

ELOKA (Exchange for Local Observations and Knowledge of the Arctic)

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ABSTRACT:

Over the last decade, Arctic residents and indigenous peoples have been increasingly involved in, and taking control of, research. Arctic communities have made significant contributions to understanding recent environmental change, and community-based research, including traditional knowledge research and community-based monitoring, are an important part of IPY activities and the Arctic Observing Network (AON).

One of the greatest challenges of local and traditional knowledge (LTK) research and community-based monitoring to date has been effective and appropriate means of recording, storing, and managing data and information. It has been a challenge to find effective means of making community-based data and information available to Arctic residents and researchers, as well as other interested groups such as teachers, students, and policy makers. Without a network and data management to support LTK and community-based research, a number of problems have arisen such as: misplacement or loss of extremely precious data (e.g. information from Elders who have passed away); lack of awareness of previous studies and repetition of research in the same communities resulting in research fatigue and waste of resources; a reluctance or inability to initiate or maintain community-based research or monitoring without a data management system available. There is an urgent need for useful and useable means of recording, preserving, and sharing data and information being collected in Arctic communities. ELOKA seeks to fill this gap.