

Pan-Arctic Report

GENDER EQUALITY

IN THE ARCTIC 3

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PHASE

3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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Foreword

Gender equality is a fundamental component of sustainable development. As an area of emphasis for Iceland, both in terms of domestic and foreign policy, it was an obvious choice to include gender equality as one of the priority issues of Iceland's Chairmanship program in the Arctic Council in 2019-2021.

Under the auspices of the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group, Iceland has led the Gender Equality in the Arctic project from its inception in 2013. The first phase of the project produced the Gender Equality in the Arctic – Current Realities, Future Challenges conference in Akureyri, Iceland in 2014 and a conference report published in 2015. The second phase was focused on the development of a circumpolar network of experts and an online platform. I am proud to present this ambitious report as a result of the third phase of the GEA project.

The Arctic is going through rapid ecological, social and economic changes. However, it is by no means a uniform region and these changes affect the people of the Arctic in different ways depending on a variety of factors, including gender. The effects of climate change may affect an Indigenous woman in Fort Yukon, Alaska in a very different way than a non-Indigenous woman in Rovaniemi, Finland, or an Icelandic man in Akureyri.

The Arctic Council is in a key position to encourage research and action to improve knowledge about gender equality. Across all chapters of this report, the need for gender-based analysis and gender mainstreaming is identified as a necessary strategy to promote gender equality. Consistent and comparable data is required for understanding realities and inequalities across regions, countries, sectors, genders and peoples. Informed policymaking is a key element in a sustainable future for the Arctic.

I would like to thank the project partners and the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group, not least the Permanent Participants, for their support and cooperation. I would also like to thank the many authors, co-authors, reviewers and sponsors who have contributed to the report.



*Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson,
Minister for Foreign Affairs Iceland*

Partners and Sponsors



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We would like to thank the Editorial Committee for their guidance and direction throughout the process and the SDWG's Social, Economic, and Cultural Expert Group (SECEG) for the time and effort they have put into reviewing and advising at different stages of the process. We would also like to thank our Youth Advisory Group for their valuable input and reviews. There would be no report without our lead authors, to whom we are eternally grateful for their hard work in researching, coordinating, and writing the chapters and for their patience and engagement in endless meetings and consultations. Thank you also to all the many contributors to the chapters, without whom this report would not have been what it is.

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Work on this report was managed and coordinated by the GEA Team at IACN in Akureyri which includes our excellent research assistants who were instrumental in gathering and processing data and information for the chapters and without whom this report would have been much poorer. We would also like to thank Jónas Þorbergsson at Fínlína for his work and collaboration in designing the report and Timothy Heleniak and Justine Ramage at Nordregio for providing the report with maps and data.

Last but not least, we would like to thank the Arctic Council Chairmanship team at the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs for their trust, guidance, and continued support throughout the whole project.

The Gender Equality in the Arctic Project

Gender equality in the Arctic is highly relevant to the agenda and role of the Arctic Council (the Council) and its Sustainable Development Working Group, which have emphasised gender equality in previous projects and initiatives. The importance of issues of gender and diversity has become increasingly evident, the latest example being Iceland's emphasis on gender issues during its Council Chairmanship.

GEA highlights the importance of recognising and appreciating diversity in terms of discourses, gender, Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, governance, education, economies, social realities, sustainability, and balanced participation in leadership and decision making, in both the public and private sectors. The purpose and objective of GEA has from the beginning been to raise visibility and understanding of the importance of gender issues in the Arctic, to identify priorities and concrete strategies to increase diversity and gender balance in policy-making and decision-making processes, and to provide information that facilitates sustainable policymaking in the future.

GEA III is a product of the Arctic Council Sustainable Development Working Group, and a Chairmanship project during the Icelandic Chairmanship 2019–2021.

A Report on Gender Equality in the Arctic

A major component of GEA Phase III has been to develop a report on gender. It pulls together material, information, and expertise to provide an overview on gender-related issues in the Arctic and contributes to filling the knowledge gaps on this subject in the region. This report is a product of phase III of the Gender Equality in the Arctic (GEA) project, which is an international collaborative project dating back to 2013 that focuses on gender equality in the Arctic. The GEA III report seeks to identify emerging issues, priorities, and concrete strategies that support gender balance and increased diversity.

The primary intended audience for this report is policymakers in the Arctic region. It is also a resource for those interested in gender issues in the Arctic, including Arctic inhabitants and researchers. We hope that additional stakeholders from the private sector will appreciate the relevance of the report to their work.

The report does not claim to be comprehensive, but it is a step forward in strengthening the knowledge base and understanding required for developing policies that foster resilient and thriving communities.

Engagement and Review Process

A vital component of developing the GEA III report was the engagement process, in terms of identifying priority themes to include in the report, producing the text, and during the review and feedback process. Significant efforts were made to ensure inclusion and transparency during the process by actively soliciting feedback from peers and interested parties. The Project Partners, the Editorial Committee and the SDWG Social, Economic, and Cultural Expert Group were instrumental in providing ideas, knowledge, and support and in developing priority themes.

Inclusion of Permanent Participants and other Indigenous representatives was a vital component of the engagement process, both with our Partners and the Editorial Committee. Through our discussions and with their guidance we have moved an inch closer to better understanding Indigenous perspectives on gender and related issues. With the support and facilitation of the Arctic Youth Network and the Saami Council, a Youth Advisory Group (YAG) was established. Its role was to advise the Editorial Committee and lead authors during the writing of the report. Two members of the YAG were also members of the Editorial Committee. The YAG were consulted during the process of identifying themes for the report and provided important advice on priority issues from a youth perspective. We see this as a first important step towards a more inclusive process and will strive to do better in future phases of the project. Indigenous and youth engagement continues to be a key outreach element for growing and strengthening the GEA network.

The main project lead, in cooperation with project partners, GEA project lead country, co-lead countries, and the Editorial Committee, identified lead authors as priority themes emerged. In turn, each lead author identified and approached contributors and coordinated the collection of material from them for each chapter. Lead authors were responsible for integrating contributions into their chapter's thematic area. Contributions to chapters from experts across the Arctic were invaluable in providing knowledge and material from this vast and complex region.

Broadly speaking, the report phases were as follows:

Identifying priority themes through one-on-one interviews with project partners, the Editorial Committee, and members of the SECEG. The YAG was consulted to gauge their perspectives on which themes to include in the report.

Development of chapters with lead authors and contributors through collection of material, research, analysis, and writing.

Feedback sessions for each chapter were held in October and November 2020. These were public online sessions in which lead authors—along with colleagues, contributors, and Indigenous and youth representatives—presented and discussed each chapter theme. All feedback sessions were recorded, transcribed, and sent to lead authors for review and integration into chapters.

Review and feedback on draft chapters was solicited from the project partners, the Editorial Committee, the YAG, all contributors, and additional relevant experts. Specific YAG reviewers were asked to review each chapter. Formal peer review of each chapter by external reviewers.

Lessons Learned

We note that reports, including those of the Arctic Council, often fail to incorporate oral traditions and include multiple worldviews. Therefore, as the GEA project moves into concept development for GEA IV, we will be reconfiguring the way we move forward, striving for even more inclusiveness and transparency in our work. We offer the following recommendations:

- Indigenous representatives and youth representatives must be a part of the process from conception to final product. It is vital to allow the time needed for meaningful dialogue to reach consensus regarding themes, priorities, and approaches.
- Build into proposals resource and funding requirements that reflect compensation for meaningful engagement and contributions.
- Make sure adequate time is available for the compilation of extensive work. Both the consultative and engagement processes suffered from rushed timelines, potentially affecting the final outcome.

Dissemination

Efforts to disseminate information about the project, material collected, individuals, institutions, and organisations involved took place throughout the project period and through various channels such as web presence, social media, interviews, and events. As always, this was an important factor in increasing the visibility of the important issues involved and reaching out to those interested in the topic.

Of no less importance is continued emphasis on dissemination after the report is published. There is always a danger that outreach efforts dwindle after projects reach the significant milestone of publishing. We will continue to make every effort to reach out to our potential audiences through further online dissemination and organisation of and participation in events and by directly approaching policy-makers to introduce our findings.



Recommendations

Gender mainstreaming

All chapters identified gender-based analysis and gender mainstreaming as necessary strategies for promoting and ensuring gender equality, including in social and economic development. Gender mainstreaming calls for evaluating the implications of actions, policies, or programmes on women and men across all levels of society to ensure equal benefits and prevent inequality. Further, it calls for gender-specific interventions, for men or for women, as necessary temporary measures to correct past and existing discrimination. Gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting are tools that should be used in Arctic governance. Strategic application of a gender-based analysis across the work of the Arctic Council would deepen understanding of Arctic regional dynamics and support the development of more tailored actions, plans, policies, and programmes for sustainable development.

The Arctic Council should systematically engage with and mainstream gender-based analysis across its work and encourage Arctic States to set an example at national and regional levels. The Council could create a small group, composed of experts and representatives from Working Groups and subsidiary bodies to develop a set of guidelines for the systematic inclusion of gender and application of an intersectional approach across the Council's work.

Data challenges

Most chapter authors noted the paucity of data and the challenges this brings for analysis and comparisons, including in gauging social and economic inequalities. Existing data may perpetuate standardised and stereotypical reporting of gender. Persistent gaps in data availability and a lack of protocols for sharing data, has been flagged in previous reports, such as in the *Arctic Human Development* reports and the *Arctic Social Indicators* reports. This continued lack of gendered and intersectional data, including specific data on Indigenous populations and LGBTQIA2S+, severely impedes efforts to adequately understand the dynamics of gender across the Arctic. Consistent and comparable data is the very foundation for understanding realities and inequalities across regions, countries, sectors, genders, and peoples. Gender-disaggregated data is crucial for meaningful research and providing policymakers and decisionmakers with the knowledge and capacity to develop well-informed policies.

The Arctic Council should encourage and facilitate the development of guidelines for consistent and comparable data and definitions throughout the Arctic. This would entail, at a minimum, gendered and ethnically disaggregated data. The Sustainable Development Working Group could within the next iteration of its project work on gender seek collaboration with national agencies across its Member States, Permanent Participant organisations, other Arctic Council Working Groups, and relevant Arctic Council Observers.

Policy relevant highlights

This report provides a list of policy relevant highlights and opportunities for action and research providing fertile grounds for concretely moving forward. While some are specifically linked to Arctic States, the Arctic Council and its Working Groups, in many cases these implicate a broader spectrum of potential actors. It is crucial to further elaborate concrete actions, drawing on the advice provided.

Phase IV of the Gender Equality in the Arctic project, in cooperation with relevant Expert Groups, to analyse, refine, prioritise and operationalise policy relevant highlights, including opportunities for action and research.

Chapter Themes with Policy Relevant Highlights

The six central themes of the report are: Law and Governance; Security; Gender and Environment; Migration and Mobility; Indigeneity, Gender, Violence, and Reconciliation; and Empowerment and Fate Control. Lead authors have worked with various contributors to pull together diverse materials and perspectives, including academics, researchers, youth, Indigenous representatives, and other experts and stakeholders.

Policy-relevant highlights are provided with each chapter, along with opportunities for action and research. Whereas some are specifically linked to Arctic States, the Arctic Council and its Working Groups, in many cases these implicate a broader spectrum of potential actors. While these highlights provide fertile grounds for moving forward, further elaboration and refinement is needed to identify priorities and concrete steps for implementation.



Law and Governance

Law and Governance examines formal obligations regarding gender equality in the public governance of the Arctic region, as expressed in political and legal documents, including a special consideration of Indigenous Peoples. The objective is to explore the political and legal commitments for which public governing bodies are accountable, how these bodies express their ambitions regarding gender equality in the Arctic, and how the commitments are fulfilled. In addition, the concept of gender equality is explored within the context of formal Arctic policy documents of the eight Arctic States and two Permanent Participants organisations (Inuit Circumpolar Council and Saami Council) and in the work of the Arctic Council. What emerges from the analysis is that governance in the Arctic does not prioritise gender equality and, more generally, that the goal of gender equality is not met within the region.

Shared gender equality commitments

Discrepancies regarding the scope for non-discrimination and promotion of gender equality in the various Arctic jurisdictions should be identified to form a comprehensive gender-equal regime applicable to all spheres of life. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women is applicable to all spheres of life.

Opportunities for action

- Arctic public governing bodies should form a comprehensive gender-equal regime applicable in all spheres of life.
- States Parties should in all fields take all appropriate measures to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by women.

Opportunities for research

- Identify discrepancies regarding the scope for non-discrimination and promotion of gender equality in the various Arctic jurisdictions.

A gender equality policy for the Arctic Council

This report demonstrates that Arctic governance does not prioritise gender equality and, more generally, that the goal of gender equality is not fulfilled within the region. The Arctic Council and other collaborative bodies for governance of the Arctic are important promoters of gender equality in the region.

Opportunities for action

- Launch a gender equality policy for the Council to promote the Council's position on gender equality in the Arctic.
- Address the gendered nature of social institutions and structures in Arctic governance.

Opportunities for research

Analyse how to use existing knowledge and further develop knowledge on processes for negotiating and implementing gender equality in the Arctic.

Identify and further analyse controversial concepts imposed on the region and its population, such as individual rights, power, culture, and tradition.

An intersectional gender equality approach

Arctic States should address inequalities based on race, Indigeneity, disability, family, sexual and gender identity, and poverty, because those intersect with sex/gender.

Opportunities for action

Public governing bodies in the Arctic should acknowledge and apply an intersectional approach

Gender equality in Arctic States strategies for the Arctic

Collaboration around gender equality in the development of new strategies is recommended, avoiding the tendency to only vaguely address gender equality and diversity.

Opportunities for action

Initiate a collaboration between Arctic States to mainstream gender in Arctic States' strategies for the region.

Arctic States should use gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting tools in Arctic governance.



Security

Security examines the impacts of inequalities in the Arctic through a security lens and identifies trends of insecurity. Rather than arguing for Arctic exceptionalism, the chapter draws from global insights about insecurity that are relevant to the Arctic and identifies some of the challenges and insecurities within the Arctic region itself. The chapter addresses gendered and human insecurities associated with climate change and provides brief examples of some of the gender/human insecurities experienced across the Arctic today. These inequalities and insecurities are linked to the broader UN Sustainable Development Goals, including gender equality (SDG #5) and peace and security (SDG #16). The chapter concludes that gender security perspectives are crucial to improving Arctic societal well-being and stability and emphasises the need for a broader, research-based understanding of security. The chapter further highlights the tendency of inequalities and centre-periphery imbalances to lead to insecurities, because most Arctic regions are neglected or bypassed regarding services, support, and inclusion in broader political goals.

Broader research-grounded understanding of security. Support and integrate research into policy.

The concept of security continues to be reduced to a narrow and limited understanding, based on military might. This silences a comprehensive security outlook.

Opportunities for action

The Arctic Council needs to work with a civilian-centric and comprehensive understanding of security to tackle current and upcoming insecurities..

Opportunities for research

Apply a comprehensive security outlook that includes gender-aware environmental, human, and economic perspectives.

Analyse the way in which the above dimensions interact to either increase or decrease security and survival.

Climate change, insecurity, and society. Responsive climate change policy.

Climate change already exacerbates inequalities and will continue to do so. A more comprehensive way of understanding the ways in which climate change affects security is needed so we are able to mitigate or manage increasing insecurities over time.

Opportunities for research

Explore and understand the ways in which climate change affects security, to support its mitigation and manage increasing insecurities over time.

Explore differential impacts of climate change on societies and inequalities using an intersectional approach.

Inequalities and centre-periphery imbalances leading to insecurities. Reduce inequalities.

Most Arctic regions are neglected or bypassed regarding services, support, and inclusion in broader political goals.

Opportunities for action

To reduce tensions, Arctic States should foster greater inclusion of local and regional bodies in broader political goals.

Opportunities for research

Analyse how continued or increasing gender and other inequalities contribute to polarising peoples, potentially exacerbating destabilisation. Explore the way in which people are mobilising, with a particular focus on digital mobilisation.

Who are we?

We need to better understand the diversity of Arctic peoples, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and how security/insecurity is perceived.

Opportunities for action

Foster research that provides a better overview of the diversity of Arctic peoples, the changing dynamics and composition of Arctic peoples, the challenges they confront, and the contributions they make, towards ensuring a more sustainable Arctic region.

Opportunities for research

Explore how people self-identify and how they experience both security and insecurity. Place emphasis on marginalised persons within the LGBTQIA2S+ communities.



Gender and Environment

Gender and Environment provides an overview of the gendered dimensions of issues connected to the broadly understood environment of the Arctic region, including climate, oceans, land, biodiversity, natural resources, and waste and pollution. The chapter pays attention to variations in how different genders relate to their environment, how they experience changes in that environment, and the gendered impacts of development and environmental change in the region. The role of gender in adaptation and mitigation efforts, observation of environmental changes, and the relationship between environmental change and human health and well-being is considered. Further, the gendered dynamics of natural resource management in the region, including forestry, mining, energy resources extraction, and renewable energy extraction, are explored. The chapter concludes that gender equality is integral for effective, efficient, and equitable environmental protection, a finding that has also been increasingly understood by the international community. Further, all regions of the Arctic exhibit only sporadic engagement with gender and gender analysis and—as reported in different studies, surveys, and reports—there is a dearth of sex- and gender-disaggregated data across the Circumpolar North. Finally, there is a lack of systematic engagement with gender-based analysis and gendered perspectives within the Arctic Council and across its Working Groups.

Expansion of Arctic studies with a specific gender focus

While global scholarship on gender and the environment is growing, its primary focus has been on the Global South, which limits its applicability to studies of the Arctic.

Opportunities for action

Encourage cooperation between the subsidiary bodies of the Arctic Council and the UArctic on Arctic gender research projects.

Opportunities for research

Expand Arctic studies that include a specific gender focus to account for the region's particular traits and characteristics.

Gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data

To enhance adaptive capacity within the Arctic, and support policy making and decision making, new and existing data should be disaggregated by gender and sex.

Opportunities for action

Arctic States should encourage official registers and statistics to provide gender-disaggregated data, both for researchers, national agencies, businesses, and service providers.

Gender mainstreaming and intersectionality

The Arctic Council should systematically engage with and mainstream gender across its work and promote the application of an intersectional approach.

Opportunities for action

The Arctic Council should create a small group, composed of experts and representatives from all the Working Groups and subsidiary bodies, to develop a set of guidelines for the systematic inclusion of gender and application of an intersectional approach into its work.

Opportunities for research

National science foundations, research councils, and similar bodies, both in Arctic and non-Arctic countries, should promote and require through research calls and programs the inclusion of gender-sensitive approaches, gender-disaggregated data collection, and gender-based analysis.



Migration and Mobility

Migration and Mobility discusses how migration and mobility in the Arctic are constructed through gender and why an understanding of migration and mobility requires a gendered approach. The chapter combines statistics with a qualitative context-based approach to understand space as gendered and the contextual nature of migration and mobility. Rather than telling one overarching story, key issues for understanding and acting on gender equality, migration, and mobility are discussed, including gendered aspects of housing and homelessness, immigration, work-related mobility of Arctic residents, and migration and urbanisation of Indigenous Peoples. The chapter emphasises how studies on migration and gender need to employ an intersectional research approach and do better at involving other social categories, most notably Indigenous perspectives and LGBTQIA2S+.

Gender and industry development in the Arctic

The discourse in industry and policy development is masculine, which reproduces a gender-segregated Arctic as the voices and concerns of women are excluded or marginalised. More diverse voices in planning and policy can contribute to transforming the gender-segregated labour market in the Arctic.

Opportunities for action

Actively bring gender perspectives into discussions, applied planning, and policies surrounding industry and development in the Arctic. This will require that more women be involved in industrial policy and a greater emphasis on employment areas where women are active.

Opportunities for research

Analyse how industrial development, inward investments, and associated policies affect women.

Explore how women can be attracted to heavily masculinised industrial developments.

Research and knowledge on gender, migration, and mobility

The lack of knowledge on migration and mobility from a gender perspective is concerning. Most studies fail to include gender perspectives.

Opportunities for research

Promote and sustain research and knowledge on gender, migration, and mobility, especially research that takes an intersectional perspective.

Immigration to the Arctic

Immigration to the Arctic has increased substantially in some regions, and a gendered pattern is clearly discernible for most regions. Most men immigrate to the Arctic for work reasons, and women are much more likely than men to immigrate with a partner or for a partner. Immigrant women are at risk for a double-earnings penalty and of being excluded or marginalised in the labour market.

Opportunities for action

Develop an overarching policy and specific strategies to address gendered inequalities amongst immigrant women and men.

Context-sensitive integration strategies acknowledging the diversity amongst immigrants and how place specificities impact integration, are needed in several of the Arctic regions.

Opportunities for research

Explore the causes and dynamics of inequality between migrants and local populations (double-earning penalty for women, exclusion or marginalisation in labour markets, opportunities for application of skills, access to social networks, marginalisation, stereotyping, stigmatisation, etc.).

Out-migration from the Arctic

The disproportionate out-migration of women has led to a skewed sex ratio in much of the Arctic. There is a need to better understand gendered push-and-pull factors and address place-relevant structures that result in more women than men leaving.

Opportunities for action

Women and young people should be included in defining problems and drawing up policies. Focus on developing, improving, and sustaining local opportunity structures from a gendered intersectional approach.

Opportunities for research

Develop better understanding of the complex processes that lead to out-migration of young people, especially women.

Services, housing, and homelessness in the Arctic

Too little is known about homelessness in the Arctic. Causes of homelessness are gendered and frequently have roots in intergenerational trauma or physical, sexual, or substance abuse. There is a lack of support services in the Arctic for Indigenous People who suffer from intergenerational trauma and are especially at risk.

Opportunities for action

Establish and provide quality gender-sensitive support services in the Arctic.

Actively address homelessness and support and recovery services in social policy.

Opportunities for research

Conduct research and produce knowledge on homelessness and gender in the Arctic, including experiences and causes of homelessness.

Work mobility

Living in the Arctic requires people to be mobile, and commuting long distances is a reality in many regions. Actively promoting commuting and providing greater opportunities for pursuing careers and social mobility can prevent out-migration and attract people to the region.

Opportunities for action

Develop material and welfare infrastructures that enable Arctic residents to engage in work-related mobility, both long-distance working and more frequent commutes.

Actively promote flexible work arrangements and home working to enable those with long-distance working partners to arrange work around a partner's absences and times at home.

Promote and incentivise both men's and women's involvement in families, as a prerequisite for women to practice work mobility (e.g., paternity leave and affordable quality childcare services).

Urbanisation and migration of Indigenous Peoples

The Arctic is becoming increasingly urbanised. The process of urbanisation has not been straightforward for Indigenous People for several reasons. Men tend to have place-specific skills that are not readily transferred to urban living. Women in rural settlements are more tied to wage-earning labour, and their skills are more transferrable to urban life. There is a risk that Indigenous men and women lead spatially separate lives: men living in rural settlements and women in urban areas. The maintenance of cultural knowledge may be at risk.

Opportunities for action

Use a multifaceted approach, including a gendered analysis and Indigenous tradition-sensitive approach, in project and policy development. Include in policies local access to education and economic diversification in communities covering public sector and private sector employment. Use various incentives at national and regional levels to attract businesses and people to less populated areas.



Indigeneity, Gender, Violence, and Reconciliation

Indigeneity, Gender, Violence, and Reconciliation seeks to take a step towards mapping the complex relations amongst violence; gender; the social, economic, political, and legal systems; human health and well-being; culture; and identities. The chapter addresses problems related to the imposition of Western binary perspectives on gender. Violence against Indigeneity, the consequent persistent inequalities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, and the importance of truth and reconciliation processes are discussed. The connection between socioeconomic inequalities and violent crimes is explored. It emphasises how gendered violence continues to be a serious issue across the Arctic and how Indigenous women and girls face disproportionate violent victimisation in the context of ongoing settler colonial relations.

Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence continues to be of great concern throughout the Arctic. Women are over-represented as victims of violent crimes, such as sexual abuse, rape, and domestic violence. Indigenous women and girls face disproportionately violent victimisation.

Opportunities for action

The Arctic Council SDWG could initiate a project on sharing knowledge of best practices to prevent and raise awareness of gendered violence in the Arctic.

Address systemic inequalities

The United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2019) is relevant to all Arctic Council states. A better understanding of the inequalities faced by Indigenous populations is vital for effective policy making.

Opportunities for action

An Arctic Council task force or an SDWG expert group should be created to compile reports on the status of Indigenous Peoples within the Arctic nations. The task force/expert group could make recommendations to the Arctic States, e.g., on ways to address systemic inequalities.

Opportunities for research

Analyse the status of Indigenous Peoples within the Arctic States for a better understanding of inequalities faced by Indigenous populations.

Lack of gendered and intersectional data

The lack of gendered and intersectional data, including specific data on Indigenous and LGBTQIA2S+ populations, severely impedes efforts to adequately understand the dynamics of social and economic conditions, gender, violence, crime, income, and inequality.

Opportunities for action

The Arctic Council should encourage and facilitate the development of guidelines for consistent and comparable data and definitions throughout the Arctic. This would entail, at a minimum, gendered and ethnically disaggregated data.

Opportunities for research

Compile and analyse the different methods used to gather data and statistical information across the Arctic with the aim of finding similarities and differences.

Inclusive terminologies and gender mainstreaming

A culturally sensitive and inclusive approach to gender, sexuality, and diversity is needed to accommodate the many perceptions and realities in the Arctic. This is an important factor in achieving and maintaining equality.

Opportunities for action

The Arctic States and Permanent Participants should promote the use of inclusive terminologies and gender mainstreaming in the work of the Arctic Council.

Opportunities for research

Compile and analyse the many different terminologies used for gender, sexuality, and diversity in the Arctic for a better understanding of differences and commonalities.



Empowerment

Empowerment and Fate Control seeks to identify concrete strategies for political, economic, and civic gender empowerment, to facilitate sustainable policy making for the Arctic. The authors define gender empowerment as the capacity of all genders to exercise power in decision making and the process by which they, individually and collectively, can help themselves and others maximise the quality of their lives. The term is closely linked to fate control, which is defined as the ability to guide one's own destiny and refers to a process that creates power in individuals over their own lives, society, and their communities. The authors design a system of key variables to provide a basis for analysing gender empowerment in the Arctic (GEA indicators) and emphasise the importance of all genders' political, economic, and civic empowerment for prosperous communities and sustainable development. Further, the authors suggest moving gender empowerment and fate control from the periphery to the centre of public discourse and decision making, making sure to incorporate

Indigenous Peoples' traditions and perspectives on gender and gender equality in the theoretical and practical framework of gender knowledge building and policy.

There is no one-size-fits-all policy solution to gender empowerment gaps

The gendered landscape is becoming more complicated as different social, economic, ethnic, and gender groups become more distinct and recognised.

Opportunities for action

Incorporate Indigenous Peoples' traditions and perspectives on gender and gender equality into legal, theoretical, and practical frameworks of gender knowledge for a comprehensive understanding of gender empowerment in the Arctic.

Ensure access and participation of underrepresented genders in political, economic, and civic spheres.

Opportunities for research

The analysis of empowerment must be more nuanced and account for various gender and other identities prevalent in diverse Arctic societies.

Continual patterns of gender-related clustering in government institutions and business

Men are overrepresented in governance and management in the most vital economy sectors. Less prestigious sectors of public governance, traditionally perceived as female domains, are often predominantly (or entirely) occupied by women, who are also underrepresented in business leadership positions.

Opportunities for action

Develop a networking and action platform for female policymakers in the Arctic to share experiences, promote gender equality initiatives, and provide inspiration and training for new generations of female policymakers.

Opportunities for research

Collect and analyse examples of best practices to combat gender segregation in politics and business throughout the Arctic.

Empowerment for all genders is essential to sustainable development

The ability of all genders to thrive contributes to community thriving and also depends on it. Moving gender empowerment and fate control from the periphery to the centre of public policy discourse and decision making is vital to achieving Sustainable Development Goals in the Arctic.

Opportunities for action

SDWG/SECEG could:

Draft a framework for a monitoring system by developing and implementing gender empowerment indicators and a gender empowerment index across Arctic jurisdictions.

Encourage regular reporting on data, policy updates, and good practices in achieving all genders' political, economic, and civic empowerment.

Create an Arctic gender empowerment initiatives hub to exchange knowledge and expertise to facilitate all genders' empowerment in political, economic, and civic spheres by sharing new ideas, perspectives, and good practices and by strengthening connections across Arctic communities so they can thrive through the challenges they face.

Opportunities for research

Maintain and increase focus on gender empowerment and relevant research to improve the knowledge base across the Arctic.

Improve gender-specific data collection and availability. These statistics should be comprehensive and track development over time.

Allocate sufficient funding for assessment of gender empowerment in politics and public administration, emphasising data analysis and good practices.

Support monitoring and research at all levels using a gender empowerment index that encompasses gender political empowerment, economic empowerment, and gender media indices.

Mainstreaming gender equality and empowerment at national, regional, and local levels plays an important role in attaining gender empowerment in the political, economic, and civic spheres

Given the diversity in political, legal, and socio-cultural environments across the Arctic, there are no universal policies and mechanisms to fully guarantee equal access to all levels of power and across different sectors to all genders.

Opportunities for action

Include specific outcomes with timeframes in gender-oriented policies, concrete gender action programmes, and implementation plans.

Create or strengthen existing gender equality institutions and practices. This could include gender-oriented task forces and parliamentary committees on gender equality aimed at assessing barriers for genders' political empowerment; monitoring gender inequality trends, gender gaps, and compliance with national laws; and preparing recommendations.

Create regulations pertaining to recruitment and promotion policies, hiring procedures, and gender-sensitive language in vacancy descriptions.

Develop an effective, comprehensive system of awards and penalties for achieving or disregarding gender equality principles.

Opportunities for research

Analyse to what extent gender mainstreaming is being applied in Arctic governance on all levels.

Compile and analyse examples and positive or negative effects of policy measures such as quota systems, legislation, affirmative action, and support for training and education in the Arctic.

Persistent gender gaps in Arctic government institutions, education, politics, economy, media, and civic society

Women are taking the lead in educational attainment, especially in tertiary education.

The Arctic faces an emerging reverse education gap where men tend to have lower educational attainment than women. Gender gaps in politics are observed, the higher the political stakes, the bigger the gap. In some Arctic communities, male underrepresentation needs to be addressed. In most Arctic regions, women earn less than men even though they are more educated. Women are less commonly employed in the more lucrative resource sector. Indigenous women play a significant role in the public sector. Civil society actors experience horizontal gender-based occupational segregation. Women dominate in the non-profit sector and men dominate in the media sector.

Opportunities for action

Ensure an inclusive approach to gender equality that considers all genders. Indigenous traditions can be considered in further research as good practices for achieving gender parity.

Strengthen civic-government cooperation. Strengthening and visualising ideas on gender diversity in leadership positions in politics, public administration, economics, and civil society may gradually contribute to creating or strengthening new social, political, and cultural norms and expectations.

Arctic Council/SDWG: Promote collaboration with the Arctic Economic Council and establish a joint working group on gender economic equality and empowerment.

Opportunities for research

Collect and analyse examples of best practices to combat gender segregation in education, politics, business, and civic society throughout the Arctic.

Examine opportunities to establish a system of gender equality in leadership positions in publicly funded media organisations (e.g., diversification of workforce, affirmative action policies, equitable promotion and recruitment practices, gender diversity in leadership positions, and gender quotas). This could be done as appropriate in specific national and regional contexts to advance gender equality in decision making in media organisations.

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