

## Summary

### Bridging Youth and Regional Development Through Dialogue

#### The Rational

The northern Scandinavia is unique in its geographic location. We share common challenges, like long distances, sparse population, and harsh climate. Several mega trends as the ageing of population, urbanization, globalization affects communities around the world and in our area. For the last few decades cooperation in the Arctic was a symbol of peace and stability, but currently it is in a process of transformation. It naturally affects the Barents and Aurora regions. Despite the turbulence in geopolitics, climate change is still the most urgent challenge, boosting green transition and bringing along many questions, like livelihood and food security.

We also share many opportunities. Here in the northern parts of Norway, Finland, and Sweden we carefully protect our natural and cultural heritage, keeping traditions and respecting the way of living of indigenous people. On the other hand, our lands are rich in natural resources and contribute to sustainable development. Green Transition boosts industrial development and attracts investments. Change requires planning and construction not only physical infrastructure, but also to raise awareness about the most important resource: the people and knowledge.

In a rapidly changing environment, it is crucial to engage various stakeholders to work on community resilience. Resilience and trust make people united and help tackle unexpected challenges in the upcoming years, while helping communities to become more attractive for living, working, studying. Public sectors need to involve youth in their planning processes, and the youth point of view is growing more and more important for regional development. For the remote region to stay vital, it is crucial to attract young people and make them also stay. Constructive dialogue is a tool to engage young people to regional development and decision-making. Dialogue is not only discussion, but also produces mutual understanding and raises the level of knowledge.

#### The target group and their involvement in project planning

The main beneficiary of the project are young people and young adults (mostly between 18-36 years). Secondly, local, and regional public authorities and decision-makers. The last, but not the least youth organizations, educational institutions, and the general public.

Too often young people feel unable to make change because "change only happens at a high level, with big organizations". But that is not true. Most of the time, change must start with simple step, on a small scale. We want to start with small-scale project to build up skills, overcome barriers, to access next opportunities together with young people. In other words, we work not for youth, but with youth for benefits our communities.

The project idea was presented to young people on several meetings and application draft was sent to several youngsters for comments.

The most influential and well-known model and framework for Youth Participation is Roger Harts Ladder of Youth Participation. It includes eight stages of participation. From the bottom it starts with manipulation, decoration, and participation for show. The top five participation levels are assigned; consulted; adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people; young people initiated and directed; young people initiated and shared decisions with adults. (Resource: <https://participationpool.eu/resource-category/youth-participation/understanding-participation/> )

During the project planning the framework was used as a tool to raise awareness on youth questions among regional development officials and for dialogues with young people aiming to collect their opinions and feedback. The model was used to guide the planning process, but also will be used to evaluate youth participation and engagement during the project.

## Project overall objective

The project aims to build a common ground for collaboration and co-creation of joint methodology focusing on bridging young people and local public authorities in Kainuu, Northern Ostrobothnia and Nordland Regions, build cohesion and contribute to resilience of the remote areas of the Interreg Aurora Programme.

Project partners together with young people will explore several different dialogues methodologies and based on best practices create joint written recommendation on further steps of bridging youth & regional development actors. Project meetings, including study trip to High North Academy in Bodø, will expand networks and strengthen dialogue skills as well as raise level of knowledge and understanding on current issues in the Programme area for both young people and official representative of the regions.

### 1.1 Project activities

Workpackages / Activities	Description	Start date – End date
1 - Participation / Planning	<p>The project purpose is to test some new methods in practice, thereby creating understanding about measures needed to enhance youth participation and international youth cooperation, and to finally draft a larger project application. All the measures taken aim to these goals and are described under a single work package.</p> <p>The project aims to reach youth and other important interest groups throughout the project area. The LP goal is to tie Kainuu into tighter cooperation with partners on the Aurora Programme area and also with Barents Youth Council BRYC, and to contribute to the effectiveness of youth cooperation. This mini project is the first step into that direction.</p> <p>The three activities described below are planned to be an agile process to involve youth in dialogue and international activities, and gathering experience on how to plan and carry out such activities on regional and inter-regional level. Based on the mini project results, it'll be significantly easier to launch more long-term cooperation.</p>	1/31/23 - 6/29/23
1.1 - Big goals in a small game	<p>March 2023, Kick-off meeting online. Coming together, learning to know each other, building networks.</p> <p>Online event gives opportunity to engage large group of participants and invite speakers from Sitra &amp; Calotte Academy or other relevant organizations. Responsible partner is the Regional Council of Kainuu, both partners and young people from partner regions participate in activities.</p> <p>As this is an online event, the geographical participation may be wider without extra costs. In addition to Kainuu and Northern Ostrobothnia, participants at least from North Karelia will be invited. Naturally, also BRYC and JWGY are essential groups to be invited to join, as well.</p>	-
1.2 - Learning the rules of the game	<p>April 2023, Study trip to High North Dialogue Academy including youth and regional development representatives back-to-back with Project Meeting for partners.</p>	-

Workpackages / Activities	Description	Start date - End date
	<p>The entity is planned and carried out together between partners. The Regional Council of Kainuu is responsible partner for the travelling related issues (transportation) for Finland, Nigh North University is responsible for the educational activities during the High North Dialogue Academy and partly support Finnish guests accommodations.</p> <p>For Finland the number of involved persons from the regional development bodies is one from each partner region, they'll be travelling with a small group of youth representatives. The amount is decided so that it fits into the project budget (tendered transportation/ accommodation, possible additional funding to allow participation for the participation of North Karelia representatives etc.).</p> <p>Norwegian partners involve accordingly minimum 1-2 official representatives with a small group of youngsters.</p>	
1.3 - Involving small players in a big game	<p>May &amp; June 2022, Final Online Meeting &amp; workshop, comments, conclusions, recommendations, future plans &amp; reporting .</p> <p>Main communication channels are email &amp; online meeting platforms, Google/One Drive for shared materials and WhatsApp group for fast communications with partners &amp; young people. Dissemination of the result press release on results on the Lead Partner homepage &amp; social media posts. Responsible partner is the Regional Council of Kainuu, all partners are involved.</p>	-

## 1.2 Indicators

### Output indicators

Solutions for legal or administrative obstacles across border identified	Project partners together with young people will explore several different dialogue methodologies, and based on best practices create joint written recommendation on further steps of bridging youth & regional development.
Strategies and action plans jointly developed	
Organisations cooperating across borders	Project meetings, including study trip to High North Academy in Bodø, will expand networks and strengthen dialogue skills as well as raise level of knowledge and understanding on currents issues in the program area for both young people and official representative of the regions.