

ARCTIC FUTURE

The Circumpolar International Internship Newsletter



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IISD and the CYLP at the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies Conference

Harry Borlase, former CYLP Intern at the University of the Arctic, 2007–2008

This past October, I had the pleasure of presenting a paper on behalf of IISD at the ninth Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS) Student Conference in Whitehorse, Yukon. At the conference, I was given the task of presenting the findings from IISD's "Securing a Sustainable Future in the Arctic: Engaging and training the next generation of Northern leaders," authored by Carolee Buckler, Laura Normand and former CYLP intern Linda Wright. The topic of Northern leadership fit perfectly with the theme of the event, *Communities of Change: Building an IPY Legacy*. The conference was attended by some 250 participants, including students from around the globe, many leading senior scientists, faculty and staff from Yukon College, as well as Whitehorse residents.

In a way, my job as a presenter was easy. The hard work of conducting the research and preparing the paper paved the way for a fruitful presentation and discussion that focussed on some of the major topics related to Northern engagement, including: an appraisal of the existing opportunities, barriers to participation and key characteristics of young Northern leaders. Of particular interest to the audience were the recommendations, which emphasized government commitment towards improving leadership capacity within the education system and increasing financial support for active organizations. There was a general consensus that research on capacity-building in the North is particularly crucial to Northern development and that such a discussion is timely, given the recent push for a university located in the North.

The fact that the conference was held in Whitehorse is significant. Research and the dissemination of knowledge is an important component of capacity-building and public engagement. It is apparent that the improvement of leadership opportunities in the North requires more than just scientific thought; it requires the capability of communities to become engaged in how these processes are shaped and nurtured. Whitehorse has also been the hometown for many CYLP past interns. This may be a testament to the community's emphasis on youth development and supportive environment for leadership opportunities.

Thanks need to be extended to Carolee Buckler, former Project Manager for IISD's Knowledge Communications and CYLP Coordinator. Carolee's dedication to not only the CYLP, but also to Northern development in general, was tireless. Her enthusiasm and connection with the North transcended the close relationship she had with CYLP interns, and reached Northern communities who valued her emphasis on training and professional development. Perhaps Carolee's legacy lies in the "Securing a Sustainable Future in the Arctic" paper, which outlines a clear path for leadership development in the North and IISD's continued commitment to Canada's Northern youth.

Climate Change Starts with Me

By: Elizabeth Zarpa, CYL intern

The eight circumpolar countries (Canada, Denmark [Greenland], Finland, Norway, United States, Russia, Sweden and Iceland) that sit as permanent participants on the Arctic Council will continue to carry the immense task of sustainably managing

their political and economic development. This is not to say that the governments did not manage their affairs in the past, but since the climate is rapidly changing the environment, there is a growing interest in how to adapt to these changes.



Youth get ready to march on Parliament Hill.

How is Canada adapting to environmental changes? One simple answer is through Canada's Northern Strategy. This federally organized political tool is gaining momentum in Canada's North through its four strategic areas: 1) exercising Arctic sovereignty; 2) protecting environmental heritage; 3) promoting social and economic development; and 4) improving and devolving Northern governance. With these four strategic areas, the federal government will maintain political control over its Northern territory and also adapt to the changing environment.

Wait just one minute. A stakeholder that cannot be ignored by governing bodies is civil society itself and its interest in climate change. Successful youth movements such as the Power Shift Canada 2009, which took place from October 23–26 in Ottawa, have lobbied the elected officials of Canada for "greener" approaches to governance. There is an emerging synergy that is taking place between the state and the civil society with respect to "greener" ways of governing the population, but does this actually mean that "greener" policies and ways of governance will be developed? Yes, it does, but there is one mitigating factor: me. Me, the individual; a single person can play a large role in climate change.

It is helpful when the federal government and environmental groups tell me to reduce my carbon footprint, but I do not need someone's approval to make greener choices in my lifestyle. Change involves simple things, such as buying my own coffee mug rather than always using the disposable cups, or recycling my cans and bottles, etc. At times, I think we forget how much impact we have on the world because we depend on other powers to make a difference for us. Climate change starts with my choices! And this is how I will contribute to making a difference.

Circumpolar Young Leaders Program Training

By: Napatsi Folger, CYL intern

The Circumpolar Young Leaders (CYL) program was started in 1999 by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), in partnership with the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group. The program was established in order to help young people gain the skills, networks and power to influence current decision-makers on important issues that will affect the Arctic by the time they take their leadership roles in the future. This year's interns quickly established close bonds because of their shared desire to enlighten other youth in the North to empower them to take charge of their future, affect change in their communities and bring to light the major environmental changes occurring in the Arctic.

There are four interns in the 2009 CYL program: Calista Morrison from Whitehorse, Yukon; Elizabeth Zarpa from Happy Valley, Labrador; and

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Circumpolar Young Leaders Program 2009 interns (l to r): Calista Morrison, Elizabeth Zarpa, Jesse Tungilik and Napatsi Folger.

Power Shift Canada: Youth taking action against climate change

By: Janice Grey

The weeks leading up to Power Shift Canada were among the most stressful weeks of my life. By the time the weekend came around, I went in thinking that I just couldn't wait for it to end. I'm sure most of my fellow students who attended felt the same way initially, as it fell right in the middle of mid-term season. I had been trying for a month to recruit people from up North, but I kept running into problems, from a lack of funding and transportation, to a lack of interest from communities, who were unwilling to put time into outreach. Pile that

on top of studying for mid-terms, finding a new apartment and looking for a job, it was really kind of a nightmare.

I have to admit that, if I wasn't required to go as a member of the Canadian Youth Delegation (CYD), I might have chosen to stay in Montreal and just tackle my mile-high to-do list. But the day came when I had to get on that train to Ottawa, and I was finally able to take a breath and absorb the fact that I was about to be part of the biggest youth climate change event in Canadian history! I went two days

prior to the event to attend my CYD retreat, which was amazing in itself!

At the CYD retreat, I got to meet most of the team that I will be going to Copenhagen with this coming December. We had two very intense days together before all dissolving into the crazy world of Power Shift. We discussed our objectives and goals as a team, what we would and would not be willing to do in terms of actions and protests, among many other topics. We even got to meet with the

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Power Shift Canada: Youth taking action against climate change

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Environment Minister Jim Prentice and Canada's lead negotiator, Michael Martin. After finalizing our respective Power Shift workshops—the CYD Arctic Team presented on impacts of climate change in the North, which was quite successful—we all just lost each other in the vastness of Power Shift Canada.

It is difficult to explain in words the amazing energy that filled the air that weekend! Ottawa was alive with the passion and dedication of Canada's climate change leaders and I was lucky enough to be part of it. Fill the Hill, the October 24 protest on Parliament Hill, did not get the media attention it deserved, but gave me a huge sense of pride in the youth of this nation. That afternoon, we came together, united by the biggest threat to our very existence, and we told the government that we will not stand for anything less than a fair treaty in Copenhagen! We shut down Stephen Harper's voice mail!

Unfortunately, media outlets could not have cared less about the couple of thousand demonstrators who stood in the cold rain for hours. The only thing they reported were the protests at Question Period, which is sad because they focused more on the actual protests than on the reasons behind them. When I attended Question Period, one of my friends was injured during a scuffle and another one of my friends had the back of his shirt torn. Both of those people were harmless, they were peacefully conveying a message that MPs just didn't want to hear. So please, when you see headlines like "was the blood real?" or "violent clashes at question period," take them with a grain of salt. Remember that these people are just fighting for our future.



Erica Young of Winnipeg's EcoNetwork stands up for Green Jobs at the Power Shift Canada march on Parliament Hill.

Circumpolar Young Leaders Program Training

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Jesse Tungilik and Napatsi Folger from Iqaluit, Nunavut. Their internships are taking place within various institutions all over the circumpolar world, with one intern at IISD headquarters in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The interns attended an intensive, six-day training session in Winnipeg to prepare for their placements.

One topic was particularly helpful to the interns, regardless of their destinations: former IISD intern Dagmar Timmer described her experiences with culture shock and being homesick. She said that it is really important to remember that people carry on nor-

mally after you leave home and that you have to put in the effort to keep in contact. This does not mean they don't love you or miss you; usually it is much more difficult for the people who left all their loved ones because they are alone. She said not to be discouraged. She also pointed out that what surprised her most was the culture shock she experienced when she returned to Canada after being abroad for so long. It was a relief to hear Dagmar's advice because it came from somebody who had experienced internship firsthand, who had been in the same position the interns were about to be thrown into.

The training modules covered team-building, sustainable development,

effective communication, networking and collaboration, climate change, stakeholder engagement and fund development. It was a very full and beneficial week, and the interns were glad to have the opportunity to meet and learn from some very talented and experienced people throughout their training. Carolee Buckler was the Project Manager for Global Connectivity at IISD in charge of selecting and organizing the interns. She was very supportive and helpful. The interns were all sad to see her go when she moved on to become the Sustainable Development Coordinator for Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, but wish her well at her new and exciting job!

Alberta's Tar Sands and COP15: A sticky problem

By Jesse Tungilik, CYL intern

The Athabasca Oil Sands, colloquially known as the tar sands, contain large deposits of extremely heavy crude oil called bitumen mixed with silica sand, clay minerals and water. The largest of the three main deposits that make up the Athabasca Oil Sands project is located in the Fort McMurray, Alberta area and is home to the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation and the Mikisew Cree First Nation people.

The Athabasca Oil Sands represent an estimated 170 billion barrels of economically recoverable oil, which makes Canada's total oil reserves second only to Saudi Arabia. As of 2006, the Athabasca Oil Sands Project made up 47 per cent of all oil produced in Canada. Given this fact, it is unsurprising that there are strong forces behind the project to ensure its development. But what impact does the tar sands have on Canada's commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions?

This is what Clayton Thomas-Muller refers to as "the elephant in the room"

when it comes to the question of whether Canada will meet its commitments to the Kyoto agreement and why Canada is expected to oppose robust reductions of greenhouse gas emissions at the upcoming COP15 in Copenhagen.

Clayton is a Cree man from Pukatawagan, Northern Manitoba (Mathais Colomb Cree Nation) and is an outspoken indigenous rights and environmental justice activist. He is the tar sands campaigner for the Indigenous Environmental Network and is a vigorous opponent of the development and expansion of the Athabasca Oil Sands project.

While the tar sands are strategically important to Canada's economic interests, producing oil is also incredibly destructive to the environment. The process to refine the viscous bitumen into oil requires vast amounts of water and energy resources. In fact, the

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Alberta Tar Sands protestors arrive in the early morning to catch government officials on their way to work.

Alberta's Tar Sands and COP15: A sticky problem

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process of recovering oil requires almost as much energy input as the oil contains at the end of the processing. The ecological footprint of the approved tar sands projects and its tailings pond is already larger in area than Vancouver Island and is expected to grow to 90,720 square kilometers in size.

The Canadian government has proposed to reduce emissions from 2006 levels by 20 per cent by 2020. If successful, Canadian emissions would be 2.7 per cent below 1990 levels; under Kyoto, Canada committed to cutting its greenhouse gases from 1990 levels by 6 per cent by 2012.

In contrast, the European Union has pledged to reduce emissions from 1990 levels by 30 per cent by 2020, if other developed countries would accept similar reductions. The American climate legislation sets a target of a 17 per cent reduction from 2005 levels by 2020, but its reductions are more aggressive than Canada's in subsequent years.

The Canadian government has said that it will not release its detailed climate-change plan, which includes proposed emissions caps on large emitters such as the oil sands, until it is clearer how the United States intends to proceed in global climate-change talks in Copenhagen in December, and what an international treaty would look like. Canada has continued to insist that it should have less aggressive targets for emission reductions than Europe or Japan because of its faster-growing population and energy-intensive industrial structure.

The Alberta Oil Sands development is considered to be the single largest contributor to emissions growth in Canada. Canada will struggle with achieving significant reductions in carbon emissions while the tar sands continue to be developed under a business-as-usual model. So, as the world



Protesting in front of Parliament October 26, 2009.

descends upon Copenhagen in December for COP15, Canada will have a difficult time justifying why

other countries should reduce emissions while tar sands development is being expanded in its own backyard.

Norway's Climate and Cryosphere Project

By Calista Morrison, CYL intern

My internship with the Circumpolar Young Leaders Program placed me at the Climate and Cryosphere (CliC) Project Office in Tromsø, Norway. My experience, so far, has taken me in an interesting direction. My responsibilities lie less with coordinating youth on Arctic issues or delving into policy work. Instead, I've spent my time working with scientists.

The cryosphere touches more regions of the globe than one might imagine. Think about it for a moment: snow, sea ice, ice caps, glaciers, ice sheets, ice shelves and permafrost are all examples of the cryosphere. When you add climate to the mix, the scope gets even larger. There are ice and snow at the North and South poles, but the cryosphere

surpasses Polar Regions. It is global.

CliC is one daughter project of the World Climate Research Programme. For CliC to tackle such incredible tasks as the climate and cryosphere, they must approach it from all angles. CliC has four main themes that encompass the cryosphere and how it interacts with atmosphere and ocean systems, water and carbon cycles, sea-level rise, as well as global predictions. It is evident that anyone taking on the climate has their hands full.

Working at such a global level is no easy task. Research is carried out all over the world, at all times. Whether these scientific endeavours answer

questions or create more, the necessity to coordinate is essential. Exchanging information among countries and agencies helps make science productive. If two people are working on the same project, asking similar or related questions, would it not make sense to collaborate, combine efforts, or simply share findings? CliC works with scientists from all continents. Everyone involved comes from different organizations, countries and cultures, creating a network that is constantly expanding and evolving. International collaboration among organizations, researchers and policy-makers ultimately builds relationships and a crucial sense of community.

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An example of the cryosphere in the breathtaking Norwegian landscape.

Norway's Climate and Cryosphere Project

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Calista Morrison looks out onto the Red River.

I often have mixed feelings as to whether or not the world has become a smaller place with technology. Novel resources such as the Internet, Skype, e-mails and conference calls are incredible for relaying information among scientists, stakeholders and policy-makers around the globe. However, despite our best advances, we have those subtle reminders of the distance still between us. Conference calls at 8 am on one side of the world happen at midnight on the other. International collaboration is a struggle that requires finesse in organization, patience and a sense of dependability.

A comforting fact is that working within an organization like CliC gives you a glimpse at how many people are studying the climate and how the world is changing around us. There are people all over the globe, from expert scientists to budding grad students, coordinators, communication officers and assistants to those brave souls balancing the budgets, all essentially playing a role in a much larger game. I find that comforting. Climate change is a global phenomenon, and our efforts are evolving to match it. People are working towards change; more people than you might think.

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Editor: Napatsi Folger

Graphic Design: Don Berg

Contributors: Harry Borlase, Napatsi Folger, Janice Grey, Calista Morrison, Jesse Tungilik, Elizabeth Zarpa

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The International Institute for Sustainable Development contributes to sustainable development by advancing policy recommendations on international trade and investment, economic policy, climate change, measurement and assessment, and natural resources management. Through the Internet, we report on international negotiations and share knowledge gained through collaborative projects with global partners, resulting in more rigorous research, capacity building in developing countries and better dialogue between North and South.

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E-mail: info@iisd.ca

Web site: <http://www.iisd.org>

161 Portage Avenue East
6th Floor
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3B 0Y4
Tel: +1 (204) 958-7700
Fax: +1 (204) 958-7710

MIE 2
9, chemin de Balaxert
1219 Châtelaine
Genève, Suisse
Tel: + (41-22) 979-9353
Fax: + (41-22) 979-9093

340 Albert St, Suite 710
Ottawa Ontario, Canada
K1R 7Y6
Tel: +1 (613) 238-2296
Fax: +1 (613) 238-8515

300 East 56th Street #11A
New York, New York 10022
United States of America
Tel: +1 (646) 536-7556
Fax: +1 (646) 219-0955



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