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THEME ISSUE



WELCOME TO NORDREGIO NEWS ON COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This issue of Nordregio News focuses on the Nordic Arctic. The area shares a number of common features, such as low population density, low accessibility, low economic diversity and abundant natural resources. It is also an area of increasing international attention, due to the effects of climate change and expectations about future exploitation of raw materials and the opening of new sea routes.

But the Arctic region is also the home of four million people – if we include the Arctic populations in Russia, USA and Canada – as well as the object of hundreds of millions of Euros in research funding. However, the bulk of those funds are spent on the natural sciences and ethnological research, while only a fraction is used for social science research that is aimed at the region's economic development and making it a better place to live.

Because of this, we at Nordregio have chosen to put people first in our research on the Arctic. We wish to contribute to the body of knowledge about opportunities for creating sustainable regional development there. A large part of this work has already been carried out on behalf of the Nordic Working Group for Sustainable Regional Development in the Arctic, under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers' Committee of Senior Officials for Regional Policy. This special issue of Nordregio News describes this work and some of its results.

The main part of the working group's activity has been to carry out a foresight analysis, based on the challenges and opportunities experienced by the residents of 12 Arctic local communities. An important reflection from the foresight work is that the attitudes of the residents have been changing; people are tired of the image of Arctic society as being underdeveloped, as well as with their own image of themselves as victims of exploitation and injustice. Instead, the citizens of the Arctic prefer to focus on the responsibility that they themselves have for their future development.

These are attitudes that we wish to support by providing a solid knowledge base, analyses and policy recommendations. The Arctic is one of Nordregio's four areas of geographical priority. In addition to working closely with the Nordic Working Group on important Arctic questions, Nordregio also manages the Nordic Arctic Cooperation Program 2015-17, and conducts Arctic research projects funded by Belmont and by the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme.

We wish you pleasant reading and look forward to your feedback!

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NORDIC WORKING GROUP FOR SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARCTIC 2013-2016

CHAIR LISBETH NYLUND, NORWAY

The year 2016 is for knowledge sharing and concluding the long Foresight project, and also drafting the steps ahead, towards 2020. The Arctic Working Group has highlighted social and natural resources that can be expected to have a major influence on regional development in the Arctic over the next ten, twenty and thirty years. The Working Group places emphasis on identifying the opportunities and challenges for business development and the perspectives of young people on their own future opportunities in the Nordic Arctic. Gender has also been an important cross-cutting issue.

The Working Group has initiated a Foresight Analysis for assessing opportunities and challenges for sustainable regional development in the Nordic Arctic and to identify future development perspectives. The project will provide more comprehensive knowledge, and input for development to the Nordic Arctic policy. More about the process and results in this magazine.

The Working Group's mission is:

- To initiate a thematic broad and profound study of the future development in the Arctic, in the form of scenarios.
- To bring the Nordic Council of Ministers' Arctic Co-operation Programme further by collecting, processing and analysing existing information, evaluate different assumptions for future development in the area, and draw perspective rich scenarios.
- To contribute to the further development of the political debate, and provide the scientific knowledge with more weight and a more holistic character.

We hope to implement and bring our work forward through the upcoming regional cooperation programme (2017-2020), thematic Nordic and Arctic networks and arenas, and current regional and national programmes and networks. We are especially concerned about our bottom-up work method and the importance of the people in the Arctic to develop the arctic societies.

Members of the working group are Lisbeth Nylund, Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation (NO), Paula Mikkola, Nordkalotträdet (FI), Sari Saarela, Länsstyrelsen i Norrbottens Län (SE), Kari-Mette Lullau, Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation (NO), Snorri Björn Sigurðsson, Byggdastofnun (IS), Margretha Nónklett, Prime Minister's Office (FO), Klaus Georg Hansen, Grønlands Selvstyre (GL), and Fredrik Juell Theisen, Ministry of Climate and Environment (NO).



NORDREGIO NEWS 2/2016

Each Nordregio News issue provides multiple perspectives on a specific theme of regional development. With Nordregio News you are also kept up to date with the interesting research results produced at Nordregio. Nordregio News is sent to our subscribers via email. You can also find each issue on our website.

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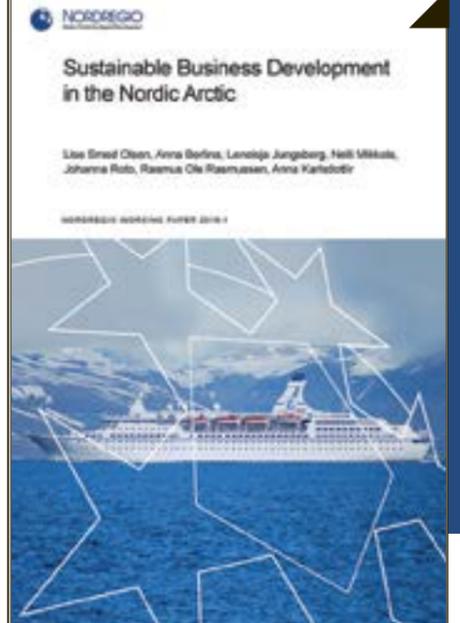
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NEW PUBLICATIONS ON NORDIC ARCTIC

Sustainable Business Development in the Arctic came out in January 2016. This Working Paper contributes with insight into the key areas of private business activities, the bioeconomy, tourism, and the field of creative industries. Final report on Arctic strategies will be out in August! Publications are available: www.nordregio.se/publications. ★



Youth perspectives on their future in the Nordic Arctic

The questions of how to raise and attract young populations are central issues for regional policy development in the Arctic. Nordregio and the Nordic working group on sustainable regional development in the Arctic have carried out an analysis to uncover young people's own perspectives on their future possibilities in Arctic communities. This policy brief summarises the main findings of a number of qualitative case studies about young people living in remote locations. The aim is to raise the ambitions and future expectations of the young generation.

Key findings:

- Young people in the Arctic are interested in business development and entrepreneurship.
- The greatest challenge for young people is to find opportunities for business development in the Arctic.
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NEW PUBLICATIONS

What are the challenges for future regional policy in the Nordic Arctic?

How can we plan for a sustainable future and who should be involved in the planning? The regional policy of the Nordic Arctic faces a number of challenges. These have been addressed in a broad and far-reaching thematic study performed by Nordregio and the Nordic Working Group for Sustainable Regional Development in the Arctic.

BY LENEISJA JUNGSRBERG AND LISBETH NYLUND



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What characterises communities and regions in the Nordic Arctic? In terms of social, environmental and economic parameters, the diversity of rural communities, towns and cities in the Nordic Arctic is impressive. From popular tourist attractions to large scale industrial operations based on forestry, mining and oil, and from massive fishing businesses and aqua farming to small innovative entrepreneurs building new IT tools, creative entrepreneurs organising big cultural festivals and vibrant towns and cities comprising Arctic and high tech universities, research and innovation organisations, the Nordic Arctic is holding its own in extraordinary surroundings and at the edge of societal innovation.

Even a quick glance at the statistical indicators for demography shows that many communities in the Nordic Arctic regions are experiencing outmigration of young people and women, while the ageing population is left behind, leading to an overall population decline in rural communities. Some towns and cities in northern Norway are growing, partly because of labour migration. An overview of the regional gross value added (GVA) in the Nordic Arctic shows a high dependence on primary industries, compared to the Nordic average. Activities such as fishing, agriculture, forestry and mining are characteristic of the labour market, which in some cases makes the communities more economically vulnerable, and also makes it difficult to attract new human resources that would add new qualifications and competences to local development. The picture is varied, and some of the arctic cities are thriving, with varied industries (eg. Tromsø, Bodø, Luleå, Rovaniemi, Akureyri). This variety is also one main characteristic of the Nordic Arctic.

The level of educational attainment outside the urban centres is low, compared to the Nordic average, in large parts of the Nordic Arctic. Small cities and communities rarely present post-secondary educational opportunities for youth. Young people, therefore, are the most mobile population group. The dispersed settlement can be seen as a societal structure that creates an incentive for youth to move at a certain age, if they wish to pursue an educa-

tion. Many young people explain that they choose education according to their interests, and accept that being mobile is a consequence of their choice. But mobility is also entailed by several other reasons such as a longing to explore new opportunities away from home.

Harsh climate conditions and, in some areas, scarce infrastructure, also have an impact on the Nordic Arctic. The West Nordic countries are highly dependent on boat and flight connections, at the same time as there are no direct flight connections i.e. between Nuuk, Torshavn and Reykjavik. The North Calotte region also needs (better) integrated cross-border transport, to support the transportation of people and goods. A good example of air traffic east-west across the borders, is the temporary existing flight route connecting Oulu, Luleå and Tromsø.

An essential characteristic of the Nordic Arctic is the presence of indigenous people. In Sápmi reindeer herding is an important livelihood. Some are also involved in research about traditional knowledge and/or in the tourism industry that involves museums, cultural events, outdoor cultural sites and places where Sámi handicrafts are sold. Tourism in Greenland has been facilitated since Air Iceland opened new routes to a number of locations. The West Nordic countries, together with northern Norway, are also popular destinations for cruise tourism, and the North Calotte is developing a successful Arctic- and Northern Light tourism.

What is the approach of the Nordic Working Group for Sustainable Regional Development in the Arctic?

Funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Nordic Working Group for Sustainable Regional Development in the Arctic has worked to collect, process and analyse information for future development, to contribute to the political debate and provide scientific knowledge that has more weight and a more holistic character.

Through the focus on socio-economic regional sustainable development, the starting point is to identify communities' interests and perspectives on future development. The working group has highlighted local and regional resources – both natural, economic and human-related – that can be expected to have a decisive >

> influence on regional development in the Arctic over the next ten, twenty and thirty years.

The methodological approach is to conduct a Foresight Analysis, to develop future visions related to local and regional resources, innovation potentials and demographic changes, and suggest development recommendations and initiatives. The context for the work carried out is changes in climate and environment, commodity price levels and globalisation. A central element in our work is the bottom up process where local communities are the starting point. We have paid specific attention to youth participation and –perspectives. The foresight analysis will also intersect, and be influenced by, local and regional governance structures. Business development generated by local participation is crucial and as a supplement to the Foresight analysis new reports has been written focusing on youth, demography, Nordic Arctic policies, innovation and business development.

What are the implications for future social sustainability?

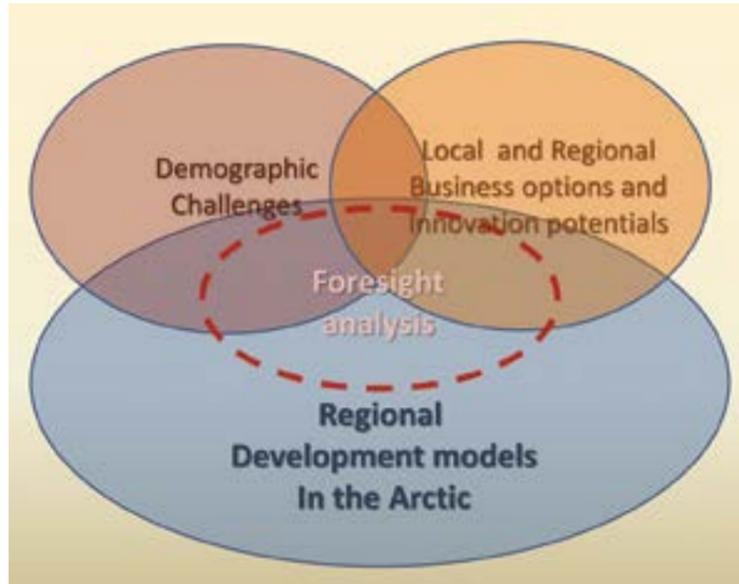
The results from the Foresight analysis, driven by the “bottom-up” approach that was conducted in local communities of northern Finland, northern Sweden, northern Norway, Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, identified a number of issues that the local inhabitants perceive to be important factors for their communities to thrive and develop. The overall themes highlighted by the citizens are infrastructure, education and skills development, job creation and business development and the importance of cultural and social activities. These issues were processed further by regional, national and Vest Nordic and North Callotte actors during the process. It is important that the people in the Arctic develops the Arctic societies. The Nordic Arctic regions have great potentials, human- and nature resource wise. They vary enormously, but also have commonalities and great potentials for collaboration and sharing of knowledge and experiences. The important role and responsibility of regional and local authorities to develop the region, and cooperate with neighbouring cross border regions, were highlighted.

Infrastructure

The need for infrastructural development varies, with the coastal communities often being the most isolated, since many of them are highly dependent on boat and ferry connections. By improving the infrastructure, importing from and exporting to the outside world will become cheaper and easier. Lack of affordable and adequate high-speed Internet connections was also raised as an prerequisite for development in several places.

Job creation and local business development

In many places, providing support to existing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to ensure a higher degree of value creation locally, was highlighted. Skill development, supervision and financial support for entrepreneurship was also mentioned by many, together with extending the opportunities within production and processing in fisheries, forestry and agricultural resources (and also, in some cases, mineral extraction).



Education and skills development

Lack of skilled workers, and mismatch between education and job requirements appeared as a general issue. More contact, including cross border, linking requirements among local businesses and educational institutions were suggested. Distance education possibilities and the opportunity to develop skills as a part of employment were stressed. It was highlighted that educational institutions could benefit from coordinating their programmes with each other, and also offer complimentary courses that aimed to support skills development in different parts of the Nordic Arctic. Participants also mentioned that more should be done to improve the qualifications of local teachers as motivators and study advisors.

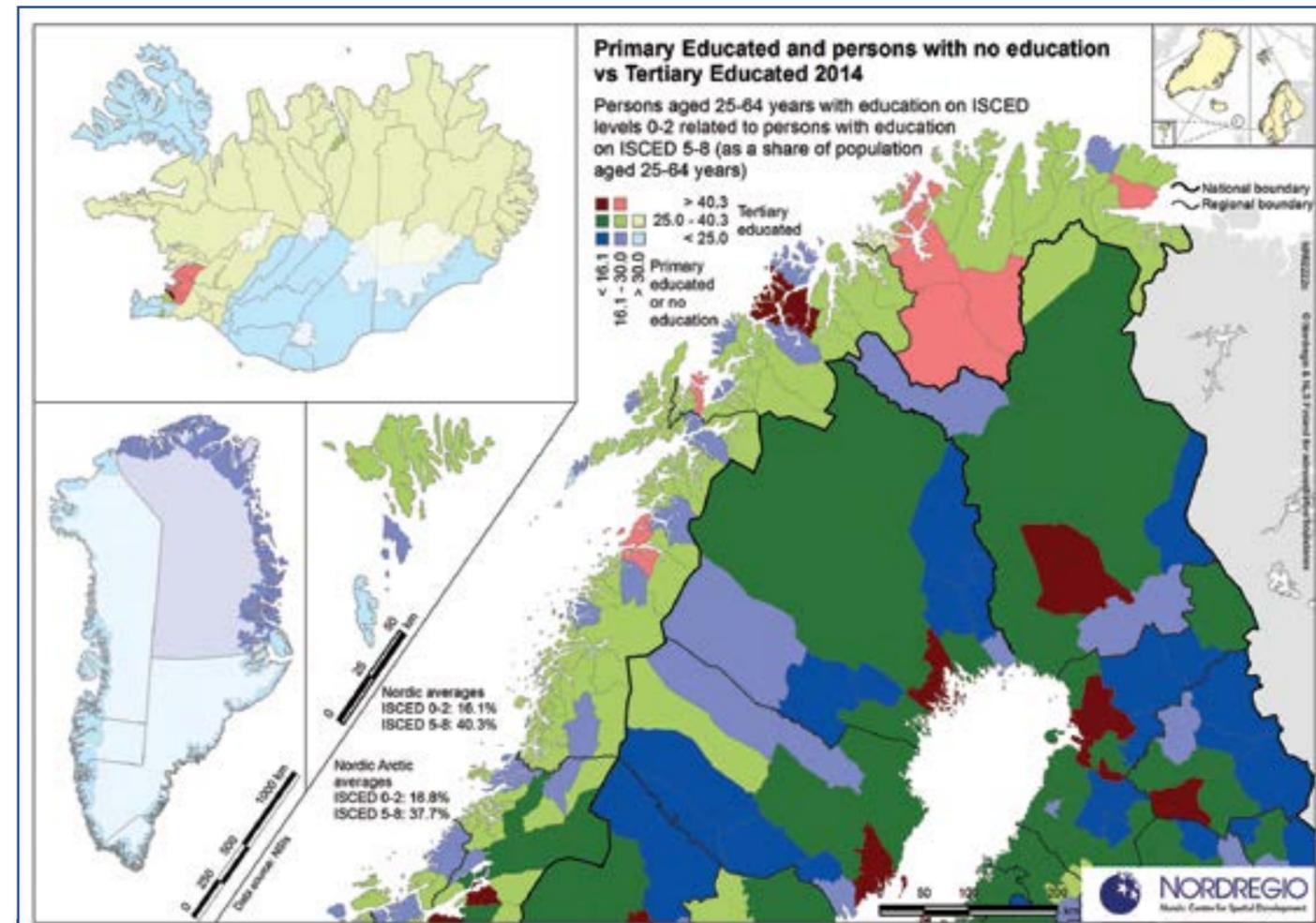
Cultural and social activities

The value of nature was emphasized in all rural communities, along with the importance of having social activities during leisure time, which would strengthen the social bonds and networks of people who live there. Some places were challenged by the integration of migrant workers, whereas other places were challenged by attitudes and “clan behaviour” that were said to cause constraints on development and collaboration between local inhabitants.

Foresight results and many ways forward

The results of the Foresight analysis will provide examples and insights about the current status of communities in the Nordic Arctic. The results feed into policy recommendations, with the objective of supporting Nordic Arctic communities and regions. The use of the “bottom-up” approach, involving the perspectives of citizens who actually live in the communities, should be particularly interesting for both Nordic and Arctic programmes and other thematic networks and arenas that work with local and regional development. ★

As illustrated in the figure, there is synergy between the fields covered by the Foresight analysis. To provide the participating communities and regions an opportunity to articulate their future visions, a “bottom-up” approach was applied.



Population with ISCED levels 0-2 compared to population with ISCED levels 5-8 education in 2014
Map by: Johanna Roto, Nordregio

The colours on the map reflect the level of education. Red colours indicate dominance of persons with tertiary education (5-8 ISCED), green indicate mixed level of education; blue colours indicate dominance of low level education (0-2 ISCED).

The highest share of population with tertiary level education (ISCED levels 5-8) can be found in the regional centres hosting administrative authorities, universities as well as in municipalities with vocational training facilities. The blue colours show regions where the level of education is low comparable to the Nordic averages. And this indicates regions where traditional renewable resource exploitation is taking place.

The most dominant colours throughout the map

are the green colours. Because the older generation comprise the majority of the population in these regions their mixed level educational background appear on the map of the Nordic Arctic. At the same time the administrative sectors and the vocational training also need a share of persons with mixed level education in order to maintain a welfare society with a certain level of social services. Together this explains the dominance of the green colours in most regions in the Nordic Arctic.

Interesting point for the Nordic perspective is that in the Nordic Arctic there are relatively more municipalities with either high or medium level of tertiary educated persons and persons with primary education only – highlighting the lack of persons with secondary education.

How does the Foresight method work?

The special conditions of the Nordic Arctic called for the use of the Foresight method, with its valuable 'bottom-up' approach, for bringing citizen perspectives on future development into regional planning. The outcome of the analysis from the Foresight study provides a scientific basis for strategic decision-making for local, regional and national authorities.

BY RASMUS OLE RASMUSSEN AND LENEISJA JUNGSSBERG



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The Foresight method is based on carrying out a structured dialogue between relevant stakeholders. As applied in the Nordic Arctic study, it used a future-oriented perspective to collect and generate insights for planning and development. It was one of the main methods in the study, which relied on a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.

While the Foresight workshops provided the qualitative material, the quantitative material consisted of maps that display the current status, geography and development over time, in terms of demography, economy and human resources, at local and regional levels. The qualitative input from the Foresight workshops was gathered in a series of three phases: the vision phase, the realism phase, and the realisation phase.

The value of Foresight is in the combination of details and overview

The workshop series in three steps constituted a central part of bringing the citizens together with local, regional and national planners. First, in the vision phase, a total of 12 local workshops were organised; they were held in each region of the Nordic Arctic, in two selected local communities in each region, with the participation of local inhabitants. Second, in the realism phase, which was conducted at the regional/national level, six workshops were held. They provided an opportunity for dialogue among the participants, who were participants from the community workshops as well as representatives municipal, regional and national authorities. Finally, in the third, realisation phase, two transnational workshops were organised, one for members of the West Nordic Council and the other for members of the North Calotte Council and other stakeholders in the cross-border region.

The diversity of the Nordic Arctic was also reflected in the variety of languages that were used in the workshops and in their materials, such as posters and maps. For example, the posters used in Greenland were in Greenlandic as

well as Danish, whereas in Kautokeino both Norwegian and Sami languages were included. In order to gain credibility in the communities, the languages used in everyday life needed to be represented during the discussions as well as on the maps. And, in both regions, once the workshops were over, the local educational institutions were happy to receive the maps as new and updated educational material.

Benefits of participatory development in local communities

Because the citizens are the foundation of their communities, they are also the core of the local development initiatives. For the study, local knowledge was relied on when gathering information about the current situation; local knowledge creates opportunities for optimizing the quality of municipal decisions. Thus, in the study's application of the Foresight method, there were several reasons to include citizens. First of all, Foresight can:

- be a support for the municipality, helping it to draw on resources from the citizens in the area, as an opportunity to hear their perspectives on current development;
- contribute to a reduction in the risk of local conflict, and strengthen the legitimacy of the local as well as national authorities.

The Foresight method includes techniques that helped us to achieve these objectives. For example, it is important that the workshops include a trusted and generally-accepted anchor person in each community, and that a selection of 15-20 people, representing the variations in local interests, are gathered. This helps to ensure that any discussion of future prospects will include a diverse set of perspectives, as does making sure to invite participants from various occupations, educational backgrounds, family situations and age groups.

This creates a solid base for steps two and three in the workshop series, when the ideas from the citizens are brought forward and discussed, together with regional and national representatives.

COMMENT

ELFAR OLIVER SIGURDARSON

Member of Árborg's youth council



"Besides, it's a piece of cake."

Elfar believes that the youth council in Árborg municipality is a good platform for young people to present their vision of the community they live in. He was honoured to participate in forming the society. "I think it is very important for the youth to get the opportunity to express their views, because their views are valid. Young people can be the ones in power, a few years from now, especially if they get the opportunity to receive a social education that involves participation. That is something that cannot be learned from a book," says Elfar, and adds that such experience can encourage young people to take part in politics in the future.

He recommends platforms that allow youth to participate, and other forms of cooperation between generations. "We recently received the news that the youth council's wish, to receive Syrian refugees, will be enforced. The youth council initiated the discussion, and recently it was decided that Árborg and the neighbouring municipality would welcome twenty refugees. This confirmed that we can be an influence and do some good. That is something." He wishes that the municipality could do more, but understands that both the budget and the housing options are limited.

Elfar wants to live in Árborg his entire life, but has to overcome some challenges first. The education he intends to get is only available in the capital city, which is also where his girlfriend lives. "Besides, it is a piece of cake."

Maps facilitate rich discussions

To make sure that each workshop was as successful as possible, materials that provide a factual basis stimulated the discussions among community participants; they included a series of maps that displayed the local community's situation regarding demography, economy, infrastructure and human resources. Even complex data, when shown on maps that relate to the participants' own reality, provides most participants a basis for a more "down-to-earth" interpretation. And when the maps are printed in full poster size, they are even more useful in facilitating the discussions that take place during the community consultations.

The detailed maps and rich graphs in the posters used in workshops in different locations should cover mostly the same themes. This helps to make sure that comparable results can be generated. Still, the diversity of Nordic Arctic communities requires adjustments to specific needs. One example of this is the differences between the posters for southern Greenland and Kautokeino, northern Norway. They reflect both minor and major differences. In southern Greenland, the local, more informal distri-

bution of local products from hunting and fishing is very important, especially in the smaller communities. In the case of Kautokeino, on the other hand, the Sámi relation to the land is an important issue that needs to be reflected in the content of the maps.

Foresight generates insight

With the conclusion of the Nordic Arctic Foresight study, a great amount of data and an equally valuable fund of knowledge about local perspectives have been gathered. The good will and hospitality of numerous communities were an important contribution, and now it remains for all users of the project's results to apply the insight it has generated. The future development perspectives produced from this Foresight study will, to a large extent, be related to current challenges, such as demographic change, local and regional business development, educational opportunities and innovation potential. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches has promising potential; it contributes to the reliability of the ideas and recommendations that have been formulated for future regional policy in the Nordic Arctic. ★

COMMENT

RAGNHEIÐUR INGA SIURGEIRSDÓTTIR

Former member of Árborg's youth council



"The youth council is the perfect platform"

Ragnheiður left Árborg's youth council recently, after five years as a member. Her reason for participating was to have an influence and be able to express her opinion on the municipality's matters. She thinks that the youth council members are an important link to other young people, since they shorten the lines of communication and push forward their ideas and philosophy within the administrative authority. "It is important to listen to youth opinion. It is a group, often left out when it comes to decision-making. We are becoming or have just become adults. We are the ones taking over from earlier generations, so why shouldn't our opinion matter at this point?" says Ragnheiður. She explains that she often receives a rather dull reaction when expressing her opinion, with people telling her that she should not be interfering with issues that are unrelated to her and to people her age. She mentions a few examples, such as the discussions about raising the age for qualifying for a driver's licence, lowering the age limit for buying alcohol and whether alcohol should be sold in convenience stores. "It is this lack of respect, this way of thinking, which makes it so important for young people to express their views, and the youth council is the perfect platform, whether you are in the council, or not," says Ragnheiður, adding that no age group should have a higher status than any other. She believes that her experience as a member of the youth council will benefit her in the future.

INTERVIEW

► Can Foresight actually be useful?

Foresight sounds so abstract. What use can the North Calotte Council make use of the Foresight project?

The Foresight Project has re-opened the discussion on Arctic cooperation in a new way and on many different levels. In Finland, the national Arctic strategy is rather unknown, especially on the local level, and many actors and citizens have felt that it does not really concern them. The Foresight Project opened our eyes to this. The first national Arctic strategy as well as later updates was drafted by major national actors with little effort to bring it down to the grassroots. It has a strong business development focus, where the major actors come mainly from the most southern parts of the country. Its strong focus on the maritime sector and the Northern Sea Route engage very few people in northern Finland. Involving the local level is a way that the Foresight Project has made a difference, especially with its local workshops.

The workshops have awakened interest in Arctic development issues on the local level. They've revealed that people in other parts of the Nordic Arctic are facing similar challenges and threats such as outmigration of the youth. We recognise this so well. Many leave to pursue further education and do not return since employment opportunities are scarce. At the same time, many small businesses lack competent employees and this slows their development and even survival. Similar to other Arctic regions, the ageing population in the most sparsely populated areas has increasing costs. The vulnerability of local economies that rely on one major industry for employment is something we share with the coastal areas of Norway and the more continental mining communities.

Generally speaking, for us the Foresight project has highlighted not so much the large-scale Arctic opportunities that have been so much in the spotlight during the last few years, but also the present realities of smaller Arctic communities. We see that the Arctic (business) development that is so much in the news, is about companies coming in from outside the area and exploiting our natural resources, with local communities benefitting only marginally from the increased business activities.

Likewise, the Foresight Project has provided valuable information and documentation – statistics and tables – about development in different areas, which gives food for thought to local and regional decision-makers. In several workshops, participants have realised that perhaps there is something we could do ourselves in order to turn the trends in a more positive direction, instead of waiting for someone else to do it for us.

The North Calotte Council is looking forward to the final conclusions and policy recommendations from the Foresight Project, and will certainly use as much of those as it can to promote the North Calotte region's interests, both in national and international forums, in the future.

How has the data collected for the Foresight analysis been useful for the North Calotte Council so far?

The Foresight analysis data has been more comprehensive than the data available to us earlier. It is data that has not been systematically compiled earlier, except for the first descriptions of Northern Sparsely Populated Areas in the early 2000s. Some national statistics authorities in the Nordic countries have made



PAULA MIKKOLA
Secretary General
North Calotte Council
Photo: Kent Lidman

efforts to collect comparable data from the different Nordic countries, but to get all-inclusive Nordic statistics has seemed to be a mission impossible, due to the different national systems of producing metadata. Thus, the material that they were able to produce together was either inaccurate, or outdated, when finally published.

Now, the Foresight analysis has clearly demonstrated that it is possible to collect comparative data and compile statistics. The project has significantly promoted the role of Nordregio as an innovative and serious statistics producer in the eyes of regional decision-makers in the North Calotte area.

Are there any examples that relate to policy-making or strategy development?

It is too early to say that the Foresight Project has had a major impact on the policy-making or strategy development in the North Calotte Area. However, in many of the local workshops, the participants realised that they could have an impact on development through their own actions, and this seems to me is a very important insight that may have long-lasting effects.

The Foresight analysis has also gathered together people from many different spheres >

> of life who perhaps would not have met otherwise. Once again, it has been proven that cross-sectoral encounters not only lead to good discussion, but also provide interesting results. This was true especially in the local workshops, where many participants met for the first time, without any pre-conceptions of each other. Those workshop results were perhaps more surprising than what happened on the higher levels. On the regional level, for example, most of the participants already know each other's perspective through regular meetings.

Now, it seems a pity that the project did not succeed in arranging a workshop where all the participating countries and, especially, the regional actors, could attend. Such a workshop might have led to some interesting discussions about future development in the Arctic.

Did the project have any surprises?

It has been a surprise to see how little "Arctic development" is a concern of the man in the street in the North Calotte area. People do not feel it has anything to do with them. Yet, at the same time, it's true that we actually are in the midst of large-scale Arctic development, and any decision concerning it will have some effect on the people of this area.

It has also been rather surprising to witness how different countries approach Arctic development issues differently: Finland has declared that all of Finland is Arctic, and the strategy has a very strong business development ambition. On the other hand, the measures that have been taken nationally, on the basis of the Finnish strategy, have mainly involved actors from the southern parts of the country, such as in shipbuilding, icebreakers, off-shore technology and maritime search and rescue. They have not been able to engage or promote the business community in the northern parts of Finland to any noticeable extent. Meanwhile, in Sweden, the focus on Arctic development has been on environmental and indigenous themes, which do not stand out in the Finnish strategy at all. And last, but not least, Norway has a totally different policy that focuses on strong development in its northern regions.

When considering these differences, one begins to fear that when it comes to the content and ambitions of the future Nordic Arctic Strategy, the old saying about the essence of Nordic cooperation will once again come true: the one who wants least, will win the most. ★

INTERVIEW

INGA DÓRA MARKUSSEN
Secretary General
West Nordic Council



► Just being part of it is already useful

Has the West Nordic Council planned or already made use of the Foresight Project?

The West Nordic Council, in cooperation with the Nordic Council, is soon going to hold a seminar with the title, "Sustainable regional development in the Arctic," which be about the Foresight Project. It will be held on the 23rd and 24th of August 2016, in Qaqortoq, Greenland. Both Councils have in the past years increased their focus on the Arctic agenda. The views of the local people, businesses and local politicians in the high north are important and the project gives the decision-makers insight into their priorities. Nordregio will present the results of the project to the inhabitants of Qaqortoq and the members of the Councils will participate.

Has the data collected for the Foresight analysis proven useful to the West Nordic Council?

The fact that the West Nordic Council has been involved in the project through a workshop has made it useful. As a result, the members of the Council have been kept informed about the processes and partial conclusions. The foresight analysis becomes very useful in that context.

Can you name examples of its usefulness in relation to policy-making or strategy development?

It is too early to tell whether the project will lead to the presentation of a resolution to the three parliaments. But the useful information given in the final conclusions will help in defining a strategy for the Arctic Agenda.

Have there been any surprises regarding this project?

No, not yet, but we look forward to participating in the seminar in Qaqortoq. Maybe there will be some surprises then.

Faroe Islands: Many young men, with just as many futures

Boys stay and girls leave, you can often hear, but is that the whole story? Where to live and where to work are common questions among young people in the small island communities of the Faroe Islands.

BY FIROUZ GAINI

Boys stay and girls leave, you can often hear, but is that the whole story? Where to live and where to work are common questions among young people in the small island communities of the Faroe Islands.

Rather than depend on hearsay, it seemed best to perform a study on the matter. If the questions were asked in a systematic way, would any patterns emerge from the answers that young people provided, not just for themselves, but for others, elsewhere? The hope was that the answers would provide clues for planners, politicians and other community leaders looking for ways to provide sustainable livelihoods for these small island communities.

It emerged that, in general, the perspectives that young people in the Faroes have about the future commonly resonate with the critical reflections they have about life at home: How is life at home versus elsewhere (that is, abroad, first and foremost in Denmark)? Assessing where to live and where to work are thought of in combination and separately, providing distinctly different kinds of answers. This is very pronounced among young people and young adults in this small-scale island community and can be partly explained by the islands' long history of short- and long-term international education and training, and work-driven migration. Recession pushes people out, away from home; economic boom pulls them back. Today's "globalising" society, with its shifting labour market, urges young people to invest in specialised knowledge and skills that enhance their personal prospects. But where are these prospects, and how is it possible that anybody stays?

Faroe boys have been falling behind educationally. According to Dagbjartur Debes (in FRØÐI 3/2014), one-third of the 20- to 30-year-old men are without any education above ninth grade (lower secondary), while girls, among persons in the age group 25-34, represent the majority at secondary and post-secondary schools.¹ The gender difference is also evident in primary and lower secondary school, where even though boys generally receive lower scores in tests (for instance PISA surveys) than girls do, once they've left school male workers still earn more than their female counterparts, regardless of educational level. The trend, since the end of the 20th century, has been that more girls move out of the country in pursuit of higher education, and that many never to return to the Faroes, while more boys remain in the (inner) rural periphery.

The above creates a picture that fits with the results from a survey² that I performed in 2012. It showed that more boys than girls planned to search for a job directly after compulsory school (ninth grade), and depicts a setting where one imagines that a boy, the usual "breadwin-

ner" and principal of a household, perhaps feels obliged to rethink his position in society, and asks: How can I realise my future dreams? Faroese boys in the eighth grade, as shown by another, qualitative, study³ (that I completed in 2014), see their futures in their home community, or in its vicinity, even if this choice might limit their career opportunities. As many of them emphasised, this is because the community "has what I need," which includes a relatively secure job in the fishery, construction, mechanical (motor), or similar, blue-collar industries. They are being pragmatic, mainly, and avoiding "unnecessary" risk in relation to life projects.

This does not imply that young men are simply immobile, with traditional minds, since many eighth-graders would indeed like to work abroad – and globally – for shorter or longer periods of time, before ultimately settling in the Faroes. Such projects are given priority because of the work-related as well as personal life experiences they can provide. One boy, for instance, told me that he would like to work in Norway (most likely offshore) as an electrician, while still living in the Faroes. As Gestur Hovgaard wrote (in an article in the book, *Remapping Gender, Place and Mobility*), this is a familiar arrangement for hundreds of Faroese long-distance commuters who work on fishing and freight vessels.⁴ As in the case of the boy I talked to, many choose strategically, selecting professions that provide ample opportunities to work across national borders and to receive the higher salaries that usually follow.

Faroe youth find security in diversity

It is getting more difficult to make a career in any industry, including most of the modern fishing industry, without, at least, secondary education. While a growing number of Faroese girls bet on an academic education, many boys are convinced that vocational school education is what they want and what they need. The unemployment rates are relatively low and the opportunities for temporary employment in a neighbouring country (in the event there is no attractive job at home) are quite good. Another interesting fact is that many men, especially men from village communities, are "handymen," with a broad range of practical skills that help them combine fishing and farming, construction and masonry, et cetera, as a livelihood.

Young men are not too worried about their futures, as the survey from 2014 illustrates, despite the challenges that boys have at school (and from the general restructuring of the Faroese economy), because traditional male-dominated industries have not disappeared. Those industries >



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Notes

1. Dagbjartur Debes in FRØÐI 3/2014 (Torshavn)
2. Firouz Gaini: 'Ungfólk í Føroyum 2012' (Report, Torshavn)
3. Firouz Gaini, project, part of the report 'Nordic Arctic Youth Future Perspectives' (Edited by Karlsdóttir and Jungsberg, NORDREGIO 2015)
4. Gestur Hovgaard: 'Being away, Being at Home; Being Both: The Case of Faroese Maritime Workers'. In Faber and Nielsen (Eds.) *Remapping Gender, Place and Mobility: Global confluences and Local Particularities in Nordic Peripheries* (Farnham & Burlington: Ashgate)



> have, on the other hand, been transformed and modernised, as is for instance the case with the booming aquaculture industry. Moreover, the individualisation of society has persuaded some boys to search for unconventional future careers, as has a boy in Torshavn, who told me that – in the event he does not succeed as a professional soccer player – he wants to become a researcher, or a "person inventing things." Young people navigate an ocean of obstacles and opportunities, but they don't seem to doubt that they will find a safe haven for adult working life. ★

The upper photo is from Nanortalik, Greenland, by Leneisja Jungsberg. Below is a photo from Faroe Islands by Pipsa Salolammi.

Home Sweet Home

Community involvement and future prospects among young people

Why stay in the small town of Steigen, in northern Norway, when you can live in New York, or Brazil? And if it may be a good idea for some, then how do you win them back?

BY LINDIS SLOAN

In the youth project of the Arctic Foresight process, we interviewed a group of 16- and 17-year-olds in the local school. What were their visions for the future? How did they see themselves and their community in 10, 20 or 30 years? Their answers showed a surprisingly cohesive picture of how they saw their future.

Being a small community (about 2500 people), Steigen does not offer secondary schooling past the first year of Videregående Skole (high school), so that young people have to leave home in order to continue their formal education. Some look forward to it, in particular those who feel stifled by what they see as a lack of choice and diversity at home. Most in this group were girls, who saw themselves living, in 20 or 30 years, in New York, or in Brazil, or travelling the world as part of Doctors Without Borders. Others – mainly boys – were paralysed at the thought, some even planned to delay the inevitable by taking a year off from school rather than leaving their families now. “Maybe when I’m 18 . . .” one told me.

Never let it be said again that men fear commitment. Heavily geared towards fish farming, agriculture and technical vocational training, the young men in my sample saw themselves as being finished with their training at about the age of 20, then settling down with a job, and starting a family, in their 20s. The girls, on the other hand, thought they would still be studying in their mid-20s, with a job and family happening sometime around the age of 30. Although planning careers in health or education, both good for finding jobs in rural areas, they were far from sure that they wanted to live anywhere close to where they had grown up. Only in describing their ideal homes did they converge, mentioning peace and quiet, friendly people and knowing that they had family close by.

But does this mean that in this community women are “modern” and men “traditional”? Well, for one thing, my sample is much too small to generalise from. It was interesting to see how neatly they fitted into some stereotypical portrayals of gender roles in rural areas and, when we put them into groups, we heard from their chat that they were aware of this, too.

It has become a commonplace “truth” that women leave, men stay. Sven-Roald Nystø, then president of the Sámi parliament, said at a conference I attended at Árran Lule-Sámi Centre, in 2003, that, “the young people should leave home for education, experience, life. It is our job to make them want to come back!” Since then, half the municipalities in Norway have had some sort of recruiting project, trying to do just that. Do they work?

Well, yes and no. On a structural level, statistics such as those in Nordregio’s new report on education and mobility clearly show that women do leave the rural areas, much more so than men. Men outnumber women in all rural municipalities in Norway. Does it have to do with education, labour market opportunities, or family choices? Yes, probably each of them, to some extent. Individual choices are never made in a vacuum, completely independent of what is going on around one. Media, teachers’ feedback and parental expectations – they all play into one’s decision-making processes.

At the same time as all that has been going on, there is a group of young professionals, starting families, and looking for just the qualities our 16- and 17-year-olds described for their ideal homes: rural communities, bucolic surroundings, the chickens-in-the-garden idyll (though I have it on hipster authority that the chickens are a hellish hassle, really). What are they looking for? It’s much what young people everywhere are looking for: affordable housing, good connections to more central areas, good schools and interesting jobs.

Steigen’s project, “Lev på Leines,” has played a part in the moving of 13 young families, 47 individuals, to the village. There are still issues of gender, class and ethnicity when it comes to questions of who comes, who stays and who leaves again, and we need to take those into account. However, seen in conjunction with the “Steigen model” for vocational training, which connects trainees with a local company from day one of comprehensive school, Steigen has received a boost when it comes to recruitment and local identity. If you ask the class of 2025, they may not be quite so convinced that their future lies in New York and Brazil. ★



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INTERVIEW

Even small changes have big effects



VIVIAN MOTZFELDT
Member of the Parliament, Greenland
Foresight facilitator, Southern Greenland

What’s it like to host Foresight workshops in Southern Greenland?

Many take for granted that, when you live in a small community, meetings and discussions between people just happen by themselves, but this is not necessarily the case. In Qaqortoq, in southern Greenland, the Foresight workshop provided a platform for people to express their concerns. An interesting part was the formulation of questions about the citizens’ perspectives on the national and municipal governments’ responsibilities and, maybe most importantly, the citizen participants’ own responsibility for societal development.

For many years in Greenland there has been a tendency to blame the Danes, the politicians, the institutions, or something else. Sometimes I miss the awareness of each individual’s role in the community, and the opportunity for taking more responsibility. This was also reflected in the final voting, where the Foresight participants voted for “Greater strength among individuals” as the most important challenge to be addressed in Qaqortoq, southern Greenland.

What is the community feeling like among the people in villages and towns in southern Greenland?

It is important that progress is visible in bigger projects such as the construction of an airport in Qaqortoq. This keeps the feeling of optimism and makes people believe that this is a place that will still be thriving in 50 years rather than moving toward depopulation.

Many activities are taking place and recently a culture and leisure activities

manager was employed and he is doing a good job. Recently, there was a ventriloquist who entertained as part of the programme for Childrens’ Day in Greenland. In general, organisations can apply for support from “Structural Political Funds” if they also invest in the initiative themselves. The kayak organisation has just applied and received funds for participation in the national championship, and a theatre instructor has just been supported in creating a play with teenagers, to be shown at the national day, and because the individuals are themselves contributing, you see a great degree of ownership in the initiatives.

To sum up, then, I see the social and cultural activities as being very important, since they give us the impression we are living in a vivid and alive city.

As part of the parliament, then, how would you describe the interaction between politicians and the local communities?

Sometimes, the debates in the parliament in Nuuk, Greenland’s capital, are based on how life is when one lives in the capital, and even politicians who come from smaller places quickly forget to bring in the perspectives of the people who live in more remote areas.

Recently, there have also been some demonstrations in relation to the plans for uranium mining in Narsaq, in southern Greenland. There are two groups, one that supports the mining project because of the opportunities for employment, and one group that is protesting against extraction of uranium because of the environmental and health-related risks. The mining companies are still prospec-

ting and the requirements for receiving a government license to extract minerals are demanding.

What are the most important future issues for southern Greenland?

A big challenge is the economic paradigm of profitability in public investments, because when few people live in one area it is not easy to ensure an economic foundation for infrastructural investments, among other things. For example, between the village of Alluitsup Paa and Qaqortoq, there are no public boat connections, so transport either has to be with the helicopter, which most people can’t afford, or by private boat, which can be very dangerous during winter season.

Something that has been a priority for many years, and is soon to be realised, is the construction of an airport in Qaqortoq and since Campus Kujalleq (the local secondary high- and business school) will now be extended, and the number of students will increase approximately by 100, this is highly relevant. Currently, around the Christmas and summer seasons when they go home to their families, it can take more than a week to transport all students by helicopter and boat.

The airport will also support direct flights to and from Iceland, which means that in 2½ hours you can be in Iceland, and I expect this will create many opportunities in terms of trade and tourism. This will also contribute a stronger experience of being connected to other Nordic countries. ★



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