**Circumpolar Archives, Folklore and Ethnography (CAFÉ )**

**University of the Arctic Thematic Network Proposal**

1. The thematic focus area of the network

CAFÉ will focus upon how archival collections, ethnographic fieldwork, and the study of folklore enrich the representation of the circumpolar region and its people. The network will place an emphasis on how the digitization of manuscripts, photographs, material objects is improving access to collections and making it possible to share collections with host communities. We will specifically examine the best practices of digital sharing and the ethical questions that these technologies pose. The network is centered around the existing folklore, photographic, and ethnographic collections held by its founding members and will seek to involve community organizations, indigenous research institutes, and new academic partners to create a forum for discussing the role of these archives in cultural revival.

1. What are the goals and planned activities of the network? (as an example,

developing joint educational programmes, conducting joint research projects, student/teacher mobility)

The network is primarily oriented to help researchers develop joint research projects to encourage research with the collections curated by many of its members. We are actively developing ideas for specialized methods courses in the digital humanities, with a focus on Arctic regions. We will also create smaller working groups which will author material for peer-reviewed publications.

The network is also working towards supporting new fields of ethnographic, folkloric and archival research. For example, some members are working with developing on-line access to community radio – an important resource for local identity and self-government. Other members are investigating methods of using three dimensional digital printing to enable the sharing of archaeological or other fragile artefacts with host communities.

1. How indigenous issues are included in TN’s operation?

Although the network looks at archives and ethnography broadly for all communities in the circumpolar North, many of our members are working directly with archives of Northern indigenous peoples. One of the important contributions of the network is to discuss best practice in what has been described as “repatriation” or “digital sharing”: the use of digital technologies to make proxies of archival, folkloric, or ethnographic collections. This is an increasingly important part of the duties of public archives and it represents a unique opportunity both to “return” collections but also to enrich knowledge of existing collections by starting a dialogue about their meaning.

We will make an effort to include indigenous research organizations, many of which are members of UArctic to partner with this network.

1. Quality control at the network

Quality control will be ensured by soliciting and evaluating the feedback from participants. We will be writing applications for funding and manuscripts for publication which will be submitted for external peer-review. We intend to set up a website and a blog which will provide a public forum for feedback to improve the network.

1. How TN defines the quality on its own terms

Beyond the usual assessment of quality through participant feedback and external peer review, the network will also focus on the appropriate standards and resolutions for employing digital tools to improve access to collections. In order to ensure that images flow long distance on sometimes lower quality networks, quality will be assessed not only by the fidelity of reproduction but also how easily accessible material would be in remote Arctic communities.

1. How UArctic member organisations and institutions will benefit from the new TN, what is the added value in establishing such a network?

The UArctic has a vibrant research culture in the humanities and social sciences with a special interest in circumpolar indigenous cultures. This network provides a strong additional support to these groups with its focus on linking archives to scholars and host communities, and with its interest in starting a dialogue on the best way to disseminate Arctic archival transcripts and photographs held in collections the world over.

1. What kind of quality control has been already done in TN partner institutions’ educational programmes, courses etc (i.e. in accepting new programme/course, student feedback and tutoring)
2. **Has network already been awarded some funding? If so, for what activities?**

The network already received a networking grant from UiT The Arctic University of Norway in order to establish the network. With those funds the project group met to refine the aims of the network and plan future activities. Over the course of 2017/18 the project group met three times in Alta (Norway), Arkhangelsk (Russia) and in Turku (Finland).

For the year 2018/19 we intend to meet one more time in Spring 2019, to offer a one-day seminar to a field school or Phd training seminar at one of our member universities, and to apply for research money from the British Library Endangered Archives Programme and a research seminar from the Society of American Anthropology.

The network is built around the archives of several large projects. The Univeristy of Turku has just completed an ambitious project to digitize the folkloric and manuscript records of northern peoples in its collection. The University of Aberdeen has also just completed a 5-year ERC project on Arctic Domestication which has generated a large archive on local relationships to Arctic breeds.

1. **Thematic Network lead and members**

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