

The UArctic Magazine

# Shared Voices

2022



UArctic



Inuit youth in Nain taking a SmartQAMUTIK on a trip.  
Photo by Rex Holwell

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Helping communities adapt to increasingly unpredictable sea ice conditions



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uarctic.org/annualreports

# Letter from the President

By LARS KULLERUD  
President, UArctic

*The UArctic Board condemns all acts of war. As a result of the current Russian military actions in Ukraine, the collaboration between UArctic and Russian institutions is paused until the situation allows for continuation.*

*This decision is taken without Russian Board members.*

*The UArctic network is strongly committed to strengthening the North through circumpolar collaboration in higher education and research with special attention to students and young researchers. UArctic works hard for a strong, engaged, informed and dynamic North creating better lives and environment for all northerners. UArctic looks forward to a future when the entire Circumpolar North can benefit from this collaboration.*

(UArctic Board statement, April 2022)



**I**t makes no sense to speculate on when and how this war will end. It can take months or years, and we know very little about the outcome. Eventually it will end, and we all look forward to a future where we can rebuild northern and Arctic relations for the benefit of its peoples as well as the world.

What is predictable is that the new future of the Arctic will not be a continuation of what we had before the attack on Ukraine. The war has established a profound distrust of Russia, with a particularly significant impact on the countries that depend on resources from the Russian Arctic – oil and gas, as well as minerals. This distrust does not end with the war.

Western countries are now initiating the green shift to become independent of gas and oil from Russia at a speed not even optimistic environmentalists would have predicted only months ago. This high-speed transition increases the need for metals and minerals to enable fossil fuel-free supply chains, and the distrust implies that the minerals and metals need to be found outside Russia and other potentially untrustable regimes.

The European Union has over the past few years conducted thorough studies to identify regions that could deliver necessary raw materials with minimal dependency on non-Western countries. An important conclusion in those reports is that most of those materials exist in the Precambrian shields of northern Europe, Greenland, and Canada.

The war will lead to strong pressure on minerals and metal extraction in the Arctic parts of the Western Hemisphere. The need for fast transition to safe and sustainable supply may lead to very challenging rights, land use, and deci-

sion-making processes in the Arctic. This is potentially in conflict with the need for thorough social and environmental impact studies, as well as decent distribution of benefits and sharing with the local communities. This will shift priorities in education and research in and for the Arctic.

Climate change was identified as a major area of scientific cooperation in the Arctic before the invasion of Ukraine. The urgency, the importance of continuing research, and finding solutions to reduce the impact of climate change in the Arctic and the rest of the world have not gone away. This will not be easy to do with half of the Arctic “paused” from participation in this important scientific cooperation.

The new future of the Arctic will for sure be different from the past. In the Western Arctic, we face new pressure on extractive activities, while the Russian Arctic will face a reduced demand for the resources that so far have been important to secure local economies.

The organizational framework will likely also be different from the past. The Arctic Council, very much the basis for UArctic, is paused, and even if we all wish so, it may not easily return to its former status as the guarantor of peace and cooperation in the Arctic. Fortunately, the Arctic Council has created some offspring, including the binding agreement on scientific cooperation in the Arctic, the search and rescue agreement, the ban on fisheries in the High Arctic seas, as well as organizations like UArctic and the Arctic Economic Council. The binding agreements have a better chance to be put back in operation when cooperation is again possible. As for UArctic, science cooperation might prove to become important to re-establish operations for the whole Circumpolar North.

No matter what the outcome of this unpredictable development, the future cannot exist without education and research cooperation. The future of the Arctic needs to be handled by coming generations, and it is up to the present generation to make their task as manageable as possible.



By OUTI SNELLMAN  
Vice-President Organization, UArctic

**I**n Finnish mythology a waterfowl - the goldeneye - is the creator of the world. There are many variations of the story, but the principle is the same. In the beginning the bird was flying above the dark ocean of origin. The Mother, or Goddess, of Air raised her knee from the ocean, and the bird landed and lay its golden eggs on the mother's knee. As she moved, one of the eggs fell and cracked. The egg-shell pieces became the world, the earth, and the sky, as well as the sun, the moon, and the stars.

We all share the sky, the stars, the moon, the sun. We also share the origin story. It is told in many formulations around the world, but at its core it is basically the same.

UArctic's Strategic Plan 2030 is built around the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which help us in mapping the steps we need to take for a sustainable future. But where the SDGs are perhaps lacking is the role of cultural understanding and the necessity of various expressions of this understanding through different means and modalities. Many of the stories in this edition of the Shared Voices Magazine stress the importance of mutual understanding. We are not the same, but we need to work together to understand and respect each other as a part of the same globe and the Milky Way.

The goldeneye is a special bird, because it has the ability to fetch things from the bottom of a lake. It is able to fetch tears that have been shed to mourn loved ones; tears that have fallen into a lake and transformed into pearls.

This year the goldeneye is busy.



The New England Arctic Network (NEAN) aims to share the wealth of expertise in Arctic engagement across New England region, and anticipate and respond to links between Arctic change and the eastern coast of North America. Five of the NEAN members are collaborating to host the UArctic Assembly 2022 in Portland, Maine:



**The University of New Hampshire's** (UNH) Arctic initiative builds on decades of field research in ocean mapping, glaciology, hydrology, permafrost, space sciences, and human-environment interactions, promoting interdisciplinary research, international collaborations, and student training. As an example, the Convergent Arctic Research Perspectives and Education (CARPE) graduate program at UNH trains interdisciplinary teams of students to study the effects of changing Arctic seasonality on ecosystems and people.



**The University of New England** (UNE) joined UArctic in 2018 upon launching UNE North, the Institute for North Atlantic Studies. UNE North connects researchers, educators, policymakers, and industry leaders from across Maine, New England, and the North Atlantic region to implement collaborative approaches to building resilient communities, healthy environments, and thriving economies. Grounded in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, UNE North holds SDG 17 – partnerships for the goals – as a core value, including projects on sustainable development, COVID-19 response, and rural health. UNE is proud to lead two UArctic Thematic Networks: Ocean Food Systems, and Bioregional Planning for Resilient Rural Communities.



**The University of Southern Maine's** (USM) Maine North Atlantic Institute (MNAI) contributes innovative education and workforce development programs. Through partnerships with Reykjavik University, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, and the New England Ocean Cluster, MNAI supports faculty, staff, and student projects in tourism, innovation and entrepreneurship, public health, and ethics and regulatory compliance. Highlights include a graduate-level research exchange among USM and North Atlantic Universities; a practicum engaging businesses involved in Maine-North Atlantic trade; and law internships assisting startup companies on regulatory compliance in the blue economy.

The New England Arctic Network –

# New England's deep history and bright future for Arctic collaboration



By HOLLY PARKER, Lead of the UArctic Thematic Network on Bioregional Planning for Resilient Rural Communities, Director of UNE NORTH, Assistant Professor, University of New England and KATHARINE DUDERSTADT, Chair of New England Arctic Network, Research Scientist, University of New Hampshire



**The University of Maine's Climate Change Institute** (CCI) fosters an interdisciplinary approach to Arctic and Arctic-impacted research. It has led several international Arctic science programs, such as the Greenland Ice Sheet Project2 (GISP2) ice coring effort, and run undergraduate and graduate student training programs including the NSF Systems Approaches to Understanding and Navigating the New Arctic (SAUNNA) and the Juneau Icefield Research Program (JIRP). The UMaine Arctic Initiative brings together over hundred members from twenty different departments across campus.



**Dartmouth College's Institute of Arctic Studies** focuses on rapid environmental change, climate, the cryosphere, Arctic engineering, and inclusive systems of governance and policy. As a founding member of UArctic, Dartmouth serves in many UArctic leadership roles, including former Chair of the UArctic Board (former Dartmouth Provost Barry Scherr), UArctic Assembly Vice-Chair (Lindsay Whaley), Board Member (Ross Virginia), and UArctic Chair for Science Diplomacy and Inclusion (Melody Brown Burkins). Dartmouth co-leads the UArctic Institute for Arctic Policy and helps advance the Thematic Networks on Arctic Geology, Science Diplomacy, Gender in the Arctic Knowledge Production, the Model Arctic Council, and Arthropods of the Tundra.

**“We anticipate and respond to links between Arctic change and the eastern coast of North America.”**



**Senator Angus King (I)** has been a vocal supporter of Maine and New England's engagement in Arctic issues, recognizing the shared challenges and opportunities in the region and the role New England can play in developing collaborative solutions. “As the Arctic region opens up, so do opportunities worth America's attention. But with this increased activity comes heightened tensions as nations from around the world – some less careful and responsible than the United States – start to make investments to advance economic and geostrategic goals. The High North has long been known as a zone of peace, and the Arctic Council's track record shows that member nations can collaborate thoughtfully to ensure it remains that way. As the Co-Chair of the Senate Arctic Caucus, I am doing everything in my power to raise awareness of the possibilities ahead of us, while never losing sight of the environmental circumstances that brought us to this point.”

UNH, UNE, USM, UMaine CCI, Dartmouth College, and other members of the New England Arctic Network are eager to share our work at the UArctic Assembly in June and to build on a rich history of northern partnerships to create a bright future for New England Arctic collaboration through UArctic.



# SmartICE

is for the North, by the North



Trevor Bell completing updates on a SmartBUOY deployed near Mittimatalik. Photo by Andrew Arreak

By EMMA DALTON, Communications Coordinator and EMILY BEST, Development Officer, SmartICE

In October 2021, Professor Trevor Bell received the inaugural Frederik Paulsen Arctic Academic Action Award for his ground-breaking achievements on climate change adaptation with SmartICE. In receiving the award, he recognized the incredible support of Inuit communities: "Without the collaboration, encouragement and knowledge of Inuit communities, the success of SmartICE as a climate change solution would not have been possible. This award recognizes them too, and I am most humbled and grateful to receive it on their behalf."

We spoke with SmartICE Regional Operation Leads Rex Holwell and Andrew Arreak to understand how SmartICE is helping their communities adapt to unpredictable sea ice conditions.

## What does sea ice mean for you and your community?

**Andrew:** In Mittimatalik we use the ice in our everyday lives. We use it to hunt, harvest, and travel to other communities. We are a part of the ice because we use it so much

and in so many different ways. It is a unique way of living. Being out on the ice like my ancestors did, enjoying what it has to offer, is very therapeutic.

## How is the ice changing?

**Rex:** In my community of Nunainguk, people are not able to predict their traditional travel routes. The ice isn't freezing as early as it used to, and conditions are very different from 20-30 years ago.

**Andrew:** In my lifetime, I am noticing that the ice is forming a little later and breaking up a little earlier each year. There are some dangerous areas that are becoming more dangerous earlier in the year than they normally do.

## How does SmartICE reduce ice travel risk?

**Rex:** We are helping communities and providing them with the tools, data and information they need to make more informed decisions before their travel on the ice.

The Frederik Paulsen Arctic Academic Action Award provides high-level recognition for innovative ideas that transform knowledge into action to help address the impacts of climate change in the Arctic. It comes with a 100,000 euro unrestricted prize, intended to help develop the idea through outreach, engagement and communication. The award is a joint activity of UArctic and the Arctic Circle.



THE FREDERIK PAULSEN  
ARCTIC ACADEMIC ACTION AWARD

Andrew Arreak and his son taking the SmartQAMUTIK out to measure the ice and snow thickness near Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet), Nunavut. Photo by Lynn Mooriman

**"We are helping communities to make more informed decisions before their travel on the ice."**

**Andrew:** I talk with the community first and ask them where they would like me to monitor the ice. We collect the data; it stays here in the community and is available when it is needed. When we listen to the community, we have a better relationship and get a better outcome for our ice monitoring service.

**SmartICE launched its Northern Production Centre (NPC) in Nain in 2019 to train Inuit youth to assemble its stationary ice thickness sensors (SmartBUOYs). As manager of the NPC, how do the youth benefit from this program?**

**Rex:** It is important to have the technology built by and for Inuit. After the SmartBUOYs are built, the youth sign a sticker on the sensor so people know they are made by them. They take pride in building them. I've seen so much growth in the youth. We give them a stepping stone to better themselves. They further their abilities and skills, and gain confidence to go on to other opportunities after the program finishes.

## How does working for SmartICE make you feel?

**Rex:** I am a positive influence on local youth and I am really proud of that, and offering this program has had a huge impact on my community.

**Andrew:** I will continue to work with SmartICE for as long as I can because there is no other occupation like this, providing safety information for the community in real time, and having the community support us. I think it's great. SmartICE is for the North, by the North.



## Floor to the UArctic Board Student Representatives

# Student Voices

By FRANCESCA STOPPANI, Intern,  
UArctic International Secretariat

Each year a new person is selected as a student representative for the UArctic Board for a three-year term. The current trio consists of outgoing representative Laurie-Ann Lines, PhD candidate at the University of Alberta, Canada; sitting representative Giuseppe Amatulli, PhD student at Durham University, UK; and incoming representative Juho Kähkönen, PhD student at the University of Lapland, Finland.

The three students recognize their strengths that lie in their differences, which has helped them achieve more in their nominated positions. They have built on the voices of the many students involved in past UArctic student declarations by presenting a list of goals and action items to the UArctic Board to benefit students across UArctic. In this article, the trio shares the experiences that have forged their strength as student representatives, and explain the reasons behind their active and personal engagement with UArctic.

### Laurie-Ann Lines

Through an opportunity with my supervisor and university, I first became involved in a UArctic student forum and Congress in 2016. For the first time in university, I met others who felt a shared admiration, appreciation, and love for the North and its Indigenous people.

My involvement with UArctic is personally important because I want to continue cultivating an atmosphere that appreciates the perspectives and knowledge of the Indigenous Peoples of the North. I believe non-Indigenous and Indigenous people working together can ignite new answers in research and education. Education helps us create the future we want, and UArctic provides many educational opportunities to benefit the North. I come from a familial line of educators who practiced an Indigenous pedagogy of education and had amazing impacts in the North. I believe incorporating more Indigenous pedagogy in Arctic education can have tremendous results that can alter the future of the Arctic for the better in terms of climate, health, justice, and environment.

Growing up in northern Canada in my small First Nations community helped me understand the strength of our First Peoples and the Indigenous traditional knowledge used to endure harsh, unforgiving climates. I wanted to become actively involved in Arctic solutions, and I knew that UArctic connects many different institutions, communities, and people. I believe having northern Indigenous voices on the UArctic Board is an important step in creating solutions that are realistic and relevant on a global scale.



### Juho Kähkönen

I am engaged in UArctic as I find its work necessary, innovative, and inspiring. For example, in my tiny hometown in northernmost Finland, UArctic offers a variety of opportunities for bottom-up internationalization. Reindeer herding students have the possibility to network with their peers abroad, and higher education students can have exchanges with other northern universities. It's valuable, considering the fast changes we are experiencing in the Arctic. It is good to meet peers and share experiences.

Many future scenarios for the Arctic are dramatic, or at least profound by nature. For this reason it is crucial to shape the future actively and collectively. That is precisely where UArctic has an essential role: by coordinating the education and research for the whole Arctic region and beyond. I find it vital to build future generations' capacity, and UArctic is a critical stakeholder in this work. We need that to make the Arctic region prepared to face the already ongoing changes.

For me, born and raised in the far North, Arctic issues are quite a natural interest. I have always been interested in what is happening in the world, but it was during my freshman year at the university when I understood that the Arctic unites my multiple interests within my field of study. Earlier, I considered the Arctic to be somewhere else, not part of my daily life. Today, I feel I am a part of the warm-hearted Arctic community, where UArctic has a valuable role.

“Being involved in the decision making is essential in shaping a future where students' needs and desires are taken into account.”

### Giuseppe Amatulli

I started to get interested in Arctic issues more than ten years ago when I was still an undergrad student in politics and international relations in Italy. In 2014 I spent a semester in Turku where I wrote my master's thesis on the rights of the Sámi in the context of the exploitation of natural resources in the Nordic countries. Since then, I have lived in Rovaniemi for two years and carried out fieldwork with First Nations in Northern British Columbia. I am now in the process of finalizing my PhD on the cumulative effects of industrial development on the culture and socio-economic organization of First Nations of Northeastern BC.

I've always been attracted to international forums where it is possible to get to know and work with colleagues from all over the world. I have been involved with UArctic since 2017 when I attended a winter school organized by one of the Thematic Networks,

funded by the north2north program. That experience made me aware of the potential of UArctic and its values. When I saw the call for the UArctic Board position, I thought it was the perfect way to contribute.

Being an active member of the Board has allowed me to better understand UArctic's mission while promoting its activities and goals. I am aware of the importance of having our voice heard when it comes to the challenges young generations must face in a fast-changing region like the Arctic. Being involved in the decision making of the Board is therefore essential in shaping a future where students' needs and desires are taken into account. At the same time, it gives us responsibility, as we will be accountable to future representatives about the role we have played while being UArctic Board members.



Photo by Kema Beaton

# Representing the Arctic Internationally



Interview with Anne Husebekk,  
Kirsi Latola and Melody Brown Burkins

By FRANCESCA STOPPANI, Intern,  
UArctic International Secretariat

**K**irsi Latola, Anne Husebekk and Melody Brown Burkins have all been working in various Arctic networks and science and education organizations over the years, including UArctic. To shed light to UArctic's role as an organization representing Arctic interests, the UArctic International Secretariat had an online talk with the three experts to hear their thoughts on why this kind of work matters, both within the region and in the rest of the world.

*This interview was done in January 2022, and the discussion describes the state of affairs at that time. The consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine currently reflect on both UArctic's and the Arctic Council's collaboration and work.*

## Interconnected Issues with Relevance to All

"The Arctic is an important part of a global system," says Anne Husebekk. Many of the scientific or educational questions that are valuable in the Arctic are equally valuable in the rest of the world. Through international engagement, Arctic institutions and organizations can take what they have learned in the Arctic and project their knowledge to a global scale. "If we think about the climate crisis, the sustainable development goals (SDGs), questions of freedom and responsibility in science - they are valid all over the world, including the Arctic. But it's also important for us think the other way round, from the global level back to the Arctic."

Melody Burkins also argues for bringing UArctic expertise to other platforms. "UArctic has set up a governance system and a way of expressing itself that could be an example for research and outreach organizations elsewhere. Inclusion is a big part of the Arctic - Indigenous knowledge, gender, youth inclusion. Some of these ideas are now moving into the global scientific sphere, but in the Arctic we have been talking about it for thirty, forty years. It has become part of the structure and fabric of Arctic research and policy." As an example, she points to the 2018 UArctic Congress Declaration and its references to the Paris Agreement, SDGs, Indigenous knowledge, and gender equality. This was UArctic saying its principles out loud through a Declaration endorsed by the whole network. "Of course, these Arctic principles did not come from research and policy. First and foremost, the principles were set by Arctic communities, and UArctic must continue to represent those voices as it engages globally. In fact, I think this is what makes the UArctic organization distinctive: it can speak for models of inclusive governance and innovation that other global organizations could emulate to ensure that more diverse ways of knowing are part of global solutions. UArctic's model of inclusion and equity is a model for others to learn from and adopt, and I'm quite proud of that."

## Representation with Influence

The relevance of international representation is a topic all the interviewees agree





upon. Over the years of working in Arctic issues, Kirsi Latola has seen concrete changes taking place all around. One of them is the inclusion of Indigenous and local knowledge and participatory methods in research. Having worked with large EU projects, Latola has seen how people in southern and central Europe are starting to realize that people living in the Arctic have valuable input and knowledge relating to their work. "It's still a process. And it's not easy to work across disciplines or actors, but it's happening more and more. It will be interesting to see where we are in five or ten years from now."

One of the big roles of UArctic, and a key element in the network's strategy, is to educate people from outside the region to understand what the Arctic is. Latola hears the need especially in discussions with colleagues from non-Arctic countries. "Students don't even know that there are people living in the Arctic. They think it's polar bears and icebergs, which to some extent is our fault for presenting only the beautiful nature. But the Arctic is a homeland for many people. That is something I've needed to remind a lot of people about over the years, again and again."

It is not only the students that the network is educating, Latola also points out. "When I started working for UArctic, I didn't know anything about the Arctic people or communities. UArctic has taught me to understand what the Arctic is, and now I'm trying to pay that forward. And I'm not alone: there are many others who have also been taught by UArctic and who are now training the next generations. UArctic has a good reputation for that; we are acknowledged and appreciated as a partner and collaborator."

**“ We can be inclusive, share knowledge, and continue to build trust and be a place where people can talk and have meaningful conversations across cultures and boundaries. ”**

"UArctic is and will continue to be an organization that is influential also outside the Arctic," Anne Husebekk agrees and points to the various audiences within and outside the network. Knowledge about the Arctic and Arctic ways of thinking are spreading through UArctic's membership in the non-Arctic countries, and thanks to our connection to and engagement with the Arctic Council, also through the Council's observers.

#### Science Diplomacy Without Borders

As part of her work in science diplomacy, Melody Burkins has been closely following the Arctic Council and its operations. "Strengthening and maintaining the Arctic Council's principles of inclusion, equity, and respect is vital. UArctic is one of its great resources in supporting those core principles. I hope that UArctic can continue to educate people about Arctic values and amplify the core values of the Arctic Council. This includes making consensus decisions with Arctic Indigenous Peo-

ples. There are not many governance systems on earth that prioritize the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and co-production of knowledge in decision-making outside of the Arctic Council and UArctic."

Husebekk describes science diplomacy as a tool for non-political, easily approachable collaboration between people. It is a way for UArctic and its committees to maintain education and research collaboration without addressing the tense geopolitical situation. Burkins echoes this idea: "We can be inclusive, share knowledge, and continue to build trust and be a place where people can talk and have meaningful conversations across cultures and boundaries. That is really powerful and important."

As proof, Latola points to the long-standing good relationships that people have in the Arctic after years of working together and getting to know each other. "Someone has said that we are all friends, and we are working with friends in the Arctic. I think

that's true." As UArctic expands to include more and more people, however, there is a risk of the network becoming less collaborative and more competitive. "UArctic could do even more to showcase how it has built the trust and friendship which mirrors the Arctic Council's way of growing up," Burkins suggests. "This culture of trust, patience and friendship is the best way to work together and get more sustainable and long-lasting equitable outcomes."

New members, both Arctic and non-Arctic, are quickly introduced to UArctic's values and way of collaborating. "They are now part of a network that thinks differently. We take care of one another and also think about communities beyond the academic sphere," says Burkins. "It's a real opportunity to create change."

#### From UArctic to the World

Cooperation within UArctic and mutual understanding are the starting points for

spreading our values and influence outside the Arctic context. Involving international and non-Arctic actors as members or partners contributes to raising awareness on the Arctic and also on the importance of community-based and participatory approaches. The Arctic can be an example for the rest of the world, and UArctic highlights that through its governance model, initiatives and impact on an international level.

Husebekk believes that the future of the Arctic can be brighter with the support of UArctic. As a member of the Board of UArctic, she is also actively involved in the network's fundraising efforts. "With successful fundraising, we will have more money to do things that are beneficial not just for UArctic but also for the whole world. That's the way it works. If UArctic can support good initiatives without heavy competition, but still having quality and excellence as a goal, that is an interesting future we move into."

#### Kirsi Latola

Over the past fifteen years Dr. Kirsi Latola has worked in several polar coordination activities. She currently holds the position of UArctic Vice-President Networks, and is a research coordinator at the Thule Institute at the University of Oulu, Finland. She also served two terms as Chair of the European Polar Board. She has managed several national and international projects on Arctic research and coordination and knowledge sharing, including organizing several international events and graduate education. She has managed the UArctic Thematic Networks strategic area since 2005.

#### Anne Husebekk

Anne Husebekk served as Rector (Chancellor) of UiT The Arctic University of Norway from 2013 to 2021. Both her research and education are particularly focused on climate and environment and sustainability in the Arctic and globally. She currently serves as Vice-President for Freedom and Responsibility in Science in the International Science Council. She is also a member of the Board of UArctic (2021-2024).

#### Melody B. Burkins

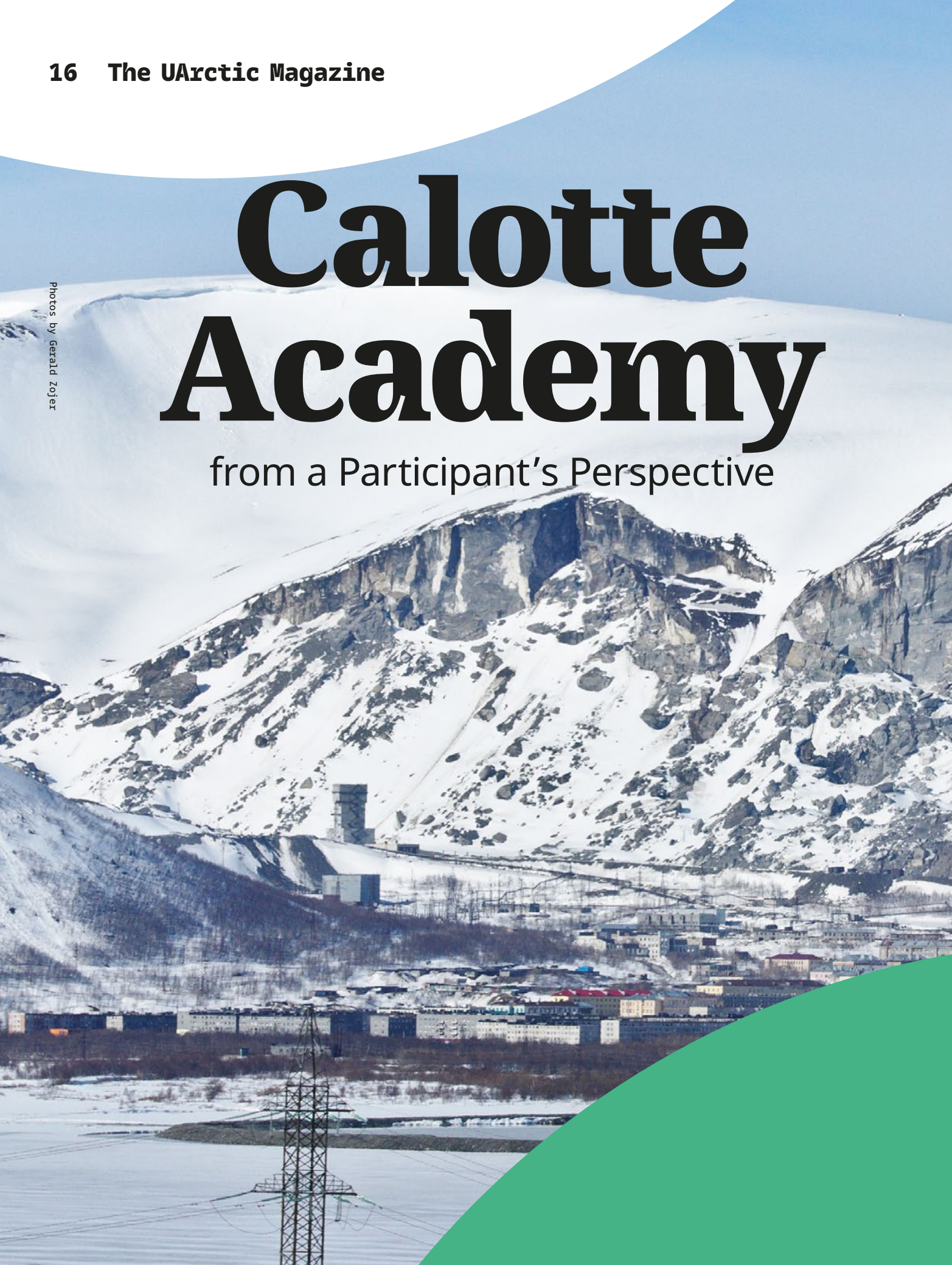
Melody Brown Burkins is the Director of the Institute of Arctic Studies at Dartmouth, where she also serves as Senior Associate Director in the John Sloan Dickey Center for International Understanding and Adjunct Professor in the Department of Environmental Studies. Trained as a polar scientist, she focuses on issues of Arctic and global science diplomacy, climate change, sustainable development, and inclusion. In UArctic, she serves as Assembly Member, is Vice-Lead to the Thematic Network on Model Arctic Council (MAC), and is a founding member of the Thematic Network on Gender in Arctic Knowledge Production. In 2022 she was appointed as the UArctic Chair in Science Diplomacy and Inclusion.



# Calotte Academy

from a Participant's Perspective

Photos by Gerald Zofer



By LUIZA BRODT, Stanford US-Russia Forum Fellow (Arctic Policy working group), Senior Lecturer, Novosibirsk University

**I** can call myself as an alumnus of two Calotte Academies (years 2017 and 2021), and it is extremely interesting to find out how I grew over these four years in my Arctic studies and research.

In 2017, I applied to the Calotte Academy as a first-year PhD student with a topic dedicated to Arctic offshore oil and gas development and energy security issues. When I received the acceptance letter in spring, I was a visiting scholar at Umeå University in northern Sweden. During my trip by train, car and bus Umeå – Luleå – Haparanda/Tornio – Kemi – Rovaniemi, I recognized a lot of remarkable issues about the connections between different “Arctics” which helped me later to understand my own research questions. The Calotte Academy 2017 was arranged in June in Finnish Lapland, in the north-eastern corner of Norway, in the western corner of the Russian Arctic, and in northern Sweden. Thanks to this experience with the Calotte Academy, I realized another important thing: if you want to know about the Arctic, first – REACH the Arctic!

We started in Inari, the Finnish Sámi capital, and then traveled onwards to the Norwegian border town Kirkenes, and further

to Murmansk and Apatity on Kola Peninsula in Russia. Finally, back to Rovaniemi, and from there a smaller group of participants including myself continued to Umeå, where three sessions of the IX International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences (ICASS) were convened under the umbrella of the Calotte Academy 2017. Among other things during the travelling symposium, I loved the implementation of interplay between senior researchers and young scholars. The Calotte Academy is a great platform for discussing Arctic science and Arctic politics simultaneously, where professors and early-career researchers have equal time for presentations. There are no one-hour lectures, just discussion! The effectiveness and outcomes of such communication lead to deeper immersion in the subject, as well as great networking. It has really helped me in my subsequent scientific approach to the other conferences and workshops.

In 2021, I again joined the Calotte Academy but digitally and already with some of my research results. I presented the highlights from my latest published article in the Arctic Yearbook 2021. And I was so happy to see on the screen the Calotte Academy Steering Group led by Professor Lassi Heininen. It took me back to my first year of graduate school, when I had so many questions and so few answers, and to how I found those answers and was able to incorporate them in my recent article. And, as always, the Calotte Academy allowed me to participate in an excellent discussion about the Arctic, including many old and new issues, issues that you should always talk about whether online or offline.

**“The Calotte Academy is a great platform for discussing Arctic science and Arctic politics simultaneously.**



# Joint Collaboration Exercises on Arctic Safety and Security



**“ Collaborative exercises have positive societal impacts: more effective cross-border cooperation, optimal use of resources, and safer environment and community values.**

By NATALIA ANDREASSEN,  
Lead of the UArctic Thematic Network  
on Arctic Safety and Security,  
Associate Professor, Nord University

**I**n November 2021, the table-top exercise “Oil in Ice” took place under the auspices of ARCSAR, the Arctic and North Atlantic Security and Emergency Preparedness Network, which is a large EU-funded innovation project. The exercise was facilitated by Nord University’s NORDLAB, the emergency preparedness management laboratory.

The main purpose of the complex tabletop exercise was to discuss how oil spill preparedness and response are organized in case of a large-scale operation in the maritime High Arctic in the Svalbard region, and identify possible lessons from other locations and agencies in the Arctic and North Atlantic region. The exercise connected various participating groups: authorities and responders involved in marine environmental response in the Arctic, partners from the ARCSAR network, academia, and other interested stakeholders. Among others, representatives from the expert group on Marine Environmental Response (part of the Arctic Council Working Group on Emergency Prevention Preparedness and Response, EPPR) and representatives of our UArctic Thematic Network on Arctic Safety and Security closely followed and contributed to the discussions.

The exercise was conducted with a combination of physical presence at NORDLAB and on digital platforms. Moderators from Norwegian Coastal Administration, Canadian Coast Guard, and NORDLAB exercise coordinator facilitated the discussions across Arctic institutions and countries. All the participants and observers could interact with the audience at NORDLAB through chat and virtual whiteboard digital tools. The planning, implementation, and evaluation were carried out in collaboration between the Norwegian Coastal Administration, the Icelandic Coast Guard, the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre North Norway, and NORDLAB.

Advanced tabletop exercises like this require good pedagogical planning with a focus on different backgrounds and needs of the various participants. The most important is to facilitate the learning of each involved individual and organization and exchange ideas on how to deal with a complex event in demanding conditions.

Nord University leads the UArctic Thematic Network on Arctic Safety and Security. The network has constantly been developing projects and initiatives aimed to meet current safety and security challenges in the Arctic

and enhance future capability to be resilient to different types of crises. Joint emergency management exercises became a successful practice for many partner universities. This is not only a good example of student learning activity, but also an effective way to create meeting places for knowledge sharing and innovations between the industry, the academia, and the professionals within the preparedness system of the Arctic region.

Joint exercises are needed to contribute to enhancing competences in collaboration, risk mitigation, emergency preparedness and safer operations in the Arctic. By organizing collaborative exercises within emergency management for students, young professionals, and novices in the Arctic, we believe in positive societal impacts: more effective cross-border cooperation, optimal use of resources, and safer environment and community values. When the students meet early in their careers and create a shared understanding of responding to complex situations, they can easier establish contact and cooperation later in their professional life, when they need to respond to emergencies and crises together.



# Tourism Industry as Security Provider – Resource to Local and Regional Preparedness and Emergency Planning

By PEKKA IIVARI, Principal Lecturer,  
Lapland University of Applied Sciences

**T**he strong development of the tourism industry in recent decades has made the industry a stakeholder in safety and security discourse. As a party to security contents, the tourism industry is a potential partner and resource in developing local and regional preparedness.

The importance of tourism as a phenomenon affecting the liveliness and vitality of local communities and regions can be viewed in three ways in terms of preparedness, emergency supply, and search and rescue capacity. First, tourism has the capacity to adapt to changes in its operating environment. Another aspect is the impact of tourism on the resilience of its operating environment, which can be both negative and positive (alternatively neutral). The third aspect pertains to tourism as a potential consumer, rather than a producer, of safety and security.

The negative impacts of tourism industry on the ecosystem (consumer sustainability, carbon emissions, species extinction), on social relations (human trafficking, crime, social licensing issues) and the economy (distorted

competition, economic unilateralism) have been of widespread interest in international tourism research. Positive outcomes such as regional economic effects, increasing working opportunities, incentives for nature conservation, enhanced cultural awareness, and maintaining international peace are also strongly reflected in the literature.

However, research on tourism and security has devoted very little attention to the capabilities of tourism to produce resilience for the surrounding community. The contribution of the tourism sector from the perspective of regional crisis management and preparedness capacities deserves more in-depth analyses in the domain. The lack of research literature is noteworthy, especially given the positive effects of the sector on the regional economy. An interesting question is, for example, whether tourism plays a role in the regional and local preparedness and search and rescue capabilities, and if so, what the vector of this impact is. An interesting research topic is also the contribution of the tourism industry's ecosystem in strengthening the resilience of municipalities and local communities, and the role of tourism in crisis preparedness planning.

Raising awareness  
of the industry  
in economic  
value-chains

1980s

A tool for  
employment  
and well-  
being in local  
communities

1990s

Relevance of  
safety and  
security as  
key concepts  
in quality  
management

2000s

Understanding  
the resilience  
impact of the  
industry

2010s

Recognition of  
the industry  
as an equal  
actor in local  
and regional  
preparedness  
pool

2020s

“  
**Companies engaged in tourism form a network of expertise in maintaining and developing the crisis preparedness of municipalities and regions.**

Tourism services are often a paramount part of the economic structure of sparsely populated rural areas and the vitality of municipalities.

The importance of the tourism business in maintaining the crisis preparedness of sparsely populated areas has only been recognized during the strong growth phase of the industry in recent years. The industry is now perceived as a resource for safety and security thanks to its strong tradition of networking with public authorities and other businesses. Businesses and private sector in general play an increasingly prominent role in the production of municipal services and goods. It is important that businesses are therefore also involved in the preparedness work of the local community. From this perspective, it is possible to consider the need to support the continuity management of stakeholders in the sector and to monitor their phase of preparedness.

In addition, the strong development of the industry has brought demands to ensure the safety of international and domestic tourists, especially in sparsely populated areas where the response time of public services is extensive and climatic and environmental

conditions are challenging. The development of the tourism industry has brought large customer flows to tourist centers and destinations. Thus, it is imperative to take the industry into account in regional preparedness cooperation. Tourism should be part of a regional situations picture function maintained by regional and local authorities.

The development of the social impact levels of the tourism industry can be illustrated by the following diagram:

Companies engaged in tourism form a network of expertise in maintaining and developing the crisis preparedness of municipalities and regions. Destinations and individual tourism companies possess expertise on crisis and risk management and the technical equipment to respond to emergency situations in municipalities and villages. While electricity and heat, fuel, food, and domestic water distribution as well as social and health care units and information and communication networks have been built for tourism, they are also available to the rest of the society.



# Seeking Solutions

## to Arctic Energy Security Locally Through Renewable Energy Transitions

By VIKAS MENGHWANI, Postdoctoral Researcher  
CHAD WALKER, Postdoctoral Researcher  
JACKIE MARTIN, Project Manager  
University of Saskatchewan

**E**nergy security in the North remains a challenge for many communities. Increasingly, however, communities are not only participating in energy development but also in knowledge creation, which is crucial in understanding the complexities of energy transitions in the Arctic region. In that pursuit, UArctic's Thematic Network on Renewable Energy is facilitating research and capacity-building activities through collaboration among communities, industry, and academics.

One of the activities of the network is the Community Appropriate Sustainable Energy Security (CASES) SSHRC Partnership Grant. Made up of a large team of academics, northern and Indigenous communities, industry (groups), and local governments across Northern Canada, Alaska, Sweden, and Norway, CASES is working toward reimagining our understanding of energy security in northern and Indigenous communities, as the global transition to low carbon energy systems accelerates. As renewable energy investments grow to combat climate change, the Arctic region has, as the Thematic Net-

work lead Greg Poelzer puts it, "an enormous opportunity ... to enhance energy security in Indigenous and northern communities, increase reliability of energy sources, make investments in local energy sources ... and also seek employment opportunities."

CASES has direct research partnerships with community members, with projects ranging from highlighting ongoing renewable energy experiences in remote off-grid communities. There are a number of examples from Arctic communities, where locally sourced and clean energy alternatives are able to enhance energy security. In Galena, Alaska the community has developed a biomass-based heating system that reduces school district and city reliance on imported, high-emission and expensive diesel fuel. In Norway, the network partners are involved in Smart Senja project to solve grid-related challenges with new power systems and renewable energy, as the communities of Senja see growing electrical demand on the back of an expanding fisheries industry. Norwegian partners have also organized Energy Cafes to encourage community participation in new energy

**“Driven by the need to advance energy knowledge and expertise at the community level, the Thematic Network is also committed to building capacity within the communities.**

activities, and to educate locals about energy and sustainability.

Driven by the need to advance energy knowledge and expertise at the community level, the Thematic Network is also committed to building capacity within the communities. A large number of students in the Master of Sustainability Energy Security Program, for instance, have come from northern and Indigenous communities. Students are enrolled in doctoral and master's programs in Sweden, Norway, Alaska, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, studying a broad array of northern energy security topics.

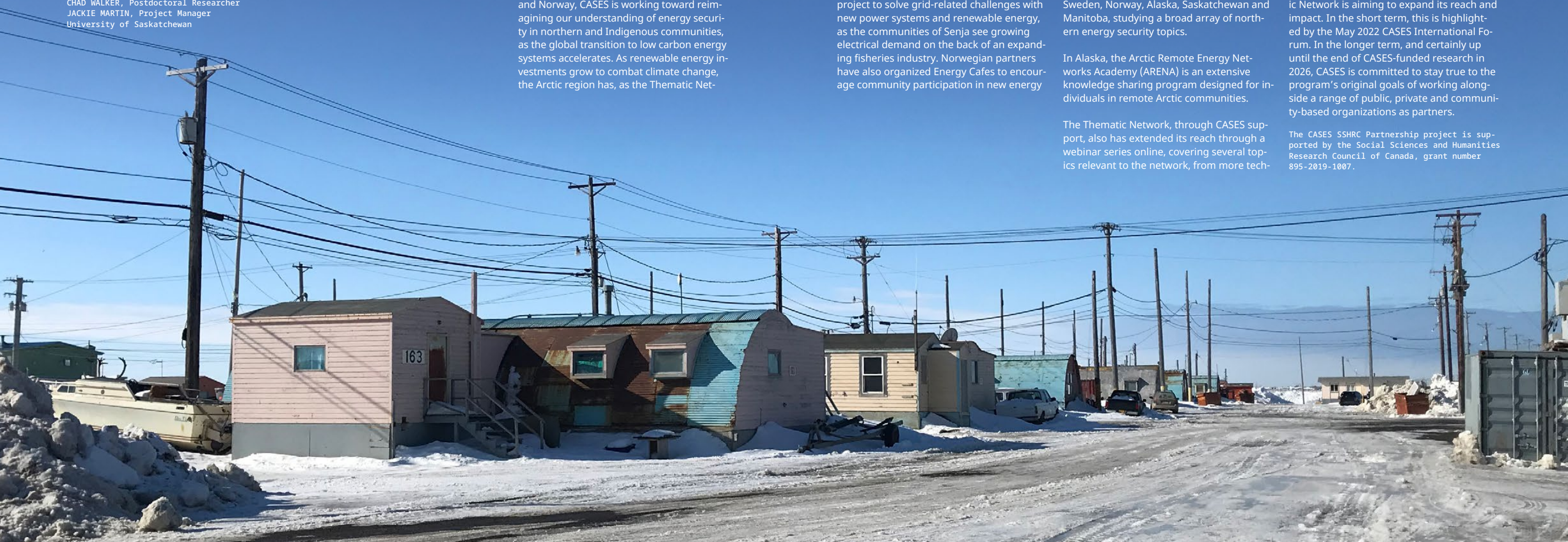
In Alaska, the Arctic Remote Energy Networks Academy (ARENA) is an extensive knowledge sharing program designed for individuals in remote Arctic communities.

The Thematic Network, through CASES support, also has extended its reach through a webinar series online, covering several topics relevant to the network, from more tech-

nical descriptions of microgrid development in northern and Indigenous communities to broader discussions of policy challenges in building renewable energy partnerships in remote places. Begun during the COVID-19 pandemic, this has expanded to become a regular part of the network's work. All webinars are recorded and made available for everyone at <https://renewableenergy.usask.ca/events/cases-webinar-series.php>.

Looking forward beyond 2022, the Thematic Network is aiming to expand its reach and impact. In the short term, this is highlighted by the May 2022 CASES International Forum. In the longer term, and certainly up until the end of CASES-funded research in 2026, CASES is committed to stay true to the program's original goals of working alongside a range of public, private and community-based organizations as partners.

The CASES SSHRC Partnership project is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, grant number 895-2019-1007.





# Worldwide Recognition for Arctic Indigenous Films:

## Interview with Liisa Holmberg and Anne Lajla Utsi

### Anne Lajla Utsi

belongs to the Sámi people and is based in the Sámi village Kautokeino in Norway above the Arctic Circle, where she has served as managing director for the International Sámi Film Institute (ISFI) since 2009. She is one of the founders of the Institute and has a background as a documentary film director. Through ISFI, Utsi has guided a new generation of Sámi filmmakers, and the production of Sámi films has increased by 46 % in this period with 77 % women directors.

### Liisa Holmberg

works as film commissioner at the International Sámi Film Institute (ISFI). She is a Sámi film maker who originally comes from the Finnish side of Sámi land. Since 1994, she has worked in the film business as a producer, production manager and film consultant. The main part of her work is to support Sámi and other Indigenous film makers in Alaska, Canada, Greenland, Sápmi and Russia through the Arctic Indigenous Film Fund (AIFF).

By FRANCESCA STOPPANI, Intern, UArctic International Secretariat

In 2018 the International Sámi Film Institute (ISFI) joined forces with international film partners to create a network of support for Indigenous filmmaking, which included establishing the Arctic Indigenous Film Fund (AIFF). In the 2019 issue of Shared Voices, Liisa Holmberg presented the Fund's plans and aspirations. Now, four years since its creation, Anne Lajla Utsi and Liisa Holmberg talk about the development and achievements of AIFF.

"During these years, we have had many successes," states Liisa. "What we started doing with AIFF is what we would do if we had millions and billions. We don't have those yet, but we have a clear vision." The first film of the Arctic Chills anthology, a horror story by Marc Fussing Rosbach, premiered in Nuuk this spring. The shooting for the second of the five films in the series has also started. The original plan was to start shooting one of the Arctic Chills films in Nunavut in January 2022, but they are still struggling with the consequences and challenges of the pandemic. 2020 was a hard year for AIFF due to COVID which has a great impact on rural communities. "We had everything in place, but we had to postpone most activities to this year," comments Liisa.

Before the pandemic, ISFI organized a digital talent hub in Inari where six virtual reality (VR) films were produced. As part of their 360-degree film project "ÁRRAN 360°", a workshop was also held in Oslo in December 2021. The films from this project will premiere in June at the Venice Biennale in a specially built *lávvu*, a traditional Sámi tent. According to Liisa, it is very interesting to make high-technology films and show them in a traditional setting. It becomes an immersive experience for the Biennale visitors. "We are so thrilled to be able to showcase our work in Venice; it's a huge deal for us."

Another big event is planned for this year's Cannes Film Festival. "We have been knocking on their door so many times," notes Liisa. "Now they are calling us and saying 'we want you to come!'" The AIFF network has clearly facilitated this process and put Arctic indigenous films in the international spotlight.

### Offering Mentorship and Training for Indigenous Creators

AIFF also offers mentoring and training opportunities to Arctic Indigenous creators. In 2021, Icelandic actor and filmmaker Baltasar Kormákur became ambassador for the Fund along with Greenlandic actress and singer Nukâka Coster-Waldau and her husband, Danish actor Nikolaj Coster-Waldau. As AIFF ambassadors, they offer to read, give advice, co-produce, and generally support Indigenous creators. At the same time, their ambassadorship helps promote and create attention for the Fund and Arctic Indigenous filmmaking.

ing through their connections in the international film business. "They have already done a lot for us," says Anne Lajla, "for example getting us in touch with Netflix. This is of course very exciting."

AIFF is also about creating connections like these and creating ways to a wider film market. Anne Lajla explains that the main goal of the Arctic Indigenous Film Fund is to be able to provide funding to support the bigger productions, feature films and series, as well as short films and co-productions. More funding is necessary, because it is expensive to make these kinds of productions. "But the most valuable resource for us is the people. The money comes second." The people involved with AIFF are working hard to connect communities, and the results are evident.

The educational component is also very important to AIFF. "With York University in Canada, we are planning to create an Indigenous

**"In order to have ownership of our own stories, we need our own producers."**





film education degree, from bachelor to PhD level," says Liisa. Anne Lajla adds that ISFI will start a one-year film course in autumn 2022 on Indigenous storytelling, screenwriting and production at the Sámi University of Applied Sciences. "The course is in English, so we welcome other Indigenous areas, Indigenous people, to apply and join. That's also part of the achievements of our UArctic Thematic Network on Arctic Indigenous Film."

"Since the opening of the International Sámi Film Institute in 2009, we have built a new generation of Sámi filmmakers," Anne Lajla continues. "At the same time, we focus very much on capacity building and training." In 2013, Sámi University College held a film production training. Shortly after, a short film series, *Seven Sami Stories*, was released and had more than 200 screenings all over the world. These initiatives set a foundation for Sámi filmmakers to move into bigger productions. "If we are going to build a sustainable and innovative Sámi film industry and be globally visible, we need to get our filmmakers into the bigger productions. That's where you can create the jobs," explains Anne Lajla. "That's where you can create the companies, and where you are really building the industry." In addition, ISFI is cooperating with European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs (EAVE), organizing production training programs for Sámi film producers starting with recruitment of producers this year. "In

order to have ownership of our own stories, that's where we need to focus," adds Anne Lajla. "We need our own producers, because they are the ones who will have the rights to the films and can create value from the stories. That is crucial."

#### Funding as a Tool to Ensure Indigenous Ownership

ISFI has recently received more consistent financial support to extend their budget for producing films. Anne Lajla believes that they need their own independence and sovereignty when it comes to deciding which films they and the Sámi society itself want. Both Liisa and Anne Lajla foresee a future where Indigenous film institutes are not dependent on the national film institutions. "Making films is very expensive," comments Anne Lajla. "The positive thing is that it employs a lot of people. There's a lot of work locally. That's the exciting thing about the film industry: you can build it up wherever you want." Currently everything is in place for starting the biggest film productions that Sápmi has ever hosted as well as a TV series. "A lot of film people are here," says Liisa while showing the snowy landscape outside of her office window. "It's really exciting."

In Greenland, there are also two big productions coming up. "The challenge for Greenland is that they have so little funding," Anne

Lajla points out. "They are perhaps where we were ten years ago". This is one of the reasons the work of AIFF is important as it provides substantial funding for productions that would otherwise lack in budget. Canada has maybe the most progressive approach related to funding when it comes to supporting Indigenous filmmakers, while in Alaska and Russia the funding is minimal if non-existent. "Here in Sápmi we have a little hope," highlights Liisa. "We have our network and it's working." In the last two years, there has been a big change internationally when it comes to diversity, inclusion and representation. This creates exciting opportunities for Indigenous filmmakers all around the world. There is a real hunger for other kinds of stories, not just mainstream western narratives.

#### Five Years from Now

In five years, both Liisa and Anne Lajla hope to have the funding they need in Sápmi that would allow them to have a few bigger productions every year. That would create the basis for continuity for Sámi filmmakers, as they cannot make a living out of one production every five or ten years. "I think we are heading there; we can see the goal already," says Anne Lajla. Ideally, the Arctic Indigenous Film Fund would also be running smoothly with solid funding five years from now. The aim is to support the Arctic Indigenous filmmakers with concrete actions, including financial support.

The whole world's attention is pointed to the Arctic due to climate change issues. "This is our homeland, so we really need to have a strong voice in this development," specifies Anne Lajla. Film is a powerful medium to reach out to a bigger international audience. It also creates jobs and a future for the younger generations of Arctic Indigenous peoples. "In five years it's normal," concludes Liisa with a big smile, "it's normal that Indigenous peoples are making their own films, with their own funding, on their own terms."

**"In five years it's normal that Indigenous peoples are making their own films, with their own funding, on their own terms."**



Conversation with

# Baltasar Kormákur

From the Arctic to Hollywood and Back



By FRANCESCA STOPPANI, Intern,  
UArctic International Secretariat

**I**n order to hear two perspectives to the same topic, we decided to reach out to one of the international supporters for the Arctic Indigenous Film Fund AIFF: the acclaimed Icelandic actor, director and film producer Baltasar Kormákur. Among his cinematic works, we find *Everest* starring Jake Gyllenhaal, *Adrift* with Sam Claflin and Shailene Woodley, and TV series *Trapped* and *Katla*. Baltasar is one of the ambassadors for AIFF, along with Nikolaj and Nukâka Coster-Waldau, and he is committed to support and mentor Indigenous creators in the global film industry.

**We are thrilled to have you here, Baltasar. We recently had a talk with Liisa Holmberg and Anne Lajla Utsi on the Arctic Indigenous Film Fund, founded in 2018. You, alongside Nukâka and Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, became AIFF ambassadors. What's behind this choice and this initiative?**

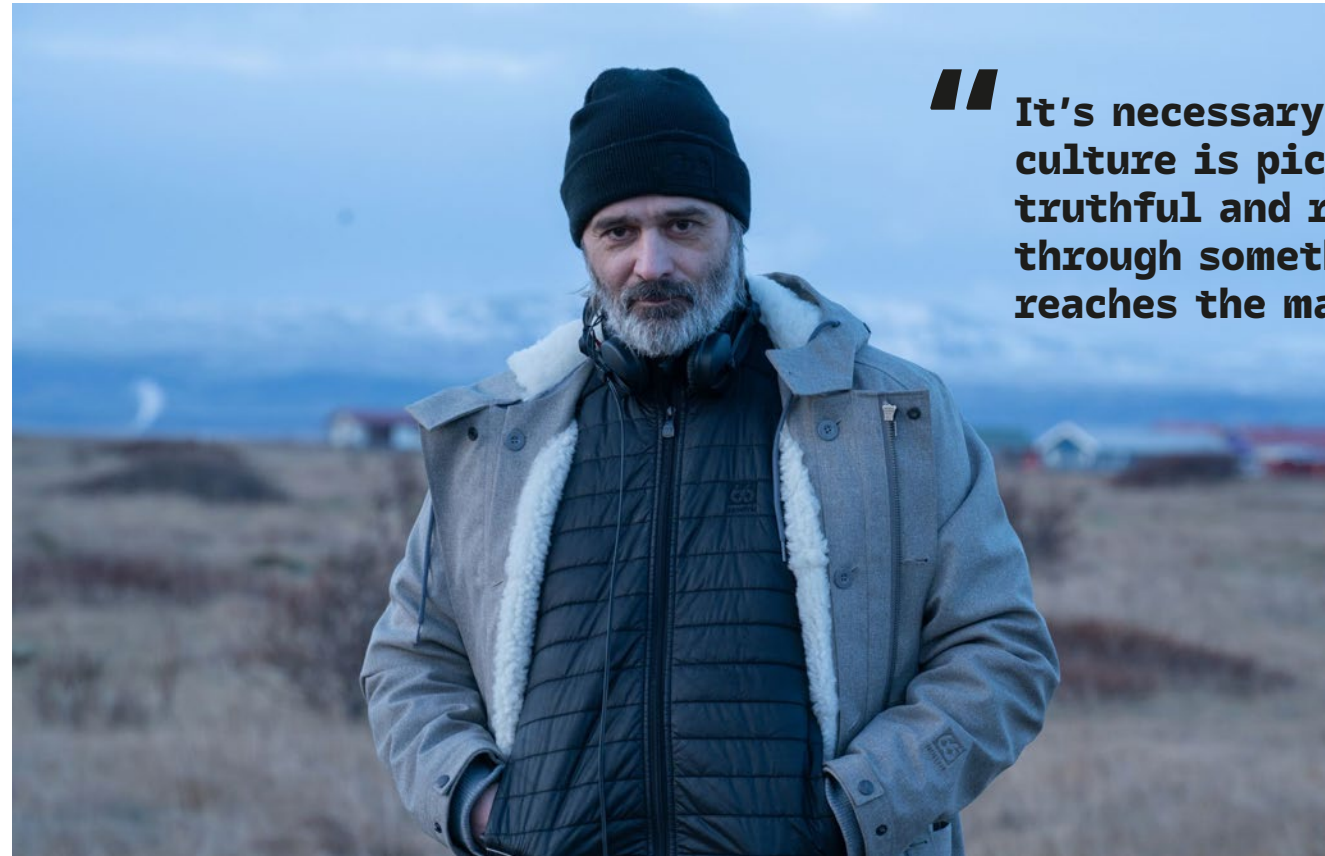
It's probably around 2018 when I went to Sámiland, to Kautokeino, Norway to be precise, where I had a meeting of the European Film Academy with the International Sámi Film Institute. There I met Liisa and Anne Lajla for the first time where I did a masterclass for them; that was also my first meeting for the European Film Academy. I've always been interested in Indigenous cultures, so when Anne Lajla came to me about becoming a sort of mentor for Sámi creators, I was open to that. We kept in contact and discussed what possibilities there were. When the Arctic Indigenous Film Fund idea came up, she asked me if I would become an ambassador, I was thrilled about it, so I accepted and suggested involving Nikolaj and Nukâka as well. I thought they would be a great addition since they have so many ties to Greenlandic culture. The whole ambassadorship arrangement happened organically and was announced at the Nuuk International Film Festival in September 2021. One month after the announcement, I was glad to host the UArctic delegates and guests in my studio to present the AIFF initiative along with Liisa and Anne Lajla. We're at the beginning of something, and I'm more than happy to support it.

**So how did you like Sámiland and Greenland?**

I loved it, they were both great experiences and flying over Greenland is amazing. These places are just so raw and real, it's like Iceland, on steroids (laughs). And maybe that's why the connection is so strong, they're perhaps in the same position as we were twenty years ago. At that point, Iceland was struggling to get funding, being at the outskirts of the world. Now the Icelandic film industry is blooming, and we move more and more to the global stage. The outer circle is now the Arctic Circle and Indigenous communities in the Arctic. Everywhere people are talking about inclusion and diversity, and this needs to include Indigenous people. You can't really make decisions about how to make the world a better place without including the people who are actually inhabiting some of the biggest territories on Earth. I think the world is hopefully coming to a place where those voices will be better heard. The film industry is a great place to start because film is such a strong medium. I would love to be involved in a film that is mainstream in a sense, but respects and tells the story of Indigenous culture in a globalized world. It's necessary that the culture is pictured in a truthful and right manner through something that reaches the masses.

**Besides educating future generations of Indigenous filmmakers, Anne Lajla and Liisa stressed the importance of educating Indigenous producers. What particular potential do you see in Indigenous creators?**

I think this has to be looked at on a very wide spectrum. Sometimes Indigenous creators are approached as if they all came from the same cloth or presented the same idea. When I was starting my career, I always had to present myself as an Icelandic director as if that was the main trait of my filmmaking. When I went to Hollywood to make films, I brought a lot of resources back to Iceland and built a studio here. So let's say the Indigenous director or producer becomes successful outside the Indigenous culture. It might then be very powerful for them to



**“It's necessary that the culture is pictured in a truthful and right manner through something that reaches the masses.**

bring all that success back to their community and tell their story. This is what I've done in Iceland, and now we have stronger connections to the international film industry, and we have bigger budgets. At the same time, you can bring your own actors to the outside world. Having Indigenous creators more involved in bigger productions that will be seen by more people will bring out Indigenous stories in a more authentic way. People today are not going to tell a story in Hollywood about Iceland like they did in the 50s, where it had absolutely nothing to do with the country. So just being a part of the industry is the most important thing, and the other things will follow.

**This reminds me of something that Liisa said; her vision is that, in the future, it's normal that Indigenous people make their own films. What do you think about that?**

Indigenous peoples don't have to be only making Indigenous films. I think everything becomes Indigenous by having an Indigenous artist, without the identification of what is or what isn't Indigenous according to the world. Being Indigenous cannot be tied to one single idea. When we talk about Indigenous films, we often think about one

thing: a man on a boat or a person with a reindeer. And there's nothing wrong with that, but I think the picture needs to be broadened.

**What is the best thing about working with the International Sámi Film Institute and representing AIFF on the international stage?**

The highlight for me was to go to Nuuk and announce the collaboration. But I also think that bringing all these people together in my studio was a very strong moment. It's great to see some recognition for what Liisa and Anne Lajla have been doing. People actually did put money into the film fund. Often you do those things and it's more symbolic than it is actually fruitful. I was very happy to hear how successful it was. I don't want it to be about my ego in any way, to be honest. Often, when established and rich people offer their support, there has to be a mutual gain. I do it because I think it's a healthier business if there are more perspectives and more diversity. I believe that this is an important step to take, and I am interested in other cultures than mine, especially Indigenous cultures, who by being connected to their past are consciously and sustainably moving towards their future.

**To conclude, where do you see yourself and your partnership with AIFF in five years from now?**

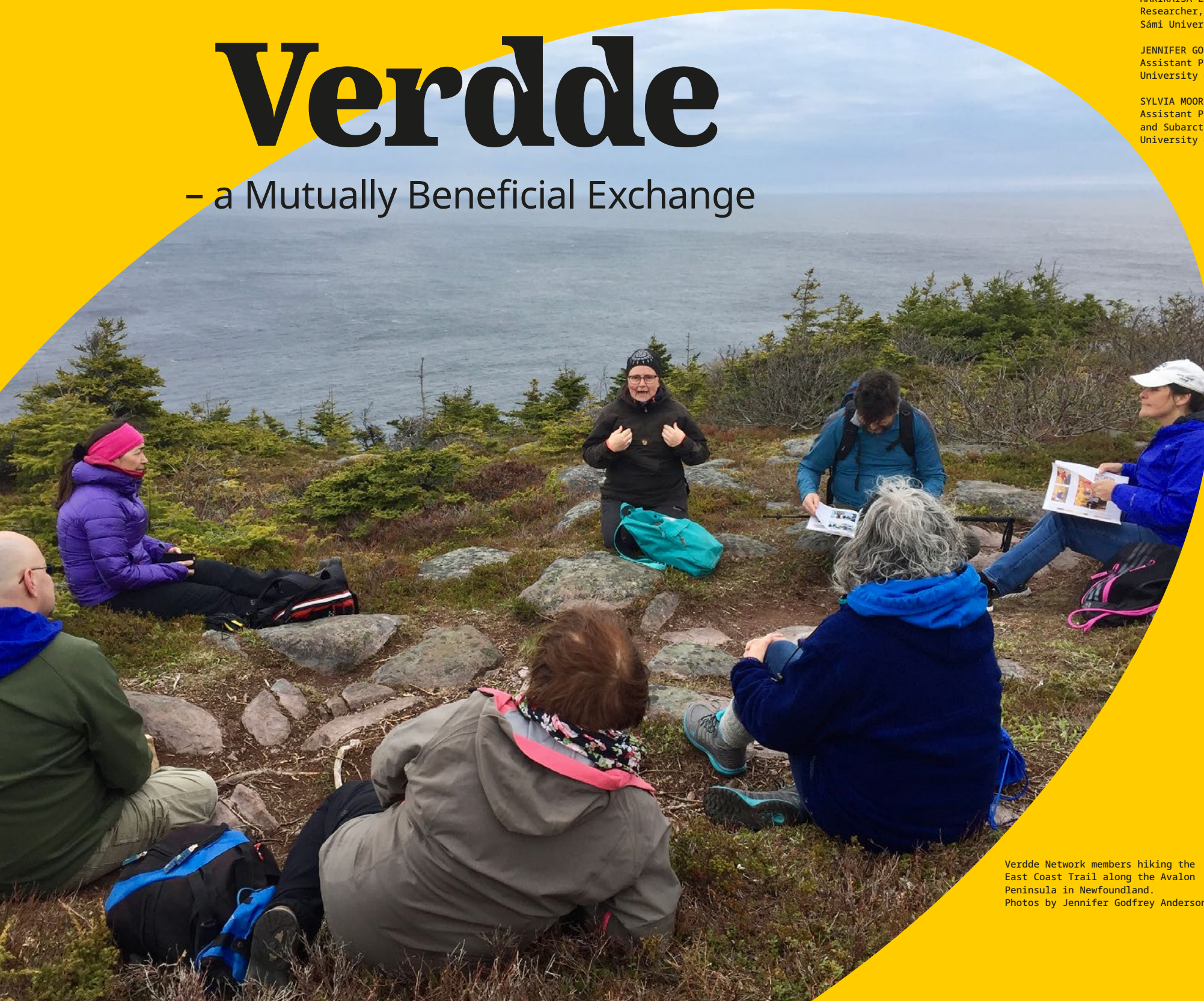
I think and hope we will have more successes. I would love to be producing something and making a film with Indigenous creators. Making a movie or a TV series somewhere in the Arctic, as a producer or director, supporting Indigenous creators making their dream come true. I hopefully can be more involved on a physical level. I'm on the board of the European Film Academy and I try to be a voice there for them. I hope Anne Lajla will take over my position when I finish in two years!

About the future, I am optimistic and I think we can only build up from here. I can only see more opportunities. It's important that everyone participates in the conversation. There is a shift in the world where Arctic communities are given more attention. I know there's a lot of dark corners that need to be looked into, but I do think there's something positive in that. It's necessary to try and make more of it, instead of only focusing on the difficult and negative parts. That's the way I choose to look at the world.



# Verdde

– a Mutually Beneficial Exchange



Verdde Network members hiking the East Coast Trail along the Avalon Peninsula in Newfoundland. Photos by Jennifer Godfrey Anderson

By ELISABETH UTSI GAUP  
Lead of the UArctic Thematic Network on Verdde, Assistant Professor, Sámi University of Applied Sciences

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JENNIFER GODFREY ANDERSON  
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SYLVIA MOORE  
Assistant Professor, School of Arctic and Subarctic Studies, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador

**“Most of Verdde’s educators are from small universities located in communities with Indigenous language speakers.**

**V**erdde is a North Sámi word meaning “a mutually beneficial exchange” which, in this context, is the name of the collaboration in the field of Indigenous teacher education. Verdde was established in 2005 as the first of UArctic Thematic Networks. Sámi allaskuvla and Nunavut Arctic College took the lead and ran a pilot program 2004–2005 that turned out to be a permanent activity within UArctic. They succeeded in building a strong collaboration in the first years by sharing experiences of teaching methods and knowledge rooted in their own culture with reciprocal respect for one another.

The goal of Verdde is strengthening cooperation within UArctic in the fields of teacher education, research, and the teaching of Indigenous languages and Indigenous Knowledge; and supporting mobility for students and faculty. Thus, Verdde makes it possible for Indigenous students and teachers to share knowledge and learn about each other’s experiences.

There have been many types of activities over the years. From the beginning, the main one has been faculty and student exchange. These exchanges have been mostly for brief periods of time, which has several

benefits for students. Activities during the exchanges have included seminars to share cultural practices, allowing participants to gain insights into the education system of the Indigenous communities.

In addition to exchange activities, members of the partner institutions have met in many kinds of venues during the course of Verdde history. There have been presentations and panel discussions in conferences and seminars with plenty of informal discussions and meetings. Verdde members have also collaborated in developing courses that integrate and embed Indigenous knowledge systems in teaching.

This long-lived cooperation within Verdde comes from the fact that we have our own niche in UArctic. Most of our network’s educators are from small universities located in communities with Indigenous language speakers. Since 2014, the lead Verdde group has functioned through close cooperation between faculty members from four education institutions: Sámi allaskuvla/Sámi University of Applied Sciences, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Ilisimatusarfik/University of Greenland, and Memorial University. Sámi allaskuvla has had the lead of the network since the beginning.





The Verdde network has also provided the opportunity for students to connect globally through in-person and online platforms. These relationships have global significance as students recognize their shared experiences with environmental changes that are happening across the North. Participating in the exchanges has inspired students to post-graduate studies and reconnected them with their communities.

Throughout the surveys and discussions, Verdde members discussed the important personal impacts of the relationships. One member stated, "I have met so many people doing so many incredible and unique things I don't think I could have found in any other research position. The knowledge Verdde is producing, and the methods of communicating it, help bring people into cultures foreign from their own while also forcing one to think about their lifestyle and heritage." We all hope this work continues to contribute to the lives of our students and future generations of our people.

#### How the connection can continue

The current members are committed to promoting place-based curricula and land-based pedagogies in the circumpolar region. During this time of environmental change, we concentrate on Indigenous teacher education that values sustainability. This aligns with UArctic's Congress Declaration from 2021: "In partnership with Indigenous peoples and communities, we seek to transform our education institutions and systems to be inclusive, relevant and responsive to Indigenous peoples, their perspectives, interests, and knowledge systems." (#3)

#### Effects of Verdde on our research and teaching

The collaboration that has taken place through the Verdde network has proven to be a significant, mutually beneficial exchange. In a survey and follow-up discussions, Verdde members discussed how the connections made through the network have had a profound effect on their teaching, research, and work at their university or school. It was felt that the network was a starting point for going deeper within each of the regions, starting with the cultural exchanges. Collaborating on projects, and sharing traditional values and ways of being, knowing, and learning has inspired their teaching and research. As representatives of countries around the Circumpolar North, the scholars said regularly connecting through the network and sharing cultural experiences also helped emotionally and spiritually, and collectively built motivation, determination, inspiration, and resiliency. As one member said, "we are all related, and we have dedicated our lives in different forms to education, and our collective has impacted each other and our students."

**“ Collaborating on projects, and sharing traditional values and ways of being, knowing, and learning has inspired teaching and research. ”**

During the Verdde virtual project in 2021, our network members worked with a variety of innovative technologies and digital platforms for online meetings and exchanges. We created a common sharing arena to share learning resources from all partners. The repository now holds over 100 items including curricula, syllabi, relevant publications, and multimedia resources. These materials attest to the history of publications about the network, the sharing of materials that foster learning across the North, and the commit-

ment to co-developing courses. Most recently, a Memorial University member developed a one-unit course for Arctic mobility in Canada. This is now being used to prepare Sámi students for an exchange to Memorial University in the coming months. Verdde members are enthusiastic about having more student and faculty exchanges, both in person and virtually, across the network. This current course is a model for partner institutions to develop courses that prepare students for such exchanges in their regions.

During the last year, we have established a routine of monthly meetings; shared challenges and successes regarding Indigenous education; supported virtual student exchanges and guest lectures; and built foundations for collaborative research. Through these activities the Verdde network will continue its mutually beneficial work in Indigenous education.





Student story:

# Hannah Zimmerman

Hannah and Hunter in  
Diehtosiida, Kautokeino.  
Photo by Aslak A. Skum

**“The Verdde network has shown me that home is not just a piece of land, but the knowledge we carry with us and build upon, ready to share with the next generation.**”

and Alaḡsxaḡ (Alaska). In my position, I aid Indigenous scholars in the creation of versatile and accessible learning resources. These resources, which are based on Indigenous knowledge, can be incorporated into the classroom in such a way that they become cohesive with differing national frameworks that guide education systems in the North.

The greatest joy of my position has been the ability to use the different northern Indigenous languages I have studied in a professional context. For example, I am able to use these languages in my interactions with Indigenous scholars as well as in writing multilingual documents. Our network’s Indigenous languages are powerful tools when communicating shared Indigenous pedagogies to students and other (particularly non-northern) scholars. In Yup’ik, it is common to say “Kenekngamceci Qanrutamceci.” In English, “We Talk to You Because We Love You.” Education, especially for younger people on distinctive, cultural, and place-based expertises of those who came before them, is an act of love deeply rooted in northern ways of life.

This knowledge Verdde is producing, and the methods of communicating it to others, help bring people like me into cultures foreign from our own while also forcing us to think about our own identities, lifestyles, and heritage.

How does migration factor into my identity beyond my past three years of circumpolar mobility? How is the way I perceive the world shaped by where I came from? As I reflect on these questions, I am forced to consider my own heritage not just through inherited genes, but also through the impact of my ancestors’ cultures as well as the influences of lands they inhabited and traveled through on the essence of who I am. Everything they learned and then shared with the next generation, who went further – all the way to New York City. The land on which I was born, and on which my parents live. In considering the totality of my heritage now, I consid-

er not only what my responsibility is to preserve and pass on the knowledge of my ancestors, but also to honor the different lands I occupy in my work and travel.

The Verdde network has shown me that home is not just a piece of land, but the knowledge we carry with us and build upon, ready to share with the next generation. Through this process of communicating cultural pedagogies, the knowledge lives on. For northern cultures, passing down this knowledge ensures people learn to be effective environmental stewards over natural lands. A skill set desperately needed in this period of mass global warming. When I can contribute to these kinds of meaningful projects in the North, whether through the Verdde Program or otherwise, I know that I am home. My heart beats for the northern cities and towns I’ve called home, and the northern people I’ve come to call my family. They are with me every day that I consider the Arctic, which happens to be quite frequently.

In the future, I hope to use socio-linguistic approaches to affect polar community resilience by first applying for a graduate degree in migration studies, and then hopefully pursuing a degree in international or polar law, with which I can work directly with the northern communities that mean so much to me. But for the moment, I am content to sit at the feet of Elders and listen to their wisdom while immersing myself in an abundance of polar studies so that I may one day grow into the educated change-maker I wish to become.

**Acknowledgements:** This article is dedicated to the UArctic Verdde Network and everything you all have taught me, especially Elisabeth Utsi Gaup for her mentorship. Thank you to my friends and family who supported me during my time in Guovdageaidnu, Måleen Norheim, Berit Ellen Skum, Lemet Ivar Hætta, Arina Shaborshina, Rebekka Steen, the people of Dillingham, Alaska, especially Ida, Nadia, Amelia, and John-John, as well as my mom and grandmother – You all help me remember why I do the things I do. Finally, a treat for my dog Hunter who at the ripe ages of 12 and 13 was made to endure two winters in the Arctic.

**M**u váibmu lea mu ruoktot; son čuovvu mu. I find myself these days whispering this Sámi phrase under my breath, which translates in English to “my heart is my home; it follows me wherever I go.” These past three years have brought non-stop northern mobility for me, as I have studied and worked in Iilgayaq (Bristol Bay), Alaska; Tromsø, Norway; and Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino), Sápmi. I have spent this year as a student at Sámi Allaskuvla/ Sámi University of Applied Sciences studying the Northern Sámi language in Allaskuvla’s year-long introductory program. As a student particularly interested in Arctic languages, I have been thrilled to have this opportunity to build on my Indigenous language repertoire, from the Central Alaskan Yup’ik (Yugtun dialect) I spent six months working with while living in Iilgayaq through gaining proficiency in the Northern Sámi tongue.

Outside of class, I have had the pleasure to work as a project assistant for UArctic’s Thematic Network on Verdde Program during their 2021 Virtual Exchange Project. This international cooperation includes university partners in Sápmi, Inuit Nunangat (Northern Canada), Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland),





Arctic Indigenous Films  
(Leads: Anne Lajla Utsi, Liisa Holmberg)

# Featuring New UArctic Thematic Networks in 2021


Circular Economy  
(Leads: Sanna Tyni, Petri Muje)


Arctic Urban Planning and Design  
(Lead: Rajnish Kaur Calay)

Bioregional Planning for  
Resilient Rural Communities  
(Leads: Holly Parker, Stuart Gibb)

In May 2021 the UArctic Assembly welcomed seven new Thematic Networks to UArctic. In this article, the leads of four networks share some of the background on why their networks were established and what difference their collaboration makes.

## Why did you decide to put your Thematic Network together?


 We need to enhance the collaboration between universities to accelerate the transition towards circular economy in different regions. Universities are wide impactors in their regions and in collaboration with different stakeholders.


 We support Indigenous film makers all over the Arctic. Our Thematic Network is not only about the films - it is also about the magic of storytelling and, above all, the miracle of collaboration. Indigenous peoples need to tell their own stories in their own ways. The stories are creating our futures; that's why we need to give opportunities to our own people to make films.


 The founding partners at UNE, UHI and the Agricultural University of Iceland saw an opportunity to create a northern-focused community of practice around bioregioning that would not only support the development of methodologies, but also allow the partners to curate and disseminate strategies that could be shaped to fit the needs of the people and the place.


 We believe that there needs to be an integrated approach between revolutionary technology advances and evolving cultural character. Therefore we have brought social scientists, architects, engineers, and communities and businesses together on one platform to appreciate each other's concerns and contribute to sustainable development in the Arctic.

## Is your Thematic Network linked to existing collaboration, and what extra value does your network bring to it?


 Since circular economy is integrated into a wide variety of activities, our Thematic Network consists of experts from several disciplines. Some of them participate in other UArctic Thematic Networks too. Our network and its broad perspective to wicked challenges can open collaboration also between different Thematic Networks.


 We are linked with many other Thematic Networks: Arctic Sustainable Art and Design, BEBO - For the Future of Reindeer Husbandry, Læra Institute. Together with Indigenous colleges we have organized lectures and workshops for Indigenous producers and screenwriters. There is extra value in this kind of collaboration, such as bringing together the local Indigenous people in remote villages, reindeer herders and film makers in the tundra, and getting their unique stories on film.


 This was our first time all collaborating together, and we have since grown the network to include others. However, many of us had met at conferences and connected through existing work. We saw the potential to use the Thematic Networks structure to create a hub that would accelerate our ideas and their use in creating and implementing plans for sustainable and resilient communities.

 We are in the early stages of establishing the network, but we have plans to link with others. Some of our members are already involved in other Thematic Networks. In due course, we wish to integrate/collaborate with other Thematic Networks through joint activities where relevant, because combining ideas from different expertise and backgrounds always brings new concepts to solve problems.

## Why is your Thematic Network and your collaboration important?

 The transition of societies towards more sustainable circular economies requires thorough transformation of everyday behaviours and practices. Therefore the collaboration of higher education institutions is necessary. We can educate new experts with knowledge of circular economy principles and how to combine this kind of knowledge into countering wicked problems.

 When we work together, we are stronger and our voice is heard better. Our Indigenous film makers get support from each other, and they will encourage each other to make bigger and more wide-spread international films which have global impacts in large scale, for example in climate change issues.

 Only in our first year, we have discovered that bioregioning work and its strategies are at the forefront of transforming systems throughout the North. We think our collaboration has the potential to change the way we approach planning for sustainability and resiliency. That new way of seeing the challenge and opportunity can be transformative and allow northern communities to set aspirational visions for thriving in concert with their environments.

 We follow a holistic approach in construction technology, using sustainable and green materials, environmentally friendly energy systems, and maintaining the cultural heritage of the High North by involving local communities. In addition to social scientists, architects, and engineers, we also aim to bring in stakeholders from outside the education sector to participate in knowledge sharing events. Understanding local issues is very important for designing education, training materials for the students, companies working in the region. Dialogue and collaboration are also important for initiating local development projects.



Follow-up story:

# Mikhail Uksusov



**“**  
**The practical knowledge I have on the Arctic international cooperation is entirely rooted in my exchange student experience.**

**I**t hadn't taken me more than five months to have been in the Alta campus of UiT the Arctic University of Norway in 2013 that I began to consider it as my second alma mater.

I entered Murmansk State Humanities University in 2010 and was immediately suggested by the International Cooperation Office to take an online course in the Finnmark University College (now part of UiT). It sounded like a nice idea to practice my English and learn more things about other countries. But I did not realize back then that the decision to apply for the Bachelor of Northern Studies course was a turning point in my professional and personal paths.

Two years after, having passed several online courses and exams on northern issues within the program, I was given the opportunity to go as a north2north exchange student to Norway in order to take in-depth studies on site. This is exactly when I really dove into the benefits of studying abroad: new knowledge, new didactic methods, new acquaintances, new challenges – I would even say that these were the five months when I started seeing myself as an adult person. Still, nine years after the exchange period and seven years after the graduation from the Bachelor of Northern Studies program, I

like to remember all the stories and even use academic materials from that time.

This opportunity to have been an international student in the North was a decisive factor for me to choose the academic and administrative career in the Arctic and become a part of the international cooperation community by working in the International Cooperation Office of Murmansk Arctic State University (MASU). Practical knowledge of what Arctic academia looks like, what the topical issues are, the way foreign researchers work, the organization of educational process – all of these are what I started getting acquainted with during my exchange period, and exactly what contributed to my professional attitudes. Now, they allow me to provide assistance and guidance to Russian professors and students, whether conducting research, filling up project applications, or making strategic development plans and policies, as well as to develop international partnerships, including with UiT Alta campus.

The practical knowledge I have on the Arctic international cooperation is entirely rooted in my exchange student experience. I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to all the related parties and people in MASU, UiT and UArctic for giving me a “ticket to life”!



# For a stronger North

Building knowledge for a strong, engaged and dynamic North



Photo: Haukur Sigurðsson

## Join us in building a sustainable future!

UArctic works across borders, across disciplines and across cultures through our member institutions based in Arctic countries and beyond. This diversity is our strength: it is everyone working together to meet the challenges and create more ideas, more solutions, better answers than any researcher, institution or country could do on their own.

Your support helps us provide unique educational, research, and innovation opportunities, and develop the knowledge we need to address the challenges that the Arctic peoples and communities and the whole world are faced with.

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