



Declaration of Principles for Interaction and Cooperation between the Voluntary and Municipal Sector

PURPOSE

This document defines a set of principles for interaction and cooperation between the voluntary and municipal sectors in developing public policies for voluntary organizations. Frivillighet Norge is the Association of NGOs in Norway, which represents voluntary organizations in all areas and not-for-profit, non-governmental companies within the health and welfare area. KS represents all local and regional municipalities in Norway. The platform is established in cooperation between equal parties, and further dialogue between the parties is based on this platform.

The platform aims to help preserve and further develop the Nordic tradition of volunteering with an independent voluntary sector. The platform contains values and principles, framework conditions, and measures that help strengthen the relations between the voluntary and municipal sectors.

The parties recommend organizations at the local and regional level and the individual local and regional municipalities¹ to promote dialogue on formal local and regional policies, preferably based on this declaration.

¹ In the following. «municipality» will refer to both local and regional municipalities.

Overall values and principles

1. The voluntary sector is an autonomous, independent sector situated between the private and public sectors. The voluntary sector is recognized as equal to the other sectors in society. Cooperation and interaction between the public and voluntary sectors are based on equitable partnership and mutual respect for each other's roles.
2. The voluntary sector creates great value in society, builds community and trust, and plays a key role in the Nordic democratic model.
3. Voluntary organizations are crucial to democracy as advocates, communicating people's interests to the political system in between elections, as well as by being schools in democratic participation and acting as a critical corrective of the governments.
4. Voluntary activity primarily takes place in the local community, in a municipality. An active and vibrant voluntary sector is key to an active and vibrant local community.
5. Voluntary organizations are significant in local innovation, through their experience and competence, based on their unique role and position in the local community.
6. Promoting participation in voluntary organizations is key to ensuring the community participation of the inhabitants in the municipality. High participation in voluntary organizations increases the social capital in society by improving the level of trust, identity, and cohesion in meetings between people.
7. Voluntary organizations contribute with their knowledge, networks, and ability to mobilize in crises, in cooperation with local authorities and police.
8. The diversity of the voluntary sector is an intrinsic value and an important reason for high participation. The diversity must be maintained through different efforts for different parts of the voluntary sector.
9. Both the municipalities and not-for-profit companies within the health and welfare area are non-commercial actors who serve a social mission based on democratic principles.
10. The municipal and voluntary sectors have different, but complementary roles in society. The cooperation and partnership between the sectors must be funded on an understanding of the fact that the voluntary sector should supplement and not replace the municipalities' statutory responsibility. The municipalities play an important role as facilitators for the voluntary sector.
11. The municipalities should develop and implement a comprehensive policy for voluntary organizations that promotes an active and thriving voluntary sector.

Predictable framework conditions

1. The parties agree that the framework conditions for the voluntary sector should be as predictable as possible.
2. The parties recommend that the municipal and voluntary sectors should cooperate in a way that ensures the autonomy and uniqueness of the voluntary sector.
3. The parties recommend that funding predominantly, to the greatest extent, is provided as core funding that the voluntary sector can use according to its priorities.
4. The parties recommend that the procedures for applying for, receiving, and reporting on public funding are as accessible as possible for the voluntary organizations and that no more requirements and criteria are set than necessary.
5. The parties recommend that the voluntary sector is consulted by the municipalities in matters that affect the framework conditions for the voluntary sector and the individual organizations' activities, target groups, and purposes.
2. The municipalities should possess updated knowledge of the local voluntary organization's challenges, resources, and development opportunities.
3. We encourage partnership agreements between municipalities and voluntary organizations where this is appropriate.
4. Municipalities should provide an arena for continuous dialogue with the voluntary sector. Such an arena can be a voluntary forum or council of voluntary organisations, where all voluntary organizations in the municipality are invited to participate.
5. The voluntary sector should be involved in decision-making and planning processes in matters that affect the voluntary sector. An example is the voluntary sector's access to suitable premises and arenas for activity.
6. Voluntary organizations and municipalities should establish dialogue and cooperation to achieve the UN sustainability goals based on local and regional conditions and needs.
7. The municipalities and voluntary organizations should discuss how they can find innovative working methods and create new solutions for challenges in the local community together.

Current measures in policies for voluntary organizations

1. The municipalities should facilitate the voluntary sector through various means and efforts. Examples are financial support; infrastructure, locations, and meeting places with universal design; an overview of activities in the municipality organized by voluntary organizations; and contact and information opportunities within the municipality.
8. Good dialogue and interaction between the voluntary and municipal sectors is fundamental for robust local preparedness and should also be grounded in voluntary policies.
9. The local voluntary sector should show an active interest in local democracy and contribute to the development of the local community.

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10. The municipalities and the voluntary sector have many arenas for cooperation on prevention, health, and welfare, and conditions for further cooperation within the framework of the voluntary organizations' purposes are necessary.
 11. The municipality should consider the legal possibility of reserving public procurement of health and social services for not-for-profit actors, insofar as certain conditions are met.
 12. Leisure activities organized by local organizations and associations influence children and young people's upbringing substantially. Any local policies for children and youth's leisure activities should be connected to the policies for the voluntary sector.

Further enactment of the platform

Frivillighet Norge and KS include common activities related to the agreement in their individual, ordinary plans. The parties will have regular contact meetings to address relevant issues that help promote the agreement among the members of the parties.

The parties will alternate the responsibility for inviting to these contact meetings.

The platform has a duration of two years. The parties will then evaluate and possibly revise the platform.

August 15, 2023

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Chairman of KS

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This document is a translation of the original «*Plattform for samspill og samarbeid mellom frivillig og kommunal sektor*» written in Norwegian. If there are differences between the two documents, the Norwegian version shall prevail.