

Creative industries create jobs for young in the Arctic

“Most of my friends have moved from the Faroe Islands to study and work. I decided to stay until my bachelor’s degree is finished but I will have to move too to continue studies”, says Barbara Apol still living in Tórshavn. Educational possibilities are limited for youth in the rural Arctic, but they are adjusting with new multi-locational lifestyles. Arctic areas hold several economic opportunities for young people in less traditional industries like the creative industries, bioeconomy and tourism, reveals the new study *Future Regional Development Policy for the Nordic Arctic: Foresight Analysis 2013–2016* by Nordregio.

Creative business opportunities

- Primary industries have traditionally been the foundation of the Nordic Arctic economy, but our study shows that huge potential lies in less traditional industries, states the author and Senior Nordregio Researcher Anna Karlsdóttir.
- Sustainable natural resource extraction forms the basis for more recent business opportunities, like the bioeconomy and more knowledge-intensive activities such as research, development and innovation. Growing industries like responsible tourism and creative industries, also show promise – for example cultural events, locally produced food, handicrafts, art and film production, Karlsdóttir continues.

The Icelandic film industry is a good example of a thriving creative industry which has gained a high profile internationally. The industry is backed by a Ministry of Industry incentive allowing producers to apply for reimbursements of costs when producing programmes in Iceland. Combining film and festival, Sodankylä, a small town in Finnish Lapland, is the annual venue for the international Midnight Sun Film Festival. This annually growing festival attracted about 30 000 international visitors on its 30th year anniversary in 2015. (Map *Employments in arts, entertainment and recreation in the Nordic Arctic*)

The Nordic Arctic region has the potential to become internationally established as a forerunner for sustainable business development, innovation and research. The focus is increasingly on upgrading bioresources to produce, for example, feed and food ingredients, biomaterials and biofuel. Biorefining contributes to the renewal of existing forestry industries and is seen as a mechanism to support regional development. The marine sector naturally plays a crucial role in the bioeconomies of Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands and the coastal regions of Norway and there is potential to develop an innovative marine industry, based on algae and bioprospecting and creating side-products from primary production.

Mismatch between education and labour force

Current challenges for the Nordic Arctic include a lack of diversity in economic activities, investments and human resources. However, young people in the Nordic Arctic are adapting to new multi-locational lifestyles, dividing their time between home, work and studies in different locations. This is becoming the new normal among Arctic youth, especially those who are not willing to leave their homes in remote areas to move permanently to bigger cities. The potential for knowledge intensive job creation is limited as the lack of broadband connection hinders distance learning. More young women than men pursue higher education; thus, more women than men leave the Nordic Arctic. Tromsø shines brightly as a Nordic Arctic location where the population is increasing. This is largely thanks to its university which is attracting more and more students every year. Access to vocational and higher education opportunities, as well as lifelong learning, is fundamental for individual development and for the competitiveness of companies in the Arctic regions.

Foresight analysis, the approach used in the report, is an ambitious bottom-up method. During the project 20 workshops were organised in selected Arctic regions where local people, decision-makers and politicians from local, regional, national and Nordic level share their views on the potentials and challenges for the future. The study was conducted by Nordregio and commissioned by the Nordic Working Group for Sustainable Regional Development in the Arctic under the Nordic Council of Ministers' Committee of Senior Officials for Regional Policy (EK-R).

Invitation: *Future Regional Development Policy for the Nordic Arctic: Foresight Analysis 2013–2016 report is launched at the Nordic Council of Ministers (Ved Stranden 18) in Copenhagen 30 January at 14-17. See more: www.nordregio.se*

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