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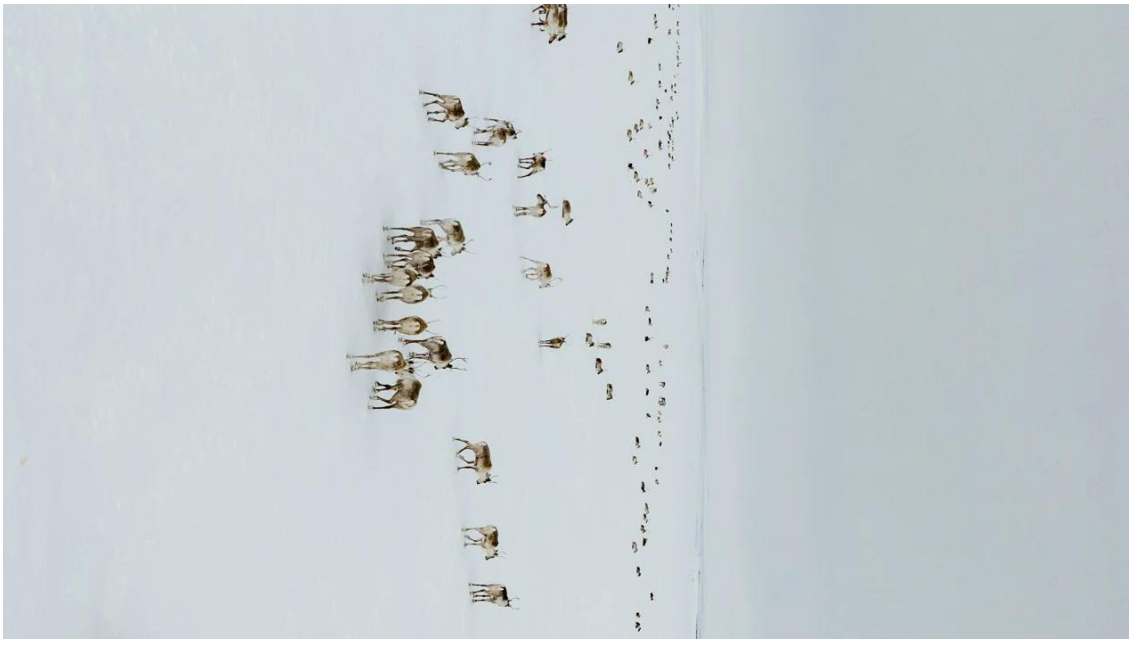


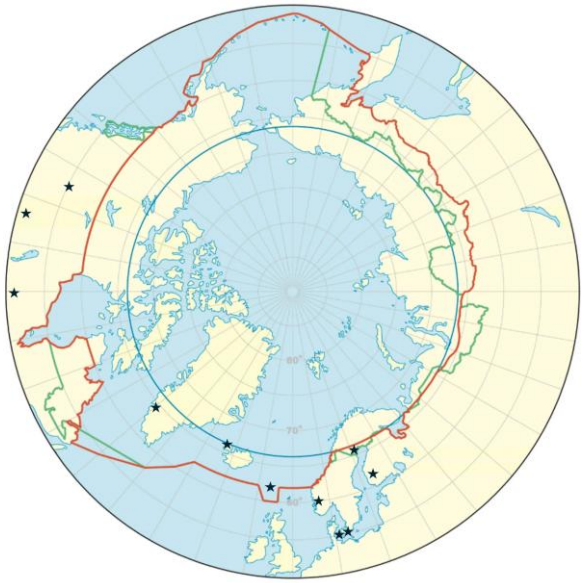
LostToClimate

Addressing Unavoidable Non-Economic Losses to Climate-Induced Events for Communities in the Arctic

LostToClimate Research Project

The Arctic is experiencing some of the fastest warming on the planet. Despite adaptation measures, these impacts undermine the well-being of Arctic communities, both economically (e.g. , by damaging infrastructure) and non-economically (e.g., by damaging cultural heritage and psychosocial health).

In most countries, non-economic losses and damages (e.g., cultural heritage, mental health) escape policy metrics and are thus neglected in public policy. This neglect is unfortunate due to the profound negative impact of non-economic losses and damages on the well-being of present and future generations.



Partner locations
Map compiled by Winfried K. Dallmann. Published with permission from the Norwegian Polar Institute

" Our relationship with ekwǫ̀ [caribou] defines who we are."

- John B. Zoe, Tłı̨chǫ Knowledge Holder

The Tłı̨chǫ Dene in the subarctic of Canada's Northwest Territories have been inextricably interlinked with barren-ground caribou since time immemorial. Caribou are of foremost cultural and spiritual importance to the Tłı̨chǫ, beyond the obvious food and material resources they have always provided.

Climatic changes in northern Canada such as warmer summer and fall temperatures, freeze-thaw and icing events, wildfires, and changing water and ice conditions collectively stress Arctic caribou, altering distribution, migration, survival and productivity. Dramatically declining barren-ground caribou populations due to climate change, industrial development and other pressures, combined with climate change impacts to travel safety and harvesting access, have significant implications for Tłı̨chǫ food systems, community health, culture and way of life.

This research will characterize the nature of these potential non-economic losses and damages for the Tłı̨chǫ, and explore equitable, community-led response options. It is a Northern, Indigenous-led initiative in direct partnership with the Tłı̨chǫ Government, drawing on community-based participatory and decolonizing methodologies.

In the project, we will answer four research questions:

- What types of non-economic losses and damages are expected?
- What trade-offs are communities willing to make?
- What evidence supports just responses?
- What responses to non-economic losses and damages do Arctic communities prefer?

Dedats'eetsaa: Tłı̨chǫ Research & Training Institute

Tłı̨chǫ Ndek'àowo
Tłı̨chǫ Government

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