Model Arctic Council for sustainable development

Tenth International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences

Northern (Arctic) Federal University, Russia

17th June 2021
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)
Since 2016, I’ve designed and run numerous MACs for schools and universities, in person and online.

- **MACBILBAO**
  - Colegio Ayalde, Spain

- **NORMAC**
  - Norwich School, UK

- **NORMAC UNIVERSITY**
  - Trent University, Canada
  - & University of East Anglia, UK
  - Online, worldwide (including delegate training)

- **OMAC**
  - Trent University, Canada
  - (online course-based MACs)

- **WYCOMAC**
  - Wycombe Abbey, UK

- **TRYKOMAC**
  - Trent University, Canada
  - & Yukon University, Canada

Source: Polar Aspect
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
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

Source: Polar Aspect
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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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

Source: Polar Aspect

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

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

Ottawa Declaration (1996)

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

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

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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
Read more in my forthcoming article, ‘Model Arctic Council for sustainable development’... 

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 a special edition of Polar Geography to be edited by Diane Hirshberg of UAA
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 Speca

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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!

Source: Polar Aspect

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Thank you / Спасибо

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