

ARCTIC FUTURE

The Circumpolar International Internship Newsletter

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In This Issue

- Circumpolar Young Leaders Program
- Qualities of a Northern Leader
- Anne Nuorgam – One of Finland's Most Powerful Women
- Making the Connection with Sheila Watt-Cloutier
- Recent Events: SDWG and SAO Meetings – A Russian Intern's Perspective
- ICARP II Conference

Arctic Resource Links

Circumpolar Young Leaders Program

<http://www.iisd.org/interns/arctic>

On Top of the World

<http://www.ookpik.org>

Arctic Youth Network

<http://www.taiga.net/ayn/home.html>

Arctic Athabaskan Council

<http://www.arcticathabaskan.council.com/>

Inuit Circumpolar Conference

<http://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/>

ArcticNet

<http://www.arcticnet-ulaval.ca/>

Circumpolar Young Leaders Program

Building Capacity in the Next Generation of Leaders in the North

Five international internships were made available for young people from Canada and Russia in 2005–2006 through the Circumpolar Young Leaders Program (CYLP). We will accept applications for the 2006–2007 program in early 2006.

All applicants must be between the ages of 21 and 30. In Canada, internships are open only to people living in—or originally from—the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Yukon, and northern Quebec and Labrador.

Current interns are working in Norway, Finland and Denmark. The program targets the specific needs of Northern Youth and focuses on capacity building. The CYLP, formally endorsed by the Arctic Council, provides young people with substantive training and work experience with leading sustainable development organizations and institutions in the North. The program consists of a one-week online training program for a group of young Northerners, followed by a six-month work placement for each participant in another circumpolar country, as well as group knowledge sharing and networking opportunities at the middle and end of the program.

For further information on the Circumpolar Young Leaders Program, eligibility and application details please visit <http://www.iisd.org/interns/arctic/> or e-mail at intern-info@iisd.ca.

The Circumpolar Young Leaders program is made possible through the funding provided by the Aboriginal and Circumpolar Affairs Division of Foreign Affairs Canada, Foreign Affairs Canada through the Youth Employment Strategy, the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, and the Centre for International Mobility.

Qualities of a Northern Leader

By Bobbie Jo Greenland



Bobbie Jo Greenland and Cindy Dickson.

It was difficult to choose just one leader to interview for this issue of *Arctic Future*, for there are so many fine leaders. I wanted to choose a passionate individual who is not only working on Northern issues, but who also comes from the North and understands the people, history, culture and the issues.

Cindy Dickson fit the bill. While she doesn't see herself as a leader just yet, Cindy is making a positive difference for people in the North and that makes her a leader and a role model for future leaders like me.

This young woman comes from generations of great leaders as her parents are from the Vuntut Gwitchin and Tlingit First Nations of the Yukon. Cindy grew up in Carcross near the Dickson and Henderson families on her dad's side. Part of her childhood was also spent in Old Crow with her mom's family, where she credits her grandfather, Lazarus Charlie, for raising her and teaching her about her roots.

Cindy later went on to University and received her degree in Social Work and is looking at pursuing a master's degree as well. Coming from a small community of about 300 people, she knows first hand the struggles and challenges indigenous students face when they leave home to pursue their education.

In addition to her education, she also obtained on-the-job training from experienced leaders with whom she worked. In past years, she managed the Northern Contaminants Program and became involved in other programs such as the Northern Ecosystem Initiative and McGill's Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment (CINE). Cindy says that all her previous jobs led to her current work with the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) and the Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC) in Whitehorse, Yukon. As Director of Circumpolar Affairs, she works at building and maintaining the connection between local, national and international issues. She explains that a large part of her work is about trying to make sense of what is happening at the circumpolar and international levels and how it affects the interests of Athabaskan people living in the North. Cindy said that one of the main focuses for her work has been on the Arctic Council and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Cindy is concerned for the people of the North and their traditional lifestyle that will be forever changed due to direct impacts of climate change.

Cindy says that she "just stumbled into this type of work" when it became clear to her that indigenous peoples have to represent themselves. She believes her community and her family, especially her two-year-old son, are what keep her focused on her work as she hopes to help make a better future for them.

Cindy often thinks about global warming and hopes it can somehow just stop, but her biggest hope for the future is for the cultural survival of her people. Cindy thinks about the future for her family and her son; she would like him to be able to participate in all of the cultural activities and milestones that are his right.

Anne Nuorgam – One of Finland’s Most Powerful Women

By Robin Urquhart



Imagine a map of Finland as the figure of a woman. Her right arm is raised. Her left one was sadly chopped off a long time ago. And, on top of her head sits Utsjoki, a town of 1,400 people, like a crown.

It seems fitting that this northern capital is the birthplace of Anne Nuorgam, one of Finland’s most powerful women.

Nuorgam entered into politics naturally. Her family did not follow the more traditional Sámi pastime of reindeer herding, but was instead always politically involved in and around their hometown.

Nuorgam’s political nature and Sámi heritage eventually led her to the Sámi Council, whose headquarters are also in Utsjoki. She was actively involved in the council serving as Vice-president, and, more recently, ending a term as President in 2003.

In her 40s, the issue of most concern to Nuorgam is capacity building in indigenous communities. Towards this goal, Nuorgam travelled 200 days out of every year to regions all over the globe raising awareness of indigenous peoples, while serving as Sámi Council President.

“It is important to raise knowledge of societies... so that indigenous people have political awareness,” she says. “This is the only way they can effect change for the better.”

The Sámi Council is extremely active in international concerns. One effective project was the establishment of a radio station on the Kola Peninsula in northern Russia. It has turned out to be one of the only independent radio stations in Russia. Its focus is on Sámi and indigenous issues in the region. Recently, it broadcast a story that was ignored by national government stations,

which called attention to new legislation threatening the existence of indigenous groups in northern Russia who rely on inland fishing for subsistence.

Nuorgam rejected an offer to serve another term as Sámi Council President so she can pursue other interests. She is spending more time with her family and is studying international law at Lapland University in Rovaniemi, Finland.

“There is always a tension between the private and public responsibilities,” she says. “I asked myself if I wanted to be a private person or a public one. I think I would like to be more private now.”

She says she feels like she is on vacation after leaving her position as Council President. However, she hasn’t left the political realm entirely.

Nuorgam still sits on the Sámi Council and is Vice-president of the Sámi Association of Finland. Some vacation.

Making the Connection with Sheila Watt-Cloutier

By Meghan McKenna



Rather than listing the qualities of a circumpolar leader, you could instead simply say “Sheila Watt-Cloutier.” In the last two years, Sheila has won five international environmental awards including the Governor General’s Northern Award, the United Nations Champions of the

Earth Award and the International Environment and Development Sophie Prize. These awards recognize her passion and dedication to addressing many critical circumpolar issues including persistent organic pollutants (POPs), sustainable development, traditional ecological knowledge, Northern education and the impact of climate change on Northern regions.

Sheila’s path to becoming a circumpolar leader began in Kuujjuaq, Nunavut where she was born in 1953. She was raised traditionally on the land for 10 years before moving to southern Canada to attend school in Nova Scotia and Manitoba.

Initially, Sheila pursued a career in counselling, education and human development. However, after contemplating what she had to offer to politics as a woman, mother, counsellor and indigenous person she decided to run for the Makivik Corporation Executive. Despite losing her first election, Sheila knew that she had a unique and important perspective that needed to be represented politically. Determined, in 1995 she campaigned again and was elected Corporate Secretary.

In 1998, Sheila was voted President of Inuit Circumpolar Canada (ICC) and in 2001 persuaded states to sign the Stockholm Convention, which bans persistent organic pollutants that contaminate the Arctic food web.

In 2002, Sheila was then designated Chair of ICC becoming the international representative of the 155,000 Inuit who live in Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Chukotka. Sheila believes that she was born into politics and says that her career aspirations are the collective goals of the people she represents.

After experiencing the progress that has been made to reduce the contamination of Arctic country foods, Sheila is optimistic for the future. It is now a scientific fact, supported by traditional knowledge, that climate change is endangering the Arctic and the whole planet. The recognition of this problem by elders and scientists together is a start towards addressing the many challenges of climate change. Sheila says that we must continue to increase this connectivity and recognize that there is a human face to climate change. "When we see that as the Arctic melts, the Small Island Developing States sink. It cannot get clearer than that in terms of understanding connectivity. We must also see the connections as well as the lack of balance between unsustainable economic policies adopted by some countries, and how these policies are leading to the destruction of the entire way of life of a people, the people of the Arctic." It is because of these issues, which are both local and international, that it is important that we, as northern youth, gain the necessary tools, training and foundation to play active leadership roles in our home communities. I am grateful for my opportunity to interview Sheila

and she has certainly inspired me to continue to be involved in circumpolar affairs.

Despite international acclaim and a very long list of accomplishments Sheila is humble, wise and amiable. It is because of these personal characteristics and the strength of her culture, which she incorporates into her professional work, that she has become such a well known and admired leader. In her words, "I am able to do global work because my culture gives me the foundation and focus I need. It is through this culture that draws connections to everything that I have come to see and understand connectivity from the community level through to the globe at large." So on the advice of Shelia Watt-Cloutier, let's get connected!

Recent Events

Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) and Senior Arctic Officials (SAO) Meetings, October 10–14, 2005, in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia

A Russian Intern's Perspective

By Serge Koinov



I have never been involved in meetings like this and would like to thank the Northern Initiative Fund for its support which enabled me to attend these important meetings in Khanty-Mansiyk. The region where I live, Khanty-Mansiyk autonomous okrug, is rather

far from the big roads and big centres and we are not able to welcome many foreigners. Yet we are eager to develop the tourism industry. So it was an excellent opportunity to show off our home to people from many countries. There is not much information widely available about our region. Those who came to take part in the SDWG and SAO meetings saw that we have modern hotels, facilities and infrastructure.

At the meetings, I helped take care of foreign delegations, acting as a translator and guide. I did my best to create a good image of Khanty-Mansiyk so that our visitors would consider coming back.

I plan on letting my peers in Russia know about my experiences with the meetings and with the internship. I really want young people from Russia to know about the program.

Serge's travel was funded by the Northern Initiative Fund of the Canadian Embassy in Russia.

ICARP II Conference, November 10-12, 2005, in Copenhagen, Denmark

The International Conference on Arctic Research Planning (ICARP) II Conference was attended by some 450 participants and involved several days of meaningful discussions and exchange of ideas among scientists, researchers, government representatives and others. The goal of the conference was to build upon the past 18 months of planning and writing in the 11 working groups. The conference prepared Arctic research plans to guide international cooperation over the next 10–15 years. With the upcoming International Polar Year, the theme of the Arctic System in a Changing World took on an even greater importance. Participants agreed on the importance of the human dimension, indigenous insight and more full integration of the earth system in Arctic research. Penultimate and final drafts of the working groups will be available on the ICARP Web site at <http://www.icarp.dk> in March 2006, in time for Arctic Summit Science Week in Potsdam, Germany, March 22–29, 2006.

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