

Nordplus



Co-operation between
educational institutions
in the Nordic and Baltic
Countries

- Nordplus Junior
- Nordplus Higher Education
- Nordplus Adult
- Nordplus Horizontal
- Nordplus Nordic Languages



Nordplus

Cooperation between educational institutions in
the Nordic and Baltic Countries

Joan Rask and Henrik Neiiendam Andersen

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Nordplus

Nordplus is the Nordic Council of Ministers' programme for support of co-operation and mobility between educational institutions across the Nordic and Baltic countries.

Nordplus is one of the largest initiatives of the Nordic educational co-operation and offers financial support for the collaboration between educational institutions within the entire field of education, from kindergarten and primary education to higher education and adult learning.

Nordplus was established in 1988 and has supported the Nordic educational co-operation and the close cohesion between the Nordic countries for over 30 years. In 2008 the Baltic countries joined Nordplus.

Nordic co-operation

Nordic co-operation is one of the world's most extensive forms of regional collaboration, involving Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland.

Nordic co-operation has firm traditions in politics, the economy, and culture. It plays an important role in European and international collaboration and aims at creating a strong Nordic community in a strong Europe.

Nordic co-operation seeks to safeguard Nordic and regional interests and principles in the global community. Shared Nordic values help the region solidify its position as one of the world's most innovative and competitive.

Nordic Council of Ministers

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PREFACE BY THE MINISTER



↑ Lilja Alfreðsdóttir, Icelandic minister of Education, Science and Culture
Photo: Sigurjón Sigurjónsson ljósm

← Photo: Yadid Levy / Norden.org

In the Old Icelandic Eddic poem Hávamál, it states: "He alone knows who wanders widely". One could say that these ancient words of wisdom aptly sum up the goal of the Nordic Council's education policy on mobility under its Nordplus programme, as well as reflect one of the central objectives of Nordic collaboration.

In a Nordic Council of Ministers' committee report from 2017, entitled "Valuable Cooperation" (Ett värdefullt samarbete), over 3,000 Nordic citizens were asked for their opinion on Nordic collaboration. The findings revealed that people were very positive towards such cooperation, particularly in the area of education. Among young people, around half considered mobility within the Nordic countries to be one of the greatest benefits of that partnership.

It is indeed heartening to see that around 9,000 students and teachers take part in educational exchange projects within the Nordic countries annually. This interaction is financed under the Nordplus programme, the largest of its kind in the field of education under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

It is also worth noting that in addition to the five Nordic countries, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Åland, and the three Baltic states are participants in Nordplus. This shows the wide degree of involvement by the countries in the programme and their commitment to collaboration in the field of education.

We know that education is a continuous and never-ending process, and study can take many forms. Lifelong learning is not limited to institutions or places, and today it is easier to have one's competence evaluated independently of how it was attained. In an age of rapid change, we all need to consider the development of our individual competencies and knowledge and allow our curiosity and thirst for knowledge to be our guiding light. Opportunities for study are everywhere, the trick is to be able to select from that vast sea of information and recognise one's rights and areas of interest. When accorded proper consideration, further education in the broadest sense is a means for achieving equality and it benefits everybody.

For the period 2019-2020, the Nordplus programme will have as its focus "Digital competences and computational thinking: preparing pupils, students and adults for a digitalised society". The impact of rapidly changing technologies on study and education is a challenge that all the Nordic countries are facing. We are far more likely to be successful in rising to that challenge by working in unison and sharing knowledge.

Last year, Nordplus celebrated 30 years of Nordic collaboration and a decade of cooperation between the Nordic countries and the Baltic states. Nordplus is, without a doubt, the Nordic Council of Ministers' flagship programme, and I very much look forward to an even closer working partnership over the coming years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Lilja Alfreðsdóttir".

NORDPLUS

– NORDIC AND BALTIC COLLABORATION ON EDUCATION

Nordplus is the Nordic Council of Ministers' mobility and networking programme for education in the Nordic and Baltic countries.

Every year, Nordplus earmarks approximately 9.6 million euro for exchange programmes, projects and other forms of networking, enabling some 9,000 pupils, students and teachers to go on exchange visits. As well as learning about each other's cultures, the participants work together in an educational perspective on a vast range of topics, from climate change and sustainability to integration, digitalisation and language.

Students collaborate on projects that enhance their knowledge of specific academic subjects. Teachers and educationalists develop new methods and approaches to teaching. NGOs and companies work together with organisations, study programmes and specialist units to develop solutions that require expert knowledge. All Nordplus projects have some connection to learning and education and are based on exchanges of knowledge, networking and co-operation between Nordic and Baltic countries.

Nordplus is open to a great variety of themes and ideas defined by the applicants.

Many initiatives reflect and seek solutions to the issues on the political agenda in the Nordic and Baltic countries: Climate change and sustainable development, digitalisation, inclusion and integration, entrepreneurship, active citizenship and Nordic language and culture, to name a few. The examples from Nordplus, presented in this publication, reflect this.

As an inspiration for applicants, Nordplus highlighted the issue of integration of refugees and immigrants in 2017 – 2018, and for the years 2019 – 2020, the focus is on digital competences and computational thinking, preparing children, young people and adults for a digitalised society.

"The world around us is changing, and that is why the Baltic-Nordic co-operation becomes increasingly relevant - not less relevant"

— Dagfinn Høybråten

Nordplus: 2012–2017 and the future

In 2018, Nordplus entered a new five-year programme period and marked its 30th anniversary. Dagfinn Høybråten, Secretary General of the Nordic Council of Ministers, has followed the development of Baltic/Nordic

FACTS

Nordplus supports cooperation within the field of education between the Nordic and Baltic countries.

- funds for networking, project collaborations, and exchange
- funds available for the entire field of education, from pre-school to higher education and adult learning
- a total of 9.6 million euro is available for grants each year
- approximately 600 applications per year, approximately 400 of them are approved for funding
- approximately 3,000 universities, university colleges, and schools amongst others participate in Nordplus each year.
- approximately 9,000 pupils, students and teachers are each year on an exchange in another Nordic-Baltic country with support from Nordplus
- annual deadline for applying for Nordplus is 1st February

At www.nordplusonline.org, you can find application forms, application guides, and information on Nordplus agencies in every country.



co-operation at first hand – not only in Nordplus but across all of the Nordic Council of Ministers' institutions.

"Nordplus has most definitely made a difference on the individual level, and that is quite unique. Every day there are new participants who get the opportunity to share their experience and apply it in their day-to-day life – it's like a ripple effect," says Høybråten.

A decade of Baltic co-operation

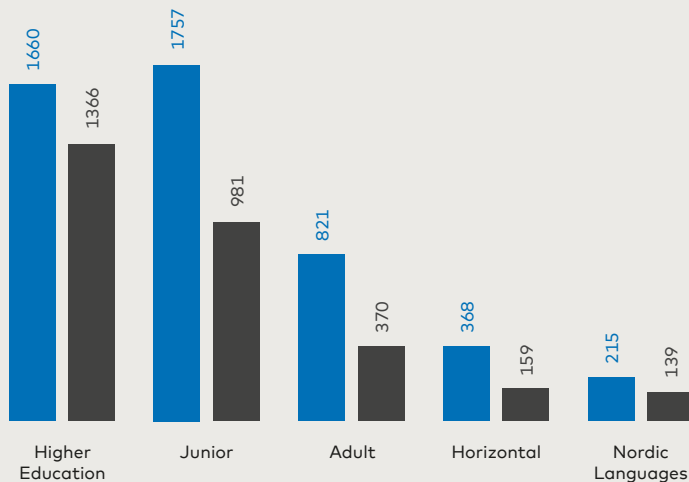
Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia have been equal partners in Nordplus for the last ten years, something that the Secretary General welcomes. Nordplus is one of the Nordic Council of Ministers' biggest co-operation programmes, and Dagfinn Høybråten sees it as one of those with the most widespread grassroots support.

"The world around us is changing, and that is why the Baltic-Nordic co-operation becomes increasingly relevant – not less relevant. The Nordic Council of Ministers commits more to this area than we did just few years ago," he says.

The three Baltic states have taken part in Nordplus since 2008. Baltic institutions now participate on an equal footing with their Nordic counterparts and are eligible to apply to all Nordplus programmes.

"When it comes to education, support for partnerships between the Nordic and Baltic countries is well established. Specifically, the Nordic and Baltic countries pay equal contributions into Nordplus, and systematic evaluations show that it is one of our most popular projects," says Høybråten.

NORDPLUS BY NUMBERS

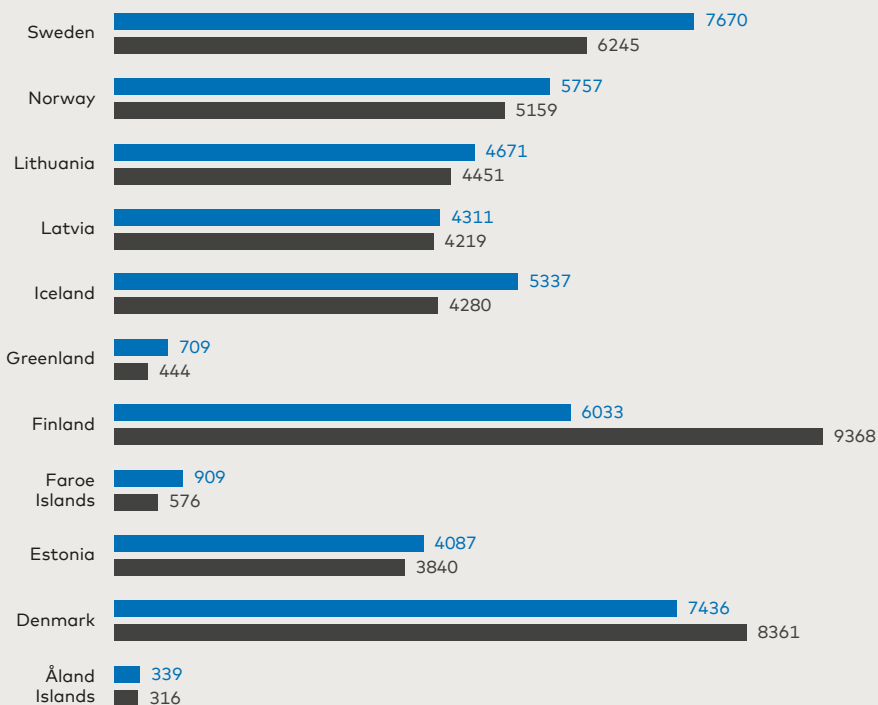


Number of project applications in the period 2012-2018

In the years 2012-2018, Nordplus has received a total of 4,821 applications, of which 3,015 received funding. In 2018, a total of 628 applied of which 415 activities were awarded funding.

Number of applications to Nordplus in the period 2012-2018 - categorised by programme.

■ Applied ■ Awarded

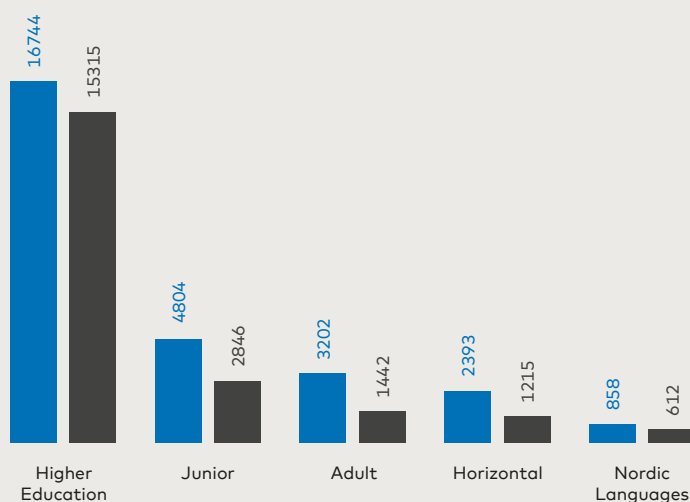


Mobility per country in the period 2012-2016

The number of pupils, students, teachers, researchers amongst others who have participated in mobility activities.

A total of 47,259 people participated in mobility activities in the period 2012-2016. Certain mobility activities are long-term projects, that is why the period only goes to 2016. Similar numbers are expected for 2017 and 2018.

■ To the country ■ Out of the country



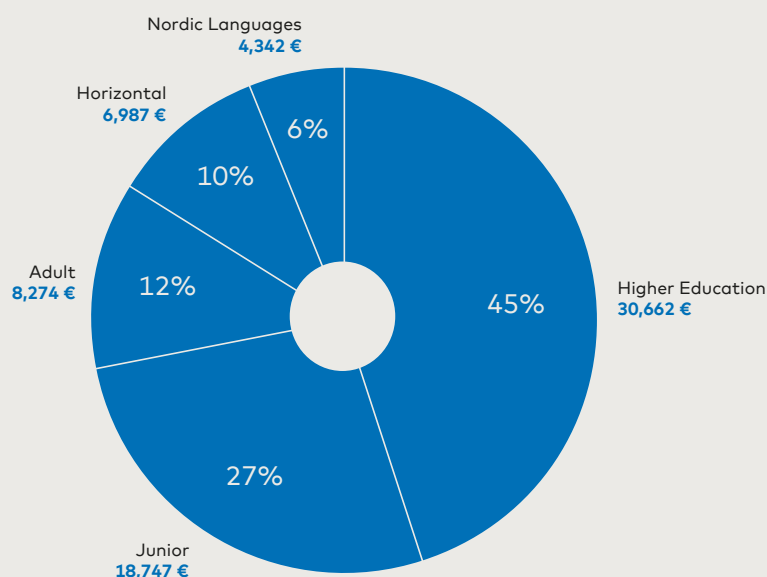
Number of organisations applying in the period 2012-2018

In the period 2012-2018, 28,001 partners applied for funding, and 21,430 were awarded funding.

In 2018, Nordplus received a total of 3,945 applications from partners, and 3,141 were awarded funding. In comparison with 2008, 2,223 applied, and 2,220 partners were awarded funding.

The numbers include organisations that have applied for funding repeatedly during the time period.

■ Applied ■ Awarded



Funding in 1000 euro in the period 2012-2018

Nordplus is one of the largest programmes under the Nordic Council of Ministers. Approximately 9.5 million euro per year have been granted to projects, networks, exchange, and mobility within education and lifelong learning.

In 2018, more than 24 million euro were applied for, and a total of 9.5 million euro were awarded in funding.

DID YOU KNOW

→ ... that Nordplus sent 9,014 people on exchange in another Nordic/Baltic country in 2016?

→ ... that Nordplus has a partner search database where you can present your project, idea or activity and simultaneously search for partners in other Nordic and Baltic countries? Perhaps it is you and your organisation they are looking for.

NORDPLUS **JUNIOR**

YOUNG PEOPLE CELEBRATE DIVERSITY

By Joan Rask

Students in vocational colleges in the Nordic and Baltic countries have been studying differences, similarities and opportunities in terms of religion, sexuality, generation, social status, physical/mental health disabilities and ethnicity. And they love it.

A society should be judged by how it treats its weakest members. A Nordplus Junior exchange programme called "Promote Tolerance – Celebrate Diversity", has been exploring this idea, originally espoused by the English social scientist Peter Townsend. It is a big project, involving six colleges, six nations - and 89 students and 35 teachers have been on exchange visits.

One of the colleges taking part is Haapsalu Vocational Education and Training Centre in a small seaside town about 100 km west of Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. The college has around 800 students and 90 staff members and provides training in subjects ranging from cookery, health and social services, to office work, construction and IT. Heli Heimo, the international coordinator, has been working there for 10 years and seen the college become increasingly international. And there is a reason for that.

"Usually, students just go to college, they learn about their future jobs and do a lot of practical stuff but not much else. These international projects allow them to be creative, to talk, to practice their communication skills and English, and to work with other people of their own age," she says.

The project aims to reduce social exclusion and help young people become more tolerant and open to people who are different. It has six sub-themes, one in each college/country: gender and sexuality; disability; religious diversity; social status; race and ethnicity; and age and inter-generational dialogue.

When it was Estonia's turn to act as host, it arranged for its Nordic and Baltic guests, and Estonian students, to visit a home for people with mental health disabilities. The college chose to work with disability

"Immigrants bring new ideas, new thinking, new skills and new contacts. This can be of benefit to the local community."

— Bryan Roberts

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in inclusive local communities because the town has a school for the disabled, as well as a rehabilitation centre.

"Our college teaches students with minor disabilities – we specialise in it. That's why we wanted to take ownership of this topic because I feel that we are strong in this area and have something to offer the rest of the network," says Heli Heimo.

Heli describes how students and residents of the home painted small bags together.

"It was interesting. Because students wouldn't normally sit at the same table as people with mental health disabilities. It was hard for them to communicate with each other, but everyone wanted it to work and helped translate," she says.

Afterwards, both the Estonian students and their Nordic and Baltic guests were enthusiastic about the visit.

↑ Participants in the Nordplus project "Promote Tolerance - Celebrate Diversity" taking part in a workshop with intellectually disabled citizens in Haapsalu, Estonia. Photo: Heli Heimo, Haapsalu Vocational Education and Training Centre

"Our college teaches students with minor disabilities – we specialise in it."

— Heli Heimo

"Our students were a bit nervous at first, but when they started to work, and the residents started asking questions, they managed to communicate. When we were leaving, the residents wanted to come with us and accompanied us along the road for quite some distance," explains Heli Heimo.

An international mindset

The project's Finnish partner, Point College, is in Porvoo, a town about 50 km east of Helsinki. The college, which is also the co-ordinating partner of the project, chose to focus on race and ethnicity. Project co-ordinator Anita Eglite-Osmane is originally from Latvia but has lived in Finland for most of her life. She is responsible for applications for international projects at the college, and she and her colleagues are clearly very good at what they do because the college is now very international.

Anita is very clear about the positive role education plays in the fight against both exclusion and radicalisation, and that it is important for students to know that they have nothing to fear from diversity.

"We should see diversity as an advantage rather than a disadvantage and, sometimes, if something can't be learned in a classroom, the students just have to go out into the real world. They learn a lot more out there," she says.

FACTS ON NORDPLUS JUNIOR

Each year, Nordplus Junior grants approx. 2.6 million euro for transnational class, pupil and teacher exchanges as well as new networks and project initiatives within primary and secondary education.

→ TARGET GROUP

Pre-schools, elementary schools, upper secondary schools (general and vocational) and vocational colleges as well as culture schools and other organisations and actors with interest and relevance for the school sector.

→ ACTIVITIES

Exchange of pupils is for full classes or groups of pupils as well as for individual stays for pupils of upper secondary school and vocational colleges, including work placements. Teacher exchanges in form of job-swapping or job-shadowing, study visits or teaching stays. Funding for preparatory visits aimed at the preparation of a project and an application.

→ PARTICIPATION

About 200 applications are submitted to the programme every year and about 100 are approved for

funding. Around 400 schools and organisations participate in the programme each year and about 4,000 pupils and teachers are on an exchange each year with support from the programme.

→ DEADLINE

Annual deadline 1st of February, but funding is also again available for preparatory visits from the 1st of October.

→ FUNDING

A total of 2.6 million euro is granted each year.

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Bryan Roberts is head of the International Programme at Point College and the contact person for the students. Together, he and Anita laid the foundations for "Promote Tolerance – Celebrate Diversity".

"We felt that diversity needed to be discussed, and that it would help the integration process – both for our international students and for the Finnish host society," Bryan points out.

He stresses that there are enormous benefits in local Finnish communities and the international students getting to know each other, and that the project is helping to facilitate and speed up integration.

"Immigrants bring new ideas, new thinking, new skills and new contacts. This can be of benefit to the local community. Finland is a small country with just 5.5 million people, so companies have to think internationally. Our international students bring resources to Finland that have not been used enough in the past," he says.

The college is keenly aware that values are not something you learn just by reading about them. As Bryan and Anita stress, it's all about experiencing things and being part of a community. New insights are made when students observe their teachers and peers showing respect for people irrespective of gender, race or disability.

"Students are often surprised at how much fun these projects are and how much they learn. It is quite beneficial for them – and for us.

"We are a small college, and many of our students are from rural backgrounds. They don't come from wealthy families. They haven't travelled before, and some of them have grown up with prejudices and preconceptions about other countries. We want to break that mindset."

— Heli Heimo



← Participants in the Nordplus project "Promote Tolerance - Celebrate Diversity" taking part in a workshop with intellectually disabled citizens in Haapsalu, Estonia. Photo: Heli Heimo, Haapsalu Vocational Education and Training Centre

DID YOU KNOW

- ... that most Nordplus Junior projects are school exchange projects in which a class visits a class in another Nordic or Baltic country as part of a common academic course?

PARTNERS

- Porvoo International College FI-POINT College, Finland
- Haapsalu Vocational Education and Training Centre, Estonia
- Karaliaus Mindaugas vocational training centre, Lithuania
- Learnmark Horsens, Denmark
- Nyköpings Gymnasium, Sweden
- The Comprehensive College in Akureyri, Iceland

Anita and I listen to these young people of various ages. When they discuss real problems, they do it in a very adult way, and they come up with some incredible solutions," says Bryan Roberts.

Tolerance on the curriculum

In Haapsalu, Heli Heimo has tried to spread the positive energy arising from the exchange programme to the rest of the college, and her dream is for more students to have the opportunity to travel.

"The students really liked this project and the very different nature of the encounters abroad. After each trip, they have to make a presentation to the whole college. A lot of students come up to me after the presentations and say that they would like to be involved in the project," she says.

From the outset, it was one of the cornerstones of the project that as many people as possible should benefit from the energy and acceptance of differences brought back by the students – and their teachers.

"For us the most important project goals were to create an inclusive education and inclusive communities and to be able to recognise and appreciate differences and see the value of diversity – and, of course, Nordic values, which are generally very strong in our institutions as well," says Bryan Roberts.

Heli Heimo finds that the exchange programme is having a lasting effect on the young people.

"We are a small college, and many of our students are from rural backgrounds. They don't come from wealthy families. They haven't travelled before, and some of them have grown up with prejudices and preconceptions about other countries. We want to break that mindset," she says.

The Finnish students are also a bit shy, but Bryan Roberts is certain that will change.

"Once they get going, almost nothing will stop them, and that's actually quite nice. They're very hesitant at first, but then their confidence increases, and when it dawns on them that their opinions have value, that is when they really start to grow," he explains.

The partner colleges in Sweden, Finland and Denmark have many students from ethnic backgrounds other than the traditional Nordic ones, and this adds a further dimension to the project. The sheer number of different countries also makes it quite special.

"Being a large group has lots of advantages. We don't just see the Swedish and Finnish viewpoints. We see the Danish, Baltic and Icelandic viewpoints as well. All these countries have similar problems and the same need for solutions and understanding. And the students need to see the opportunities that these issues present," says Bryan.



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NORDPLUS
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EDUCATION**

INNOVATION IN ARCTIC TEACHER TRAINING

By Joan Rask

"I feel that there is a North Norwegian identity that stands out from the general Norwegian one, and I meet the same thing in Finland and Sweden. It's the same historical and geographical isolation because the North hasn't always been treated as particularly valuable by the country as a whole."

— Gregor Maxwell

Huge distances and a range of cultural identities and minority languages pose a unique set of challenges for teacher training and research into the subject in the Arctic part of the Nordic region. A new 10 ECTS transnational module helps address the issues – and more innovation is to come!

Sámi, Kvens, Inuit, Norwegians, Swedes... Almost everybody who works with education or teacher training, regularly runs into problems. The Arctic is home to a range of cultures, and the educational systems in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark have not properly come to terms with this diversity – at least not yet.

"It's frustrating that we have a generation of Sámi and Kvens – to quote just two examples – who aren't fluent in their own languages," says Gregor Maxwell, a researcher and lecturer at the Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø.

Gregor Maxwell specialises in how the education sector copes with groups who are in some way different, whether because of disability, religion, sexuality or ethnicity. In northern Norway ethnicity, in particular, has a special dimension to it.

"The whole system is predicated on a Norwegian cultural outlook," he says. "But whole generations of Sámi want to hold on to their language, culture and identity."

Five Arctic universities in Norway, Sweden and Finland are seeking to address the issue. In 2015, they formed the "Arctic5" network. Now the Nordplus project, "Arctic Teacher Education for Social Justice and Equality", has led to its first transnational module, a joint online course, "Arctic Inclusive Pedagogy Master Study Course" (10 ECTS) in the field of teacher training.

Gregor Maxwell and research colleagues from Sweden and Finland are working hard to provide the academic and practical setting for the module to be offered to master's students in all five universities in 2019/20.

Education without borders

Approximately 600 km east of Tromsø, Vice-Dean Outi Kyrö-Ämmälä and lecturer Erika Sarivaara are working on the same task at the University of Lapland, Finland, where cultural interaction and an Arctic outlook are part of everyday life. Erika specialises in Sámi culture and language.

"We may all be Nordic countries, but we don't work together well enough. We don't know what the other universities in the Arctic are doing – not even the other Finnish ones," she says.

Erika trained in both northern Norway and Finland and has taught and researched at universities in both countries. She draws a large circle to represent the entire Arctic region. She has to use her whole arm – because it's big.

"We already have a better picture of what's going on in terms of inclusion," she says. "Now, we know what Luleå University is doing, for example. That's progress. We didn't know that before this project."

"We may all be Nordic countries, but we don't work together well enough. We don't know what the other universities in the Arctic are doing – not even the other Finnish ones."

— Erika Sarivaara

FACTS ABOUT NORDPLUS HIGHER EDUCATION

Nordplus Higher Education grants about 4.2 million euro each year to networking activities, collaborations, and exchange of students and teachers within higher education.

→ TARGET GROUP

Universities and other recognised higher education institutions, as well as other organisations and relevant actors interested in higher education.

→ ACTIVITIES

Funding for establishing networks, collaborative projects, and exchange of students, teachers, and other academic staff.

→ Exchange of students can be in the form of either a study exchange at a higher education institute or an internship at a company.

→ Exchange of teachers and other academic staff can be in the form of teaching, tutoring, developing teaching materials, or placement and working with professional life.

→ Funding for establishing networks, collaborative projects, developing shared curricula, amongst other development projects

→ PARTICIPATION

About 225-250 apply each year, and about 200 of the applications are accepted for funding. Around 2,300 partners participate in the programme every year, and about 4,500 students and teachers go on exchange.

→ DEADLINE

Annual deadline 1st of February.

→ FUNDING

A total of 4.2 million euro is granted each year, of which 60-70% comprise mobility and 30-40% networks and projects.



The management view

Outi Kyro-Ämmälä explains that teacher training is grappling with the same or similar problems in all of the Arctic nations. They all have minority groups with their own languages, customs and identities, and some people feel that the indigenous people are having their cultures sucked out of them by the dominant Nordic ones, a schism with which newly qualified teachers need to learn to cope.

"I find it deeply rewarding that the students have been involved in the preparations for the new module. It's also about networking and the opportunity to share various kinds of knowledge," Outi Kyro-Ämmälä says.

The universities of Lapland and Tromsø, like the others in the partnership, have entered into a strategic collaboration on development

↑ Photo: Yadid Levy / Norden.org

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and activities that will benefit the whole of the Arctic region. Gregor Maxwell sees it as a step in the right direction.

"A range of challenges are unique to the northernmost parts of the Nordic region. It's often difficult to find qualified staff, for example, and that goes for schools, kindergartens and even the university, where we have too few applicants for vacant positions," he says.

Gregor Maxwell explains that the problem is exacerbated by the fact that jobs in the Nordic countries are becoming more specialised in general, than they were just a few years ago, which makes staff recruitment more difficult and places greater demands on the study programmes.

"The pedagogic focus used to be on disabilities," he says. "But it has shifted to language problems and emotional difficulties. If we could incorporate the multicultural aspect as well, that would be really good."

Gregor believes that northern Norway will be an even better place if its schools and universities become better at embracing minorities.

"It cuts both ways – it's not just about coming up with special initiatives for including minorities," he explains. "Knowledge of minority cultures needs to be integrated into the general education system so that all children and young people encounter it."

"I find it deeply rewarding that the students have been involved in the preparations for the new module. It's also about networking and the opportunity to share various kinds of knowledge."

— Outi Kyrö-Ämmälä

↓ Outi Kyrö-Ämmälä
Photo: Marko Junttila



DID YOU KNOW

- ... that universities and higher education institutions can co-operate on joint programmes, and the students are studying in at least two different countries?

PARTNERS

- University of Lapland, Finland
- Luleå University of Technology, Sweden
- The Arctic University of Norway, Norway
- Umeå University, Sweden
- University of Oulu, Finland

What is "inclusion"?

"How do we define inclusion?" Outi Kyro-Ämmälä throws out the question and smiles. "We might have different views, but I don't know yet just how big those differences are," she says.

Work on the project, which will run for two years, has only just started, with the first workshop being held in June 2018. So far, it hasn't run into any challenges.

"But we know that the challenges will come," says Erika Sarivaara. "Legislation is a problem... we need to get it to fit together."

About 20 students are expected to sign up for the first module, and Outi Kyro-Ämmälä and Erika Sarivaara hope that it will eventually attract up to 100. But their ambitions don't stop there.

"We want to share our ideas and create something new together with colleagues from completely different contexts," says Outi Kyro-Ämmälä.

Erika Sarivaara takes up the thread:

"Participants in the project are really motivated and interested. They want to work, and they feel that they're creating something new here. It has been very rewarding to be part of this project."

Virtual knowledge centre

Erika Sarivaara grew up in Lapland, as did Outi Kyro-Ämmälä, but Gregor Maxwell is Scottish. It was his interest in inclusion, exclusion and the treatment of minority groups that brought him to the far North, but not until after spending several years in Sweden, where he wrote his PhD.

"I feel that there is a North Norwegian identity that stands out from the general Norwegian one, and I meet the same thing in Finland and Sweden. It's the same historical and geographical isolation because the North hasn't always been treated as particularly valuable by the country as a whole," he says.

Ambitions are high for both the Finnish and the Norwegian parts of the project. The next big challenge will be a joint Arctic Master's degree; which might be a reality within a time span of five to seven years. Gregor Maxwell hesitates slightly before explaining:

"We'd like to collaborate on research. Maybe setting up a 'Graduate School of Arctic Pedagogy' or something like that – that's the dream 20 years down the line."

It may sound like a very distant dream, but it is one shared by the partners in Lapland.

"We're dreaming of a Centre of Excellence, a kind of joint research centre. We don't know how to build it... and, of course, it wouldn't be a physical place but a virtual research centre – but the 10 ECTS module is a start," says Erika Sarivaara.



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NORDPLUS **ADULT**

SPORT OPENS DOORS FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS

By Joan Rask

"From Monday to Thursday, I go out with representatives from local sports clubs. They demonstrate their respective branches of sports, and in this way we try to teach refugees and immigrants about sports in Sweden."

— Paavo Väyrynen

The International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA), a worldwide NGO, and its Nordic partners have built up a network of organisations and volunteers who encourage refugees and immigrants to get involved in sport in the community. A great deal of new knowledge is emerging from their work.

Play together, take part in sports, be positive and be strong – both physically and mentally. It creates new bonds and the strength to face up to your situation. In simple terms, this is how a video featuring a number of young men explains the benefits of playing sports, while they wait. They are refugees or immigrants who have ended up in a Nordic country. The Nordplus Adult project "Integration of Refugees through Sport" is all about people like them.

The project was initiated by ISCA, which is a sports and cultural institution based in Copenhagen and involves partners from most of the Nordic countries. Project manager Monika Rešetar has been working on it for about a year. She is surprised at how vital this project has become at a personal level.

"Before becoming involved in this work, I used to just read about refugees in the papers or saw news on TV, but when you sit down with refugees, it's no longer just something that's happening somewhere outside of our safe countries. It becomes a reality when you find yourself talking with human beings just like you, face-to-face", Monika says.

Monika Rešetar is 33 years old, from Slovenia, and she came to Denmark to do an internship with ISCA in Copenhagen. The job evolved, and Monika stayed on to become one of the driving forces behind the coordination of the project.

"I am a 'making the world a better place' kind of person. It means a lot to me that I can actually contribute somehow to the cause, even

though I'm not working out in the field. But I'm helping the cause in other ways, with my knowledge and experience. And hopefully with inspiration too," she says.

Sport creates new communities

One of those out in the field is Paavo Väyrynen, who works for the Swedish Sports Education Organisation (SISU), another project partner. He has worked with refugees and immigrants for 17 years, particularly with sport.

"From Monday to Thursday, I go out with representatives from local sports clubs. They demonstrate their respective branches of sports, and in this way we try to teach refugees and immigrants about sports in Sweden," Paavo explains.

It is up to the existing clubs to seize the opportunity once Paavo Väyrynen has generated interest. His working day is filled with sport. His bag is full of footballs, handballs, volleyballs, shuttlecocks and every-

"The other, less experienced countries were very interested in seeing how we had succeeded in getting refugees into sports."

— Paavo Väyrynen

FACTS ABOUT NORDPLUS ADULT

Each year, Nordplus Adult grants 1.2 million euro for Nordic/Baltic networking, collaboration and exchange of adult students and teachers within the field of adult learning.

→ TARGET GROUP

All types of adult education institutions and other relevant organisations and associations within all parts of the field for adult learning - both general and vocational adult education, formal education as well as non-formal and informal adult learning, including actors of liberal education and adult teacher and guidance counselor education and studies and analyses of adult learning.

→ ACTIVITIES

Funding for forming of networks, project initiatives and exchange of adult students and teachers and other learning responsables. And funding for preparatory visits aimed at the preparation of a project and applications.

Exchange of adult students in adult education institutions in another Nordic/Baltic country or as work placement in companies.

Exchange of adult teachers and learning responsables in terms of job-swap, job-shadowing, study visits or teaching stays, or participation in courses.

→ PARTICIPATION

About 100 applications each year, approximately 50 are granted. Around 200 institutions and organisations participate each year, and more than 300 adult students and teachers are on exchange each year.

→ DEADLINE

Annual deadline for applying is 1st February and for preparatory visits again 1st October.

→ FUNDING

A total of 1.2 million euro is granted to projects every year

→ Better sport opportunities for refugees, immigrants and guest workers. This was the focal point of the Nordplus Adult project "Integration of refugees through sport".
Photo: ISCA.org



thing else he can take outside. Once there, it's just a matter of getting going and see who turns up.

"When we started, only a few participants would come, but now we can have up to several hundred participants. They are of all nationalities, including Swedes. We're trying to reach those who don't belong to a club," he continues.

It is quite simply a matter of awakening their interest and engaging them in dialogue so that they become aware of the opportunities they have to join sports clubs. The places Paavo turns up in are always in the most deprived areas, where up to 90% of the young people are either refugees, immigrants or children of them.

Paavo and his colleagues often encourage them to bring their parents along to learn what sports clubs have to offer. In Borås, an average of about a thousand children and young people come into contact with somebody from SISU every month, so the potential for the clubs is huge.

"The clubs are losing members, so it is a way of helping them too. Sport is also one of the best ways of integrating people," he says.

In fact, anybody can borrow equipment free of charge from Fritidsbanken, a kind of library with sport equipment. Membership fees for sports clubs are only token amounts, so the barrier to getting started is by no means insurmountable. SISU's work has been such a success that local authorities now pay for it from their budgets, and some sports clubs are now struggling to cope with a lack of space because demand for membership has grown.

Nordic knowledge sharing

Paavo Väyrynen may have considerable experience in the field, but he is particularly pleased with this project.

"This project has given us a great deal. It was very helpful to talk to people from other countries about this work. And those that did not have so much experience were very interested in seeing how we had succeeded in getting refugees into sports," he says.

One of the countries more or less starting from scratch was Iceland, which has only recently begun work on sports for foreigners. It's not about refugees here. Iceland has very few refugees, but about 30,000 are foreigners. When the population only are approximately 320,000, it has great impact how the foreigners integrate.

Ragnheiður Sigurðardóttir is the national spokesperson for UMFÍ, an umbrella body for sports organisations in the country.

"According to the Icelandic Red Cross, children of non-Icelandic origin don't integrate into society as well as Icelandic children. They have fewer friends, are more likely to be left out than their Icelandic peers,

"We can see that these organisations need inspiration from other countries. There is a lack of knowledge – or maybe in some cases a lack of inspiration."

— Saskia Benedicic Tomat

↓ Participants in the Nordplus project
"Integration of refugees through sport."
photo: Paavo Väyrynen, SISU



DID YOU KNOW

- ... that Nordplus Adult also funds preparatory visits? It is possible to apply for funding of meetings with future partners to develop the project idea and prepare an application.

PARTNERS

- International Sport and Culture Association, Denmark
- Academy of Physical Education Ollerup, Denmark
- Akershus Idrettskrets, Norway
- The Icelandic Youth Association, Iceland
- SISO Västergötland, Sweden

ISCA

- The organisation has 231 member organisations and operates in 83 countries. Its main objective is to create a framework for sport and wellbeing for all, regardless of age, ethnicity, etc.
- Sport and Culture Association (ISCA): www.isca-web.org

and there is a tendency for them to be bullied more. UMFÍ wants to improve their well-being," says Ragnheiður Sigurðardóttir.

She points out that UMFÍ gained a lot of knowledge and information by taking part in the Nordplus project, and this has improved the organisation's ability to succeed.

"Until recently the issue of foreigners sports activities has not got the attention it deserves in Iceland. I hope that this project will lead to greater awareness, and UMFÍ can take action at the grassroots level in various local sports clubs. That will include training of coaches, staff and committee members," she says.

Shared online tool

One of the project's main goals was to set up a website featuring guidelines, good examples, specific ideas and input on how to get a group of volunteers up and running because they often start completely from scratch. The website irts.isca.dk now offers a full suite of information and a clearly written manual on how to get started. But dilemmas only arise when the work actually begins. Meeting people with very different norms and rules for group behaviour is difficult, and then at the same time decide exactly which ideas to deploy.

Saska Benedicic Tomat is responsible for coordinating the many project partners, voluntary organisations and project managers and for evaluations and knowledge acquisition in the global ISCA organisation. She underlines the enormous importance of the latter.

"We can see that these organisations need inspiration from other countries. There is a lack of knowledge – or maybe in some cases a lack of inspiration. They need to ask others: How did you do that? Can you share your tips and methods so I can learn them? And how do I transfer this knowledge to my country so I can see what works here," she says.

Saska Tomat has worked for ISCA for more than a decade and built up an enormous amount of knowledge about sports projects linked to integration.

"We can see that the principles of transferring knowledge actually work in almost all countries. It means that we bring partners together, bring organisations together and we bring people together who want to know more and learn more," she explains.

The website was developed for the Nordic countries, but ISCA spreads its knowledge further afield and has started a follow-up EU-wide project on refugee integration through sport (MOVE Beyond) this January.

"The message about these results will go all over Europe. The tools we have developed are shared with our member organisations and our partners – and they share them in their home countries too," Saska Tomat adds.



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CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE CURRICULUM

By Joan Rask

"I combine environmental themes with arts and crafts, and I like to use the word 'upcycling' because it means that we are taking old things and making something new from them. We kind of upgrade them."

— Elīna Pekšēna

Climate change is perhaps the most challenging legacy that current generations will leave to our children. A network of Nordic and Baltic colleges, schools and NGOs is sharing ideas about teaching children and encouraging them to innovate so that – hopefully – they will be better at looking after the planet.

Global warming, melting glaciers, vast areas of the Arctic exposed as the ice cap thaws.... The effects and what we know about them are easy enough to rhyme off. But no amount of facts, figures and doomsday prophecies will actually solve the problems we face.

"Visually, it's a different matter. It's easy – or at least easier – to show children these things. When you're talking about the Arctic, you can show them exactly what is happening," says Elīna Pekšēna.

Elīna Pekšēna combines arts and crafts with teaching and preventative environmental work in her activities as a self-employed craftswoman and as a project worker at the Environmental Education Centre in Riga, the capital of Latvia. The centre is one of the 12 Nordic and Baltic partners in the Nordplus project "Creative Environmental Education", which uses innovative methods to engage and empower school pupils aged 6–15 and heighten their awareness of environmental issues and sustainability. All are partners in the Creative Environmental Education Network (CEE Network).

"Getting to communicate with people from Greenland is really interesting and useful to me," explains Elīna Pekšēna. "They say what they have to say in a very authentic manner. We look at pictures and see their culture and dances. The children and I are developing an emotional bond with their part of the world, where global warming is making such an impact."

Art as a tool

Arts and crafts don't usually appear in the same sentence as climate change, but Elīna Pekšēna has a foot in both camps. She has a bachelor in arts, a master's in environmental science, and has been working in



after-school clubs for the past six years, teaching children about environmental issues through arts and crafts.

"I soon realised that just talking about issues isn't always very effective. If you really want to talk about climate change, you have to show kids that the environment is something that is all around us - you touch it, you influence it, and you change it, and vice versa. If you can't feel it, then it's difficult to understand, especially for children and young people," she explains.

For Elīna Pekšēna it was just a matter of seizing the opportunity when it came along. In 2016, Nordplus hosted a seminar that created the framework for bringing together most of the partners now involved in the project. Representatives attended from Iceland, Denmark, Greenland, Northern Norway and Latvia – and she was one of them.

Nordic, Baltic + a bit American

The original driving force behind the idea is actually an American, David Yoken, who has lived most of his adult life in Finland and is currently Senior Music Lecturer at the Faculty of Performing Arts at the

↑ Collage created from recycled materials when the partners in the Nordplus project "Creative Environmental Education" met in Greenland.
Photo: David Yoken, Turku University of Applied Sciences

"The arts combined with informed environmental science can truly engage students in a visceral sense so they truly understand and take proactive actions towards global warming."

— David Yoken

Turku University of Applied Sciences in Turku, a medium-sized city in the south-east of the country.

David Yoken is the project coordinator. He is highly conscious of the nature of his role and knows that it is up to the teachers in schools and students in higher education to develop the project along with the children. The first physical meeting of the network was held in Finland in spring 2018, and David Yoken has been deeply impressed by the creativity and quality on display right from the start.

"It was incredible when we saw the work from Latvia – it was like 'wow'! Everyone was so deeply taken by the workshop, and when all the partners went out to visit the local Turku city school, they were so impressed about the concrete effect of the co-design," he says.

Wow-factors in real life

One of those "wow-factors" at the workshop was down to Elīna Pekšēna – even though all she did was present the kind of work that she does with Latvian children every day.

"If I am talking to the children about plastic, then we make something with it. I combine environmental themes with arts and crafts, and I like to use the word 'upcycling' because it means that we are taking old things and making something new from them. We kind of upgrade them," she explains.

FACTS ABOUT NORDPLUS HORIZONTAL

Nordplus Horizontal grants about 1 million euro in funding each year to innovative projects and network activities that cut across traditional school- and educational sectors in the North and the Baltic states.

→ TARGET GROUP

All institutions and organisations working with education and life-long learning. The projects might also involve partners not directly involved in education.

→ ACTIVITIES

Funding is available for a wide range of activities and areas, as long as these involve at least two different sectors and include participants from a minimum of three countries. An example of such could be education and professional life, entrepreneurship, integration, democracy and active citizenship, inclusion of marginalised groups, digitalisation, further education, health, fitness, art and culture, sustainability, and the development of new teaching methods.

→ PARTICIPATION

About 45 coordinators apply to the programme Nordplus Horizontal every year, and about 20 of the applications are accepted and receive funding. Approximately 150 schools, organisations, and companies participate in the programme each year.

→ DEADLINE

Annual deadline 1st of February.

→ FUNDING

A total of 1 million euro is granted to projects every year.

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Elīna Pekšēna rues the fact that Latvia doesn't have a deposit and return system for bottles, like the ones in the Nordic countries. But that only fuels her drive to do something about the bottle problem.

"I teach the children to make practical things, like self-watering pots from plastic bottles, but also beautiful things – jewellery, bracelets, necklaces. You can even make a crown with all sorts of nice, bright plastic things," says Elīna Pekšēna, who gesticulates excitedly as she explains all the possibilities.

She asks the children direct questions: "How long do you really expect those cheap earrings that you bought to last?" "You don't always have to buy new things. Why don't you reuse things and save money and resources?" This provides an opening to talk to them about environmental impact and to reuse things that they would normally throw away.

Elīna Pekšēna was introduced to even more possibilities when she was in Finland.

"The other teachers and speakers deeply enriched my understanding," she says. "I really hope that I can implement some of the ideas that I learned about in Finland. Many of them wouldn't cost much. I also discovered teaching materials that I hadn't been aware of. I hope the network will continue. I find it really positive."

"I hope the network will continue. I find it really positive."

— Elīna Pekšēna

↓ Partners in the Nordplus project "Creative Environmental Education", meeting in the autumn of 2018, Greenland.
Photo: David Yoken, Turku University of Applied Sciences



DID YOU KNOW

- ... that upper secondary schools, folk highschoools, and universities can collaborate across sectors and subjects in Nordplus Horizontal? That means a project could include partners from various industries if they, for example, can offer expert knowledge or knowledge about the educational needs of the labour market?

PARTNERS IN THE CEE-NETWORK

- Turku University of Applied Sciences, Finland
- Sabro-Korsvejskolen, Denmark
- Danish Association of Managers and Executives, Denmark
- Garðaskóli, Iceland
- Kangillinniguit School, Greenland
- Nuuk Internationale Friskole, Greenland
- Rezekne Municipality, Latvia
- Sámi University College, Norway
- The Danish National School of Performing Arts, Denmark
- The Environmental Education Centre in Riga, Latvia
- Pääskyvuoren Elementary School, Finland
- University of Greenland, Greenland

The carbon footprint problem

The network rarely holds physical meetings during the project period. When it does, the members have to think about and discuss whether flying is okay – it's definitely not an environmentally friendly way to travel after all.

"It's a challenge, and we really have to think about it," says David Yoken. "We try to work remotely as much as possible but have to come together once a year. When we met in Greenland, of course, that increased our carbon footprint."

This is one of the reasons why virtual solutions are so valuable – online meetings and web platforms for sharing materials, discussing issues and helping each other. One important objective of the project is to make methods and tools available to teachers in schools throughout the Nordic and Baltic regions. Differences in languages always pose a challenge, of course, but tests are being run with Google Voicethread and much of the communication takes place via video and graphic elements.

"We have a secure platform on the website, where we hope that the partners will upload materials, and pupils will engage actively in digital information exchange," David explains.

Schools are the axis

Elīna Pekšēna has a list of all schools in Latvia. She writes to them offering assistance and introducing the new website. David Yoken is often accompanying his Arts Academy students to the schools where they are teaching the environmental arts workshops to the primary school pupils.

"But our students are doing the teaching... I am observing and having important dialogue with our students, as well as the classroom teacher," he says.

In fact, part of the teacher-training curriculum consists of placements in schools. One of the most important ones is Pääskyvuori Primary School.

"Without the school's interest, support and the opportunity for us to work with the pupils, it would have been impossible to even have this CEE Network. Finnish primary schools are in general extremely important partners for us – and they just welcomed the project with open arms. It has been really fantastic," he says.

David is convinced of art's potential to enhance understanding of climate changes.

"The arts combined with informed environmental science can truly engage students in a visceral sense, so they truly understand and take proactive actions towards global warming".



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LANGUAGE TECHNOLOGY CHANGES LANGUAGE TEACHING

By Joan Rask

"We have built a wealth of knowledge on how to develop digital language learning tools so it would be relatively easy to transfer this to other languages. So many people are learning Danish after all!"

— Auður Hauksdóttir

Language-learning tools on websites and smartphones are helping Icelandic, Faroese and Greenlandic children to learn Danish. The tools have also opened the eyes of linguists to just how great the linguistic and cultural differences are between the three countries.

Frasar.net, a language-learning tool for Icelanders, was one of the most visited websites at the University of Iceland when it was first launched. Professor of Danish, Auður Hauksdóttir, has been involved in the development and implementation process from the beginning.

"Language-learning tools do things dictionaries can't – whether the dictionary is a physical or a digital copy, it is organised from A to Z, and when you are learning to speak a language, you can't always look up a word," says Auður Hauksdóttir.

Frasar.net has a wide range of users, including government ministries, interested individuals as well as companies and their boards. The website provides detailed, concrete descriptions of how a phrase is used, what it means in Icelandic, and the contexts in which it is used.

"Unlike ordinary dictionaries, frasar.net also contains the pronunciation," says Auður Hauksdóttir and explains that much of spoken language differs from the written language due to the enormous influence of particular phrases and idioms on the understanding of spoken language. She cites the example of the Danish idiom: "Hæng lige på" (Hang on).

"Even if I had a lifetime to guess what it means and to think about it, I probably still wouldn't be able to figure it out," says the linguist.

Auður Hauksdóttir has worked with Danish all her life and was Head of the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute of Foreign Languages at the University of Iceland until a few months ago. It is about 15 years since she began systematically collecting phrases in Danish.

Idioms can be difficult to learn because they do not necessarily make immediate sense to non-native speakers. "Hæng lige på" is a prime exam-

ple. Literally, it means “just hang on”, but it is used during phone calls instead of saying: “Wait a minute, I’ll be right back”. The phrase harks back to the days when the person on the other end of the line would ask you not to hang up the receiver while they did something else. Few phones have a receiver or a place to hang one any more so the idiom makes absolutely no sense, but it is still used all the time in Danish.

“It’s completely normal that a language is full of idioms. It’s the same in Icelandic, but the special thing about Faroese, Icelandic and Danish is how incredibly similar the languages are. They come from the same language family, and it seems obvious to think about language teaching for all three in the same vein,” says the professor.

In 2016, for example, the work with frasar.net led to a joint development project between the University of the Faroe Islands and the Greenlandic Ministry of Culture, Education, Research and Religions, which resulted in the website “taleboblen.dk” and the app “Taleboblen”. These projects are funded by Nordplus and the most recent one, “Sproghjælp i smarttelefoner” (Language Help on Smartphones), was supported by Nordplus Nordic Languages in 2016. Teachers in Danish and pupils from all three countries were involved in the development and testing process.

“Even if I had a lifetime to guess what it means and to think about it, I probably still wouldn’t be able to figure it out.”

— Auður Hauksdóttir

FACTS ABOUT NORDPLUS NORDIC LANGUAGES

Each year, Nordplus Nordic Languages grants 635,000 euro in funding to initiatives strengthening the knowledge of the Nordic languages, which are Danish, Finnish, Faroese, Greenlandic, Icelandic, Norwegian, Sami, Swedish and Nordic sign language.

→ TARGET GROUP

All actors within education and other relevant actors, including language teaching for immigrants or refugees in the Nordic/Baltic region.

→ ACTIVITIES

Funding is available for projects, networks, and activities that aim to improve children and young

people’s language comprehension of Nordic languages (primarily Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish), as well as developing materials, methods, and strategies for improving language comprehension of the Nordic languages at all educational levels. For example, it could be methods for teaching the languages of neighbouring countries, developing curricula, general information work, conferences, courses, publications, language technology projects, learning tools, and teaching materials.

Moreover, funding is also available for preparatory visits with the goals of preparing future collaborations and preparing an application.

→ PARTICIPATION

About 35 coordinators apply to Nordplus Nordic Languages each year, and about 20 of the applications are accepted and receive funding. Approximately 85 schools and organisations participate every year.

→ DEADLINE

Annual deadline 1st of February, but funding is also again available for preparatory visits from the 1st of October.

→ FUNDING

A total of 635,000 euro is granted to projects every year.



Speak and listen

The "Taleboblen" website and app both build on what has been learned from frasar.net and the Frasar app. Both contain many of the same idioms, but they also offer new functions – to the extent that the quality of the language-learning tools has been much improved in terms of quality and functionality.

Margrét Karlsdóttir, a Danish language teacher at Hvaleyrarskóli in the town of Hafnarfjörður, is one of the people involved in testing "Taleboblen" and "Talebob" in classrooms in Iceland.

"It's good that the pupils can practice conversation when they use "Talebob" and "Taleboblen". It works really well," says Margrét Karlsdóttir.

The pupils hear the correct pronunciation, hear themselves say sentences out loud, record their answers and get direct feedback on their sentences. They can keep practicing their pronunciation and intonation until they have learned to say the sentence correctly.

Margrét Karlsdóttir reiterates that apps for smartphones and iPads are a good idea.

"It's easy and effortless to get started. The pupils all have smartphones, and many schools provide them with iPads as learning tools. It's good that a digital solution has been developed rather than only using books in language teaching," she explains.

↑ "Language support in smartphones" is supported by Nordplus Nordic Languages. Teachers of Danish and pupils from Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands have been involved in the development and testing of the app.
Photo: Unsplash

Big differences around the West Nordic Region

The development of the app did not proceed as expected because of the very different learning environments in the different countries.

"It has really surprised me that – even though the Faroese and Icelandic languages are so similar, especially the written language – the children's learning situations are very different," says Auður Hauksdóttir.

In fact, Faroese children learn Danish at almost the same time they learn Faroese. One very tangible reason for this is that Danish TV shows and films are not always subtitled in Faroese, so the children have to learn Danish to understand them. However, there is another crucial difference.

"Children and teenagers from the Faroe Islands often have a hard time working out how many times they've been to Denmark because they have been there a lot, and some of them have family there. It's not at all like that in Iceland, where children may have been to Denmark a couple of times at most, and some have never been," says Auður.

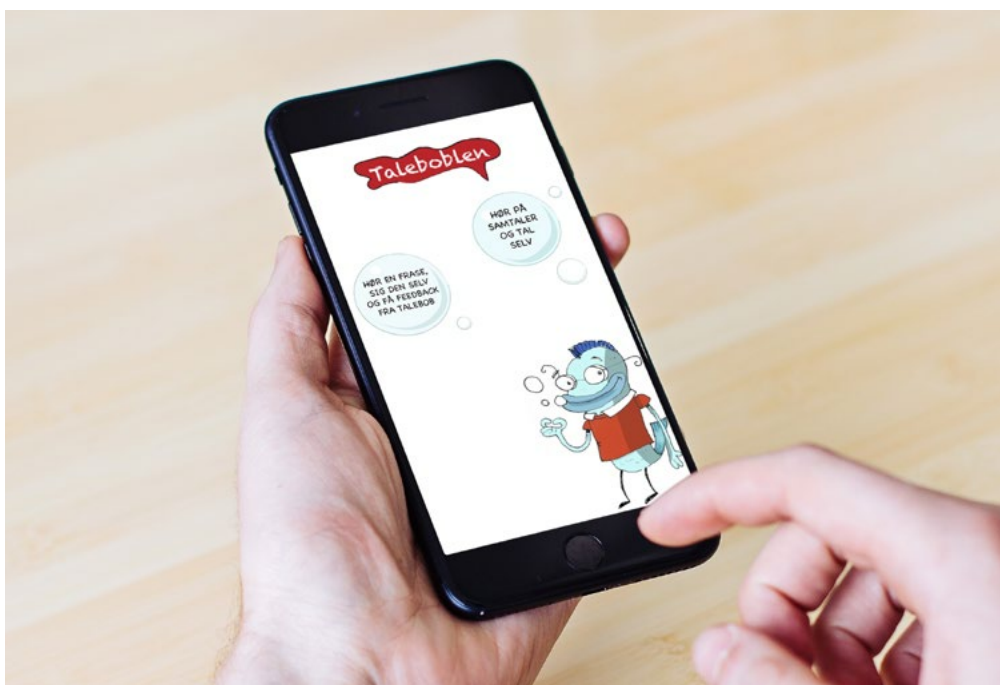
It varies greatly how often the children hear Danish. Greenlandic and Faroese children hear it a lot more in their everyday lives than Icelandic children, who only begin studying Danish in school when they are 12–13 years old.

"The Greenlandic children who tested "Talebob" thought it was too easy. They were all from Nuuk, and I have often wondered how the results would have turned out if we had gone to communities out by the coast," Auður says.

"It has really surprised me that – even though the Faroese and Icelandic languages are so similar, especially the written language – the children's learning situations are very different."

— Auður Hauksdóttir

↓ Language support in smartphones secures that the tool is available when the pupils need it.
Photo: Unsplash



DID YOU KNOW

- ... that Nordplus Nordic Languages also funds projects in the Baltic countries that increase understanding and knowledge of the Nordic languages?

PARTNERS

- Vigdis Finnbogadóttir Institute of Foreign Languages, Iceland
- Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
- The Ministry of Education, Culture, Church and Foreign Affairs, Greenland
- University of the Faroe Islands, Faroe Islands

New knowledge, available to everyone

Auður Hauksdóttir is more than happy with the results they have achieved. Both frasar.net and taleboblen.dk are available to everyone, and schools in Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands can use them free of charge. The project has made great academic impact and the ambition now is to take it further – Auður dreams about adding more functions and even more languages, phrases and situations.

"We now know far more about the issues involved in developing digital language-learning tools and what to do about them. We now have interdisciplinary knowledge, which couldn't have been achieved before. That has happened through the projects – frasar.net, taleboblen.dk, and the apps based on them. Everything is open source, it's available to anyone who wants to build on our work," she adds thoughtfully.

The project is now completed, but Auður Hauksdóttir hopes the "Taleboblen" app will continue to be developed and will pave the way for future applications and improvements.

"I think we have the largest collection of Danish phrases," she explains. "We have built up a wealth of knowledge on how to develop digital language-learning tools – it would be relatively easy to transfer this to other languages. So many people are learning Danish after all!"

The professor knows that the language-learning tools already benefit language teaching in the small nano-communities in the West Nordic region, and she hopes that one day perhaps they will be developed for the other Nordic languages.

"I don't think there are many Nordic universities that are as advanced in this area as we are," she says, "but I would love to get in touch with anybody who is working on this – no matter how advanced a stage they are at. The potential is huge, and I very much hope other people would want to work with us and take the project further."

Multiple innovative ideas are already at the planning stage. The Vigdis Finnbogadóttir Institute, for example, is developing an entertaining and engaging video game in which pupils solve tasks and make progress while learning Danish. However, digital development and experiments are expensive in terms of resources.

"Together with experts in language technology, we have shown that it's possible to develop digital learning tools based on play. The Nordplus project has made an incredibly valuable contribution and made it possible to move elements of language teaching from old books to new digital media," says Auður Hauksdóttir.



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www.ufm.dk/nordplus

Nordplus

Through the Nordplus programme, the Nordic Council of Ministers supports collaboration and exchange between education institutions and other actors across the Nordic and Baltic countries.

Every year, more than 3,000 institutions participate in Nordplus, and approximately 9,000 pupils, students and teachers go on exchange visits to another Nordic or Baltic country with Nordplus.

In 2018, Nordplus celebrated its 30-year anniversary and 10 years with Baltic participation. Also in 2018, a new five-year programme period was commenced, which ensures future collaborations and supports the close ties between the Nordic and Baltic countries. We mark this with a number of articles which close in on the experiences and benefits from projects and general information on Nordplus and some key figures from the period 2012–2018.