More About SLiCA Findings

SLiCA’s indigenous partners developed five international analysis themes.

**Theme One: The importance of social relationships and the standard of living to settlement patterns.**

Why do so many Arctic residents choose to live in villages where jobs are scarce and incomes are lower? Limiting our focus to education and employment makes it appear that there is no reason why people stay in Arctic communities. Yet over 70 percent of indigenous residents have not considered moving. Family ties are stronger in villages and social support is stronger in the towns. More women than men want to move, and more men than women return. Returning men are more likely than other men to have jobs and to engage in subsistence activities.

**Theme Two: The importance of a mixed cash- and harvest/ herding-based economy to living in the Arctic.**

The best way to characterize the economies of many regions of the Arctic inhabited by Inuit is mixed economies: economies that combine wage employment with hunting, fishing, herding, and traditional food processing activities.

Households tend to combine wage work with traditional activities as do individuals. Two out of every three Inuit households perceive that half or more of their household’s food supply is made up by traditional food. Over half of Inuit adults work on a full-time job. Households with above average incomes perceive that traditional foods make up as much of the meat and fish they eat as households with below average incomes.

**Theme Three: Relationships between social problems and other dimensions of living conditions.**

Our Indigenous partners recognize that social problems like suicide are more pronounced in the North. They also feel that public discussion of these problems is often negative. They encouraged us to look at social problems in the context of other living conditions.

Inuit who are very satisfied with their lives as a whole are half as likely to be seriously depressed. Those who are not seriously depressed are half as likely to have considered suicide in the last year. Working to improve people’s satisfaction with life may therefore be a way to reduce social problems like suicide.

Factors found in our analysis to be important to satisfaction include local job opportunities, the amount of fish and game available locally, and the influence Inuit perceive that they have over the management of natural resources.

**Theme Four: The influence of educators and missionaries.**

Forty percent of indigenous adults in Greenland, Alaska, and Chukotka attended at least part of their elementary schooling outside their home towns. One in four found their elementary school experiences stressful.

The most commonly reported stressors were the school environment; being singled out as different; punishment for speaking their indigenous language; getting picked on; conflict between school and culture; and being away from home.

**Theme Five: The influence of policies on living conditions.**

One analysis focus related to policy is health. Chukotka Indigenous people are more than twice as likely as Arctic Indigenous in Greenland or Alaska to have three or more symptoms of health problems. Chukotka indigenous people are five times less likely to have a doctor or other medical professional in their community. They consume less meat and fish that is traditional food. Diet and health are related. Chukotka Indigenous adults who eat less traditional food are more likely to have three or more diagnosed health conditions as those whose traditional food constitutes more than half the meat and fish they eat.
What are the results based on?
Major findings to date are based on data concerning Inuit people of Canada, Greenland, Alaska, and indigenous peoples of Chukotka. Over 7,000 interviews form the basis for SLiCA results. The results can be generalized to all indigenous adults living in the three Iñupiat settlement regions of Alaska, the four Inuit settlement regions of Canada, all of Greenland, and in the Anadyrsksij, Anadyr, Shmidtovs, Beringovskij, Chukotskij, Iujl’tinskij, Bilibinskij, Chaunskij, Providenskij, Uel’Kal’ districts of Chukotka.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inuit Settlement Region</th>
<th>Inuit Adults</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
<th>Maximum estimated sampling error (plus or minus %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chukotka</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>4,700</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenland</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The intent of SLiCA is also to document living conditions in Saami settlement regions in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Kola Peninsula. A lack of funding has delayed field work. About 300 interviews have been completed in Sweden and Norway. These interviews can be the basis for a proposal to complete work in Saami settlement regions.

Who has funded SLiCA?
The National Science Foundation, Nordic Council of Ministers, Canada Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Greenland Home Rule Government, the Commission for Scientific Research in Greenland, the Barents Secretariat, Nordic Arctic Research Programme, Danish Research Council for the Social Sciences, Swedish Research Council for the Social Sciences, Norway Department of Municipalities, the Joint Committee on Research Councils for Nordic Countries, and Statistics Canada.

What is SLiCA?
The Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic (SLiCA) is a partnership of indigenous peoples and researchers from the United States, Canada, Greenland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and the indigenous peoples of the Kola Peninsula and Chukotka in Russia.

SLiCA is a Sustainable Development initiative of the Arctic Council and is supported by the Inuit Circumpolar Council, the Saami Council, and the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North.

The aims of SLiCA are to:

- Measure living conditions in a way relevant to Arctic residents
- Document and compare the present state of living conditions among the indigenous peoples of the Arctic
- Improve the understanding of living conditions to the benefit of Arctic residents

How can I learn more about SLiCA?
Visit the SLiCA website: [www.arcticlivingconditions.org](http://www.arcticlivingconditions.org)
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SLiCA is part of the Arctic Council’s Arctic Human Health Initiative and IPY.

Major Findings

- A combination of traditional activities and cash employment is the prevailing lifestyle of Arctic indigenous people. It takes money to pursue traditional activities; households with higher incomes can, and do, choose to spend income on these activities. Nine in ten Inuit think traditional activities are important to their identity.
- Family ties, social support of each other, and traditional activities have a lot to do with why indigenous people choose to remain in Arctic communities.
- Well-being is closely related to job opportunities, locally available fish and game, and a sense of local control. Well-being and depression (and related problems like suicide) are flip sides of the same coin. Improving well-being may reduce social problems.
- Health conditions vary widely in the Arctic: three in four Greenlandic Inuit self-rate their health as at least very good compared with one in two Canadian and Alaska Inuit and one in five Chukotka indigenous people.