

### Why SLiCA?

A study of living conditions in Greenland in 1994 documented lower scores on a number of living condition indicators (like income and housing standards) in small settlements than in larger towns and generally lower scores in Greenland than in the Nordic countries. To understand why people live in small remote communities in the Arctic, Statistics Greenland initiated what became the Survey of Living conditions in the Arctic, SLiCA, based on measures of living conditions and well-being relevant to Inuit, Sami and other indigenous peoples. SLiCA is thus developed in partnership between

### Sample summary\*

Indigenous settlement region	Indigenous Adults	Sample Size	Response Rate	Indigenous respondents
Northern Alaska	11.000	800	84%	650
Chukotka	14.000	600	85%	500
Canada	22.000	5.650	83%	4.700
Greenland	36.000	1.450**	83%	1.050
Inuit settlement regions	83.000	8.500	83%	6.900
Sweden	..			200
Norway	..	800	56%	450
Kola Peninsula	..			300
Sami settlement regions	50.000***	...	...	950
Indigenous Settlement Regions				7.850

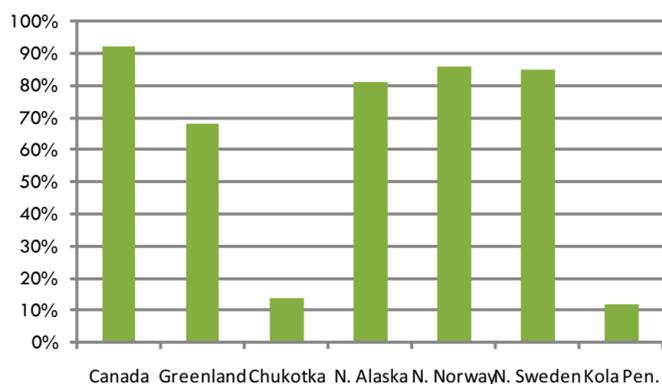
\* Rounded figures (to closest '50')

\*\* In Greenland also including non-indigenous respondents

\*\*\* Estimate for Nordic Sami including Finland but not Kola Peninsula (AMAP 1998) <sup>2</sup> Due to lack of funding SLiCA was not conducted in Northern Finland.

### Very or somewhat satisfied with the quality of life in community

Inuit, Sami and the other indigenous peoples of Chukotka and the Kola Peninsula have lived and survived through millennia as hunters, fishermen and herders. Rapid social change characterizes the livelihood and living conditions of the indigenous peoples of the Arctic. Many – including large majorities in Northern Canada, Greenland, and Northern Alaska, Northern Norway, and Northern Sweden — are satisfied with the quality of life in their communities.



indigenous people and researchers from Greenland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, United States, Canada and Russia. SLiCA is a Sustainable Development initiative of the Arctic Council and is supported by the Inuit Circumpolar Council, the Sami Council, and the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North.

### About the survey

The core questionnaire<sup>1</sup> was developed between 1998 and 2001 in close cooperation between researchers and indigenous experts. Interviews were conducted between 2001 and 2008 face-to-face with people 15 and older in Canada and Greenland

and 16 and older in the other regions.

About 7.500

Inuit, Sami and other indigenous people were interviewed: in Greenland, in the Inuit settlement regions in Alaska and Arctic Canada, in the Northern regions of Norway and Sweden as well as the Kola Peninsula and Chukotka in Russia<sup>2</sup>. Response rates are

presented in the Sample summary.

This publication describes the survey and introduces the wealth of information available on the lives of the Arctic's indigenous peoples, measured in ways they themselves chose.

### Major findings

- A combination of traditional activities and cash employment, the mixed economy of the Arctic, is the prevailing lifestyle of Arctic indigenous peoples. It takes money to pursue traditional activities; households with higher incomes can, and do, choose to spend income on these activities.

- Despite the rapid changes in the Arctic, most indigenous people have maintained their traditional subsistence activities. Many also continue to speak their indigenous languages – particularly in Greenland.

- Health conditions vary widely in the Arctic: Most of the indigenous people surveyed rate their own health as good or excellent. The exception is Chukotka, where more than half rated their health as only fair or poor.

- Even though most are satisfied with life in their communities, indigenous people also acknowledge widespread social problems:

unemployment, alcohol abuse, suicide, drug abuse, family violence and sexual abuse are considered major social problems by more than six indigenous respondents out of ten. In Chukotka and the Kola Peninsula at least eight out of ten cite most of these problems.

- Results in SLiCA on health conditions, ability to speak and write the indigenous languages and also maintenance of traditional subsistence skills vary between age groups. Thus additional analyses controlling for age differences will be informative.

- On average three out of four indigenous people perceive climate change to be a problem in their communities and more than 50 per cent mention local contaminated sites, pollution of local lakes and streams and pollution from industrial development as problems in the region.

- Some of the overall SLiCA findings indicate an awareness of a variety of problems to the indigenous peoples – problems that most Inuit and Sami feel they lack influence on.

- The value of a major international research effort like SLiCA can be augmented by conducting follow up studies using the SLiCA findings as the base line for studies of rapid social change in the Arctic.

- And last but not least: Human development shall be measured in ways that reflect individual well-being; thus partnerships with the respondents – in SLiCA the indigenous peoples of the Arctic – is key to study living conditions and welfare priorities.

### The mixed economy: A way of life

- Hunting, fishing and herding are still important productive activities, and constitute the main source of income for many. The productive activities of the mixed economy consist of both traditional subsistence activities and activities rooted in the cash economy.]

- Numbers of subsistence activities people take part in vary somewhat among regions,

as do available resources and traditional practices. The survey asked about as many as 25 activities (but not all 25 in all regions). In Northern Alaska and Northern Norway respondents averaged about 9 different activities a year, compared with 8 in Chukotka and 6 in Greenland, Sweden and the Kola Peninsula.

- The most common subsistence activities throughout the survey regions are fishing and picking berries, which three quarters of respondents do. Roughly two thirds preserve meat or fish or do other things necessary to prepare for hunting or fishing or to take care of fish and game. One third or more hunt birds, sea mammals or big game.

- Seven to nine in ten Inuit, Sami and other indigenous people of The Kola Peninsula think 'the way they view nature' and traditional activities and customs like eating and preserving traditional food, use of the indigenous language, fishing and hunting are important to their identity.

- The widespread participation in subsistence activities contributes to household economies, to healthy diets, to cultural continuity and social cohesion.

- When jobs are available, large majorities of people in Arctic communities work. About 75% of respondents in Northern Alaska, Sweden and the Kola Peninsula, 80% in Greenland and Norway, and 88% in Canada and Chukotka worked at least some time in the year before the survey. That includes people who worked full-time and many more who worked only part-time or seasonally.

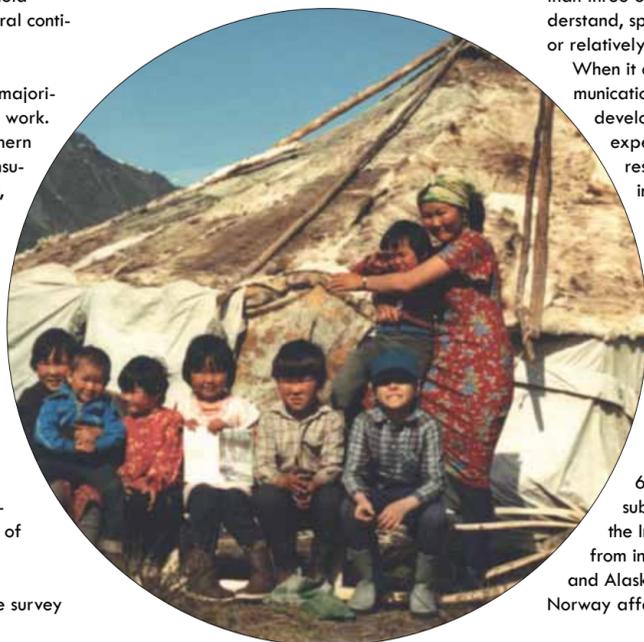
- About a third of those who didn't work in the year before the survey were unemployed—they wanted jobs but couldn't find them. Others didn't work for various reasons— including family responsibilities, poor health, being in school or of advanced age.

- Indigenous people throughout the survey

regions cite unemployment as one of the main problems in their communities. Jobs are scarce in small Arctic communities, and many jobs are seasonal or part-time labour.

### Education

Different productive activities require different skills: formal education to fit jobs in the market economy and traditional education skills to apply in subsistence activities. The vast majority in all regions learned five or more skills (as for example: 'read the weather', 'hunt and fish', 'learned stories passed by parents and grand parents', 'navigate at sea' and 'cook and prepare traditional food'). More than seven out of ten in all regions have applied these skills since childhood. Overall approx. four out of ten indigenous adults in the survey regions have completed vocational training or high school/university. This average covers major differences: almost seven out of ten Sami in Northern Norway have completed the vocational training or high school/university. The figures for Chukotka, Greenland and the Kola Peninsula are between four and five.

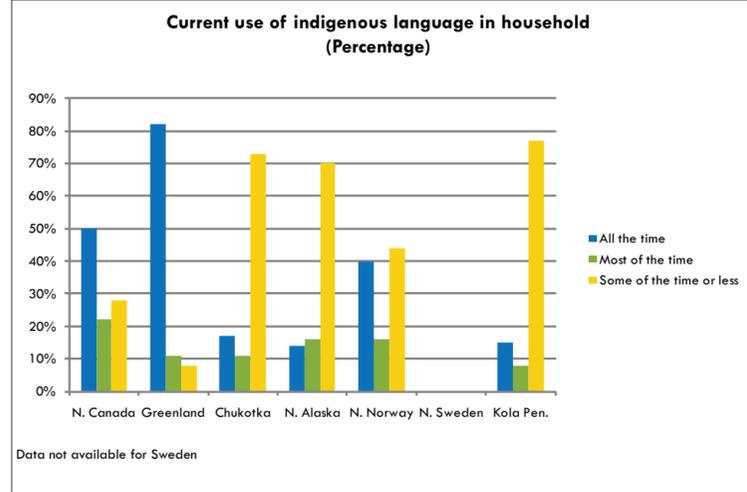
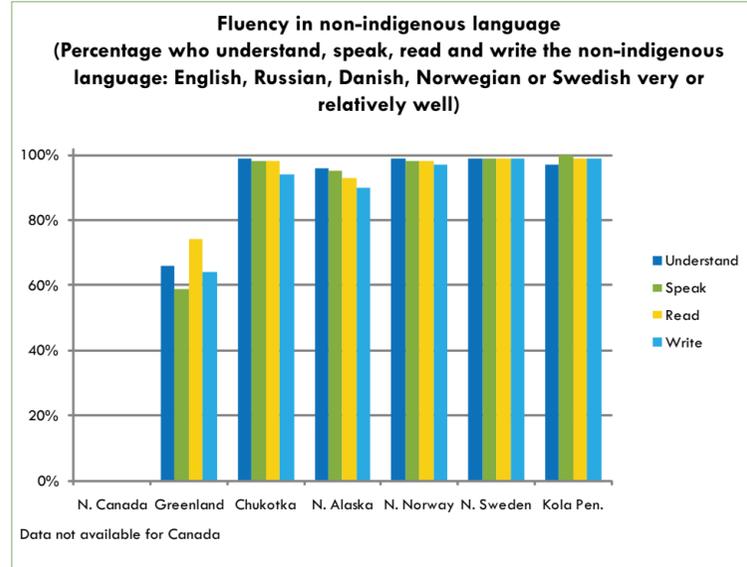
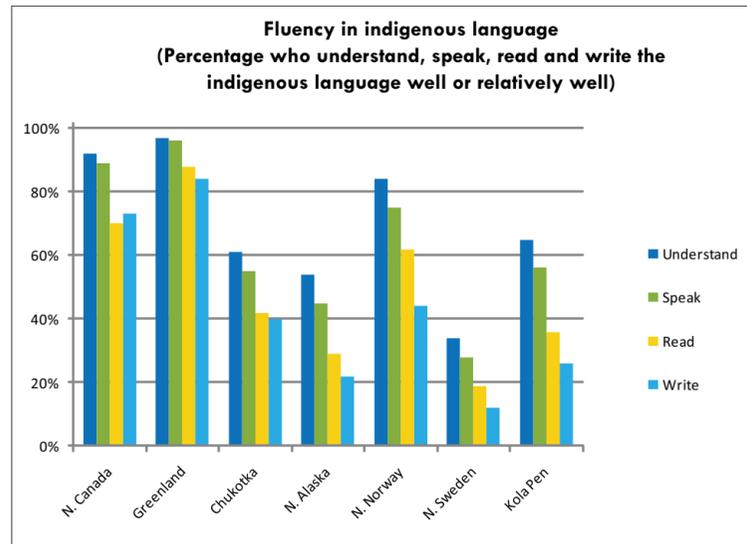


### Language

Maintaining the indigenous language is important for the identity of the individual as well as for the cultural continuity. In Greenland, Greenlandic is the official language and thus has a unique status compared to the other regions. We asked all respondents about their fluency in the indigenous as well as the non-indigenous language used in the region. More than eight out of ten Greenlanders and more than seven of out ten Canadian Inuit understand, speak, read and write well or very well in their native languages. In Northern Norway and more so in the other surveyed regions indigenous people are less likely to understand, speak, read and write their native languages. Many indigenous people in these regions do not read or write their native language due to lack of teaching offered.

In most regions qualifications in a non-indigenous language (English, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish or Russian) are necessary when it comes to for instance further education. Almost all respondents report fluency in one non-indigenous language. In Greenland the situation is different as less than three out of four report that they understand, speak, read or write Danish very or relatively well.

When it comes to using modern communication technology a parallel development to southern regions is experienced: Almost all indigenous respondents between 16 and 24 in Norway, the Kola Peninsula and Greenland used a cell phone in the twelve months prior to the interview. Apart from Norway and the Kola Peninsula few 65 year-old and older had used a cell phone in that period. In Norway, Greenland and Alaska more than two out of three used the Internet in the younger age group. In the age group 65+ only in Northern Norway a substantial part (four out ten) used the Internet (note: the span of years from interviewing started in Canada and Alaska and until it was finalized in Norway affects the differences).



**Major social and environmental problems and local control**

Even though most indigenous people are satisfied with the quality of life in their Arctic communities, they also recognize major problems.

- Almost nine in ten say unemployment is a major social problem. People in Northern Alaska who reported that they had thought about moving out of their home communities – especially villages – frequently cited lack of jobs as a reason.

- 85% of those in all survey areas—and everyone in Chukotka and the Kola Peninsula—say alcohol abuse is a problem in their communities. More than two thirds also cite drug abuse.

- Suicide is widespread among indigenous people across the Arctic, but a much larger share of people in Chukotka and the Kola Peninsula cite it as a problem.

- Family violence and sexual abuse also rank high on the list of problems, but less so in Northern Norway than in other areas, especially Chukotka.

The indigenous peoples in focus of the survey were asked about environmental concerns, if any.

- On average three out of four perceive climate change to be a problem in their communities.

- More than 50 per cent mention local contaminated sites, pollution of local lakes and streams and pollution from industrial development as problems in the region.

- A significantly larger proportion of indigenous people in Chukotka and the Kola Peninsula are concerned with these problems.

- In Greenland a vast majority cite pollution from other countries and in Chukotka, Alaska and the Kola Peninsula erosion of coastal areas or riverbanks as problems. Six out of ten respondents in Chukotka and the Kola Peninsula consider fish or animals may be unsafe to eat.

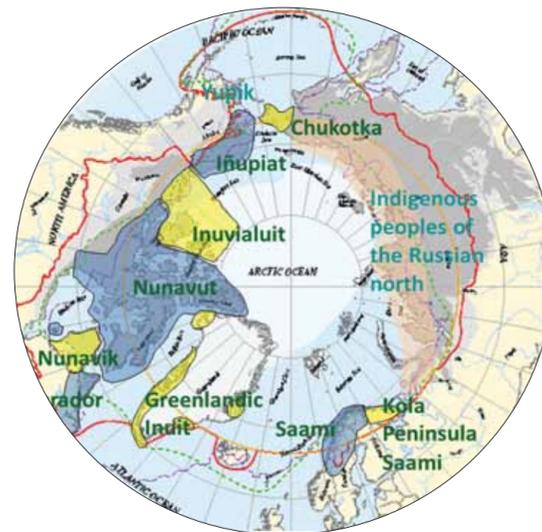
- The Iñupiat of Northern Alaska are much more likely than indigenous people elsewhere to be satisfied with their ability to influence management of local fish and game and other natural resources. Only between 10% and 15% of the Sami in

Northern Norway and the Kola Peninsula and the indigenous peoples in Chukotka are satisfied with the influence the indigenous peoples have on the management of natural resources like oil, gas, and minerals.

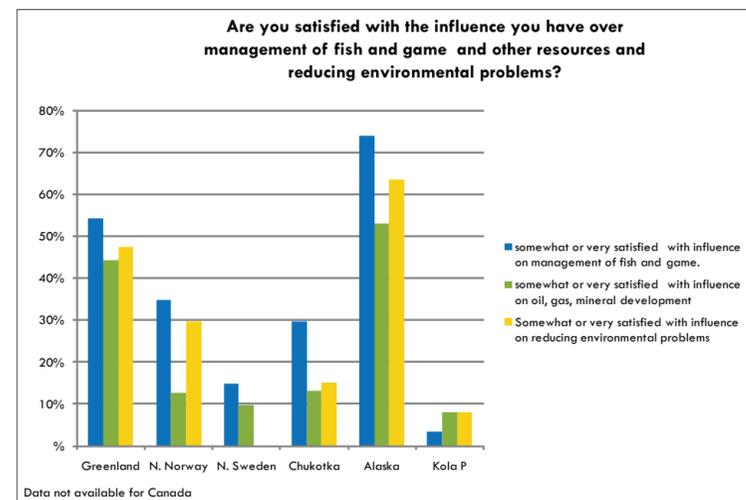
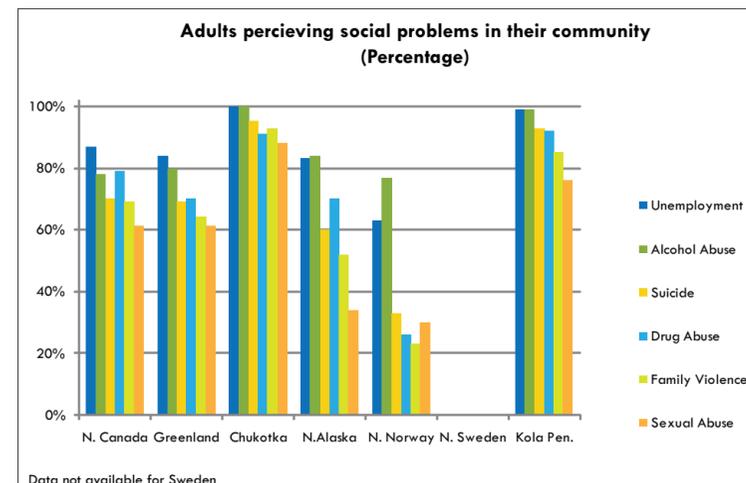
**Satisfaction: The quality of life**

The figure on the first page shows that with the exception of Chukotka and the Kola Peninsula, most of those surveyed are satisfied with the quality of life in their communities. Analyses on data from Greenland

and Alaska indicate that ‘opportunities’ related to jobs and ‘availability’ of fish and game had the highest score of explanation. ‘Satisfaction with combination of productive activities’ and ‘Influence over natural resources and the environment and job satisfaction also contributed significantly to overall life satisfaction.



SLiCA survey regions



SLiCA was adopted as an Arctic Council project under the auspices of the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) at the Ministerial meeting in Barrow, 2000. The final reporting of SLiCA to the Arctic Council will be a ‘SLiCA anthology’ including statistical information from all survey

regions. The production of the anthology is in progress.

This folder presenting major SLiCA findings is funded by the Nordic Council of ministers and the Greenland Government.

SLiCA is supported by:

- Inuit Circumpolar Council, ICC
- The Sami Council
- Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, RAIPON

[www.arcticlivingconditions.org](http://www.arcticlivingconditions.org)

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