

SSSI Working Group Themes

Local Topics

Keywords: Urban Planning, Cultural Diversity, Svalbard post COVID-19, Quality of Life Issues, Material Culture, Climate Change, Environmental Issues, Tourism, Economic or Structural Change

This working group focuses on what is happening in Svalbard locally. Topics can cover: the development of urban areas in Svalbard (both currently inhabited and abandoned), the structure of the populations of Svalbard, quality of life issues, cultural diversity, impacts of Covid-19 on the various communities, material culture, architecture, heritage, site-specific impacts of climate change, local politics and policy, environmental issues, tourism etc.

Many of the settlements in Svalbard are layered in nature - be it for historical or social reasons. This has a wide range of implications from housing to work contracts to use of nature. The group will strive to paint a real picture of local topics and what the impacts are/will be for the people, businesses, and environments of the various settlements of the archipelago. One specific perspective of the group is that these topics will be looked at through a grass-roots lens, i.e. seeing through the perspective of local residents.

Global Issues

Keywords: Geopolitics, International Law/Law of the Sea, Sovereignty, Climate Change, Fisheries, Complex Governance

The working groups deals with various aspects in which Svalbard is, on the one hand, implicated in, and affected by, a range of global processes, while, on the other hand, having an outstanding global visibility of its own. Svalbard's globally unique legal position as laid down in the Svalbard Treaty produces a particular intense link between global and local dynamics. The group will focus on a variety of these links, such as issues pertaining to land and resource usage by actors from different countries, issues pertaining to local fisheries and fisheries rights of other (continental shelf/EEZ issues), or (the lack of) Svalbard's representation in regional and global fora. In addition, it will also thematize both 'classical' topics of international relations, such as strategic and military interests relating to Svalbard, as well as issues of transnational migration, analyzing Svalbard as a focus point of overlapping migration networks.

Research, Policy and Practice

Keywords: Methods, Tools, Collaboration, Co-production, Inclusivity, Interdisciplinarity, Engagement, Knowledge Exchange, Impact, Ethics

The Research, Policy and Practice working group aims to explore and improve the processes and frameworks steering social science research in Svalbard, from concept through to implementation. It provides a forum to improve research practice, support collaborative opportunities and increase impact. Through the development of a range of bespoke activities, the group will focus on identifying best practice and encouraging innovative thinking and initiatives that will have a positive impact on society in Svalbard. The group will lead a range of discussions associated with research in Svalbard, covering key topics such as interdisciplinary research, collaboration and co-production, research methods and tools, responsible research, inclusion of underrepresented groups, and engagement, outreach and impact. The group will also work to facilitate knowledge exchange between academia, policymakers and practitioners, to establish sustainable cross-sectoral relationships and to build partnerships and identify opportunities for co-produced research. All who are involved in either research, policy or practice and are interested in conducting, contributing to or utilising research in Svalbard are encouraged to engage with the RPP working group.

We realise that these groups do not cover everything, notably the overlap between local and global issues, but see them as starting points for deeper discussions.