

The Research Council of Norway's High North Conference 2010

The cooperation programme with
Russia within higher education and
research

Concluding conference

Tromsø 10 -12 november 2010

Why focus education and social work in the arctic area?

- Education and competence-building by exchanging knowledge and discussing attitudes are very useful in building inclusive and well-functioning societies.
- This is especially the case when we are talking about civil-, political-and social rights in society, which is a main concern for social work education.
- We believe that peaceful and lasting cooperation between nations will benefit from cultural, political and societal knowledge on macro as well as micro level in the respective countries.

Constructing partnership – developing cooperation on different levels

- **Norwegian Cooperation Program with Russia:** The programme is administered on behalf of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation between the Research Council of Norway and SIU and supports long-term collaboration in higher education and research between universities, university colleges and research institutes in Russian and Norway.
- **University of the Arctic:** cooperative network of universities, colleges, and other organizations committed to higher education and research in the north, sharing resources, facilities and expertise to build post-secondary education programs that are relevant and accessible for northern students
- **Barents Euro-Arctic Regional cooperation:** promote people-to-people contacts and economic development and creates good conditions for interregional exchange in many different fields

**From long-term projects - through bilateral partnership –
to sustainable cooperation**

- **1998-2006 Pomor project:** *accomplished a program of institution building, improved and qualified social work education and practice in Arkhangelsk and Bodø*
- **2006 – cont. Thematic network in social work** *under the umbrella of the University of the Arctic*
- **2005-2010** — *cooperation within Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies program: provided a broad introduction to different issues affecting the world's Northern areas and living conditions. Network of BCS coordinators. BCS joint program*

SWAMP – an acronym for a Masterprogram in Comparative Social Work in the Arctic

- A collaboration-project between
 - Bodø University College
 - Pomor State University/Norwegian-Pomor University Centre
 - Murmansk Humanities Institute
- Project leaders
 - Dr. Marina Kalinina (PSU)
 - Dr. Rolv Lyngstad (BUC)

Through partnership – to sustainable development of higher education in the North: joint international Master program “Comparative Social Work in the Arctic”

- The program is focusing on the Arctic region.
 - We believe that knowledge and competence about welfare, governance, society and people in the neighboring countries are necessary to address social problems and current solutions.
 - The program aims to build such competences by stimulating academic mobility and cooperation between **Bodø University College in Norway, Murmansk Humanities Institute and Pomor State University in Arkhangelsk, Russia.**



Objectives

- The main objective is to improve social work practice in the High North through *the development and running of a Master Programme in Comparative Social Work in the Arctic (SWAMP)*.
- We regard the main challenge to identify, elaborate and develop facts and perspectives of special relevance for the arctic region with respect to *living condition, democratic governance, indiginous and gender issues* in order to minimise marginalization of vulnerable groups in society.
- Instead of each institution contributing with one course, our aim is to *develop the courses jointly* so as to ensure mutual learning and increased understanding among staff members and the development of courses contextualised for both Norwegian and Russian students.

Activities

- Started 2008
- 3 joint seminars
- 5 joint working groups established to develop relevant courses
- Coordination within the working groups
- General project coordination
- Spring 2009 - intake of students
- Fall 2009 – running the first class of students
- Spring 2011 – graduating 10 students



Outcome

- More cooperation between academics working in the collaborating institutions in the fields of social work, sociology, pedagogy and political science
- Established arenas (like workshops) to discuss relevant academic issues
- Better facilitation of joint degrees and sandwich courses according to the goals in the Bologna
- Graduation of Russian and Norwegian master students with professional competence in social work to address challenges facing our societies. Hopefully 10 students within June 2011.
- More general, the cooperation has facilitated a better people to people dimension according to the Norwegian government's high North strategy.

What have we learned?

- To prioritize academic collaboration between partner institutions
- To recognize international cooperation as an important resource
- To discuss common theoretical base within/across disciplines
- To build team-work based on trust, transparency and use of different models of partnership
- To involve university top-management

Some challenges

- Adjusting to the Bologna process is complicated: one policy - different practices. Formal differences between two educational systems
- Complex character of the program: many actors involved
- Mediating institutions and people have an important role in coordinating the work
- Interdisciplinary approach-new for the Russian academia
- Different cultures of education: critical reflections and analytic approaches about structures and democratic practices less developed in a Russian context
- A somewhat reluctant attitude from Norwegian academics to travel to Russia

Possible future research cooperation: Social policy in the High North

- What has previous research learned us about the social, cultural and economic life in the high north?
- How are different countries addressing social problems? What are the characterizing features of contemporary social policies?
- To what extent have these features been able to meet needs following from social, cultural and economic life in the high north? What is typical to successful political approaches, and what kind of approaches don't work, and why?
- What requirements does the new ecological development put on social policy?
- On basis of these questions: What can we possibly say about new outlines for social policy in the high north?

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- Some reflections from
 - masterstudent Oxana Sobulyak
 - Pomor State University

«Until recent time the social workers were engaged in the activity when they carefully collected the pieces of the broken cup. Now it is the time to teach the clients not to lose it.»

Fransin Sobi

The knowledge which was received in the process of the study can look in the following way

Social conditions

the factors influencing a standard of living – the world, the country, region, area

Social phenomena

the descriptive theory and the information, the theory of the person, socio – cultures theories, integration theories

Social programs

Organizational structures, grants, services

Trade of the social worker

Sphere. Professional responsibility. Ethical principles

The social worker

Creativity and a science. Professional personal style of work.

To gather and to integrate we have to apply critical reflection.

- *Critical reflection allows us to be flexible when we have to make decision in a particular situation where contextual understanding of the issue is a key point. When we have to choose a particular method or specific approach, critical reflection of our knowledge will help us to make right decision. Using critical reflection we can feel free and flexible in different contexts.*

As a result, *we can conclude that*
*the program has given visions of
the new approach to social work,
particularly to the professional work,
to personal development and
efficient potential which every
student can use in future.*