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## NETWORKING ON GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ARCTIC REGION

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Session 5.19 at the UArctic Congress 2018

Date: 7 September 2018, Time: 9.30 - 11.00

Place: Runeberg Hall, Main Building, University of Helsinki, Finland

### SUMMARY OF THE ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

The following persons were invited to give short presentations at the Round Table discussion:  
**Arja Rautio**, Co-Chair of the Arctic Human Health Expert Group (AHHEG) of Arctic Council, UArctic VP Research, Professor of the Arctic Research, University of the Arctic and University of Oulu, Finland

**Eva-Maria Svensson**, Gender Equality in the Arctic TUARQ-network, Deputy Head, Professor in Jurisprudence, Department of Law, School of Business, Economics and Law, Gothenburg University, Gothenburg, Sweden

**Embla Eir Oddsdottir**, Director, Icelandic Arctic Cooperation Network (IACN)

**Tuuli Ojala**, Senior Specialist, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland

**Moderator: Annamari Asikainen**, Senior Specialist, Gender Equality Unit, Ministry of Social Affairs, Finland was unable to moderate the session, so **Carita Peltonen**, International Expert and Independent Consultant replaced Annamari Asikainen and moderated the session.

#### The following questions were the base for the discussion:

- What forms of networks are most effective?
- What is needed for fruitful cooperation?
- Is there a need for a joint umbrella network on *Gender Equality in the Arctic* for researchers and activists?
- Who could best facilitate a *Gender Equality in the Arctic* network?
- Is there need for financial support?

Information about the session is found on UArctic Congress 2018 homepage:

<https://congress.uarctic.org/program/science-section/sessions/5-other/session-38730/>

Appendix 1. Professor Eva-Maria Svensson's presentation on TUARQ

Appendix 2. Participants in the Gender Equality Network Round Table discussion

Appendix 3. Overview on Gender Equality Networks in the Arctic Region

### PRESENTATIONS

The session on Networking on Gender Equality in the Arctic Region started with presentations on the need of networking on gender equality in the Arctic region.

**Arja Rautio** gave a presentation on the *Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG)*, which was created in 1998 and has two subsidiary groups:

- The Arctic Human Health Expert Group (AHHEG) aim is to increase awareness and visibility of health issues and research of people living in the Arctic Region
- The Social, Economic and Cultural Expert Group (SECEG) aim is to support advanced research on the development of sustainable and integrated approaches emerging in the Arctic Region.

Rautio mentioned the on-going SDWG projects as:

-*RISING-SUN*: Reducing Suicide in Indigenous Groups - a problem especially among young men in the Arctic Region

-*EALLU*: The Arctic Indigenous Youth, Climate Change and Food Culture

-*One Health*: The project aim is to identify, prevent and mitigate health risks in humans, animals and the environment by developing broad interdisciplinary cooperation.

Rautio said that SDWG arrange two meetings each year. The co-chairs of the AHHEG change according the Arctic Council Chairmanship, and there are 1-2 meetings annually. During the last years there have not been participation of the nominated representatives from Sweden and Norway because of the lack of financial support.

Rautio also mentioned that in the *Arctic Human Development Report, 2004*, one chapter is about gender equality.

The Arctic Council decided, that in the *Arctic Human Development Report, 2014* gender equality should be included into all chapters, as an integrated theme. In the *Summary of Major Findings* under *Gaps in Knowledge* is written:

"*Gendered dimensions of Arctic change* . While the past decade has seen a substantial expansion of research on gender in the Arctic, we still note significant gaps in knowledge. Men and women are not affected equally by climate change and globalization, and their impacts on traditional and non-traditional economic activities in the Arctic, on political systems, on education and health care provision, etc. We lack knowledge about the gendered dimensions of contemporary cultural practices and expressions, domestic violence, gendered dimensions, the gendered characteristics of decision-making regarding resources at different scales, the gendered nature of aging in the Arctic (see above, i.e. *Arctic social indicators and monitoring*), the gendered experience of food and other (in)securities (see below, i.e. "*Soft securities*": *Food, water, and energy*) and the gendered nature of Arctic geopolitics."

Rautio concluded by saying that there is a need of a thorough discussion on gender equality in the Arctic Council and SDWG.

*Read more*

Chapter 11: Gender Issues in Arctic Human Development Report 2004

<http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A788965&dswid=-4978>

Page 24 Arctic Human Development Report, 2014

<https://www.uarctic.org/news/2015/2/new-report-arctic-human-development-report-volume-ii-published/>

<http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A788965&dswid=-4978>

**Eva-Maria Svensson** presented the *TUARQ Network on Gender Equality in the Arctic*. The network was established in 2011 and includes about 30 researchers from the following universities: the Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø in Norway, Umeå University in Sweden, Northern Arctic Federal University (NArFU), in Archangelsk, Russia, University of Lapland in Rovaniemi, Finland and Queen's University in Kingston and Université Laval in Quebec, both in Canada. The network has arranged six seminars, two in Tromsø, Norway, two in Umeå, Sweden, one in Archangelsk, Russia and one in Kingston, Canada.

The collaboration in TUARQ is centred round the theme *Toward a Gender Equal Human Development in the Arctic*. A broad area of research issues are represented and the research within the network is divided into five sub-themes:

- Governance, labour market and economic development
- Intimate relations in mobility
- Sami livelihoods and gender aspects
- Gendered abuse
- Health and welfare

The first publication from the network was published in Arctic Yearbook 2014: Lahey, K., Svensson, E-M. and Gunnarsson, Å., *Gender Challenges & Human Capital in the Arctic*. See all publications in Eva-Maria Svensson's power point presentation (see Appendix 1).

Svensson told that the network has received financing from the Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø and Umeå University for networking and cooperation with Northern Arctic Federal University from Archangelsk, and financing for networking from Nordregio. The network has

sent in many applications to receive funding for research but has not yet received any financing. An application has been sent to the Swedish Research Council for Sustainable Research (FORMAS) and the decision will be taken in November 2018.

Svensson How is the governance in the Arctic? What has been done? Is gender achieved? Svensson said that her own research interest is governance in the Arctic region, and wants to explore and analyse the approaches to gender equality in public governance of the Arctic region, and she wish to get answers on questions as:

- *How gender equality is understood* (rhetoric aspect),
- *How gender equality is done* (strategic aspect), and
- *Whether gender equality is achieved* (CEDAW).

Svensson wish also, to explore the normative framework, and she said, that the countries have signed the *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*, and still the governments are not requesting gender research as a way to find out, where and how women and men in the societies of the Arctic use power and resources.

Svensson ended by stressing, that today, when all decisions are justified by economic arguments, instead legal arguments should be used, to integrate of gender equality at all levels and all decision-making in the Arctic Council.

<http://www.polis.umu.se/forskning/polisforskning-vid-umu/tuarq>

**Embla Oddsdóttir** presented the status of the project *Gender Equality in the Arctic II*, which is one of the SDWG projects for 2017-2019.

*Gender equality in the Arctic (GEA)* is an international cooperation project focusing on gender equality and diversity in the Arctic, and highlights the importance of recognition and appreciation of 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 both in the public and private sectors.

<https://www.sdwg.org/activities/sdwg-projects-2017-2019/gender-equality-in-the-arctic-ii/>  
<https://www.sdwg.org/activities/sdwg-projects-2017-2019/>

During *Phase I* of the project the conference *Gender Equality in the Arctic: Current Realities, Future Challenges* was arranged in the autumn 2014 in Akureyri, Iceland.

<https://arcticgenderequality.network/#phase-1>

Oddsdóttir said that the conference discussed diversity in terms of discourses, gender, peoples, education, economies, social realities, and balanced participation in leadership and decision-making both in the public and the private sectors during seven plenaries:

1. Gender Equality and the Arctic: Current Realities, Future Challenges;
2. Political Representation and Participation in Decision-Making: Gendered Dimensions;
3. Regional Socio-Economic Development and its Gendered Impacts;
4. Climate and Environmental Change, Natural Resource Development, and Gender;
5. (Re-)Construction of Gender in the Arctic;
6. Human Security: Gendered Aspects;
7. Human Capital and Gender: Migration, Mobility, Education and Adaptation.

The clear message from the *Gender Equality in the Arctic* conference in 2014 was that a network for gender equality should be established, to facilitate dissemination of research, publications and information on gender equality in an Arctic perspective to all relevant organisations and actors in the Arctic region.

Oddsdóttir stressed that it is important to integrate gender equality into research, policies and strategies as well as implementing effective tools for gender analysis at all levels of activities of the Arctic Council and thus making gender-related issues a priority in the Arctic.

The goal of *Phase II* is to promote and expand the dialogue on gender, equality and diversity in the Arctic and to encourage cooperation between existing networks focusing on gender and to provide an online platform for information on gender, equality and diversity in the Arctic. Within the framework of the project the aim is also to organize and participate in

meetings and conferences focusing on gender, equality and diversity. The *Phase II* of the *Gender Equality in the Arctic* project will end in 2019, so Oddsdóttir said, that it is time to start to plan the Phase III.

Oddsdóttir ended by asking: What is preventing gender, equality and diversity to be included into all activities of the Arctic Council?

**Tuuli Ojala**, Senior Specialist, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland presented some general comments on gender equality in the Arctic region from an Arctic Council perspective. Ojala said that there is a lack of gender specific data and gender mainstreaming processes in the Arctic Council activities. A peculiarity is also the all female panels when gender equality is discussed. During the first Finnish chairmanship in the Arctic Council, gender equality was included into the Arctic Council chairmanship program and funds were allocated for arranging the *Taking Wing conference* in Saariselkä, Finland in August 2002. One weakness for integrating gender equality into the Arctic Council activities is that the each chairmanship decides the themes to be discussed during the two-year chairmanship period. If a country does not prioritize gender equality, it will not be high on the agenda for two years. Funding of long-term research projects on gender equality is challenging in the Arctic Council framework, as the states often operate in Arctic cooperation on short-term project funding for priority activities.

**Astri Dankertsen**, associate professor in Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Nord University, Bodø, Norway presented the *KEL-research network*, which is an informal local research group for gender, ethnicity and equality at the North University in Bodø in Norway. The network/group arranges two seminars/year.

<https://www.facebook.com/kjonnetnisitetlikestilling/>

**Gertrude Saxinger**, Dr., Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Vienna, Austria presented the *IASSA Working Group Gender in the Arctic*. Today there 60 persons have joined the network, which provides a platform in order to foster knowledge and developing research initiatives. The network wish to attract persons focusing on gender, diversity, masculinity, queer, etc. and has hosted seminars and has the mission to combine activism, projects and research and highlight the variation of themes within gender research.

<https://gender-arctic.jimdo.com>

## DISCUSSION

At the Round Table discussion followed after the presentations, and the participants shared experiences on gender equality and commented on the need on of a gender equality network in the Arctic region, and which kind of network was needed.

Comments from the Round Table discussion:

- There is a need for a gender equality umbrella network
- There is a need to raise a discussion on gender equality in the Arctic Council, and the national SDWG arenas, and there is a need to reduce inequality within the SDWG.
- Gender should be highlighted, presented and integrated in all committees, working groups, networks and especially in all workshops, seminars, conferences and plenaries, i.e. gender mainstream the Arctic Council activities - gender is a part of diversity. All male panels as well as all female panels should be forbidden.
- Legal arguments should be used in the global society, as the Arctic Council because the countries have ratified the Platform of Actions from the UN Conference in Beijing in 1995.
- Gender equality should not be hidden, because gender equality includes so many things. Today it seems gender has disappeared from the agenda.
- Lack of gender research in the Arctic region, much because gender research is considered as soft sciences. Governments need to support gender research. Research is an analytical tool, but there is also a need to focus on gender strategies, methods and policies.

- Today more students are interested in gender research, although e.g. a backlash is seen in international studies, and the result is no funding for research, and the result is no research. Inclusive education is also needed.

### *CONCLUSIONS*

The conclusions from the Round Table Discussion on the Networking on Gender Equality in the Arctic Region:

- There is a need for an umbrella network on gender equality in the Arctic Region - joining both the existing networks and projects on gender equality and women in the Arctic and the interest of senior officials, researchers, NGOs/activists and politicians focusing on gender equality and including both gender research and gender equality policies.
- Gender equality should be included in all projects - not just as a separate women's issue. Legal arguments should be used to integrate gender equality at all levels, all decision-making and all activities in the Arctic Council.
- More funding for gender research In the Arctic Region.
- Representation should include both diversity and gender equality at all levels in the Arctic Council organisation and in the activities.
- A network needs a yearly budget to achieve sustainable results.