

Norwegian-Russian cooperation in public health education in the Euro-Arctic Barents region

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A Norwegian-Russian cooperation in public health education in the Euro-Arctic Barents region started in the 1980s. In the 1990s it has been mostly limited to research- and student exchanges.

In September 2006 seven universities including Northern State Medical University, Arkhangelsk (Russia), University of Tromsø (Norway), Nordic School of Public Health (Sweden), Umeå University (Sweden), Mid-Sweden University (Sundsvall, Sweden), Tampere University (Finland) and the National Institute of Public Health (Oslo, Norway), came together to found the International school of public health in Arkhangelsk, Russia (ISPHA). The mission of the ISPHA was to increase the level of knowledge in methods of research and practice in the field of public health, and to promote the implementation of this knowledge in Northwest Russia. Since 2007, ISPHA is providing public health education based on a 2-year MPH training. In 2007, ISPHA became the first full member of ASPHER. Forty-eight specialists got MPH degrees at ISPHA as a part of the program.

In 2013 a PhD programme between NSMU and the University of Tromsø was established. In 2013-19, 6 PhD theses were defended, and totally 28 full-text papers were published in peer-reviewed journals. In 2017 two new PhD programs in public health between Norway and Russia were initiated. The programme in environmental health and registry epidemiology in Arctic and Sub-Arctic Russia is run in collaboration between two Russian and two Norwegian universities while the second programme on cardiovascular epidemiology is run by NSMU and the University of Tromsø. Both programmes have already recruited PhD students and teachers from both countries. Achievements, challenges, sustainability and future perspectives will be discussed.

In spite of political perturbations, cooperation in public health education and research between Norway and Russia is contributing to better understanding of each other and strengthening public health workforce in Arctic Russia.

Key messages:

- Norwegian Russian cooperation evolved from exchanges to PhD programs.
- Most of the graduates strengthen public health capacity in their regions.