



Sustainable
Development
Working Group



ARCTIC COUNCIL

Health, Wellness, & Social Inclusion:

The SDWG encourages projects and activities in the area of human health including exchange of information, assessments and innovations that can support public health systems and health service delivery with particular emphasis on projects that reduce death and disability from environmental risk factors, suicide, and high-burden infectious and chronic diseases. During the United States Arctic Council Chairmanship (2015-17), the SDWG undertook work on the following health projects:

The ***Operationalizing One Health in the Arctic*** project is an interdisciplinary approach to assessing and responding to health issues at the interface between humans, animals and ecosystems. This project took steps to institutionalize this practice across the Arctic region, using multi-pronged approach that included a large-scale survey of One Health awareness and practices; a series of technical knowledge-sharing workshops were held and a Table Top Exercise was designed to incorporate multiple perspectives on how complex processes work for example, the response to an unusual mortality event among marine mammals or a wildfire. A report was produced on achievements to date with policy recommendations to the Arctic Council. The SDWG will continue to support knowledge building and information sharing, the identification of strengths and areas for further capacity building and cooperative activities

to address observed events of a One Health nature. The working group will also work to build relationships with traditional and local knowledge holders – as well as relevant stakeholders in other Arctic Council working groups.

The ***Reducing the Incidence of Suicide in Indigenous Groups – Strengths United through Networks (RISING SUN)*** project has resulted in a report on activities that provide a set of common metrics for evaluating suicide prevention efforts in the Arctic and a toolkit for practitioners. Through aiding health workers and policy-makers in measuring progress and identifying challenges by facilitating data sharing and pooling, evaluation,





and interpretation across service systems, the project has contributed towards the scaling up and evaluation of interventions across the circumpolar region.

The SDWG will continue to support efforts to increase mental wellness and facilitate suicide prevention in Arctic Indigenous communities in 2017-2019 and has planned to continue education and dissemination of the RISING SUN toolkit, regional webinars to improve utility of the toolkit and discussion of regional efforts to validate measures for outcomes identified through the RISING SUN initiative. The project will continue to build relationships with traditional and local knowledge holders - as well as other stakeholders beyond the SDWG.

The Improving Health through Safe and Affordable Access to Household Running Water and Sewer (WASH) project focused on documenting the status of WASH services in the Arctic, identifying threats to these services brought by environmental change and sharing approaches to enhancing

decentralized water and wastewater treatment, recycling, and usage efficiency. Conferences in Alaska and Greenland were held to facilitate collaboration between relevant stakeholders on measures to increase access to and reduce costs of in-home running water and sewer in remote communities and to improve public health.

Moving forward, SDWG will continue to share information and monitor progress towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goal of improved water/sanitation service for all Arctic residents. Project participants from the first phase plan to convene a workshop on Arctic water and sanitation and health at the 17th International Congress on Circumpolar Health in August 2018.

The SDWG has in the past looked at issues related to ***Gender Equality in the Arctic*** and will continue to do so under the Finnish Chairmanship. The main goal of such work is to promote an extensive policy relevant dialogue on gender equality putting current realities and future challenges into context with climate and environmental changes as well as economic and social developments throughout the Arctic.

