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Green Grassroots

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Defining environmental sustainability guidelines for an art NGO

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Degree Programme in Cultural Management

(240 ECTS)

11/2022

ABSTRACT

Humak University of Applied Sciences
Degree Programme in Cultural Management 240 ECTS

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Title: Green Grassroots – Defining environmental sustainability guidelines for an art NGO

Number of Pages: 32 and 5 attachment pages

Supervisors: Lecturer Jari Hoffrén & Lecturer Anna Leino

Commissioned by: Rjukan Solarpunk Academy

The purpose of this thesis was to collect information on how Nordic grassroots art organisations take environmental sustainability into account. The aim was to create an environmental sustainability guideline for Solarpunk Arts Festival, which is to be held for the first time in 2023. The work was commissioned by Rjukan Solarpunk Academy, a non-profit NGO located in Rjukan, Norway.

Four Nordic grassroots art organisations were interviewed and a questionnaire was sent to a fifth organisation. These five organisations were compared by using benchmarking as a method. This study collected qualitative data, which were analyzed using data-driven qualitative content analysis.

The results show that environmental sustainability has a cross-cutting effect on grassroots art organisations and cultural productions. In addition, they display the grassroots' current state and their relationship to the theme. The outcome of this thesis is an environmental sustainability guideline that can be used within the Rjukan Solarpunk Academy and shared internationally. In particular, the guideline is targeted at art organisations with a lack of resources. This is only one viewpoint and therefore further research is required to study how social and economic sustainability can be defined and implemented in grassroots art organisations.

Keywords: ecology, environmental sustainability, sustainable development, festivals, cultural sector, art events, art associations

TIIVISTELMÄ

Humanistinen ammattikorkeakoulu
Kulttuurituotannon koulutusohjelma 240 op

Tekijät: Milja Silvan

Opinnäytetyön nimi: Ruohonjuurissa Vihertää – Ekologisen kestävyden suuntaviivat taidejärjestölle

Sivumäärä: 32 ja 5 liitesivua

Työn ohjaajat: Jari Hoffrén & Anna Leino

Työn tilaaja: Rjukan Solarpunk Academy

Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli kerätä tietoa siitä, miten pohjoismaiset ruohonjuuritason taideorganisaatiot ottavat huomioon ekologisen kestäväen kehityksen. Tavoitteena oli luoda suuntaviivat ekologisesta kestävydestä Solarpunk Arts Festivalille, joka järjestetään ensimmäistä kertaa vuonna 2023. Työn tilaajana toimi Rjukan Solarpunk Academy, joka on voittoa tavoittelematon taidejärjestö Rjukanissa, Norjassa.

Neljä pohjoismaista ruohonjuuritason taideorganisaatiota haastateltiin ja viidennelle organisaatiolle lähetettiin kyselylomake. Näitä viittä organisaatiota verrattiin benchmarkingin keinoin. Tässä tutkimuksessa kerättiin kvalitatiivista dataa, joka analysoitiin aineistolähtöisellä sisällönanalyysillä.

Tulokset osoittavat, että ympäristön kestävyydellä on läpileikkaava vaikutus ruohonjuuritason taideorganisaatioihin ja kulttuurituotantoihin. Lisäksi tulokset esittelevät ruohonjuuritason nykytilannetta ja suhdetta teemaan. Tuotoksena tästä opinnäytetyöstä syntyi ohjeet ekologisen kestävyden käytänteistä, jota voidaan hyödyntää Rjukan Solarpunk Academyn toiminnassa ja jakaa kansainvälisesti. Ohje on suunnattu erityisesti taideorganisaatioille, joilla on pulaa resursseista. Tämä opinnäytetyö on vain yksi näkökulma aiheeseen, ja siksi tarvitaan lisätutkimusta sen selvittämiseksi, miten sosiaalinen ja taloudellinen kestävyys voidaan nähdä ruohonjuuritason taideorganisaatioiden toiminnassa.

Asiasanat: ekologisuus, ekologinen kestävyys, kestävä kehitys, festivaalit, kulttuuriala, taidetapahtumat, taideyhdistykset

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1 PREFACE

The purpose of this thesis is to develop environmental sustainability guidelines for the Solarpunk Arts Festival 2023. The festival is organised by Rjukan Solarpunk Academy (RSA) and is planned to be held in Rjukan, Norway. The festival has big ambitions in terms of environmental sustainability, but as it is being arranged for the first time it needs guidelines to go by.

It is also necessary to gain a better understanding of how sustainability is addressed in cultural productions in Nordic countries, especially in the grassroots. We need to look both at the present and the future of sustainability in cultural productions, how it can be seen in the productions and how it is measured and developed to be able to create a truly sustainable festival model. This research does not cover the whole state of environmental sustainability practises in the Nordic art and culture sector. Instead, it covers sustainability practices in art organisations with a Nordic grassroots viewpoint.

In addition, the guideline should be created so that it can be applied to other event productions within the RSA and possibly other organisations. The primary goal of this thesis is to implement environmental sustainability guidelines in the production of the festival. A second objective is to provide easy access to information about environmental sustainability in cultural productions.

The result of this thesis will be a written sustainability guideline for the first edition of the festival in 2023. The guideline will summarize the results of the research presented in this thesis, making it easy to apply to productions. Sustainable development is a broad topic, but three focus points can be drawn from it: environmental, social and economic sustainability (Finnish Ministry of the Environment 2022). This thesis focuses only on environmental sustainability, since the Solarpunk Arts Festival aims to be a truly green production. In addition, the festival revolves around the research of low-carbon energy transitions and thus emphasises the topic. Defining the topic to include only one of the three was also a matter of resources.

Earlier research on the topic has been made quite a lot in terms of event production and environmental sustainability. For instance, Westerlund and Perkkiö handle the topic in their bachelor's thesis "Ecologically sustainable production – Case Arabia Street Art Festival" (2022), and so does Koskinen in 2011 in a bachelor's thesis called "Sustainable development in event management: The environmental aspect of festivals". Still, it seems that there has not been made

earlier research on environmental sustainability in grassroots art organisations with a Nordic viewpoint.

2 CONTEXT

2.1 Rjukan Solarpunk Academy

Rjukan Solarpunk Academy is a non-profit art organisation located in Rjukan, Norway. By carrying out high-quality art projects around the themes of sustainability, RSA intends to educate people on these matters while also integrating contemporary art into society. Most of RSA's projects are multidisciplinary and involve a wide range of collaborators, both in Norway and internationally. The organisation is supported by Arts Council Norway, Vestfold and Telemark County Council, Sparebankstiftelsen DNB and UNESCO. Rjukan Solarpunk Academy was founded in 2019 by the artists Margrethe Brekke and Martin Andersen. I spent five months at RSA working as a producer for an internship in 2022. (Rjukan Solarpunk Academy a 2022.)

The RSA has an art centre and a social arena with a variety of events for locals and travellers but has not yet held an art festival before. The biennial Solarpunk Arts Festival is going to be an artistic-academic collaboration synchronized with the Empowered Futures project initiated by the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU). In collaboration with different artists, the festival showcases the research around low-carbon energy transitions and opens questions around sustainability in new ways, all while making science more accessible. The ambition is to raise the bar of sustainable cultural productions and to create a new model of sustainable festival production. (Rjukan Solarpunk Academy b 2022.)

2.2 Events affect the environment

The urgency for sustainable practices is growing as we are facing the climate crisis. Climate change is indisputable, but it is not too late to slow it down, according to the United Nations (2022). Another current event that affects especially Europe is the energy crisis. The crisis is caused by Russia's war on Ukraine, and it emphasizes the urgency of renewable energy and sustainable energy consumption even further. (Bank of Finland 2022, European Parliament 2022).

It is not an environmental act to organize a festival. It is even said that art fairs are one of the biggest generators of waste in the global art sector (Mychal 2020). Events are often built from scratch and require a lot of logistics and materials, consume energy, and create a lot of excess waste. Likewise, artistic production takes up materials and energy, needs transportation for both

the artists and artwork, and creates waste. International cultural productions also include a lot of travelling as artists and artworks are often flown to venues from all over the world, which creates a big carbon footprint. (Ibid., Jokinen 2022). Carbon footprint is often used to measure the effects our actions have on the environment by calculating carbon emissions the acts produce (WWF 2022).

There are many stages for making decisions in a production where sustainability could also play a part. Cultural productions are not the biggest polluters in the world, but they can have significant effects on environmental sustainability, both negative and positive. For instance, the event industry is linked to many other industries, such as food, energy, construction, logistics and travel. In the best case, preferring sustainable choices in decision-making can affect consumption patterns for the better (Øyafestivalen 2014). Festivals can even work for testing new ideas for sustainable practices, which could then be implemented elsewhere (Jokinen 2022). Nowadays audiences also expect sustainable practices from events (Holmes, Hughes, Mair & Carlsen 2015).

2.3 Compensation

These days many events are pursuing to become carbon neutral, which means that the production does not change the carbon content in the atmosphere. Carbon neutrality does not mean zero carbon emissions, instead, it implies a balance between emitting and removing them from the environment. (Bernoville 2022). One, although heavily debated, option to have a carbon-neutral event is to compensate for carbon emissions by donating money to support projects that for example create carbon sinks. A carbon sink absorbs more carbon from the atmosphere than it emits, such as a forest (Finnish Environment Institute 2022). On paper, it allows an event to call itself carbon neutral. This makes the organisation look more responsible and therefore attracts especially younger audiences that in the future, will form the biggest share of the consumer demographic (Business Wire 2021).

There are still many issues with emission compensation since it is difficult to confirm whether the environmental benefit would be achieved without the compensation money. For example, whether the forest would be planted or not. There are issues also with the permanence of the environmental acts and how the local environment and population are considered in the projects. There is no common guideline yet for how to responsibly compensate emissions. The consensus seems to be that you should compensate for emissions only when there is no other

way to avoid or decrease them. (Finnish Ministry of the Environment, Landström 2020, Jokinen 2022)

2.4 Art and sustainability

Sustainability has also risen as a topic in art, both thematically and in artistic production. Thematically the connection goes as far back as art history since nature has always played a part in art. But there can be seen a change in artistic production's connection to environmental sustainability when the Land Art movement came into the picture in the 1970s. The art movement used natural materials and told a message of sustainability and how we are affecting the environment in a new way. (Sustainability For All 2022). At present, when the climate crisis is increasingly affecting our lives, the topic can be seen impacting the whole art sector more than ever (Lescaze 2022).

There are even art movements being born from the topic of sustainability, such as solarpunk which came to be in 2009. Spreading organically through social media around the world, the term 'solarpunk' is a modality of dreaming of real-life constructive change. It started as a sub-genre of fantasy and science fiction, with a particular focus on envisioning sustainable futures after the energy transition. In our times of change, solarpunk provides a network of ideas, sensibilities, and values that can generate answers to the most pressing questions regarding sustainability and structural change. (Williams 2019.)

Increasingly, art and culture are being acknowledged in the discourse around sustainable development and have proven to add value to the matter (British Council 2020). For instance, art can communicate scientific research in a way that is easier to understand than intricate academic text. Art can also shock, awaken and change people's minds about sustainability for the better. (Honkala 2018.) Art can inspire in another way than traditional research, and artists are a crucial resource for imagining innovative solutions to the most urgent questions around us (Sidford & Frasz 2016). That is also what Solarpunk Arts Festival is all about.

As art works as a communicator for sustainability (Honkala 2018), and since consumers are preferring sustainable products and services, sustainability has become a popular factor in marketing (West 2022). This applies also to event marketing. There are clear benefits to the organisation when communicating about environmental acts (Business Wire 2021). In some cases, the marketing goes too far, and it turns into greenwashing. Greenwashing refers to spreading

disinformation about your organisation's environmental sustainability in order to achieve a positive image. In event production, greenwashing can show as promoting only one specific environmental act while hiding the non-sustainable parts of the production. It can also be seen from unclear statements and an absence of evidence of the actions made for sustainability. (Griese, Werner & Hogg 2017.)

2.5 Grassroots and resources

Especially with grassroots art organisations, the sustainability question becomes often about resources. Who has the time to plan, execute, measure and develop these matters, and where does the organisation find money to do all those things? Using consultant companies or hiring an eco-coordinator are options, but with limited funds, they are often off the table. Slow travel by land sounds appealing from a sustainable point of view, but when an airline company gives you the same journey half as cheap and double as fast, the resource savings often win. The same applies to material transport. Sometimes it is also impossible to travel by land because of the location of the venue and a lack of travel options. (Ugelvik interview 2022, Thastum interview 2022, Kaartinen interview 2022.)

Then there is the question of what should be prioritised in a production, artistic content or environmental sustainability? Or rather how to make the two go hand-in-hand. My core question for this research was how to make a solarpunk-themed art festival in rural Norway that has international aspects environmentally sustainable. In order to find answers, I decided to look beyond borders.

2.6 Nordic countries

I chose to study Nordic countries for this research for many reasons. The Solarpunk Arts Festival will be held in Norway, but it is pursuing to create an international network of grassroots art organisations around it. Rjukan Solarpunk Academy and thus the festival has also pre-existing international contacts, which many are from Nordic countries. One purpose of the network is to share proven sustainability practices between the organisations. It is also beneficial for the research to have an international viewpoint so that the sustainability guideline could be implemented easier in cultural productions outside of Norway. Therefore, it made sense to look across the Norwegian borders. My research focused on art organisations from Nordic countries since they have similarities in their climate issues and the art and culture sector, so the material

collected would be better comparable. In this thesis, I will be referring only to the five sovereign states Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Finland as the Nordic countries for the sake of clarity and comparability.

My interest was awakened by the Nordic countries' approach to environmental sustainability, their goals, and what measures are taken to accomplish them. The climate crisis is a global issue that affects Nordic countries and their economy in similar ways. One practical example is increasing heavy rains and floods that are already affecting infrastructure at coastlines and areas with rivers (Nordic Co-operation 2022). The Nordic countries have also gotten praise for their climate actions, for instance, having the most advanced energy transition strategies in Europe (DG Trésor 2021). In terms of the art and culture sector, it is reasoned to compare these countries since their public spending on art and culture is quite similar, varying between 0,8-1,8% (Eurostat 2018, Meriläinen 2019, Compendium 2022 a, Compendium 2022 b). The only exception is Iceland which spent 2,5% of the total general government budget on culture in 2018 (Statistics Iceland 2020).

Nordic countries have a long history of cooperation, and the countries are doing a lot to tackle the problems together with shared initiatives and goals. The Nordic Council of Ministers made an action plan for Vision 2030 that is running from 2021 to 2024. In the plan, it is declared that the Nordic Region will become the most sustainable region in the world. One of the three focus points in the plan is to have a green Nordic region, which is all about environmental sustainability. The other focus points are social sustainability and the Nordic region's competitiveness, which also links to environmental sustainability through green growth. The action plan for Vision 2030 is based on the Paris Agreement (2015 b) which set long-term goals for climate action, and the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015 a) which includes the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. All Nordic countries have adopted both declarations. (Nordic Co-operation 2020.)

More specifically linked to arts and culture, the Nordic Ministers of Culture have agreed on a declaration "Art and culture as promoters of sustainable development" in 2021, which states the importance of arts and culture as sustainable development promoters and a tool for managing climate crisis (Nordic Co-operation 2021). The Nordic Ministers of Culture have also adopted a UNESCO declaration in 2022 that emphasizes culture's role in sustainable development, which also includes environmental protection. The declaration was created at MONDI-ACULT 2022, which is a UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable

Development. (UNESCO 2022). These declarations work their way down from the ministries for example in the form of requirements for applying for public funding. It is clear that on a big scale, efforts are made for encouraging actions for sustainability. But what is actually happening at the grassroots of the art and culture sector?

3 METHODS

In this chapter, I will be presenting the data collection and analysis methods used in this research.

3.1 Data collecting methods

For this thesis, I chose benchmarking and half-structured individual interviews as my research methods. Benchmarking means developing your own processes by comparing them to others who are equivalent to you but better in the area of development. The method is about questioning your own actions and learning from others. Benchmarking might give direct practical ideas to improve your processes and thus allows putting the learned things actually into practice. (Impiö 2022.) To create the sustainability guideline, I needed to get an idea of how things are done in other Nordic art organisations in terms of environmental sustainability. The idea was to get an overview of where the Nordic countries are at today when it comes to these matters. I adapted benchmarking to my research by comparing the actions for environmental sustainability of the interviewed organisations.

A half-structured interview means that the questions are the same for all participants and are presented in the same order, but the participants are allowed to answer in their own words (Eskola & Suoranta 1998). The interviews were held remotely through the video conference service Zoom. With the interviews, I wanted to learn from these other organisations and get more in-depth information on how they are addressing environmental sustainability. I concentrated on grassroots organisations so that the operational environment and mindset behind the organisations' activities would be similar to the Rjukan Solarpunk Academy. I felt that could give me more suitable results for the festival guideline since it would not make sense to compare organisations with significant differences in resources.

As one of the interviews could not be arranged due to scheduling issues, I ended up using an email inquiry as the method in that case. I used the same questions for the inquiry as I did for the interviews, and the respondent was able to answer in their own words. This was to make the responses as comparable to the interviews as possible. Due to the differing method, I also needed to consider the fact that the answers were written instead of spoken in the analysis.

I chose benchmarking and interviews as the research methods because they allow me to get close to practical solutions, which this thesis is all about. Practical solutions for an art festival,

not solving the global issues the art world is facing in terms of the climate crisis. By interviewing Nordic grassroots organisations, I was able to get a more realistic picture of how ecological practices are actually put to use.

3.2 Data analysing method

This study collected qualitative data, and as I was observing separate cases on the basis of which I needed to generalise the guideline, I chose data-driven qualitative content analysis as my method. It means that I started to generalise the results based on the individual benchmarking to create an overview of the topic. The collected data is also being analysed from a realistic standpoint. That means that the answers are seen as the real state of the organisation. Therefore, the analysis method demands that the interviewees are being honest, which can be improved by having them answer anonymously. I gave the opportunity to be anonymous to all of the organisations interviewed.

I separated the collected data using the interview and questionnaire structure, demonstrated in appendix 2. Then I picked out the focus points of the answers and started to look for common themes. Those themes then created the core of the results, depending on how much they were highlighted in the answers and on the organisations' websites. With the main points, I was able to create the environmental sustainability guideline, which can be seen in appendix 3.

4 BENCHMARKED ORGANISATIONS

The benchmarked organisations were from the five sovereign Nordic states: Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Denmark and Finland. Some of them were familiar with Rjukan Solarpunk Academy and the idea of the Solarpunk Arts Festival in advance, but not in a way that would affect the answers as I see it. These organisations are all non-profit and geographically distant from each other, so in that sense, they are not competing with each other. In addition, the questions presented for the interviewed organisations were not meant to and did not reveal sensitive information about them, per se.

From Sweden, I chose Kultivator, an organisation that connects visual art and organic farming on the island Öland in Sweden. Since founded in 2005, their activities include projects, exhibitions and workshops with varying groups of people. The whole idea of Kultivator and their activities are based on environmental sustainability. Their artistic activities are funded with project-funding since there is no long-term funding yet. The core of Kultivator is created by three artists and two farmers. I interviewed two of the founders, artists Mathieu Vrijman and Malin Lindmark Vrijman, who now work as the artistic coordinators at Kultivator. (Kultivator 2022, Vrijman & Lindmark Vrijman interview 2022.)

From Norway, I interviewed the Festival Leader Ane Margrethe Ugelvik from Márkomeannu, a Sami festival located at Gállogieddi on the Norwegian side of Sápmi. With more than twenty years of arranging the festival, it has become a connection point for various art forms and Sami artists from all over Sápmi. Márkomeannu has two full-time employees working all year around, but the staff increases up to 40 with the power of volunteers during the festival. The amount of staff changes from year to year. Their finance is built on funding from the Norwegian side of Sami parliament and Norwegian Art Council, in addition to project funding. The next festival will be arranged in July 2023, and it lasts for four days. (Márkomeannu 2022, Ugelvik interview 2022.)

From Iceland, I chose the festival List í Ljósi, which is a contemporary art festival focused on artworks that use light in some way. Since the first edition of the festival in 2016, List í Ljósi has attracted audiences and artists from all over the world to the remote town of Seyðisfjörður. The program includes many activities, such as performances, panels and film screenings. They have normally a staff of 10 who are partly paid and partly voluntary but work only two to three

months on the festival. With the artists, the event has approximately 40 contributors volunteering a huge portion of their time. List í Ljósi is funded by the local municipality, the East Iceland cultural fund and a sponsorship with a power company and several smaller suppliers. Due to scheduling limits, I sent an email questionnaire to the Creative Director of the festival, Celia Harrison, instead of interviewing her directly. (List í Ljósi 2022, Harrison interview 2022.)

From Denmark, I got to interview the Co-founder and Environmental Sustainability Director of The Independent AIR, Line Thastum. The non-profit organisation's activities include art projects, exhibitions and workshops around photography, visual art and sustainability. The organisation has usually only two workers because of lack of resources. Their funding is project-based but they also have sponsors in their projects. The Independent AIR has been running since 2013 in Silkeborg, inland Denmark. (Thastum interview 2022, The Independent AIR 2022.)

From Finland, I interviewed the Executive Director of Mustarinda, Miina Kaartinen. The Mustarinda Association is located in Hyrynsalmi, Eastern Finland. Most of the activities revolve around an artist residency program, but they also include such things as events, workshops and exhibitions. The activities bear on socio-ecologic rebuilding of society and stress the importance of bringing art and science together. Mustarinda has currently three part-time employees and 16 volunteers, but the number of staff varies a lot from project to project. Their funding is project-based, and the funds come both from public and private associations. (Kaartinen interview 2022, Mustarinda 2022.)

5 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In this chapter, I will be presenting and processing the research data. Sustainable practices are implemented daily in the benchmarked organisations in the areas of materials, food, transportation and energy consumption. With organisations where sustainability is at the core of the activities and image, such as Mustarinda, Kultivator and The Independent AIR, it affects daily lives the most. As I learnt from the interviews, it is clear that most of the people involved in these organisations are already implementing sustainable practices in their personal lives, so applying them at work makes sense. The results show that sustainability has a cross-cutting effect on the organisations' activities and is continuously considered in decision-making.

5.1 Materials

All of the organisations mention materials as an area where they consider environmental sustainability. Materials are being reduced, reused and recycled from one production to another and if something needs to be bought, second-hand or eco-friendly materials are preferred. This includes everything from event merchandise to the materials used in the artistic production. Reducing materials is possible for instance by calculating carefully how much materials are needed, and by making decisions in the production's planning phase on what materials are truly required. For instance, List í Ljósi does not make flyers, merchandise or sales of food or drink during the festival so there is no residue from attendees. They are also involved in artistic production by workshopping artwork concepts with more sustainable methods. (Harrison 2022). In parallel, Márkomeannu makes sure not to order too much merchandise, even if they are made of more eco-friendly material (Ugelvik interview 2022). Sometimes having the most sustainable option in materials is more expensive, which requires reducing the number of bought materials (Thastum interview 2022).

A key focus of the answers is on reusing materials. Especially the materials used in installing artwork and other structures built for an event are used again in different projects. All organisations want to avoid buying new materials. The Executive Director of Mustarinda also notes the importance of renovating and using recyclable materials when building larger structures, as construction is a major pollution source (Kaul 2021, Kaartinen interview 2022). Another example of implemented practices includes sharing equipment with other organisations (The Independent AIR 2019, Harrison 2022).

After reducing waste and reusing materials, recycling comes into the picture. For instance, recyclable materials are being used in artistic production, and as Harrison from List í Ljósi writes (2022), they source said materials for artists on behalf of the festival production. Another aspect is making sure disposable items are recyclable, such as the leaf plates at Márkomeannu (ibid., Ugelvik interview 2022).

5.2 Food

From leaf plates, we get to food, which rose as another common theme regarding sustainable practices. List í Ljósi does not include food in the festival and does not comment on it. All the other organisations consider food sustainability in their activities.

Environmental sustainability is thought of by growing food by yourself, eating organic food, eating vegetarian or vegan food, and using locally produced ingredients. Plant-based diets have proven to cut food production emissions and so they should be preferred (Springmann, Godfray, Rayner & Scarborough 2016; Lacour, Seconda, Allès, Hercberg, Langevin, Pointereau, Lairon, Baudry & Kesse-Guyot 2018), which seems to be the case with most of the benchmarked organisations. Márkomeannu uses local reindeer and moose meat and blood in the food served at the festival and has some vegetarian options. The served food is a part of promoting traditional Sami culture, which is the purpose of the festival. (Ugelvik interview 2022, Márkomeannu 2022).

Food sustainability is a big part of Kultivator's activities since they are an organic farm and produce their food as eco-friendly as possible (Vrijman et al. interview 2022). Likewise, Mustarinda improves the organisation's self-sufficiency by growing food in their own garden (Kaarinen interview 2022). Being self-sufficient means being able to supply goods on your own without any external assistance (Merriam-Webster 2022). Food waste is also considered by waste sorting, composting or using the leftover food for other things, such as feeding farm animals at Kultivator.

5.3 Transportation

Many of the benchmarked organisations are located in rural areas, as will the Solarpunk Arts Festival. Transportation is the next big theme that arises in the conversations about daily practices. In this context, transportation refers to travel done by personnel and artists, in addition to

the transport of goods. Some of the organisations have stopped flying and are using either electric or biogas cars. After those options, all organisations prefer public transportation, such as trains, buses and boats, if available. In rural locations, it can be hard to have access to public transportation, which is the case for Márkomeannu which is located on the Norwegian side of Sápmi and involves artists from all over Sápmi. The majority of the travel is done by cars and flying because of a lack of bus routes, according to the Festival Director Ugelvik (2022).

A big current trend is slow travel, which means travelling by land and sea with fewer emissions than what would be caused by flying (Koneen Säätiö 2022). The Independent AIR has set a limit of travel time to eight hours, during which you must travel by land. If the limit is exceeded, flying can be justified, but it needs to be compensated. (The Independent AIR 2019). The Executive Director of Mustarinda brings up that while they encourage slow travel in the organisation, it is also a privilege. Slow travel takes up time and money resources that everyone does not have. Kaartinen explains that they have gone as far as applying for funding for artists to slow travel to the Mustarinda house in Paljakka nature reserve in Kainuu, eastern Finland. (Kaartinen interview 2022). Mustarinda (2022) has also published multiple blog texts on how people have travelled slow to their residency from abroad, which can inspire others to do the same.

Travelling can be avoided by using digital solutions, such as video meetings and digital platforms, like The Independent AIR (2019) encourages to do. Still, none of the benchmarked organisations has quit travelling altogether, nor is planning to do so. Vrijman from Kultivator (2022) points out that people often forget the digital carbon footprint. Digital devices cause carbon emissions through the production, use, and transfer of data (Myclimate 2022). Taking this into consideration, Mustarinda (2022) specifies on their website that their servers use wind power.

5.4 Energy consumption

The Independent AIR and Mustarinda mention energy consumption when talking about daily practices. By using renewable energy, an organisation can lower its carbon footprint (Szetela, Majewska, Jamroz, Djalilov & Salahodjaev 2022). The Independent AIR has an office in the other co-founder's home that has solar panels, so they serve both the home and the organisation (Thastum interview 2022). The Mustarinda house uses geothermal heating, wind power and solar electricity. During the coldest time of winter, the Mustarinda house has to rely on energy

from other sources, such as burning wood. From March to October, the Mustarinda house is at times completely self-sufficient in terms of electricity. (Korpela & Majava 2020, Kaartinen interview 2022).

Energy can also be saved by consuming less electricity, heat and water and by buying the most energy-efficient devices (The Independent AIR 2019). Vrijman from Kultivator (2022) notes that the measuring of energy consumption has grown due to the current energy crisis. The prices of energy are rising, and its availability is uncertain in the near future (Bank of Finland 2022). Especially the everyday energy-saving practices need to be communicated to the people involved in the organisations, as for example Mustarinda does by having created guidelines for their residency visitors (Kaartinen interview 2022).

5.5 Communication

Three of the organisations highlight communication as a part of their daily sustainability practices. Communicating about how sustainability plays a part in the organisations is targeted both to internal and external stakeholders. The messages include information about both practical habits the organisations implement in their activities and more philosophical messages about sustainability. Kultivator's founders (2022) describe their communication about environmental sustainability as obvious since the organic farm already speaks for itself. People are already aware that sustainability is at the core of Kultivator's activities (ibid.). Likewise, Thastum from The Independent AIR (2022) explains that environmental sustainability is the organisation's image and platform. Mustarinda (2022) and Kultivator (2022) also note the importance of continuous communication and sharing the information they have collected to express the need for ecological reconstruction. Ugelvik from Márkomeannu (2022) brings up the want to inspire audiences to think about sustainability.

Content as a tool of communication rises as a common theme when asking the organisations about how they communicate to visitors and audiences. Kultivator, Mustarinda and The Independent AIR share information and educate people on sustainability for example by cooperating with schools. Moreover, in the said organisations artistic content is one of the main ways to communicate about environmental sustainability. The artworks often contain sustainability as a concept and therefore work as a communicator. (Vrijman et al. interview 2022, Kaartinen interview 2022, Thastum interview 2022). At Kultivator, art activism plays a big part, and the artworks are made to primarily talk about sustainability. Preferably to new audiences, according

to the co-founder Vrijman (2022). Digital communication to audiences is implemented through websites, and Mustarinda has also a blog and a magazine that they publish online. The said magazine dives into the more philosophical themes of sustainability, while the blog concentrates more on practical issues, such as slow travel and energy consumption (Mustarinda 2022). None of the organisations mention social media. The Independent AIR, Márkomeannu and Mustarinda bring up using written signs about sustainability, for example in the form of recycling instructions at Márkomeannu. List í Ljósi does not communicate about sustainability to their audiences but are intending to develop it according to Creative Director Harrison (2022).

Internal communication with employees, volunteers, partners and artists is emphasized in the interviews. At Kultivator sustainability's role is, as stated earlier, quite obvious and this is the case when people come to work with them. For instance, the artists involved at Kultivator are pushed directly into sustainable living as they are expected to help with the daily tasks at the farm. They also see the ecosystem as a collaborator in their projects and make sure the artists understand this by for instance having biologists talk with them beforehand or having nature take part in video meetings. (Vrijman et al. interview 2022). Some practical ways to communicate about sustainability are through staff meetings and guidelines. Harrison from List í Ljósi (2022) writes that they give the festival's artists a welcome pack where sustainability is mentioned. Mustarinda also gives house tours to residency visitors where they go through sustainable living practices (Kartinen interview 2022). Márkomeannu communicates about sustainability issues more towards employees and volunteers than artists, according to Ugelvik (2022). The Independent AIR, on the other hand, prioritises communicating with partners over audiences. Thastum states (2022) that it takes a lot of resources to show sustainability to audiences in addition to communicating with the partners. They aim to inspire their sponsors and collaborators to be more sustainable by demanding the most sustainable solutions from them for their projects. Of course, flexibility is needed, and compromises are made in the limits of resources and not wanting to lose the partners. (Ibid.).

5.6 Planning sustainable

The responsibilities over sustainability matters are distributed in the benchmarked organisations in similar ways. All organisations make use of their own expertise and educate themselves when it comes to sustainability. Moreover, environmental sustainability is integrated into the thinking

of all organisations. Only The Independent AIR has named one person to be in charge of sustainability because they think it is important that someone has an obligation to look into the subject and share information with others (Thastum interview 2022). Otherwise, the theme would be too difficult to handle, according to Environmental Sustainability Director Thastum (ibid.). Márkomeannu has usually two volunteers in charge of the festival's environmental work, who cooperate with the festival administration. Because of changes in staff after covid, sustainability work has recently been done by the administration. (Ugelvik interview 2022). With the rest of the organisations, the responsibility is mutual. Kaartinen (2022) mentions that responsibility is shared by dividing and alternating work tasks at the Mustarinda house. On the other hand, the Executive Director is in charge of future planning, which includes sustainability strategies (ibid.).

Only The Independent AIR and Mustarinda have implemented sustainability guidelines in some way in their activities. It is unclear whether List í Ljósi's code of ethics that Harrison refers to in her answer (2022), is written or not, at least it has not been published on their website (List í Ljósi 2022). Mustarinda has sustainability guidelines for residency visitors and volunteers, and in addition, plans for sustainability are made on the strategic level (Kaartinen interview 2022). At, Kultivator they include environmental sustainability in their project plans but do not otherwise have a strict plan in terms of it. Still, they aim to consider sustainability as seriously as possible. (Vrijman et al. interview 2022). Likewise, Márkomeannu does not have a specific plan because there is not that big of a need for it since sustainability is so incorporated into the staff's thinking. Although, they are interested in having guidelines to find out if there is more they can do, but do not have the resources for making them right now. (Ugelvik interview 2022). Thastum (2022) brings up being creative to be sustainable because you always have to come up with new ideas and new solutions in daily life.

5.7 Measuring

To get to the new solutions, organisations need to know where they are currently and what to develop. Both Márkomeannu and List í Ljósi measure waste and aim to reduce it every year, by planning in advance and developing recycling practices. Otherwise, they have not measured the effects the festivals have on the environment. (Ugelvik interview 2022, Harrison 2022).

Mustarinda on the other hand measures energy consumption and has had a comprehensive report done on their carbon footprint in 2020 and is planning to do a new one (Kaartinen interview

2022). Kaartinen notes that measuring is beneficial for your own organisation, but the data is often not comparable to others. This is due to the indicators varying a lot, especially when measuring carbon footprint. For that reason, it is important to know what is being measured and what is not. Still, they do not measure everything every day at Mustarinda, instead they do follow-ups from time to time. (Ibid.).

Kultivator has not implemented a specific measurement system since according to them, it is a non-stop development to become more sustainable anyways. For them, the state of the organic farm tells how successful they are in environmental sustainability matters, since in organic farm thinking being successful means being sustainable. Vrijman notes that they are measured by other people in the art sector since they are so visible with sustainability. He comments on the art sector's attitude by saying that people are quite strict with each other when it comes to this. (Vrijman et al. interview 2022.)

The Independent AIR is not measuring continuously either for multiple reasons. In the past, they have measured bigger projects where they have had the resources to do so but are not able to do it on smaller projects. Thastum highlights the importance of measuring so that the organisation can see if it is able to reach its goals. Still, the lack of resources prevents them from measuring regularly. Calculating takes a lot of time, and in a small organisation, there are no resources to make a yearly green account, according to Thastum. (Thastum interview 2022). Green accounting means calculating the costs of natural resources that go into an organisation's activities (Muralikrishna & Manickam 2017). Thastum (2022) explains that they plan to start using a free CO2 measurement tool published by Danish Arts Foundation for the art sector. The tool measures energy consumption, transport, waste and water, and one can use it in as many projects as one would like (Danish Arts Foundation 2022).

5.8 Developing

All of the benchmarked organisations aim to develop their sustainability practices. Vrijman points out that the urgency for development is increasing, but so are the ways to work with sustainability within the arts. He claims that Kultivator's "pretentious" goal is to change the world for the better, but that they are doing it one step at a time through art activism to change structures and make sustainability grow. By working on projects that are designated to sustainability, they develop their own practices continuously. (Vrijman et al. interview 2022).

Márkomeannu and List í Ljósi develop their practices together with their festival staff and set new goals for each festival (Ugelvik interview 2022, Harrison 2022). Harrison (2022) writes that they set personal goals within the staff, but a bigger goal for List í Ljósi is reducing and returning to grassroots. Developing sustainability relies a lot on the staff's own knowledge and willingness to educate themselves (ibid., Vrijman et al. interview 2022, Thastum interview 2022, Kaartinen interview 2022).

Thastum mentions that they have developed their sustainability practices by being more visible with the subject. One way to do this was to publish their environmental sustainability guidelines on their website. The Independent AIR does not have sharp goals for sustainability due to the small size of the organisation and being already quite far with sustainability, according to Thastum. She also emphasizes creativity when developing their activities and challenging partners to be sustainable. (Thastum interview 2022).

For Mustarinda, sustainability development is included in the organisation's strategy. Currently, they are focusing on developing eco-social sustainability, which considers environmental, social and cultural responsibilities (Wang & Altanbulag 2022). Kaartinen notes that the structures of the art and culture sector are not very socially sustainable, due to the asymmetry between work and pay, for example. At Mustarinda, they are also exploring how to show the connection between social and environmental unsustainability. The goal of the association is to have a comprehensive approach to sustainability. But to develop especially social sustainability further, the economic resources need to be in balance with the activities. (Kaartinen interview 2022.)

5.9 Resources

Resources, or reasonably, the lack of resources gets highlighted in every organisation's interviews. Most issues are formed around the problem of financing the activities of non-profit organisations. All of the organisations work with project funding and only some get long-term operating grants in addition to that. A lot of the work is done also by volunteering. Economic resources affect environmental sustainability matters most visibly in terms of what materials can be bought since eco-friendly products can be more expensive. On the other hand, buying second-hand materials can be cheaper. Kaartinen from Mustarinda (2022) notes that with a small budget and a smaller project, the emissions caused by it seem to stay low as well.

Another issue with resources is finding the time and energy to plan, measure and develop sustainability practices properly. In small organisations the personnel is limited and they often do not get paid enough for their work in the art sector (Joutsenniemi 2011, 4; Thastum interview 2022). Time and energy go also to communicating about sustainability and the planning and implementation of slow travel and eco-friendly transportation of goods. For instance, the amount of time you have for communicating with a partner affects how sustainability can be considered throughout a project (Kaartinen interview 2022). As Thastum (2022) from The Independent AIR puts it, with few resources, it is more important to actually implement sustainable practices than for example use resources for measuring sustainability.

The common answer to resource issues seems to be flexibility, which gets emphasized in the interviews. None of the organisations claim that compromises should be made at sustainability's expense, but rather by raising sustainability to the same level as finance and artistic quality in decision-making. Flexibility is also needed in organizing enough time for planning sustainability practices. Lindmark Vrijman (2022) notes that flexibility is needed every day at Kultivator, because they will not always know what they will work with and adapt to things around them as they come. She also explains that sometimes social sustainability exceeds environmental sustainability. In some cases, sharing ideas and working with sustainability as the content in art is more important than not to have travelling, for instance. (Ibid.). Hence, there are different ways to implement flexibility when it comes to environmental sustainability.

6 CONCLUSION

The end product of my thesis is an environmental sustainability guideline (appendix 3). The emphasis of the guideline is to include sustainability already on the strategic level of an organisation or a production. It is also essential to notice, and allow, the cross-cutting effect environmental sustainability can have on productions. It is evident from the results that environmental sustainability does not have to be a complicated topic, and that flexibility is an important aspect when working with little resources. It is also better to act on sustainability than investing all your energy to marketing green and falling for green washing. Furthermore, the research reveals that environmental and social sustainability are tightly knit together, and so I did not completely exclude the social aspects from the guideline.

By connecting existing information and the collected data, I was able to figure out the main factors of sustainable practices in grassroots art organisations. The focal point of the environmental sustainability guideline was created around those elements. My focus on small non-profit organisations provided reliable information that could be processed further for the commissioner's needs. This guideline will help in organizing the Solarpunk Arts Festival and in making it a green production, so that goal of this thesis was reached. The guideline will be presented for the festival's core team, and I encourage Rjukan Solarpunk Academy to publish sustainability guidelines on their website for a wider audience. In addition, this thesis will be sent to the benchmarked organisations and a few others that have personally requested it from me. This supports the goal of providing information to others and enabling the guideline to be implemented in different organisations as well.

Even with a relatively small research sample, I was able to demonstrate that there are big efforts made for sustainability in the grassroots art organisations. There are constantly broad declarations made on environmental sustainability both on the Nordic and global level, but maybe we should look at what is happening on the smaller scale: actual change. I was surprised that the communication to internal stakeholders and networks is preferred over external communication, but that shows just how the information is actually shared and valued in these organisations. And to note again, these people are often working with very little resources and are not always paid for their work. One can only imagine what innovation might occur when grassroots organisations would get the resources they need for long-term activities. This is where I see the significance of this work for the entire art and culture sector.

The future trend for art organisations is already here, and it is social sustainability. Many of the United Nation's sustainable development goals (2015a) can also be tied to social sustainability, as stated in the British Council's report *Missing Pillar* (2020). Thus, more research is required to study how social and economic sustainability can be defined and implemented in grassroots art organisations.

My work will become outdated as the world is rapidly changing and facing new and evidently increasing crises. It is interesting for me to see how the relationship between art and environmental sustainability develops. Will art's power of changing structures and innovate have more space and resources, or will we see more climate activists throwing cake at Mona Lisa (Osipova 2022)? But as it is now often said, there will be no art on a dead planet.

Still, I believe my work is adaptable for the current situation and easy to develop further. To get a hold of even more specific environmental sustainability practices, a broad document analysis on existing guidelines could be made. I unfortunately did not have the resources to implement that in my work. I am still satisfied in the end product, and I got a lot of useful information from this for my future career as a cultural manager.

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APPENDIX

KEYWORDS

Carbon footprint:	Emissions to the climate caused by human actions. Measures carbon dioxide (CO ₂) and greenhouse gases. (SITRA 2022)
Economic sustainability:	Growth in balance in terms of content and quality, not based on long-term debt or the destruction of reserves. A sustainable economy is a requirement for society's key functions and the foundation of social sustainability (Finnish Ministry of the Environment 2022).
Environmental sustainability:	The foundation of sustainable development is the preservation of biodiversity, the functioning of ecosystems, as well as human economic and material activities that are compatible with nature's sustainability (Finnish Ministry of the Environment 2022).
Greenwashing	“Behaviour or activities that make people believe that a company is doing more to protect the environment than it really is” – Cambridge Dictionary (2022)
Nordic countries:	In this thesis, I will be referring only to the five sovereign states: Norway, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Sweden.
Social sustainability:	Ensuring that the conditions for well-being are passed on from one generation to the next. Continued population growth, poverty, food and health care, gender equality and the provision of education are global challenges to social sustainability that have significant implications for ecological and economic sustainability (Finnish Ministry of the Environment 2022).

- Solarpunk:** Referred to as an art movement in this thesis. The term ‘solarpunk’ is a modality of dreaming of real-life constructive change. It started as a sub-genre of fantasy and science fiction, with a particular focus on envisioning sustainable futures after the energy transition.
- Sustainable development:** A continuous and controlled societal change that takes place globally, regionally, and locally, with the aim of providing good living opportunities for present and future generations (Finnish Ministry of the Environment 2022).

INTERVIEW STRUCTURE

1. What year was the organisation established?
2. How many employees and/or volunteers do you have involved?
3. How are you funded?
4. How does environmental sustainability show up in daily life at your organisation?
/ (FIN) Miten ekologinen kestävyys näkyy organisaation arjessa?
5. Can environmental sustainability be seen in daily decision-making?
/ (FIN) Vaikuttaako ekologinen kestävyys päätöksentekoon? Jos kyllä, miten?
6. Does environmental sustainability affect (artistic) content decisions? If so, how?
/ (FIN) Vaikuttaako ekologinen kestävyys päätöksiin taiteellisesta sisällöstä? Jos kyllä, miten?
7. Is the sustainability consideration planned or improvised?
/ (FIN) Onko kestävä kehityksen huomioiminen suunniteltua vai improvisoitua?
8. Do you communicate about your organisation's environmental sustainability to visitors and audiences? If yes, how?
/ (FIN) Viestittekö vierailijoille ja yleisölle organisaation ekologisesta kestävydestä? Jos kyllä, miten?
9. Similarly to the last question, do you communicate about it to your employees and/or volunteers? If yes, how?
/ (FIN) Kuten edellisessä kysymyksessä, viestittekö aiheesta työntekijöille ja/tai vapaaehtoisille? Jos kyllä, miten?
10. Is someone in charge of sustainability matters in your organisation?
/ (FIN) Vastaako joku organisaation vastuullisuusasioista?
11. Is environmental sustainability measured in your organisation? If yes, how?
/ (FIN) Mitataanko organisaation ekologista kestävyyttä? Jos kyllä, miten?
12. How are sustainability matters developed in your organisation? Do you have specific goals in terms of sustainability?
/ (FIN) Miten organisaation kestävyyttä kehitetään? Onko teillä erityisiä tavoitteita sen suhteen?

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINE

GREEN STRATEGY

Sustainability has to be included in the strategy

- If the budget allows, include professionals in environmental and social sustainability in the strategic work.
- Name a sustainability coordinator.
 - Depending on the size of the staff, either name one person to be in charge of sustainability matters or with more personnel, share the responsibility between a small group of people.
 - The naming should be done during the festival planning process.
- Consider sustainability on the same level as artistic quality and financial resources in all decision-making.
- Include sustainable solutions and the work that goes into managing sustainability in the budget.
- Be flexible.
- Allow mistakes and learn from them.

MEASURING

Measuring to improve

- Measure carbon footprint and waste.
 - Consider digital footprint in the measurements.
- Reflect to the measurements when planning the next festival editions.
- Research and implement trustworthy compensation methods.

DEVELOPMENT

Invest into development

- Set sustainability goals before the event
- Analyse if the goals were achieved at the end of the event.
- Communicate these to the internal stakeholders and possibly publicly.
- Research and get more educated in the matter.
- Update sustainability guidelines yearly.

MATERIALS

Reduce, reuse, recycle

- Plan carefully what is needed.
- Reduce materials needed at the event.
 - Research other options, such as digital leaflets.
- Make use of what you already have.
- Fix what you can.
- Borrow or rent materials and equipment from others.
- Buy second-hand and eco-friendly materials.
- Ask for the most sustainable solutions from partners.
- Encourage and inspire artists to use sustainable materials in their artwork.

FOOD

Eat green

- Arrange vegan or vegetarian food whenever food is involved in the activities.
- Prefer locally produced ingredients.
- Reduce food-waste by planning carefully what is needed.
- Avoid disposable tableware or choose biodegradable materials.
- Take care of managing food waste properly.
 - Make it easy for the eaters to do as well.
- Take self-sufficiency into consideration.

TRANSPORTATION

Sustainably on the move

- Reduce the need for travelling.
 - Consider video meetings and venue locations, for instance.
- Plan travel and transportation of materials thoroughly and in advance.
- Avoid flying.
- Encourage slow travel.
 - Share information on how to travel slow to your venue to audiences and internal stakeholders.
- Arrange enough time to implement the plans.
- If the budget allows, fund slow travel for artists.
- In the case of multiple venues, enable sustainable travelling for audiences.
 - Arrange bicycles and group transport between venues, for instance.

ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Lights off!

- Reduce energy consumption.
 - Electricity
 - Heat
 - Water
- Use renewable energy.
- Purchase energy efficient devices.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is the key

- Explain to artists and personnel what you expect and value in terms of sustainability in advance.
- Share information about sustainability with other art organisations and audiences digitally.
- Learn from other organisations.
- Communicate about sustainability with partners and collaborators in meetings.
- Communicate sustainability at the venue.
 - Include an explanation on how sustainability was considered in the artwork at the venue, for instance.
- Inform people about practical solutions and decisions that have been made, not just lip service.