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WEXFO

WORLD EXPRESSION FORUM

2025 REPORT

Some of our key impacts:

- **Global participation:** Over 2,600 participants from 52 countries attended the conference and related events.
- **Strong youth representation:** WEXFO Youth ensured youth voices were present and heard, including 1,500 young people under the age of 35.
- **Main theme – “The Year of Resistance”:** The conference addressed democracy, disinformation, press freedom, technology, inclusion, and freedom of expression in conflict zones.
- **First official conference statement:** A shared statement was developed and adopted during the conference.
- **Art and exhibitions as expression:** The SPEAK and War Diaries exhibitions gave powerful visual voice to global and personal experiences of free expression and war.
- **Award that amplifies voices:** The WEXFO Young Inspiration Award honors courageous individuals advocating freedom of expression.

Photo: MMM / WEXFO

Message from our Managing Director

In June 2025, we gathered in Lillehammer for the fourth edition of the World Expression Forum — a milestone event held under the theme “The Year of Resistance.” This year’s conference brought together voices from across the globe to explore the state of freedom of expression in a time marked by democratic challenges, disinformation, and growing polarization.

We are proud to report that WEXFO 2025 was our most ambitious and inclusive forum to date. With over 2,600 participants from over 50 countries, including more than 1,500 young people, the event became a vibrant arena for dialogue, learning, and action. The presence of youth was especially significant, with dedicated programs such as WEXFO Youth Voices, WEXFO More Young Voices, and WEXFO Utøya Young Experts creating meaningful intergenerational exchanges throughout the week.

The conference program featured keynote speakers, artistic performances, and powerful exhibitions — including SPEAK and War Diaries — that highlighted the role of creative expression in confronting censorship and conflict. We also hosted a public meeting on freedom of expression, and for the first time, published an official conference statement, reflecting the shared values and insights of our community. A new highlight this year was the presentation of the WEXFO Young Inspirational Award, which was awarded to activist Imaan Mazari-Hazir for her courageous work in Pakistan.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our board, program committee, partners, volunteers, and staff — as well as the generous support of our shareholders and sponsors. I extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed to making WEXFO 2025 a success.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to strengthening youth participation, expanding our global reach, and deepening our impact. Whether you joined us in Lillehammer or are engaging with WEXFO for the first time through this report, we invite you to be part of our work.

“WEXFO 2025 was our most ambitious and inclusive forum to date”

– KRISTENN EINARSSON, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Who is WEXFO?

Norway holds a unique and privileged position in the global landscape of freedom of expression — and with that comes responsibility. Freedom of expression is essential for building trust and transparency, both between individuals and between people and societal institutions. It is a cornerstone of a healthy and inclusive society.

The World Expression Forum (WEXFO) is dedicated to protecting and advancing freedom of expression worldwide. We provide a shared platform for those who believe that freedom of expression is fundamental to sustainable global development. WEXFO aims to inspire progress at all levels — international, national, and local.

Since our founding in 2021, we have rapidly established a range of initiatives to strengthen global collaboration on freedom of expression. We bring together young and established voices, act as a catalyst, and contribute to meaningful, positive change.

The Word Expression Forum 2025

The World Expression Forum conference is the hub of our engagement. In 2025, WEXFO was held for the fourth time and proved to be a major success. The conference brought together almost 300 participants from across the globe for a seven-day program, with the main events taking place in Lillehammer on Monday, June 2 and Tuesday, June 3.

We welcomed representatives from 52 countries, and a significant portion of the participants — including 110 young delegates through dedicated WEXFO programs and 1,400 youth attending a parallel freedom of expression festival — were under the age of 35.

More than 60 speakers and artists took the stage during the conference. Among the many distinguished guests were Maria Ressa, Gérard Biard, Oleksandra Matviichuk, and Irene Khan. Political representation included Hans Olav Sundfør, Mayor of Lillehammer; Thomas Breen, County Mayor of Innlandet; Lubna Jaffery, Norway's Minister of Culture and Equality; Agnese Lāce, Latvia's Minister of Culture; and Erlend Hanstveit, State Secretary in Norway's Ministry of Culture and Equality. Artistic contributions included poets Kokob Tesfaldet and Carlos Egaña, as well as musical performances by Jamala, Mohammed Elsusi, and Ghawgha.

*The annual World Expression Forum takes place at Scandic Lillehammer Hotel in May/June.
Photo: MMM / WEXFO*



This year's forum featured more than 60 speakers, panelists, and artists. Photo: Jørgen Skaug / WEXFO



Dmitri Strotsev received the IPA Prix Voltaire on the WEXFO stage during the conference. Photo: Øystein Nordås / WEXFO

Main theme and program

When this year's conference program was launched, we described it as our "most important conference ever," with the main theme "The Year of Resistance." Key topics included the development of democracy, disinformation, press freedom, technology, diversity, inclusion, and freedom of expression in areas affected by conflict.

The program spanned two days and featured eight sessions, hosted by journalists and moderators Kadafi Zaman and Jette F. Christensen.

Enhanced engagement with the legal sector

WEXFO partnered with the law firm Thallaug to host a session on freedom of expression in academia and at the workplace, led by attorney Ingrid Sandberg. The initiative increased visibility within the legal sector – an audience of strategic importance to WEXFO – and helped position the forum as a relevant actor in professional legal discourse.



Imaan Mazari-Hazir was awarded the inaugural WEXFO Young Inspiration Award, and was honored on stage by Nobel Laureate Maria Ressa. Photo: MMM / WEXFO

Awards

Two awards were presented during this year's WEXFO. Imaan Mazari-Hazir was honored with the newly established WEXFO Young Inspiration Award, presented by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Maria Ressa. The award comprised a diploma, a unique glass artwork by renowned Norwegian glass artist Kari Mølstad, and a grant enabling the recipient to return to WEXFO in 2026.

The publishers Nadia Kandrusovich and Dmitri Strotsev received the IPA Prix Voltaire, which was awarded during a moving ceremony on Monday evening. WEXFO worked in close collaboration with the International Publishers Association (IPA) on both the award ceremony and the Democracies Depend on Reading program, highlighting our shared commitment to protecting freedom of expression within the publishing sector.

Exhibitions

A highlight of this year's conference was the presentation of two exhibitions: SPEAK and War Diaries.

SPEAK was presented in collaboration with Lillehammer Museum and Fritt Ord, with support from the Bergesen Foundation. The exhibition is developed by Irene Khan, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression, and curated by renowned photographer Dr. Shahidul Alam. SPEAK visualizes key insights from Khan's 2021 UN report "Disinformation and





The Ukrainian exhibition War Diaries was part of this year's conference. Photo: MMM / WEXFO



In collaboration with the Norwegian Festival of Literature, WEXFO hosted a public meeting on freedom of expression during the conference, featuring several artistic performances. Photo: MMM / WEXFO



WEXFO brings together young defenders of freedom of expression from around the world at the conference in Lillehammer. Photo: Jørgen Skaug / WEXFO

Freedom of Opinion and Expression," bringing together powerful visual works from around the world that explore both the opportunities and challenges of free expression in the digital age.

For its Lillehammer edition, SPEAK was expanded to include political cartoons by this year's Fritt Ord Prize recipients: May Linn Clement, Marvin Halleraker, and Morten Mørland. Their contributions offered timely and sharp reflections on the role of satire and journalism in shaping public discourse.

In collaboration with Scandic Lillehammer Hotel, WEXFO also presented the exhibition War Diaries, which shared 14 deeply personal stories of children and teenagers who have witnessed and documented the war in Ukraine. The exhibition's main goal was to give voice to Ukrainian children, highlighting their unique experiences and shedding light on the profound trauma experienced by the younger generation.

The exhibition opened on June 2, with a special event attended by the Ukrainian Ambassador to Norway and a delegation of Ukrainian children and youth currently living in Lillehammer. Several school classes also visited the exhibition as part of the WEXFO program.

Public meeting for freedom of expression

As part of the WEXFO program, a public meeting was held in the garden of the conference hotel, bringing together local residents, artists, partners and international guests to reflect on the state of freedom of expression. Organized in collaboration with The Norwegian Festival of Literature, Musikk i Innlandet, and the local newspaper GD, the event featured live performances and panel discussions in both Norwegian and English. The meeting served as an open and inclusive arena for civic engagement, highlighting the importance of public dialogue in defending democratic values.

Conference statement

In 2025, WEXFO published its first official conference statement. The goal was to unite the forum around a shared message, based on the themes and discussions from the conference. A small team drafted the initial version using input from the first conference day and the full program. The draft was approved by the board on the morning of the second conference day, presented to the audience at the start of the day, and updated throughout the day based on feedback. The final version was presented at

the end of the conference and adopted by acclamation.

The statement was then shared with all participants, published on wexfo.no, distributed via newsletter and press release, and promoted across social media with a call to action. As of October 1st, it had received 133 signatures.

The process provided valuable experience. Although the statement was reviewed both internally and with the audience, we see value in making future reviews even more structured. WEXFO will take extra steps to ensure that all key aspects of freedom of expression are considered, and that the process supports broad inclusion of relevant perspectives.

WEXFO Youth

WEXFO aims to make a lasting impact beyond the main conference in Lillehammer. This year, we brought together over 1,500 young people from both Norway and around the world, actively involving them in our projects and initiatives.

What makes WEXFO unique is its strong emphasis on intergenerational dialogue connecting young people with conference

participants and leading international voices. These exchanges ensure that youth are not only given a platform, but that their perspectives are actively recognized and considered.

We do this because in a well-functioning democracy, it is essential that all groups have the opportunity to help shape the society around them — a principle rooted in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, SDG 16 highlights the importance of ensuring public access to information, protecting fundamental freedoms, and promoting responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels.

WEXFO has established a Youth Council, includes young representatives on both the board and program committee, and ensures youth voices are present in every panel on stage. We include young people in our conference because freedom of expression for young people is a prerequisite for a healthy democracy.

WEXFO Youth Voices

The youth festival WEXFO Youth Voices took place on June 2–3 in the garden at Lillehammer Hotel with around 1,400 students from lower and upper secondary schools in Lillehammer. WEXFO and WEXFO's Youth Group tailored the content to different age levels, and each class spent half a day at WEXFO. The content was customized for each class and communicated to the schools well in advance.

The program framework was part of the educational project Equal Opportunities, in which the classes had already completed preparatory learning activities at school, and the WEXFO program served as an extension of this. Each class attended the main stage program and two workshops. The arena consisted of 11 workshops led by professional organizations, including Stop Hate Speech, Solidarity Youth, the UN Association of Norway, the Police, Utøya, as well as artists, authors, and other experts. The main stage program featured rap artist Mohammed Elsusi and performers from UKM. This year also saw further testing of arena elements such as benches, a portal, and a pyramid developed by Opp Att. Additionally, parts of the exhibition SPEAK were showcased at the venue.

WEXFO Utøya Young Experts

The seminar was held from May 30 to June 4, with the first two days taking place at Utøya and the remaining days at the World Expression Forum. For the first time, WEXFO established a nomination committee to select participants, while also opening the process to nominations from WEXFO Alumni. This resulted in a large pool of strong candidates. The committee devoted significant time to a thorough selection process, with a key priority being to ensure broad global representation.

Although recruitment began early, we encountered challenges related to visa processes, including rejections and late withdrawals, which resulted in some participants joining the process late. Nevertheless, the participant list was communicated early to the program committee, who included them broadly in the program as speakers or panelists. The

"Participating was deeply valuable to me because it created a rare space where lived experience, activism, and global dialogue came together in an honest and empowering way. Being surrounded by passionate young people from around the world, all working in different fields but sharing a commitment to freedom of expression, reminded me that I'm part of something bigger."

– YOUNG EXPERT 2025.

seminar program was developed by WEXFO and Utøya, with several participants contributing actively at Utøya as speakers, facilitators, and workshop leaders.

WEXFO More Young Voices

The seminar took place from May 30 to June 5, with the first part (May 30–June 1) at the Nansen Academy and the second part at WEXFO. A total of 45 participants from Norway, Poland and Germany took part. The project was implemented in partnership with the National Youth Council of Poland, and the European Youth Press, and formed part of an Erasmus+ group exchange. This was the second consecutive year that WEXFO carried out the project.

The project aims to strengthen young people's freedom of expression, provide them with skills to actively participate in public debate, and inspire them to pursue further education and engagement. At the same time, the project contributes to the development of new methods and enhances the capacity of participating organizations at the European level. In 2025, WEXFO received accreditation, indicating that the project will continue in the years to come.

WEXFO Take Action

WEXFO Take Action was held on June 4, 2025, in Lillehammer as a practical follow-up to the World Expression Forum. The seminar brought

together young people, organizations, and professionals for a day of dialogue and co-creation on the freedom of expression of young people.

The seminar was hosted by Arizza Ann Nocum, who also moderated the panel discussion "Youth Freedom of Expression in the Year of Resistance". The panel included human rights lawyer Seyran Ates and freedom of expression expert Nik Williams, with reflections from WEXFO's Young Experts. The conversation highlighted the challenges facing youth freedom of expression in a time marked by political resistance, repression, and increasing pressure on democratic institutions.

"As a person who doesn't have a long list of political activism in their CV and is just at the beginning of their journey, I was incredibly grateful to have been chosen for the program. Wexfo inspired me more than I could have imagined to take action myself."

– MORE YOUNG VOICES 2025.



Razan Abou-Watfa and Sam Rechek were among the many Young Experts who contributed on the WEXFO stage. Photo: MMM / WEXFO

Throughout the day, Young Experts delivered talks that brought personal perspectives and inspired discussion. Ehad Badwi shared his experiences with art as a form of expression, Karina Thyra Cordova addressed the importance of youth voices in political processes, and Olesya Krivstova spoke about how young people can resist repression and censorship.

Workshops in a World Café format allowed participants to share experiences, develop new ideas, and build networks. Participants in WEXFO More Young Voices had received training at the Nansen Academy to facilitate these discussions, while Johanne Fearnley from the organization Fritt Ord developed the guiding questions.

The results of the group discussions were presented in plenary, focusing on how the insights could be transformed into concrete actions. Overall, the event strengthened the participants' skills and engagement while also reinforcing cooperation between Norwegian and international actors working with freedom of expression and democracy.

WEXFO Alumni

In 2025, the WEXFO Alumni network continued its efforts to strengthen engagement and solidarity among former participants of WEXFO programs,

serving as a platform for knowledge sharing, capacity building, and collective action.

Throughout the year, we organized a webinar on the imprisonment of Mahrang Baloch in Pakistan and issued seven newsletters providing members with updates on activities, opportunities, and resources.

The work was coordinated in close collaboration with the WEXFO Alumni Working Group, composed of former Young Experts Frances An, Kiyya Baloch, and Atta Khaled. The group also organized a dedicated alumni gathering during WEXFO, bringing together both new and returning members to strengthen the network and foster exchange across cohorts.

These activities have made the Alumni network an essential resource for both former participants and WEXFO, helping to create lasting impact from the programs and ensuring that commitment to freedom of expression remains active even after participants complete their initial involvement.

Project development

Project development is a key component of WEXFO's work, and in 2025, our primary focus has been the Democracies Depend on Reading (DemRead) initiative. Nearly three years ago, the Ljubljana Reading Manifesto was presented.

WEXFO offers unique opportunities for dialogue and networking.
Photo: MMM / WEXFO

A key takeaway from the report is this:

“Reading is our culture’s central training technique for cognitive and social behavior and a precondition for a properly functioning democracy.”

The report also emphasizes the urgent need to strengthen efforts around reading as part of the broader defense of democracy. While the current global situation calls for military rearmament in Europe, it also demands a strengthening of our inner defenses — recognizing that cultivating informed and enlightened citizens is essential for sustaining democracy. The Ljubljana Reading Manifesto is one of the driving forces behind the establishment of the project DemRead. The other key inspiration comes from the experiences gained through the network Reading Boost Lillehammer.

What makes this project unique is the close collaboration between research communities and practitioners in the field. It is pan-European in scope, bringing together academic institutions, cultural organizations, and local actors. A global network will also be established.

The project spans a five-year timeline, with a clear ambition: to strengthen democracy and safeguard freedom of expression.

WEXFO in numbers

In 2025, WEXFO operated with a dedicated team equivalent to 4.6 full-time positions, distributed across five roles. We featured 66 speakers who contributed in various capacities throughout the conference.

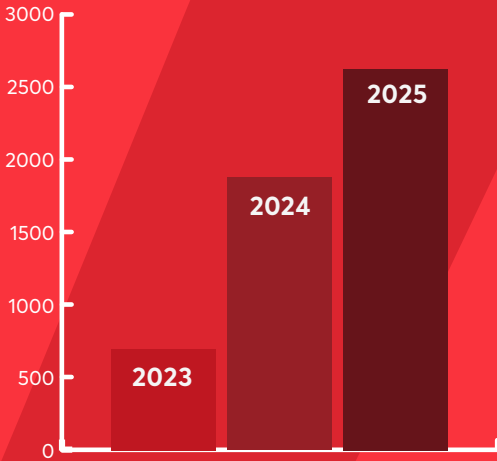
Delivering an event of this scale requires the support of many committed individuals. In addition to our board and program committee — many of whom are actively involved during the event — we were fortunate to have 25 volunteers working from early morning to late evening.

We also collaborated with approximately 60 partners and trusted contributors who supported the event in a variety of ways.

Alongside the conference, 1,400 school students participated in the freedom of expression festival WEXFO Youth Voices. Photo: MMM / WEXFO

- Number of participants
- Intergenerational meeting: 150
 - Reception hosted by Lillehammer Municipality: 150
 - WEXFO Utøya Young Experts: 62
 - WEXFO More Young Voices: 45
 - WEXFO 2025: 293
 - Artistic performances in the garden: 200
 - WEXFO Take Action: 120
 - WEXFO Youth Voices Monday: 700
 - WEXFO Youth Voices Tuesday: 700
 - Public Meeting: 200
 - Total number of participants 2,620

Development in attendance figures in recent years:





Ukrainian artist Jamala – winner of the 2016 Eurovision Song Contest – opened this year's conference with a powerful musical performance.
Photo: MMM / WEXFO

Marketing and communications

This section provides an overview of communication and marketing activities related to the WEXFO conference and associated projects during the reporting period. The aim is to document measures implemented across channels and audiences.

Program launch

Speaker announcements began in February, featuring Deeyah Khan, Gérard Biard, Seyran Ates, Nina Jankowicz, Maria Ressa, and Oleksandra Matviichuk.

Announcements were supported by interviews, press releases, and tailored content for social media. Maria Ressa's participation was distributed via NTB and received nationwide coverage. Jette F. Christensen and Kadafi Zaman were also profiled in pre-conference press materials.

The full conference program was released in the first week of March, three months ahead of the event.

Social media

A LinkedIn page for World Expression Forum was established and grew to 727 followers over its first 18 months. Content on LinkedIn generated 35,000 views over the past 12 months.

Facebook content reached 182,000 views in the same period, while Instagram content reached 44,000 views.

Publishing activity was maintained before, during, and after the conference across all platforms.

Film and photography

All WEXFO events were documented through video and photography. Footage included interviews and thematic films for use on social media, the WEXFO website, and in presentations. Filming and stills footage covered both indoor and outdoor settings, and contributors were given access to images for use in their own channels.

Local audience engagement

Efforts to engage the local community included targeted social media posts and newspaper ads. A public stand was set up in Lillehammer's pedestrian street to recruit volunteers and share information about WEXFO. Flyers were distributed in the city center and at the conference venue. Presentations were held at the University of Inland Norway and local Lions Clubs, and an evening gathering was arranged to introduce volunteers to WEXFO's events and work.

Website

A new section, WEXFO Insights, was launched to publish in-depth articles on freedom of expression and conference themes. Fourteen insight articles were published during the last 12 months.

The website was regularly updated with news about the organization, events, speakers, and ticketing.

Dedicated pages were maintained for all WEXFO projects, and the program and speaker overview were further developed through integration with FestivalPro.

Event films were also published on the site.

Maria Ressa, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate of 2021, was among the distinguished speakers at WEXFO 2025.
Jørgen Skaug / WEXFO





Staffan I. Lindberg, Professor and Director of the V-Dem Institute, delivered a keynote on global democratic trends and freedom of expression at WEXFO 2025. Photo: MMM / WEXFO

Newsletters

Monthly newsletters were sent to subscribers with updates on events, projects, operations, and organizational developments. Additional mailings covered ticket campaigns, press releases, and insight articles. In total, 15,175 newsletters were distributed over the past year, in addition to tailored editions for the alumni network.

Surveys and insight

Two population surveys were conducted in collaboration with Norstat. The surveys explored public attitudes toward freedom of expression and barriers to engagement among youth aged 16–25. Findings were used in op-eds, media coverage, project development, and stakeholder dialogue.

Press and media coverage

Media representatives from Norway and abroad were invited and supported in covering WEXFO. NRK reported on both the main conference and the youth freedom of expression festival. Selected speakers were

interviewed by local, national, and international outlets, and editorial teams received assistance with images and speaker contact. An op-ed by the WEXFO director on the state of freedom of expression in Norway was published in Panorama Nyheter.

The WEXFO Young Inspiration Award received broad coverage in both Norwegian and international media, including HUM News and Azadi Times.

International and professional outlets such as Publishing Perspectives and the International Publishers Association also covered WEXFO, highlighting themes such as democracy, disinformation, and freedom of expression.

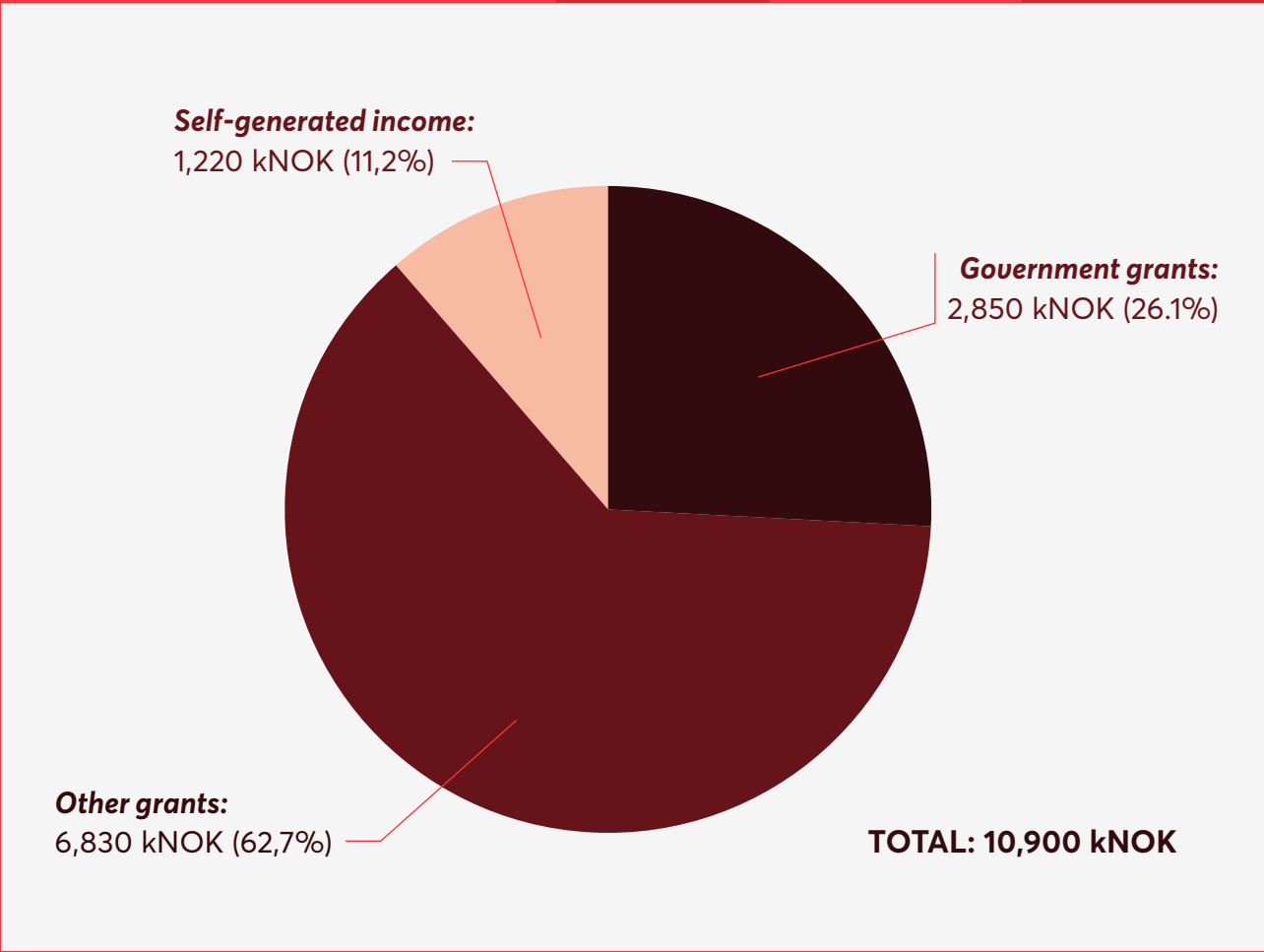
Promotional materials

A new set of WEXFO tote bags was produced in collaboration with Bokhari, with sustainable and responsible production. Conference materials included printed lanyards, name tags, programs, posters, and informational signage used throughout the conference venue.

Financial overview

Total projected revenue for 2025 is estimated at approximately NOK 10,900,000.

The revenue is distributed as follows (in thousands of NOK):



Professional, practical, and financial collaboration with individuals and organizations is essential for delivering a conference of this scale within a modest budget. Due to the event’s format, ticket prices are relatively high, which we recognize may affect representation. We are therefore continuously working to find ways to keep prices down, such as through scholarships and subsidies. Nevertheless, ticket sales remain a vital source of income for us, and we aim to increase this revenue in the coming years.

Local ripple effects

The conference, along with its associated projects, plays an important role for Lillehammer and the local business community. We are committed to using local suppliers, both in our year-round operations and during the event itself. The scale of the event and the large number of attendees have a significant positive impact on hotels and restaurants in the area. The number of hotel nights we generated this year — along with the rooms booked directly by our partners and participants — represents valuable business for our hotel partner, Scandic. Our regular suppliers of staging and technical services also had busy days, delivering large-scale productions across multiple venues.

Collaborations and networks

WEXFO is supported by a wide range of sponsors and partners who are essential to our operations and the successful delivery of our programs.

Our key supporters include Sparebankstiftelsen DNB, Fritt Ord, The Norwegian Publishers Association, Kopinor, Innlandet County, Lillehammer Municipality, The Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Equality, and Erasmus+. SpareBank 1 Gudbrandsdal, Advokatfirmaet Thallaug, ARK, Aschehoug, Association of American Publishers, Bergesenstiftelsen, Cappelen Damm, Groep Algemene Uitgevers, Gyldendal, International Publishers Association, Mediebedriftenes Landsforening, Norsk faglitterær forfatter- og oversetterforening, Nansen Center for Peace and Dialouge, NRK, Syndicat national de l'édition, Verlag C.H. Beck, PEN Norway, ALMA and WAN-IFRA also provide valuable contributions to our work.

We collaborate closely with The Norwegian Festival of Literature, Utøya, The Nansen Academy, and Scandic Lillehammer Hotel.

In addition, WEXFO is backed by 79 shareholders, all of whom actively contribute to our mission in various ways.

Shareholders

Advokatfirmaet Thallaug, Aller, Alrow Media ApS, Amedia, ARK, Aschehoug, Association of American Publishers (AAP), Associazione Italiana Editori (AIE), Bokhandlerforeningen, Bonnier Books, Bonnier forlag, Börsenverein, Brazilian Book Chamber, Cappelen Damm, Childpress, Civita, Creo, C.H Beck Verlag, De norske bokklubbene, Den norske forleggerforening, Egmont, Eum Publishing House, European and International Booksellers Federation (EIBF), Fagpressen, FEP – Federation of European Publishers, Filmforbundet, Finnish Publishers Association, Folkeakademiens landsforbund, Forbundet frie fotografer, Forfatterforbundet, Forlagshuset Vest, Forlagsfinans, Groep Algemene Uitgevers (GAU), Grafill, Gudbrandsdølen Dagningen, Gyldendal, Hamar Arbeiderblad, Holtzbrinck Buchverlage, Human Rights Foundation, International Publishers Association, Kagge, Lillehammer

kommune, Lillehammer kultur, Mediebedriftenes landsforening, Mimeta, Must, Nansenskolen, NOPA, Norli, Norsk bibliotekforening, Norske dramatikerer forbund, Norsk faglitterær forfatter- og oversetterforening, Norsk Litteraturfestival, Norsk musikkråd, Norsk PEN, Norsk presseforbund, Norsk skuespillerforbund, Norsk teater- og orkesterforening, Norstedts, Norwegian Helsinki Committee, NTB, Odd Øie, Piratförlaget, Polaris Media, Publishers Association UK, Riksmålsforbundet, Sahoipyong, Samlaget, Schibsted News Media, Stiftelsen Lillehammer museum, Stiftelsen Tinius, Svenska Förläggareföreningen, Syndicat national de l'édition, Tidningsutgivarna, Torleif Dahls kulturbibliotek, TV 2, TV 2 Skole, Vigmostad og Bjørke, WAN-IFRA.

Networks

Lillehammer UNESCO

Creative City of Literature

WEXFO is part of the steering committee for Lillehammer UNESCO City of Literature, alongside Lillehammer Municipality, the Norwegian Festival of Literature, Innlandet County, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, the Nansen Academy, and Lillehammer Museum. Through this collaboration, WEXFO has access to the global UNESCO Cities of Literature network and engages with relevant partners within the network when appropriate.

Reading Boost Lillehammer

Reading Boost Lillehammer is a collaborative initiative involving the Lillehammer schools, the Municipal School Office, Lillehammer Public Library, the Norwegian Festival of Literature, Innlandet County Library, The Cultural Schoolbag, WEXFO and several other partners. The project is anchored in Lillehammer Municipality's adopted Cultural Strategy 2024–2035, which places strong emphasis on the goal of fostering an enlightened and informed community.

Organizational contributors

Board

Mads Nygaard (Chair), Anne Bergman, Trine Skei Grande, José Borghino, Marit Borkenhagen, Aage Borchgrevink, Anne Holt, Celina Jerman Bright-Taylor, Elisabeth O. Sjaastad, Helje Solberg, Margit Ketterle, Khin Thandar Htay, Fatemeh Ekhtesari, Felicia Anthonio.

Program Committee

Veslemøy Østrem (Chair), Aage Borchgrevink, Felicia Anthonio, Carlos Egaña Joakim Lie, Arizza Ann Nocum, Martjn David, Oksana Brovko, Reihaneh Taravati, Khaled Emam, Jørgen Frydnes, Nedin Mutic, Adele Matheson Mestad, Sarah McLaughlin, Vicky Hristova, Jakob Mchangama.

Nomination Committee

Morten Gjelten (Interim Chair), Silje Riise Næss, Elin Floberghagen, Heela Yoon, Ingvild Kogstad Brodal.

Alumni Committee

Frances An, Kiyya Baloch, Atta Khaled.

Administration

Kristenn Einarsson (Managing Director), Anne-Thea Haavind (Head of Administration), Julia Dietze (Producer), Hilde Fauskerud (Project Manager WEXFO Youth), Andreas Gjone (Communications and Marketing Manager).

Our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals

WEXFO actively aligns its work with several of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a particular focus on Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. Our core mandate is to promote and protect freedom of expression – a fundamental pillar of democracy, the rule of law, and inclusive societies.

In addition, our work supports:

- **Goal 4: Quality Education**, through initiatives like Reading Boost Lillehammer and DemRead, which fosters critical thinking and democratic awareness among youth.
- **Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals**, by building strong collaborations with schools, organizations, institutions, and international partners.
- **Goals 12 and 13: Responsible Consumption and Climate Action**, through concrete measures to reduce the environmental impact of our events – including reuse, local accommodation, vegetarian food options, and sustainable transport. Our staff is employed through the Norwegian Festival of Literature, which has been certified as an Environmentally Approved Event by FEE Norway (Foundation for Environmental Education) for the fifth consecutive year.

WEXFO is committed to being a socially, democratically, and environmentally responsible actor – contributing to a more sustainable society.

Reading Boost Lillehammer is a collaborative initiative, with active involvement from WEXFO and regional partners. Photo: WEXFO





Moving forward

WEXFO has adopted a broad and inclusive approach to freedom of expression, aiming to engage everyone with an interest in this vital issue. Our goal is to increase participation both nationally and internationally. Moving forward, we will focus on strengthening youth representation and ensuring greater inclusion of voices from the Global South during the main congress as well as in related projects.

We believe that dialogue, group work, and active participation are effective methods for identifying solutions and best practices. Therefore, we are committed to integrating these approaches across all WEXFO projects and platforms.

From its early start-up phase, World Expression Forum has grown into a key contributor to national and international efforts to promote freedom of expression and democratic development. We now have a stable organization with 4.6 full-time positions based in Lillehammer. A key priority going forward is to ensure that the development work invested in building this platform results in a lasting and sustainable structure. We will continue to improve existing initiatives while also looking ahead and developing new projects.



WEXFO

WORLD
EXPRESSION
FORUM

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