

## Concept note: Askerkonferansen/ Asker Youth Conference, October 24th 2018 - Localizing the SDGs

The date for the conference will be October 24, 2018, on the International United Nations day.

### **Background:**

Asker municipality has organized the *Asker Youth Conference* twice the last four years, a conference where the voice of youth in the municipality is taken seriously and listened to.

### *The themes and focus were:*

2014: governance, at international and local levels.

2016: Asker town hall hosted two parallel conferences where (1) local youth provided their input and resolutions for a sustainable and youth-friendly municipality, while (2) the UN Habitat's Youth Advisory Board focussed on peace and security, highlighting the adoption of Security Council Resolution 2250 with the focus on youth and its participation in all decision-making processes.

The main focus both years was anchored locally, but conscious efforts were also made to connect the issues to a global perspective. Both years the organisers of the conference cooperated with UN Habitat and their Youth Advisory Board. This year's conference, to be held on October 24, the international UN day, will focus on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the opportunities, challenges and solutions they highlight.

### **Why The SDG's**

In 2014, the Norwegian government initiated a structural reform of the country's municipalities and regions. A key element is to ensure that municipalities are sufficiently robust to face current and future challenges and provide adequate and efficient services. In 2016, the three neighbouring municipalities Asker, Røyken and Hurum (all located south of Oslo and part of the capital region), agreed to merge, and the new municipality will be operative from 2020. Hurum, Røyken and Asker early agreed to develop the new municipality not only according to the best practice available, but also the next practice. Integrating the SDGs as a framework for the new municipal master plan and planning processes is one of the innovations of the new municipality.

The UN SDGs became operative in January 2016, and a few months later the process of merging Asker, Hurum and Røyken began. Looking beyond their local borders and into the future, the politicians and planners found inspiration, but also a window of opportunity for bringing in new perspectives. Initially proposed by the three mayors, who were inspired by the 17 SDGs, it was agreed to use the SDG framework as a planning tool and framework for developing the new municipality. A working group was established, which based on the 2030 Agenda for transforming our world to a sustainable one, has worked on developing new methodologies and adapting the SDG framework for use in Norway at the local level and in the specific context of the new, merged municipality.

An integral element of these methodologies is the active involvement of stakeholders. Bottom-up participation has become a central principle, and the Asker Youth Conference is

an important and integrated part of this involvement. Connecting local issues in Norway to global issues and to experience the exchange and transfer of values by actively involving global youth through UN Habitat is of great importance. UN Habitat will also this year be a close partner in developing the concept of the conference as well as contributing to organizing the conference on October 24<sup>th</sup>. Two other partners this year will be the Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation (NOREC), and the Norwegian Association for Youth Organisations (LNU).

**Objectives for The Asker Youth Conference, 2018: Localizing the SDGs**

Overarching goal: How to succeed in implementing the SDGs locally, and how can Asker’s process be of inspiration for other municipalities and regions globally?

By bringing Norwegian and international youth together to discuss and deliberate the localisation of the SDGs from the perspective of young men and women, a final summary and statement from the youth will be provided as an input to inform about the way forward on sustainable urbanization for youth in Asker as well as in global communities. We also hope this can be the start of our common plan for a potential side event: “Localising the SDGs through the youth” during the HLPF in New York in July 2019.

During the conference we will study and discuss areas and targets defined as the most crucial to be dealt with for the merged and new Asker municipality. Targets identified through the particular methodologies developed by new Asker and listed as most significant for the future of the municipality will also be discussed. This does not exclude discussing other targets. However, priority will be given to two sets of targets: those targets singled out as the most important ones to the citizens of new Asker, and those targets where new Asker has the highest potential to make a difference. (For specific reference, see the model below)

*Materiality matrix for new Asker municipality:*



**Concept:**

There are three stages to this year's Asker Youth Conference, simply: Before, During and After. Every phase of the work has its own purpose and sub-targets:

**Before:** Meet, involve and include youth in developing the concept:

- The three Mayors have visited schools in their region to meet, listen and discuss with young people;
- A resource group is established consisting of young people from all three municipalities (Hurum, Røyken, Asker). These young persons will be part of the Project Team planning the entire event; they will work with their schools up front, organise a recruiting campaign and decide who to bring to the table as core stakeholders. These 'stakeholders' should be able to possess and disseminate knowledge or be able to identify and propose changes;
- International involvement. The concept will be tested and discussed with youth from other parts of the world through UN Habitat networks;
- The time for applying to participate begins during a UN Habitat event, August 12, and the final date for application will be on September 5<sup>th</sup>.

**During:** Several workshops will be organised focussing on the prioritised targets. The project team will define one problem/question under each SDG, and the participants will be given information in advance about the specific SDG and which problem areas the assignment contains.

The key organisational structure of the workshop will be:

- Stakeholders with good knowledge and/or connection/working with the defined question or problem area will be invited to either give a presentation or participate actively in the work-session. The invited persons can be an NGO, a local or national politician, a person from the private sector, from academia or other groups with a strong interest in the problem area.
- The different youth will choose among the workshops, select one and participate in only this workshop throughout the day, but interactive communication between groups and stakeholders will be organised
- UN habitat will be responsible for the work-shops around two of the SDGs – SDG 11 and SDG 17. NOREC and LNU will also be part of this part of the program.

**After:** We plan to summarise the results of the workshops and deliver it to politicians in new Asker to support their efforts to have real participation of all stakeholders in planning the new municipality. We also plan to give the outcome-document to other important stakeholders nationally and internationally and inspire them to do likewise. The youth in the resource groups will also visit schools and present the outcomes from the conference, and as suggested earlier in this document we also hope to present the product of the conference during the HLPF in New York 2019.

**Project management**

Aske Municipality has established a Project Team, consisting of people from their administration, the youth resource group and Pure Consulting to help with planning, organising and writing the summary and outcome documents from the conference.

UN Habitat, LNU and NOREC will be supporting the Project Team in the development of the conference, during the conference and will help compose and write the summary and outcome document including the recommendations from the youth.