



Nordic Arctic Youth Summit

TROMSØ, NORWAY • 28 NOVEMBER 2024

RECOMMENDATIONS THE POWER OF NORDIC YOUTH

ORGANIZERS



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INTRO

The Nordic Arctic Youth Program is a set of recommendations presenting a vision for the future of the northern regions as envisioned by young people. This program reflects the outcomes of discussions, workshops, and consultations conducted before the Nordic Arctic Youth Summit 28 November 2024 in Tromsø. Its purpose is to guide policymakers at local, regional, and national levels in making informed, youth-centric decisions that shape a vibrant and sustainable future for the north. The Nordic Arctic Youth Program was delivered to the politicians attending the summit and later formally sent to the mayors in all the municipalities and county governments in Northern Norway, Northern Finland and Northern Sweden as well as the governments of the three countries and the Arctic Council. The Nordic Arctic Youth Summit was initiated by Tromsø, Oulu and Umeå as a part of the project Team Nordic Arctic led by ProTromsø and financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

This program focuses on six key themes, each addressing critical aspects of life in the northern regions. These themes were identified as priorities by the northern youth and are supported by concrete recommendations designed to address current challenges and needs of the youth in the region.



• **AN ATTRACTIVE NORTH WISHLIST FROM A YOUNG PERSPECTIVE**

A thriving life in the north requires more than just economic opportunities. The youth want vibrant communities that support well-being, cultural expression, and recreation. Young people value access to healthcare, diversity of opportunities, and extracurricular activities that foster a connection between people.

KEY TOPICS:

Improving access to healthcare and mental health services.
Strengthening cultural activities, events, and facilities.
Expanding sports opportunities and extracurricular programs.

YOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS:

- More meeting places for young people that can support youth when they want to create projects in their local communities.
- Investigating possibilities for balancing out the healthcare system through offering nurses' opportunities for enhancing and upgrading their competencies and skills.
- Invest in youth cultural houses that promote culture which is vital to make the arctic an attractive place to settle down. Libraries or other public spaces can be useful arenas for this.
- Sports must be more accessible for young people. This can be done through applying student/youth discounts for memberships and fees, as well as arenas to rent out sporting equipment for free
- Create funding for grassroots level activities that create and promote local culture. The ideal way to distribute this funding inside the regions is participatory budgeting. Activities resulting from this funding must be free-to-participate or only include a minimal fee.

- Apply attractive job options to our regions, and to promote those who already exist further for young people. Address the job opportunities that exist in the north even further to attract young people, and to make sure our youth stay in our region.
- Politicians and influential people should go meet youth where we are, instead of the opposite. Communicate with young people where we are
- Every municipality and county should have a youth council that actively works towards making their local communities attractive for young people to live in.
- Improve healthcare infrastructure in remote areas, including telemedicine services and mobile clinics, to ensure all residents have access to physical and mental health care.
- Provide funding for regional festivals, arts programs, and cultural events that celebrate northern traditions and diversity, making communities vibrant and attractive to young people.
- Encourage diversity through initiatives that attract people from different backgrounds and create programs promoting inclusivity and intercultural understanding
- Promote the construction of affordable and energy-efficient housing tailored to northern climates, addressing one of the key barriers to retaining and attracting residents.



● CLIMATE AND NATURE. A KEY TOPIC FOR THE YOUNG

The Arctic is at the forefront of the climate crisis, facing rising temperatures, melting ice, and biodiversity loss. Young people are committed to balancing growth with environmental conservation and leading the transition to a sustainable future.

KEY TOPICS:

Balancing conservation efforts with economic growth. Accelerating the green transition and renewable energy adoption. Promoting sustainable development practices.

YOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Governments need to ensure that biodiversity in vulnerable areas is protected.
- A goal of no animal species going extinct in any of the Nordic countries.
- All future industry development should be carbon neutral.
- End the fossil fuel subsidies and invest them into the care sector and non consumptive services.
- Local youth should be given the chance to voice their thoughts on future industry projects that happen in their municipality to ensure the safekeeping of nature. The local communities should also have more power over decisions when it comes to conservation of nature and expansion of industry.
- Create incentives for forest owners to manage their forests sustainably and reward them for having high biodiversity, good ecosystem services and sustainable practices.
- More conservation of terrestrial and maritime ecosystems, stronger protection of reserves. Focus on areas with high biodiversity, and rare species.
- Restore damaged nature with a chance of high diversity, "quality over quantity".
- More money and resources for these purposes.
- Rethink forestry, focus more on giving forestowners money for protecting their forests, forest and other nature resources can be used for multipurposes not only classic forestry.
- Ecotourism, economical advantages from hunting and bigger industries around selling mushrooms, berries and organized sustainable foraging.
- The government should pledge to restore and clean up the Baltic sea of all pollutants!
- Prioritize offshore wind power
- Implement more solar panels and windmills
- Invest more in public transportation, such as buses and trains, and make it cheaper and more attractive. Expand these services and ensure they are more affordable than flying.
- Ecofriendly and locally produced food should be cheaper and more accessible.
- There should be stricter protection of the last old growth forests. We urge nordic countries to reduce expansions toward unused natural land in the Arctic region and increase conservation of Nature.
- Encourage companies to make long lasting products out of forest biomass.





• THE INDIGENOUS VIEW

The northern regions are home to diverse indigenous communities whose perspectives are vital for shaping the future. This theme focuses on ensuring fair representation, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting inclusive collaboration in policymaking.

KEY TOPICS:

Preserving traditional livelihoods and fostering sustainable growth.
Promoting the use and teaching of indigenous languages.
Strengthening representation in decision-making processes.

YOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Learning the Sami language must be made more attractive to encourage students to choose Sami as a subject in primary, secondary, and high school, and create incentives to become a Sami teacher.
 - There should be personnel on as many healthcare services as possible who can speak Sami to make it easier for Sami individuals to use their language when discussing health issues.
 - It is important that schools receive updated equipment, books, and renewed materials for Sami education.
 - Schools should focus on raising awareness of Sami culture, traditions, and history so that both Sami and non-Sami students gain a deeper understanding of the Sami people. When teachers convey curriculum about the Sami people they must be educated on the Sami language and culture to teach effectively and respectfully.
 - Political support is necessary to ensure resources and measures that promote Sami education and culture in schools.
- Politicians, adults, children, and youth must become aware that issues affecting the Sami people are still a real societal challenge and need to be addressed.
 - Active dialogue with Sami representatives is crucial in discussions about Sami reindeer herding areas to find common solutions to the climate crisis and the development of the Nordic region.
 - Improved conditions and benefits should be provided for those pursuing education to become a teacher of the Sami languages. Municipalities should provide benefits to Sami language teachers such as free kindergarten and after-school programs, reduced fees, or exemptions for Sami-speaking teachers. This will help increase the attractiveness of the profession in question.
 - It must be ensured that students have access to a Sami teacher who speaks the same Sami language as they do.
 - Politicians must learn to represent the Sami people in an inclusive manner and understand that one Sami opinion is not every Sami opinion. There must be established more politically independent Sami organizations, and the ones who already exist must be strengthened and used actively.



• **YOUNG CONTRIBUTION TO A SECURE NORTH**

The Arctic is gaining global attention due to its strategic importance. This brings opportunities for development but also challenges related to security. Young people in the north seek policies that ensure stability and promote cooperation.

KEY TOPICS:

Addressing security challenges and promoting peace.
Building resilient and future-proof infrastructure.
Enhancing cross-border and international collaboration.

YOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Facilitate dialogues between Nordic youth and representatives from NATO and the EU to discuss regional security, hybrid threats, and the importance of regional cooperation in the northern part of the Nordics.
- Support programs that connect young people from different northern countries to share knowledge and experiences.
- Organize workshops for youth to assess and propose strategies for safeguarding critical infrastructure in the Nordic part of the Arctic region, such as energy grids, communication networks, and transportation routes, against climate impacts and security threats.
- Promote training programs that empower indigenous youth to advocate for their communities' interests in international policy settings, emphasizing their unique perspectives in geopolitics.
- Establish regular youth-led forums to simulate Arctic Council negotiations, addressing issues like climate change, indigenous rights, and security concerns in the High North.
- Implement training sessions for youth on countering disinformation and understanding cybersecurity threats in the context of northern geopolitics and international relations.
- Promote cross-border cooperation for joint security patrols, shared early-warning systems, collaborative infrastructure projects, and renewable energy initiatives
- Young people should be informed about how the security network functions, so young people are prepared in case of an emergency, to make us feel more safe.
- Increase access to digital technology and platforms to connect young people across borders for joint projects and initiatives.
- The Arctic Council must establish an Arctic Youth Council that is elected democratically and can represent young people in discussions about circumpolar political issues.
- Establishing the north as a hub for international cooperation by hosting recurring high-level conferences focused on Arctic geopolitics, climate science and cross-border collaboration. These events should bring together global leaders, policymakers, scientists and youth representatives to discuss solutions to pressing regional and global challenges, ensuring the north is seen as a key player in international dialogue.



• **LIVING AND LEARNING**

Education is the foundation for a thriving future. The northern regions need equitable access to quality education, from early childhood to higher education, with models that address the unique challenges of remote communities.

KEY TOPICS:

Strengthening vocational and higher education pathways.
Developing decentralized education systems for remote areas.
Improving lower and secondary education standards.

YOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Expand decentralized education possibilities by investing in digital infrastructure and mobile classrooms to bring high-quality education to remote areas, ensuring equal access to a good education regardless of geographic location.
- Strengthen vocational training by developing partnerships with local industries to create tailored vocational programs that meet the unique labor market demands of northern regions, with a focus on green and sustainable jobs.
- Integrate indigenous knowledge into the school curricula by focusing on incorporating indigenous history, and traditional knowledge into primary, secondary, and higher education to preserve and celebrate cultural heritage.
- Offer incentives for teachers in remote areas by providing financial incentives, housing assistance, and professional development opportunities to attract and retain skilled teachers in remote northern communities.
- Establish arctic scholarships and grants by launching dedicated scholarship programs for northern youth to pursue higher education and research opportunities in fields critical to the region.

- The northern universities should develop a northern student exchange program supported by the local governments. This will create opportunities for students to study and engage with other northern communities to foster cross-cultural understanding and collaboration on shared challenges.

- Schools should encourage academic and vocational education by providing programs that will allow students to pursue vocational skills and academic qualifications simultaneously, broadening their career options.

- Local and regional governments need to modernize school facilities by investing in state-of-the-art facilities for schools in the northern regions, incorporating green technology, accessible design, and spaces that reflect the needs of the students.

- There should be exchange programs for middle- and high schools focused on the Northern region that last for a few weeks at a time, showing young people the opportunities and people in our region.

- Universities should develop and promote unique aspects of higher education in our region, such as indigenous competence or climate change science.



• EARNING AND CREATING FOR TOMORROW

Economic development is critical to retaining young people in the north. Supporting youth entrepreneurship and fostering sustainable industries can help build a resilient economy that empowers the next generation.

KEY TOPICS:

Addressing barriers to entrepreneurship, such as funding and mentorship. Encouraging youth to explore innovative and sustainable industries. Building a robust economic framework that supports young business owners.

YOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS:

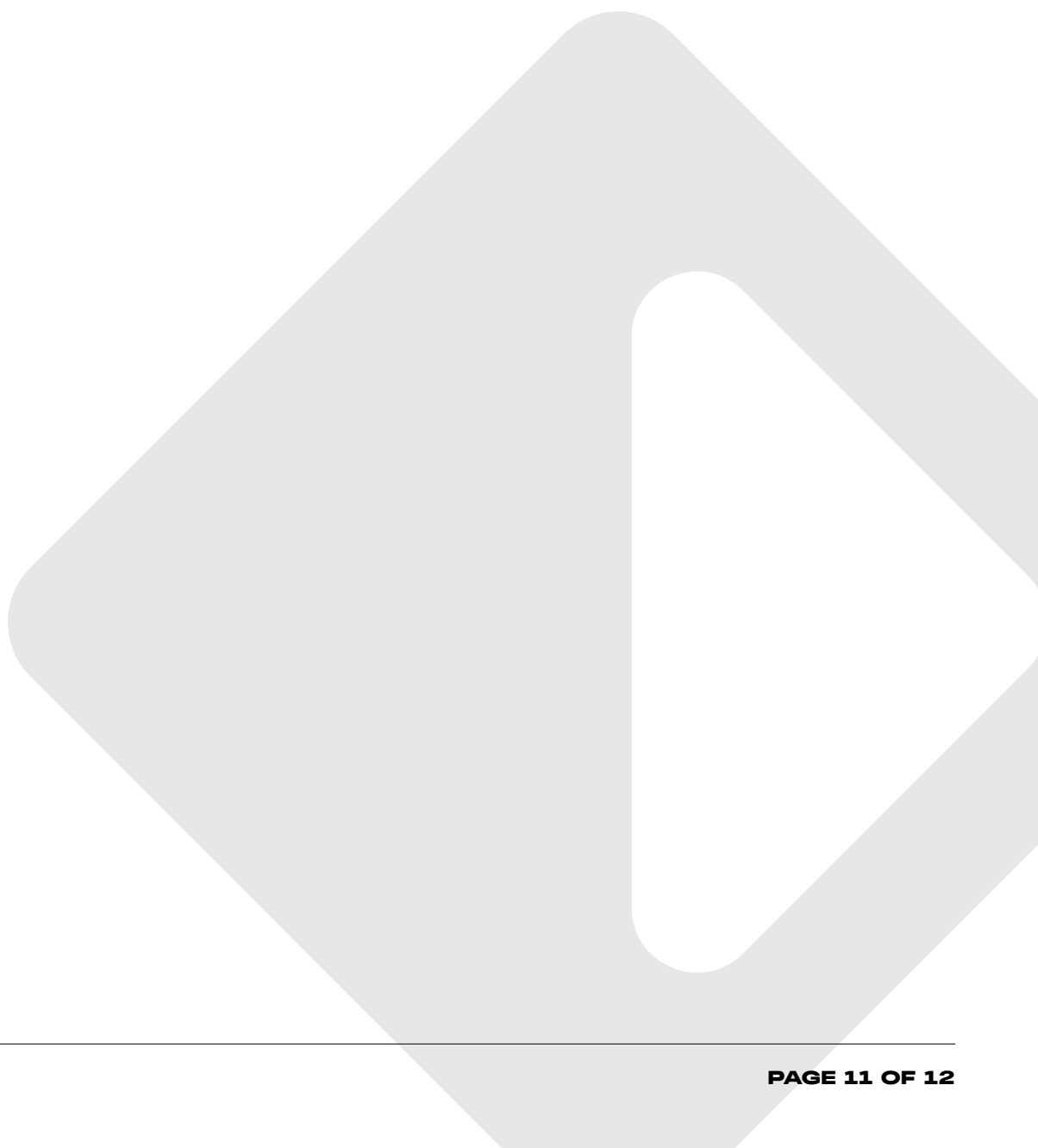
- There should be regular networking events with a focus on business to foster closer collaboration among entrepreneurs.
- Offer hands-on workshops focusing on acquiring digital skills, opportunity for business development, and how to access markets.
- Young people who are interested in starting their own business should have access to an information database on "how to start your own company/organization." where young people can learn the basics of how to set up a business. This will simplify the process of starting and registering a business.
- Facilitate the creation of entrepreneurial hubs that can develop communities for young entrepreneurs. These communities should offer peer support and if possible a physical workspace for collaboration.
- Develop a mentoring program by pairing young entrepreneurs with experienced business leaders to provide guidance and connections.
- Introducing targeted grant schemes for young entrepreneurs in the north, providing seed funding for startups.
- Develop a region-specific entrepreneurship curriculum for secondary schools and vocational programs to equip youth with essential business skills.

- Create region-specific financial seed funds for young entrepreneurs for youth entrepreneurs in the North. These could focus on industries like tourism, renewable energy, and tech.
- Offer tax breaks, reduced business registration fees, and subsidies for youth-led businesses in the north to reduce financial barriers with a particular focus on underdeveloped sectors.
- Establish government-backed loan programs with low-interest rates and flexible repayment terms tailored to youth-led startups. These programs could focus on reducing financial risks for entrepreneurs in remote northern areas.
- Create incentives for private companies to collaborate with the government in supporting young entrepreneurs through mentorship, funding, and shared resources. These partnerships can include co-working spaces, innovation labs, and training programs tailored to Nordic economies.
- Include entrepreneurial studies in the school curriculum. These studies should focus on turning passion into business, problem solving and the practicalities of creating actual business. Studies should be organized in collaboration with local businesses and/or entrepreneur organizations.
- Communities in the north can organize events for people at a young age where they offer mentorship whilst promoting collaboration with other businesses in order to make entrepreneurship grow among the youth.
- Change legislation to encourage entrepreneurship among students who are operating small scale businesses on the side of studies. Practicing entrepreneurship shouldn't be punished by cutting down financial support for studies, especially if income from entrepreneurial activities is irregular and within reasonable limits.

- **CONCLUSION**

The Nordic Arctic Youth Summit program is a testament to the ideas and aspirations of young people living in the north. By addressing these six themes, policymakers can ensure that the northern regions remain vibrant, sustainable, and attractive for future generations. The youth of today are ready to partner with decision-makers to build a resilient future that honors the unique character of the north while embracing global challenges and opportunities.

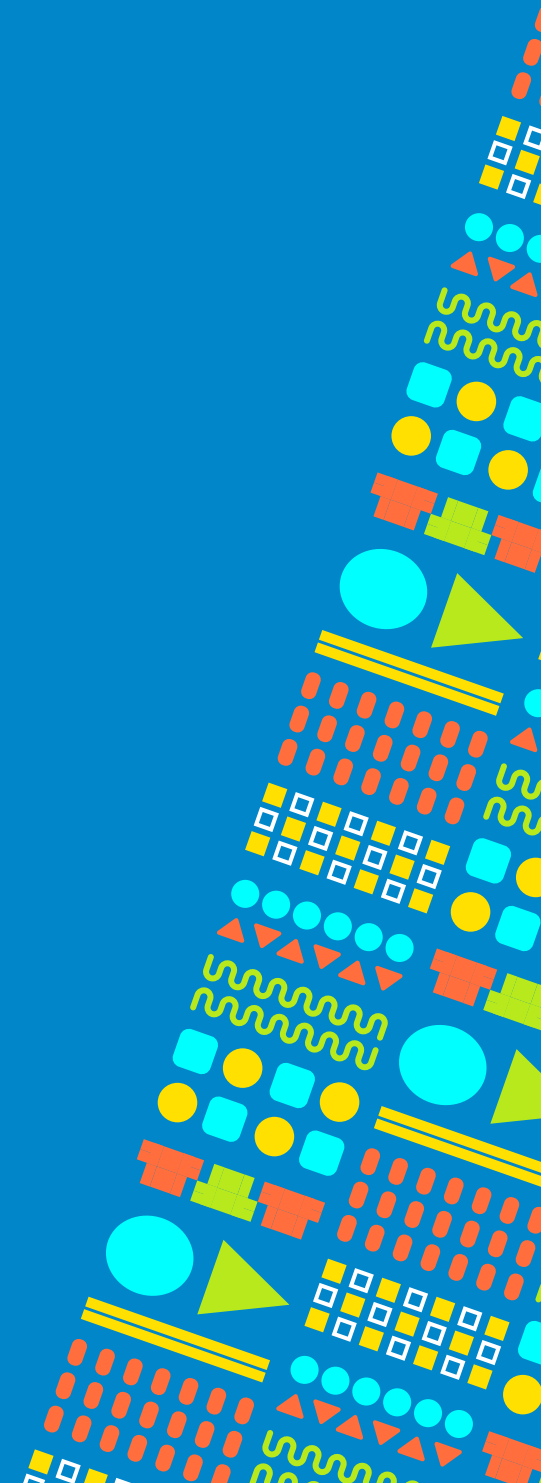






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