

# ANNUAL REPORT

SVALBARD  
SOCIAL  
SCIENCE  
INITIATIVE



**SSSI**

[svalbardsocialscience.com](https://svalbardsocialscience.com)



**2020 - 2021**

Photo: Dina Brode-Roger



# About SSSI

## The Svalbard Social Science Initiative

The Svalbard Social Science Initiative, SSSI, was launched in 2018 by several researchers studying the human dimensions of the dynamic changes currently underway in Svalbard. The aim is to create linkages among social scientists working with issues related to Svalbard, to establish a platform for coordinating research activities, and to facilitate the communication with local communities and other scientists. Our website provides a venue for sharing research and publications as well as coordinating activities between scientists and local actors. We invite other social scientists with relevant past, present, or future research interests to get in touch with us and join the initiative.

SSSI association has grown substantially and currently has 27 members. The core values of our work are collaboration, co-creation, and community involvement.

### **Members**

Alexandra Meyer

Andrian Vlachov

Ann Eileen Lennert

Annette Löf

Astrid E.J. Ogilvie

Cecilie Vindal Ødegaard

Dina Abdel-Fattah

Dina Brode-Roger

Eva Kotašková

Eva la Cour

Frigga Kruse

Halvor Dannevig

Jasmine Zhang

Jelmer Jeuring

Julia Olsen

Laura Ferguson

Lisbeth Iversen

Maike Knol-Kauffman

Mathias Albert

René van der Wal

Samantha Saville

Siri Veland

Tarje Iversen Wanvik

Tiril Vold Hansen

Trym Eiterjord

Ulrich Schildberg

Zdenka Sokolíčková





# 2021 Activities

## The Svalbard Social Science Initiative

### ***Guest lecture in UNIS course History of Svalbard***

On 5 February, Alexandra Meyer, Andrain Vlachov and Zdenka Sokolíčková presented trends and changes in contemporary Longyearbyen and Barentsburg. The lecture was part of Thor Bjørn Arlov's course History of Svalbard, and is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-dMcNKzG9U>.

### ***Presentation of focus group project at Lokaltstyret meeting***

On 11 February, Alexandra Meyer and Ingvild Sæbu Vatn (LPO Arkitekter) presented the collaborative project "Folk om Longyearbyen som fysisk ramme" / "People about Longyearbyen as a physical framework" to political representatives at a Municipality Council meeting. The material is being used in the work on the new Community Plan.

### ***Exhibition: People about Longyearbyen as a physical framework***

In spring 2020, LPO Arkitekter and SSSI arranged nine focus groups to find out how inhabitants of Longyearbyen perceive and use the town, and what needs and dreams they associate with the place. We presented the results of these conversations on posters with quotes and maps during Solfestuka in March 2021 in the town center. The project was part of a needs assessment of the self-initiated LPO project "Right Place Right Form", funded by DOGA (Design and Architecture Norway).

Link to webpage: <https://www.lpo.no/prosjekter/folk-om-longyearbyen>

### ***Podcast about the LPO & SSSI focus group project***

Lilli Wickström (LPO) and Alexandra Meyer (SSSI) were invited to the podcast "Teknisk Etat" to talk about the focus group project ("People about Longyearbyen as a physical framework"). The episode (in Norwegian) can be found here: <https://www.buzzsprout.com/827113/8128134-folk-om-longyearbyen>



Photo: LPO Architects



### **Workshop initiative by SSSI-NERSC**

On 24 March, a workshop hosted as a digital seminar was arranged between the CAPARDUS and CULTCOAST projects on Svalbard, led by Lisbeth Iversen, SSSI/NERSC. Local guides, AECO, and international institutions (NERSC, NIKU, NORDECO) and projects (CAPARDUS and CULTCOAST) took part in the discussion about more collaboration across social and natural science, and involvement of the local communities on Svalbard.

### **SSSI at the Arctic Science Summit Week, ASSW**

*Joint presentation by LPO and SSSI at ASSW.*

On 21 March, Lilli Wickström and Alexandra Meyer presented the project "People about Longyearbyen as a physical framework" at the Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW). The talk was part of the session "RATIC meets T-MOSAiC: Sharing Best Practices in Research on Infrastructure in the Arctic":

<https://www.geobotany.uaf.edu/ratic/workshop2021.php>

*Seminar: Data sharing between Community-based observing systems and scientific observation*

On 25 March, Stein Sandven, NERSC, presented on behalf of several researchers in INTAROS and CAPARDUS. Stein presented results from the H2020 CAPARDUS and INTAROS projects. Lisbeth Iversen (SSSI) is part of the research projects responsible for the Community Based Monitoring, Citizen Science initiative, and dialogue with local stakeholders on Svalbard. <https://assw2021.pt/?accas=detailedprogram>

*Use and Usability of Data and Information within Arctic Community-Driven Research.*

On 26 March Lisbeth Iversen, NERSC, co-hosted the ASSW 2021 Session ID: 85 Use and Usability of Data and Information within Arctic Community-Driven Research. Lisbeth also presented on the topic Linking top down and bottom up initiatives, and co-creation of knowledge on Svalbard. <https://assw2021.pt/?accas=detailedprogram>

### **Co-production of knowledge panel, UK Polar Network Early Career Conference**

On 6 May, Lilli Wickström and Dina Brode-Roger participated in the 'Co-production of Knowledge' panel during the UK Early Career Conference with 3 other panelists. The panel discussed how working together can be beneficial to all involved, and how this kind of co-production of knowledge serves the community. There was an emphasis on working together and building bridges to strengthen communities amongst all the panelists.



### **Community dialogue about new education law**

On 12 May, SSSI organized a community dialogue about the new Education Law proposed by the Ministry. About 20 people attended the meeting where we presented basic information about the legislation and opened for a discussion. The meeting was held in four languages: Norwegian, English, Thai and Tagalog.



Picture from Svalbardposten. Photo: Siri Åbø Wiersen

### **Collaboration with Longyearbyen skole**

In 2021, Zdenka Sokolíčková worked as the research contact for students at Longyearbyen videregående taking part in the competition Holbergprisen i skolen. Several SSSI members were interviewed by local youth for their research projects. Marte Nilssen Alexandersen and Liv-Anna Ringheim won 3rd prize with their paper about relation between Longyearbyen and Barentsburg.

### **"Temakveld" in Svalbard Church**

On 15 June, the SSSI was invited by Svalbard Church to facilitate a public meeting focusing on the role of the church in Longyearbyen. The topics were: church as bridge builder, church both as a sacred and physical space, the social profile of the church, voluntary work and possible future events.



Photo: Anna Filipova





## ICASS X

On 19 and 20 June, Alexandra Meyer, Andrian Vlachov and Zdenka Sokolíčková co-convened a session on 'Social sciences, humanities and arts (in) changing Svalbard' during the 10th International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences. There were 13 papers presented during three conference slots, with about half of the presenters being members of the SSSI. Some of the papers presented are part of the collection of articles published in 2021/2022 in Polar Record.

## Presentation at The Royal Geographical Society

On 1 September, SSSI members of the Imaginaries working group presented a collaborative piece at the Royal Geographical Society Annual Conference. The presentation engaged with the concept of imaginaries, using the site of Longyearbyen's old coal power plant (past, present and future) to think through different perspectives of changing imaginaries in Svalbard. Following the presentation, the group received an invitation to contribute to the Palgrave book series Arctic Encounters.

**Constructions and consequences of power-full Svalbard imaginaries**

RGS-IBG 2021 1<sup>st</sup> September

<https://svalbardsocialscience.com/>

Dr. Sam Saville  
Eva la Cour  
Dina Brode-Roger  
Lisbeth Iversen  
Prof. Mathias Albert

SSSI

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

E·S·R·C  
ECONOMIC & SOCIAL  
RESEARCH  
COUNCIL

UNIS  
The University Centre in Svalbard

NEROC

UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

UNIVERSITÄT BIELEFELD



### **WWNA Apply Award**

On 11 September, the SSSI in collaboration with LPO Arkitekter received 2nd prize in the international Why the World Needs Anthropologists (WWNA) Apply Awards for the project "People about Longyearbyen as a physical framework". According to the jury, the project «is a neat demonstration of where anthropologists and architects can collaborate to shift perceptions, giving voice to people who are often silent on projects in the context of city planning. It is a clever application of anthropology to 'inclusive design', focusing on the co-creation of physical maps of the city. The award celebrates the combined application of anthropological theory and method.»



Picture from  
Svalbardposten.  
Photo: Børre Haugli

### ***Baptism of Hurtigruten Expeditions' hybrid-powered expedition ship MS Fridtjof Nansen***

On 14 September, Lisbeth Iversen was invited to participate in the baptism of Hurtigruten Expeditions' hybrid-powered expedition ship MS Fridtjof Nansen in Longyearbyen. At this important networking arena, future collaboration was discussed between several actors.

### ***Community Science Panel***

On 15 September, a Community Science Panel was organized in Longyearbyen. This was an initiative by Hilde Fåln Strøm and Sunniva Sorby, partners in the citizen science project Hearts in the Ice: <https://www.heartsintheice.com/?lang=no> Lisbeth Iversen, NERSC/SSSI was invited as a partner and moderated the panel discussion.

### ***SSSI-NERSC workshop in Longyearbyen***

The SSSI and NERSC held a joint three-day workshop in Longyearbyen from 29 - 31 October. SSSI members and invited researchers took part in the workshop. A sharing event at the public library was held to present the SSSI and members' work to the community. The workshop was funded by the Svalbard Science Forum through the Svalbard Strategic Grant in 2019. Fifteen members and guests met in-person to discuss current projects, the future development of the SSSI, and potential collaboration.



## Longyearbyen workshop, October 2021



### ***The General Assembly of the Svalbard Social Science Initiative***

On 29 October, The General Assembly of SSSI and the SSSI housekeeping meeting were arranged as part of the three days workshop in Longyearbyen.

### ***Open meet and greet in Longyearbyen***

On 29 October, SSSI and NERSC hosted an open meet and greet at Vinterhagen for local organizations and actors.

### ***Dissemination events in Longyearbyen***

On 30 October, SSSI hosted a sharing event and a panel discussion at the public library. Line Nagell Ylvisåker, a local journalist, moderated a public panel discussion that centered around various aspects of participants' research and social science on Svalbard.

### ***Svalbard Science Conference, Oslo***

On 2 and 3 November, several SSSI members attended the Svalbard Science Conference in Oslo. In the session 'Science for society', Dina Abdel-Fattah presented the SSSI on behalf of the initiative. The SSSI was also present at the poster session, with several members exhibiting their work, and one poster presenting the SSSI.







Posters inviting people to reflect on their own and others' disciplines and on the collaboration between social and natural sciences

### ***SSSI-NERSC side meeting /workshop***

On 4 November, the SSSI together with NERSC, facilitated a side meeting following the Svalbard Science Conference

The workshop was attended by more than 30 participants, including SSSI members and other guests from various institutions and disciplines. SSSI members presented their projects and discussed synergies and future collaborations.

Grete Hovelsrud (Nordland Research Institute) and Eugene Guribye (NORCE) held keynotes. The workshop was funded by the Svalbard Science Forum through the Svalbard Strategic Grant.



### ***SSSI extraordinary General Assembly***

The Extraordinary General Assembly of the SSSI was arranged on Thursday 9 December via Zoom. Three members were elected to the board: Lisbeth Iversen (leader), Dina Brode-Roger, and Alexandra Meyer.



# Future Activities

## The Svalbard Social Science Initiative

Work in progress:

- A collection of articles in Polar Record
- Palgrave book series Arctic Encounters (SSSI Imaginaries group)
- The SSSI will continue to evolve as per the input from the SSSI-NERSC Longyearbyen Workshop and the Svalbard Science Conference side meeting.



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