



## THE BARENTS WORKING GROUPS

### ANNUAL REPORT 2018

**Name of the Working Group:**

Barents Regional Youth Council (BRYC)

**The current Chair and the Chairmanship period:**

Sweden and the Finnmark County, 2017-2019

#### 1. Priorities of the Chairmanship

The priorities of the Swedish BEAC Chairmanship 2017-2019 has a specific emphasis on youth:

*“The future of the Barents region relies on continued efforts and investments in youth, culture, health and social issues, education and research. During the Swedish Chairmanship, attention will be given to the younger generation and promotion of gender equality in all the areas of the Council’s work.”*

This also includes the aim to “promote youth engagement in all areas of Barents cooperation.”

Finnmark County also mentions youth as a priority for their Chairmanship of the Barents Regional Council (BRC):

*“The Barents Regional Youth Council will play an important part in the implementation of the Youth Program.”*

Based on these priorities, the Barents Regional Youth Council in the accounting year focused on the following aims:

- Continue to strengthen the youth cooperation in the Barents Region and empower young people to be active participants of the societies in which they live.
- Discuss key youth issues in the Barents Region, and jointly develop ideas for new project initiatives that involve youth.
- Actively promote the voice and interests of Barents youth at various events – including youth events, education events, political events, BRC and JWGY meetings, as well as other events involving regional and/or national decision-makers.
- Secure funding from the Barents Regional Council for BRYC’s activities in the upcoming years.

- Strengthen the cooperation with the JWGY, as well as other BEAC working groups and stakeholders.
- Organize the BRYC Annual Meeting and the BRYC Annual Event, with a particular focus on cultural diversity.
- Contribute to the organization of the anniversary conference in Luleå: “25 years of Barents Cooperation – Youth perspective for the future” (hosted by the Swedish BEAC Chairmanship).

## **2. Meetings (meetings held, main topics and outcomes of the meetings)**

BRYC met three times in 2018. The first time, BRYC met **16-18 April in Luleå, Sweden**, for the **BRYC Annual Meeting**, which was held back-to-back with the **anniversary conference “25 years of Barents Cooperation – Youth perspective for the future”**. The Annual Meeting elected a new Board and Chair for 2018-19. Also, a total of six new members, from all four Barents countries, were added to the Council. The annual meeting set an ambitious goal to develop BRYC as a project initiator, and created two new project ideas: “Career development” and “BRYC Gaming Event”. The ideas were further elaborated by two designated project committees and resulted in two project drafts.

The second meeting was a **BRYC Board meeting**, which was held in **Kirkenes, Norway, in August**. The main focus of this meeting was to develop the program of the upcoming BRYC Annual Event 2018. Another important topic was the future structure and work of BRYC. The Board also had several online meetings throughout the year.

The third time, the whole council met in Kirkenes during the **BRYC Annual Event 2018 in November**. During this meeting, BRYC discussed the status of ongoing and future projects/activities. In addition, several new council members were introduced.

In addition to its own meetings and events, BRYC attended the **BRC/RC meetings** in Rovaniemi in May and in Syktyvkar in September. The BRC meeting in May, in Rovaniemi, decided that each member region will allocate the annual grant of 5000 EUR to BRYC in the next three years (2018-2020). Regions that are legally prevented from allocating the annual grants, are expected to support BRYC with an in-kind contribution of an equivalent value.

BRYC also attended the **three meetings of the JWGY** in 2018: firstly in Umeå in April, secondly in Stockholm in June and thirdly in Kirkenes in November. As a result, BRYC developed a closer cooperation the Joint working Group on Youth (JWGY), and discussed new project ideas to cooperate on in the upcoming year.

## **3. Other activities (projects, events, programmes etc.)**

BRYC’s project collaboration with the Murmansk culture organization “Fridaymilk” continued in 2018 in the form of two youth projects: “Inversia: Digital North” (1-5 February) and “Uncapitals: Nature Fragility” (26-29 September). The project “Inversia” is a digital and media art festival with a focus on the High North. In 2018, the project was implemented for the second time, after a big success in 2017. “Uncapitals” is a creative camp for young people who specialize in photo and video, music and sound, and dance performances from the Nordic countries. The purpose of this project was to explore the vast territories of Northern Norway and, through collaboration, create a common product inspired by the integrity of nature.

Both Inversia and Uncapitals were implemented with the help of external funding from the Norwegian Barents Secretariat, the Nordic Council of Ministers, as well as other sources.

BRYC held its 12th Annual Event 8-11 November, 2018, in Kirkenes. The theme of this year's event was cultural diversity in the Barents Region, a topic which also highlighted the 25th anniversary of the Barents Cooperation. A total of 64 youths from Norway, Russia, Sweden and Finland gathered in Kirkenes for the weekend. They participated in networking activities, group discussions on cross-border cooperation, and interactive workshops on cultural diversity. The event also brought together BRYC and the JWGY in a plenary discussion on future cooperation.

In 2018, BRYC started to work more systematically towards increasing its project activity, or the number of youth projects initiated by the BRYC members. As a result of this work, BRYC created two designated project committees to work on two specific project ideas: "BRYC Career development project" and "BRYC Gaming event". These were ideas that received the highest number of votes at the BRYC Annual Meeting in April. The first project is aimed at raising awareness around career opportunities for young graduates in the Barents Region. The second project was aimed at the gaming community, and promotion of youth entrepreneurship within the gaming sector, across the Barents Region. Both projects are currently in the planning phase, and implementation is estimated in 2019.

#### **4. Results of the year (decisions, new initiatives, improvements)**

BRYC achieved the following results in 2018:

- More than 1000 youths were reached as a result of BRYC's activities and social media interactions.
- Around 30 youth volunteers and 100 youth participants have been involved in BRYC's activities.
- BRYC has been represented at around 20 meetings and events, both on a local, regional and national level.
- BRYC implemented a total of 3 youth projects this year.
- BRYC was approved as an official member of the Barents Regional Council.
- BRYC managed to secure a long-term annual funding from the regions for the upcoming period (2018-2020).
- BRYC managed to re-establish contact with the BEAC Joint Working Group on Youth (JWGY).
- 9 external partners have been involved in BRYC's activities in 2018, both on a local, regional and national level.

#### **5. Evaluation of the work (What went well, what needs improvement)**

2018 was an interesting year for BRYC. A closer cooperation was developed with the Barents Regional Council (BRC), Regional committee (RC), and the Joint working Group on Youth (JWGY). BRYC participated in both BRC/RC meetings this year, in Rovaniemi (May) and Syktvkar (September), and has continued support from the regions. BRYC had a good cooperation with the Finnmark county, which currently holds the chairmanship in the BRC, through the organization of the BRYC Annual Event 2018 in Kirkenes.

Something BRYC plans to improve in the upcoming year is the number and quality of youth projects initiated by the youth council.

#### **6. Other**

For more details, please see the separate document "BRYC Annual Report 2018".