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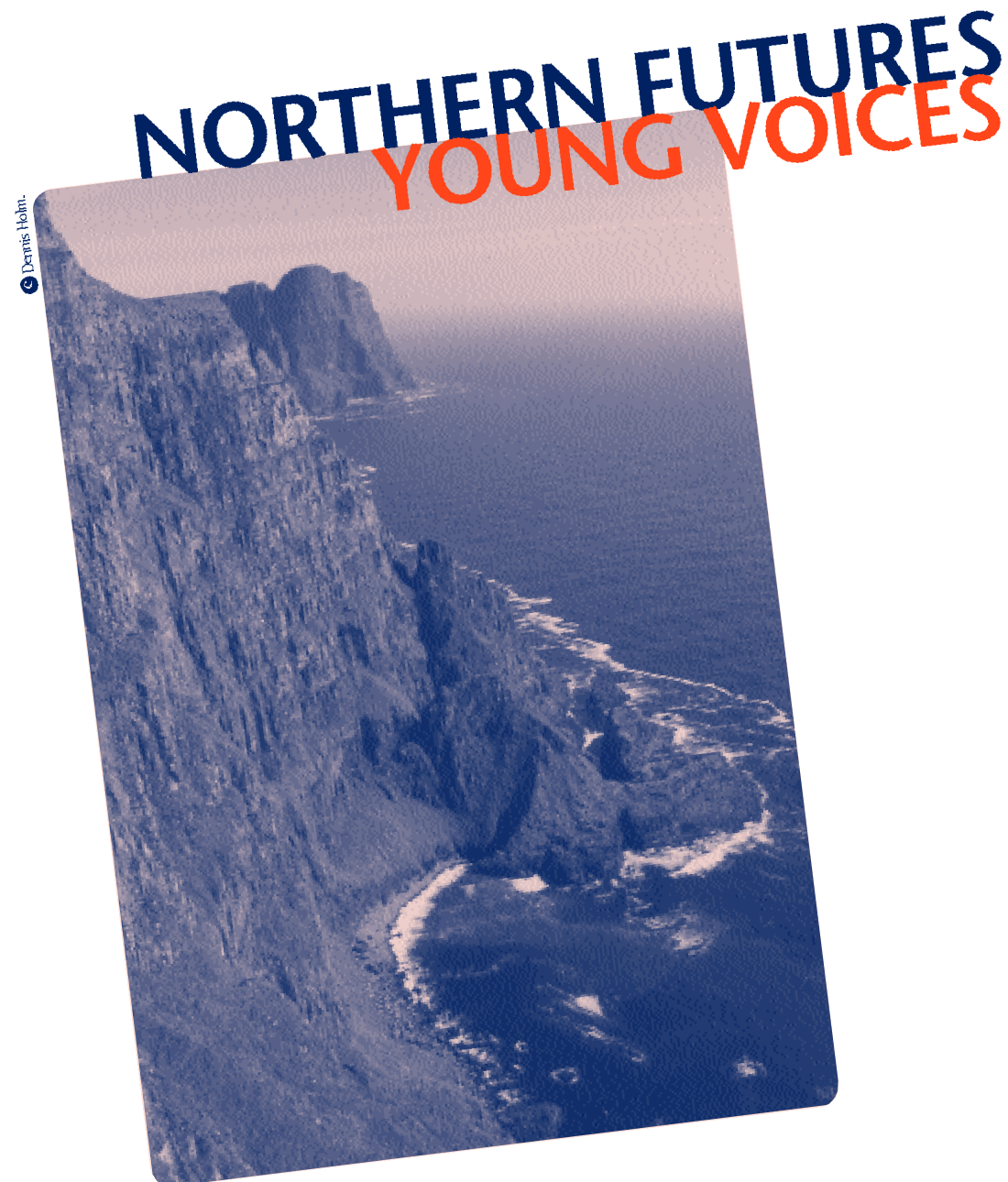
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A COMPARISON OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRESENTATIONS OF THEIR COMMUNITIES IN CANADA, ICELAND, THE FAEROE ISLANDS, NORWAY, SWEDEN, FINLAND AND RUSSIA.

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Contents

Introduction	7
Organising the pilot project	7
MOBILISING RESOURCES AND CO-OPERATING WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS	7
IMPLEMENTING THE PILOT STUDY	8
REGARDING CONCEPTS AND METHODOLOGY	8
THE LOCALITY APPROACH	9
Description of the communities	10
DIGBY	11
CHISASIBI	11
ISAFJORDUR	11
VAGUR	11
STORFJORD	11
BÅTSFJORD	12
STORUMAN	12
PAJALA	12
GOTLAND	13
INARI	13
TERIBERKA	13
What young people like and dislike about their home communities	14
What young people like about their community : the social environment and nature	14
What young people dislike about their community : the lack of leisure activities	15
ESSAYS FROM THE NORTH : YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS IN WRITING	16
A • YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET	17
B • YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS ON SOCIAL CONDITIONS	19
Variations between places	19
Variations in openness?	21
Friends and family	21

C • YOUNG PEOPLE NEED THEIR OWN SOCIAL ARENAS	22
Questionnaire data on leisure activities	22
Places and activities	23
Essay data on young people's need for public areas	23
D • YOUNG PEOPLE'S SENSE OF PLACE	25

Young people's views on how their community can become a better place in the future	29
Concluding remarks	30
References	33
Acknowledgments	33

Appendix I > methodological considerations	34
---	----

Appendix II > frequencies and crosstabulations	36
---	----

FREQUENCIES	36
Statistics	36
FREQUENCY TABLE	36
Place	36
Age	36
Sex	36
Father's occupation	37
Mother's occupation	37
Is either of your parents looking for work?	37
Sense of place	37
CROSSTABS	38
Case Processing Summary	38
Sex * What are the two things you like about living in your community? (no 1) Crosstabulation	38
Sex * What are the two things you do not like about living in your community? (no 1) Crosstabulation	38
Sex * What kinds of things do you like to do when you are not at school? (no 1) Crosstabulation	38
Sex * Social arenas for youth/Crosstabulation	39
Sex * Social conditions; general/Crosstabulation	39
Sex * Social conditions; friends/Crosstabulation	39
Sex * Social conditions; family/Crosstabulation	39
Sex * Local economy, labour market/Crosstabulation	39
Sex * Sense of place/Crosstabulation	39

Appendix III > standardised questionnaire	40
--	----

Questionnaire	40
----------------------	-----------

Appendix IV > selected essays	41
--------------------------------------	----

Essay	41
--------------	-----------

Introduction

This report is a pilot study on how young people in Northern peripheral communities experience their everyday situation, and in what terms they describe their home communities. The study is part of the research activities of the MOST Circumpolar Coping Processes Project (CCPP). This project attempts to analyse how people in the North cope with economic, technological, and environmental changes.

In the first book published within this project entitled *Coping Strategies in the North* (Aarsæther & Bærenholdt, 1998), the voices of young people in the Northern localities were barely heard. In the introductory chapter of this book, the scientific co-ordinators had pointed to the need for developing the project further, so as to ensure that the practices and viewpoints of the younger generations were included in the analysis of local development policies in circumpolar areas.

With several case studies already well under way, it was decided that the voices of the young generation should be part of the on-going research project, by approaching the local schools in the localities under consideration and obtaining for permission to ask pupils a limited number of questions. A standardised questionnaire for the study was worked out, with the aim of conducting a comparative study; the data was collected in the spring of 1999.

Organising the pilot project

MOBILISING RESOURCES AND CO-OPERATING WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS

The prospect of co-operating with local schools held much promise and potential because a more or less standardised scheme for collecting data could be set up which would allow for a truly comparative project. It was envisaged that with a limited amount of effort, a short questionnaire and a request to write a short essay about one's home place could be translated, distributed to teachers, handed out to the pupils in question, and returned for translation and analysis. The CCPP network of researchers was mobilised to discuss the structure of the questionnaire, to have the agreed-upon version translated into seven different languages, and to contact the schools and educational authorities to obtain permission to carry out the study. During this process, scholars with experience from the field of educational research were also brought into the research network. We succeeded in collecting data from localities in seven countries : Russia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, the Faeroe Islands (Denmark), Iceland, and Canada. Kerstin Haegg of Umeå University also took part in the school essay project. Her present research activities included an approach similar to the one we had planned, and by combined efforts, young people from three localities in Sweden (Pajala, Storuman, and Gotland) were included as part of this pilot project.

Grunnskollinn a Isafiroi school.



Jonas Gunnarsson

IMPLEMENTING THE PILOT STUDY

The secretariat of the CCPP in Tromsø, headed by Marit Aure, organised the process of obtaining essays and questionnaire data from a total of 11 municipalities (three localities in Sweden, two in Norway and Canada, and one each in Russia, Finland, the Faeroe Islands, and Iceland). The aim was to have approximately 30 young people (age group 14–15 years) from each locality. In those schools with a higher number of pupils in the actual age group, an equal number of girls and boys were selected at random. As can be observed from the statistical tables in the report, the number of young people varies between 19 and 62 depending on the respective place. A total of 384 pupils have been involved in the pilot project. We would like to thank all the pupils, schoolteachers, school administrators, and each member of the research team for contributing to this research effort.

The study was originally planned as an analysis of essay texts, but the large number of participants made it possible to add a quantitative analysis of the material. Graduate student Nina Olsen, Tromsø, has assisted the research team in preparing the information for this statistical analysis. The main thrust of the study, however, has been the qualitative analysis of the contents of the essays, based upon a close reading by Cato RP Bjørndal. The team of researchers, after having the essays translated and with some statistics met for a workshop at the University of Roskilde, on September 23–24, 1999. There, Cato RP Bjørndal presented the data to the CCPP team, and the team discussed how to proceed with the analysis, working in small groups, as well as participating in plenary discussions. Since the end of September, members of the CCPP team have sent comments and additional information to Tromsø. There has been a clear understanding that the deadline for submitting this report to UNESCO should be adhered to, even though the limits of this report can in no way do justice to the wealth of the material collected.

We are very grateful to the large group of facilitators and field workers who have made this co-operative effort possible – this study has especially benefited from the experiences of Gestur Hovgaard who undertook a corresponding study in Klaksvik, in the Faeroe Islands. The following persons have been responsible for the data:

- Teriberka, Russia: Larissa Riabova
- Båtsfjord, Norway: Mayor Leif Arne Viken and Marit Aure
- Storfjord, Norway: Anne Dalheim
- Inari, Finland: Leena Soupajärvi
- Pajala, Storuman, Gotland, all in Sweden: Kerstin Hägg
- Vagur, the Faeroe Islands: Dennis Holm
- Isafjordur, Iceland: Gunnar Thor Johannsson, Sif Svavarsdottir, and Unnur Dis Skaptadottir)
- Digby area, Canada: John David Flint
- Chisasibi, Canada: Tor Gjertsen

REGARDING CONCEPTS AND METHODOLOGY

The methodology upon which the research is based combines the study of people's perceptions with the study of their practices (cp. Bærenholdt & Aarsæther 1998). We have listened to what people said (in this case, what they wrote down) about the positive and negative aspects of local life, but we also tried to get a picture of their daily life practices, which may or may not deviate from what they express in words. Compared with studies limited to people's perceptions, or to people's actions, a study using this methodological approach sheds more light on how people reflect on their practices, and thus allows for a deeper understanding of the current situation. In this study, we hope to be able to analyse not only what young people do in their leisure time, but also what they think about themselves and their home. By analysing the answers to the questionnaires and the contents of the essays, we should be able to get a better understanding, not only of the situation young people find themselves in, but also of the problems and potentials of the localities they live in.

In the present study, we have had to rely on the accounts given by the young people when asked to write down their leisure time activities giving them real weight in a practical sense. Also,

the evaluations of the young people have provided valuable information about how they think, on the condition that the answers are sincere and not simply a “fooling-the-researchers” strategy (which, in the end, is impossible for us to know...). Some may even doubt the value of recording the views of girls and boys at the age of 15. This period in life is one in which important changes take place. As young people at this age will be entering new levels within the education system, they are soon to experience life in other places than their home place, and their perceptions are therefore susceptible to changes. Research that captures just one moment in a person's life at the age of 15 will hardly be sufficient to draw firm conclusions on local development strategies and their prospective analysis.

Keeping this in mind, we still see the value of the present study, as the localities that the young people come from (with the exception of Chisasibi, Gotland and Storuman) are also being studied on a broader basis within the CCPP, and variations as to what young people express may prove to be a very valuable contribution to our attempts at analysing the coping strategies and processes in each place.

At the outset, conducting this kind of study by organising a standardised questionnaire and essay theme to school pupils of about 15 years of age seemed to represent quite a simple task. But several methodological problems arose during its implementation. First, finding and translating questions into seven different languages is not particularly easy. To find questions that were meaningful in all of the relevant localities posed another problem, and at least in one case some questions had to be omitted for this reason. And finally, since the actual distribution and collection of the questionnaires and essays were done by different people and in different school day contexts, the answers from the pupils should be reviewed with that in mind, especially when making comparisons.

In this report, as well as in the CCPP at large, the voices and answers of the young people will be analysed with reference to their local settings. Overall, we have obtained information from 384 young people in the Circumpolar North, and whether seen as a group or as a sample, their answers can be divided by gender, by the occupational status of their parents, by ethnicity or according to other criteria. In the quantitative part of the analysis, tabular presentations in the text below will set out the questionnaire answers according to the 11 distinct localities (or municipalities when they cover more than one locality) that the young people belong to. In the statistical appendix, frequencies and patterns within the categories of age, gender, parents' occupational status, and “sense of place” will be presented, together with cross-tabulations that allow for an analysis of gender differences. In the excerpts from essays presented, each essay will be identified by gender and by place (e.g. “Girl from Storuman”).

THE LOCALITY APPROACH

The analysis is primarily based on the study of places, but not of localities as such. The idea being that localities matter only insofar as the specific circumstances within a locality, including its links with global processes (economic liberalisation, global climate change, ozone layer depletion, standardization of consumption patterns), will influence both the attitudes and practices of its youth. The attitudes and practices of young people will surely in turn influence the development of these local places, including the relations between them and global processes (cp. Aarsæther & Bærenholdt, forthcoming).

This theoretical position – embodied in the locality approach – may also be supplemented, by approaching the issue from (at least) two other perspectives. Firstly, that young people, in the era of globalisation, will be exposed to similar impulses, irrespective of geography, and that they therefore tend to develop rather standardized “youth culture” attitudes and practices. Secondly, that there will be differences between young people, but these differences will often be based on social cleavages within each locality, such as class background (e.g. according to the occupational status of parents), and gender-based differences. The impact of these variants can be seen in tabular form in the appendix.

In our research design, we have tried to include these other perspectives, by asking background questions about the occupational status of each individual's father and mother, and of course the young people's answers have been grouped into gender categories. In the preliminary analysis of the statistical material (i.e. the questionnaire part) we found that



differences in attitudes and practices according to gender and class background certainly existed, and, if we were to extrapolate from these findings, the following model sets out the situation of the young people in its entirety :

Figure 1.

Diversifying and standardising effects on young people's attitudes and practices.

Locality situation	diversifying effects	Young people's, Attitudes, Practices
Social and gender background	diversifying effects	
Global youth culture	standardising effects	

In this report, we have tried to highlight the differences in young people's attitudes and practices and the extent to which these relate to their belonging to different localities. A systematic analysis of the effects of differences in gender, social class, ethnic origins, and the standardising effects of a global youth culture has not been carried out within the framework of this report, but the material lends itself to such an analysis, and we hope this analysis can be done as part of any follow-up work on the data collected.

This first report from the school essay project is mainly descriptive; that is, we do not venture to explain the many differences between young people in the 11 localities. Due to the format of this pilot study, we have not been able to discuss our results within a broader framework of educational research or research within specific localities. To guide readers who are not familiar with the geographical area in question, we will start by giving some very basic information about the localities which the pupils refer to in their writings.

Description of the communities

Digby

The Rural Municipality of Digby is situated in the scenic Bay of Fundy, on the Southwest coast of the Atlantic Canadian province of Nova Scotia. Compared to other areas in this survey it has a very temperate climate. Covering 1620 sq. kilometres, it consists of the town of Digby and at least 35 villages and hamlets with a total population of about 9000. For thousands of years this area was home to members of the indigenous Mi'kmaq First Nation, but aboriginal people make up only slightly over one percent of the population today.

French explorers established the first European settlement in the area almost 400 years ago, but control was ceded to the British in 1713. The population in the Digby area grew rapidly after the American revolution, increased by British loyalists fleeing the United States. The fishing industry is the most visible one and Digby scallops are world famous, but tourism, logging and agriculture are also important. About 16 percent of the labour force is employed in the primary industries, compared to about 20 percent in manufacturing and another 20 percent employed in health, education and other civil services. The Digby Municipality provides all of the shopping necessities for its residents, but few of the frills. While hotels, restaurants and gift shops serve the tourist trade, there is no movie theatre, sports complex or major shopping mall.

Household income is lower than the Nova Scotian average, which itself is lower than the Canadian average. The unemployment rate hovers around 18 percent. The area has suffered economically from a severe downturn in the fisheries industry and the closure of a nearby military base. Less than half the area's adult residents have completed high school, 20 percent left before grade 9 and only 6.5 percent have university degrees. The Digby Regional High School serves all area students from grade 9 to grade 12 (ages 15-18). The adjacent Middle School serves grades 7 and 8, and the combined pupil intake of the two schools is just over 500 students.



Digby.

Avinault

Chisasibi

The Cree (Eeyou) village and First Nation of Chisasibi is located on the Northeast coast of James Bay, Province of Quebec, Canada. James Bay is situated on the Southeast corner of Hudson Bay, and is the Southernmost extension of the Arctic Ocean in Canada. The Chisasibi First Nation has a population of approximately 3,100 people, of which more than 2,900 live in the community's territory.

Chisasibi is one of nine communities that make up the Cree Nation (Eeyou) in Quebec. The community was originally established on the lands of what formerly was Fort George, but the construction of a dam led to the relocation of the reserve in 1980 to its present site. The principal languages spoken in the community are Cree and English. Over 50 percent of the population is under 30 years of age.

In recent years, the construction industry associated with hydro-electric projects and road development has played an important role in wage employment and local economic development. Yet, traditional activities such as hunting and trapping continue to represent a cornerstone of the Cree lifestyle, economic activity and culture. Over 60 percent of the adult population is unemployed. The major businesses include air and road transport, tourism, construction, and heavy machinery.

Approximately 850 students at the pre-school, primary and secondary levels attend Chisasibi's James Bay Eeyou School. Cree is the language of instruction during the first years of pre-school and primary education. There are also approximately 60 members of the community that attend various post-secondary study programmes located outside of the community.



Isafjordur.

Jonas Gunnarsson

Isafjordur

Isafjordur is situated in the Northwestern part of Iceland, in the West Fjords. This is the biggest of 10 relatively isolated towns in the West Fjords. The village is part of the Isafjordur municipality, which also includes three smaller towns. In 1998 there were 3,274 inhabitants in Isafjordur. The fjord is surrounded by mountains which results in quite still weather and reduces the effect of hard blowing winds. The people are used to a lot of snow in the winter.

The fisheries industry is the main occupation (employing around 30 percent of the population). The second most common occupation is within the service industry (including a growing tourism sector) and in commerce. The

unemployment figures in the Westfjord region are quite low (1,3 percent). Living standard and housing are relatively high.

There is one primary and secondary school in Isafjordur. In addition there is also a high school. It is possible to take undergraduate modules at University level via computer-network. During the last few decades there has been a steady increase in the ethnic diversity in the region. Migrant workers from abroad have come to work and some have stayed permanently. People from around 40 different ethnic backgrounds are now living in the region.



Vagur.

Denis Hehn

Vagur

Vagur is one of two towns situated on the island Suderoy, which is the Southernmost island of the Faeroe Islands. The number of inhabitants is today about 1,400, but this number is decreasing. The municipality of Vagur also includes the two villages Hov and Porkeri. The climate in the Faeroe Islands is oceanic, in the warmest months it rises to about +11° and in the coldest month it drops to about +3-4° Celsius.

Vagur's employment profile corresponds to approximately 40 percent in the public sector and 60 percent in the private sector. In the private sector most people are employed in the fishing industry. In the 1990s the Faeroes went through a severe crisis in the fishing industry, during which unemployment rates rose to over 20 percent. In recent years the economic life has changed for the better again, and today there is about 6 percent unemployment in the Southern part of Suderoy. In Vagur there is a primary and secondary school, as well as a high school.

Storfjord

Storfjord is located in the innermost area of the Lyngen Fjord in Northern Norway, 100 km by road from the regional centre Tromsø. By North Norwegian standards, this area has a mild

and dry climate. There is no municipal centre in Storfjord. The fjord is surrounded by several houses and small villages, linked together by the road that runs along the fjord. The population has been stable here since the Second World War, and totals about 1,900 people. Contrary to many other peripheral municipalities, the population figures in Storfjord show an almost 50/50 percent gender balance.

The living standards are generally high here, as in most of the rural areas of Norway. Traditionally people have made their living through fishing combined with small tenure farming. Today this is not the case anymore: less than 5 percent of the population is employed in farming, forestry and fishing and 16 percent is occupied in construction work, while another 16 percent is occupied in trade, hotels and restaurants. Tourism is a growing sector. In 1998 only 4,1 percent were unemployed, which is close to the national average. Storfjord is the Southernmost municipality that benefits from a special state policy of tax exemptions, extra pension allowances for children, discounts on educational loans, etc. aiming at securing settlement and the presence of skilled workforce in the North.

The population consists of Sami, Norwegian and "Kven" (immigrants from Finland). The municipal slogan of Storfjord reads "plurality strengthens".

Båtsfjord.



Båtsfjord

Båtsfjord is situated in the Varanger peninsula in the Eastern part of Finnmark County, which is the Northernmost county in Norway. The post-war period has witnessed significant economic progress and an increase in the population. Today however, about 2,400 people live in Båtsfjord. The living standard is high, and the climate is arctic.

Right outside Båtsfjord's port is the rich Barents Sea. Today five fish processing plants are situated in the municipality, and Båtsfjord is considered to be the largest fishing town in Norway. The economy is very closely tied up with the fishing industry, and various related industries have also evolved. The economy is clearly heading in direction of a more knowledge-based economy. There are two elementary schools and different kinds of adult education.

It would not be incorrect to describe Båtsfjord as a "male-dominated" society – at least numerically speaking. There are only around 80 women for every 100 men in the town. Båtsfjord is also a multi-ethnic society with about 17 nationalities represented.

Storuman.



Storuman

Storuman is located in the Northern part of Sweden, in the inland section of Västerbottens, towards the Norwegian border. Almost 4,000 inhabitants live in this municipality, which has long winters and short summers. Roughly 2,500 people live in the centre of the Storuman municipality.

The settlement in Storuman was created when some large hydroelectric power stations were built in the area. Today, however, almost 25 percent of the labour force works in the nursing and care sector. Other important sectors include trade, communication, education and research. The living conditions are generally good. In 1997 there was 10 percent unemployment in this area, which is a little above the average in Sweden.

The municipality provides schooling until the age of 18. In addition there are some extended courses at high school level.

Pajala

Pajala is situated in the region of Tornedalen in the middle of Nordkalotten in Sweden. Pajala is a municipality including many villages. The number of inhabitants in the municipality comes to nearly 7,800. 55 percent of the population live in places with more than 200 inhabitants and 27 percent live in the centre of the Pajala municipality. Traditionally people have been employed in small-scale farming and forestry. Today Pajala is also a prospering municipality in information technology, thanks to a local college and some enterprises within this sector. The standard of living today is high, but so are the unemployment figures – which are among the highest in Sweden. In Pajala there is a grammar school and the local college offers several courses. The population is of Swedish, Sami, Finnish and "Tornedalian" (local area) origin.

Gotland

Gotland is an island in the Baltic Sea, on the Swedish coast. Compared to the other places presented in this report, the climate is mild, with long summers and short winters. The research into the views and lifestyles of young people has been carried out in two small towns in Fårösund and Roma. The former is in the Northern part of the island, and Roma is situated in the middle. The town in Fårösund where children attend the comprehensive school had nearly 3,300 inhabitants in 1998. The corresponding figure in the Roma town was about 6,100. The number of inhabitants is gradually decreasing in both areas.

People in Gotland have a lower average income than the average in Sweden, but the living standard is still relatively high. The most common ways of making a living is in the public sector, farming, and in tourism during the summer. Information Communication Technology (ICT) is a growing sector. In February 1999 unemployment was at roughly 5 percent, while 4,5 percent of the population was employed in state-run activities. This is higher than the average of Sweden.

There are schools for all of the island's children and teenagers up to the age of sixteen. In Fårösund and Roma there is no upper secondary school, but this is available in other towns on the island. There is also a High School and an art school in the biggest towns on the island: Visby.

Inari

The municipality of Inari is situated in Northern Lapland, in Finland, an area which shares its borders with Norway and Russia. The climate in the area is harsh, with very cold winters. Traditionally this has been an old Sami district. Today roughly 7,700 people live here, which equates to only 0,51 people per square km. Out of the total population, there are about 2,200 Sami inhabitants, and within this group there are about 600 Scolt Sami people.

The main village is called Ivalo where about half of the population live. Inari is the second largest centre of the municipality. In addition to these two places, data for this report was also collected in the small Scolt Sami village of Sevettijärvi.

The living standards are quite high. Tourism is today very important in Inari – in recent times, there has been an average of 300,000 registered people staying overnight per year.

The local tourism industry has its centre in Saariselka in the Southern part of the municipality, with about 8,000 of a total of 10,500 "tourist beds" available in Inari; 34 percent of the work force is in tourism, private services etc., while 37 percent of the working population is employed in public (mainly social and educational) services. A fairly large part of the community is also occupied in primary production (14 percent) and in industry and construction (11 percent). The unemployment rate is quite high in Inari, with an average of 28.3 percent in 1997.

There is one high school in Ivalo, and in Inari there is a Sami Education Centre which offers education in several different fields, including traditional and modern handicrafts. This school is also open to people of Finnish origin.

Teriberka.



Teriberka

Teriberka is situated on the Murman coast of the Barents Sea, 120 km from Murmansk. The Murman coast together with the Kola Fjord is one of the very few ice-free coasts of Russia. In the winter period strong winds and snowstorms occur almost every day in this area.

Teriberka consists of two settlements: Teriberka and Lodeonoe, located 4 km from each other. The number of inhabitants in these two places has decreased from 3,200 in 1970 to 1,732 in 1997. There are two public schools covering 11 grades in the municipality. In the past this was the richest settlement in the Kola Peninsula.

Today the situation is very different. The housing standards in the municipality are poor – the flats are small and the houses are old, and in need of repair. This reflects the general living conditions – most of the population is poor and some families are even undernourished. In 1997 the level of unemployment was 21 percent. If hidden unemployment is taken into consideration the figure becomes disastrous, about 40 percent. Those who work are employed in fishing kolkhoz farms, in the public sector (hospitals, schools etc.), and in private fishing and hunting enterprises. Because of the extremely difficult economic situation, salaries are often not paid on time or sometimes not even paid at all. The main social problem is excessive alcohol consumption. It is worth mentioning that the major causes of death are alcohol intoxication and accidents.

What young people like and dislike about their home communities

In the questionnaire, the pupils were asked to mention two things they liked and disliked about their home places. They were not explicitly asked to rank the positive or the negative factors, and the questions were open-ended. The following table sets out the two answers given by the respondents in each locality.

What young people like about their community: principally the social environment and nature

The first question was: "What are the two things you like about living in your community?" Going through the answers, we found that it was possible to group them into five categories that were directly related to most of the home towns: A) family and friends, B) general social environment and safety, C) being close to nature, including outdoor life and an unpolluted environment, D) living in a small place, E) the school and F) other. Table 1 (below), shows the differences in the children's responses in percentage terms:

Table 1.

What pupils like about their community. Two answers given by each respondent by locality.

Percentages. Source: CCPP 1999 school essay questionnaire.

	Family and friends	Social environment	Nature, outdoor life	Small place	School	Other	Total	(n)
Digby	9	42	24	9	0	17	100	(79)
Chisasibi	28	25	8	8	8	25	100	(53)
Isafjordur	28	40	12	12	2	5	100	(57)
Vagur	6	43	16	0	2	33	100	(49)
Storfjord	18	29	38	3	3	9	100	(34)
B tsbjerg	14	30	6	9	3	38	100	(66)
Pajala	2	34	39	3	0	23	100	(62)
Storuman	8	38	20	6	2	27	100	(64)
Gotland	8	29	23	7	5	28	100	(117)
Inari area	15	33	33	13	0	6	100	(54)
Teriberka	19	14	44	9	0	14	100	(43)
Total	13	33	23	7	2	22	100	(678)

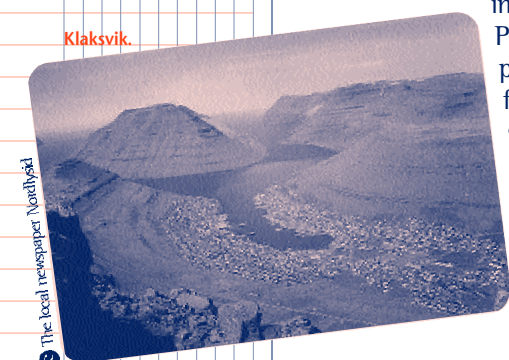
As can be seen from this table, the youth most frequently mentioned general social environment, as a positive aspect, many included safety within this category; 33 percent of the children identified this factor as being the most positive in their evaluation of their home environment. Typical answers given included the following comments: "friendly people", "I know everyone who lives here well", "most people are friendly", "honest people", "not a lot of violence" "peaceful", "don't have to worry about crime", "safe for kids", "people respect people" or "people helping each other". The next aspect most appreciated by the youngsters was closeness to nature, outdoor life and unpolluted environment which gained 23 percent of the children's support. This category covered answers such as "beautiful ocean", "the mountains", "clean air", "good ecological situation", "nice skiing", "I can fish in the vicinity of my house", "not a lot of pollution, like in the cities", "we have the cleanest environment in Finland, a beautiful virgin wilderness", "a lot of nature", "you can fish, hunt and spend time in nature", "it's like you are living in nature; I know many people who do not have this opportunity, like my friends in the city", "living close to nature" or often just "nature". Family and friends was another aspect emphasised in the children's answers, although this factor



made up a smaller part of the answers (13 percent). The pupils used words like: "all of my friends are here", "I like going out with my friends", "my family is here", "friends and family are here", "living near my relatives", "I have lots of fun with my friends", "my pals on the football team", "you have a lot of friends", "my boyfriend and Dad live here". About 7 percent of the 678 respondent participants had a positive attitude about the size of the locality they lived in: "not too many people around", "short distances so you don't have to have a car", "small and quiet place" or often just "small place".

The category "Other" which totalled 22 percent of the answers consisted of a very broad range of comments that were difficult to categorise into units that made up more than one or two percent of the answers. A samples of these statements include "good weather", "it's nice here", "it's funny here", "my dog", "does not exist", "my television", "constantly developing", "Statoil", "pot", or "many things". In addition to this broad picture of what young people along the Arctic Circle like about their community, the table high-lights some differences between the children's perceptions about their local habitats that are worth noting :

- Social environment : In Vagur, Digby and Isafjordur, the youth seem to be particularly satisfied with their social environment. In these three places, more than 40 percent of the answers fell within this category. Also in Storuman, 38 percent of the young people found the general social environment to be positive. The social situation was perceived rather differently in Teriberka, in Northwest Russia, where only 14 percent of the answers gave a positive appraisal of the social environment.
- Nature : It is interesting to note that 44 percent of the answers from Teriberka mention nature in positive terms. This is the highest score, though closely followed by Storfjord and Pajala with almost 40 percent. This is in contrast with the answers from the young people in Båtsfjord, Chisasibi and Isafjordur, who seldom mention nature as a positive factor, giving it a rate of 6 percent, 8 percent, and 12 percent respectively.
- Family and friends : The positive response to "family and friends" distinguishes Chisasibi and Isafjordur from the answers relating to the other localities. In both these localities, nearly 30 percent of the answers related to family and friends, while the overall average rate was only 13 percent. In several places, less than 10 percent of the answers came within this category, and all three Swedish localities showed friend/family ratings below 10 percent. Only one of the 62 answers from the youth of Pajala, Sweden referred to family and/or friends.



What young people dislike about their community: principally the lack of leisure activities

The pupils were also asked to write down two things they did not like about living in their home place. These answers are presented in the table (below), which is divided into the following categories: A) social problems, B) general social environment, C) lack of shopping facilities, D) a too small place, E) long distances, F) lack of leisure activities, G) lack of work prospects, H) climate and I) other. Once again, a table was drawn up, (Table 2 below) to show the differences in the children's responses in percentage terms.

Table 2.

What young people dislike about their community. Two answers given by each respondent by locality.

Percentages. Source: CCPP 1999 school essay questionnaire.

	Social problems	General social environment	Lack of shopping facilities	A too small place	Long distances	Lack of leisure activities	Lack of work prospects	Climate	Other	Total	(n)
Digby	0	13	9	8	4	36	4	1	25	100	(77)
Chisasibi	31	31	0	4	2	7	2	0	24	100	(58)
Isafjordur	2	21	9	20	9	20	2	4	13	100	(56)
Vagur	0	7	5	2	2	46	18	0	21	100	(44)
Storfjord	0	7	3	10	7	45	10	0	19	100	(31)
B tsbjerg	3	20	4	16	1	26	3	6	22	100	(81)
Pajala	2	15	5	15	8	23	2	2	29	100	(65)
Storuman	0	7	12	11	4	37	0	2	28	100	(57)
Gotland	1	16	4	14	26	15	2	3	20	100	(106)
Inari area	2	5	7	23	18	18	0	5	23	100	(57)
Teriberka	3	13	0	8	21	29	8	3	16	100	(38)
Total	4	15	6	12	10	26	4	3	22	100	(670)

Generally, the pupils were most unsatisfied with their possibilities for leisure activities, a category which was given in 26 percent of the answers. A fairly large part of the respondents stressed their lack of satisfaction about the general social environment (15 percent), the size of the place (12 percent), and the long distances (10 percent). Roughly 6 percent of the answers emphasised the lack of shopping facilities. But very few mentioned social problems – only 4 percent – and the lack of work opportunities – only 4 percent as well. It is also rather surprising that only 3 percent of the answers from these regions exposed to extreme climatic conditions, mention the weather as one of two things that young people most disliked.

A brief comparison of the answers from the different localities, reveals that young people in Vagur and Storfjord expressed most dissatisfaction with their leisure time opportunities. Almost half of the answers from these two places fell within this category, and the same tendency was found in Digby and Storuman (36 percent and 37 percent, respectively). The opposite pattern was seen in Chisasibi, where only 7 percent of the answers emphasised dissatisfaction about the lack of leisure activities.

As much as 31 percent of the answers from Chisasibi identified the general social environment as especially negative, while Isafjordur and Båtsfjord also responded with quite high figures, 20 percent and 21 percent, respectively. On the opposite end of the scale, the answers showed that only about 5 percent of young people from the Inari area, Vagur and Storfjord, gave a negative evaluation of their social environment.

The youth from the Inari area and Isafjordur placed the most negative weight on the smallness of their communities. This tendency was strongest in Inari, where nearly one in four of the answers contained this type of criticism. “Long distances” was a problem mentioned 26 percent of the young people in Gotland in the Baltic Sea, 21 percent in Teriberka and 18 percent in Inari.

The high percentage of answers from Chisasibi which stressed social problems, totalling 31 percent deserves special attention. In fact, there are far more answers referring to this problem in Chisasibi than in all of the other places combined.

Lack of shopping facilities represents a concern for the young people in Storuman, Isafjordur and Digby, although this category accounts for only about 10 percent of the answers.

Almost one out of five of the answers from Vagur raised concerns about the lack of prospects for work – far more than the overall average of 4 percent. It is quite surprising that only 8 percent of the answers from Teriberka in Russia fell into this category – given that the level of unemployment is extremely high in this community, and that lack of social security makes the consequences of unemployment far more serious here than in any other of the communities.

Thus far in this presentation, we have not sought to explain similarities and differences between the different localities. This would require more in depth investigations in each place. Still, it may be possible to glimpse at a deeper understanding of life in these places by analysing the written evaluations of the pupils in the essay part of this study.

ESSAYS FROM THE NORTH : YOUNG PEOPLE’S PERCEPTIONS IN WRITING

After completing the questionnaire, the participating pupils were asked to write a short essay in the format of “a letter to an imaginary pen pal living in another country”. They were asked to inform the pen pal about their home place, and asked to comment upon how people made a living there, and to mention important events that had taken place during the last few years.

In reviewing the essays, the CCPP research team identified four themes that seemed to be specifically mentioned in, or alluded to in a substantial number of the essays from all the localities. These were: A) the labour market and local economy, B) local social conditions, C) social arenas for youth, and D) a sense of place. Of course, several other themes were discussed, and the wealth of the essay material has by no means been exhausted by the following presentation. Table 3 (facing page) provides an overview in percentage terms of how many of the pupils wrote about each theme.



Teriberka

Margarita Bartosa



Isafjordur school students

Jonas Gunnarsson

Table 3.
Percent of the pupils who wrote something on each of the four themes.

Source: CCPP 1999 school essays.

Theme	Mentioned	Not mentioned	Total (%)
Local economy and labour market	77	23	100
General social conditions	42	58	100
Social arenas for youth	60	40	100
Sense of place	100	0	100

The high percentage in the essays on “the local economy and labour market”, totalling 77 percent is not surprising, as the pupils were explicitly asked to tell, “How people make a living”. The themes “general social conditions”, and especially “social arenas for youth”, were also mentioned frequently, 42 percent and 60 percent, respectively. In all the essays, it was possible to identify positive, negative or neutral/descriptive formulations that could be put into the category “a sense of place”. It is important to note that although most of the essays could be classified as either predominantly negative or positive in their evaluations, many of them contained both negative and positive evaluations.

It is also important to note that the figures in the table say nothing about how much the pupils wrote about each of the different themes. It would be wrong to claim that the young people wrote most about “the local economy and labour market”. The textual volume on the themes “social arenas” and “local social conditions” is in fact larger. The theme about which the pupils wrote the most about in a quantitative sense is “social arenas for young people”. The last theme, “a sense of place”, cannot be compared to the others in this way because, of course, the writing on this theme overlaps with the other themes.

A • YOUNG PEOPLE’S PERCEPTIONS OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET

Three out of four pupils mentioned the local economy and/or labour market in their essays. In Table 4 (below), we have tried to classify the evaluations expressed in the essays as A) predominantly positive, B) predominantly negative, and C) predominantly descriptive or containing both negative and positive evaluations. We have added a column in which we have subtracted the “negative” from “positive” percentage, in order to facilitate the reading of the table.

Table 4.
Perceptions of the local economy and labour market.

Percentages. Source: CCPP 1999 school essays.

	Predominantly positive	Predominantly balanced or only descriptive	Predominantly negative	Positive minus negative	Not mentioned	Total (n)
Digby area	10	39	23	-13	28	100 (n=39)
Chisasibi	4	13	13	-9	70	100 (n=23)
Isafjordur	14	61	21	-7	4	100 (n=28)
Vagur	8	28	40	-32	24	100 (n=25)
Storfjord	13	13	0	+13	75	100 (n=8)
Båtsfjord	2	74	0	+2	23	100 (n=43)
Pajala	7	39	19	-12	36	100 (n=31)
Storuman	3	65	23	-20	10	100 (n=31)
Gotland	3	52	28	-25	17	100 (n=58)
Inari area	3	73	17	-14	7	100 (n=30)
Teriberka	4	35	57	-54	4	100 (n=23)
Total	6	49	22	-16	23	100 (n=339)

The results show large differences between the different communities, both regarding how many have written about the economy, and to what degree those who have mentioned this theme have a negative or positive perception. As can be seen from the table above, only three out of ten essays were categorised as showing an exclusively positive or negative evaluation. Only a modest 6 percent of the essays discussed the theme in a predominantly positive light.

Nearly half of the pupils expressed both positive and negative evaluations on this theme, or merely presented the theme without giving any personal evaluations. Although 22 percent were

predominantly negative, it could be interpreted as encouraging that 55 percent of the young people expressed a positive or a balanced perception of the local economy and labour market. It should be mentioned, however, that a large number of the “balanced or descriptive” writings were simply descriptive, often limited to explaining what kinds of businesses exist in the locality.

The essays from Teriberka deserve special attention. 96 percent of the young people wrote about the local economy and labour market. The reason for this interest in the theme is probably best understood by citing some of the pupils’ own descriptions :

Salaries are not paid here, very often they are very low. In 1998, for example, my father had no money, and he was not the only one. All of the people only got paid for the months from January to August – for eight months. His boss said that they would pay the salaries without further delay. He also said that they will pay money for the year 1999, but for the year 1998 they will only pay if they have the funds ... Another important event has happened on the farm, where they used to receive salaries regularly; however, for a year they didn’t receive anything, and now they are getting paid again.

Boy from Teriberka

The essays from Teriberka are characterised by young people experiencing an extremely difficult economic situation. Their focus is not so much on the possibilities of gaining “self realization” through a job, but just to get a job in order to secure an income to live on. The pupils seem to be resigned about the situation. No other community comes close to Teriberka as to the degree of the negative perception about this theme. In Teriberka, more than half of the young people are predominantly negative, while only 4 percent are predominantly positive. The feeling of resignation is well expressed by a girl who, in spite of all the difficulties, sees possibilities for changes for the better :

The village has every possibility to prosper, but nobody has an interest in it, neither the elders nor the young generation. Resources never appear easily, one must find them. To find resources, one has to offer a good programme. Then the village will develop and people will come here. The youth will not leave the village. In my mind, this will never happen.

Girl from Teriberka

In Isafjordur as well, 96 percent of the pupils wrote about this theme. But in contrast to Teriberka, most of the essays are rather descriptive, expressing the dependence of the community on the fishing industry. In Inari, Storuman and Gotland, the students seem to have focussed upon the local economic situation, which is generally viewed in a negative light.

In Båtsfjord, Vagur and the Digby, a smaller majority wrote about the local economic situation. Of these, young people from Digby and especially Båtsfjord used a descriptive mode when writing about the local economy and labour market. In Vagur on the other hand, the respondents gave the second most negative evaluations overall. However, it is important to note that the youth in Vagur expressed other aspects related to this theme than those from Teriberka.

Young people in Vagur were more concerned about the lack of variability in the job market, and the fact that this may lead to them choosing to leave. One quotation from an essay about Vagur clearly illustrates the difference in perspective from that at Teriberka:

The opportunities for work are rare here in Porkeri. We have a salmon smoking factory, which provides around 200 jobs. If a person is not interested in working with fish, he or she would have to leave the town, or even the island, and find work elsewhere.

Girl from Vagur

The negative views about the lack of variation in the local labour market is not only typical of Vagur. This is a common theme in the answers from all the other localities, except for Chisasibi and Teriberka.

A large percentage of the essays from Pajala (36 percent) do not mention the economic theme, but the evaluations from this community are predominantly balanced or descriptive. It

is very interesting to observe that 70 percent of the youth from Chisasibi and Storfjord (i.e. three out of four) paid very little attention to the local economic situation and labour market in their essays. As we shall see later, their attention was focussed on other factors.

B • YOUNG PEOPLE’S VIEWS ON SOCIAL CONDITIONS

“Social conditions” represent a very distinctive theme in the essays. More than four out of ten essays contain comments on the local social situation. In Table 5 (below), we have tried to classify the essays by dividing them once again into A) predominantly positive, B) predominantly negative, and C) predominantly descriptive and/or expressing both positive and negative attitudes.

Table 5.

Young people’s views on social conditions in own community.

Percentages. Source: CCPP 1999 school essays.

	Predominantly positive	Predominantly balanced or just descriptive	Predominantly critical	Positive minus critical	Not mentioned	Total/N
Digby	49	9	17	32	26	100 (n=35)
Chisasibi	13	4	39	-26	44	100 (n=23)
Isafjordur	14	21	10	4	55	100 (n=29)
Vagur	56	0	0	56	44	100 (n=25)
Storfjord	17	0	0	17	83	100 (n=6)
Båtsfjord	2	2	51	-49	44	100 (n=45)
Pajala	23	7	3	20	67	100 (n=30)
Storuman	22	9	9	13	59	100 (n=32)
Gotland	9	5	12	-3	74	100 (n=57)
Inari	10	7	10	0	73	100 (n=30)
Teriberka	0	0	17	-17	83	100 (n=23)
Total	19	6	18	1	58	100 (n=335)

The table shows that not that many essays contained comments on the local social conditions, and among the ones that do evaluate these conditions, there is a balance between positive and negative points of view. 19 percent of the essays have been classified as predominantly positive, while almost the same figure, 18 percent have been classified as predominantly critical. Contrary to the treatment of the economy/employment theme, there were few descriptive or “balanced” essay statements on this theme.

The positive aspects can be divided into two main categories. First, there were general comments about the community as being peaceful, safe, with few incidents of crime, and that “everybody knows each other well”, etc. Second, there were positive remarks concerning human characteristics such as “most people are nice, friendly, helpful, honest”, etc. In this regard, the following statement is relatively typical :

My community is clean and everyone is friendly. Everyone gets along just fine, and there is rarely any argument about our community.

Boy from Digby

The negative aspects of social life varied from place to place. However, the main criticism was focussed on rumour, the lack of a private life, criminality, violence, and alcohol and drug abuse. Criticism about gossip was particularly common, indeed one girl from Isafjordur put it this way :

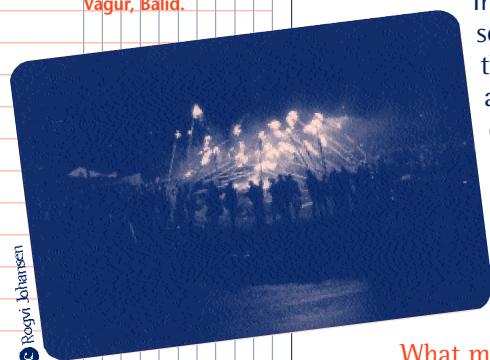
The people in Isafjordur live and nourish themselves on gossip, and we can’t have any private life here.

Girl from Isafjordur

Variations between places

Regarding views about social conditions, there were interesting variations between the communities. Four places stood out as those where the young people seem most focused on

Vagur, Balid.



Ragna Johnsen

social conditions. First of all, there was Digby, where as many as 74 percent of the respondents expressed themselves on this theme. The theme was also a central one in Chisasibi, in Vagur, and in Båtsfjord. In all of these places, more than half of the young people wrote about social conditions. Interestingly enough, these four places also held the most extreme positions on the scale between predominantly positive and predominantly critical evaluations. On the positive end of the scale, in Vagur and Digby, the differences between positive and critical commentaries were + 56 percent and + 32 percent, respectively. At the other end of the scale, in Båtsfjord and Chisasibi, the differences between positive and critical comments were – 49 percent and – 26 percent, respectively. These large differences deserve further attention. The essays from Vagur presented a very positive picture of social conditions in the locality. The following two statements by two girls are typical of Vagur. Both of them focus upon safety, friendliness and social integration:

What makes it very nice to live here is the fact that there is almost no crime and parents can just let their children play outside without the fear that someone might harm their children. If you walk along the streets, you don't see any homeless, starving families.

Girl from Vagur

The same kind of positive appraisals are also to be found in the material from Digby, though to a slightly lesser degree:

I also like that there is very little violence. It makes it easier to grow up without worrying about being shot at or beaten up. My parents moved here from Ontario to get away from the violence so that my sister and I could be raised safely. This is a good community for raising children.

Girl from Digby

These perceptions are representative of the positive evaluations given in the other localities where the questionnaire was applied. Quite a few boys from different communities also seemed to appreciate the freedom that living in a rural area afforded them. Examples of this can be found on both sides of the Atlantic:

The thing I like most about my community is that I'm able to ride my 4-wheeler up and down the back roads without anyone calling the cops on me.

Boy from Digby

In the winter, all that matters is driving scooters, and it's bloody fun. Going out on a nice day, a gang on scooters, to grill hot dogs. I think it is good that there are so few police out (I have never seen any), because then you can drive illegally, and we have done this for a couple of years now.

Boy from Storuman

Pajala.



Anne Lund and Pajala Community

At the critical end of the scale, are the evaluations from Båtsfjord. The essays described certain negative events. These are best depicted in the words of some of the respondents:

Three women and two men have committed suicide, there has been one person arrested for murder, and we had two fires the last year. We call the community I live in little Oslo, because it has a very high crime rate here... I like to live here very much... We just had two fires in one year. The police believe that it could have been pyromaniacs who lit the fire.

Girl from Båtsfjord

Many of these young people depicted their community in a rather aggressive and ironic way. The strong negative focus included criticism of drug abuse and high crime figures. Some of the teenagers stated quite openly that the youth environment was bad in the community, while others complained about the relationship between the youngsters and adults. For example,

one young male says "Young people get far too little respect in Båtsfjord". Another one claims that a strong focus on drugs has affected the relationship between young people and adults in a negative way:

We have had serious drug problems here in recent years, and this has affected the people's faith in young people. People are accused of using drugs, but they are usually just unfounded rumours.

Boy from Båtsfjord

Variations in openness?

The predominantly critical slant in the Båtsfjord essays, however, may not only be a result of a negative social environment. Reading the essays, one is struck by how open these young people are in their evaluations of the local situation, compared with young people from other communities. It is possible that this enhanced self-awareness offers a partial explanation for these figures. The following quotation can be seen as an example of the willingness in this locality to speak about social problems very openly and publicly:

Bullying has been a problem at the school. Twice, pupils have come forward in the local newspaper, saying that they have been exposed to bullying.

Boy from Båtsfjord

The same critical tendency can be found in the Chisasibi essays, though the tendency is not nearly as strong as in Båtsfjord. Still, the comments of the young people do indeed deserve attention. A large majority of the essays which discussed social conditions had this critical edge to them, containing, for instance, especially in comments about violence, alcohol and drug abuse. Many of the young people seem to be strongly affected by these social problems:

I have many things to tell about our community. Right now, our problems in our community are alcohol, drugs and violence. These are the problems that I feel really concerned about. I know I don't really talk about what I really like, maybe it's because I am a confused young girl who doesn't know what direction I will head in. Because of all different and conflicting messages I receive in my daily life. I know I don't make any sense, but as you can see, there are many things that I need to talk about, but I don't know where to start. Do you understand?

Girl from Chisasibi

It's a great place to live. But there's just one thing, alcohol and drugs. I don't like these things. And we don't have privacy at night, because those who are drunk always knock at everybody's doors.

Girl from Chisasibi

I wish that there were better cops, because the bootleggers and the drug dealers always get away with what they do. And a lot of people don't have a driver's licence and they still drive around. But life can't be perfect. You have to learn how to deal with your problems.

Boy from Chisasibi

Young people from Isafjordur, Storuman and Pajala are far more divided in their views on social conditions, compared to the four places mentioned above (however, young people from Pajala have the third most positive perception after Vagur and Digby). The participants from the other localities did not tend to comment much on general social conditions.

Friends and family

In addition to the comments on the general social conditions, many participants mention their relationships with friends and families in the essays. On average, 18 percent wrote about friendship, while an average of 13 percent mentioned their family. In Chisasibi and Storfjord in particular, many wrote about friends. On the other hand, no student from Teriberka mentioned friends. Similarly, in Isafjordur and Gotland, very few mentioned this theme, only 7 percent and 9 percent respectively.

The youth in Chisasibi also frequently referred to their families (44 percent). This figure is far higher than in Gotland, which in this respect is closer to Chisasibi. The overall picture shows that young people from Chisasibi seem to focus far more on close social relations than young



Pajala.

people in any other of the localities in our study. This orientation towards family and friends may be an aspect of the overall structure of social relations within the “Cree First Nation community”. In fact, the pupils often use ethnicity-related expressions such as “we, the Cree”. This focus upon local social relations also includes a more pronounced cross-generation interaction compared to most of the other localities. For example, many of the young people in Chisasibi expressed positive attitudes toward the elders in their community. The following formulations are representative samples of this focus:

I really love it when my family and I go to our camp, which is about 3 hours from here. Every time I get to camp, I learn something new. I have many teachers, which are mostly the elderly of our family members.

Boy from Chisasibi



Isafjordur.

I like living here because of my family and my friends. My family are very supportive when it comes to important things. Especially when I got pregnant, but at first it was pretty hard for them. My friends are like my family; we’ve been through a lot, my friends and me. Through good times and bad times, we’ve stayed together no matter what.

Girl from Chisasibi

Young people from Isafjordur, Båtsfjord and Teriberka showed little attention towards their families in their essays, and only a few students from these two places wrote about friends. None of the respondents from Isafjordur and Båtsfjord wrote about their family, while 9 percent of the youth from Teriberka wrote about this theme.

C • YOUNG PEOPLE NEED THEIR OWN SOCIAL ARENAS



Isafjordur.

Questionnaire data on leisure activities

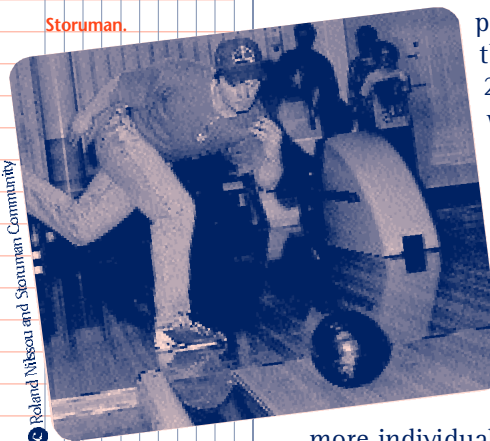
One of the dominant specific themes in the essays was the need for social arenas (clubs, libraries, public spaces, meeting points, etc.) for young people. The writing on social arenas also seemed to reflect a lot of commitment. In Table 6 (below), we have sought to classify the answers to our questionnaire that related to leisure activities into the following categories: A) sports, B) social life, C) outdoor life, D) watching TV, videos, other audio/visual devices, E) PC, Internet, electronic games, F) reading (books, comic-strips), G) relaxing, H) other activities.

Table 6.

What young people like to do during their leisure time.

Percentages. Source: CCPP 1999 school essay questionnaire.

	Sports	Social life	Outdoor life	Watching TV, video, audio-visual	PC, Internet, e-games	Reading (books, comic-strips)	Relaxing	Other activities	Total/N
Digby area	48	17	5	10	2	5	0	14	100 (n=42)
Chissibi	27	42	15	3	0	0	3	9	100 (n=33)
Isafjordur	45	24	3	7	7	0	0	14	100 (n=29)
Vagur	69	0	4	0	8	8	4	8	100 (n=26)
Storfjord	12	41	24	0	0	6	0	18	100 (n=17)
Båtsfjord	40	23	11	6	9	0	4	6	100 (n=47)
Pajala	31	37	6	9	3	0	6	9	100 (n=35)
Storuman	33	52	6	3	0	0	0	6	100 (n=33)
Gotland	32	35	3	3	8	0	3	15	100 (n=60)
Inari area	23	33	23	7	7	3	0	3	100 (n=30)
Teriberka	23	5	14	9	0	36	14	0	100 (n=22)
Total	36	29	9	5	5	4	3	10	100 (n=374)



Storuman.

In the questionnaire, the pupils were specifically asked, “What do you like to do when you are not at school?”. The answers were open-ended and therefore for the sake of clarity in our research, the first alternative the students mentioned is recorded. Afterwards, the figures for the different places will be commented upon in the second point of this chapter.

“Sports” seem to represent the overall dominant activity. As many as 36 percent of the students liked to participate in different kinds of sports in their leisure time.

29 percent of the pupils mentioned the importance of their social life, which becomes the second largest category by a long mark. It is time, however, that the difference between these two categories is less if you sum up the totals of alternatives from each pupil. In which case there are 24 percent of the answers that include sports, while 23 percent of the answers refer to social life.

A modest 9 percent of the pupils said that they liked different kinds of outdoor life (excluding sporting activities). This percentage remains the same even when all the answers are analysed.

It is interesting to note that more active and social activities were much more popular than other alternative activities that were perceived as more individualistic and non-physical; 74 percent of the young people mentioned either sports, social life and outdoor life as their first answer, while only 27 percent of the answers concerned watching TV, videos, listening to audio devices, using a PC, the Internet, playing electronic games, reading, and relaxing. (If we sum up all the answers recorded which mentioned more than one activity, the difference becomes smaller – though still significant – 60 percent for the outdoor/sports/social category versus 28 percent for the individualistic/indoor category). The category “Other activities” included many different activities, among them dancing and parties, voluntary organisations or cultural activities, and making or repairing different things.

Places and activities

Vagur seems to be the most sports-oriented place among the circumpolar localities covered by the questionnaire. As many as 69 percent of the students mentioned this first. Also in Digby, 48 percent of the respondents mentioned sports. The opposite pattern was found in Storfjord, where only one in eight answers listed sports first, although outdoor life was mentioned more often than in other places.

More than half of the students from Storuman pointed out social life as their first alternative Chisasibi also showed a very high number of answers on this theme. No one in Vagur mentioned social life, and only 5 percent of the students in Teriberka mentioned social activities.

Nearly one out of four young people from Storfjord and the Inari area mentioned in first place that they liked outdoor life, far more than the overall average. Young people from Digby and Teriberka were slightly more interested in watching TV, videos and listening to audio devices compared to all the other localities. Young people from Båtsfjord stated most often that they enjoyed using the PC, the Internet and electronic games. In Teriberka, the young people mentioned that they liked to relax and especially read, much more often than in the other places. The “Other activities” category was largest in Storfjord. Some examples of what this category contains are also quite representative of the answers given in the other communities, in the sense that they are all wide-ranging: e.g. “writing”, “smoking in the quiet”, or “driving a moped”.

Young people’s need for public places

As many as six out of ten of the students mentioned the theme “public areas for young people” in their essays. The way in which this theme was treated in most of the essays allowed for the following categorisation: A) “predominantly satisfied”, B) “predominantly dissatisfied” and C) predominantly descriptive or balanced, i.e. containing both negative and positive evaluations. These categories as well as a “Not mentioned” one are set out with the results in percentage terms in Table 7 (next page).

Table 7.

Degree of satisfaction with the local public areas.

Percentages. Source : CCPP 1999 school essays.

	Predominantly satisfied	Predominantly descriptive or balanced response	Predominantly dissatisfied	Satisfied minus dissatisfied	Not mentioned	Total/N
Digby area	15	0	56	-41	28	100 (n=39)
Chissibi	12	12	8	4	68	100 (n=25)
Isafjordur	29	18	18	11	36	100 (n=28)
Vagur	8	8	52	-44	32	100 (n=25)
Storfjord	14	29	43	-29	14	100 (n=7)
B tsfjord	11	11	29	-18	49	100 (n=45)
Pajala	10	23	37	-27	30	100 (n=30)
Storuman	34	25	22	12	19	100 (n=32)
Gotland	9	21	31	-22	40	100 (n=58)
Inari area	7	17	27	-20	50	100 (n=30)
Teriberka	0	0	36	-36	64	100 (n=22)
Total	14	14	32	-18	40	100 (n=341)

Generally, more young people were more dissatisfied rather than satisfied with the available public areas that were available to them. As many as 32 percent of the students were predominantly dissatisfied, while only 14 percent were predominantly satisfied. There appears to be no consistent pattern which would connect the amount of times the subject is mentioned and the degree to which the participants were satisfied or otherwise with the existing public areas in their communities social arenas.

The places where the young people were most likely to identify a public place as a focal point were Storfjord and Storuman. In contrast, only about 30 percent of the students from Teriberka and Chisasibi wrote about social arenas for young people, which is still a sizeable amount but less than Storfjord and Storuman.

There are however large differences between the essays from different localities as to the degree of satisfaction with public places (summarised by the positive minus negative figure). The most dissatisfied participants were in Digby (-41 percent), Vagur (-44 percent), and Teriberka (-36 percent). Most of the comments below are very typical of almost all of the other communities, though the economic situation in Teriberka makes those young people's situation particularly different:

Living in Hov isn't fun; there are too few people and the village is too small. If a soccer field and a community house had been built here, I would have been satisfied.

Boy from Vagur

If I had the opportunity to decide about changing things so that it would be better to live here, I believe I would have done a lot more for the youth. I think that I would have liked it better here in town if we could have organised a youth club, where you could also meet other young people. In this way, I believe that the young people would stick together.

Girl from Vagur

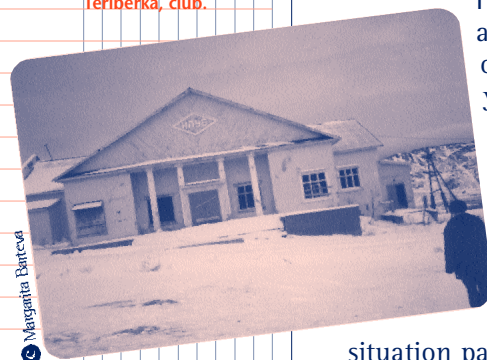
I think it would be a more enjoyable place if there were more fun things to do for teenagers, maybe a teen dance club would be fun! And maybe more clothing stores instead of the 100 fast food places and all the other little stores that are only set up to please tourists!

Girl from Digby

Youngsters have nothing to do in our village. But in fact, almost every Friday, discotheques are held at the school. We had a Cultural House before, so discotheques were held there. Before, during the weekends, we went to the cinema, and now there is no Cultural House and youngsters have nothing to do. When there are no discotheques at night, youngsters sit in the entrances or storehouses, because there is no other place.

Girl from Teriberka

Teriberka, club.



Isafjordur.



Some young people claim that a lack of socialising areas for teenagers has had negative social consequences. The following comments explain this feeling of frustration :

There is not even a small club in the village and no events that might be of interest for the youth. The young people are "perishing" in the village. They have no idea of how to use their spare time, terrible things are coming out of this: lack of culture, many youngsters are drinking and sitting in sheds and garages.

Girl from Teriberka

I am from Digby, Nova Scotia, and around here there isn't a whole lot to do but work and drink. Where I am from, the majority of people are labour workers aboard some boat who spend their spare time drunk, and those who can handle it spend all their time drunk.

Boy from Digby

The essays from Storfjord, Pajala, Gotland, Inari, and Båtsfjord showed a degree of dissatisfaction relatively close to the average of minus 18 percent. The most dissatisfied of these youngsters live in Pajala. One boy from this area expressed his opinion this way:

There isn't that much to do here, not many shops, but bloody plenty of forest.

Boy from Pajala

The young people who were most satisfied with their social arenas live in Storuman. Here, as many as 34 percent of the teenagers said they were predominantly satisfied, whereas 22 percent said they were dissatisfied. A majority of the young people in Storuman stressed the recent opening of an "activity house" as of particular importance.

I believe it was a great event for us young people when the activity house was built... It was built some years ago, and you can do many things there. You can bowl in the bowling alleys, play ping-pong or have a game of billiards, read books in the library, play darts, or go to the café there.

Girl from Storuman

In fact, many of the negative appraisals in the essays from the pupils of Storuman were because this "activity house" was not open often enough.

Young people in Isafjordur also claimed to be predominantly satisfied. They too, weighed up positively the facilities for sports, especially their downhill skiing centre as well as the movie theatre, and some students also mentioned a diversity of cultural activities, such as the local theatre.

It's always possible to find something to do: go to the movies, wander around, see plays, and play different kinds of sport.

Boy from Isafjordur

D • YOUNG PEOPLE'S SENSE OF PLACE

The last main theme that we extracted from the essays was the young people's sense of place-belonging. In all of the essays there were expressions related to evaluations and/or descriptions of place where they live. We have categorised the attitudes of the young respondents as follows: A) predominantly positive attitude, B) predominantly negative and C) predominantly descriptive or balanced, i.e. containing both negative and positive evaluations. These categories are set out with the results in percentage terms in Table 8 (next page).

Table 8.

Attitudes towards own home place.

Percentages. Source: CCPP 1999 school essays.

	Predominantly positive	Predominantly descriptive or balanced	Predominantly negative	Positive minus negative	Total/N
Digby	43	41	16	27	100 (n=37)
Chisasibi	33	46	21	12	100 (n=24)
Isafjordur	62	31	7	55	100 (n=29)
Vagur	56	36	8	48	100 (n=25)
Storþjodur	50	50	0	50	100 (n=8)
B tshjordur	18	44	38	-20	100 (n=45)
Pajala	32	32	36	-4	100 (n=31)
Storuman	28	63	9	19	100 (n=32)
Gotland	24	50	26	-2	100 (n=58)
Inari	37	50	13	24	100 (n=30)
Teriberka	35	22	44	-9	100 (n=23)
Total	35	43	22	13	100 (n=342)

As the table 8 (above) shows, 35 percent of the essays have been categorised as predominantly positive, and 22 percent of them as predominantly negative. The descriptive or balanced category is however the largest, totalling 43 percent.

Although the young people’s attitudes are predominantly positive, this does not mean that the pupils with a predominantly positive outlook do not express negative evaluations about their home place as well. The overall impression in the essays is just what the table shows - that there are more positive than negative evaluations, but also many descriptive essays and ambivalent ones.

In general, there is a contradictory thread running through the essays, which follows the logic of this sentiment: “my place has good qualities – but it is not a place for me”. Many pupils are proud of their community, especially mentioning good social conditions and the beautiful surrounding nature, but many consider that their home place is more for kids, tourists, and particularly for adults and elderly people. The following statements are quite representative of most of the places:

Pajala.



Pajala doesn’t have very much to offer to the youth, but it’s probably quite nice to live here if you are old.

Boy from Pajala

It will be a better place to live once we get our new school and a theatre. A real mall would be nice, too. What I would really like is if they would stop kicking the teenagers out of town during tourist season! Don’t we get to enjoy our town in the summer, too? (emphasis as per the original)

Girl from Digby

Not much happens here in my community. Yet, there are shops here and clubs, but teenagers are not allowed to go to the clubs here.

Girl from Isafjordur

We also have... a clothing shop for pensioners.

Girl from Gotland

People are quite conservative and boring; it is quite hard to get new ideas through, even though they are good. One the whole, you can summarise this as an old region with old people, old ideas.

Boy from Gotland

I don’t intend to spend my future here in Ivalo. I will go to Ivalo Upper Secondary School, and after that, I will move to Southern Finland. The prospects for Ivalo are really poor. All the young people, or at least most of them, will move south, and the only ones left here will be the older people. In time, Ivalo will shrink quite fast. My future is somewhere to the south from here, but you are welcome here to look at the Northern Lights and the colourful nature in the autumn.

Girl from Inari

The table indeed shows differences, from Teriberka (-9) to Isafjordur (+55) at the extremes. In the following section, we will try to take a more in depth look at the contents of the essays,

from each of the localities, in order to present a more comprehensive picture of how young people perceive their local situation. We decided this was important because we felt somewhat uncomfortable about letting percentages and single quotations alone convey the perceptions and evaluations of the young people.

The students from three places in particular were the most positive in the way they expressed themselves about their sense of local belonging: namely, Isafjordur, Storþjodur and Vagur. In all of these places the difference between predominantly positive and negative essays were roughly +50 percent (unclear). In these places the young people’s essays reflected pride about their home place, and often the writer seemed to be defending his or her locality. The following examples reflect this:

Last spring none other than the queen of Denmark came to town with the president of Iceland. And that’s why Isafjordur isn’t such a zero as you thought.

Boy from Isafjordur

The fishing industry is prospering and all other industry revolves around it, which is very common here in Iceland. The entertainment life is just fine here, there could be a few changes for the better, though. This town has a remarkable history, for a long time in this century it was the largest fishing village in the country and among other things this place was one of the first to use telephones.

Boy from Isafjordur

After all, I think that it is lovely to live here. In the winter there is lots of lovely snow here and in the summer we have tropical temperatures. Skibotn is a great place to live.

Girl from Storþjodur

People from Porkeri are famous for being hardworking and very kind and hospitable people. As it is, I like to live in Porkeri, but I can’t imagine that I will keep living here, because there is no work. I plan to get some education, but first I’m going out to explore the sea as a sailor, before I will sit at a school desk again... It’s unhealthy to be a sailor, but if that’s the only opportunities for work, then one has to settle down.

Boy from Vagur

My hometown is one of the most beautiful villages in the Faeroe Islands. We don’t have much to offer here, but we have recently got an artificial soccerfield, which is very positive for us. The men’s league entered the first division and I think it is very good, because we are a few people here. We are the smallest village in the first division. The village is not big, but it is not that small either.

Boy from Vagur

In Digby, Inari, and Storuman the young people also have a relatively positive sense of place. In Digby the teenagers are the most positive (+27 percent), while in Inari and Storuman the difference between predominantly positive and predominantly negative responses to the sense of place question related to local belonging are +24 percent and + 19 percent respectively. Some rather typical expressions of the children’s sense of local belonging are shown below:

I live in a place called Digby. It’s a small town of 2,500 people. We won a contest for the most romantic place in Canada. It is really pretty in the summer when you look out on the water.

Boy from Digby

How’s life in London? It blows here as usual. You’re probably cruising the streets checking out every sport equipment store you can find... Anyway, you asked me to tell you about Digby. Well, I can assure you, there isn’t much to tell. You tell me that you’ve never heard of Digby let alone the world famous fleet and the scallops they catch. A bunch of rotten boats dragging themselves through the water – some fleet.

Girl from Digby

The village is situated in the middle of “wilderness”, but maybe that’s what is best about it. People often ask me why in the world I live in such a one-horse town. It’s an easy question to answer. For them Lima is a small village in the middle of nowhere, but for us who live here, it is an important place. It has the best possible conditions for practising reindeer herding.

Girl from Inari

As regards nature, I find Sevetijarvi to be the most beautiful place in Finland. There are thousands of small lakes with clear water and abounding salmon fish that abound. We have forests, wooded hills and marshes. And let us not forget the River Nääämöjoki, the only salmon river in Finland which you cannot reach by car...

Boy from Inari

Sometimes I hate Storuman and sometimes I love it, but to be honest I want my children to grow up here.

Girl from Storuman

Once again Chisasibi presents a special case. The young people from this place seem to have a very strong sense of belonging within the Cree-community, though they are critical about many of the things going on in their locality – like alcohol abuse, drugs, garbage and contractors coming from the outside. Their sense of pride is very much based on the traditions within the Cree-community, as follows:

Chisasibi is a good place to live in... beside our community, we have the biggest dam in the world which is L-G1 about a few kilometres from here in Chisasibi, we have the main buildings which every village has such as a hospital, commercial centre, air-strip, bank, etc.. Also Chisasibi has the biggest highest tee-pee in the world, the building is called the community centre. Well we call it “Michuap” which means tee-pee in Cree.

Boy from Chisasibi

I like this community because we still hunt or to live traditional way. We can still survive by killing the animals and eat them by cooking.

Boy from Chisasibi

In Gotland, Pajala and Teriberka a slight majority of the pupils gave negative rather than positive responses, although the difference was not dramatic. The difference between positive and negative views was least pronounced with the students from Gotland (-2 percent), and most pronounced with the students of Teriberka. The following quotations represent some typical comments provided by students from these places:

This place is safe and I have had good years growing up here. But I don't believe there will be any future for me here. Though Roma will always mean something to me.

Girl from Gotland

I have lived in my home place since I was 1 year old. Now I feel like I want to get out – there are so many things lacking in this place. But I am sure some people can feel comfortable living here. The years I have lived here have been really good ones.

Girl from Gotland

It's fabulous here in the winter. Everything is white, so it looks like a snow-empire! At night you see the moon sitting in it's throne in the middle of the sky, surrounded by the dancers, the northern lights. You can see this almost every bright night during the winter.

Girl from Pajala

I feel comfortable living in Pajala, but I believe I will move when I have finished grammar school. Then I am going to travel around and work a little anywhere in the world. Later I will get an education and then start a family. I am not afraid of the future. I think it will be fun to see what I am going to do after grammar school and the rest of my life. I hope I will have an exciting and amusing life. And if I move from Pajala I will maybe return some day. You never know.

Girl from Pajala

In the weekends there is nothing to do in Pajala, nowhere to stay. Now the young people hang around the bus station, where nobody really wants to stay. Though, if you compare Pajala to other small towns we are probably lucky. It is a nice place to grow up in until you become about 16.

Girl from Pajala

The young people from Teriberka seem to live in a place full of extreme problems and hopelessness. Still, they write more than any of the students from the other localities about their positive appreciation of nature:

The place where I live is beautiful, diverse. Especially in summer, when nature wakes up and starts to bloom. In summer we go for long walks, to fish. There is nothing to do in the village in summer time. “Ruins surrounded by mountains” – the best name for our village.

Boy from Teriberka

There are many places like our Teriberka. I would not say the village is something special. There is nothing special here, everything is destroyed, crashed and devastated. But the territory around could be used even for a nature reserve. Although vegetation is quite poor here, but, on the other hand, it is not touched by “civilisation”.

Girl from Teriberka

Nature is great: the sea, mountains, rivers, air. The rest is awful: dirty, everything is devastated, there is no place to spend spare time. And the most scary thing is that it is becoming worse and worse every year.

Boy from Teriberka

The young people from Båtsfjord definitely expressed the most negative sense of place in our sample. The essays describe Båtsfjord as a place that is undergoing social change. Many of these young people seem quite aggressive toward their home place – and they write directly and openly about what they do not like. This is clearly expressed in the comments below:

Båtsfjord is a shit boring place. People are bored so much that they set fire to houses! Damn, it's only fishery buildings here! (and it's those that burn)

Girl from Båtsfjord

I am a girl from a little place of shit far north. There are 2,500 people living here – or I don't know any more because so many Tamiles, Swedes and Finnish people have arrived that we will soon be invaded...

Girl from Båtsfjord

I don't like it here! Damn, I want to move! All the people here are completely crazy!

Boy from Båtsfjord

Young people's views on how their community can become a better place in the future

In the last question of the questionnaire, we asked the pupils to make suggestions and give examples of what they thought could make their home place a better home for them to live in, in the future. In Table 9 (next page), we have only recorded the suggestion that was first mentioned by each respondent. The answers have been grouped and given a percentage value according to the following categories: A) better work prospects, B) better leisure facilities C) better shopping facilities, D) better schools and education generally, E) better public transport, F) more people, G) fighting social problems, H) better living standards, and I) other.

Two aspects of local life were highlighted in the answers from the respondents making the “Young North”: First, a better future was related to better leisure facilities, and, second, a better future was linked with work opportunities. In this context, the students discussed not only the quantity of jobs, but in most cases, the hope of a more diversified labour market at a local level. Other “local improvement” factors were mentioned far less, such as better shopping facilities and “more people around”, but these two secondary categories are the ones that come closest to the central issues of leisure and jobs.

Table 9.
What would make this community a better place to live in for you in the future? Grouped answers.
 Percentages. Source: CCPP 1999 school essay questionnaire.

	Better work prospects	Better leisure facilities	Better shopping facilities	Better schools, education	Better public transport	More people	Fighting social problems	Better living standards	Other	Total
Chisasibi	7	7	4	4	0	0	37	25	15	100 (n=27)
Isafjordur	30	11	7	15	4	7	4	11	11	100 (n=27)
Storfjord	13	56	0	0	6	6	0	0	19	100 (n=16)
Båtsfjord	3	45	10	8	0	8	5	5	18	100 (n=40)
Pajala	14	28	7	3	0	14	0	3	31	100 (n=29)
Storuman	12	56	12	0	0	4	0	0	16	100 (n=25)
Gotland	11	32	15	2	7	13	0	4	17	100 (n=54)
Inari	15	37	0	0	4	19	0	7	19	100 (n=27)
Teriberka	46	9	5	0	5	0	14	0	23	100 (n=22)
Total	15	31	8	4	3	9	6	6	18	100 (n=267)

One way of interpreting the answers would be to say that the young people are in fact concerned about issues which are not at all unrealistic; their suggestions are arguably well within the reach of committed regional policy planning schemes. Better leisure facilities could, for example, involve a wide spectrum of indoor and outdoor activities at the local level, as well as improved accessibility for cultural events elsewhere (this is definitely a question of economy and logistics that could be tackled within a regional policy framework). Regarding the job diversification front, in the age of advanced Information and Communication Technology, this should not be impossible to respond to in terms of regional policies either, given today's technological development. We already see small businesses in remote geographic areas marketing their niche products via the Internet, or utilising ICT in performing and delivering high quality services over long distances. These considerations are formulated within a Nordic context where it is accepted that regional policies should also address development at the local level. We are fully aware that such policy conditions do not necessarily exist everywhere.

As to the variation between the answers of young people from different places, we find that better leisure opportunities are particularly stressed in Storfjord, Storuman, Båtsfjord, and Inari. There are only three places where young people showed little interest in this theme: namely, Chisasibi, Teriberka, and Isafjordur.

More job opportunities and more diversified work prospects are the main concerns of the teenagers from Teriberka, Isafjordur, and Båtsfjord. All of these places are heavily dependent upon the fishery industry.

Young people from Finland noted that there was room for more people in the vast areas around Inari in Northern Finland and young people in inland Northern Sweden (Pajala) also mentioned this concern that their localities are under-populated, as did the respondents from the island of Gotland, which, to a large extent, is a summer resort.

Better shopping facilities were stressed in Gotland, Storuman, Båtsfjord, Storfjord, and in the Inari area. Specific problems relating to infrastructure standards and social problems are discussed by young people from Chisasibi, and this is also true for Teriberka's young people.

Concluding remarks

The "Voices from the North" carry elements of pride and hope, but also despair. Despite the overall positive tendencies in the reports given by young people, we will start our concluding remarks with this quotation from inland Canada:

I have many things to tell about our community. Right now, our problems in our community are alcohol, drugs and violence. These are the problems that I feel really concerned about. I know I don't really talk about what I really like, maybe it's because I am a confused

young girl who doesn't know what direction I will head in. Because of all different and conflicting messages I receive in my daily life. I know I don't make any sense, but as you can see, there are many things that I need to talk about, but I don't know where to start. Do you understand?

Girl from Chisasibi

Similar quotations could be taken from some of the Teriberka essays. In our report, we have felt obliged to highlight the problematic conditions experienced by young people in some of the case study localities, but are aware that more attention should be paid to the important differences and living conditions in the various communities of the Circumpolar North.

In the other nine localities, the young people seem not to have experienced problems of the kind that are reported in the essays from Russia and inland Canada. In the other localities we often find a standard expression, more or less in this form: "It is nice here, but probably not for me". This may indicate that the young people – who are 15 to 16 years old – are at the beginning of a very mobile phase in their life, often seeking educational opportunities in colleges and universities in regional centres far away from their home place. They are definitely on their way out of the locality, some temporarily, but others to settle in more urbanised settings. What we can observe, however, is a feeling that may be interpreted as follows: "My home place is going to, or at least deserves to, survive and prosper in times to come, but I am not sure whether I will be an important part of that future".

At the beginning of this report, an interpretative model was presented in order to explain variations in young people's attitudes and practices according to which we expected to find a certain tension between standardised "youth culture" attitudes on the one hand, and variations due to the effects of gender, class, and locality on the other hand. In the questionnaire and essay material we have found distinct differences in the answers and comments from the children of the different localities. In that sense, the locality perspective has proved to be a useful tool in understanding young people. Different living conditions (e.g. Teriberka) and social factors (e.g. Chisasibi) have a great impact on the descriptions and opinions of the young people there as do the differences in what is provided for them in the form of social arenas (e.g. Storuman). Among the fishery-based localities in Iceland, the Faeroe Islands and Norway, the pride expressed by the young people in the two former cases contrasts strongly with the negative sense-of-place expressed by the teenagers in the Norwegian localities of Båtsfjord and Storfjord.

We have not, as stated in the introduction, looked for differences across localities that could be related to social background, or gender differences though we are aware that they exist. The differences between the voices of girls and boys can be detected in the short quotations presented in this report. But the overall impression so far is that there is a certain consistency in the answers from young people within each locality, which seems to outweigh any other differences created by gender and/or class background.

As to the standardizing effect of being 15 or 16 years old within a very commercialised global youth culture, we have made two observations: first, the overall importance that the young people attach to having access to their own social arenas; and, second, the ambiguous "self-distancing" from the community, expressed in terms of "a good place, but perhaps not for me." The "perhaps" element could be interpreted as an awareness that the present adolescent's situation will inevitably be replaced by one of young adulthood, of middle age, and finally of old age. In this perspective, the prospects for Northern localities may, after all, not be so bleak.

On the basis of the present study, what recommendations for public policies may be made? In a study covering seven countries, each of which pursues its specific regional policy objectives, we should be careful to come up with a set of standard suggestions. First, the state-level policies vary as to the weight put on developing the smaller villages and towns in the North. Second, states vary in the degree to which they entrust local democratic institutions like municipal and sub-municipal councils, with political and economic resources which are sufficient for these bodies to play a substantial developmental role in their communities. With this in mind, we will put forward here some suggestions for policy innovations on the basis of what the young voices in this study have expressed.

1 **Policies of place:** Young people come up with interesting responses when asked to describe and evaluate their respective home places. The fact that they mention very different aspects of their own locality's qualities is an argument for regional and welfare policies that encourage local level discretion, with leeway for local democratic authorities to implement policies according to local needs. Policies of place could also include supporting the physical restructuring of settlements to make places aesthetically more attractive.

2 **Youth councils:** The interest of the young in their community should be responded to by stimulating democratic practices and participation among young people outside the adult arenas. This could be achieved by having elected "youth councils" with (even small) annual funds to be utilised to improve conditions for young people.

3 **Leisure time arenas:** Local authorities should take the responsibility for running arenas like "the young people's house", arranged in such a way that the plurality of individual interests among the young is respected and used as a platform. From the present study we can clearly see the importance of such areas. If the local authorities themselves cannot afford running a house, one should seek co-operation with voluntary organisations and local businesses to create and maintain such arenas.

4 **Facilitating returning home:** Almost all young people will leave the small places, at least to complete their education if not for other reasons. This implies that policies to make young people stay on will be rather unrealistic. On the other hand, central and local authorities should prepare young people for a phase of back-moving, e.g. by involving people who have done so in discussions with pupils and students.

5 **ICT:** Living in and coming to of age in remote places like the ones we have been studying invariably involves the question of physical and electronic communications. Physical transportation may become more expensive in the future, but coming to access to world wide nets should be exploited. Young people, for example, should become familiar with the trading of local products on world wide markets, as performed by local businesses in the tourism and commodity sectors. Fibre-optical cables or equivalent devices should be made available to people in small and isolated places of the North, and the eagerness of young people to engage in these means of communications should be used as an asset for promoting business as well as public service and leisure activities. ■

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Acknowledgements

This publication is the result of a collective effort of the CCPP Secretariat, the MOST Secretariat, the Publications Unit of the Social and Human Sciences Sector, and all network members who kindly sent pictures from their localities for the brochure. All photographers gave us the free possibility to publish their pictures; we are very thankful to them in this regard. Moreover, we would like to thank Ambroise Bobtcheff and Chloé Keraghel who, as interns in the MOST Programme, worked in revising the final draft version. ■

Appendix I > methodological considerations

The combined data from the questionnaire and the essays reveal a mature and open response from the participating students in their discussion of important aspects of their home life. Despite some minor inconsistencies, the research results do contribute to an understanding of the problems and potentials perceived by the students.

Although more difficult to characterise, the comments from the young people's essays are particularly enlightening, giving a direct and objective view of their home-place life and personal experiences. In the evaluations of the essays, there were certain methodological problems in incorporating and categorising comments into tabular form. For example, pupils expressed both positive and negative evaluations regarding the state of the local economy, many students gave merely descriptive answers without evaluative content and the length and depth of treatment could not be reflected in table form. It was also observed that the students from BATSFJORD and CHISASIBI seemed even more open compared to other communities, often articulating their social criticisms in a more direct language. In conclusion, the two methods used – questionnaire and essay – have been complementary and have helped to shed light on some of the more complex issues, such as the students' concerns regarding work prospects.

Here is a brief review of the results of the research project. First of all, the answers to the questionnaire will be summarised and secondly, these answers will be briefly reviewed in the light of the data from the essays, especially where there seems to be inconsistencies.

SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS :

In answer to the question “What do young people like about their home places?”, the following answers were given in order of priority :

- 1 **General social environment (safety, friendly atmosphere, honesty and lack of crime and violence) :** VAGUR, DIGBY, ISAFJORDUR and STORUMAN - high score; TERIBERKA - low score.
- 2 **Nature (clean air, natural beauty, outdoor life) :** TERIBERKA, STORFJORD and PAJALA - high score; BATSFJORD, CHISASIBI and ISAFJORDUR - low score.
- 3 **Family and friends :** CHISASIBI and ISAFJORDUR - high score; SWEDISH LOCALITIES - low score.

Similarly, in answer to the question “What do young people dislike about their home places?”, the following answers were given in order of priority :

- 1 **Lack of leisure activities and facilities :** VAGUR, STORFJORD, DIGBY and STORUMAN - high score; CHISASIBI - low score.
- 2 **General social environment :** CHISASIBI (stressed social problems), ISAFJORDUR BATSFJORD - high score; INARI , VAGUR and STORFJORD - low score.
- 3 **Small size (geographical isolation) :** INARI and ISAFJORDUR-high score; VAGUR and CHISASIBI-low score.
- 4 **Lack of work opportunities :** VAGUR and STORFJORD - high score, TERIBERKA high score compared to others but still only 8%; STORUMAN and INARI - low score.

In answer to the question “What do young people like to do in their leisure time?”, the following answers were given in order of priority:

- 1 **Sport :** VAGUR and DIGBY - high score; STORFJORD - low score.
- 2 **Social life :** STORUMAN and CHISASIBI - high score; VAGUR and TERIBERKA - low score.

- 3 **Outdoor life :** STORFJORD, INARI, TERIBERKA and CHISASIBI - high score; VAGUR, GOTLAND, DIGBY and ISAFJORDUR - low score.

- 4 **TV, video, PC, reading, relaxing :** DIGBY (except relaxing category) and TERIBERKA (except “PC/internet” category) - high score; CHISASIBI and STORUMAN - low score.

Finally, in answer to the question “What would make this community a better place to live in for young people in the future?”, the following answers were given in order of priority:

- 1 **Better leisure facilities :** STORFJORD, STORUMAN, BATSFORD and INARI - high score; CHISASIBI, TERIBERKA and ISAFJORDUR - low score.
- 2 **Better work opportunities :** TERIBERKA (stressed quantity/availability), ISAFJORDUR and BATSFORD (stressed variation in employment possibilities).

OVERALL REVIEW OF DATA FROM QUESTIONNAIRE AND ESSAY:

The answers show a largely consistent and practical response from the students. The students highlight their immediate concerns, namely the need for better social facilities, as well as their concerns for the near future, namely the need for more diversified job prospects. There is little to no concern shown about education facilities, although the fact that students from poorer places such as Teriberka made no mention of computers, internet and electronic games is perhaps telling.

In today's globalising economy, “on line” access is a vital part of education, especially in isolated areas, and these students are clearly at a disadvantage. The answers often reflect a positive and negative sense of place. The students from CHISASIBI, for example, are very critical of social problems in their area; yet they are also proud of their local heritage and have a strong sense of belonging.

The general response of the students is that their home places have positive aspects but that they are not attractive places to live for young people. In this regard, the students make sensible and practical proposals for a better future. They cannot offer immediate answers to tackle social problems, such as drug and alcohol addiction, or combat the isolated nature of their region, so they propose that the core issues be dealt with are : Better leisure facilities to combat boredom and antisocial behaviour, and better job opportunities to create a secure and viable future in the locality. The students from TERIBERKA were the most negative about their sense of place (except regarding nature) while the most positive were the students from ISAFJORDUR, STORFJORD and VAGUR.

There is a great deal of consistency in the questionnaire and essay responses of the students, for example the students from CHISASIBI reflected a greater attachment to friends and family; and the students from BATSFJORD and CHISASIBI showed a greater preoccupation with social problems such as crime and drug and alcohol abuse.

However, a few inconsistencies need to be addressed if not actually resolved. Friends and family are not given much mention in the essays of the students from ISAFJORDUR, yet the same students give friends and family a high score in the questionnaire. Similarly, students from ISAFJORDUR are shown as both supportive (40%) and critical (20%) of the general social environment, in comparison to the answers in percentage terms of students for the other localities.

The biggest query however results from the unusually low percentage of students from TERIBERKA who expressed concern about work prospects in the questionnaire (8%). The essays in fact reveal that the students are immensely concerned, if rather resigned, about the local economy and labour market (96% of the youth of TERIBERKA wrote on this theme). The reasons for this inconsistency could be many – for instance, that the TERIBERKA students have low expectations of finding work, or that even if they find work, salaries are rarely paid. In any event, this preoccupation was in contrast with the lack of concern shown by the students of Pajala, Chisasibi and Gotland regarding their local economy. ■

Appendix II > frequencies and crosstabulations

Frequencies

Statistics

	Place	Age	Sex	Father's occupation	Mother's occupation	Is either of your parents looking for work ?	Sense of place
N. Valid	384	384	384	362	366	348	342
N. Missing	0	0	0	22	18	36	42

Frequency table

Place

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disby	42	10,9	10,9	10,9
	Chisasibi	33	8,6	8,6	19,5
	Isahjordur	29	7,6	7,6	27,1
	Vasur	27	7,0	7,0	34,1
	Storhjord	19	4,9	4,9	39,1
	B tshjord	51	13,3	13,3	52,3
	Pajala	35	9,1	9,1	61,5
	Storuman	33	8,6	8,6	70,1
	Gotland	62	16,1	16,1	86,2
	Inari	30	7,8	7,8	94,0
	Teriberka	23	6,0	6,0	100,0
	Total		384	100	100

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	15 years and younger	163	42,4	42,4	42,4
	16 years and older	221	57,6	57,6	100,0
Total		384	100	100	

Sex

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Boy	194	50,5	50,5	50,5
	Girl	190	49,5	49,5	100,0
Total	Total	384	100,0	100,0	

Father's occupation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Fishing, hunting, forest labour	47	12,2	13,0	13,0
	Industrial work farming, reindeers	14	3,6	3,9	16,9
	Farming, reindeers	4	1,0	1,1	18,0
	Self-employed	60	15,6	16,6	34,5
	Service, private, mainly manual work	102	26,6	28,2	62,7
	Service, private, mainly intellectual work	32	8,3	8,8	71,5
	Service, public, mainly manual work	31	8,1	8,6	80,1
	Service, public, mainly intellectual work	42	10,9	11,6	91,7
	Combination	9	2,3	2,5	94,2
	Unemployed	6	1,6	1,7	95,9
	Living at home	2	0,5	0,6	96,4
	Other	13	3,4	3,6	100,0
Total		362	94,3	100,0	
Missing	Missing	22	5,7		
Total	total	384	100,0		

Mother's occupation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Fishing, hunting, forest labour	1	0,3	0,3	0,3
	Industrial work	18	4,7	4,9	5,2
	Self-employed	17	4,4	4,6	9,8
	Service, private, mainly manual work	99	25,8	27,0	36,9
	Service, private, mainly intellectual work	19	4,9	5,2	42,1
	Service, public, mainly manual work	70	18,2	19,1	61,2
	Service, public, mainly intellectual work	74	19,3	20,2	81,4
	Combination	6	1,6	1,6	83,1
	Unemployed	13	3,4	3,6	86,6
	Living at home	30	7,8	8,2	94,8
	Other	19	4,9	5,2	100,0
	Total		366	95,3	100,0
Missing	missing	18	4,7		
Total		384	100,0		

Is either of your parents looking for work?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	59	15,4	17,0	17,0
	No	289	75,3	83,0	100,0
	Total	348	90,6	100,0	
Missing	missing	36	9,4		
Total		384	100,0		

Sense of place

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Predominantly positive	120	31,3	35,1	35,1
	Predominantly balanced or just descriptive	147	38,3	43,0	78,1
	Predominantly negative	75	19,5	21,9	100,0
	Total	342	89,1	100,0	
Missing	missing	42	10,9		
Total		384	100,0		

Crosstabs

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Sex * What are the two things you like about living in your community? (noi)	361	94,0	23	6,0	384	100,0
Sex * What are the two things you do not like about living in your community? (noi)	367	95,6	17	4,4	384	100,0
Sex * What kinds of things do you like to do when you're not at school? (noi)	374	97,4	10	2,6	384	100,0
Sex * Social arenas for youth	341	88,8	43	11,2	384	100,0
Sex * Social conditions; general	335	87,2	49	12,8	384	100,0
Sex * Social conditions; friends	332	86,5	52	13,5	384	100,0
Sex * Social conditions; family	330	85,9	54	14,1	384	100,0
Sex * Local economy, labour market	339	88,3	45	11,7	384	100,0
Sex * Sense of place	342	89,1	42	10,9	384	100,0

Sex *

What are the two things you like about living in your community? (no 1)

Crosstabulation

		What are the two things you like about living in your community? (no 1)						Total	
		Family and friends	Other social environment	Close to nature, outdoor life, cleanness	Small place	School	Other		
Sex	Boy	Count	26	68	40	12	3	30	179
		% within Sex	14,5	38,0	22,3	6,7	1,7	16,8	100,0
	Girl	Count	35	83	31	14	3	16	182
		% within Sex	19,2	45,6	17,0	7,7	1,6	8,8	100,0
Total	Count	61	151	71	26	6	46	361	
	% within Sex	16,9	41,8	19,7	7,2	1,7	12,7	100,0	

Sex *

What are the two things you do not like about living in your community? (no 1)

Crosstabulation

		What are the two things you do not like about living in your community? (no 1)									Total	
		Social problems	Other social environment	Lacking shopping possibilities	Too small place	Long distances	Lack of leisure activities for young people	Lack of work prospects	Climate	Other		
Sex	Boy	Count	8	32	7	26	20	52	6	5	25	181
		% within Sex	4,4	17,7	3,9	14,4	11,0	28,7	3,3	2,8	13,8	100,0
	Girl	Count	7	30	14	30	23	60	3	4	15	186
		% within Sex	3,8	16,1	7,5	16,1	12,4	32,3	1,6	2,2	8,1	100,0
Total	Count	15	62	21	56	43	112	9	9	40	367	
	% within Sex	4,1	16,9	5,7	15,3	11,7	30,5	2,5	2,5	10,9	100,0	

Sex *

Sex * What kinds of things do you like to do when you are not at school? (no 1)

Crosstabulation

		What kinds of things do you like to do when you are not at school? (no 1)									Total
		Sports	Other social company	Out-door life	TV, video, listening	PC, games Internet	Read (books, strips)	Relax	Other activities		
Sex	Boy	Count	71	38	26	9	15	5	7	17	188
		% within Sex	37,8	20,2	13,8	4,8	8,0	2,7	3,7	9,0	100
	Girl	Count	63	70	8	11	2	9	4	19	186
		% within Sex	33,9	37,6	4,3	5,9	1,1	4,8	2,2	10,2	100
Total	Count	134	108	34	20	17	14	11	36	374	
	% within Sex	35,8	28,9	9,1	5,3	4,5	3,7	2,9	9,6	100	

Sex *

Social arenas for youth.

Crosstabulation

		Social arenas for youth				Total
		Predominantly satisfied	Predominantly balanced or just descriptive	Predominantly unsatisfied	Not mentioned or difficult to interpret	
Sex	Boy	Count	25	18	43	80
		% within Sex	15,1	10,8	25,9	48,2
	Girl	Count	21	31	67	56
		% within Sex	12,0	17,7	38,3	32,0
Total	Count	46	49	110	136	341
	% within Sex	13,5	14,4	32,3	39,9	100,0

Sex *

Social conditions; general.

Crosstabulation

		Social conditions : general				Total
		Predominantly satisfied	Predominantly balanced or just descriptive	Predominantly unsatisfied	Not mentioned or difficult to interpret	
Sex	Boy	Count	25	7	28	103
		% within Sex	15,3	4,3	17,2	63,2
	Girl	Count	37	14	31	90
		% within Sex	21,5	8,1	18,0	52,3
Total	Count	62	21	59	193	335
	% within Sex	18,5	6,3	17,6	57,6	100,0

Sex *

Social conditions; friends.

Crosstabulation

		Social conditions; friends		Total	
		Mentionned	Not mentionned		
Sex	Boy	Count	27	133	160
		% within Sex	16,9	83,1	100,0
	Girl	Count	33	139	172
		% within Sex	19,2	80,8	100,0
Total	Count	60	272	332	
	% within Sex	18,1	81,9	100,0	

Sex *

Social conditions; family.

Crosstabulation

		Social conditions; family		Total	
		Mentionned	Not mentionned		
Sex	Boy	Count	21	140	161
		% within Sex	13,0%	87,0%	100,0%
	Girl	Count	23	146	169
		% within Sex	13,6%	86,4%	100,0%
Total	Count	44	286	330	
	% within Sex	13,3%	86,7	100,0%	

Sex *

Local economy, labour market.

Crosstabulation

		Local economy, labour market				Total	
		Predominantly : Satisfied,	Balanced or just descriptive,	Negative.	Not mentioned		
Sex	Boy	Count	11	77	36	41	165
		% within Sex	6,7	46,7	21,8	24,8	100,0
	Girl	Count	9	90	39	36	174
		% within Sex	5,2	51,7	22,4	20,7	100,0
Total	Count	20	167	75	77	339	
	% within Sex	5,9	49,3	22,1	22,7	100,0	

Sex *

Sense of place .

Crosstabulation

		Sense of place			Total	
		Predominantly satisfied	Predominantly balanced or just descriptive	Predominantly negative		
Sex	Boy	Count	54	73	40	167
		% within Sex	32,3	43,7	24,0	100,0
	Girl	Count	66	74	35	175
		% within Sex	37,7	42,3	20,0	100,0
Total	Count	120	147	75	342	
	% within Sex	35,1	43,0	21,9	100,0	

Appendix III > standardised questionnaire

Questionnaire

The research was based on a standardised questionnaire and essay theme which was provided to all of the pupils involved in the project. Some necessary adjustments had to be made for translation reasons. Certain questions had to be adapted in view of specific local conditions. The following is the basic questionnaire model :

Age Gender

Home place ?

What is your father's occupation?

What is your mother's occupation?

Are your parents looking for a job?

Which one of them?

Why?

Mention two positive factors about living in your home-town

1

2

Mention two negative factors about living in your home-town

1

2

What would make this town a better place to live in for you in the future?

What do you usually do in your spare time?

Appendix IV > selected Essays

Essay

Please write a short essay (maximum 2 pages) on the following subject:
Write a letter to your pen friend living in another country! Tell her/him about :

- Your community.
- How people make a living and get their income in your home place.
- Important events that have occurred in the last few years.

Canada

Chisasibi, female, 16 years

I'm going to talk to you about this community. I like living in this community cause it's fun. It's a great place live in for. But there's just one thing it's alcohol and drugs. I don't like those things. And we don't have privacy at night. Because those who are drunk always knock on everybody's doors. Ok. Bye. That's about it.

Chisasibi, female, 16 years

I'm gonna tell you about my community. Last weekend they were people all over this community drunk. When people drink alcohol they always have to get drunk. When they get drunk they start fighting or drunk driving people always lost their life. In the future I wish the Alcohol's gone and there's a lot of garbage here in our community. I wish that garbage is gone.

Digby Area, male, 16 years

I live in a fishing community, that is how most people make a living doing something connected with fishing either working on a boat or in a fish plant or something like that. I don't like living here that much, its boring, it is too far to the city, it kind of smells like fish, and I can't wait until I move away. It would be a better place to live if there wasn't so many assholes around here. If we had a new school instead of one that is half torn down, and if I didn't live here. Bye.

The Faroe Islands

ID 373, Vagur, male, 15 years

My name is , I'm 16 years old and I live in Porkeri. Porkeri is a small village lying between Hov and Vagur, and about 360 people live here. And the only working place is the salmon smoking factory, where about 100 people are working – however there are mostly people from Vagur who are working there. The managers' name is Heri Hjelm, he is from Vagur. He had a fish buyer in Germany, but Paul Watson (from the Sea Sheppard group, who are against whaling) – the infamous scoundrel, who only has made things difficult for the Faroese people – was once again up to harm the Faroese. He told the German fish buyer that the Faroese people killed whales just for the pleasure of it. When the buyer heard this, he refused to buy more fish from the Faroese. However now there are other fish buyers and hopefully this will cause more work here in the future. People from Porkeri are famous for being handworkers and very kind and hospitality people. As it is, I like to live in Porkeri, but I can't imagine that I will keep living here, because there is no work. I plan to get an education, but first I'm going out to sea as a sailor, before I will sit on a school bench again.

I don't relish the thought of spending the whole day in front of the computer. I would much rather be a fisherman or have a regular job. It's unhealthy to be a sailor, but if that's the only opportunities to work, then one would have to settle for that. Take care!

Vagur, female, 16 years

I am a young girl living in Vagur. It is one of the greatest towns here in South Islands with approximately 1.500 citizens, where everybody knows each other. In Vagi there is not much industry and not much money, so it is difficult to make any business profit. I like to live here in Vagi because it is so peaceful and there are no crimes. Here you can be involved in any sport or play any musical instrument if you want to. However, there could be a youth club, because there is nothing for the young people to do here. Dear pen pal, I hope you consider Vagi as an interesting town and I hope you will come and visit us soon.

Vagur, male, 16 years

I live in Sumba, which is a peaceful village by the ocean. We have two little stores, and one fast-food restaurant. We also have a soccer field located just above the village. Many people have a boat, some go fishing regularly, but most of the boats are only used during the end of august and the beginning of September to catch the young of fulmar. Most people don't have a job – some do, but they all work outside Sumba, e.g. in Vagur. Sumba, like many other villages was severely hit by the financial recession. We had a small fish factory where there was work every day, but it went bankrupt. I love living here because I grew up here. The town is peaceful and by the ocean. That is mainly what is nice about living here.

Iceland

Isafjordur, female, 16 years

How are you doing? I'm just fine. I'm going to write a bit about my home town. My hometown is called Isafjordur and the population is around 3.500. This is a rather small town. The main occupation here is the fishery first and foremost and then there are other smaller lines of work. People here make their living in many different ways e.g. fishermen, staff at hospital and mechanics and other things. The most important events that have taken place are, I think, the avalanches, one that fell on a town called Flateyri and then another on a town near called Sudavik.

In these avalanches together around 40 people died. Then two avalanches have fallen on our ski arena, one went all the way down the land where the summerhouses are and there was one individual killed. Well I think it's time to say goodbye now. Say hi to everyone for me and write back soon.

Isafjordur, female, 16 years

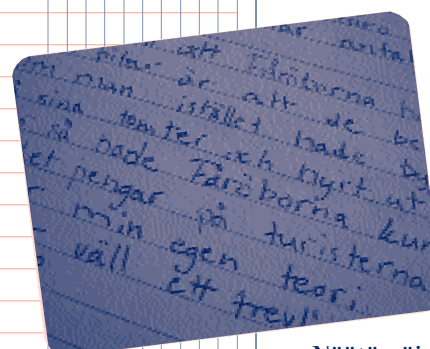
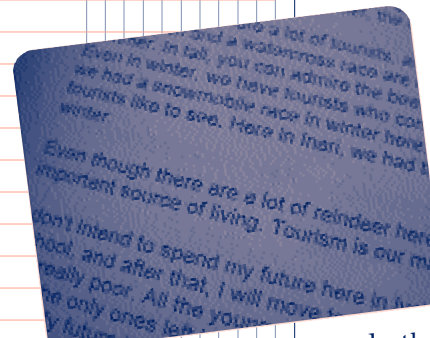
Isafjordur is a very sweet and fun little town where human life prospers and life is good. I don't really know about it but it's nice living here.

The cultural life is alive and well, which may be expected is such a great town like this one, and people like it. The main occupation here is the fish industry but it has been a difficult position the last few years. The quota has been sold away, factories been closed down and people lost their work. There's some left of it and that is what keeps the town going. Important events have taken place here over the last few years.

The school has now continuous school days, Margret, the Queen of Denmark came here on Olafur Ragnar Grimsson's birthday who also grew up here. This is quite enough for you.

Isafjordur, female, 15 years

I come from a little town, which is called Isafjordur. It is in the Westfjords, and the population here is around 3.500 people. There's great growth in the cultural life here and in fact enough to do Sometimes, though, it could be more because the town doesn't offer many work opportunities!! The people her in Isafjordur live and nourish themselves on gossip and we can't have any private life here. Today there was an exam and there will be another one tomorrow so I'm just at home reading for them and I don't do anything else.



Finland

Inari, male, 16 years

There are very few people living in this area. The distances are very long. We have a lot of reindeer herding here. In one village, there are two stores that you can buy groceries at. In winter, we get a lot of tourists who are taking part in snowmobile safaries. Many Norwegians come to do shopping in the stores. A Christmas party at the school, reindeer driving race and the opening of a new paved road have been the most notable events here lately. Over here where I live there is also the Frontier Guard and two cafés. People go to fish for salmon on the River Näätamöjoki. Some tourists fly there by seaplane. We still have a good deal of forest left here, and there is not much industry here. Almost everybody knows each other. We have a lot of good places for picking berries and mushrooms. Wild animals may run across the yard or come and eat the food meant for birds, like the fox, squirrel etc. The mail is, however, delivered regularly, just like it always has been--as long as I have lived, and even before me. The school is situated 30 km away from our house, and, to get there, I take the bus. I come home by taxi. I am not a Skolt Sámi.

Ivalo, female, 15 years

I've lived in Ivalo all my life, that is for 15 years, and there's never been anything here that I would have found interesting. Of course we have lately had all kinds of events, like Finnish Skiing Championships, snowmobile and reindeer races, film festivals etc. The surroundings here, though, are very nice. The scenery is beautiful, this land is good for hiking, and we have beautiful virgin forests. There are many good sources of income in the surroundings of Ivalo and Inari. Reindeer, just like fishing and hunting, are of course an integral part of life here in the municipality of Inari. The livelihoods of this area seem very primitive compared to the livelihoods of e.g. Rovaniemi, as there it is probably much harder to do fishing, reindeer herding and hunting. In my opinion, the prospects for Ivalo seem poor. The stores and hotels do well during certain seasons, thanks to tourism, but without tourists, the hotels would go bankrupt. Special events bring tourists to the area, and there are enough of such events. With no events, it is really boring here. My own future doesn't look good at all. I will probably have to go to a reform school in Muhos, although I would prefer to stay in Ivalo. Thus, I will be able to come back to Ivalo only when I turn eighteen. I have had this obsession - a very common one among the young - to get far away from Ivalo, but it disappeared when I started to think more about it. My home is my castle! I can think of going away to study, but only to study. There's no way I could leave my friends and relatives. Maybe I could think about it when it is time to "set up a family", but not now, not at least for ten years. Ivalo is quite OK, although there could be more things to do, especially for the young.

Inari, female, 15 years

Hi there, lazybones! I come from Lisma which is a village 100 km away from Inari. Lisma is a Sámi village with only one non-Sámi inhabitant. Reindeer herding is the livelihood in Lisma, and I, too, have a reindeer earmark, and thus also reindeer of my own. Lisma is a small village with about 10 houses and approximately 30 people. The village is situated in the middle of "wilderness", but maybe that's what is best about it. People often ask me why in the world do I live in such a one-horse town. It's an easy question to answer. For them Lisma is just a village in the middle of nowhere, but for us who live there, it is an important place. It has the best possible conditions for practicing reindeer herding. We have reindeer corrals in the yards, and, thus, the reindeer can be all the time by the houses. People gain their living from reindeer husbandry, but some do have other jobs as well. Usually these involve attending meetings and work that has to do with improving the living conditions of the Sámi. I guess the most important event in this area has been the opening day of the Sámi Museum, or "Siida". Other events to mention include the Finnish Skiing Championships and general skiing competitions as well as the reindeer driving race. These events take place in the village of Inari.

Norway

B tsjford, female, 15 years

Hi there! I'm a 15-year old girl from Båtsfjord. Most people here in Båtsfjord fish for a living or work with fish-farming. Båtsfjord is a small fishing municipality with only 2500 inhabitants. Yes, I know, you may think that it must be boring to live here, but there's actually quite a few things happening; homicide, pedophilia, stabbing, theft, burglary, and then there's lots of drugs. In that respect, plenty is going on! People here are actually very sick! Many girls aged 13-15 have slept with more than 20 guys, they behave like sluts! Every weekend all of us drink, well, at least almost all of us. It's a lot of fun!!! I just look forward to graduating from school so that I can move away from this place. I've grown so fucking tired of Båtsfjord! Have fun! Hugs.

B tsjford, male, 15 years

Båtsfjord! It's actually rather nice to live in Båtsfjord. The population is only 2600, so you know almost everybody. People from about 17 countries live here. We don't have that many stores, but that's not lethal. Båtsfjord is the biggest fishing community in Norway, and without the fish plants, there would be no Båtsfjord. There aren't that many leisure activities, and the ones offered are quite boring. In winter we've got lots of snow, which makes snowboarding fun. The drawback is that there's no lift to take us up the hill. But except for that, it's nice to live in Båtsfjord.

Storjord, male,

Skibotn is a small place in Scandinavia, in Norway. Skibotn lies in Troms county, in a district called Storjord. It is all right to live here, but I guess I'm not totally satisfied with offer youth get in their spare time. Nothing happens really, and there are hardly any places for us to hang out, apart from the club, which is open only twice a week. In my view it is a nice place for retired people. They have a center where they get food and everything they need. They even have a rehabilitation center with a pool, training facilities, TV-room, and plenty of other things we would love to use. Retired people probably live here because of the nice climate. They live in "Paradise" because they can do basically everything they like, but they have to do some exercises to stay in shape, and apart from that they can do whatever they like. The nice thing about Skibotn is our climate. There is rarely any rain. If I were to move I would miss my friends and everything else in Skibotn.

Russia

Teriberka, male, 16 years

I live in a small village on the Barents sea coast. The climate is very cold here, but I like the nature because of its beauty. Many fishermen and hunters live in our village, and the job they are doing became not a hobby, but the only way to feed themselves and their families. In summer, many people pick berries and mushrooms to have it for winter. People in our village make living in any way they can. They fish and sell it to "cooperators" (NB: people working in private companies or stock companies) coming from the town almost for nothing. I don't like it, I would forbid to take fish out of our village. For the last years very bad events have happened in our area. Today practically all the enterprises are stopped, this leads to increase in unemployment. Our village is very rich with natural resources. It is a very good place to invest money. If investments are attracted, the village will live better, and the investors will get more profit.

Teriberka, female, 17 years

I live in the village, and it is not a town. There is no such a quantity of cars and dirty emissions into atmosphere, but our stoke - hole, and its chimneys produce a lot of mud, that lay down on the snow (in winter) and on the ground (in summer). Then all these mud is taken to children's mouths. But comparing to the city this emission is like a drop of water

in the sea. But if to speak about good things, there are not so few of them either. If to go out of the house and to walk some tens of meters and you appears not in the village but in the nature. It is easy to breath and all around is beautiful. In summer it's possible to pick berries and mushrooms, in winter to go in for skiing in the mountains. We have a club in our village, but it needs full repairing. Concerts are held in our club and discotheques (each Saturday). Children also visit the club to sing songs, paint and dance. But I don't like that every concert they sing the same songs. Also was established the group. The club needs to be repaired, the halves of the houses are broken, other houses are burnt but nothing is being built. If to speak about parents and their work, all is bad here. My father was employed in municipal service and he didn't receive his salary eleven months. He was obligated to go to work to the collective farm. This is only organization where the business is not bad and this is the only place where the salary is paid in time. My mother's situation is different. As long as my father did not receive his salary, we lived owing to mother's salary. But nurse's salary is not so high. For such a salary three of us have to live during one month. At the moment my mother might be dismissed. And again we'll have to live with one salary, only with parents. There are enough problems in the village. The village has all possibilities to prosper but nobody has interest in it, neither elder, no young generation. Resources never appear easily, one should find them. To find resources one has to offer good program. Then the village will develop and people will come here. The youth will not leave the village. To my mind it will never happen.

Teriberka, male, 16 years

The place where I live is very beautiful. The village is located on the Barents Sea coast. Teriberka river and its tributary Muchka are running nearby the village. Some small buildings are located along Muchka. People spend leisure time there in summer, pick mushrooms there. There is a beautiful waterfall there and Little Forest, the only forest in the mountains (it is mostly dwarf birch in the mountains). The hydropower station is built on Teriberka river near the place where one river becomes two. The bridge is built across the river nearby the village. Steep mountains surround the bay. There is a sandy beach near the village. People make living as all people do: working in the kolkhoz, in communal service. In summer, people fish in the sea. Important events: a bridge was built; few cottages were built instead of old or burnt houses. Old generation dies out.

Sweden

Pajala, male, 16 years

Hi! I live in Norrbotten, or more precisely in Pajala, 180 kilometres Southeast of Kiruna and 250 kilometres north of Luleaa. There isn't much to do in this place; there are not a lot of shops but a whole lot of forest. There are a lot of fishing lakes and other rivers. In the wintertime you can go ice-skating, cross-country skiing and lots of other things. But in the summertime there is not a lot to do. Most of the young people go to a party once or twice during the summer, but most of the time there is not a damn thing to do here.

Storuman, male, 15 years

Stensele is a small village that is situated close to Storuman. Stensele has more than 8000 inhabitants. Around here there are lots of small enterprises. These provide the jobs that help most people make a living. The only thing to do in the winter is to go ice-skating, which is great fun. Going out on a nice day, going ice-skating and then eat hot dogs. I think it is nice that we don't see too much of the police (I have never seen them), because of this you can drive without a driving license, and I have been doing that for a couple of years. In the summer there are much more things to do. You can drive your moped, play football and if the weather is nice you do that every day, but it is even nicer to play in the rain. During both summer and winter you can play bandy, and we do that a lot. You can go by moped. This summer, me and some friends of mine are going to a cabin, and we are staying there for a couple of days. We are also going for walks in the mountains. The negative thing about Stensele, and most of

the nearby villages, is the fact that there are so huge distances and few people here. Mostly, though, you have quite a nice time here.

Gotland, female, 16 years

I will tell you about the district in which I live, though I am originally from another part of the country. The place I live is named Roma, and it lies in the middle of Gotland. There is a swimming pool, grocery stores, a cinema, a sugar factory, and last but not least a school. People are occupied with either farming or enterprises connected to selling. The most important event in Roma was that the sugar factory was shut down. The result was that people got sacked, thus unemployed and upset. ■