



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN ARCTIC SECURITY POLICY: CO-CREATING POLICY WITH RIGHTS AND STAKEHOLDERS IN THE ARCTIC

Arctic Security and Cooperation Working Group:

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SUMMARY

- Arctic communities consider security beyond the scope of military concerns.
- All forms of security are interconnected; no form should be considered in isolation.
- National and regional policies impacting Arctic communities require collaborative approach and co-creation to be successful.
- Effective collaboration starts with the correct rights- and stakeholders, a clearly defined issue, an inclusive engagement schedule, community-centric communication modes, a process to co-create policy, and an implementation and follow-up plan.
- Most Arctic policies include the language of community engagement but do not provide policymakers with the steps for [HOW](#) to do this.

Recommendations for Arctic Policy Makers

Include all relevant forms of security, such as food, environmental, energy, gender, health, economic, and cultural security, when developing security policy through active and meaningful engagement of Arctic communities.

Challenges

Arctic security is often understood in terms of military security. The focus solely on military security draws attention away from other essential and pressing aspects of Arctic security. Indeed, recent national Arctic strategies acknowledge other forms of security but actionable recommendations on how to concretely engage Arctic communities are still required.

Arctic communities are rarely included and engaged in developing conventional security policies that directly impact their lives, communities, culture, and human security. This includes long-term strategic decisions on national defense policy, cooperation with other states' military forces and the development of critical infrastructure to underpin policy decisions (e.g., ports, airports, roads, telecommunications, housing, energy sources, food supplies, medical needs and search and rescue). Creating such Arctic security policies without the involvement of affected communities has largely resulted in implementation problems and increased tension and conflict between communities and all levels of government.

The active participation of Arctic communities, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, in developing and implementing Arctic security policy results in stronger, more comprehensive policy. It does so by strengthening shared ownership of those policies and by reducing opportunity and transaction costs that arise from communication failures between government and communities.

Discussion

Over the course of 18 months, the Fulbright Arctic Initiative III Security and Cooperation working group facilitated eight town hall-style meetings across the Arctic to identify key factors for security-centric community engagement. Our key findings from those discussions include:

1. Communities are eager to engage with and co-create Arctic security policy;
2. Communities are interested in a diverse range of security issues;
3. Knowledge embedded in Arctic communities, whether Indigenous or local, must be considered on par with scientific knowledge;
4. Community-based expertise and resources lead to more effective implementation outcomes, also of national policies;
5. Continuous communication and follow-up are essential for long-term policy significance.



The Arctic town hall discussions revealed six important actions on HOW to co-create policy with Arctic communities:

WHO:

- Identify relevant rights- and stakeholders both inside and outside the communities affected by policies and decisions in question.
- Think beyond formal requirements for consultations.
- Ensure broad participation of different genders, age groups, expertise etc.
- Include community point people who have the trust of formal decision makers and rights- and stakeholders, and possess an in-depth knowledge and understanding of local socio-cultural, economic, and political dimensions.

ISSUE:

- Identify the core issues in question through community hearings.
- Do not assume you know what the issues are in advance.
- Be ready and willing to engage in extensive discussions and consensus decision-making processes.

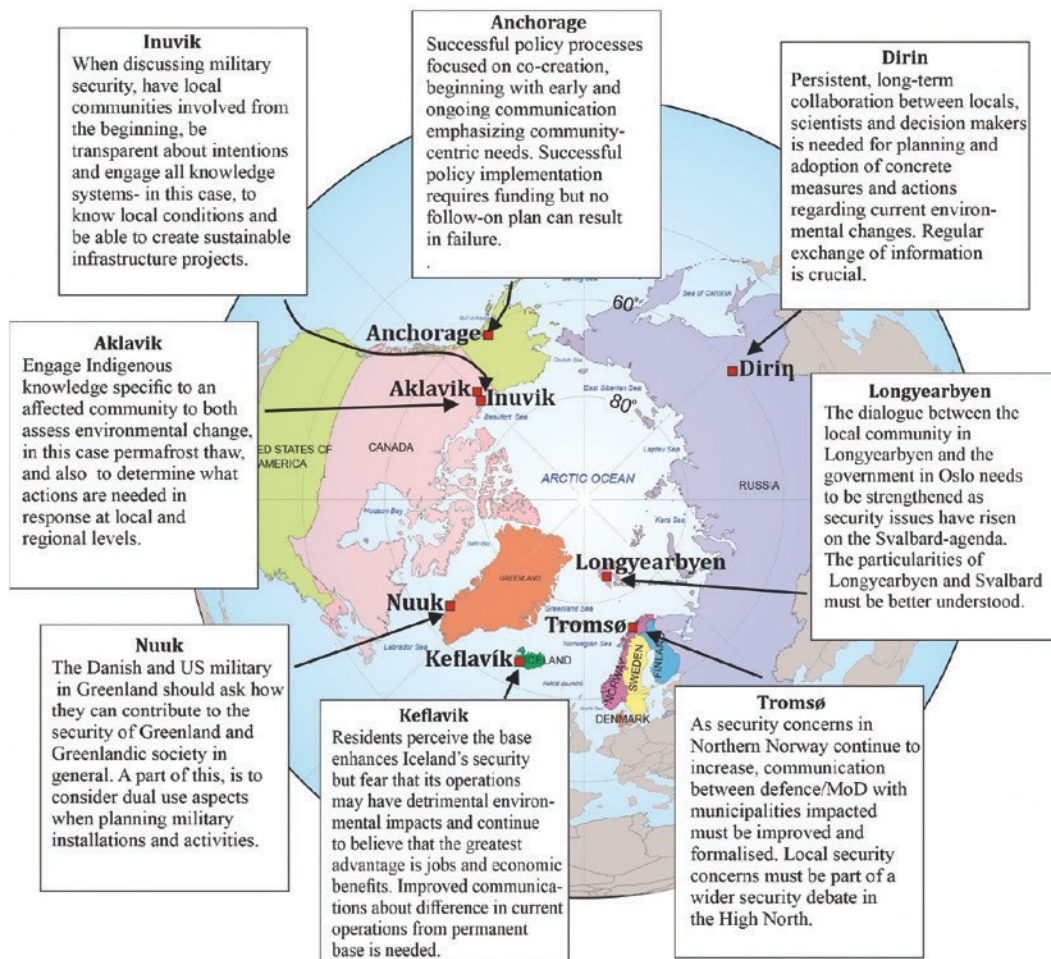
SCHEDULE/TIMING:

- Ensure there are no scheduling conflicts with the community's seasonal activities (harvesting, hunting, fishing, etc.) or other community events.
- Do not assume your time schedule is theirs.

COMMUNICATION:

- Align the level and type of communication and information to the intended audience, their interests, concerns and any pressing issues. Ensure interpretation to and from local languages where appropriate and/or necessary.
- Leverage existing communication modes and networks, including community meetings, social media, broadcast, or print media.

Figure 1 Town Hall Highlights: The circumpolar map below succinctly highlights key findings from each town hall meeting.





Scan the QR code to learn more.



CO-CREATE:

Work collaboratively to draft policy and develop implementation and monitoring plans to reflect the security needs of all rights- and stakeholders.

- Review the basics of policy drafting with participating community members.
- Enable internal community deliberations on the selected policy topic.
- Workshop community discussions and findings into a joint policy draft and ensure a community review process for the draft.

FOLLOW-UP:

Determine a follow-up schedule and process:

- What will be shared by whom, when and where.
- Which community members will be trained to participate and implement the policy.
- How updates will be done and communicated.
- How community feedback will be incorporated into ongoing policy-making.

Benefits of Community Engagement in Security Policy Creation

Both formal decision makers and Arctic communities can benefit from the co-creation of an inclusive security policy process, especially in terms of decisions and implementation. Benefits of an inclusive process include:

- Builds long-term communication channels between decision makers and Arctic communities.
- Better aligns goals, priorities, interests, and benefits of all parties.
- More equitably shares opportunities (e.g., economic, social, environmental, educational) across the community.
- More equitably involves all relevant knowledge systems (Indigenous, local, and scientific).
- Strengthens corporate and public social responsibility.
- Increases community resilience and security.
- Enables more effective implementation of national security policies