CONTENT

On the following pages, you can read a summary of six workshops held with participants from civil society's social organizations across the Nordic region during the spring and summer of 2023. The summary provides insight of participants' perspectives on significant challenges in the Nordic welfare societies.

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BACKGROUND: FROM WORKSHOPS TO SUMMARY

Participants. In total, more than 100 representatives from civil society's social organizations across the Nordic countries have participated and contributed with their perspectives.

Workshop Format. The six workshops followed the same format with three distinct rounds, each focusing on:
Round 1, Primary social challenges in each country.
Round 2, Main structural barriers hindering social progress.
Round 3, Primary internal/organizational barriers.

In total, five physical workshops were held in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Iceland, along with one online workshop where we invited organizations from Greenland, Åland, and the Faroe Islands. The participants from the Faroe Islands had to cancel, so the Faroe Islands are not included in this summary.

Workshop Purpose. To identify the barriers that are significant for civil society organizations in the social sector – and thereby determine the topics relevant to the 5 collaborative pillars in the Nordic Civil Society Platform on Social Affairs.

Approach in summary. The insights in this summary are the result of coding and cross-reading the main points from the workshops. We have included, to the greatest extent possible, all key points from each workshop and have faithfully attempted to reproduce participants' own written summaries. However, the specific wording and the prior grouping of key points ultimately reflect the project team's interpretation of participants' perspectives.

Other relevant literature: The current summary focuses on the barriers that the participating civil society organizations assessed as the most significant. This naturally does not provide a complete picture of the situation of civil society, the social challenges, or structural circumstances in the Nordic region. Therefore, the insights in this summary can be considered in conjunction with the insights found in the publications released in connection with the Nordic Summit for Civil Society 2021 (available HERE) and Árni Páll Arnasson's examination of the social sector (available HERE).

CROSS-READING: WHAT WAS COMMON CHALLENGES ACROSS THE NORDIC COUNTRIES?

Social challenges	Organizational barriers	Structural barriers
• **Discrimination and marginalization.** Most organizations in civil society in the Nordic countries emphasize that an increasing number of people are experiencing a rising level of discrimination and marginalization. This growing challenge particularly affects individuals with special needs who do not fit into the way societal institutions are designed. • **Loneliness and isolation.** A common challenge in the Nordic countries is that isolation and loneliness pose significant social problem. The extent of these challenges has increased in recent years, partly due to individualization, digitization, and geographical factors. It is evident that many individuals, including the young and the elderly, those without employment and education, as well as individuals with limited digital skills, feel unwanted alone. • **Mental Distress.** People across the Nordic countries experience mental distress, especially children, youth, the elderly, and refugees. This leads to loneliness, substance abuse, increased mortality, suicide, stigmatization, and social isolation. • **Inequality of opportunity.** There is broad agreement that unequal opportunities constitute one of the most central social challenges. Both disability, health profile, gender, sexuality, language, ethnicity, geography, and socio-economic background have a significant impact on a person's opportunities and quality of life. This issue is on the rise and is also influenced by the growing digitization in society. • **Exclusion.** More and more people in the Nordic region are excluded from societal communities, including the labor market, the healthcare sector, and other social networks. This poses a challenge as society is built on communities, and exclusion from these structures creates social imbalance. Additionally, many experience a form of digital exclusion, especially minority groups. • **Diminishing cohesion.** A gap has emerged between citizens and society, which is further amplified by the increasing segregation and polarization.	• **Recruitment, retention, and management of Volunteers.** It is challenging to recruit, retain, and manage the volunteers needed, especially considering new volunteer patterns characterized by greater ad-hoc volunteering. Success requires a specific set of skills that not all organizations possess. Additionally, ensuring diversity among volunteers is particularly challenging. • **Organizational challenges.** Many organizations are not equipped to handle the organizational tasks required to find a balance between operations and development. Some organizations face challenges related to governance and collaboration between leadership and the board, while others grapple with issues such as recruitment, internal conflicts, lack of clear priorities, and task overload. • **Lacking civil society collaboration.** The funding structure creates a competitive environment that hinders collaboration and knowledge sharing across various organizations within civil society. • **Risk of purpose drifting.** The constant pursuit of new funding carries the risk of organizations compromising their identity and expertise to satisfy donors. • **Administrative burdens.** Growing administrative tasks pose a burden and a barrier to organizations' work. This negatively affects coordination both internally within organizations and across civil society. Administrative tasks demand significant resources and divert focus from other responsibilities. • **Narrow focus on own organization.** There is a perception that a focus on one's own organization can overshadow addressing the social challenges that are most important for society. • **Challenges with competent policy advocacy.** Effectively influencing policies as a civil society organization is complex, and many organizations feel they lack the skills, impact, and knowledge to better shape the policies being pursued.	• **Unstable funding base for civil society.** The economic foundation supporting civil society's social organizations is overly uncertain. For most, funding comes from a wide array of short-term project funds. This makes it difficult to build robust organizations and results in intense competition among civil society organizations for scarce resources. • **Short-term focus.** Easy 'here-and-now' solutions are prioritized over long-term and preventative measures. This is partly rooted in the political structure, which seems to reward politicians who implement quick fixes. This leads to addressing symptoms and short-term interventions that are more about showcasing action than problem-solving. • **Silo thinking.** Our welfare society consists of numerous specialized entities that excel in solving specific problems. While there are merits to specialization, the solution to most social challenges requires individually tailored interventions that consider the whole person, hindered by silo separation. • **Resource scarcity in the public sector.** Lack of personnel and resource pressures in the public sector complicate the resolution of many social challenges and increase pressure on civil society organizations, often having to act as a buffer when public initiatives fall short. • **Exclusion of civil society from major decision-making.** Civil society possesses significant knowledge and represents many of the target groups in the social sector. Therefore, there are advantages in involving civil society in shaping the future of social policy. Unfortunately, the current situation is such that civil society is rarely genuinely included in the development and formulation of social policy across the Nordic region.

WHAT WERE THE MAIN CONCERNS FOR ICELANDIC ORGANIZATIONS?

Social challenges	Organizational barriers	Structural barriers
• **Discrimination.** As a society, we struggle to include all individuals. We find that societal institutions are often designed to meet the needs of the majority. Many people with special needs or who stand out for social, physical, or linguistic reasons are not properly included. Discrimination also exists in daily life, where certain groups are spoken down to or treated poorly. • **Unjust and insecure economic situation.** Rising economic inequality and high living costs, combined with low wages, result in significant economic challenges for many Icelanders. • **Housing conditions.** There is a significant shortage of affordable or public housing, and the very idea of 'housing' as a right is challenged by increasing marketization and weak regulation. • **Diminishing access to welfare.** Both qualitatively and quantitatively, the solutions provided by the welfare system leave much to be desired. Waiting times are long, and the efforts are insufficient, primarily due to a lack of personnel and funding. Many are also unaware of the services to which they are entitled. • **Marginalization.** Increasingly, opportunities to participate in society are unevenly distributed, both concerning democratic participation and access to fundamental rights and services. • **Mental distress.** More people are developing anxiety and depression, and even more are experiencing mental distress—a trend often intensified by social media. • **Loneliness and Isolation.** Many feel unwanted alone, and isolated from the rest of society, a challenge that particularly affects people in vulnerable positions. • **Diminishing social cohesion.** Our society is undergoing significant social changes, including increasing individualization and polarization, which can challenge social cohesion.	• **Lack of collaboration across civil society.** Civil society organizations find it challenging to collaborate effectively with each other. Often, relationships are marked by competition for limited resources. While a robust platform for internal collaboration existed in the past, it no longer functions as efficiently. • **Insufficient knowledge sharing and transfer.** Often, we lack expertise and capacity, and within our organizations, we are not effective in ensuring that knowledge is anchored, and best practices are passed on. • **Organizational resignation.** At times, our organizations are characterized by resignation and a lack of belief that we can solve the problems. In such situations, we lack counseling and support to counter organizational exhaustion. • **Task _overload._** The workload and the number of projects are excessive. • **Difficulty with volunteer recruitment.** It is challenging to recruit, motivate, and retain volunteers. This also applies to board work. • **Organizational weakness in NGOs.** Often, our organizations are not sufficiently robust in their daily work to also focus on the development of the organizations themselves.	• **Limited preconditions for cross-sector collaboration.** Municipalities and the government are not always focused on the common good. Instead of solving problems, they are characterized by silo thinking and primarily focus on their own narrow interests. Additionally, collaboration between different parts of the public administration is lacking. • **Insufficient funding.** Civil society's social organizations suffer from a lack of stable funding. Instead, the economic foundation of organizations consists of a variety of smaller and short-term funds. This makes it difficult to establish robust organizations and leads to competition between organizations for the available funds. • **Lack of long-term perspective.** The long-term view is missing. Instead, politicians focus on the next election, hindering predictability and the implementation of the long-lasting, preventive, and sustained efforts needed. • **Weak institutions.** Many of our key societal institutions are not very strong. This includes the education system, which fails to address students' social backgrounds. It applies to the media, which cannot hold politicians accountable, and to the public administration, which is complex and bureaucratic. • **Political accountability evasion.** The political system does not take responsibility for its decisions, and much of the policy never evolves beyond words in an agreement document. • **Lack of recognition of the civil society's role.** The central role and extensive knowledge of civil society are not recognized. This is evident in the lack of involvement in policy development, support for our activities, and in collaborative relationships with the public welfare system. Despite often serving as a buffer for a public system that is not adept at assisting people in vulnerable positions.

WHAT WERE THE MAIN CONCERNS FOR NORWEGIAN ORGANIZATIONS?

Social challenges	Organizational barriers	Structural barriers
• **Discrimination.** Xenophobia and racism hinder societal cohesion and lead to minority stress and lack of inclusion. Moreover, several minority groups experience exclusion from society due to their background, for instance, through limited or challenging access to healthcare. • **Insecurity.** Lack of safety and security hampers opportunities for democratic participation. The challenge is particularly significant for minority groups. • **Loneliness.** Many often feel unwanted alone. The challenge is widespread across all age groups. • **Mental Distress.** Mental health is a great issue, especially among children, youth, the elderly, and refugees. These groups have experienced an increase in mental distress. • **Exclusion.** Many experience a lack of access to the communities that make up our society. This includes the labor market, housing market, education sector, and within democracy. Additionally, many also experience digital exclusion. The challenge is particularly pronounced for minorities. • **Inequality of Opportunities.** Your background determines your opportunities. Gender, sexuality, language, ethnicity, and socio-economic background have far too much influence today on how well you do and what opportunities you have. It is especially clear that many grow up in poverty, leading to significant limitations in their opportunities to create a good life.	• **Funds with expiration dates.** Short-term funding and a lack of operational funds create uncertainty for individual organizations and foster competition within civil society. This also entails a risk that, in the pursuit of funds, individual organizations may forget why and for whom they exist. • **Administrative burdens.** Reporting requirements consume many resources and divert energy from other (more important) tasks. • **Resistance to change.** It is not always easy to adapt one's organization, even though it is often necessary to secure funding, test new initiatives, or reach a broader audience. Unfortunately, we are often hindered by a lack of diversity in leadership. • **Challenges in volunteer recruitment.** New forms of volunteering can complicate the recruitment and retention of volunteers. Several volunteers 'shop around' and are only briefly involved in the same place. Additionally, being a volunteer is often demanding, especially in organizations for minorities, leading to trends of 'paid volunteering'. • **Lack of capacity.** We lack staff and volunteers with the right skills, and therefore, cannot meet all the needs in society. • **Organizational vulnerability.** A declining membership base, a heavy administration, combined with often dispersed focus and long distances between different levels in the organization, create vulnerability and hinder maneuverability. • **Inequality in welfare task fulfillment.** Competition with other types of actors is not always fair.	• **Financing.** Lack of funding and predictable framework conditions make the work of civil society organizations challenging. • **Collaboration difficulties.** Cross-sector collaboration is not satisfactory. This applies both to the public sector, where bureaucracy and silo thinking often hinder efficiency, and within civil society, where internal competition is too prominent. Additionally, there is often a significant gap between authorities and civil society, which can be challenging to overcome. • **Lack of social mobility.** Your background largely determines your opportunities. Wealth and poverty are inherited, and the institutions meant to break the cycle of social inheritance, such as schools, are not robust enough to succeed. • **Inappropriate political structures.** Decisions are often made without considering the long-term consequences and without considering the perspectives of the citizens affected by them. Moreover, decisions often lead to standardized solutions that do not consider individual circumstances. • **Inequality in access to welfare.** Not everyone has equal access to societal welfare services. Factors such as geography, age, digital readiness, and others determine access to and the quality of the welfare services an individual receives. • **Lack of recognition of the role of civil society.** There is a lack of recognition and understanding of the role of civil society and the task it performs in society.

WHAT WERE THE MAIN CONCERNS FOR ORGANIZATIONS ON ÅLAND?

Social challenges	Organizational barriers	Structural barriers
• **Loneliness.** We observe that loneliness constitutes a significant problem, and many people, regardless of age, struggle with the feeling of being unwanted alone. • **Stigma associated with mental illness.** It is a significant challenge that negative prejudices exist against people with mental disorders. • **Unequal access.** Not all Ålanders have equal access to public services or the opportunity to get the help that suits them. It can be particularly challenging for individuals with special needs to receive the right support. • **Challenges of integration as newcomers.** In Åland, we have strong local communities that mean a lot for daily life and society. Unfortunately, it is not always easy to enter and become part of these communities if you are a newcomer in Åland. This means that new Ålanders often face challenges in finding employment, gaining political influence, and building social relationships. • **Difficulty for young people to access communities on their terms.** It is often challenging to find youth communities where the young people themselves set the terms. This creates challenges for a good youth life in Åland. • **Lack of accessibility.** Getting around Åland can be difficult; for example, public transportation is not sufficiently adapted to existing needs. This poses a particular challenge for individuals with disabilities or other special needs.	• **Challenges in engaging our citizens.** We often find it challenging to engage the people needed, both in terms of involving individuals in volunteer work and encouraging them to take on leadership roles. • **Lack of influence on policy development and formulation.** We lack the influence on policy development and formulation that our knowledge and legitimacy justify. Often, we feel that politicians merely listen to us to be able to say they have listened without actually making any changes. • **Focus on the organization – not the society.** There is a risk that as organizations, we forget to consider the overall well-being of the entire Åland society and instead focus too much on our own cause or target group. As organizations, we should be better at collaborating, remembering the bigger picture, and collectively deciding on the societal challenges that are most important to address. • **Difficulty in obtaining funding as a new organization.** In Åland, most older organizations are well-positioned, thanks to the "PAF funds." Unfortunately, it can be very challenging for a new organization to secure a share of the pie.	• **Silo thinking.** At times, the public system in Åland is characterized by silo thinking, where the whole person is not considered. This can result in services not being tailored to individuals, and people with different needs often receive the same assistance. • **Person-dependency.** Occasionally, the assistance, support, or service provided by the public sector can depend heavily on the individual assigning it, rather than, as it should, persons needs in the situation. • **Tight municipal budgets.** Tight budgets in municipalities mean that not everyone receives the help and support they need. • **Lack of focus on people with reduced work capacity.** Åland lacks a unit that can assist individuals in employment who cannot be employed on regular terms, for example, because they do not have full work capacity.

WHAT WERE THE MAIN CONCERNS FOR FINNISH ORGANIZATIONS?

Social challenges	Organizational barriers	Structural barriers
• **Mistrust and fluctuating social cohesion.** We observe a shift towards increased polarization, segregation, and marginalization. Apathy, hopelessness, and mistrust threaten minority rights (trust in others), social cohesion (trust in society and its institutions), and participation (trust in one's own opportunities and rights). • **Inequality of opportunities.** We experience that the differences in our society are growing, and an increasing number of citizens, due to factors such as economics, health, sexual orientation, or digital skills, have fewer opportunities or are directly excluded. • **Mental well-being.** Mental health is in crisis, affecting many societal and age groups, but particularly impacting young people, the elderly, and citizens in vulnerable positions. • **Loneliness.** Isolation and loneliness are significant social challenges in contemporary Finland, and the issue has grown in scope in recent years, particularly due to the pandemic.	• **Poor workplace image and high requirements.** The civil society sector is not considered an attractive and modern workplace. Simultaneously, there are unrealistically high expectations for employees' skills. • **Locked-in ideas hindering change.** Various entrenched notions and a lack of critical perspectives on one's own organization often hinder necessary renewal. • **Renewal vs. operations.** We experience that the pressure for constant renewal challenges operations, creates uncertainty, and requires significant resources. • **Lack of understanding for volunteering.** New trends in volunteering challenge our way of working. Likewise, there are often unclear or unrealistic expectations regarding what volunteers should be able to do and what it should cost. • **Clannish environment.** Too many individuals wear multiple hats. The close political relationships create a clannish environment where personal factors dominate. • **Lack of linguistic accessibility.** It is not always easy to navigate as a linguistic minority, especially for double minorities. • **Overlap and internal competition.** Within organizations, we compete for funds, target groups, and attention. Prominent personalities define individual organizations, and instead of seeking synergy, they compete against each other. • **Administrative burdens.** Many projects with extensive and diverse reporting requirements increase administrative burdens. • **Unclear strategy.** We experience that there are at times unclear strategic goals and a lack of consensus on what one wants to achieve with their organization.	• **Changed media landscape.** Changes in the media landscape with fake news, misinformation, and internationalization contribute to society's segregation and mistrust. • **Political structure.** The four-year election cycles create a breeding facilitation for short-term political solutions. In addition, cooperation between us and the public sector is sometimes poor and bureaucratic, lacking common long-term goals. • **Challenges to the welfare state.** We experience significant issues with the welfare state. Firstly, there is a lack of resources and personnel to address tasks. Secondly, the public sector sometimes operates from a system perspective with bureaucratic and slow processes, where services do not always meet citizens' needs. Moreover, the long-term perspective is often absent. Instead, welfare is often viewed as a burden rather than an investment, as it should be. • **Uncertainty about the role of civil society.** Without a public discussion about the role and significance of civil society, the sector's value becomes unclear. This vulnerability makes the sector vulnerable to populist decisions, and funding consequently becomes uncertain. • **Norm shift.** With a new conservative flourishment, new values influenced by moralism, discrimination, anti-gender movements, etc., have emerged in society. This has negative consequences for political support and, therefore, the funding of the sector. • **Funding.** Uncertainty about the funding of civil society creates uncertainty about the future. The sector is pressured to be judged based on impact measurement and change-theoretical indicators. • **Geography.** Finland is a large country with long distances on the outskirts of Europe, hindering the possibilities for the work of civil society.

WHAT WERE THE MAIN CONCERNS FOR SWEDISH ORGANIZATIONS?

Social challenges	Organizational barriers	Structural barriers
Discrimination and eroding cohesion. Racism and segregation harm cohesion, leading to a growing mistrust of important societal institutions. Some minority groups feel unrepresented or mistreated. **Loneliness.** Many often feel alone, including unemployed and uneducated youth. It is a significant challenge due to geographical factors, social isolation, and digitization, resulting in declining cohesion, substance abuse, and suicide. **Poverty.** Increasing economic inequality and a growing proportion of poor children and young people increase vulnerability and lead to worse health and fewer opportunities. **Homelessness.** Too many young people end up homeless. **Hopelessness.** Particularly among the youth, a lack of belief in the future is growing. Instead, there is resignation and frustration. **Crime.** The growing prevalence of gangs and crime creates insecurity in society and for individuals. More children are recruited and deprived of their childhood for a life marked by insecurity, abuse, violence, shootings, etc. **Mental Distress.** Mental health is an issue among both the young and the elderly. It is a complex challenge, and many getting a proper treatment. Ultimately, it can result in loneliness, substance abuse, increased mortality, suicide, stigmatization, and social isolation. **Outside the community.** Many feel excluded from society's communities, whether it be in the job market, the education sector, the health sector, and/or social communities. Digital development also leads to a new form of exclusion in the form of digital exclusion.	**Poor organization.** At times, our organizations are characterized by internal conflicts, competition, and a lack of decision-making ability. This makes it difficult to deliver on our mission. **High task complexity.** Leading complex tasks with high documentation requirements is demanding. This also applies to advocacy, which requires both political know-how and specialized knowledge of complex issues. **Welfare state's emergency room.** There is a widespread expectation that we can step in during emergency situations. The challenge may be that as organizations, we lose the long-term perspective on change. **Funding.** Short-term funding and a lack of operational funds create uncertainty for our organizations and foster competition across the civil society. This also poses a risk our organizations may forget the true mission in an attempt to satisfy their donors. **Renewal vs. operations.** We often experience that the operations of our organizations suffer under a constant demand for renewal, which requires many resources to meet and reduces predictability. **Lack of collaboration across civil society.** Our organizations often prioritize their own interests and forget the consideration and responsibility for society. **Work environment.** The work environment suffers from a shortage of qualified staff for the tasks at hand. There are problems with management and leadership, as well as with the overall work environment. **Visibility.** In organizations, we do not always present ourselves with pride, which also affects our visibility to our target audiences.	**Lack of knowledge and inclusion.** At times, we experience a lack of understanding and awareness from the public sector regarding the role and function of civil society. This damages our legitimacy and means that we are not always taken seriously as advocates and partners. **Digitization.** Society is characterized by increasing digitization, where systems are sometimes prioritized over the individual. This creates increased (digital) exclusion. **Norm shift.** There is a trend of increasing polarization, racism, segregation, and political shifts. The perception of individuals changes, moving away from a resource-based view of each person. **Ineffective and incorrect policies.** In several areas, as a society, we fail to address existing inequality. This is especially true in the field of education, and much of it is due to pursuing the wrong policies. **Project management and short-term focus.** Society's efforts toward the most vulnerable are often characterized by a project-oriented approach, prioritizing short-term and temporary solutions over long-term and preventive initiatives. **Challenging cross-sector collaboration.** Collaboration between civil society and the public sector, as well as internal collaboration within the public sector, is not always optimal. Improvement requires changes in legislation, for example, regarding the Individual Occupational Plan (IOP), and a different approach to collaboration from both sides. **Organization of the welfare state.** The welfare state is organized in silos, making it difficult to have a holistic view of the individual. This creates unclear responsibilities with organizational gaps and a lack of coordination. Centralization of authorities reinforces this and hampers the possibility of individually tailored solutions. Civil society struggles to contribute to the solution, partly due to the fear of cuts in the public sectors.

WHAT WERE THE MAIN CINCERNS FOR THE DANISH ORGANIZATIONS?

Social challenges	Organizational barriers	Structural barriers
• **Loneliness.** Many people often feel alone and excluded from participating in communities. The challenge is significant and exists across all age groups and societal strata, but it is particularly pronounced for those outside employment, newcomers, and among the youth. The phenomenon is hindered by the taboo surrounding it and the individualization of social problems. • **Distrust.** There is a growing trust gap between citizens and society. Many simply mistrust the system. This is related, in part, to increasing segregation and polarization, where there is a more negative focus on people with problems rather than addressing the root causes. • **Mental well-being.** Mental well-being is declining, and there is a general issue with mental health. This applies to various age groups and is observed both within the so-called normal range and among those who already struggle with mental illness. Prevention is lacking in the efforts to combat this. • **Inequality of opportunities.** Your background determines your opportunities to an extent that is too high. Disability, health profile, gender, sexuality, language, ethnicity, geography, and socio-economic background exert too much influence on how well you do and what opportunities you have. Many also experience being left behind due to the digital development, which not everyone has equal capabilities to navigate. • **Multiplicity and accumulation.** It is seen as a distinct challenge that social and health issues often exist in combinations. In connection with long-term effects and accumulation, it makes it difficult to receive the right help in a silo-thinking system.	• **Governance issues.** There is a lack of knowledge and expertise regarding governance, board responsibilities, working with daily management, etc. Board work is sometimes influenced by self-interest, and there is a lack of skills in association-democracy. • **Lack of skills to recruit and lead volunteers.** It is challenging to lead, recruit, and ensure the commitment of volunteers. Competencies are lacking, and it is difficult and costly to organize and support long-term engagements. The organizational capacity is too small to handle the conflicts and the need for competence development that come with volunteers, making our organizations and efforts vulnerable. • **Lack of collaboration across civil society.** The collaborative environment in civil society is characterized by internal competition for the same resources, partners, and visibility. Being self-centered comes before sharing knowledge and efforts, even with actors from other sectors. • **High employee turnover and internal competition.** In organizations influenced by project economics, there is often high employee turnover and harmful internal competition between them. High employee turnover also complicates the anchoring of expertise. • **Recruitment and diversity.** It is difficult to recruit employees with the right skills for specific duties, and there is an additional challenge in ensuring diversity in that process. Often, the people we work for—and their perspectives—are underrepresented in our organizations. • **Weakened innovation due to lack of documentation and self-reflection.** When target groups and knowledge about them are not more extensively involved, it becomes challenging to develop the right interventions. This hinders systematic work with knowledge and documentation, which is necessary to promote innovation.	• **Challenged cross-sector collaboration.** Collaboration is at times characterized by shortsightedness and a lack of established frameworks. There is a lack of familiarity with each other and a stance on civil society as a welfare provider. Civil society is viewed both as free labor and as part of a market and supply regime, and the collaborations between organizations and authorities are often very different. • **System before human.** The problems and positions of individuals often have to fit into the logics of the system. This rarely works and creates mistrust. • **Organization of the welfare society.** When society is organized into silos and cannot communicate or collaborate across, it affects the holistic effort for individuals. This silo thinking hinders knowledge sharing and instead creates difficult transitions and gaps for the individual citizen. It also makes it challenging to measure effectiveness and thus understand the impact of interventions. Many resources are wasted on duplicative work—reinventing the same wheel repeatedly. • **Lack of core funding.** Lack of stable funding is a fundamental barrier, challenging our ability to work long-term and negatively impacting the resilience of individual organizations. • **Involvement in policy development.** When organizations lack the necessary expertise to contribute to policy development, it becomes harder to convey knowledge to the political system, where there is otherwise a significant need to involve civil society. • **No incentive for prevention.** The focus is on fixing things, when they have already gone wrong instead of preventing it.

WHAT WERE THE MAIN CONCERNS FOR THE ORGANIZATIONS ON GREENLAND?

Social challenges	Organizational barriers	Structural barriers
• **Suicide**. The suicide rate in Greenland remains unacceptably high. • **Sexual abuse**. Too many children experience sexual abuse. • **Discrimination against minorities**. In a society marked by vast distances, low population density, and small communities, it is challenging to be a minority. One is often one of very few, perhaps even the only one. This applies to disability, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, etc. Accessibility to relevant support, aids, and resources from both the public and civil society is lacking. • **Loneliness and mental distress**. More and more people experience unwanted loneliness. Mental distress is on the rise, and there is a general issue with mental health. Waiting times for assessment are long, and case handling is inadequate. The infrastructure is poor and insufficient, and specialized assistance is only available in Denmark.	• **Colonial relations: culture, language, and power.** The relationship between Greenland and Denmark is an internal part of our organizations. There are cultural and linguistic barriers, creating unequal power dynamics. For example, the awareness of colonial relations can make Danish speakers cautious, and well-educated Danish-speaking professionals may lack relationships in, and understanding of, Greenlandic society. • **Geography.** Our work in organizations is limited by the long physical distances (including to Denmark), and online work is hindered by expensive and poor digital infrastructure. • **Lack of qualified workforce.** It is challenging for us in civil society to recruit and retain personnel and volunteers with the right skills. The challenge with sustained workforce is particularly evident in the high turnover of arriving Danish speakers. • **Economic barriers.** There are few and hard-to-access funding opportunities, and public support is severely limited. This means there is also a lack of courage to venture into establishing activities in the social sector. • **Practical barriers.** Administrative burdens, such as opening bank accounts, obtaining criminal record checks, and registrations, are thought of as demotivating.	• **Political decision-making and implementation of legislation** can be lengthy and challenging, and often the implementation is quite inadequate. There is a lack of meaningful inclusion of the civil society both in decision-making and implementation. • **The colonial relationship creates difficult conditions**, including prejudices, language barriers, and a lack of persistent, qualified workforce that understands and has an established network in Greenland. This challenge is not only present in civil society but also in the public sector, where there is significant employee turnover. • **Geography and poor infrastructure pose challenges**, with large distances in Greenland, and internet and telephony being very expensive. • **Financing is a significant issue,** with a pronounced lack of resources and interest in civil society in Greenland. There is a perception that very few in Denmark are interested in supporting activities and organizations in Greenland. Traditional fundraising through collaboration with major foundations in Denmark is not possible, and there is no equivalent in Greenland.