

*The Co-Presidency of Finland and Åland
of the Nordic Council of Ministers
invites you to the conference*

***Media Literacy and Democracy
Education for Societal Resilience***

*18 and 19 September 2025
Helsinki Central Library Oodi*

Organised by



KANSALLINEN AUDIOVISUAALINEN INSTITUUTTI
NATIONELLA AUDIOVISUELLA INSTITUTET
NATIONAL AUDIOVISUAL INSTITUTE





The conference is aimed at experts and policymakers working in media literacy, education, teacher training, lifelong learning, youth sector and public libraries.

Conference themes:

- Promoting media literacy and civic skills as part of lifelong learning
- Role of media literacy and democracy education in fostering active citizenship, countering disinformation and misinformation, and encouraging respectful public dialogue
- Inclusion as a cornerstone of diverse public discourse and democratic progress: How can we make this a reality?
- State of play in the Nordic countries: How are our societies supporting citizens' media literacy and democratic skills in a digital world from childhood to adulthood? This includes examples of ongoing initiatives and collaboration among stakeholders across the Nordic region.

All sessions will be held at Oodi. Keynote sessions on Thursday 18 September will also be livestreamed.



Programme

Thursday 18 September 2025

Creating a Strong Base and Competence Continuum in a Changing World

Host: Journalist *Anu Partanen*

9.30 **Registration and breakfast**

10.00 **Opening remarks**

Anders Adlercreutz, Minister of Education, Finland

10.15 **Greeting from the Council of Europe**

Villano Qiriaz, Head of the Education Department

10.30 **Keynote 1: Media Literacy for Social Cohesion: A Theory of Change for a Healthier Future**

Julian McDougall, Professor in Media and Education, Bournemouth University

11.10 **Keynote 2: Multidimensional Media Literacy for National Resilience**


Minna Aslama Horowitz, Senior Researcher, DECA, University of Helsinki

11.45 Short break

12.00 **Nordic Media Literacy Survey – Findings from the Joint Nordic Survey on Aspects of Media Literacy**

Presented and discussed by:

- *Leo Pekkala*, Deputy Director, Head of Media Education Department, National Audiovisual Institute in Finland
- *Jan-Olof Lind*, Director, Swedish Agency for the Media
- *Catharina Bucht*, Analyst, Swedish Agency for the Media
- *Cesilie A. Bollingmo*, Head of Insights and Analysis, Norwegian Media Authority
- *Miriam Michaelsen*, the Chair of The Media Council for Children and Young People
- *Skúli Bragi Geirdal*, Hmíead of Netvís, Icelandic Media Commission



13.00–14.15 Lunch

14.15–16.15 **Breakout sessions**

Each session runs for two hours. Participants can stay in the same parallel session or switch to another parallel session after one hour if they wish.

Teacher Education for Democratic Competences and Media Literacy

By the Finnish Teacher Education Forum

Venue: *Kino Regina* (1st floor)

- *Auli Toom*, Professor of Higher Education, President of Teacher Education Forum, University of Helsinki
- *Carita Kiili*, Associate Professor, Tampere University
- *Eva Wennås Brante*, Associate Professor, Malmö University
- *Katri Kleemola* (facilitator), PhD, academic coordinator of Teacher Education Forum, University of Helsinki

**Building Civil Preparedness through Lifelong Learning
– A Guide to Resilience**

By the Nordic Network for Lifelong Learning

Venue: *Maijansali Hall* (1st floor)

Hosted by *Johanni Larjanko*, National Coordinator for NLL in Finland

Transformation of the Security Environment

- *Jukka Vahti*, Senior Lead, Foresight and Training, Sitra, Finland

Democracy Step by Step - A Model for a Systematic Whole School Approach on Education for Democracy

- *Hugo Wester*, Director of Education, Swedish National Agency for Education, Sweden
- *Ingiberg Olafson*, Teacher, Västerbotten folk high school, Sweden

Strengthening Resilience through Lifelong Learning: The Role of Study Associations and Adult Education in the Nordic Model

- *Olav Soleng*, Former Rector, Higher Education, Norway



Public Libraries as Media Educators and Promoters of Democracy

By the Nordic Culture Point

Venue: *Kuutio* (2nd floor)

Democratic agency through information literacy

- *Jonna Steinrud*, Author, Digitalization consultant, Sweden

The Stronghold of Democracy - Democracy work at libraries in practice

- *Marjo Hietikko*, Librarian, Tampere City Library, Finland

Empowered citizens and happy readers – What are the roles of libraries today?

- *Jonna Steinrud*, Author, Digitalization consultant, Sweden
- *Marjo Hietikko*, Librarian, Tampere City Library, Finland
- *Niina Holm*, Information Specialist, Helsinki Central Library Oodi
- *Salomon Hellman* (moderator), Library Developer, the Nordic Culture Point

Workshop: *Democracy Scan!* Method by *Marjo Hietikko*

16.15 Coffee break

16.30 Wrap-up of the first day (Venue: *Maijansali Hall*, 1st floor)

17.00 End of the first day

18.00– Informal dinner hosted by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Culture *Heidi Backman* in Helsinki city centre



Friday 19 September 2025

Democracy and Participation, Youth Involvement

9.00 **Teaching Controversial Issues – Experiences from Norway and other European Countries**

Kristin Flacké, Head of Youth Section, European Wergeland Center, Norway

Comment: *Mikko Puustinen*, Associate Professor, University of Helsinki

10.00 Coffee break

10.30 **Youth Councils in the Nordic Region: Strengthening Democratic Participation and Youth Involvement**

- *Markus Koski*, Chair, Union of Local Youth Councils in Finland
- *Marcus Melau*, Chair, Danish Network of Local Youth Councils
- *Niila-Juhán Valkeapää*, Vice-Chair, Sami Youth Council in Finland

11.15 **Digital Citizenship in Education – Implementing through Institutional Cooperation**

Bergþóra Þórhallsdóttir, Project Manager, City of Kópavogur, Iceland

11.45 **Closing Remarks**

Jonna Grunér, Head of Section, Bureau of Education, Government of Åland

12.00 End of Conference. Safe Travels!

Speakers



Host: Anu Partanen – Journalist

Anu Partanen is a journalist based in Finland and the United States. Her writing has appeared in The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times and The Atlantic, and her book *“The Nordic Theory of Everything: In Search of a Better Life”* compares everyday life in the United States with life in the Nordic region. In Finland she has held many positions ranging from managing editor to columnist, features writer to news reporter, lecturer to on-air commentator. Currently she works as a journalist at a Finnish digital journalism start-up Uusi Juttu.

Photo: Heidi Blåfield



Anders Adlercreutz – Minister of Education, Minister for Nordic Cooperation, Finland

Minister of Education Anders Adlercreutz heads the Ministry of Education and Culture. Minister is responsible for early childhood education and care, general education, vocational education and training and religious affairs. He is also responsible for matters related to Nordic cooperation at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Adlercreutz's political career began when he was elected to the Kirkkonummi Municipal Council in 2012, and he served as Chair of the council in 2017–2023. He was first elected to Parliament in 2015. Adlercreutz has also served as Minister for European Affairs and Ownership Steering in 2023–2024. Adlercreutz has been a member of several committees in Parliament. He was also a member of the Finnish Delegation to the Nordic Council for the 2022–2023 term. In 2024, Adlercreutz was elected President of the Swedish People's Party. Before serving as a Member of Parliament, he worked as an architect and as a partner in an architecture firm for nearly 20 years.



Jonna Grunér – Head of Section, Bureau of Education, Government of Åland

Head of Section at the Bureau of Education at the Government of Åland (Ålands landskapsregering). Alternate member of the Nordic Council of Ministers' Committee of Senior Officials for Education and Research. Over 20 years of experience in vocational education and training on the Åland Islands.



Heidi Backman – Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Culture

Heidi Backman, M.Pol.Sc., was appointed Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland on 4 August 2025. As the highest-ranking civil servant in the Ministry, she leads its operations in close cooperation with the Ministers and is responsible for implementing the Government Programme within the Ministry's administrative sector. Her role includes overseeing internal functions, coordinating cross-ministerial collaboration, and preparing the Ministry to meet future challenges in education and culture.

Prior to her role as Permanent Secretary Backman has held senior leadership positions across Finland's education system. She served at the Finnish National Agency for Education for nearly two decades, followed by her tenure as Director of Education and Cultural Services for the City of Kauniainen, where she oversaw early childhood education, general education, and cultural services. Most recently, she led University Services at Åbo Akademi University, with responsibilities spanning research and education services, ICT, HR, facility services, communications, and societal engagement.



Cesilie A. Bollingmo – Head of Insights and Analysis, Norwegian Media Authority

Cesilie has been at The Norwegian Media Authority for two years, in the position as the Head of insights and analysis. The department is responsible for data processing, insight/analyses and studies across specialist areas. This includes areas such as economy, trends and ownership in the Norwegian media market, children's usage and experience with digital media, critical media literacy, media diversity, technology and international development/global actors. Before this she has nearly 30 years of experience from positions within media business and market research.



Catharina Bucht – Analyst, Swedish Agency for the Media


Catharina works as analyst at the Swedish Agency for the Media. Her main focus is the agency's task to promote media and information literacy. She has been leading the Nordic Media Literacy Survey-project and is currently also involved in the government assignment to develop of a MOOC on media and information literacy addressing the general population. Prior to this Catharina has worked as analyst with a focus on media and information literacy at the Swedish Media Council and at Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. She holds a B.A. in media- and communication science.



Kristin Flacké – Head of Youth Section, European Wergeland Center, Norway

Kristin Flacké is currently Acting Head of the Youth Section while her normal position is senior advisor for the project "22 July and Democratic Citizenship" and "Youth for the Cities, Cities for youth" in Lublin.

Kristin finished her teacher training in 2012 at Lærerhøyskolen at Oslo Høyskole, now OsloMet. After finishing her degree, she worked several years as a secondary school teacher in Oslo. She wanted to use her experiences from the classroom, combined with her engagement for human rights and



sustainable development, and started working as an advisor for the school department at UN-Association of Norway. Kristin also likes to write and to use her creative mind in her work. This is something she got to do in her time as a project manager in Von Kommunikasjon.



Skúli Bragi Geirdal – Head of Netvís, Icelandic Media Commission

Skúli Bragi Geirdal is the Head of Netvís (Icelandic Safer Internet Centre). In this role, he leads efforts to promote a safer online environment for children and young people in Iceland. He oversees various initiatives focused on education, awareness, and support, working to empower youth with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the digital world responsibly and safely. Skúli established and coordinates the Icelandic Information and Media Literacy Network. He also oversees media literacy research for the Media Commission in collaboration with the University of Iceland's School of Education and Maskína. In addition to these roles, Skúli also lectures in media studies at the University of Akureyri.



Salomon Hellman – Library Developer, the Nordic Culture Point

Salomon Hellman is a librarian with extensive experience from the public libraries in Stockholm, where he has worked with book selection for the 40 branches as well as acquisition policies to ensure diverse collections that represent a wide range of views. He currently works as a library developer at Nordic Culture Point in Helsinki.



Marjo Hietikko – Librarian, Municipality of Tampere, Finland

Marjo Hietikko is the librarian in charge of the library's democracy and inclusion work at Tampere City Library and is the team leader of the library's democracy team. Before her current job, she was a project planner in the Jyväskylä and Tampere City Libraries' democracy project titled Stronghold of Democracy. The project produced the handbook "*Tiedossa on demokratiaa*".



Minna Aslama Horowitz – Senior Researcher, DECA, University of Helsinki

Minna Aslama Horowitz is a media and communications scholar focused on media policy, democracy, and digital rights. She is a Senior Researcher at the University of Helsinki and Head of Interaction at DECA, a national research consortium on democratic capacities in the algorithmic age. Her work spans media and information literacy, public service media, and inclusive communication in the digital era.

Dr. Aslama Horowitz has contributed to numerous international policy initiatives, particularly in the Nordic region, and serves as a policy expert at NORDIS, part of the European Digital Media Observatory. She was also a member of the Nordic Think Tank for Tech and Democracy of the Nordic Council of Ministers.



Niina Holm – Information Specialist, Helsinki Central Library Oodi

Information specialist Niina Holm has been working for Helsinki City Library since 2007, and in Oodi since its opening in 2018. In Oodi she loves to learn new things with others. Holm's expertise lies in adults' literature, events, and developing new ways to promote reading.



Carita Kiili – Associate Professor, Tampere University

Carita Kiili is an associate professor at the Faculty of Education and Culture, Tampere University, Finland, where she leads the Educating for Future Literacies (EduLit) research group. She holds the title of docent in digital literacies at the University of Lapland. Her research focuses on assessing and supporting students' skills in evaluating the credibility of online information. She is a work package leader in the six-year Critical project, funded by the Strategic Research Council, which aims to support children's and adolescent's critical reading. She also leads a newly launched project, Develop, funded by the Research Council of Finland, which investigates the development of online credibility evaluation skills during upper secondary education.



Katri Kleemola – PhD, academic coordinator of Teacher Education Forum, University of Helsinki

Dr Kleemola, PhD, is a researcher and the academic coordinator for the Finnish Teacher Education Forum in the Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Helsinki. Dr. Kleemola's academic activities are centered around the concept of a diverse university. Her research focuses on inequalities in educational paths leading to university. Key themes in her research include educational inequalities, critical thinking, student diversity and inclusion, and sense of belonging.



Markus Koski – Chair, Union of Local Youth Councils in Finland

Markus Koski has been the Chair of the Union of Local Youth Councils in Finland since 2024. Markus has served in the Youth Council of Nokia in 2018-2022 and as its chair in 2020-2022. The Union of Local Youth Councils in Finland (Nuva ry) is an expert organization in youth participation that promotes young people's opportunities to influence and act in society. We monitor the interests of young people in decision-making and train young people to act as influencers.



Johanni Larjanko – National Coordinator for NLL in Finland

Working in lifelong learning since 1997, with a special focus on non-formal adult education, inclusive participation, and flipped learning. Currently engaged as national coordinator in Finland for NLL, the Nordic Network for Lifelong Learning. About to start a new Nordic network on digital integration.



Jan-Olof Lind – Director, Swedish Agency for the Media

Jan-Olof Lind is the Director General of *Mediemyndigheten*, the Swedish Agency for the Media. He was appointed in September 2023 following senior roles in government and research. From 2019 to 2023, he served as State Secretary at the Ministry of Defence, and earlier was Director General of the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI). He has also held leadership positions at the Swedish Defence Materiel Administration and the Ministry of Defence. Trained in economics and business administration at Stockholm University, Lind was elected in 2025 to the board of the European Media Board, which advises on media regulation at EU level.



Julian McDougall – Professor in Media and Education, Bournemouth University

Julian McDougall is Professor in Media and Education and media literacy consultant. He is Principal Fellow of Advance HE and Programme Leader for the Professional Doctorate (Ed D) in Creative and Media Education at Bournemouth University. He is an advisor to Ofcom's Making Sense of Media Panel and academic adviser to the UK Government All Party Parliamentary Group on Political and Media Literacy. He is co-editor of the Journal of Media Literacy Education and Routledge Research in Media Literacy and Education and Chair of the Media and Information Literacy Alliance, the UK chapter for Unesco MIL.



In the fields of education, media literacy, media, communications and cultural studies, he is an author and editor of a wide range of books, articles, chapters and research reports and has provided an extensive body of research for research councils, the media industry, governments, regulators, charities and non-profit organisations. His new book is *Media Literacy for the Communication Ecosystem; A Theory of Change for a Healthier Future* (Palgrave).



Marcus Melau – Chair, Danish Network of Local Youth Councils

Marcus Melau is the Chairman of the Danish Network of Local Youth Councils (NAU), representing 50 youth councils across Denmark and working to strengthen youth participation in local democracy. Former Chairman of the Youth Council of Viborg Municipality and currently also serving as a Youth Delegate to the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.



Miriam Michaelsen – Chair, The Media Council for Children and Young People

Miriam Michaelsen is a lawyer and the Chair of The Media Council for Children and Young People. The Council works for children's safety, well-being and rights in the digitalized society and is responsible for age labelling movies and trailers. She is also a founding partner in ReThink Law, which specializes in tech and digital rights.



Ingiberg Olafson – Teacher, Västerbotten, Sweden

Ingiberg Olafson is a pedagogical development leader at Västerbotten Folk High School. He has extensive experience in developing education and teaching methods that strengthen democracy, dialogue, and lifelong learning. With a background as a teacher, art director, and creative professional, he combines creativity and strategic thinking to clarify and reinforce the role of popular education in society.



Leo Pekkala – Deputy Director, Head of Media Education Department, National Audiovisual Institute in Finland

Leo Pekkala is the Director of the National Audiovisual Institute of Finland (KAVI), where he oversees the implementation of Finland's national media literacy policy. He has extensive experience in media education, democracy, and civic engagement, and is recognised internationally as a leading expert on media literacy. Pekkala has contributed to numerous European and global initiatives promoting critical thinking, resilience against disinformation, and media education across all age groups.



Mikko Puustinen – Associate Professor, University of Helsinki

Puustinen has studied the history of Finnish teacher education, disciplinary knowledge in subject-specific teaching, the rhetoric of public debate on education, and discussion culture in universities. He is particularly interested in the interaction between education and society, and the recontextualization of curriculum knowledge in societal processes.



Villano Qiriazhi – Head of the Education Department, Council of Europe

Villano Qiriazhi is an experienced education policy leader with a long career at the Council of Europe, where he currently serves as Head of the Education Department. With a career spanning over two decades, he has been instrumental in shaping European education policies, advancing democratic citizenship, and developing human rights based digital transformation of education, as well as promoting ethics, transparency and academic integrity in higher education. Over the years, he has led major educational initiatives of the Council of Europe, represented the Organisation in high-level international fora (UNESCO, EU, OECD, BFUG), and managed strategic projects that have shaped European education systems in line with the Council of Europe's values and principles.



Olav Soleng – Special Advisor, Kompetanseforbundet, Norway

Olav Soleng is a former rector in higher education. Currently, he is an advisor on non-formal education sector at the Ministry of Education, Norway.



Jonna Steinrud – Author, Librarian, Municipality of Sätters, Sweden

Jonna Steinrud is an expert in MIL (Media and Information Literacy) with extensive experience from national coordination within digital participation and digital inclusion initiatives across Sweden. With a master's degree in Library and Information Science, she has worked as a librarian at both municipal and regional levels. She is co-author of the recent book *"MIK i praktiken! Biblioteken visar vägen"* (MIL in Practice! Libraries at the forefront) demonstrating her expertise in media literacy implementation from policy development through to hands-on operations.




Bergþóra Þórhallsdóttir – Project Manager, City of Kópavogur, Iceland

Bergþóra Þórhallsdóttir holds an M.Ed. in Educational Institution Management and a Dipl.Ed. in Public Administration. Bergþóra has primarily worked in primary education and adult education for 35 years as a teacher, school administrator and executive director of a continuing education center, Since 2020, Bergþóra Þórhallsdóttir has been serving as a project manager in information technology within the education department of Kópavogur Municipality, supporting school administrators, teachers and leading projects on digital citizenship education.



Auli Toom – Professor of Higher Education, President of Teacher Education Forum, University of Helsinki

Auli Toom, PhD, Full Professor of Higher Education, works as a Director of the Helsinki University Centre for University Teaching and Learning (HYPE) and Vice-Dean for research at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Helsinki. Dr. Toom is a permanent member of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters. Her research interests include teacher's professional agency and teacher education. She investigates student learning of generic skills, and pedagogies supporting

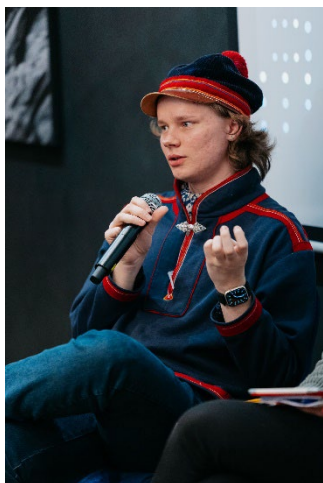


learning in the contexts of basic, upper secondary and higher education. She leads and co-leads several research projects and supervises PhD students. Her research articles have appeared in several scientific journals and edited books. She is the President of the National Finnish Teacher Education Forum.



Jukka Vahti – Senior Lead, Foresight and Training, Sitra, Finland

Jukka Vahti is a Senior Lead in Sitra's Foresight and Insight team, currently working on Sitra's forthcoming Futures Barometer and is engaged in foresight work related to the transformation of the security environment. At Sitra and previously as a journalist for over a decade, Vahti has been familiarised diversely with the change in the information and media environment, the societal role of social media platforms and the challenges imposed on democracy by disinformation and misinformation. At Sitra, Vahti has previously worked as a project director in the Digital Power and Democracy project. Vahti has also co-written several reports including *Digipower – How data can be used for influencing decision-makers and steering the world*, and *Media-driven societal influence – A transition and the future*. In addition, Vahti has been one of the hosts of Sitra's future oriented podcast *Hyvää huomista*.



Niila-Juhán Valkeapää – Vice-Chair, Sami Youth Council in Finland

Niila-Juhán Valkeapää is the Vice-Chair of the Youth Council of the Sámi Parliament in Finland. The Youth Council promotes the cultural and language rights of Sámi Youth around Finland, while strengthening Sámi Youths' sense of belonging to the Sámi Culture. The Youth Council works under the Sámi Parliament in Finland and contributes to the work of the Youth Sector of the Sámi Parliament. Valkeapää has also been active in other Sámi civil society organisations and advocated for Sámi Peoples' rights in many different national and international platforms. He wants to ensure that Sámi culture and traditions thrive through present-day challenges, such as extractive industries and climate change, while ensuring that indigenous peoples' rights are respected.



Eva Wennås Brante – Associate Professor, Malmö University

Eva Wennås Brante is an Associate Professor in Education at the Faculty of Education and Society, Malmö University, Sweden. Her research focuses on reading comprehension, digital and multimodal literacy, critical literacy, and inclusive teaching in multilingual classrooms. She has explored how images and multimodal texts influence reading for students with dyslexia, as well as how children engage in digital information searches and source evaluation. Recently, she has examined the role of AI tools in writing and the impact of remote teaching on the teacher–student relationship. Her work bridges research and practice, aiming to strengthen literacy education in a digital age.



Hugo Wester – Director of Education, Swedish National Agency for Education, Sweden

Hugo Wester is a government official and education policy advisor specialising in citizenship and civic education, anti-discrimination and bullying prevention, inclusive education, and student voice. A former history and social sciences teacher, Hugo has worked in education policy since 2009. He serves as Sweden's expert in the Council of Europe's Education Policy Advisor Network and participates in the EU Commission's Working Group on Citizenship and Inclusive Education. He has also been commissioned by the Council of Europe to implement a digital course on Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) in the Nordic countries. Hugo has held positions at the Living History Forum (Holocaust Centre), the Swedish National Agency for Education, and the Swedish Ministry of Education and Research.