



EMERGING LEADERS

ARCTIC FRONTIERS

Digital Emerging Leaders 2021





Project report – digital Emerging Leaders 2021

Summary

The Emerging Leaders is a leadership development program and important networking arena on Arctic issues for young scientists and early professionals, organized by Akvaplan-niva as a part of Arctic Frontiers. Usually, the Emerging Leaders programme invites young international candidates to a socially and professionally inspiring study of the Arctic in the arctic environment. This includes travelling on the coastal steamer, "Hurtigruten", from Bodø via Lofoten archipelago to Tromsø. During this travel the Emerging Leaders are meeting with representatives from regional management, business, academia, and relevant organisations before attending Arctic Frontiers when arriving in Tromsø. This year, due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, Emerging Leaders went digital. For this purpose, 25 Emerging Leaders alumni were invited to meet in an online workshop with the aim to engage in discussions about current societal challenges in the Arctic. The discussions evolved around the impacts of Covid-19 on the Arctic, the impacts and adaptation to climate change in the Arctic, and what themes to address in future Emerging Leaders programmes. Their perspectives were collected and recorded, to be shared in this report and through a highlights video during the Arctic Frontiers conference 2021.

About Emerging Leaders

The Arctic as we know it is going through a set of changes. People who live and work in the Arctic are experiencing climate changes. Nations are experiencing a change in the climate in which they work and cooperate. These changes also open up for opportunities for easier access to the geological resources in the Arctic, as well as for increased maritime activity including tourism. This may strengthen the regional economy and differentiate the labour market, thereby reducing the flux of young people leaving the High North for better opportunities elsewhere. A main challenge must be solved: How to embrace such development and at the same time not harm the environment and degrade lifestyle of local and indigenous peoples?

Future operations in the Arctic require efficient cooperation across disciplines, sectors and national borders. Development in the Arctic depends on brave, safe and sustainable solutions with tailor-made strategies and global action plans. Decisions in and for the Arctic have been based on historical, social and trans-border networks that for generations have brought together a variety of nationalities, cultures, peoples and disciplines. What happens in the Arctic does not stay in the Arctic. The development in the high north is concurrently affecting the whole world, the entire global community. Our common Arctic gives us a unique opportunity to set the course for a sustainable development and global cooperation across traditional forms of governance. The Arctic is calling out to future generations and emerging leaders in policy, science and business to take the lead in the Arctic on arctic premises.

The Emerging Leaders is a leadership development program and important networking arena on Arctic issues for young scientists and early professionals, organized by Akvaplan-niva as a part of Arctic Frontiers. The programme is supported by the Research Council of Norway and Sparebanken Nord-Norge, and SALT is engaged for the execution. The program which annually starts in Bodø, goes on to Lofoten and ends at the international and multidisciplinary Arctic Frontiers conference in Tromsø. The Emerging Leaders program invites socially engaged Norwegian and international

candidates under the age of 35 years from different disciplines and sectors to a socially and professionally inspiring study of the Arctic in the arctic environment.

Re-imagining Emerging Leaders 2021 – going digital

This year, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, we had to reimagine Emerging Leaders 2021, as physical meetings were not possible. Therefore, for the first time, Emerging Leaders went digital!

For the Emerging Leaders 2021 program, 25 Emerging Leaders alumni of the last five years were invited to participate in an online workshop, which was held on the 27th of January 2021. The aim of the workshop was threefold: 1) to organize the first digital workshop with Emerging Leaders alumni 2) to use the experiences of the workshop for planning of future Emerging Leaders activities. And 3) to provide a platform for young professionals to exchange their perspectives on current societal challenges in the Arctic and to collect and share these through the Arctic Frontiers conference 2021.



Figure 1. Screenshot of the 'studio' in Tromsø with the hosts of the Emerging Leaders workshop, Salve Dahle and Charlotte Weber.

To start the workshop, the hosts and Emerging Leaders alumni met online via Zoom, where the participants were welcomed by the studio in Tromsø (see Fig. 1) and introduced to the workshop's agenda and goals. The hosts and participants took a tour de table to introduce themselves and to get to know each other, as not everyone had met each other before. Then the participants were split into groups and asked to discuss a set of questions of Arctic relevance, which was given to them beforehand. The groups synthesized their key discussion points into short presentations, so that each group presented their outcomes for further discussions in plenary (see all participants in Figure 2). The plenary discussions were recorded to collect these young perspectives and to share them with a wider audience in video format.



Figure 2. Screenshot during the online zoom workshop, showing all Emerging Leaders workshop participants and hosts.



3. How would you adapt to climate change challenges and what advice do you have for the young generations in the Arctic?

Adaptation is a balancing act between taking climate change seriously, and yet not panicking. Today’s generation is keen to learn and is curious, those who live in the Arctic should drive the change. Change happens slowly, so it is important to speed it up through the spread of knowledge, while preserving traditional knowledge and skills. Young generations in the Arctic cannot abandon hope for the future. While we might be up against grand global challenges and dealing with the impacts, we need to harness and build hope. Our next step needs to be directed and built on concrete actions to bring about change. Youth are the future leaders and we need to ensure there are platforms to have their voices heard. We need to create opportunities that keep the younger generations in the Arctic.



4. How has the societal lockdown due to Covid-19 impacted you and your social circle in regard to your educational and work opportunities?



Each life situation is different, and so are the challenges. However, some experience challenges in their mental health. Most commonly, some research activities slowed down or stopped, travel was restricted, and future plans delayed. However, the situation also brought about new possibilities (online platforms, teaching, education), new work routines, and improved technology skills. For many, 'home-office' opened new opportunities to live far away from one's workplace. This is interesting development for people who wish to live in (remote) Arctic areas and work remotely.

5. How do you think the pandemic will impact the development of your local area and your home country? (Industry, emigration, social conditions, climate, etc.)

We see a short mid-term recession coupled with joblessness and high levels of social anxiety. Often, small business suffered, while big ones thrived. Yet, the pandemic shows promise of an accelerated energy transition and of innovative solutions. We already see less pollution and decreased emissions as a result of remote work, change of commuting habits, and increasing outdoor activities. The pandemic also provides a technology opportunity that let us connect to the world from our homes. At the same time, our focus has shifted from the world to our local communities, out of concerns regarding the health, safety and well-being of those closest to us. We also see a redefining of our human values and the definition of essential.



6. Which themes would you propose for Emerging Leaders in 2022 and how could these themes be addressed?

- How will the 2020s look like
- How to rebuild the World after the pandemic
- How to get locals involved in science
- How to make Arctic more united
- Arctic in a post Covid time
- Digital transformation in a digital age
- Integrating science and policy
- We worry that people will forget what we've learned during this time. Challenge the "Covid 19 reboot": How to systemise the learning and engrain the learning from the pandemic into society?

Reboot
Phoenix
PostCOVID
Integration
Remember
Action
COVID

Achievements and contributions from the Emerging Leaders 2021:

Overall, within the restrictions given, the first digital Emerging Leaders workshop was a great success and both the Emerging Leaders alumni as well as the hosts enjoyed the event and their participation. The Emerging Leaders also provided important contributions to the plenary sessions of Arctic Frontiers conference 2021.

A digital booth (see Figure 3) provided the opportunity for the Emerging Leaders to present a highlights video of the workshop video to conference participants. The video briefly explains about the history of Emerging Leaders and contains highlight clips from the recordings of the workshop. The booth also contained last year's report and a link to the website.

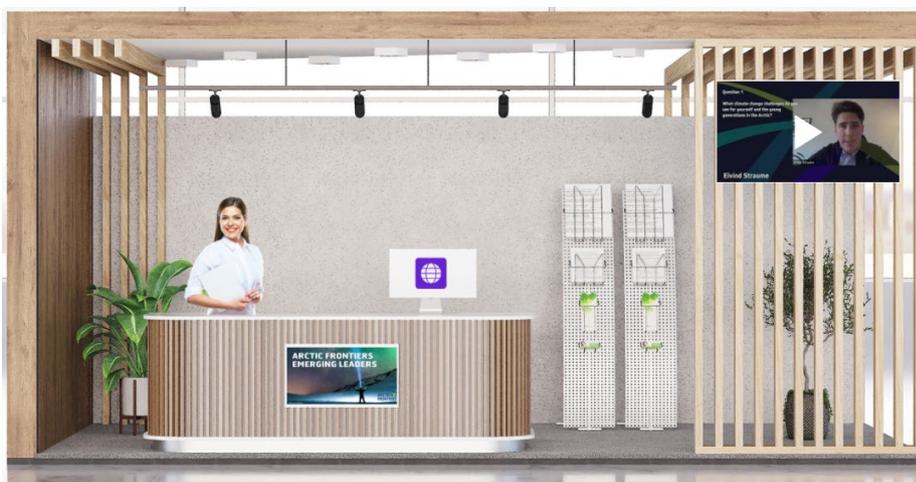


Figure 3. Screenshot of the Emerging Leaders digital booth during the Arctic Frontiers conference 2021. The booth contained last year's project report and this year's highlights video showing the main outcomes of the workshop.

The Emerging Leaders also contributed to the live plenary program of the main conference. Three Emerging Leaders, namely Chloe Scott, Johannes Schmied, and Joelena Leader, provided short, pre-recorded videos with direct questions to conference panellists (see Figure 4). These questions were presented as a brief outlook video during the session on "Climate collaboration for the Future", and panellists answered these questions during their live debate.



Figure 4. Screenshot of the brief outlook provided by three of the Emerging Leader alumni, as a contribution to the plenary program of Arctic Frontiers 2021.

Additionally, three Emerging Leaders alumni participated in a session of the Arctic Frontiers Student Forum titled: Young People Inspire Each Other. The Student Forum is a multidisciplinary program designed for bachelor and master students with a passion for Arctic issues. During the session, the alumni shared stories about their academic and professional journeys. Their presentations highlighted the skills, tools and values critical for young people as they soon transition from studies to the world of work.

In summary, the Emerging Leaders program 2021 accomplished several important milestones, namely: 1) to take the first step towards establishing a strong network of young professionals in the Arctic across the Emerging Leaders cohorts; 2) to facilitate the first Emerging Leaders alumni meeting and test a potential format to do so; 3) to provide a platform for young professionals to exchange their perspectives on current societal challenges in the Arctic and to share these through the Arctic Frontiers conference 2021.

Evaluation from participants

The evaluation showed that participants provided very positive feedback about the workshop and enjoyed the discussions and their overall participation. The participants thought the aim and content of the workshop were very relevant and the discussion topics addressed important issues. The Emerging Leaders' input the Arctic Frontiers conference with the highlights video and the brief outlook were also meaningful contributions in the eyes of the participants. The participants were all very happy and excited to see familiar faces again, but equally enjoyed meeting new people from the other cohorts. The workshop provided a great networking opportunity, especially in times of reduced travel, and some participants wished that there was even more time to get to know everyone even better. The idea of an alumni network and yearly alumni meetings sparked great interest, given that there was a clear aim and purpose, with a driving force behind such a network that could organize and facilitate meetings, while maintaining the network.

In the future, participants would like to invite also mentors and more senior participants to the table, to make their voices heard amongst those and thereby increase the impact of such a workshop. Other ideas included to use 'saved money' from 2020-2021 for organizing a funded place for Emerging Leaders on the Arctic Council, use digital tech to reduce social isolation, and to develop



"reverse scholarship" initiatives for arctic communities. This constructive feedback will be taken into account in the planning and organization for future Emerging Leaders events and activities.

Thank you to the funders!

The organizers greatly appreciate the good collaboration over the last years with our partners. The collaboration with the Research Council of Norway has been crucial and remains a particularly important contribution to the continuity and early planning of the annual edition of Emerging Leaders. Also, for the third year in a row, we have had the opportunity to receive support from Sparebanken Nord-Norge through their funding support mechanism "Samfunnsløfte". Their support enabled us to build bridges across the arctic youth and continue Emerging Leaders in 2021! We look forward to the continuation of the Emerging Leaders program and hope to return to its original format in 2022.

With best regards,

Tromsø, 24 February 2021

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