

**Finland's Presidency 2021 in cooperation with Åland – Nordic Council of Ministers
We All Make a Difference! Alla påverkar! Jokainen vaikuttaa!
Virtual Conference on Education, Culture and Youth as Drivers for Sustainable
Development
June 8 – 9, 2021**

Sigríð Leivsdóttir

This conference about Nordic co-operation on sustainable development was very interesting and engaging as it provided a variety of perspectives from a diversity of thought-provoking speakers. As a repertoire for the conference, my special task was to follow the presentations by Finnish and Ålandic ministers, the Secretary General of the Nordic Council of Ministers, HRH Crown Princess Victoria, activist-poet Aka Niviâna, and Nordic Youth debating the implementation of sustainable development through the eyes of young people. Nordic governments have agreed on making the Nordic region the most sustainable and integrated region by 2030, which requires the countries to work closely together. The conference focused on the importance of education for sustainable development, and the role of culture and arts as 'agenda-setters' in modern societies. It amplified the participation of Nordic Youth as entrenched in sustainable development, and Nordic indigenous people, whose participation and knowledge are crucial to the development of the region. What I found specifically interesting is that discourses usually seen in the spheres of environmental organisations and climate activism have now been established among government officials, such as acknowledging the severity of the climate crisis, addressing the problem of over-consumption in the Nordic region, and deliberating on the relations between economic growth and sustainability. Immediately after this conference, I feel hopeful that the outlined intentions will generate tangible development to Nordic co-operation on sustainability. Nonetheless, until such actions are implemented, I remain somewhat sceptical, since many of these goals are easier said than done. The challenge now is to actually implement the goals outlined in this conference and to transform words into action. Realising these intentions requires people to become mobilised on local, national, and regional levels, and it necessitates intergenerational participation in community organising and strong integration between institutions and citizens.