

Barents Youth Cooperation Office



Activity report

2010

Introduction

In May of 2001, a conference of ministers responsible for youth affairs in the Barents region was held in Tromsø, Norway. At the conference, a Plan of Action for the future Barents cooperation in the youth field was adopted. In this Plan it was stated that mechanisms for information and guidance for youth groups in the Barents region would be established. The Barents Euro-Arctic Working Group on Youth Policy is responsible for the implementation of the Plan of Action. As a result of this, the Barents Youth Cooperation Office was established in Murmansk, Russia.

The overall objective for the establishment of such a service is:

- A well functioning multilateral cooperation in the youth field, that contributes to an improved situation for young people in the Barents Region, as well as a sustainable development of the region.

Coordinators for youth cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region are appointed by the Barents Euro-Arctic Working Group on Youth Policy. These coordinators shall provide information and guidance for youth groups, organisations and networks on:

- national and international resources for funding of projects
- education in project planning, implementation and follow-up
- possible cooperation partners nationally and internationally
- planned and ongoing youth projects and meetings in the Barents Region

The coordinator shall also stay in close and regular contact with the regional and local administrations in the Barents Region and with other cooperation structures and organisations working with youth issues in the northern part of Europe.

Work in 2010

Major achievements

1. Counseling and guidance of youth groups

The Office provides counseling and guidance for youth groups interested in international cooperation and provides education in such issues as project planning and project management, as well as information and counseling on possible sources for financing of youth projects and application writing.

Counseling concerning studies abroad and possibilities for getting grants for long term studies or short summer courses provided by BYCO is also in great demand by the youths and their parents. The office also gets enquiries about possibilities to go on a traineeship or voluntary service to the Nordic countries or Europe.

BYCO also provides general information about the Barents region, international cooperation and youth cooperation, for students research works.

In 2010 total amount of counseling hours was 385 hours.

2. Project support

BYCO provides counseling and support to international (multilateral and bilateral) youth projects. It includes a wide range of service and various level of involvement: from minor counseling, and just taking part in the event, to heavier involvement including participation in planning and implementation and practical support in the organization of the event. The scope of projects supported is also rather wide it includes conferences, festivals in various fields of art and culture, information meetings and seminars.

In 2010 the Office has provided support to 30 international youth projects in such spheres as culture, youth entrepreneurship, education, environment, indigenous issues, sport, youth NGO and youth policy. 27 projects were successfully completed, and 3 projects are on preparatory stage and will be carried out later. Among the biggest projects to be mentioned are “Barents Sea Youth Conference”, “Jokkmokk Winter Conference”, “Barents Passion Week”, “Barents Youth Film Festival”. There also was a big number of smaller youth initiatives that also play an important role in the development of youth cooperation in the area and creation of good relations between the youths of the region. Total number of participants in all the projects is 2630 persons.

More detailed information about these projects can be found in a separate project description.

3.Information and networking

BYCO staff is often invited to regional youth forums where BYCO provides the information about cooperation possibilities, but also creates a wider contact network of youth organizations. Office representative travels around the Barents region, meeting both youth authorities and youth organizations, spreading the information about cooperation and funding possibilities and encouraging them to international cooperation.

BYCO takes part in various conferences and forums organized by various organizations. We consider this part of work very important because the Office representative not only plays a role of experts, providing information about youth cooperation in the BEAR, but also gets new contacts, finds “customers” and supports their projects. Such work also makes a good publicity for BYCO.

Participation in the conferences and seminar is also important for updating the information that BYCO staff has to offer to young people, building competence and knowledge. BYCO organizes information sessions for youth groups and

organizations on demand. In 2010 BYCO has taken part in 3 conferences, 5 information meeting and 10 seminars.

BYCO is cooperating with local mass media providing information about upcoming international youth events.

Publicity work is also important. In 2010 the office had its own web-site www.byco.ru, where the news from the regions and various youth projects as well as information about coming projects was published. One could also find there useful information about project finding and links to funding organizations and youth organizations of the Barents region.

In the end of 2010 the site was closed down. In 2011 such information and news will be published at the web-site www.barentsyouth.org in cooperation with the Norwegian Barents Secretariat.

BYCO is also present in social media – there is a group in www.vkontakte.ru, oriented on Russian youths, there the information about the projects is published.

A brochure containing practical advice on application writing and project planning and financing, as well as an overview of funding possibilities for youth projects was published in 2010 and it is in great demand by the youths.

4. Cooperation with RWGYP

The Office is also interacting with the regional working group on youth issues, a representative is present at the meetings, and contact with the members is established.

5. Cooperation with BRYC

BYCO provides support for BRYC members, including mostly visas and logistics, as well as supports BRYC events.

6. Support of cooperation of youth authorities

One of the main functions of BYCO is to facilitate cooperation between the regions, so it functions as a link between youth authorities of different regions, facilitating contacts between them. For example, BYCO is involved in cooperation and negotiations between youth authorities of Murmansk region and Lappland. In our work we try to encourage youth authorities of the region to cooperate internationally and to allocate more resources to international cooperation.

The expertise gained by BYCO is acknowledged and widely used by other actors. The office staff has been invited as an expert to the grant committee of the Murmansk regional board for youth affairs where the best projects were chosen and financed.

Major future challenges for 2011

Sustainable financial situation

Adequate level of financial resources and proper financial management is a necessary precondition for successful functioning of BYCO and providing services for young people. It is of vital importance to ensure a mechanism of sustainable and functioning accounting system for the office. In order to keep the activities evenly spread throughout the year it is necessary to ensure the stability and the timeliness of cash flow both regarding the incoming cash flow (contributions) and the outgoing cash flow (payments).