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# GUIDEBOOK

## GOOD PRACTICES ON CREATING YOUTH SOCIAL CAMPAIGNS IN NORWAY



Information brochure



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POZnań\*  
metropolia

Brochure prepared by a team of authors  
from **Norsensus Mediaforum**  
as part of a project implemented by:

Stowarzyszenie Centrum Rozwoju (LEADER-POLAND)  
Edukacji Obywatelskiej CREO  
ul. Kochanowskiego 8A/2  
60-845 Poznań  
[www.centrumcreo.pl](http://www.centrumcreo.pl)

Stowarzyszenie Metropolia Poznań (POLAND)  
ul. Kościelna 37  
60-537 Poznań  
[www.metropoliapoznan.pl](http://www.metropoliapoznan.pl)  
[www.konsultacje.metropoliapoznan.pl/eko](http://www.konsultacje.metropoliapoznan.pl/eko)

Norsensus Mediaforum (NORWAY)  
Rådhusgata 20  
0151 Oslo  
[www.norsensus.no](http://www.norsensus.no)

Društvo Ekologi Brez Meja (SLOVENIA)  
Trubarjeva 50  
1000 Ljubljana  
[www.ebm.si](http://www.ebm.si)



**NorSensus**  
MEDIAFORUM



## 1. Overview



We prepared this brochure to present civic engagement and volunteerism culture in Norway, and to share how the youth in Norway engage themselves in different social initiatives.

The guide consists of several parts. Its main element are examples in the field of creating and implementing social campaigns aimed at the youth environment and pro-ecological or pro-citizen initiatives created by young people and implemented largely in the media or Internet space.

The authors hope it will provide relevant insight, perhaps inspire replication, but at least show the relevance of the youth activism.

## 2. Introduction

For many of the readers of this guide, Norway is a perfect model with its very well functioning welfare system, yet we also have challenges from climate crisis to mental health. To understand the differences in addressing these kinds of social challenges, we need to clarify the civil society and civic engagement culture in Norway.

### Norway and the culture of civic engagement

Norway has historically a strong volunteerism and civic engagement tradition. Therefore, nonprofit and voluntary associations have played a distinctive role as intermediary democratic structures between individual citizens and the political and administrative system.

There are over 80,000 teams and associations in Norway, which gives a high average number of associations per person. Half of all residents in Norway over the age of 16 contribute with voluntary work in the voluntary organizations annually.

This is the highest proportion measured worldwide. In addition, there is all the volunteer work and volunteering that is done outside the organizations. The civic engagement of people through volunteerism and social initiatives amount to approx. 100,000 man-years of labor force annually.

## Volunteering in Norway in numbers

**142,000**

The voluntary work effort in the voluntary organizations in Norway corresponds to 142,000 man-years (SSB's satellite accounts for the voluntary sector 2020).

**58%**

58% of the population (over 15 years of age) have done voluntary work during the last year (Volunteering barometer 2022). This is a decrease from before and must be seen in the context of the corona pandemic.

Membership

**78%**

78% of the population is a member of at least one organisation, and 48% of the population is a member of at least two organisations. (SSB's Living Conditions Survey 2020).

Economy

**78mrd**

Voluntary work contributed to a value creation equivalent to NOK 78 billion in 2018 (SSB's satellite accounts for the voluntary sector 2020).

**45%**

The sources of income for non-profit and voluntary organizations are 45% from households, 27% state and 17% municipal and county funds through transfers and the purchase of services, and 12% other private actors (SSB's satellite accounts for the voluntary sector 2020).

## Norway and the culture of civic engagement

As we noted earlier, voluntary and non-profit organizations have been and are the welfare system watchdog. Historically, the voluntary sector has been responsible for much of the development and innovation, both in physical and mental health, environment and sustainability, care for children, and the many other areas.

As a historically well established element of social structure in Norway, nonprofit organizations have been seen as a natural ally for governments and state institutions in order to keep the welfare system up and running disregarding the political spectrum of the governing parties.

This level of engagement culture also includes young people. We see many young people engage in social initiatives and volunteerism through becoming volunteer at NGOs or starting their own initiatives. Even in school system, some schools offer volunteerism as an elective course.

When young people would like to make a project, start a project, a campaign, there are umbrella organizations which they can get guidance and also financial mechanisms that they can get funding for their initiatives very easily. Here we would like to share with you some of the very successful initiatives by young people in Norway.



### 3. Selected youth civic engagement initiatives in Norway

#### Nature and Youth (Natur og ungdom)

[Link do the website: Nature and Youth \(Natur og ungdom\)](#)



Natur og ungdom is one of the most influential youth led initiative/organziaiton working for protection of nature.

Youngsters can join many local units even in the tiniest towns and can meet other committed young people to do activist activities to change and discover new climate and environmental issues.

One of their recent initiative is for example a political campaign for Norway to stop oil drilling. They do this with regular large protests, local activities, social media campaigns.



## Golden Barbie (Gullbarbie)

[Link to the website: Golden Barbie \(Gullbarbie\)](#)



This extraordinary creative campaign The “Golden Barbie” (Gullbarbie) is run by Norwegian Save the Children Youth branch (Press). The campaign is in the form of awarding each year to the business or advertiser that Norwegian youth deem the “best at making them feel the worst”. The aim with the award is to raise awareness on how businesses, and their presence in advertising and media, make money on promoting harmful standards for a young audience.

The award is organized by Press – Save the Children Youth Norway. Youth nominate candidates for the award, and three finalists are selected based on the following criteria; the use of one-sided beauty standards, unnecessary sexualisation and outdated gender roles in their marketing.

This is the 12th time Press – Save the Children Youth hands out the Golden Barbie. The goal is to change the advertising and media industry to stop using one-sided ideals, old gender roles and unnecessary sexualization to sell products to children. Victoria’s Secret is among former “winners” of the prize.

Press – Save the Children Youth is a Norwegian youth organization that is not associated with a specific political party or religion. Consist of children and young people between 13 and 25 years.

### Radiator: Radi-Aid’s Critique of So-Called Poverty Porn

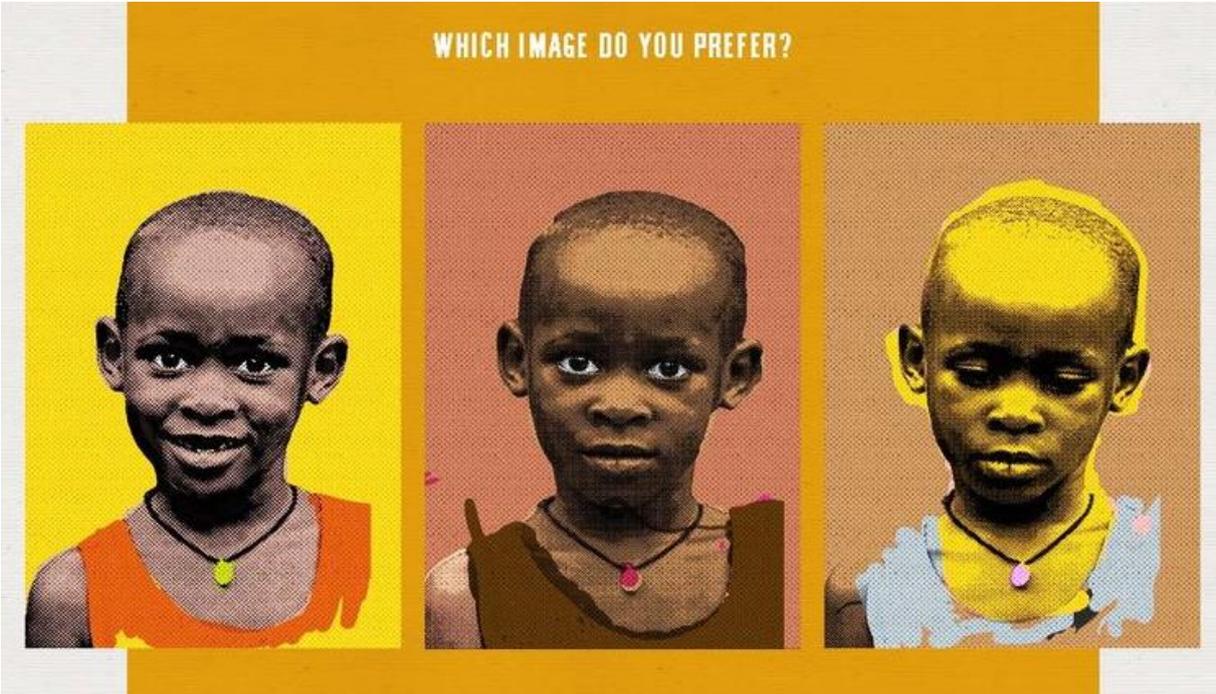
[Link to the website: Radiator: Radi-Aid’s Critique of So-Called Poverty Porn](#)



Radi-Aid is a former awareness campaign created by the Norwegian Students' and Academics' Assistance Fund (SAIH).

From 2013 to 2017, Radi-Aid presented literal rusty radiators to organizations that produced what they considered the most egregious examples of poverty porn advertising. Concern Worldwide, Plan Norway, Band-Aid, Save the Children and Disasters Emergency Committee all won rusty radiators during its five-year stint.

The selection criteria included lack of context and nuance identified as critical for exposing underlying causes of poverty. Radi-Aid worried that oversimplified images were damaging the long-term development of these countries. SAIH argues that the staple representation of passive, starving African children without the agency or desire to better their situation strips people of their dignity. Radi-Aid argues that there is no need to equate a donation to a saved life. Global issues are complex, so Radi-Aid resists aid organizations' tendency to convince their audience that solutions are cheap and easy. Presenting a parallel Golden Radiator award each year, Radi-Aid shows advertising can represent individuals with agency, dignity and respect. Campaigns can inspire rather than guilt their audiences. Charity campaigns can highlight the concept of common humanity and solidarity rather than detachment.



## Eco-Agents (Miljøagentene)

[Link to the website: Eco-Agents \(Miljøagentene\)](#)



Eco-Agents is a Norwegian environmental organization for - and with - children.

Children are the future, and the Eco-Agents make sure the voices of children are heard today, while preparing them for taking environmental leadership tomorrow. This means working to give children greater belief in themselves, in their future, and to demonstrate that taking action makes a difference.

The Eco-Agents wants to nourish a long lasting and solutions-oriented engagement for the environment among children in Norway, on the children's own terms.

Eco-Agents choose to face the challenges of today with enthusiasm, creativity, and inclusive action to build the motivation and momentum that is needed to secure a cleaner environment, global sustainable development, and safer future for us all.

The initiative describes its value as “working for a world where the opinions of children about the future of the Earth is listened to and acted upon”.

The Eco-Agents is a democratic organization where it is the member children who decide what issues the organization should work with and what the activities should be. All children in Norway can become Eco-Agents – regardless of religion, faith, and creed. They are a non-governmental organization with no affiliation to political parties. However, they do get involved in political topics of our time and do whatever they can to get all political parties onboard to help take better care of our planet.



The Eco-Agents have these fundamental goals:

- That children discover the wonderful nature and explore the connections between humans and nature.
- To help give children belief in themselves, in the democratic process, and that it is important to take action.
- To work for a safer society where humans know what nature can tolerate and act accordingly, for a safer future for the Earth and humanity.

Eco-Agents was founded in 1994, growing out of the popular children’s movement “Inky’s Environmental Detectives”. In 2006 the organisation changed name to “Miljøagentene”, with the English name Eco-Agents. Today, the organisation has local groups across most of Norway and many thousand registered members.

Each local group determines its own activities, which include campaigning, organizing nature clean-up days, performing recycling drives, conducting surveys, and compiling reports. In addition, each year the members elect a Children’s Panel on Climate Change made up of eight members from the Eco-Agents. This group of children is given the task to act as a voice for Norway’s children at the annual UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s Conference of the Parties summit – also known as the COP meetings.

## Europeisk Ungdom

[Link to the website: Europeisk Ungdom](#)



Europeisk Ungdom is a non-partisan youth organization that works for active Norwegian membership in the European Union. We want a united Europe where democratic countries enter into binding cooperation to solve common challenges. In addition, we work to raise young people's level of knowledge about the EU and Norway's relationship with Europe.

European Youth is an organization with around 1,000 members distributed among local, student and county teams across the country . The day-to-day activities were carried out at a local level and included everything from school visits and stands to lectures, training of our members, debates and social gatherings. Please get in touch if you would like to be put in touch with any of our local and county teams.

European Youth was established in 1973, just after the first referendum on Norwegian EC membership in 1972. The organization was central to the Norwegian EU struggle in 1994 and in the 90s was one of Norway's largest youth organizations with close to 10,000 members.



One of their recent initiative is the campaign „Come with us to Ukraine!“. For the second year running, Europeisk Ungdom organizes Eastern European Training Days (EETD). The project this year was held from 6-10 November in Kyiv, Ukraine. Here they gathered young people from Norway and Eastern

Europe with a focus on cooperation across national borders. The seminar consisted of a combination of lectures and workshops around the theme "Youth Participation in Democratic Governance", i.e. how young people can participate in democratic decision-making processes.

### Nordic SDGs youth alliance

[Link to the website: Nordic SDGs youth alliance](#)



Another example is from our organization, Norsensus Mediaforum's young volunteers. Nordic SDGs youth Alliance is a youth led Nordic level initiative.

The project run by youth from age of 14 aims to develop young people's creative media and digital skills with a focus on solution journalism, supporting and promoting the Agenda 2030 and the Nordic focus in the implementation of the Agenda in Nordic. The initiative is a spring of another youth initiative called Nordic Young Impact Storytellers. The project aims to empower young people (16-25 years old) from Norway, Sweden and Finland to participate and influence more, providing them with the necessary skills to advocate better for any social cause they believe in, through Nordic level and local workshops and specific tools on advocacy, storytelling, communication strategies and online campaigns.

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„We are active for the climate!“ / „Działamy dla klimatu!“



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