

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

FOLKEMØDET





Foto: Bevica Fonden

Folkemødet

Who am I?

- Project manager
- Originally landscape architect
- Holds a PhD in accessibility to green spaces for people with mobility disabilities
- Previously researcher at UCPH for 8 years on the relation between nature, health and design in relation to accessibility



Foto: Per Frost

Folkemødet

- Danish democracy festival with over 2,000 events and up to 45,000 visitors a day during three days in June each year
- Held in Allinge on Bornholm



Foto: Mads Claus Rasmussen
Ritzau/Scanpix

Folkemødet

- Folkemødet aims to improve democracy by bringing people together
- It provides a unique venue for free debate between decision-makers and citizens
- Folkemødet offers free participation in all events

Meet the participants

- Partners (app. 60) / Organizers (app. 100)
- Debaters
- Volunteers (app. 300)
- Guests enjoying all the activities
- Food/beverage stall staff
- Employees in the secretariat



Foto: Pelle Rink

Folkemødet X Bevica Fonden



Foto: Marie Gramkow

- 5-year project
- The ambition is to create a democracy festival where everyone can participate, regardless of their abilities.
- Folkemødet should function as a laboratory for the real world where different technologies and new ideas can be tested.

Folkemødet X Bevica Fonden



Foto: Pelle Rink

- Universal design must be the basic principle and view of humanity in all the activities at Folkemødet
- Folkemødet must explore its own blind spots and create a framework for all participants, so that it is possible to include as many as possible

Universal design at Folkemødet

The tasks include:

- Improvements in accessibility, including major operational actions as well as small-scale upgrades
- Provide accessible alternatives, eg. virtual reality, digital involvement, etc.
- Incorporating universal design into all activities that Folkemødet are initiators of.



Foto: Bevica Fonden



Foto: Pelle Rink

Challenges

- Folkemødet is located on an island – you must get there by ferry or flight
- Many people in a quite small area
- Space-related logistics and negotiations
- Many participants and stakeholders
- Lack of knowledge and blind spots
- Convincing colleagues (and others) about the importance of accessibility/UD



Foto: Marie Gramkow

Challenges

- The island of Bornholm is rocky
- Allinge is an old harbor town with a lot of terrain and varied, uneven pavement



Fotos: Marie Gramkow



Challenges

- Poor access to the different stages
- Lack of variety in stage setup (furniture)
- Very much related to the fact that each of the around 160 partners/organizers hold the responsibility for their own event space



Foto: Pelle Rink & Marie Gramkow



Fotos: Søren/Foreningen Folkemødet

Challenges

- Lack of places for rest and retreat
- And those that are, are often inaccessible to people with mobility difficulties
- Lack of alternative ways to participate (eg. Live stream, head phones)



Challenges

- Deficient or unclear signage



Fotos: Søren/Foreningen Folkemødet



Foto: Marie Gramkow

Folkemødet 2023 vs. 2024

- Events:
2023: More than 2,800 events spread over more than 100 stages and tents
2024: 3,500 events
- Sign language interpretation
2023: 8 events (all had disability as a theme in different ways)
2024: 16 events
- Telecoil
2023: 48 events spread over seven different stages/tents
2024: 184 events spread over 14 stages/tents



Fotos: Søren/Foreningen Folkemødet



Fotos: Marie Gramkow



Foto: Bevica Fonden

Solutions 2025

- Focus on signage and wayfinding, including maps of accessibility routes
- Focus on toilets and close collaboration with colleagues on ordering and placing disabled toilets
- New accessible bar by the Main Stage
- Wheelchair podium by the main stage



Foto: Pelle Rink

Solutions 2025

- New and improved guide for organizers and partners + workshop in January + dialogue with partners
- Additional focus on areas with the possibility of rest and retreat
- Improved web accessibility, incl. 'Easy-Read'
- Development collaboration – preferably with start-ups and continued collaboration with DTU Skylab



Foto: Tina Jeppesen

Thank you

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