

Taking part and contacting us:

If you would like to take part in any or all of these sessions please contact us on:

Email: northernlights@demoss.co.uk

Or call us on: +44(0)20 7367 6340

Please consult <http://www.demoss.co.uk/events/northernlights> for more information and regularly updated details of each session.

DEMOS

THE
FINNISH
INSTITUTE

 **BRITISH COUNCIL**
Finland

September/October 2006

The arts as a source of innovation and well-being

Arts and cultural activities are crucial to the social fabric of our lives. As such they are intimately connected to the creativity and openness of mind required for social innovation, integral to our sense of well-being and instrumental to our capacity to 'grow' innovative practices and ideas across our societies. Nordic countries have long recognised the potential of the arts as a force for social innovation, as an instrument for social change and as a way toward the development of the whole person. As a result, Nordic countries have developed flagship arts education programmes and invested heavily in the arts. Given our renewed emphasis in the UK on educating the whole child and developing well-adjusted, creative individuals, the series will sponsor two separate events on the link between education, innovation and the arts and what bright ideas we might take from our Nordic neighbours.

November 2006

Public services reform

November's seminar will look at the welfare state and changing welfare policy in Nordic countries and the UK.

Nordic countries face the long-term challenge of how to maintain the core of their welfare systems in the face of a variety of internal and external pressures. As the population ages, demands for improved and more specialised healthcare are growing. Public services more generally need to be improved in response to changing patterns of wealth and new technologies. Tighter integration within the EU and globalisation in the broader sense make it more difficult to maintain the high tax rates necessary to fund the region's ambitious public service programmes. In addition, issues of migration, nationality and multiculturalism must be addressed in relation to the welfare economy.

While maintaining the welfare system is certainly possible, it will require policy reforms. The nature of these reforms, their impact on the current situation in the Nordic countries and possible comparisons with the reform agenda in the UK, will be addressed at the seminar.

1st December 2006

Social innovation and well-being

This final seminar will mark the end of an 18 month collaborative project between SITRA (the Finnish national innovation agency), Demos and Demos Finland. As well as serving as the basis for a report on social innovation and well-being, the seminar will also celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Finnish Institute in London.

Well-being is a word often associated with life in the Nordic countries. 90% of the Finnish population describes itself as very happy or quite happy, while in Sweden the number rises to 93.6%. Good public services and generous benefits naturally influence the overall well-being of the region, but what else is there in the Nordic life that contributes to such high levels of contentedness? How can these levels best be sustained in light of an increasingly diverse population as well as increasingly differentiated conceptions of happiness and well-being?

From June to December 2006

Northern Lights

Invitation to a seminar series to discuss social innovation and explore the secrets of the Nordic Model

The 'Nordic model' of development and social innovation has once again been the subject of much debate within Europe—the combination of steady growth and innovative industries coupled with generous measures of social protection are models for the rest of the world. Nordic economies seem to produce societies better equipped to deal with the challenges ahead and key political figures all over Europe are therefore once again looking to the Nordic model for solutions.

Exchange and dialogue are the basis for this proposed series of exploratory seminars. In response to the ongoing discussion surrounding the Nordic model, in an attempt to learn more about its potential benefits for UK policy, as well as an arena for policy exchange, Demos will run a series of seminars beginning in April 2006, under the banner title '*Northern Lights*'.

The series will address policy questions relevant to both the Nordic countries and the UK, and will be structured as an exchange of ideas between key policy-makers, opinion formers and academics from both Britain and Nordic countries.

The events cover issues that range from musical education, to parenting practices, from urban development to welfare reform. The diversity of themes is designed to highlight the intricate interdependence between creativity, innovation and policy reform as well as between individual and collective well-being.

June 2006

Northern Lights 2020: The Future of Northern European Cities

What kind of places do Europe's Northern cities want to be as they look forward to 2020? Can they tell a distinctive story of optimism, inclusiveness and imagination? Glasgow is often pulled south to Edinburgh, Manchester and London by comparison, competition or control. But what if Glasgow chose to look north and east instead? Might its Nordic neighbours such as Gothenburg, Helsinki and Oslo provide a better 'urban peer group' for Glasgow to exchange ideas, learn and collaborate? Glasgow holds much in common with many of these 'northern lights': as port cities with a strong manufacturing heritage, undergoing rapid economic restructuring and a shift to knowledge-based enterprises; as cities experiencing increased migration and social diversity and searching for new approaches to public service innovation.

This day long symposium will be held in Glasgow and will bring together representatives of Scandinavian and Nordic cities to explore whether they have a common future as Northern European cities.

July 2006

Parenting and families: 21st century households

Building on the UK's renewed emphasis on the role of parenting and families in creating a tolerant, discerning and educated public sphere, Demos has been carrying out research on household typologies and parenting. To create a level playing field, the UK faces very real structural, institutional and cultural challenges.

Nordic countries have notoriously privileged this arena: generous paid parental leave and free, high-quality childcare for all has promoted the role of women in the workplace and is seen as one of the major vehicles for societal development. This event will bring together UK and Nordic policy advocates and analysts in an effort to highlight the shared and divergent modes in which family life is organized and parenting supported.

September 2006

The New North: multiculturalism and diversity

Immigration to the Nordic countries has grown rapidly over the last decade. In Sweden immigrant and refugee families account for nearly 20% of the 9 million strong population; Finnish immigration figures have trebled since the early 1990s; while Denmark demonstrates similar trends, despite having introduced tightened immigration laws in a controversial bill in 2002. The ability of the Nordic countries to deal with diversity is a huge challenge to the system, and to society as a whole. The question as to how to integrate minorities and migrants, especially unskilled workers at times of economic difficulty, combined with the dangerous growth of far right parties in Europe makes this challenge a very real one. Nordic countries have to date served as a model of social policy to other European nations, their ability to deal with this new challenge will be tested over the next decade and beyond.

While the UK faces similar challenges, it has historically been confronted with issues of diversity, and the UK's multicultural policy as well as its tradition of tolerance and integration, make it an obvious place to look when seeking innovative policy ideas in the field of diversity and ethnic management.