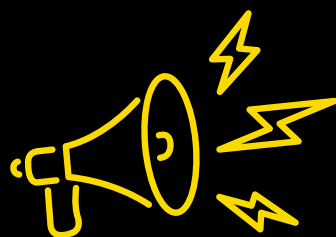


YOU 23

YRKES OG
UTDANNINGSMESSA
HITRA OG FRØYA



Guideline

Organizing an Engaging
Vocational and Education
Exhibition Trade Fair

D10.4 Vocational and
Education Exhibition Trade Fair



 **bridges**
COLLABORATION



This document will give a short and concrete overview of how Blått Kompetansesenter organized a Vocational and Education Exhibition Trade Fair, along with tips on how you can do the same.

A trade fair can be of great importance to youth- or people looking to upskill or reskill- who are looking for inspiration on education and career choice. A trade fair can also be a good showcase on what schools and workplaces have to offer future students/workers, as well as be an effective marketing platform for the schools and workplaces involved. Any school, business and/or stateowned enterprise will give added value to their region due to the mobilization and recruitment possibilities such an activity brings to exhibitors and organizers.

In this document we will describe

- Who was involved in the creation of the fair and the different roles they had
- How to plan and implement a Vocational and Education Exhibition Trade Fair, as well as best practices
- How to engage fair-goers more effectively

Examples given for this document are from the Vocational and Education Exhibition Trade Fair at Hitra and Frøya, Norway organized in 2023.

What is a Vocational and Education Exhibition Trade Fair:

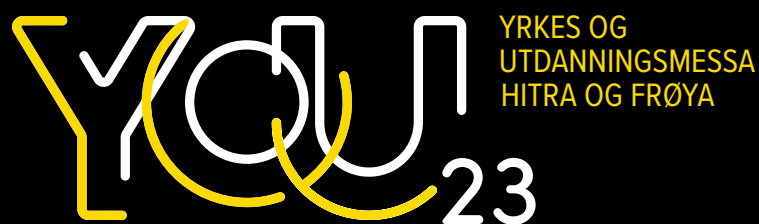
A joint fair where upper secondary schools, secondary schools, universities and the business world meet.

Upper secondary schools invite secondary school students to a joint fair.

Both education and career paths are presented here. Fair-goers get to meet other students, teachers and the local business community.

The fair aims to help young people choose an education and career path that is right for them through showing opportunities and diversity within the fields of education, combined with the business world and their current and future skill needs.





YOU – Vocational and Education Exhibition Trade Fair for Hitra and Frøya

The trade fair (Yrkes- og Utdanningsmesse or “YOU”) is organized every year by the innovation company Blue Competence Center/Blått Kompetansesenter in the island region of the municipalities of Hitra and Frøya. The fair is held alternatively at Hitra and Frøya, to be as representative as possible to the involved municipalities.

With the help and support from the EU and the Bridges project, Blått Kompetansesenter organized the “YOU” Vocational and Education Exhibition Trade Fair for Hitra and Frøya on behalf of Guri Kunna upper secondary school, which wants to increase recruitment to the school.

All 9th and 10th graders from the regions of Hitra and Frøya arrived to the fair, held in Hitrahallen at Hitra for the year of 2023. A total of 8 fields of study on offer at Guri Kunna were presented by upper secondary students and teachers. The fair was divided up into categories based on these fields of study and all stands were placed into the area of most relevance.

There were over 40 stands in total: a university, several training offices and over 30 companies from a vast array of industries were represented at the fair.

Ahead of the fair, a digital workshop was organized with the students, to prepare them for what to expect, as well as what they should think about and ask about at the fair.

A digital catalogue was also produced in which both schools and businesses that are exhibiting at the fair are represented.

The fair was divided according to the subject areas of Guri Kunna. Each subject area had its own stand from Guri Kunna. The companies were matched based on which field of study they were experts in. All professional fields included several companies.

Lots of activities were planned, with the hope that the fair-goers would be able to try out tasks and test for themselves what the different career paths entail. Fair-goers could try everything from first aid, connecting electricity, splicing ropes, using dental drills and much more.

Lectures were held on the stage available in the main hall. Representatives from exhibiting companies and from different disciplines presented what it was like to work/study for them, and what a working/study day looked like.

Participating pupils were given reward charts ahead of the fair: each subject area had its own reward chart, and if the students tried activities from all subject areas they qualified for a goody bag at the end of the day. This is a motivation tactic to encourage the pupils in broadening their horizons and to try out new things they might not have considered before.

The students were transported by bus to and from the fair and were served lunch during the event.

An open fair was also held at the end of the day, where parents and jobseekers could visit, with or without their children.

Organizers, roles and tasks

This is an example of how organizer roles are set up for the Vocational and Education Exhibition Trade Fair of Hitra and Frøya. Whoever is considering organizing their own Vocational and Education Exhibition Trade Fair in their region need to consider their unique financial and strategic context: a school might be able to apply for funding from the state or private donors and have enough allocated human resources to cover time and costs on their own. Perhaps several schools and/or companies can collaborate to realize a Vocational and Education Exhibition Trade Fair in their community for effective resource and risk management. Similar results can be achieved in several different ways.

Main organizer

bks | Blått
Kompetansesenter

- Project coordinator
- Venue and supplier contact and payment
- Attracting sponsorships
- Stand sales
- Programming
- Stand consultation
- Activity consultants and coordinators
- Graphic design and marketing material production
- Digital catalogue production
- Ninth and tenth grader preparatory workshop coordinator
- Ad space purchase, marketing and PR
- Gathering sponsorships

Project owner



Guri Kunna
videregående skole

- Project owner
- Veto rights
- Transportation support for ninth and tenth graders in the region
- Use of school premises where applicable
- Use of school students as fair facilitators where applicable



Guri Kunna videregående skole

2 d · 🌐

Mange ungdommer innom oss på messe i dag! 🍷
Minner om at messa er åpen helt fram til kl 18.00 i kveld -
Stikk innom!

Studiespesialisering har åpen skole, skolested Hitra.
Kom innom og få informasjon, prøv aktiviteter, slå av en
prat mens du nyter Marivics nystekte vafler 🍪 (kl 15-18)



Blått Kompetansesenter

2 d · 🌐

Yrkes- og utdanningsmesse med [Guri Kunna videregående skole](#)
Mellom kl. 15 og 18 er det åpent for alle; forel... Se mer

Working group

A working group was set up to represent Guri Kunna, the secondary schools and the representatives for the local business world (the business associations in Hitra and Frøya). Here a clarification of expectations was set.

Setting expectations and goals

- The secondary schools wanted a good overview for fair-goers, making it easier to choose an education path, as well as give an increased understanding of what both exhibiting education and career paths entail.
- Guri Kunna wanted increased recruitment for their fields of study, with an emphasis on construction and electrical studies for the year of 2023.
- Business representatives wanted the fair to represent the diversity and opportunities at their regional companies, with the desire to influence the choice of education for young people so as to secure local companies' future workforce. In other words, company representatives need early recruitment.

Status reports and feedback meetings were held regularly throughout the preparation phase.

Roles

- Mobilization of schools and companies in their network
- Coordinating teacher, student and parent mobilization



Financing



Funds for implementation given in order based on size:

- For the year of 2023, the BRIDGES project supported Blått Kompetansesenter work-hours spent on planning and implementing the fair, as well as the consultation to exhibitors on how to engage the audience more efficiently and memorably
- Sponsorship funds from businesses
- Income from the sale of stand spaces to businesses
- Covers stand area, lunch and power connection
- Guri Kunna partially funded the fair in 2023

The business sector paid a fixed price for their exhibition fee based on the size of the company. All stands were the same size. This was done to ensure equal visibility and inclusivity for all industries and companies, no matter how big or small.

Sponsorship agreements are set to a 3-year contract so as to reuse marketing materials for expenditure efficiency and to avoid annual work-hours on obtaining sponsorship funds.

Based on the experience from this event, Blått Kompetansesenter sees that it should be possible to hold future trade fairs based solely on stand sales and sponsorship funds. This should be possible, even with the up-scaled event that YOU as evolved into throughout the years.

Expenses in connection with implementation:

- Planning and organization (work hours)
- Registration forms, invitations, sales and presentation meetings
- Venue rentals + their own crew for up-rigging and down-rigging of venue setup
- Workshop with the students ahead of the fair (this was carried out digitally for financial reasons, considering the scattered location of schools in the island regions of Hitra and Frøya and long journeys)
- Marketing
 - Digital catalogue
 - Design and development of advertisements and marketing materials
 - Advertising budget
 - Production of marketing materials (much of this is reused on a 3-year basis)
- Expenses for lunch for fair-going students, exhibitors and organisers
- Transport students to and from the fair
- Evaluation for establishing best practices
- Up-rigging and down-rigging
- Hosting and facilitation on the day of the fair



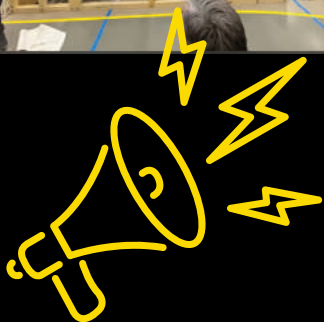
Bygg og

Extra focus on construction and electrical studies in 2023

Goals on which fields of study the fair should highlight from year to year may vary depending on the number of applicants Guri Kunna receives. Guri Kunna has been seeing a steady, negative trend of applicants to their construction and electrical studies up to 2023, thus it was decided to allocate special attention to these career paths.

This was solved by combining several measures:

- Placing the relevant professional field with companies and schools close to the stage area where a lot of attention was drawn to throughout the day.
- A larger joint event was held where the students competed in building a bridge from a construction kit. This created a lot of engagement and was an activity that the young fair-goers really appreciated. It was also noticed by the press and mentioned in local articles covering YOU. In order to achieve this activity, Blått Kompetansesenter collaborated with the local training office, which has experience in carrying out such activities and was the owner of the construction kit.
- Extra focus on the subject area during the lectures presented on stage.



Central Concepts

Blått Kompetansesenter worked a lot with helping schools and companies realize tailor-made, practical, relevant and unique activities at each stand. Learning through "hands on" tasks was central to each stand activity. It was also important that the activity not require large investments and that they should include what was a natural part of the exhibitor's everyday work/study day. This resulted in a very active and creative fair, where the young fair-goers had a great time and got to try lots of different tasks from different career and study paths, as well as gaining a better understanding of them.

To encourage the ninth and tenth graders participating in the fair to try a variety of activities, Blått Kompetansesenter developed the reward chart. These encouraged the pupils to visit at least one stand from all subject categories and in that way introduce the young fair-goers to potentially new and previously unknown interest. Completing the reward chart qualifies the student to a goody bag. This was filled with snapbacks, snacks, buffs, bottles, reflective paraphernalia to be seen in traffic, bags etc. donated from the companies that were exhibiting at the fair. This is synergistically a good way for companies to market themselves also after the the fair and was very well received by both students and exhibitors.

Giveaways at the stands were banned at YOU. This was done so as to focus on the activities and ensure that fair-goers showed up at stands for the sake of getting to know the exhibitors from a professional/academic perspective, as opposed to just being interested in the stand for the sake of its giveaways. This helped to create several valuable conversations between those exhibitors and fair-goers. Students were thus in less of a hurry to secure giveaways and focused more on the experiences that YOU and its exhibitors provided.



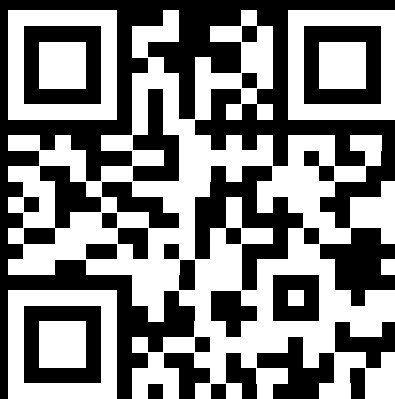
Evaluation

After the fair, an evaluation form was sent out to both participating students and companies.

The students gave a 3.8 score out of five on the overall assessment: they reported that it was easy to interact with exhibitors and that the reward chart scheme was fun.

The companies were positive about the focus on activities instead of giveaways. Several exhibitors have reported that they want to provide content for goody bags and that it was wise not to have giveaways at their stand. The companies also supported the strategic choice of setting different price ranges based on the size of the organization for the same sized stand, so that everyone had a place to shine no matter how big or small the organization is.

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YOU video

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