



# Greenland Workshop Review

## *A Week in Review: Reflections and Recommendations*

### Overview

The [Arctic Resilient Communities Youth Fellowship \(ARCYF\)](#) hosted its second in-person workshop in Greenland on August 16-23, 2023. This week is the second of three workshops to be conducted across three international Arctic locations during the nine-month fellowship, the first of which was hosted in Anchorage, AK. During each workshop, young leaders from rural regions of each country (Alaska, Canada, and Greenland) participated in a 5-day immersive experience where they connected on their cultural backgrounds, shared insight and knowledge into the issues faced by their respective communities and bonded through skill-building activities.

Thanks to funding from Global Affairs Canada, the gathering brought together this year's fellows to Sisimiut and Nuuk, GL —see the complete list of the 2023 ARCYF cohort [here](#)—to supplement their regular online training through in-person discussions, seminars, and meetings on a range of Arctic issues with leading experts of diverse backgrounds, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous Arctic community leaders, local business professionals, government representatives, academics and others working in Arctic social research.

The first four days, they focused on educational programming with the Greenlandic School of Minerals and Petroleum (KTI) and meetings with municipal, business, and other academic representatives in Sisimiut. The fellows then traveled to Nuuk, Greenland's capital, to discuss international cooperation on climate change and to engage in cultural exchange with Greenland's government and Parliament, research institutes, the Greenlandic Hunters Association, and the U.S. Consulate. The workshop focused on important topics such as cultural sustainability, responsible development of Arctic resources, workforce training, meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities, and other environmental and social concerns relevant to changing Arctic conditions.

This review offers day-to-day takeaways from events, summaries of discussions, reflections on the fellows' overall experience, and recommendations for enhanced youth engagement. As ARCYF concludes its inaugural year and program coordinators look forward to the second year's cohort, we hope to employ these workshop reviews as a celebration of the successes, an acknowledgement of shortcomings, and essential guides for the continued improvement of the program.

## Fellow Reflections and Insights

ARCYPF and other youth initiatives aim to improve the quality of interaction between youth, their communities, and their institutions. To this end, the fellows provided the following observations.

- Youth engagement efforts must be inclusive and representative of all young people by developing safe spaces for the discussion of issues relevant to them and their communities.
- Youth participation and engagement in leadership programs increase when they feel mutually respected and can fully trust those who facilitate the opportunity.
- Youth engagement is only successful if the knowledge and insight shared by youth are properly recognized and accredited. Youth represent the power of new perspectives and feel a sense of contribution when this unique perspective is fully valued and validated.
- The slogan “nothing about us, without us” reflects a need for Indigenous voices and self-determination when operating within Indigenous spaces, whether that action is academic, political, or economic.
- Indigenous economics involves a mutual reliance, prioritization of help, and egalitarian care that ensures everyone is taken care of: a whole community effort is needed.
- Transgenerational Indigenous knowledge is a science that has played a vital role in community health and has helped Indigenous peoples thrive for thousands of years.
- Understanding food resources teaches values, makes people stewards of the land on which they live, and keeps communities culturally connected with the natural world.
- Participating in sessions and talks is good; leading sessions is even better!

## Key Recommendations

ARCYPF is an evolving program. Lessons learned and feedback generated from the Greenland Workshop are accounted for and will be integrated into the development of future ARCYPF programming.

- Use the first cohort of fellows as guides for the next and seek to incorporate their feedback into future planning activities.
- Dedicate the first day of the workshop to group bonding and social mixing to ensure the quality of interaction; should also include a review and commitment to a Code of Conduct that incorporates fellow input.
- Allow youth the opportunity to assume leadership roles in discussion-based activities; encourage fellows to collaboratively lead talks rather than passively listen. Placing fellows in roles where they are at the forefront should be a top priority for future workshops.
- Prioritize Indigenous participation in developing programming and workshops. Emphasize daily reflections and debriefs following each day of workshop activities.

## Greenland Workshop Recap

The following section provides a day-by-day overview of the ‘Greenland Workshop’ activities and feedback provided by the fellows.

### **Wednesday, August 16 — Arrival in Sisimiut, Orientation to Sisimiut and Greenland School of Minerals and Petroleum (KTI)**

The fellows and the ARCYF team arrived in Sisimiut. They were welcomed by KTI hosts and provided a bus tour of Sisimiut. Afterward, a brief program orientation and a preparatory reflection; these were regular at the end of each day of events. The rest of the evening was spent settling in and socializing.

### **Thursday, August 17—Arctic Business Forum | Tekniske Universitet | Qeqqata**

On the first full day of the workshop, the fellows met with Jesper Schrøder, director of Arctic Circle Business, and Tupaarnaq K. Klesit, destination manager of Arctic Circle Business, to discuss the fisheries and mining industries in Sisimiut and the collaborative activities and programs currently in development. The fellows learned about the partnerships between business entities and academic institutions in Greenland and how their technologies are used for climate and sustainability research. They emphasized the ongoing work on the Greenland Integrated Observation System (GEOS).

The fisheries program microcosmically represents the entire supply chain for local environmental resources, from ocean microbiology to population dynamics, ecology, oceanography, harvesting technologies, and human economics. The discussion emphasized the importance of instilling a culture of responsibility and stewardship toward resources and wildlife populations, adequately providing for local communities and their economic needs.

Fellows met with professors and staff from Denmark’s Tekniske Universitet to review educational programming, including the development of a biology program that centers on hands-on learning incorporating Indigenous knowledge. An example of this includes the convergence of Western science and Greenlandic knowledge as valid modes of inquiry; the discussion emphasized how to unify and positively implement two distinct cultural epistemologies in a mutually beneficial way. Fellows also engaged with municipal leadership in Qeqqata (one of the five municipal regions in Greenland), Juliane Henningsen and Hans Christian Svaerd. The fellows were given an overview of Qeqqata's role in Greenland’s government, the value of municipal authority in general, the services it provides, and its status as a vector for local change.

Later in the day, the fellows introduced themselves and shared their backgrounds with local community members in Sisimiut. They discussed their interests in ecology, sustainable cultural practices, and community resilience, that lead to exchanging personal notes on the challenges mutually shared by their respective communities. The evening concluded with community members responding to the fellows and sharing their thoughts on the issues discussed. Sample of the conversation topics include:

- Program Activities – The participants discuss their interests, such as ecology, culture, sustainable practices, and community resilience, highlighting the importance of preserving their cultures and traditions while adapting to changing circumstances.

- Impact of Climate Change – Participants discussed the impact of climate change on their communities, including shifting migration patterns of animals, thinner sea ice, and increased subsistence challenges.
- Food Security and Traditional Practices – The participants expressed concern about the availability of traditional foods due to environmental changes.
- Language and Cultural Connections – Participants discussed the similarities and differences in their languages and cultures across regions, reflecting on the importance of effective transboundary communication.
- Health and Safety – The issue of mercury contamination in certain foods is raised, prompting a discussion about the safety of consuming traditional foods and the need for further research.
- Threats of Excessive Development – They expressed concerns about the value of mining and other extractive industries, citing environmental and cultural degradation.
- Observations of Changes – The discussion ended with elder-sharing comments on environmental changes, especially about thinner sea ice and shifting animal migration patterns.

### **Friday, August 18—School of Minerals and Petroleum | Sisimiut Museum**

On the second full day of the workshop, the fellows visited the Greenland School of Minerals and Mines (KTI) to receive an overview of the program from the Mineral Resources School's Head of Education, Hans Hinrichsen. Participants explored the catalog of international courses and apprenticeships available.

Fellows then visited an on-campus community workshop that provided tools and workspace for local craftspeople, carvers, and artists. This excursion provided the opportunity to engage directly with locals, through which the connection between community, traditional culture, and economic development was apparent.

Afterwards, Hinrichsen led the fellows on a field trip to a local beach to expose them to the area's natural beauty and to relax and connect with the land before heading off to the Sisimiut Museum near the town's harbor for a special presentation. The presentation was given by Dorthe Katrine Olsen, the museum's director, focusing primarily on the history of Greenland, from pre-contact culture to Denmark's colonization of the country. The presentation's themes highlighted cultural trauma experienced by native Greenlanders and more recent developments in independent rule and self-governance. Fellows then explored the museum's exhibits before heading home for the night.

### **Saturday, August 19—Greenlandic Dog Sled Culture**

After a morning workshop activity, fellows were given a presentation by two representatives from the Sisimiut Dogsled Association. It emphasized the importance of dogsledding to the cultural history of Greenland, the domestication and evolution of Greenlandic dog breeds, and contemporary community involvement in the practice.

The fellows workshop their individual ARCYF projects before a farewell dinner as they get ready to leave Sisimiut.

## **Sunday, August 20—Sisimiut to Nuuk**

In the morning, after a weather delay, workshop participants and fellows departed Sisimiut bound for Nuuk by plane (the only way to travel between the towns). After a bus tour of Nuuk, fellows were given free time to explore on their own before attending a Kaffemik (a traditional Greenlandic social mixer with coffee and snacks) at the home of one of the Greenlandic fellows, Nivi Rosing. The Kaffemik was hosted by Nivi's family and included a variety of Greenlandic foods and refreshments. There, fellows engaged in relaxed, in-depth discussions on Arctic issues and their projects.

## **Monday, August 21st—Climate Policy, Greenlandic Institute of Natural Resources | Youth-led Group Discussion**

The fellows attended a presentation on climate policy from Avijâja Rosing-Olsen, a Special Advisor for the Greenlandic Government. Later in the day, the fellows met with Josephine Nymand of the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources and were given a presentation on the Arctic Hub program, which focuses on merging geophysics research and local Indigenous knowledge. There was a heavy focus on the importance of outreach and science communication. After this presentation, there was a Q&A session with the fellows.

The day's central event was a knowledge exercise conducted with the fellows. This exercise featured discussion-based seminars in small groups of 3-4 each, with questions facilitated and notes taken by the ARCYF team. Each group was asked three questions; included here are summaries of the responses to each question.

- 1) What are the most critical community resiliency issues affecting your community?
  - Various facets of mental health: what impacts it on a societal scale and how it might be improved; the relationship between mental health and employment/economic stability; the relationship between individual mental health and community well-being. Integral to enhancing community well-being is creating meaningful work that supports and aligns with community values.
  - Economics and the underrecognized expenses of remote living in the modern world ("living in two worlds"), the economic dominance of mining and its impact on job diversity, and the preservation of culture amid environmental and social change.
  - Politics and the challenges faced in effectively communicating with governmental entities for support, the language disparities between remote Arctic communities and their national governments.
  - Youth isolation, resentment/apathy, and the lack of third spaces (creative programs and platforms beyond work/school and home)
- 2) What is the most critical issue for policymakers to focus on regarding sustainable natural resource development?
  - Indigenous consultation in resource development and extraction initiatives and decision-making
  - Site analysis of environmental and economic impacts that identifies but prioritizes culturally relevant sites, reclamation/remediation adequacy, animal migration patterns, and habitats.

- Assurance of local benefit from natural resource development, addressing the problems of outsourced labor, corporate cronyism, and resource and revenue hoarding.
  - Emphasis on education in Indigenous communities that adequately prepare them for self-advocating.
  - Government intervention in housing crises and holding external development industries accountable for realistic planning/sustainable practices.
  - Developing a balance between Western and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) when engaging in tribal consultation, collaborative decision-making, and policy recommendations from locals.
- 3) What is one thing that the facilitators of the ARCYF program can do to help fellows achieve a successful personal project?
- Budget allocation for proper and effective implementation of project plans, including funding for interviews, digital software, and data storage.
  - Access to non-public materials from museum archives, academic institutions, and government research.
  - Full recognition of the fellows as working professionals, allowing space for an emphasis on creative freedom and the provision of time not only for breaks from daily activities during workshops but also for developing ideas (“marinating”).
  - Assistance in networking and connecting individual fellows with influential contacts.
  - Setting and maintenance of deadlines, check-ins, and regular updates to encourage and stimulate motivation.

The fellows met with Foreign Minister Vivian Motzfeldt (former speaker of the Inatsisartut and former minister of education and foreign affairs under Prime Minister Kielsen) on Greenlandic foreign policy and trade. Motzfeldt highlighted five ongoing government initiatives, including parliamentary efforts to collaborate with Canadian and American Inuit populations. This effort specifically aims towards initiatives that aim to develop better airport infrastructure in Greenland that may foster closer pan-Arctic cooperation between these northern communities. The speaker emphasized the cultural similarities among the Inuit across national borders, especially as they face similar environmental, political, and economic challenges. Recognizing shared experiences can encourage greater unity and “relationality” among these people. She acknowledged that while transboundary unity among Arctic communities is critical to enhancing growth and stability in the region, there must be an acknowledgment of the inclusion of youth voices in these discussions. Youth represents not only some future potential but active individuals capable of engaging in the present. Motzfeldt emphasized the Greenlandic government’s need to involve youth at decision-making tables to ensure their perspective are considered in Arctic development talks.

After meeting with Motzfeldt, the fellows heard from Arctic microbiologist Dr. Aviaja Lyberth Hauptmann of the University of Greenland. She gave them an overview of the development of the biology curriculum at the university and how it differs from traditional European programs, specifically about its emphasis on practical Indigenous knowledge and the notion of decolonizing scientific research to allow a broader view that incorporates years of Indigenous understanding and connection to the land. The fellows received a boat tour with Nuuk Water Taxi before the night's end.

## **Tuesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> —Cultural Practices, Governance**

At the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources, Vivi Sørensen gave an interactive presentation to the fellows on cultural practices and identity at the Institute and the participatory nature of cultural exchange. Beginning with the lighting of a traditional Greenlandic lamp, Vivi shared her experiences dealing with cultural identity, and facilitated a group discussion.

ARCYP participants also received a parliamentary tour and met with representatives of Greenland's Parliament and the U.S. Consulate. After the day of scheduled meetings and talks, the fellows enjoyed shopping and spending time around the town before participating in group activities and reflection.

## **Wednesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> —ARCYP Debrief | Departure from Nuuk**

Fellows that did not depart with the first group attended a presentation by Vittus Qujaukitsoq of the Greenlandic Hunters Association. On the last day of the workshop, the ARCYP team conducted debrief interviews with the fellows to review the week and share their observations and suggestions. To ensure that the program continues to flourish and develop an environment of inclusivity, respect, and educational opportunity, ARCYP is committed to implementing this constructive feedback in future workshops. The takeaways were summarized under the Fellows Debrief, Insights, and Recommendations section on pg. 2; the following recommendations to program management have been recapitulated below:

- Expectations and accountability for both staff and fellows must be properly understood to ensure the flow of operations; in pursuance of this, the Code of Conduct will be reviewed and renewed by signed acknowledgment at the commencement of each workshop.
- A robust logistical framework for the staff, including information packets and assigned points of contact for specific needs, will be updated to support more open communication, allow for flexible adaptation, and establish operational standards with a transparent daily agenda.
- For future workshops, prior successes will be emphasized and capitalized on to inform future curricular content choices. Encouragement of Indigenous participation in curricular programming, a decolonized workshop facilitation, and an Indigenous coordinator on-staff to promote more diverse representation in staff presence will be prioritized.
- For organization and communication among administrative members and fellows, future workshops will have clearly defined roles and responsibilities for staff, regular check-ins with fellows to advance ongoing dialogue, and an anonymous system for reporting and resolving issues.

## Engagement Opportunities

Integral to the immersive approach to the Greenland Workshop, ARCYF is grateful to the following for their time to engage with the fellows personally.

- Jesper Schrøder, Director, Arctic Circle Business
- Tupaarnaq K. Kleist, Destination Manager, Arctic Circle Business
- Steffen Ringsø, Campus and Research Coordinator, DTU Arctic
- Tina Chapman, National Space Institute, DTU Arctic
- Martin Kotol, Assoc. Professor, Dept. of Civil and Mechanical Engineering at DTU
- Juliane Henningsen, Municipal Director, Qeqqata
- Hans Christian Svaerd, Chief of Staff, Qeqqata
- Hans Hinrichsen, Director, KTI
- Dorte Katrine Olsen, Director, Sisimiut Museum
- Josephine Nymand, Head of Department, Greenland Institute of Natural Resources
- Vivi Sørensen, Greenland Institute of Natural Resources
- Avijâja Rosing-Olsen, Special Policy Advisor, Greenlandic Government
- Vivian Motzfeldt, Minister, Greenlandic Government
- Aviaja Lyberth Hauptmann, University of Greenland (Ilisimatusarfik)
- Vittus Qujaukitsoq, Greenlandic Hunters Association

## Support Team

ARCYP is a collaborative project, and the Greenland Workshop was only made possible with members of its team who provided programmatic and logistical support.

- Konkordia 'Kunngu' Sørensen Gabriel, Greenland Workshop Coordinator
- Francesca Bray, ARCYF Project Manager
- Gilbert Castellanos, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, International Affairs Specialist
- Hanna Eklund, Institute of the North, Program Coordinator
- Hans Hinrichsen, Director, Greenland School of Minerals and Petroleum (KTI)
- Ian Laing, Institute of the North, Executive Director
- Jon Isaacs, Institute of the North, Board Chairman
- Shyanne Beatty, North Star Group, Communication Advisor
- Veronica Slajer, North Star Group, Communities & Social Performance Advisor

## Partners

ARCYP builds on the results of the Arctic Council's Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) working group's Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Arctic Mining (MBAM) initiative. ARCYF was initiated and implemented by the Institute of the North and North Star Group in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and with support from Global Affairs Canada, Greenland School of Minerals and Petroleum (KTI), the Rasmuson Foundation, and the Denali Commission.

The Greenland Workshop was made possible thanks to support from local Greenland businesses and organizations, including:

- Arctic Circle Business



- Denmarks Tekniske Universitet (DTU)
- Sisimiut Museum
- Sisimiut Dogsled Association
- Greenland School of Minerals & Petroleum (KTI)
- Greenland Institute of Natural Resources
- University of Greenland (Ilisimatusarfik)
- Inuit Circumpolar Council

Additional partners are invited to join visionary supporters in empowering emerging Arctic leaders. As a contributor, you will be asked to speak at one of our seminars or assist fellows with their projects. If you are interested in getting involved, please email inquiries to [info@arcyf.org](mailto:info@arcyf.org).