

Model Arctic Council for sustainable development

Third UArctic Congress

Iceland
17th May 2021

01

MAC is experiential learning event at which pupils or students simulate real-world Arctic Council



NORMAC Senior Arctic Officials Meeting
(Norwich, UK, March 2019)

Arctic Council Senior Arctic Officials
Meeting (Rovaniemi, Finland, November 2018)



Source: Polar Aspect; Arctic Council (right image)

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02

Since 2016, I've designed and run numerous MACs for schools and universities, in person and online



Colegio Ayalde, Spain



Norwich School, UK



Trent University, Canada
& University of East Anglia, UK



Online, worldwide
(including delegate training)



Trent University, Canada
(online course-based MACs)



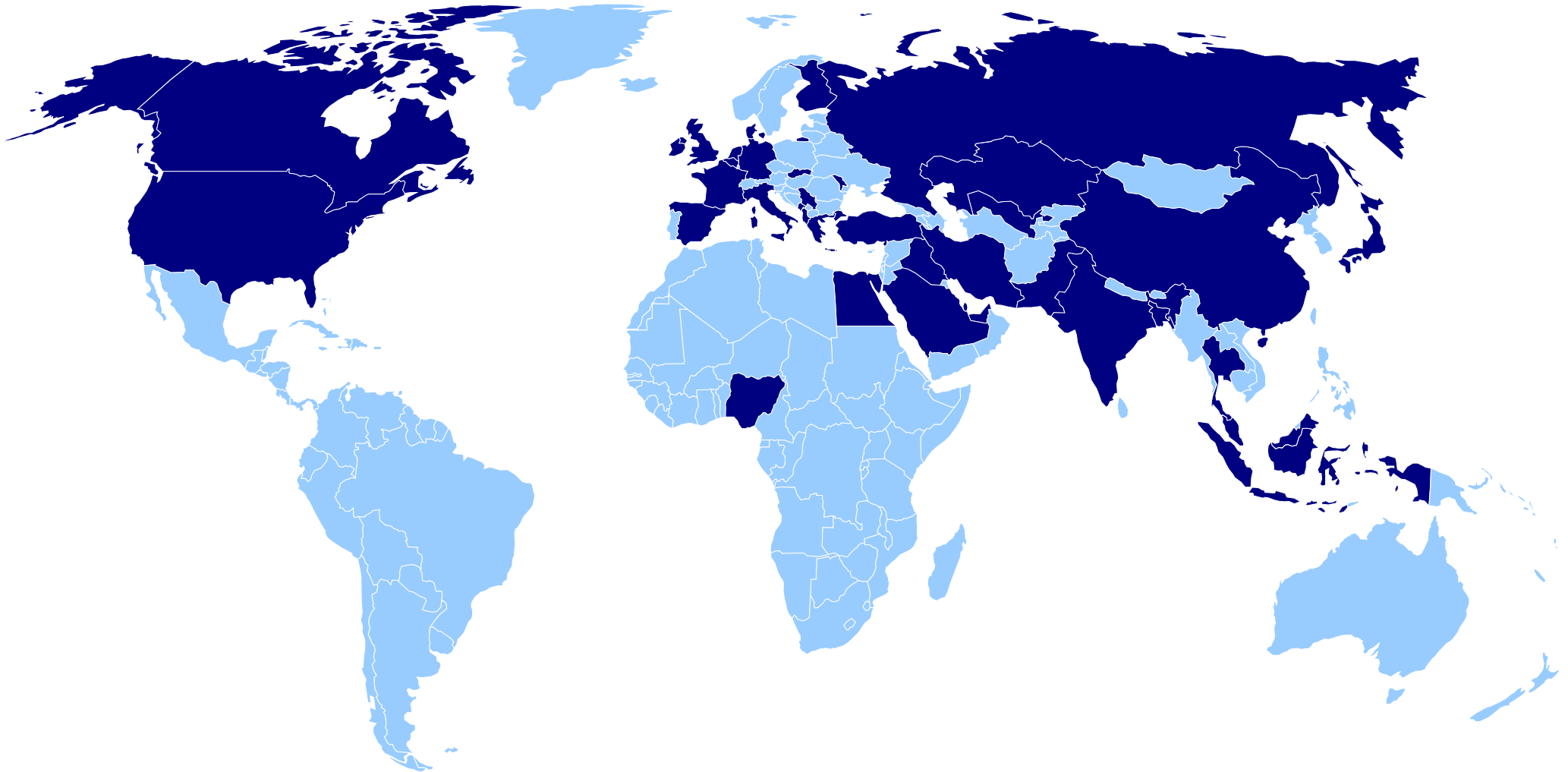
Wycombe Abbey, UK



Trent University, Canada
& Yukon University, Canada

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Polar Aspect MACs have thus far engaged hundreds of pupils and students from many home countries



Raising awareness of Arctic region, peoples and challenges amongst youth around world

Source: Polar Aspect

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04

Pedagogical research shows diplomatic simulations such as MAC deliver valuable educational benefits



Significant and better-retained learning



Improved communication and interpersonal skills



Teaching tailored to variety of learning styles



Understanding of ambiguities and power dynamics of IR



Improved independent learning skills



Appreciation of diverse or conflicting perspectives and beliefs



Cooperative learning and co-creation of knowledge



Enjoyable, motivating and empowering learning

05

MUN Impact founded in 2017 to use Model UN as tool to promote Sustainable Development Goals



THE GLOBAL GOALS For Sustainable Development



MUN Impact is a global community that believes in the power of Model United Nations to inform, inspire, and motivate its participants to action in support of the Sustainable Development Goals.

As a community we will:

- Be a hub for sharing stories of impactful MUN activities, best practices, and ways to support, through action, the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Act as a platform through which the United Nations can engage the MUN community, share information and act as a source of inspiration.
- Deliver experiential learning opportunities for students that are focused on the SDGs and that bring together diverse individuals from around the world.
- Host world-class, student-planned and executed events that allow for further sharing and collaboration around the SDGs

MAC similarly suited for teaching about and promoting Arctic sustainable development

Source: MUN Impact (logo and mission statement); UN (SDG graphic); Polar Aspect analysis

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06

MAC agendas naturally revolve around sustainable development issues



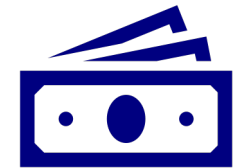
Rapid climate change



Vulnerable indigenous cultures



Limited access to public goods (e.g. education, health care)



High cost of living



Poor community infrastructure



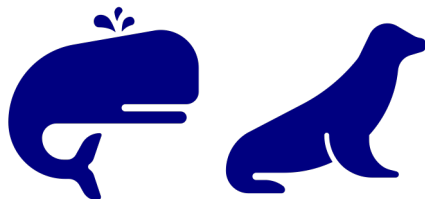
High pollutant concentrations



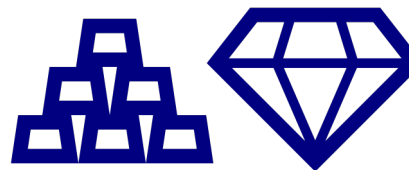
Narrowly-based local economies



Constrained physical and digital connectivity



Fragile ecosystems



Dependence on natural resource extraction

07 | By highlighting these issues, MAC banishes notion sustainable development isn't applicable in Arctic



← Look carefully at this 'photograph'!

Source: Coldimages/iStock.com (left); Greenpeace (right); Polar Aspect analysis

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Indeed, MACs serve as general antidote to dubious popular conceptions of Arctic



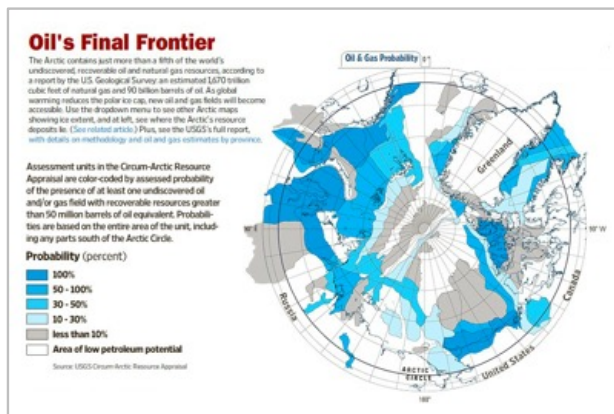
Fragile wilderness



Masculine crucible



Savage wasteland



Resource frontier



Terra nullius



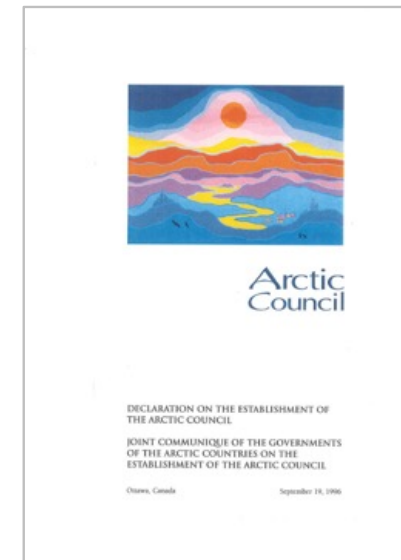
Militarised zone

Source: Florian Ledoux, Ranulph Fiennes, Nicholas Ray/Paramount Pictures, USGS, Encyclopaedia Britannica, US Senator Dan Sullivan (images clockwise from top left); Polar Aspect analysis

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09

MAC rule of consensus requires delegates to grapple with tensions in sustainable development



Ottawa Declaration (1996)

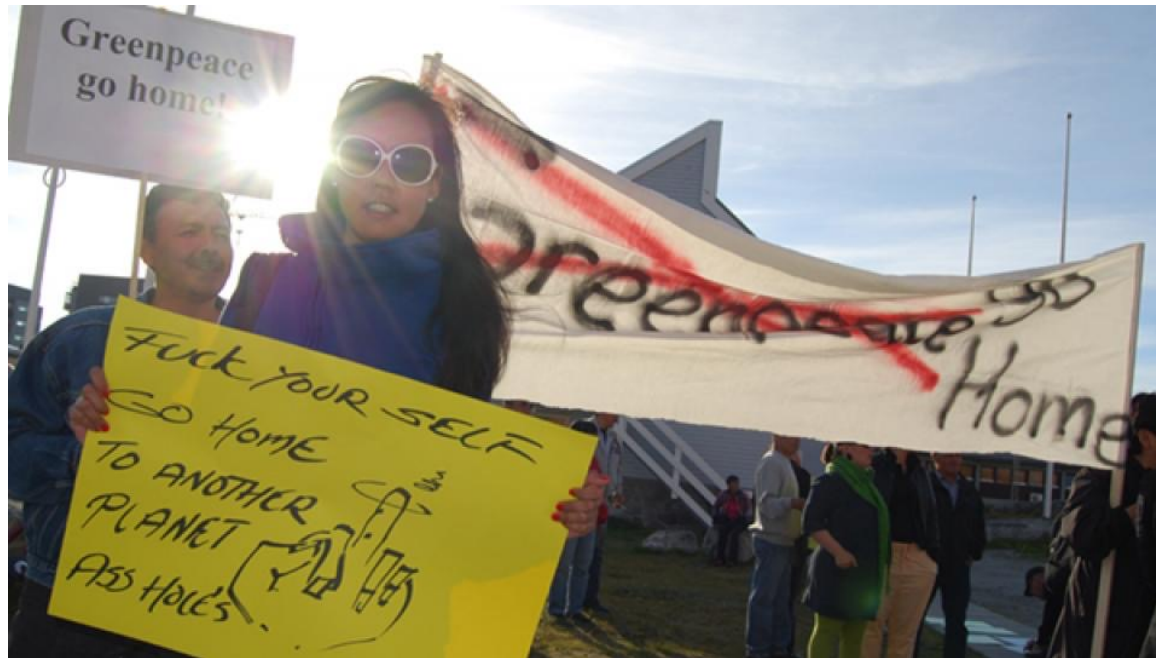
'Decisions of the Arctic Council are to be by consensus of the Members' (Article 7)

'It is the need for consensus (not just a majority) that makes it truly special' – *Teacher*

Source: Stephanie McMillan/Cartoon Movement (left image); Arctic Council (right image and text); Polar Aspect analysis

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10 | MACs foreground Arctic Indigenous perspectives on sustainable development and relations to land



Potential multiplicities of meaning of Arctic sustainable development only understood through cultural lens

Source: Mats Nyvolds/Sermitsiaq (left image); Hamlet of Clyde River/Greenpeace (right image); Polar Aspect analysis

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Read more in my forthcoming book chapter, 'Model Arctic Council for sustainable development'...

WORKING DRAFT – PLEASE DO NOT CIRCULATE OR CITE

Model Arctic Council for sustainable development

Anthony Speca
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Draft of 1 November 2020

1. Education, sustainable development and the Arctic

Education is not only an end of sustainable development, but also a means. It is a means because the idea of sustainability does not sufficiently explain itself, as our presently unsustainable path of development shows. Correcting our path will also impose social and economic burdens that people will not accept without understanding why. For these reasons, education plays a special role in the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which call for all people not only to enjoy lifelong quality education, but also to 'acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development' (UNGA, 2015).

Regrettably, though, we have not yet agreed how to promote sustainable development, despite thinking and teaching about the idea for over 30 years since it entered public discourse (WCED, 1987). This is because we have not been able to make the vexed moral and political choices that sustainable development requires (Owens, 2003). Nor have the SDGs helped. Shortly before they were officially adopted, a scientific review questioned whether the SDGs could all be achieved together (ICSU & ISSC, 2015). Considering the environmental consequences of our present methods of social and economic development, they probably cannot be (Spaiser *et al.*, 2017). In other words, the SDGs are themselves unsustainable, at least the way things work now.

For some people, this sort of incoherence is perfectly exemplified by the idea of sustainable development in the Arctic. The Arctic of the popular imagination (Young & Einarsson, 2004a) is simultaneously one of the last pristine wildernesses on the planet, and one of the first tragic victims of our obsession with fossil-fuel-driven economic growth. Should the Arctic melt and the polar bear go extinct, we can only blame ourselves. What is more, we may be next! In this morality play of climate disaster and redemption, we must save the Arctic from development at all costs, since no Arctic development is sustainable. As for education's role, it can do no better than to teach us to avoid the mistake of believing otherwise.

I shall not try to refute this popular view here, though I do not sympathise with it. I shall assume instead that sustainable development can be sensibly understood, including in the Arctic. This is to say I shall assume that the

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MAC for sustainable development

1. Education, sustainable development and the Arctic
2. The educational value of diplomatic simulations
3. The educational benefits of Model United Nations
4. Model United Nations and sustainable development
5. Model Arctic Council and sustainable development
6. Effective educational use of Model Arctic Council
7. Coda: From Model League of Nations to Model Arctic Council

...in D Hirshberg (ed), *The Role of Education in Sustainable Development in the Arctic*, Springer

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Finally, please don't hesitate to be in touch if you'd like to sponsor, host or take part in Polar Aspect MAC



Dr Anthony Specca

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- Adjunct Professor of Canadian Studies at Trent University (Canada)
- Managing Director of UArctic Læra Institute for Circumpolar Education
- Teacher of PPE and Geography at Norwich School (UK)
- Former civil servant with Government of Nunavut in Canadian Arctic
- Passionate about Arctic education and Arctic 'philosophical geography'

I'd be delighted to hear from you!

Thank you / Þakka ykkur fyrir

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