

# **NB8 Nordic Circle** *Mentoring Program*



**Nordic-Baltic Mentoring Program for Dance Producers  
2021-2024**

**Final Report**

# NB8 Nordic Circle

## *Mentoring Program*

NB8 Nordic Circle is a Nordic-Baltic network and mentoring program for the development of producer skills in the independent arts field, especially in dance. The mentoring program has been implemented as a joint project of five Nordic actors. In addition, there were six cooperation partners from the Baltics and autonomous northern regions. The aim of the project was to strengthen the Nordic and Baltic infrastructure for the production, management and distribution of dance.

The NB8 Nordic Circle mentoring program was originally planned for the years 2021–2023, but due to the corona pandemic, the schedule had to be extended. The project was carried out in 2021–2024. The mentoring program included two project cycles, for both of which eight participants were selected through an open call. A suitable mentor from another country was selected for each participant.

## **PROGRAM PARTNERS**

The partners of the project were Arts Management Helsinki (Finland), SITE Sweden (Sweden), JC Copenhagen (Denmark), Performing Arts Hub Norway (Norway) and Dansverksthæðið (Iceland). Cooperation partners in the Baltic countries were New Theater Institute of Latvia (Latvia), Platforma Lithuania (Lithuania) and Estonian Dance Agency (Estonia). Cooperation partners in other northern regions are Qiajuk Studios (Greenland), The Nordic House (Faroe Islands) and Nordic Institute on Åland (Åland).

### **Arts Management Helsinki**

Arts Management Helsinki is a values-based organization specializing in arts management and administration. The range of activities and services spans from production and project management to career planning and development. Arts Management Helsinki functions as a production platform for 50 independent artists in Finland. Arts Management Helsinki was the coordinating partner and leader of the project.  
<https://artsmanagement.fi/>

### **SITE Sweden**

SITE is an independent support structure for the performing arts based in Stockholm, Sweden. SITE's activities consist of a Production house for performing arts, Artist residencies in different formats for different needs, and Knowledge hubs and skills development for artistic and organizational development of artistic activities.  
<http://sitesweden.se/>

### **JC Copenhagen**

JC Copenhagen is a private owned organization specializing in advising, managing and administrating smaller companies, self-producing choreographers and artists. The organization was founded by Jens Christian Jensen in 2020 after having worked in different institutions such as The Agency for Culture and Palaces, The Project Centre at Dansehallerne and Performing Arts Platform in Aarhus. JC Copenhagen has a large network within the choreographic and dance field in Denmark.  
<https://jc-copenhagen.dk>

## Dansverkstæðið

Dansverkstæðið is the home of freelance dancers and choreographers in Iceland. It provides a place for established as well as aspiring choreographers to develop ideas, experiment and rehearse new creations. Workshops on dance and choreography are offered on irregular basis. Dansverkstæðið constantly looks for ways to further support choreographers in their career development.  
<https://www.dansverkstaedid.com>

## Performing Arts Hub Norway

Performing Arts Hub Norway (PAHN) is a national competence centre organised as a network organisation. Its mission is to promote professional performing arts domestically and abroad, emphasising independent performing arts. PAHN was a partner in the project at the beginning, and participated in the selection of the mentees and mentors, but due to changes unrelated to the NB8 program, they later dropped out of the project.  
<https://www.pahn.no>

NB8 Nordic Circle project was coordinated by **Ulrika Vilke** from Arts Management Helsinki. The project's responsible leader and financial administrator was **Outi Järvinen**, CEO of Arts Management Helsinki.

## PROJECT LAUNCH 2021

After several years of planning and applying, NB8 Nordic Circle project finally received the first approved funding decision by the Nordic Culture Point in April 2021. The project started in August 2021. Project website was launched at [www.nb8circle.com](http://www.nb8circle.com). Visual branding of the project was designed by Finnish designer Lille-Ile.

The first open call for mentees took place 6.-28.10.2021, and 24 application from all Nordic and Baltic countries were received. Information about the open call was distributed through the network of project partner organizations and associated partner organizations, in the whole Nordic-Baltic region.

Program partners - Outi Järvinen (FI), Ulrika Vilke (FI), Emelie Johansson (SE), Geir Lindahl (NO), Jens Christian Jensen (DK), Tinna Grétarsdóttir (IS) – gathered in Suomenlinna, Finland, 8.-9.11.2021 for a selection meeting, hosted by Nordisk Kulturkontakt. Eight mentees were selected for the first cycle, and they were matched with experienced mentors from another country by the steering group.



# NB8 Nordic Circle

## CYCLE 1

### PARTICIPANTS IN CYCLE 1

#### **Mentees:**

Elina Aholainen (Finland)

Kara Hergils (Iceland)

Minna-Triin Kohv (Estonia)

Ina Ločmele (Latvia)

Vár Bech Ártíng (Faroe Island)

Maija Pavlova (Latvia)

Emilija Rimašauskienė (Lithuania)

Julianna Viðarsdóttir (Sweden)

#### **Mentors:**

Sigríð Aakvík, Creative Producer Art & About (Denmark)

Emmy Astbury, Producer Cullberg (Sweden)

Annika Ostwald, Producer (Sweden)

Ragnheiður Skúladóttir, CEO and Artistic director of Festspillene (Norway)

Anne Holck Ekenes, Artistic Director of Panta Rei Danseteater (Norway)

Eliina Ruoho-Kurola, Producer Zodiak – Center for New Dance (Finland)

Isabel Gonzalez, Executive producer and General manager of Moving in November (Finland)

Marinella Jaskari, Executive Producer, Helsinki City Theatre (Finland)

#### **Partners:**

Tinna Grétarsdóttir, Dansverkstæðið (Iceland)

Jens Christian Jensen, JC Copenhagen (Denmark)

Emelie Johansson, SITE Sweden (Sweden)

Outi Järvinen, Arts Management Helsinki (Finland)

Ulrika Vilke, Arts Management Helsinki (Finland)



## KICK-OFF MEETING 2022

The kick-off meeting of the first mentoring cycle was held in Raseborg, Finland **13.–16.9.2022**. The program started with a meeting of the 8 mentors, and the following day they were joined by the 8 mentees. The meeting program consisted of group work, discussions, walk & talk, and participatory activities. The program was facilitated by **Holger Björklund** (SE).

The kick-off meeting took place in Calliola, an idyllic conference center in the Finnish archipelago. With a beautiful setting by the sea, pristine nature, Finnish local food, and professional organization, the international group of mentors and mentees had an inspiring start for the mentoring year.



## Kick-off meeting schedule:

**NBS Mentoring Program kick off**  
 When: 13.-16.9.2022  
 Where: Calliola (Raasepori) <https://calliola.com/en/front-page/>

	Tue 13.9.2022	Wed 14.9.2022	Thu 15.9.2022	Fri 16.9.2022
	arrival to Calliola	breakfast	breakfast	breakfast
14:00	lunch buffet	the second session with mentors	The second session with mentors & mentees	The third session with mentors & mentees
15:00	the first session with mentors	coffee break	lunch buffet	lunch
16:30	afternoon coffee break	arrival of mentees	The second session with mentors & mentees continues	departure to airport / Helsinki
18:00	the end of the first session with mentors	lunch buffet	afternoon coffee break	
	accommodation arrangements, settling down	13:30	16:00	
19:00	dinner	14:30	The second session with mentors & mentees ends	
20:30	seaside sauna and free time together	16:30	dinner	
21:30	evening snack in sauna (or take away)	18:00	20:00	
		19:00	evening snack in sauna (or take away)	
		21:30		
	in total 15 person	in total 23 person	in total 23 person	in total 23 person

After the kick-off meeting, each mentor-mentee pair kept in touch with each other using communication tools about once a month. They met each other in a one-on-one live meeting once during the mentoring year. There was also a joint online meeting with the group of mentors and another one with the mentees organized by the program partners.

**“New way to develop a professional relationship.”**

**“Meeting other people who have the same struggles, same understanding.”**

**“This kind of support is unique.”**

**“It takes a lot but you get more back.”**

**“Highlight was to meet in person.”**

**“Confidence boost.”**

**“Safe space. Joy.”**

**“Tangible change.”**

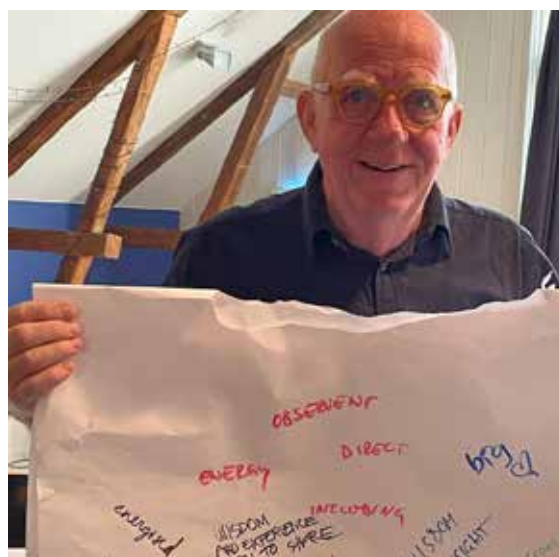
**“Beauty of the program is having time together.”**

**“It turns the world upside down a little bit. The process gives you an opportunity to change.”**

## WRAP-UP OF CYCLE 1

The wrap-up event for the cycle 1 participants was organized in Calliola, Finland 23.-25.8.2023.

After a full year of one-on-one mentoring, all the mentor-mentee couples gathered again, to reflect on the process and learn from one another. The wrap-up program was again facilitated by Holger Björklund.



## Wrap-up meeting schedule:

NBB Mentoring Program 1st Cycle wrap up					
When:	23.-25.8.2023				
Where:	Callioja (Raaseperi) <a href="https://callioja.com/en/first-page/">https://callioja.com/en/first-page/</a>				
	Wed 23.8.2023	Thu 24.8.2023	Fri 25.8.2023	Participants	Mentees 23.-25.8.
	8:00-9:00	breakfast	8:00-9:00	breakfast	
	9:00-12:00	The second session with mentors & mentees	09:00-11:00	The third session with mentors & mentees	
13:30 / 14:00	12:00-13:00	lunch buffet	11:00-12:00	lunch	
13:30-14:30	13:00-15:30	The second session with mentors & mentees continues	12:00	departure to airport/ Helsinki	
14:30-16:30	15:30-18:00	afternoon coffee break			
16:30-16:45	18:00-19:00	The second session with mentors & mentees ends			
16:45-18:00	18:00-19:00	Setting down			
18:00-19:00	19:00-21:00	Dinner			
19:00-21:00	21:00-23:00	Free time for the great ideas of the moment			
21:00-23:00					
	in total 21 person	in total 21 person	in total 21 person		
				<b>Partners 23.-25.8.</b>	
				Out Järvinen	
				Lilika Viike	
				Tinna Orlandsdóttir	
				Jana Christian Jensen	
				Emilia Johansson	
				<b>Mentors 23.-25.8.</b>	
				Sigríð Jakvík	
				Anniina Ostwald	
				Emmy Astbury	
				Isabel Gonzalez	
				Ragnheiður Skúladóttir	
				Mannetta Juskanen	
				Elin Ruoño-Kurula	
				<b>Facilitator 23.-25.8.</b>	
				Helger Björklund	
				<b>TOTAL 21 PERSON</b>	
					<b>Mentees 23.-25.8.</b>
					Eina Aholainen
					Kaisa Hengila
					Minna Tiina Kolby
					Julianna Vidarsdóttir
					Vár Ræch Arling
					Rannva Guðnisdóttir
					Ina Loomale
					Maja Pavlova

## PODCAST

One mentor-mentee couple, **Julianna Vidarsdóttir** (SE) and **Ragnheiður Skúladóttir** (IS/NO), were interviewed for a podcast at the wrap-up event. They shared some of their experiences and challenges from their year together as mentee and mentor, or "critical friendship" as Ragnheiður described it. The podcast was published by SITE Sweden on Soundcloud:

<https://on.soundcloud.com/9rbWBxjJLxfhExJ8>



# NB8 Nordic Circle

## CYCLE 2

### PARTICIPANTS IN CYCLE 2

The open call for mentees for the second cycle was held in October 2022. Out of a total of 31 applicants, eight mentees were selected for the mentoring program. They were matched with eight experienced mentors from other Nordic and Baltic countries. The selection and matching process was conducted by the project partners online, via Zoom. The program cycles ran in overlap; first cycle from September 2022 to August 2023, and second cycle from April 2023 to March 2024.

#### **Mentees:**

Mirkka Maikola (Finland)  
Heba Eir Kjeld (Iceland)  
Evelyn Raudsepp (Estonia)  
Patrīcija Kolāte (Latvia)  
Thea Thori Kogstadt (Norway)  
Maja Bonde Holtze (Denmark)  
Anders Engebretsen (Norway)  
Lena Yngvesson (Sweden)

#### **Mentors:**

Kasper Egelund, International producer of Bora Bora (Denmark)  
Ólöf Ingólfssdóttir (Iceland)  
Katja Kirsi, Managing Director of Reality Research Center (Finland)  
Bek Berger, Artistic Director of the New Theatre Institute of Latvia (Latvia)  
Tora de Zwart Rørholt, Creative Producer (Norway)  
Tina Eriksson Fredriksson, Riksteatern (Sweden)  
Anne Cecilie Bodin Larsen, Managing Director of Jo Strømgren Kompani (Norway)  
Ann-Jette Caron, Creative producer, Selected Works Festival and freelance (Denmark)

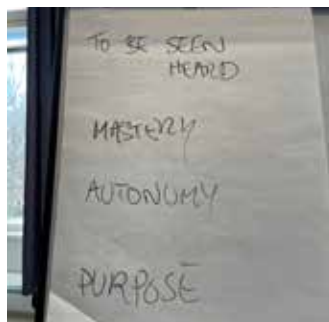
#### **Partners:**

Tinna Grétarsdóttir,  
Dansverkstæðið (Iceland)  
Jens Christian Jensen,  
JC Copenhagen (Denmark)  
Emelie Johansson,  
SITE Sweden (Sweden)  
Daniel Inatti,  
SITE Sweden (Sweden)  
Outi Järvinen,  
Arts Management Helsinki (Finland)  
Ulrika Vilke,  
Arts Management Helsinki (Finland)



## KICK-OFF MEETING 2023

The kick-off meeting of the second mentoring cycle was held in Raseborg, Finland **18.–21.4.2023**, at Calliola Conference Hotel. The program started with an intensive training for the 8 mentors, as in the first cycle. The training was developed based on the feedback from the first cycle, and small changes were made in the program. On the second day of the kick-off meeting, the mentors were joined by the 8 mentees, for two and a half days together in the whole group. The program was facilitated by **Holger Björklund** (SE).



Examples of topics discussed in the mentor-mentee pairs:

- finding a future path
- compare best practices, exchanging practices
- how to prioritize
- finding your driving forces, motivation
- setting boundaries for worklife vs personal life
- finding a sustainable income structure
- dealing with the artist-producer relationship
- working with co-production, international collaboration

Each mentor-mentee pair kept in touch with each other using various communication tools. During the mentoring year, they also met each other in a one-on-one live meeting. The program partners arranged a joint online meeting with the group of mentors and another one with the mentees, and also kept in touch to follow-up on the process.

Second cycle Kick-off meeting schedule:



	Tue 18.4.2023	8:00	Wed 19.4.2023	8:00	Thu 20.4.2023	8:00	Fri 21.4.2023	8:00
	Traveling to Helsinki		breakfast		breakfast		breakfast	
	arrival to Calliola	9:00	the second session with mentors	9:00	The second session with mentors & mentees	9:00	The third session with mentors & mentees	9:00
13:00	lunch buffet	11:30	coffee break	11:30	lunch buffet	11:00	lunch	11:00
14:00	the first session with mentors	13:30	arrival of mentees	13:30	lunch buffet	11:45	departure to airport / Helsinki	11:45
15:30	afternoon coffee break	14:30	the first session with mentors & mentees	14:30	The second session with mentors & mentees continues	12:00		12:00
16:30	the end of the first session with mentors	16:30	afternoon coffee break	16:30	afternoon coffee break	16:00		
18:00	accommodation arrangements, settling down	18:00	End of the first session with mentors & mentees	18:00	The second session with mentors & mentees ends	16:15		
19:00	dinner	18:00	accommodation arrangements, settling down	18:30:00	dinner	18:30:00		
21:00	seaside sauna and free time together (small snacks in sauna)	19:30	long dinner (first all together)	21:00	seaside sauna and free time together (small snacks in sauna)	21:00		
	freetime		freetime		freetime			

**Contact:**  
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[nb8circle.com](http://nb8circle.com)

## WRAP-UP OF CYCLE 2

The second cycle wrap-up event was organized in Calliola 13.-15.3.2024. This was the final event of the whole NB8 program. To prepare for the event and to gather the accrued knowledge, the project partners met in Helsinki one day before, for a partner meeting.

The wrap-up event was again facilitated by Holger Björklund.



## FEEDBACK FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

*What did you gain?*

Community. Generosity. My own strength. Having fun. Trusting the process.

Networking is a practice.

Knowledge sharing is complicated and takes time.

“If you are at a turning point, or want to find a new direction – this is a very good opportunity for you”

Wrap-up meeting schedule:

NB8 Mentoring Program wrap up schedule 13.-15.3.2024			
	Wed 13.3.2024	Thu 14.3.2024	Fri 15.3.2024
	8:00-9:00	breakfast	8:00-9:00
	9:00-10:00	The reflection Mentors & Mentees	9:00-10:00
	10:00-11:00	Sharing with the group Mentors & Mentees	10:00-11:00
13:30-14:30	lunch buffet	11:00-12:00	11:00-12:00
14:30-15:30	Coming together with mentors & mentees	12:00-13:30	12:00
15:30-16:30	The last session Mentor & Mentee*	13:30-14:30	
16:30-16:45	afternoon coffee break	14:30-15:30	
16:45-17:45	Summary of the day Mentors & Mentees	15:30-16:45	
17:45-19:00	accommodation arrangements, setting down	16:45-17:45	
19:00-21:00	Dinner	17:45-19:00	
21:00-23:00	sauna sauna and free time together (small snacks in sauna)	19:00-21:00	
		21:00-23:00	
		Party!	
			breakfast
			Reflection Mentors & Mentees
			Summary and sharing with the group
			Lunch buffet
			departure to airport / Helsinki

\* Tina & Pasi on online

**NB8 Nordic Circle**  
Mentoring program

Need help? Ulrika whatsapp +358503462563 ulrika@artsmanagement.fi

## PODCAST

From the second cycle, **Anders Engebretsen** (NO) and **Ann-Jette Caron** (DK), were interviewed for a podcast at the wrap-up event. They shared some of their experiences from their year together as mentee and mentor. The podcast was published by SITE Sweden on Soundcloud in the Art-Ache series:

<https://on.soundcloud.com/Dam33vqSWNjNDqS28>



**”It is a journey worth taking.”**

## **DISSEMINATION**

There were a total of 55 mentee applicants for NB8, and the information about the program reached the Nordic and Baltic dance field well in collaboration with the associate partners. The NB8 Facebook page had 625 followers. With the podcast and other publicity, the program has reached nearly a thousand professionals in the professional field. Social media posts were actively made by project participants and partners.

In November 2022, Emelie Johansson gave an online-presentation of NB8 in the On The Move Training group, for international members of the IETM linked network focusing on international professional development training programmes. In April 2023, Ulrika Vilke and Emelie Johansson participated as representatives of the NB8 Nordic Circle project in the Nordic-Baltic Network meeting organized in Tallinn, invited by the Nordic Culture Point. In June 2023, Outi Järvinen, invited by the Nordic Culture Point, presented the project at an online seminar organized by Creative Europe.

Local, regional and national activities were organised by the project partners, to engage the larger community.

## **FINANCING**

NB8 Nordic Circle Mentoring Program was supported by Nordic Culture Point and Nordic Culture Fund, as well as national funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland, the Swedish Arts Council and the Danish Arts Foundation.

All project partners also self-financed the program by providing staff, administrative help, and in-kind or direct financial support.