evaluation report based on experiences
from Ungdommens Folkemøde NORD 2023

UNGDOMSBUREAUET

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In collaboration with



Supported by

A.P. MØLLER FONDEN

KNUD HØJGAARDS FOND



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Introduction

On April 21-22, 2023, Ungdommens Folkemøde NORD took place for the very first time in Copenhagen, Denmark. Being the first of its kind, the democracy festival focused exclusively on Nordic youth, creating a space for political and cultural exchanges, democratic activities, creative expressions, and international networking.

Ungdommens Folkemøde NORD as a festival aimed to strengthen the democratic self-confidence of Nordic youth and to kickstart the social and cultural community of the Nordic region. Nordic youth are among the best in the world when it comes to knowledge about democratic systems and rights, and we wanted to make use of this knowledge by letting Nordic youth come together and explore what the Nordic region is and, more importantly, what it can be.

The entire festival was open and free for everyone to attend, and we made a special effort to invite and attract participants from all over the Nordic region. Specifically, we offered to pay for the travel expenses for young people within our target group age (18-25) so that they would have easier access – and so that it was not only the resourceful ones that had the chance to be part of the festival.

In this report, we look at what some of the 1.500+ participants had to say about their experiences at the festival, while also examining evaluations from the 17 organizations and our Core Volunteer Group.



PART I: Participants

Participants

We will begin with the people the festival is all about: The participants. Just to clarify from the beginning, we didn't get as many nationalities represented in the responses as we expected. We got respondents from Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden but missed out on Denmark, Faroe Islands, and Åland Islands. This is most likely because our evaluation survey was spread through our network with Nuva Ry (FI), KRK Inua (GL), Voksenåsen (NO), and Sveriges Ungdomsråd (SE) reaching out to confirmed participants in their network, while our Icelandic contacts also helped, resulting in answers from those five countries. Most participants from Denmark were individuals that attended the festival without being part of a specific organization in our network and therefore were difficult to reach for us afterwards. The same goes for Faroe Islands, and Åland Islands. However, this does not mean that there were no participants from those three missing countries. In a democracy-themed survey conducted *during* the festival, we had responses from all eight nationalities, so we know that they were all present. Unfortunately, we couldn't reach them this time. And with that, let's get back to the survey at hand.

Our evaluation surveys resulted in primarily qualitative answers, and so we have analyzed and sorted some of the data in order to present it in a meaningful way without quoting everyone.

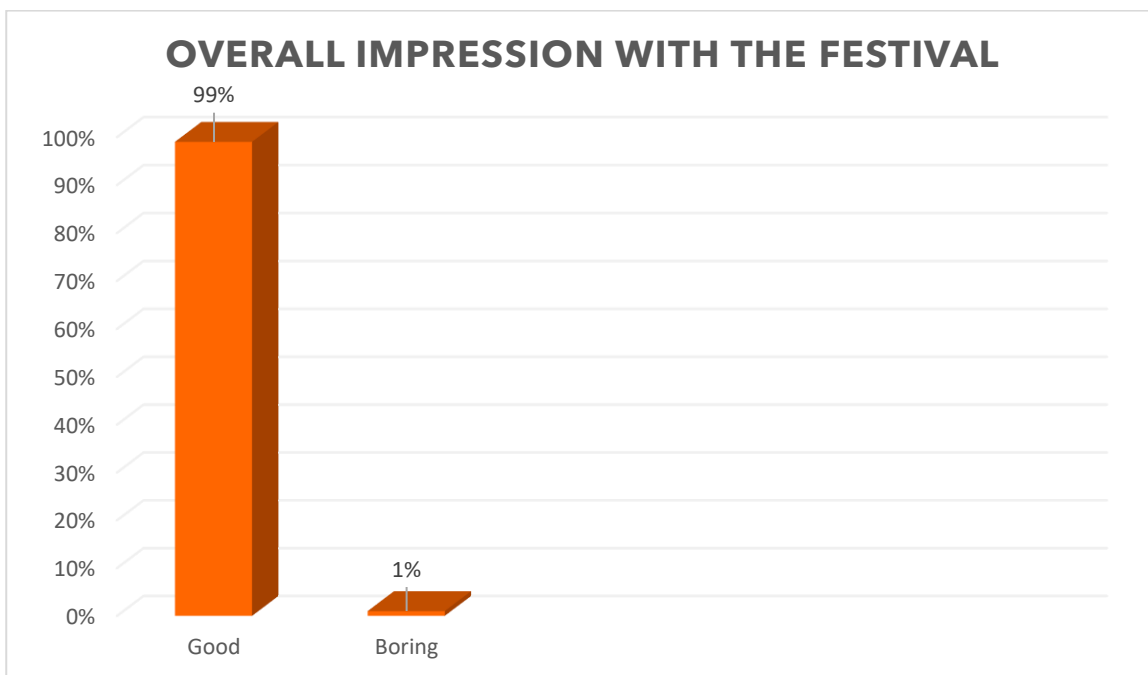


Illustration 1.1: Participants overall impression (Source: Cluster & Margin)

The first one was among the easy ones, as all but one respondent were hugely positive when asked about the overall impression with the festival. Diving into the answers, beyond "boring" the festival is described as "lively", "festive", "engaging", "fun", "special" and "well planned". One of the respondents elaborated a bit more, branding it "a nice meeting place for nordic youth interested

in democracy, the nordic and the society in general” (Norwegian female. Source: Cluster & Margin).

Among the important things for the festival was the representation aspect, not only in relation to participants, but also participants’ own feeling of representation through content and atmosphere. When asked if they felt that their country was represented in the festival, the majority confirmed. This is hugely positive as one of the visions behind the festival was to create not a Danish festival with Nordic representation, but a Nordic festival with Danish representation alongside all other Nordic countries. Although we can’t specifically conclude that this was how it turned out, especially with only five of the eight nationalities represented in the answers, we do have a clear indication that a decent amount of representation was felt.

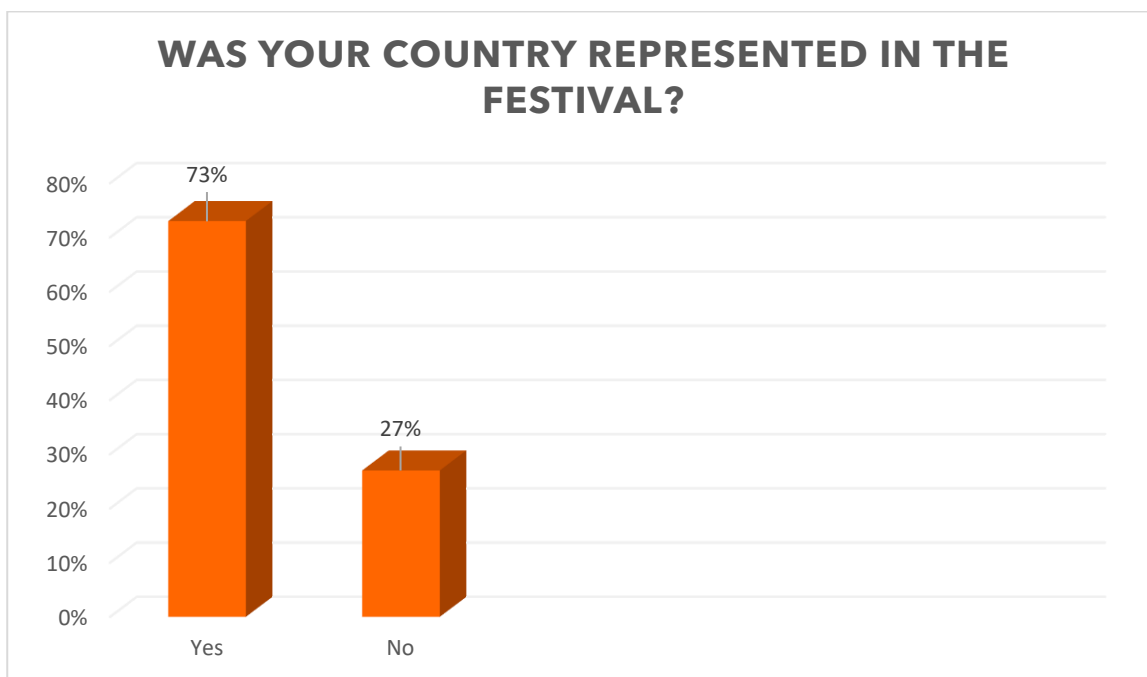


Illustration 1.2: Was your country represented? (Source: Cluster & Margin)

As the graph suggests, almost three quarters of the respondents confirmed that they felt their country was represented in the festival, which is a good number, but it leaves obvious room for improvement. Of the no-says, 40% were Finnish, 20% Greenlandic, 20% Norwegian, and 20% Swedish, and while there are no glaring anomalies in the numbers, the higher Finnish percentage is most likely due to very limited Finnish content on the stages, an issue we struggled with in the planning and flagged as a future improvement area.

Moving on to individual outputs, what have the respondents taken with them from their visit at Ungdommens Folkemøde NORD 2023? As a first, 100% of respondents answered ‘yes’ when asked if the festival inspired them to participate in a Nordic community or collaboration, and when looking at the more qualitative responses on what inspired them, there are some fine examples:

Meeting other nordic youth made me realize that we are many that are interested in the same stuff. Also it was very educative hearing different people speak about what is going on in different country and what they do to make a difference (Norwegian, source: Cluster & Margin survey)

Instead of reading statistics I could now see how many young people who share my beliefs, hopes, and fears for the future. It made me feel hopeful that there are many other who wants to make a change too, which inspired me a lot. (Swedish person, source: Cluster & Margin survey)

These two have the identification in common; the realization that other young people from other Nordic countries are interested in the same stuff and maybe even think and believe the same way. Especially the second quote points out something important in that the physical meeting at the festival made way for an experience that goes beyond what simple statistics can tell. Even though we come up with reports presenting this and that in numeric terms, nothing comes close to the real-life experience, and that is valuable to remember. In addition to this, the social aspect of meeting each other in real-life also plays its part. When asked what the best experience was at the festival, 39% of respondents went with statements like “meeting people” and “new friends”. Considering the amount of stage content and organization activities that headlined the festival and presented itself as the big experiences, the emphasis on the social aspect from the respondents underlines the value of getting together. In addition to this, 95% said that they did engage in activities presented by someone from another country and 89% talked to someone from another country. This is a real positive as the social aspect was among the important focus areas for the festival.

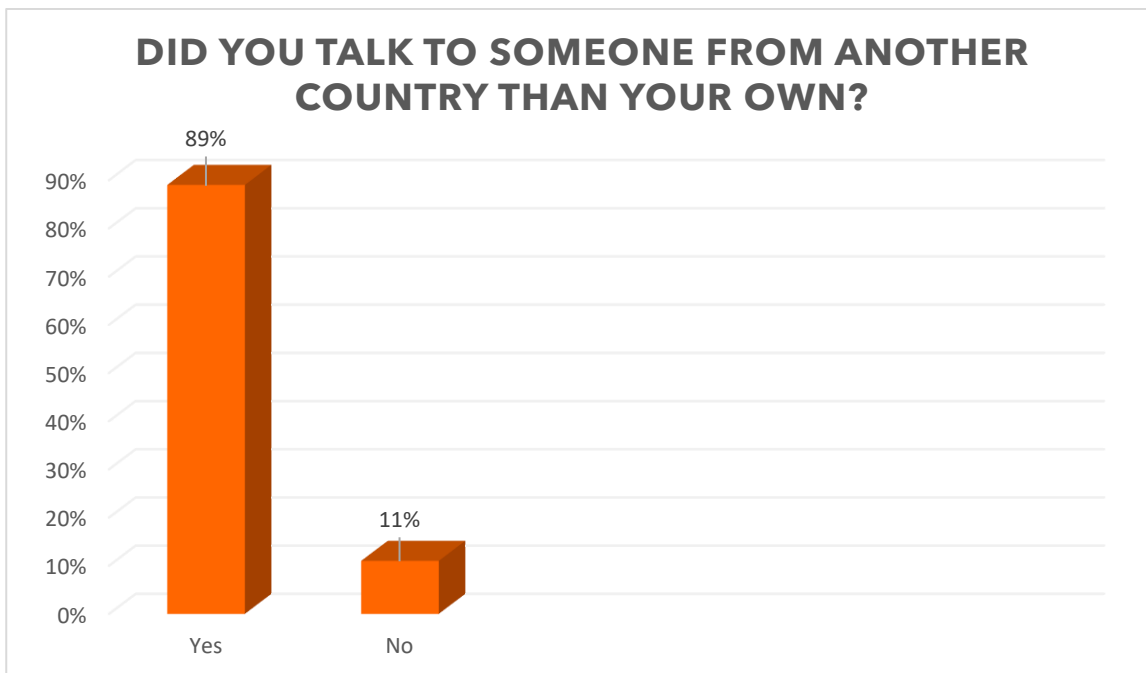


Illustration 1.3: Did you talk to someone from another country? (Source: Cluster & Margin)

If we turn to some of the suggested changes the participants would make, there are some pretty useful insights that also describes the overall experience. First of all, most respondents say that they were very happy with the design and structure of the festival site, branding it “creative”,

“smooth”, “colorful”, and “adapted to younger people”. So far so good. But there are also some respondents calling for changes that could have made it an even better experience, most notably in terms of the stage programs. Some think that the stage content overlapped too much, some think that there were simply too much and that it should be narrowed down to fewer stages and fewer activities. Also, some find the general overview of stage content confusing at times while some had struggles with hearing what was going on at the stages due to many simultaneous activities and, as mentioned, overlapping content.

When asked what the respondents would like to experience or learn if the festival was to return in 2024, there were a lot of great answers, with everything from minority debates to LGBT issues, an ice cream van, and more content involving Finns. However, the most eye-catching suggestions are the ones arguing that there should be even more options for participants to *participate*. In the stage content, that is. This is important to have in mind as we try to find a balance between the passive and active forms of activities at the festival so that everyone can enact their engagement the way they prefer.



PART II: Organizations

Organizations

A total of 17 organizations were present at Ungdommens Folkemøde NORD and were divided into three theme areas: Identity & Equality, Sustainability & Future, and Wellbeing & Creativity. Overall, the organizations were happy about their participation at the festival, highlighting inspiration and participant interaction, but also pointing to the amount of participants as an area that would need improvement.

As a first, we asked the organizations if Ungdommens Folkemøde NORD lived up to their expectations. Here, it became obvious that the festival somewhat lived up to the expectations with 71% partially agreeing, and although none of the organizations completely disagree, none completely agree either. In the middle, 21% went with neither nor, while 7% partially disagrees.

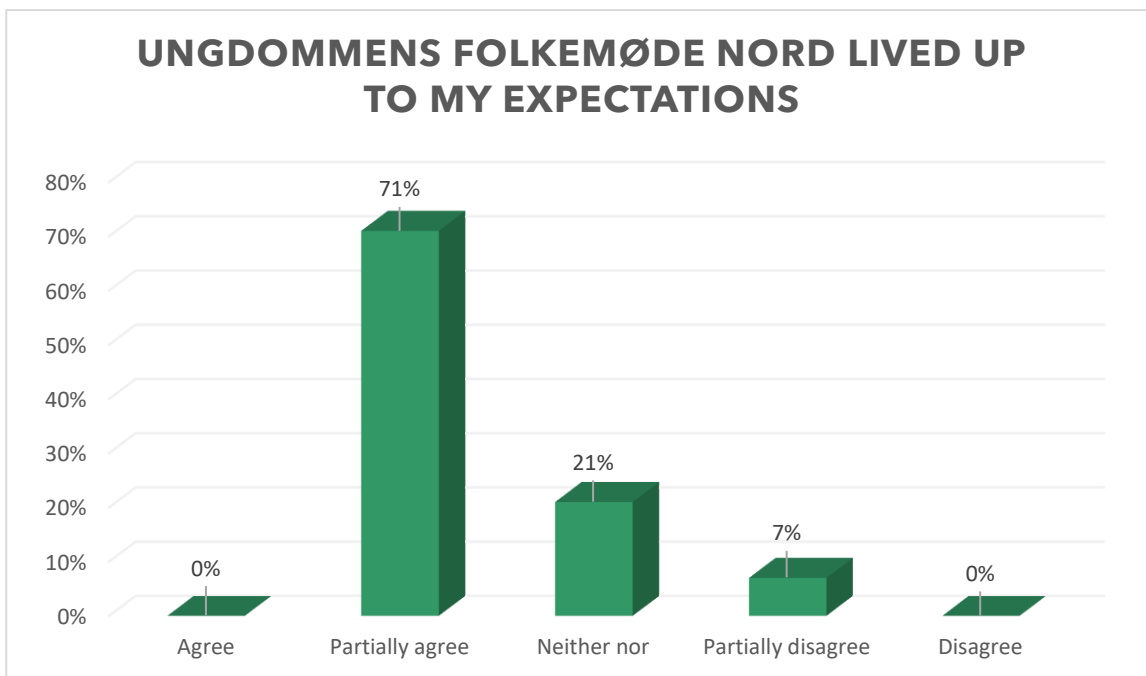


Illustration 2.1: Organization Expectations (Source: Ungdomsbureauet)

The answers make it clear that while the festival not completely lived up to the expectations of the organizations, it didn't fall through either. And in this case, the data only becomes meaningful when adding context as to which expectations they had going into the festival. When asked specifically about their expectations, most organizations point to the number of visitors as something that was not quite as high as they had hoped for. This is understandable as we had targeted an estimated 2.000-3.000 participants and ended up with ≈1.500 during the festival. Some of the organizations highlighted a lack of Danish participants as most people visiting their stall had other Nordic nationalities. This is most likely linked to the overall number of participants as our recruitment strategy primarily focused on non-Danish participants for the festival to actually be Nordic in terms of representation among the participants. Instead of having 3.000 participants of whom, say, 60% were Danish, we ended up with fewer people but secured broad Nordic representation

with an estimated 20-25% Danish participants. On the one hand, it can be argued that it's great to have a good balance in the nationalities among the participants without the host country dominating the experience. On the other hand, it can be argued that travelling organizations were left a little short of Danes despite Denmark being the host country. As a suggestion for the future, a few organizations mentioned more advertising targeting local youth in Denmark as well as general young Nordics to enhance the amount of participants.

In terms of interaction, all organizations interacted with youth from around the Nordic region, with 57% completely agreeing and 43% partially agreeing. In elaborated comments, the lack of Danish participants gets mentioned again alongside the general number of participants, which is a general tendency throughout the evaluation. The positive, though, is that all organizations interacted with Nordic youth from across the region which was one of the important goals for the festival.

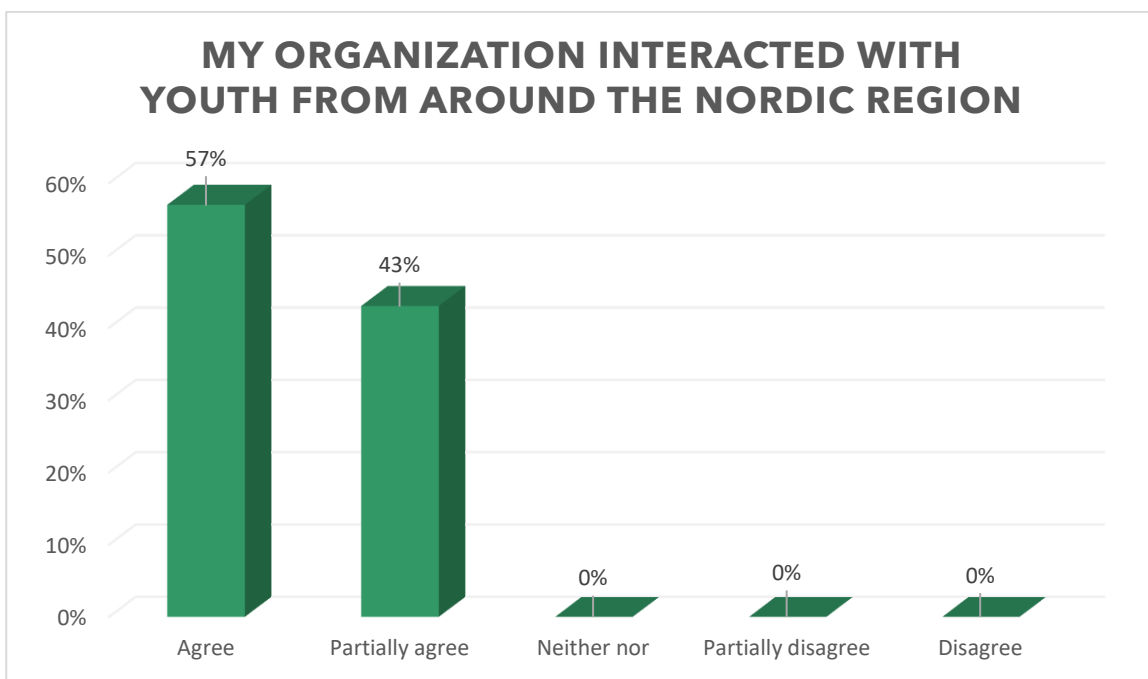


Illustration 2.2: Organization Interaction (Source: Ungdomsbureauet)

Even though the organizations would have liked more participants, almost all of them felt that their activities were well received by the participants that visited their stalls (71% agree, 21% partially agree). Also, most organizations felt that the participants were engaged when visiting their stalls (43% agree, 50% partially agree) with the main caveat being the difficulties in attracting participants and keeping them for longer periods of time. This is most likely due to the many other organizations and stage acts taking place at the festival simultaneously, a condition that was always going to be a challenge for those creating content.

In terms of output and takeaways, the organizations largely agree that participating in Ungdommens Folkemøde NORD gave them more inspiration to engage in Nordic co-operations.

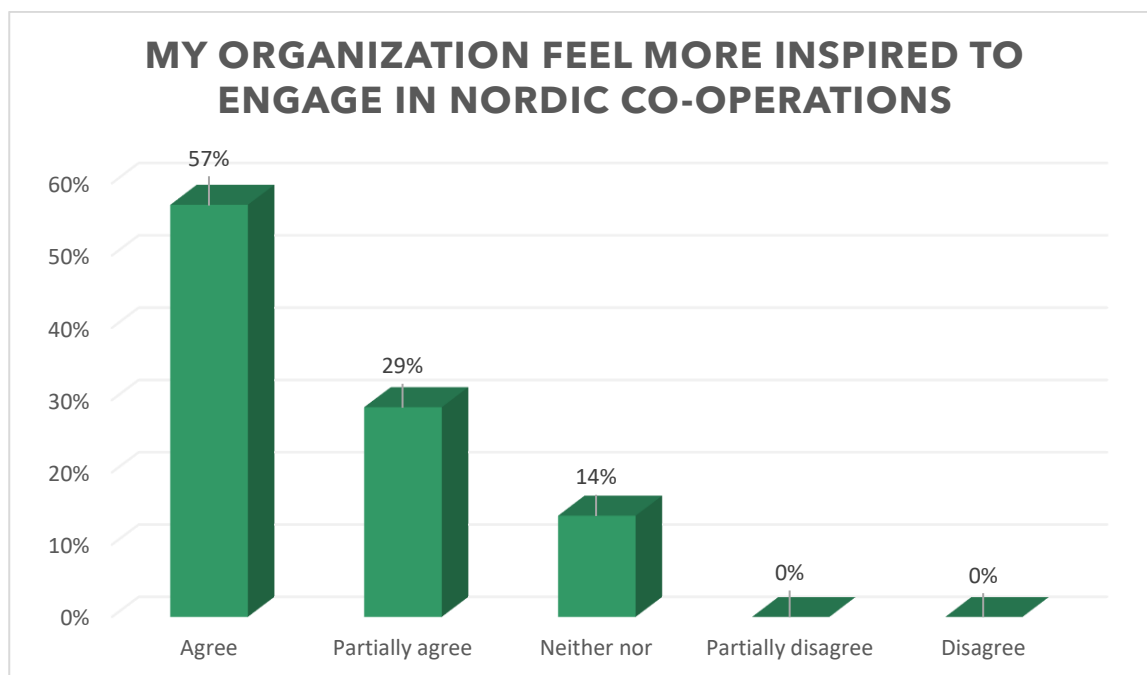


Illustration 2.3: Inspired to engage in Nordic co-operations (source: Ungdomsbureauet)

With one of the key goals for Ungdommens Folkemøde NORD being to strengthen the Nordic co-operation, this is obviously great news. With a total of 86% of organizations completely or partially agreeing, there is reason to believe that the festival format and, specifically, Ungdommens Folkemøde NORD has the capacity to inspire for more Nordic co-operation in the future.

All in all, the participating organizations had a good experience at Ungdommens Folkemøde NORD (64% agree, 26% partially agree), and the majority would participate again in the future (57%) while the rest maybe would (36%) or don't know yet (7%).



PART III: Volunteers

Volunteers

This section is dedicated to our Core Volunteer Group consisting of 12 members from seven different countries. The group worked together from kickoff in September until the end of the festival in April, with their main task being curating content for their own stage, "The Compass".

In this section we will focus on their experiences regarding: trust and tools, teamwork, build-up, learnings, and overall reassessment of the Core Volunteer period.

First of all, trust was an important factor in the process as the group was tasked with planning and curating content by themselves, which required a certain amount of creative freedom and, therefore, trust. When asked, 100% of the volunteers had a feeling of trust from the UFN staff, and most also felt creative freedom with 76% agree, 13% partially agree, and 13% not sure.

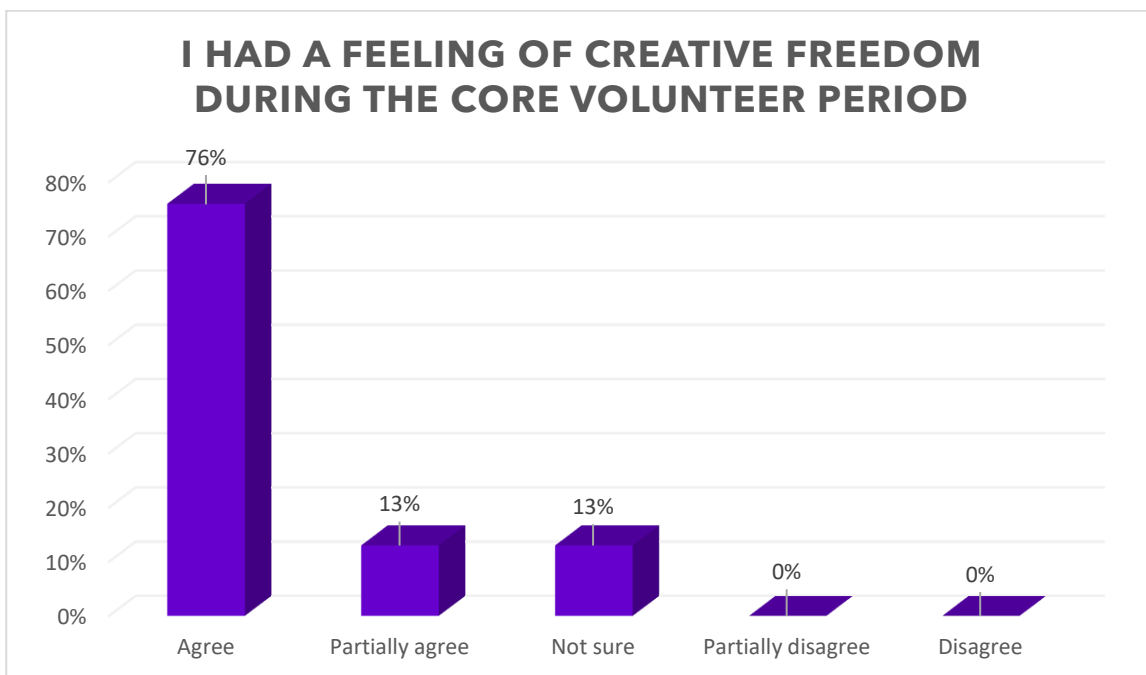


Illustration 3.1: Feeling of creative freedom (source: Ungdomsbureauet)

With trust and creative freedom also comes responsibility and self-governance, which ultimately requires skills or tools to complete the task themselves. Here, the group largely feel that they had the tools and skills needed to do the task, although there is room for improvement, with 50% agree, 38% partially agree, and 12% not sure. With "only" 50% agreeing without reservations, it suggests that there could have been done more to prepare the group, although it was never expected that they would possess all the tools and skills to curate festival content as the whole process was also meant as a learning curve.

Moving on to the teamwork part, we asked the group if they were happy with the team effort in planning and curating content for their stage, resulting in rather mixed answers. Although not something to be too concerned with, the responses show that it didn't exactly work out perfectly.

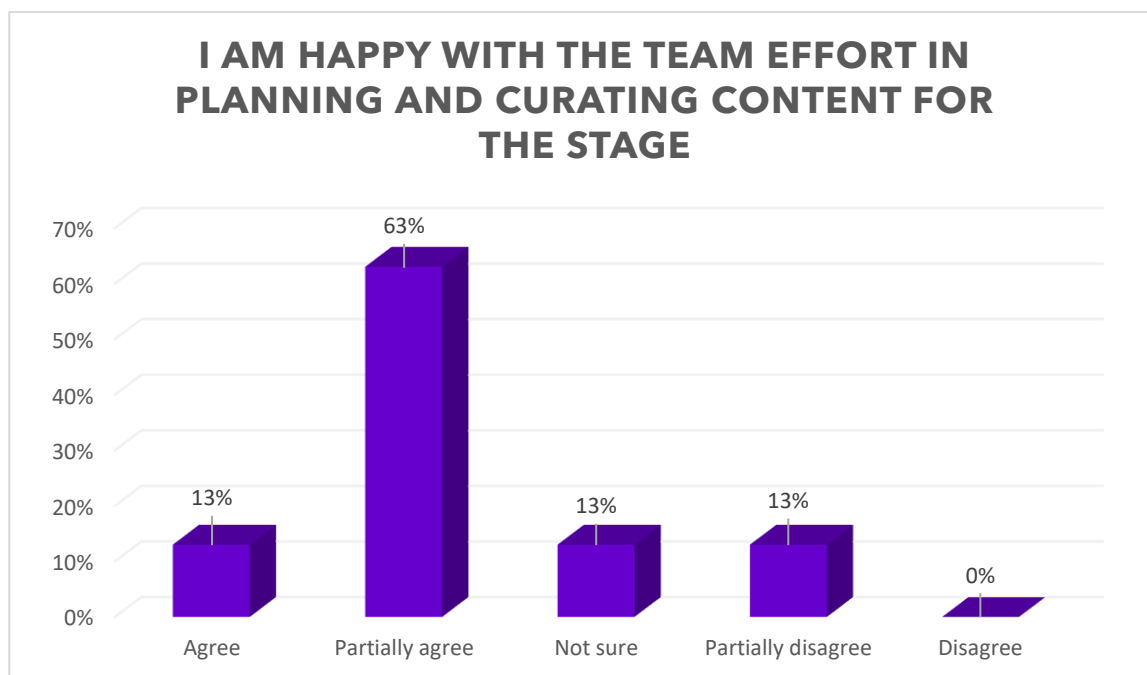


Illustration 3.2: Team effort (source: Ungdomsbureauet)

With only 13% completely agreeing, it is obvious that something wasn't working as it was supposed to do. One of the main reasons for this seems to be the difficulties attached to the group work being executed through online meetings as the members resided all over the Nordic region, some of them in different time zones. When asked if it was easy to work with the group through online meetings, the picture is clear: 13% disagree, 38% partially disagree, while 25% are not sure, and 13% partially agree and agree respectively. In other words, only 1 in 4 found it somewhat easy to work online with the group, so that has undoubtedly impacted the motivation and teamwork.

Even though the planning phase had its difficulties, the task was completed in the end, and there were some really positive takeaways for the core volunteers. 100% agreed that the build-up and showday production gave them a better understanding of what it takes to make a festival, and on a higher level 88% agrees that they feel more connected to the Nordic region with 12% partially agreeing. This in particular is valuable as Ungdommens Folkemøde NORD aimed to strengthen the Nordic togetherness among youth across the region.

As one of the core volunteers put it:

Yes, I have made friends and become better at speaking scandinavian, learned loads of new things about the other countries which has just led to my interest for the Nordic region increase so much.

Another vision for the festival was to empower youth and strengthen the democratic self-confidence, and when asked if they felt that the festival did that, 63% agree and 25% partially agree. For some, it has even enhanced the will to participate in other things: "I agree. I feel empowered and would like to be more engaged in society after being a part UFN," one core volunteer explains. On a personal level, the festival seems to have invoked an interest and a feeling of agency among the core volunteers. On a practical level, the experience has also brought development as most of the group feel that they have learned useful skills for future projects.

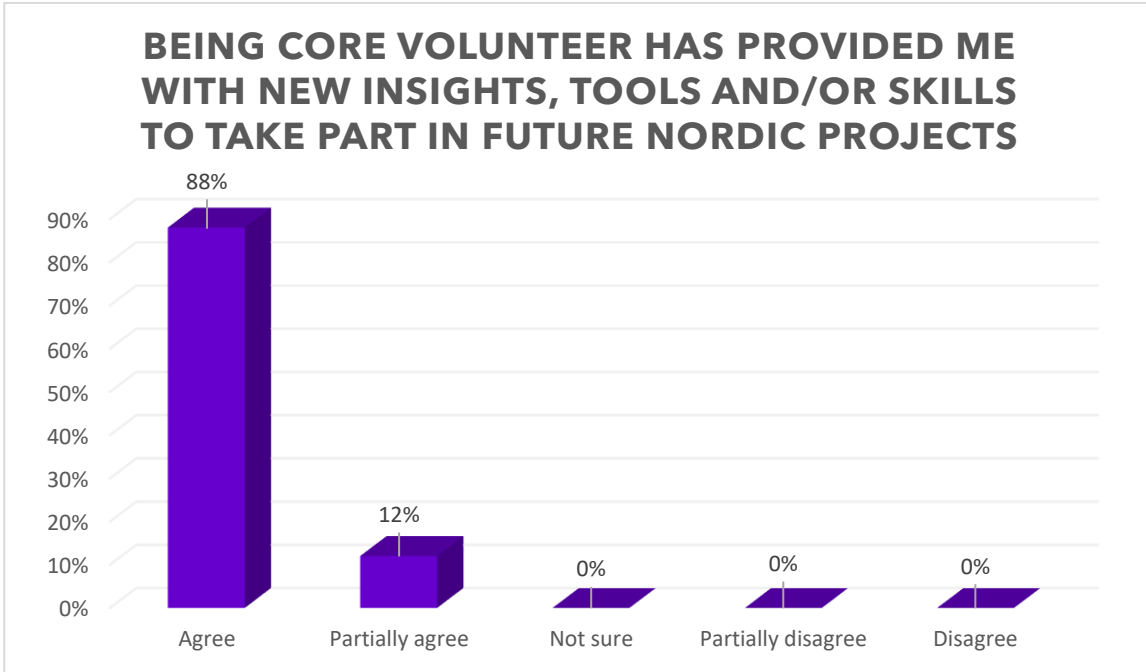


Illustration 3.3: New insights, tools, and skills (source: Ungdomsbureauet)

The numbers almost speak for themselves here as 88% completely agree and 12% partially agree, which, combined with their stronger connection to the Nordic region and their feeling of empowerment, bodes well for the future.

When we look at the overall view of the festival, yet again 88% completely agreed and 12% partially agreed that it lived up to their expectations. When rating the entire core volunteer experience from 1-5, half of the group rated five stars out of five, while the other half rated four stars out of five.

Overall rating of the core volunteer experience by the volunteers themselves:



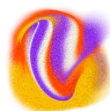
Summary

Our evaluation from the participants is limited by the fact that four countries are missing in the data set as we didn't manage to get answers from Danish, Icelandic, Faroese nor Åland participants. However unfortunate that is, we know that they were present during the festival, and we had to work with what we got in terms of the data. Here is a summary of some of the key points from the evaluation analysis.

Part I on participants argued that all but one comment was positive in the assessment of the overall impression with the festival. The participants find the festival engaging, lively, well planned, creative, smooth, colorful, and largely representative of their individual countries, the latter making it more of a Nordic festival with a Danish touch than a Danish festival with a Nordic touch. Room for improvement, but a good start. In terms of personal output, the participants feel inspired to engage in future Nordic projects, and many of them highlight the social aspect of meeting new people as the main takeaway. Almost all of the respondents have talked to people from other countries than their own and engaged in activities presented by people from other countries than their own. Though mostly positive, there are also suggestions on improvements from the participants. Some respondents found the program too overlapping and sometimes confusing, while others had problems with hearing what was going on due to noise from other activities nearby. Looking forward, respondents also suggest that there should be even more options to take part in the stage content and enact their democratic engagement more actively.

Part II on organizations argued that the festival experience only partially lived up to their expectations. This is mainly due to the number of participants that wasn't on the expected level, with some of the organizations especially pointing to a lack of Danish participants. The main explanation to this is our vision of a Nordic festival meaning that the recruitment of international participants got more focus than the Danish ones, but nonetheless it is something that was noticed by some organizations. In terms of interaction, all organizations interacted with youth from around the Nordic region, and almost all organizations felt that the participants were engaged when visiting their stalls. A takeaway for the organizations is more inspiration to engage in Nordic co-operations, and all in all the vast majority of the organizations agree that they had a good experience at the festival.

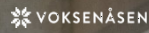
Part III on volunteers argued that all volunteers felt trust from the staff, while also experiencing creative freedom in their work. Mixed assessments when it comes to teamwork within the group can be explained with the task being executed mainly through online meetings, which is not always the most engaging format. Only 1 in 4 found it somewhat easy to work online. Despite the struggles, the task was completed, and all volunteers agreed that they learned a lot about creating a festival and have acquired skills for future projects. On a higher level, most volunteers felt more connected to the Nordic region and felt empowered in terms of democratic self-confidence. To round it all off, the group all felt that the festival completely or partially lived up to their expectations, and their combined rating of the volunteer experience ended at 4,5 out of 5.



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