



hack- pack

Arctic Policy Hackathon

OCTOBER 2022



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ARCTIC POLICY HACKATHON | OCTOBER 2022

This brief overview of food sovereignty in the Arctic was written to provide background information for participants attending the Arctic Policy Hackathon. Included are several examples of how policy impacts food sovereignty and plays a role in advancing it. There are many other perspectives on the topic that may not be represented in this document; however, during the Arctic Policy Hackathon, participants will have opportunities to share their lived experiences and diverse perspectives on this topic.

SECTION 1: INTRO TO FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

This section provides some foundational information about food sovereignty, starting with two introductory videos to define important concepts. Next, there is a short discussion about the meaning of sovereignty in the circumpolar context, specifically from the Inuit perspective. Finally, there are two case study examples showing some of the many ways food sovereignty is defined and understood in different organizations/ contexts.

UNDERSTANDING 'FOOD SOVEREIGNTY' AND 'FOOD SECURITY'

We ask that all Hackathon participants watch the two short videos below to help you understand the concepts of food sovereignty and food security. Written definitions are also included in the glossary of this document (see Section 4).

Table Debates: [What is Food Sovereignty](#)¹

University of Alberta: [Food Security in the Arctic](#)²

The Hackathon will primarily focus on food sovereignty discussions, as will the policy recommendations you develop during the event; however, it is equally important to understand the definition of food security, as many existing food-related policies and programs are based on this concept. Food sovereignty was chosen as the Hackathon's focus because it "goes deeper into the issue of food and what it means to a people. It speaks to the fact that communities want to look after each other, defining their own vision of food security as well as to have more agency within the food system."³

UNDERSTANDING 'SOVEREIGNTY'

In an effort to keep the 'sovereignty' part of food sovereignty front of mind for the Hackathon, we refer to the 2009 [Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic](#).⁴ The declaration is an important reminder that the self-determination of Arctic Indigenous peoples is a crucial part of achieving food sovereignty in the Arctic. Though food sovereignty is not explicitly referenced, some elements, such as economic, environmental, health and wellbeing, are included. It shows how self-determination over food fits into broader understandings of sovereignty. See the following excerpts:

“2.1 'Sovereignty' is a term that has often been used to refer to the absolute and independent authority of a community or nation both internally and externally. Sovereignty is a contested concept, however, and does not have a fixed meaning. [...] For Inuit living within the states of Russia, Canada, the USA and Denmark/Greenland, issues of sovereignty and sovereign rights must be examined and assessed in the context of our long history of struggle to gain recognition and respect as an Arctic indigenous people having the right to exercise self-determination over our lives, territories, cultures and languages.”

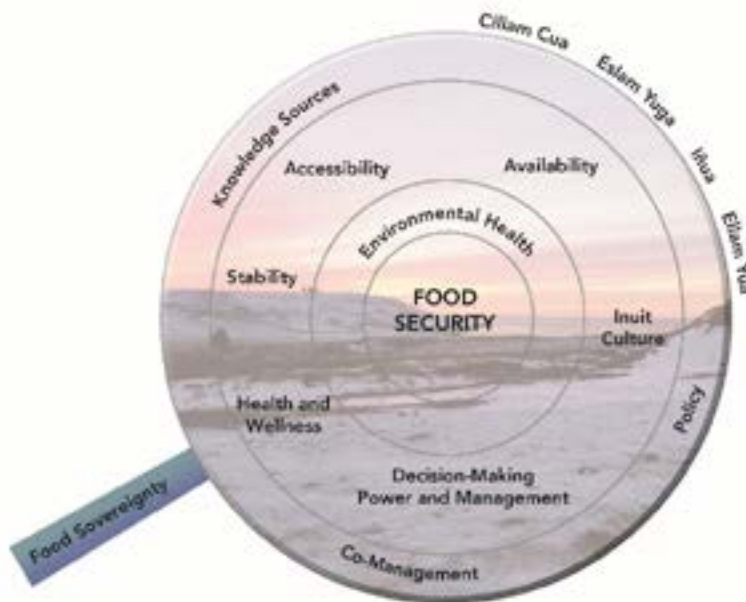
“3.12 The foundation, projection and enjoyment of Arctic sovereignty and sovereign rights all require healthy and sustainable communities in the Arctic. In this sense, 'sovereignty begins at home.'”

CASE STUDY UNDERSTANDINGS OF FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)

Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Russia

ICC Alaska's policy paper, *Climate Change and Inuit Food Sovereignty*,⁵ defines food sovereignty as “the right of all Inuit to define their own hunting, gathering, fishing, land, and water policies; the right to define what is sustainably, socially, economically, and culturally appropriate for the distribution of food and to maintain ecological health; and the right to obtain and maintain practices that ensure access to tools needed to obtain, process, store, and consume traditional foods.” It also explains the connection between food sovereignty and food security: “Within the Inuit food security conceptual framework, food sovereignty is a necessity to support and maintain the six dimensions of food security.”⁶ Food sovereignty is described as the handle on the drum of food security (see image below).



Food Security Conceptual Framework (ICC AK 2016) from Inuit Circumpolar Council-Alaska. 2015. Alaskan Inuit Food Security Conceptual Framework: How to Assess the Arctic From an Inuit Perspective. Technical Report. Anchorage, AK.

To further your understanding of ICC's definitions, you can read the article, [Indigenous Food Sovereignty in the Arctic | Cultural Survival](#),⁷ and listen to the audio clip on the webpage. They discuss food sovereignty as a means of achieving food security as well as ICC's Food Security Conceptual Framework. Some interesting excerpts:

“In discussions about food sovereignty and food security it is important to understand that Inuit are talking about something that goes far beyond ‘resource management’ or similar terms used in management systems. To Inuit, marine animals, land-based animals, birds, and plants have worth and cultural relevance far beyond their material value to Inuit. Furthermore, terms such as ‘subsistence,’ used primarily in the legal context, does not capture the multiple social, cultural, economic, and spiritual dimensions of Inuit food security.”

“Inuit Food Security is the natural right of all Inuit to be part of the ecosystem, to access food and to care-take, protect and respect all of life, land, water, and air. It allows for all Inuit to obtain, process, store, and consume sufficient amounts of healthy, nutritious, and preferred food – foods Inuit physically and spiritually crave and need from the land, air, and water. These foods provide for families and future generations through the practice of Inuit customs and spirituality, languages, knowledge, policies, management practices, and self-governance. It includes the responsibility

and ability to pass on knowledge to younger generations, the taste of traditional foods rooted in place and season, knowledge of how to safely obtain and prepare traditional foods for medicinal use, clothing, housing, nutrients and, overall, how to be within one's environment. It means understanding that food is a lifeline and a connection between the past and today's self and cultural identity. Inuit food security is characterized by environmental health and is made up of six interconnecting dimensions: 1) Availability; 2) Inuit Culture; 3) Decision-Making Power and Management; 4) Health and Wellness; 5) Stability; and 6) Accessibility. This definition holds the understanding that without food sovereignty, food security will not exist."

Slow Food Sápmi on Food Sovereignty

Sweden, Norway, Finland, Russia

Slow Food Sápmi is a non-governmental organization in the food sovereignty movement whose aim is to reclaim ownership and control over traditional Sámi knowledge and production. They work to maintain the resource base necessary for the continued practice of traditional food practices. In their own words:

“Slow Food Sápmi was formed in 2009 and covers Sami areas in Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia. Slow Food's ideology of Clean, Good and Fair food fits well with Sami values, where nature's conditions and holistic view should prevail in life, business and culture. We cooperate with other slow food organizations in Sweden, the Nordic countries and Slow Food International. The collaboration with other indigenous peoples is strong and natural through Indigenous Terra Madre. Slow Food Sápmi represents Sami food entrepreneurs and Sami interested in Sami food production and sustainable resource consumption. We are an active party in issues related to Sami food and the right to be able to produce one's own food, food sovereignty.”⁸

To further your understanding of Slow Food Sápmi's understanding of food sovereignty, you can read Lena Maria Nilsson's [Sámi Food Culture, Traditional practices and contemporary challenges](#).⁹





SECTION 2: IMPACTS OF POLICY ON FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

This section offers a glimpse into some of the ways policy impacts food sovereignty in the Arctic. Across the Arctic regions, there are a host of challenges and opportunities to secure food sovereignty, far more than could be covered in this document. The following examples are meant to demonstrate the role policy can play in promoting or hindering food sovereignty efforts. In some cases, policies create barriers, such as restricting harvesting activities or forms of trade. In other cases, policy is used as a tool to resolve issues of food security, whether responding to disruptions from a changing climate, or optimizing innovations in food technology. These examples may spark ideas of what food sovereignty issues resonate with you, how policy can affect them, and why taking action to influence policy is important.

Challenge: [Policy decisions encroaching on Sámi Harvesting Rights](#)¹⁰ (Deatnu Agreement)

Who: Norway, Finland, & Sámi from these regions

Theme: Governance & Agency

Bilateral agreements between Norway and Sweden have regulated fishing in the Deatnu River since the late 19th Century. The recent 2017 bilateral agreement sparked strong opposition from the Sámi and their allies for encroaching on their fishing rights.¹¹ Christina Henriksen (member of the Sámi Council, former chair of the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region) acknowledged that this restrictive bilateral agreement lacked consultation with traditional knowledge holders, and she called for combining science and traditional knowledge to inform policy.

For further reading, check out these sources:

- [The Deatnu Agreement: a contemporary wall of settler colonialism](#)¹²
- [One Valley, Three Hands: The Bilateral Negotiations of the Deatnu Agreement and Its Impact on Sami People's Rights](#)¹³
- [Sámi Food Culture, Traditional practices and contemporary challenges](#)¹⁴

Opportunity: [The Arctic as a Food Producing Region](#)¹⁵ from Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG)

Who: All Arctic Nations, emphasis on Iceland, Norway, and Canada

Theme: Food & Innovation

This example of a food sovereignty opportunity comes from the Arctic Council's SDWG. They mandated an international research project on the opportunities and constraints to the commercialization of wild foods in the Arctic. Their aim is to: "identify conditions for increased production, both to improve food security in

northern regions, and to increase the added value of food originating in the Arctic both for local and southern markets.”¹⁶ For further reading, check out the SDWG Final Report on [The Arctic as a Food Producing Region](#).¹⁷

Challenge: [Indigenous Food Security in the Arctic: Implications of a Changing Ocean by the Arctic Council's Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment \(PAME\) Working Group](#)¹⁸

Who: All Arctic nations & Permanent Participants – representing Arctic Indigenous Peoples

Theme: External Factors

This challenge to food sovereignty and food security is related to the impact of climate change on the arctic marine environment, namely, sea ice loss, ocean warming, and ocean acidification. These factors impact food availability and accessibility, as well as culture and health. For further reading, check out [Adaptive Management Case Studies](#)¹⁹ (pg. 10-14), featuring adaptive responses in ocean management in the United States, Russia, Canada, Greenland and Finland.

Opportunity: [Food self-sufficiency in five Nordic island societies](#)²⁰

Who: Bornholm (Danish Island in the Baltic Sea), the Faroe Islands, & Greenland (Denmark), Iceland, and Åland (autonomous island in Finland)

Theme: Enabling Infrastructure

Food systems across these five islands vary, all possessing unique challenges and opportunities, yet all share a vulnerability in their dependencies on imported materials to support the food production process. This example of an opportunity for increasing food self-sufficiency in these distinct islands involves re-thinking global supply chains, (re-)adapting to local contexts, and ensuring optimal conditions for selling and buying locally produced food.

Challenge: [Global plant-based diet promotion, meat-shaming & importance of animal proteins](#)²¹

Who: Greenland

Theme: Land & Resources

This challenge to food sovereignty is related to the global promotion of plant-based foods in response to changing climate. The article states that the call for a more plant-based diet is not the problem, but the “problem is that Western institutions speak on behalf of the entire global population.”

Opportunity: [Food System Digitalization as a Means to Promote Food and Nutrition Security in the Barents Region](#)²²

Who: northern parts of Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Northwest Russia

Theme: Innovation & Food

This opportunity for promoting food sovereignty and food security is about the development of cross-border infrastructures for food system digitalization in the region. Breaking the isolation of the local food system simplifies the availability of processed, novel and safe traditional food products.



SECTION 3: INTERNATIONAL POLICY COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION TO ADVANCE FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

This section provides examples of transboundary as well as international collaboration and cooperation on policies, projects, and commitments that impact food sovereignty. These examples show the potential value of circumpolar cooperation on food sovereignty policy. Examples at national or local levels are also included to provide further inspiration and spark ideas for the Hackathon.

During the Hackathon, you will be developing circumpolar policy recommendations through collaborative discussions with youth from across the Arctic. International collaboration provides an opportunity to create more effective and robust policies as the contribution of multiple perspectives helps challenge the status-quo and generate innovative ideas. Cooperation across the circumpolar Arctic can enable synergies and alignment between the policies of different countries and provide opportunities for the sharing of experiences and best practices. It can also increase the human and financial resources available to implement policies that advance food sovereignty.

TRANSBOUNDARY EXAMPLES

Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG): [Reindeer Herding and Youth \(EALLIN\)](#)²³

EALLIN, “the voice of the reindeer herding youth,” was a project of the Russian Federation and Norway, in partnership with the Sámi Council, UArctic, and led by the Association of World Reindeer Herders in cooperation with the International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry. They also had the support of the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples (WGIP) in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region. A strong example of transboundary collaboration that brings together reindeer herding youth to address the challenges, opportunities and pathways for change for sustainable reindeer herding in the future. For further reading, check out [SDWG report on EALLIN, Reindeer Herding and Youth](#)²⁴.

Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG): [EALLU and Arctic Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems](#)²⁵

This ongoing project is “by and for Indigenous youth,” including elements like climate change, food culture and health. It involves the participation of all Arctic Council Permanent Participants. As they put it, “the challenge of EALLU is to use our own knowledge to build our own society... [involving] a series of community-based youth workshops about food and Traditional Knowledge, bridging generations, experience and understanding across the Arctic.” For further reading, check out [EALLU – Indigenous Youth, Food Knowledge & Arctic Change](#).²⁶

Inuit Circumpolar Council Alaska: [Climate Change and Inuit Food Sovereignty](#)²⁷

This policy paper lays out how the international commitments can be leveraged to promote food sovereignty. The five calls to action (see pgs. 1-2) demand accountability from their respective governments to act on their international agreements, frameworks, and declarations—some of which are also featured as international examples in the next subsection.

INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES

United Nations: [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\), Goal 2](#)²⁸

This SDG goal represents an international commitment to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum of Indigenous People: [Joint Brief - The Right to Food and Indigenous Peoples](#)²⁹

This international briefing states that Indigenous peoples have the right to fully enjoy as a collective or as individuals, all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

[Milan Urban Food Policy Pact \(MUFPP\)](#)³⁰

This 2015 agreement was signed by more than 100 international cities. The MUFPP is “an international protocol aimed at tackling food-related issues at the urban level, to be adopted by as many world cities as possible.” As a “concrete working tool for cities,” its Framework for Action includes 37 recommended actions across six categories.

NATIONAL EXAMPLES

[The Qikiqtani Inuit Association: Food Sovereignty and Harvesting](#)³¹

The Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) is a not-for-profit society which represents approximately 14,000 Inuit in the Qikiqtani (Baffin) Region of Nunavut. Their report has recommendations on how to achieve food sovereignty (pg. 11) and an infographic that shows how “supporting harvesters feeds Nunavut” (pgs. 12-13). Their understanding of food sovereignty is also described in this document (pgs. 7-10).

[Greenlandic Board of Food and Environment: Dietary Advice](#)³²

Where there are concerns about the presence of contaminants in local harvested foods, the Greenlandic Board of Food and Environment outlined ten recommendations to meet people’s dietary needs (safety, sufficiency, and cultural appropriacy). Along with the recognition that local harvested foods have nutritional and cultural importance, their dietary advice also extends to curbing pollutants, improving access in public institutions, and spreading awareness on food safety, storage and processing.

[Agriculture and Agri-food Canada: Food Policy for Canada](#)³³

This national food policy was developed through public consultations and feedback from people and organizations with a diverse range of perspectives. It states the federal government’s vision for the future of food in Canada: “All people in Canada are able to access a sufficient amount of safe, nutritious, and culturally diverse food. Canada’s food system is resilient and innovative, sustains our environment and supports our economy.” This policy aims to increase national integration and coordination for policies and programs related to food. It also aims to support stakeholders from across Canada’s food system through informed and collaborative decision-making.

LOCAL EXAMPLE

[Yellowknife Farmers Market \(Canada\): Yellowknife Food Charter](#)³⁴

The vision and principles laid out in the Yellowknife Food Charter are a strong example of how local community goals can be used as a tool to inform food policy. Though it reflects the specific vision for the Yellowknife food system, the principles are broad enough that they may have applicability to other northern cities, and at the least, a model for other regions.





SECTION 4: ADDITIONAL NOTES

GLOSSARY AND OTHER HELPFUL TERMS

Food Charter: “A Food Charter is a broad community statement and/or a set of goals that describe how the members of a specified geopolitical community want their food system to be maintained. By including the voices of various stakeholders, Food Charters encourage a broad base of support, cross-sectorial collaboration, and community connection. Used as an education piece, Food Charters raise community awareness about food system concerns and weaknesses, and offer a platform for public discussion and advocacy. Most importantly, Food Charters are not binding policy statements, but instead act as inspiration for how to develop local food policy and or initiatives for the community.”³⁵

Food Metrics: “Metrics are the way we count or measure things—they are the data we collect to help us better understand and change our communities at different scales. They are important because they draw attention to specific issues and frame the food system in a particular way. They can be used instrumentally to help decision makers develop policies and interventions, help to accelerate programs and policies by drawing attention to a problem, or they can slow things down by suggesting that the system is okay as is.”³⁶

Food Policy: “Food policies are developed by governments at different scales to guide food-related decisions and actions. They inform and govern public, private, and non-profit sector actions related to improving food related outcomes and can create opportunities for stakeholders to work together across sectors.”³⁷

Food Security: Food security is “[a] situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”³⁸ On the other side of the coin, food insecurity is “[a] situation that exists when people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active, healthy life. It may be caused by the unavailability of food, insufficient purchasing power or the inappropriate distribution or inadequate use of food at the household level. Food insecurity, poor conditions of health and sanitation and inappropriate care and feeding practices are the major causes of poor nutritional status. Food insecurity may be chronic, seasonal or transitory.”³⁹

Food Sovereignty: Food sovereignty was coined in 1996 by the La Via Campesina movement at its Second International Conference, and was further defined in the Declaration of the Forum for Food Sovereignty, Nyéléni 2007.⁴⁰ It is defined as “the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems”⁴¹

Sustainable Development: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”⁴²

Sustainable Food Systems: “A food system has many parts. In general, the food system refers to the path food takes from the land to our stomachs. It includes everything from growing and harvesting, processing, transporting, storing, managing/marketing, paying for, eating and how we handle food scraps and packaging. A sustainable community/regional food system is a collaborative network that integrates sustainable food production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste management to enhance the environmental, economic and social health of a particular place. It must be informed by community identified values and principles and requires people from all aspects of the system to work together now and in the future. As our climate changes, we have more to consider at every point in the system.”⁴³

ACRONYMS

AAC	Arctic Athabaskan Council
ALA	Aleut International Association
BEAR	Barents Euro-Arctic Region
EHN	European High North
GCI	Gwich'in Council International
ICC	Inuit Circumpolar Council
PAME	Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment
RAIPON	Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North
SDWG	Sustainable Development Working Group
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS IN THE ARCTIC REGION

Arctic Indigenous Organizations with permanent participation in the work of the Arctic Council:

Aleut International Association (Alaska and Russian Federation)

Arctic Athabaskan Council (Alaska, Yukon and Northwest Territories)

Gwich'in Council International (Alaska, Yukon and Northwest Territories)

Inuit Circumpolar Council (Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Chukotka)

Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (Russian Federation)

The Saami Council (Finland, Russian Federation, Norway, Sweden)

Other groups/organizations:

Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment Working Group (PAME)

Working Group of Indigenous Peoples in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (Representatives of the Sami, the Nenets and the Vepsian peoples [Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia])





SECTION 5: IDEAS FOR DEVELOPING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Theme:

- What area of policy do you hope to change?

2. Issue Statement:

- What is the challenge or opportunity that needs to be addressed?
- What action is required?

3. Background:

- What is the background of this issue?
- What can we learn from other jurisdictions, research, etc.?
- What are some options to change the situation?
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of the options?

4. Recommendations:

- Identify your audience. Who would be interested in your policy recommendation?
- Provide clear, specific and detailed recommendations. They should include actions that are practical for your specific audience.
- You could identify a gap in existing international arctic policy and make an argument for a change. Include a description of the gap, why a new policy is needed, and a description of the new policy.

5. Next steps:

- Who should be involved in the next steps?
- What is the action or activity?
- When should it take place (timeline)?



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