



Jokkmokk Winter Conference



Sustainable Energy - Sustainable Living Planning for Action

4 February - 7 February 2013

Ája Conference Centre - Jokkmokk, Sweden

Conference report 2013





Jokkmokk Winter Conference 2013:



205 participants from around **20 countries** in the main conference and about **20 more in the side event** seminar "From ideas to results: How to develop a Sustainable Energy Action Plan". The conference hosted also the **Minister of the Environment from Sweden**, Political Advisor for the Minister of the Environment Norway, President of the Sami Parliament in Sweden and a representative from the one in Norway, Counselors from US Embassy and of the Canadian Embassy.

12 Key Note Speakers plus 7 workshop and round-table discussion leaders from 8 countries

Participants from **32 partner organizations** or companies, **10 universities** or colleges, and decision-makers from **11 municipalities** within the project region.

Around **3000 google hits** for JWC 2013; **536 likes** in Facebook, on average 315 people following the Blog daily, 107 people Twittering about the conference.

Interviews for **TV and newspapers** (SVT, Kuriren, NSD, Miljömagasinet etc.).

Benefits for **local companies**: meals in many restaurants, travel agency *SN Resor*, presents to speakers from *Jokkmokks Tenn*, *Sapmi Ren och vilt* and *Jokkmokksbär*, dog sledge with *Jokkmokk Mountain Travellers*, bookings for hotels, hostels, camping and private accommodation, visits to *Ajtte - Swedish mountain and Sami museum* and to the *Historic Market*.

Involvement of **local people** with a quiz a month before the conference.

Sustainable Energy - Sustainable Living: Planning for Action

The theme of this year's Jokkmokk Winter Conference implies both the visionary perspective of what the contents of sustainability could be, and a more practical perspective – planning and implementing. The work with the conference theme was carried out in different ways such as lectures, workshops, round-table discussions and small group discussions. Participants from universities, NGO:s, companies and municipalities came from various parts of the northern circumpolar area to take part in the four interesting conference days.

Defining the Challenge for the North



The conference started with a discussion on climate and energy strategies in the North with Lena Ek (Minister of Environment, Sweden), Audun Garberg (Political Advisor for the Ministry of Environment, Norway), Mika Flöjt (City Council Kuusamo, Finland), Stefan Mikaelsson (Chairman of Sami Parliament, Sweden) and Marianne Balto (Sami Parliament, Norway).





Lena Ek spoke of the importance of ecosystem services and underlined that they should be included in the national budget. She pointed out a number of good things that are happening on the renewable energy field, thus giving examples of how things that are actually going in the right direction.

Stefan Mikaelsson argued that we must stop consuming natural resources at the rate we are doing today; food is more important than minerals. Already, the resilience of the ecosystems is damaged, due to, for instance, the hydropower dams and the massive cuttings of pristine forests. Marianne Balto said that we should include indigenous people more in the discussion and learn from their knowledge on how to live with nature. On the question on how to include young people in the decision-making Mika Flöjt gave a good example: The Youth Municipal Council in Finnish municipalities. Mika Flöjt also reminded that we will not be able to stop climate change, hence we must try to adapt. But most people will not be able to adapt, which will mean climate refugees.

The first day was closed by a speech held by Lena Ek, where she underlined that we have to live within the planetary boundaries. Addressing climate change means talking about many questions at the same time. We know that we need to change. And maybe, when doing so, we might end up with better life quality as well. Lastly, Lena Ek handed prizes for the happy conference quiz winners.



A Planet under Stress

Shora Esmailian, author and journalist, spoke about climate refugees – a phenomenon that exists already today in many parts of the world. She has met victims of climate change in Egypt, Kenya and Pakistan, and she shared stories of how the floods swept everything away; houses, trees, even the soil where people used to grow their food. Land rights is a big issue, since many people do not have legal papers to prove their ownership of the land – which makes it difficult for them to get compensation. The point in showing the victims is to make the connection clear to who is responsible. These people have almost no emissions at all – but they are the ones that are affected first by the climate systems which now are set out of balance. Climate refugees are not recognized by the Geneva Convention and hence we need a new definition for refugees that includes climate and is borderless. When natural catastrophes happen, many people flee within their own country.



Lassi Heininen from the University of Lapland, gave a run through of the politics of the Arctic. The arctic is an area of strategic importance, which has been quite stable historically, though there are a lot of weapons in the area. Environmental protection was actually the starting point for international Arctic cooperation. Now, open waters in the Arctic might cause a race for the natural resources in the area. At the same time, the Arctic is also an area of high diversity; both ecologically and culturally. There are a number of indigenous groups in the Arctic, with knowledge that should be acknowledged in discussions on how to prevail resilience and stability in the area. Heininen also talked about possibilities in new forms of governing with a non-hierarchical power distribution.

“Indigenous knowledge – A resource for today?” was the question Kristina Sehlin MacNeil, from the Centre for Sami Research, addressed in her talk. According to Kristina, non-indigenous people have a lot to learn from indigenous knowledge and we should be asking indigenous people if they would be willing to share their knowledge. But, it is extremely important how this is done: we must avoid the historical colonial perspective. Another issue that was discussed was whether it might be more meaningful to talk about wellbeing (both of ecosystem and humans) instead of sustainability.





Mats Berg from Girjas Sami Village expressed his concern over the expanding mining industries and how potential new mining will kill the reindeer herding in his village. It was underlined that there is a clear unfair power distribution between the reindeer herders and the professional, employed staff at the mining companies. The localization of the planned new mine would split up the village and stop the villages' many thousands of reindeer from passing between winter and summer pastures. Mats sees mining industry as the new predator in his area and calls for the right of the Sami people to say no. To celebrate the Sami National Day the conference participants got to hear beautiful Sami music and stories performed by Ella Katarina Rimpi.

The afternoon was spent in workshops:

- **The role of Greenland in the Arctic-** workshop discussed if and how Greenland's role might change now as the island is in a state-building process.
- **Mining in Lapland-** workshop discussed the problems and challenges of mining in the North calotte: the rights of the local livelihoods, and problems with wastewater and waste rock.
- **Arctic environmental policies-** workshop continued the discussion which Lassi Heininen started in the plenary. One of the questions discussed was how to make the value of Nature - and the services that Nature provides - understood in a better way.
- **Public Engagement towards Sustainable Communities-** workshop explored different ways to engage the public with building sustainable communities.
- **100 % renewable energy future - how to realize?** – workshop highlighted that 100% renewable energies is not a lifestyle choice, but an essential way to combat climate change. The participants discussed challenges and possibilities in the political framework.



The way forward: Turning ideas into reality

Rob MacMonagle from Canada presented his work for the City of Toronto on strategies for developing whole sectors in the green economy. They have worked with innovation-integration strategies and a new paradigm: doing more with the same (or less). The city is up-front when it comes to green building technology. Toronto has many high rise constructions, which can be used for energy production through solar panels, which are integrated in the building design. In the concluding discussion, aspects of the total energy cycle for the green technology buildings were brought up, which puts light on yet another challenge for large scale cities as Toronto.

Eva Vitell from Vattenfall and Antonio Caló from University of Oulu debated about centralized and decentralized energy systems. They gave a good overview on the technical point of view: transmission vs transformation. Different ways of directing and spreading electricity and total energy usage were discussed; "smart grids" were mentioned as one solution. It was agreed that for the future, we need both centralized and decentralized energy systems. Eva pointed out that centralized solar panels (i.e. big solar parks) often are more efficient than small decentralized solar panels. Antonio added that social, economic and environmental aspects of the energy systems have to be considered when thinking sustainability, and thus decentralized will be beneficial due to the use of local resources.

The morning session ended with parallel round-table discussions where community sustainability was discussed from three different perspectives: indigenous, business and local/regional. The round-table discussions resulted in questions for the panel discussion on climate and energy policy in the afternoon.





The panelists from left: Counsellor Michael Sullivan, US Embassy; Jon Petter Gintal, Sami Parliament Norway; Eva Vitell, Vattenfall; Jeppe Mikel Jensen, Union of the Baltic Cities environment and sustainable development secretariat; Governor Sven-Erik Österberg and Karl Petersen, Municipal league Norrbotten.

In the panel discussion, Karl Petersen emphasized that the discussion about mining in Jokkmokk should be developed into a dialogue between people in the conflicts over land and natural resources. Transparency and education to help people understand the impact of things they purchase was suggested as a way to change people's behavior. Furthermore, it was suggested that politicians need to be made secure that voters will reelect them when they make the right (but sometimes difficult) decisions for the environment. Long term thinking in policy making was also considered important. Jon Petter finished off by reassuring that the Sami people are here for the future – with mines or no mines – and will adapt to change.

The day ended with open space discussions where several small groups discussed various themes, for example organic farming and sustainable building. An email group was started to encourage initiatives and share ideas on farming activities. The conference day was followed by the inauguration of Jokkmokk winter market.

Building bridges to the Future: Sustainable Community Plans

"100% renewable energy is not an alternative, it is the only choice we have", says Anna Leidreiter from World Future Council. After showing us why non-renewable energy is not an option, Anna talked about success stories from Jämtland (Sweden), Iceland and Denmark. Community participation is the key in the switch to renewable energy. We also need to change perspective on the scale of energy production, from large scale fossils, to the renewables which often are more small scale, locally based. Climate and security questions in the world are not to do with energy but rather fuel: shift from fuel-based to infrastructure-based energy.

Michaela Hogenboom and Elias Kindle are working together to create a connected and sustainable Liechtenstein. Through their project they are trying to move Liechtenstein from vision to implementation in sustainability. They bring people together in Future workshops and on online platforms with the goal to create a critical mass of community engagement. Decision makers are also offered consultancy in sustainability questions. The vision is to achieve 100 % renewable energy in 10 years. The session was finished with an interactive exercise on the participants 'take away messages'.



Wolfgang Mehl presented The Covenant of Mayors and Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAP), with examples from Jokkmokk. The Covenant of Mayors is the mainstream European movement involving local and regional authorities, voluntarily committing to increasing energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources on their territories. By their commitment, Covenant signatories aim to meet and exceed the European Union 20% CO₂ reduction objective by 2020. When signing the Covenant of Mayors, the municipality or council have to create a SEAP and BEI (Baseline Emission Inventory). So far 4750 authorities have done this.

Jeppe Mikel Jensen continued on the same theme, introducing NET-COM, which can support the SEAP implementation through local energy leadership. It has a bottom-up approach and aims at making climate protection happen on a local level. As a network, the objective is to make small and big cities get together and collaborate, to exchange ideas and best practices and also to influence governments.

The concluding words encouraged the participants to push their local politicians into joining the Covenant of Mayors. If their home municipalities already had signed the Covenant of Mayors, the next step could be to ask the politicians what they are doing with it. A SEAP should not be a dust collector – it should be a plan of action. This can serve as a wrap up example of the whole conference: taking sustainability into concrete aims – and planning for action!





Results from evaluation questionnaires:

	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Not satisfactory	Bad
Information before the conference	50%	21%	8%	8%	
Registration process	60%	13%	8%		
Management	69%	26%			
Materials	47%	35%	17%		
Assistance on-site	65%	17%	13%		
Conference facilities	74%	13%	8%		
Accommodation	60%	13%	13%	4%	
Theme	69%	26%			

What did you like most about the conference?

- That I could contribute to the programme
- Different ideas and projects, views and perspectives on sustainability and well-being
- Municipalities' role with green things
- The opportunity to network with people from such diverse backgrounds
- Interactive parts like workshops
- The themes and style of presentations
- Mix of pleasure, fun, networking, sami culture
- Input from different nations, seeing that good examples exist all over the world
- Panel debate with our questions
- The indigenous perspective is awesome
- The mining discussion

What did you like least about the conference?

- The philosophy behind the conference remains a bit unclear
- Not too deep conversation or very concrete tools, more "we can do it" spirit
- Too many speakers and too much information
- Need more open space time that is semi-directed
- The non-informative politician debate

In what ways could this conference be improved?

- Less speakers and more detailed information about specific topics
- Perhaps one key note per day and more short presentations
- A clearer focus on if there is supposed to be an outcome of this conference
- Have longer round-table discussion time, maybe multiple sessions
- More people presenting concrete examples of sustainable work
- A summary in the end of the day to tie the speakers and discussions together
- Free speaking, people could register to talk about something for a few minutes
- A hotter debate in the panel discussion
- Have time to make individual action plans
- Better introduction to open space session

Please write any other feedback

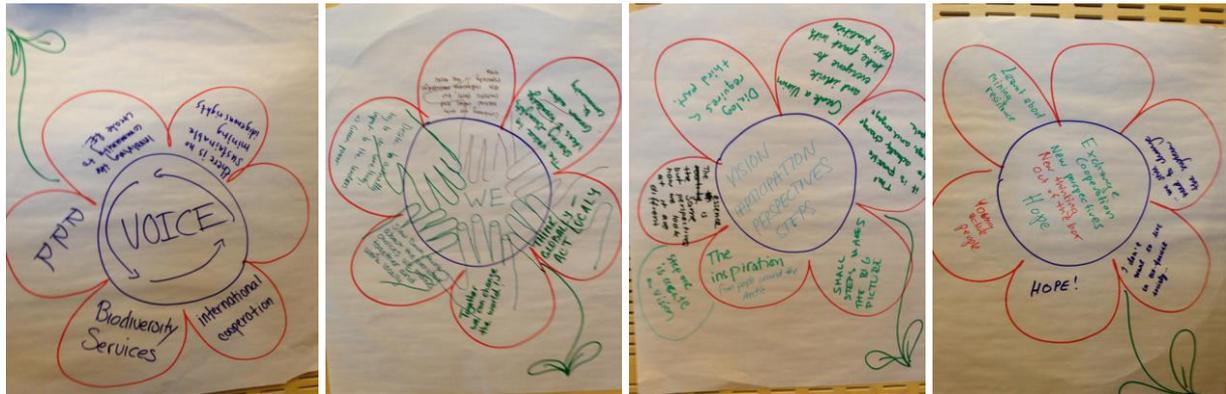
- More program enabling people to create contacts (people didn't mingle that much)
- Navigation and information on the website could be improved
- Great job! Hope this expands!
- As long as the high-level participants stay short time, dialogue is not very likely to happen which is the most important. So make them stay longer!

Report by: Linda Ellegaard Nordström, Tiina Jaatinen, Anna Andersson





Foto: Margaretha Dahl, Seedling



Thomas Edison 1920:

"We are like tenant farmers, chopping down the fence around our house for fuel when we should be using Nature's inexhaustible sources of energy — sun, wind and tide..."

"I'd put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! I hope we don't have to wait until oil and coal run out before we tackle that"

Partners:

Jokkmokk Winter Conference is initiated and organized by the municipality of Jokkmokk in cooperation with University of Lapland, Rovaniemi; Länsstyrelsen Norrbotten; Intelligent Energy Europe; Covenant of Mayors; University of Oulu; Norrbottens Läns Landsting; Teknikens Hus, Luleå; Föreningen Nordens ungdom; Abisko Scientific Research Station; World Future Council; Nenet Norrbottens Energy Agency; Luleå University of Technology; VINN; Oulu Arc Region; Ajtte museum Sámi centre; Northern Research Forum; Sáminuorra; the Sámi Parliament; Sparbanken Nord; Övertorneå municipality; Association of Polar Early Career Scientists; University of Tromsø; Sámi Education Centre Jokkmokk; Barents Youth Cooperation Office; Bellona Foundation; Sveaskog; Association of Swedish Eco Municipalities; Vaartoe Centre at Umeå University; Murmansk University; Swedish Society for Nature Conservation and SEAP plus.

