



Nordic Regional Youth Camp – Young Eyes on Sustainability in the Arctic Dimension

GREATER INCLUSION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND YOUTH IS NEEDED FOR BETTER DECISION-MAKING

Because of increased interest in the Arctic Region we need to include those affected. Nowadays, local and indigenous people, including youth representatives, are almost always excluded in international co-operation. For instance, the Saami parliaments in Finland and Sweden lack real legislative power and are often overruled. Climate change affects traditional ways of living and the traditional livelihoods are threatened and need to be taken into consideration. The traditional ways of living are often more sustainable, and therefore it is important for climate protection to include people living in traditional ways into the decision-making process.

The need for local representation in international bodies is getting more attention, but there is a lack of action. Representation of indigenous people in parliamentary bodies is needed and the existing bodies' position and legislative mandate should be strengthened. The Saami parliament, Sametinget, in Norway should act as a good example of good intentions to give representation to the Saami. Good examples of including the youth in international co-operation are the Nordic Youth Council (UNR) and Barents Sea Regional Youth Council (BRYC). Indigenous peoples are also included in the work of the Arctic Council and BRYC. Concerning the matter of the amount of representatives that should be included, the organizations and decision-making bodies should not be too big. Sizable decision-making organs will only make it more difficult to reach an agreement on certain issues. On the other hand should decision-making organs not be too small, in order to keep legitimacy and avoid having an elite group making all the decisions.

Another issue regarding decision-making in the Arctic region is the legislation. The Arctic countries have different laws and rules from each other, which is making implementation of decisions in the countries more difficult. By reducing legislative barriers in accordance with international agreements between Arctic countries, co-operation amongst the countries will be easier. These barriers create problems e.g. when seeking healthcare in other countries. A similar body as the Nordic Council of Ministers for Legislative Affairs should be founded in the Arctic Council and/or a co-operation between these two bodies. The Arctic region should also act together when implementing international agreements and guaranteeing rights provided by international conventions. Norway and Denmark have already ratified the ILO Convention 169 on indigenous peoples' rights and the rest of the countries should follow suit.



What do we want to see happening now?

- Local and indigenous people must be included in decision-making on all levels through permanent quotas.
- Stronger mandate and decision-making powers for indigenous peoples' parliamentary organs.
- Guaranteeing quality education in the indigenous languages and culture to ensure its preservation and raise awareness amongst the majority population to work against the social stigma indigenous people face.
- Support direct cross-border contact between indigenous people through removing obstacles created by borders.
- The rest of the countries who have not ratified the ILO 169 Convention should ratify it.
- Permanent youth representation in all international decision-making.