

Title: Many Strong Voices' Portraits of Resilience: bringing personal stories to the attention of the general public and to decision-makers

Authors: John Crump, Bjorn Alftan, Tiina Kurvits, Trista Patterson (GRID-Arendal, Norway)

This contribution by GRID-Arendal and over 25 partner organizations describes the Many Strong Voices Program (MSV), focusing on the role of innovation in communication and media to engage stakeholders, actors, and policymakers in identifying solutions and resilience in and for arctic communities. The presentation focuses specifically on MSV activities that highlight innovative outreach and engagement approaches, in the context of rapidly changing technologies, attention spans, bandwidths and consequent digital divides, and new/social/mobile media expectations & strategies.

One key example, is the role of digital storytelling. The Portraits of Resilience Project illustrates in a direct and personal way the ethical dimension of climate change. The project trains children in regions most affected by climate change in the use of photography and other digital media, helping to bring personal stories and faces to the attention of the general public and to decision-makers at international climate change negotiations (<http://www.manystrongvoices.org/portraits/>).

Many Strong Voices (<http://www.manystrongvoices.org>) was born at the climate change negotiations in Montreal, December 2005, out of a need for joint efforts to raise awareness about the effects of climate change in the Arctic and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), two of the world's most vulnerable regions. Since then, Many Strong Voices has worked to bring together over 20 organisations from these two regions to take collaborative and strategic actions on climate change mitigation and adaptation at the local, regional and international level. Many Strong Voices' activities are developing along a number of parallel tracks, including research, assessment, networking facilitation, support to regions and communities, communication and outreach, and action on climate change mitigation.

Activities of the Portraits of Resilience Project align with three core objectives of MSV, which are to:

- 1) Build a stronger voice in international negotiations, increase collaboration and build capacity in the Arctic and Small Island Developing States. Aims are for people in these vulnerable regions have a stronger voice in negotiating international and national measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as developing and implementing adaptation strategies at the local, national regional and international levels.
- 2) Raise awareness about the effects of climate change on vulnerable regions in general, and on the Arctic and Small Island Developing States in particular, including Increase in understanding of the needs, solutions, and practical measures for adaptation
- 3) MSV is working to develop community-driven comparative and integrated research on the socio-economic and natural conditions that shape vulnerability and capacity to adapt to climate change. It is also undertaking practical, on-the-ground projects on adaptation in coastal communities in the Arctic and Small Island Developing States.