

INTRODUCTION TO THE FINAL REPORT

The Innovation Circle project, INTERREG III B BSR, was closed 31th October 2007. The activities within the TACIS part continued until end of May 2008. This evaluation report is based on interviews undertaken in Murmansk and Pskov. The respondents have all been participating in IC project activities in Russia.

The external expert evaluator Mr. Bjørn Ring Opjordsmoen was engaged as chairman of the jury at the Innovation Circle expo 2007. He has the first hand information about the content of the project activities. He was also one of the managers of the PIPE project, which predeceased the IC project. However, he has not been directly involved in IC activities and therefore he has a critical eye on activities and deliveries from the project.

The partners who cooperated in the project was the Pskov Oblast Agency for Regional Development, the Murmansk Oblast Board for youth affairs and the public institution Baltic Innovation Group.

Baltic Innovation Group initiated and coordinated the project. A management team was taking care of overall coordination and cooperation, finances, information and external reporting. The working languages have been English and Russian. Web information and brochures have been distributed in both languages. However, English has been the main language for the international cooperation activities and events.

Activities has been organized according to plan, and as project manager I am in general satisfied with the results. We have not used all available budget. This mainly comes from too high expectations for international cooperation. However, the international cooperation has been significant at all international targeted events.

Through the IC project our partners have gathered experiences from international cooperation and collected many novel ideas about topics like city planning, tourism, youth policy, culture and education. The project was also a basis for creation of the Innovation Circle Network and the new partnership for the TRANS-IN-FORM project. The methodology used by the IC project can be described as holistic with an integration of sectors and disciplines. The participants have given very good feedback and we also see that the innovative approach has managed to involve both genders, different age groups, public and private sectors. This has resulted in many new innovative teams within the participating cities and regions and trans-nationally. They also represent a variety of institutions and enterprises involving themselves in city- and regional development issues together with the local and regional authorities.

The IC network is a cluster of innovative and devoted city planners, city promoters and regional developers meaning a variety of such people who in fact have become "agents of change".

Alytus 16-06-2008



Alf S. Johansen
Managing Director
Baltic Innovation Group

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN PSKOV AND MURMANSK



Elena Kolosova
coordinator in Pskov

PSKOV - Activity overview

Activity 1.1. Innovation Academy 4, Notodden, Norway, Training session about entrepreneurship and business development for four days on the 10-13 October 2006

Outputs produced

Five representatives from the Pskov region participated in this training session. They represented NGO (Zateshilov Nikolay, director of fund "Pskov oblast agency for regional development", Elena Kolosova project coordinator of fund), regional administration (Mikhaylov Oleg, State Committee for youth policy and sport), educational institutions (Maslennikova Liubov, Russian international Academy for tourism and Varlamov Georgy, Pskov polytechnic institute).

A set of training materials developed from the Innovation Academy was disseminated among local partners in Pskov, an article about participation of Pskov partners was published at the website of fund "Pskov oblast agency for regional development" www.arrpo.ellink.ru.

Activity 1.2. Innovation Academy 5, Turi, Estonia, Training session about management of innovative projects for four days on the 27-31 March 2007

Outputs produced

Four representatives from the Pskov region participated in this training session about innovative project management. They represented NGO (Natalia Ustinova, head of the Union of Student Groups), educational institutions (Liudmila Zhagurina, teacher and Julija Belova, student, Russian international Academy for tourism and Georgy Varlamov, Pskov polytechnic institute).

The participants were trained as "agents for change" took home the received knowledge on innovative project management so that these guidelines can be used in future for applying for new projects.

A set of training materials developed from the Innovation Academy was disseminated among local partners in Pskov, an article about participation of Pskov partners was published at the website of fund "Pskov oblast agency for regional development" www.arrpo.ellink.ru.

Activity 2.1. Youth summer camp in Sigulda, Latvia for six days on the 24-29 August 2006

Outputs produced

Five students and deputy director from the Russian international Academy for tourism, director of fund "Pskov oblast agency for regional development" and Elena Kolosova IC coordinator from Pskov participated in the camp.

Two projects were presented from Pskov: a social one – Pskov Treasures and a business one – The Centre for Internship and Practices. The social project from the Pskov group was evaluated as one of the best.

There was discussed an opportunity to make it an international project for seven countries involved in IC. The financing is supposed to get through Youth Forum by the Robertsfors municipality, Sweden who will be the lead partner.

Youth business and social ideas and projects were identified for implementation.

An article was published in the fund website.

Activity 2.2. Youth summer camp in Pskov, Russia for four days on the 9-12 August 2007

Outputs produced

More than 70 persons (both students and experts) from six countries participated in the event. Experts from Russia and Norway took part in the activity: Inna Smirnova (director MO «Pskov architecture»), Alexey Krasilnikov (main architect of JSC «Restoration workshop»), Liubov Maslennikova and Anna Bogdanova (Russian international Academy for tourism, Pskov branch), Michael Fuller-Gee and Fredrik Barth (Norwegian housing bank), Linda Dynes (head of culture department of Ostfold district).

Two topics studied:

- Branding of Pskov as a tourist destination (direction - tourism),
- Creation of a living city - visions and proposals (direction - city planning).

Improved knowledge about tourism marketing and branding, city planning and architecture.

Five presentations including youth ideas and concepts in the above mentioned topics prepared.

Articles published in several mass media.





Activity 3. Project set-up. Establishment of management, sub-contracting of experts, establishment of the Community Generator Group in September-December 2006.

Outputs produced

The management team was established.

The project was presented to stakeholders.

Experts were sub-contracted.

The community generator group was established.

The small scale investments were made: a laptop computer, including basic software, a portable video projector, a colour printer, a digital camera and a web-camera were purchased.

Activity 4 Observation and registration of local needs and opportunities for development, performance of SWOT analysis in September – November 2006

Outputs produced

1. SWOT analysis was made.

Activity 5 Pskov motivation workshop – “Strategies for Innovation and Development. Visions and Options for Development of Russian Cities” for two days on the 8-9 November 2006

Outputs produced

More than 50 persons participated in the event: partners and guests from IC partner – countries, representatives of local Pskov authorities, IC management team, coordinators from Pskov and Murmansk.

There was built common understanding among key stakeholders about the IC project concept and importance of community involvement in local development planning processes.

Pskov was presented to the guests of the city. The event was distinguished by the Pskov city Administration.

There was made a city survey by the invited experts who led a plenary discussion. As a result there came comments from the invited experts and their proposals for the city improvements.

These proposals were distributed among the participants of the workshop and later published in the IC project website.

Press releases were disseminated in the city mass media before and after the event.

The report from the motivation workshop was made and distributed among city key stakeholders and was published in the IC project website and in the site of the fund “Pskov oblast agency for regional development”

www.arrpo.ellink.ru

Activity 6 Elaboration of the Innovation Charter and presentation to the local/regional authorities and mass media in December 2006 – February 2007

Outputs produced

1. Innovation Charter was produced

Activity 7 Development of actions plans in January – February 2007

Outputs produced

1. The action plan is worked out

Activity 8 Involvement of schools and institutes in the IC project activities through local project groups in August – December 2006

Outputs produced

Students and faculty staff from Pskov pedagogical complex, Pskov polytechnic institute and Russian international academy for tourism took an active part in planning of local actions and implementation of them.

Activity 9.1. Implementation of local and transnational actions together with ERDF partners Conference “Cultural Path – from Theory to Practice”, Suwalki, Poland for two days on the 1-2 December 2006

Outputs produced

Three students and dean from the Russian international Academy for tourism participated in the event.

More than 90 persons from Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia participated in the event.

The expert and students from the Academy made a presentation “Tourism as an opportunity for the city promotion”.

An article was published in the fund website.

Activity 9.2. Implementation of local and transnational actions Implementation of local actions in September 2006 – May 2008

Outputs produced

Continuous implementation of local action (Generator Group meetings, projects realization).

On the basis of the analysis of local needs, including the SWOT, the data obtained the local projects were elaborated, action plan was worked out.

Activity 9.3. Implementation of transnational actions – Round table discussions “Murmansk – capital of the Arctic?!” for two days on the 7-8 June 2007

Outputs produced

Five representatives from the Pskov region participated in the conference about innovations, sustainability and new urbanism. They represented NGO (Zateshilov Nikolay and Elena Kolosova, fund “Pskov oblast agency for regional development”), educational institution (Maslennikova Liubov, Russian international Academy for tourism) and architects (Inna Smirnova and Natalia Yerastova, municipal organization “Pskov Architecture”).

The participants together with experts (that took part in the event) formed the core group for preparing Youth summer camp in Pskov.

The event was highlighted on the web-page of the fund “Pskov oblast agency for regional development”.

Activity 9.4. Implementation of local and transnational actions. Implementation of local actions. Presentation of the results of work in the international youth summer camp that took place in August 2007 for one day on the 21 September 2007

Outputs produced

About 30 guests participated in the round table discussion. They were politicians, civil servants, architects, NGO, youth.

Four presentation elaborated during the work of the IC youth summer camp were presented. Experts' opinions were discussed.

The information on the event was given on the regional TV channel (GTRC) in the regional news.

Activity 9.5. Implementation of local and transnational actions. Meeting with the LP for two days on the 12-13 December 2007

Outputs produced

1. Current and potential project partners were visited: Mr. Selyantsev, head of the State examination bureau in the Pskov region; representatives of two big construction companies – Restoration Workshop JSC and “Institute “Pskovgrazhdanproekt” JSC, the Vice Mayor of the city of Pskov Mikhail Semenov, faculty and students from the Russian international Academy for tourism.

2. The results of the project so far were discussed.

3. Follow-up actions were planned.

Activity 10. Preparation for EXPO 2007 in February – May 2007

Outputs produced

Several Generator Group meetings were held in partnership with Russian International Academy for Tourism, Pskov Polytechnic Institute, Restoration Workshop, Pskov City Youth Committee, NGO Union of Student Groups.

Presentation of five projects prepared, brochures printed, presentation of Russia and Pskov prepared, stands organized.

Information about the final Expo 2007 was disseminated in Pskov with the help of e-mass media.

Activity 11. Participation of Russian partners in the final event of Innovation Forum – EXPO 2007 for five days on the 9-13 May 2007

Outputs produced

The following persons took part in the event: Elena Kolosova – IC coordinator in Pskov, Nikolay Zateshilov – director, fund “Pskov oblast agency for regional development”, Anna Bogdanova – senior teacher, Russian international Academy for Tourism, Regina Maluyshkayte, Natalia Vekshina, Vladislava Vishnevskaya – students, Russian international Academy for Tourism, Alexey Krasilnikov, Alexander Smirnov – architects, JSC “Restoration Workshop”, Boris Sherstnev – correspondent, Pskov State RadioTeleCompany, Dmitry Mikhaylov – head, Pskov city Youth Committee, Natalia Ustinova – head, NGO Union of Students' Groups.

A member of jury from the Russian side appointed – Nikolay Zateshilov, director of fund “Pskov oblast agency for regional development”.

Pskov participants took part in two workshops in Alytus Entrepreneurial Communities and in Druskininkai New Governance and Attractive Communities.

Brochures, information and the Pskov projects were disseminated among participants of EXPO 2007.

Several TV news reports and a TV program were prepared after the final EXPO that were broadcasted at the regional state TV channel.

The final Expo was also highlighted in news web-pages.

In award criteria 5 Pskov project "Expanding Borders" took a gold.

Final reports from EXPO produced.



Activity 12. Innovation Forum in Murmansk, Russia for two days on the 4-5 March 2008

Outputs produced

The following persons took part in the event: N.Zatshilov, director of fund "POARD", E.Kolosova, IC project coordinator, O.Kozyreva, director of Russian international academy for tourism, D.Mikhaylov, head of Pskov city youth committee, A.Krasilnikov, architect, V.Kuliev, student of Russian international academy for tourism, T.Andronenkova, student of Pskov Polytechnic Institute.

At the Forum Pskovites presented results of work of the youth international summer camp that was held in August, 2007, and also the projects developed in the framework of the IC project.

Participants shared the experience on youth policy and regional development.

Activity 13. Project evaluation / closing meeting in Pskov, Russia for two days on the 21-22 May 2008

Outputs produced

57 persons took part in the event: Tacis coordinators, management, evaluators, project partners from five countries, politicians and civil servants from local and regional levels, NGO, educational institutions and youth.

IC results were disseminated.

Evaluation report was presented.

Follow up activities were discussed.

Activity 14. Coordination and management in August 2006 – June 2008

Outputs produced

1. Mile-stone reports and project archive were made.

MURMANSK –Activity overview



Evgeny Kurdin
coordinator in Murmansk

Activity 1.1. Innovation Academy 4, Notodden, Norway, Training session about entrepreneurship and business development for four days on the 10-13 October 2006

Outputs produced

Four representatives from the Murmansk region participated in this training session. They represented regional administration (Leonid Mostovoy, Head of Murmansk Region Board for Youth Affairs, Evgeny Kurdin, Project Coordinator of Board) and local business enterprises (Dmitriy Borovkov, Director of "Arctic Media Group" Company, Sergey Plisov, Director of "Sphere" Company).

A set of training materials developed from the Innovation Academy was disseminated among local partners in Murmansk; information about participation of Murmansk partners was published at the website www.mbnews.ru.

Activity 1.2. Innovation Academy 5, Turi, Estonia, Training session about management of innovative projects for four days on the 27-31 March 2007

Outputs produced

Representatives from Murmansk didn't participate in the training session because of visa problems.

Activity 2.1. Youth summer camp in Sigulda, Latvia for six days on the 24-29 August 2006

Outputs produced

Five students from Murmansk educational enterprises and Evgeny Kurdin, IC coordinator from Murmansk participated in the camp.

The cultural media project "www.artmurmanout.ru" was presented from Murmansk.

There was discussed an opportunity to make it an international project for seven countries involved in IC. The financing is supposed to get through Youth Forum by the Robertsfors municipality, Sweden who will be the lead partner.

Youth business and social ideas and projects were identified for implementation.

An articles were published in www.murmanout.ru and Board website www.4erdak.ru.

Activity 2.2. Youth summer camp in Pskov, Russia for four days on the 9-12 August 2007

Outputs produced

More than 70 persons (both students and experts) from six countries participated in the event. Experts from Russia and Norway took part in the activity: Inna Smirnova (director MO «Pskov architecture»), Alexey Krasilnikov (main architect of JSC «Restoration workshop»), Liubov Maslennikova and Anna Bogdanova (Russian international Academy for tourism, Pskov branch), Michael Fuller-Gee and Fredrik Barth (Norwegian housing bank), Linda Dyrnes (head of culture department of Ostfold district).

Two topics studied:

- Branding of Pskov as a tourist destination (direction - tourism),
- Creation of a living city - visions and proposals (direction - city planning).

Improved knowledge about tourism marketing and branding, city planning and architecture.

Five presentations including youth ideas and concepts in the above mentioned topics prepared.

Articles published in several mass media.

Activity 3. Project set-up. Establishment of management, sub-contracting of experts, establishment of the Community Generator Group in September-December 2006.

Outputs produced

The management team was established.

The project was presented to stakeholders.

Experts were sub-contracted.

The community generator group was established.

The small scale investments were made: a laptop computer, including basic software, a portable video projector, a colour printer, a digital camera and a web-camera were purchased.

Activity 4. Observation and registration of local needs and opportunities for development, performance of SWOT analysis in September – November 2006

Outputs produced

1. SWOT analysis was made.

Activity 5. Pskov motivation workshop – “Strategies for Innovation and Development. Visions and Options for Development of Russian Cities” for two days on the 8-9 November 2006

Outputs produced

More than 50 persons participated in the event: partners and guests from IC partner – countries, representatives of local Pskov authorities, IC management team, representatives of Murmansk Region administration (Lubov Popova, Chief Accountant of Murmansk Region Board for Youth Affairs, Evgeny Kurdin, Project Coordinator of Board, Olga Borisenko, Head of the Branch for business and innovation development of the Department of Economic Development of Murmansk region).

There was built common understanding among key stakeholders about the IC project concept and importance of community involvement in local development planning processes.

Pskov was presented to the guests of the city. The event was distinguished by the Pskov city Administration.



There was made a city survey by the invited experts who led a plenary discussion. As a result there came comments from the invited experts and their proposals for the city improvements.

These proposals were distributed among the participants of the workshop and later published in the IC project website.

Press releases were disseminated in the city mass media before and after the event.

The report from the motivation workshop was made and distributed among city key stakeholders and was published in the IC project website, the site of the fund "Pskov oblast agency for regional development" www.arpo.ellink.ru and Murmansk business site www.mbnews.ru.

Activity 6 Elaboration of the Innovation Charter and presentation to the local/regional authorities and mass media in December 2006 – February 2007

Outputs produced

1. Innovation Charter was produced

Activity 7 Development of actions plans in January – February 2007

Outputs produced

1. The action plan is worked out

Activity 8 Involvement of schools and institutes in the IC project activities through local project groups in August – December 2006

Outputs produced

Students from Murmansk State Pedagogical University, Murmansk Humanities Institute and Gymnasia #2 took an active part in planning of local actions and implementation of them.

Activity 9.1. Implementation of local and transnational actions together with ERDF partners Conference "Cultural Path – from Theory to Practice", Suwalki, Poland for two days on the 1-2 December 2006

Outputs produced

Representatives from Murmansk didn't participate in the event.

Activity 9.2. Implementation of local and transnational actions Implementation of local actions in September 2006 – May 2008

Outputs produced

Continuous implementation of local action (Generator Group meetings, projects realization).

On the basis of the analysis of local needs, including the SWOT, the data obtained the local projects were elaborated, action plan was worked out.

Activity 9.3. Implementation of transnational action – Future workshop “Murmansk – My Dreamtown”, 5-7 February, 2007

Outputs produced

20 trainees participated in the workshop (representatives of Murmansk educational enterprises).

Outer experts were involved in the event - Michael Fuller-Gee (Norwegian Housing Bank) and Sergey Putistin (Petrozavodsk State University).

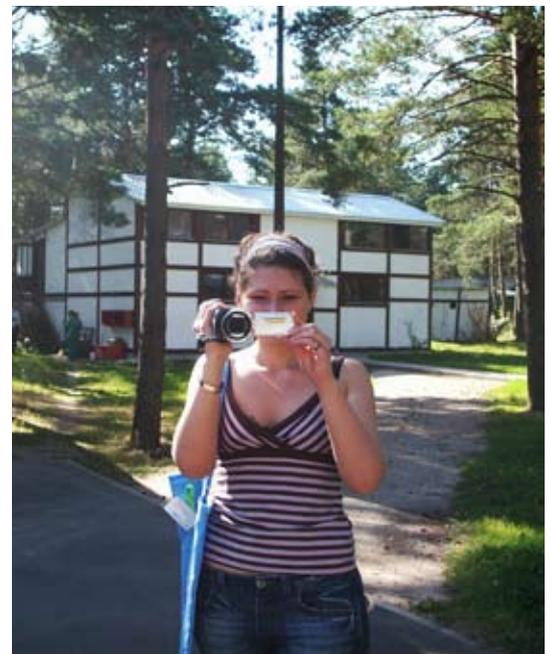
A report which is pointing out strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities and proposals for improvements. The report also pointed out identity markers. Digital photos and videos were made. The report was written in Russian and English. A summary of the report was published in local mass media.

The results were provided as an input for schools, for the city council, for the regional boards and for the following IC actions.

A methodology for training of young people about local identity, based on observation of their community. The workshop became an example which was copied for later occasions by schools and by the authorities.

1 common spatial development vision was elaborated by the youth.

The event was fully covered in the local mass media (3 articles on the local websites, about 10 articles in the local printing media, 3 TV broadcasts and 2 radio broadcasts).



Activity 9.4. Implementation of local action - Survey «Murmansk 2016 - the Capital of the Arctic”, April-May, 2007

Outputs produced

Experts delivered a statistical analysis of the survey and a final report written in Russian / English.

A list of proposals for changes and improvements of Murmansk was made.

A summary was published in a leaflet, at the IC web, other relevant websites and in mass media. The report was available for the authorities and schools.

About 200 persons were involved directly in the event (interviewers and respondents).

1 common spatial development vision resulted from the analysis of the survey.



Activity 9.5. Implementation of local action - Training for young entrepreneurs "KPD" ("Efficiency"), April-July, 2007

Outputs produced

A methodology for training of young people about business was created. The training became an example which was copied for an annual event organized by the city and the region administrations. The budget for such an event was elaborated for the next year.

Results were published in mass media, at the IC website.

A network of public organizations and companies supporting development of youth entrepreneurship was created.

20 young people were trained in business creation.

5 business-plans were created (3 awarded).

1 leaning programme in business creation was created.

The event was covered in the local mass media (10-15 newspaper article, 3 local TV broadcasts).

A special website was created for the training (www.kpdmurmansk.ru).

Activity 9.6. Implementation of transnational action - Conference "Murmansk 2016 – the capital of the Arctic", 7-8 June, 2007

Outputs produced

Illumination of the possibilities and challenges for the sustainable development of Murmansk.

The results from the conference were presented in mass media (10 newspaper articles, 2 radio broadcasts, 3 local TV broadcasts). and at the IC website and at other relevant websites (www.mbnews.ru, www.region51.ru, www.4erdak.ru).

1 concrete development concept and strategy plan compiled in the resolution resulted from the event.

3 workshops were held and about 50 participants were trained in those workshops. The topics of the workshops:

"Investment and Business";

"Tourism";

"City Environment and Housing".

70 persons were involved in the event (representatives from Murmansk Region Administration, Murmansk City Municipality, municipalities of Norway, Norwegian Housing Bank, Norwegian Barents Secretariat, "New Eurasia" Fund, Murmansk educational enterprises, local businesses).

Activity 9.7. Implementation of transnational action - Norwegian-Russian project "Breaking Stereotypes" (Finnmark-Murmansk), February-April, 2007

Outputs produced

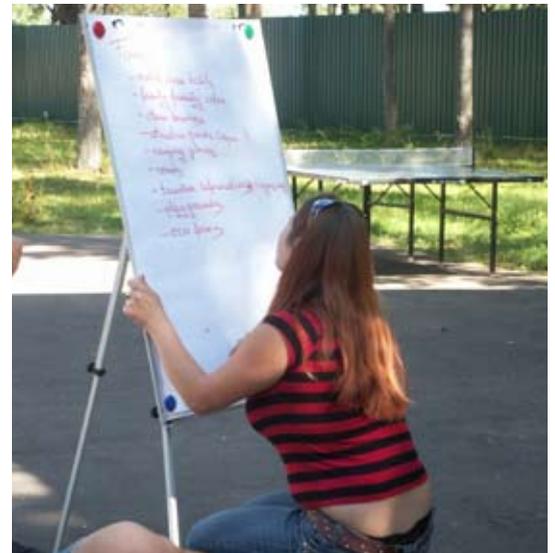
Materials (articles, movies) which were made during the project reflected a lot of interesting aspects of modern life on the both sides of the border.

Participant practiced their knowledge in journalistic and filmmaking. And they were introduced to the modern life of Barents region.

All materials were published in local newspapers and shown on TV (8 articles published in the local papers and websites, 2 radio broadcasts, 1 film about the project).

During the project a new video studio was established at Youth Centre "BASEN" (Kirkenes, Norway) for continuing making films at Barents Region.

20 persons were involved in the project (students and journalists).



Activity 10. Preparation for EXPO 2007 in February – May 2007

Outputs produced

Several Generator Group meetings were held in partnership with Murmansk Region Board for Youth Affairs, Murmansk City Municipality, Murmansk Humanities Institute, Murmansk Office of Norwegian Barents Secretariat, "Arctic Media Group" Company.

Presentation of five projects prepared, brochures printed, presentation of Russia and Murmansk prepared, stands organized.

Information about the final Expo 2007 was disseminated in Murmansk with the help of e-mass media (www.mbnews.ru, www.mout.ru).

Activity 11. Participation of Russian partners in the final event of Innovation Forum – EXPO 2007 for five days on the 9-13 May 2007

Outputs produced

The following persons took part in the event: Evgeny Kurdin – IC coordinator in Murmansk, Leonid Mostovoy - Head of Murmansk Region Board for Youth Affairs, Dmitriy Borovkov - Director of "Arctic Media Group" Company, Alexey Filin - Director of Murmansk Office of Norwegian Barents Secretariat, Vadim Ulanov - Coordinator of "SevZapInvest" Project in Murmansk, Ekaterina Melnichihina - Manager of "Arcturmuranout.ru" Project, Lubov Popova - Chief Accountant of Murmansk Region Board for Youth Affairs, Elizaveta Goncharova - Consultant of "Arctic Media Group" Company, Mikhail Ponomarev - student.

Murmansk participants took part in two workshops in Alytus Entrepreneurial Communities and in Druskininkai New Governance and Attractive Communities.



Brochures, information and the Murmansk projects were disseminated among participants of EXPO 2007.

The final Expo was also highlighted in news web-pages.

Murmansk project "Murmansk 2016 - the Capital of the Arctic" took a gold, project "Theatre Festival"Grani" took a silver.

Final reports from EXPO produced.

Activity 12. Innovation Forum in Murmansk, Russia, 4-5 March, 2008

Outputs produced

About 100 participants were involved in the event (representatives of Murmansk public organizations, local municipality, students, business and educational enterprises, representatives of Poland, Lithuania, Pskov, Severodvinsk).

At the Forum the projects developed in the framework of the IC project and its results were presented.

Participants shared the experience on youth policy and regional development.

Activity 13. Project evaluation / closing meeting in Pskov, Russia for two days on the 21-22 May 2008

Outputs produced

57 persons took part in the event: Tacis coordinators, management, evaluators, project partners from five countries, politicians and civil servants from local and regional levels, NGO, educational institutions and youth.

IC results were disseminated.

Evaluation report was presented.

Follow up activities were discussed.

Activity 14. Coordination and management in August 2006 – June 2008

Outputs produced

1. Mile-stone reports and project archive were made.

INNOVATION CIRCLE

EVALUATION REPORT BASED ON INTERVIEWS:

MURMANSK, RUSSIA: 5.-7. APRIL 2008.

PSKOV: 20. MAY 2008.

THE RESULTS WERE PRESENTED AT THE IC CLOSING CONFERENCE IN PSKOV 21. MAY 2008.



MURMANSK:

The interviews are based on separate discussions with 9 respondents from the city who took an active part in the IC project and played central roles in the participation from Murmansk. The respondents were given a questionnaire and additional questions were added when deemed necessary.

The respondents, 7 men and 2 women, were in the age group from 21 to 32. Some were students, others were either employed by the city or engaged in entrepreneurial activities. Some were working for the Youth department of regional administration.

PROJECT ORGANIZATION:

The project was organized by the regional youth office and was for the most part financed through Baltic innovation group, Tacis and Eurasia funding. The project coordinator was Evgeny Kurdin.

THE PROJECT IN GENERAL:

The goal of any project is to make changes, both in a short- and long term development aspect.

Murmansk as a city in the high north was built as an industrial town and ice-free seaport on the Barents sea. Traditionally one could say that the city and region have been focusing more on economical development than on green and ecological values. Nowadays it is right to say that the latter values are more in focus within the young ones than one could expect on part of the older generation. This is true in Murmansk as well as elsewhere in the world.

Interviewer / Author:

Bjørn Opjordsmoen

Senior Consultant



CENTRAL VIEWPOINTS:

One of the respondents was clearly negative to the effects of the IC project. According to his view there were not any significant changes taking part in Murmansk, which could be related to the project. The reason for this, according to this respondent, was the lack of a clear and well defined goal for the IC project. The positive changes that had come to the city, would have come anyway, because of investments made by entrepreneurs and local businessmen who were renovating property etc. Another respondent had viewpoints fairly similar to this one, but on the other hand, he clearly identified *new thinking* as part of the younger generation's new attitudes .

Another example was related to the international IC conference in Murmansk, June 2007. There were many participants from the IC partners present at this conference, and some top officials from the city were invited. Much to the surprise of the IC management team, most of these officials left the conference shortly after they had given their own contribution in the form of speeches. The respondent claimed that this was quite understandable, as long as these officials clearly looked upon the event as being too theoretical.

There is enough evidence to claim that quite a few of these local administrators, with their background from the old system, is used to focus on concrete projects like the building of a new industrial plant, the production of building materials etc. The idea that future progress will also come from visionary thinking and long-term planning, is almost non-existent.

The main objective of this report will therefore be to focus on some kind of common denominator as to the interviews from all the respondents, and the final conclusions which will be drawn.

CENTRALIZED PLANNING:

The socialist plan economy of the former Soviet Union was to a large extent based on decrees and regulations from the official ruling powers in Moscow. Here visions and plans were drawn up for regions all over the country, and the local administrators had to adhere to these plans. Therefore there is no wonder that even today some of these administrators, who were educated and had their working experience from the past, would be rather unwilling or even incapable to instantly accept local action plans and initiatives from citizens of the city and region. The *new thinking* of the younger generation would be hard to accept if you had your background from this system of the past.

Consequently it is good reason to claim that there is a rather sharp division between the young ones and the older generation when it comes to *new thinking* and acting!

Several of the young respondents clearly identifies new ways of doing things. There is a lot of motivation for change, and several of these young respondents have acquired new skills in international cooperation and even gained much ability to organize activities on an international scale.

Some of these young persons have even gone abroad for studies, either in Western Europe or in the USA. Many have experiences from Norway and norwegian institutions.

They clearly seem to understand that Murmansk city and region will offer opportunities in the not too distant future, but their willingness to stay in the city will to a large extent depend on the rapid development of a better infrastructure. This attitude will of course be challenging for a city and region where the population has diminished over the years since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The young and educated want influence and a better life-situation, and they want it now! They want to live in a city where there are relevant job opportunities, as well as a focus on green values and ecological thinking.

Some respondents indicate that some progress in developing the infrastructure is under way, but is slowed down by lack of experience in project work on part of the administration. Quite a few of the administrators seem to lag behind when it comes to implementing complex projects, which to a large degree involve cooperation among several professionals.

Any visitor coming to the city and region from Western Europe will clearly observe the total lack of maintenance of the main road system. Some of the respondents even state that the roads leading south from the city is in a much worse condition. According to their views no change will happen until the federal government decides to allocate money for the reconstruction of the road system. The local decision makers tried on one occasion to allocate regional money for improvements, but this was stopped by the state bureaucracy for formal reasons.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER IC PARTNERS:

All of the respondents from Murmansk gave a very positive evaluation of the cooperation they had taken part in across national borders. Getting contacts and establishing platforms for cooperation were seen as fundamental for the implementation of their own local projects.

Good examples from Lithuania, Norway, Poland and other countries in the network were mentioned. The cooperation between Business Angel in Alytus, Lithuania, and the young students from that city, was clearly seen as a model for future cooperation between the young ones and the older generation in Murmansk.

It is quite relevant to state that there is a *generation gap* between the young and impatient , and the older generation.

Taking part in international activities has proved to be quite valuable for the young participants from Murmansk. They have experienced how youth houses have been developed in Tromsø and Kirkenes, and seen that initiatives from the young ones have been valued and listened to. Traditionally there were cultural palaces in almost every town and city in the former Soviet Union, but there are reasons to believe that these were to a large extent run by the adults and based on ideological ideas and values. Murmansk city had several of these cultural palaces, but today they are either closed down or turned into premises for business activities.

HAS THE IC PROJECT INFLUENCED LOCAL DECISION MAKERS?

Murmansk won a golden price at the IC expo in Alytus in May 2007. The winning project's title was: Murmansk 2016 – The capital of the arctic.

The main goal for this project was to focus on Murmansk as the only big city in the arctic, with a potential to develop tourism and other sectors of the economy and social life. To fulfill this dream it was clearly stated that the young ones should play an important role together with public and private enterprises.

The mayor's office seem to have copied the ideas from Murmansk 2016 and created their own project; - Murmansk 2011. The city of Murmansk will be 95 years old in 2011, and the mayor's project



clearly indicates that the thinking from the winning project has readily been accepted.

There is also clear evidence that the Regional youth committee, a construction which has survived the Soviet union, now is much more active than before. New activities are created for children and the young ones.

WILL THE YOUNG ONES LEAVE THE CITY IN THE FUTURE OR STAY BEHIND?

It is no clear answer to this question. The oil and the gas sector, which is rapidly developing in the region, might halt the outflow of at least some of the younger generation. But that will depend on the availability of relevant jobs for the young and educated. But a relevant jobsituation is not the only factor to stop the outflow of people from the city and region. The system must change and for well educated women it is probably a better solution to move elsewhere in Russia or even outside Russia, to find relevant jobs outside the oil and gas sector. As in many other parts of the Nordic countries, young and educated women tend to be more mobile than younger men. To halt further emigration from the region, it is necessary to create interesting jobopportunities for women as well.

A brief summary of challenges facing the city and region:

- there is a problem that so many of the young ones leave for other regions
- the service sector must improve
- lack of ecological and green thinking
- bad infrastructure
- bad climate
- lack of agents for change
- schools and higher institutions of learning must improve and reach international standards
- lack of entrepreneurship in the school syllabus
- end corruption at both public and private levels
- clean up the seaside areas
- improve the housing
- improve all aspect of quality of life

PERSONAL COMMENTS FROM A SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR:

Background:

This IC participant is running a successful media company in Murmansk operating a round-the-clock commercial radio station. Making websites, doing marketing and other forms of media activities. It is a typical young company manned by approx. 30 young people. The radio station seems to have great appeal to the young ones, and may also be listened to on the internet.

This respondent has taken part in several international projects over the last 4-6 years, and may stand as a typical representative of a young entrepreneur who seems to have benefited a lot from cooperation with partners from all over the Baltic Sea Region.

The following are some of his comments to the "Yeltsin-period" of the Russian economic development.

The transition from a Soviet style economy to a more market-oriented situation, was chaotic and without control. People with access to the decision makers were able to get into positions where they amassed wealth at a rather large scale. State property was often acquired at a very low price or even confiscated. Many former state businesses were also brought into bankruptcy and millions of Russians fell on very hard times.

The social security network fell apart, people were thrown out of work and savings lost most of their former value. Even if you had a job, salaries were sometimes not paid for months, or not paid at all.

Drunkenness followed and life expectancy fell dramatically, especially among the men. Many children were neglected and not looked well after, and the drop out rate from schools increased. Consequently many of those who grew up during these chaotic years of Russia, lack an adequate education and many may end up as unqualified workers. Higher education suffered as well, and it takes time to recover from these years.

The political system which was created during these turbulent years in Russia made room for corruption and situations where you got to know somebody high up in the system, if you wanted something to be done.

Creativity and innovative actions do not thrive under such circumstances. The talented and those with ambitions may solve their frustrations by just leaving the city and the region. This is exactly what happened in Murmansk. St. Petersburg was like a magnet for those who could find a qualified job in this big city, and they left the Kola peninsula by the thousands.

As mentioned previously in this report the mayor's office has initiated a project named "Murmansk 2011". The ideas are apparently "stolen" from Murmansk 2016, where the main focus points were actions to stabilize the population, establish green thinking, promote sustainable development and take an active part in the development of the city and region.

It is no wonder that many of the entrepreneurs who actually managed to start up successful businesses, tend to stick to their own projects, not giving much attention to what is good for the city and region. The collective responsibility may be gone. The main goal for the politicians and top administrators is still to focus on short-term economic development. The fact that many talented young people leave for St. Petersburg, does not seem to bother them too much.

On the other hand a lot of cafes and restaurants have sprung up during the past 2-4 years. One would think that many of these new businesses are owned and managed by a variety of new entrepreneurs. Not so at all. It is claimed by one of the respondents that many of these places have just one owner, often a very influential businessman with ties to the decision makers in the city.

The following example explains how a network between influential persons might work. The wife of a very central person in the city administration is running a company who is putting up electronic boards for commercial advertisements all over the city. Someone wanted to challenge this position and asked the city for permission to buy or rent vacant land in the city for electronic boards from a competing company. The request was quickly denied on basis of the city's decision to keep the land for other purposes. Shortly after, the wife of the decision maker from the city was allowed to get hold of the land, setting up her own boards on this vacant lot. The consequences are that there will be no competition allowed within the city limits. According to western standards this is a very good example on how corruption and corruption-like situations are being allowed to prevail in Murmansk.

CONCLUSIONS:

No wonder that many young ones with an entrepreneurial spirit just pack up and leave realizing that they will not be able to enter a network where decisions are discussed and made, for the benefit of the few who have a more or less direct access to the important people in the city.

COMMENTS FROM ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR WHO IS MANAGING A CONSULTING COMPANY:

First of all he commented on the size of the population within the city limits. Officially it is stated that the city has a population of approximately 316 000. According to this respondent this figure is not very reliable. Due to climatic conditions, there is still a better payoff in Murmansk on salaries and pensions than in most other part of western Russia. Many of the retired persons prefer to live in the southern parts of Russia or Ukraine, but uphold their addresses in Murmansk to benefit from higher pensions for people "living" in this city. It is estimated that this could account to as many as 30 000 – 40 000 persons. If this is the case, then it is reason to believe that the number of people living in Murmansk could be less than 300 000. 280 000 is mentioned as the most realistic population figure as of 2007.

This respondent clearly indicates that he personally has benefited a lot by cooperating and establishing networks between the various participants from all over the BSR. The business ideas he has acquired by taking part in the IC project, has given him and his company a competitive advantage on the Russian consulting market. A new way of thinking has been one of the key factors to his success.

It is also very interesting to note that this respondent seems to face just minor problems in relation to the city's decision makers. He states that he "knows where to go" when a difficulty arise. This attitude might suggest that he has managed to connect with the right network of officials and decision makers. This is in rather sharp contrast to what the other respondents say.

According to this respondent it is quite obvious that the city administration has experienced a learning effect from the IC project. When it becomes clear that the mayor's office is "stealing" their idea of Murmansk 2011 from Murmansk 2016, then this sole fact clearly indicates that even within the administrative bureaucracy, there is a willingness to make changes, at least to some degree.

Future projects with partners from Murmansk should be very concrete and define clear and realistic goals.

Supporting Young Entrepreneurs would be of great value.

Tourism should have some potential in Murmansk city and region. There is a very interesting Arctic museum in the city, but all the displays are in russian only, and no-one working at the museum seems to have the slightest knowledge of the english language.

Other factors which may stop the outflow of the young and educated to St. Petersburg and other cities, must include a change of attitude among the decision makers in the fields of environmental thinking, focus on green values and even more emphasis on strengthening cultural values. A lifestyle which appeals to the young ones must include more than just economic values.

A RESPONDENT FROM THE CITY ADMINISTRATION:

This respondent is a trained economist employed by the city administration. It is always of great value to interview someone who has first hand experiences from the inner life of a city bureaucracy. According to him it is quite clear that the administration has observed various challenges for the city through the eyes of the IC participants. Among some of the initiatives is the creation of *Business competitions*, where focus is on the training of young entrepreneurs. He claims that this initiative would never have come up if it had not been for the change of attitude on part of the administrators. And this change of attitude has come about as a direct result of the IC project. This statement coming from someone who is working close to the decision makers, seems to challenge the statements from

other respondents who are not that close, and still would stick to the viewpoint that they had seen no changes at all in attitudes and practice.

There are good reasons to believe that the respondent is able to see what may be concealed to others, that the IC project has indeed created a change of attitudes within the Murmansk city bureaucracy.

It must also be noted that the economist has taken an active part in creating the concept Business competitions.

The results from the IC project, as he sees it, may explain why the city has decided to join Transinform. The Youth Innovation Centre would be one of the main focus points of Transinform.

Like many of the other respondents he can clearly see that the main challenge for the city and region is to keep the young and educated in the city after they have completed their education. The tendency to strengthen other values than purely economical factors is clearly seen, according to his viewpoints.

These viewpoints are supported by another female respondent who also sees the creation of a Youth innovation Centre as a construction highly valued by the young ones in Murmansk, and to a large degree being supported by local decision makers. Previously one would observe that various challenges facing the city would be discussed in many meetings and discussion forums, but after some time, business would be as usual. Consequently there are reasons to believe that this change of attitude is due to the fact that many took part in the IC project, and this in itself created arenas for *new thinking*. The practical approach of the IC project was the catalyst for change of attitude!

But there are still challenges to overcome. As a student of foreign languages at the Pedagogical university, she has interesting ideas as to how the image of the city could be greatly improved if websites and other types of information material could be translated into english. Students have approached the director of the university and offered to translate the university website into english for free, but so far no decision has been made by the administration. The respondent claims that this is due to the fact that the director is still applying Soviet thinking where emphasis are on bureaucratic rules and old time practice. This is another proof of the *generation gap* between the younger generation and the older decision makers!

The same applies to the Arctic museum where students would be more than willing to volunteer to give translational services, but so far it has been quite difficult to reach the right person who would be in a position to say – Go ahead and do it!

This respondent is typical for a young person who puts more emphasis on green values and ecological thinking than on economic development alone. She wants to move the harbor activities away from the city centre. This part of the city is characterized by ugly buildings and wasteproblems. Like in many cities around the world she would like to see the seafront





developed into pedestrian streets with cafes, restaurants, theatres and new housing areas. The public transport system of the city should also be improved to reduce the traffic problems the city is facing today. She underlines the fact that some positive changes are made, but supermarkets still prevail over playgrounds and parks.

As some of the other respondents claim, she is able to observe that the ideas of the IC project, Murmansk 2016, are slowly influencing the attitudes of the decision makers of the city. One proof would be the mayor's project □ Murmansk 2011, even if some will claim that the main motivation for this project is to safeguard the re-election of the present mayor.

As a result of innovative ideas from Murmansk 2016 the park near hotel Arctica is to be renovated.

According to her view ideas and suggestions from the younger generation are more valued than before, and at times taken into consideration when decisions are made.

A RESPONDENT FROM THE REGIONAL LEVEL:

This respondent is head of a department at the regional level. He believes quite strongly that participation in the IC project has promoted local and regional thinking in the field of innovation

The young ones who have taken part in IC activities have changed their attitudes, and it is a common belief among these that to obtain lasting changes of a policy, then one has to take part in activities on a broad scale. As a direct result of the youth willingness to take a direct and active part in local and regional programmes, a Youth parliament was established in 2007. In 2008 a Forum for youth initiatives was also created to ensure that youth initiatives were taken seriously. As a side effect, many of the decision makers are now fully aware of the fact that volunteer activities and NGOs may also be of value to the further development of the city and region.

This respondent also claims that the concept Murmansk 2016 has created more visionary thinking at high administrative and political levels. However, when he is challenged as to why the concept of "Entrepreneurship" is not included in the school syllabus, it becomes quite clear that the region is not in a position to make this happen, due to a centralized structure of the school curriculum. Such activities must be done in the free time after the school day is over.

Experiences from the IC and other international projects have been factors leading up to the establishment of a committee in the Duma, called Youth, family and sport with 32 members. It is also pretty sensational that a young woman has been elected as member of the Duma. This would have been unheard of just a few years ago!

The respondent has gained a lot from international cooperation through IC and other projects, and such participation has been of great value to his present position as head of a regional department.

His list of priorities regarding challenges to be addressed are:

- improve the roads and traffic situation
- get federal funding for the upgrading of national highways
- set green values and ecological thinking on the agenda
- more focus on waste and pollution management
- further increase of youth activities

A SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS FROM MURMANSK:

There are many reasons to believe that international projects like PIPE and IC have influenced the participants from Murmansk in a very positive way. International thinking and a more modern approach to development strategies have been strengthened through all the events that took place in the BSR during the past 5-6 years.

However, there are some hindrances. There are still decision makers with a background from a system where centralized planning was prevalent and where the major decisions were actually made in Moscow. The younger generation have had their educational background and experiences from another time where borders were opened and connections could be made on a personal level all over the BSR and elsewhere in the world.

Innovation activities created at the local level has slowly come about, and in due time one could expect even more progress due to *new thinking*, change of attitudes and innovative actions.

The *generation gap*, which is still notable, will gradually be diminished as future decision makers enter the scene with other values and attitudes.



PSKOV

General:

The interviews are based on separate discussions with 5 respondents from the city who took an active part in IC activities.

The city of Pskov and the Pskov region joined the Innovation Circle project as a partner, fully supporting the objectives and goals for the project. The city of Pskov is located south of St. Petersburg along the rail line from Riga to S.P. A lot of young and educated people left the city due to low innovation capacity and fairly bleak prospects for the young, ambitious and well educated persons. Consequently there was a downsizing of the population and it became quite clear that something had to be done to alter this situation.

THE RESPONDENTS:

The first respondent is in a high position at the Academy for Tourism in Pskov. This academy wanted to engage in international activities which could promote tourism in the city and region and give the students opportunities to cooperate and gain experiences on an international level.

As a representative from the Academy she approached the leader of the Pskov Oblast agency for regional development, Nikolay Zateshilov, and asked to be included in regional development strategies. It became quite clear that the Academy and its students could easily be included in the IC activities planned for Pskov city and region. Pskov has a great number of castles and old church buildings and other historical monuments, and the proximity to the Baltic states and Western Europe could transform the city into an interesting object for tourist groups. A youth camp with young representatives from all over the BSR gave positive results, and plans were drawn up for the renovation of historical monuments, the clearing of bicycle paths etc. Pskov has a very impressive Kremlin with a walled old city with magnificent churches and other buildings of historical interest. Innovative ideas were generated through cooperation with architects and other professional groups, and especially the young ones were enabled to look upon their city with new spectacles.

There will always be some kind of a power struggle between investors with ideas of building shopping centers and high-rise office buildings, and those who first of all want to preserve the historical buildings from the past. One of the objectives is to prevent further development of such high-rise buildings near the old city. The younger generation with their ideas of *new thinking* offer a challenge to the older generation who are still in power both at the administrative and political levels. However, IC has played an important part in the development of this *new thinking*, both among the youths, but also to some degree among the older decision makers.

One of the most vivid results so far is the creation of a recommendatory body that influences the process of working out development strategies for the city of Pskov.



Pskov is in a historical context a very unique city with roots back to the Viking area of the Baltic states and Western Russia. The city was once the gateway for trade with the Hanseatic states of northern Europe and the Baltic states. As such it is of high importance to protect the historical past of this city for future generations. A process is under way to try to get the historical city on the Unesco list of world heritage sites.

Participation in the IC project may have opened the eyes on those decision makers who have the power to influence future progress in Pskov city and region. But progress does not mean that one should forget about the preservation of historical monuments and buildings.

Tourism could be one field of economic development in Pskov. The infrastructure is, however, in a pretty bad shape and transport is a problem. There are rail connections to Riga and St. Petersburg, but the trains are slow and not up to date as far as the tourist industry sees it. There is also a lack of adequate hotel capacity, and there is a need for language training and upgrading of restaurants and cafes. It is typical of the present situation that almost none of the restaurants offer the menu in English or any other western language.

THE COOPERATION WITH ARCHITECTS:

The IC project group from Pskov established a very interesting cooperation with architects from Pskov and from abroad. They were used as experts, generating new ideas for the restoration and maintenance of historical sites, collected data for the IC groups and helped in any way they could to make the project sustainable and of value for the city. They clearly pointed out the discrepancy between the need for economic development and setting aside spaces for leisure activities. One of the architects had experienced little will on part of the decision makers in the city to listen to the experts. Compromises were not on the agenda. Those who had other ideas than those based purely on economical factors were often brushed aside.

This changed quite a lot when the project expanded and cooperation with foreign partners gradually developed. The key factor to this change, as one of the architects sees it, was the participation of an internationally renowned architect from Norway. His support for the local project ideas gave the local architects more self-confidence and an understanding that the ideas they for so long had tried to convey to the decision makers, slowly were accepted, at least to some extent.

The infrastructure must be improved and the city administration must focus more on improved water quality, better waste handling and making the city more accessible for pedestrians and the handicapped. Pedestrian streets should be created in parts of the city.

The architect concludes that some progress is under way, and she feels that she is more listened to and taken more seriously now than before she entered the IC project.

Another young architect took part in the IC project as a motivator and creator of progressive ideas. Brainstorming among the young ones was practiced, and out of the many ideas she tried to make the students realize that sometimes one has to take economical factors into consideration as well. It takes time to make changes within the older generation and their way of thinking, but she is rather optimistic about the future development of the city. It's location quite near the new EU member states could be of great advantage to the city. The surrounding countryside is pretty and if taken care of, will serve as a valuable area for recreation and leisure. Young families will probably want to settle in Pskov, but one negative factor is the lack of adequate housing for those with meager salaries. Being a young architect with a quite low monthly salary of 10000 rubles, she would have to pay 7000 rubles for a decent, but rather small flat in Pskov.

REFLECTIONS FROM ONE OF THE ACADEMY STUDENTS:

This respondent is just 20 years old and took part in the IC project from 2006 when she went to the youth camp in Latvia. She did some field work in Pskov and also in Lithuania, and participated in 6 different projects. She gained a lot of experiences from these various activities, and it is no question that her Master degree-project will be highly influenced by the IC thinking and project results. She is able to identify many interesting sites for tourism development, but as many others comment on, there must be improvements as far as the infrastructure is concerned. Soviet type thinking is still

prevalent among some of the decision makers, but may be slowly changing as more young people are brought into decision making.

City planning should have a broad view and include environmental thinking with a focus on green values as well as strengthening the economic situation. Motivate the citizens to take more care of the land and improve their attitude to waste handling and upkeep of the countryside, parks and city centers. Tourism could be developed to take care of the internal Russian market, but also include the international aspect due to its proximity to the western markets.

The Academy for tourism has adopted many of the ideas which focuses on ecological thinking and the preservation of the historical past of Pskov city and region. She concludes by saying that IC has created changes, especially among the young ones. Many of the ideas created by the project will become future arenas for Master studies among the students from the Academy for tourism. A very promising aspect for the city and region!

INTERVIEW WITH THE HEAD OF PSKOV CITY YOUTH COMMITTEE:

The city of Pskov has established partnerships with cities in many countries. In that respect the youth committee has gained experiences from participating on an international level. IC was just one of several projects which the youth committee took part in. To establish contacts and participating with others is always a valuable exercise, enabling some of the participants to receive new knowledge from this which is useful to Pskov. He was asked whether he would think that the young ones were listened to or not. In his view many of the young and educated were mostly caring about their own careers, and not so keen on doing something for the city. But after taking part in international projects, this has gradually changed. Project participants from IC and other similar projects have experienced that a cooperation with other young persons, stimulates a new way of thinking and acting. This is promising!

Not all of the ideas and initiatives brought forward by the young ones are realistic. Consequently they should not be too disappointed if the older generation at times seem to neglect the attitudes and proposals of the younger generation.

On the other hand, according to his view, it is quite obvious that many young persons want to participate in decision making. In this respect this will facilitate the work the youth committee is performing on their behalf.

He clearly identifies the top priorities of the decision makers in Pskov.

Firstly a great focus on economical development, then social matters and finally on ecological challenges.

The proximity to the Baltic countries of Latvia and Estonia is for him looked upon as an advantage, and the past problems between the former republics of the Soviet union, doesn't seem to bother the young ones any more. It is more of a political problem at higher levels. It is also very interesting to note that there are actually several minorities living in the city. There are citizen groups from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Latvia and Estonia. An surprisingly – even a Jewish group is still active in Pskov. Nearly all of these ethnic groups have established their own projects, but mainly for their own national groups. Language classes are mentioned specifically.

In his view the number one priority for Pskov city and region is to address common challenges, discuss visions for future development and reduce the level of conflict between various interest groups. Compromises have to be made and according to this respondent this is well under way.

COMMENTS:

This respondent with a high position in the Pskov city youth committee, is in my view a person who is able to look at the effects of the IC from two angles: One from the administrative side, - as he is one of the decision makers and is able to exert some influence on decisions made at a higher level. Then on the other side he is a young person himself, and the cooperation he adheres to on a daily basis with other young people, will probably allow him to fully understand that there might still be discrepancies between the young ones and the older generation. He is in a way trying to bridge the gap, as I see it.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS FROM BOTH MURMANSK AND PSKOV:

Present situation in both cities;

- Decline of population
- The young and educated move away
- Some of the infrastructure is in a bad shape
- But still, - many talented people in the cities with innovative ideas and a willingness to do something to improve the situation

Some typical comments from the respondents:

- There is a generation gap as far as attitudes and ways of thinking are concerned
- Many of the political and administrative leaders have their educational background and much of their work practice from the Soviet system
- Old thinking still prevails
- Younger people are not always listened to

Main challenges:

- Attracting investments to the cities and regions
- Improve the physical appearances of the cities
- Increasing the quality of products and services
- Increasing the image of the cities

Did the IC-project make things better?

The younger generation apply new ways of thinking

- They want changes
- They want international experience
- They want to grab opportunities
- They are impatient
- They want changes now

Why are changes slow?

- Bureaucratic hindrances
- Centralized administrative structures
- Few younger people in administrative or political positions
- Language barriers
- You got to know somebody who has the power to make things right

On the other hand:

- Things are changing, slowly!
- The political leaderships have organized new projects along the lines of the IC ideas
- IC has been one of the main factors to establish business-competitions among the young ones
- The leaders seem to understand that economic development is not the only factor to keep the young and educated in the city
- More focus on social matters
- The creation of a Youth innovation centre
- More emphasis on green values and ecological thinking
- More willingness to make fundamental changes in attitude and practice

After all, there is no doubt that the IC project has had very positive effects in both cities. Future progress and development will to a large degree be influenced by IC thinking and actions. There are still bureaucratic hindrances, but they will eventually be overcome!

Spydeberg, Norway

4.june 2008

Bjørn R. Opjordsmoen



PROJECT BACKGROUND:

The main goal for the IC project was to stimulate innovation and sustainable development in rural districts, towns and cities in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR).

An innovation academy was established to improve competence for working with strategic development projects, encourage innovation and stimulate entrepreneurship.

One of the tools to achieve these goals was to form community generators as local arenas for generating and promoting innovative ideas and initiatives.

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The Innovation Circle project, INTERREG III B BSR, was closed 31th October 2007. The activities within the TACIS part continued until end of May 2008. This evaluation report is based on interviews undertaken in Murmansk and Pskov. The respondents have all been participating in IC project activities in Russia. The external expert evaluator Mr. Bjørn Ring Opjordsmoen was engaged as chairman of the jury at the Innovation Circle expo 2007. He has the first hand information about the content of the project activities. He was also one of the managers of the PIPE project, which predeceased the IC project. However, he has not been directly involved in IC activities and therefore he has a critical eye on activities and deliveries from the project.

The partners who cooperated in the project was the Pskov Oblast Agency for Regional Development, the Murmansk Oblast Board for youth affairs and the public institution Baltic Innovation Group.

Baltic Innovation Group initiated and coordinated the project. A management team was taking care of overall coordination and cooperation, finances, information and external reporting. The working languages have been English and Russian. Web information and brochures have been distributed in both languages. However, English has been the main language for the international cooperation activities and events.

Activities has been organized according to plan, and as project manager I am in general satisfied with the results. We have not used all available budget. This mainly comes from too high expectations for international cooperation. However, the international cooperation has been significant at all international targeted events.

Through the IC project our partners have gathered experiences from international cooperation and collected many novel ideas about topics like city planning, tourism, youth policy, culture and education. The project was also a basis for creation of the Innovation Circle Network and the new partnership for the TRANS-IN-FORM project. The methodology used by the IC project can be described as holistic with an integration of sectors and disciplines. The participants have given very good feedback and we also see that the innovative approach has managed to involve both genders, different age groups, public and private sectors. This has resulted in many new innovative teams within the participating cities and regions and trans-nationally. They also represent a variety of institutions and enterprises involving themselves in city- and regional development issues together with the local and regional authorities.

The IC network is a cluster of innovative and devoted city planners, city promoters and regional developers meaning a variety of such people who in fact have become "agents of change".

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