The National Science Week in Norway

The National Science Week in Norway (Forskningsdagene) is a nationwide event held every year to make science and research available to the public. Research and knowledge institutions throughout Norway have an opportunity to participate and provide the general public with new insight into what they do.

Forskningsdagene is designed to:

People of all ages can learn about and experience science through a multitude of different events, many of which are held at venues that today bear little resemblance to the traditional lecture hall with its podium and blackboard. Events range from science expo's, demonstrations, lectures, "stand-up scientist" performances, exhibits and discussions, to tours, information stands, and cultural and hands-on activities. Nearly all Forskningsdagene events are available to the public free of charge.

The Research Council of Norway took the initiative to organise Norway's first Forskningsdagene in 1995. Since then, the festival has emerged as the nation's foremost arena for publicly targeted information about science and research activities, with events taking place at locations throughout the entire country. Each year, the festival offers around 450 events hosted by local organizers in 160 towns and villages all over the country. Forskningsdagene is significant in size, geographical spread and scientific scope, not least seen in relation to Norway's population of 5,4 million people.

Organisation - the national administration of the festival

Forskningsdagene is organised as a project administered by a secretariat under the Research Council of Norway. The secretariat is responsible for linking the many regional events together into a unified national festival. This involves marketing activities in a variety of channels, development of a common visual profile, and activities vis-à-vis the media. The secretariat is responsible for the update and maintenance of the Forskningsdagene website and provides a variety of services to those hosting events, including evaluation. The secretariat is also in charge of events organiser recruitment and networking activities.

Event organisers

Each local organiser is responsible for the content of its respective events. Organisers include institutions of higher education, research institutes, representatives of trade and industry, municipalities, museums, libraries, professional associations and other private and public institutions. Each organiser is free to decide how to present its organisation and activities, and each is responsible for planning, financing and marketing its own events.

Organisations and institutions are motivated to take part in Forskningsdagene for a wide variety of reasons. Participation offers them many benefits, including the opportunity to:

▪ convey knowledge and significant research findings;
▪ promote the recruitment of children and young people into fields relevant to the institution involved - both long and short-term;
▪ promote understanding for the important role of research in social development and to focus attention on the need for greater investment in research activity;
▪ profile the individual institution locally or nationally;
▪ focus attention on specific problems and theoretical approaches;
▪ help build alliances and enhance innovative thinking in local communities.

Many participating institutions have the festival as an important and established part of their science communication to the public.

Forskningsrådet

International representation

Forskningsdagene is a member of EUSEA, the European Science Engagement Association established to promote science-related events in Europe. EUSEA encourages and assists its members in exchanging experiences of best practise in science communication; in exchanging events, lecturers and exhibitions; in communicating across borders and in securing better financing for science events in Europe.

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