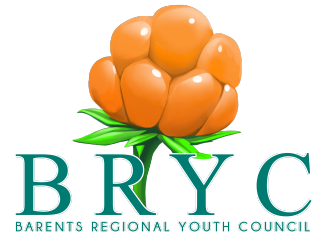


# Barents Regional Youth Council Annual Report April 2016 - March 2017



## Summary

2016 was a challenging year for BRYC due to uncertainty regarding the financial situation and a large turnover of members throughout the year.

However, 2016 was also a year of highlights. At the annual meeting in Oulu april 2016, BRYC adopted new organisational structure and work program, with each member of the board responsible for one of the priority areas in order to facilitate the implementation. The board continued the effort to formalise BRYC's structure and improve the effectiveness by adopting new Statutes.

With regards to the severity of the financial situation and the closing down of the Barents Youth Cooperation Office, BRYC took action to publish a statement and present its case at the BRC meeting in Kajaani in May. BRYC followed this up in Luleå in November, where the Barents Regional Youth Programme 2017-2020 was adopted and BRYCs funding was secured for the next two years.

In December, the 12th annual event was held in Syktyvkar, in the Komi Republic with 65 participating youths from all over the Barents Region. BRYC decided to lower the age limit for the event participants from 18-30 to 16-30 in order to attract a wider target audience. The theme of the event was "Sports and Health" as it is an important topic in the contemporary society and was not highlighted in the previous events.

In addition to the annual event, BRYC had several workshops arranged on different themes including project management in the Barents Region. BRYC members also promoted the organisation and the Barents cooperation throughout various media channels, such as newspapers, radio and social media.

BRYC has established contacts with international organisations and actors in the interest of future collaboration, for example ComUnYouth, a project that researches the issue of youth unemployment in the Nordic countries, initiated by the Karelian resource center of NGOs. High North Dialogue in Bodø in May and Barents Forum in Helsinki in December became good platforms for exchanging contacts with the regional stakeholders and decision-makers.

So far in 2017, BRYC has contributed with its suggestions to the consultation process for EU investments in the region, and the indigenous representative took part in the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples (WGIP) meeting in Murmansk, where he was approved as the indigenous representative to BRYC.

With the funding now in place, as well as a more formalized structure and experienced representatives, we are hopeful that 2017 will be a fruitful and productive year for BRYC.

Sincerely, on behalf of BRYC;  
The Board

# 1. Organisation and influence

Responsible board member: Tuure Vairio, Oulu (Northern Ostrobothnia)

AIMS/GOALS	TASKS	WHO	EVALUATION
1.1. Strengthen the BRYC structure and reduce the turnover of members.	Provide training courses and give the members certificates.	Barents Secretariat	As far as BRYC faced challenges with funding and also the position of Chair for several months was uncertain, BRYC did not have training courses, except one team-building exercise during the annual meeting in April 2016 in Oulu. So far this gap needed to be fulfilled in 2017.
	Anchor the BRYCers work also in their respective regions.	Members	The process of anchoring implies dissemination of information about the Council in all the respective regions and establishment of new contacts with the local organisations, activists and politicians. BRYC lacked representatives in Nenets, Finnmark, Norrbotten, Kainuu, Lapland and the indigenous representative. In the other regions, the level of activity showed some variation. Improvement in this area is a top priority in 2017. At the annual meeting in Alta, it was decided to implement regional action plans in order to strengthen the activity.
	Introduce stand-ins in the council as soon as possible.	Members	This point was not under the control, as far as in 2016 BRYC more than 50% of the whole Council were newcomers. In 2017 it will be obligatory to establish stand-ins.
	Make sure that all regions are represented by keeping in contact and use social media actively.	Members	Social media channel was one of the most important and effective in information dissemination. The Chair's responsibility was to keep in touch with all the BRYC members and keep them updated with the current situation.
	Find the plan for how to introduce new people into BRYC activities – get on paper for everyone.	Members	Attracting new people to BRYC activities was successfully done and shown as a good example during the annual event in Syktyvkar 14-18 December 2016. All the participants (around 60) were absolute newcomers and learned a lot about BRYC and the Barents Region itself during the event workshops.
1.2. Organize the work in the BRYC as efficient and fruitful as possible	Give the Board of BRYC the power to make decisions in minor items and act on behalf of the whole BRYC.	BRYC	The board has achieved quite wide power to make decisions and are now looking at other ways to improve the effectiveness of BRYC.

1.3. Give BRYC real influence in decision-making processes	Come with suggestions in items that concern youth in the region, to the Regional Committee and Regional Council.	The board	<p>In 2016 BRYC has contributed with two policy suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BRYC produced a statement detailing our position regarding adoption of the Barents Youth Programme and the Barents Youth Cooperation Office.</li> <li>- We also delivered our suggestions in the consultation process for EU investments in the Barents region.</li> </ul> <p>BRYC welcomes closer relations with the Regional Committee and Council, including the opportunity to participate in its meetings and make policy suggestions on youth relevant issues. In order to play this role, BRYC needs to be kept informed about the ongoing work. After the meeting in Luleå with both Regional Council and Committee, we hope this will be the start of a long-term fruitful relationship.</p>
	Take part in the implementation of the youth program for the Barents region 2017-2020.	BRYC	BRYC has followed the objectives of the Barents Regional Youth Program, for example the Annual Event put focus on Health- and Sports issues.
1.4. Make the financial support of BRYC and youth initiatives more stable	Continue to encourage the regional authorities to support BRYCs work and their representatives costs related to meetings.	Members	<p>In 2016 BRYC worked hard to secure the financing for the next years. BRYC board took action to write a statement, participate in the BRC meetings in Kainuu and Norrbotten, where the funding was secured for the next two years.</p> <p>The Russian participation in BRYC is currently covered by the overall budget.</p>

## 2. Networking and information

Responsible board member: Hege Kallbekken, Troms (Norway)

AIMS/GOALS	TASKS	WHO	EVALUATION
2.1. Cooperate with the Joint Working Group on Youth Issues	Arrange a joint meeting with the Barents Joint Working Group on Youth Issues.	Members	Several attempts have been made, but it has proved very difficult due to the fact that JWGY is not active at the moment. They have not had any meetings under the current Chairmanship.

<p>2.2. Increase the information about BRYC and youth issues in the Barents region</p>	<p>Inform on local level through newspapers, radio, websites, schools and through presentations at events and arenas for youths and politicians.</p>	<p>Members</p>	<p>BRYCers have had several presentations at events and have received publicity in local media, but this varies a lot from region to region. There is room for improvement overall on this point. Here are some examples.</p> <p><b>Arkhangelsk:</b> The representative made a report to the local Ministry of Youth and Northern Arctic Federal University. She was interviewed for the article and it was published on the student's online newspaper. She also made a presentation about BRYC and its projects to representatives of the Russian Union of Youth and other youth organizations of Arkhangelsk region. There was also a conference, devoted international cooperation, organized by Corporation of Development of Arkhangelsk, where a presentation about BRYC took place as well.</p> <p><b>Karelia:</b> the representative had several talks with schools on the importance of Barents cooperation and youth issues.</p> <p><b>Komi:</b> BRYCs annual event was held in Komi, which helped spread awareness of BRYC in that region. Holding an annual event here gave an opportunity to get to know Komi republic better, to present BRYC to the local Ministry of Youth and Ministry of Culture and local youth organisations, and also to two big universities in Syktyvkar.</p> <p><b>Murmansk:</b> The representative (also the Chair) paid more attention to cooperation with youth organisations (Murmansk Arctic State University Council, Murmansk Student Council, the City Union of Youth Clubs, and others) in the region and activists to collaborate on future projects.</p> <p><b>Oulu:</b> The representative kept close contact with the Council of Oulu region and student union OSAKO, NUAS (Council of Oulu Region Youth issues). 20 youth from Oulu applied to participate in the annual event, which shows a great effort was made in recruiting and many new youth learned about BRYC.</p> <p><b>Troms:</b> The representative has held several presentations about BRYC for the Regional Youth Council and has established good working relations with them and the JWG member in Troms.</p>
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	Contribute with information about events to the Barents Youth website.	Members	<p>She had one article published on the Troms county website which spread awareness about BRYC, and promoted the annual event actively on social media. She also represented BRYC in a delegation to Murmansk in relation to the signing of the cooperation agreement between Troms and Murmansk, which helped spread awareness about BRYC and the importance of including youth.</p> <p><b>Norrbotten:</b> In relation to the BRC meeting in Luleå BRYC held a practical workshop about project management and funding opportunities in the Barents region.</p> <p><b>Indigenous:</b> Throughout the year WGIP have elected a new indigenous representative, which have participated under High North Dialogue and taken action to represent BRYC under the upcoming Arctic Circle Conference</p> <p>There is room for improvement on this point. There was an intention to establish a calendar of Barents youth events on the website, but this has not happened yet due to lack of technical expertise.</p>
	<p>Keep the website Barentsyouth.org updated with information about financial possibilities and events</p> <p>Cooperation with other international youth councils and take part in international events.</p>	<p>Barents secretariat</p> <p>BRYC</p>	<p>The website has not been sufficiently updated. The platform for editing is a bit slow and impractical to use, but there is also a problem with sharing this information effectively within BRYC.</p> <p>We have established a connection with the Youth Arctic Coalition and are talking about participating in an Arctic Youth Conference in Iceland in 2017. Also there is good contact in the Carpathian region, where we cooperate with the youth association GenerationWe, which tries to adopt BRYCs best practices in its respective region.</p> <p>Also, the Chair had a chance to cooperate with the Baltic regions during the project «ComUn Youth», the main idea of which is to find solutions to the youth unemployment in the Nordic countries.</p> <p>BRYC participated in the following international events through the year 2016:</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- «Talking Barents», Brussels, Belgium (panel discussion);</li> <li>- «ComUn Youth conference», Marijampolė, Lithuania (presentation);</li> <li>- «Barents Forum», Helsinki, Finland (participation in a youth workshop).</li> </ul>
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### 3. Youth initiatives and arrangements

Responsible board member: Tim Andersson, Vasterbotten (Sweden)

AIMS/GOALS	TASKS	WHO	EVALUATION
3.1. Have special focus on community development and active citizenship.	Arrange the BRYC event in Syktyvkar in October.	Members	The annual event in Syktyvkar was successfully held. It focused on health and sports, which is a relevant and popular topic in society at the moment.
	Actively support new BRYC members.	Members	New members got support with practical issues, and this will be a continued focus for BRYC in 2017. At the Annual Meeting in Alta, it was decided to create an Information Package for new members.
3.2. Increase the tolerance for other cultures.	Increase the knowledge of each other's cultures within BRYC members	Members	Every BRYC member respects other cultures and customs, and Council's core values are tolerance, cooperation, reliability, fairness and respect.
	Make sure that the participants are reflecting the society we live in and make sure that minorities are invited to events and the BRYC.	Members	BRYC now has a great diversity in the council, and finally we also have the indigenous representative. In BRYC events we pay attention to include people from all nationalities, religions, genders, and do not discriminate against anyone.
3.3. Make sure that the indigenous issues are taken into account	Inform about indigenous events for youth on the website	Board	For large parts of 2016 BRYC did not have an indigenous representative as we were awaiting the approval of the WGIP, but now that the new representative has been approved this will be a focus for 2017.
	Make sure that indigenous youth are invited to Barents youth events	Board	At the Annual Event the quota for indigenous participants was filled, and 4 participants from Norway and Russia took part.
	Take part in meetings with indigenous organisations in the Barents countries	Members	BRYCs indigenous representative took part in the WGIP meeting in Murmansk and keeps in close contact with indigenous organisations.

	Establish contact with existing indigenous youth organisations		The indigenous representative is working on establishing a network of indigenous youth in the Barents region.
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#### 4. Events and projects

Responsible board member: Inna Fedorova, Murmansk (Russia)

AIMS/GOALS	TASKS	WHO	EVALUATION
4.1. Annual event	Arrange an annual event for the young people in the Barents region.		The annual event took place in Syktyvkar (Russia) from 14-18 December 2016 and gathered 65 young people from the whole Barents, including the indigenous youth representatives. The themes for the event was «Health and Sports», meaning that all the lectures and workshops were devoted to those themes. The lectures were aimed at healthy nutrition, illness prevention, the importance of mental health and active lifestyle. Workshops were devoted to first-aid help, as well as the Barents cooperation practices and youth project management in general. BRYC tried to collect lecturers and workshop leaders from all four of the Barents countries. The event also included several presentations about the Komi region and the youth activities there and traditions of Komi republic for the better acquaintance with region.
4.2. Support the ongoing youth projects.		Members	BRYC gave support to the various projects involving youth. For example, the study trip for the Youth Atlantic Treaty Association (YATA) to Murmansk was implemented with support of BRYC members as well, the study trip of Troms Youth Council. Also, project Robota, initiated by both Barents Press Sweden and BRYC member from Västerbotten was supported by the BRYC members in Murmansk and Karelia, so far the study trip of project Robota achieved the stated goals, that were basically devoted to the environment and industrial focus in the North-West Russia.

4.3. Increase the number of international Barents youth events	Inform those running youth events in the respective counties about the possibilities of expanding the event and invite participants from the other Barents countries.	Members	BRYC is disseminating information about ongoing projects, searches potential events and shares it on the official webpage and social network.
	Take own initiatives and take part in events.	Members	Concerning BRYC own initiatives, they exist, and BRYC implements own projects or in cooperation with cultural or youth organisations or associations. Here are the examples, what BRYC did except annual event: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UnCapitals project in cooperation with culture curator association Fridaymilk from Murmansk (project about decentralization of art in Barents);</li> <li>- Robota16 in cooperation with Barents Press Sweden (project for young journalists with a special focus on environment and industry);</li> <li>- BarentSeize (a series of workshops for young people of Barents and giving practical information about project management).</li> <li>- Inversia festival (audio-visual festival in Murmansk, that gathered artists from the North)</li> </ul>
4.4. Study trip	Study trip somewhere to work on team building in the council, and to increase the competence and network of BRYC.	Council	So far the BRYC budget issue was unstable for the year 2016, the Council could not plan it. For the year 2017, it is planned to search for the youth institutions or organisations in the Barents region or out of it, so to gain the extra training in the field.