



# Social Sustainability

Campus Kristiansund Internship Program



Kristiansund  
kommune



Møre og Romsdal  
fylkeskommune

NEAS

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## 1. Introduction

There has increasingly been a focus on how to measure sustainability in practice, particularly environmental and economic sustainability. However, how to measure social sustainability has not received the same amount of attention. Researchers and policymakers have therefore highlighted the need for a better understanding of how one can measure social sustainability in practice.

Against the backdrop of this, Kristiansund Municipality has established a project with the aim of establishing a benchmark for measuring progress towards different aspects of social sustainability. More specifically, the municipality seeks to find suitable KPIs to measure its progress towards social sustainability. Kristiansund municipality asked us from Campus Kristiansund Internship Program to help them out in this process. Through this the municipality aims to get a better understanding of the mechanisms and connection between the three pillars of sustainability in the municipality's work.

## 2. Methods

To find and collect indicators on social sustainability we have mostly relied on document analysis and analysing existing literature on social sustainability. For instance, we have gone through various datasets, including SSB and Folkehelseinstituttet to examine Social Sustainability

whether these indicators can be measured with data that is available to Kristiansund Municipality. We have also gone through Kristiansund's city masterplan to get a better understanding of Kristiansund's current approach to social sustainability.

Before establishing this project, Bjarte Bye Løfaldli (the project manager of this project) and Kristiansund Municipality agreed on a set of criteria to establish whether an indicator on social sustainability is relevant for the municipality or not. These are as follows: The indicator should be objectively measurable (quantitative), exist in sources that are "freely available for use" or in own sources that the municipality currently has access to through its own data sources, can be synthesized, depersonalized, or not personally identifiable, reflect focal points in the municipality's community plan, and thus be relevant for the municipality's further work with the project. In addition to selecting indicators from the sample list that meet the inclusion criteria, it is also important to allow the municipality itself to develop custom indicators. These may represent local priorities or "peculiarities" that the municipality finds useful to pursue in its work with social sustainability. The same inclusion criteria will also apply to custom indicators.

### **3. Results**

The main result of our work is a provisional excel spreadsheet with indicators looking at different aspects of social sustainability, such as education, health, culture, equality, social integration, etc. We have also found KPIs for culture and established whether there is available local data on them in Kristiansund.

### **4. Discussion**

Social sustainability is a contested term and there is no consensus within the literature on how it is defined. However, scholars seem to agree that social sustainability is always dependent on time and space. Since there are multiple definitions on what social sustainability is, it is important that Kristiansund Municipality is clear on how they define social sustainability in their further work on this project.

When it comes to project challenges, there are mainly two challenges we have faced in this project; 1. The short timeframe of the project; 2. Finding indicators that are relevant and adaptable to the context of Kristiansund. With more time, we could have gone through more literature and datasets which is crucial to further establish which KPIs on social sustainability that are relevant for Kristiansund Municipality.

To continue the work further, we recommend focusing on the following points:

- There is need for further work to understand which indicators that are relevant for Kristiansund municipality with clear definitions of these indicators and how to measure these.
- Categorise these indicators into different aspects of social sustainability (e.g., health, education, inclusion etc.), with clear definitions of these indicators, how to measure them and establish whether there is any local available data on these indicators.
- Continue assessing how these indicators are tied to economic and environmental sustainability.
- Supporting the municipality in finding suitable KPIs to measure its progress towards social sustainability.