

Arctic Human Development Report

Eirik Mikkelsen, September 2011

1. Project / publication	Arctic Council (2004): <i>Arctic Human Development Report</i> . Akureyri: Stefansson Arctic Institute, 242 pages. http://www.svs.is/AHDR/
2. Initiator	The report was initiated by the Arctic Council and was finished during the Icelandic chairmanship 2002-2004.
3. Objective	The objective was to initiate the process of developing "... a comprehensive knowledge base for the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Programme". Hence, it was not a scenario/foresight project, but rather a status report about human conditions in the Arctic as well as an assessment of the current status of knowledge in the field. More specifically (see the introduction of the report): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AHDR will offer an accessible overview of the state of human development in the Arctic that can serve as a point of departure for assessing progress in the future. • The report will identify critical gaps in knowledge that require attention on the part of the scientific community. • The AHDR will provide a framework and help to establish priorities for the activities of the Sustainable Development Working Group. • More generally, the AHDR will shed light on the concept of human development itself, highlighting dimensions of human well-being that are not prominent in mainstream discussions of this topic.
4. Geographical delimitation	The entire Arctic area.
5. Time horizon	This is not a study about the future of the Arctic (as mentioned above), but it includes development trends. The study is primarily carried out in a qualitative manner and does not use fixed time horizons.
6. Thematic focus	The report takes on a broad perspective and covers issues such as arctic demography; societies and cultures; economic, political and legal systems; resource governance; community viability; human health and well-being; education; gender issues; circumpolar international relations and geopolitics.
7. Images of the future	No explicit futures are portrayed, but certain trends and their consequences are described, as well as the conditions needed for these trends to be maintained or broken.
8. Key driving forces	The various chapters point at many different trends and driving forces. The central message is that arctic societies today are facing an unprecedented combination of rapid and stressful changes due to both climate change and socioeconomic pressures associated with globalization.
9. Uncertainties/wildcards	The width of the study makes it impossible to summarize wildcards.
10. Accomplishment and collaboration	This is an expert-based study carried out by about 100 researchers. The editorial team consisted of Níels Einarsson, Joan Nymand Larsen, Annika Nilsson and Oran R. Young, while each of the 13 chapters has its lead authors.
11. Method	The study is based on qualitative material and quantitative data sources. No modeling methods were used for this study.
12. Sources of information	The study draws on various knowledge bases, and the report's chapters are important reference sources in their own right in the fields it covers.

13. Strengths	The strength of this report is the width of the approach and the all-embracing character of the work.
14. Weaknesses	Many of the chapters function as a review of the current status of knowledge within their field of interest. Some of them appear to be partly politically engaged, with a selection of literature and case studies that support their view.
15. Attention and significance	<p>This study has achieved relatively large attention and can to a significant extent be seen as a reference work about human conditions in the Arctic.</p> <p>It is to our knowledge unclear how this study has been used in the work of the Arctic Council, apart from the fact that it has led to a proposal for a more elaborate Human Development Index than the one used by the United Nations, on the basis of the AHRD's report recommendations in this area (cf. the report about Arctic Social Indicators published by the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2010; edited by Joan Nymand Larsen).</p>
16. Relevance for the Fram Centre	The report has a general relevance for work in the Fram Centre. It offers a wide-ranging scientific assessment of achievements and challenges relating to human development in the Arctic. Many of the contributors work in institutions connected to the Fram Centre. Other authors are potential future (project) partners.