The UArctic Magazine

Shared Voices

2026

UArctic

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PHOTO: ARLYN CHARLIE

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Shared Voices 2026

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Shared Voices 2026

Letter from the President

When the World Turns Polarized, the Arctic Turns to Partnership

The decades of Arctic as a zone of peace and cooperation are over. The Arctic faces changes mainly by external drivers like geopolitical instability, accelerating climate change, hunt for resources, demand for territory, security, pressure on democratic institutions and academia, and distrust in established knowledge systems.

History shows that such moments are risky, but they also create opportunities for institutions that are anchored in strong values, knowledge, and long-term partnerships and responsibility.

Nearly 30 years ago, the University of the Arctic was created through an initiative of the Arctic Council. From the beginning, UArctic was designed not as a single institution, but as a cooperative academic network – a "university without walls" – connecting universities, colleges, research institutes, and Indigenous organizations across the Circumpolar North and beyond. Our framework, the Arctic Council, is itself a novel development where the Arctic Indigenous Peoples and the governments work together.

The UArctic purpose was clear then and it remains clear today: to strengthen education and research in and about the Arctic, grounded in the principle that decisions affecting the Arctic must be based on knowledge from both traditional academia and Indigenous Knowledge holders. The UArctic partnership with all the Indigenous Peoples' Organisations of the Arctic remains core. Lived experience, cultural continuity, and place-based knowledge are essential to understanding the Arctic, just as rigorous scientific inquiry is essential to addressing the region's role in global systems.

In a time when facts are increasingly contested and expertise is sometimes treated as optional, this commitment matters. Knowledge is not a political convenience; it is the foundation for responsible decision-making. UArctic will not drift with short-term interests or changing geopolitical moods, but instead continue to emphasize stability, openness, and respect for knowledge.

This strategic direction is particularly important as external interest in the Arctic intensifies. The region is increasingly seen through lenses of resource access, tourism growth, security considerations, and global competition. Some of these interests are legitimate, but none of them can be pursued responsibly without genuine inclusion of and ultimate decision by Arctic communities and respect for their right to shape their own futures. People who live in the Arctic are not passive stakeholders in someone else's strategy. Like all peoples, they have the right to define development on their own terms.

Encouragingly, UArctic is not alone in this approach. Across the Arctic and around the world, we see a growing number of like-minded institutions that want to work carefully, cooperatively, and responsibly. In a world where the cold regions are essential to the future of our globe, we have partners in the Himalaya University Consortium and the International Antarctic Institute. UArctic is also deeply engaged in building the next International Polar Year together with Arctic and Antarctic partners.

In a world of uncertainty, the Arctic embraces a future based on trust, reconciliation, true partnerships, and knowledge-based development opportunities that serve the Arctic and our Mother Earth.

By Lars Kullerud

President, UArctic

UArctic at 25

Editorial

This year marks 25 years of UArctic since the Launch in 2001, a quarter century of collaboration across borders, disciplines, individuals, peoples and communities in the Arctic. From our first feasibility studies to the vibrant network of over 200 organizations we are today, UArctic has shown that shared values, goals, and partnerships are the foundation for meaningful change.

Through student and faculty mobility, Thematic Networks, and joint research and education initiatives, our members have not only advanced Arctic knowledge but also built lasting relationships that strengthen our collective capacity. Each story in this issue illustrates how collaboration turns ideas into action and how partnerships make the Arctic's challenges and opportunities accessible to all.

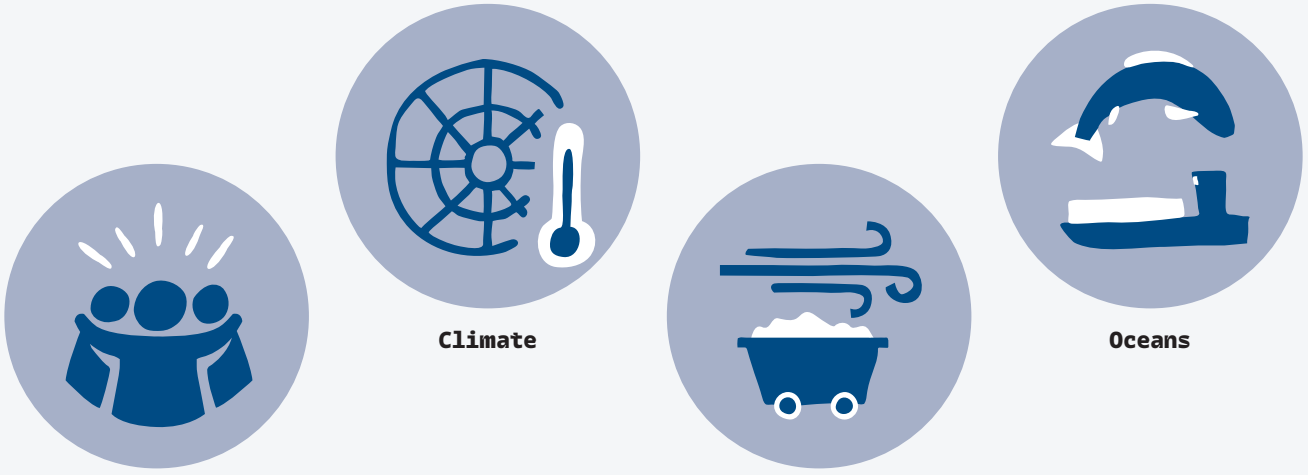
Twenty-five years on, the strength of UArctic still lies in the shared commitment to work together for the future of the Arctic. Congratulations, UArctic, and everyone who has been touched by UArctic along the journey!

By Outi Snellman

Secretary General, UArctic

UArctic Focus Areas

Working Together for the Future of the Arctic



By JOUKO NIINIMÄKI,
Executive Vice-President, UArctic

For nearly 25 years, UArctic has been guided by a strategy rooted in strong values, clear principles, and a long-term commitment to impact. As a network without walls, UArctic has brought together education, research, and innovation to support sustainable development and resilience across the Arctic.

Building on this foundation, UArctic is now introducing new Focus Areas to address the region's most pressing challenges. These Focus Areas – Communities, Climate, Oceans, and Green Transition – invite our members to work together around shared themes, not by limiting their activities but by encouraging collaboration and collective action. They reflect the understanding that Arctic challenges are complex and cannot be solved by any single institution, discipline, or country.

The Focus Areas are grounded in the values UArctic puts into practice every day. They are based on a circumpolar perspective that amplifies northern voices. UArctic builds its work on trust and partnership, valuing the knowledge, perspectives, and worldviews of northern Indigenous Peoples. Collaboration runs through all activities, supporting participatory ways of creating and sharing knowledge. As an open university network, UArctic works to reduce barriers across borders, cultures, and academic systems, while promoting openness and transparency.

Focus Area activities are carried out through collaboration among members, connecting education, research, and innovation, and strengthening international partnerships. Trusted relationships with regional and global partners help ensure that northern perspectives inform wider scientific, policy, and societal discussions. A strong commitment to Indigenous Peoples is woven throughout this work, alongside a global presence that brings Arctic knowledge to international audiences.

The impact of the Focus Areas is closely linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Through collaboration, the Focus Areas help to bring Arctic knowledge to the global stage, increase understanding of the region, and promote respect for its people and environments. The Focus Areas support skills and capacity building in the North, help improve wellbeing in northern communities, and contribute to healthy ecosystems that benefit both the Arctic and the world over the long term.

UArctic's overall strategy remains the same. The Focus Areas serve as flexible frameworks that help plan and align initiatives over specific periods of time. They support solution-oriented collaboration, clearer communication, and more focused use of funding and resources, including philanthropic support. Importantly, they are broad and inclusive, helping to prioritize efforts without excluding valuable work in other areas.

Looking ahead, the Focus Area framework strengthens UArctic's ability to connect Arctic challenges with the right expertise. It offers a useful platform for policymakers, communities, and institutions seeking knowledge-based solutions, while reinforcing UArctic's role as a global leader in Arctic research and education. Ultimately, the Focus Areas support meaningful change that is locally grounded, internationally relevant, and built on collaboration, shared responsibility, and a long-term commitment to the Arctic's future.

PHOTO: MARJO KOIVUNÄKI, STUDIO APRIS OY

By DIMITRIOS DALAKLIS,
UArctic Chair in Search and Rescue, Profeassor, Head of Maritime Administration and Environmental Protection (MSEA) Specialisation, World Maritime University

The Need to Intensify Search and Rescue Cooperation in the Arctic

PHOTO: MAXS128 / ADOBE STOCK

Throughout human history, the wider Arctic region has traditionally been considered a harsh and inhospitable environment for a rather self-explanatory reason: dire year-round environmental conditions, which, at a minimum, severely hindered or even completely blocked the necessary access and transport connections. However, the continued warming of the Arctic atmosphere and ocean has resulted in an ice retreat situation which is breathtaking in scope. It is not a coincidence that Indigenous communities – who have sustainably inhabited and stewarded this region for millennia – today face existential threats to their food security and cultural continuity. At this point in time, the Arctic Ocean and Adjacent Seas (AOAS), including surrounding landmasses, stand at the forefront of global environmental transformation, serving as a harbinger of climate change and a frontier for emergent geopolitical and economic interests.

Climate change has dramatically reduced ice coverage in the region under discussion, with human activities following a totally different trend. Increased numbers of touristic endeavours are recorded. The total number of fishing vessels operating in the AOAS is also following the same path. Similarly, the number of ships that are serving international maritime transport needs – as well as those delivering local communities' resupply – is increasing over time. Commercial flights transiting through the Arctic Ocean should also be factored into this rather complex equation. The forecasted increase of human activities in the Arctic, from both ships and aircrafts that will be regularly transiting or operating in the wider region in years to come, is clearly expected to place higher demands on the existing search and rescue (SAR) infrastructure.

It is worth noting that the sheer size of the Arctic region, paired with the long distances of a SAR incident from the station of a responder, no matter who the concerned stakeholder is, makes Arctic SAR operations particularly challenging. In addition to the long distances often described under the term "tyranny of distance," SAR responders are commonly facing treacherous mountain ranges, icy conditions, volatile seas, unpredictable sea ice, extreme temperatures, and substantial differences in seasonal daylight. These challenges are very often combined with a lack of support or communications infrastructure. While SAR is a challenging mission in any operating environment, these unique characteristics transform Arctic SAR into an effort unequalled in difficulty.

On a positive note, the Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic effectively coordinates international SAR coverage and response efforts in the region under discussion and establishes the area of SAR responsibility of each state party. This agreement was the first legally binding instrument negotiated and adopted under the auspices of the Arctic Council and has been a decisive step in the establishment and enhancement of SAR infrastructure in the Arctic. At minimum, intensifying cooperation in and around AOAS, including the transparent sharing of information among all concerned states, should be approached as an important prerequisite for addressing all the previously mentioned challenges. All Arctic stakeholders must continue to work together in congruence to improve SAR capacities and promote the safety of humans, and essentially all life, throughout the Arctic region to preserve the integrity of this unique and important ecosystem.

The forecasted increase of human activities in the Arctic is clearly expected to place higher demands on the existing SAR infrastructure.

UArctic Chairs are highly qualified academics who serve as academic drivers in a broad area of relevance to the Arctic. They implement and drive collaborative actions in research and education among UArctic members and Thematic Networks and build partnerships with the broader Arctic community.

PHOTO: LAURA DITTO

Once the Arctic, Always the Arctic

By LAURA DITTO,
Writer, UArctic Foundation US

When I first heard about the American Arctic Connection internship – a collaboration between the University of Lapland, UArctic, and the U.S. Embassy in Finland – I hardly knew what UArctic was. Despite having grown up in Alaska and attending Alaska Pacific University (APU), a UArctic member institution, the connection between the north2north program or other opportunities was not made obvious.

However, as I was graduating from APU in 2024 and looking for what came next, the internship opportunity drifted into my email inbox. I always intended to stay connected to the Arctic, and while I had a few different employment options (most of which were comfortably within the confines of my home city), the idea of expanding my horizons internationally was hard to beat. So, just four months after graduating, I found myself moving across the world to join the UArctic International Secretariat at the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi, Finland.

Throughout my internship in Finland, I got to travel from Inari to Helsinki; meet educators, scientists, and diplomats; learn about other Nordic cultures; and coordinate and attend events that encouraged collaboration across Arctic borders.

While there, even halfway across the world from home, I seldom felt out of place. It was still the Arctic: facing the same harsh winters, breezy autumn days, and unpredictable weather. Skiing and skating in the snow after soaking up what warmth the summer provides. Dodging moose and reindeer on the roads and learning to steer into the skid when your tires start to slide on the ice.

The conversations we shared were similar too, with our eyes always trained on how the climate is increasingly changing the northern world we live in.

During a staff meeting in the winter of 2024, we had multiple branches of the UArctic team visit Finland, including some from my home state. While it felt odd at the time – having traveled across the world to meet people from the same place I grew up – it was these connections that continued my work with UArctic.

Now, back in Alaska, I work with UArctic Foundation US, writing grant applications and content to raise funds and awareness for UArctic initiatives. One of the best parts about working with UArctic is seeing the connections we are building, and these harken to one of my favorite things about living in the Arctic: the community.

One of the best parts about working with UArctic is seeing the connections we are building.

There has been plenty of literature and discussion on how the small communities of the North foster unique groups that work together, and I have always seen community as a necessity for thriving in the northern climate. However, now, more than ever, cooperation is increasingly important as we face the unique challenges of the Arctic.

This is one of the reasons I am proud to work with UArctic. It is an organization that encourages Arctic communities to reach across borders and work together on a larger scale. It is empowering to know that each day I get to work with people to create a better future for all of the Arctic, from Alaska and beyond.

UArctic Thematic Network on Health and Well-being in the Arctic

Impact for Collaboration

PHOTO: MADS SCHMIDT RASMUSSEN / NORDEN.ORG

By ANNA REETTA RÖNKÄ, Vice-Lead of the UArctic Thematic Network on Health and Well-being in the Arctic, Postdoctoral researcher, University of Oulu

ANASTASIA EMELYANOVA, Lead of the UArctic Thematic Network on Health and Well-being in the Arctic, Senior researcher, University of Oulu

CHRISTINE INGEMANN, Vice-Lead of the UArctic Thematic Network on Health and Well-being in the Arctic, Postdoctoral researcher, University of Southern Denmark

GERT MULVAD, Vice-Lead of the UArctic Thematic Network on Health and Well-being in the Arctic, MD PhD hc, Ilisimatusarfik / University of Greenland

Established in 2005, the Thematic Network on Health and Well-being in the Arctic (TNHW) is one of the four founding UArctic Thematic Networks. In 2025, the network proudly celebrated its 20th anniversary. TNHW is a vibrant and growing network of around 40 members, representing 24 partner institutions with close to 100 subscribers on its newsletter. The network's core mission is to increase the quantity and quality of research and education on Arctic health and well-being, build community capacity, and promote collaboration and networking.

Arctic communities are facing unique health challenges, shaped by geography, triple planetary crisis, and cultural and societal transitions (Akearok & Larsen, 2025; Sonne, 2024). TNHW's research and education focuses on the health impacts related to climate change, pollution, and permafrost thaw, health of Indigenous Peoples, mental wellness, healthy ageing, maternal and child health, and demographic and social change, including the delivery of health and social services. TNHW has embraced One Health, a holistic perspective embedded in Indigenous worldviews, recognizing the deep interconnection between human, animal, and environmental health.

UArctic Thematic Networks are independent and thematically focused networks of experts in specific areas of northern relevance. They collaborate in developing research, implementing educational activities, and strengthening knowledge exchange across the circumpolar region.

tfuj 20 Years

Building capacity through education

TNHW has organized education and training through summer and winter schools, workshops, and courses for Master's and PhD students and professionals. Over 100 courses have been delivered.

One of the network's flagship initiatives was the two-year Master's program on Circumpolar Health and Well-being (120 ECTS, 2005-2017), led by the University of Oulu in Finland, with six partner universities. More than twenty students graduated, two of whom now hold PhDs. In 2025, TNHW also had its first cohort in a new mentorship program together with partners and mentors from eight universities and institutions.

Impactful multidisciplinary research

Members of TNHW have played key roles in numerous high-impact research projects addressing critical Arctic health issues. These include ArcRisk, CLINF and CLINF-GREEN, PARC, Sámi Reindeer Herders' Health, EDCMET, Nunataryuk, ILLUQ, ArcSolution, NORRUS-AGE, Nordic AHA Communities, and Inuit Health in Transition, among others.

The CLINF project, co-led by TNHW member, professor Birgitta Evengård, investigated how climate change affects the geographic distribution and epidemiology of infectious diseases in humans and animals across the Nordic region and Russia. By compiling data of disease patterns, climate variables, and landscape features, CLINF was able to forecast the future spread of climate-sensitive infections and assess their societal impacts. One of its key outputs is the CLINF Geographic Information System, available at https://clinf.org/.

Role in policy processes

Leads of TNHW have been members of the Arctic Council's Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) Human Health subgroup as well as the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group (the SDWG Arctic Human Health Expert Group). TNHW has used these opportunities for building collaboration with the Arctic Council. As an example, a health-focused ministerial meeting was collaboratively planned in Nuuk in 2011, with the outcome of the Arctic Health Declaration. TNHW members have also contributed to the Lancet Commission of Arctic Health which identifies key health and wellness challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples and develops a roadmap for improving health outcomes through community-driven approaches.

Collaboration, communication, and youth engagement

Recently, the project Strengthening Arctic Health Networks through Partnerships and Mentorship (2023–2027, funded twice with UArctic project funding from the Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science, led by TNHW member, professor Christina VL Larsen) was launched to deepen collaboration across circumpolar health networks, develop the work of TNHW, and support emerging scholars in the field.

The continuous efforts of TNHW reflect the ambition to build a platform for all those interested in health and well-being across the Arctic to promote meaningful collaboration.

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More information and contact:

www.uarctic.org/activities/thematic-networks/health-and-well-being-in-the-arctic/

Next International Congress of Circumpolar Health ICCH19 in 2027 in Alaska:

www.americancircumpolar.org/

Naapinneq: Strengthening Inuit Maternal and Child Health Through Gathering Inuit from Kalaallit Nunaat and Nunavut

By CHRISTINE INGEMANN, Vice-Lead of the UArctic Thematic Network on Health and Well-being in the Arctic, Postdoc, Centre for Public Health in Greenland, NIPH, University of Southern Denmark & Institute for Health and Nature, Ilisimatusarfik

INGELISE OLESEN, Research Coordinator, Centre for Public Health in Greenland, NIPH, University of Southern Denmark & Institute for Health and Nature, Ilisimatusarfik

These two projects are part of the activities of the UArctic Thematic Network on Health and Well-being in the Arctic.

Naapinneq, a Kalaallisut term referring to gathering, brought together Inuit maternal and child health professionals from Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland) and Nunavut (Canada) to share knowledge and explore culturally grounded approaches to parenting. The project focused on Kalaallit Nunaat's parenting program MANU and Nunavut's Indigenous-led parenting/childrearing program Inunnguiniq. In August 2024, professionals from Nuuk participated in the Inunnguiniq facilitator workshop hosted by the Qaujigiartiit Health Research Center (QHRC) in Iqaluit, and in 2025, partners from QHRC visited Nuuk to share Inunnguiniq at a MANU workshop with over 50 professionals from across Kalaallit Nunaat. Participants described the exchange as transformative – reconnecting with Inuit values and affirming the importance of language, land, and kinship in childrearing. Outcomes include strong interest in identifying Kalaallit Inuit childrearing values, continued collaboration with Nunavut, and advocacy for culturally grounded early childhood services. In 2026, we aim to continue to build on these experiences through ongoing dialogue, exchange, and scientific documentation of the process.

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Strengthening Circumpolar Network in Arctic Health Research Through Mentorship, Education and Research Activities

By CHRISTINA VISKUM LYTKEN LARSEN,
Professor, University of Southern Denmark

This project under the Thematic Network for Health and Wellbeing brings researchers, students, and Indigenous scholars together to share knowledge, set priorities for Arctic health research, and strengthen collaboration across regions and institutions. Since the launch of the project in 2024, the Thematic Network has expanded its membership and visibility, and partners have developed a shared Memorandum of Understanding. Key academic outputs are underway, including a proceedings paper and a special issue on circumpolar maternal and child health. The first mentorship cohort has been completed and evaluated, informing the next phase of the program. Knowledge exchange activities, such as a gathering in Sisimiut, have deepened partnerships between researchers and Indigenous knowledge holders in Nunavut and Kalaallit Nunaat and elevated Indigenous perspectives in health research. By fostering relationships and building capacity, the project promotes sustainable, culturally grounded, community-driven approaches that support healthier Arctic communities and potentially shape future health research and policy in the region.

Thanks to financial support from Arctic governments, UArctic is able to provide funding towards collaborative projects of its members. The funding from the Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science (DAHES) supports network activities related to Arctic research and education across all fields of science, and it is aimed at strengthening collaboration between member institutions within the Kingdom of Denmark as well as internationally.

PHOTO: BERTELLIFOTOGRAFEN / PEXELS

Navigating the "New Normal":

Marine Heatwaves and the Future of Arctic Shipping

By Dr BAHAREH KAMRANZAD, UArctic x Lloyd's Register Foundation Research Fellow, Chancellor's Fellow, University of Strathclyde

Funded by Lloyd's Register Foundation (LRF), the UArctic x LRF Research Fellowships support research projects through the joint initiative "Maritime Safety: Learning from the Past to Address Challenges to the Safety of Peoples in the Arctic". The initiative funds Research Fellows' work across three themes: ice histories, safely navigating changing Arctic Sea routes, and cruise ships in the cold.

Marine heatwaves remind us that a more accessible Arctic is not necessarily a safer one.

In the Arctic the traditional summer melt is being fundamentally altered by a powerful, often hidden driver. While we often focus on atmospheric warming, the Arctic's waters are experiencing climate change impacts more severely than almost any other open ocean. Among the most critical, yet understudied, phenomena are marine heatwaves; prolonged periods of abnormally high sea surface temperature at a location, lasting at least five days above the 95th percentile of long-term climatology. As these events become the "new normal," they are not only reshaping Arctic ecosystems. They are also redrawing the map for Arctic shipping and redefining what safety means in a rapidly changing ocean.

The Mechanics of the Marine Heatwaves

Marine heatwaves typically peak during the summer. As sea ice retreats, darker ocean surfaces are exposed, absorbing more solar energy and reinforcing a feedback loop of warming and further ice loss. Recent research shows that these events are increasing in both frequency and intensity. At the same time, the way we define marine heatwaves is becoming increasingly inadequate. General definitions rely on long-term climatology, yet in the Arctic this baseline is shifting rapidly. Conditions that once appeared extreme are now occurring more often, even though their impacts on sea ice, ecosystems, and ocean dynamics remain profound.

Opportunity vs. Risk: The Shipping Dilemma

Decadal analyses of ocean conditions reveal a striking reality: in regions where summer ice was once permanent, ice concentration has now declined to near zero in recent decades. On the surface, this appears to create new opportunities for Arctic shipping. Marine heatwaves can open routes earlier in the year and extend the navigation season. However, this apparent accessibility comes with significant risks. Marine heatwaves can drive sudden and uneven reductions in ice thickness and concentration, creating highly unpredictable conditions. For vessels not designed or prepared for rapid transitions between ice-covered and open water, this unpredictability can lead to serious safety hazards. If Arctic development is to be sustainable, future shipping route planning must account not only for average conditions, but also for these compound and cascading impacts driven by extreme ocean warming.

Looking Ahead

As the Arctic continues to warm, marine heatwaves will play an increasingly central role in shaping navigational safety, environmental risk, and sustainable development. Understanding these events is not only a scientific challenge, but also a societal one. To benefit from new opportunities in the Arctic while avoiding preventable accidents and environmental harm, we must move beyond averages and begin planning explicitly for extremes. Marine heatwaves remind us that a more accessible Arctic is not necessarily a safer one, and that adaptation must keep pace with change. Achieving this will require collaboration across UArctic member institutions and beyond, to improve our understanding of climate-driven extremes at local and regional scales. As the ice retreats, our knowledge of the risks must advance even faster, protecting both the people who call the Arctic home and the fragile environments they depend on.

Learning on the Land and with Community

Reshaping Circumpolar Education

By SYLVIA MOORE, UArctic Chair in Indigenous and Northern Education, Vice-Lead of the UArctic Verdde Indigenous Education Thematic Network, Associate Professor and Founding Faculty, School of Arctic and Subarctic Studies, Memorial University of Newfoundland

PHOTO: SYLVIA MOORE

UArctic Chairs are highly qualified academics who serve as academic drivers in a broad area of relevance to the Arctic. They implement and drive collaborative actions in research and education among UArctic members and Thematic Networks and build partnerships with the broader Arctic community.

PHOTO: HEATHER ANGNATOK

Working closely with Indigenous and northern community members is a vital part of transforming education at all levels.

Education across the Circumpolar North is inseparable from the lands, cultures, and communities that sustain us. My own path as an educator has been guided by Labrador's landscapes and peoples, and by a commitment to learning that reflects the strengths and priorities of Indigenous and northern communities. Through my work at the Memorial University's Labrador Campus and within UArctic, I have witnessed how place-based and Indigenous-led approaches are reshaping circumpolar education and reflecting UArctic's mission to strengthen northern education through collaboration, respect for diversity, and Indigenous leadership.

Learning on the Land

Through the UArctic Chair in Indigenous and Northern Education and the Verdde Indigenous Education Thematic Network, we are co-creating opportunities for shared learning that emphasize relationships and reciprocity. Verdde – a Sámi word meaning mutually beneficial exchange – embodies the spirit of this collaboration. Hosted by Marikaisa Laiti, Verdde Thematic Network Lead at Sámi University of Applied Sciences, activities have focused on sharing and strengthening Indigenous knowledge on the land through the *searvelatnja* principle, emphasizing learning "with" the land and on the land through activities that employ local knowledge and skills.

In addition to online events, educators gathered in Guovdageaidnu, Norway to participate in activities such as fishing, cooking with locally harvested foods, and reindeer herding, led by local knowledge holders and Sámi University hosts. These land-based experiences were followed by discussion and writing that explored the sharing and strengthening of Indigenous and local knowledges as integral to teaching and learning and highlighted the importance of such experiences in teacher education programs.

Learning with Community

Working closely with Indigenous and northern community members is a vital part of transforming education at all levels. The School of Arctic and Subarctic Studies has Indigenous representation on its governing council, and graduate programs (diploma, Master's, PhD) require student research to be conducted in collaboration with community partners. This ensures that research is in community, for community, and by community.

UArctic Fellow Heather Angnatok, based at the Labrador Campus, plays a pivotal role in advancing community engagement by co-coordinating community members' involvement in courses and organizing frequent events that bring community members onto campus. This work ensures that university–community relationships continue to grow.

The importance of local knowledge is also evident in the weekly craft sessions that Heather leads, where participants share crafting techniques and position the campus as a site of learning for all. Crafting as a pedagogical pathway for bringing Indigenous knowledge, history, and languages into education is the focus of the research project *Duodji and Ilusivut (Arts and Crafts) as Pedagogy in the Circumpolar North*. Led by the UArctic Chair in Indigenous and Northern Education in cooperation with the Verdde network, the project works with crafters and educators across the Circumpolar North to examine the many ways crafting serves as an avenue for teaching through a cultural lens.

A Shared Path Forward

Teaching on the land and with community members is reshaping circumpolar education. By grounding learning in place, culture, and community, northern institutions are preparing students for the future while honoring knowledge systems that have sustained Indigenous peoples for generations. The collaborative work of the Labrador Campus, the Verdde network, and UArctic partners demonstrates how circumpolar cooperation enriches local initiatives and advances a shared vision for transformative education and resilient communities across the North.

Strengthening the Arctic Voice in Europe:

The Arctic Six Step Up Their EU Engagement

By Dr LINDA SOLSTRAND DAHLBERG, Lead of Arctic Six Policy Working Group, Head of UiT The Arctic University of Norway's Brussels Office, Senior Advisor, UiT The Arctic University of Norway

Prof DAG AVANGO, Previous Director of Arctic Six, Professor, Director at Centre for the Arctic and Antarctic, Luleå University of Technology

The Arctic Six is a partnership between Luleå University of Technology, Umeå University, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Nord University, the University of Lapland, and the University of Oulu. The Arctic Six also operates as a UArctic Regional Centre.

UArctic Regional Centers are formed by one or more member institutions to support UArctic's mission, strengthen member engagement, and foster regional dialogue. Their role can also include liaison activities with national or regional administrations and other local stakeholders.

The EU's Arctic policy and the forthcoming FP10 are critical not only for the A6 universities but for the entire UArctic network.

Lately, the Arctic Six (A6) universities – University of Oulu, University of Lapland, Nord University, UiT The Arctic University of Norway (UiT), Luleå University of Technology (LTU), and Umeå University – have taken steps to strengthen the universities' and the Arctic region's voice in the European capitol. Both the University of Oulu and UiT have joined LTU with their own office in Brussels, working to promote their interests and researchers while scoping for funding and partnering opportunities. Collectively, the Arctic Six network have refocused their efforts to ensure a concerted approach towards the European Union (EU). Two position papers reflecting the universities' view on the EU's coming framework programme for research and innovation (FP10) have been produced and promoted. There have been lobbying efforts both in Brussels and at events with EU representation, and internally, the EU task force of the A6 has been upgraded to a working group on policy in which opportunities and positioning linked to the EU feature heavily.

These efforts are already yielding results. Through presence in Brussels, we have been invited to closed consultation meetings with respective commissioners on relevant policies and initiatives, including FP10 implementation. The network has been mentioned in a speech to the European Parliament by a Swedish member (MEP), and in a recent report from the Foreign Affairs Committee in the European Parliament, the A6 was referred to as a consultative partner in their recommendations for the EU Commission to revise their Arctic policy. This demonstrates the importance of maintaining representation in Brussels to ensure that our perspectives are heard and that EU policies – particularly those concerning the Arctic – are anchored in the reality of people who live it, study it, and experience it first-hand.

The EU's Arctic policy and the forthcoming FP10 are critical not only for the A6 universities but for the entire UArctic network. Following funding cuts and shifting political priorities in the United States, the EU has become the world's largest funder of Arctic research. Sustaining and strengthening both the level and focus of EU support is essential, as the European Arctic sits at the frontline of major shared challenges – climate change impacts, demographic shifts, and security concerns – while also offering key opportunities and solutions. These include advancing understanding of the climate, nature, and biodiversity crises; collaborating with the EU to ensure sustainable development and use of critical raw materials essential for the EU's strategic autonomy, competitiveness, and innovation; and contributing to holistic security across food, energy, climate, and societal resilience.

The EU's framework programme for research and innovation, Horizon Europe, is the world's largest instrument for competitive research funding. The current programme is nearing its end, lasting throughout 2027 before the new programme period commences in 2028 and runs until 2035. In summer 2025, the Commission put forward their proposal for the EU's next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) – which includes the new European Competitiveness Fund which is closely connected to the new iteration of Horizon Europe. The final budget allocation and content are not yet known but are currently being negotiated. So far, signals suggest that the EU is shifting priorities to strategic technologies and industries that are critical to boost European competitiveness. There is concern, however, that this shift may come at the expense of efforts to address climate change, protect nature, and restore biodiversity.

For these reasons, it is vital that the EU continues to invest in Arctic research, which is essential for our scientific work, regional development, and Europe's overall resilience. By engaging proactively with the EU, the Arctic Six will continue to champion the interests of our universities, our region, and the broader UArctic network. At a time when multilateral cooperation structures are weakening, maintaining strong focus on Arctic research has never been more important – a point that bears repeating.

PHOTO: ARLYN CHARLIE

Sharing Knowledge, Sharing Responsibility:

The Nan guk'anàatii ejuk t'igwinjik (The Land We Are Taking Care of Is Changing) Project

By KRISTI BENSON, Senior Heritage Specialist, Gwich'in Tribal Council

SHARON SNOWSHOE, Director (Emeritus), Gwich'in Tribal Council

ARLYN CHARLIE, Culture and Heritage Coordinator, Gwich'in Tribal Council

TREVOR LANTZ, Professor, University of Victoria

TRACY PROVERBS, Research Associate, University of Victoria

Nan guk'anàatii ejuk t'igwinjik is the winning project of the 2025 Frederik Paulsen Arctic Academic Action Award.

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 collaboration between UArctic and the Arctic Circle.

THE FREDERIK PAULSEN
ARCTIC ACADEMIC ACTION AWARD

Nihk'atr'inaatii, which is the Gwich'in value of sharing and caring, guides our work as we study the traditional landscape classification of the Gwich'in people of the Canadian subarctic in tandem with compiling and predicting the impacts of climate change and other threats.

The Gwich'in are a northern Indigenous nation whose traditional lands are in what is now known as the Northwest Territories and Yukon in Canada. As they have maintained a close relationship with their lands for millennia, they have developed an intricate, flexible, adaptive, and robust body of knowledge about the land: the plants, animals, weather, and other natural systems and cycles. The Gwich'in protect their lands in many ways, through careful on-the-land stewardship, community and regional management infrastructure, and ongoing research. As climate change is disproportionately affecting the North, they are also working to develop tools to understand and manage the impacts occurring across their lands. Along with their research and management partners, they are working to understand, model, predict, and plan for the changes to wildlife, fish, permafrost, vegetation, and water that are impacting Gwich'in lives.

For more than three decades, the Department of Culture and Heritage of the Gwich'in Tribal Council has carefully recorded Gwich'in knowledge and stories. This includes life histories, legends, place names, and ecological knowledge. For fourteen years, the Department has worked with academic partners at the University of Victoria's Arctic Landscape Ecology Lab, who bring expertise in their work mapping and modelling the effects of natural and anthropogenic disturbance on landscape features, including cultural features such as important fish habitats and harvesting locations.

Through this partnership, we are bringing ethnographic information on Gwich'in land use together with geospatial data on current and future climate impacts, important habitats, and industrial development. We will focus on the integration of Gwich'in traditional ecological classifications and an evaluation of current and projected impacts on Gwich'in lands. For example, gwąhsri' are low-alpine grassy, treeless areas important for caribou and moose, and in some areas, they may be at risk of climate-change mediated "shrubification". Modelling these interactions in a fluid and multi-layered map overlay will help scientists and the Gwich'in make plans and educate land-users to better withstand a changing climate.

The Gwich'in value of Nihk'atr'inaatii (sharing and caring) applies to knowledge-sharing just as it applies to sharing a meal of caribou stew. For this reason, we will freely share the methods we used in this work with researchers and colleagues. A public form of the final overlay will also be shared with our numerous partners, including other Gwich'in and non-Gwich'in organizations, regional and territorial Indigenous and governmental co-management boards, and other territorial and federal stakeholders.

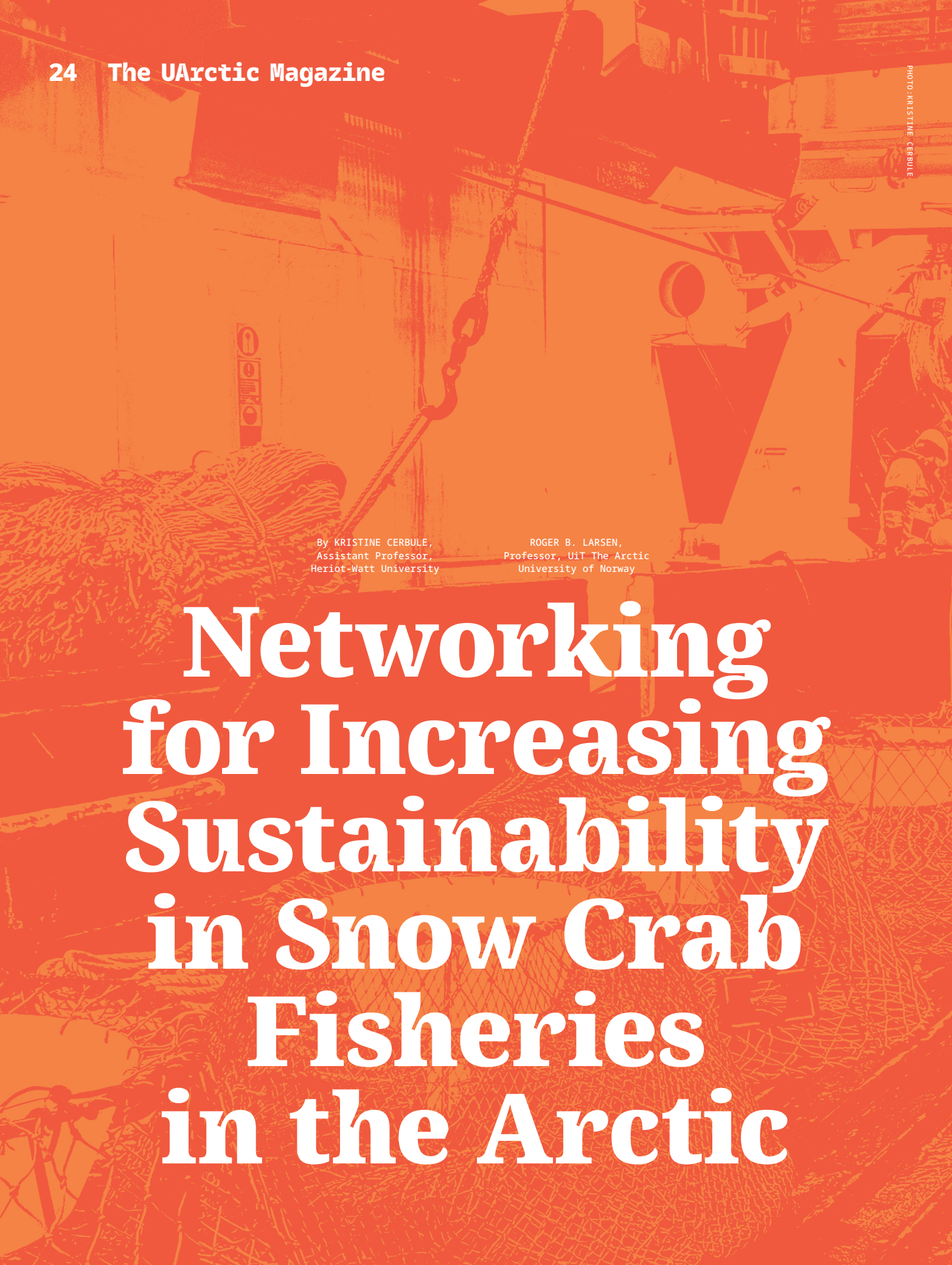


PHOTO: KRISTINE CERBULE

By KRISTINE CERBULE,
Assistant Professor,
Heriot-Watt University

ROGER B. LARSEN,
Professor, UiT The Arctic
University of Norway

Networking for Increasing Sustainability in Snow Crab Fisheries in the Arctic

Thanks to financial support from Arctic governments, UArctic is able to provide funding towards collaborative projects of its members. The funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research supports collaboration between Norwegian UArctic member institutions and the wider network, and it targets new projects focused on Arctic research and education across all fields of science.

Snow crab is a cold-water marine species that is being exploited by several countries in the Arctic. However, these fisheries can pose serious sustainability challenges. Bycatch of undersized and juvenile crabs, lost gear that continues to trap marine life (so-called "ghost fishing"), and plastic pollution from non-degradable pot materials threaten Arctic marine ecosystems and challenge the long-term profitability of the industry through unintended and unaccounted snow crab mortality.

To tackle these issues, the project *Networking for Increasing Sustainability in Snow Crab Fisheries in the Arctic* brought together scientists from research institutions from Norway (UiT The Arctic University of Norway), Canada (Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University of Newfoundland), Denmark (Technical University of Denmark), and Greenland (Greenland Institute of Natural Resources) to share their knowledge and develop practical solutions to main challenges in this fishery. The project ran from 2024 to 2025, supported with UArctic project funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research.

Snow crab pots are made of metal frames and plastic (polyethylene) netting. They allow some small crabs to escape through mesh openings while pots are on the seabed, but many remain trapped and may be injured and die after release during catch sorting onboard. If lost, these pots pose an even greater problem, continuing to catch crabs for years and contributing to marine litter. These challenges require collaborative innovations and sharing of knowledge from the institutions that have separately carried out research on this fishery, which was the aim of this project.

During this project, online and in-person workshops and meetings took place. The first in-person meeting was held in the Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Canada in May 2024. It brought together researchers and industry representatives to explore gear modifications that improve size selectivity and efficiency, as well as the potential to reduce environmental impact.

The second workshop, held in UiT The Arctic University of Norway in December 2024, included research trials onboard R/V "Helmer Hanssen" in the Svalbard zone of the Barents Sea by testing selective escape gaps in snow crab pots to reduce small crab bycatch. Results confirmed that these gaps reduce the capture of undersized crabs without affecting target-sized catches. Participants also emphasized the potential of biodegradable components to minimize ghost fishing and plastic waste. Both workshops involved direct engagement with fishers and gear manufacturers, as the proposed solutions should be suitable for industry adoption.

Both workshops involved direct engagement with fishers and gear manufacturers

The project strengthened collaboration among the four UArctic member institutions and involved scientists, students, and industry stakeholders. The findings highlighted that fishing gear modifications such as escape gaps and use of biodegradable materials can make fisheries in the Arctic more sustainable and improve the state of the Arctic marine environment. However, this research should be supplemented by further investigations, and future research will focus on biodegradable materials and technical innovations that balance the improvements for reducing environmental impacts with that of optimal catch efficiency and profitability of the fishing industry.

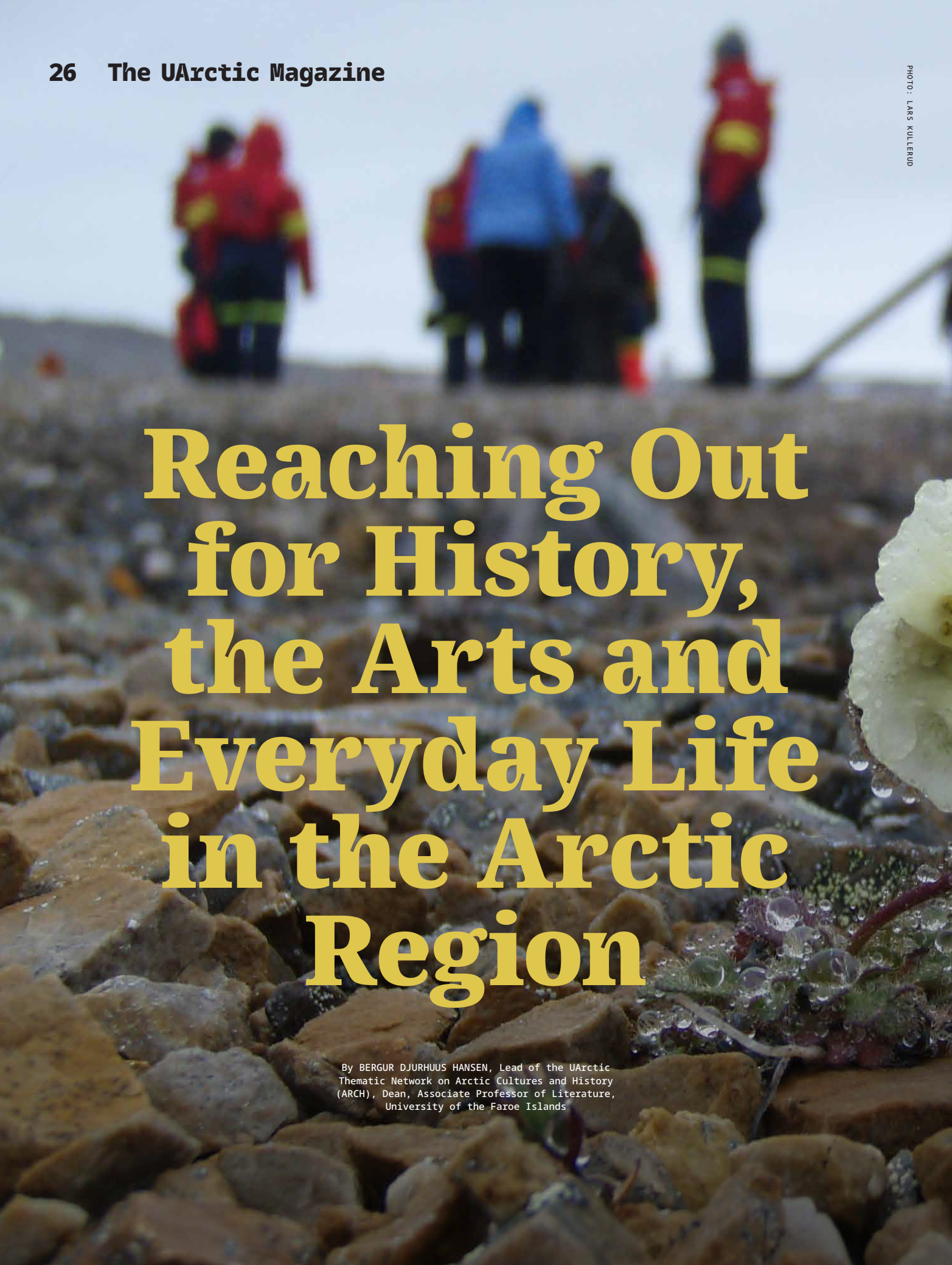
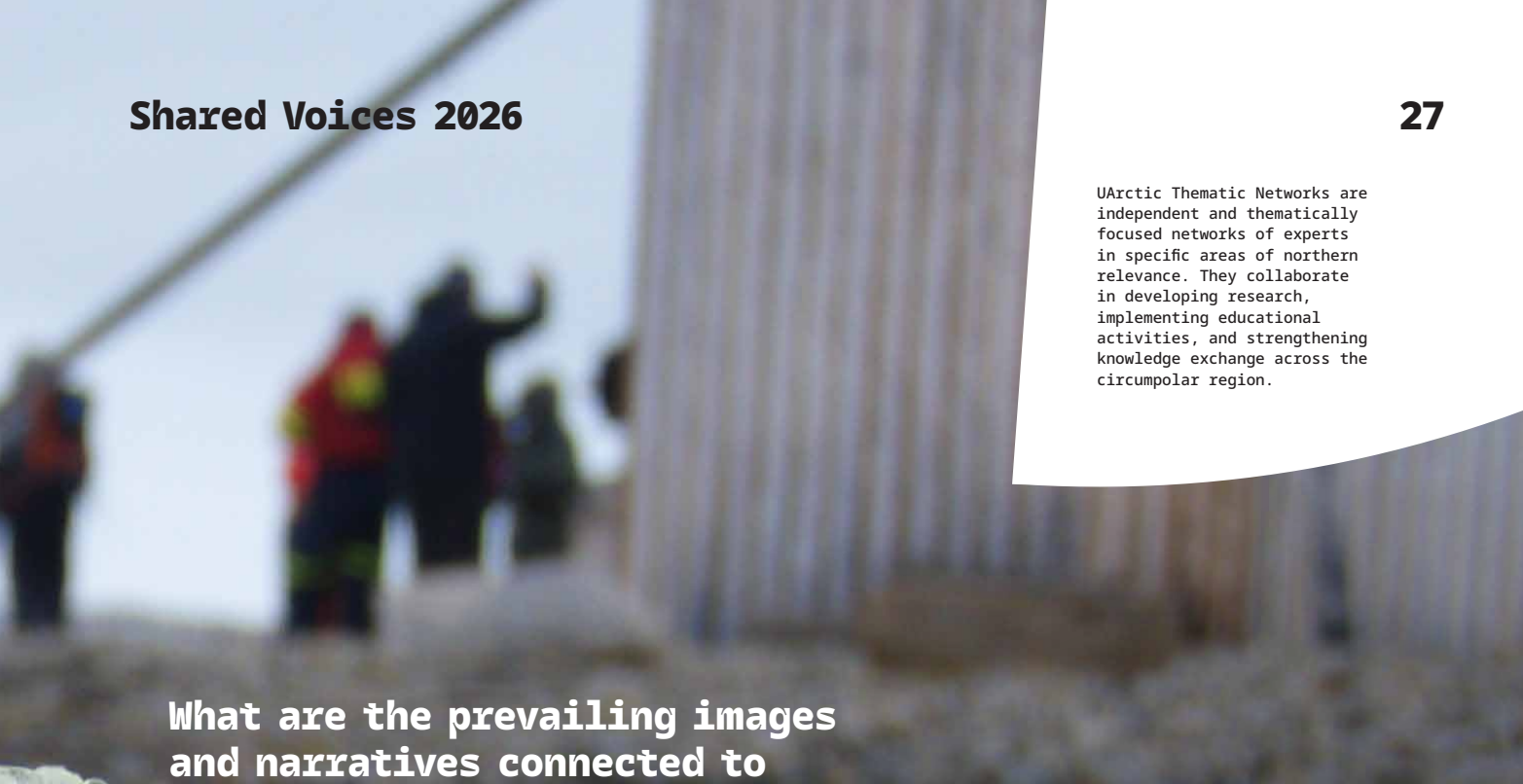


PHOTO: LARS KULLERUD

Reaching Out for History, the Arts and Everyday Life in the Arctic Region

By BERGUR DJURHUUS HANSEN, Lead of the UArctic Thematic Network on Arctic Cultures and History (ARCH), Dean, Associate Professor of Literature, University of the Faroe Islands

UArctic Thematic Networks are independent and thematically focused networks of experts in specific areas of northern relevance. They collaborate in developing research, implementing educational activities, and strengthening knowledge exchange across the circumpolar region.



What are the prevailing images and narratives connected to the Arctic? How were these narratives constructed, and whose voices do they represent?

When the Arctic is mentioned, what comes to mind? We recognize the glow in the eyes of academics, politicians, and other policy makers when questions about the Arctic are raised. But what are the prevailing images and narratives connected to the region? How were these narratives constructed, and whose voices do they represent? Which are the connections between old narratives and present challenges? How and to which extent are they reflected in cultural and artistic expressions in the region today?

These questions lay behind the establishment of the UArctic Thematic Network on Arctic Cultures and History (ARCH) in 2022. The network is part of the field of research commonly known as Arctic humanities which focuses on the human, cultural, historical, and artistic dimensions of the Arctic. Emphasizing history, the network brings into view a rich and fascinating trail of societal developments and cultural exchanges in the region, evident in narratives about encounters between the region and visitors from afar.

Activities of the network mainly include conferences, papers, and publications with a connection to teaching at the universities involved and feeding programs such as the Arctic Studies Master's program in English at Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines as well as history or literary studies elsewhere where Arctic-related issues are integrated in running programs. An important aim of the network is the education of future researchers and decision makers.

The members of the network represent universities across the Arctic and Nordic regions from Greenland to Iceland, Finland, the Faroe Islands, and Sweden, as well as European and American universities such as Université du Québec à Montréal, Yale University, University of St Andrews, and the University of Washington. Many of the participating members are involved in the publication of the book series *Arctic Humanities* at Brill publications, edited by the network's Vice-Lead Jan Borm. The series has thus far published three volumes.

In October 2025, the network organized a two-day conference in Versailles, and on the third day joined the *Blue Humanities* project at Sorbonne University for a dedicated afternoon seminar. The conference at Versailles explored the "mineral Arctic," focusing on stones and cliffs understood both as an idea, image, and as potential resources, and more abstractly as symbols of both emptiness, desolation and fullness, richness. Participants included professors of history and literature, art historians, curators, and PhD and MA students. The outcome of the conference will be disseminated through a range of channels, with the most substantial contributions published in the 2026 issue of the online journal *Inter-Nord*.

In addition to its activities in research and teaching, an overall objective of the network is to raise awareness of cultural and historical issues in a context increasingly dominated by discussions on energy, military tensions, new shipping routes, and access to minerals. In October 2025, members of the network convened a session at the Arctic Circle Assembly in Reykjavík, Iceland.

To further engage students and future decision makers, the University of Versailles, in cooperation with the Malaurie Institute of Arctic Research, organized an Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme in June 2025. It was especially aimed at young researchers (MA and PhD) to learn more about the circulation of knowledge between Europe and the Arctic and current challenges in conducting respectful and mutually beneficial cooperation with Indigenous Peoples in the Arctic.

The UArctic Congress 2026 will involve many of the members of the ARCH network, the lead of the network being from the University of the Faroe Islands which hosts the event. In an array of sessions and lectures on energy and geopolitics, the network will raise awareness about culture, artistic expressions, the human beings, and ordinary life in the Arctic region.

PHOTO: KIM SENGER

Unlocking Svalbard's Deep-time Climate Archives Through SvalCLIME

By KIM SENGER, Lead of the UArctic Thematic Network on Arctic Geology, Professor, University Centre in Svalbard

In collaboration with GRACE SHEPHARD, MORGAN JONES, STEN-ANDREAS GRUNDVÅG, WILLIAM J FOSTER, VALENTIN ZUCHUAT, DENISE KULHANEK, ALEKSANDRA SMYRAK-SIKORA, and SVERRE PLANKE

Thanks to financial support from Arctic governments, UArctic is able to provide funding towards collaborative projects of its members. The funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research supports collaboration between Norwegian UArctic member institutions and the wider network, and it targets new projects focused on Arctic research and education across all fields of science.

Over the past few years, an international network of Earth scientists, known as the SvalCLIME team, has systematically reviewed Svalbard's rock record. In part thanks to a UArctic cooperation grant funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, the team proposed a large-scale international scientific drilling campaign to characterize the last 250 million years of climate change using Svalbard's rock record.

Svalbard's rock record is exceptional, because it records most of the last 400 million years, giving geoscientists insights on how the global climate and life have co-evolved. By understanding how the Earth System functioned in the past, geoscientists can contribute to predictions of how the Earth System may function in the future. This is important at a time when climate change is affecting large parts of the planet.

The Arctic is one of the most sensitive regions to climate change, with warming rates several times higher than the global averages. This is called the polar amplification effect and is caused by, among other things, the ice-albedo effect. As sea ice diminishes in extent, less of the incoming solar radiation is reflected, and the oceans warm. This in turn causes less sea ice over time, creating a positive feedback loop. Even today we struggle to understand the geosphere-hydrosphere-cryosphere-atmosphere interactions that, together with the biosphere, make up the Earth System. We also do not know whether this polar amplification effect was always there, or if it is only something that occurs when the Earth's polar regions are glaciated.

As a land mass, Svalbard has drifted northwards through much of its history. This journey is reflected in its rocks, from continental sandstones deposited in equatorial, desert-like environments, through large carbonate platforms formed in progressively cooler waters, to siliciclastic deposition at mid-to-high latitudes. Coal, the foundation of all permanent settlements in Svalbard, was deposited at similar latitudes as Svalbard is today (including a very long polar night), clearly reflecting intervals when Earth's climate state was much warmer in the past than today.

In parallel to Svalbard's northwards tectonic drift, the global climate was oscillating between warmer and colder periods. Today's period, the Quaternary, is actually one of the cooler intervals. In the past, numerous factors including large-scale volcanism, meteorite impacts, gas hydrate dissociation, and continent reorganizations contributed to a changing climate. Superimposed on the long-term evolution of Svalbard are also catastrophic events, such as the end-Permian mass extinction 252 million years ago which occurred due to extensive magmatism in present-day Siberia and resulted in ca. 90% of the species going extinct, known as the Great Dying. Scientists have conducted numerous studies using both outcrops and drill cores in Svalbard to decipher the causes of the extinction and characterize how quickly fauna and flora recovered from the extreme event.

Similarly, Svalbard records the Paleocene-Eocene Thermal Maximum, 56 million years ago, where global temperatures were much higher likely due to major volcanism in the North Atlantic. These events are considered by many scientists as good analogues for a world with very high atmospheric CO_2 concentrations and high temperatures. What is unknown, however, is whether the polar amplification effect we see today was as important in the geological past.

In conclusion, the SvalCLIME team considers Svalbard a world-class archive of Earth's history and looks forward to materializing the scientific drilling in the future.

Geoscientists can contribute to predictions of how the Earth System may function in the future.

Duodji and Ilusivut (Arts and Crafts) as Pedagogy in the Circumpolar North

By SYLVIA MOORE,
UArctic Chair in Indigenous and Northern Education, Vice-Lead of the UArctic Verdde Indigenous Education Thematic Network, Associate Professor and Founding Faculty, School of Arctic and Subarctic Studies, Memorial University of Newfoundland

PHOTO: ANN TOPKOK

Thanks to financial support from Arctic governments, UArctic is able to provide funding towards collaborative projects of its members. The funding from Global Affairs Canada is targeted towards Canadian UArctic members, and it supports the development of collaborative partnerships and cooperative projects related to Northern and Indigenous research and education through two funds: the Indigenous and Northern Relationship Development Fund, and the Indigenous and Northern Collaborative Research and Education Engagement Fund.

Across the Circumpolar North, crafting has always been more than the pragmatism of making objects. It is a way of learning, a way of remembering, and a way of staying in relationship – with land, materials, ancestors, and community. The *Duodji and Ilusivut (Arts and Crafts) as Pedagogy in the Circumpolar North* project brought together northern and Indigenous educators and crafters to share their crafts, reflect on their lived cultural knowledge, and consider the ways in which crafting can be a holistic approach to teaching.

Developed in collaboration between the UArctic Chair in Indigenous and Northern Education and the UArctic Verdde Indigenous Education Thematic Network, and funded by the Canadian Global Arctic Leadership Initiative, the project connected participants in virtual monthly gatherings. Together, participants explored how traditional and contemporary crafting practices carry Indigenous knowledges, values, and histories into teaching and learning.

Through dialogue and educator self-study, participants articulated what crafting teaches. Patience. Observation. Responsibility. Problem-solving. Respect for materials. The process of making, many reflected, is a form of thinking – one where hands and mind learn together.

A central element of the project was educator self-study. Participants reflected on their own crafting practices and considered how these experiences shape their teaching identities and pedagogical choices. In this context, self-study becomes a decolonizing methodology – one that centres lived experience, cultural knowledge, and relational accountability. Educators are not only practitioners; they are also scholars of their own practice.

The project unfolded through online seminars, recorded conversations, and graphic recordings that visually captured shared insights. These gatherings created supportive spaces for educators to think together about how crafting can be meaningfully integrated into schools, teacher education, and community learning. Importantly, the project emphasized that crafting as pedagogy is not about adding activities to an already crowded curriculum. It is about a shift in orientation – recognizing Indigenous ways of knowing as foundational rather than supplementary.

Inuk educator and crafter Ola Andersen said, “with these crafts also came stories … you’re not sitting there in silence,” highlighting the inseparability of crafting and storytelling. Teaching stories arise organically through the act of making, and crafted objects themselves carry memory and narrative.

The process of making is a form of thinking – one where hands and mind learn together.

The project participants also spoke about crafting as a way that knowledge, values, and responsibilities are passed across generations, situating learners within longer lines of continuity. This was reflected in discussions about learning from Elders and other family members.

Crafting was also described as deeply land-based as the materials, techniques, and aesthetics emerge from close relationships with specific environments. “Our artwork is grounded in our environment … it’s important to know our environment and to be observers,” said Alaska educator and crafter Nancy Douglas.

As circumpolar education systems respond to calls for reconciliation, Indigenization, and cultural sustainability, projects like *Duodji and Ilusivut* offer a grounded path forward. By honouring crafting as pedagogy, educators reaffirm that learning is relational, embodied, and deeply connected to place. In the steady rhythm of hands working with familiar materials, knowledge is not only transmitted – it is lived, remembered, and carried forward.

Facilitating Collaborative Online International Learning from Kathmandu to Nuuk

By IZZY CRAWFORD, Lead of the UArctic Thematic Network on Collaborative Online International Learning and Biodiversity Education across the Arctic Circle (COIL@UArctic), Associate Dean, Aberdeen Business School, Robert Gordon University

ELINA OKSANEN, Vice-Lead of the UArctic Thematic Network on Collaborative Online International Learning and Biodiversity Education across the Arctic Circle (COIL@UArctic), Professor, University of Eastern Finland

UArctic Thematic Networks are independent and thematically focused networks of experts in specific areas of northern relevance. They collaborate in developing research, implementing educational activities, and strengthening knowledge exchange across the circumpolar region.

COIL projects develop students' digital, intercultural, problem-solving and interpersonal skills.

Established with the support of Arctic Indigenous Scholar, Dr Heather Gordon, the UArctic Thematic Network on Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) and Biodiversity Education across the Arctic Circle (COIL@UArctic) was endorsed in 2024. Since then, it has made connections between universities in the Circumpolar North and Global South and has created a wealth of resources to promote and facilitate inclusive approaches to COIL focused on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

COIL is an approach to teaching and learning that has grown in importance since the COVID-19 pandemic. Student teams from more than one country and more than one university use freely available platforms like Zoom to work on a collaborative project together. These projects are often interdisciplinary and address big global challenges like climate change. COIL projects develop students' digital, intercultural, problem-solving and interpersonal skills, and offer an opportunity to work alongside students anywhere in the world, without the complexity, cost, and carbon footprint of air travel.

One of the Thematic Network Leads, Dr Izzy Crawford from Robert Gordon University (RGU) in Aberdeen, completed a PhD in this area in June 2025. She believes it is more important than ever for universities to create opportunities for students to learn that we have more similarities than differences with people in other parts of the world, and sharing different perspectives and working collaboratively can improve the quality of problem-solving and decision-making.

It was a great honour for the Thematic Network to be invited to run a master class and workshop on COIL at the Kathmandu University School of Education in April 2025. The participants shared their perspectives on COIL and how it might benefit students across the Hindu Kush region which has much in common with the Arctic. This visit challenged some of the underlying assumptions of COIL and opened critical discussion about globalization, dominant knowledge systems, and digital inclusion within emerging experiential pedagogy.

In the last twelve months, the Thematic Network has presented its work at conferences in Reykjavík, Toulouse, Bodø, Helsinki, and Gothenburg. RGU recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Institute of Training and Research (UNITAR), enabling academic collaboration between the UN and the COIL@UArctic Thematic Network. Next year, the Thematic Network will explore how COIL can be made more inclusive and meaningful for Indigenous Peoples living and studying in Greenland and Norway.

The Thematic Network has also delivered several biodiversity courses which have a COIL component. University of Eastern Finland has co-created multidisciplinary online courses on biodiversity and nature-based solutions in collaboration with researchers and teachers from different scientific backgrounds and institutions. The open-access versions for these courses – Biodiversity.now A and Nature Based Solutions – are freely available for everybody and address several important issues from the Arctic environment.

To learn more and get involved in COIL@UArctic, please contact Dr Izzy Crawford at i.c.crawford@rgu.ac.uk or Professor Elina Oksanen at elina.oksanen@uef.fi

UArctic's mobility program north2north enables students from participating member institutions to study in another northern location. The program helps strengthen connections between regions, builds competence on Arctic issues, and creates opportunities to experience different northern places and communities firsthand.

Take a Chance on the North

PHOTO: MIRIAM JAUHIAINEN

By MIRIAM JAUHIAINEN, Master's Student, Tampere University

An exchange semester can be a defining moment of time in a student's life, and mine was no different. I went on an exchange semester to Glasgow, Scotland for autumn 2024 through UArctic's north2north program, an experience which has shaped my life quite significantly in the year since my return. Besides meeting new friends and learning from new people, it shaped my perceptions of the region and led me to new adventures in the North.

As a person who loves travelling, grass has often seemed to be greener elsewhere, especially in warmer locations. However, the more experiences I have gained in the North, the more I appreciate it and realize that my preconceived notions of it are simply assumptions based on lack of knowledge. Spending more time in the North has made me appreciate untouched nature, clean air, and simply just being in the moment without a constant rush somewhere. Moreover, I consider such things to be a rare privilege. In the current society marred with never-ending commitments, schedules, and deadlines, the importance of having moments of peace in clean nature should not be underestimated.

Within the last year, the word "direction" has been on my mind frequently. As a young person, I am often thinking about my direction in life and whether my daily choices are taking me to the right direction in terms of my life plans and goals. At the same time, direction can also be understood as a compass point. Coming from Finland, it seems like young people are only looking south when thinking about their professional opportunities. To be sure, there are jobs in Helsinki and other cities beyond the Baltic Sea, but few even consider going north instead. There are many amazing opportunities in the northern Nordics and across other Arctic states; one just has to look for them and be ready to try something new.

After being in Scotland and experiencing life in the Highlands, I have been more curious about life in the North and the Arctic in general. This interest has also shaped my decisions in practice. Only a few months after I returned from Scotland, I moved to Northern Norway for an internship that was connected to the High North and the Arctic. This decision was one that I would not have done without my exchange semester and the fresh curiosity it brought for more northern latitudes. Throughout the internship, I gained invaluable knowledge and experience on Arctic matters, which again will undoubtedly shape the decisions I am going to make next about my direction in life.

Giving the North a chance was a turning point in my life, and I genuinely cannot wait to see what other adventures it will lead to later on!

UArctic

Photo: Haukur Sigurðsson

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