

July 2002

THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF THE ARCTIC

REPORT AND WORK PLAN FOR 2002 - 2004

INTRODUCTION

The “Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic”, an initiative of the Arctic Council, was developed to contribute to sustainable development in the Arctic. Ministers of the eight Arctic Council States endorsed this initiative in 1998 and a subsequent plan in 2000. The current goals are:

- to improve the health and well-being of children and youth of the Arctic;
- to improve the basis for sound decision-making by increasing the knowledge and understanding of sustainable development among Arctic youth and children.

Sustainable development in the circumpolar North is only achievable if sustainable development knowledge and information, both traditional knowledge and western science, is promoted and made accessible to the people of the region on an on-going basis. The next generation must be prepared to deal with issues such as those presented by environmental health risks and dangers to health brought about by socio-economic and other factors.

Progress with the three components - Health Programme, Networking Programme and the Internship Programme - is described herein. The plans for 2002 - 2004 are in keeping with the Arctic Council’s focus on capacity building. The new plans were developed at a meeting of the expert working groups of the three Programmes in Copenhagen in May 2002. Representatives were invited from member countries and Permanent Participants’ organizations. All countries and four of the Permanent Participants were represented in at least one of the Programme working groups. The collaboration of the AMAP Human Health working group in the Health Programme, of non-governmental organizations and of Observers has been invaluable and will

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continue to be sought.

The “Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic” is a capacity building initiative, and consequently responds directly to goals of the proposed Capacity Building Strategy. Various capacity building needs such as communications, indigenous participation, leadership, partnerships, and learning have been taken into account in the development of the Action Plans for each of the three Programmes. Children and youth will be involved in activities that strengthen their skills in these areas. Mentoring by elders in the Networking Programme is a significant element of capacity building and the value of having elders and youth from the same organizations on the International Networking Programme Committee should contribute to its success.

Progress has been made in each of the Programmes. However, the full participation of all countries and Permanent Participants is critical for this circumpolar initiative. The plans for the new biennium reflect the concerns of both subject matter experts and young people, many of whom are volunteering their time and resources. Although most of the activities in the Action Plan fall primarily within in the jurisdiction of one Programme, efforts are being made to increase the linkages among the Programmes. To this end, there has been a recommendation for consideration of a project that will encourage young people to research and prepare short videos on a health issue, e.g. tobacco use, substance abuse, safe sex, teenage pregnancies. The proposal involves education, peer action, the possibility of having an intern administer the project, the use of the Networking Programme web site, “On Top of the World”, for disseminating best practices, and mentoring by members of the Health Programme.

HEALTH PROGRAMME

Goal

To improve the health and well being of children and youth of the Arctic

Background

The health and well-being of children and youth are the result of many inter-related factors that include socio-economic-cultural conditions, access to health services, nutrition, bio-physical health, reproductive health, psycho-social well-being and environmental contamination. For example, links between socio-economic conditions and environmental contamination are often reflected in housing conditions, indoor air quality, exposure to contaminants in food and other materials, availability of clean water and management of sewage.

The objectives in 2000 based on the goal ‘to improve the health and well-being of children’ were:

1. examination of existing baseline data and studies in key areas that are related to the health of children and youth in the circumpolar region and identification of gaps therein;
2. assessment of processes and approaches used at international, national, regional and community levels that might provide models for actions in Arctic regions; and
3. an action plan that takes into account the results of objectives 1 and 2, the nature of specific issues, scientific and traditional knowledge as appropriate that will lead to the elimination or mitigation of problems associated with health.

Structure of the Health Component

The 2000 Work plan focussed on five key areas:

- A Socio-economic-cultural;
- B Health Services;
- C Psycho-social Well-being;
- D Bio-physical Health; and
- E Innovative approaches or models for actions to improve the well-being of youth in Arctic regions.

Indicators of the health and well-being of young people were developed, and in June 2000 were

reviewed by a Working Group of Circumpolar Health experts, for topics A to D. The experts affirmed the sustainable development principle that young people are ‘entitled to a healthy and protective life in harmony with nature’. Indicators are one useful measure of the health of children and youth in the Arctic.

Available data do not necessarily allow comparison among various Arctic States. There is a considerable amount of data available by age group and gender, but national data for different ethnic groups is not often available (and in some cases not legally reportable).

In June 2000 the Expert Group on the Health of Children and Youth of the Arctic identified the following key elements:

- ▶ Leadership and Coordination;
- ▶ Data Gathering and Assessment: Creating a culture of evidence-based decision-making;
- ▶ Capacity Building: Well-documented, effective interventions;
- ▶ Communication, Information Dissemination and Support; and
- ▶ Linkages with other groups and organizations.

Report of Current Status (2000-2002)

Leadership and Coordination

The need for an overall co-ordinator for the health programme continues. Canada has attempted to meet this leadership need through its federal Department of Health; however the challenges to circumpolar coordination and responsiveness continue. Too frequently country contacts have not been able to respond in a timely fashion, have not been given authorization or support to access data and information sources, or the contact persons have changed several times during this stage of the Programme’s implementation. However, some member states identified new country contacts in time for the May Experts meeting, other experts were identified through networks and the co-operation of members of the group bodes well for the future. While there has been and continues to be excellent cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) European Regional Office in Copenhagen, coordination between and among member states and permanent participants needs to be improved.

Data Gathering and Assessment: Creating a Culture of Evidence-based Decision-making

The Expert Group, in June 2000, had emphasized the value of the evidence-based approach as the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the health and well-being of children and youth in the Arctic. Following their deliberation and after meetings with other experts from the AMAP’s Human Health Expert Group, the basic indicators in the four indicator categories were reduced to approximately 60 (see appendix in last

report).

Following the Ministerial meeting in Barrow Alaska in October 2000, at which the Action Plan was approved, all country contacts were requested to submit data to the Canadian focal point. Several reminders and some specific requests for clarification of data sets were sent over the following months. The AMAP health experts of most circumpolar countries provided data and support for the biophysical indicators. Several of the AMAP experts were also able to provide data for the three other indicator categories (socio-economic-cultural, psycho-social, and health services), when it became clear that previously identified country contacts would not be able to supply any information.

All information received up to March 31, 2002 was tabulated and graphs were prepared by the Canadian coordinating office for evaluation by the Expert Group in May 2002. The information was organized when possible into comparisons of:

- ▶ national versus regional data;
- ▶ indigenous versus non-indigenous data;
- ▶ male versus female data; and
- ▶ WHO age groupings.

Despite significant effort to obtain information, there was a paucity of data from some countries which severely affected a circumpolar evaluation of the status and well-being of children and youth. There was also unevenness in reporting on all indicators and the Expert Group re-evaluated the utility of a large number (60) of indicators. Following extensive discussion, the Expert Group agreed to focus on the following smaller number of key indicators that could be followed prospectively:

- ▶ education
- ▶ prenatal care
- ▶ preterm birth rate
- ▶ low birth weight
- ▶ breast feeding
- ▶ immunization status
- ▶ maternal age at birth
- ▶ population demographics (less than 18 years of age)
- ▶ infant mortality rate (neo-natal and post-neonatal)
- ▶ major notifiable diseases (tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, chlamydia)
- ▶ disease incidence (diabetes, cancer)
- ▶ tobacco use
- ▶ child abuse and neglect
- ▶ unintentional injuries
- ▶ suicides.

Data for these indicators were considered to be more readily available and internationally comparable, and more consistent and suitable for countries to identify the key disparities between and among Arctic regions, ethnic groups and countries. These indicators were also found to be areas appropriate for policy recommendations to improve the health of children and youth and, thus, a sustainable future for Arctic people.

The detailed results for the revised set of indicators is provided in Appendix X. The original indicators that were not included in the new list of 15 key indicators (see above) are still considered important; however they will not be a major focus of work in the next biennium due to the effort that would be required to collect and validate the information. The Expert Group also proposed a) a small number of modified or new indicators (also Appendix X) for which data could be collected and evaluated in the next biennium, and b) the development of a policy and protocol for monitoring changes in health status over time.

There was strong consensus among the Expert Group that significant improvements in the health status of children and youth in many Arctic communities have taken place. This consensus is based on both indicator information and field observations by practicing health professionals. It is not useful to emphasize the current disparities between health status of indigenous and marginalized populations with the overall national health status. Recommendations for policy changes should recognize the resilience of indigenous communities, the importance of empowerment and the huge gains that can be made by building on positive momentum within the target population.

Capacity Building: Well Documented, Effective Interventions

The June 2000 Action Plan called for the identification and collection of well documented, low-technology, innovative approaches or best practices in four priority areas to improve the health and well-being of children and youth of the Arctic:

- psycho-social health/suicide prevention
- maternal and infant health
- alcohol and substances
- respiratory and other common infectious diseases including tuberculosis and prevention of tobacco use.

Only three countries and no Permanent Participants responded to requests for these models (see Appendix Y). This activity is still considered important, and concerted effort will be made to collect more case studies of this nature.

Although a symposium had been planned for the fall of 2001 to communicate and validate the findings from the analysis of the health data and to showcase best practice models, this event was deferred as insufficient input from member states and Permanent Participants was provided

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under the 2000 Action Plan. A symposium or similar event is proposed for the next biennium. To maximize the dissemination of the information to Arctic populations and other key stakeholders, and to minimize costs, every effort will be made to link this with another significant circumpolar health event

Communication, Information Dissemination and Support

The proposed internet searchable data base of best practice models, collected papers and other materials that may be of interest to communities was not created, as the materials for inclusion were not completed during the past biennium. This is an activity that is proposed for implementation in the 2002-2004 period, and will be coordinated with the work of the Networking Programme.

Once collection is completed, encouragement and support will be given to member states to promote pilot projects in some or all of the four priority areas or to extend existing projects to other locations within the country.

Linkages with other groups and organizations

Experts at the May 2002 meeting of the Initiative affirmed the importance of capacity building and the development of effective partnerships. Participants applauded the work of the Human Health Expert Group of AMAP and the contribution of the WHO to the children and youth initiative. Other strategic linkages and partnerships will benefit from further strengthening. Current and future partnerships could include:

(a) for the Arctic Council,

- Infectious disease project
- Telemedicine Project
- Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Project on Food Security (Russia)
- Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic (SLICA)
- University of the Arctic
- Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP)
- Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA)
- Arctic Human Development Report
- Proposed Capacity Building Initiative

(b) for other Agencies,

- European Union
- World Health Organization
- Barents Council

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Council of Baltic Sea States
Nordic Council of Ministers
Northern Forum
Other Arctic Council observers
Other UN Agencies: UNICEF, ILO, UNESCO
International Union for Circumpolar health

Recommendations for the Health Programme for 2002-2004

It is recommended that Ministers:

1. Place their primary policy focus for improving the health and well-being of children and youth in the Arctic on:

- (a) the long term gain that comes from primary, secondary and post-secondary education and training;
- (b) ‘positive’ promotion models in the Arctic which embrace community wellness, the family and early childhood education;
- (c) protecting and supporting the pregnant family; and
- (d) empowerment of communities to act and take responsibility (through elders, youth, local resources and cultural vehicles).

2. Provide vigorous support for:

- (a) the collection of national, regional and community best practices models;
- (b) fundamental and applied health research (environmental, social, cultural, medical, psycho-social and socio-economic) in the circumpolar region that will enhance understanding of current and emerging issues in the Arctic related to the health and well-being of children;
- (c) protection of the Arctic population from the effects of environmental contaminants as described by the AMAP’s Human health Expert Group;
- (d) coordination and integration of indicator development and utilization among and between jurisdictions and agencies to increase comparability and power of the indicators data; and
- (e) greater cooperation between universities, governmental and non-governmental agencies

and institutes and indigenous people through Permanent Participants in data gathering and evaluation.

3. Encourage the gathering of indicator data from the five northern regions of Russia on the health and well-being of children and youth.

HEALTH ACTION PLAN 2002 - 2004

- ▶ Support a coordinated approach by identifying contacts with authority and resources to meet the commitments agreed to by Arctic Council Ministers
- ▶ Collect key health data, in accordance with international standards, and continue epidemiologic assessment to support recommendations for policy action, and develop a policy and protocols for monitoring of trends in health status over time.
- ▶ Collect and share examples of innovative approaches, pilot projects or best practices which could form the basis for new policy and programming across circumpolar regions.
- ▶ Strengthen capacity building through information dissemination and enhanced communication through the use of the Arctic Council websites and international conferences/symposia
- ▶ Strengthen linkages, integration and co-operation among governmental and non-governmental organizations whose interests relate to the health of children and youth and sustainable communities in the circumpolar region.

The 2002-2004 Action Plan for the Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic continues to affirm the health of children and youth as a major element of sustainable development. Only children and youth with a hope for their future life, and who are empowered and participate in decision-making affecting their own lives, will effect sustainability.

Work undertaken through this Action Plan, together with strong ministerial policy support, should increase the gains already visible in health indicators in several parts of the circumpolar region

This Action Plan provides a framework and details recommended actions for implementing the broad recommendations arising from the Health Programme Expert Group meeting in Copenhagen, 4-7 May 2002. It also takes the next step towards taking the work of the Expert Group and organizing it into a coordinated and integrated design which will provide direction for action over the next two years.

The Action Plan reiterates the importance of strong project support by all Arctic countries, including financial and human resources, in order to produce meaningful output upon which recommendations for actions to reduce or minimize health disparities can be based.

ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK 2002 - 2004

Time Line	Strategies	Actions	Budget/2 years
Oct 2002 - Sept 2004	<p>Leadership and Coordination</p> <p>Continue with overall coordination of the Health Programme by Canada, with each member state and Permanent Participant appointing a single contact person responsible for liaison with the coordinator</p>	<p>Assure project sustainability by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordination of data collection and assessment. 2. Coordination of the collection of innovative approaches or best practices 3. Providing leadership in planning and implementing the dissemination of all material related to the Health Programme 	\$200K USD*
Oct 2002 - Sept 2004	<p>Data Gathering and Assessment</p> <p>Coordinated data collection, analysis and longerm monitoring</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue data acquisition from Member States, Permanent Participants, and from WHO and other relevant databases 2. Ensure that current and future data indicators are consistent with international standards. 3. Epidemiologic assessment of health data to inform policy decisions. 4. Develop policy and protocols for monitoring trends in health status over time 	<p>Costs of obtaining and submit data to be covered by each member State ***</p> <p>\$200K USD*</p>
Oct 2002- Sept 2004	<p>Capacity Building</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a comprehensive inventory of innovative models available across all 	Each country will be responsible for its own costs of

Time Line	Strategies	Actions	Budget/2 years
	Well documented, effective, low cost/low tech interventions of innovative approaches, pilot projects or best practice models which can be shared to enhance and support communities' capacity to deliver effective programmes and support policy change at a national or regional level	countries/circumpolar regions 2. Strengthen communication and networking among and between Member States and Permanent Participants through the officially designated country and PP contacts, and through informal channels. 3. International event/symposium in 2003	obtaining and submitting the material. \$550K USD**
Oct 2002- Sept 2004	Communication, Information and Support Strengthen communications and networking	1. Implement an internet clearinghouse of innovative models on the Arctic Council/Networking Programme website. 2. Member States encouraged to support/extend programs or pilot projects in areas covered in the broader recommendations	
Ongoing	Linkages	Sustain partnerships with relevant organizations/agencies	

TOTAL**\$950K USD**

* Canada's contribution as lead organization.

** Cost based on travel, translation and support. In-kind facilities of the WHO Regional Office in Copenhagen or other supporting organization may be used. Each country will be responsible for the participation of representatives from its national jurisdiction and Permanent Participants. Overhead costs may be recovered through a registration fee.

*** Estimated at \$40K USD per country

NETWORKING PROGRAMME

BACKGROUND

1998 - 2000

The long term objective of engaging and empowering youth was supported by the 1998 - 2000 Networking Programme in its efforts to create tools and foster youth and intergenerational events that would support the sharing of information, traditional ecological knowledge and experiences relevant to sustainable development and health in the circumpolar North.

The initial work plan for the Networking Programme was prepared in Toronto at a meeting of international experts in March 1999. Each member state and Permanent Participant was invited to submit two names - one elder (wise, experienced person) and one youth - to form part of the international committee. *Learning for a Sustainable Future*, a Canadian non-governmental organization, was contracted to lead the Networking team.

This network is expected to create a forum in which children and youth will:

- ▶ build a sense of identity, solidarity and pride;
- ▶ grow to understand the similarities among northern traditions and cultures and respect differences among them;
- ▶ share ideas and hopes for the future;
- ▶ identify activities which will contribute to the sustainability of a healthy environment and the well-being of their local community, and support each other in creativity and working towards change;
- ▶ participate in existing community and youth programmes and, where appropriate, create new groups focused on specific interests; and
- ▶ learn and practise the skills of planning and decision-making and the values of commitment and co-operation.

The first step in its plan was to set a vision of the future that would lead to a consideration of what must be changed, what must be preserved and what must be done to achieve the vision.

The design of “On Top of the World”, the website of the initiative, provided the basis of a virtual network as it was expected that the primary means of communication among network members would be the Internet.

Of considerable value and potential use was a Directory of Youth Programming prepared by Benoit Associates, a Canadian consultant on childhood development issues. The Directory covered programmes for mainstream youth as well as youth at risk. The examples include peer-based or peer helper programmes, intergenerational programmes, community-based programmes, new technology programmes, arts-based programming, adventure programming, mentorship programmes, internship programmes, micro finance, service programmes, social marketing programmes, and “edutainment”.

2000 - 2002

An elder and a youth from each member State and Permanent Participant were invited to a Networking workshop in Copenhagen in June 2000. Fifteen people attended the workshop. A review of the work of the Programme and consideration of work being done by other Arctic organizations (Nordic Council of Ministers, Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Northern Forum) as well as by Arctic states and the Permanent Participants, resulted in the identification of projects for the next biennium. The intention was to focus on educational activities through sharing of ideas and experience pertaining to sustainable development, adapting best practices to different environments, strengthening northern cultures, and encouraging entrepreneurship among youth. Proposals included:

- i. Creation of a web site dedicated to the interests of children and youth living in the circumpolar region;
- ii. Development of a database directory to facilitate the exchange of curricula, projects, programs, resources and materials appropriate to the teaching of sustainable development in the Arctic;
- iii Organization of a camp sponsored by the Saami Council that would bring together youth from throughout the circumpolar region in the summer of 2002. A video of this event was also proposed;
- iv The organization of an art contest focusing on a theme related to Rio +10 with the winning entries being organized for exhibit at the WSSD conference in South Africa in 2002.

It is anticipated that the International Networking Committee will continue to work with the coordinator to implement the program. It is defining terms of reference and has identified the following as important to their mandate:

1. Further engage youth, both in their opinions and their involvement;
2. Become more familiar with each country's and organization's institutions and governance;
3. Foster a greater understanding of sustainable development among Arctic children and youth;

4. Establish better relations and partnerships with governments and identify where government priorities coincide with "Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic" objectives;
5. Utilize and encourage the involvement of media in Children and Youth projects.

The Committee has expressed the desire to collaborate with Arctic Council Working Groups such as AMAP, CAFF, and PAME, in the participation and mentoring of children and youth in the projects of these committees. To this end, the committee has undertaken to write a letter, ratified by all members, expressing to the Chairs and membership of these Committees the hope that children and youth can be included in a very active and engaged way, in the work that they are doing. The Committee also wishes to express its willingness to co-operate with these Working Groups in developing strategies to achieve this goal.

PROGRESS REPORT

1. The International Networking Committee was reconvened via e-mail in the summer of 2001 after an extensive campaign to enlist additional elders and youth representatives. To date, only Iceland and Sweden have chosen not to participate, although efforts are ongoing to fill these vacancies. The Committee operates primarily via e-mail and is working effectively despite the limitations of the medium, the geographic remoteness of many of the members and limited resources to support the work of the Committee.
2. An assessment by the International Networking Committee members of the preliminary design of "On Top of the World" after its first year of operation led to constructive recommendations for its continued improvement and future development. While funding limitations have made it difficult to support these changes or expand existing features, the site has been upgraded and enhanced with the assistance of a school and a voluntary Information Technology group. Plans to relocate the web site to the Arctic Council server are also under negotiation and should be completed by October 2002. The website will provide an opportunity for children and youth of the Arctic to register themselves as part of the network, find out about the Arctic Council, discuss ideas and share opinions, exchange news, report on projects and activities, learn about Arctic cultures and traditions, and find out more about sustainable development.
3. The Learning Exchange involves the development of a compendium of best practices for teaching and learning about sustainable development in the Arctic. The directory provides basic descriptions, costs of acquisition, and identification of project co-ordinators or locations where material might be obtained. Where needed, member states are responsible for arranging for translation into other languages. While funding has again placed limitations on the scope of this project, its addition to "On Top of the World" will represent a useful and important resource for teachers and youth-serving agencies in the Arctic.

4. The Saami International Youth Camp 2002, held in Finnmark proved to be a great success. The 10 day event consisted of both a coastal and inland program for 20 circumpolar youth aged 15 to 21. Enthusiasm surrounding the event was high. The International Networking Committee undertook a broad based selection process in support of the camp, and resulted in a diverse, high calibre representation of northern youth. The Saami also undertook the production of a video of the camp which will be made available through the "On Top of the World" web site. The video could also be broadcast on local or national television channels. It will be a way of sharing traditional knowledge and raise the profile of the Arctic Council. It proved to be a real challenge for the young people to pay for their travel costs, but the benefits of the experience are undeniable.
5. Despite efforts to secure sponsorship for the art contest focussing on sustainable development and the Rio process, funding has not been forthcoming. The anticipated collaboration with UNEP to display the exhibits at the WSSD conference in South Africa will therefore not be possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The International Networking Committee will continue to select projects according to the following criteria:

- advancement of sustainable development in the Arctic;
- involvement of at least three countries and/or Permanent Participants;
- youth involvement in implementation of the project; and
- mechanisms for the funding of any initiative, project or event clearly identified by the proponents.

While the Networking Program has realized modest success in its first two years of operation, it has become apparent that future projects must also have an identifiable leader (country or Permanent Participant) that is responsible and accountable for the development, funding and implementation of the project if they are to fulfil the objectives and achieve the level of impact intended.

PLAN FOR 2002 - 2004

Objective: To foster and create cultural exchanges for youth

- i. International youth program for reindeer herders in Russia will involve the exchange of traditional ecological knowledge of reindeer and herding, the exchange of information regarding modern herd management, and development of a reindeer herders' guide.

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Funding: Leadership (RAIPON and Russia)

Travel and registration will be the responsibility of participants.

ii. International Summer Youth Camp to be located in Alaska will focus on the exchange of cultural and traditional ecological knowledge of Alaskan indigenous peoples.

Funding: Leadership - ICC Alaska

Travel and registration will be the responsibility of participants.

Objective: to educate Arctic youth on sustainable development by engaging them in “hands-on” learning opportunities.

i Seminar to showcase capacity building workshops developed by Arctic Council members and Permanent Participants to facilitate the sharing of successful programs. Propose workshops to be presented will include: Management of international projects (Norway), Consensus building and conflict resolution (ICC Canada), Traditional ecological knowledge (Saami Council).

Funding: Leadership - ICC Alaska

Seminar - ICC Alaska

Workshops (Norway, ICC Canada and Saami Council, etc.)

ii Identification and exchange of information on summer job programs within member countries and organizations with a view to encouraging the exchange of circumpolar youth for useful activities. A letter to summer job program managers, prepared and endorsed by the International Networking Committee, would facilitate the creation of these exchange opportunities.

Funding: Leadership - ICC Greenland

Travel costs to be borne by participants.

Objective: to encourage educational systems to adopt and utilize tools and programs relating to sustainable development.

i Promotion of outreach programs such as GLOBE and the New POPs through the Networking Programme web site, “On Top of the World”.

Funding: Leadership - dependent on the programs.

Project - to be determined.

ii Preparation of a youth friendly resource book on sustainable development activities, projects and organizations targeted to high schools.

Funding: Leadership - ICC Alaska

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Project - ICC Alaska and others

iii Continue the development of “On Top of the World” and a materials exchange database for teachers.

Funding: Leadership - Canada

Web site development -Tampere Technological Institute (Finland), Government of Nunavut

Objective: to educate youth in traditional businesses such as reindeer herding, in sustainable development and the stewardship of the environment,

i. To extend the ability of children and youth to access internet-based programs described on “On Top of the World” and other internet-based resources. The project would include development of between five and ten Youth Environmental Information Centres in northern Russia. Given the importance of Internet access as a basis for many of its projects, the International Networking Committee members have endorsed this initiative to allow equality of opportunity and participation of all children and youth of the Arctic and to facilitate exchange between Russian children and youth and those of other circumpolar nations.

Funding: Leadership - RAIPON, Russia

Project - Russia and philanthropic organizations

ii. Internet Salmon Project. Using the “Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic” web site, Top of the World, as the basic tool to convene a “community of interest” around the subject of salmon, this project will provide for the collection and exchange of information and data, best practices and projects including traditional ecological knowledge, salmon harvesting practices, the health of populations and the enhancement of habitat.

Funding: Leadership - Arctic Athabaskan Council

Project - Existing funds

ARCTIC COUNCIL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

In 1999-2000, the International Institute for Sustainable Development in co-operation with the Secretariat for the “Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic” provided four northern Canadian youth between the ages of 19 and 30 with a six-month international work experience and training program, two in the Arctic and two in African countries. The success of this pilot project led the Arctic Council Ministers to endorse a revised Arctic Council Internship Program which now seeks to involve youth from other circumpolar countries. During the past biennium a second phase of the pilot project was implemented with four internships in Arctic countries. The goal of the proposed program is to facilitate the exchange of youth between circumpolar countries in order to provide them with practical work experience abroad in areas related to sustainable development.

In December 2001, the International Institute for Sustainable Development was contracted to undertake the following activities in support of this initiative:

- i. Preparation of a working paper which reviews the experiences of northern youth in international research and work experience programs. The goal was to identify best practices and tools for supporting young northerners in these programs and to assess their value in promoting sustainable development.
- ii. Expansion of a directory of current international research and work experience opportunities for youth within the Arctic Council’s member countries.
- iii. Development of a directory of potential host organizations willing and able to accept participants between April 2001 and March 2002 and in the future.
- iv. Formation and co-ordination of an International Internship Co-ordinating Committee to facilitate the exchange of circumpolar youth in work experience/internship programs.

To date the following tasks have been accomplished:

1. Working Paper

The goal of the Working Paper is to review the experiences of northern youth in international research and work experience programs. Canadian youth from northern Canada who have formerly participated in international internship opportunities have been contacted and interviewed. Efforts are now being made to identify and contact youth from other circumpolar

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countries who have participated in an internship/work exchange program. It appears that few northern youth have participated in programs of this type.

2. Directory of International Research and Work Experience Programs in the Circumpolar Countries

This directory is an important step in developing the funding model for the Arctic Council Internship Program, as support will in large part be based on existing study and work abroad programs in member countries. The directory is divided into two sections; one which describes programs specifically for northern youth and a second which focuses on programs with an Arctic focus that are open to all youth from a particular nation or sector.

An Internet search has been conducted to identify potential programs suitable for inclusion in the directory. These organizations have either been contacted and a draft copy of the directory has been distributed to members of the Arctic Council International Internship Committee.

3. Directory of Host Organizations

Host organizations for the Arctic Council Internship Program may be non-governmental organizations, private sector companies, business associations, indigenous organizations, educational institutions, research organizations, public health institutions, national governments, or international organizations. All host organizations are required to work in areas that contribute to sustainable development.

The International Institute Sustainable Development has contacted a variety of organizations in each Arctic State regarding their interest in serving as host organizations. Several of these organizations have already expressed interest in hosting interns. More organizations will be contacted during the upcoming month as the International Institute for Sustainable Development develops a comprehensive list of potential placement locations.

4. Arctic Council International Internship Co-ordinating Committee (IICC)

The objectives of the International Internship Co-ordinating Committee and the roles and responsibilities of committee members have been defined. The mandate of the IICC is:

- to facilitate the exchange of youth between circumpolar countries in order to provide them with practical work experience abroad in areas related to sustainable development.

Each Arctic country and Permanent Participant has been requested to nominate a representative. Each participating country is responsible for funding its own participation in the Co-ordinating Committee and encouraged to access funding to support its Arctic interns. Currently, the confirmed participants are Canada, Finland, USA, RAIPON and the Arctic Athabaskan *Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic Report and Action Plan 2002-2004*

Council. Denmark and Norway have indicated an interested in continuing participation. The Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) will select interns in the near future, and both CIMO and Barentsplus may be in a position to fund two Russian interns.

Activities of the committee members will include:

- Identifying potential host organizations in their country.
- Sharing information on best practices and lessons learned through use of a listserv.
- Tracking the number, activities and post-intern positions of Arctic Interns in their programs.
- Forwarding the names of interns and the results of their experiences to members of the International Internship Committee.
Co-ordinating material for analysis and inclusion in a biennial report submitted to the Arctic Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Northern young people will need to have a strong command of sustainable development issues to work effectively across national boundaries and to make informed decisions about the environment and development problems facing their region. Professional work experience with organizations in the Arctic region will open the doors for them to make a difference in their communities and on the world stage.

PLAN FOR 2002 - 2004

- Co-ordinate and administer the Internship Programme for 2002 - 2004 including the identification and screening of potential host organizations/employers willing to accept youth from other circumpolar countries, normally for 6 month placements; financing or locating funding for work/training experience for 1 - 4 northern youth per country and Permanent Participant; administration of the recruitment and application process; and ensuring that interns are adequately prepared and suitably placed.
- Explore opportunities for marketing the internship and exchange programs with other Arctic organizations such as the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Northern Forum, Nordic Council of Ministers, University of the Arctic and the European Union.
- Encourage placement of interns with secretariats of the Arctic Council Working Groups and Arctic Council Observers.

- Establish Internet linkages between the sites of member countries that describe existing Internship and Exchange programs.

BUDGET

- Cost per participant: Between \$8000 USD and \$12,000 funded by member countries' organizations (covers insurance, visa, basic living expenses and some administrative costs). In most cases the cost of transportation will be funded by the intern. Host organizations provide both cash and in-kind contributions.
- Other costs: International co-ordination - \$18,000 USD
International Internship Committee meeting - \$25,000 USD
Travel and accommodation of Internship Committee members - in-kind.

ARCTIC COUNCIL INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

1. Goal of the Internship Component

To enhance awareness of sustainable development issues affecting the North among young future northern leaders and help them to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitude needed to address sustainable development issues in their community.

Objectives:

To provide northern youth with opportunities to gain practical work experience abroad in areas related to sustainable development in the circumpolar North.

To provide northern youth with the tools to play a leadership role in their community with respect to addressing sustainable development issues.

To provide youth with self-confidence, leadership and communication skills, and broaden their understanding of global issues.

To strengthen linkages among Arctic Council countries.

2. Background

Key to achieving sustainable development in the circumpolar North, among others, are: 1) the promotion and accessibility in the North of sustainable development knowledge and information, including both traditional knowledge and western science; 2) awareness among people outside the North of the impact of development and other activities on the North; and 3) the capacity of the next generation of leaders to address sustainable development issues in their communities in order to make them more sustainable.

Hence, an initiative that engages and empowers youth will contribute to sustainable development now and in the future. The proposed International Circumpolar Internship Programme addresses these issues by providing practical international work experiences to northern youth which will expose them to new ideas and different cultures, and allow them to develop the knowledge, skills and attitude that will help them to play an effective role in fostering sustainable development in their communities.

While numerous international opportunities are available to young people in general (e.g. work exchanges, internships, university exchanges such as AIESEC which runs an international Programme for student work exchanges and the American Field Service Intercultural Programme), few of the existing programmes target the specific needs and capacity building of northern youth and few concentrate on sustainable development or on youth who are out of school and/or unemployed. For example, the Northern Forum internships focus on international relations and are restricted to graduate students. Moreover, the funding structures of most internship programmes tend to favour people living in larger, more populous centres. The advantage of the proposed Programme is its focus on the specific needs of northern youth and the account taken of the realities faced by these youth.

In 1999-2000, a pilot internship project was successfully undertaken by the International Institute of Sustainable Development (IISD), a non-governmental organization that advances policy recommendations to achieve sustainable development. IISD in co-operation with the secretariat for the “Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic”, conducted the project with four youth from northern Canada. The project was funded by Canada and provided graduates between the ages of 21 and 30 from diverse backgrounds with international work experience and training. The Programme began with a two-week training session at IISD in Winnipeg, Canada. The session focused on global sustainable development issues and policies, leadership building, cross cultural issues, Internet tools, communication skills and country specific briefings. Following the training, participants were placed with host organizations in both the North and the South (Stockholm Environment Institute, the World Wildlife Fund in Norway and the International Red Cross in Zimbabwe and Swaziland) for six-month work terms. The Programme concluded with a one-week debriefing session at IISD. The debriefing allowed participants to reflect upon their experiences and work together to identify and develop means of transferring new ideas and knowledge towards their future work in this field.

The interns made a strong contribution to their host organizations. At the same time, participants gained or enhanced the following skills:

- Awareness of global issues and exposure to new cultures, values and attitudes were increased;
- Leadership, problem solving, communication and teamwork skills;
- Organizational, time management and logistical skills were enhanced, including the development and execution of work plans and reports;
- Internet skills were strengthened through the development of web products;
- Understanding of ways in which communities become involved in sustainable development issues was expanded;
- Language skills were improved;
- Adaptability and flexibility were improved.

These new skills are being applied in their home communities. These former interns are now employed by the Northwest Territories Community Mobilization Partnership and Job Development Strategy, the Nunavut Legislative Assembly and the Northern Manufacturers' Association.

Based on the successful results of the pilot programme, the Programme proposed for the future has an expanded scope that includes young people from other Member Countries and Permanent Participants in an Arctic Council Internship Programme.

3. Expected Results

- Core of young people able to contribute to sustainable development in their own communities;
- Increased knowledge of global environmental and development issues and exposure to new cultures, values and attitudes, thus enabling them to work more effectively at the local, regional or national level;
- Strengthened leadership, decision-making, problem-solving, organizational, project management and communication skills;
- Personal development through living and working abroad and an enhanced understanding of different cultures, languages and circumstances;
- Application of what has been learned to future professional activities;
- Host organizations that are exposed to new ideas and approaches provided by young dynamic northerners;
- Host organizations that benefit from the services of a qualified inexpensive human resource;
- Greater capacity in the North to participate in the new political and economic structures;
- Directory of Programmes and opportunities available in Arctic Council countries to Northern youth for the purpose of international internships, exchanges, and research projects related to the field of sustainable development (e.g. via the Internet).

4. Programme Description

- 6 to 12 month placements in a country other than the participant's country of origin (all or a portion of the internship must be spent abroad);

- Internships can take place in any type of organization (e.g. private sector, NGO, international organization, educational institution, band council, etc.) that deals with issues pertaining to sustainable development;
- The annual target is a minimum of one participant per Arctic Council member country and Permanent Participant - 14 participants annually.

5. Eligibility Criteria

- Participants will be citizens or permanent residents of Arctic Council member countries (in the case of Canada, Russia, and the USA, interns must be from the region defined by the country as the North);
- Participants will normally be 30 years of age and under. (Exceptions to this guideline may be authorized by a member country);
- Educational level required will depend upon the work assignment and will take into account differing national and regional member country circumstances. (In the pilot project the minimum level was a university degree or college diploma.)

6. Programme Partners

The following Arctic Council member countries and Permanent Participants will have the opportunity to be involved in the project: Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, United States of America, and the Permanent Participants which are currently the International Aleut Association, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the Saami Council, the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, the Arctic Athabaskan Council and the Gwich'in Council International.

Host organizations can be non-governmental organizations, private sector companies, business associations, indigenous organizations, educational institutions, research organizations, public health institutions, national governments, or international organizations. They are required to work in areas that contribute to sustainable development.

A co-ordinator will administer the Internship Programme.

Linkages

Linkages of the Programme with other organizations has already been proven. Following are some potential links in the future:

- a) The Health and the Networking Programmes of the "Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic" have identified the Internship Programme as an important aspect of their work.

b) It is expected that other Arctic Council Working Groups will identify potential internship opportunities in their projects.

c) Possible partnership arrangements or possible internships in other organizations (e.g. Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Nordic Council of Ministers) are foreseen.

d) Internationally, the World Health Organization (WHO) has already offered a placement for an intern. The plan is to extend this kind of cooperation to UN agencies and international organizations such as the World Conservation Union (IUCN), World Wildlife Fund, etc.

Proposed Associate Programmes

Agencies and organizations that already have internship programmes will be invited to be associated with the Arctic Council Internship Programme. Criteria for associate membership will include having a northern focus and relevance to sustainable development. Potential candidates are the following existing Programmes:

Finnish Career Development Programme

Youth International - Human Resources Development Canada

Youth International Internship Programme - Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada

Nunavut Youth Abroad Programme (Canada)

AIIESEC

Association with other organizations will enhance awareness of related activities and approaches, and provide an opportunity to complement other Programmes.

7. Programme Management Structure

The Chair and Co-ordinator will be initially in Canada. An international Co-ordinating Committee will be formed with representation from the Arctic Council member countries and Permanent Participants.

Each participating country will be responsible for funding its participation in the Co-ordinating Committee and its own internship participants.

Permanent Participants will endeavour to access relevant funding Programmes in the countries where their members reside.

Responsibilities of the Co-ordinator

- Coordinate overall activities of the Programme;
- Organize international committee meetings and events;

- Act as primary contact for Arctic Council member and Permanent Participant representatives;
- Gather and disseminate information on Internship Programme progress and activities;
- Report to chairman of the initiative on the “Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic” in readiness for reports to the Sustainable Development Working Group;
- Maintain a directory of Programmes and opportunities available to northern youth;
- Collect information on potential host organizations and distribute to Co-ordinating Committee members;
- Enrol associate Programmes and serve as a clearinghouse for information through website containing internship information; and
- Conduct an evaluation of the Programme every two years.

Responsibilities of Sponsoring Organizations

- Find host organizations interested in participating in the project and submit their names to the Co-ordinator;
- Submit names of domestic potential host organizations to the Secretariat;
- Recruit interns according to eligibility criteria established for the Programme;
- Ensure interns’ visas, accommodation and personal support needs are met;
- Develop agreements with interns to ensure funds are used appropriately and that employers hosting interns obtain the expected results from the internship;
- Provide interns with adequate pre-departure briefing and orientation;
- Ensure internships involve full-time work for a minimum of 6 months and a maximum of 12 months;
- Coordinate activities with host organizations;
- Ensure objectives of the Programme are met;
- Take reasonable precautions to ensure interns have a safe and secure workplace free from harassment;
- Provide in-kind contributions of office space, administrative support, etc;
- Provide the Secretariat with contact information for intern and host organization, along with a description of the work plan, as well as a final report upon completion of the internship; and
- Ensure appropriate follow up upon completion of project, as deemed advisable by the funder.

Responsibilities of Host Organizations

- Participate in the selection of the intern;
- Provide full-time work experience for 6-12 months;
- Provide the necessary office space and equipment (e.g. telephone, computer);
- Provide cash and/or in-kind contribution toward the internship;
- Assist intern in locating appropriate, low-cost accommodation;
- Develop a work plan in conjunction with the sponsoring organization and/or the intern;

- Help the sponsoring organization obtain a visa for the intern, if needed;
- Orientate the participant on organizational policies, administration, programmes and the scope of the work placement including assignments, responsibilities and schedules;
- Provide opportunities for the intern to attend staff and/or community meetings or workshops to promote their personal and professional development;
- Ensure the intern is provided with adequate supervision and guidance throughout the internship; and
- Submit progress reports during and after the internship, and respond to surveys, if applicable.

Host organizations will fill in an application form before they are accepted. The review of applications will be based on the terms of reference, support for the intern in their placement, and the stability of the host organization.

Responsibilities of Interns

- Contribute towards the cost of the internship; the Sponsoring Organizations will determine the extent to which the interns may need to raise funds for their participation in the project;
- Participate in a pre-departure briefing;
- Carry out the tasks outlined for their internship;
- Respect the duration of the internship;
- Fulfil the terms of their internship agreement; and
- Submit progress reports during and after the internship to the Sponsoring Organization.

8. Evaluation

A strong emphasis will be placed on monitoring and evaluation in order to ensure that difficulties can be addressed in a timely way and that all parties involved in the Programme are satisfied with the outcome. The evaluation process will include an annual review to determine what improvements or changes are needed for the following year. In addition to the attention that must be paid to costs, evaluations will include:

- Personal assessments of new or enhanced skills / knowledge gained through the experience
- Assessment from the host organizations of the benefits derived from the internship
- Surveys of former participants concerning their post-internship volunteer and professional activities related to sustainable development