



Nordic Safe Cities

Fostering a Secure Democratic Future

Jepppe Albers, Founder and Executive Director, Nordic Safe Cities

Why Nordic cooperation?

The Nordic countries share fundamental values and societal models – and that is precisely why we learn the most from each other's differences. Shared challenges are better solved together.

Why cities?

The municipality is democracy's closest expression: it makes decisions that directly affect people's everyday lives. Nordic cities that collaborate don't just share knowledge – they strengthen each other as democratic institutions.

Four themes – one coherent system

A resilient city needs to be cohesive, democratically vibrant, digitally safe and prepared for crises. Each building block reinforces the others: progress in one area creates the conditions for progress in all.

Why combine hard and soft measures?

Democratic resilience depends on both protection against concrete threats and on trust, participation and belonging. Neither is sufficient without the other – and it is in the combination that the real strength lies.



The Safe Cities Blueprint



✱ The Cohesive City

✱ The Democratic City

✱ The Safe Digital City

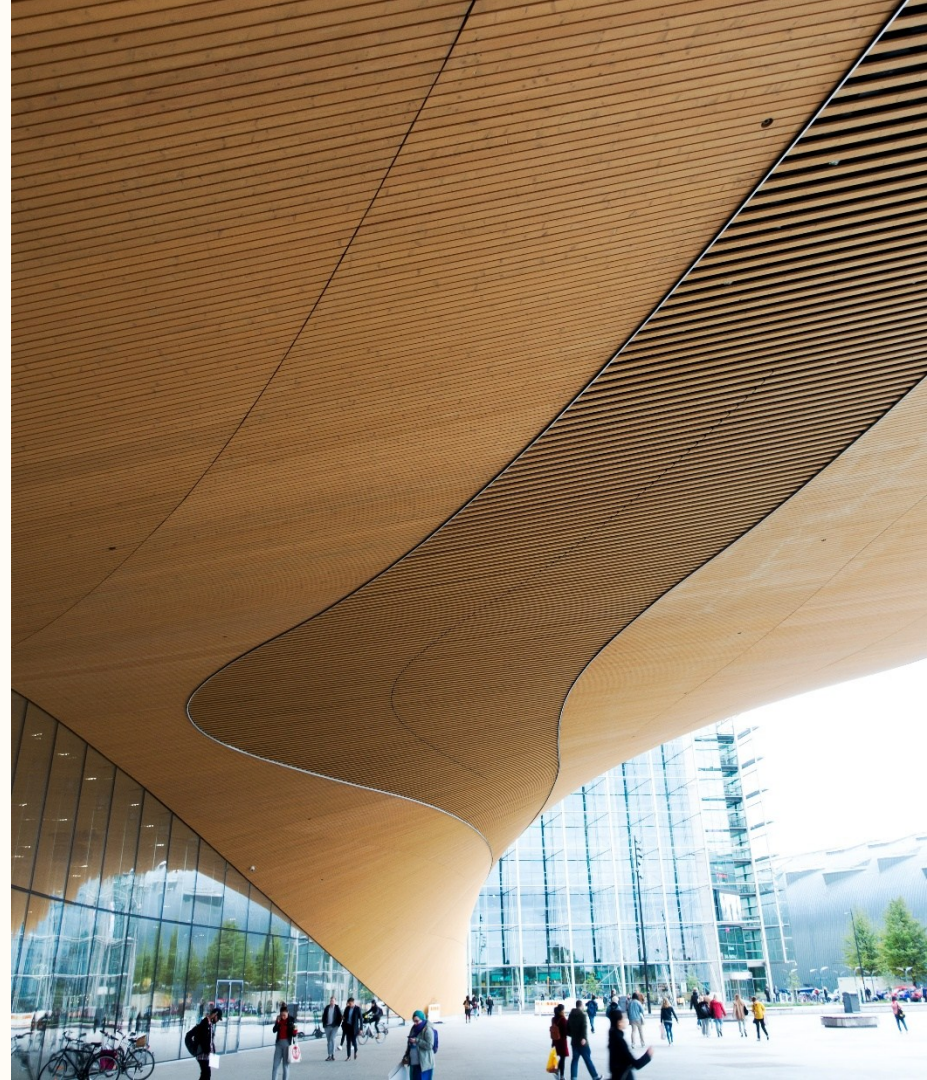
✱ The Prepared City

Cohesive City

Nordic democracies rely on trust and strong institutions, but segregation, organised crime and social exclusion are eroding these foundations — democracy is increasingly unevenly distributed within cities.

Strategic Priorities

- Ensure High Social Cohesion Across Neighbourhoods
- Prevent Crime Through Strategic Coordination
- Protect the Integrity of the Welfare State
- Counter Antidemocratic Influence
- Building Solidarity Across Difference



Promising practice

The Remaking of Tingbjerg, Copenhagen

- **Repositioning the school as a neighbourhood anchor** — with clear leadership and strong local partnerships — increased family trust and school uptake.
- **Integrating education, crime prevention and integration** into one coherent approach boosted social mixing and rebuilt everyday connections across backgrounds.
- **Sustained relational investment and structured participation** gradually restored trust between families and institutions.
- **Long-term commitment** over declarations produced stronger educational outcomes, greater cohesion and deeper institutional trust — democratic resilience built from daily life.



Democratic City

Young people are politically aware but experience systems as closed — and democratic culture is ultimately shaped through practice. Without meaningful roles, fair treatment and real influence in schools, communities and local decision-making, trust in democracy erodes over time.

Strategic Priorities

- Institutionalise Youth Power and Influence
- Strengthen Youth Capacity, Leadership and Civic Ecosystems
- Ensure Safe, Inclusive and Enabling Conditions for Participation
- National and Nordic Frameworks for Youth Democracy

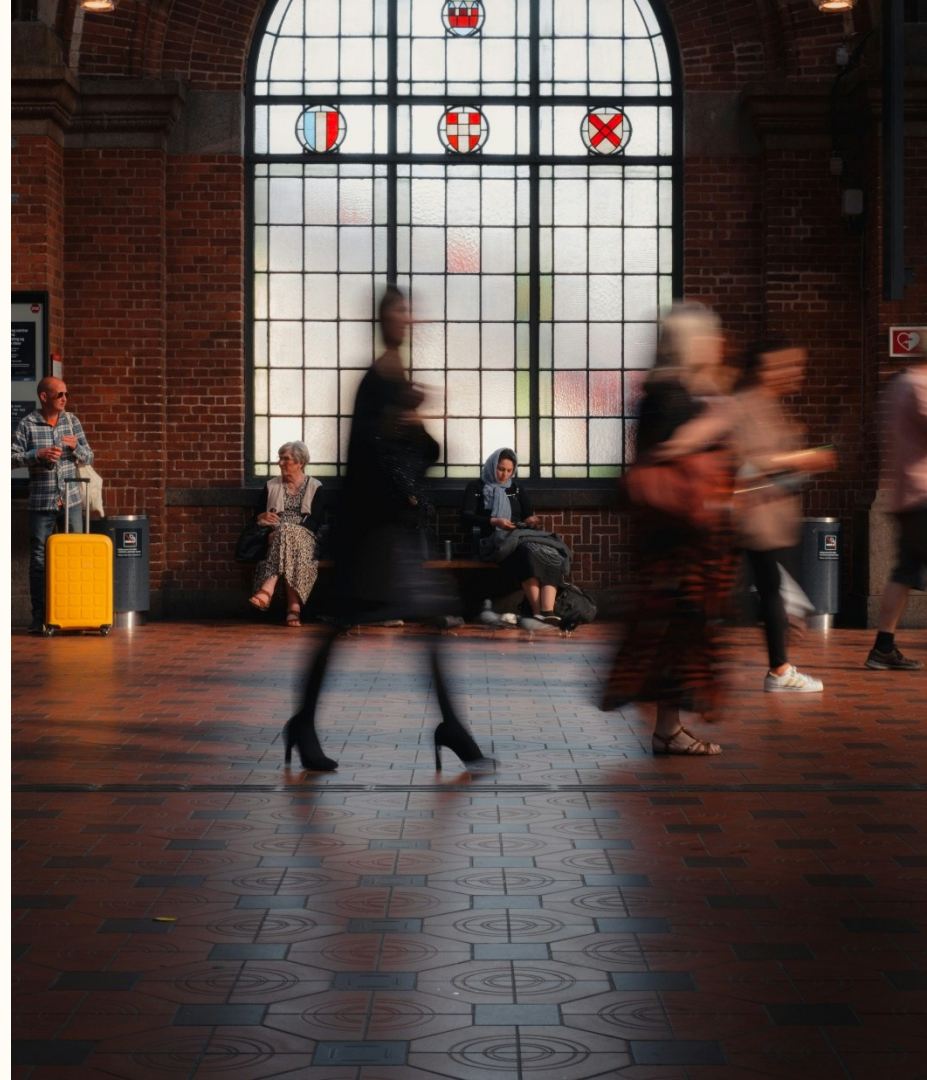


Prepared City

Nordic cities face growing uncertainty — geopolitical tensions, hybrid threats, climate crises and cyberattacks. Resilience is built before crises hit, through coordinated institutions, local networks and clear leadership. Preparedness is no longer just emergency response — it means embedding resilience in everyday governance to withstand shocks while maintaining public trust.

Strategic Priorities:

- Shape Whole-of-Society Preparedness at City Level
- Psychological Resilience and Social Cohesion
- Ensure Civic Literacy, Information Integrity and Crisis Communication
- Empower Residents and Communities in Crisis and Recovery
- Protect Critical Infrastructure and Essential Services



Safe Digital City

Democratic life is increasingly digital, but online spaces expose citizens to harassment, disinformation and manipulation. Information resilience — the ability to assess and withstand manipulation — is a core component of democratic resilience.

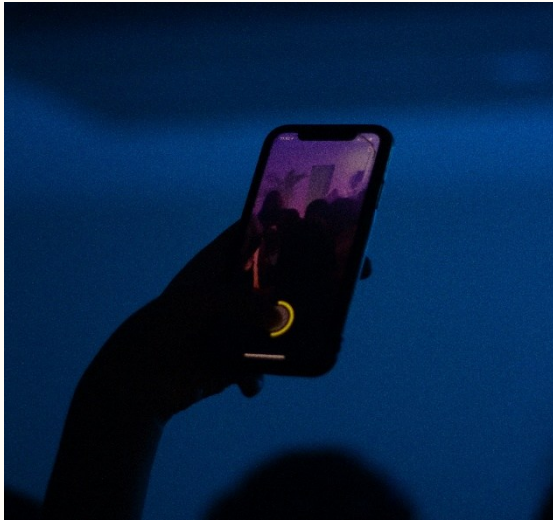
Strategic Priorities

- Monitor Local Digital Trends and Risks
- Integrate a Digital Mindset in Prevention
- Meet People Where They Are
- Engage the Right Actors, on the Right Platforms, at the Right Time
- Take Responsibility for Safe Moderation and Democratic Conversation



Safe Digital City Promising Practices

Helping Cities understand and prevent online hate, polarisations and digital threats to Democracy



Safe Digital Cities Concept

Using AI to strengthen democratic resilience in digital public debates



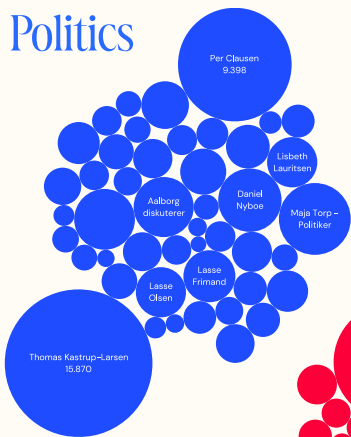
Edda

A way for cities to work directly inside young people's online environment rather than only on physical streets and in traditional youth clubs

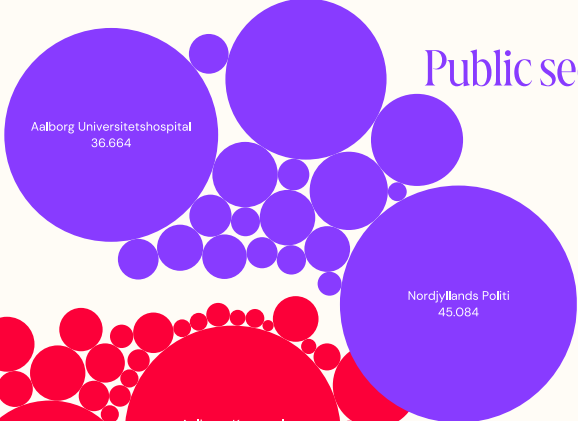


Digital Street Outreach,
Bodø, Aalborg, Bergen

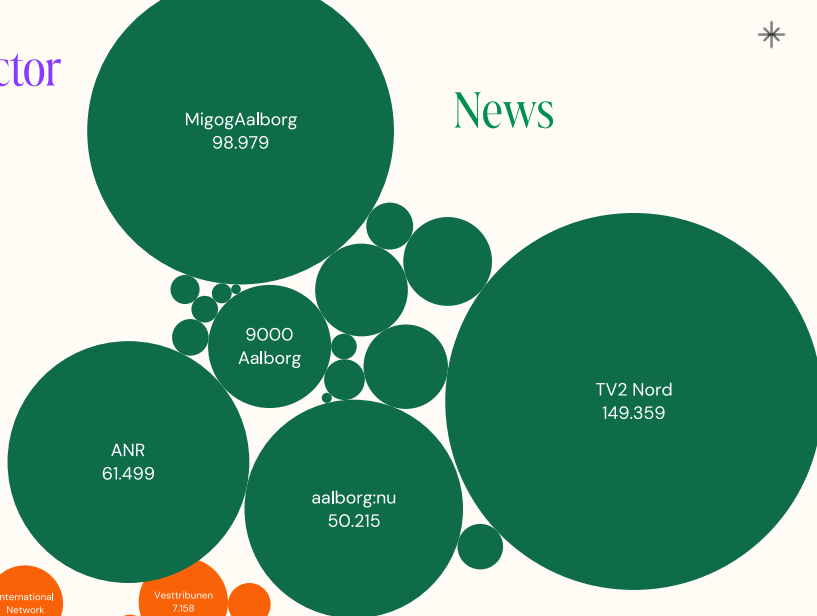
Politics



Public sector



News



Sports & culture



Local communities

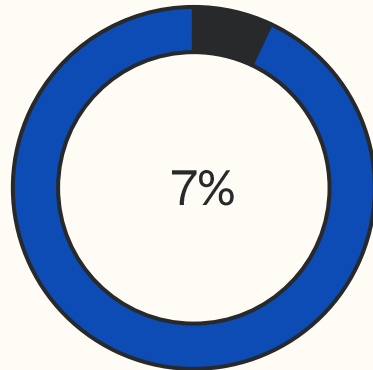


Religion

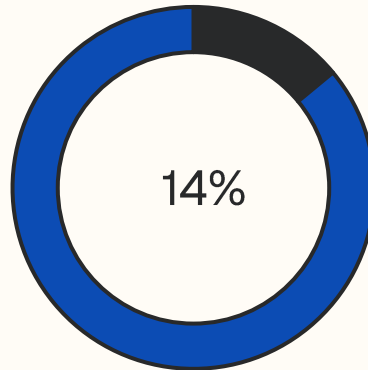


In Kristiansand, when the conversation explicitly concerns ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, or young people, the proportion of attacks and hatred is high.

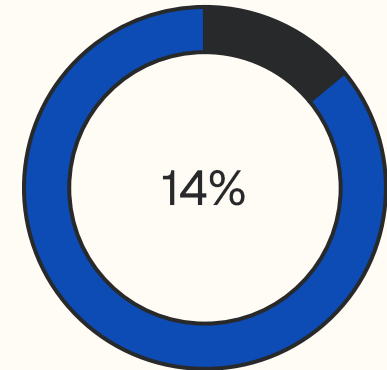
Youth



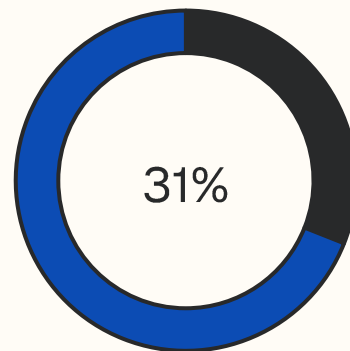
Ethnic Minorities



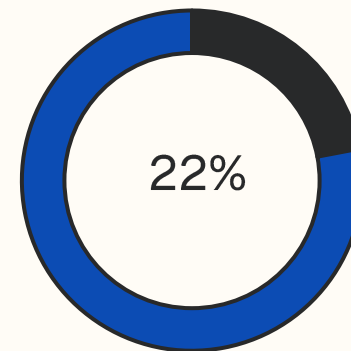
LGBTQ+



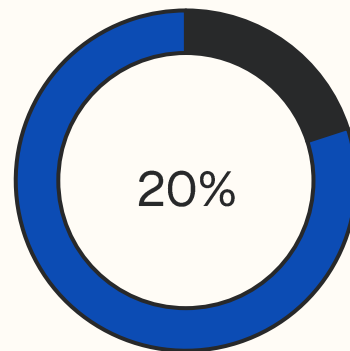
Muslims



Jews



LGBTQ+



In Odense, dialogue breaks down when conversations turn to minorities, and they become targets of hatred.

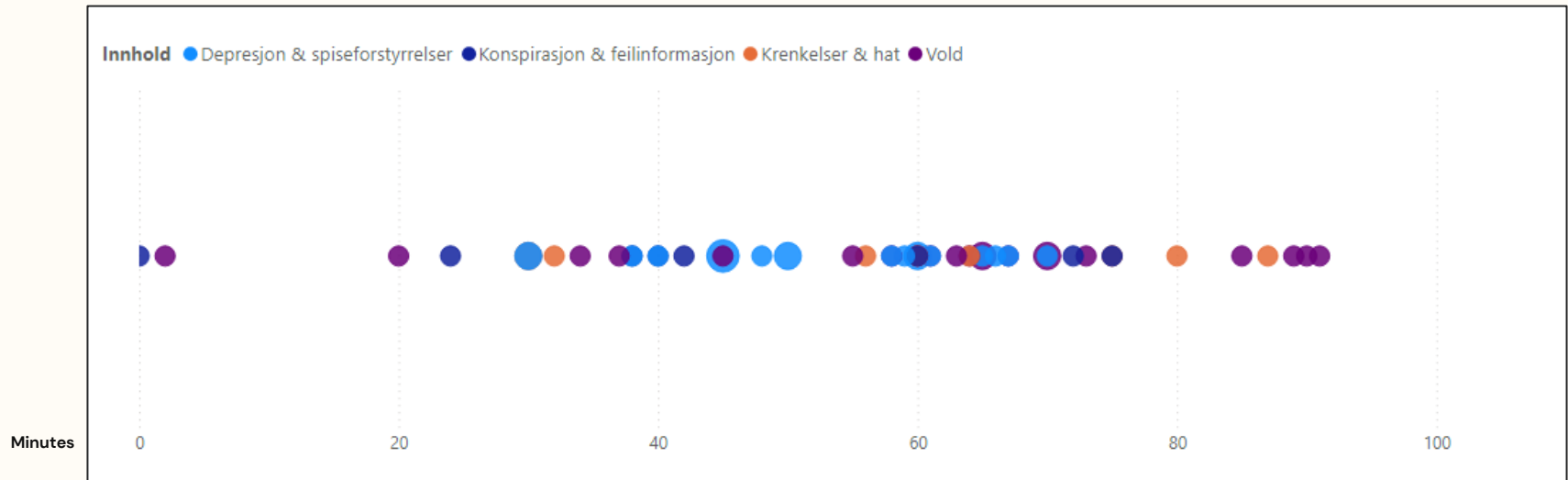
Number of attacks and hateful comments mentioning minorities

Source: Odense, Nordic Safe Cities, 2025

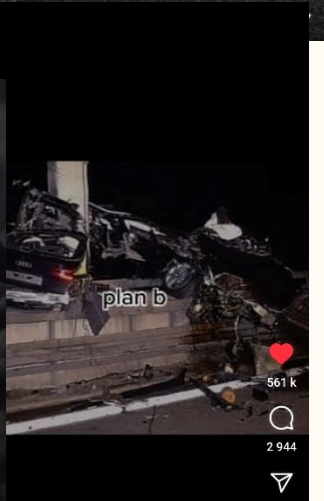
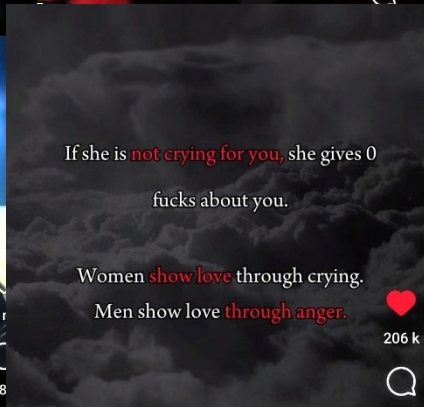
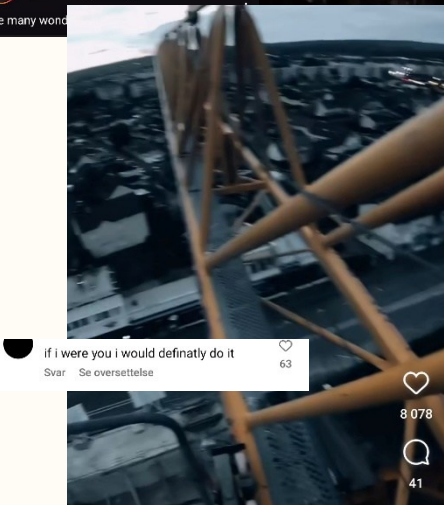
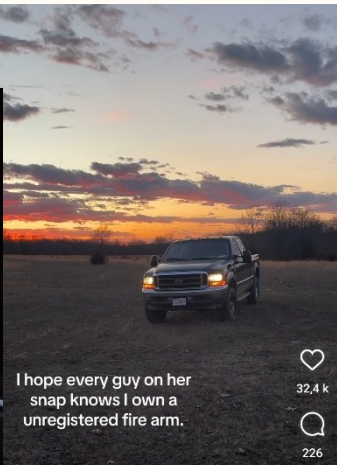
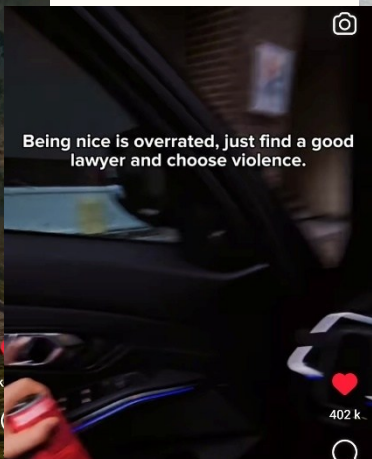
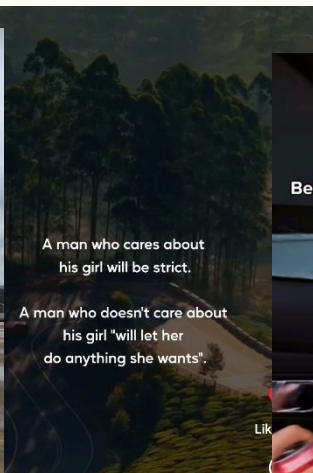


It doesn't take long before young people see problematic content when scrolling through TikTok and Instagram.

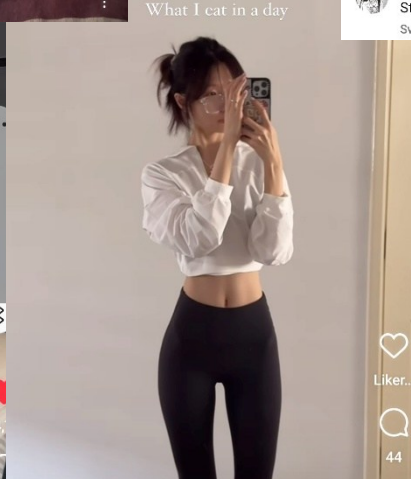
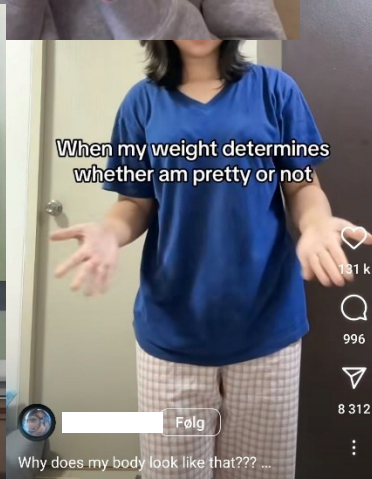
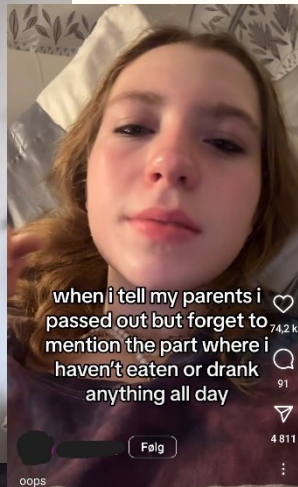
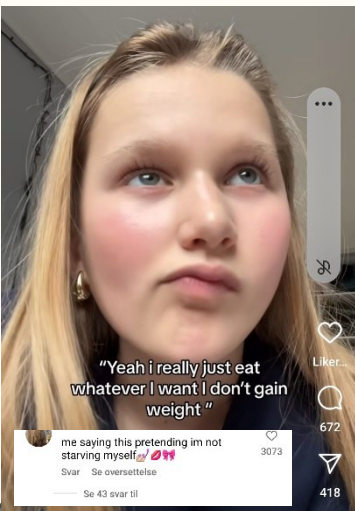
Problematic videos quickly appear on TikTok and Instagram Reels



Problematic ideals of masculinity



Content about eating disorders

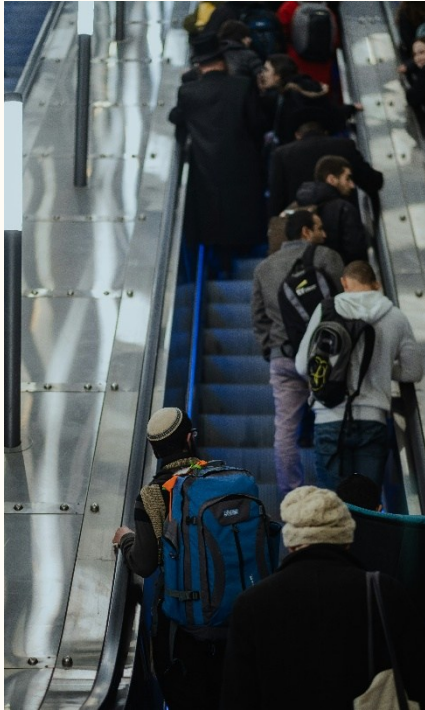


Takeaways from digital analyses of young people on Instagram and TikTok

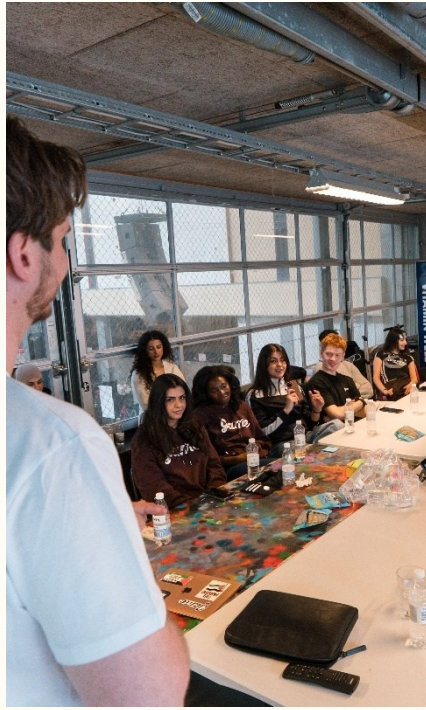
1. There is widespread exposure to harassment, bullying and extreme content.
2. Harassment takes place in private groups, while extreme content is easy to find on TikTok and Instagram.
3. Social media increases pressure on vulnerable groups (the youngest, LGBTQ+, immigrants).
4. Normalisation of extreme content; few feel able to act.
5. Young people rarely seek help from adults due to fear or lack of understanding.
6. Young people want “an adult” in the room.



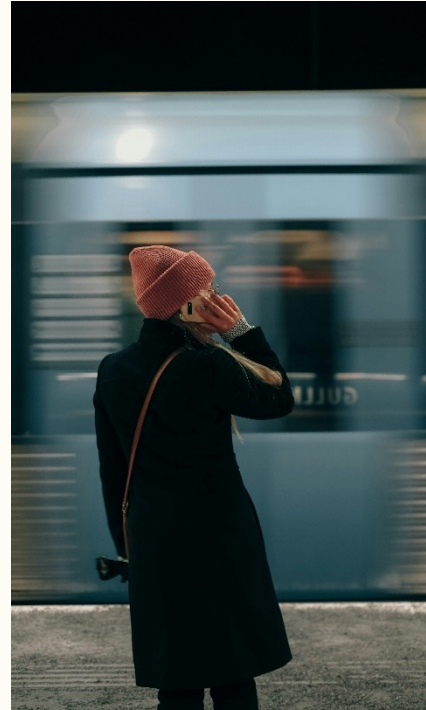
Other Initiatives



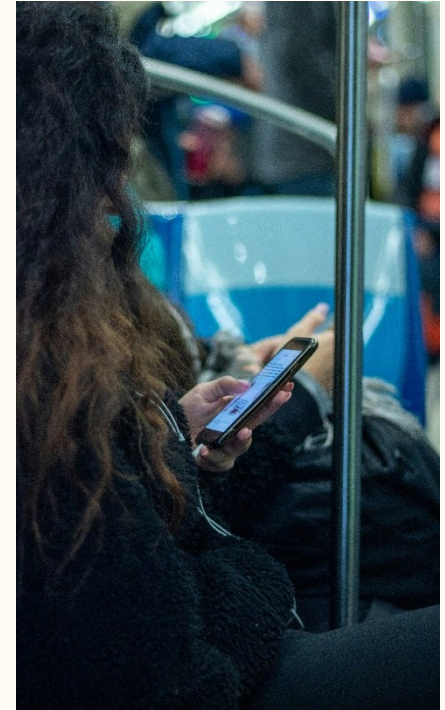
AMOS



Street Care Online



Digital teams

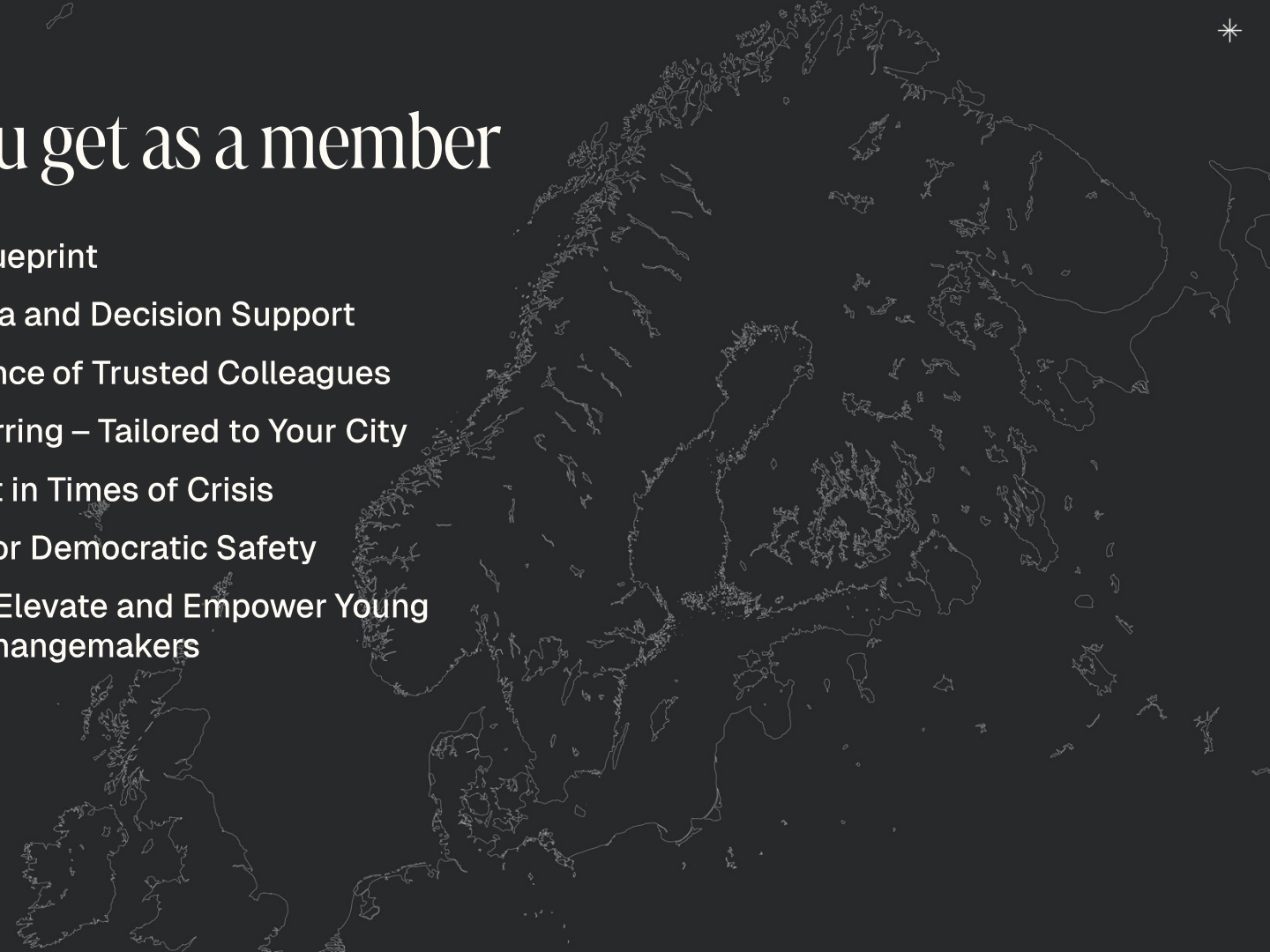


Safe Digital Presence



What you get as a member

- Safe Cities Blueprint
- Foresight, Data and Decision Support
- A Nordic Alliance of Trusted Colleagues
- Strategic Sparring – Tailored to Your City
- Rapid Support in Times of Crisis
- Digital Tools for Democratic Safety
- A Platform to Elevate and Empower Young Democratic Changemakers





Nordic Safe Cities

Fostering a Secure Democratic Future

www.nordicsafecities.org