



ARCTIC PASSION

Deliverable 9.5

Arctic PASSION Sharing Circle

(previously planned as Arctic PASSION School)

Version 1

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ARCTIC
PASSION

Work package

09 – Connecting the PAN-AOSS with society through communication, dissemination and engagement

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Executive summary

Arctic research is moving increasingly towards being application-oriented, based on the needs of the people who directly face the impacts of accelerating change in the Arctic. In fact, grown up in a world of global challenges, Arctic youth and early career professionals have the power to create positive change. The Arctic benefits from a close dialogue between Arctic youth, young professionals and early career researchers working and living in the Arctic. The Arctic PASSION Sharing Circle fostered this dialogue by inviting eighteen international participants from 9 countries to Sevetijärvi and Inari, Northern Finland, from 2-6 October 2023. The participants learned from and discussed with the Arctic PASSION partner Snowchange about the local Skolt Sámi culture, as well as indigenous-led and co-managed environmental restoration projects of the region. Lively discussion rounds to various relevant topics and a lot of exchange among the group were an integral part of the Sharing Circle. Spending every day indoors and outdoors, experiencing the Skolt Sámi culture and nature led to an intercultural exchange and built connections across the Arctic.

In an online survey we evaluated that the goal and expectations of linking our young society with Arctic Observations were successfully met. Raising awareness about two-way communication, co-management, intercultural collaborations and the Skolt Sámi history and culture in the next generation of upcoming leaders (PhD candidates, students, young professionals from the Arctic and non-Arctic) was a main achievement. After the Sharing Circle, the Sharing Circle participants have become Arctic PASSION Ambassadors and develop their own outreach projects to distribute learnings of the event to a wider audience.

A report, written by Arctic PASSION Sharing Ambassador Jessica Hall, is published on the APECS and Arctic PASSION Websites:

<https://www.apecs.is/events/past-event-highlights/sharing-circle/5215-sharing-circle-report-2.html>

<https://arcticpassion.eu/blog/sharingcirlereport>

1. Introduction

With the aim to offer education and training activities in Arctic PASSION, the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS) organised an Arctic PASSION School in the frame of Task 9.4. While developing and planning the training activity, the name of the event was transforming more into what we actually envisioned: The Arctic PASSION “School“ became a “Sharing Circle”, and will be henceforth referred to as Arctic PASSION Sharing Circle. The name of the Deliverable 9.5 was changed accordingly.

The Sharing Circle was addressing Arctic youth and early career professionals. More information can be found on <https://arcticpassion.eu/sharingcircle/>

The aim of the Arctic PASSION Sharing was:

- Gaining new perspectives on Arctic issues and Arctic collaborations
- Empowering early career professionals to establish meaningful collaborations across sectors and cultures
- Getting a better understanding about life in the Arctic and the intercultural and transdisciplinary complexity of the Arctic
- Learning about the approach of “capacity sharing” and its valuable contribution to research processes as well as best practices in engaging with Arctic rights holders and stakeholders
- Learning how to create safe spaces for collaboration and exchange, leading to more equitable research outcomes and better science
- Gaining a new network and developing future paths by incorporating their learnings and experiences

The organisation of the training event was accompanying Arctic PASSION from the beginning, based on multi-directional exchange on the basis of reciprocity, communication and collaboration. The structure of the timelines summarised in Figure 1 and presented in the following chapters.

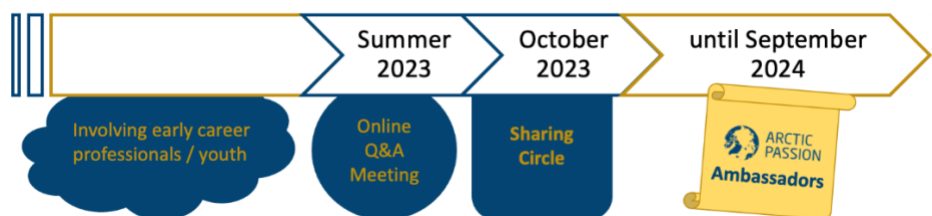


Figure 1: Structure of the Arctic PASSION Sharing Circle timeline

The Deliverable 9.5 reports on the planning process, the selection and preparation of participants, and the training concept and plan. The report concludes with an assessment of the training event and steps following the event itself, which are an online seminar and discussion and the Arctic PASSION Ambassador projects.

2. Planning of the training event - From a “School” to the Sharing Circle

As part of the Deliverable 9.4 “Arctic PASSION Education & Training Plan”, a rough outline of the education activities planned in the frame of the Arctic PASSION project was described in December 2021.

A few months later, the actual planning of the main education event began. According to the shaping format the education and training activity changed from a “School” to a Sharing Circle. See below a timeline of the Sharing Circle organisation:

Timeline

December 2021	Description of “Arctic PASSION School” in Deliverable 9.4 “Arctic PASSION Education & Training Plan”
30 March - 1 April 2022	Discussion at the Arctic Observing Summit
8-30 April 2022	Release of online survey addressing Arctic youth, Indigenous youth, early career scientists reveals interests and needs for a Sharing Circle (Survey)
May 2022	Survey evaluation and concept development
July 2022	Start planning incl. format, location and time window
22 February 2023	Announcement of Sharing Circle at the Arctic Science Summit Week
15 March 2023	Call for applicants to the Sharing Circle
21 March 2023	Call for reviewers for the Sharing Circle applications
28-31 March 2023	Visit in the Sevettijärvi community , the place where the Sharing Circle is taking place
23-25 May 2023	Breakout session at the Arctic PASSION General Assembly to evaluate the Sharing Circle concept and brainstorm with Arctic PASSION collaborators
16 June 2023	Sending out the review results, confirmation of final candidates, sharing of with travel information
11 September 2023	Sharing information in form of a handbook with participants (see appendix)
13 September 2023	Online call with final participants , including an Q&A
1 October 2023	Travel to the Arctic PASSION Sharing Circle
2-6 October 2023	Arctic PASSION Sharing Circle in Sevettijärvi and Inari, Northern Finland
7 October 2023	Travel home from the Arctic PASSION Sharing Circle
24 October 2023	Ambassador project online meeting
Oct 2023 - Sept 2024	Sharing Circle participants act as Arctic PASSION Ambassadors with their own outreach projects

Initial survey

Before the organisation and concept planning started in more detail, a [survey to early career scientists and Arctic youth](#) was shared. This survey aimed to meet the needs and interest of the target audiences in the current time and to co-develop the education event concept from the very beginning. The survey was sent on 8 April 2022 to early career scientists and Arctic youth (via networks, mailing lists, contact partners). 36 responses were received, most of them identifying as female and between the ages of 26-35. The majority was based in academia with their work/working area in the Arctic (64 %) or even working and living in the Arctic (19 %), currently doing their PhD (44 %) or postdoc (17 %) and with no Indigenous background (83 %) and not affiliated with an Arctic PASSION member organisation. It can be assumed that most answers to the survey were received from APECS members as this is a network which is rather easy to reach out to over the existing channels.

The survey asked for their goals for participating in a format like the Sharing Circle or an Arctic PASSION online seminar. Key goals mentioned in the survey participant's free-text answers were having meaningful conversations, sharing experiences, gaining new perspectives, getting inspiration, empowerment, networking, and to stay connected. The survey also asked for preferred topics and formats. Their wishes for topics (mostly chosen out of a multiple-choice list of potential topics Arctic PASSION can provide) were effective community engagement training, collaborations with Indigenous Peoples (as an early career researcher), making science relevant to people and communities, traditional ways of life, exchange across generations, how to collect relevant data, science communication, permafrost, sea ice and ship safety. Preferred formats (mostly chosen out of a multiple-choice list) were by far discussions, but also diverse topics for presentations, the interdisciplinary and cultural side of international collaborations, meeting with right holders and stakeholders.

The more technical survey questions about the timing and the location of the education event, were a valuable input for the organisers. Especially, respecting Indigenous lifestyles being more connected to nature cycles, and the excursion/field work times of young academics helped us to set a suitable time for most people of the target audience. Additionally, the light conditions at the location were considered. The place should be located where the abovementioned goals can be achieved: Learning from Arctic Peoples and discussing effective community engagement.

Concluding from the survey responses and given that Arctic PASSION is an EU project, the organisers agreed that a Northern European country is the ideal place for the Arctic PASSION

Sharing Circle. The Arctic PASSION partner Snowchange Cooperative offered their close connections to the Arctic PASSION Skolt Sámi partner community in Northern Finland.

The Arctic PASSION Sharing Circle event was finally planned for the 2-6 October in Sevetijärvi/Finland (Fig. 2).

Planning phase

After evaluating the survey and deciding on location and dates for the Arctic PASSION Sharing Circle, the organisers started planning format, structure and speakers.

Since the Arctic PASSION project has a clear focus on the co-creation with Arctic communities and end users of the developed services for the Arctic, the same concept of co-creation was applied to the main education event of the project. In the first months of the planning, the conference Arctic Observing Summit (AOS) 2022 also had a major influence on the development of the Sharing Circle concept. Many beneficial consortium partners of Arctic PASSION participated in this conference. APECS contributed to the AOS Working Group on Capacity Sharing and achieved great learnings about the importance of creating meaningful conversations, and how to initiate new partnerships especially in the context of collaborations with local Arctic communities and Indigenous People's communities. With the learnings from the Arctic Observing Summit, its [recommendations and call to action](#), and the general Arctic PASSION approach, the format of the Sharing Circle developed. It can be seen as a step forward towards the connection between Arctic youth and early career researchers considered as crucial bridge builders between the science community and the Arctic communities and also to raise awareness about more ethical and equitable work (see [AOS recommendations](#)).

While developing the concept, it became clear that this event will be different from other formats of an academic summer school meant to train early career scientists about scientific topics. With that, also the title "Arctic PASSION School" was only a working title until it was changed to "Arctic PASSION Sharing Circle". This name was chosen to underline the key concept of capacity sharing (two-way communication) instead of capacity building (one-way communication).

"We wanted to create an event based on co-creation and exchange, to bring people together, initiating better collaborations and connections!"

Lisa Grosfeld, Sharing Circle organiser



Figure 2: Location of the Arctic PASSION Sharing Circle in the homelands of the Sapmi, Northern Finland (© 2024 GoogleGeoBasis).

To gather more attention and interest to the event as well as to discuss the planned concept and receive feedback, the Sharing Circle concept was presented at the Arctic Science Summit Week in Vienna on 22 February 2023.

During a breakout session at the Arctic PASSION General Assembly in Baveno on 24 May 2023, a discussion round about the Sharing Circle concept was used for testing the interactive format.

Visit in Skolt Sámi community in Sevettijärvi. 28-32 March 2023

As part of the preparation for the event and further planning, the organisers visited the Skolt Sámi community in Sevettijärvi to introduce themselves to the Indigenous and local community and to get to know the people and their culture and ideas. Coming from an urban environment, this is a place where human beings live much more in connection with their lands and nature. The Arctic PASSION partner Snowchange was the host of this visit and built the bridge between the community and the Arctic PASSION associates. The Arctic PASSION coordinator and the Sharing Circle organisers stayed at Sanila's Reindeer Farm, led by a Skolt Sámi family and spent the meals and evenings at their place. During the visit they had the privilege to talk to a local reindeer herder and to get introduced to a shaman. Two presentations about the project and our activities were given at the local school in Sevettijärvi. The visit in Sápmi was a fundamental basis for the organisation of the Sharing Circle. Especially, the closer contact to Sanila's Reindeer Farm was precious in the creation of the program and local planning. Even though a rough sketch of the program was developed before the visit, it received a full makeover afterwards, e.g. with a focus on selected topics of importance and to make the best use of this event taking place in Sápmi and to get to know people and life in the Arctic. The overall aim was still to create connections and create a place to learn from each other.

Also in regards to logistics, the pre-visit was helpful to getting to know the sites in and around Sevettijärvi, its logistical challenges which led to an adjustment of the logistical planning.

The report of the visit to Sevettijärvi on 28-32 March 2023 can be read here:

<https://arcticpassion.eu/blog/Sevettijarvi>

Funding

Besides the allocated project funding, further external funding was secured. Applications were submitted to the Nordic Culture Point, the Norwegian Research Council, the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), and the U.S. Embassy in Finland. Two of them succeeded: IASC supported the event with 9,550 € (spent for car rental, fuel, dinner at a restaurant, as well as the realisation of Arctic PASSION Ambassador projects) and the Norwegian Research Council supported with 4,200 € (~50,000 NOK, spent for the meals at the accommodation).

2.1 Participants selection

Announcement and application

Between 15 March and 10 April 2023, the call for applications to the Arctic PASSION Sharing Circle was published on the Arctic PASSION and APECS websites.

The information on the call was spread via Arctic PASSION and AWI mailing lists, Arctic PASSION and APECS social media channels and newsletters, the EU Polar Cluster platform “Catalyst”, diverse networks (UArctic, Arctic Youth Network, Arctic Observing Summit, Arctic Frontiers Emerging Leaders Alumni network) and to interested participants from the initial survey. When

The call for applications received a great response of 87 applications from 19 countries, of which 35 applications came from EU member countries (Fig. 3).



Figure 3: Origin by place of residence of all applicants to the Arctic PASSION Sharing Circle. Size of circles and numbers in table refer to number of applicants.

The majority of the applicants identified as female (64 %; 29 % male, 7 % non-binary) and not as part of an Indigenous community (90 %). 64 % of the applicants indicated a membership with APECS.

Review

In parallel, to the call for applications, a call for reviewers was opened from 21 March until 12 April 2023. The engagement of 31 senior and early career reviewers from 13 countries was much appreciated. In preparing the review material, all personal information from the applications was removed in order to allow for an anonymous and unbiased review process. After receiving the scorings from the reviewers, the organising team applied a ranking which now included 1. the

primary criteria of gender balance and country of residence and 2. in the second place the diversity of sectors and level in experience. The final list of ranking was approved by the Arctic PASSION project coordinator. 17 successful candidates including four early career professionals from Arctic PASSION, were selected and informed accordingly.

This rather academic approach of application and review of candidates, seemed not applicable for Youth or young (Indigenous or non-Indigenous) Arctic community members. Instead, the direct approach of relevant contacts was preferred as a method. Different Arctic youth and Indigenous youth networks were asked if people are interested in joining the Sharing Circle. Full coverage of their travels was included. However, this method did not result in more participants with local Arctic perspectives (see “4. Training assessment”). One Indigenous youth from one of the Arctic PASSION partner communities was invited to share her Thaltan perspective in the event’s frame. In total, the participant group included 18 individuals from 9 countries. See the full list of participants on the Arctic PASSION website: <https://arcticpassion.eu/sharingcircle/>

Speakers

Following the approach of two-way communication and thus loosening the barrier between speakers and listeners, the organisers made use of the expertise of the group, meaning that the participants were not only participating but also speakers – sharing their knowledge, perspective and experience. This sparked discussion and interaction within the group. In addition to the speakers of the participant group, three speakers were invited: Harmony Wayner - tribal member of Naknek Native Village, a commercial fisher and a marine scientist; Olivia Rempel - documentary filmmaker and multimedia journalist at GRID-Arendal; and Tahnee Prior - co-founder of Women of the Arctic, focussing on women’s and gender-related issues in the Arctic. The Arctic PASSION partner Snowchange Cooperative shaped the program with 4 speakers, Tero Mustonen, Kaisu Mustonen, Tiina Oinonen and Lauri Hämäläinen, as well as 2 associated guests. The Snowchange Cooperative is an NGO and a network of local and Indigenous cultures working together on climate change and environmental challenges, and advancing these cultures. They built the bridge to the Sevetijärvi community and shared their valuable knowledge about Indigenous community engagement and co-created environmental restoration projects as well as Sámi culture. They invited contacts from the local community who shared their Sámi culture and their individual stories. See the full list of speakers on the Arctic PASSION website: <https://arcticpassion.eu/sharingcircle/>.

2.2 Preparation of the participants

The remoteness of the location and format of the training event required more in-depth planning and instructions for the participants. To make it as easy as possible for the participants the organisers created a document with detailed travel information about how to get there and where to book. Additionally, a sheet was circulated to collect the travel information of everybody so people could team-up if they want to travel together. Being responsive to the questions of the participants and speakers was key.

On 13 September 2023, about three weeks prior the in-person event, the organisers invited for an online meeting which included a Question & Answer. This meeting was intended to clarify questions about logistics, accommodation, program and equipment but on the side, it also served as an opportunity to get to know each other, hence, a short introduction game in the beginning served as an icebreaker.

It became clear that the meeting was useful for the participants to connect and to ask questions, and also for the organisers to get a feeling for the group and what information is still unclear. In parallel, the organising team was creating a handbook and all open points were included here (see Appendix). The handbook included information about the location & accommodation, arrival and transportation, travel guide, some practicalities such as internet and language, as well as weather and packing information, Sharing Circle rules, call for rapporteurs, some information about the Ambassador project after the event and it included recommended literature and contact addresses.



Figure 4: Group picture of the Sharing Circle participants in Sevetijärvi, Finland (Photo Olivia Rempel, GRID-Arendal)

3. Training concept and plan

The Sharing Circle aimed to create a personal setting where everyone and everyone's voice is equally important. In practice, participants became speakers and speakers became participants. All participants learned about different knowledge systems and the co-creation in theory and practice and they learned from locals and those who collaborate closely with the local community. And they learned from each other. The group of participants was diverse and presented the areas of industry, policy, social and natural science as well as linguistics. Group discussions were led by early career professionals and Arctic youth. The organisers from the Sharing Circle group were early career professionals themselves, too, and learned a lot in the whole process.

Spending this intense time together in this remote location, including a wooden hut with a fire in the centre, always burning, helped to create trust within the group and opened safe spaces in a natural way, which offered opportunities to have vulnerable discussions. It was a mixture between outside excursions and indoor seminars and group discussions which offered different formats of learning and using the opportunity to be on-site, while talking about relevant issues. Also, the transit ways to and from the event location, built a space for individual conversations and making connections.

The program and schedule for the Arctic PASSION Sharing Circle was shared with project partners on different development stages for feedback. In general, the schedule developed dynamically; prior to the event based on the results of the initial survey and discussions with the participants, but also during the event. Latter was needed to enhance flexibility and adjustments to daily changes where needed, e.g. to adapt to the availability of community members. Further, it was considered key to give space (and more time) when meaningful exchanges took place. The adjustments to the daily agenda and the preparations needed for these activities were communicated daily, so the participants were aware of the daily program flow.

As a result, an interesting module-based program has developed, shaped by the many inspiring topics provided by the group of participants and their diverse backgrounds. Discussions and short presentations were enriched by – often spontaneous – contributions from participants. See Fig. 5 for details.

Project: Arctic PASSION
Deliverable 9.3 – Arctic PASSION School

	Sunday, 1 October	Monday, 2 October	Tuesday, 3 October	Wednesday, 4 October	Thursday, 5 October	Friday, 6 October
Topic of the day						
7:30-8:00	Arrival day to Seveti/jarvi	<i>Sámi life + River Restoration</i>	<i>Reindeer Herding + Two Way Sharing</i>	<i>Local Culture + International Collaboration</i>	<i>Local Fish Habitats + Ways Forward</i>	<i>Forest Restoration + Sámi Culture</i>
8:15-9:00	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
9:00-10:00	Opening (organizers & Snowchange) & Land acknowledgement	Culture of reindeer herding (Tero Mustonen)	Culture of reindeer herding (Tero Mustonen)	Visit in the local school	Fish habitats in the Arctic Ocean and the Neiden river (Tero Mustonen)	Travel to Inari
10:00-11:00	Introduction round with the host, organizers, speakers and participants	Indigenous storytelling + ways to connect to nature (Paullina Feodoroff)	Indigenous storytelling + ways to connect to nature (Paullina Feodoroff)	Co-managed forest restoration project (Tero Mustonen)	Stop at co-managed forest restoration project (Kaisu Mustonen)	
11:00-12:00	History + development of the Skolt Sámi (Paullina Feodoroff & Tero Mustonen)			Travel back + break		
12:00-13:00	Lunch break		Travel back + break		Fire camp lunch and input on Well-being and Salmon Systems (Harmony Wayner)	Arrival in Inari and walk to museum
13:00-14:00	Indigenous-led river restoration initiative (Tero Mustonen & Paullina Feodoroff)	Caribou habitat restoration in Canada (Elise Brown-Dussault)	Caribou habitat restoration in Canada (Elise Brown-Dussault)	Lingonberry picking (Miina Sanila)	Permafrost geomorphology (Fabian Seemann)	Lunch break in SIDA Sámi museum
14:00-15:00		Two-Way Sharing Processes:	Two-Way Sharing Processes:	Introduction APECS (Sarah Strand)	Ways forward - ECR/youth exchange	Outdoor and indoor tour in the Sámi museum
15:00-16:00		Presentations with discussion Communication with national and regional policymakers in the Arctic (Pavel Tkach)	Presentations with discussion Communication with national and regional policymakers in the Arctic (Pavel Tkach)	Introduction Arctic PASSION (Michael Karcher)	Presentations with discussion An ECR Perspective from Alaska: Looking Ahead for Future Solutions in Resource Management (Harmony Wayner)	
16:00-17:00	Storytelling in science - Take aways (Olivia Rempel)	Developing environmental contaminant monitoring through two-way capacity sharing (Louise Mercer)	Developing environmental contaminant monitoring through two-way capacity sharing (Louise Mercer)	Intercultural collaborations in the Arctic: Connecting with indigenous communities: being open and flexible (Caitlyn Lyons)	Cultural Revitalisation (Lauren Clavelle)	Time to visit the exhibition individually
17:00-18:00		Community-based monitoring in the Thaitan community (Lauren Clavelle)	Community-based monitoring in the Thaitan community (Lauren Clavelle)	Group discussion	Introduction Women of the Arctic + Gender and Environment (Tahnee Prior)	
18:00-18:30	Storytelling in science - Take aways (Olivia Rempel)	Changing the way we think about foundational science in the Arctic (Emma Bullock)	Changing the way we think about foundational science in the Arctic (Emma Bullock)	Partner group work: What are your wishes/ideas/needs for future collaborations?	Group discussion	Free time
18:30-19:30	Check out of the day	Group discussion	Group discussion	Presentation of the results from the group work	Closing words	
19:30-20:00	Check out of the day	Check out of the day	Check out of the day	Check out of the day		
20:00-21:00	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner with head school teacher and traditional singer	Dinner	Dinner
	Welcome	Film screening about reindeer and sheep farming - Among herders (Minnetta Westerlund)	Film screening about reindeer and sheep farming - Among herders (Minnetta Westerlund)	Traditional Skolt Sámi Leav'dd singing (Hanna-Maaria Kiprianoff)	Check out of the day	Feedback round & Goodbye
					Free time	

Figure 5: Arctic PASSION Sharing Circle Schedule.

4. Training assessment

During the event verbal communication revealed that the group highly appreciated the input, the selection of the participants and the diverse and flexible program. This was mirrored in the online evaluation sent out on 24 October, two and a half weeks after the event. The survey included closed and open questions of which representative figures and quotes are included below.

The survey received 12 responses.

The general experience with the Sharing Circle event was rated overall very positively with 100 % of the responses scoring it 7 out of 7. The participants felt overall well prepared (Fig. 6) and 100 % of the survey responses stated that the Sharing Circle was well organised.

More importantly, the 5-day program was not only generally well received (Fig. 7) but the comments provided to this questions made clear that it was the mixture of the training approach (informal setting, creation of safe space), people (diversity, knowledge and group dynamic of participants/speakers), program (balance of discussion and on-land-activities, cultural input) and logistics (food and location) that was received very positively – resulting in a steep learning curve (Fig. 8)

Looking back, how well prepared did you feel?

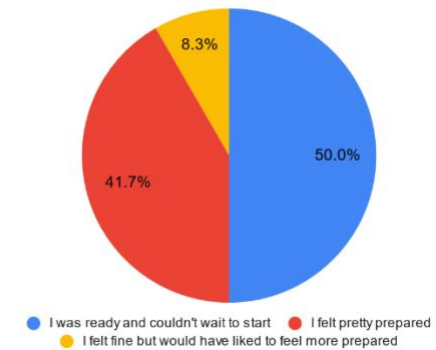
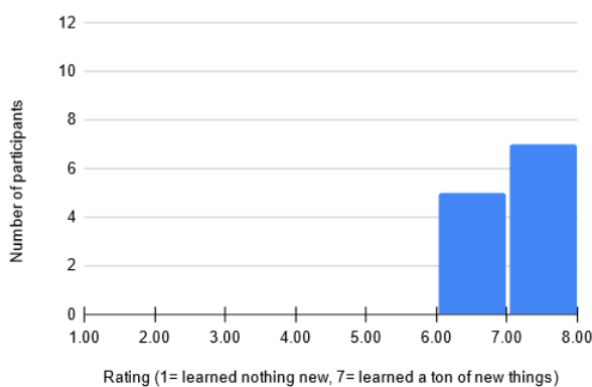


Figure 6: Participants' response to the question on how well they felt prepared for the Sharing Circle.

How do you rate your personal learning success by participating in the Sharing Circle?



How do you rate the 5-day program?

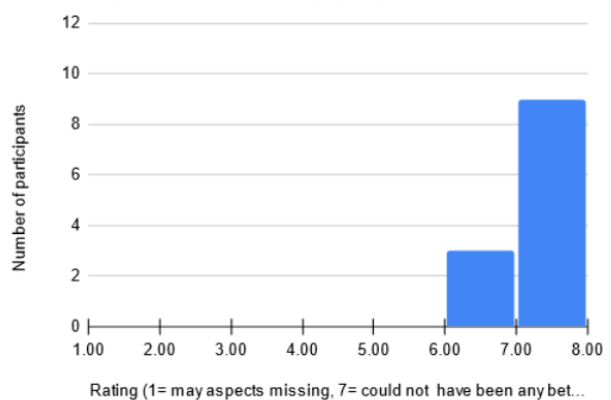


Figure 7 & 8: Participants' response to the question on how they rate the 5-day program and their personal learning success.

Main learnings were achieved in the topics of local environmental changes and its impact on the Sami culture, as well as Indigenous Knowledge, colonialism and co-creation, such as co-created environmental restoration efforts. They saw the importance of collaboration and relevance to include values of collaboration partners. Participants learned a lot from contributions from the local community, Snowchange and the other participants. They got inspired by other participants and one participant reported that the Sharing Circle allowed critical thinking about what it means to engage in the Arctic. Also, the political component attached to Sami land use rights was seen as a much-needed discussion and increased their learning a lot. The topics covered were also emotionally intense, which needs to be considered by organisers to give enough breaks and down time to process and sink in.

The most mentioned topic that was missing was more information about the Ambassador projects (see chapter 5.1), but due to time constraints the organisers decided to skip the brainstorming sessions in favour for deeper discussion on ongoing topics, thus, the organisers shift the exchange on potential Ambassador projects to an online meeting after the Sharing Circle.

Moreover, participants mentioned positively the focus on them as individuals and not just academics. The evaluation made clear that the informal setting allowed for more personal connections and welcomed to take off the office titles and be more open to listening. The atmosphere created safe spaces. Many aspects that made the event as it turned out to be, were based on the individuals of the group, affecting the learning among each other and their well-being. The meeting with Arctic people, Arctic community members and Snowchange's huge experiences as well as the mixture of group discussions and on-the-land activities and a balance between education, social and physical were a great asset, according to the participant's perception.

"I felt that this structure really deepened my understanding of the material and made for a really incredible and unique experience."

Participant of the Sharing Circle

Same argument for positive and negative, was the fully packed program. For some it was too long and too little downtime to digest. Some participants saw the need to have an even longer Sharing Circle.

The participants agreed that the Sharing Circle served its purpose of international exchange. Mostly the social interactions within the group, the participants themselves and the indoor seminars led to this achievement (Fig. 9).

What do you think fostered international exchange?

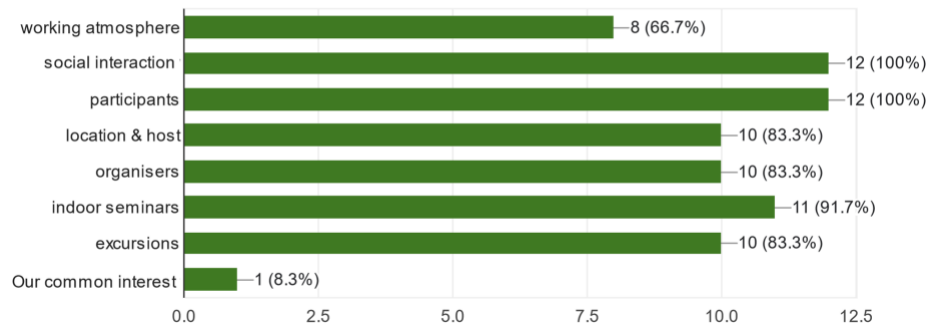


Figure 8: Participants' response to the survey question on what they think the Sharing Circle fostered international exchange.

One of the main successes was that people felt safe and that a space for open sharing was created, thus, the possibility to discuss emotional topics. This was also due to the location, the welcoming and open hosts and the overall setting of a wooden hut with the fireplace in the centre.

Two of the main key points participants evaluated as really positive were the different forms of learning throughout the program and to be at the spot that we are currently discussing. It was important to be in Sápmi, to fully embrace the topic and to learn about indigenous culture on indigenous lands.

On the other side it was mentioned that non-indigenous participation in the Sharing Circle was clearly dominating Indigenous participation, including a suggestion that remuneration may be needed to encourage participation and sharing knowledge.

Participants were also asked about the difference between the Sharing Circle and similar early career events. One participant stated:

“Because we were people first, we were given the opportunity to introduce who we are and not all the impressive things that the group has achieved as individuals. And this is the reason I felt so comfortable and relaxed being on this trip - I didn't have to pretend or justify my inexperience. I felt like I deserved to be there.”

Participant of the Sharing Circle

Responses to the question on the potential influence of the Sharing Circle to their future career were threefold: 1/3 said it could have quite an influence, 1/3 responded it would have a great influence and 1/3 responded that it will boost their career greatly (Fig. 10).

A 100 % of the evaluation respondents stated that they would participate in a Sharing Circle or similar event again.

How will the Sharing Circle influence your future career?

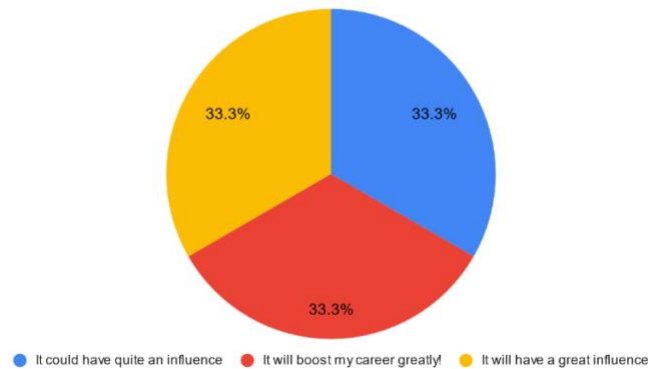


Figure 9: Participants' response to the question on how participation in the Sharing Circle will influence their future career.

Finally, the participants who responded to the evaluation survey were asked which words they would use to describe the Sharing Circle experience (Fig. 11).

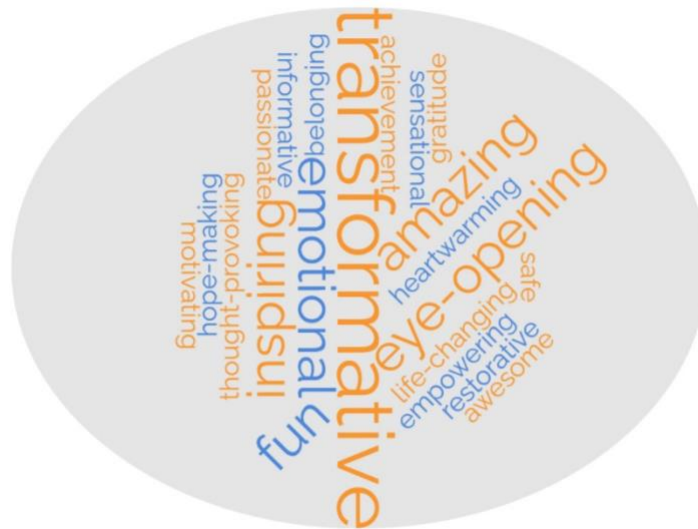


Figure 10: Wordcloud with entries of the participants describing the Sharing Circle experience in one word (created with wortwolken.com)

5. Next steps and Outlook

5.1 Arctic PASSION Ambassadors

After the training event and as part of the legacy of the Arctic PASSION Sharing Circle, all 18 participants became Arctic PASSION Ambassadors for the duration of one year until September 2024 and as such they develop outreach projects in order to distribute their personal learnings to a wider audience.

Arctic PASSION Ambassadors act as multipliers and increase the reach of the Sharing Circle. They will share their newly gained knowledge and experience with an audience of their choice through outreach products or communication projects. The project will be chosen and developed by each participant, some of them partly co-developed in a team. The ambassador products and projects can have a variety of oral, written, visual or interactive formats such as blogs, presentations, activities with schools, engagements with other early career scientists etc.

A meeting to introduce the concept of the ambassador projects and to talk about initial ideas took place after the Sharing Circle on 24 October 2023. Opportunities for the ambassadors to engage in, were distributed to the group as they came up.

The current state of development varies among the Arctic PASSION Ambassadors, some are still orienting themselves and others have finalised their projects. Among the finalised projects are e.g. a written [report about the Sharing Circle](#) for the Arctic PASSION and APECS websites. A few participants gave oral presentations about the Sharing Circle in their own research departments. Two candidates submitted a successful abstract to the International Conference on Permafrost in Whitehorse/Canada (16-20 June 2024) to share their learnings from the Sharing Circle and how to integrate them into their permafrost research. Another joint activity took place during the Arctic Observing Summit (27-29 March 2024) where two participants and one of the organisers co-designed a session to share and discuss the value of such inclusive and co-created format like the Sharing Circle to the wider research community. The Arctic PASSION Ambassadors outputs and experience reports will be shared on Arctic PASSION platforms such as social media channels and website news over the course over the summer of 2023 and until the end of the project.

5.2 Arctic PASSION Online Seminar and Dialogue

On 12 March 2024, an online seminar and dialogue reflected on the Arctic PASSION Sharing Circle (Fig. 12). Four Arctic PASSION Ambassadors shared their learnings with the audience. In an interactive online discussion, panellists and participants discussed how the Sharing Circle opened new perspectives on Arctic intercultural collaborations and co-management. Its personal and professional value, as well as the application to future educational efforts was of particular interest to the audience and organisers.

A recording of the online event is available here: <https://arcticpassion.eu/blog/WhatWeLearned>



Figure 11: Advertising image for the online seminar and dialogue.

5.3 Next steps beyond Arctic PASSION

The concept of the Sharing Circle has been used as an inspiration for youth activities in the new EU funded project „Youth Together for Arctic Futures“. This new project is led by the WWF Global Arctic Programme, in cooperation with organisations that bring decades of experience in youth empowerment, policy shaping, and research and conservation of Arctic ecosystems and livelihoods: Arctic Youth Network, European Youth Parliament (Schwarzkopf-Stiftung Junges Europa) and its Norway Alumni Association, Saami Council, Arctic Mayors' Forum, Tromsø Municipality, University of Tromsø, and the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists. The project is supported by the Norwegian Arctic Council chairship, WWF Greenland, and Arctic Frontiers as associates.

As part of the consortium, we are proud that APECS will continue to bring in learnings from the EU Arctic PASSION Sharing Circle in and organise similar events for early career professionals in the future.

6. Conclusion

Conversations with speakers and participants, in fact, in many cases people with both roles, and the online evaluation made clear that it was very much worth rethinking the training format of the Arctic PASSION School, reshaping it to the Arctic PASSION Sharing Circle. Raising awareness about two-way communication, co-management, intercultural collaborations and the Skolt Sámi history and culture in the next generation of upcoming leaders (PhD candidates, students, young professionals from the Arctic and non-Arctic) was a main achievement. We achieved a connection between early career professionals working in the Arctic with Arctic youth and young professionals living in the Arctic. The group consisted of diverse expertise and knowledge, also covering different sectors - this helped to approach discussion topics from different angles.

Having the training event taking place at the spot of Indigenous community life and really living with them and learning from them first hand made the event very special but also was important for sustainable learning. The pre-visit of the community in March was crucial and indispensable as it was essential to get to know the people, getting a sense of the community, their history and the environment as well as for activity planning, logistical planning and the program focus. The atmosphere and the group of participants created a safe space for more vulnerable discussions.

An event such as the Sharing Circle can shape careers and (research) approaches at the beginning of their early (scientific) careers. Even though the effort to create such an event was much higher than expected, this kind of training is important for creating better collaborative and co-created research leading to more meaningful results and trustful relationships. The event format of a Sharing Circle empowered the participants in many ways and can be seen as a good example for other (future) EU projects.

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