

KVS 150 YEARS

The Year of Sivistys 2024

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MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION AND CULTURE
FINLAND

Opening words

The objectives of the Year of Sivistys 2024, designated by the Ministry of Education and Culture, were to the dust off Sivistys and put it into words that mean something today. During the year, Sivistys was examined from the perspectives of a sustainable future, equality, science, arts and culture, literacy and lifelong learning. Digitalisation and compassion became the cross-cutting themes.

The idea for the Year of Sivistys was conceived three years ago. We could not have imagined how topical the issue would become: War broke out in Europe as Russia invaded Ukraine. Democracy is under threat as those trying to establish dictatorships seek power on a wider scale. The global economy has been in crisis and markets have been volatile. Climate change threatens our planet. We fear that Sivistys could be trampled by these changes.

During the Year of Sivistys, hundreds of various actors showed that the concept is worth defending. The year of events was celebrated at a time when all actors and sectors of society were being affected by the austerity measures in public finances. This did not discourage us. The events have given us hope for the future. Dust has been wiped off with enthusiasm both at home and internationally – even to the extent that the word "Sivistys" has been introduced to other languages alongside "Sauna", "Sisu" and "Sibelius"!

During the year, it has become clear that Sivistys is first and foremost a word of action, helping us to find solutions together to the tough challenges of our time. We see Sivistys as a multi-level and multi-dimensional concept. In our day and age, Sivistys is also everyday civility. Everyday civility is about thinking about what I can do for others – especially those who are at risk of being sidelined.

We want to thank all of you who made the year a reality. Thanks also to all those who participated in the events and contributed their views to the debate.

Thank you to the Lifelong Learning Foundation, which just celebrated its 150th anniversary, and initiated and coordinated the year of Sivistys. Thanks to the Ministry of Education and Culture and especially to Permanent Secretary Anita Lehtikainen for making the year possible. Thanks to the Year of Sivistys 2024 Committee for steering the year, and to each and every one of our partners.

This report on the year is a compilation of its results. Let the report be a tool for all those who are fearlessly defending Sivistys. I want to give a warm thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the year. And I wish you a great time reading this report and doing something impressive for Sivistys.

Helsinki, 19 March 2025

Chair of the Year of Sivistys 2024 Committee **Sirpa Pietikäinen**, Member of the European Parliament

Patrons of the Year of Sivistys:

Tarja Halonen, Former President of the Republic of Finland

and

Finnish National Youth Council and Youth Sector

Summary

The Year of Sivistys designated by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, was celebrated in 2024. The Year of Sivistys came at a time when the world's democratic progress had stalled, climate change was shaking the planet, our country was in economic crisis, extremism had reared its head and in Europe there was war after Russia's attack on the independent state of Ukraine.

The aim of the Year of Sivistys was to bring up the roots of our civilised state, wipe the dust off Sivistys and update the concept for the modern age. The six main themes of the year were sustainable future, equality, science, arts and culture, literacy and lifelong learning. Digitalisation and compassion were pervasive perspectives.

The Year of Sivistys was a year of events, with over 200,000 participants in Finland and abroad. The year was coordinated by the Lifelong Learning Foundation (the Kvs Foundation), which was celebrating its 150th anniversary. The year also included a touring exhibition in Finland by the Science Center for Education and Learning (SOPPI), run by the Lifelong Learning Foundation. The missions of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs were given access to Sivistys material and the word "Sivistys" was launched as a gift to the world.

This report describes the activities and results of the Year of Sivistys. Sivistys is seen as the multidimensional foundation of the civilised state deeply rooted in Finnish society. From an individual's point of view, Sivistys is seen as a resource of hope: it represents, in particular, action for a better tomorrow. From a societal point of view, Sivistys is under threat from austerity and the rise of extremism, among other things. The report highlights the importance of defending Sivistys as a means of strengthening the resilience of society as a whole and safeguarding its future.

The report is intended for all sectors of society to support the future of our civilised state. This report provides a springboard for action for all the fearless defenders of Sivistys.

Introduction

The objective of the Year of Sivistys 2024, designated by the Ministry of Education and Culture, was to dust off Sivistys and put it into words that mean something today. The timeframe and inspiration for the year was the 150th anniversary of the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation (Kvs Foundation).

During the foundation's existence, Finland has become one of the most successful countries in the world. In honour of our anniversary year, we were given the task of coordinating the Year of Sivistys. The Ministry of Education and Culture made it possible to coordinate the year with a three-year funding (€100 000 in total). In addition to this funding, the Kvs Foundation contributed significantly to the production and promotion of the year. It is worth mentioning that the events organised during the year were financed by the organisers themselves. Many of the events were organised and carried out by volunteers.

The Year of Sivistys 2024 Committee chose six main themes through which to explore Sivistys. These main themes were sustainable future, equality, science, arts and culture, literacy and lifelong learning. Digitalisation and compassion became the cross-cutting themes.

The Year of Sivistys brought together a large number of actors from different sectors of society to organise events in Finland and abroad. Applications to become event organisers were filed through Year of Sivistys' website (sivistys.fi). The languages used on the website were Finnish, Swedish, English, the three Sámi languages and Romani. Event applications were processed by the Lifelong Learning Foundation. The criteria included the linkage of the event to the main themes of the Year of Sivistys and the organiser's commitment to the principles of safe space and event reporting.

In the run-up to the year, the Lifelong Learning Foundation, in cooperation with the Finnish Broadcasting Company Yle, organised the Aurora Future Event in Levi on 17 November 2023, on the theme of Sivistys. The Year of Sivistys was officially launched on 13 December 2023 at a seminar on sustainable development organised by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The title of the seminar was "Creativity, prosperity and Sivistys to boost the sustainability revolution" (Luovuus, hyvinvointi ja sivistys kestävyysmurrosta vauhdittamassa).

To mark the Year of Sivistys and its 150th anniversary, the Lifelong Learning Foundation organised a touring exhibition by the Science Centre for Education and Learning Soppi. Soppi invited all those interested to become part of the story of Sivistys: The touring exhibition took in 12 locations and 18 venues. It was organised in cooperation with local organisers. The Finnish National Gallery provided "the World of Hugo Simberg" virtual exhibition for the Soppi tour. The Lifelong Learning Foundation was responsible for the virtual glasses and for training the local partners.

The year was made possible by a large number of key partners: Aula Research Oy, the Timeout Foundation, Fountain Park Oy, the Finnish National Gallery, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, the Finnish Reading Center, MustRead, the Finnish National Agency for Education, ProCom – The Finnish Association of Communication Professionals, the Finnish Local Heritage Federation, MTV/SuomiAreena, Finland Society, Solar Films Inc. Ltd and the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies.

The visibility of the year was monitored through various channels. The Lifelong Learning Foundation held regular information webinars for event organisers. A common visual identity for the year supported communication and marketing by event organisers and key partners. Impact communication was targeted at Members of Parliament, as well as at decision-makers in general, in cooperation with MustRead media.

This report brings together the activities and results of the year. The report includes a content analysis of the year's events, the results of the public consultation and a summary of the touring exhibition of the Science Centre for Education and Learning Soppi.

We hope that the results of the year will be widely used in different sectors of society and in influencing decision-makers to ensure the continuity of our Sivistys state.

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2. Sivistys is continuous development

This chapter analyses what Sivistys is and what it should be in the future. The analysis is based on the views of the organisers of the Year of Sivistys events collected through a reporting form. A total of 135 event reports have been included in the analysis.

Sivistys is a broad concept that refers to the intellectual and cultural development of human beings. Sivistys encompasses, among other things, knowledge, skills, morals, and aesthetics. Sivistys has been – and still is – the subject of research and reflection by many different disciplines and thinkers. Sivistys is a constantly evolving concept that reflects society's values and goals. A person who espouses Sivistys listens, thinks critically, appreciates science, art and culture, and acts ethically and responsibly. Sivistys enables responsible citizenship, independent thinking and compassion for people and nature. Sivistys builds dialogue and understanding between various world views. Sivistys is a living and dynamic process that combines both individual and collective growth.

2.1 The individual in relation to Sivistys

The events of the year addressed the individual's relationship to Sivistys. Sivistys is seen as curiosity, lifelong self-development and spiritual growth; as a quest for a deeper understanding of oneself and the world. An important part of Sivistys is critical thinking – the ability to analyse information and to present and receive criticism.

Sivistys is about understanding culture, art, history and the ability to appreciate beauty. Sivistys is also about practical skills, such as physical and manual skills, language and mathematics. Today, Sivistys is also thought to include eco-social bildung. Eco-social bildung emphasises responsibility for all species on the planet, for nature and for the environment. Eco-social bildung is seen as the key to building a sustainable future. Sivistys is also about being a good human being and understanding the difference between right and wrong. It is not enough to have acquired a lot of knowledge; you must also be able to use it for good. Equality and compassion are important values in Sivistys.

2.2 Equality and non-discrimination at the heart of Sivistys

In the debates held during the year, equality and non-discrimination were linked as key values to Sivistys. The importance of community and compassion was also often mentioned. Sivistys is about compassion, valuing diversity and respecting all people, regardless of their background. Sivistys of the heart, which includes empathy and consideration for others, is essential. Sivistys promotes understanding and cooperation between people. It promotes the ability to listen to and reflect on ideas that differ from your own. Open and constructive dialogue is an essential part of Sivistys.

Compassion, dialogue and community are important elements of Sivistys. They help create communities where everyone can feel valued and heard. Sivistys creates inclusion and attachment to the community.

Instead of criticism, the year raised concerns about the declining appreciation of Sivistys and the lack of resources allocated to it. Concerns about the accessibility of information and Sivistys were also common.

2.5 Sivistys must change with the world

Sivistys requires constant updating of knowledge and skills. The definition of Sivistys also changes and evolves with society – different areas of Sivistys emerge and become more prominent in different eras. Sivistys in itself embodies the possibility to redefine itself, as the different aspects of Sivistys show. Here are the aspects that emerged from the analysis of the event reports.

A changing world demands new skills from everyone, and Sivistys must be inclusive and accessible to all. Society must support citizens' efforts to learn and develop throughout their lives: Everyone should have access to learning and Sivistys, regardless of their background or life situation. The importance of creativity, the learning process and repetition must be recognised as tools for human growth and the development of Sivistys.

The climate crisis highlights the importance of eco-social bildung and sustainability as an aspect of Sivistys. Sivistys should promote a responsible relationship with the world and an understanding of the complex relationships between people and the environment. Sivistys is not limited to human relations; it must also include respect for other species and the planet. People who espouse Sivistys understand and value biodiversity and work to preserve it.

Digitalisation is an important part of modern Sivistys. Digitalisation has made virtually all information available to us. At their best, digital tools can improve accessibility and equality, but it can be difficult to distinguish reliable, true information from false information. However, basic digital skills and critical thinking are essential to reap the full benefits of digital literacy.

Scientific knowledge and a world view based on science are the foundation of Sivistys. Sivistys must be based on accurate and reliable information that is accessible and understandable to all. The impact of AI on knowledge, knowledge acquisition and the definition of Sivistys will become topical in the future.

One important form of Sivistys is vocational Sivistys, the appreciation of which should be raised to the level it deserves. Vocational Sivistys involves not only in-depth knowledge of one's field, but also an appreciation of the social impact of one's activities and a sense of responsibility. Vocational education and training play a crucial role in promoting vocational Sivistys, but also, more broadly, the equality of Sivistys in society. Art and culture are important components of Sivistys, feeding the brain, supporting the development of compassion and helping individuals to be present for their peers. Culture and the arts are also sources of emotional security and resilience.

Belief in the future and hope are important themes when considering the future of Sivistys. Belief in the future can be seen as an essential indicator when assessing the return on investment in Sivistys. It is important to build a world where young people have faith in the future and the will to invest in themselves through education and culture. An important cultural dimension is to create hope and agency, especially for younger generations. Sivistys helps to promote positive change and build confidence in a better future.

Three insights into Sivistys

1. At the level of society, Sivistys is under threat but there is hope on an individual level: At the societal and institutional level, Sivistys is currently living in dark times. Cuts to Sivistys, polarisation, fake news, geopolitics and cultural conflicts are challenging the development of Sivistys. On an individual level, however, the enthusiasm for the preservation and development of Sivistys is clearly visible in the organisers and participants of events.

2. Sivistys is the key to maintaining mental security: Sivistys helps us to understand and articulate the world and thus supports our survival. Sivistys creates agency and gives hope for the future.
3. Sivistys must change with the world: Continuous development is an essential part of Sivistys. For the definition of Sivistys to remain relevant in the future, it must change with society.

Interview with President Tarja Halonen

Sauna, Sisu and Sivistys

What does Sivistys mean?

Sivistys means a holistic approach to your own life, to other people and to the wider world. This is reflected in attitudes towards different genders or immigrants, for example. Sivistys is most easily seen in the way we behave in everyday life and in the way we deal with different situations.

Sivistys gives us the big picture and helps us put different changes into perspective. Without Sivistys, our time horizons will be shorter and narrower and the necessary reforms may fail.

Sivistys is a key element of sustainable development. The fourth goal of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is about education, but the whole 2030 Agenda is built on a new kind of culture, or in Finnish, more accurately, Sivistys. This, in turn, is the basis for our attitude to the world.

What are the characteristics of Finnish Sivistys?

Finnish Sivistys is very special to us, because it is the closest and dearest to us. Our Sivistys has its own characteristics. For example, Finnish national epic, the Kalevala, is quite different from other similar works. The Kalevala is less warlike. It has a strong cultural and civilisational hallmark. The hero of the tale, Väinämöinen, the ancient minstrel, also embodies this hallmark of Sivistys by playing his *kantele* (a Finnish box zither) and bringing with him the perspective of time created by his age. Of course, we must take into account that the author of Kalevala, Elias Lönnrot, may have brought his own views and ideals to the Kalevala when he collected the poems.

The Finnish word 'Sivistys' is also special. There are considerable differences in the nuances of Sivistys in different languages, and there is no direct equivalent for the Finnish word in other languages. In that sense, "Sivistys" belongs in the same category as "Sisu" and "Sauna".

What is the future of Sivistys?

The future of Sivistys is a source of concern for many of us. Can we see beyond the economic divide?

In times of economic hardship, Sivistys and culture often have to be defended. Cuts in Sivistys and culture can have long-term negative effects, especially on young people. Education and training should aim at broader goals than just immediate economic benefits. The value of Sivistys should not be measured in money alone. As Winston Churchill is said to have answered when it was suggested to him during the Second World War that cuts in the arts should be made to cover the increase in defence spending: "Then what would we be fighting for?"

In many ways, the world has changed and become increasingly complex. Armed conflicts may not be on the decline in the future. War always means great human suffering, economic loss and ecological devastation. Peace must always be the goal, visible even in times of war.

Both small and large countries and their people face problems if resources are concentrated in the hands of a few. Therefore, we need human rights, democracy and pluralism. These are also part of Sivistys.

According to the UN Sustainability Report, the situation is worse today than it was in 2012, when the 2030 Agenda was jointly adopted. But let's work to improve the situation.

A multilateral world can bring new perspectives to our own Sivistys. The Chinese appreciate patience more than we do. Demographic problems, such as ageing populations, are challenges that we can in turn learn from the Nepali culture, where the relationship between parents and children is lifelong and two-way. Human rights apply regardless of age, from the first day to the last.

3. Thematic year and events

During the Year of Sivistys, 231 events were organised in different parts of Finland and abroad. The events dealt with the theme of Sivistys or were related to it in many different ways.

The #Sivistys2024 hashtag was mentioned on average four times a day during the year and reached more than 10 million people. The visibility and number of events of the Year of Sivistys, in relation to the financial investments, were considerable.

231 events – nearly 200 event organisers

Nearly 200 organisations organised events. Many of the events were organised in partnership. By 20 January 2025, 135 event reports had been received, covering 164 events.

According to the event reports, the most common event organisers were different associations. The next most common organisers were educational institutions and libraries. Foundations, universities and research institutes also excelled in organising events for the Year of Sivistys. Other events were organised by public authorities, schools and municipalities. Event organisers included churches and parishes, ministries, museums, scientific journals and magazines, among others.

250,000 participants – over 3 million people reached

In November 2023, the Year of Sivistys was heralded by the Future Event Aurora. The themes of the event were Sivistys and equality, organised in cooperation between the Finnish Broadcasting Company Yle and the Kvs Foundation. Aurora's content has reached over 500,000 viewers. At the 2024 democracy festival SuomiAreena, Sivistys was one of the themes of the year. The event, organised by MTV Oy and the City of Pori, attracted around 50,000 visitors.

A total of 249,418 participants attended and participated remotely in the reported events. The average number of event participants was 1,459. A typical event had just over 80 participants. The total estimated reach of the reported events was 3,391,345 people and, for a typical event, 224 people.

€10 per participant

Overall, the Year of Sivistys was organised on a small budget. A total of €2.5 million was spent on organising the events reported. The money spent was therefore €10 per participant and 74 cents per person reached. Typically, around €900 was spent on organising an event. Around one-fifth of the events were organised on a zero budget.

The Year of Sivistys would not have happened without the event organisers. A total of 2,482 people participated in the organisation of the events reported. A typical event was organised by a group of seven people.

Target group: Everyone

The target groups of the events strongly reflected the idea that Sivistys belongs to everyone. In the event reports, the most common type of event reported was for anyone interested or, more generally, for the general public.

The next most common target groups were adults, followed by children and young people. Events for education and training professionals and teachers were also relatively common. Other popular target groups included people interested in science, researchers and families with children. Events were also organised specifically for expatriate Finns, Ukrainian speakers and the elderly, for example.

44% of events received media coverage

The Year of Sivistys was visible in the media through channels such as Yle, MTV and MustRead. In social media, the Kvs Foundation's publications reached tens of thousands of users.

The year's events also received media coverage. Almost half of the event organisers reported that their event had received some media coverage. The events were particularly visible online, for example on news and information sites. The year's events were reported in local and national newspapers (for example, Helsingin Sanomat and Hufvudstadsbladet). The events could also be heard on the radio on Yle and Radio Helsinki. The events were also broadcast on Yle and MTV and on social media channels.

Did the event receive media coverage?

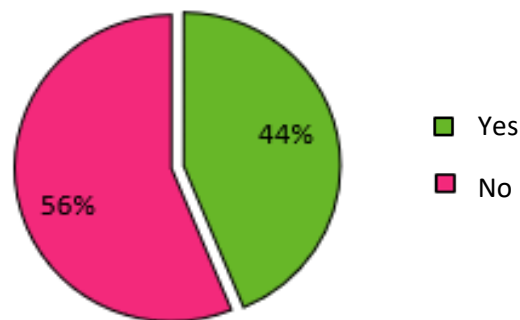


Figure 2. Event organisers' estimates of the visibility of reported events (n=135) in different media.

Rating of events: 9

The events of the Year of Sivistys 2024 were rated to be very successful. Participants' ratings of the success of the events averaged 9.0 on a scale of 1 to 10. The organisers of events gave an average score of 8.6. This shows that both participants and organisers were very satisfied with the way the events were run and their impact.

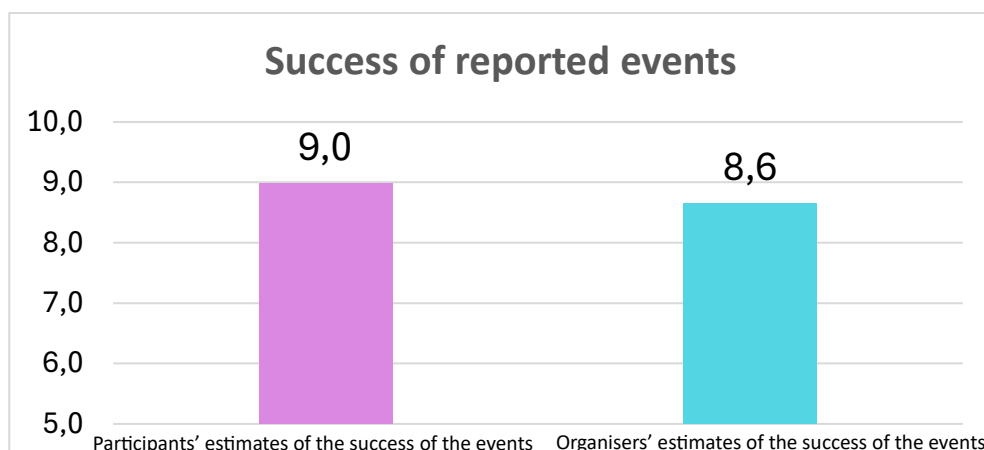


Figure 3. The average rating of participants and organisers of the reported events (n=135) on the success of the events. The success of the events is rated on a scale of 1–10.

¾ of Sivistys is lifelong learning

The six main themes of the Year of Sivistys were:

- A Sustainable Future
- Diversity, Equality and “New Finnishness”
- From Science to Sivistys
- Culture and Art as a Precursor to Sivistys
- Literacy and Dialogue
- Lifelong Learning and Sivistys

In addition, digitalisation and compassion were themes that cross-cut all the main themes.

The theme of Lifelong Learning and Sivistys was the most popular – almost three quarters of all reported events. Culture and Art as a Precursor to Sivistys, A Sustainable Future and Literacy and Dialogue were the themes of more than half of the events. The From Science to Sivistys theme covered 44% of the events and Diversity, Equality and New Finnishness 39%. The events also featured the cross-cutting themes of the Year of Sivistys: digitalisation (44% of events) and compassion (46%).

The Literacy and Dialogue events attracted the most participants. As many as 90% of all participants attended an event that dealt in one way or another with literacy and dialogue. 75% of all participants visited events under the theme Culture and Art as a Precursor to Sivistys. Among the cross-cutting themes, digitalisation was a particular focus.

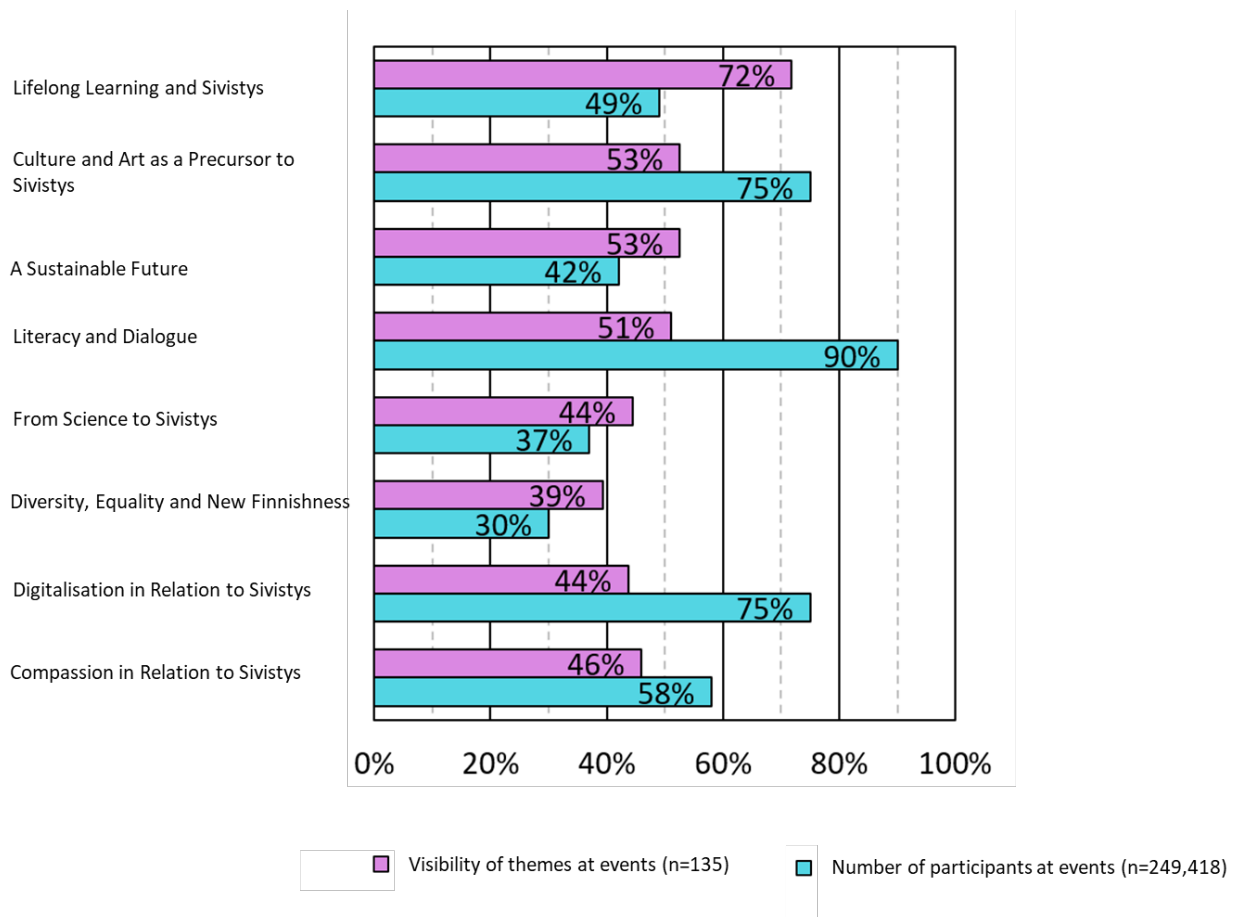


Figure 4. Breakdown of reported events (n=135) by theme and number of participants.

The six main themes of the Year of Sivistys are dealt with separately in chapters 3.1 to 3.6. The chapters describe the overall context of the events related to the theme, as well as the main results. The results have been processed taking into account the cross-cutting themes of the year, namely digitalisation and compassion. The chapters on the different themes of the Year of Sivistys (3.1 to 3.6) are based on reports written by the organisers of the events and on a content analysis of the reports.

Theme

A sustainable future

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3.1 A sustainable future

A sustainable future means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. Sustainability is often considered from ecological, economic and social perspectives. Sivistys also plays a key role in this balance: Sivistys promotes critical thinking, ethical reflection and ultimately sustainable action.

This chapter looks more closely at Sivistys from the perspective of a sustainable future, and considers how it can help ensure that future generations have the chance to live a good life. The summary presented in this chapter is based on a content analysis of events related to the theme.

During the Year of Sivistys, 71 events on a sustainable future were reported, meaning that sustainability was addressed in just over half of the events. Alongside a sustainable future, the most common theme was lifelong learning – another topic with strong links to the future. Together, these two themes were present in 60 reported events.

According to the organisers' reports, the Sustainable Future events attracted a total of 104,415 participants. Some 129,923 people were involved in some way in the theme's events.

1,093 people were involved in organising the events, and around €1.7 million was spent on producing the events reported. The events were praised by both organisers and participants who rated them as very successful.

The focus of the events of the Year of Sivistys on a sustainable future was on the role of Sivistys in building the future. A sustainable future is built by people with eco-social bildung who understand the links between ecological, social and economic realities and the impact of their actions on present and future generations, nature and society.

A sustainable future built on Sivistys is often considered in terms of the environment, climate change or loss of biodiversity. This is where so-called environmental Sivistys is discussed. Social dimensions are also at the heart of a sustainable future and a measure of our Sivistys – ensuring the well-being of our fellow human beings as the population ages and young people struggle to cope.

1,093	people involved in organising events
104,415	participants
129,923	persons reached
€1,693,237	spent on organising events

Sustainable Future events in figures

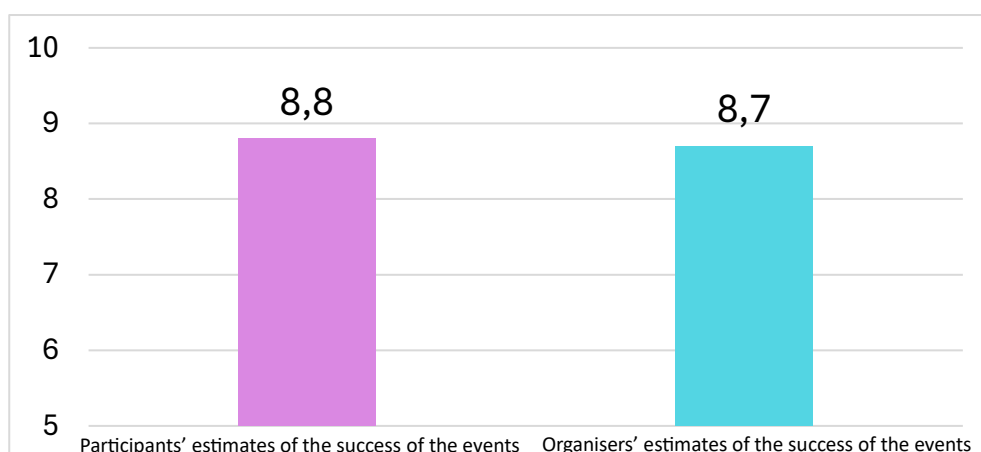


Figure 5. Participants' and event organisers' evaluations of the success of the Sustainable Future events. The success of the events is rated on a scale of 1–10.

Compassion is one of the most important raw materials for a sustainable future. The pursuit of Sivistys and of a sustainable future are connected by an understanding of others and compassion for others and for oneself. Compassion drives us to cherish our cultural heritage and build communities that maximise the well-being of current and future members of our community. Compassion plays an important role in working life, especially in terms of promoting well-being at work and community spirit. Compassion should also be extended to other species and the environment.

All levels and forms of education have a key role to play in enabling a sustainable future. Education and training, in particular, increase our knowledge and social Sivistys – we know what to do and how to achieve change in society. A sustainable future requires an understanding of our history and the ability to envision the future. Sivistys helps us learn from the past and harness experience to create a sustainable future.

Digitalisation and technology will only be at the heart of building a sustainable future if we have the skills to use them properly. The digitalisation of schools and educational institutions and the wider use of digital learning environments will lead to a more sustainable future. AI also has a place in a sustainable future, as it will have a major impact on working life and schools.

Media and information are also an important part of a sustainable future and Sivistys. The importance of open and reliable information is constantly growing. At its best, social media can raise young people's awareness and support inclusion but, when misused, it takes us further away from Sivistys and a sustainable future.

The theme of a sustainable future is often addressed through threat scenarios and risks. But a sustainable future should also be modelled through hope. Creating hope motivates people to act and to take action in their everyday lives. Recycling and the circular economy allow us all to play our part in building a sustainable future. For example, by using circular economy services in the textile sector, monitoring textile quality and avoiding overconsumption, each of us can contribute to building a sustainable future with a contribution the size of a wardrobe.

Building a sustainable future is done for young people, children and generations as yet unborn. There is a lot of talk about climate anxiety among young people. Young people have become active players, especially in the climate debate. The majority of young people fall somewhere between activism and paralysis. It is important to work towards strengthening young people's involvement. Sivistys helps to support young people's active involvement in building a sustainable future.

Three insights

1. Sivistys is the foundation of a sustainable future: To build a sustainable future, we need people with eco-social bildung who understand the links between ecological, social and economic realities.
2. A sustainable future requires a broad range of skills: All levels and forms of education have a key role to play in enabling a sustainable future. Education increases knowledge and social literacy, which helps people to understand history and envision the future.
3. We need hope in a reality full of threats: A sustainable future should be modelled through hope. Creating hope motivates people to act and to take action in their everyday lives.

Experiences of events:

"The aim of the researcher of eco-social bildung Hannu Heikkinen's research is to find out how each of us can act to avoid the ecological crisis that threatens us and the entire planetary biosphere – or at least mitigate its consequences. To do the right thing for oneself, for others and for the planet, one must have knowledge and the ability to use that knowledge correctly." From Science to Sivistys (Tieteestä sivistykseksi) – a series of articles on Tietysti.fi - the Academy of Finland

"Sustainable well-being is about living a good, meaningful life within the limits of the planet. We ate well, we had vegetarian food, relaxed, walked in the forest, watched and discussed inspirational videos on how to meet basic needs sustainably, and also made natural cosmetics or literary works to take home." A sustainable and good day in life (Kestävän ja hyvän elämän päivä) – Jalotus ry

"The ecological crisis is a problem for Sivistys. Its solution is related to Sivistys. Knowledge, technology and innovation can make a sustainable future a reality. But you have to imagine and articulate it first, and for that you need a new kind of Sivistys. We do not lack knowledge, science, technologies and economic resources, but what we do lack are ideas and thoughts about what we want to use them for. We lack a vision of what kind of better, planet-sized future we want. It's a question of Sivistys." Sivistys, the best investment of our lives (Sivistys, elämämme paras investointi) debate at the Future Event Aurora. – Kvs Foundation

"The future will be more sustainable if empathy and understanding between people increases, and in this case specifically by trying to understand and expand linguistic concepts." Webinar for those interested in participatory linguistic research - Societal awareness of linguistic variation and change (LANGAWARE) project

Interview: Chair of the Year of Sivistys 2024 Committee Sirpa Pietikäinen, Member of the European Parliament

Sivistys must become more vocal

What does Sivistys mean to you?

For me, Sivistys is a word that is linked to civilisation, it is the ability to function in human communities. We need to be civilised as human beings in order to form a civilisation.

Sivistys is not about elitism, but about the desire to grow and becoming collectively wiser. Nor does Sivistys simply mean that you are educated; even an uneducated person can attain a great amount of Sivistys. You cannot divide people into those who have Sivistys and those who have not; we are all on a long journey.

Sivistys provides the foundation for the rules of society and why we act the way we do. There would be no tripartition of power without Sivistys, nor Sivistys without saving the environment for future generations.

Now that the limits of the environment and nature have been reached, Sivistys also means reflecting on our own consumption needs and where they come from. For example, do I buy a new phone because I need it to replace an old one that doesn't work, or just because it's a status symbol? Where do I seek and get my experiences and joy in life?

Eco-social bildung means taking collective responsibility for the world and its inhabitants. It is solidarity with other people, but also with nature and other living beings. I think it's a disgrace how we relate to and treat other species. Aren't we animals as well, no different to other species? How have we come to call all other species animals and ourselves human?

Why is Sivistys important?

The world is complex. Problems cannot be solved one by one without understanding the interdependencies between different phenomena. Challenges to the planet such as global warming or chemicalisation are not isolated issues.

The pace of change is constantly accelerating, problems are interlinked and we need to solve them simultaneously. We have to be able to admit that we don't know everything. Solving complex issues requires systematic thinking and transnational cooperation. Sivistys gives us the instruments to do this.

What is the state of Sivistys in Finland today? Is it valued?

On the other hand, Sivistys is increasingly highly valued, and more and more people have access to it. Finland has had a strong belief in Sivistys, but I fear it is being eroded. In my childhood, stupid was the worst thing you could be, but nowadays ignorance and rudeness are becoming acceptable. Trumpism and populism are examples of this phenomenon, where one's own feelings are as valuable as the opinions of scientists. People undermining Sivistys express their negative opinions loudly, while civil people with Sivistys stay quiet. Perhaps the civil people should open their mouths more.

Promoting Sivistys is first and foremost a global challenge. I think more use could be made of international organisations such as UNESCO, which is doing excellent research. The European Union could also do more to promote Sivistys. Finland could be a force for promoting and renewing Sivistys within the EU. Everyone, regardless of nationality, should have the right to education, training, libraries and Sivistys.

Theme

Diversity, Equality and New Finnishness

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3.2 Diversity, Equality and New Finnishness

Sivistys is based on the idea that all people have equal value and rights. Sivistys requires openness and respect for different cultures, languages and perspectives. Diversity enriches society and promotes understanding and cooperation between people from different backgrounds. A society with Sivistys values and supports diversity, which creates the basis for peaceful and dynamic coexistence.

This chapter looks at the relationship of events on Diversity, Equality and New Finnishness to Sivistys. The summary presented in this chapter is based on a content analysis of events related to the theme.

New Finnishness highlights the importance of immigrants and new citizens in society. Compassion and understanding for people from different backgrounds are part of Sivistys. New Finnishness enriches culture and brings new perspectives and experiences that promote social development and innovation.

Diversity, equality and new Finnishness were the themes of 39% of the reported events during the year. Alongside diversity, equality and new Finnishness, the theme of lifelong learning was most often present (47 events reported). A total of 73,749 people attended the Diversity, Equality and New Finnishness events. The events were estimated to have reached a total of 92,123 people.

A total of 1,027 event organisers were involved in organising events on diversity, equality and new Finnishness, with a total budget of €1.6 million. Both organisers and participants rated the events as very successful and gave the events high marks.

1,027	people involved in organising events
73,749	participants
92,123	persons reached
1,606,451	money spent on organising events (€)

Diversity, Equality and New Finnishness – the theme's events in figures

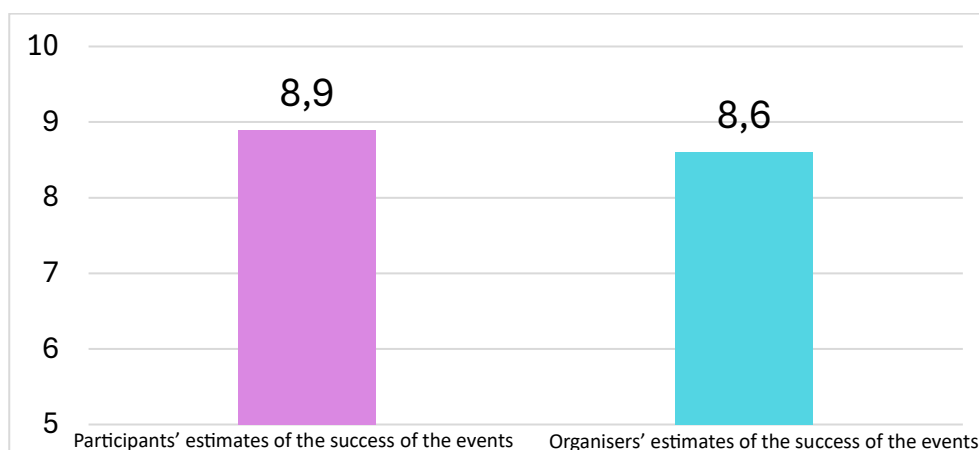


Figure 6. Participants' and event organisers' evaluations of the success of the Diversity, Equality and New Finnishness events. The success of the events is rated on a scale of 1–10.

The themes of diversity, equality and new Finnishness were addressed in lectures, panel discussions, presentations and exhibitions. In particular, the events emphasised the importance of civilised debate that is respectful of others. This approach promotes diversity and cohesion and acts as an effective counterweight to polarisation.

Cultural and linguistic diversity enriches society. Different cultures and languages bring new ideas and perspectives that foster innovation and creativity. This will lead to better solutions and developments in different sectors. Diversity creates different forms of art, music, literature and food culture that enrich the cultural life of society. This makes society more vibrant and interesting.

Diversity also enables economic benefits by combining different skills and competences. This can improve competitiveness of businesses and create new commercial opportunities. The presence of different languages enriches the linguistic landscape, providing opportunities to learn new languages and communicate more widely. This in turn can open doors to international cooperation and understanding.

In education and training, equality is emphasised through the strengths of students and accessible teaching materials. Diverse teacher training and school support for diverse learners are key factors in promoting inclusion and participation.

In the workplace, equality is reflected in the fact that all workers are treated equally and have equal working conditions. Equality is ensured when recruitment and hiring processes are fair and non-discriminatory. The workplace must create and maintain a working environment where all employees can feel safe and valued.

New Finnishness challenges organisations and institutions to rethink their structures. Organisations and institutions need to adapt their services to better meet the needs of the new Finns. Particular attention must be paid to the accessibility of services. This can mean, for example, providing multilingual services or adopting culturally sensitive practices. It is important that new Finns can participate and influence society at different levels.

Compassion and fairness are at the heart of promoting diversity and equality. Compassion was also promoted in the year's events, such as the principles of safe space and respectful debate. One way of showing compassion was seen as an understandable and accessible use of language. Discussions at events on diversity, equality and new Finnishness were thought-provoking, while creating cohesion and a sense of community. Participants learned more about different cultures, linguistic diversity and the history of women's status, among other things. In particular, the richness of diversity was highlighted.

Three insights into Sivistys

1. Civilised debate promotes diversity and cohesion: The importance of a civilised, participatory debate is highlighted. This promotes diversity and cohesion and acts as an effective counterweight to polarisation.
2. Diversity enriches society: Cultural and linguistic diversity brings new ideas, perspectives and creativity. This may lead to better solutions and developments in different sectors. It enriches the cultural life of society and can also bring economic benefits.
3. Equality and inclusion are central to the functioning of society: Equality in education, training and employment and the participation of new Finns in society are important in promoting inclusion and participation. Compassion and fairness are at the heart of promoting diversity and equality.

Experiences of events:

"This theme was referred to when discussing equality and non-discrimination in education. There was also discussion on how Sivistys also means an interest in and ability to understand the reality and perspectives of people in different situations." SuomiAreena / Once upon a time there was Sivistys – what about its future?

(Olipa kerran sivistys – entä sen tulevaisuus?) – Academy of Finland, Sivista, Council of Rectors of Finnish Universities UNIFI ry

"Jenny Orphanou from the Finland Society presented the digital services of the advisory service, which enable access to information and participation in decision-making, regardless of time and place. Digitality is a great development and a great help for many, but we must not forget the people who are not able to access digital services." Changing expatriate Finnishness and the hope for a good old age (Muuttuva ulkosuomalaisuus ja toiveena hyvä vanhuus) – Jenny Orphanou, Finland Society

"...the project provides a forum to share experiences of linguistic inequality. This also gives others the opportunity to broaden their understanding. In the form of publications, the views of people from different backgrounds are brought to the fore and can also contribute to a more positive and compassionate development, a wider flourishing and use of different Finnish languages in everyday life." Webinar for those interested in participatory linguistic research - Everyday Finnish Language Awareness and Change Project

Interview: Anna Munsterhjelm, Chief Executive at Patron of the Year, the Finnish National Youth Council and Youth Sector

Involving young people strengthens their commitment to society

What does Sivistys mean to you?

At the individual level, Sivistys is the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills and experiences that enable one to evaluate the world outside one's own sphere of life and everyday experience. It is having the confidence that you are equal to others, that your ideas are valuable and that you are an important part of your community. Then you can also participate in building a shared world view.

Often, Sivistys is treated from an academic perspective and is defined by those who are already in a position of power. Young people should be involved in defining Sivistys and thus be able to accumulate their own Sivistys capital. Without the participation of young people in defining society's values, there is a risk that they will not engage with society.

What makes Finnish Sivistys special?

Finns often like to emphasise that Finland is a country built on Sivistys, education and training. However, Sivistys, education and training are in fact the starting point for all more developed countries.

What makes us different is that to some extent we have had and still have education available to all. We have traditionally lacked a deeper division between upper and lower classes.

But we are not as perfectly equal a country as is often claimed. We often say that anyone can earn a doctoral degree in Finland. There are, however, people who barely make it through primary and lower secondary education. Not everything is possible for everyone, not even in Finland. We are no longer particularly literate or educated as a nation.

What is the state of Sivistys in Finland today?

Sivistys is valued and considered important. However, Finns are more apathetic than before about voting in elections and membership of NGOs, among other things. This has undermined the knowledge, skills and social dimensions that NGOs have been responsible for promoting. The downward slope is not steep, but it

exists, and there is reason to be concerned about it. We need structural measures now to avoid a further downward spiral.

What does the future of Sivistys look like?

Finland's long tradition of good development is fading, and it can no longer be automatically assumed that the next generation will be better off than the previous ones, either with regard to Sivistys or more generally. The generation born in the 1970s is the most educated, physically healthy and economically well-off generation of Finns, while younger generations are less well-off. Already, a third of young people are so unwell that they are unlikely to be able to work in adulthood.

Structural and cultural changes are needed to halt this trend, which could have major consequences for the future of individuals and society.

How should the state of Sivistys in Finland be improved?

Improving the state of Finnish Sivistys should start from a legal perspective – defining together what rights Finland is ready to guarantee to all with regard to Sivistys and culture.

What is Finland's promise to all its citizens? What kind of knowledge and skills do we want everyone to have? Once this has been decided, it is only a matter of agreeing how to implement Sivistys.

Theme

From Science to Sivistys

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3.3 From Science to Sivistys

Science and Sivistys have a special, two-way relationship. Science and its achievements provide the basis for Sivistys. Scientific knowledge and research contribute to Sivistys – the intellectual and moral development of individuals and society – for example by providing tools and methods for acquiring new knowledge and understanding the world. Sivistys, on the other hand, is a prerequisite for the cornerstones of science: values, ethics and critical thinking. This is how science and Sivistys intertwine to create the basis for sustainable and progressive societies.

This chapter will discuss in more detail the content of the From Science to Sivistys events and the relationship between the events and the theme to Sivistys. The summary presented in this chapter is based on a content analysis of events related to the theme.

A total of 60 events on the relationship between science and Sivistys were reported during the year. The total number of participants was 93,187. The reported events were estimated to have reached a total of 103,004 people. The From Science for Sivistys theme was present in just under half of all reported events during the year. The most common parallel theme in the From Science to Sivistys events was lifelong learning.

In relation to the number of participants and the number of people reached, the From Science for Sivistys events were successfully organised with limited resources. A total of 994 people participated in the organisation of the events. The realised budget for events was EUR 1,662,262. The events were a great success – both the organisers and the participants praised them.

994	people involved in organising events
93,187	participants
103,004	persons reached
1,662,262	money spent on organising events (€)

From Science to Sivistys events in figures

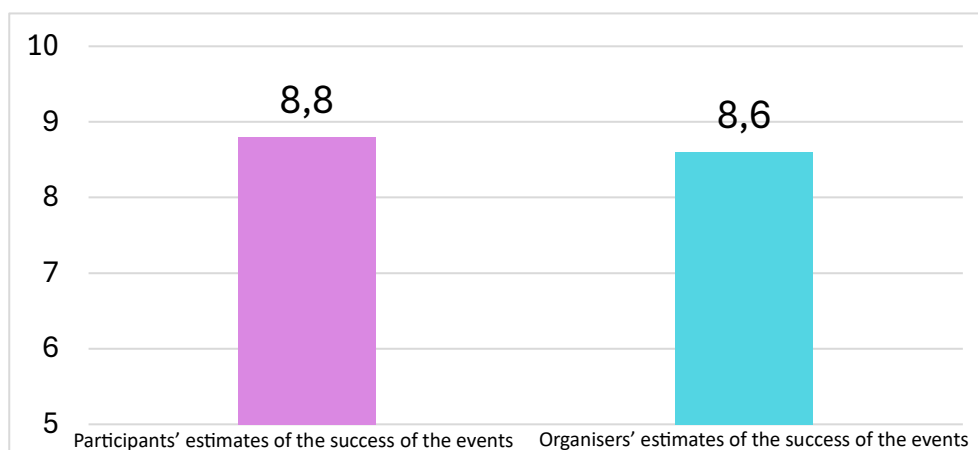


Figure 7. Participants' and event organisers' evaluations of the success of the from Science to Sivistys events. The success of the events is rated on a scale of 1–10.

The key message of the From Science to Sivistys events is that science and Sivistys go hand in hand. Sivistys is based on scientific knowledge, and it is essential for engaging in science. The events showcased scientific research and discussed the importance of science and research for society.

Knowledge produced by scientific methods can be considered the foundation of Sivistys – knowledge is used to build understanding of the world around us and of people. Scientific research and the updating of knowledge are built through new research, but new research also needs the established knowledge gained through the life's work of academics and previous researchers.

As Sivistys changes with the times and our society's notions of equality and non-discrimination are updated, the way we engage in science is also changing. The history of science looks at the individual achievements of talented women in the largely male world of science. Today, female scientists in Finland have a more equal and clearly greater role as part of the scientific community.

Science and Sivistys are united by a desire to better understand the world around us. Like building Sivistys, engaging in science requires humility, curiosity and compassion.

Often perceived as hard and unconditional, science is not intuitively associated with compassion. But compassion and humanity are also present in science. No human being knows everything, scientists are human beings and human beings are fallible. Hate speech on internet discussion boards can also hurt or scare a scientist. In research topics and subjects, compassion is more naturally present in some disciplines than in others but, for example, in studying the challenges faced by space rovers, even hard science is confronted with something very human.

Scientific achievements are not born in a vacuum. They need the opportunity for debate, both within the research community and between science and the phenomena and objects of scientific research. Interacting with teachers and researchers in different fields who use basic scientific knowledge in their work can be very useful: Teachers learn about new research projects and researchers gain a better understanding of everyday teaching. Similarly, interpreters, translators and linguists who deal with language from different perspectives, for example, benefit from dialogue, as information about research projects, current phenomena and practical issues circulates between them.

Both science and Sivistys must keep abreast of the times. Content produced through scientific methods becomes established knowledge and wisdom over time. Individuals and societies with Sivistys pass it on. As science progresses, paradigms change and previous phenomena are examined in the light of new knowledge.

In civilised societies, the popularisation of science and its findings is becoming increasingly important. This is an effective way of disseminating scientific knowledge to fuel Sivistys. Digitalisation plays a key role here. Only for a very short time in human history has a vast amount of scientific and non-scientific information been abundantly available online. The importance of critical thinking skills as an aspect of Sivistys has become even more important as the responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of information has largely shifted to the receiver of the information. Media literacy and source criticism are needed more than ever.

Technological advances affect not only the dissemination of scientific knowledge, but also the way science is conducted. Artificial intelligence and robotics will have a major impact on humanity and also on the content of science and the way we look at it. New technological advances always bring with them ethical issues, which require Sivistys.

Three insights

1. Science and Sivistys go hand in hand: Sivistys is based on scientific knowledge. It is essential for engaging in science. New research always builds on previous knowledge and builds on and extends existing knowledge to achieve new insights and innovations.
2. Sivistys and science do not happen without debate: Compassion and humanity are also present in science. Engaging in science requires humility, curiosity and compassion. Scientific achievements do

not happen in a vacuum; they require interaction and debate within the research community and between science and its subjects.

3. Technological progress must be harnessed for the benefit of Sivistys: Artificial intelligence and robotics will have a major impact on humanity – and we must be prepared for them, for better or worse. Unconditional opposition to technology is as silly as unconditional techno-utopianism.

Experiences of events:

"The intrinsic value of learning and knowledge was much discussed because it was linked to the Sivistys mission of higher education and its role in solving the crises that threaten the planet." 'Higher education in the midst of crises' seminar (Korkeakoulujen sivistystehtävä kriisien keskellä) – Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, 3AMK Vocational Pedagogical Research Campus and the Kesto Network

"We reflected on the importance of producing, acquiring and valuing researched knowledge as part of Sivistys. Science, education and skills bring stability to society." SuomiAreena / Once upon a time there was Sivistys – what about its future? (Olipa kerran sivistys – entä sen tulevaisuus?) – Academy of Finland, Sivista, Council of Rectors of Finnish Universities UNIFI ry

"The full range of science camps offers children and young people an experience of the educational nature of science." Science camps – Science Centre Heureka

"Science, technology, skills and Sivistys should not compete with each other. Sivistys may not be easily translated into numerically measurable results, but that doesn't make it any less important. A learned person can also lack Sivistys." Honouring Sivistys (Sivistyksen kunnianpalautus) - University of Jyväskylä, Resource Wisdom Community JYU.Wisdom

"Empathy between people, respect for others and equality between people were highlighted in the discussions during the XIV Philosophy in the Park (Puistofilosofia) Week. Compassion was seen as a key skill of Sivistys, which can also be learned if you want to." XIV Philosophy in the Park Week – Puistofilosofia ry

Interview: academic Ilkka Niiniluoto

Science is the counterforce in the post-truth era

What does Sivistys mean to you?

The concept of Sivistys was long out of fashion as it was seen as pretentiously elitist. Its new rise was marked by 200th anniversary of the birth of the Finnish statesman J. V. Snellman in 2006. The theme of the celebration was "Sivistys". According to Snellman, Finland was to be built as a civilised state, where universities would educate critically thinking citizens and enlighten the nation about the values of truth and honesty. Sivistys expresses erudition, the intellectual capital of the individual and the stock of knowledge of a nation, all that has been achieved in the fields of science, art, religion, industry and manners.

Everyday Sivistys is not just about polite behaviour. Here again, I use Snellman's definition: Sivistys includes etiquette, ethics and morality, i.e. the ability to distinguish right from wrong and the ability to use knowledge for good purposes. Sivistys is also a desire to learn and an interest in how the world works.

The basic meaning of the concept of Sivistys is the continuous development and refinement of human capacities. Sivistys is a process, an individual is never fully versed in Sivistys. This continuous development concerns both the individual and society as a whole.

What is the role of science and scientists in promoting Sivistys?

Knowledge and knowing, along with ethics, are key elements of Sivistys. Sivistys is the use of knowledge for good purposes. Science is the unprejudiced production and creation of new knowledge. Science also acts as a counterweight to the post-truth era of fake news and helps to raise critically-minded citizens.

What does the future of Sivistys look like?

Finland has maintained its position as a nation of Sivistys. The school system, universities and art education are in good shape. But at the same time as we celebrate the Year of Sivistys, there are cuts in culture and in the funding of many cultural, educational, and civil organizations, societies and institutions. Reduced funding and a political debate that downplays the importance of Sivistys are major threats to its future.

AI will be a major factor in shaping society, and its impact must be taken into account in education and training. The impact of AI is paradoxical. On the other hand, AI will make people's work and everyday lives much easier – the best software is already writing good essays, poems and speeches. However, literacy is eroded when mental activity is transferred to machines.

Sivistys requires constant care and nurturing. We have really good Sivistys institutions and they have taken a lot of responsibility for promoting Sivistys. This year's Nobel Prize in Economics went to researchers with an emphasis on institutions. It has been observed that countries with good institutions perform well in all areas and the effect is also reflected in the economy. The responsibility for the state of Sivistys lies with everyone, from individual citizens to the government.

Why is Sivistys important?

Sivistys is at the heart of humanity and a resource for society to improve the world. It sustains a good society, supports democracy and creates infrastructure for economic actors. Without Sivistys, there can be no organised society or prosperity.

Theme

Culture and Art as a Precursor to Sivistys

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3.4 Culture and Art as a Precursor to Sivistys

Culture and art inspire, innovate and create change at both individual and community levels. Art challenges prevailing values and norms and encourages critical thinking and debate.

A total of 71 reported events on Culture and Art as Precursors of Sivistys were organised during the year. The theme was present in a total of 53% of the events reported. A total of 186,309 people attended the Culture and Art as a Precursor to Sivistys events. The events were estimated to have reached a of 319,798 people. Participants were particularly pleased with the success of the events.

This chapter will discuss in more detail the content of the Culture and Art as a Precursor to Sivistys events and the relationship between the events and the theme to Sivistys. The summary presented in this chapter is based on a content analysis of events related to the theme.

The reported events involved 1,880 people and the budget realised was EUR 2,224,094. Alongside the theme of Culture and art as a precursor to Sivistys, Lifelong learning (53 events) and Literacy and dialogue (40 events) were presented.

1,880	people involved in organising events
186,309	participants
319,798	persons reached
2,224,094	money spent on organising events (€)

Culture and Art as a Precursor to Sivistys – events in figures

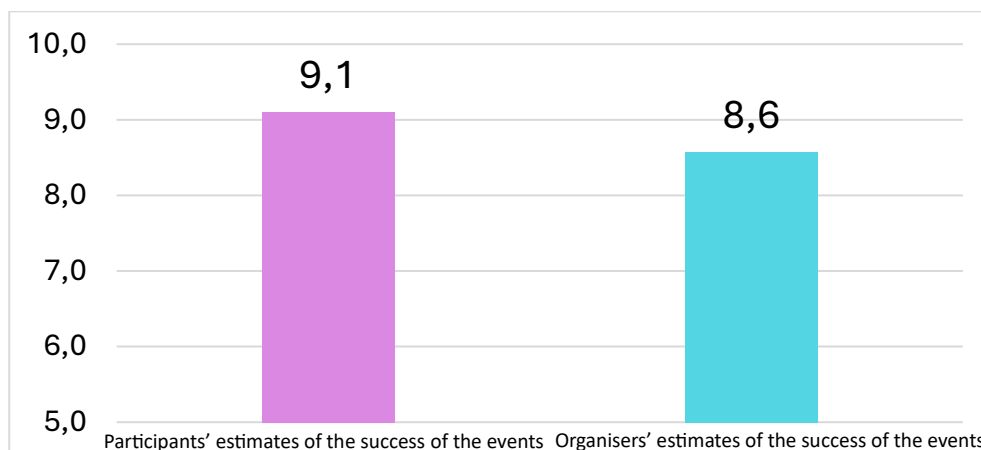


Figure 8. Participants' and event organisers' evaluations of the success of the Culture and Arts as a Precursor to Sivistys events. The success of the events is rated on a scale of 1–10.

Culture and the arts are central to promoting Sivistys and shaping the future. The theme's events included discussions about the importance of culture and art, introductions to artists and other cultures, and experiencing art and culture through exhibitions and concerts. Creating art was also an important part of the events, allowing participants to create and experiment with different art forms. A wide range of art forms were represented including film, visual arts, music and literature.

Art and culture create meaning for individuals and communities. Art gives power and freedom to the individual. Engaging in art, like learning to play an instrument, is not just about developing technical skills. It is a process of *Sivistys*, where the individual becomes part of a larger community. Art is a way for us to face difficult issues. Arts and culture build community and promote well-being. Community and a safe environment are essential for learning and attaining *Sivistys*.

Art and culture also play an important role in building a sustainable future. Art can also be a means of activism for both individuals and communities. Museums and cultural institutions can play their part in promoting eco-social *bildung*, for example by using art to make people reflect on their relationship with nature. The importance of art as a building block for *Sivistys* and a sustainable future cannot be underestimated. On the other hand, art creates our cultural heritage. Protecting our cultural heritage is an important investment in our nation's unity, future and overall keeping our society secure.

In the future, digitalisation will bring opportunities to the field of arts and culture. The increasing use of e-resources and audiobooks will increase their accessibility and promote equality between readers and listeners. Digital tools bring many new possibilities for preserving and sharing cultural heritage. The internet makes it easy for anyone to access archival material, and new channels also offer the possibility to reach new audiences. 3D modelling creates new opportunities not only to understand history, but also to imagine the future.

AI will change our language and culture, but the direction and strength of the impact is still difficult to assess. AI-based language models can impoverish our language and our thinking.

Human interaction and compassion will become an increasingly important part of our culture as machines shape it. Art is a key tool for developing compassion. Emotional skills are developed through art and stories. Humanity and compassion can be developed through cultural or artistic activities. Art is based on experiences and emotions. It allows us to understand the perspectives and experiences of others in the world.

Art teaches us to observe and perceive. Through art, people can develop their ability to observe their surroundings and notice details they might not otherwise see. Art encourages people to look at things from different angles and pay attention to small but meaningful details.

The events of the year generated much debate and insight into the importance of art and culture for *Sivistys* and humanity. Cooperation between different organisations in the arrangement of cultural events was deepened. Art experiences brought emotions to the surface. Works were sold and many new works of art were created. New audiences were introduced to different forms of art and culture.

Three insights

1. Art and culture build bridges between individuals and communities: Art and culture create meaning for individuals and communities, promote well-being and build a sense of community.
2. Art engenders compassion: Art enables us to put ourselves in the shoes of others and to perceive and understand different perspectives and cultures. Art and our cultural heritage help us to look at the world in a trans-generational way.
3. Art teaches us to observe and perceive things: Engaging in art doesn't just lead to artworks. Through art, you learn to see and feel and express your feelings and experiences in new ways.

Experiences of events:

"Culture influences your own Sivistys and what is perceived as Sivistys. Knowledge of cultures also contributes to Sivistys. You can't espouse Sivistys if you're very narrow-minded." What does Sivistys mean to me now and in the future? - The Timeout Foundation, as part of the Well said debate festival (Hyvin sanottu)

"Culture and art are expressions of human courage and playfulness, and can be used to confront subjects that seem impossible. Sivistys requires such courage in a changing world." Kirsi Kunnas' 100th anniversary – the Kirsi Kunnas 100th anniversary cooperation group, coordinated by Cultural Centre PiiPoo

"Artificial intelligence opens up new opportunities: AI-generated music, images and art show how technology can be both an enabler of Sivistys and an enabler of new forms of creativity.... The debate on the impact of AI on the value of art and the role of the artist is part of a broader reflection on what Sivistys means in the age of digitalisation." ProCom Day 2024 - Artificial intelligence in communication – ProCom – The Finnish Association of Communication Professionals

Interview: Teppo Ylitalo, Executive Director, the Finnish Local Heritage Federation

Community labour represents Finnish super-Sivistys

What does Sivistys mean to you?

Sivistys is a pathway to self-development, a way of being in the world. It is clear that Sivistys involves the assimilation or acquisition of knowledge. However, education in itself, is not enough to define Sivistys; it is also the ability to use one's own know-how for the common good. Sivistys is about community.

In addition to learning, Sivistys is also created by civil society, when people find a common way of organising and being together. Sivistys is that society has certain rules, a common agreement on how we behave towards each other. The importance of Sivistys is, I think, well-illustrated by the fact that we use exclusion from society, and therefore from Sivistys, as a punishment.

Sivistys is about responsibility, about taking responsibility for oneself, for society and for the world. An example of this is taking responsibility for the climate. An individual is not solely responsible and does not have to shoulder all the responsibility alone. However, it is important to see that your actions influence the direction of development, and that you can contribute and make an impact, so that the end result is a better tomorrow.

I don't know if I'm conservative or old-fashioned, but I think that Sivistys also means good manners in everyday life. Today, there is much emphasis on the individual's right to be and behave as they wish, sometimes at the expense of the rights of others. The right to self-expression does not mean that you do not have to consider others. Everything, and saying anything you like is not acceptable.

What are the characteristics of Finnish Sivistys?

The Finnish word 'talkoot', or as they say in Ostrobothnia, 'kökkä', both of which mean 'community labour', is a Finnish form of super-Sivistys. It is work done out of good will, without profit. I want to see the tradition of 'talkoot' alive and well in the future. Taking shared responsibility and seeing the shared benefit and the joy of doing and being together that can be achieved through community labour, without the individual receiving any financial gain from the work. 'Talkoot' is the cornerstone of Finnish Sivistys.

Libraries are also an important building block of Finnish Sivistys. The library system shows how we want to provide opportunities for self-Sivistys. Libraries allow you to explore new insights and knowledge that may be alien to you.

What does the future of Sivistys look like?

I believe that Sivistys is appreciated in Finland, but it is not always clear how it is promoted and implemented. It is all too easy to believe that, because it exists, you don't have to worry about it. Making Sivistys visible is

particularly important in an economic downturn, otherwise it is very easy to cut from it. Could it be that in the future, Sivistys will slip beyond the reach of some class or group? I hope not. Funding at the grassroots level, such as free civic activities and the library network, is important. Sivistys must be within everyone's reach.

Sivistys is an idea that puts into practice the ideals most of us have about living in community and society. I want to hold on to Sivistys with all my might. The well-executed Year of Sivistys is proof that Sivistys does not look after itself. Each of us, individually and collectively, must actively promote Sivistys, both at the level of decision-makers and civil society and through our own life choices.

Theme

Literacy and Dialogue

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3.5 Literacy and Dialogue

Literacy is the ability to understand and interpret written text and to use this information critically and creatively. Literacy is the basis for knowledge acquisition and lifelong learning. Dialogue, on the other hand, is about open and respectful discussion that promotes understanding, cooperation and community. Literacy and dialogue are both essential for Sivistys. They enable individuals to actively participate in society and its development.

This chapter will discuss in more detail the content of the Literacy and Dialogue events and the relationship between the events and the theme to Sivistys. The summary presented in this chapter is based on a content analysis of events related to the theme.

51% of the events reported during the year dealt with the relationship between literacy and dialogue. Literacy and dialogue were often intertwined in the events, especially with the themes of Lifelong learning and Sivistys and Culture and art as a precursor to Sivistys.

The reported events on Literacy and dialogue attracted a total of 225,182 participants. The events were estimated to have reached as many as 3 million people. Sixty-nine events were organised under the theme Literacy and Dialogue. A total of 1,804 people participated in their organisation. A total of €2,218,033 was spent on producing events. Both participants and organisers felt that the events were very successful.

1,804	people involved in organising events
225,182	participants
3,325,787	persons reached
2,218,033	money spent on organising events (€)

Table. Literacy and Dialogue events in chapters

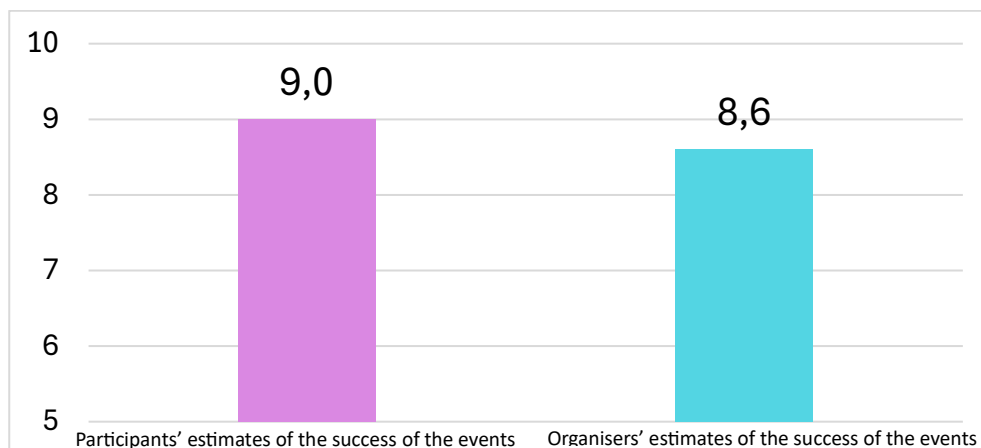


Figure 9. Participants' and event organisers' evaluations of the success of Literacy and Dialogue events. The success of the events is rated on a scale of 1–10.

The Literacy and Dialogue events explored literacy through different concepts of literacy, the discovery of the joy of reading and the meaning of dialogue. The level of both literacy and dialogue in modern society was a

cause for concern. We are constantly dealing with large amounts of text, but at the same time our reading skills and ability to understand what we read are deteriorating. The proliferation of digital tools has led to superficial and fragmented reading. Concentration-intensive deep reading has declined. Digital platforms have enabled a wider range of dialogue, but its facelessness has led to a polarisation in the culture of debate.

Literacy is not just the ability to read and understand text, but covers a wide range of skills that are important in today's world. Media literacy is the ability to understand and evaluate media such as news, social media and advertising. Digital literacy refers to the ability to use and understand digital devices and applications such as computers, smartphones and the internet. Critical literacy is the ability to critically evaluate and analyse information, identify reliable sources and distinguish fact from opinion. These skills are particularly important in the digital world where information is available in vast quantities and its reliability varies. Literacy is developed through reading, which is why it is important to find the joy of reading at an early age. Libraries have a key role to play in promoting literacy and reading.

Literacy and reading are key factors in the development of compassion and understanding. Books and stories give us the chance to step into other people's shoes and experience the world from their point of view.

This helps us to understand different life situations, cultures and emotions, which in turn increases empathy and compassion.

With the development of AI, critical literacy will also include our ability to recognise and evaluate AI-generated content. For example, AI brings many new opportunities for communication, but it is important to follow the principles of ethics and openness in the use of new technologies.

Dialogue is an important way to promote Sivistys and broaden our understanding of the world. Dialogue skills include the ability to listen actively, to express ideas clearly and respectfully, and to understand and take into account the other party's point of view. Dialogue skills help create an open and trusting atmosphere where all parties feel heard and valued. Good dialogue skills can improve problem-solving and creativity by bringing different perspectives and ideas to the table and dealing with them constructively.

Compassion is a precondition for dialogue, but also its result. For dialogue to be constructive and meaningful, the parties must show compassion for each other. Compassion increases through discussion, as the parties understand each other better. In a polarised world, it is necessary to understand someone else's point of view, even if you disagree with it. This is difficult to achieve without compassion.

Literacy and dialogue are important building blocks of Sivistys. They not only open doors to new knowledge and understanding, but also help to develop Sivistys of the heart and compassion. It is therefore crucial to nurture and develop them.

Interview: Executive CTO Lassi Kurkijärvi, Sofigate

Successful societies are not created in Excel – they need Sivistys

What does Sivistys mean to you?

Sivistys is often defined by rational dimensions, but this overlooks the emotional aspects that are central to Sivistys such as sensitivity, empathy and the willingness to understand others. Sivistys is never just rational thinking.

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about AI and whether it is possible for AI to espouse Sivistys.

Sivistys is important if we want to understand other people. We take elements from previously read books, films and art to try to help others understand our feelings, hopes and dreams. The more knowledge of context you have, the easier it is to reach others over divisions.

I see the challenge of AI precisely in the fact that AI cannot understand the hidden cultural meanings that are part of Sivistys. Empathy and sensitivity – the desire to understand others and to take account of them and their different points of view – are also an essential part of Sivistys and civilised debate. AI easily misses these aspects of Sivistys.

What is the future of Sivistys?

Rising populism and social media algorithms have turned Sivistys into a weapon to make people seem different from each other. Being uncivilised is seen as a strength and uncivilised behaviour is rewarded.

In the 1990s, I naively thought that the internet would unite all the nations of the world to form a global Sivistys and solve common threats. Now it seems that we are running further and further away from this dream.

But I still see the possibility of developing a common Sivistys, for example by watching children build their own understanding and make global connections through the internet.

Sivistys is the foundation on which our common reality is built. AI enables the differentiation of communities and AI can create any kind of reality. The current situation presents both great opportunities and risks. Preserving a shared reality requires everyone to act in a shared context.

What is Sivistys in work and business?

In my experience, in countries such as the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark, a lot of energy and time is spent thinking about why we do something, what we do and what kind of future we believe in. What is the expected outcome of an action.

In my view, Sivistys in working life is the strategic view that looks beyond the short-term benefits to the longer term. This creates innovation and competitive advantage that is more complex than simple metrics can prove. If Excel could be used to build a successful society, Finland would have risen a long time ago. The Sivistys of working life is made up of all the not-so-productive things that ultimately create a successful economy.

It is a threat to Sivistys to think that, for example, the role of schools is to produce only certain types of skills for the labour market. Sivistys does not bring immediate tactical benefits, but its benefits will become apparent later. Businesses and society need to focus on long-term strategic thinking.

Three insights

1. Critical literacy and digital literacy are important skills: Communities and individuals need to be able to assess the trustworthiness of social media and AI-generated content. This requires critical thinking and knowledge of the opportunities and threats of technology.
2. Compassion is a precondition and a result of dialogue: If we want to increase compassion in society, we must engage in dialogue to understand each other's views.
3. Investing in Sivistys is not only valuable but also strategically wise: Education and training should not be seen simply as a tool to produce certain types of skills for the labour market. Sivistys itself is valuable, and the society of the future will need skills that we cannot foresee today.

Experiences of events:

"We need a wide range of literacy skills to be able to work in different environments, such as digital environments or face-to-face encounters. Critical literacy doesn't happen by itself, it has to be practised."
SuomiAreena: Should school change? (Pitäisikö koulun muuttua?) - University of Jyväskylä

"The event increased people's ability to recognise the material produced by AI and the benefits and drawbacks it brings. Sivistys was characterised in a new way. In itself, it is a unique word for which there is really no

equivalent in other languages, as it encompasses, for example, polite behaviour, personal growth, social outlook, academic learning and much more. The dialogue also addressed the development of Sivistys and its needs." Christmas gift-giving ceremony on the wings of Sivistys (Joululahjavalvojaiset sivistykseen siivin) – Espoo Adult Education Centre

"The discussion often revolved around clickbait headlines and the analytics used by the news media to guide, among other things, what kind of headlines we see. Solutions to their problems were not sought, deliberately, but the debate raised interesting questions, such as whether the carbon footprint of online news media compared to print news media has been measured and whether readers should be informed about it." News reading circle - Taru - Tampere University Research Centre for Communication Sciences

"By reading about the experiences of others, you learn to observe and better understand the diversity of life and experience sympathy." Learning not just for school (Opiskelua ei vain koulua varten) – Pukinmäki-Seura Bocksbacka-Sällskapet ry, in cooperation with Pukinmäki Library

Interview: Director General Minna Kelhä, Finnish National Agency for Education

Education and the Sivistys it creates is valuable in itself

What does Sivistys mean to you?

Sivistys is a truly multidimensional term. At the individual level, it can be seen as a willingness and readiness to develop. Sivistys is the desire to learn and develop, to collaborate and reflect with others. It is the desire to develop intellectually, artistically and ethically. It also involves attachment to your community and community development.

A person espousing Sivistys can reflect on their own life and lifestyle, their own thoughts, values, actions and decisions. Sivistys also includes the ability to think critically and question. In our time, eco-Sivistys, for example, or environmental Sivistys and the prevention of loss of biodiversity, is also a key issue. Part of eco-Sivistys is also about defining the good life together – how we want to live in the future and what kind of things we make possible as a community.

Sivistys is also about fairness and equality, pluralism and respect for others. I don't think we would have such advanced societies without Sivistys.

What is the state of Sivistys in Finland today?

At the moment, the economy is valued more than Sivistys, especially in big debates. There's a lot of talk about what we can afford and what we can't, and a search for quick solutions to big problems.

Free education and social equality have long been central to Finnish Sivistys. The belief in education and the intrinsic value of Sivistys are, however, being eroded. Educational policy plays an important role in society, both in terms of Sivistys and democracy. Education and training create a sense of inclusion, attachment to society and the ability to function in society. If people no longer believe in education or think that it is relevant to them or their children, then we are facing major social problems.

The value of education should not be seen as a mere instrumental value, an opportunity to get a better job and more pay, or, at the level of society, as a tool for economic growth. Education, and the Sivistys it creates, is valuable in itself.

Who is responsible for the future of Sivistys?

We need a debate on Sivistys policy about what kind of Finland, Nordic countries and European Union we want to build. It is also important to inspire hope for the future. This is particularly important for children and young people.

We need to think about issues of fairness, both from a social and an economic perspective – in particular what we can afford and what we cannot afford, what we want to spend public money on. We need ways to develop citizens' critical thinking and digital literacy, and to develop a more respectful culture of debate. Education and continuous learning play an extremely important role in improving the state of Sivistys. We need equal access to education and training and accessible information for all on educational opportunities.

Political decision-makers must take their own responsibility for promoting Sivistys. The Finnish National Agency for Education and the education system have their own responsibilities. Sivistys and its improvement is not the responsibility of teachers alone, although teachers have a big role to play in practical work on Sivistys. Families are also working to develop Sivistys and bring it into the modern world through educational means. The development of Sivistys is not the responsibility of just one party, and there are no quick and easy solutions to societal challenges.

Theme

Lifelong Learning and Sivistys

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3.6 Lifelong Learning and Sivistys

Lifelong learning is the cornerstone of Sivistys. Sivistys is not a static state, but a continuous process. Without continuous learning and the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, an individual or community cannot remain civilised and educated.

This chapter will discuss in more detail the content of the Lifelong Learning and Sivistys events and the relationship between the events and the theme to Sivistys. The summary presented in this chapter is based on a content analysis of events related to the theme.

The relationship between lifelong learning and Sivistys was addressed in as much as 72% of the events reported during the year. Lifelong learning was often intertwined with at least one other theme. Lifelong learning was most often discussed in conjunction with a sustainable future.

A total of 97 reported events on Lifelong Learning and Sivistys were organised during the year, with a total of 123,145 participants. The events reached 182,218 people. €1.7 million was spent on the events, which involved 1,459 people.

1,459	people involved in organising events
123,145	participants
182,218	persons reached
1,764,650	money spent on organising events (€)

Table: Lifelong learning and Sivistys events in figures

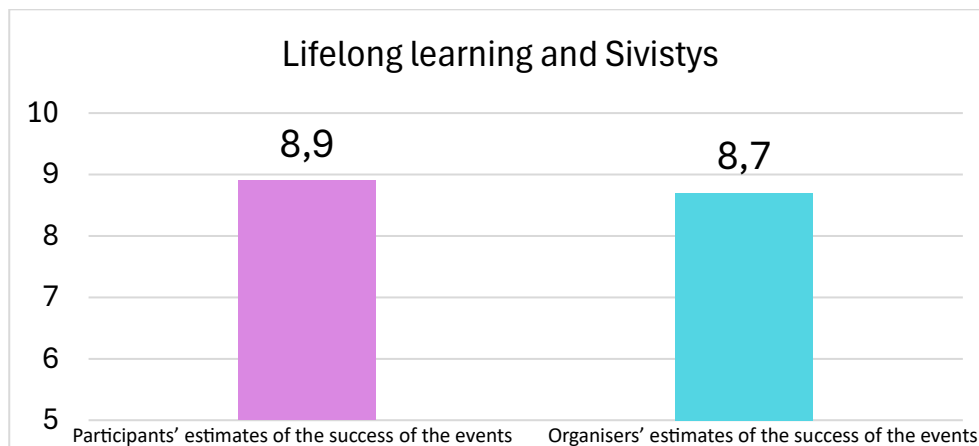


Figure 10. Participants' and event organisers' evaluations of the success of Lifelong Learning and Sivistys events. The success of the events is rated on a scale of 1–10.

A key finding was that lifelong learning is the lifeblood of Sivistys: Sivistys will be slowly eroded without constant development and curiosity. A person who refuses to learn new things is no adherent of Sivistys.

School and the school system are an integral part of Sivistys work, but learning continues throughout life: at work, in hobbies and in interaction with others. It is never too late to learn.

Access to lifelong learning must be guaranteed for everyone, regardless of age or background. Liberal educational organisations and institutes are essential for lifelong learning and equal and accessible learning opportunities. In many respects, cuts in resources are jeopardising the preconditions for Sivistys work and citizens' access to lifelong learning and Sivistys. Sivistys is becoming a luxury product.

Expertise in lifelong learning must be strengthened and capacities supported to ensure that everyone has equal opportunities for self-development and Sivistys. Promoting the Sivistys of individuals creates inclusion and builds society: Adherents of Sivistys work for their communities and for a better society.

Teaching should also take better account of a sustainable future in the context of lifelong learning. Teachers' capacity to highlight the links between their area of expertise and building a more sustainable future must be supported.

In trans-generational and peer learning, the importance of compassion becomes particularly important. Compassion can be learned through stories and art. Culture and the arts are therefore extremely important in Sivistys education. For example, the work of music schools and the Kindergarten Museum promote lifelong learning through the arts.

Digital literacy and digital competence are key prerequisites for lifelong learning and Sivistys today. Technology brings both new opportunities and challenges to lifelong learning. Digital tools and the internet make it possible to reach a wider audience and improve access to information. Distance learning online offers better opportunities for people living in remote areas. E-books and audio books have attracted new people to books and reading. Digitalisation also creates challenges. It can be difficult to distinguish true information from false online. Nor should it be assumed that everyone has equal access to and skills in using digital tools.

Lifelong learning experts stress that communities and institutions must develop citizens' skills, critical thinking, compassion and citizenship. These skills will help individuals to navigate a complex world and actively participate in the development of society. The world is changing rapidly, so knowledge and skills need to be constantly updated.

Three insights

1. There is no Sivistys without lifelong learning: To achieve and maintain Sivistys, you must be willing to learn new things and constantly improve yourself.
2. There can be no lifelong learning without the communities and institutions that enable it: For lifelong learning and development, we need environments that provide resources and support: schools, universities, libraries and the broad field of liberal education.
3. Used properly, digital tools make Sivistys more accessible: Digital tools can facilitate and widen access to information and culture by providing more flexible access to a wide range of information sources, learning materials and educational opportunities.

Experiences of events:

"The whole dialogue was about lifelong learning in the context of organisational Sivistys work. It was seen as important because it enables the participation and inclusion of everyone from children to the elderly and also brings people of different ages together through arts and culture." Dialogue on the effectiveness of guidance work (Dialogi ohjaustyön vaikuttavuudesta) – Study Centre Citizens' Forum

"The whole theme of the event was that we are not just studying for school, but for life. This was clear in many ways, both in the introduction and in the addresses. Many people shared their own experiences of the benefits of learning in different ways, whether at school, adult education centres or in work-related training." Learning not just for school (Opiskelua ei vain koulua varten) – Pukinmäki-Seura Bocksbacka-Sällskapet ry, in cooperation with Pukinmäki Library

"Online education is of great importance for people living in remote areas. When you don't have a local training provider, distance learning is a really good option." Autumn Forum Kouvola (Syysfoorumi Kouvola) – Working life and research in the South-East (Työelämä ja tutkimus Kaakossa) – University Association of Kymenlaakso (Kymenlaakson korkeakouluyhdistys ry)

"A common concern is about the impact of government funding cuts, which are already being felt across the broader liberal education landscape. Lifelong learning policies must be invested in, while demonstrating their social impact. Sivistys work lives on the curiosity of people to learn new things." Sivistys work as a factor for the future (Sivistystyö tulevaisuuden tekijänä) – Finnish Adult Education Association

"The importance of lifelong learning, lifelong learning does not happen by itself as education and training also need funding. One form of Sivistys is vocational Sivistys." Seminar on education and Sivistys "Year of Sivistys" – Trade Union of Education, OAJ

Interview: Ari Savikko, founder of the Finnish Fish Library

Sivistys does not come from money alone, but without funding there is no Sivistys

What does Sivistys mean to you?

There are many kinds of Sivistys, Sivistys of the soul, of the heart and of the mind, and combinations of all these. Sivistys is the lifeblood of a functioning society and communities, through which common rules have been established. At the individual level and in the community, Sivistys is reflected in the ability to follow common rules and understand the customs of different cultures. Sivistys is about understanding other cultures, empathy and understanding difference.

Sivistys of the heart means empathy and situational awareness, the ability to take into account the community in which you operate. So Sivistys of the heart is about doing the right thing in the right place.

Sivistys is the cornerstone of society. Without it there would be anarchy. Sivistys makes the arts, music and sport possible, and without it there would be no constitution, no governed society and no common hobbies. Sivistys is reflected in every human domain.

What is the state of Sivistys in Finland today?

On average, Finnish Sivistys stands up to global comparison. Thanks to free education and the library system, we are relatively well informed.

Culture is quite a clear expression of Sivistys, each country with its own specific characteristics. There are also differences within Finland. Lapland, for example, has had its own development and thus its own cultural characteristics, as have the East and West of the country.

The state of Sivistys in Finland is stable in the big picture. However, illiteracy and media illiteracy are worrying phenomena that divide the nation and create inequality. There are those who learn and those who don't, or don't care to learn.

Cuts in education and culture may lead to other countries overtaking Finland. We have seen that money invested in culture and Sivistys is paid back many times over in terms of prosperity.

How should the state of Sivistys in Finland be improved?

You can't get Sivistys with money alone, but equally you can't get it without money. Improving Sivistys in Finland requires funding and public responsibility in supporting culture and Sivistys. In addition to funding, you need people with vision.

Organisations and the third sector have a crucial role to play in promoting Sivistys. Finland is the promised land of organisations and these organisations are largely run by volunteers. Organisations play a key role in educating people, especially in remote areas. Adult education centres, sports and other organisations do very important work for Sivistys.

However, each individual must also bear their own responsibility for their own Sivistys and that of their offspring.

Results of the public consultation

In October 2024, the Kvs Foundation and Fountain Park Oy organised a public consultation for the Year of Sivistys as an online brainstorming session. The session brought people closer to Sivistys and informed them about the current Year of Sivistys.

Participants were free to come up with their own ideas, in their own words. As involvement progressed, there was also the opportunity to see the answers written by others and to evaluate and refine them. This also allowed involvement without having to present actual development ideas of one's own.

Online brainstorming sessions identify the most talked about and most important issues to the participants, but also the single top ideas. The saturation point of the results is usually around 400 responses – the results of the year's online consultation gave a good indication of citizens' views.

Participants were invited to the online public consultation via Year of Sivistys bulletins, newsletters, mailing lists and social media. There was also an invitation to an online brainstorming session as part of the Sivistys is (Sivistys on) campaign on public transport in several cities.

The path followed by respondents was:

- background variables
- image selection: What does Sivistys look like in today's Finland and why (321 choices)
- what does everyday Sivistys mean to you? (243 replies)
- ideation: What progress has been made in making Sivistys the best it can be in 2030? (611 ideas)
- evaluation: Which issues are most important for Sivistys (1,672 ideas)
- What can be done to promote this in Finland? Is there anything you can do yourself? (401 ideas)

The total number of participants in the debate was 328.

The participants represented all age groups. The largest group of respondents was 51–60 years old (28%). 53% of respondents had completed higher education. The majority of respondents (73%) were women. Responses were received from almost all Finnish regions. The responses were dominated by Uusimaa (56%). The languages of participation were Finnish (93%), Swedish (2%) and English (5%).

Everyday Sivistys

For respondents, everyday Sivistys meant, above all, working together and respecting others. Other purposes of everyday Sivistys that emerged from the responses were learning and curiosity about the new, being in harmony with nature, intergenerational Sivistys, equal opportunities for all, appreciation of culture, inclusion and participation, globalism and multiculturalism, reading and literacy, and technological and digital development.

Complemented by intergenerationality, the responses suggest that everyday Sivistys is almost identical to the key themes of the Year of Sivistys.

- Working together and respecting others – good manners, contacting and respecting others, talking, community spirit
- Learning and curiosity for the new – together and alone, across the life span, open-mindedness
- In harmony with nature – respecting nature and promoting biodiversity, acting according to the values of sustainable development
- Equal opportunities for all – regardless of gender, age, origin
- From one generation to the next – the family as the starting point of Sivistys, the value of intergenerationality
- Appreciation of culture – active use of cultural capital

- Globalism and multiculturalism – understanding of the world around us and how it affects us, global interconnections and trends, interest in multicultural themes
- Inclusion and participation – developing opportunities for everyone to participate in a variety of ways, open debate
- Reading and literacy – the key to self-Sivistys
- Technological and digital development – faith and skills

Where to develop Sivistys to achieve the best possible position

According to respondents, equality and tolerance are the most important areas for the development of Sivistys. They were complemented by learning and development, working together and interacting, appreciation of culture, and education and training.

A total of 611 development targets were described.

Targets grouped in a development pyramid



Figure 11. What has developed when the position of Sivistys is the best possible in 2030? (n=611)

Respondents also described the content of their answers in more detail:

- Equality and tolerance – Sivistys, culture and learning for all, understanding diversity, open-mindedness, diversity
- Learning and development – continuity of learning, diversity and equality, curiosity for the new
- Appreciation of culture – accessible to all, broad support for cultural operators, understanding of its importance
- Working and interacting together – collaborative learning, encounter, constructive debate
- Education and training – value, equality, quality focus
- Digital and technological development – understanding threats and opportunities, preventing digital exclusion
- Humanity – compassion, care for others, emotional skills, good behaviour

- Reading and literacy – valuing literature but also digital literacy
- Sustainable future – nature connection, sustainable values, ecological dimension, environmental actions
- Interest in Sivistys – shared understanding of the meaning and content of Sivistys, making it a daily phenomenon, intrinsic value
- Multiculturalism – supporting the integration of immigrants, eradicating racism
- Knowledge management and exploitation – using knowledge for a better tomorrow, identifying fake news

The most important issues and actions for Sivistys

Respondents generated 1,672 ideas on the issues most relevant to Sivistys. Respondents were also able to select the issues they felt were most important from all the answers given. These choices resulted in a list of 15 items (in order of importance):

1. Understanding the importance of Sivistys
2. Sivistys of the heart, an appreciation of humaneness and humanity
3. Equality in Sivistys
4. Safeguarding the well-being of children and young people
5. A sustainable future and caring for the well-being of the planet
6. Supporting and enabling continuous learning
7. Learning together
8. Science is constantly developing new solutions to different problems
9. Compassion and the desire to understand others
10. Rise in learning outcomes
11. Understanding that only by working together can solutions be found
12. Enabling inclusion for all
13. Live events open to all
14. Supporting a diverse culture
15. Valuing multiculturalism and eradicating racism from society

The answers reflect the human aspect of Sivistys. Above all, Sivistys is seen from a social perspective: every citizen can strengthen society and contribute to it. These perspectives reflect the importance of lifelong learning, sustainable development, science and culture, and community.

Respondents' descriptions of the most important issues to put into practice (for similar responses, the heading has been refined in order of importance):

1. The importance of Sivistys

- Emphasising that Sivistys is not an elitist phenomenon but a matter for all
- An active and visible debate on Sivistys and its values in schools, educational institutions and the media
- Concretising the benefits of Sivistys for individuals and society
- Involving actors at different levels of society to concretise, articulate and illustrate Sivistys: schools, educational institutions, mass media, various public authorities, third sector, etc.
- Making use of role models and influencers for different target groups
- Consuming a wide range of culture from childhood onwards
- Raising the profile of Sivistys, arts, science and culture – no funding cuts
- Highlighting the world to which the opposite of Sivistys leads

2. Equality in Sivistys (including lifelong learning)

- Emphasising the everyday qualities of Sivistys – so that as many people as possible can identify with it
- Maintaining a culture of pluralistic debate and stressing its importance
- Enabling an adequate level of education for all and supporting continuous learning for all
- Emphasising the role of libraries in the development of reading and Sivistys
- Teaching media literacy to people of different ages
- Enabling equal access for all to cultural events and civic activities
- Ensuring the capacities of liberal adult education centres and distance learning
- Introducing a "Sivistys-specific curriculum" from early childhood education onwards
- Keeping information accessible to all
- Linking Sivistys with happiness and emphasising "Sivistys of the heart"
- Ensuring the high quality of the Finnish Broadcasting Company Yle's broadcasts
- Recognising the rights of older people and their importance to society

3. Safeguarding the well-being of children and young people

- Supporting parenting through child health clinics and family work
- Improving access to mental health services
- Reducing class sizes
- Enabling children to have a long childhood through play
- Encouraging children to read and exercise, reducing smartphone use
- Implementing the "It takes a village" approach, for example, including voluntary youth work in the neighbourhood.
- Strengthening media literacy among children and young people
- Making Sivistys "a thing for children and young people", for example through young influencers
- Seeking ways to do this from children and young people themselves

4. A sustainable future and caring for the well-being of the planet

- Bringing environmental themes and activities to life for all ages through enjoyable communal activities
- Increasing environmental literacy and outdoor activities in education for all ages
- Pondering together about what is important for sustainable development
- Increasing people's understanding of the importance of their choices and list possible practical actions
- Enabling participation in environmental initiatives in an everyday, constructive and community-based way
- Emphasising the transparency and criticality of research and the importance of research evidence for decision-making
- Incorporating the objectives of eco-social bildung into the content and methods of Sivistys work training.
- Integrating eco-social values into economic decision-making
- Selling the green transition to the people in plain language

5. Learning together

- Emphasis on community activities, such as communal voluntary work
- Raising the image of adult education centres
- Increasing the visibility of organisations and volunteering as communities and learning environments that support learning together
- Solving problems together

- Setting up accessible community spaces in municipalities
- Deliberately increasing co-operation in schools and educational institutions
- Emphasising the importance of civil society
- Rewarding organisations for mutual cooperation

6. Compassion and Sivistys of the heart

- Learning interpersonal and emotional skills and constructive conversation culture from early childhood education onwards
- Learning to contact, listen to and understand others → Gaining new perspectives
- Setting up discussion forums open to citizens for reflection that open up perspectives
- Developing empathy skills by increasing reading
- Enabling encounters between different people in everyday life, for example through the diversity of the population in neighbourhoods and events in neighbourhoods and villages
- Presenting a balanced range of perspectives in the media
- Emphasising the importance and content of Sivistys of the heart
- Implementing projects to eradicate hate speech
- Organising a Sivistys of the Heart themed year

7. Rise in learning outcomes

- Solving students' motivation problems and encouraging learning
- Increasing the level of requirements, and individual attention for students who need support
- Listening to teachers about what works and what doesn't
- Ensuring adequate resources for primary and lower secondary education
- Eliminating classroom distractions to teaching and learning
- Creating faith in a better future
- Emphasising the importance of literacy
- Investing in teacher training and paying teachers a decent salary
- Ensuring understanding of the role and responsibility of parents
- Valuing and investing in education

Summary

Respondents were asked to complete the sentence: "In my opinion, Sivistys is...". 178 responses were received, highlighting the humanity of Sivistys.

For the participants, Sivistys is above all about humanity, working together, learning and knowing, and being in harmony with and respecting nature. Development is needed in equality, tolerance, learning and development, appreciation of culture, working together and interaction. The key to Sivistys is a common understanding and making it more of an everyday phenomenon: Sivistys is for everyone.

Main results

For participants, Sivistys means, above all, humanity, doing things together, learning and skills, as well as being in harmony with nature and respecting it.

The best possible position of Sivistys most requires development in equality and tolerance, learning and development, cultural appreciation, doing things together and interaction.

From the perspective of Sivistys, a shared understanding of its meaning and making it a daily phenomenon are essential, i.e. making it something that belongs to everyone.

Soppi Touring Exhibition

The unique Science Centre for Education and Learning Soppi

The Science Centre for Education and Learning Soppi, which opened to the public in 2022 at the Kvs Foundation in Helsinki, is unique – the only Finnish science centre focusing on the themes of Sivistys and learning.

Soppi tells the story of Finnish Sivistys and opens up a social debate on the importance of Sivistys. At Soppi, the theme of Sivistys connects to education and training. In addition to the past and present, the Science Centre is also looking to the future. Soppi provides the opportunity to review progress to date and consider where we want to go next. The aim of the Science Centre is to feed the debate and raise questions– not to give ready answers.

Soppi's research-based content has been produced in collaboration with a wide range of experts. The content planning was supported by the Sivistys Workshops (Sivistystilatyöpajat 2021–2022) funded by Sitra's Bildung+ programme and coordinated by the Kvs Foundation. The Kvs Foundation invited 30 experts from different areas of society to the workshops. The aim of the expert group's work was to increase the understanding of Sivistys as a social task and to seek solutions to promote it in the fields of education and national Sivistys.

In February 2024, the Science Centre for Education and Learning Soppi was awarded the 2024 Achievement in Adult Education Award (Aikuiskasvatuksellinen teko). Soppi is a member of the Finnish Association of Science Centres.

The Soppi touring exhibition in the Year of Sivistys

As part of the events of the Year of Sivistys and to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Lifelong Learning Foundation (the Kvs Foundation), Soppi conducted a historic touring exhibition of its contents, the first ever in Finland on the theme of Sivistys. The Soppi touring exhibition tells the story of Finnish Sivistys and opens up a social debate on the importance of Sivistys.

The Soppi touring exhibition took in 12 locations and 18 venues. The tour included four different Soppi exhibition modules. One of the modules was designed for outdoor events.

During the Year of Sivistys, the smaller exhibition modules visited shorter events such as Educa, Adult Education Research Days and ProCom Day. The largest Soppi exhibition module visited eight locations at a total of ten venues. The exhibition venues varied from one to another, including libraries, an adult education centre and a university.

At the initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a separate Soppi exhibition was produced for Finnish missions abroad in addition to the tour modules. The exhibition became available as a wall poster or roll-up version.

Contents of the touring exhibition

The contents of the permanent exhibition at the Science Centre for Education and Learning Soppi are divided into three main themes:

1. Lifelong learning – the story of Sivistys work
2. Equality in Sivistys
3. Sivistys and sustainable life

The themes of the permanent exhibition were also repeated in the touring exhibition. The largest exhibition module also contained mostly the same content elements as the permanent exhibition at the Science Centre Soppi in Helsinki. The touring exhibition included, for example, a timeline and the building blocks of Sivistys.

The timeline concretises the foundations and origins of the European concept of Sivistys: the ideals of ancient Greece, the history of the cathedral schools of the Middle Ages, the philosophers of the Enlightenment and the rise of nationalism are interwoven with modern Sivistys. The timeline is the core content of Soppi's permanent exhibition.

The largest of the Soppi exhibition modules was in four languages (Finnish, Swedish, English and Northern Sámi). In addition to the exhibition content, the Building Blocks of Sivistys set was also produced in four languages for the tour. The Building Blocks of Sivistys have been very popular from the start at the Science Centre Soppi. You can use the building blocks to reflect on your values, as a basis for discussion or even to play games.

To complement the touring exhibition, a brief introduction to the themes of Soppi was available to listen to via a QR code. The voice-over was also in four languages.

The World of Hugo Simberg and other accompanying side events

The touring exhibition was accompanied by a wide range of side events: Through the Kvs Foundation it was possible to include the World of Hugo Simberg virtual exhibition to the Soppi exhibition. A virtual exhibition produced by the Finnish National Gallery presents Hugo Simberg's light sensitive, paper-based gouache paintings from the late 1890s. There are many limitations to displaying these works in a traditional exhibition.

The exhibition venues also independently organised a wide range of programme content in connection with the Soppi touring exhibition, such as guided tours tailored to different target groups, task boxes and activity points. In Jyväskylä, the Soppi touring exhibition was accompanied by a Heureka Science Centre pop-up. In Joensuu, Sivistys Weeks were organised during the touring exhibition. In addition to the Soppi exhibition, the Joensuu Sivistys Week programme included lectures and other public events.

Visitor feedback – and a look to the future

The Soppi exhibition reached around 5,000 visitors on the tour. Reaching the visitors and the success of the tour in different parts of Finland was significantly influenced by the activity of local partners.

The exhibition received much positive feedback from domestic and foreign visitors. Positive feedback reiterated the importance, interest and timeliness of the exhibition content. The content was considered thought-provoking and great. The World of Hugo Simberg virtual exhibition also received a lot of praise. Visitors and exhibition venues also provided input on the content: for example, early childhood education and adult education centres would have been welcome as separate sections. They also requested objects/materials to study and a task or learning package related to the exhibition. Feedback from the touring exhibition visitors has been published on Soppi's online news and Instagram account.

The Science Centre for Education and Learning Soppi is regularly open to the public in Helsinki. Soppi organises guided tours of the exhibition and tailor-made events for groups in Finnish and English when requested. The story of Finnish Sivistys can also be explored in the future, regardless of time and place, in an online exhibition produced by the Kvs Foundation called A journey through Sivistys (Sivistyksen aikamatka).

Science Centre for Education and Learning Soppi – more information and up-to-date opening hours: tiedekeskussoppi.fi

Soppi touring exhibition

- 4 exhibition modules
- 12 localities
- 18 exhibition spaces
- 1–29 days/exhibition venue
- More than 5,000 visitors in total

Kvs Foundation's Soppi tour 2023–2024

exhibition hours	exhibition space
17 November 2023	AURORA future event, Levi
26–27 January 2024	Educa 2024 fair, Helsinki
7–9 February 2024	Adult Education Research Days, University of Helsinki
4–26 March 2024	The Adult Education Centre of the Tampere Region, Sampola site
4–28 April 2024	University of Turku, Faculty of Education, Educarium
3 May–1 June 2024	University of Jyväskylä Science Museum, Kipinä Gallery
6 June 2024	ProCom Day, Pikku-Finlandia, Helsinki
25–27 June 2024	Promenade Centre, Pori
26 July–3 August 2024	Kimara Scout Camp, Evo
1–2 August 2024	Finland School Days, Finnish National Agency for Education, Helsinki
7 September 2024	Hyvän tuulen fest, Helsinki
14–26 September 2024	Main Library, Joensuu
3–22 October 2024	Main Library, Vaasa
4 October 2024	XVI International Days of General Education and Early Childhood Education, Vantaa
29 October–17 November 2024	Provincial Museum of Lapland, Arktikum Science Centre, Rovaniemi
20 November 2024	AURORA future event, Rovaniemi
21–27 November 2024	Pilke Science Centre, Rovaniemi
3–13 December 2024	City Hall exhibition space, Oulu

Final words - Did Sivistys get Dusted off?

The Year of Sivistys 2024 designated by the Ministry of Education and Culture came at a time of many crises and transitions: the world's democratic progress is stalling, climate change is shaking the planet, our country is in economic crisis, extremism rears its head and in Europe there is war with Russia's attack on the independent state in Ukraine. Sivistys is under threat from many directions and the lack of it is an increasingly prominent feature all over the world. More than ever, we need defenders of Sivistys.

In 2021, the Lifelong Learning Foundation already took the initiative to the Ministry of Education and Culture to establish a Year of Sivistys. The aim of the year was to bring Sivistys into discussion, dig up the roots of our State of Sivistys, dust off Sivistys and update the concept for the modern age. 2021 was dominated by COVID-19, and it was not yet known how topical the year would become.

The timeframe and inspiration for the year was the 150th anniversary of the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation (Kvs Foundation). During the last 150 years, Finland has become one of the most successful countries in the world. As part of our anniversary celebrations, we were honoured to coordinate this year of events.

The results of the Year of Sivistys should be seen from an input-output perspective. The year was produced in a cost-effective way. The Lifelong Learning Foundation received a total of €100,000 for coordination in funding over three years (2022-2024) from the Ministry of Education and Culture. Annual funding was around €30,000. The Lifelong Learning Foundation contributed its own funding to the Year of Sivistys. In addition, the combined contribution of the event organisers was more than €2 million. A large proportion of the events were put on by volunteers.

Certainly, more could have been done to reach every Finn. In addition, the most difficult target groups to reach, the opponents of Sivistys, were undoubtedly left unaware. From the point of view of the resources available, however, we can be quite satisfied with the results. It is also worth remembering that work for the future of Sivistys will continue.

More than 200 events were organised during the year. The events attracted more than 200,000 participants from all over Finland and the world. The events of the year were complemented by the touring exhibition of Finland organised by the Science Centre for Education and Learning Soppi. Through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, all Finnish diplomatic missions around the world also received access to the Sivistys materials.

In autumn 2024, we organised an online brainstorming session involving public. Together with transport companies in large and medium-sized cities, we had the "Sivistys is" campaign, which also served as an invitation to the public consultation.

During the year, significant effort was made in terms of communication. The reach of the year's communication through events was over 3.5 million. The reach of social media communications was over 10 million. In addition, for example, the Future Event Aurora, which was organised in cooperation with the Finnish Broadcasting Company Yle, reached more than 500,000 viewers with its content. Sivistys was one of the key themes at the 2024 SuomiAreena. This event attracted more than 50,000 visitors. Impact communication cooperation was carried out with MustRead: seven journalistic articles aimed at decision-makers in local and national government highlighted the Year of Sivistys.

The key partners supported considerably the visibility of the Year of Sivistys with their own activities and linked their own events to it. For example, the World of Hugo Simberg virtual exhibition, produced by the Finnish National Gallery, was included in Science Centre Soppi's tour. Hugo Simberg (1873–1917) was a Finnish symbolist painter and graphic artist.

As part of its anniversary year, the Lifelong Learning Foundation financed the production of the film 'Stormskerry Maja'. Having premiered in 2024, the blockbuster film takes viewers back to the origins of Sivistys. It illustrates the relationship with nature, the steps towards equality – and above all the faith to overcome difficulties.

The theme year's Sivistys.fi website served as a platform for event organisers. All approved events were published in the events calendar on the website. Event organisers also received guidance on how to organise and promote their events. The languages used on the website were Finnish, Swedish, English, the three Sámi languages and Romani.

The Year of Sivistys Committee chose six main themes through which to explore Sivistys. These themes are sustainable future, equality, science, arts and culture, literacy and lifelong learning. Digitalisation and compassion were chosen as the cross-cutting themes.

During the year, the debate on Sivistys seemed to be divided into two. It could be described as a discourse of two realities. In the first discourse, Sivistys is seen in terms of the economy, austerity and deprivation. The cuts in the state budget were particularly concentrated on the cultural sector, but also in all other areas of the Ministry of Education and Culture's administration. Those who saw Sivistys from this point of view also raised criticisms about the year: The importance of Sivistys and related activities should not be highlighted while the State is saving money and reducing resources. This discourse guided the perspective on the present moment and a poorer tomorrow.

The second reality of Sivistys was revealed through the activities of the year. The future is powerfully present in this perspective. Sivistys is firmly rooted in communities, in civil society actors. Sivistys is also seen as an asset for getting through difficult times. The Year of Sivistys events certainly included a discussion on resources. The focus was on how individuals and communities can strengthen Sivistys and its relevance. In this reality of Sivistys, the future and the hope of a better future were present. Sivistys was seen as a diverse, living and action-oriented resource.

It can be said that both realities of Sivistys are true simultaneously. The key message of the year is that these perspectives should not be considered in isolation. At the same time, Sivistys is committed to institutions and to civil society. Both must be able to function – thus state resources provide the foundation for strengthening the Sivistys State.

The redefinition of Sivistys is strongly positioned in favour of the traditional view of Sivistys as a body of knowledge that continues throughout life. But knowledge is not enough: Sivistys must be seen first and foremost as action for a better tomorrow. The redefinition of Sivistys is a prerequisite for our future.

Sivistys is the foundation on which the greatest challenges of our time must be solved: the greatest challenges are saving our planet and democracy. This redefinition is also connected to the vision of strengthening national security and resilience of our societal bonds in times of insecurity.

The public consultation in autumn 2024 generated more than 1,600 ideas for actions to promote Sivistys. Participants in the online brainstorming stressed the human aspect and the importance of everyday Sivistys. Making Sivistys a common everyday issue and conveying its meaning to everyone was deemed important.

The Year of Sivistys reached Finns – including expatriate Finns – across a wide range of regions and age groups. The year also sought to reach out to groups that may be excluded from the debate on Sivistys.

Internationally, the year attracted a lot of interest. Alongside Sibelius, Sauna and Sisu, Sivistys was launched as another Finnish word to enter the global lexicon. The year also saw the creation of a Nordic network of Sivistys to continue the joint debate. There were requests to translate the original Finnish report into English, and now you are reading it. There is a need and a demand for Sivistys worldwide.

The effectiveness of the Year of Sivistys can only be assessed in the coming years. We hope that the work for Sivistys in all sectors of society has been re-energised. Expectations are high that the importance of Sivistys will be recognised in future government programmes. Difficulties and challenges will certainly be faced in the coming decades. The most important thing is that we believe in the future and the power of Sivistys.

The survival of our nation depends on future generations. Our Sivistys state must provide good conditions for growth and life – each and every one of us is needed to do this. We should also listen to criticism of Sivistys and try to include even those who do not care about Sivistys. The most important work is done in each of our

own thoughts and actions. We only have to look around us to see what happens when lack of Sivistys takes over. Let this report be a tool for all those interested in continuing the work for Sivistys.

A warm thank you to all the supporters of and contributors to the Year of Sivistys!

A warm special thank you to all our key partners: Aula Research Oy, the Timeout Foundation, Fountain Park Oy, the Finnish National Gallery, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, the Finnish Reading Center, MustRead, the Finnish National Agency for Sivistys, ProCom – The Finnish Association of Communication Professionals, the Finnish Local Heritage Federation, MTV/SuomiAreena, Finland Society, Solar Films Inc. and the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies.

The dust was wiped off and a new definition of our Sivistys was revealed:

Sivistys is an asset, the foundation of national security and working towards a better future.

Report content production

Opening remarks – Chair of the Year of Sivistys 2024 Committee, Member of European Parliament Sirpa Pietikäinen; Patrons of the Year: President Tarja Halonen and Finnish National Youth Council and Youth Sector

Introduction – CEO Lauri Tuomi, Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation (Kvs Foundation)

Chapters 2 and 3 – Aula Research Oy

Results of the public consultation – Lauri Tuomi and Fountain Park Oy

Soppi touring exhibition – Communications specialist Kristiina Andreasson, Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation (Kvs Foundation)

Closing words – Lauri Tuomi

Translation: Kielipalvelu Kauriin Kääntöpiiri Oy

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2024

Sivistyksen teemavuosi Temaåret för Bildning The Year of Sivistys

The Year of Sivistys designated by the Ministry of Education and Culture, was celebrated in 2024. The year came at a time when the world's democratic progress is stalling, climate change is shaking the planet, our country is in economic crisis, extremism rears its head, and in Europe there is a war with Russia's attack on an independent state in Ukraine.

The aim of the year was to dig up the roots of our Sivistys state, dust off Sivistys and update the concept for the modern age. The year was a year of events, with over 200,000 participants in Finland and around the world. It also included a touring exhibition by the Science Centre for Education and Learning Soppi. Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were given access to Sivistys material and the word "Sivistys" was launched as a gift to the world. The year was coordinated by the Lifelong Learning Foundation (the Kvs Foundation), which was celebrating its 150th anniversary.

This report presents the results of the Year of Sivistys. The report is divided in six main themes: Sustainable future, Equality, Science, arts and culture, Literacy and dialogue, and Lifelong learning. Digitalisation and compassion are the cross-cutting themes.

Sivistys is specifically about working for a better tomorrow. This report provides a springboard for action for all the fearless defenders of Sivistys.