



# Climate Change and Sustainable Development in Canada's Northern Communities

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# Climate change and Canada's Northern Communities

- Enormous social and economic transformation in the Canadian North over past 50 years
- Many important social and economic challenges face Canada's Northern communities
  - Climate change is only one
- An important challenge surrounding climate change is measuring the social, economic, and cultural impacts on Northern communities
- Very little research

# Current Research

- Climate change impacts on health and food security (Furgal et al; Loring)
  - possible negative affect on access to country foods
  - this would lead to less healthy diets and economic and cultural problems
- Importance of sea ice (ICC)
- The impacts of climate change on the vulnerability, adaptability, and the resilience of these communities (Ford, Smit)
- Attempts to use indigenous knowledge (Gearhead)

# Recommendations

- Very little research exists on the social and economic impacts of climate change on sustainability. A new research initiative looking at the issue in relation to the other challenges to sustainability would be welcome.
- Climate change is often seen as a less important problem than other issues facing their community. Climate change has to be understood as one of many challenges these communities are facing.
- Greater community involvement and empowerment through increasing human, social, and physical capital is the most sensible long term solution. Researchers, governments, and communities themselves must increase efforts to improve community empowerment through local knowledge generation, transfer, and utilization.
- A new international initiative in partnership with University of the Arctic and its members promoting knowledge transfer and dialogue with Northern communities would assist work in this area



# What is the University of the Arctic?

International consortium of Northern-oriented post-secondary institutions

Creation of the Arctic Council

Purpose is to improve the well-being of Northern and Indigenous communities through improving access to post-secondary educational resources

This is done primarily through the sharing of resources and experiences



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# What does the University of the Arctic offer?

- Arctic Science in the Public Interest
- Assistance with education and research by providing linkages with Arctic educational and community organizations and mobilizing dialogue
- Translation of research findings into educational programs in partnership with Northern communities



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Thank you



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