

# Balancing Worldviews: Climate Change Solutions in Canada’s North

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Elder Mrs. Jane Dragon (Setsune) at her cabin on the Taltson River

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The Gordon Foundation undertakes research, leadership development and public dialogue so that public policies in Canada reflect a commitment to collaborative stewardship of our freshwater resources and to a people-driven, equitable and evolving North. Our mission is to promote innovative public policies for the North and in fresh water management based on our values of independent thought, protecting the environment, and full participation of indigenous people in the decisions that affect their well-being. Over the past quarter century The Gordon Foundation has invested over \$37 million in a wide variety of northern community initiatives and freshwater protection initiatives.



The Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship is a policy and leadership development program that recognizes leadership potential among northern Canadians who want to address the emerging policy challenges facing the North. The 18-month program is built around four regional gatherings and offers skills training, mentorship and networking opportunities. Through self-directed learning, group work and the collective sharing of knowledge, Fellows will foster a deeper understanding of important contemporary northern issues, and develop the skills and confidence to better articulate and share their ideas and policy research publicly. The Fellowship is intended for northerners between 25 and 35 years of age, who want to build a strong North that benefits all northerners. Through the Fellowship, we hope to foster a bond among the Fellows that will endure throughout their professional lives and support a pan-northern network.

# AUTHORS



Iqaluit | NU

## Tina Piulia DeCouto

Tina is currently a Jane Glassco Northern Fellow and works for Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI), a land claims organization representing the interests of Inuit in the implementation of the Nunavut Agreement since 2014. Most recently, she has taken on the role of Director for Social and Cultural Development. Prior to that, she worked in the division of Inuit Employment and Training with a focus on Article 23, where the objectives are toward a representative public service, but a majority of her time was committed to playing a pivotal role in the establishment and operation of Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corporation. Tina greatly contributed to the development and approval of Makigiaqta’s Long-term Strategy and supported the Corporation in making its first investment in 16 Nunavut organizations.



Yellowknife | NT

## Chloe Dragon Smith

Chloe Dragon Smith was born and raised in Yellowknife, NWT. Of Dënesųłiné, French, and German heritage, she grew up close to her Indigenous cultural values and learned traditional skills for living on the land. Her mother is Brenda Dragon (from Fort Smith), her father is Leonard Smith (from Edmonton), and her Grandmother is Jane Dragon (from Fort Smith). Chloe has learned most of what she knows from her family and her upbringing. She spent four years obtaining a BSc in Earth Science from the University of Victoria. While now also educated in Science, she is keenly interested and has found her niche in working with people on the social/cultural benefits of the natural world, particularly where those values meet science and conservation. Chloe believes that relationships with the land are important for the health of individuals, the Earth, and our relationships with each other. She believes in the importance of cultivating those relationships from a young age. It is for these reasons that she co-founded an outdoor learning initiative called Bushkids, located in Yellowknife. She does the best she can to get out on the Land regularly with family, to keep her Indigenous world view and values strong and grounded through all the work she does.



Carcross | YT

# Ashley Carvill

Ashley Carvill was born into a family of leaders within the Carcross/Tagish First Nation (C/TFN). Her training in traditional Indigenous values came at the knee of her paternal great-grandmother, T'sint. As a young child, she was known in Carcross for her high sense of justice and her ability to advocate for the downtrodden youth and Elders in her Traditional Territory and surrounding areas.

Ashley graduated high school in the city, one of only a handful from her community. She worked as a walking and ATV tour guide, giving Indigenous history lessons and teaching about the values that her First Nation espouses. Her next position was in Yukon's criminal justice system as a Corrections Officer. It was there she came to realize that root causes of many negative justice issues stem from unresolved multi-generational childhood trauma and family breakdowns, this realization lent a hand in her future career path.

As a young woman, Ashley began her career by putting a focus on working with children and families. She has worked for her First Nation in various departments, which has brought her closer to the very real issues that inhibit her Nation from progressing. She was instrumental in helping shape the Family Council, a body established to effectively manage family matters that come before justice or social service institutions. Ashley is a Jane Glassco Northern Fellow Alumni and her required social policy paper has a focus on strengthening community through traditional virtues, values and pursuits. Ashley brings her vibrancy and joyful enthusiasm to difficult issues, ensuring efficiency and accountability to the values of her ancestors.

What are effective and innovative climate solutions that currently make a difference in the North, and how can we build on these successes?

When the three of us were placed together through the Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship group project focusing on climate solutions for the North, we found that we were all individually, and for our own reasons, frustrated by this appointment. Climate change, although a very obvious and large-scale problem in the North, did not resonate with the issues and solutions present in our communities. After a time of sitting with this frustration, we decided to explore it and get to the bottom of those feelings. Why was the topic of climate change not speaking to us? As young Indigenous northerners who love our Lands and are deeply connected with our communities, climate change is a clear threat to our existence. After discussion and reflection, we came to an understanding:

## Climate change, in our worldviews, is a symptom and not a primary problem.

Treating the symptom was not resonating with us. What we see as the fundamental issue, however, is something that we all hold dear:

## The primary problem causing the symptom of climate change is a rift in the relationships between Land, peoples, and communities.

Through our group discussions, we realized that based on our worldviews, climate change, and other environmental problems we face today, originate from a lack of relational accountability and reciprocity between us and our Lands. Balance has not been prioritized, leading to positive feedback effects on a majority of systems. This framing describes a holistic and all-encompassing problem. Through this frame, we discovered we had much to say about climate change and the North – our home. We believe that a neglected piece of the conversation in the North is a difference in worldviews between the scientists and professionals that study climate change, and the Indigenous peoples who are being disproportionately affected by it. It is this difference in worldviews, and the solutions that come from it, that our group explores in this paper.

### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

**Funding for climate change solutions should be allocated to programs that promote relationships with the Land and cultural resiliency in the North. Northern climate change policy should be community-determined and focused on supporting and developing human resiliency through connections with the Land.**

## CURRENT STATE

It is clear that the North is being affected by climate change. The northern regions are warming at up to four times the global average, and the southern area of the Northwest Territories (NWT) is warming at twice the global average. It is commonly understood amongst northerners that different species are moving into the ecosystems around our homes. As many northerners rely on food from the Land, this change of species is alarming in many cases. Changes in weather are also remarkable. Ice thickness changes make travelling on the Land difficult. Water level challenges make travelling in boats hazardous.<sup>1</sup> Infrastructure is threatened by the thawing of permafrost and changes in weather. Consultations around climate change in the North continue to bring out these same concerns. The issues are numerous and they are pressing. They impact our ecosystems, infrastructure, our health and safety, our cultures, and our ways of life.<sup>2</sup> The issues affect the intersections between all of these impacts too – all the spaces between that make up who we are. Our families, relationships, and identities are all affected. We do not understand all the impacts, but we know that all northerners must prepare themselves for a very altered future.

In global and national discourses on climate change, northerners are often portrayed as victims of a phenomena beyond our control. In many cases, northerners adopt this way of thinking too, often asking:

**HOW CAN WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHEN THERE ARE MASSIVE INDUSTRIES IN THE SOUTH EMITTING CARBON AT A RATE THAT WE CANNOT EVEN FATHOM?**

Many southern organizations and western governments see this mentality and want to help us. Northerners are invited to facilitated discussions about the changes we are witnessing, and we are offered solutions and opportunities. Lands and peoples in the North are the subjects of many studies from Universities. Northern peoples do not often guide or participate in shaping these studies and it is rare for us to receive study results, all contributing to a distrust of researchers. The view of northerners as victims has resulted in what we can call a 'saviour complex.'<sup>3</sup> Scientists are well intentioned in bringing us tools and knowledge; however, we all need to acknowledge that these are their tools, and their knowledge.

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**These explorations and solutions are not self-determined, and that is why they are not working.**

Alongside the saviour complex, there is another framing of northerners within the climate debate where northerners are implicated as part of the problem. For the most part, we have not ceased to use fossil fuels in heating our homes, driving our skidoos, driving our boats, or driving/warming our cars. Northerners are told that their burning of fossil fuels is contributing to this large, global problem. Environmentalists make the point that if northerners want to be taken seriously in our issues with climate change, we need to change our ways in the North too. This narrative is disempowering because it victimizes northerners and conceals the problem. Northerners are not

1 GNWT Climate Change Strategic Framework. Accessed July 3, 2019, [https://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/sites/enr/files/resources/128-climate\\_change\\_strategic\\_framework\\_web.pdf](https://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/sites/enr/files/resources/128-climate_change_strategic_framework_web.pdf)

2 GNWT Climate Change Action Plan. Accessed July 3, 2019, [https://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/sites/enr/files/resources/128-climate\\_change\\_ap\\_proof.pdf](https://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/sites/enr/files/resources/128-climate_change_ap_proof.pdf)

3 R Straubhaar. The stark reality of the "White Savior" complex and the need for critical consciousness: A document analysis of the early journals of a Freirean educator. *A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 45 (3), 381-400.



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often allowed opportunities to be leaders in the climate crisis that affects us so directly, rather we are relegated to being players in the strategies of others. It is clear to us that this direction of seeking approval, funding, and validation from others is not moving the conversation forward in meaningful ways, which is the case not only for us as Indigenous northerners, but also for the entire global climate movement.

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This disempowerment and lack of meaningful advancement is why our group proposes that climate policy in the North supports the needs of communities and peoples who live here.

# CLIMATE CHANGE AND INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEWS

Indigenous worldviews are of course as diverse as Land and individual people can be. There are, however, some common threads that help to generally understand differences between Indigenous and Euro-Western worldviews. These distinctions in worldviews are the basis of our reasoning in this paper. For the purposes of framing the climate change conversation, we will focus on the manifestation of worldviews within three main concepts: humans’ place in nature, holism and interconnectedness, and progress or “growth”.

## HUMANS’ PLACE IN NATURE

Euro-Western worldviews are based on a human-centric foundation.<sup>4</sup> This foundation is exemplified by tenets of Christianity that describe how Land and other species were created to serve humans.<sup>5</sup> A human-centric foundation is also mirrored in western scientific approaches founded on the principle that the human mind is superior to rest of Nature, and our ability to reason is what separates us from

other species.<sup>6</sup> The framings of ‘we are above Nature’ and ‘we are harmful to Nature’ (or ‘below nature’) stem from the same root – both place humans as separate from the natural world. These framings are part of the paradigm that put humanity on track for this global issue of climate change and environmental disruption: a western worldview of our place within nature. Indigenous worldviews generally understand interconnectedness to mean that we are only a small part in a larger system. We have the ability to both help and be harmful as part of that system. Removing ourselves from the system is not an option, and by trying to remove ourselves, we end up causing more harm.

## HOLISM AND INTERCONNECTEDNESS

Indigenous knowledge systems perceive life as interconnected and holistic. Broadly, focus is centered on relationships and process, rather than results and outcomes. We elevate the self as an inextricable part of the larger whole, and emphasize reciprocity and resourcefulness between pieces. Today, mainstream society tends to silo these dynamic relationships into categories. This categorizing and streamlining



Jonah Muckpa of Arctic Bay, Nunavut, Nauttiguqtiit Program. Photo Copyright © Qikiqtani Inuit Association, Nauttiguqtiit Program. Please do not reproduce without permission from QIA.

4 Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500–1800* (Oxford University Press, 1996)

5 David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous* (New York: A division of Random House, Inc, 1996)

6 Abram.

aligns with Euro-western perspectives that are dominating the current mainstream system in North America. Federal departments (and subsequent funding) are divided along the lines of the environment, economy, culture, health, infrastructure, etc. The sense of connection has been replaced by a desire to specialize. It is a prioritization of streamlining and progress over balance and relationships.

### **PROGRESS OR 'GROWTH'**

In many Indigenous worldviews, a significant measure of 'growth' could be considered balance. The highest achievement within any system is a healthy balance, and growth that jeopardizes balance is not considered progress. Euro-western worldviews tend to manifest in a linear, progress oriented fashion; A progresses to B, to C, to D, and so on.<sup>7</sup> This forward movement is the highest achievement in Euro-western worldviews, a principle that has led to consumerism growth and exploitation of ecosystems and "renewable" resources. As a result, our products and institutions move further away from the Land that provides for them and we experience a disconnect from the environments in which we live. The forward movement is in opposition to Indigenous practices of respect and responsibility to Land, which are to "take only what you need, and use all that you take" in order to prioritize healthy systems.

The tenets of Indigenous worldviews examined above align with a deep understanding of climate change. Climate change is an issue that affects life as a whole. It affects all systems on earth, thus, it cannot be fully understood through silos, which includes separating it into its own issue to be handled by individual departments or experts. Climate change can be considered an imbalance, a positive feedback system that

has been brought on by a lack of reciprocity and harmony. Based on the differences in worldviews highlighted above, Indigenous systems are well-placed to understand climate change and innately understand solutions.

In the North of Canada, Indigenous peoples are not far removed from a complete reliance on Land. There are many Elders alive today that were born on the Land and not in a hospital. Families were nomadic and moved around seasonally. Indigenous northerners were subjected to traumas of residential schools and cultural genocide that occurred across the country, and though our cultures have undergone devastating breaks in knowledge, they are still here. Every piece of Land has an Indigenous name and a story that began at the beginning of time. As Indigenous peoples, we are the holders and interpreters of these stories.<sup>8</sup> The solutions put forward by communities are often similar for a wide breadth of issues: physical health, mental health, climate change, biodiversity loss, economic stability, etc. Their solutions all come back to our connections with Land. It is easy to feel caught in a vortex of mass issues, but Indigenous perspectives tell us that they are all intimately connected back to Land.

Western science has developed many useful tools that can contribute to rebalancing our Earth and climate. Regardless of these tools and strategies, the world is falling deeper into climate crisis, and, in our analysis, it will continue falling. One reason western science tools have not been effective is the fundamental framing of climate change has not reached the roots of this multidimensional issue. Climate change is not only a science problem, it is one of interconnectedness, relational accountability and humanness. Effective solutions—and science—

7 Saul, John Ralston. *The Comeback*. (Toronto: Viking, 2014)

8 Steven Nitah. (Northern Advisor, Indigenous Leadership Initiative). Personal communication. May 2018.

must be grounded in this reality, otherwise, humans may overcome the issue of climate change, but will be fraught with more environmental imbalances in the future if we fail to repair our relationships with the Earth.<sup>9</sup> Our issues will persist, and they will evolve, but they will not go away.

We propose that climate policy solutions for the North ground themselves in northern Indigenous understandings of knowing and being. There are answers to the pressing issue of climate change that are found within our northern Indigenous worldviews. We are not victims of a global phenomenon beyond our control, rather, our worldviews are the very fabric that will mend a missing solution. It is essential to look outside of the system and the paradigms that caused the problem to find effective solutions. For instance, the time spent out in our boats on the Land, although we are burning gas, is contributing to a solution, a solution on which we are world leaders. Burning more gas would mean more of our people were out on the Land, which would contribute significantly to more solutions, solutions from a different paradigm and understanding about what it means to holistically respect and have responsibility for Land.

It is an opportunity to pull together our strengths and break out of silos. Indigenous systems are extremely well placed to guide Canadian society in holistic and interconnected solutions. For policy, this will mean ensuring Indigenous peoples have access to funding, capacity and support for our own solutions. Instead of money going to science-based monitoring and tools and solutions born in the south, it can be redirected to Indigenous Land-based programming. These Indigenous solutions can be celebrated and adapted across the country to help all Canadians rebuild understandings of relationship with Land. This fundamental understanding can be enhanced through a balance with western science; however, it is essential that the two complement one another. Currently, we have many tools to move forward, but we are lacking the grounding and perspective necessary for the tools to be effective.

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The nature of the climate change issue we are facing is an opportunity to tap into our reliance on one another and our collective reliance on Land.

9 David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous* (New York: A division of Random House, Inc, 1996)

**POLICY OPTIONS: CURRENT  
INITIATIVES BY NORTHERNERS**

What are solutions that promote Land-relationships and cultural resiliency? It will be important for Polar Knowledge Canada to understand and enshrine from a policy perspective that each community knows what they need in terms of their own Land-relationships. Below, we provide examples of what solutions that promote land-people relationships and cultural resiliency may look like in our territories in the form of

policy options. These options are by no means prescriptive solutions. There are many organizations that are promoting Land-relationships, and this list is not to prioritize any particular one, rather it is to share examples of what could constitute Land-relationship building. Ultimately, any policy that reflects northerners needs to be dynamic and adaptive, just like the Lands and peoples it purports to serve.



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# 1. INDIGENOUS GUARDIAN INITIATIVES<sup>10</sup>

Indigenous guardian programs empower communities and peoples to manage Lands according to traditional laws and values – Indigenous worldviews and governance systems. The programs prioritize ‘moccasins and kamiit on the ground,’ which means getting local people out to monitor and support healthy ecosystems by spending time on the Land. They have recent support from the federal government that is helping to expand their growth across the country.<sup>11</sup>

## EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- **NWT:** Ni Hat’Ni Dene, a program by the Łútsël K’é Dene First Nation<sup>12</sup>
- **Nunavut:** Uatijiit (recently renamed to Nauttiqsuqtiit), Tallurutiup Imanga Pilot Guardian Program<sup>13</sup>
- **Yukon:** Dane Nan Yé Dāh Network (Kaska Dena)<sup>14</sup>



Nauttiqsuqtiit Inuit Stewards from left to right: Mike Akumalik, Niore Iqalukjuak (Nauttiqsuqti Manager), Roland Taqtu, Mishak Allurut, and Jonah Muckpa'. Photo Copyright © Qikiqtani Inuit Association, Nauttiqsuqtiit Program. Please do not reproduce without permission from QIA.

10 Indigenous Leadership Initiative, Indigenous Guardians Program. Accessed October 4, 2019, <https://www.ilinationhood.ca/our-work/guardians/>

11 <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-funding/indigenous-guardians-pilot-program.html>

12 Government of Canada, Indigenous Guardians Pilot Program. Accessed October 4, 2019, <http://landoftheancestors.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Ni-hat-ni-Overview-2016.pdf>

13 Qikiqtani Inuit Association, “Tallurutiup Imanaga Pilot Guardian Program in Arctic Bay, last modified July 20, 2018, accessed December 8, 2019, <https://www.qia.ca/tallurutiup-imanga-pilot-guardian-program-in-arctic-bay/>

14 Kaska Dena Council. Dane Nan Yé Dāh Network. <https://kaskadenacouncil.com/dane-nan-ye-dah/>

**2. INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREAS (IPCAS)<sup>15</sup>**

As defined by the Indigenous Circle of Experts for the Pathway to Canada Target 1,<sup>16</sup> IPCAs are Lands and waters where Indigenous governments have the primary role in protecting and conserving ecosystems through Indigenous laws, governance and knowledge systems. Culture and language are the heart and soul of an IPCA.

**EXAMPLES INCLUDE:**

- ▶ **NWT:** Edézhzhíe National Wildlife Area/ Dehcho Protected Area<sup>17</sup>
- ▶ **Nunavut:** Tallurutiup Imanga National Marine Conservation Area<sup>18</sup>
- ▶ **Yukon:** Ch’ihilii Chik Habitat Protection Area Management Plan<sup>19</sup>

**3. LAND BASED HEALING ACTIVITIES<sup>20</sup>**

Land-based healing has come from a recognition that a separation from Lands and cultures has caused people to become unwell in numerous ways, including both physically and mentally. Culturally appropriate healing often takes place on the Land as it occurred traditionally. Poor mental health in Indigenous communities has been directly correlated with the colonial severing of Land-relationships.<sup>21</sup>

Efforts to reinstate Land-based healing have been emerging all over Canada, and certainly the north.

**EXAMPLES INCLUDE:**

- ▶ **NWT:** Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation<sup>21</sup>
- ▶ **Nunavut:** On-the-Land Addictions and Trauma Treatment in the three regions of Nunavut<sup>22</sup>
- ▶ **Yukon:** Jackson Lake Healing Camp run by Kwanlin Dün First Nation<sup>23</sup>

**4. CULTURAL ON-THE-LAND EXCURSIONS**

On-the-Land excursions represent a variety of experiences that get people out on the Land for learning, fun and community building. The excursions allow locals and tourists to connect with Land and place through people, longstanding cultural practices and relationships with Land.

**EXAMPLES INCLUDE:**

- ▶ **NWT:** B. Dene, a privately owned Indigenous company.
- ▶ **Nunavut:** Young Hunters Program, a program of the Aqqimavvik Society<sup>24</sup>
- ▶ **Yukon:** Long Ago Peoples Place, a privately owned Indigenous company.

15 Indigenous Circle of Experts, Pathway to Canada Target 1, We Rise Together 1 (Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2018), accessed June 2, 2019, [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e007452e69cf9a7af0a033/t/5ab94aca6d2a7338ecb1d05e/1522092766605/PA234-ICE\\_Report\\_2018\\_Mar\\_22\\_web.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e007452e69cf9a7af0a033/t/5ab94aca6d2a7338ecb1d05e/1522092766605/PA234-ICE_Report_2018_Mar_22_web.pdf)

16 Pathway to Canada Target 1, The Pathway. <https://www.conservation2020canada.ca/the-pathway>

17 Vast region of Northwest Territories declared an Indigenous Protected Area. Globe and Mail. Gloria Galloway. October 11, 2018. Accessed November 8, 2019, [www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-vast-region-of-northwest-territories-declared-an-indigenous-protected/](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-vast-region-of-northwest-territories-declared-an-indigenous-protected/)

18 Tallurutiup Imanga/Lancaster Sound to be Canada's largest protected area. Canadian Geographic. Sabrina Doyle, August 14, 2017. Accessed November 20, 2019, <https://www.canadiangeographic.ca/article/tallurutiup-imangalancaster-sound-be-canadas-largest-protected-area>

19 The Ch’ihilii Chik Habitat Protection Area Working Group. 2017. The Ch’ihilii Chik Habitat Protection Area Final Recommended Management Plan. Department of Environment, Whitehorse, Yukon. Accessed December 11, 2019, [https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/engage/engage-chilii-chik-habitat-protection-plan\\_0.pdf](https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/engage/engage-chilii-chik-habitat-protection-plan_0.pdf)

20 Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation. Home. Accessed Nov. 20, 2019, <https://arcticindigenouswellness.org/>

21 Land for Healing: Developing a First Nations Landbased Service Delivery Model, © Thunderbird Partnership Foundation, 22361 Austin Line, Bothwell, Ontario, 2018.

22 Kate Kyle, “The only way to go forward: The home-grown addictions treatment program that works”, CBC News North, Sept. 1, 2019, accessed December 8, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/cambridge-bay-nunavut-addictions-1.5262062>

23 Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Health – Jackson Lake Healing Camp. Accessed December 13, 2019, [http://www.kwanlindun.com/index.php/health/section/jackson\\_lake\\_healing\\_camp/](http://www.kwanlindun.com/index.php/health/section/jackson_lake_healing_camp/)

24 Aqqimavvik Arviat Welless Society. Home. Accessed February 24, 2020, <https://www.aqqimavvik.com/young-hunters-program>



5. OTHER INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Many institutions in the North and across Canada are recognizing the need to create ethical space between Indigenous and Euro-Western worldviews. More often than not, this work includes connection with Land. Large-scale transitions can be found throughout public governments, schools, healthcare, private sector and more. It is a movement supported nationally and internationally by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada,<sup>25</sup> United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,<sup>26</sup> the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples,<sup>27</sup> treaties, agreements, and other constructive agreements, including section 35 of the Canadian constitution.<sup>28</sup>

EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- **NWT:** Bushkids, an outdoor learning initiative working with the public school system in Yellowknife.

- **Nunavut:** Iviqtippalliajut, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit within the Government of Nunavut<sup>29</sup>
- **Yukon:** Yukon College, an institution looking at incorporating Indigenous worldviews<sup>30</sup>

None of the programs listed above are currently categorized as climate change programs; however, they all have something important in common: they bring us back to our intimate human relationships with ourselves, others and Lands. Polar Knowledge Canada can consider this new focus when directing federal funding for northern climate research and action. Challenges articulated by many of these organizations include the lack of ongoing multi-year funding, no core funding, and no core staff position to handle administration of their programming.<sup>31</sup> Refocusing climate change action will require strengthening these organizations by addressing their challenge through funding and support.

25 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Calls to Action, 2012. Accessed December 3, 2019, [http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

26 United Nations. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Accessed December 11, 2019, [https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf)

27 Government of Canada. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Accessed December 11, 2019, <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples/Pages/final-report.aspx>

28 Canadian Constitution, Charter of Rights, Section 35. Government of Canada, Justice Laws Website. Accessed December 11, 2019, <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-16.html>

29 Government of Nunavut, Department of Culture and Heritage, Iviqtippalliajut: In the Process of Falling into Place 2018-2023, accessed December 8, 2019, [https://www.gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/ch\\_-\\_iviqtippalliajut\\_report\\_en\\_rev05.pdf](https://www.gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/ch_-_iviqtippalliajut_report_en_rev05.pdf)

30 Yukon College. Accessed December 30, 2019, [www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/?gclid=CjwKCAiA3abwBRBqEiwAKwICA8OznNE3MfgB3bDbjXDuyIvbeubea6oT4Ubln3t669L2lp504DjRvaxoCfloQAvD\\_BwE](http://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/?gclid=CjwKCAiA3abwBRBqEiwAKwICA8OznNE3MfgB3bDbjXDuyIvbeubea6oT4Ubln3t669L2lp504DjRvaxoCfloQAvD_BwE)

31 Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. Arviat Wellness Centre. Accessed December 8, 2019, <https://www.itk.ca/nuluq-mapping-project/initiative/arviat-wellness-centre/>

# 1. Support Northern Solutions

Northern solutions may go beyond mitigation/adaptation and monitoring and assessment, expanding into worldview, relationship with the Land and resourcefulness. These solutions are deep, long term mitigation and adaptation. Examples of solutions are outlined in the policy options above.

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# 2. Adapt Internally

The difference in worldviews, and the solutions that come from it, can be embedded in internal policy for Polar Knowledge Canada, an organization that does much of its work in northern regions. It is essential that Polar Knowledge Canada considers ethical space by embedding northern Indigenous worldviews within its own structure.<sup>32</sup>

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# 3. Articulate Within Western Institutions

Polar Knowledge Canada can then articulate the solutions that come from strengthening Land-people relationships and help to share this perspective to contribute to the climate change discourse, which could include gathering research and sharing the knowledge that comes from the North. If our northern cultures can have space to be successful within our own identities, we can share those solutions with the rest of the world. We can contribute our strengths to the global conversation about climate change.

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<sup>32</sup> Willie Ermine, "The Ethical Space of Engagement," in *Indigenous Law Journal* 6, Issue 1 (2007), 194-201.



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## CONCLUSION

# Indigenous Way of Life is Climate Action

**T**he solutions we are all looking for come from Land, and they come from people who know their Lands. Indigenous solutions to many issues in our society come from the ground up – they are self-determined solutions. These solutions, coming from Indigenous worldviews, tend to be inclusive of all things on Earth, taking into consideration the future generations of humans and what will be left for our children. People come from Land, as do cultures, languages and knowledge;

thus, it follows that solutions will look very different depending on the Land, peoples and the relationships that define them. High level conversations about climate change are important, but they need to take their leadership and their understandings from local levels. The closer our decision making is to the Land, the sounder it will be. Growing those connections to our environment and peoples must become an integral part of climate action across the world.

## **Balancing Worldviews: Climate Change Solutions in Canada's North**

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