

Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship 2018–2019

Policy Recommendations



The contents of this publication are entirely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of The Gordon Foundation.

This publication is available under limited copyright publication. You may download, distribute, photocopy, cite or excerpt this document provided it is properly and fully credited and not used for commercial purposes.

Front cover photograph by Pat Kane
Back cover photograph by Kalen Emsley

Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship 2018 - 2019

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS



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.

RECOMMENDED CITATION

The Gordon Foundation, ed. *Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship 2018-2019: Policy Recommendations*. Toronto: The Gordon Foundation, 2020.

Foreword

The Gordon Foundation is a charitable organization dedicated to protecting Canada's water and empowering Canada's North. Since 2010, The Foundation's Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship has been providing northerners aged 25 to 35 with a unique opportunity to influence change in the North by participating in an 18-month policy and leadership development program. Fellows develop public policy research that addresses some of the most pressing issues facing northern communities. As such, Fellows are often sought after as experts and advisors to inform governments, and to present their policy research at local, regional, national and international events.

The Gordon Foundation has compiled the Fellows' public policy research into a compendium to provide an accessible and centralized resource to advance policy recommendations developed by and for the North. This compendium showcases policy papers from the 2018-2019 Fellowship cohort. It provides innovative northern solutions and opportunities for change, including ways forward for addictions programming, engaging communities in Land Claims Agreements, equity in education, community-controlled education, supporting mental health, deregulating and empowering language teachers, incorporating Traditional Knowledge and Values in government structures, creating ethical spaces for on-the-land learning, and rethinking modern Treaty-making. This compendium aims to amplify the voices of emerging northern leaders, and provides a key resource for northern communities, governments, and organizations in their quest to find solutions for an ever-evolving Canadian North.

SHERRY CAMPBELL

President & CEO, The Gordon Foundation

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Scampbell".

Contents

Individual Papers

- 8 Deregulate and Empower Language Teachers
Killulark Arngna'naaq
- 20 Creating the Education That Matters: Enhanced Engagement with Land Claim Agreements
Heather Bourassa
- 34 Turning to Traditional Processes for Supporting Mental Health
Ashley Carvill
- 50 Negotiating the Dehcho: Protecting Dene Ahthít'e Through Modern Treaty-Making
Don Couturier
- 66 Creating Ethical Spaces: Opportunities to Connect with Land for Life and Learning in the NWT
Chloe Dragon Smith
- 92 Nunami Ilinniarniq: Inuit Community Control of Education through Land-based Education
Marjorie Kaviq Kaluraq
- 128 Accounting for our Plant Citizens: Proposed Collaborative Approaches for Supporting Wild Plant Harvest in Whitehorse, Yukon
Kelly Panchynshyn
- 156 Uncomfortable Inuk - Exploring Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit
Tina Piulia DeCouto
- 186 Learning to listen: On Racism and Power in Yukon Education
Julianna Scramstad
- 206 Ways forward in addictions programming in Fort Simpson Northwest Territories | Dene Gog ndié Voices of the People
Kristen Tanche

Group Papers

- 250 Balancing Worldviews: Climate Change Solutions in Canada's North
Chloe Dragon Smith, Tina Piulia DeCouto, Ashley Carvill
- 266 Language, Community and Legends in Post-Secondary Education
Kristen Tanche, Luke Campbell,
Julianna Scramstad, Hilda Snowball
- 282 Realizing Indigenous Law in Co-Management
Killulark Arngna'naaq, Heather Bourassa, Don Couturier,
Kaviq Kaluraq, Kelly Panchyshyn

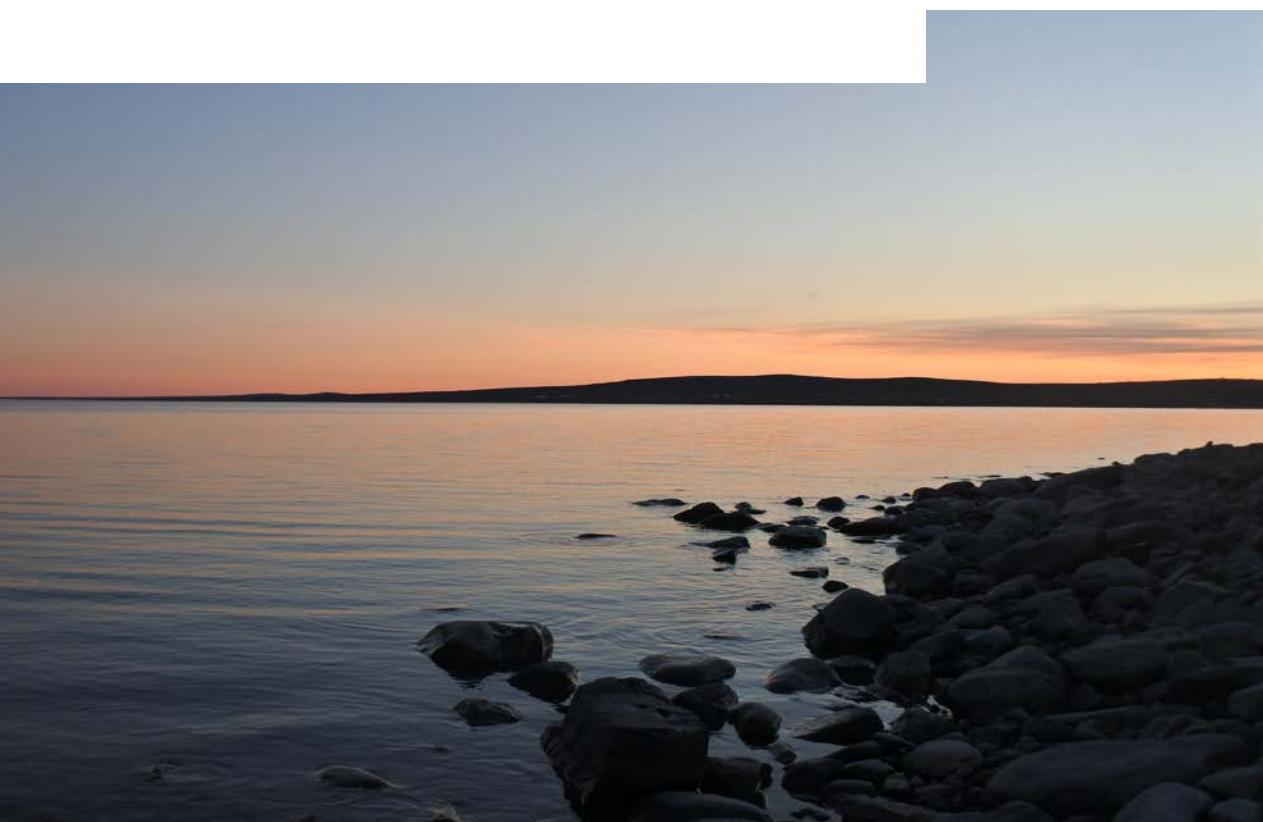
Author

Biographies

310

Killulark Arngna'naaq

Deregulate and Empower Language Teachers



CONTENTS

10	Introduction
11	Policy Options, Background & Analysis
18	Conclusion
19	Reference list

INTRODUCTION

Since the inception of this paper, I have adjusted my perceptions towards work that is being done in the philanthropic sector. My largest recommendation in this paper suggests an amendment to the tax act to create an exception for the free flow of charitable dollars towards language revitalization work.

Though I still believe that in our current structure this would be a beneficial amendment, I no longer believe that it would make substantial changes for the work that is being done as the entire structure of wealth distribution is not built for decolonization. Minor changes to federal regulations regarding the redistribution of wealth is not enough to change a broken system. Self-empowerment of Indigenous people will drive the changes needed to fuel language revitalization, and my largest recommendation does little to enable this, though I am inspired by the many people that are.

Approaches to supporting Indigenous language revitalization in the North at the Federal level is currently inappropriate, as it requires teachers and learners to distort their work and administrative structures to adapt to what governmental regulations perceive to be the most appropriate methodology for language work. This dilutes the capacity of entities completing actual language work. It is necessary to adapt the framework of ways that language revitalization work can be supported for widespread impact, allowing languages to flourish and expand in ways that our leaders envision and suggest. My focus in this analysis is on federal level work, as northern languages are not defined by jurisdictional boundaries, however, Inuit Nunangat in the political boundaries of Canada spans three territories and two provinces, each with varying regulations and support.

When I started out with the topic of Language Revitalization, my goal was fairly self-serving in that I wanted to learn my traditional language of Inuktitut. It was something that I have struggled with for many years living outside of Inuit Nunangat. As I began working through my policy topic, I tried to think of ways that policy could support and help Inuit who wanted to learn our language. As I progressed through my thoughts and research, I found many examples of impactful language revitalization work being done across the North, and recognized there is not necessarily one best way to learn and teach. There is a plethora of passionate individuals who are working towards teaching and learning their languages using methodologies applicable to the specific language. Further, many of our Indigenous leaders are working towards transforming Canadian language policy.

Indigenous peoples' relationship with Canada has always been full of strife. In a modern context, the implications of this present us with two options: we can continue to go forward with this method of interaction, or we can identify that the relationship is problematic and work on improvements. Arguably, this latter process has taken initial steps towards improvement through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The Final Reports of both these bodies include the recommendation to better include languages in national conversation. The TRC's Calls to Action 13 to 17 address language and culture (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 6). These recommendations outline several opportunities to improve language preservation and use within Canada, with a focus on the urgency of preservation and revitalization.

When initiating discussions about language work, it is equally important to keep in mind the need for communities to be empowered to develop their own approach in teaching and learning. As I read through the *Inuktitut Essentials* book I carry around with me, I think of how much of the language is based on root words:

***NAGLIGIVAGIIT* – I LOVE YOU**

***NAGLI* – LOVE**

***TUKTUTUQ* – SHE CAUGHT A CARIBOU**

***TUKTU* – CARIBOU**

I need to learn so many root words to become semi-fluent in Inuktitut. The words above are ones that I know and have known since I was little: *tuktu*, I am from the caribou Inuit, it has always been important to me; *nagli*, I have been loved. This is how I remember the words I know in Inuktitut best. However, this is my language and my learning, and there are so many languages across the North, including eleven official languages of the Northwest Territories alone. To even start to feed the flames of language revitalization, empowerment of many different efforts and ideas is needed. This will allow the foundations of teaching to be established and to normalize Indigenous language in a context that is appropriate for the language and culture of those that are learning and teaching.

POLICY OPTIONS, BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

Recently there has been a tangible increase in publicity towards language revitalization efforts; there has been an increase in funding, both federally as well as jurisdictionally, as well as the recent passing of Bill C-91, the *Indigenous Languages Act*. As with all aspects of society, however, language revitalization also faces a scarcity of resources. The federal budget allocated significant funding towards language revitalization over the next five years; this is an important step towards supporting current efforts. However, I have concerns about the dollar amount that is being provided, as well as the lack of clarity regarding how the funding will be allocated. The *Aboriginal Languages Initiative*¹ application guidelines specify outright in the “Eligibility” section

¹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/aboriginal-peoples/languages.html>

that “[...]his funding is highly competitive... and requests typically exceed available funding.” Scarcity of resources is a pervasive problem in all funding pools. This can result in creating competition between programs and organizations who would, in a better world, be working together to strengthen and improve their efforts. A theoretical example of this collaboration would be two parallel language initiatives in two territories. Facilitating a conversation between the two programs would enable experience and knowledge sharing between the two entities, ideally resulting in improvements for both programs. However, given the scarcity of funding, the two theoretical programs may end up in competition for funding, damaging relationships, rather than enabling a positive mutually beneficial relationship.

The *Aboriginal Languages Initiative* application guidelines outline the requirements and the components of applications for language funding. These guidelines alone demonstrate the problematic nature of governmental funding in several ways. In my day job, I occasionally review applications submitted through the Languages Program; I am formally an accountant, but still I struggle with the budget component of this application due to the complexity and structure of the application file. Further, this funding is intended to support teaching of languages other than English and French; this application is only available in English and French, creating another barrier for people fluent in languages that they are trying to teach. The application is designed for the ease of use for the application reviewer rather than functionality for the applicant. It is unreasonable to create an application that is inaccessible for individuals or entities whose expertise is related to facilitating language revitalization.

The guidelines go on to outline specific requirements for projects that are applying for support, including entity types, projects, expenditures, and specific disallowed expenditures. Individually, each requirement outlines components of a project that should produce a successful language revitalization project. Collectively, however, all of these requirements force revitalization efforts to fit within a specific paradigm that the relevant department views to be a successful project. Indigenous language teachers should not have to adapt their teachings and approaches to fit within the vision of the federal government.

At this precarious point in time in language revitalization, with a strong reduction in fluent speakers, Canada needs to support the use and teaching of languages in whichever form teachers have found to be appropriate and successful.

Federal policy, funding models and regulations need to empower the individuals actually doing the work rather than defining what a successful project looks like for them.

Further, the relationship between the Canadian government and Indigenous peoples has been damaged. Through years of work on the part of Indigenous leaders, this relationship is working towards improving. Depending exclusively on federal government-sector funding for financial support of language revitalization initiatives is not appropriate while the relationship between the Canadian Government and Indigenous people continues to mend, as it prohibits independence and empowerment of Indigenous people. The proposal and

reporting requirements for language funding needs to be redeveloped to be accessible to individuals participating in language teaching. The definition of “Indigenous education” in funding requirements needs to be eliminated or, at a minimum, adapted with consultation from Indigenous communities to be more adaptable and encompassing of alternative teaching methods. Further, due to the diminishing number of fluent speakers, federal language funding needs to be supportive of individuals who have the fluency and skill to teach.

According to Statistics Canada census data, between 1996 and 2016, the number of households who spoke Inuktitut at home decreased from 76% to 48%

(STATISTICS CANADA, 1996, 2016).

Indigenous teachers should not have to adapt their teaching methodologies to align with federal definitions and should not have to develop the administrative expertise required to complete a funding proposal.

For Inuit, our current leaders have incredible visions for the future of Inuktitut preservation and revitalization of our languages.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) has provided several written suggestions and responses in regard to policies that could be implemented to support Inuktitut preservation and expansion within Canada. *National Inuit Positions on Federal Legislation in Relation to the Inuktitut Language*² outlines tangible and attainable recommendations to fill gaps in Inuktitut use within Inuit Nunangat. This position specifies “The co-development of legislative content should be guided by the following principles: human rights-based approach; distinctions-based approach; Inuit Nunangat approach; machinery change must be distinctions-based, and; consistency with federal principles” (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2017, p. 3). These principles pinpoint some of the major issues interwoven within federal policies regarding languages. Language policies must acknowledge the distinction of languages, both between languages themselves as well as cultural differences, while ensuring equality when working with these different languages. In this case of Inuktitut, ITK’s position paper goes on to recommend federal funding be structured to “enable equitable access to resources, greater flexibility... and Inuit self-determination in the acquisition and implementation of resources” (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2017, p. 5). It is important to note that in this context, the use of “equitable” describes both dialect and region for Inuit, but also equitable distribution of federal financial resources for Inuktitut as there is for the French language within Canada; the disparity of resource allocation between French and Inuktitut is cited as \$8,189 and \$186 respectively, despite Inuktitut being formally recognized as an official language within two Canadian jurisdictions.

2 <https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Inuktitut-position-paper.pdf>

“

The co-development of legislative content should be guided by the following principles:
human rights-based approach;
distinctions-based approach;
Inuit Nunangat approach;
machinery change must be distinctions-based, and;
consistency with federal principles.”

The position paper ends with a recommendation to establish an Inuktitut Language Authority responsible for the development, unification, and monitoring of Inuktitut resources, and finally to appoint an Inuktitut Language Commissioner. The position piece of ITK strengthens the foundations of legislation designed to make Inuktitut a working and recognized language within Canada. It creates a vision for Canada to enable and support the use of a language on a national level.

Since ITK's position paper was published, *Bill C-91, An Act respecting Indigenous Languages*, has been passed. This act echoes several linguistic aspects of ITK's position piece; however, Inuit leaders have identified a number of significant gaps and shortfalls within the legislation. The Act specifies that Indigenous work will be completed collaboratively and with input from Indigenous peoples; however, taken as a whole, the act amounts to little more than acknowledgement of the use of Indigenous languages as a component of Canada. The vision of a working language outlined in ITK's Inuktitut position piece is lacking significantly. Implementation of ITK's recommendations would be an ideal method of working towards supporting language revitalization efforts. ITK's recommendation piece focuses primarily on Inuktitut specifically, however, components of the paper can be applied to Indigenous languages as a whole. Further, recognition of an Indigenous language as a national language and creating the space to elevate a language to that level signifies that Indigenous languages still maintain an important presence within Canada, and in turn, this will empower us as whole.

As the Federal Government continues to develop the Indigenous Language Bill, Indigenous

peoples will continue language revitalization efforts. A substantial barrier identified by those working in the field of language and cultural revitalization is the difficulty of accessing funding to support the individuals working in this area. There are two major sources of funding for such initiatives: government funding and charitable sector funding. Federal funding is accessible for most fiscal entities, however, as discussed above, there is a finite amount of funding available for programming and often involves extensive application forms and information to be completed by the applicant. Charitable sector funding can be an important contributor to culture and language teachings as it is one major source of financial support for language initiatives, though it is regulated and restricted in terms of granting. Canadian charitable regulations specify that charitable entities must either reallocate financial resources through direct programming or within the charitable sector. Practically, what this means is that charitable entities can deliver work directly or grant to another charitable entity who can then deliver the work themselves.

LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION IS INHERENTLY A TASK THAT WOULD FALL WITHIN WHAT CANADIAN REGULATIONS CONSIDER TO BE CHARITABLE, MATCHING THE CHARITABLE CLASSIFICATION OF "EDUCATION." TO BECOME A CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION IN CANADA, AN ENTITY MUST SUBJECT ITSELF TO EXTENSIVE REVIEW AND SCRUTINY BY THE CANADA REVENUE AGENCY (CRA) ON INITIAL REGISTRATION, AND THEN, IN CONTINUING TO OPERATE AS A CHARITY, ENTITIES MUST FURTHER INCREASE ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING ON AN ONGOING BASIS. THIS ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN IS FEASIBLE FOR SOME LARGER OPERATIONS THAT HAVE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF, HOWEVER, IT IS NOT CONDUCTIVE TO THE ENABLEMENT OF ALL LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION EFFORTS.

Firstly, interpreting and understanding charitable status requirements is a specialized skill set. My sister is a lawyer and I am an accountant; I often joke that we both hate taxes because there is too much law for me, and too much accounting for her. The nature of CRA regulations can often be counter-intuitive to many, however, individuals whose primary goal and abilities are to pass on a language should not have to develop and maintain expertise in compliance, understanding, and review of an external authority.

Secondly, applications for charitable status require time and effort to even qualify for funding, and if successful, subsequent organizational reporting requirements require time and effort. These administrative processes detract from individual capacity, which could be better spent by the individual or entity on program delivery or educational work. Lastly, entities working in language revitalization should not have to prove their charitable nature to the government to receive financial support from the philanthropic sector.

My recommendation aims to enable the philanthropic sector to better support language and cultural revitalization efforts to empower Indigenous people to work towards language reclamation ourselves.

I propose that Canadian charitable laws deregulate the charitable re-granting requirements specifying the need for recipients to be registered charities or qualified donees for individuals and organizations working in language revitalization, in order to allow for free resource exchange between the philanthropic sector and entities completing the work.

The section of the Income Tax Act³ which creates this access barrier is Part 1 Section H: Exemptions (3); Section B.1, which specifies

(3) The Minister may, in the manner described in section 168, revoke the registration of a public foundation for any reason described in subsection 168(1) or where the foundation....

(b.1) makes a disbursement by way of a gift, other than a gift made

(i) in the course of charitable activities carried on by it, or

(ii) to a donee that is a qualified donee at the time of the gift.

³ <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/i-3.3/>

My recommendation is to expand the exemption list to include gifts made to support Indigenous language revitalization, and permitting charities to direct resources to language revitalization efforts freely and directly. This expansion would remove the burden of registration as either qualified donees or charitable bodies from entities.

I appreciate that Canadian charitable law is in place for a reason. Guidelines and restrictions are in place to ensure that charitable entities are held accountable for their spending and operations. In lieu of the CRA determining the eligibility of what should be considered charitable, internal due diligence can be completed. Though I am unsure what role the CRA should have in developing guidelines on how Indigenous communities consider language revitalization effective or charitable, there is protocol for the CRA to provide and develop analysis checklists for public use. Currently, CRA provides guidance for aspects of tax law which are not always clearly black and white. For example, organizations can refer to the “employee versus employed” guidance when engaging with individuals to complete work.

There are a series of steps and questions to be completed with each new engagement

detailing specific factors which have been identified as critical distinctions between the two. This concept of outlining specific guidance to assist users of the *Income Tax Act* in interpreting and defining a section of the income tax act can be explored for use in this context. Charitable sector Indigenous language grantors can complete due diligence approaches using guidelines approved or developed by the CRA to confirm that individual projects and initiatives can be viewed as charitable without requiring straining administrative effort on the parts of entities completing the work. This would shift the burden of review compliance from the individuals completing language revitalization work toward philanthropic organizations, who inherently require administrative support and expertise to continue operations and maintain charitable status.

CONCLUSION

I am pleased to continue to work with and see the growth of northern Indigenous language revitalization work. Considering that in many parts of the North, fluent and first-language speakers' numbers are decreasing, the reclamation of language has proven to be an important component of healing for us and it is a critical time to be supporting this work. In the context of Inuit Nunangat, the continued expansion of the use of Inuktitut is critical, as it is still the first language of many Inuit. The financial support currently in place for this work has sufficed as a stepping stone for the beginning of language revitalization, however, to solidify and expand the working use of Inuktitut as a territorial language there needs to be a major shift toward supporting and using Inuktitut and other Indigenous languages. Currently, language revitalization work is starting to be supported through federal funding and the *Indigenous Language Act*. This support, though important as a starting point, is insufficient to make a substantial impact in developing pervasive and competent languages, particularly as access to federal support is a challenging barrier that is difficult to overcome in and of itself. There have already been concrete recommendations from Inuit leaders that outline a beautiful vision for Inuktitut to be a national language

with very specific requirements. Many of these recommendations were excluded from the *Indigenous Language Act*, which, in my opinion, did little more than acknowledge the fact that other languages exist within Canada, and does not provide sufficient tangible supports or solutions for strengthening the use and availability of other languages within Canada. This, coupled with the fact that the federal government is not supporting teachers and programming, the national position provided by ITK should be implemented as a means of providing regulatory level support for Indigenous Languages. Federal funding applications and agreements must be reviewed and changed to be accessible to regular members of the public, and the *Income Tax Act* must be amended to support the expansion of learning and teaching of languages by making it easier for charitable organizations to support language teaching initiatives. Implementation of these recommendations will allow teachers to teach and learners to learn. Indigenous languages need to be revitalized and taught in a way consistent with Indigenous values, and without having to adapt to requirements by the Government of Canada.

REFERENCE LIST

Inuktit Essentials, A Phrasebook – Pirurvik Centre

Canada, G. o. (n.d.). *Income Tax Act*. Retrieved from <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/i-3.3/>

Government of Canada. (n.d.). *Indigenous Languages Component - Indigenous Languages and Cultures Program*. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/aboriginal-peoples/languages.html>

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. (2017, November). Retrieved from <https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Inuktit-position-paper.pdf>

National Inquiry into Missnad Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (2019). *MMIWG-FFADA.ca*. Retrieved from <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>

Statistics Canada. (1996, 2016). Census of Canada.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). [www.TRC.ca](http://www.trc.ca). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*. Retrieved from http://www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

Heather Bourassa

Creating the Education That Matters: Enhanced
Engagement with Land Claim Agreements



CONTENTS

23	Introduction
24	Problem
27	Background
27	Policy Options & Analysis
31	Recommendations & Implementation
33	Conclusion

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude for the support I received to accomplish this paper. I am thankful to my husband Paul for his encouragement, time, and support during my time in the Fellowship, in managing our home without me while away and offering guidance and keeping me focused in writing. I also need to thank Dakota Erutse for being so generous with his time in listening and offering his knowledge and writing experience. I would like to thank all those who agreed to explore this topic with me through discussions. Thank you to the Gordon Foundation for giving me this opportunity and investing in me and this issue.

INTRODUCTION

Fort Good Hope is one of five communities that make up the Sahtu Region in the Northwest Territories. The Sahtu Region signed a land claim agreement, the *Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (SDMCLCA)*, with the Government of Canada in 1993. From the land claim many institutions were created. The *Agreement* created expectations and obligations for all signing parties: The Government of Canada; the Government of the Northwest Territories; and, the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated. With the *Agreement*, the Sahtu created a regional co-management system for land management and development with the territorial government. There are 29 chapters in the SDMCLCA, including enrolment, self-government, economic measures, protected areas, arbitration, and implementation.

With modern land claim agreements, First Nations in the Northwest Territories (NWT)

have developed agreements beyond the historical treaties. Four regions have done this by building on Treaty 8 or Treaty 11 and negotiating a comprehensive land claim. The Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in, the Sahtu, and the Tłı̨chǫ have completed such land claim agreements. These agreements provide tools, rights, obligations, and processes for their beneficiaries, but beneficiaries may not realize their full authority.

Current rights include the inherent harvesting/traditional land use rights; requirements for community engagement and Access and Benefits Agreements for projects involving land use; resource royalties; and board appointments and representation through The Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated. Land use decisions are to be made through the Sahtu Land Use Plan, wildlife management through the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board, and resource management through the Sahtu



Land and Water Board. The beneficiaries are active decision makers when it comes to issues affecting the region, such as in legislative changes, economic opportunities, and self-government.

THESE RESPONSIBILITIES OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEFINE THE SAHTU AND ITS PEOPLE, BUT EACH ONE IS A COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP AMONG FEDERAL, TERRITORIAL AND CLAIM GOVERNMENTS, LOCAL LEADERSHIP, AND SAHTU RESIDENTS. THE AGREEMENT IS MEANT TO ENHANCE THE REGION, BUT IT IS A RECYCLED COLONIAL STRUCTURE, AND NOT ONE CREATED BY INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE. AS A RESULT, THIS CREATES INTERPRETATION DIFFICULTIES.

To continue their journey, all of the Sahtu communities (Colville Lake, Fort Good Hope, Tulita, Norman Wells, and Deline) are moving into self-government negotiations or are implementing self-government agreements. These self-government agreements are as complex as the land claims agreement, and their implementation is a new phenomenon for all communities. As in land claims agreements, the roles and responsibilities of the various organizations and the transfer of authorities from one government entity to another are not specified in the self-government agreements; they are merely contemplated.

Those responsible for implementation of the SDMCLCA—The Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated (SSI), the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), and the Government of Canada (GC)—have not published an implementation report since 2014. The priorities for implementation are unclear, with three implementation meetings a year which do not result in widespread reporting. Community leaders are left to

explain the roles and responsibilities of the organizations responsible for implementation but are not involved in their on-going activities. With the resources of governments, there could be more collaborative communications of shared priorities, challenges, and completed priorities.

There is a lack of school curriculum on the land claim agreements, their importance, their implementation, and the roles and responsibilities of organizations created from them. Educators are limited to their own interpretations and experiences. School programs are developed at the territorial level, and most educators are non-beneficiaries which contributes to the difficulty of exposing youth to these implementation priorities and concerns. **How, then, will youth be prepared to be the next generation of decision-makers and to meet their responsibilities in the future?**

PROBLEM

In general, beneficiaries of these agreements are disconnected with what is in place on their behalf. The Sahtu Land Claim was signed 26 years ago, and many of those in leadership at the time have retired, moved, or passed away. This makes it difficult to pass on the intangible and tangible information to land claim beneficiaries. Currently, there is no structured way to pass on information to the beneficiaries. The story of how the land claim agreement was achieved and what it means for the people of the Sahtu is not being taught in elementary, middle or high school. The SDMC-LCA is a legal document, and so for those not trained in law it is challenging to understand and remains subject to interpretation by all



Sahtu Settlement Region in the Northwest Territories

The Sahtu Trust, which was created out of the SDMCLCA, has a structured set of rules that governs how the money is invested and distributed. It is the sole provider of funding to the seven Sahtu Land Corporations. The distributions from the trust come from the interest earned on the principal. This is also a complicated aspect of the Agreement that requires education. Beneficiaries can receive money directly from the trust and through programs from their respective Land Corporation based on permitted activities. The ways in which this money is managed and distributed are not always obvious, and there is no structured system in place to educate beneficiaries about them.

In 2014, the GNWT signed a devolution agreement with the Government of Canada, which resulted in increased authority to make decisions about the way public lands, resources, and waters are managed, and to make decisions about environmental protection. The GNWT needs to remain cognizant of its

obligations mandated within the SDMCLCA while adjusting to its new authorities under Devolution. If government representatives do not understand the legal obligations of the SDMCLCA, then it becomes much more important that the land claims leadership and beneficiaries thoroughly understand their own rights as they currently exist. Besides the land claim agreement, Fort Good Hope, through its Land Corporation, has signed Access and Benefits Agreements. These agreements are with individual companies for access to specific lands (parcels) for the purpose of development or exploration. An example of this would be the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline (MGP). Some of these Access and Benefits Agreements have expired, and some are still in effect. With the same concern as knowing land claim rights, there are also obligations within the benefits agreements which might be overlooked because as a First Nation government, as a community and as a Sahtu people, we are not effectively passing on the spirit and intent of these signed documents.

“

With the same concern as knowing land claim rights, there are also obligations within the benefits agreements which might be overlooked because as a First Nation government, as a community and as a Sahtu people, we are not effectively passing on the spirit and intent of these signed documents.”

BACKGROUND

It is apparent from the amount of current work being done at the Land Claims Agreements Coalition and at The Gordon Foundation that this is a widespread concern.¹

Rick Hardy thoughts on Sahtu:

The Sahtu communities came together to get an agreement. There were some compromises that had to be made to ensure an agreement was reached. It seems to some that they “gave away” too much and did not hold out for the agreement that they wanted. Expected more education.

The Sahtu Implementation Committee, described in chapter 29 of the *Agreement*, was created to oversee the progress of the agreement’s implementation. This includes reviewing the funding of claimant organizations and reviewing the obligations of each signing party. This committee suffers from turnover in leadership within the region and the government. According to the *Agreement*, it was designed to have an initial 10-year plan and then meetings as needed afterwards. Currently, meetings are scheduled throughout the year in Ottawa, Yellowknife, and a selected Sahtu Community. There does not appear to be any repercussions for items that do not get resolved.

POLICY OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS²

Edwin Erutse, the President of Yamoga Land Corporation, notes:

The issues around putting it together have to do with the human resources, putting people into the positions to monitoring the Claim and obligations. There needs to be more people doing the work and also education on current agreements. How do we make people care? We try to keep it simple, in terms of policy. Treating it like a family.

Brian Davidson, a consultant for SSI, says that in his time supporting the SSI he has not seen the organization focus on education of members on the Sahtu Claim. The SSI has been focused on dealing with the federal and territorial governments in legislation consultations, implementing all aspects of the Claim, and spending energy trying to work together as five separate communities making steps toward self-government. The SSI deals with the implementation committee. There has been no structured development of plain language summaries or other advocacy toward education, mentorship, or regional communications in regards to succession planning. Patricia McNeely, a former District Education Authority member, indicates that the local DEA (school authority) has not developed policies incorporating local

¹ See <http://gordonfoundation.ca/resource/treaty-negotiators-of-the-future/> and <http://gordonfoundation.ca/resource/treaty-training-is-vital-for-indigenous-youth>

² Interviews were conducted with: Ricky Hardy, Former President of Fort Norman Land Corporation, February 14th 2018; Patricia McNeely, Former Kasho Gotine DEA board member, October 25th, 2018; and Brian Davidson, Consultant for Sahtu Region, October 26th, 2018.

1. Status Quo

2. That the signing parties enhance education and awareness of the Agreement by creating and implementing a school curriculum, having employee orientations, and promoting awareness through plain-language publications.

3. That the Sahtu Land Corporations set aside money for land claims education initiatives, mentor the next generation through role-shadowing, and engage a broader audience through the use of modern technologies.

governance and leadership history into the school, and nothing is formalized with the DEA. To deal with this problem, I foresee three policy options:

POLICY OPTION 1

That the status quo be maintained – do not address the concern, keep things the same.

POLICY OPTION 2

That the signing parties enhance education and awareness of the Agreement by creating and implementing a school curriculum, having employee orientations, and promoting awareness through plain-language publications. A partnership should be formed between the GNWT and the Sahtu to deliver high school grades 11 and 12 Northern Studies with relevant content, including an on-line course. There is also a need to develop government orientation that would inform employees of the complexities of land claim agreements and their responsibilities and obligations as government employees under such agreements. There should also be publications of the SDMCLCA in plain language which are then distributed to promote awareness and

understanding, such as on the claim itself or on any other reports that result from it (such as Sahtu Implementation Committee reports).

Challenges for this option are the competing internal and external priorities of government, the creation of an orientation curriculum designed for government employees, the high turnover of government employees, and even the motivation for awareness. Both territorial and federal governments struggle with elections, budget cuts, and department restructurings. As a result, priorities constantly shift. It can be difficult to develop an appropriate orientation curriculum with employees, in a way that fits their needs, and it could be costly to create and implement. Also, there is a high turnover of government employees in the North, either due to moving away or being transferred to other positions, and so it could be hard to manage. It can be difficult to convince government employees that this information is important to them and that it matters to their work, when they don't see themselves being involved long-term or when they believe that they have gotten on fine without it.



SSI AGM in Fort Good Hope

POLICY OPTION 3

That the Sahtu Land Corporations set aside money for land claims education initiatives, mentor the next generation through role-shadowing, and engage a broader audience through the use of modern technologies. Land Corporations can fund education initiatives such as mock land claim negotiations, school projects around land claims, or youth councils that work with their boards of directors. A role-shadowing program can be developed with youth or with interested beneficiaries to learn about the many aspects and activities around the claim, possibly leading to them pursuing that path as a career. Communications between the Land Corporation office and its members can be improved by embracing technology that would connect a corporation with its members both inside and outside of the community.

Fort Good Hope has a capacity issue when it comes to human resources. Many people sit on more than one board or work more than one job. This makes it a challenge to create strategies or develop and implement policies, as people are very busy already. Creating sub-committees with other community members could lessen the workload of elected members and foster better communications and a sense of being involved.

Fort Good Hope has a capacity issue when it comes to human resources. Many people sit on more than one board or work more than one job. This makes it a challenge to create strategies or develop and implement policies, as people are very busy already.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

My policy recommendation is a combination of policy options 2 and 3: All parties to the Treaties—that is, the federal and territorial governments, as well as the Sahtu peoples—should share in the resourcing of initiatives toward education, mentorship, and awareness about the SDMCLCA. All parties should be promoting the claim and the responsibilities of the decision-makers whenever possible.

These recommendations are simple to put into action.

POLICY OPTION 1

Status Quo:

I recommend not following this policy option. To continue with the status quo is not a viable option for a bright future.

POLICY OPTION 2

For the governments of the Northwest Territories and Canada:

The governments should invest in a formalized orientation for government employees who will be working with claimant groups. There are many changes in the NWT with updating legislation, devolution, land claim negotiations, and on-going strategies and frameworks that would allow for improved knowledge and understanding. Having an orientation may give employees confidence in their role and may help them build relationships with appropriate land claim organizations, recognizing the claimant organizations as equal members in the decision-making process. The GNWT has the School of Community Government

and has Executive and Indigenous Affairs which could be the appropriate department to develop modules for an orientation.

POLICY OPTION 3

For the Sahtu Land Corporations and Community Leadership:

The local District Education Authorities have authority under the NWT *Education Act* to develop policies that are locally relevant. This authority has not been exercised, with only one policy in place to date: a cold weather policy.

MUCH WORK IS NEEDED TO ESTABLISH A HEALTHY BALANCE BETWEEN OUR RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE CLAIM AND OUR RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER A STANDARD EDUCATION CURRICULUM. OUR YOUTH NEED TO BE AS EDUCATED AS THEIR GOVERNMENT PEERS WHILE BEING VERSED IN OUR OWN NEEDS AND ROLES.

The DEA can create policies of including local leaders in school projects, assemblies, and DEA regular meetings. The Dene Kede class (former Slavey Class) is a subject that all students are enrolled in until grade 9. This class has a flexible curriculum and it can include local knowledge, traditions, and history, alongside the language.

The SSI leadership should put more pressure on the GNWT, either through the Sahtu Implementation Committee or through direct communication, to complete the Northern Studies 20 and 30 curricula. This is already one of the on-going implementation priorities, but it has not moved from the idea stage since conception.

The Land Corporations created under the SDMCLCA have a percentage of their trust distribution designated for “permitted activities” annually. The Land Corporations can create policies that ensure education about the Agreement is included in the scope of permitted activities. This would allow those seeking funding to actually do their part in spreading awareness and recognition around the Agreement. Also, those benefiting would have more appreciation of where this money comes from, reinforcing the ties to the Agreement. There needs to be better communication between the different agencies created by the land claim in order to coordinate funding and resources. This can happen by creating committees or working groups that include each of the co-management boards. These committees or working groups can find common ground and support each other in their respective roles. They can share information and have a unified approach to funding challenges.

Local Land Corporations should include community members and youth as a priority through sub-committees. Allowing for non-elected members to sit on committees means there is more input into decisions and policy development. It also means there would be more communication between members and leadership. Another method of including members would be to use modern technology (apps, websites, etc.) to interact with members living in the community and elsewhere.

CONCLUSION

The lack of knowledge and education on land claims is a widespread concern, particularly for the Sahtu Region. The solutions seem simple. It is a matter of connecting the dots. All parties should do more to communicate and invest resources in education. With the first land claim being signed in 1984 (the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*), this is a relatively new phenomenon in the NWT. So much is happening in the North. Leaders in Fort Good Hope are constantly faced with the needs of the community, such as housing, employment, mental health, education, the high cost of living, and justice. While it is asking a lot of people to also focus more attention on

these agreements, I firmly believe that if beneficiaries of land claims felt connected and engaged with their modern treaty, it would have a ripple effect on their self-esteem and their sense of identity, and it would ensure a more proactive leadership. This in turn would promote greater youth involvement in terms of claims implementation and stewardship, and would prepare youth for the leadership roles into which they will inevitably be thrust. If the region wants to see positive changes, we will need to establish these goals at some point in time. Why not work towards these goals now?



Drum dance at the SSI AGM in Fort Good Hope

Ashley Carvill

Turning to Traditional Processes for
Supporting Mental Health



CONTENTS

- 36 Introduction
- 37 Background
- 43 Policy Options & Analysis
- 47 Recommendation
- 48 Conclusion / Implementation

INTRODUCTION

First Nations culture, traditional values and practices are fundamental to our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. This importance is highlighted by examining how reliance on traditional values and practices makes an instrumental contribution to maintaining mental wellbeing and responding to mental health issues. The importance of drawing on our cultural traditions as First Nations people in addressing contemporary challenges in our communities cannot be overstated.

Traditionally, the people of Carcross\Tagish First Nation (C/TFN) in the Yukon were more than just a community; they were family. During the pre-contact period, each community member had designated roles and knew their roles and responsibilities to the community, so that members were able to depend on one another for support, help in emergencies and in times of need. Before the dark days of mission (residential) school, there were few if any suicides, less depression and hopelessness, and the broad spectrum of other mental health issues was not rife throughout our community.

In 1910, the territory's first residential school, Choutla Residential School, was built in Carcross. The school was in operation from 1911 until 1927, when an Education Centre opened in its place.¹ The suicide rate among First Nations people in Canada was three times higher than in non-Indigenous populations between 2011 and 2016, according to Statistics Canada. Suicide rates were highest for youth and young adults aged 15 to 24 years old among First Nations men and Inuit men and women.² Statistics Canada

says the higher risk of suicide for Indigenous people compared to non-Indigenous [people] is due to "socioeconomic characteristics," such as household income, labor force status, level of education, marital status, as well as whether they live on or off a reserve and the community size.³

Today, mental health issues challenge the wellbeing of our families and community. Mental health challenges are made apparent in addictions, depression, stress, post-traumatic stress, breakdowns in our families, dysfunctional behavior including crimes, and an escalating number of tragic suicides.

My thesis is simple: the reason mental health was not a serious problem in the past amongst First Nations, and now arises as an escalating problem, is directly and indirectly related to engagement in and practice of traditional cultural values and processes. When traditional values and practices permeated the lifestyle of our community, mental health issues were relatively rare. Currently, our traditional values and practices are not central to our community governance, workplace and families. Today mental health issues feature prominently in the many challenges our community faces. Our cultural belief is that the active engagement and use of traditional values and practices can fundamentally address the escalating mental health issues currently affecting the wellbeing of individuals, families and our community. The invigoration of traditional values and practices is as essential to creating and maintaining good governance as it is to creating and maintaining mental health. This paper explores the positive impacts traditional values and practices can have on mental health and wellbeing.

1 Eric Stober, "First Nations suicide rate 3 times higher than non-Indigenous people: StatsCan." Global News, June 30, 2019. Accessed August 22, 2019, <https://globalnews.ca/news/5448390/first-nations-suicide-rate-statscan/>

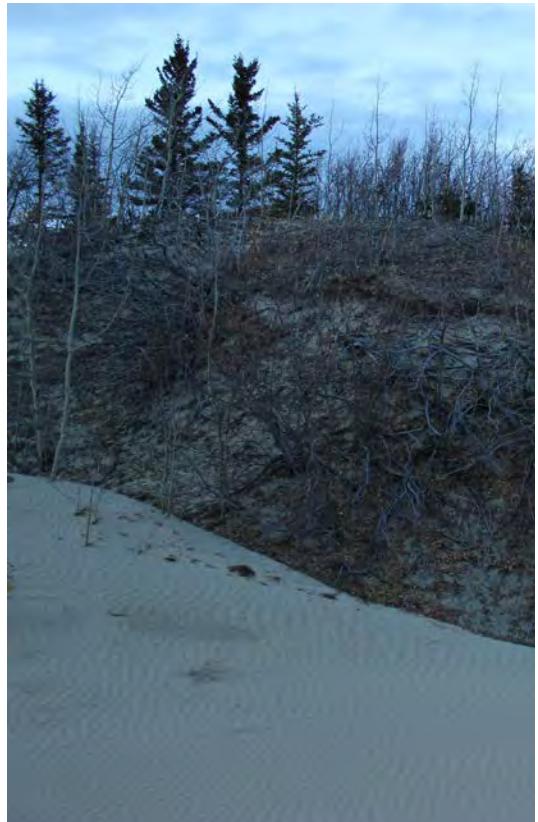
2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

BACKGROUND

Mental wellness derives from many different things: a healthy sense of self; self-worth; self-respect; loving others and being loved; loving what you do; having something you love to do and look forward to doing every day; being appreciated for who you are; having self-confidence; being included; and feeling connected within one's family, clan and community. These practices reduce stress in life and provide the foundation for hope and joy in life.⁴ All of these factors support mental health and all of these factors are generated and can be supported by traditional practices and values.⁵

Basing our governing processes on traditional values and practices would work towards breaking a historical cycle that has repeated the lesson many times in the development of Indigenous governments: reliance on and adaptations of western laws, processes, practices and values. Changing who “rules” without changing governing structures, processes and traditions, ultimately changes very little from colonial regimes in outcomes, in the relationships among citizens and between citizens and government. One option to change how governing structures operate would be changing the values and virtues that design and drive all parts of the governing process, resulting in a more inclusive and traditional structure. Doing anything less has repeatedly sustained the primary power structures and outcomes of a colonial system. Failing to begin building a new governing process by establishing shared values in the design, despite best efforts to govern in a different way, has resulted in returning to colonial practices and thus, to similar outcomes and to destructive conflicts within a new nation.



C/TFN sought to build a self-governing process capable of generating different outcomes and positive relationships among all citizens. To secure and sustain real changes in governance, C/TFN began by drawing from the advice of Elders, from lessons in traditional stories, songs, traditional practices, and the core values and virtues of *Haa Shagoon* (our ancestors). These values and virtues became the foundation for designing our laws, processes and governing practices. This was our first step in developing a system of governance that would support the revival of our culture, rebuild our nation based on traditional values, and regenerate the traditional unity within and among clans, most importantly, to not ever leave any one behind or to treat any one as disposable simply because they are mentally, physically or emotionally struggling.

⁴ First Nations Health Authority, *Traditional Wellness Strategic Framework*. Accessed September 10, 2019, https://www.fnha.ca/WellnessSite/WellnessDocuments/FNHA_TraditionalWellnessStrategicFramework.pdf
⁵ Ibid.

First Nations peoples have used stories to guide us, to communicate our worldviews, and to help us work through difficult times and decisions. There are teachings from our ancestors passed down through time from Elders to family to community, and they will continue to be passed down to our future generations. Stories are regularly utilized as a resource for our people, like an encyclopedia or a history book. When we endure hardship, conflict, or are seeking direction, reflecting on a story will provide the insight to assist us during these times.

A traditional story based on what actually happened to Keish, a member of our Nation best known by his nickname, Skookum Jim, provides invaluable lessons for our community. The story called “Skookum Jim’s Frog Helper” reveals how Skookum Jim saves the life of a frog who had been trapped in a deep hole by providing a board for the frog to crawl out on, to be carried to the safety of a creek. About a year later, because he was a natural peacemaker and attempted to make peace between two men he had never met, Skookum Jim was kicked in the stomach by one of the men. The kick developed a large

wound that threatened his life. His aunt, who was tending to him during his illness, found a frog licking his wounds. The frog would not leave him until his wound was healed. It was the same frog that he had saved a year prior! Once back to full health, Keish travelled home. During his journey he had a dream about finding gold; in the dream the frog is thanking him and says he will find gold. Keish did in fact find gold, the most important gold discovery in North America, the discovery that triggered the Gold Rush of 1898.

The teachings of this story are about respecting mother earth’s creatures, the relationships between life and land, about trust, the wellbeing of nature and of caring for others only because it is “the right thing to do.” Several things about storytelling relate significantly to mental wellbeing. Firstly, storytelling connects us to others, to our past, to our core guiding values and to our history and ancestors. All of these connections are important sources of reassurance, of centering our lives on concrete understandable things that reinforce who we are and what our purpose is in our life. Stories we hear are ours to share with others and thereby render us valuable teachers





in our community. Sharing stories as teller or listener connects us to others in positive ways.

Processes used to deal with conflict can significantly determine whether the conflict can be an opportunity to save or rebuild a healthy relationship between the affected community members, which is vital in small populations. The style of mediation used within a conflict can inspire innovative outcomes to seemingly entrenched differences and can be the determining factor in sustainable resolutions. With increasing mental health issues, we have learned the hard way that if the process used to deal with these issues does not rebuild or build sustainable healthy relationships, the ultimate outcome is destructive to individual and community wellbeing. Relationships are invigorated by our traditional values and practices and are fundamental to the emotional and mental health of all community members.

Involvement in adversarial processes such as the court and justice systems, which are primarily western models, inflicts stress on anyone captured in these processes and undermines the mental health of the entire community. Regardless of whether community members are directly involved as parties, witnesses or as family and friends of those involved, the ripple effect of impact is evident. Addressing conflict and engaging people

suffering from emotional or mental health issues in western adversarial processes is harmful to the best interests of the parties involved. These processes are less likely to find solutions that will serve the needs of the parties involved, but also the critical need to address the needs of a small collective. Collaborative and constructive dialogues are essential to find suitable outcomes that will address the unique mental health issues that arise, particularly solutions created for long-term support.

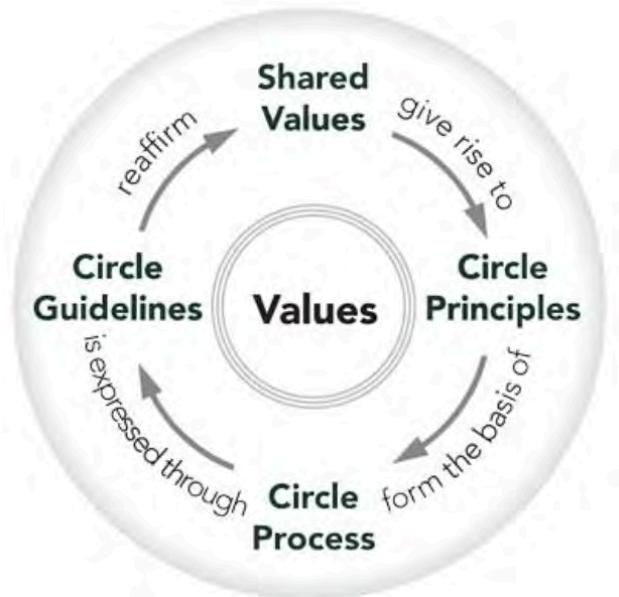
Peacemaking circles were effectively used in the early 1990s, mainly to address justice and community conflict. They are a process that brings together individuals who wish to engage in conflict resolution, healing, support, decision-making or other activities in which honest communication, relationship development and community consensus are required. The premise of a peacemaking circle is that they are another option to build capacity within communities and facilitate a process that fosters connections, with the ultimate goal being to reach consensus on the particular option or issue.

Circles become a way that conflict can be transformed into opportunities to build healthy, loving and resilient relationships. Circles bring balance to our lives, rebuild our connections and bring another way to work through justice.

Although each circle develops its own set of values, principles and guidelines, all peacemaking circles generally include the following elements:

- ▶ Are designed by those who use them
- ▶ Are guided by a shared vision
- ▶ Call participants to act on their personal values
- ▶ Include all interests, and are accessible to all
- ▶ Offer everyone an equal, and voluntary, opportunity to participate
- ▶ Take a holistic approach, including the emotional, physical, mental and spiritual
- ▶ Maintain respect for all
- ▶ Encourage exploring instead of conquering differences
- ▶ Invite accountability to others and to the process⁶

Circle Dynamics: Putting Values into Practice⁷



Restorative practices, including Circles, are derived from and build on Indigenous teachings and other wisdom traditions. Excerpted from *Peacemaking Circles: From Conflict to Community*, by Kay Franis, Barry Stuart, and Mark Wedge. © Living Justice Press. Permissions: ljpress@aol.com For educational and training purposes only.

6 "Peacemaking Circles: A Process for Solving Problems and Building Community." Accessed October 1, 2019, <https://www.ousd.org/cms/lib07/CA01001176/Centricity/Domain/97/PeacemakingCircles.pdf>

7 Ibid.

8 Encyclopedia Britannica, "Moiety System." Accessed October 1, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/moiety-system>

9 Carcross/Tagish First Nation, "Clans." Accessed September 19, 2019, <https://www.ctfn.ca/haa-kusteeyi/clans>

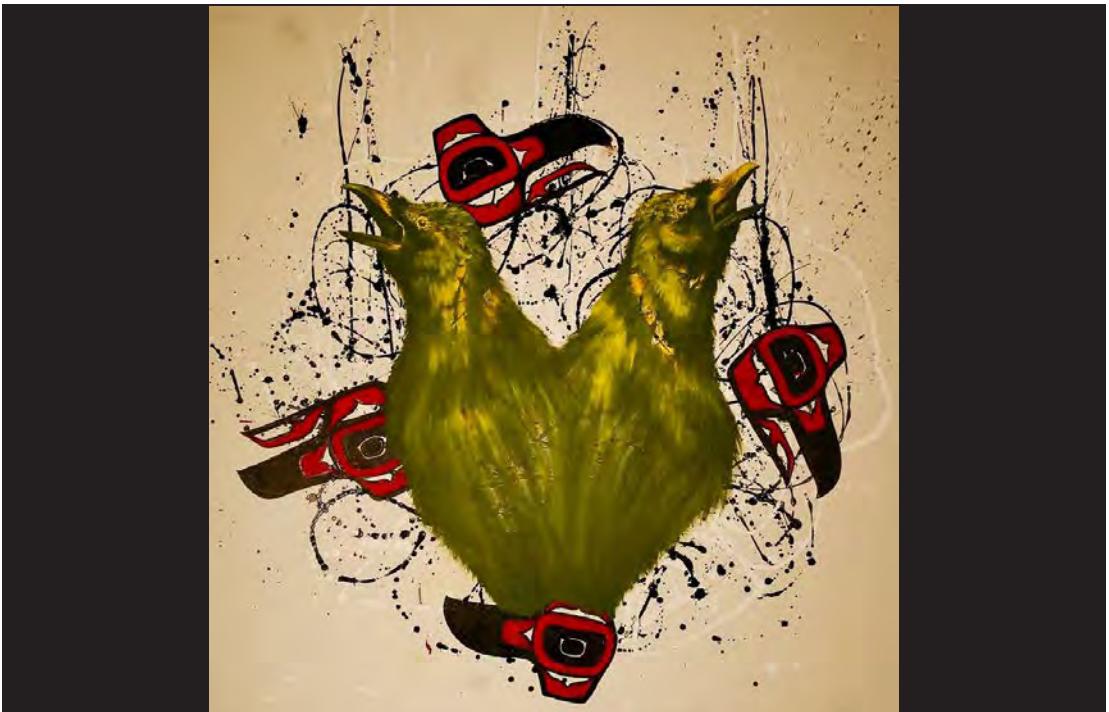
By including clans, the *Carcross/Tagish First Nation's Family Act* respects the traditional role of clans and recognizes their vital role in the overall governing process. The *C/TFN Family Act* is designed to support healthier families and communities. The Act is comprised of Book 1 and Book 2, which are intended to be the beginning steps to breaking down colonial laws and returning to traditional values and ways of doing. Book 1 breaks down traditional beliefs and laws and are the primary resources to interpret the intent and meaning of any part of this Act. Book 2 focuses on family law recognizing and emphasizing the central place of family in our Kustéeyi (culture).

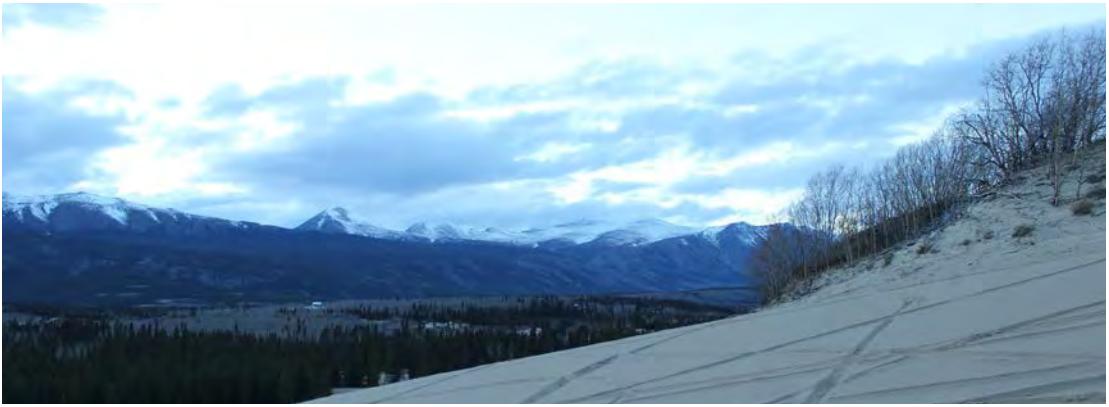
Clans are crucial in the sharing of responsibility for responding to and developing resources for appropriate responses to mental health challenges. By establishing processes that invite self-initiated actions to rebuild relationships, and support others in these actions, the sense of connection with, and

service to, a community can be enhanced and shared. When each of us acts “in a good way,” all of us benefit.

At all times, the rights of anyone subject to mental health issues deserve to be acknowledged and must be fully respected. All members of a family and Clan have a responsibility to care for people dealing with mental health challenges. This responsibility requires appropriate government assistance.

Without a vibrant culture, we lose our connections to each other. We lose the underlying complex systems of support that have enabled us to survive for centuries. The wellbeing of our people is at risk and is directly and profoundly affected by their connection to our culture. We can and do adapt our culture to changing times, but in adapting to change, we need to preserve the essential features of our culture that bind us together and generate a powerful sense of belonging within a caring community.





Currently, a majority of self-governing Yukon First Nations operate with a western style of bureaucracy, and after 30 years of implementation, they are in a stable financial position to adapt the model to best fit the needs of their First Nation. In order to shape a government to meet our needs and to effectively run our government utilizing our virtues and values, we need to engage with our citizens and staff in an inclusive and holistic manner. Traditionally, community was more than a word and was very much about the people coming together to take care of one another. The times when we put tradition at the forefront of our ways of doing and living are quickly dissipating, and reigniting that passion within people to be part of the bigger picture of change is difficult.

Negative emotions, defensive reactions, fear and hostility are habits created by lack of transparency and barriers pushed by policy and procedures. Approach is everything, and government taking the time to invest in relationships and community is the first step to create bridges that will, in turn, provide healthy communal relationships and increase positivity. First steps may be as simple as sitting with community members, listening to what they have to say and working with them to reach mutually beneficial solutions. People are used to “win or lose” situations, but by taking the time

to “be soft on people, but hard on the problem” we learn a new way to reach consensus.

When governments push programs or solution-based initiatives onto the community without including the community in the development of these, there are many things that become damaged over time. Broken connections happen; how do we begin to repair what has been done? Loss of relationships, connections, independence and pride are a few. Doing things as a team, united as a community, may begin to ignite the ownership and pride within individuals and their clan affiliations within the community. By operating with a more citizen-driven approach, the government may begin to break these barriers that have become a reality within communities. Citizens and community members may have a unique opportunity to participate in the designing phase of community wellness, where they can gain independence, unity and community pride.

Starting to work toward a more holistic and traditional community way of living will, in turn, build relationships, communication and connection, ultimately resulting in a strength-based, traditional manner of dealing with current mental health shortcomings.

POLICY OPTIONS & ANALYSIS

Three options that begin to address supporting mental health more effectively within community are:

- 1. Maintain the status quo.**
- 2. Strengthen community by building upon the capacity of community to address mental health issues through a Peacemaking Circle training mentorship project.**
- 3. Engage the C/TFN Family Council to become the lead in developing next steps for a community mental wellness strategy.**

These options could include other existing programs, and further collaboration with external agencies within community would continue to be encouraged.

I **Maintaining the status quo** is an option that would continue along the current way we are working. In doing so, there would be little to no cost increase to the C/TFN, as preventive and traditional pursuits would not be increased. However, there may be a potential increase of costs over time due to sustained dependencies on social programming and emergency services required for community members suffering from a mental health crisis. If things do not change, some community members may, in turn, begin to resent the government and agencies working locally as they are not recognizing the need for an increase of services and supports. The health care system and Royal Canadian Mounted Police will see an increase in the need for their services, which, in turn, increases territorial costs for time and services provided.

2 **Peacemaking Circle training** would focus on empowering youth to champion a process that begins to break down western barriers and focuses on utilizing traditional knowledge and teachings to strengthen relationships, communication and community, which all impact mental health. Local Elders would serve as mentors and would provide assistance to develop the curriculum to ensure that cultural relevance and traditional virtues and values are embedded in the foundation of the program. The peacemaking circle mentorship would begin with the fundamentals of a peacemaking circle.

Since the start of 2018, there have been four Peacemaking Circle training courses offered within the community of Carcross, Yukon, which have been a positive form of community engagement. There have been over 82 graduates; each graduate completed 18 training days consisting of four separate courses, with class sizes of 20 to 25 students, led by two instructors. Each course had a diverse mix of participants including youth, Elders, community members, Yukon Government employees and elected officials. Each course includes assistance provided by fellow community members who are considered peacemakers-in-training. The four courses are: Traditional Values and Practices; Intergenerational Trauma; In Dignity: Justice on the Land and Resistance to Violence; and the Fundamentals of Peacemaking Circles. As the community has used circles for many years, there are sufficient skills within the community to commence this initiative on a specified range of mental health issues. By beginning the program with circles, learning the basics of our traditional virtues and values and how we practice and live within the two worlds (western and First Nation), this may be the lever to get things moving within community.

The cost to attend the Peacemaking Circle training course is \$4,000 per participant, and if you are a C/TFN citizen, the cost is waived. There is also the possibility of non-citizen youth to receive sponsorship from the Government of C/TFN to attend. If a community wanted to host the training in their community, the other costs include:

Advertising (Graduation & photos)	\$6,000.00
Instructor Contracts	\$42,000.00
Support's Honorarium	\$14,200.00
Resource/Classroom Materials	\$2,500.00
Materials & Supplies	\$8,000.00
Honorarium (other)	\$5,000.00
Travel (Instructors)	\$8,000.00
Misc. (travel, mtg., room, etc. supports)	\$3,000.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$88,700.00

This estimated cost is for a group of 25 people for the duration of 18 days. Comparatively, if the program were to be reduced in class size and content for students/youth, the cost to run the program would be considerably less because the course would only run 5-10 days, and would cover two to four of the Peacemaking Circle Training sessions and an evaluation process. The program would also assist in building individual and collective capacity while building trust to once again be able to “rely on thy neighbour” in times of need and celebration. Giving youth opportunities to build relationships that are rooted in their

cultures and traditions would lend a hand to a larger shift within the community.

There are alternative avenues for funding this program through the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, through collaboration with the Capacity Development department of the C/TFN. For example, there is flexibility to work with the Ghuch Claw community school for an hour a week to do traditional pursuits programming. The program may run for nine weeks with the curriculum focusing on areas such as how to address/safely discuss historical families issues; traditional

harvesting; traditional place names on a map developed by the participants; what does safety look like among their peers; and a community map developed by the participants that reflects safe places within community high risk areas and dangerous areas. Through the duration of this program, mental health supports services, Elders and educators will be available to assist the youth, as well as work as a team with the youth demonstrating what a healthy and collaborative community may look like.

Time will be required to explore ideas with the youth, Elders, public servants and community members to begin in the development of what support in dealing with mental health issues within community looks like. This mental health initiative seeks to raise the level of civic responsibility throughout the community by creating meaningful participation in community issues along traditional lines for all members of the community. The program would be evaluated as self-governing implementation evolves and experiences change and growth.

3 A final option is **engaging the C/TFN Family Council** to lead in developing next steps for the community to take ownership, and lead the initiative of change through practicing our traditional knowledge.

The *Family Act* of the C/TFN places the primary responsibilities for the wellbeing of all family members, all community members upon each person based on their relationships to all members of their family, to Elders, to their clan, to the community and to the First Nation. The most important part of the Act specifies what each person is expected to do in all of their different capacities as a child, teenager, brother, sister, spouse, parent, maternal and paternal uncle or aunt, grandparent, elder and member of a clan. The Act clarifies the different ways of how each person throughout his\her\ their life can make meaningful contributions to their families.

The key to the success of the *Family Act* approach depends on all community members taking up their traditional responsibilities in engaging with others who are requiring help,





or to address a specific need in the community. Responsibilities for all things in communities and in families are shared amongst the community as they were when traditional processes governed daily life. An individual's responsibilities are based on every relationship each person has to others, traditionally. For example, a grandmother may have responsibilities not only to her children and grandchildren, but in her role as an aunt, cousin, sister and to her clan. Thus in every stage of their life, new kinds of relationships arise with new responsibilities. In respect of the challenges facing those with mental health issues, two powerful constructive impacts result from reliance on sharing traditional responsibilities throughout the community. First they are included in this work to the extent they are able. Including them provides a means of constructive inclusion in their families, clan and community. Secondly, others in the community have an opportunity to make important and meaningful contributions that make a difference in their community and thereby in their lives. Traditional sharing of responsibility in respect of mental health can be set out in the same way the *Family Act* sets

out shared responsibilities in a community to share in the care of healthy families and children.

The same identification of traditional responsibilities based on relationship lines can be made for mental health, education, land, wildlife, justice, etc. The important difference flowing from this approach lies not just in outcomes, but in the ways outcomes are developed. The inclusive and consensus-based decision-making processes built on shared values promotes connections and creates opportunities for each person to be a provider and a receiver, to be supported and to provide support, and, in essence, to feel and experience a true sense of belonging to a family and community.

With the Family Council collaborating with the C/TFN Government for citizens and families at risk, there is accountability, support networks established and constructive relationships to each person involved in the process. With Family Council taking the lead in creating the environment for inclusion, problem solving and community lead initiatives, the pride, accountability and responsibility belongs to the whole community.

In order to engage the Family Council, the Council would need to develop an implementation plan that should include the following:

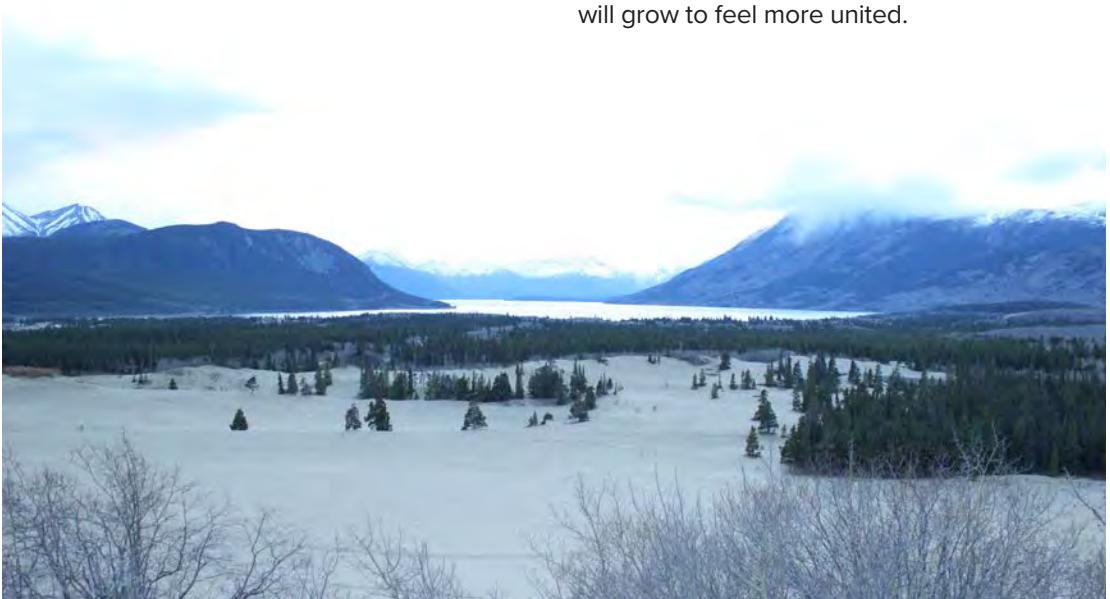
1. Establish the initial leadership in the Family Council by designating a community prevention and safety lead person.
2. Ask each clan to appoint a representative to join other community members at large interested in mental health issues.
3. Form a task force within the Family Council to develop protocols for working with all affected departments of C/TFN and to review other similar initiatives.
4. Identify through this task force any training courses that can provide skills and knowledge related to key mental health issues.

RECOMMENDATION

My recommendation is that in order to begin addressing and supporting mental health more effectively within the community, we must begin to look back and down the trails that were once walked by our Elders and ancestors.

The urgency of enhancing services for mental health issues is compelling, and the community is ready. Government support and funding is within reach to pursue option 2: **Strengthen community by building upon the capacity of community to address mental health issues through a Peacemaking Circle training mentorship project.**

If the Government of C/TFN supports the long-term vision of rebuilding and rekindling our ancestors' teachings, a phased approach can begin the path to greater community engagement, which would start with community input and consultations. If we start slow and build with sustainability in mind; starting in a way that avoids setting up volunteers for failure, then government-to-community and person-to-person relationships will have an opportunity to be strengthened and the people will grow to feel more united.



CONCLUSION / IMPLEMENTATION

While policy option 2, strengthening community by building upon the capacity of community to address mental health issues through a Peacemaking Circle training mentorship project, requires consistent funding, the solutions would be innovative, creative, inclusive and developed through consensus. The hope for the future would be that the facilitators are eventually worked out of a job and the participants fully absorb their traditional roles within community. Six suggested steps are provided to begin the planning of the implementation of option 2.

The primary guidelines governing the implementation of option 2 are:

- 1.** Phasing in development to match capacity with evolving engagement.
- 2.** Respecting the needs of people seeking help.
- 3.** Relying on traditional values and practices.
- 4.** Avoiding duplication of services.
- 5.** Assessing ability to serve needs.
- 6.** Monitoring implementation and completing a minimum of two program evaluations yearly.

The change that we seek begins with the recognition that we ourselves have a large responsibility to take on, being of people who believe in a deep connectedness to all life forces; everything on earth, rocks, plants, rivers, animals, fish, birds and insects all share a common origin. I hope that my policy paper will have an impact on the community of Carcross and encourage those who may feel excluded, or in the shadows, that they have a voice and deserve to be heard and listened to. By igniting the sacred fires that carry our traditional virtues and values to the forefront of how we conduct our lives and how we interact with one another, we will begin the process of healing our community.



Don Couturier

Negotiating the Dehcho: Protecting Dene
Ahtít'e¹ Through Modern Treaty-Making



CONTENTS

- 52 Introduction
- 54 Background
- 61 Policy Options and Recommendations for Negotiators
- 65 Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

Caught between two legal and political systems with conflicting interpretations of history, the Dehcho self-government negotiations falter. The task: the Dehcho Dene, Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and Canada must harmonize their competing visions through nation-to-nation partnership and treaty federalism. What principles ought to guide constitutional struggles of this kind? During the first gathering of the fourth cohort of the Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship in the Yukon, Ta'an Kwäch'än elder Shirley Adamson impressed upon me that we “must always remember the treaties.”² Tethering modern negotiations to historical relationships both honours the past and appropriately frames the terms of dialogue. The Two Row Wampum, a 1613 treaty between the Haudenosaunee and Europeans often cited as an ideal framework for modern treaty-making,³ symbolizes a ship sailing side-by-side with a canoe in the spirit of coexistence and non-interference. However, the Dehcho Process looks more like a ship and canoe passing in the night. Yet these voyagers have met before, promising to live in peace and friendship for as long as the sun shines, the grass grows and the river flows. The canoe communicates this to the ship—but the ship glides on, with only a flicker of recognition, and the treaty partners slip into darkness once again.

Attempting to distil a politically and historically

complex negotiation, this research modestly describes the positions of each party, identifies areas of mutual understanding, and analyzes potential compromises and opportunities going forward. Three primary sources inform my analysis. First, the normative intent behind Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, which was to create obligations of peace and friendship between the Dehcho Dene and the Crown.⁴ Second, lessons from the success of Edézhzhíe, the first Indigenous protected area in the Dehcho region. Edézhzhíe exemplifies how co-governance mechanisms can advance both Dehcho First Nations (DFN) and Crown interests, even where these interests greatly diverge. Finally, I apply the *Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples*⁵ to the rolling Agreement in Principle (AiP), providing as they do objective criteria for establishing nation-to-nation partnership. Out of respect for the extensive negotiations and offers made to date, no numerical suggestions for land quantum or cash settlements are given. Instead I focus on areas where DFN and Crown worldviews can co-exist in symbiotic tension. I find that:

- ▶ DFN has considerable opportunities to achieve their sovereignty goals within the GNWT's and Canada's legislative and administrative scheme;
- ▶ the GNWT and Canada can achieve legal certainty in exchange for a flexible and innovative approach to resource management in the Dehcho region; and

1 Dene althít'e “means the ongoing relationship between Dene and the land as expressed through the Dene way of life, including language, customs, traditions, historical experiences, spiritual practices, and laws,” as cited in the Agreement Regarding the Establishment of Edézhzhíe, signed October 11, 2018, <https://dehcho.org/docs/Edehzhie-Establishment-Agreement.pdf>.

2 Over the course of two years, the Fellowship conducted regional gatherings across three territories and Ottawa. During our first gathering in the Yukon, Fellows were asked to pitch their policy ideas to various officials and community leaders from all sectors. Feedback and guidance were given in return. I benefitted greatly from the wisdom of many elders, and in particular Shirley Adamson.

3 See generally John Borrows and Michael Coyle, co-editors, *The Right Relationship: Reimagining the Implementation of Historical Treaties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017).

4 “Any fully elaborated legal framework for the implementation and enforcement of historical treaties must reflect the central fact that those treaties were intended to create a new normative order between Indigenous peoples, the Crown, and settler governments.” Michael Coyle, “As Long as the Sun Shines: Recognizing that Treaties Were Intended to Last,” in *The Right Relationship*, 54.

5 Canada, Justice Canada, *Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples*, (Ottawa, 2018), <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/principles.pdf>.

► the rolling AiP reflects some of the *Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples* but lacks others. Cultivating the absent principles could greatly improve the terms of self-government.

As these recommendations suggest, progress requires compromise. Land quantum remains the most contentious barrier—essentially, how much comprises the settlement area. Addressing other concerns peripheral to, but touching on land quantum will diminish the numerical importance of “X kilometres squared.” Strict quantum will always be critical, but agreement becomes more likely where adjacent concerns are satisfied. DFN influence in resource management decisions can find expression through the co-governance mechanisms explored here, which include adapting resource management to mirror the spirit of Indigenous-led governance taking shape in Edézhíé, and giving equal weight and consideration to Dehcho law in decisions to grant or deny licences, permits and project certificates.

I begin with a brief history of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11 as the guiding framework for the relationship between the Dehcho Dene and the Crown. An account of the negotiating context and summary of the parties' positions is then provided. Analysis of Edézhíé's lessons for the Dehcho Process follows. I highlight areas of compromise and recommend several options that would enable parties to advance their respective interests. I recognize that in 2015, the GNWT appointed a Ministerial Special Representative to make recommendations on the Dehcho Process. I am grateful for the information her report provides. I build on aspects of these recommendations, but also augment them in what I believe are new and helpful ways.



Photo by Pat Kane

BACKGROUND

From Treaty 8 (1900) and II (1921-22) to Modern Negotiations

Where does the Dehcho Process come from?

Treaty 8 and 11 founded the Dehcho Dene/Crown relationship. To DFN, these Treaties represent living obligations of peace, friendship and non-interference.⁶ To the Crown (represented by Canada), they authorized European settlers to take up treaty lands in exchange for, *inter alia*, the guarantee that the Dehcho Dene's way of life would remain undisturbed.⁷ These conflicting interpretations still influence the parties' modern negotiating positions. DFN views the Dehcho Process as building on and clarifying (but never superseding) oral promises made under those Treaties, whereas the GNWT insists that the outcome of the Dehcho Process (a final agreement) will clarify and confirm the Aboriginal treaty rights of the Dehcho First Nations and set out the relationship between the parties entirety.⁸

Reaching agreement will unquestionably clarify DFN's legal rights and the government's corresponding obligations. And yet, evidently, securing agreement requires balancing these conflicting interpretations. As Michael Coyle writes, "[t]o be embraced by Indigenous and non-Indigenous treaty partners alike, any effective approach to the implementation of the historical treaties must be cognizable by and convincing to both treaty partners in light of their distinctive world views and legal traditions."⁹ As a starting point, this could involve, on one hand, recognition that the Agreement represents the contemporary legal basis for the DFN–Crown relationship, with the understanding, on the other, that as circumstances change over time, good faith negotiations may be required to renew treaty obligations.¹⁰ Such a compromise balances the GNWT's and Canada's desire for legal certainty with DFN's position that the treaties represent evergreen relational promises of peace and friendship.

The Dehcho Process, Edézhzié, and Indigenous-led Resource Management

Land remains the fundamental impasse: how much to include and how to manage it. Differences in legal worldview fuel this

6 Indigenous interpretations of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11 share some commonalities with other historic numbered treaties signed in the 19th and 20th centuries. For an excellent narrative on Treaty 6's meaning to the Montreal Lake Cree Nation see: Harold Johnson, *Two Families: Treaties and Government* (Saskatchewan, Purich: 2007).

7 See generally: René Fumoleau, *As Long as This Land Shall Last: A History of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, 1870-1939* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004, originally published in 1973); Dehcho Process: Backgrounder and MLA Briefing Note, 2015, https://dehcho.org/docs/DFN_Negotiations_Process_2015_11.pdf.

8 Interview with Fred Talen, Director of Negotiations, Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, Government of the Northwest Territories, May 9, 2019. Mr. Talen indicated that the GNWT and Canada take an aligned position on this matter.

9 Coyle, "As Long as the Sun Shines," 43.

10 *Ibid*, 58, 61-62. This adopts Coyle's framework for negotiating modern treaties and applies his principle that historical treaty partners should be prepared to negotiate, over time, a new consensus on treaty understandings to address contemporary needs and interests.

tension. Public governments must satisfy a range of interests including economic development, effective program and service delivery, and environmental protection. Statute and common law, informed by its property, environmental and administrative law concepts, provide the Crown's legal instruments. In service of these interests, the Crown seeks legal certainty and a textual reading of the Treaties, which vests all NWT lands in the Crown save where Aboriginal title has been proven or an agreement has been finalized. Jurisdictional authority and limitations derive from section 35 of the Constitution, which establishes the Crown's obligations to Indigenous peoples.

The Dehcho Dene, conversely, assert total territorial and jurisdictional sovereignty in the Dehcho region. DFN seeks cultural preservation, strong national identity, and meaningful participation in contemporary economic and social life.¹¹ Dehcho law continues to apply, as it always has since time immemorial.¹² Inherent governance authority pre-dates European settlement. DFN favours an oral or relational understanding of the Treaties, wherein Dehcho lands were never surrendered.¹³ The GNWT and Canada recognize DFN's inherent right to self-determination and associated section 35 rights, and therefore seek to facilitate legal certainty through self-government. A brief summary of the negotiating history and

positions will illuminate how these differences inform the land quantum impasse.

The Dehcho Process: History, context, and negotiating positions

Negotiations began in 1999.¹⁴ The *21 Common Ground Principles* and subsequent *Dehcho First Nations Framework Agreement* establish the overarching goal of recognizing a Dehcho "government based on Dene laws and customs, and other laws agreed to by the parties."¹⁵ The *Dehcho First Nations Framework Agreement* sets out the guiding principles, objectives, roles, and other negotiating specifics. Obstacles quickly arose. Litigation resulted from Canada taking the position that the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* (MVRMA) dictated the terms of environmental review for resource development in the region.¹⁶ Settlement was reached in 2005, with Canada promising to negotiate a stand-alone Dehcho Resource Management Authority (DCRMA) in exchange for DFN abstaining from challenging the validity of the MVRMA.¹⁷ The next ten years saw slow progress towards an AiP. By 2017, many terms were tentatively reached on governance, justice, culture and language, marriage, adoption

11 Dehcho First Nations, accessed July 15, 2019, <https://dehcho.org/>. These goals are apparent from DFN's mission statement and governance goals. My research also included conversations with Michael McLeod, who reiterated these sentiments. See also Dehcho Land Use Planning Committee, *Respect for the Land: The Dehcho Land Use Plan Background Report*, last modified November 2005, accessed July 15, 2019, [http://www.dehcholands.org/docs/revised_draft_plan_nov_2005/Revised%20Draft%20-%20Dehcho%20Land%20Use%20Plan%20-%20The%20Plan%20-%20November%202005%20-%20Text%20%2B%20Maps%20\(PDFs\).pdf](http://www.dehcholands.org/docs/revised_draft_plan_nov_2005/Revised%20Draft%20-%20Dehcho%20Land%20Use%20Plan%20-%20The%20Plan%20-%20November%202005%20-%20Text%20%2B%20Maps%20(PDFs).pdf).

12 Dehcho First Nations, accessed July 15, 2019, <https://dehcho.org/>. See DFN's Mission Statement on their website.

13 Dehcho First Nations, *Dehcho Process Chronology*, accessed July 15, 2019, <https://www.liidliikue.ca/sites/default/files/Chronology%20and%20FAQS.pdf>, 1. This document appears to be the most detailed account of the Dehcho Process available online.

14 Dehcho First Nations, *Dehcho Process Annual Report*, last modified June 2008, accessed July 15, 2019, https://dehcho.org/docs/DFN_Negotiations_Process_Report_2007-2008.pdf. See also: Dhara Philpot, *Crown Consultation in the NWT: A Case Study to Establish a Consultation Working Group in the Dehcho Region* (Master's Dissertation, March 31, 2010), 47-48.

15 "The Deh Cho First Nations Framework Agreement," conclusion date: May 23, 2001, https://www.eia.gov.nt.ca/sites/eia/files/dfn_framework_agreement.pdf. The Agreement is based on the 21 Principles of Common Ground, which was the result of Peter Russell's Special Ministerial Envoy in 1997.

16 Decho First Nations, *Dehcho Process Chronology*, 3.

17 *Ibid.*

and child welfare, social housing and income assistance.¹⁸ Land quantum and resource management terms remain outstanding. DFN recently stated its desire to put lands and resources negotiations on hold while other aspects of the agreement are implemented.¹⁹

DFN's Lands and Resources Position

DFN's latest position consists of three terms:²⁰

1. Canada must deliver on its DCRMA promise;
2. Dehcho Ndehe (the settlement lands) must include at least 50,000 square kilometres of surface and subsurface lands subject to 100% DFN control; and
3. outside Dehcho Ndehe, joint land use planning between DFN and government must be done through the negotiated Dehcho Land Use Plan (DLUP).

DFN has indicated several variations on the above that might be acceptable to them. First is an option with only surface rights in the settlement area but a generalized interest in other regional lands. This would reduce the extent of DFN's interest in the settlement lands but would extend their interest in regional lands outside the settlement area. Second, DFN has proposed a "Dehcho Model" in which DFN owns

just surface rights of some lands but surface *and* subsurface rights of others (a patchwork of land ownership, guided by available land uses set out in the DLUP).²¹ At this point, these are theoretical suggestions which have not been taken up by the GNWT or Canada in their formal positions as of yet.

DFN also takes a position on its preferred negotiating party. Given that Canada, not the GNWT, negotiated and signed the historic Treaties, DFN prefers to negotiate directly with Canada as the Crown's representative.²² This position has been complicated by the GNWT's growing role in the negotiations since devolution, in which the GNWT acquired jurisdiction over lands and resources from the federal government. Whatever the final outcome of the Dehcho Process, for DFN, a self-government agreement would clarify but not replace the promises made under the historic treaties.

In June 2018, Canada and the GNWT jointly offered DFN two options.²³

Option 1: \$113 million cash settlement with 48,000 square kilometres of surface and subsurface resource royalty rights, but no resource revenues from Crown land in the Mackenzie Valley.

Option 2: The same cash settlement, but with a smaller land offer of 42,000 square kilometres of surface and subsurface rights, and a small share in mineral royalties from development on Crown land in the Mackenzie Valley. The offer was rejected.

18 "Dehcho First Nations Agreement in Principle" (Rolling Draft, Version #41, January 3, 2017), accessed July 15 2019, <https://dehcho.org/docs/50-ROLLING-DRAFT-AIP-VERSION-DATED-JANUARY-3-2017-2-1.pdf>. The 2017 rolling draft is the most recent version available online. As I am not privy to negotiators' discussions surrounding the specific provisions within this draft, I cannot claim that it represents the most accurate and recent representation of the agreement between the parties.

19 Alex Brockman, "Dehcho First Nations put land issues aside – for now – in land-claim talks with Ottawa, NWT," CBC, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/dehcho-first-nations-land-negotiations-1.5193005> (June 27, 2019).

20 Dehcho Process Negotiating Team Report, last modified June 2017, accessed July 15, 2019,

<https://www.liidliikue.ca/sites/default/files/Dehcho%20Process%20Update%20-%202017%20Assembly%20package.pdf>, 2-3.

21 Ibid.

22 Dehcho First Nations, Dehcho Process Chronology, *supra* note 13, 10.

23 Kirsten Murphy, "Dehcho First Nations not impressed with federal government land claim offer" CBC News, July 27, 2018, accessed July 15, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/dehcho-first-nation-land-claim-offer-1.4763245>.



Photo by Pat Kane

The GNWT's Negotiating Position

The above offers reflect the GNWT's position:²⁴

1. the settlement area should be between 42,000 to 48,000 square kilometres;
2. the settlement lands may include either surface and subsurface rights or surface rights only with a generalized interest in the subsurface of the settlement area; and
3. resource royalties from Crown lands in the Mackenzie Valley are possible but depend on the direction taken to 1.

Negotiations are trilateral, except where matters arising from the provisions of treaty 8 or 11 are discussed, at which time the GNWT becomes an observer and negotiations occur

between DFN and Canada.²⁵ In terms of resource management, the GNWT affirms that all parties want regional land use plans, which would include implementing the DLUP.²⁶ The GNWT and Canada endorse the DCRMA as part of the integrated system of resource management in the Mackenzie Valley. The GNWT has considerable flexibility to negotiate the type and structure of government DFN wants to establish.

Notably, the parties agree on the DCRMA and the implementation of the DLUP, satisfying two of DFN's three terms. Where the offered lands vest surface and subsurface rights in DFN, such lands would be under DFN control. Why the impasse? Is the difference between 48,000 and 50,000 square kilometres really the only impediment? No—we need to look more closely. Concerns over how the DCRMA and DLUP would operate in practice continue

²⁴ Interview with Fred Talen, May 9, 2019.

²⁵ "The Deh Cho First Nations Framework Agreement," preamble.

²⁶ Interview with Fred Talen, May 9, 2019.

to divide parties. Increasing the DCRMA's and DLUP's on-the-ground ability to effectively respond to DFN's legal and political worldview and generate associated resource royalties (including the Dehcho region outside the official settlement) would reduce land quantum opposition. The 2018 designation of Edézhzié as the first Dehcho Protected Area offers clues as to how negotiations could evolve to address these peripheral concerns.

Edézhzié and its Bearing on Negotiations

As the first Dehcho Protected Area, Edézhzié permanently protects the Horn Plateau, the Dehcho Dene's spiritual home since time immemorial, from development of its boreal forests, waters and wetlands.²⁷ Protection flows from both Dehcho law and the area's status as a National Wildlife Area under the *Canadian Wildlife Act*.²⁸ The Dehcho K'éhodi Guardians and the Canadian Wildlife Service will oversee the Edézhzié Management Board (EMB) and draw on a blend of Dene culture and western science in monitoring and conservation efforts.²⁹ Dehcho elder Edward Sabourin emphasized the importance of Edézhzié by stating: "this is for our survival in the future."³⁰

Most strikingly, the EMB will make decisions by consensus with a view to protecting Edézhzié's sacredness and position as a

critical harvesting location. Dene laws and values, language, and youth-elder mentorship arrangements will guide the manner in which Edézhzié is managed and protected.³¹ Management of Edézhzié must "uphold Dene laws, incorporate and strengthen Dehcho Dene *Zatié* as the foundation for Dene *Náodhee*, and promote the transmission of Dene knowledge and Dene *Náodhee* from present to future generations."³² The *Dehcho* Protected Area Law reconciles the Dehcho Dene's way of life with modern land management.

While development is strictly off the table within Edézhzié (whereas it animates resource management debate in the Dehcho region more broadly), its features usefully illustrate how the governance aspirations of the Dehcho Dene can be fulfilled in a contemporary context.³³

Renewing Treaty Obligations

The shared management role between the Dehcho K'éhodi Guardians and the Canadian Wildlife Service in Edézhzié honours DFN's interpretation of the historic treaties. Both DFN and government officials work side-by-side in mutual recognition and respect for the expertise that each brings to the table. Neither interferes with the other, and Dehcho law informs conservation and management efforts in the area.

27 Dehcho First Nations, Dehcho Protected Area Law, Resolution 1, enacted on July 25, 2018, at the Dehcho Annual Assembly in Wrigley, NT, <https://dehcho.org/docs/REGARDINGEdzhzieDehchoAnnualAssembly2018.pdf>.

28 Courtney Mason, "Indigenous protected areas are the next generation of conservation," *The Conversation*, November 29, 2018, accessed July 15, 2019, <http://theconversation.com/indigenous-protected-areas-are-the-next-generation-of-conservation-105787>.

29 *Ibid.* See also Dehcho First Nations, Dehcho Protected Area Law.

30 Office of the Grand Chief of the Dehcho First Nations, "Edézhzié designated as a Dehcho Protected Area – Establishment Agreement with Canada Approved," news release dated 2 August 2018.

31 Dehcho First Nations (website).

32 Dehcho First Nations, Dehcho Protected Area Law.

33 For the report informing policy movement towards Indigenous protected areas, see Indigenous Circle of Experts, "We Rise Together: Achieving Pathway to Canada Target 1 through the Creation of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas in the Spirit and Practice of Reconciliation," last modified March 2018, accessed July 15, 2019, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e007452e69cf9a7af0a033/t/5ab94aca6d2a7338ecb1d05e/1522092766605/PA234-ICE_Report_2018_Mar_22_web.pdf.



Photo by Aaron Tambour

Territorial Sovereignty

The *Dehcho Protected Area Law* recognizes that the Dehcho Dene have lived on and governed their lands and waters since time immemorial.³⁴ Canada's signing of the *Edézhzhíe Establishment Agreement* reflects its acknowledgement of this law's authority.³⁵ While conservation, rather than resource development, likely plays a role in Canada's willingness to acknowledge territorial sovereignty in this region, Edézhzhíe's success stems from this affirmation of DFN's legal worldview.

Management of Lands and Resources

The *Dehcho Protected Area Law* includes the principle that "The Dehcho Declaration (1993) affirms the inherent rights and powers of the Dehcho Dene to govern as a nation."³⁶ The *Edézhzhíe Establishment Agreement* signals Canada's implicit recognition of the Dehcho Dene's self-determination with regard to protection and management of Edézhzhíe. The *Dehcho First Nations Framework Agreement* and AiP include similar preambles;³⁷ negotiators must vigilantly tie these principles to land and resource management mechanisms.

³⁴ Dehcho First Nations, *Dehcho Protected Area Law*, preamble.

³⁵ Environment and Climate Change Canada, *Edézhzhíe Protected Area*, last modified April 16, 2019, accessed July 15, 2019, <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/national-wildlife-areas/locations/edehzhie.html>.

³⁶ Dehcho First Nations, *Dehcho Protected Area Law*, preamble.

³⁷ "Dehcho First Nations Agreement in Principle" (Rolling Draft, Version #41, January 3, 2017).

POLICY OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEGOTIATORS

The distance between DFN's and the Crown's legal and political perspectives manifests as disagreement over land quantum. DFN seeks influence on resource development in the Dehcho region broadly speaking, whereas the GNWT seeks to protect development opportunities in the Mackenzie Valley outside the settlement area. Some compromises seem immediately obvious. For example, the DCRMA could provide input into but not control over resource decisions outside settlement lands; the GNWT could explicitly recognize Dehcho law's application to the DCRMA and its recommendations; and a share of resource royalties should be on the table outside the settlement area regardless of final land quantum. Beyond these preliminary thoughts, the following recommendations balance the interests of DFN and the Crown by addressing various concerns while protecting core interests.

1. The DFN compromise and opportunity: Accepting land selection and pursuing sovereignty goals within the GNWT's legislative and administrative scheme

The DFN Compromise

If DFN accepts a land offer within the GNWT's offer range, it can still assert sovereignty beyond the settlement lands in other ways.³⁸ Accepting the GNWT's integrated system of resource management (with the DCRMA operating under the MVRMA) need not preclude the DCRMA from serving DFN's political goals. Dehcho law can influence the MVRMA process by informing the DCRMA's recommendations, meaning DFN will still shape resource management in its traditional territory while allowing the GNWT to preserve its legal rights.³⁹ True, DFN may not hold surface or subsurface rights to these lands, but the DLUP would apply and inform environmental assessment decisions.⁴⁰ If the agreement includes the second option offered including a share of resource royalties in these Crown lands, DFN can participate meaningfully in resource management and reap the economic benefits of doing so. In turn, this would allow the GNWT to retain some control over "open" lands outside the settlement area and preserve its current legislative and administrative scheme.

The DFN Opportunity

DFN could press for joint authority over the DCRMA's operating procedures so that, over time, they mirror the co-governance model seen in Edézhíé. Mechanisms for community input could follow. As Jocelyn Jo-Strack and

³⁸ For a leading example of how this may be possible, see John Borrows' discussion of Nisga'a law application in the context of the modern Nisga'a Final Agreement. John Borrows, *Canada's Indigenous Constitution* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 96. Borrows argues that the Nisga'a Final Agreement includes important provisions recognizing and asserting Nisga'a law. See also "Dehcho First Nations Agreement in Principle" (Rolling Draft, Version #41, January 3, 2017), 99.

³⁹ The Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board (MVLWB) comprises several regional panels that regulate the use of land and water and the deposit of waste by issuing land use permits and water licenses. These panels each have their own jurisdiction. They include the Gwich'in Land and Water Board, the Sahtu Land and Water Board, and the Wek'eezhii Land and Water Board. See: Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board, "Co-Management: Our role in Integrated Resource Management Under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act (MVRMA)," accessed July 15, 2019, <https://mvlwb.com/content/co-management>. The DCRMA would become integrated under this system as another regional panel. Where the DCRMA's decisions and/or recommendations are grounded in Dehcho Law, Dehcho law influences this overall process.

⁴⁰ Separately from the MVLWB, the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board conducts environmental assessments of proposed projects in the Mackenzie Valley. During screening, project proposals are assessed by the relevant land use planning board for compliance. The DLUP would operate here to insert the Dehcho perspective into the review process. See Mackenzie Valley Review Board, "Process Diagrams," accessed July 15, 2019, http://reviewboard.ca/process_information/process_diagrams.

Douglas Clark argue, co-management in the North, while far from perfect, has made significant progress in the past 20 years under the tireless efforts of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples who believe in the system.⁴¹ With conscientious refinement, the DCRMA could grow into the EMB's likeness through consensus decision-making and reliance on Dene laws and values. In legislative and administrative terms, the DCRM integrates into the territory's co-management regime, but its operational policies, procedures and guidelines need not be frozen in time. This reflects a compromise between the difficulty with overhauling entrenched legislative and governance systems related to self-government and the need to give expression to Indigenous laws in governance matters impacting Indigenous rights.

2. The GNWT and Canada's compromise and opportunity: Accepting flexibility in resource management in exchange for legal certainty

The Crown Compromise

The GNWT and Canada could jointly-ratify a Governance Protocol (GP) for shared governance in resource management. MVRMA legislation would govern the DCRMA, but a GP would inject a good-faith political commitment to nation-to-nation partnership. GP terms could enshrine commitments to



Photo by Aaron Tambour

⁴¹ Douglas Clark and Jocelyn Joe-Strack, "Keeping the 'co' in the co-management of northern resources," Northern Public Affairs, vol 5, issue 1 (April 2017), accessed July 15, 2019, <http://www.northernpublicaffairs.ca/index/?s=douglas+clark>.

giving equal weight and consideration to Dehcho law in resource management in the Dehcho region outside the settlement area.⁴² The protocol could simply take the EMB as precedent and commit to, over time, working with DFN to adapt the DCRMA's policies and procedures to mirror the EMB. Guided by the DLUP, the DCRMA's recommendations would infuse Dehcho law into environmental assessments. While DFN would render binding decisions within the settlement area, the DCRMA would make recommendations on resource management in the Dehcho region broadly according to the GP's terms, which in turn would inform the decision of the territorial Minister receiving input from the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (MVEIRB).

The Crown Opportunity

The NWT's integrated system of resource management accommodates such an approach, rendering it politically feasible. Legal certainty would be achieved in two ways. First, the GNWT would consolidate the MVRMA scheme. Adopting a GP would not require the GNWT to deviate from its negotiating mandate; instead, it would simply require it to review the internal process by which decisions are made under the current administrative framework. Put differently, re-designing procedure on the basis of treaty partnership introduces a regional, contextual approach to resource management within the MVRMA. Procedural flexibility alters how parties do business but leaves their legal rights untouched. The GNWT would retain legal title to Crown lands in the Mackenzie Valley, and all DCRMA recommendations would

flow through the MVLWB or DLUP-informed environmental assessments and would require ministerial approval. Second, legal certainty would be achieved by securing the agreement itself. This would significantly advance the GNWT's mandate commitment to conclude outstanding land, resource and self-government agreements.⁴³

3. Constitutional Dialogue: Capturing the Spirit of the Treaties through the Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples

The Dehcho Process represents a forum for constitutional dialogue between nations, the result of which will produce a contemporary example of treaty federalism.⁴⁴ The Dehcho Process must foster respectful treaty relations in the spirit of nation-to-nation partnership to manage the interpretive differences highlighted in this paper. Where the parties negotiate as equal partners, fair constitutional dialogue bridges these otherwise conflicting legal perspectives. As a political commitment to more fully recognize Indigenous rights, the *Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples* offers objective criteria for evaluating the AiP as a modern treaty. To the extent that

42 See: Naomi Metallic and Janna Promislow, "Realizing Aboriginal Administrative Law" in *Administrative Law in Context*, eds Colleen M Flood and Lorne Sossin (Emond: Toronto, 3rd ed, 2018), 130. Metallic and Promislow observe that while it is easy enough to assert that Indigenous law should play a role in decision-making and judicial review, what this looks like in practice, how it is incorporated, and ultimately how it is adjudicated where disputes arise is more difficult to discern.

43 Government of the Northwest Territories, *Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories 2016-2019 Revised*, accessed July 15, 2019. <https://www.eia.gov.nt.ca/sites/eia/files/mandate-of-the-gnwt-2016-2019-en.pdf>, commitment 5.1.4.

44 Graham White, "Treaty Federalism in Northern Canada: Aboriginal Government Land Claims Board" *Publius* 32, no. 3 (2002) accessed July 15, 2019, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3330968>, 89. In his analysis, White finds that such agreements exist at the intersection of government-national, federal/territorial and Aboriginal orders of government, giving rise to substantial independence from government. Although White concludes that these agreements have significantly enhanced Indigenous peoples' ability to influence land, wildlife and resource decisions, the extent to which Indigenous culture and worldviews are brought to bear on these decisions remains unclear.

its terms embody these principles, the parties can be confident that the mutual intention of the historical treaties is upheld within the modern agreement. The more the AiP achieves this balance, the less interpretive differences surrounding the legal status of the historic treaties will hinder modern understandings of the parties' rights and obligations.

Several aspects of the AiP clearly reflect the *Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples*. These include:

- ▶ Principle 1, the inherent right to self-government;
- ▶ Principle 2, reconciliation as a fundamental purpose of section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982;
- ▶ Principle 3, Indigenous self-government as an evolving system of cooperative federalism; and
- ▶ Principle 4, treaties as acts of reconciliation based on mutual recognition and respect.⁴⁵

For example, the *Dehcho First Nations Framework Agreement* sets out how DFN, Canada and the GNWT agree to negotiate on a government-to-government basis within the framework of the Constitution of Canada.⁴⁶ The rolling AiP's preamble states that the Treaty of 1921 (Treaty 11) recognizes the inherent rights and political powers of the Dehcho Dene, and further sets out that the parties are

committed to implementing the principles of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)*.⁴⁷ Concurrent law-making authority between DFN, the GNWT and Canada is recognized, with Dehcho law prevailing where conflict arises.⁴⁸ Within the settlement lands, DFN will have extensive jurisdiction, including, among others, over non-renewable resources,⁴⁹ language and culture,⁵⁰ and the administration of justice.⁵¹

Other principles are conspicuously absent, signalling the need for greater compromise from the Crown. Specifically, Principle 6, *meaningful engagement with Indigenous peoples that aims to secure their free, prior and informed consent* and Principle 8, *a renewed fiscal relationship, developed in collaboration with Indigenous nations, that promotes a mutually supportive climate for economic partnership and resource development* could be more explicitly referenced and supported. DFN's outstanding concerns with respect to participation in resource management and associated resource royalties reflect these shortcomings. The above recommendations go some way towards fulfilling these goals. With federal and provincial commitments to implementing *UNDRIP* on the horizon, decision-making processes grounded in consent-based resource development are crucial to moving negotiations forward.

The suggested Governance Protocol on the DCRMA's operation within the MVRMA, that is, moving it in the direction of Edézhzié's EMB, nudges negotiations in this direction.

45 Canada, Justice Canada, *Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples*. See principles 1, 2, 4, and 5.

46 "Dehcho First Nations Agreement in Principle" (Rolling Draft, Version #41, January 3, 2017), preamble.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid, 6.6.2.

49 Ibid, Chapter 9.

50 Ibid, Chapter 22.

51 Ibid, Chapter 25.



Sharing resource royalties in the Dehcho region regardless of final land quantum also fits nicely with the goal of economic partnership in resource development. Such provisions do not require an overhaul of the NWT's legislative or administrative regime, but they do require a willingness to commit to a new style of intergovernmental relations in the Dehcho region. Put simply, this third recommendation calls for getting the terms of constitutional dialogue right. Applying the *Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples* to the AiP reveals that equal participation in and benefit from resource development is the crucial area where the Dehcho Process falters. The first two recommendations aim to satisfy these outstanding principles.

CONCLUSION

On the outstanding issue of land and resource management, strict land quantum and cash settlement offers such as the one offered most recently by the GNWT will not move negotiations forward and overcome this impasse. More is needed: changing the *kind* of deal on offer through the recommendations presented here will. Although compromise and flexibility will be required, workable solutions need not force either party to abandon their deeply held and sometimes conflicting worldviews. Collaborative co-governance arrangements can blend these perspectives without subordinating either one. The federal government's political commitments to more fully recognize Indigenous rights, as well as emerging ways of thinking about environmental assessment, canvassed here, provide specific and objective direction beyond the positional mandates embedded

in the Dehcho Process. These suggestions, which include moving towards a model of consent in resource management and sincere engagement with Indigenous law in the decisions of co-management boards, simply reflect the momentum and dominant tide of resource management narratives in Canada. Implementing these recommendations is possible without overhauling all progress to-date on the AiP or the territory's legislative and policy resource management scheme.

In several ways the Northwest Territories' governance landscape holds promise for innovative models of treaty federalism to take root. Canada's three territories already lead in terms of the scope and scale of their self-government agreements. Emerging Indigenous-led protected areas can complement this multi-level governance map by introducing greater application of Indigenous law and jurisdictional sovereignty over lands and natural resources. Co-management in the NWT currently embraces Indigenous knowledge in environmental assessments but could be refined by aligning its procedures with Edézhíe's approach so that the laws of Indigenous governments wield greater power in decisions to greenlight projects. My recommendations have attempted to outline several concrete ways in which this move could be brought to fruition through the Dehcho Process. These developments would bridge the diverging legal assumptions pushing DFN and the Crown apart and provide assurances that a final agreement advances and protects the interests of all parties.

Chloe Dragon Smith

Creating Ethical Spaces: Opportunities
to Connect with Land for Life and
Learning in the NWT



CONTENTS

- 68 Dedications
- 70 Situating Myself
- 72 The Opportunity
- 74 Background: Ethical Space
- 80 Background: On-the-Land Learning
- 82 Policy
- 88 Vision
- 90 Conclusion
- 91 Appendix

DEDICATIONS

Thá'huná means “live a long time,” and is our Dënesųiné Yatia way of saying “thank you”).

Thá'huná, to my family and my ancestors – those who came before me and who have continually honoured our deep familial relationships with Land in and around the NWT.

Thá'huná, to my future children, my nieces, nephews, cousins, and our generations to follow. This work is for them, and there will always be more for them to do.

Thá'huná, to those who, over time, have contributed to this important conversation. There are many, many champions of on-the-Land learning in the North. Countless people have worked tirelessly, within systems that are not their own, and over many years. I am honoured to have the help and support of some that I personally know, and those I don't – all of whom have my deepest respect and gratitude.

Thá'huná, to my honoured Circle of Support: Rita Mueller (my Fellowship mentor), Sabrina Broadhead (my dear Auntie), Angela James, Jennifer Fresque-Baxter, Jessica Schmidt, and Wendy Lahey. These women of the Circle of Support have given me strength, confidence, and wise, thoughtful advice throughout this journey. This paper would not be the same without their guidance.

I would like to start by telling a story about our Earth, Water, Sky, Plants, Animals, and People. It is a story about connection and love. It is a story about the one thing that unites us all, and the one thing that we will never lose.

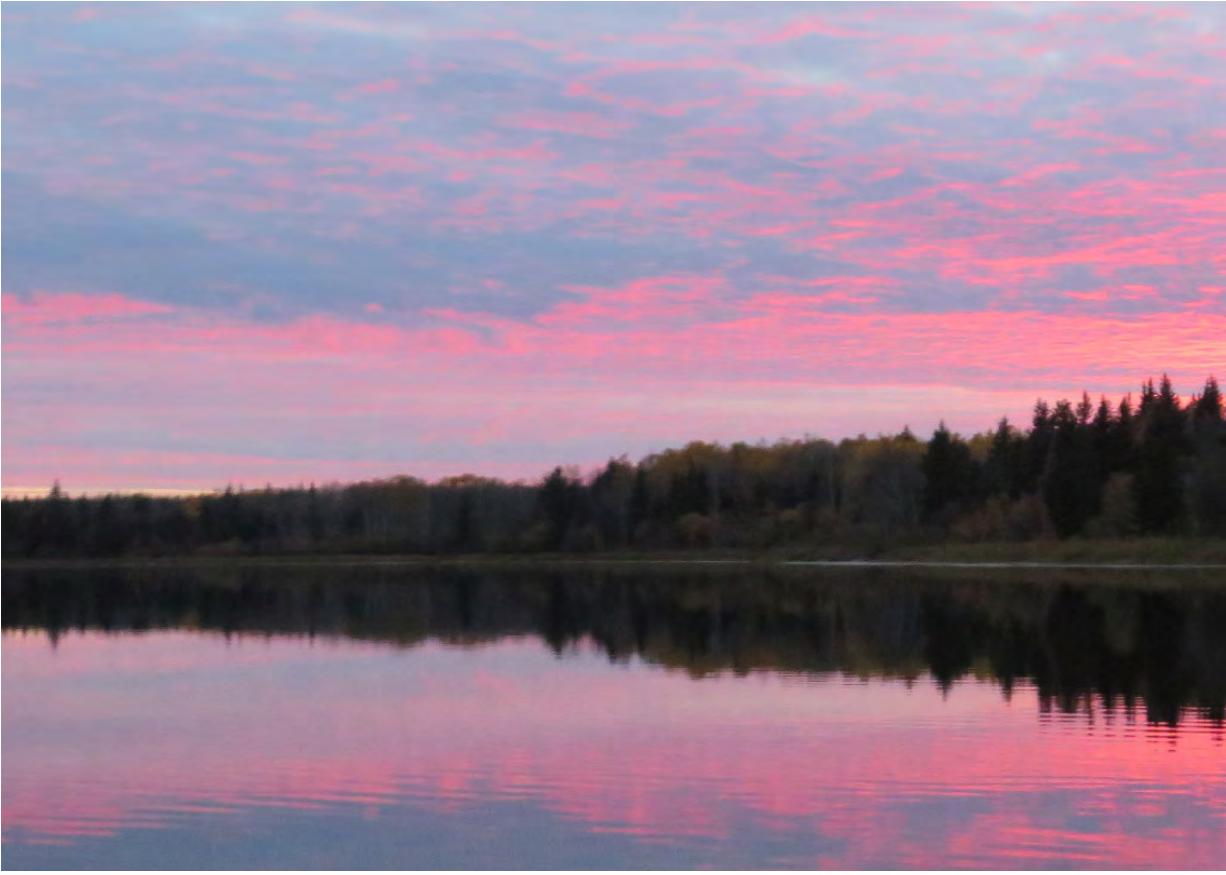
We are the Land. We are Nature.

We are the Water; our bodies are ninety percent Water. We are the Sky; our bodies need oxygen to breathe. We are the Earth; other Animals and Plants sustain our bodies, giving us strength. We are Nature, no matter where we come from, and no matter what else we are. To connect with Nature is to connect with ourselves.¹



¹ Canadian Parks Council, *The Nature Playbook: Take Action to Connect a New Generation of Canadians with Nature* (Canadian Parks Council, 2016)



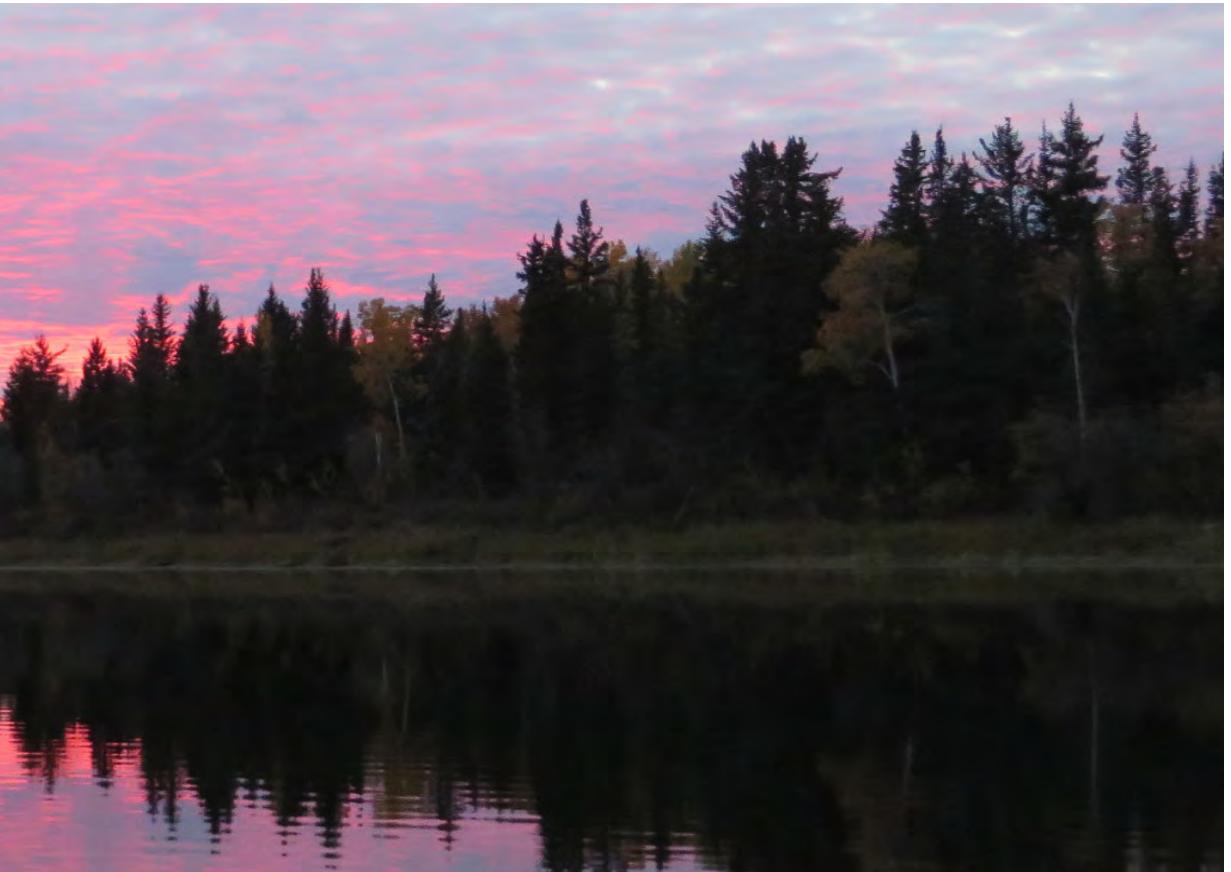


SITUATING MYSELF

Sézi Chloe Dragon Smith súlyé. Dënendeh ts'j'ást'j. Sé ts'í ?amá Brenda Dragon hulyé, Sé ts'í ?abá Leonard Smith hulyé. My own journey of connection began long ago with respect for those who came before me. I am referring to women who were shaped by the Land, generation after generation, life by life, who steadily and consciously pass on the values of the Land, of human connection, and of relationship. My Dënesųliné ancestors lived seasonally and travelled all over the Northwest Territories (NWT): north of Great Slave Lake up to the tundra, and south of Fort Smith into northern Alberta and Saskatchewan. They are my maternal lineage and the two closest are my own mother, Brenda Dragon, and her mother, Jane Dragon. Within my memory, this story begins with them. My mother and

grandmother placed value on raising me with a connection to our culture and to Land, just as their mothers did before them. I am very grateful to my entire family for making these choices.

A place that is very special to our family is our cabin on the Taltson River, sitting on the banks where the river meets Deskenatlata Lake. It's a one-room cabin; eight bunk beds rest at the back, a table sits in the middle, with a wood stove and a tiny kitchen at the other end. It was this place where we lived with the Land, harvesting in the fall: moose, duck, rabbit, and fish. For my younger brother Joel and me, learning through explorative play shaped who we are today. We learned skills from our traditional ways of life and from the Land. We learned the value of engaging all our senses. We learned how to resist our



impulses, sometimes simply and repetitively by sitting patiently waiting for ducks to fly in. We learned about cycles of life and death through immersion in ecosystems, including harvesting animals. We learned to work together in emergency situations, or just difficult ones: for example, having to clean and transport a moose killed far down the lake, in blustery, wintery conditions. We learned basic skills from the Land including that Nature cannot be controlled and that we needed to be flexible and adaptable to our environment. The weather always teaches us that lesson! We learned to take opportunities as they come, and to always manage those opportunities with their inherent risks. I have grown to appreciate these wise life teachings from the Land, and I believe they could have only come from spending time with Nature.

In the NWT, we all live in a territory where life is constantly shaped by Land. Since time immemorial, the evolution of plants, animals, peoples, cultures, languages, knowledge, and ways of life have all taken shape on the Land. Relationships dictate this evolution: relationships with ourselves, others, the spiritual world, and the Land itself. Spending time outdoors allows us to tap into understandings of natural law – the way Nature is designed to work when humans are connected, respectful, and working in harmony with her. Ultimately, on-the-Land learning gives us the opportunity to understand Nature, and through that, ourselves and our interconnected cultures.



THE OPPORTUNITY

This policy paper presents opportunities to expand and integrate on-the-Land learning into daily life in the NWT. Education and learning opportunities in our territory are unique. This is, in part, because in recent history, governments, policy makers, school boards, and educators have demonstrated an understanding of the importance of education that is designed for the North, and by northerners.² I believe there is an opportunity to take this uniqueness even further, and align our education system even closer with who we are as northern peoples. Taking an asset-based approach³ means aligning goals with high priorities and aspirations, and basing actions on assets rather than liabilities. This

same concept of framing policy through opportunity was shared by Elder Mark Wedge at the first gathering of the 4th Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship cohort in Whitehorse, Yukon, February 2018:

“Western society tends to focus on solving problems. There are advantages to this approach, and policy generally follows Western philosophy. Indigenous peoples, however, are opportunists. We had to be – we might go out into the bush to set a net, and notice fresh moose tracks. Seizing the opportunity to follow those moose tracks is a matter of survival for us.”⁴

2 Northwest Territories, Education, Culture and Employment, *ILE Policy*, accessed June 9, 2019, <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/services/indigenous-languages-and-education-secretariat>

3 David Suzuki and Holly Dressel, *Good News For A Change: Hope for a Troubled Planet* (Vancouver: Greystone Books: 2002).

4 Mark Wedge (Elder), personal communication, February 23, 2018.



In the NWT, we can continue to build policy around the identities of peoples and Lands. These are our “opportunities,” to quote Mark Wedge, or our “assets.” We live closely with the Land; it is one of our strengths. Land is a major shaper, a definer of culture in the NWT, even in our modern shared culture, which includes a diversity of peoples from across the world. For instance, northern languages, food, art, clothing, and adornments, are all intrinsically inspired by Land. These cultural staples are embraced by all northerners, regardless of their backgrounds and ethnicities. Realizing our potential begins with policy changes that can lead to systemic shifts in the NWT: shifts to the foundations of who we are and where we came from. Since time immemorial, we have found those foundations through Land and community. It follows that this paper is a call to action to accept a shared responsibility for connection and access to Land.

THE OPPORTUNITY:

The GNWT can collaborate interdepartmentally to nurture holistic relationships between Land and community through relationships and on-the-Land learning.

BACKGROUND: ETHICAL SPACE

1. WHAT IS ETHICAL SPACE?

Since time immemorial, Indigenous peoples have thrived on this Land, now called Canada. Many cultures and distinct peoples have taken shape, all intimately tied in co-evolution with Land. There are fundamental differences of worldview between Indigenous and European cultures, values, practices, and actions.⁵ Nature remains integral to Indigenous systems across the country, encompassing language, politics, governance, and education. Through colonization, these systems encountered different ways of being, inherent to Euro-Western cultures.⁶

An ethical space of engagement, as outlined by Dr. Willie Ermine, is a theoretical space between thought worlds, where engagement can happen in a respectful, balanced way.⁷ The foundations of Canada are built on two broad worldviews: Indigenous and European. This is exemplified by the historical treaties between First Nations and the Crown. These treaties are social contracts, historical models of ethical space that outline understandings about how society should function. An understanding of ethical space helps frame how the current systems for learning in the NWT are disproportionately embedded in Euro-Western conventions and why there is a desire to decolonize them. It is important to situate the conversation by naming the dominant knowledge systems and understanding how mainstream practices occur the way they do today.

As a person of mixed heritage – German, French, Dēnesųliné, Métis – I have personally examined, reflected on, and appreciated intrinsic understandings of ethical space. There are different ways that describe this merging of worldviews: “two eyed-seeing”⁸; “strong like two people”⁹; “walking in two worlds”; through all these articulations it is clear that there are undoubtedly separate and defined ways of interacting with the world that come about from both Indigenous and Euro-Western ways of knowing and being. I understand the former phrases to encompass all aspects of one’s being and how worldviews then manifest in our thoughts, principles, values, actions, and practices.



5 Willie Ermine, “The Ethical Space of Engagement,” in *Indigenous Law Journal* 6, Issue 1 (2007), 194-201.

6 Valarie Angela James, Chloe Dragon Smith, and Wendy Lahey, “Indigenizing Outdoor Play,” in *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development*. (2019).

7 Willie Ermine.

8 Albert Marshall, “Two-eyed Seeing,” *Institute for Integrative Health and Science*, accessed August 20, 2019, <http://www.integrative-science.ca/Principles/TwoEyedSeeing/>

9 Chief Jimmy Bruneau School, “About Us,” accessed August 20, 2019, <http://cjbs.tlicho.ca/about-cjbs>



Ermine says:

“[Ethical space] is a way of observing, collectively, how hidden values and intentions can control our behaviour, and how unnoticed cultural differences can clash without our realizing what is occurring. Presently, the norm of Western existence, the norm of its governance, becomes so pervasive in its immediacy, so entrenched in mass consciousness, that the foundations of its being become largely invisible to itself. The idea of the ethical space, produced by contrasting perspectives of the world, entertains the notion of a meeting place, or initial thinking about a neutral zone between entities or cultures. The space offers a venue to step out of our allegiances, to detach from the cages of our mental worlds and assume a position where human-to-human dialogue can occur.”¹⁰

The concept of ethical space was first explained to me by Piikani Blackfoot Elder Reg Crowshoe. He used one example of validating, and its different manifestations across cultural worldviews.¹¹ Elder Crowshoe shared that in his community, the culture is to write a song and sing it in ceremony to commemorate an event, or validate completed work. In Euro-Western systems (or the current mainstream system in Canada), documents and papers are signed. Elder Crowshoe asked us to consider how silly it would seem to a group of scientists, if they were asked to write and sing a song in order to publish their findings. He paused, and remarked gravely, “imagine how the Elders feel when they are constantly asked to sign papers.”¹² This outward manifestation of conflict within ethical space applies to the gamut of processes: our ways of learning, knowing, and being. Understanding, honouring, and celebrating in dynamic ways, through different worldviews, is essential to set foundations for ethical interactions.

¹⁰ Willie Ermine

¹¹ Reg Crowshoe (Elder, Piikani Nation) personal communication, June 7, 2017.

¹² Ibid.

Ethical space between Indigenous and Euro-Western world views is important to consider in any Canadian context; however, here in the NWT, where the student demographic is 60% Indigenous, ensuring that Indigenous worldview is accounted for in education is essential to the success of everyone.¹³ The ever-present effects of residential schools in Canada emphasize the danger in rejecting cultures and worldviews. The consequences of an education system that does not value the identities, beliefs, and learning needs of Indigenous peoples has resulted in widespread socio-economic, environmental, and cultural difficulties across Canada, and the North contributes to this living narrative.¹⁴

In the NWT, institutions are still fundamentally European, although Indigenous concepts (language, culture, practices) are increasingly being incorporated. There is an essential difference between indigenizing a western system (regardless of the quality or quantity of Indigenous content added), and that of supporting harmony between two systems: ethical space. For harmony to be achieved, space must continually be created for Indigenous worldviews until ways of knowing and being can be rebalanced. Through this understanding of the current imbalances in the education system, we can allow freedom for Indigenous education principles to evolve and grow, not as add-ons, but as a dynamic whole. Achieving ethical space in education is an ongoing discussion of adaptive management, learning, and relational accountability.¹⁵ It requires constant

exploration. Sabrina Broadhead, Director of the Indigenous Health and Community Wellness division in the GNWT's department of Health and Social Services, shared the following: "to compromise, we let go of thoughts that do not benefit the greater good, and do not benefit our shared responsibilities. We must do everything we can to come together and understand each other."¹⁶

To achieve this balance, and to further the healthy self-determination of our NWT education system, more time must be spent on the Land as part of standard learning and curriculum. Indigenous education principles are place-based. Intrinsic learning comes from the laws of the Land, as they did for previous generations, and simply, as they did for my brother and me. Our Dene Laws are codified and inextricably rooted in natural laws of the Land, as are the Indigenous laws from other cultures. Perhaps most importantly, Land is an equalizer between all peoples; a safe place for cultural exchange and understanding. When we are on the Land, we naturally meet each other through our humanity. This is where we find ethical space. Because we are all part of Nature, our shared responsibilities to Land transcend systems and colonized protocols. There is a need for an acceptance of all worldviews and our collective strengths in order to care for ourselves, for each other, and for the Land, now and for the future generations.

13 Valarie Angela James, "The Shaping Influences of 'A Capable Person': A Narrative Research of Elders' Stories of Raising Children to Inform Aboriginal Education in the Northwest Territories" (PhD thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2016).

14 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Calls to Action*, 2012. Accessed October 21, 2019, http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

15 Valarie Angela James (Director, Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat), personal communication, February 15, 2019.

16 Sabrina Broadhead (Director of Indigenous Health and Community Wellness, Health and Social Services, Government of the Northwest Territories), personal communication, May 18, 2019.



2. INTERDEPARTMENTAL GNWT APPROACH AND COLLABORATION

This policy paper is an open call and invitation to all departments and divisions within the GNWT. Holism is ingrained in Indigenous worldviews, as are the importance of relationships and our context as part of greater systems.¹⁷ A collaborative approach is a way to honour Indigenous values within policy: an element of ethical space. Additionally, the extensive benefits of learning outdoors will result in long-term social and environmental solutions for the whole NWT. Connecting with Land serves the cultural, environmental, health, and economic needs of residents. This is an opportunity of broad importance, and the government as a whole has a shared responsibility for the future of Lands and

peoples in the NWT. It should be noted that this is not a new idea even within public government; for example, the upcoming *Traditional Knowledge Action Plan* for the GNWT emphasizes all departments working together and widely considering Indigenous methodologies.¹⁸

For this paper, three lead departments have been identified to coordinate this collaboration. They are: Education, Culture, and Employment (ECE), Environment and Natural Resources (ENR), and Health and Social Services (HSS). These three departments have direct mandates to advance on-the-Land learning.

¹⁷ Willie Ermine (2000). "Aboriginal Epistemology." In M. Battiste & J. Barman (Eds.), *First Nation Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds* (pp. 101-111). Vancouver: UBC Press.

¹⁸ Northwest Territories, Environment and Natural Resources, *Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan—Public Engagement*, accessed August 20, 2019, <https://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/en/services/sustainable-livelihoods-action-plan-public-engagement>

Education, Culture, and Employment¹⁹

- ▶ ECE is focused on implementing the Education Renewal and Innovation Framework through a renewed Aboriginal Language and Culture-based Education Directive.
- ▶ ECE is mandated to increase cultural programming and education, revitalizing Indigenous languages and promoting the use of official languages.
- ▶ The Department of ECE should work with education bodies to establish, maintain and monitor supports for JK-12 Indigenous language and education.
- ▶ Education bodies should provide quality Indigenous language instruction and relevant culture-based school programs for students as part of the education program for the education district.

Health and Social Services²⁰

- ▶ HSS has a mandate to support quality early childhood development in collaboration with existing organizations.
- ▶ There is a current focus on mental health and addictions which is ensuring that services are delivered locally with culturally appropriate methods. There is a new On the Land Healing Contribution Fund that supports healing and mental wellness.
- ▶ Healthy families are a priority, by focussing on wellness, and improved nutrition.
- ▶ HSS is mandated to create opportunities for healthy lifestyles and community leadership for our youth.



19 Northwest Territories, Education, Culture, and Employment *Mission and values*, accessed June 9, 2019, <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/mission-and-values>.

20 Northwest Territories, Health and Social Services, *About Us*, accessed August 20, 2019, <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/about-us>.

Environment and Natural Resources²¹

► Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (or IPCAs) and Indigenous Guardian programs are supported by ENR. These are nationally-supported initiatives with plenty of financial support and capacity behind them. IPCAs are Indigenous-led, and they strive to support Indigenous worldviews on the importance of connecting with Land.²²

► ENR is developing a Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan, which recognizes the importance of learning on the Land for wellbeing, families, health, income, and food security. ENR plans to focus on supporting communities in their on-the-Land programming, in ways that make sense for them.

► It is becoming more common within ENR to decolonize meeting spaces by holding government meetings outdoors. ENR is supporting a workforce backed by multiple knowledges.



21 Northwest Territories, Environment and Natural Resources, *Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan—Public Engagement*, accessed August 20, 2019, <https://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/en/services/sustainable-livelihoods-action-plan-public-engagement>

22 Indigenous Circle of Experts, Pathway to Canada Target 1, *We Rise Together 1* (Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2018), accessed August 3, 2018 https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e007452e69cf9a7af0a033/t/5ab94aca6d2a7338ecb1d05e/1522092766605/PA234-ICE_Report_2018_Mar_22_web.pdf

BACKGROUND: ON-THE-LAND LEARNING

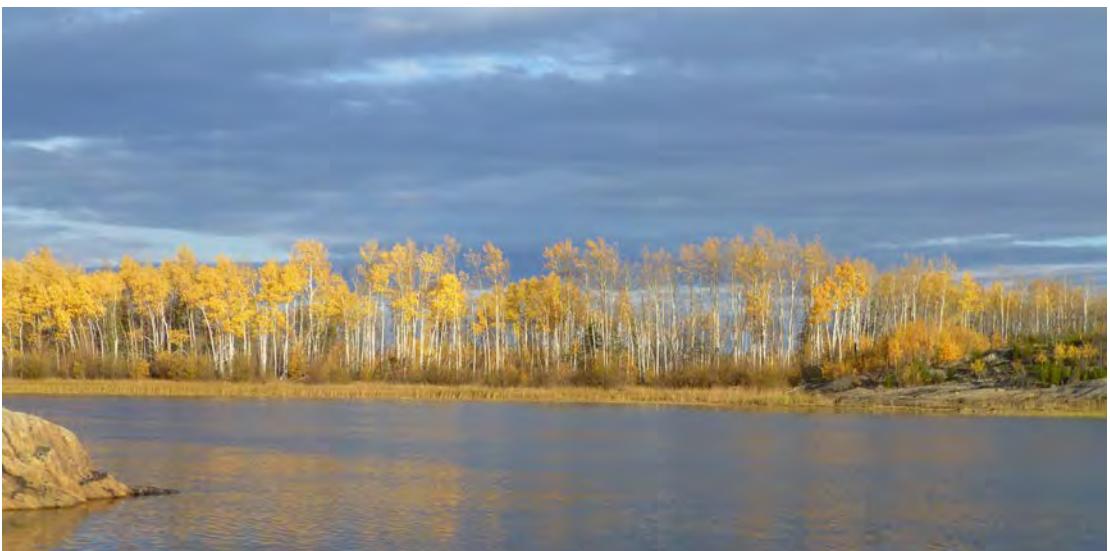
“Youth should be on the Land regularly as part of their learning and their families should be part of that learning. I can do any kind of job now, because I learned how to make things work with whatever I had; I didn’t have all the tools and parts. Everything is out there, on the Land. That’s why I take risks and started a business today. I’m not worried about losing it all, because it’s all out there. I didn’t go to school for a year when I lived in the bush. Everyone thought I would fall way behind, but when I got back, I was in grade 4 for a day, then they put me in grade 5. I got the scholastic award every year, top of my class. I even graduated early.”

DONOVAN BOUCHER, ROCHER RIVER

1. BENEFITS OF LEARNING ON-THE-LAND

Connecting with Nature and learning on the Land have benefits that have long been understood by Indigenous peoples in the North. Land is inextricable from the cultures of northern peoples, and understanding the benefits of Nature for health and wellbeing comes so naturally to many of us. To shed more light on this connection, I had conversations with several Indigenous northerners, and have integrated quotes from them throughout the paper. From an Indigenous perspective, sharing knowledge orally through relationships is a valuable research methodology. Integrating the quotes throughout the paper honours the interconnectedness and holism of our worldviews.

From a Euro-Western systems perspective, there is a growing body of research in Western science that aligns with Indigenous knowledge and wisdom about the importance of Land. The Canadian Parks Council publication *Connecting Canadians with Nature* ²³ gives an overview of some of these scientific sources (see Appendix A).



23 Canadian Parks Council. *Connecting Canadians with Nature*. (Canadian Parks Council, 2014).



2. WHAT IS ALREADY HAPPENING?

There are many diverse and dynamic on-the-Land programs operating through Indigenous governments, communities, First Nations, GNWT departments, schools and school boards, businesses, and other non-profit organizations. The importance of connecting with Nature is already widely recognized across our shared cultures in the NWT. It is already a priority, with concrete steps taken to offer windows of opportunity, where possible. Examples of this include efforts to streamline and collaborate through the NWT On-The-Land Collaborative, which provides centralized access to funding and other resources to interested parties in the Northwest Territories.²⁴ The Collaborative is supported by ECE, HSS, and ENR, among many others. It is important to note that at the time of writing, schools cannot apply for funding from the Collaborative to run programs within a community.

There are many camps, trips, and outdoor education classes that involve school and community, and that do successfully create ethical space within isolated experiences. An

example of one of these trips within the context of school, is the annual trip to the Sweetgrass station by grade 8 students at Paul William Kaeser School in Fort Smith. These types of inclusive outings have great value and need to be supported. There is room for standard education curriculum to accept and entrench these types of trips and experiences. Further, there is an opportunity for the educational system to be flexible in the manner they are integrated into accepted curriculum, whether through school, family, community, or program.

Though expanding the breadth of experiences is important, the policy changes proposed in this paper would create continuity between extra-curricular experiences, by ensuring outdoor learning is *integrated* into everyday life, work, school, and community. It would not be seen as an add-on to the current system, but rather integrated in a balanced way that reflects and supports strong NWT identities. We are Nature. The Land is found not only outside our borders and away from our communities, but rather it is within them and it is within us.

²⁴ NWT On the Land Collaborative, accessed July 22, 2019, <http://www.nwtontheland.ca/>

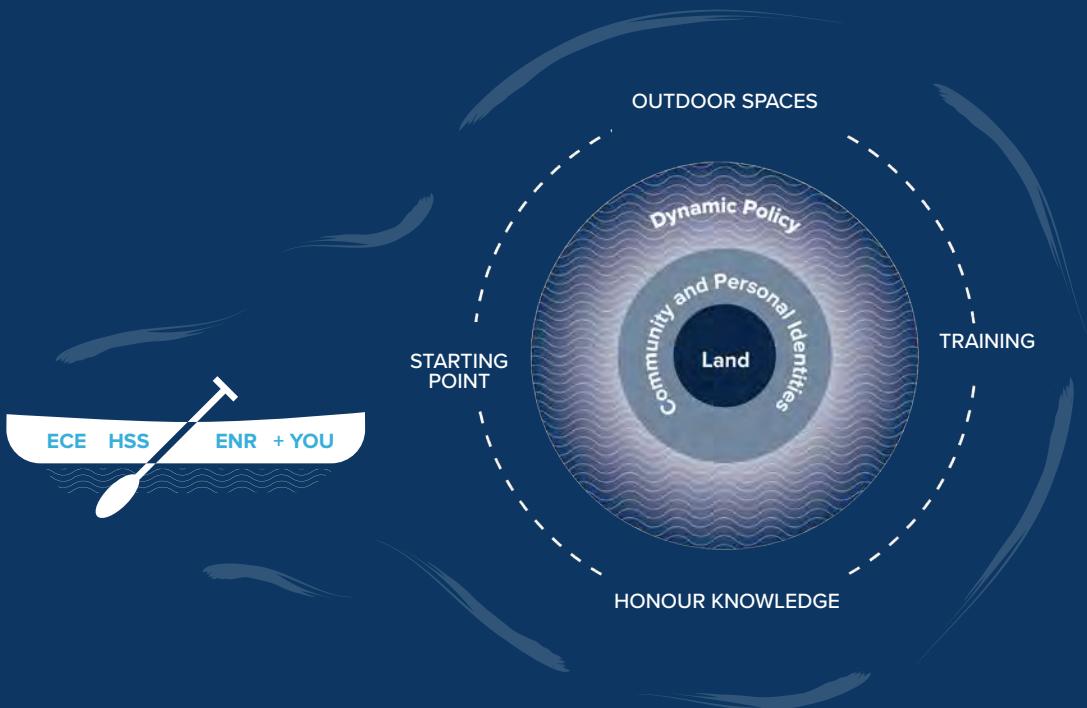
POLICY

1. POLICY JOURNEY

To optimize this opportunity, a few stages are essential as elements for success. These are laid out below, in the form of four reoccurring and simultaneous checkpoints. Rather than the conventional policy format of distinct options, the recommendations can be envisioned as a journey of adaptive management, checking in at new “starting points,” with instituted relational accountability to ensure the solutions are working for all. I acknowledge this not a traditional policy approach. Recognizing identities within the NWT, and how our relationships with Land shape us and our place in the world, adaptive and ever-changing policy is needed to serve our communities. Land is living and vibrant, and successful policy has to mirror that. A journey format is an opportunity to further decolonize policy, by taking a circular (balanced), rather than linear (growth) approach.²⁵

One's individual awareness, the sense of a relatively personal self or psyche, is simply that part of the enveloping Air that circulates within, through, and around one's particular body; hence, one's own intelligence is assumed, from the start, to be entirely participant with the swirling psyche of the land. Any undue harm that befalls the land is readily felt within the awareness of all who dwell within that land. And thus the health, balance, and well-being of each person is inseparable from the health and well-being of the enveloping earthly terrain.

DAVID ABRAM, *THE SPELL OF THE SENSUOUS* (PG. 237)



²⁵ John Ralston Saul, *The Comeback*, (Toronto: Viking, 2014).

Checkpoint: Starting Point

The starting point, or status quo, is where we evaluate what needs to change, if anything. It is where we adaptively assess where we are in time and space, and what can be improved for the future.

Checkpoint: Outdoor Spaces

Outdoor spaces would be made available at all schools (or within walking distance of schools), bringing each school up to a minimum standard of infrastructure. These spaces would also be open to families and the broader community.

Checkpoint: Training

Mandatory training would be offered to all GNWT employees, educators, and early childhood educators in the territory, including teaching the foundations and history of Canada and the NWT, the concept of ethical space, and on-the-Land competency. Indigenous peoples have spent much time learning Western systems, and the learning has not been reciprocated.²⁶

Checkpoint: Honouring Knowledge Holders

Supporting knowledge holders in the NWT is integral to guiding on-the-Land learning through a sharing of worldviews, and ways of knowing and doing. Support has to include appropriate compensation by providing salaries or honoraria for knowledge holders, and requires regular work with educators at each school for consistency. This option would be put into effect with the goal of elevating Indigenous systems, in order to create balanced ethical space within our institutions and within the GNWT.

“Relationship with Land comes with responsibility. People need Land, and Land needs people, we’re made of the same stuff. Learning on the Land should be mandatory. Giving children the chance to form a spiritual relationship with Land will serve them as a foundation for the rest of their lives. It will sustain them and it will sustain Mother Earth.”

STEVEN NITAH, ŁUTSELK'E



26 John Ralston Saul.

2. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

When aligning with northern Indigenous worldviews, Land is at the center. What follows are the specifics of engaging with Land, and are led by the Land itself, by aligning with natural laws. This alignment requires many variations in approach depending on location, peoples, cultures, and knowledge frameworks. In creating outdoor spaces, each community will make choices based on their own worldviews and relationships, about how to include families and community, and how curriculum will be integrated outdoors. This place-based focus and inherent flexibility are integral to Indigenous worldviews. Paul Andrew, Shúhtaot'jñę Dene Elder, says that in our Dene culture we share stories for teaching and learning.²⁷ Each listener takes something different from the story, and whatever we take is what is meant to be conveyed at that time. Each interpretation is exactly what it needs to be.

My recommendations to implement this policy journey in the context of the champion departments (ECE, HSS, and ENR) can be summarized by the diagram on page 82, and follows with two concrete recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Relational Accountability

Establish a tri-departmental committee of the champion departments, ECE, HSS, and ENR, for adaptive learning and accountability to ethical space and the overall policy journey. This would include training, as well as honouring Indigenous knowledge holders (checkpoints 3 and 4).

2. Outdoor spaces

ECE, HSS, and ENR collaborate to support locally-appropriate outdoor spaces that are accessible to every school and community (including families) in the NWT (checkpoint 2).

²⁷ Paul Andrew, Elder, Tulita. personal communication, June 28, 2019.

RECOMMENDATION 1

RELATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The tri-departmental committee would comprise the three champion departments (ECE, HSS, ENR), which would be subsequently responsible for integrating representation from both government and community. It is recommended that the committee not limit championing to the three departments, but bring in others from additional departments and the larger community, including knowledge holders of all ages.

Creating ethical space within relationships and institutions is a much longer and more committed process than simply establishing infrastructure, and this is where the roles of the three departments are critical. A tri-departmental committee tasked to ensure collaboration and relational accountability to the vision will be key to the long term success. This committee will ensure departments are aligning their budgets and yearly goals making it easier for schools, families, and communities to benefit from this policy. There is potential for the committee to collaborate and expand the work of the On-The-Land Collaborative.

The committee is a holistic mechanism to honour the interdepartmental approach. ECE would lead the school and learning aspects of the journey, while HSS and ENR would bring perspective on how to integrate community into the vision and shift existing, related policy. The roles of the champion departments must be balanced and equally committed. Schools must both reflect and belong to the community.²⁸ The importance of the interdepartmental approach is to help weave family and community into school based learning systems within the NWT.

RECOMMENDATION 2

OUTDOOR SPACES

While the policy journey is dynamic and will look different based on communities' contexts, there is a common need for outdoor spaces as a comfortable gathering place through seasons. The spaces would be located at or near every public school in the NWT. Schools are where our future generations are spending the majority of their time learning, and the responsibility for children remind us of the importance of long-term relationships with Land and community. Though located in close proximity to schools, it must be communicated and fully understood that these outdoor spaces are open for use to families and the community. The spaces are meant to serve as a baseline for cross-cultural exchange and understanding, for *everyone*.

“Supporting and working within/to create/to support/foster ethical spaces is, to me, a key component of reconciliation – we need to shift our paradigm to support these spaces to improve the work we do to support the people we serve. We need collaborative spaces to identify innovative solutions.”

JENNIFER FRESQUE-BAXTER, DIRECTOR, ON-THE-LAND DIVISION, ENR²⁹

28 “Second Place Winner: Gwich’in Land-based Education,” *EdCan Network*, 2019, accessed July 22, 2019, <https://www.edcan.ca/awards/the-ken-spencer-award/2019-winners/gwichin-land-based/>.

29 Jennifer Fresque-Baxter (Director, On-The-Land Division, Government of the Northwest Territories), personal communication, June 23, 2019.

This budget is recommended as a phased approach, with the recommendation to include as many schools as possible per year. If the spaces are being utilized to their fullest and the programming is running successfully, wood fuel costs would increase with more

use and maintenance would decrease with community stewardship. This knowledge is reflected in the table below. The numbers are based on the costs to set up wall tents at J.H. Sissons School in Yellowknife.³⁰

PROJECT ELEMENT	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	TOTAL
Wall tent + set up	\$6,000	0	0	0	0	\$6,000
Wood stove and pipes	\$1,000	0	0	0	0	\$1,000
Fire pit	\$500	0	0	0	0	\$500
Firewood (400/cord)	\$800	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$5,600
Small woodshed	\$1,000	0	0	0	0	\$1,000
Maintenance	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$5,000
Total/space	\$10,300	\$2,200	\$2,200	\$2,200	\$2,200	\$19,100
Grand total for the GNWT over time, for 49 spaces	\$504,700	\$107,800	\$107,800	\$107,800	\$107,800	\$935,900 over 5 years

—

“Identity is important to self-esteem; feeling and being a part of a bigger whole is one of the ways to build identity. Northern children with a strong sense of identity are resilient, adaptable and ultimately, will strive to seek their basic needs of connection and love. These characteristics contribute to the life goals of purpose, happiness, and fulfilment. Children who spend time in Nature are more likely to care and preserve their land and environment for themselves and for future generations.”

BRENDA DRAGON, THEBACHA

³⁰ Wendy Lahey (Co-founder, Bushkids NWT), personal communication, May 3, 2019.



THE VISION

“Indigenous literature is about being a capable person, being a good person. Not just taking care of your mind, but your heart, and your spirit. Across Turtle Island, we hear people talking about doing things in a good way. It is simple but powerful. The land means sense of place, sense of belonging, environment. It connects to big Western movements, but in many ways Land-based learning is coming back full circle to how we’ve always lived. We all have different words but it means the same thing. This shows how important it is.”

ANGELA JAMES, SOMBA K'É

There are endless ways for everyone in a community to engage with and contribute to ethical spaces. Specific parameters must be set by each community and space; however, there is room to develop a vision of how ethical space may look. There are opportunities and responsibilities for everyone, and the freedom to engage how we wish is where the beauty will arise. By trusting relationships and ethical space, we allow dynamic solutions to present themselves.

► **Children/Youth:** Outdoor learning in ethical space allows for the Land and children to lead learning. In addition to honouring Indigenous principles of education, many concrete facets of the current curriculum can be enhanced by learning outdoors, such as: inquiry-based learning, *Becoming a Capable Person*,³¹ *Dene Kede*,³² and *Inuuqatigiit*.³³ These opportunities for outdoor learning are for all children in the NWT.

► **Schools:** Learning and curriculum move fluidly between indoor spaces and outdoor spaces. Each school has access to a defined space that is close enough for daily use. Schools celebrate local, Land-based Indigenous ceremonies and protocols in ethical space, both indoors and outdoors.

► **Educators:** Educators are given the opportunity to access local training and additional funding to increase knowledge and build comfort with bringing their curriculum outdoors, and working with knowledge holders and community to create ethical space in the classroom. This includes learning about Indigenous history in the NWT.

► **Families:** Families, including extended family members, have a place to go and they use the spaces, spending time outdoors together, cooking food, and engaging in healthy activities. Traditionally, Indigenous learning has happened through family and relationships. Welcoming families into learning is an important part of creating ethical space within schools.

31 Northwest Territories, Education, Culture and Employment, “NWT Key Competencies,” *Education Renewal*, accessed May 26, 2019, <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/services/education-renewal/nwt-key-competencies>

32 Northwest Territories, Education, Culture and Employment, *Dene Kede*, (Yellowknife: Northwest Territories, Education, Culture and Employment, 1993), https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/sites/ece/files/resources/dene_kede_k-6_full_curriculum.pdf

33 Northwest Territories, Education, Culture and Employment, *Inuuqatigiit: the Curriculum from the Inuit Perspective* (Yellowknife: Northwest Territories, Education, Culture and Employment, 1996), accessed July 3, 2019. <http://inuuqatigiit.ca/2018/03/inuuqatigiit-inuit-curriculum/>



► **Workforce:** Outdoor spaces are welcome spaces for work that would normally occur in offices and boardrooms, including the potential for being used as work or meeting spaces, for health breaks, and as eating spots.

► **Community:** Relationships within communities are an essential part of Indigenous learning principles. The creation of accessible outdoor ethical spaces encourages community members to participate in learning

and knowledge sharing with schools. Because of the accessibility, older members of families and people with physical restrictions feel welcome to the space. Furthermore, these space provide opportunities for schools to branch out into the community. Learning does not end when the school day ends.



CONCLUSION

This policy fellowship has been a thought-provoking experience. As an Indigenous northerner, I have found that Euro-Western structures of policy feel incongruent for me, my worldview, and my measures of progress. With these recommendations, I have tried to weave elements of Western policy making with aspects of my own identity. I thought deeply about my upbringing and what I have learned from my family and from the Land, and how those gifts could translate into opportunity at every step of the process. It is my hope and belief that the concept of ethical space and learning from the Land will also resonate with other Indigenous northerners.

My conclusion from this process is that policy is deeply personal, and must be connected to us as policy makers and to our families and communities to truly serve our systems. This is messy, without a doubt - and it must be dynamic and ever-changing. It must be subjective. We can guard room to follow opportunities as they come, through the process of creating policy, and through implementation. John B Zoe³⁴ says that we must tell our story, even if we don't have all the pieces yet. Through this paper, I've shared what I know of my own story and my own understanding of Indigenous policy, at this time. I believe we must take the time and space to honour our stories, if we expect to honour people, communities and Lands through the instrument of policy in the NWT.

34 John B Zoe, T'licho Nation, personal communication, August 16, 2019

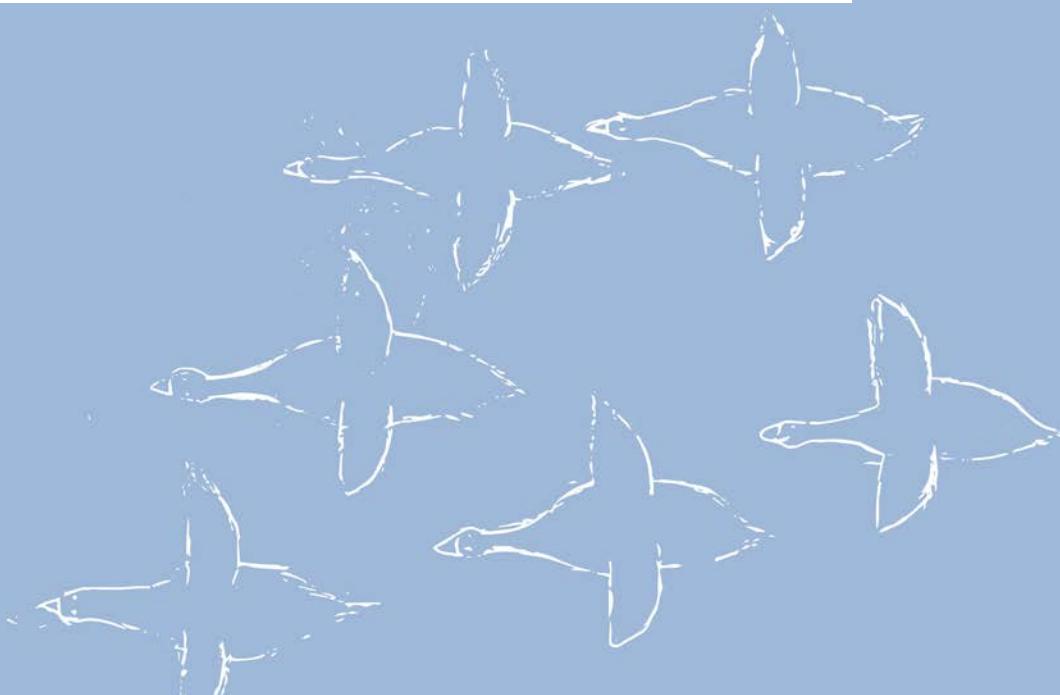
APPENDIX A: SCIENTIFIC BENEFITS OF NATURE

The following is shared from the 2014 Canadian Parks Council publication *Connecting Canadians with Nature*.³⁵ These points are examples of the benefits of connecting with Nature, but there are many more which can be found both online and in this document.

- ▶ Children have greatly improved focus during classroom periods if they have spent time outdoors.
- ▶ Symptoms of ADHD and other attention disorders are reduced.
- ▶ Engagement and enthusiasm of students improves with time spent outdoors regularly.
- ▶ Having a classroom window that looks into a green space improves standardized test performances.
- ▶ Resilience and discipline increase.
- ▶ Observation, problem-solving and reasoning, categorization, creativity, imagination, risk-identification strengthen.
- ▶ Overall emotional and intellectual development is enhanced.
- ▶ Gross motor skill development – agility, coordination, and balance improve.
- ▶ Contact with nature allows us to put things into perspective, it helps give us a sense of purpose, and to be more outwardly focused.
- ▶ Time in Nature inspires episodes of ultimate happiness and spiritual fulfillment.
- ▶ Self-confidence increases.
- ▶ Urban residents living near natural environments tend to know more of their neighbours, feel a stronger sense of belonging to the community, and have a more positive view of their neighbourhood.
- ▶ Nature brings out more social feelings, more value for community and nurtures close relationships among neighbours.
- ▶ Nature helps prevent crime and mitigate some of the psychological precursors to aggression and violence.
- ▶ Playing in nature nurtures the development of empathy and self-awareness, removes the social hierarchy among children, and reduces instances of bullying.
- ▶ Adults that participate in group outdoor experiences have shown enhanced abilities to connect with others that carry over into their personal lives.
- ▶ The benefits of being on the Land for human mental health are almost endless, and are still being recorded.
- ▶ Stress levels (measured through cortisol) decrease when spending time outdoors.
- ▶ Blood pressure drops, and the overall immune system strengthens.
- ▶ Rates of healing increase.
- ▶ Living nearby to green space is the best predictor of individual physical activity.
- ▶ Connection with Nature fosters love for the environment, which is proven to lead to future environmental stewardship.

Marjorie Kaviq Kaluraq

Nunami Ilinniarniq: Inuit Community Control
of Education through Land-based Education



CONTENTS

94	Introduction
97	Background
99	INUIT COLONIZATION THROUGH EDUCATION
100	AULANIQ ASIJJIRLUGU – CHANGE THE CURRENT
103	THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LAND-BASED LEARNING FOR INUIT EDUCATION
108	Challenges & Recommendations
108	CHALLENGE 1: FRAGMENTED FUNDING OPTIONS AS A BARRIER FOR COMMUNITY PROGRAMS
109	ATULIQUJAUJUQ – RECOMMENDATION 1: CONSOLIDATE FUNDING
110	CHALLENGE 2: LACK OF INUIT KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE IN EDUCATION STAFF
111	ATULIQUJAUJUQ – RECOMMENDATION 2: INUIT PILIMMAKSAININGAT ILINNAQTITSIJINIK
113	CHALLENGE 3: LACK OF COMMUNITY AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
114	ATULIQUJAUJUQ – RECOMMENDATION 3: PIJITSIQATIGIINGNIQ POLICY
116	CHALLENGE 4: INCORPORATING THE ABOVE POLICY CHANGES INTO THE EXISTING EDUCATION SYSTEM
117	ATULIQUJAUJUQ – RECOMMENDATION 4: FLEXIBLE EDUCATION POLICY
120	Conclusion
123	Reference list

Nunami Ilinniarniq: Inuit Control of Education through Land-based Education¹

As my children get ready for bed I hear the usual request, “Mom, can you tell us a story, can you tell us a story from when you were little?” I often opt in to tell a story from my mother’s life on the land. I find the details from my mother’s life stories more evocative than my own. I find the story about my mother catching a tuktu while she was pregnant more intriguing (Nasby, 2002). Eventually, I realized how much life on the land and the memories created turn into vivid stories with important lessons. The lessons are taught to us by the land, we observe nature then give meaning to the patterns it presents to us; our elders, our families, our community members impart knowledge learned from nature through their stories, their songs, their art. Coincidentally, I realized how much cultural attrition² Inuit have experienced with land-based learning. In only four generations of Inuit, within one century, we have effectively become disconnected from the places in which we live, increasing our dependency on external support such as imported food sources, building materials and fuel. Rhoda Karetak (2017) discusses how

under the guise of a helping hand, colonizers have created dependence among Inuit causing us to “become dependent and because of these helping hands, do not pursue independence” (p. 186). Education has been used to colonize Inuit into disconnected ways of living that displace cultural knowledge and practices that allowed Inuit to survive in the Arctic (Karetak, Tester & Tagalik, 2017; Walton & O’Leary, 2015). Systemic colonization has debilitated Inuit from achieving self-determination. However, decolonizing and Indigenizing education can change the current, Inuit can regain control of their education by reintroducing land-based learning in a more holistic and equitable way.

Josie Kusugak (2012) shares his story about the time he lived on the land with his family as a child then suddenly being forcefully taken away to attend residential school in Iglulugaarjuk at Turquibel Hall. Zeebedee, Eric and Peter often known as the Experimental Eskimos also share their stories about how they were sent away to be educated and assimilated (Greenwald, 2010).



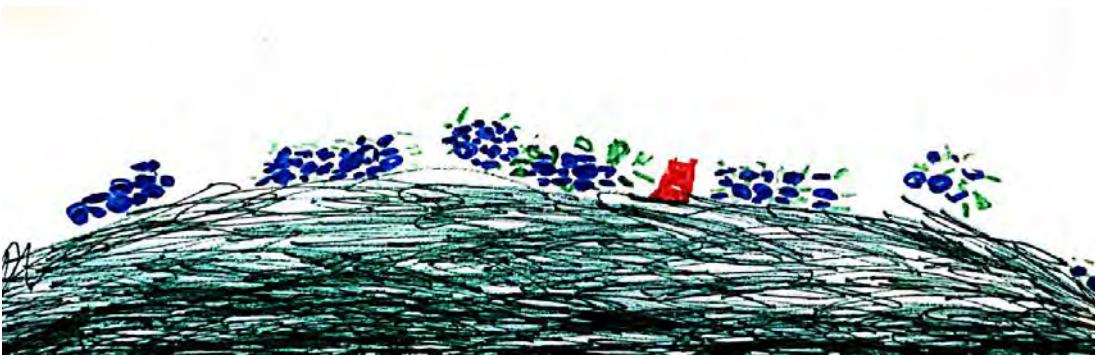
¹ Land-based education: I use the term 'education' rather than 'land-based learning' to emphasize the need to recognize and accredit learning that takes place on the land, either entirely or partly; to change the discourse from extra-curricular activities to the foundational space for learning to take place that is both meaningful and valid both as informal and formal education.

² According to Kang’ethe (2015) cultural attrition and erosion constitute phenomena in which a group of people are influenced either through coercive forces such as colonialism, slave trade, socialization, modernization, Eurocentrism, westernization and globalization, to abandon their cultures and adopt other new cultures.

Their stories resonate with so many people who for three generations were removed from their families to be educated and assimilated (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [TRCC], 2015). Although my generation did not attend residential school, my mother would listen to policy developments from Inuktitut media and say, “the government is raising our children.” I first heard this statement when the government was in discussions about how it would use Inuktitut in schools. Initially, I was puzzled by her statement, wondering: “how is the government raising us if we live with our family?”. Eventually, the analogy made sense to me as such: the government decides our routine, with expectations set for us to attend school with specified mandated timelines and schedules; the government decides what language we speak; the government decides what knowledge is accredited; the government decides what determinants to use to measure our success; the government figuratively fulfills the role of what parents did prior to government intervention by creating policies that delegate many decision making powers to government staff in regards to an Inuit child’s life. For example: when the Special Committee on Education recommended that

the Nunavut Department of Education [NDE] make legislative amendments that would allow District Education Authorities to seek resources and supports to provide additional language education in their local dialects to promote multi-lingual education; the NDE rejected the recommendation in favour of standardized Inuktitut similar to practices used with the English language, of the opinion that families are solely responsible for passing on their mother tongue (NDE, 2016). A bureaucratic decision to not use public funds to promote home languages in education is an example of how Inuit parents still have little influence over how their children are educated.

Inuit as Indigenous people³ have a rich history with land that is sophisticated, innovative, ingenious, and sustainable. Although we do not live as our ancestors did a century ago, the foundations of life on the land still hold true to living a hopeful, enriching, independent and sustainable life. In this paper, I examine policy barriers that prevent Inuit in Nunavut from receiving equitable land-based education that is based on Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit⁴, and I aim to bring to light the potential for change in policy recommendations informed



3 According to the Canadian Encyclopedia, “In Canada, the term Indigenous peoples (or Aboriginal peoples) refers to First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. These are the original inhabitants of the land that is now Canada.”

4 Kalluak (2017) defines IQ as “what Inuit have known all along. In the simplest of terms we could say it is wisdom gained from extensive experience, passed from generation to generation” (p. 41).

by conversations with Inuit. The policy issues I explore through this research are the challenges to provide equitable land-based education for Inuit students as a perpetual force that prevents transformation in Inuit education rooted in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit. The policy options presented aim to challenge existing policy directions so that the relationship between the education system and communities can work in a more collaborative and strategic way to deliver comprehensive educational programs through land-based education. The first option is to consolidate funding for educational programs into a one window approach, as well as to change the criteria from problem specific and targeted intake criteria to goal oriented criteria. Second, to place more emphasis of teacher professional development dollars on learning Inuit culture and Inuktitut as a means to obligate everyone within the education system to use Inuit culture and language within the education program. Third, to improve work between the education system and communities by developing agreements to work together to deliver land-based learning programs.

Last, to create a flexible education policy for the school system to allow for a better mediated learning program for students so that the system has effective measures in place to accommodate the lifestyles of Inuit. The data for his research comes from two sources, a workshop report from the National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education held in Nunavut in March 2019 on Inuit Ilinniarniliriningat, and a land-based stories workshop done with children in Baker Lake in June 2019.

The concept of education needs to be broadened to include out of school learning, on the land, in the community.

Rather than fitting Inuit life into schools, we need to fit schools into Inuit life.

The recommendations from this research emerged out of the conversation with people in the field of education, community members, elders, and children. During the Inuit Ilinniarniliriningat workshop, participants discussed what programs they offer, what their goals are, what challenges they face, and opportunities to overcome those challenges. Participants in the workshop were from various community-based programs, youth researchers, and stakeholders from the Nunavut Department of Education, Nunavut Arctic College, and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. The workshop with children focused on conversations about why the land is important to them and sharing those ideas by illustrating stories then storytelling.

Critical reflection about the systems we engage in are necessary because we are the creators and actors of policy. We need to challenge our mindsets and reframe our thinking in order to make these changes possible. If extrinsic factors shape our intrinsic attitudes that direct our behaviour, we need to create opportunities to interact extrinsically to critically think about our attitudes so that we can transform our behaviour. Therefore, these policy recommendations are intended to promote collective engagement and space to think critically so that the changes we make in education work towards equitable social changes for Inuit.

BACKGROUND

Inuit traditionally taught their children on the land and at home until they were forced to attend residential schools (Legacy of Hope Foundation, 2013). Initially, residential schools were administered by churches focused on print literacy for indoctrination using the Bible and providing medical services; subsequently the Canadian government created Federal Day Schools to assimilate Indigenous children (Crowe, 1991; TRCC, 2015). Federal Day Schools were operated in settlements for primary grades while residential schools for secondary grades were delivered in regional boarding schools in regional centers such as Yellowknife, Iqaluit, and Churchill (TRCC, 2015). As the Canadian education system transitioned to adopt Multi-cultural educational philosophies and policies, responsibilities of Federal Day Schools were transferred to the Government of the Northwest Territories for some of what we know as Nunavut communities today (McGregor, 2010). New policies required schools to offer language of instruction support in the mother tongue of the students, in the Inuit context, Inuktitut (McGregor, 2010). Local and regional school boards were developed to help produce culturally relevant curriculum resources (McGregor, 2010). Inuit were working as classroom aids and working towards earning formal credentials to become qualified teachers (Walton & O’Leary, 2015). With the creation of Nunavut in 1999, Inuit were in a new position to reform education based on an Inuit worldview. Commitments from the Bathurst Mandate (1999) relevant to this research are:

- ▶ The raising and teaching of children and the care of those in need, ‘llagiinniq’ (kinship) and ‘Inuuqatigiinniq’ (community kinship), are a collective community process.

- ▶ Land and language skills and respectful pride in our cultures and languages are fundamental for adults and children.
- ▶ Our education system needs to be built within the context of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit.
- ▶ Educational programs are offered on a strategic basis, based on community by community needs.
- ▶ Begin the re-writing of the K-12 school curriculum, to emphasize cultural relevance and academic excellence, to be completed over the next 10 years.

This led to the legislative changes of the Nunavut Education Act (2008) and the Inuit Language Protection Act (2008). Despite increased control of education by Inuit through the development of Nunavut, Inuit are still challenged to realize the goals set out in their mandate for Nunavut education. Within this mandate, key goals include:

- ▶ Inunnguiniq - to create capable human beings who can function independently
- ▶ To rewrite the K-12 education system
- ▶ Recreate curriculum within the context of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit
- ▶ Develop an Inuktitut – English bilingual education system where students are able to function in both languages
- ▶ Be able to receive an education that prepares students for post-secondary education and the Nunavut workforce

Following the legislation of the Nunavut Education Act (2008), the NDE (2007, 2008a, 2008b) published foundation documents to define the applications of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit in a school context, specifically in the areas of assessment and inclusive education.

The fourth document that has yet to be published is the document on critical pedagogy. These documents, along with many subsequent publications aim to reform Nunavut education within schools to meet the goals mandated in the Bathurst Mandate (1999) and the Nunavut Education Act (2008). Today, the Government of Nunavut has tabled for the second time, proposed amendments to the Act⁵ that would extend the initial timelines, as well as change many of the responsibilities initially envisioned.

The system of Inuit laws is important to education because they shape how we live. They can be understood as such: Maligait – natural laws derived from the natural environment, encompass interconnected relationships within the universe; Atuagat – cultural laws were used to govern the community, localized, and context specific; while Piqujat – communal laws set out how we live, shaping our behaviour, within the educational framework defined as

the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Principles (NDE, 2007). The system of Inuit laws in the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Foundation Document (NDE, 2007) demonstrate how the Inuit way of life revolve around the environment, hence the significance of land and place in Inuit education.

For the purpose of this research, land-based education is used to refer to the environment as a whole, encompassing land, sea, water, sky, as well as the physical and biological processes. Obed (2017) explains how land-based education for Inuit encompasses multiple components of the environment from the land – nuna, sea – tariuq, sky – qilak, including the relationships within these systems. Redver (2016) distinguishes the differences among land-based practice, activities, programs, and education to help define them for northern education. However, for the purpose of this research, using the term land-based is not limited to a specific mode of land-based learning.

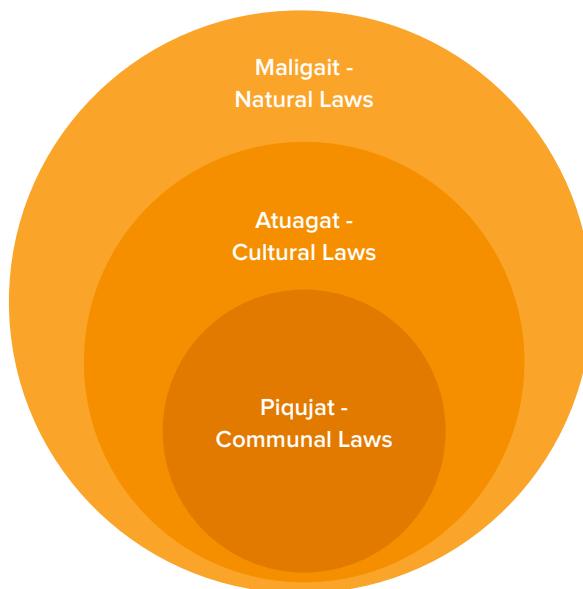


Figure 1: Inuit Laws graphic from broad to specific context.

5 <https://www.ourgoalsforeducation.ca/en>

INUIT COLONIZATION THROUGH EDUCATION

In the initial version of the Nunavut Education Act, the process of giving control of local education to District Education Authorities continued from the Government of the Northwest Territories policies. Goals to transition to Inuktitut Language of Instruction in all grades were set (Nunavut Education Act, 2008). However, efforts to reform education in Nunavut are recurring experiences of colonization by asserting cognitive imperialism through internalized oppression and Eurocentrism. These actions have created barriers to transformative changes in Nunavut's education system, additionally increasing the gap in access and land-use by Inuit in culturally relevant ways that are recognized in education as valid and creditable.

Battiste (2005) defines cognitive imperialism as:

A form of cognitive manipulation used to disclaim other knowledge bases and values. Validated through one's knowledge base and empowered through public education, it has been the means by which whole groups of people have been denied existence and have had their wealth confiscated. Cognitive imperialism denies people their language and cultural integrity by maintaining the legitimacy of only one language, one culture, and one frame of reference. As a result of cognitive imperialism, cultural minorities have been led to believe that their poverty and impotence is a result of their race. The modern solution to their despair has been to describe this causal connection in numerous reports. The gift of modern knowledge has been the ideology of oppression, which negates the process of knowledge as a process of inquiry to explore new solutions. This ideology seeks to change the consciousness of the oppressed, not change the situation that oppressed them.

In the context of Inuit education, this is manifested by making Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit fit into the limitations of education within the context of schools, dissecting it to determine what parts of it can be included while excluding parts that challenge existing limitations and creating an Inuit education system that mirrors Eurocentric processes for the purpose of standardizing for efficiencies and corporate managing. For example, Inuit children are allowed to take time off from school to participate in harvesting activities, but their school calendars have not been redesigned to make it normal practice to do so. Additionally, knowledge and skills that are gained during those land-based activities are not explicitly counted for any value in their assessments and there is no expectation to do so. If what is learned on the land is counted for value in the educational program, the recognition is given value by a teacher's ability to incorporate it into the educational program.

Inuit children have been consistently measured against national Canadian expectations for education. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami [ITK] (2011) stated in its National Strategy on Inuit Education that "many of our children are not attending school, too few are graduating, and even some of our graduates are not equipped with an education that fully meets the Canadian standard" (p. 3). Additionally, "the stark reality of Inuit education today is that roughly 75% of children are not completing high school, and many who do find that their skills and knowledge don't compare to those of non-Aboriginal graduates" (ITK, 2011, p. 7). Developing curriculum that meets the goals to deliver bilingual education that is culturally relevant, based on an Inuit worldview continues to be a challenge (ITK, 2011). Berger (2009) notes that Nunavut teachers face

challenges using Inuit curriculum resources such as Inuuqatigiit: Curriculum from an Inuit Perspective, resulting in teachers defaulting to resources that reinforce Eurocentric curriculum. Inuit students continue to be problematized in schools; statements like “What do you do when every child in the school is a ‘special needs’ child, and that’s only taking into account the children who are still attending school?” (as cited in Taylor, de la Sablonniere, & Bourgeois, 2018) reinforce ideas that Inuit have to change and measure up to systems and processes from Western culture.

Battiste (2000) conceptualizes internalized oppression as a process by which the oppressed use the same tactics as the oppressor against people in their own group, in this case Inuit imposing oppressive policies against Inuit. For example: Inuktitut is measured against English by standardizing Inuktitut language in school while enforcing an Inuktitut education dialect. This is Eurocentric in that it seeks to reform Inuit education using mainstreamed school design by promoting a standard language, excluding the validity of any other Inuktitut beyond approved terminology. Also, what is silent in the conversation around school attendance is asking ‘why are students not attending, what needs to change in schools to make them more welcoming and how can schools change to better reflect the lifestyles of students?’ Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson and Dunbar’s (2019) report on the current state of Nunavut education illustrate how education in Nunavut is still assimilative, even after policy changes have been made to transform it from an Inuit worldview, further perpetuating historical policies enforced during the residential school era. Even if these policy changes are done with good intentions,

they still need to be critically interrogated to refocus them on transformative changes because they perpetuate ideas that Inuit and Inuit knowledge are not good enough for today’s life.

AULANIQ ASIJJIRLUGU – CHANGE THE CURRENT

Many changes, although well intended, have perpetuated cycles in education with very little to show how they are meeting the original intentions to raise Inummariit who are independent and capable of being successful in any future they choose. In order to change the current education system, we need to change the context because “educating a child always happens in a holistic social context, and understanding that context is vital for any educational changes” (Skutnaab-Kangas et al., 2019). In the Inuit context, educating children was done as a family and as a community following the philosophy of Inunnguiniq (Akittiq & Karetak, 2017) and Pamiqsainiq (Uluadloak, 2017). The places and spaces where this took place was on Inuit Nunangat – Inuit homeland. Land is the space in which this took place, and it is from the land that Maligait – Natural Laws come from (NDE, 2007).

Bell and Brant (2015) offer a perspective on how we can understand the importance of land in an Indigenous worldview. We can look at land as the receptacle where our knowledge and wisdom are obtained from and grounded in (Bell & Brant, 2015). It is also important to understand that this knowledge is not fossilized and timeless. Inuit understand that life is in continuous motion, evolving as the environment evolves, requiring planning and preparedness for the unknown.

Kublu et al. (1999) explain:

Knowledge was produced in relation to practice. Children were taught to develop their skills; this included using whatever was appropriate, and the use of modern techniques or implements had no negative connotations whatsoever. Inuit were always prepared to adopt new methods and materials if that proved to be advantageous. A balance of experience and innovation is central to the production and transmission of knowledge. The elders would relate to the young hunters how they hunted caribou with bows and arrows, but that did not mean they disapproved of the use of guns. In qualifying the knowledge of the elders as “traditional,” we should never forget that it was always directed to the future, intended to give a perspective to younger generations so that they were better equipped to face the changes they were facing.

On this basis, I provide recommendations to transform Inuit education to be expand beyond the school, into the community, including families, elders, and programs on the land in an equitable, diversified, and inclusive relationship that is more equitable than the current system. Barnabus Piryuaq (1978) once said:

In the past, our lifestyle was patterned after the seasons. We led a nomadic life. We lived off the land and were bound to it. Today much has changed.

(AS CITED IN PUTULIK, 2015, P.71)

Although we no longer live nomadic lifestyles, we still rely on the land for food, for employment opportunities, for wellness, and

to maintain our identity as Inuit. Therefore, these policy recommendations should be understood as living policies that change to evolve to reflect the context of how Inuit live and where Inuit live. Battiste (2013) discusses how “the 'mainstream' functions like a 'keeper' current in a rapidly flowing river or ocean” (p. 107). These recommendations aim to change the current in Nunavut education to change the direction of education from a centralized, standardized, mainstream process to a diverse, inclusive, and community-oriented process.



My classmates in Nicole Bell’s Indigenous Education Class illustrated this metaphor that represents decolonizing education from Marie Battiste’s book. It illustrates the sense that I felt going through this research process, traveling against currents. Traveling against the current can be imagined as facing criticism, doubt, and conflict; going against popular opinion; facing things from a different angle to challenge the forces in education. Each current represents a different factor that has to be considered or flowed through to decolonize. Multiple routes represent the different paths that can be taken to achieve this.

“

The land and its people were made for each other... One must know the nature of the Arctic to enjoy its climate and not feel intimidated by it. To occupy a place required that we be active in fellowship and stewardship with place. The next generation must be taught the importance of the good stewardship left to us by the ancestors.”

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LAND-BASED LEARNING FOR INUIT EDUCATION

The land and its people were made for each other... One must know the nature of the Arctic to enjoy its climate and not feel intimidated by it. To occupy a place required that we be active in fellowship and stewardship with place. The next generation must be taught the importance of the good stewardship left to us by the ancestors.

(MARK KALLUAK, 2017)

Angutinnurniq (2017) reminds us that the purpose of Inunnguiniq is “to ensure that [people] will be successful throughout life and be able to live a good life by helping others.” (p. 69). This was achieved by learning about our relationships as humans, with our environment, and all those within it.

What we learned about these relationships grounded us, gave us a sense of place, belonging, and responsibility. These relationships and our interactions with them developed our respect for ourselves and those around us. Even as we have become global citizens, “Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit beliefs and laws will always have value and will always be important for Inuit to follow because they hold our truth.” (Angalik, 2017, p. 84).

When we think about school curriculum and the work that teachers carry out, we recognize that their work has been well thought out, is organized, and has purpose. Equally, Inuit have well thought out ways of planning, organized systems of developing a child as a person, and continuously and gradually developed their

sense of purpose through active participation. Angalik (2017) tells us that “children need to be pilimmaqsaktau – capable through acquired skills and knowledge,” and “children were conditioned about their attitudes and ways of thinking before they were taught lessons” (p. 85). In order for children to observe, and be engaged, their mindset needs to remain positive and forward thinking. Angalik (2017) explains that a child’s mindset was developed using some of these actions:

- ▶ children were taught their kinship as a step towards building respectful relationships,
- ▶ determination was developed by finishing tasks,
- ▶ the tasks given to children were achievable,
- ▶ children were given space to think freely about how to complete a task in order to develop skills for problem solving,
- ▶ observation was key to understanding different ways of doing,
- ▶ self-reflection was taught by learning your own mistakes,
- ▶ there was continual encouragement to improve,
- ▶ and learning was based on a child’s observed ability to prevent limiting their ability to learn.

Attungalaaq (2017) shares how important it was for Inuit to conscientiously plan in order to live well and successfully. This was done by interacting with the environment and being given wise instructions (Attungalaaq, 2017). Attungalaaq (2017) uses a story about caribou harvesting and meat preparation to relate them to instructions that fulfilled Inuit laws and teachings. A common theme in their stories is

that they were all taught out of experience (wisdom) and learned through experience (participating in a relationship of doing activities).

Tootoo (2015) says that the lesson from Angalik's story is

“The most important possessions that we own are within us; they are not material things. It is the knowledge and wisdom we actively pass down to our children and to our children's children that are most important to their later success. In order to gain wisdom, we must listen carefully”

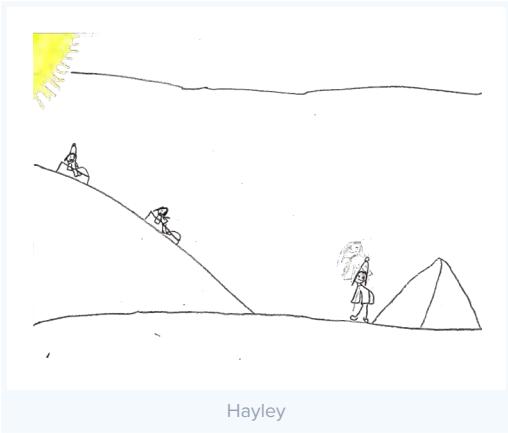
(P. 134).

In order to understand what land-based learning has to offer Inuit children, I gave them space to illustrate their stories, and use their illustrations to tell me what their illustrations are about in order to understand their significance. They used their stories to tell me what is important to them about being on the land.

Here are lessons from the children's stories about the land that demonstrate the significance of land-based learning in their lives. Sally tells the story about her and her dad observing geese fly above, discussing the pattern of their flight, and the direction they are flying. Sally's initial experience develops her comprehension about geese and their behaviour. This can be extended to understanding patterns and behaviours of other living things, and also as metaphor about relationships, leadership, and change. The formation of their flight is called Aulajaaqtut, Aulajaaqtut is also the name for the high school curriculum about relationships, Inuit values, and wellness.

Haley, Lily, and Maggie all told stories about playing with their friends and families on the land. They talked about how they went sliding and played. They illustrated what their surroundings were like and described the weather. They also explained a sequence of events that took place, and described how they thought it was fun to be on the land. They got to experience being in a tent or Iglu. Haley, Lily, and Maggie's stories remind us the about the importance of play in building relationships. Through play, they gained a greater understanding of their environment and continued to foster their relationships with people. They used their observational skills to make meaning of what the weather was like on those days. They used their understanding of cycles to identify the seasons and used Inuktitut place names to situate their stories. These interactions they had with nature also relate to Angalik's (2017) teaching about conditioning the attitudes of children before teaching specific skills. For example, “it was important to be conditioned to withstand the cold environment before learning how to hunt” (Angalik, 2017, p. 85).

Positive attitudes about the land and our relationships are important to living a good life. In order to develop positive attitudes, we need to make space for positive experiences. All the participants in the workshop described their stories in a positive way. In particular, Jamiya, Sheridan, and Sydney shared stories about being at their family camps. These three stories include the presence of family, interacting with their surroundings, observing the weather, and enjoying their time. Their stories took place during the summer which happens to be the time of year when children are out of school. The activities they engaged in included physical activity by chasing animals, playing games, and hiking. These three participants described how



Hayley



Lily



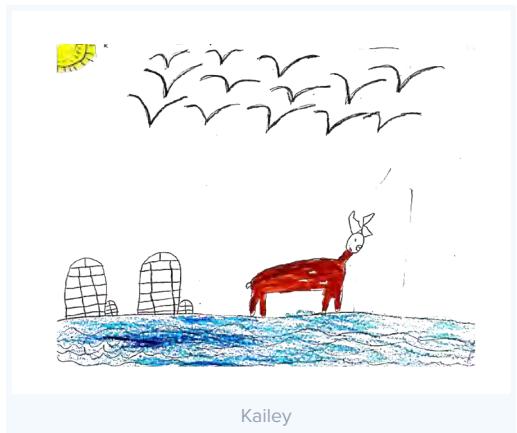
Maggie



Gibson



Kalea



Kailey

peaceful and calm they feel when they are at these places.

Bridget and Rosalinde described the excitement they felt going fishing with their families. They also provided detailed descriptions about the conditions of the ice and fish they caught while they were out on the land. Meanwhile, Kalea, Kailey, and Gibson recalled times when they went caribou hunting with their families and the joy it brought them to participate in the harvest. They recounted the process of catching a caribou and taking it home. The positive experience gave them happy memories about catching tuktu and understanding why it is important to practice.

Similarly, Cameron shared his excitement when he caught a fox outside his mother's tent. The four of them described the weather, the sequence of events when they harvested, and the emotions that they processed living these experiences. All of their experiences allowed them to actively learn on the land. Their mental, physical, social, and spiritual selves were actively engaged in the experience of harvesting for subsistence; they were holistic experiences that involved the land and their families.

Maria and Cassidy told stories about times when they were at summer camps with their mothers. Maria recalled the experience of harvesting berries while her mother was learning to make nipku (caribou dry meat). Her accounts of events were vivid: the elder tending to the fire, her mother preparing meat, then feasting on caribou heads to eat the eyes and brains. This experience allowed her to observe how different tasks are done within a camp and showed her the importance of using everything that is harvested. Cassidy's experience was at a

stage where she was able to begin practicing tasks within a camp. She helped her mother make nipku, cook meat over the fire, and prepare bone marrow to make papquti (caribou bone marrow dip aged in caribou stomach). She talked about how she enjoyed doing those things because it allowed her to spend time with her mother, and brought the family together in a happy place. Their experience on the land from observing to completing tasks work towards these practices become part of their *iliqqusiq*. Kalluak (2017) defines *iliqqusiq* as "the usual pattern of behaviour or being" (p. 41). Engaging in activities on the land allows them to make these healthy habits a part of their lifestyle. Akittiq (2017) reminds us that "if we want to teach our children how to prepare good food and how to share food with others, we need to model this all the time in the way we live our lives" (p. 62). If we are going to carry on Inuit culture, we need to include our children and demonstrate our relationship to the land in healthy, practical, engaging, and holistic ways so that they become a part of their *iliqqusiq*.

The youngest participant, Sebastian emanated a sense of joy and excitement when he told the story about the shoveling he did to clear a path into his *anaanatsiaq's*⁶ cabin. He used a lot of energy and worked hard to create a path so that they could access the entrance. When he completed his task, he had a chance to eat lunch, sit, and enjoy the scenery. He was proud that he was able to do something helpful and he relished the time he got to spend outdoors with his family. His excitement and reaction were a clear indication that being on the land, with family, and contributing to the group give a sense of pride, demonstrate purpose, and promote healthy relationships between children, their families and the environment. Equally,

⁶ Anaanatsiaq is grandmother in Inuktitut.

“

... if we want to teach our children how to prepare good food and how to share food with others, we need to model this all the time in the way we live our lives. If we are going to carry on Inuit culture, we need to include our children and demonstrate our relationship to the land in healthy, practical, engaging, and holistic ways so that they become a part of their *iliqqusiq*”

they develop a foundation in children around *naalangniq*. Akittiq (2017) defines *naalangniq* as the foundation for any child to listen, obey, respect and be accountable.



Sebastian

All of the stories shared by the participants demonstrate IQ principles of *piliriqatigiingniq*, *qanuqtuurniq*, *pijitsirniq*, *pilimmaksarniq*, *inuuqatigiitsiarniq*, and *avatiptingnik kamatsiarniq* in concrete ways. They also reinforce the recommendations from Padney, Manish, and O’Gorman (2016) to prioritize family engagement in education, “increase the number of school trips” (p. 23), and the need for DEA’s to strengthen their work to foster the relationship between schools and families. The following recommendations work towards making these actions possible by changing the current directions to providing land-based education in collaboration with Nunavut schools.

CHALLENGE 1: FRAGMENTED FUNDING OPTIONS AS A BARRIER FOR COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Within the current funding networks offered by governments, land-based program funding is project-specific, problem specific, short-term, and dispersed by departmental mandates resulting in a fragmented network. Participants in the NCCIE workshop discussed how funding opportunities usually ask for information about how they are

going to treat a problem using their programming, requiring age and gender specific initiatives with short deadlines for proposals and program delivery.

Highlights from this discussion include:

- ▶ Current community programs need to continue their work and have their financial support improved
- ▶ Resources to access land need to be made available and accessible to people who do not have the means to retain them
- ▶ The funding opportunities do not usually encompass all their financial needs such as operational costs and upfront expenses, all equipment and materials; this results in people using their personal equipment, volunteering, limiting participation and creating a situation of have and have nots
- ▶ Land-based programs operate based on the conditions of the environment, and the cycles of seasons, funding options are not considerate of and do not reflect these timelines
- ▶ It is challenging to access funding for program delivery when the expectations of the funder are not in sync with the program delivery timelines
- ▶ A visible and accessible network of community resources can improve collaboration. This came out of the realization that many of the program delivery personal were meeting for the first time, realizing that many of them delivery similar programs
- ▶ Many of them do not receive adequate information about how to access funding or have a network to connect with other programs to in order to be able to collaborate on projects together

Atuliquajaujuq – **Recommendation 1:** **Consolidate Funding**

*FUNDING OPTIONS FROM GOVERNMENT
SHOULD BE CONSOLIDATED INTO ONE SOURCE
WITH OVERALL GOALS AS CRITERIA RATHER
THAN TARGETING PROBLEMS.*

More specifically to:

- ▶ Consolidate funds into a single source with processes that reflect the operational requirements of these programs and work in conjunction with schools
- ▶ Revise funding timelines and process to reflect program design
- ▶ Use sponsorship information to network programs to generate collaborative opportunities
- ▶ Use goal-oriented criteria rather than target groups and issues to allow programs to use community statistics, and environmental cycles to determine what programming would benefit their community more effectively and meaningfully

A recent example of this approach is Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corporations [MITC] consolidated funding cycle from 2018, where \$12.6 million was distributed to nine projects (LeTourneau, 2018; MITC, 2018). This allowed for programs to secure multiyear funding. Also, the criteria developed to qualify for funding used priority areas (goals) rather than specific guidelines that target identity, social class, or living conditions, diversifying clientele options. The only specific criteria are that participants must be Nunavut Inuit. Meeting the recommendation above would fulfill a commitment made by partners of the Inuusivut Anninaqtuq Action Plan (2017) to

“Explore options for consolidating some existing GN community funding programs, simplifying application and reporting processes and improving support for multi-year planning and organizational stability”

(P. 34).

The benefits of a consolidated fund include the ability to create multiyear program plans, create stability in collaborating with schools when designing calendars and collaborative programming, with the ability to meet longer term goals. Longer program plans open up the opportunity to create curricular expectations and participant growth plans. A consolidated fund can improve the flow of resources to communities, as well as improve the relationship between government services, community programs, community members and students.

There are many community-based programs that offer land-based programs. Many of these programs for adults, with very few of them offering programming to children.

Some of these organizations in Nunavut are:

- ▶ [Arviat Young Hunters Program](#)
- ▶ [Community Wellness Groups](#)
- ▶ [Hunters and Trappers Associations](#)
- ▶ [Ilisaqsivik](#)
- ▶ [Inuit Literacy Initiative – Baker Lake](#)
- ▶ [Kivalliq Inuit Association](#)
- ▶ [Kivalliq Science Educators Community](#)
- ▶ [Nunavut Literacy Council](#)
- ▶ [Pirurvik](#)
- ▶ [Qikiqtani Inuit Association](#)

These organizations, non-profit or private, have delivered land-based programs in Nunavut communities. Not included in this list are government programs such as Piqqusilirivik, and projects delivered in communities on a volunteer and ad hoc basis. These existing programs are potential sites to pilot school-community land-based programming that is community specific.

CHALLENGE 2: LACK OF INUIT KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE IN EDUCATION STAFF

As of November 2018, 70% of teachers in Nunavut are non-Inuit⁷, many of whom relocated from the south and do not speak Inuktitut. The majority of the workforce that is expected to fulfill the goals set out for Inuit education neither come from Inuit culture, nor speak Inuktitut, and often have lived experiences which had nothing to do with Inuit and Inuit culture prior to coming to teach in a majority Inuit population. This disproportional representation creates an environment of teachers whom are not ethnically or culturally reflective of the Inuit students. This can create challenges in communicating instruction and ideas, impeding student ability to comprehend what their teachers are teaching (Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010). However, when what is taught is culturally relevant, applicable to the context of students' lives, they are able to relate to what they are learning and perform better (Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010). Lewthwaite and McMillan (2010) research shows that Inuit students are more engaged and perform better, meeting educational outcomes more effectively when what they are taught is relevant to where they live, includes people they know, uses their first language, and is related to their life outside of the school.

There has been significant emphasis to address the reflection of teachers in Nunavut schools by providing post-secondary training for Inuit to become teachers through the Nunavut Teacher Education Program (Berger, 2006; Nationtalk, 2019). The program has been operational for 40 years and Nunavut still experiences teacher shortages with a teaching staff that is only 30% Inuit. Many graduates of the program move onto other leadership roles and do not remain in the classroom. This is a cyclical problem where even as new Inuit are added to the teaching staff, many are also retiring or transitioning to leadership roles, leaving a steady gap in Inuit teachers.

Based on my understanding of Inuit values and how Inuit work, when we are faced with a challenge, everyone is responsible for contributing to working it out; everyone has a role to play. Perhaps the current model of focusing entirely on Inuit professional development is not sufficient to change the current circumstance. The problem with focusing on only Inuit, making it an Inuit only problem is that we problematize being an Inuk, rather than effectively capitalizing on adaptations to all aspects of and all those involved in education.

Inuit culture comes from the relationship Inuit have developed with the land, Indigenous cultures are shaped by their relationship to land. It is through these experiences that others will begin to comprehend Inuit culture in a holistic way.

Participants from the NCCIE workshop expressed:

- ▶ How we need to offer more sophisticated learning activities without shying away from difficulty

⁷ <https://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/nunavuts-education-department-suffers-from-a-people-problem/>

- ▶ That Inuit ways of living are holistic and encompass the things in school curricula but with a different worldview, different ways of doing; these need to be honoured and practiced
- ▶ The roles and responsibilities of people, including children need to be practiced in schools in order to reflect an Inuit way of living
- ▶ Educators have to remember that they play an important role in mobilizing these goals

Atuliquajuuq – Recommendation 2: **Inuit Pilimmaksainingat Ilinnaqtitsijinik**

INVESTMENT DOLLARS ALLOCATED FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE STRATEGICALLY INVESTED IN LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL TEACHERS AND DELIVERED BY INUIT THROUGH A VARIETY OF OPTIONS.

Teachers and education staff have significant funds accessible through their professional development funds. They are able to access these funds to further their education, such as earning a graduate degree in a field relevant to their work. Professional development days are regularly scheduled in the school calendar where teaching staff use working hours to receive training on department planned initiatives such as new curriculum resources on Balanced Literacy, First Aid, Suicide Prevention, etc. Teachers should be immersed meaningfully into Inuit culture so that they can better serve their students to contribute more meaningfully to meet the goals made for

Inuit education. In the first recommendation, some organizations were identified as having cultural training programs.

There is an opportunity here to bridge those relationships so that Inuit programs are also used to bring people into Inuit culture. The benefits of doing so fulfills Inuit values of Inuuqatigiitsiarniq, Piliriqatigingniq, Tunnganarniq, and Pilimmaksainiq.

Many organizations, including the Government of Nunavut organize Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit days as a way to immerse people into Inuit culture. These experiences allow for team building, reflection, and growth. The limitation to this approach is that they are often limited to one day excursions, and activities are not recognized in any formal training plans. Formalizing the expectations for cultural immersion is an opportunity to create community-initiated training programs where community members design and plan relevant training, and are compensated equitably. This also applies to the involvement of elders.

If teachers are going to meet these aspirations, we have to create the opportunities for teachers to first comprehend Inuit culture, then begin to practice it so that they can apply it in their practice. The professional development is not intended to exclude Inuit teachers, rather to include all teachers both Inuit and non-Inuit with training specifically delivered by Inuit. Doing so may also be an opportunity for Inuit who may have internalized oppression to begin healing and reclaiming their Inuit identity from unresolved trauma.

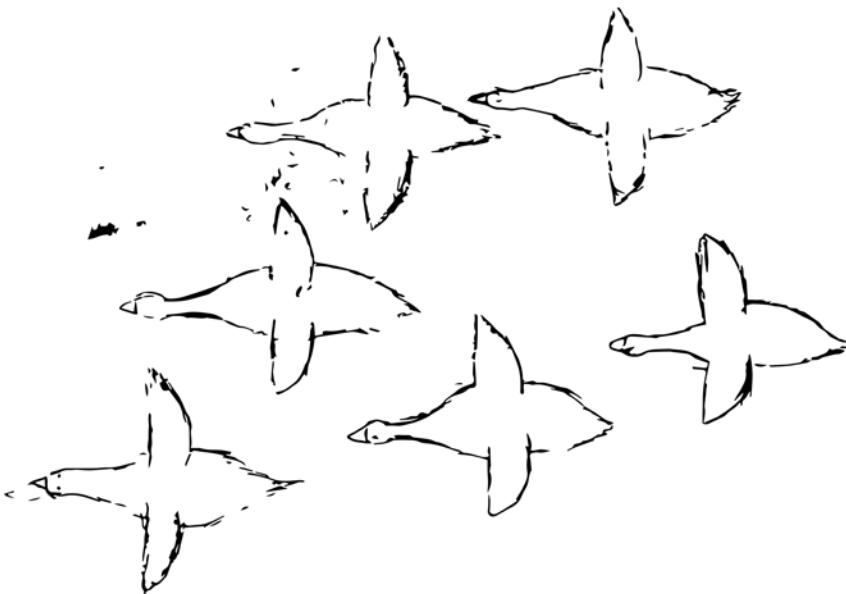
From my experience participating in a Piqqusilirivvik course, I know that cultural reclamation activities provide a more effective space for reflection and dialogue about language, culture, and the traumas that ensued after contact. More specifically, the dialogue also happens in Inuktut, with elders, making it a more culturally relevant way to participate in heritage reclamation.

The refocused, goal specific professional development funds should be redirected to land-based, Inuit culture focused learning. Programs from Piqqusilirivvik, Pirurvik, Illitaqsiniq, and the Kivalliq Inuit Association already exist. Their participant intake is currently Inuit specific for the non-profit programs. However, if their intake is diversified to include non-Inuit, people working with Inuit would be in a better position to comprehend and practice Inuit culture. Subsequently, teachers would be able to embed Inuktut, Inuit culture and pedagogy into their practice. This

would also open up the dialogue for planning how schools and communities can collaborate to offer land-based learning during school hours, recognizing what they learn on the land, and providing credit for that learning.

"Providing all teachers with continuous language and cultural professional development would obligate them to go through an enculturation process so that their practice better reflects the language and culture of Inuit students."

In the NTEP, Inuit Culture Education courses combine hands-on culture-based learning with paper-based learning for academic credits. These already accredited courses can be used as frameworks to begin the process of developing land-based professional development. The



program is also an avenue that can be used to channel accredited programming because of its experience contracting cultural knowledge transfer services throughout multiple Nunavut communities. Additionally, Piqqusilirivvik is an Inuit Cultural School that has the ability to validate courses of this nature. A pilot project through Piqqusilirivvik, NTEP, and another community organization should be conducted to articulate how programming can be delivered to fulfill this recommendation.

CHALLENGE 3: LACK OF COMMUNITY AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

In the current education framework, District Education Authorities [DEA] represent communities. They mediate between the education system, schools, and the community; often dealing with school calendars, and hiring community members for relief roles, land-trips, and elder visitors. Additionally, DEAs are mandated to create an Inuuqatigiitsiarniq Policy for schools that sets out how people are expected to behave in schools to fulfill the principles of Inuuqatigiitsiarniq and Piliriqatigiingniq (Nunavut Education Act, 2008, S.58, pp. 33-39).

In the proposed revisions to the Nunavut Education Act (2018, BILL 25) many of the roles that DEAs fill are expected to be taken away and transferred to the NDE; citing the limited funding and lack of administrative capacity to fulfill those duties. According to the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities (2018) their role would essentially change from being an oversight body to an advocacy body. DEAs provide a local voice and perspective on school operations. These changes would be working backwards from the GNWT development of DEAs to create

locally relevant education because decisions would be made for schools by people outside of the community. DEAs are intended to provide leadership and oversight for schools to provide locally relevant education (McGregor, 2010). The DEAs also report to regional school boards who were highly involved in curriculum development (McGregor, 2010). Communities seek to have these divisional school boards re-introduced (NTI, 2019). Communities also expressed their interest in having relevant bodies collaborate more effectively while providing better financial support for DEAs (NTI, 2019). Continuing with the proposed amendments creates a centralization of power, making it uncollaborative and uncooperative, contrary to Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit principles.

During the NCCIE workshop, participants expressed that:

- ▶ Learning and living needs to be taken back to the land
- ▶ Inuit language and culture needs to be at the core of all business and learning to reflect the communities in which we live
- ▶ The responsibility of teaching and learning needs to be shared as a community
- ▶ Space and time need to be created for elders and youth to interact in a more organic way that reflects an Inuit way of living
- ▶ Community programs need to be recognized as creditable, non-credit assumes that the knowledge does not count and is not worth knowing. It is worth knowing and it does count. It has applications in both personal and professional fields.

The ability to function on the land both for personal use and professional employment are necessary in Nunavut.

Many employment opportunities require wisdom about the land in order to carry out operations in everything from research, harvesting, mining, architecture, shipping, and many more. This knowledge is earned by traveling on the land and interacting with the environment.

Knowledge and experience about the land is what has brought meaningful employment to Inuit like Sam (Tootoo, 2015). Additionally, the QIA (2018) demonstrates that as more people spend time working in the wage economy, away from the land, their ability to harvest country food is disrupted, then the amount of food available goes down, and a cycle that leaves families struggling to meet their needs is perpetuated. The ability for DEAs to bring a voice that promotes land-based learning and creates opportunities to do so with schools is significant. Continuing their oversight role can help promote the goals of local programs like the ones above.

Atuliqujaujuq – Recommendation 3: Pijitsiqatigiingniq Policy

PIJITSIQATIGIINGNIQ POLICIES AND MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING SHOULD BE DEVELOPED BETWEEN THE NDE BODIES, DEAS, AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS TO OUTLINE COMMON GOALS, AND STIPULATE HOW THEY WILL COLLABORATE TO DELIVER EDUCATION PROGRAMS AS A STEP TOWARDS RECOGNIZING COMMUNITY LEARNING OPTIONS INCLUDING LAND-BASED LEARNING.

Pijitsirniq is interpreted as: serving and providing for family and community; -qatigiik interprets as: together; the policy would focus on Piliriqatigiingniq (working together for a common cause) and Aajiiqatigiingniq (decision making through consensus) to keep in line with Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit principles. Doing so would place the obligation on these organizations to work together, and provide more accountability to communities. Creating a policy for working together can be an initial step towards developing a better understanding about local opportunities and generate time and space to discuss how these land-based learning opportunities can be recognized as creditable.

The Office of the Auditor General of Canada's [OAG] Report (2019) identified that “the Department of Education did not have a strategy that outlined actions it and other partners could take to help students graduate and transition from high school to post-secondary education and employment.” Creating a policy around how to collaborate with stakeholders, followed by a memorandum of understanding in each community would be a step towards fulfilling

the gap in partnerships. It would also be a step towards fulfilling the Inuit philosophy of Inunnguiniq. Inunnguiniq in Inuit society is a shared responsibility where everyone has a role in a child's development and this needs to be included in education (Akitiq & Karetak, 2015). There is consensus around the fact that partnerships and collaboration are lacking in education, a formal agreement around Pijitsiqatigiingniq can bridge those relationships within communities in an explicit way. They can also be used as models for people to understand the concept of Pijitsirniq. Kalluak (2015) reminds us that:

“we cannot always be there for our children, or for our grandchildren, or for our great grandchildren, so it is very important to teach them the concept of serving (pijitsirniq). This principle will assure them to find ways to get things done” (P. 68).

Based on the recommendations of the OAG, the NDE agreed to increase hands on learning opportunities related to careers and employment by tasking their Transition Team at Curriculum Services to “engage partners to ensure that academic and experiential learning opportunities are tied to program planning, course selection, and career pathways.” This commitment does not include land-based learning. Land-based learning should be included in the commitment to increase hands-on and experiential learning opportunities. Recognized land-based learning opportunities in formal education is not a new practice. Many universities and colleges recognize this kind of learning within

their programs. For example, Actua has done this in STEM education (Johnson, 2019).

Actua developed an InSTEM program that combines land-based learning, with traditional knowledge, and science and technology for high school credit (Johnson, 2019). It provides a model for how such programming can work. However, relying on programs like Actua to deliver this programming is not the intention behind this policy recommendation. Programs like Actua are offered in Nunavut schools throughout the year where program staff, usually university students, are sent to the north to deliver programs. The issue with relying on programs from the south is that the funds these local programs need are redirected to organizations like Actua in the south. Delivering local programs with local people allows students to reflect on people they live with, it allows people to model Pijitsirniq as a community. Also, keeping funds for northern programs in the north generates a diversity of employment opportunities, it also promotes land-based lifestyles that are essential to Inuit identity and autonomy.

Many non-credited programs are offered to adult Inuit, often as a reaction to colonization and cultural attrition. However, those programs are non-existent for children. Land-based learning is done ad hoc to school calendars during the school year. The creation of land-based programs for children would redirect the focus on cultural resistance and maintenance, and gap prevention, rather than a reaction to cultural genocide. These programs need a way to be included meaningfully in school calendars so that they may be regarded as mainstream curricula and not extracurricular activities. This requires responsible authorities to work together to determine what that looks like in their communities.

CHALLENGE 4: INCORPORATING THE ABOVE POLICY CHANGES INTO THE EXISTING EDUCATION SYSTEM

In the current Nunavut school model, each community develops a ten-month long school community calendar. The educational outcomes come from national standards, often with northern adaptations. School breaks usually occur during civic holidays. Each school usually has a start and end time calculated using the recommended number of teaching hours for various subjects, plus consideration for extra-curricular activities. Most of the time spent in schools is dedicated to instructional time that teachers are expected to account for in their planning; clearly and comprehensively outlining what they will teach, when they will teach it, how they will teach it, and how they will evaluate student achievement. The system itself currently has very little room for accommodations beyond the existing program to add activities such as land-based learning.

Participants in the NCCIE (2019) workshop highlighted that:

- ▶ We need to respect Inuit diversity amongst ourselves
- ▶ Policies need to reflect an Inuit way of life, even in the workforce and public service
- ▶ Space and time need to be created for elders and youth to interact in a more organic way that reflects an Inuit way of living
- ▶ The recommendations above have to be reflected in schools

These recommendations recognize that Inuit live differently throughout Inuit Nunangat, usually in ways that are influenced by the conditions and patterns of the environment. If Inuit diversity and ways of living are to be recognized within a school's educational program, there needs to be space and time for diversity in curriculum and planning.

The challenge behind developing diverse land-based educational programs with schools lies within the direction the NDE has taken. The NDE has launched many initiatives in schools in terms of standardizing the education program for math, English and Inuktitut literacy. These initiatives are creating "mainstream" education for Nunavut as a way to create consistency and use standardized evaluation practices as a way to monitor student achievement and control the quality of the education program. These changes make little to no space for community specific educational planning and restrict parental decision making responsibility around their child's education.

Atuliqujaujuq – Recommendation 4: Flexible Education Policy

“Balance can only be maintained if one’s life is flexible”

(ANGALIK, 2017)

THE NDE NEEDS A FLEXIBLE EDUCATION POLICY TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO THE EDUCATION PROGRAM AND TO INCREASE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING OF THE EDUCATION PROGRAM.

If the policy recommendations above are to be piloted and implemented effectively, access to the education program needs to be more flexible, accessible, and open to community goals and student lives. In order to create clear and transparent mechanisms for people such as families to get involved in planning student education plans, people need to understand how to access the NDE, how to get involved, and understand the options available to balance their lives while meeting their educational goals. A flexible education policy would clearly outline the paths that students can take to complete their education, define the role the education system plays in accreditation, and opens the door to community involvement in education program delivery. Doing so puts the authority of a child’s education back into the hands of families.

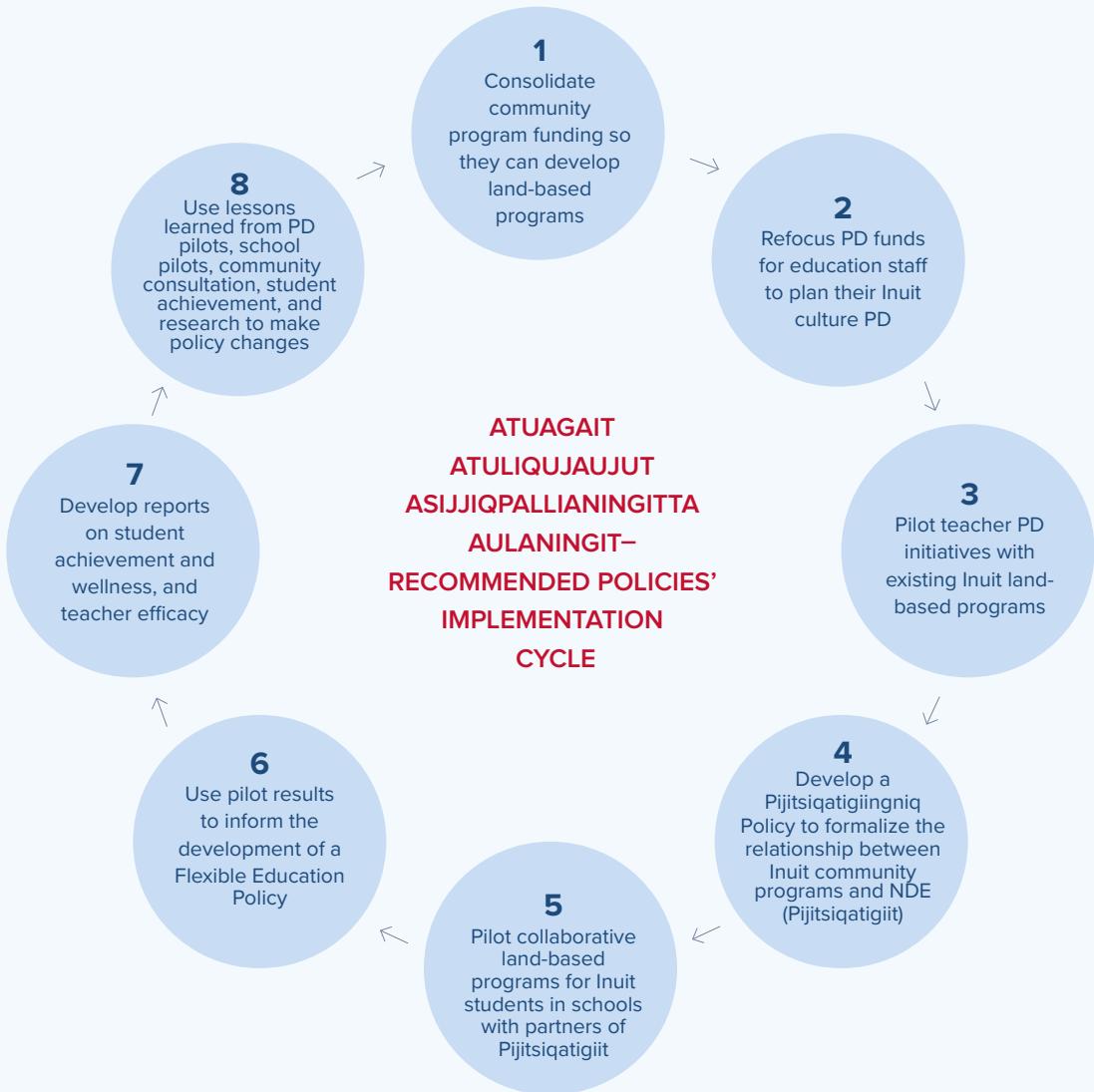
Families regaining control over the education of their children is paramount in all of the policy changes because “parents were set aside when

they were moved into communities and the role of parents was replaced by institutions like the school” (Karetak, 2017, p. 202). Equally, Pandey et. al (2016) argue that parental involvement and support is a primary determinant for Inuit student achievement and completion. A flexible education policy allows Inuit families to practice their culture such as living off the land, and plan their formal education goals in partnership with their local schools.

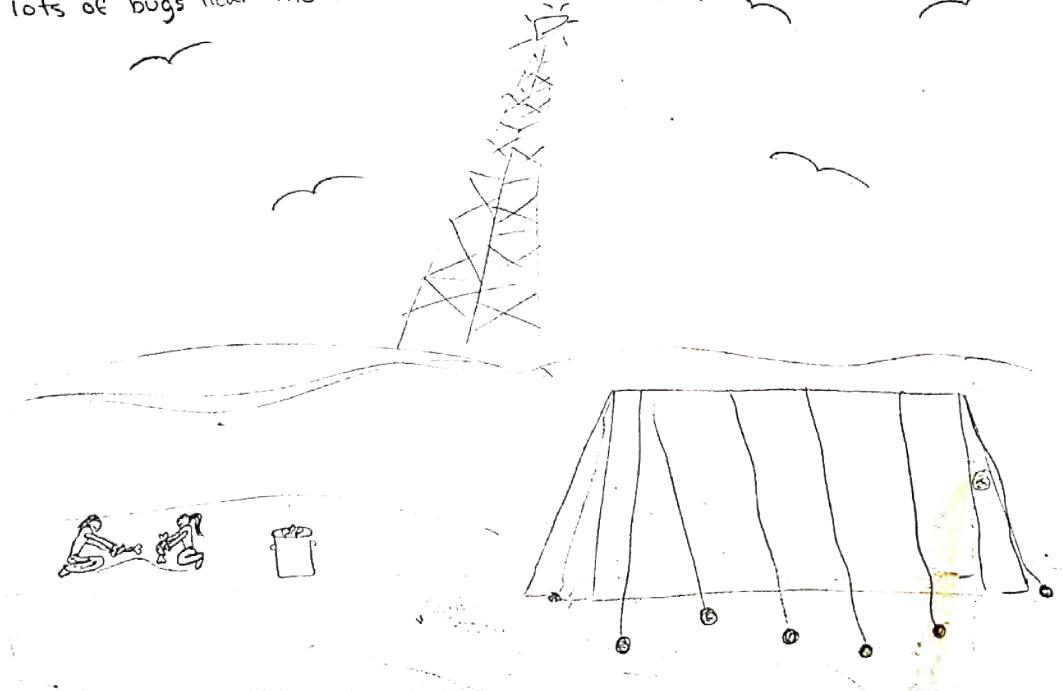
In other jurisdictions, flexible education options have been used to improve student achievement by allowing students to learn at their own pace (Whiteman, 2018); create flexibility options around time, access and entry requirements, instructional approach/design, and delivery options (Palmer, 2011); and to increase access to education and making it more inclusive (Ryerson University, n.d.); to place learners at the centre of the education program because they recognize the “benefits for students when they have a say in what they learn, how they learn, and what help they need (Education Review Office, 2018, p. 11). The Education Review Office (2018) in New Zealand found that “by sharing the power and responsibility for learning, teachers set their students on a path to fulfilling the vision we have for them” (p. 11); allowing teachers to make pedagogical changes using flexible learning spaces that meets students’ strengths and needs (Education Review Office, 2018). The Pathways to Education Program (Government of Canada, 2019) states that “a key component of the success... is the flexibility to adapt to local needs and conditions.”

Nunavut currently has guidelines and procedures to accredit locally developed courses that require Ministerial approval to be recognized (NDE, n.d). However, this approach is hegemonic and places administrative burden on the Minister if it were to be used more readily and frequently by communities.

POTENTIAL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE



Two summers ago my mom and I were making nipku at our tent. We also made uujug. It was a hot and sunny day so there were lots of bugs near the tuktu.



Kassidy

The NDE already has a Curriculum Services division that actively reviews educational resources and develops educational resources in collaboration with Nunavummiut. If the role of Curriculum Services is expanded to accredit local programs using a flexible education policy, Inuit may be more inclined to contribute to collaborating with NDE in creating accredited land-based programs.

The existing land-based programs in Nunavut, in collaboration with local families and schools can pilot flexible education options to help articulate:

what should go into such a policy, who should be involved in creating this policy, and determine how they will work together to deliver the program options. Fulfilling this recommendation would also meet the recommendation from the Nunavut Inuit Labour Force Analysis Report - executive summary [NILFA] (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2018) to "offer flexible and supported high school completion programs" (p. 27). Although there are external institutions that currently use flexible education policies, it is important that Nunavummiut have one that allows Inuit to live an Inuit way of life and improves access to land.

CONCLUSION

The policy recommendations above are directed primarily to the Government of Nunavut because “those who are in positions of power in our government are there because they are experts at the Qallunaat way. They need to decolonize themselves in order to really serve Nunavut in an IQ way that is effective for the people.” (Karetak, 2017, p. 201). Too often, student lives, family dynamics, and social conditions are problematized as barriers to student success.

There is a need to interrogate the system of education in order to change the current, decolonize, and Indigenize the system. Changing the discourse in Inuit education where Inuit culture is central to those changes is necessary to foster the identity of Inuit students, promote their culture, and recognize it in valid and meaningful ways so that Inuit students can ground themselves in their culture, their heritage, their language, and ways of living.

Dragon Smith (2020) discusses the need for ethical spaces and how ethical spaces can be created using land-based camps. For Inuit, being on the land can be the ethical space between Inuit communities and the education system, with Inuit children at the centre of that space so that new equitable learning opportunities are created. New opportunities can manifest as new curriculum, new outcomes, new understandings about teaching and learning, new ways of working together. Existing programs such as Nuna School⁸ at Apex’s Nanook School and Arviat’s

Young Hunters Program⁹ have demonstrated that land-based learning can be meaningfully incorporated into the school program. In order for successes like those observed from these programs to grow and expand into other grades, other schools, other communities, we need to make policy changes that allow them to be implemented meaningfully. In order for land-based programs to be implemented:

- ▶ community programs require sufficient and consistent funding,
- ▶ teachers need to have the ability to plan for land-based learning in the education program and be able to assess it to account for it in student achievement,
- ▶ community programs and the NDE need to work together to develop community specific curricula,
- ▶ and Inuit need to understand how they can use a community education network to meet their educational goals.

DEA’s are positioned to mediate between community programs and the NDE, they are also well positioned to be the window for Inuit to access flexible education options. Pottle (National Geographic, 2018) argues that “Inuit were born to be outside” and “our culture has to be practiced in order to be strong.” The policy recommendations aim to change current systematic processes in Nunavut education as a way to improve community involvement, student engagement, and recognize the significance of land to Inuit culture.

8 <https://www.facebook.com/nunaschool/>

9 <https://www.aqiumavik.com/young-hunters-program>

The recommendations aim to be strategic in redirecting existing resources and promoting more meaningful and effective relationships between Inuit students and their families, community land-based programs, and the Nunavut education system.¹⁰ Additionally, implementing these recommendations would meet the recommendations of the NILFA (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2018) to "provide Inuit Qaujimagajatuqangit learning opportunities" and "integrate Inuit identity and local knowledge into essential skills training" (p. 26).

The illustration below shows where each of the policy changes fits within a community education framework. These policy changes are significant to the education of Inuit children because the land connects them to where they are, to who they are, and to where they come from; as their stories demonstrate, the land keeps them connected to their families. Let us work together to redefine the concept of earning an education to something that is achieved beyond the boundaries of a school, let us actively practice Inuit culture to prevent cultural genocide, and let us give our children the opportunity to become *inummarit*.

NUNAVUT COMMUNITY EDUCATION FRAMEWORK



Community-based Programs and NDE - Pijitsiqatigiingniq Policy

Stipulates how community programs and NDE will work together to accredit and deliver programs - Mediated by DEA's

¹⁰ In Inuuqatigiit, Inuit envisioned curriculum for Inuit students to be student-centered, for the whole child, culture-based, involve parents and elder, include Inuit history, ensure inservicing of partners in Inuuqatigiit, and be process oriented. The foundation of the document rests in the concept of the circle of belonging which are the relationships to the environment and relationships to people, the cycle of seasons (environmental processes), and the cycle of life (the past, present, and future).



Jamiya



Rosalinde

REFERENCE LIST

- Akittiq, A. (2017). The role of family. In Karetak, J., Tester, F. J., & Tagalik, S. (Eds.), *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit: What Inuit have always known to be true* (pp. 61-68). Fernwood Publishing.
- Akittiq, A. & Karetak, R. (2017). Inunnguiniq (Making a human being). In Karetak, J., Tester, F. J., & Tagalik, S. (Eds.), *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit: What Inuit have always known to be true* (pp. 112-146). Fernwood Publishing.
- Angalik, L. (2017). We Inuit call our children Qiturngat. In Karetak, J., Tester, F. J., & Tagalik, S. (Eds.), *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit: What Inuit have always known to be true* (pp. 83-88). Fernwood Publishing.
- Angutinnurniq, J. (2017). Hunting, fishing, and laws of the land. In Karetak, J., Tester, F. J., & Tagalik, S. (Eds.), *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit: What Inuit have always known to be true* (pp. 69-82). Fernwood Publishing.
- Attangalaaq, N. (2017). Conscientious planning. In Karetak, J., Tester, F. J., & Tagalik, S. (Eds.), *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit: What Inuit have always known to be true* (pp. 102-106). Fernwood Publishing.
- Battiste, M. (2005). Indigenous knowledge: Foundations for First Nations. *WINHEC: International Journal of Indigenous Education Scholarship*, (1), 1-17.
- Battiste, M. (2013). *Decolonizing education: Nourishing the learning spirit*. UBC press.
- Bell, N., & Brant, T. (2015). *Culturally relevant Aboriginal education*. Toronto, ON: Pearson.
- Berger, P. (2009). Eurocentric roadblocks to school change in Nunavut. *Études/Inuit/Studies*, 33(1-2), 55-76.
- Berger, T. R. (2006). Conciliator's final report: "The Nunavut project." *March*, 1, 1.
- Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities (2018, September 4). Our goals for education (*handout with commentary and questions to Nunavut Department of Education announcement*). Unpublished.
- Crowe, K. J. (1991). *A history of the original peoples of northern Canada*. McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP.
- Dragon Smith, C. (2020). *Creating ethical spaces: Opportunities to connect with land for life and learning in the NWT*. Toronto, ON: The Gordon Foundation.

- Education Review Office. (2018). *Leading Innovative Learning in New Zealand Schools*. New Zealand Government. Retrieved from <https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/mental-health-wellbeing/Documents/Flex-Learning-Res-Full.pdf>
- Employment and Social Development Canada. (2018). *Nunavut Inuit Labour Force Analysis Report - executive summary*. CANADA: Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/reports/research/nunavut-inuit-labour-force-analysis-summary.html>
- Government of Canada. (2019, July 30). Evaluation of Pathways to Education, final report. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/reports/evaluations/pathways-education-report.html>
- Government of Nunavut. (1999). *The Bathurst Mandate. That Which We've Set Out to Do. Pinasuaqtavut. Our Hopes and Plans for Nunavut*. Iqaluit, NU: Government of Nunavut.
- Government of Nunavut, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Embrace Life Council. (2010). *Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy*. Retrieved from <http://www.tunngavik.com/files/2010/10/2010-10-26-nunavut-suicide-prevention-strategy-english1.pdf>
- Government of Northwest Territories. (1996). *Inuuqatigiit: The curriculum from the Inuit perspective*.
- Greenwald, B. (2010). *Experimental Eskimos*.
- Inuit Language Protection Act, SNu 2008, c 17. Retrieved January 1, 2020 from <http://canlii.ca/t/535vk>
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, (2011). *First Canadians, Canadians first: National strategy on Inuit education 2011. Prepared for the National Committee on Inuit Education*. Ottawa, ON: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.
- Johnson, R. (2019, April 6). On-the-land STEM program for high school credit to expand to northern Indigenous communities Social Sharing. CBC News Indigenous. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/actua-instem-program-north-1.5085196>
- Kalluak, M. (2017). About Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit. In Karetak, J., Tester, F. J., & Tagalik, S. (Eds.), *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: What Inuit have always known to be true* (pp. 41-60). Fernwood Publishing.
- Karetak, J., Tester, F. J., & Tagalik, S. (Eds.). (2017). *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: What Inuit have always known to be true*. Fernwood Publishing.

- Karetak, R.A. (2017). Healing unresolved issues. In Karetak, J., Tester, F. J., & Tagalik, S. (Eds.), *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit: What Inuit have always known to be true* (pp. 182-207). Fernwood Publishing.
- Kublu, A., Laugrand, F., & Oosten, J. (1999). In Nakasuk, S., Paniaq, H., Ootoova, E., & Angmaalik, P. (1999). *Interviewing Inuit Elders Volume 1: Introduction*, (pp. 1-12). Iqaluit, NU: Nunavut Arctic College.
- Kusugak, J.A. (2012). On the side of the angels. In Rogers, S., DeGagné, M., Dewar, J., & Lowry, G. (Eds.), *"Speaking My Truth": Reflections on Reconciliation & Residential School*, (pp. 109-128). Aboriginal Healing Foundation.
- Legacy of Hope Foundtion (2013). *We were so far away*. Retrieved from: <https://weweresofaraway.ca/>
- LeTourneau, M. (2018, June 18). Makigiaqta funds nine Inuit training projects. *Nunavut News*. Retrieved from <https://nunavutnews.com/nunavut-news/makigiaqta-funds-nine-inuit-training-projects/>
- Lewthwaite, B., & McMillan, B. (2010). "She Can Bother Me, and That's Because She Cares": What Inuit Students Say About Teaching and Their Learning. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 33(1), 140-175.
- Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corporation. (2018, June 12). Makigiaqta Media Release. Retrieved from <https://www.makigiaqta.com/news/makigiaqta-media-release/>
- McGregor, H. E. (2010). *Inuit education and schools in the eastern Arctic*. UBC Press.
- Nasby, J. (2002). *Irene Avaalaaqiaq: Myth and Reality*. McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP.
- National Geographic (Producer). (2018, July 22). Keeping the Inuit Way of Life Alive in a Changing World | Short Film Showcase [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYMEoFOZavs>
- Nationtalk, (2019, September 10). Re-focused Nunavut Teacher Education Program to strengthen Inuit language and culture in schools. *NationTalk: powered by you*. Retrieved from: <http://nationtalk.ca/story/re-focused-nunavut-teacher-education-program-to-strengthen-inuit-language-and-culture-in-schools>
- Nunavut Department of Education. (n.d). Curriculum and Learning Resources. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.nu.ca/education/information/curriculum-learning-resources-0>
- Nunavut Department of Education, (2007). *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit: Education framework for Nunavut curriculum*. Iqaluit, NU: Nunavut Department of Education, Curriculum and School Services Division.

- Nunavut Department of Education, (2008a). *Ilitaunnikkuliriniq: foundation for dynamic assessment as learning in Nunavut schools*. Iqaluit, NU: Nunavut Department of Education, Curriculum and School Services Division.
- Nunavut Department of Education, (2008b). *Inuglugijaittuq: foundation for inclusive education in Nunavut schools*. Iqaluit, NU: Nunavut Department of Education, Curriculum and School Services Division.
- Nunavut Department of Education. (2014). *DEA/CSFN Orientation and Training Manual*. Iqaluit, NU: Department of Education, Government of Nunavut. Retrieved from https://www.gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/dea_manual_eng_final.pdf
- Nunavut Department of Education, (2016). *Annual Report 2015-2016: Department of Education*. Iqaluit, NU: Government of Nunavut, Department of Education. Retrieved from: [https://www.assembly.nu.ca/sites/default/files/TD-17-5\(1\)-EN-2015-2016-Annual-Reports-of-the-Department-of-Education.pdf](https://www.assembly.nu.ca/sites/default/files/TD-17-5(1)-EN-2015-2016-Annual-Reports-of-the-Department-of-Education.pdf)
- Nunavut Education Act, SNu 2008, c 15 | Education Act. Retrieved February 14, 2020 from <http://canlii.ca/t/5260>
- Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. (2019, June 5). Bill 25 Education Act Amendments Disappoint Again. Retrieved from <https://www.tunngavik.com/news/bill-25-education-act-amendments-disappoint-again/>
- Office of the Auditor General of Canada. (2019). *Support for High School Students and Adult Learners: 2019 June Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut*. CANADA: Office of the Auditor General of Canada. Retrieved from https://www1.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/nun_201906_e_43388.html?wbdisable=true
- Palmer, S. (2011). The lived experience of flexible education: Theory, policy and practice. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, 8(3), 1-16.
- Pandey, Manish & O'Gorman, Melanie. (2016). Cultivating the Arctic's Most Valuable Resource: An Analysis of the Barriers to High School Completion Among Youth in Nunavut. 10.13140/RG.2.1.3726.8083.
- Putulik, M. (2015). Chapter 5: Piniqaqarniq. In Walton, F., & O'Leary, D. (Eds.), *Sivumut—Towards the Future Together: Inuit Women Educational Leaders in Nunavut and Nunavik*, (pp.71-88). Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Obed, D. (2017). Illiniavugut Nunami: learning from the land: envisioning an Inuit-centered educational future.

Redvers, J. M. (2016). Land-based Practice for Indigenous Health and Wellness in Yukon, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Calgary, Calgary, AB. doi:10.11575/PRISM/26717

Ryerson University. (n.d). Flexible Learning Resource. Retrieved from <https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/mental-health-wellbeing/Documents/Flex-Learning-Res-Full.pdf>

Skutnabb-Kangas, T., Phillipson, R., & Dunbar, R. (2019). Is Nunavut Education Criminally Inadequate?: An Analysis of Current Policies for Inuktitut and English in Education, International and National Law, Linguistic and Cultural Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity.

Tootoo, B. (2015). Chapter 8: Strengthening Young Inuit Male Identity. In Walton, F., & O'Leary, D. (Eds.). (2015). *Sivumut—Towards the Future Together: Inuit Women Educational Leaders in Nunavut and Nunavik*, (pp.121-140). Canadian Scholars' Press.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Canada's Residential Schools: The Inuit and Northern Experience*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

Uluadluak, D. (2017). Pamiqsainirmik (training children). In Karetak, J., Tester, F. J., & Tagalik, S. (Eds.), *Inuit Qaujimagajatuqangit: what Inuit have always known to be true* (pp. 147-173). Fernwood Publishing.

Walton, F., & O'Leary, D. (Eds.). (2015). *Sivumut—Towards the Future Together: Inuit Women Educational Leaders in Nunavut and Nunavik*. Canadian Scholars' Press.

Kelly Panchynshyn

Accounting for our Plant Citizens: Proposed
Collaborative Approaches for Supporting
Wild Plant Harvest in Whitehorse, Yukon



CONTENTS

130	Summary
130	Method
131	Introduction
133	Challenges
138	Problem
149	Recommendations
149	Implementations
150	Conclusion
154	Reference list

SUMMARY

For the Whitehorse community, wild plant harvest is an important cultural practice, as well as a means of subsistence and source of recreation. However, this practice is under threat. Development, environmental damage and unsustainable harvest have limited the community's access to safe and convenient harvest areas. One way to address this issue is through collaborative land-use planning among municipal and First Nations governments. This paper outlines three potential options for inter-governmental protection of, and support for, wild plant harvest in Whitehorse, Yukon:

Option One

Develop a database of wild plant harvest areas around Whitehorse to inform planning and decision making.

Option Two

Collaborate on stewardship programs and educational campaigns around wild plant harvest in Whitehorse's Regional Parks and trails.

Option Three

Allow wild plants to be harvested prior to the development of an area.

Based on my analysis, the preferred option is option number two, given that it has the most potential to create lasting impact.

METHOD

The objective of this research is to better understand threats to wild plant harvest and identify ways municipal and First Nations' governments can work together to protect and support wild plant harvest. This project has involved speaking with local land-use planners, Traditional Knowledge keepers, and community members to evaluate threats to traditional plant harvest and to develop solutions. It has also involved reviewing government reports, plans and policies relevant to land-use planning, government-to-government collaboration and Northern food security.

Key Definitions

In the context of this paper, I will be using the following terms as defined below.

Wild plants: plants native to the Whitehorse area, growing in natural settings, outside of conventional farms or gardens.

Wild plant harvest: the human harvest of wild plants, for food or medicine.

Traditional plant harvest: the practice of plant harvest linked to Indigenous cultural traditions and teachings.

INTRODUCTION

The area of Chū Lin, also known as Whitehorse, has long been host to a diverse array of berries, roots and herbs. These plants are well known to the region's Indigenous peoples, known as the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council (TKC) and Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN). TKC elder Shirley Adamson explains that "we weren't able to go to the store for food or the hospital for medicine so we needed to know the properties of the plants around us, we needed to know their energies, and how to use them in a good way. Old timers used plants not when they were sick necessarily, but to maintain good health."¹ Despite the arrival of hospitals and grocery stores, TKC and KDFN citizens still maintain a practical and cultural connection to wild plants and plant harvest. As KDFN elder Dianne Smith explains, "traditional medicine is everything. It touches everything, every human being, every animal, every lake. Traditional medicines are a part of our way of life, they have so much to offer us."² Thanks to elders like Adamson and Smith, plant harvest continues to play a role in the lives of younger generations.

Is it food or is it medicine? In the eyes of TKC elder Shirley Adamson, they are not separate: "All plants are food, and all food is medicine, it is just a question of if that medicine is good or bad medicine."³

Traditional plant foods and medicines are also important to Indigenous peoples from

other communities who now live and forage in Whitehorse. Shelby Blackjack, a Whitehorse resident and citizen of Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, still practices the harvest traditions of her Nation: "There isn't a year that I haven't gone berry picking around Whitehorse. Harvesting is how I carry out my grandmother's teachings, my traditions. It is how I take care of myself and my family."⁴ Wild plant foods and medicines are made available to the First Nations, Inuit and Métis patients of the Whitehorse General Hospital (WGH) upon their request. This is done to help create culturally appropriate healing opportunities for Indigenous patients.⁵ For many like Blackjack and the patients of WGH, the use of wild plants is a way to maintain their culture while away from their families and home communities.

It is not only Indigenous peoples who recognize the value of plant harvest. Whitehorse's non-Indigenous community members also engage in the harvest of wild plants. For many in the community, plant harvest is a popular way to get out on the land with family and friends, young and old. The city's expansive trail networks offer easy access to wild plant patches close to residential areas, and opportunities for plant harvest can be found year-round. For example, spruce can be collected in the spring, arnica and fireweed in the summer, cranberry and blueberry in the fall, and rose hips and Labrador tea in the winter. For many, this popular recreational activity also doubles as a way to collect food.

As the community's interest in eating local, sustainable and natural foods grows, so does its desire to collect wild plants in and around Whitehorse. In 2017, a public survey issued by the City of Whitehorse as part of ongoing work to develop a local food and urban agriculture

1 Shirley Adamson (traditional knowledge keeper), personal communication, January 10, 2019.

2 Dianne Smith (traditional knowledge keeper), personal communication, December 9, 2018.

3 Shirley Adamson (traditional knowledge keeper), personal communication, August 12, 2018.

4 Shelby Blackjack (traditional plant harvest practitioner), personal communication, January 29, 2019.

5 Yukon Hospitals, Traditional Foods Program, last modified May 3, 2019, accessed June 1, 2019, <https://yukonhospitals.ca/yukon-hospital-corporation/traditional-food-program>.



strategy, showed that approximately 58% of survey respondents indicated they got “at least a portion of their summer diet from foraged sources.”⁶ Yet, the community’s interest in wild plant foods is not solely about recreation or about eating local and sustainable foods.

The harvest of wild plants plays a huge role in the city’s cultural identity, for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents. Many engage in fall berry harvests not to just to collect food, but to join their fellow community members in an annual social tradition. Wild plants also help to give the region’s cultural cuisine a distinctly northern flavour, and ingredients like morel mushrooms, wild sage and high-bush cranberry can be found in the pantries of local homes and on local restaurant menus. Whitehorse-based Chef Michele Genest features wild plants heavily in her cookbook *The Boreal Gourmet*, and explains how “in the Yukon, wild or country foods – moose, salmon, caribou, berries, mushrooms, plants, herbs and flowers – are a part of our everyday diet.”⁷ Wild plants

have also made their way into the shelves of the city’s local businesses, grocery stores and farmers’ markets as artisanal teas, tinctures, soaps, beauty products and liqueurs. Yukon Brewing even collects local spruce, juniper, rose hips and alder to create their popular beers and spirits.⁸

wild plants can be found at local restaurants, farmers markets and breweries, which are all part of one of the City's largest industries - tourism.

For Whitehorse residents, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, wild plant harvest is more than a practice of recreation or subsistence, it is a way of life. Local herbalist Beverley Grey emphasizes

6 City of Whitehorse, Local Food & Agricultural Strategy Public Survey #2: What We Heard, (Whitehorse: City of Whitehorse, 2017), 6.

7 Michele Genest, *The Boreal Herbal: Adventures in Northern Cooking* (Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing, 2010), 8.

8 Tyson Baxter (Production Coordinator, Yukon Brewing), personal communication, July 20, 2019.

that wild plant harvest “...is intrinsic to who we are as people, in terms of our health our food our medicine.”⁹ The collection and use of wild plants is one way the city chooses to express its cultural identity, and without proper access to harvest areas, Whitehorse risks losing part of that identity.

CHALLENGES

In recent years, challenges such as development, contamination, over-harvesting and climate change have threatened the safe and sustainable harvest of wild plants in and around Whitehorse. These challenges are outlined below.

1. FEWER PLACES TO HARVEST AND GREATER RISK OF CONTAMINATION

Whitehorse’s growth and development is having a negative impact on the community’s ability to access wild plant foods and medicines. Between 2011 and 2018, Whitehorse’s population grew from 22,276 to 31,808, and is projected to rise to 35,500 by 2030.¹⁰ The city’s infrastructure has expanded to meet this growth. In 2009, construction of the Whistle Bend subdivision began, with roughly 244 hectares set aside for the construction of 3,000 new units, with the aim of accommodating 7,800 residents.¹¹ The city’s growth in size and population has meant fewer wild areas to harvest and growing concern over which areas are safe to harvest.

As Adamson comments, “I grew up and learned my harvesting from harvesting in this area [Whitehorse], but this area is heavily populated now; there is incredible damage done to the environment as a result of development. The challenge is looking for those plants that are clean.”¹² Blackjack has also felt the impact of development in the area, “there are more and more roads each year. My Grandma taught me to stay away from well-worn trails and not to harvest there.”¹³ Like Adamson and Blackjack, many plant foragers prefer to avoid collecting plants close to developments such as buildings, fences and roads, fearing that the plants may absorb chemical run-off from these structures.^{14 15} ¹⁶ However, ditches, power lines and greenbelts are easy to access and full of popular plants like wild rose, raspberry, strawberry, dandelion and yarrow. Harvesting from these patches can be tempting for those who are short on time, willing to accept the risk, or simply unaware of the potential threat.

Wild plant gatherers also have concerns about contamination in areas away from development. The traditional harvest area of Sima, also known as Golden Horn Mountain, rests on the northern fringe of the city’s limits. Undeveloped areas around Sima continue to be used for plant harvest. However, these places are also popular for hiking and motorized sports. As a result, foragers in the area have become increasingly concerned with contaminants such as motor oil and dog fecal matter.

9 Beverley Grey, personal communication, December 14, 2018

10 Government of the Yukon, Yukon Bureau of Statistics, Population Report: Fourth Quarter Report, last modified May 5, 2019, accessed July 17, 2019, http://www.eco.gov.yk.ca/stats/pdf/populationQ4_2018.pdf.

11 City of Whitehorse, Final Whistle Bend Master Plan Concept, Administrative Report (Whitehorse, 2009), 4.

12 Shirley Adamson, personal communication, January 10, 2019.

13 Shelby Blackjack, personal communication, January 29, 2019.

14 Beverley Grey, personal communication, December 14, 2018.

15 Dianne Smith, personal communication, December 9, 2018.

16 Marion Primozić (Traditional Health Specialist, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations), personal communication, August 9, 2018.

Sima is the traditional name for Golden Horn Mountain.¹⁷ In the context of this paper, the name Sima refers to the mountain and the surrounding area, not simply the Mount Sima Ski Hill (although, this ski-hill is part of the Sima area).

2. OVER-HARVEST OR IMPROPER HARVEST:

Disregard for, or lack of knowledge in, respectful harvest protocols and sustainable harvest techniques has led to over-harvesting and improper harvest in several areas around Whitehorse. Chauga, a fungus found on birch trees across the circumpolar north, has recently attracted the interest of alternative health advocates for its potential immune-boosting properties. Foragers suspect that this increase in attention has had a negative impact on local chauga forests. “Chauga is very popular right now and many do not realize there is a proper way to harvest so that the plant comes back

each year. Consequently, it is getting harder and harder to find.”¹⁸ Sadly, foragers have witnessed the disappearance of chauga patches that have been harvested by their families for generations, and feel this is due to over-harvesting and improper harvest. The decline of chauga forests has local plant foragers worried about the wider impact of commercial interest in plant foods and medicines.

Historically, commercial over-harvesting has contributed to the decline of wild plants such as American ginseng in Canada. Like chauga, American ginseng is known for its immune-boosting properties. The plant was collected in large quantities for export as early as the 18th century, and quickly became Canada’s second most important export after fur.¹⁹ In 2007, American ginseng was listed as a national endangered species, and is now protected under the *Species at Risk Act*. Under this act, harvest and export of American ginseng is illegal, yet poachers continue to threaten the plant’s existence.²⁰ Unfortunately, only a handful of viable wild ginseng patches can be found in Canada today.



17 Shirley Adamson, personal communication, August 12, 2018.

18 Shelby Blackjack, personal communication, January 29, 2019.

19 Environment and Climate Change Canada, “American ginseng” accessed at “Trade in protected species: publications”, Government of Canada, last modified July 28, 2017, accessed June 13, 2019. <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/convention-international-trade-endangered-species/publications/american-ginseng.html>

20 Ibid.



"When my mother and sister go out on the land, we find plants dying due to over harvest or over use of the area. There is less and less to harvest, and we have to go further and further [from home to harvest]. When you know about the traditional plants, and you know the traditional laws, it is hurtful to see them suffering, ripped up or run over, and you look at your little grandchildren, and the only teaching you can offer them about the traditional plant is that you cannot harvest here today because the plants need time to heal."²¹

While harvest for personal or small batch use also has an impact, it is often more sustainable than commercial-scale harvest. Grey explains that plants growing around Whitehorse like *Rhodiola rosea* (also known as roseroot) have been wiped out in northern Russia by nutraceutical companies collecting for large-scale production and warns that "you have to be careful, you cannot just go in and disrupt a plant community. When you take a plant you also take from birds, animals, water and land, so you must take wisely."²² Currently, there is little legislation covering the harvest of wild plants on Crown land for commercial purposes. Under Section 29 of the Yukon's *Forest Resources Act*, the Government of Yukon (YG) is able to "establish a right to

21 Dianne Smith, personal communication, December 9, 2018.
22 Beverley Grey, personal communication, December 14, 2018.

harvest resources other than timber for commercial purposes or establish a right to harvest timber for non-commercial purposes within the area specified in the permit.”²³ All commercial foragers must apply for a permit. However, in practice, permits have only been established for the commercial harvest of morel mushrooms and are available free of charge. Under Part 13 of the KDFN *Land and Resources Act*, the Nation has the ability to develop regulations for the use and management of forest resources on Settlement Land; however, no such regulations have been created yet.²⁴ Without proper protection, plant foragers are concerned large companies may threaten the destruction of harvest areas in Yukon.

For some, the concept of selling traditional medicines as medicines is deeply problematic: “it is difficult to use those plant medicines in an honourable way when it is turning into a business for people, in my teaching I have never been encouraged to do that. It is challenging to see that. They are not showing the proper respect for the energy we are taking.”²⁵

Plant foragers are also aware of the potential impacts had by small businesses. For example, the buds of the spruce tree, known as “spruce tips,” are collected locally for their high vitamin C content and antiseptic properties.²⁶ However,

local brewing companies also used wild spruce tips to create unique flavours. In 2018/2019, Yukon Brewing used roughly 23 kilograms of local spruce tips in the process of making beer and gin.²⁷ Members of the plant harvest community do not want to stop the use of wild plants by local companies, as it is a part of the community’s cultural identity and economy, but they would like to ensure commercial harvest on any scale is done respectfully and without harm to the plants.

3. INCREASED CLIMATE VARIABILITY:

Members of the plant harvest community sense that an increase in dramatic weather events and changes in seasonal patterns have shifted harvest timelines and affected plant health. For example, an unusually late thaw in the spring of 2018, led to a late and weak wild rose harvest.²⁸ This thaw was followed by unusually high temperatures that led to a drastically shorter harvest window for arnica.²⁹ In the fall of that same year, citizens of TKC also reported the complete failure of wild soapberry crops.³⁰ The winter of 2018-



23 Forest Resources Act, SY 2008, c.15, s.29.4E.

24 Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Land and Resources Act, Part 13, S. 85.C.

25 Shirley Adamson, personal communication, January 10, 2019.

26 Beverley Grey, *The Boreal Herbal* (Whitehorse: Aroma Borealis Press, 2011), 261-262.

27 Tyson Baxter, personal communication, July 20, 2019.

28 Beverley Grey (Herbalist), personal communication, December 14, 2018.

29 Marion Primozic, personal communications, August 9, 2018.

30 Natalie Leclerc (Land Use Planning Coordinator, Ta’an Kwäch’än Council), personal communication, October 3, 2018.

2019, saw an extremely late and low snow fall, which meant less protection for plants during the coldest month and less melt water for them in the spring.³¹ Local botanist Bruce Bennett notes that seasonal patterns have become less predictable in recent years, and that the impact this change will have on local plant life has yet to be measured.³² While little research on the impact of changing weather patterns on plant life around Whitehorse exists, early research on arctic berry patches suggests that warming temperatures may lower a plant's antioxidant capacity.³³ Lower production of antioxidants could affect the nutritional value of these berries.³⁴



4. DIFFICULTY ACCESSING HARVEST AREAS:

Changes in northern landscapes, economies and lifestyles have increased the cost and time needed to collect plants. As wild spaces close to the city shrink and their popularity increases, foragers find themselves travelling outside city limits to gather. Such travel often requires access to a vehicle, money for gas, and enough time to go. Each of these requirements has the potential to limit plant harvest; as Blackjack explains, "it's harder and harder, living in the city. I don't always get the chance to go out, I have to rely on my family to bring it back."³⁵ The reality of this problem is captured in the KDFN *Land Vision*:

"OPPORTUNITIES ARE NOW DESIRED FOR WEEKENDS OR OTHER SHORT REPRIEVES FROM THE CASH ECONOMY WITH THE RESULT THAT THERE IS NOW MORE INTEREST IN ACCESSING PLACES WITH MODERN MEANS. CONSEQUENTLY, THE COMMUNITY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH TRADITIONAL LAND USE HAS CHANGED, WITH FORMERLY TRADITIONAL SUBSISTENCE USE BEING REPLACED BY RECREATIONAL USE. FOR MANY CITIZENS THERE IS SIMPLY LESS TIME AND OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE THE LAND, AND WHEN ON THE LAND, CITIZENS NOW FACE DIRECT COMPETITION WITH OTHER LAND USERS."³⁶

Unfortunately, for Indigenous hunters and gatherers, this challenge is not unique to Whitehorse. A recent survey of more than 2000 northern Indigenous households identified financial cost as the most widespread barrier to harvesting country foods, followed by lack

31 Dianne Smith, personal communication, December 9, 2018.

32 Bruce Bennett (Botanist and Yukon Conservation Data Centre Coordinator, Government of Yukon), personal communication, June 12, 2019.

33 Greg Henry, "Impacts of Vegetation Change in the Canadian Arctic: Local and Regional Assessments" in *ArcticNet Annual Research Compendium (2013-14)*, (2014): 9, accessed June 13, 2019, http://www.arcticnet.ulaval.ca/pdf/compendium2013-14/arctic_vegetation_2013-14.pdf.

34 *Ibid.*, 9.

35 Shelby Blackjack, personal communication, January 29, 2019.

36 Kwanlin Dün First Nation, *Kwanlin Dün First Nation Traditional Territory Land Vision (Whitehorse: Economic Development Department and Lands Department, 2017)*, 23.



of time due to schooling and employment.³⁷ Northern scholars Eleanor Stephenson and George Wenzel link challenges in collecting traditional foods back to the colonial institutions that have “dramatically reshaped Northern food systems.”³⁸ In other words, decisions made by colonial governments around economy, education and land have not given priority to traditional foods and have weakened Indigenous food security and sovereignty.

Whitehorse does not have to look far to find an example of colonial impacts on Indigenous food systems. In the late 1950s, a dam was constructed to harness the power of the Whitehorse Rapids and provide the territory with electricity.³⁹ Construction took place with little to no consultation with First Nations.⁴⁰ It was built on a section of the river where people often gathered to fish and forage.⁴¹ Further impacts included flooding from the dam, which wiped out several large root and berry patches down river. While this dam was instrumental in the development of the Yukon, it permanently altered the ability for residents to fish and gather in the area.

Food security is defined by sustainable access to healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate foods, while food sovereignty is the ability to manage food networks (e.g. caribou herds, crops, shipments) without interference from forces outside the community. Both are essential to a community’s self-determination, which is the ability to make decisions independent of an outside authority.

PROBLEM

While wild plants, such as roots and berries, are acknowledged as valuable cultural and nutritional resources, they are often left out of discussions on land and resource planning. This exclusion is in part due to a lack of clear roles and responsibilities around the health of wild plant life and plant harvest. Currently, wild plant life and plant harvest are not central to the work of YG’s Department of Environment or its Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. Plants are also seldom addressed under the mandates of the Yukon’s land and resource planning boards, councils and committees. As a result, little time and resources have been allocated for the management of wild plant life, creating a huge blind spot in the territory’s land and resource planning.

37 David Natcher, Shea Shirley, Thierry Rodon, and Chris Southcott, “Constraints to Wildlife Harvesting Among Aboriginal Communities in Alaska and Canada,” *Food Security* 8, no. 6 (December 2016), 1-15.

38 Eleanor Stephenson and George Wenzel, “Food politics: Finding a Place for Country Food in Canada’s Northern Food Policy” *Northern Public Affairs* 1, no. 5 (March 2017), 50.

39 Les McLaughlin, “Whitehorse Rapids Dam” accessed at “Yukon Nuggets”, Hougou Group of Companies, accessed June 6, 2019, <http://hougengroup.com/yukon-history/yukon-nuggets/whitehorse-rapids-dam/>.

40 Shirley Adamson, personal communication, January 10, 2019.

41 Dianne Smith, personal communication, December 9, 2018.

Unlike other provinces and territories, Yukon uses the term “wildlife” to refer strictly to wild vertebrates (or animals with bones and spines) and not to all wild living things. Consequently, plants are easily left out of the work of the Fish and Wildlife Board and YG’s Fish and Wildlife branch.⁴²

While wild plants cannot sustain the whole city, they are a valuable component of Whitehorse’s culture and local food network. The health of local plants cannot be ignored: “when we lose plants we lose part of our identity as humans. We are of the opinion that we are above all, but we aren’t, we are dependent on the plants and animals, the air and the water. We risk losing our respect for what sustains us; once we do that, it no longer sustains us.”⁴³ Land-use planning is needed to ensure the community has access to harvest areas, and that these areas are kept healthy, or else the whole community risks losing part of its local food network and cultural identity.

The incorporation of wild plant harvest into land-use planning could support local food security while helping to address challenges such as environmental damage, over-harvesting and lack of harvest access. One of the ways to begin the incorporation of plant harvesting is through land-use planning at the municipal and First Nations level. While regional land-use planning is a significant piece of the puzzle, the process takes a great deal of time and resources. So far, out of the eight anticipated plans, only one has been completed, while one is being re-evaluated and six remain incomplete. Among these six is the Whitehorse regional land-use plan. It could take another decade for the regional planning process to reach Whitehorse, so, in the meantime, small-scale land-use projects between the City of Whitehorse, TKC and KDFN may provide the best path forward. The advantage of smaller projects is that they often require less time and money to develop and implement. Small projects may also offer valuable research insights that can support planning on a larger scale.



42 Council of Yukon First Nations, “Definitions” in Umbrella Final Agreement, last updated 1990, accessed June 14, 2019, <https://cyfn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/umbrella-final-agreement.pdf>, 8.

43 Shirley Adamson, personal communication, January 10, 2019.

Collaborative land-use planning in Whitehorse could be a vital avenue for reconciliation in the territory. Partnerships between municipal and Indigenous governments are emerging across Canada, and are proving to be a powerful and achievable way of furthering reconciliation:

“POLICYMAKERS BELIEVE THAT INDIGENOUS-LOCAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS MAY HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO ADDRESS A VARIETY OF PROBLEMS AND ISSUES FACING THESE COMMUNITIES. THESE PARTNERSHIPS ARE ALSO IMPORTANT BECAUSE THEIR GROWING PRESENCE MAY INDICATE THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW, UNDERAPPRECIATED, YET OPTIMISTIC TREND IN THE EVER-PRESENT AND EVOLVING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIGENOUS AND SETTLER COMMUNITIES IN CANADA.”⁴⁴

Action on plant harvesting is one step in addressing the impact of colonial forces on Indigenous food systems in Whitehorse.

Luckily, the City of Whitehorse, TKC and KDFN have already expressed a willingness to work together on shared interests. In 2018, the City of Whitehorse, TKC and KDFN signed a Declaration of Commitment. Through this, they agreed to collaborate on outstanding issues and to seek economic, heritage, social, cultural and spiritual opportunities for partnership.⁴⁵ Plant harvest projects could fit nicely under the objective of the Declaration, as the protection of plant harvest is an outstanding issue and tied to the community’s economic, heritage, social, cultural and spiritual well-being.



While the list of threats to traditional plant harvest is long, it presents an ideal opportunity for collaboration between the various governments in Whitehorse. The City recognizes there is an issue and a need for partnership on the matter: “Where Whitehorse residents might be having an impact on plant harvest areas, especially in areas reached by public trails, the City has a role to play in finding solutions. We need to work with TKC and KDFN to better understand the issues, and figure out the types of strategies that could be effective to address this,” says Erica Beasley, who is responsible for planning with the City of Whitehorse.⁴⁶ Now is an excellent

44 Christopher Alantara and Jen Nelles, *A Quiet Revolution: the Emergence of Indigenous-Local Intergovernmental Partnerships in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 11. 45 Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Declaration of Commitment, 1, last modified June 19, 2018, accessed June 6, 2019, http://www.kwanlindun.com/images/uploads/Declaration_of_Commitment_Scroll.pdf, 1.

45 Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Declaration of Commitment, 1, last modified June 19, 2018, accessed June 6, 2019, http://www.kwanlindun.com/images/uploads/Declaration_of_Commitment_Scroll.pdf, 1.

46 Erica Beasley (City Planner, Planning & Sustainability Services Department, City of Whitehorse), personal communications, June 3, 2019.

time to build on the momentum of the Declaration and the ongoing work occurring within Whitehorse linked to food security, trail management, and regional park planning.

Here are three ways Whitehorse’s municipal and First Nations governments could work together to include wild plant harvest in existing land-use planning:

OPTION ONE

Develop a database of wild plant harvest areas around Whitehorse to inform planning and decision-making.

OPTION TWO

Collaborate on stewardship programs and educational campaigns around wild plant harvest in Whitehorse’s Regional Parks and trails.

OPTION THREE

Allow wild plants to be harvested prior to the development of an area.

Each of these options could be implemented separately or in conjunction with one another, and are examined in detail below.

OPTION ONE

Develop a database of wild plant harvest areas around Whitehorse to inform planning and decision making.

In order to consider wild plant harvest in land-use planning, local governments first need more information about key harvest areas. This issue could be addressed by co-developing a database of known or potential harvest areas around Whitehorse. Databases are commonly used by planners at TKC, KDFN and the City of Whitehorse, and a harvest database could easily build on or feed into



ecological and heritage database projects already underway. For example, data on soil conditions from an ecological database could be used to better understand the health and long term outlook of a given harvest area, while lists of TKC and KDFN traditional harvest sites could be fed into a heritage database. By pooling data, governments are better able to understand the current health of harvest areas around the city. This information allows governments to determine which areas need to be protected for harvest, and which are better for other uses such as residential development or agriculture.

Information collected by a harvest database could be used on independent and collaborative government projects. Before building such a database, governments will need to address concerns around the protection and proper use of Indigenous knowledge within the database. Indigenous plant gatherers may be hesitant to share information if it will be available for use by outside entities; “a lot of the information [on plant harvest] is held close because of the damage that has been done by colonization.”⁴⁷ However, Bennett notes that there is a risk to not sharing as well: “The consensus within the conservation community is that harm happens more often than not due to lack of knowledge.”⁴⁸ The key to making a tool like this is to find an approach that fits the needs of land planners while respecting Indigenous knowledge and peoples.

This concern can be mitigated by having each government ask its citizens to identify important harvest areas, then flow this information into a multi-faceted database, allowing for sensitive harvest information provided by KDFN or TKC citizens to be kept only for use by those governments. Under this approach, the specifics of a given harvest area may be replaced by general markers. This could mean broadening the boundary of a harvest area or removing details about what is harvested. For example, if the citizens of TKC provide information about a cluster of bear root patches, it would show up uncensored in TKC’s version of the database. However, in the versions available to KDFN and the City, TKC could choose to have the patches grouped into a single area and vaguely marked as an important harvest area rather than a bear root area.

Another approach would be to adapt the Habitat Sustainability Prediction method, a process typically used to map out the location and health of specific animals by mapping out their preferred habitat and monitoring distractions to that habitat.⁴⁹ The database could modify this approach by collecting information on the type of environments needed for specific plants, rather than the location of the plants themselves. The database could then create a map of potential harvest areas based on the Whitehorse landscape. Either of these approaches would help to address concerns over the protection of Indigenous knowledge, while still ensuring that knowledge is involved in the land-use planning process.

This option could help land planners monitoring the threat to harvest areas due to development (challenge one), and maintain access to convenient harvest areas (challenge four).

Option one requires the most time, resources and maintenance but would be an incredible asset to government planning and decision-making. The database would also align with the intentions of the Declaration of Commitment among TKC, KDFN and the City of Whitehorse, which calls on the Parties to share knowledge, resources and expertise whenever possible.⁵⁰ Initially, the impact of such a tool might only be felt within the Lands departments of each government, but, hopefully in time, its benefits would be seen by the community. Staff with TKC, KDFN and the City of Whitehorse have

47 Shelby Blackjack, personal communication, January 29, 2019.

48 Bruce Bennett, personal communication, June 12, 2019.

49 John Meikle (Senior Lands and Resources Planner, Kwanlin Dün First Nation), personal communication, June 5, 2019.

50 Declaration of Commitment, 1.

Map of Regional Parks⁵¹





expressed interest in a plant harvest database, especially if it were linked to other database projects. Governments will need to develop policies that accompany the database to ensure the information is stored, shared and used in a safe and respectful manner.

OPTION TWO:

Collaborate on stewardship programs and educational campaigns around wild plant harvest in Whitehorse’s regional parks and trails.

Stewardship programs and educational campaigns can protect the health of harvest resources by tackling issues such as over-harvesting or improper harvest. Part of this protection involves ensuring that new and inexperienced foragers have easy access to information on how to harvest with respect for the environment, Indigenous protocols and fellow foragers. Governments could start by

bringing environmental scientists and Traditional Knowledge keepers together to create harvest guidelines. The next step would be the dissemination of these documents through print and digital education campaigns. Land stewards could be established to help implement these guidelines by engaging with foragers and hosting respectful harvest workshops. Land stewards could also help protect harvest resources by monitoring the health of harvest areas and tracking signs of overuse or improper harvest. This information could then be used to develop a collaborative strategy for promoting restoration and sustainable harvest around the city. Education and stewardship projects like this could start as a pilot project in one of the city’s regional parks, then spread to other areas.

The size and popularity of regional parks and municipal trails make them an ideal place to launch stewardship programs and educational campaigns on wild plant harvest. Altogether,

51 City of Whitehorse, 2010 Official Community Plan, last modified June 29, 2018, accessed July 17, 2019, <https://www.whitehorse.ca/home/showdocument?id=10347>.

regional parks make up 30% of all municipal lands,⁵² and local trails total at least 850 kilometers.⁵³ These vast green spaces and trail networks are easy to access and commonly used by locals or visitors for recreation, cultural practice and subsistence harvest. Parks like Wolf Creek, McIntyre Creek, and Chadburn Lake encompass important traditional plant harvest sites and, therefore, continue to be popular locations for Indigenous and non-Indigenous foragers. The qualities listed above make parks and trails an ideal location to share harvest guidelines and test monitoring programs or revitalization projects. These types of pilot projects would also help the City of Whitehorse fulfill several of the goals set out under the *Regional Parks Plan* (RPP).

After extensive public consultation, the City of Whitehorse developed the RPP in 2014, to establish a ten-year vision and direction for parks management. Collaboration between

municipal and First Nations governments on wild plant harvest would align with key aspects of this plan. One of the plan's central principals is the inclusion of First Nations peoples:

“The City will make special efforts to reach out to First Nations communities to encourage participation in Regional Park planning and management. The City will also explore the possible development and delivery of interpretive activities in partnership with the First Nations community.”⁵⁴

Building on this principal, plant harvest initiatives would meet the goals of RPP objective 3.1.1, which aims to “... engage, train, and support organizations and individual



52 John Glynn-Morris, *Regional Parks Plan*, last modified June 2014, accessed July 17, 2019, <https://www.whitehorse.ca/home/showdocument?id=4452>, 3.

53 Inukshuk Planning and Development, *City of Whitehorse Trail Plan*, last modified 2012, accessed July 17, 2019, <https://www.whitehorse.ca/home/showdocument?id=246>, 29.

54 John Glynn-Morris, 17.

volunteers to design, develop and implement effective stewardship activities such as habitat restoration, heritage restoration, species recovery, and other activities aligned with the *Regional Parks Plan*,” or objective 4.1, which aspires to “... identify, inventory and protect significant cultural and traditional-use sites within Regional Parks, and to collaborate [with First Nations] on initiatives of mutual interest.”⁵⁵ The City could also work with TKC, KDFN and the plant harvesting community to work towards objective 4.4.1, which calls for a strategy to incorporate local and traditional knowledge in parks planning and management.⁵⁶ Finally, one of the desired outcomes of the plan is to make sure “parks are safe, enjoyable and accessible for residents to explore their culture and their connection to the land,” so, the City could use the health of wild plants and plant harvest activity to measure the success of the RPP.⁵⁷ If done well, collaborative education and stewardship on plant harvest would fulfill the goals of the RPP and help promote respectful harvest both in parks and other wild areas around the city.

Plant harvest education and stewardship on city trails also aligns with the Management Goals for Multi-use Trails, laid out under the City of *Whitehorse Trail Plan*. These goals include the protection of natural resources, such as plant communities and heritage sites, through signage, monitoring and restoration.⁵⁸ Another goal of the plan is to provide high quality user experience for a wide variety of trail users.⁵⁹ Consideration for plant harvest around trails could help reduce trail conflict and nurture a



positive culture, which is one of the *Trail Plan* implementation objectives.⁶⁰ Programs could be built in the model of the Tān Tágà Shro project which brought KDFN, TKC, YG and the City of Whitehorse together to design trail signage that acknowledge the Indigenous history and use of the trails around Wolf Creek.⁶¹

Activities under option two have the potential not only to fulfill the objective of the RPP and the *Trail Plan*, but also to fulfill shared obligations under the final agreements of TKC and KDFN. While the City is not a signatory on the final agreements, it does a great deal of planning for lands owned by YG, which is a signatory. Thus, the City considers YG’s obligations under the agreements when planning around lands held by YG. For

55 John Glynn-Morris, 23-27.

56 Ibid., 23-27.

57 Ibid., 12.

58 Inukshuk Planning and Development, 30-31.

59 Ibid., 31.

60 Ibid., 31.

61 Government of Yukon, Environment, “Tān Tágà Shro Trail at Wolf Creek Campground Open for Use,” news release, June 6, 2019, accessed July 17, 2019, <https://yukon.ca/en/news/tan-taga-shro-trail-wolf-creek-campground-open-use>.



example, regional parks are on lands held by YG, but the City is responsible for land-use planning in these areas. Traditional Indigenous plant harvest areas could be deemed “Heritage Resources” under the final agreements; therefore, planning around these areas would connect to the following obligations:

- ▶ 13.1.1.8 to identify and mitigate the impact of development upon Heritage Resources through integrated resource management including land use planning and development assessment processes;
- ▶ 13.1.1.9 to facilitate research into, and the management of, Heritage Resources of special interest to Yukon First Nations;

- ▶ 13.1.1.10: to incorporate, where practicable, the related traditional knowledge of a Yukon First Nation in Government research reports and displays which concern Heritage Resources of that Yukon First Nation.⁶²

The City of Whitehorse, TKC and KDFN could draw support from the federal and territorial governments if this option is pursued under implementation of the final agreements.

This option could help Land Planners confront over and improper harvest (challenge two), and maintain access to convenient harvest areas (challenge four).

62 Council of Yukon First Nations, “Chapter 13: Heritage” in Umbrella Final Agreement, last updated 1990, accessed June 6, 2019, <https://cyfn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/umbrella-final-agreement.pdf> 121-130.

The time and resources required to implement option two depend greatly on how governments choose to pursue it. The benefit of this option is that it can be customized to meet the needs and restrictions of each government. Implementation could be as simple as creating and distributing pamphlets on respectful harvest, or as complex as dedicated staff for stewardship and harvest monitoring systems. This approach also has plenty of opportunities for engagement and relationship-building in the community. In contrast to option one, this option would likely be felt by the community more directly.

Of those interviewed for this study, members of the plant harvesting community favour this option above all others. Governments could seek to lower implementation costs by using volunteers from the plant harvesting community to distribute harvest guidelines and monitor the health of harvest resources. This option could be built into future planning documents, such as the individual plans for each of the Regional Parks and both the upcoming North and South Whitehorse Trail Plans.

OPTION THREE:

Allow wild plants to be harvested prior to the development of an area.

When local governments are looking to develop lands within Whitehorse, they can support the plant harvesting community by inviting other governments, organizations or individuals involved in plant harvesting onto the site prior to construction. Including plant harvesting in the early phases of development provides foragers with a chance to pull up important roots, strip bark and collect lichen

wasted. Furthermore, these groups would be able to collect without the worry of over-harvesting or harming the plants, as the area would soon be developed. This also means that they can amass more plants in a single harvest than usual. The surplus harvest could then be offered to elders, single-parent homes, and others who might not be able to get out and harvest for themselves. Seeds could also be collected and used for the restoration or replacement of local harvest areas.

When development is taking place on land owned by YG, a review by the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board is usually required, which is an opportunity for municipal and First Nations governments to identify wild plant resources and make recommendations on pre-development harvesting.⁶³ Those recommendations could then be included in the development permits or any other authorizations issued.

Agreements issued by YG are sometimes used in which contractors are required to cut and stock wood from development sites, after which, the public is notified to come and take the wood for free. Similar agreements could be contemplated for the harvesting of other resources. However, this might be more complicated, as it would involve the public going onto development areas to collect. Timing also presents a challenge, as most development projects are usually reviewed over the winter, with financing taking place right before the start of construction season in early spring.⁶⁴ Construction typically begins before many popular wild plant foods, such as mushrooms and berries, are ready for harvest. Projects on this timeline and scale leave little

63 Erica Beasley, personal communication, February 4, 2019.

64 City of Whitehorse, 2010 Official Community Plan, 41.

opportunity for the coordination of plant harvest, and may have fewer plants to offer.

This option could help land planners temporarily elevate the lower harvest counts caused by all four of the challenges.

Option three has the potential to cost governments the least amount of money, but may present the most risk and procedural difficulty. In practice, this option could parallel the local use of recovery archeology (the practice of extracting archeological items before development). This approach would provide a much-needed boost to the community's food and medicine stores, reduce waste and maximize the use of the proposed site. However, developers may be hesitant to support this option as it has the potential to cause delays, although these are likely to be minor with this type of harvest; even limited time given for harvest prior to development would be better than none. If developers do support this option, it could strengthen their relationship with First Nations and plant harvesting communities.

Implementing this option would require changes in government administration and regulations. The impact would likely be felt most by the offices responsible for this administration and by the developers. Plant foragers would likely experience the benefit of additional harvest opportunities, but this option does not remedy long-term threats to plant harvest. Options one and two have a better chance at supporting the long-term health of plants and plant harvest.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The three options described above are not mutually exclusive and could be implemented in conjunction with each other. For example, a harvest database could be used to help identify resources for harvest prior to development. Similarly, park stewardship programs could be used to collect information for the database so the health of harvest areas in the parks could be contrasted with those elsewhere. However, if only one option can be implemented at this time, I recommend the governments of TKC, KDFN and the City of Whitehorse select option two and collaborate on stewardship programs and education campaigns in Whitehorse's regional parks and trails. This option has the most potential to deliver positive outcomes for wild plant harvest and provides greater opportunity to involve the community. This option can also be initiated on a small scale and expanded over time, which makes it more accessible than the other options.

IMPLEMENTATION

If implemented, I recommend the parties draw on Indigenous legal traditions to inform planning, policy and education around traditional plant harvest in regional parks and trails. Legal traditions have the potential to inform sustainable harvest and strengthen community relations:

“TRADITIONAL LAW IS VALUABLE BECAUSE IT HELPS US RESPECT WHAT WE HAVE AND IT HELPS US RESPECT EACH OTHER. THOSE LAWS ARE MISSING, I THINK IT'S TIME THE ELDERS AND THE YOUNG ONES OPEN THAT DOOR AND BRING IT BACK... ONE OF OUR TRADITIONAL LAWS IS SHARING, EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW, IF YOU DON'T SHARE, WHAT YOU HAVE WILL DRY UP.”⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Dianne Smith, personal communication, December 9, 2018.

Legal traditions have the potential to inform sustainable harvest and strengthen community relations, but they need to be brought to the forefront. Shirley Adamson explains:

“THE WHITEHORSE AREA LEADING DOWN TO LAKE LABERGE, TÀA’ AN MĀN, IS UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE WOLF CLAN. NOW IN PRE-CONTACT TIMES THIS MEANT THE WOLF CLAN LEADER OR MATRIARCH WOULD BE THE DECISION-MAKER ABOUT HOW THIS AREA WOULD BE USED, HARVESTED. NOW SO MANY PEOPLE LIVE HERE, INCLUDING NON-ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND PEOPLE FROM OTHER FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES, A LOT OF THIS HISTORY IS LOST TO THE OVERWHELMING INFORMATION THAT OTHERS BRING HERE.”⁶⁶

If brought back into regional parks in a meaningful way, traditional harvest law could be used to make space for the voices of youth, women and elders, and could empower all park users to act as land stewards. For example, to apply the Law of Sharing, workshops on plant harvest in the parks could ask participants to donate part of their first harvest to organizations that can distribute them to those in need.

CONCLUSION

The protection of healthy harvest areas close to the city and support for plant harvest is vital to maintaining Whitehorse’s cultural identity and food systems. Lack of local, sustainable and culturally relevant food systems threaten the prosperity of all

Whitehorse residents. With a population of 31,808, Whitehorse is home to more than three quarters of the territory’s residents.⁶⁷ Like most of the territory, the city relies primarily on food brought up from the south by way of the Alaska Highway.⁶⁸ This heavy dependency on southern foods comes with great risk. For example, in the summer of 2012, the Alaska Highway closed unexpectedly, leaving the territory’s grocery stores empty in a matter of days.⁶⁹ Residents of Whitehorse and Yukon are eager to change this dynamic: “food sovereignty goes deeper into the issue of food and what it means to a people. It speaks to the fact that communities want to look after each other, defining their own vision of food security as well as have more agency within the food system. As northerners we do not want to rely on the South to provide us our basic human right to food.”⁷⁰ To improve food sovereignty and security, Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents of Whitehorse will need to work together on joint approaches for responsible land use and food harvesting practices. It is crucial that the harvest of wild plants be considered in these discussions. Yet, wild plant harvest is not only about human subsistence, it is also about maintaining a reciprocal and respectful relationship with the land.

Dianne Smith says, “all governments need to know who you are and where you come from, but most importantly they need to know the land, the animals, and the plant citizens. The people, each of us have a role to play, to sustain what we have.”⁷¹

66 Shirley Adamson, personal communication, January 10, 2019

67 Government of Yukon, Population Report: Fourth Quarter Report.

68 Government of the Yukon, Energy, Mines and Resources, Local Food Strategy for Yukon: Encouraging the Production and Consumption of Yukon-grown Food 2016-2021, last modified 2016, accessed July 17, 2019, <http://www.emr.gov.yk.ca/agriculture/pdf/local-food-strategy-for-yukon.pdf>, 5.

69 Ibid.

70 Jody Buttler Walker, Norma Kassi, Katelyn Friendship and Molly Pratt, “Stories in Yukon Food Security,” Northern Public Affairs 1, no. 5 (April 2017), 37.

71 Dianne Smith, personal communication, December 9, 2018.

“

All governments need to know who you are and where you come from, but most importantly they need to know the land, the animals, and the plant citizens. The people, each of us have a role to play, to sustain what we have.”

In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Professor Robin Wall Kimmerer, a member of the Potawatomi Nation, explains how sweetgrass, a plant long used by Indigenous peoples for medicine and weaving, has been disappearing from the Great Lakes region. She details how one study on the issue revealed that the plant has become dependent on human disruptions to stimulate growth, and that it is struggling to thrive in areas where it is no longer being harvested for cultural use.⁷² Wall Kimmerer notes that this finding aligns with the observations of traditional knowledge keepers in the area: “if we use the plant respectfully it will stay with us and flourish. If we ignore it, it will go away. If you don’t give it respect it will leave us.”⁷³ Echoing these knowledge keepers, she explains that “... people can take too much and exceed the capacity of the plants to share again.”⁷⁴ However, by taking too little, the community risks far more: “if we allow traditions to die, and relationships to fade, the land will suffer.”⁷⁵ While the variety of sweetgrass discussed by Wall Kimmerer is not native to Whitehorse, the findings covered in her book have relevance to the community.

Continued access to plant harvest is key to maintaining the community’s culture, but it may also be part of maintaining the health of our lands and ecosystems. Local plant foragers have remarked on a decline in bear root. While the plant is less popular today, it used to be a valuable starch for Indigenous harvesters. As the name indicates, the root is also an important food source for bears. The decline of bear root around Whitehorse has not been measured or studied; however, it is possible it is no longer benefiting from the compulsory growth stimulated by human harvest.⁷⁶ This is speculative, but it is also possible that bear root is disappearing from the area because human activity has prevented bears from harvesting the plant close to Whitehorse. As a community, we must look to harvesting patterns to gain a better understanding of our impact on the land and responsibilities to it. However, in order to gain these insights, we must first look seriously at protecting plant harvest opportunities. Without proper protections and considerations for wild plant harvest, our community risks losing a valuable tool in maintaining healthy ecosystems and building better food systems.

Wall Kimmerer stresses that “not all plants are the same; each has its own way of regenerating. Some, unlike sweetgrass, are easily harmed by harvest,” and that it is important to know each plant well enough to understand this difference.⁷⁷

72 Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*, (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2013), 165.

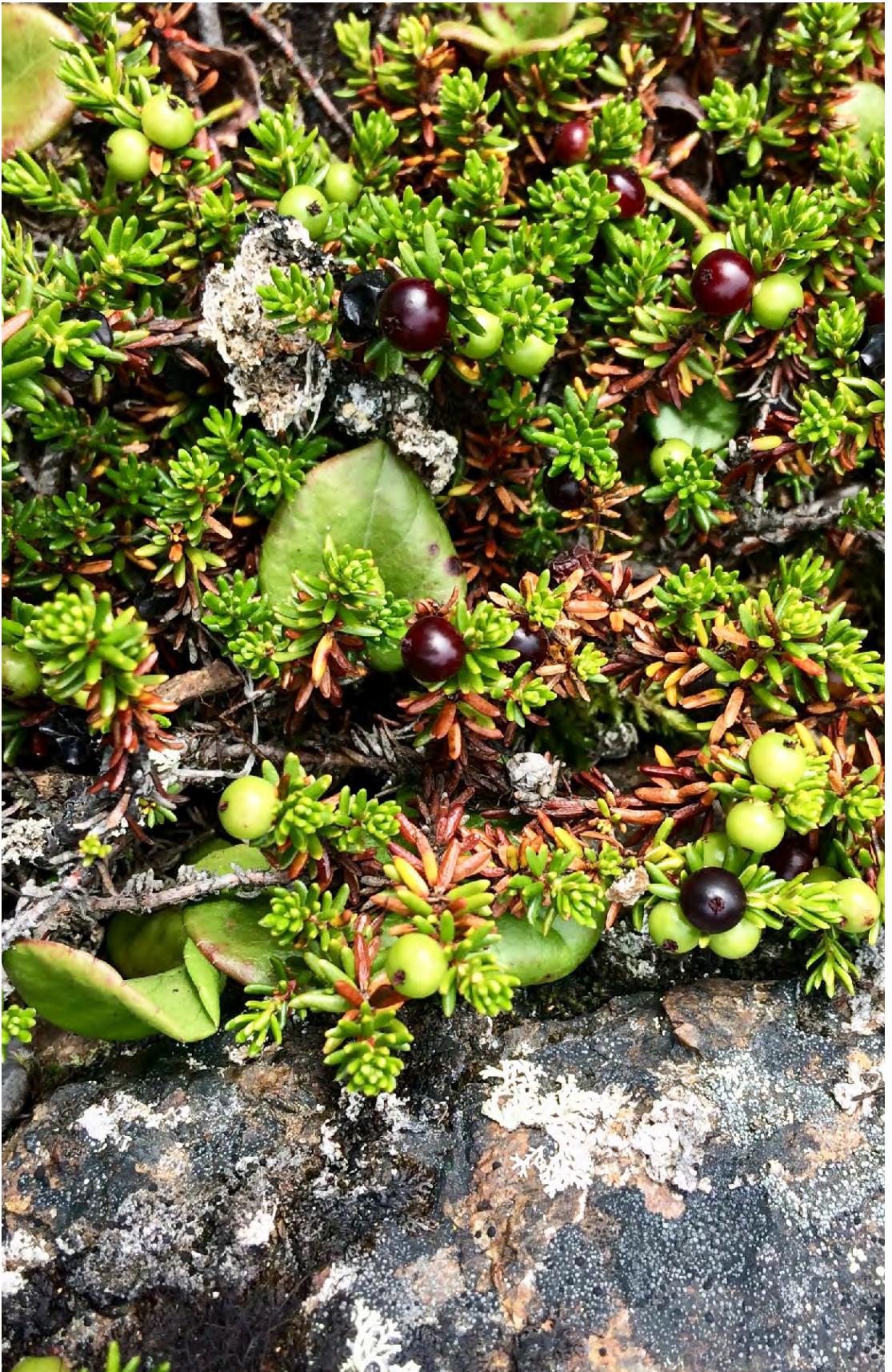
73 *Ibid.*, 157.

74 *Ibid.*, 166.

75 *Ibid.*, 166.

76 *Ibid.*, 166.

77 *Ibid.*, 166.



REFERENCE LIST

- Alantara, Christopher and Jen Nelles. *A Quiet Revolution: The Emergence of Indigenous-Local Intergovernmental Partnerships in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016.
- City of Whitehorse. *2010 Official Community Plan*. Last modified June 29, 2018. Accessed July 17, 2019. <https://www.whitehorse.ca/home/showdocument?id=10347>.
- City of Whitehorse. *Final Whistle Bend Master Plan Concept, Administrative Report*. Whitehorse: City of Whitehorse, 2009.
- City of Whitehorse. *Local Food & Agricultural Strategy Public Survey #2: What We Heard*. Whitehorse: City of Whitehorse, 2017.
- Council of Yukon First Nations. *Umbrella Final Agreement*. Last updated 1990. Accessed June 14, 2019, <https://cyfn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/umbrella-final-agreement.pdf>.
- Buttler Walker, Jody, Norma Kassi, Katelyn Friendship and Molly Pratt. "Stories in Yukon Food Security". *Northern Public Affairs* 1, no. 5. April 2017, 33-38.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada. "American ginseng." Accessed at "Trade in protected species: publications." *Government of Canada*. Last modified July 28, 2017. Accessed June 13, 2019. <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/convention-international-trade-endangered-species/publications/american-ginseng.html>
- Forest Resources Act*. S.Y. 2008, c.15, s.29.4E.
- Genest, Michele. *The Boreal Herbal: Adventures in Northern Cooking*. Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing, 2010.
- Glynn-Morris, John. General Consulting. *Regional Parks Plan*. Last modified June 2014. Accessed July 17, 2019, <https://www.whitehorse.ca/home/showdocument?id=4452>.
- Government of the Yukon, Energy, Mines and Resources. *Local Food Strategy for Yukon: Encouraging the Production and Consumption of Yukon-grown Food 2016-2021*. Last modified 2016. Accessed July 17, 2019. <http://www.emr.gov.yk.ca/agriculture/pdf/local-food-strategy-for-yukon.pdf>.
- Government of Yukon, Environment. "Tän Tágà Shro trail at Wolf Creek campground open for use". News release, June 6, 2019. Accessed July 17, 2019. <https://yukon.ca/en/news/tan-taga-shro-trail-wolf-creek-campground-open-use>.

- Government of the Yukon, Yukon Bureau of Statistics. *Population Report: Fourth Quarter Report*. Last modified 2018. Accessed July 17, 2019. http://www.eco.gov.yk.ca/stats/pdf/populationQ4_2018.pdf.
- Government of Yukon. 2019. Population Report - Second Quarter, 2019. Whitehorse: Department of Finance, Yukon Bureau of Statistics.
- Grey, Beverley. *The Boreal Herbal*. Whitehorse: Aroma Borealis Press, 2011.
- Henry, Greg. "Impacts of Vegetation Change in the Canadian Arctic: Local and Regional Assessments" in *ArcticNet Annual Research Compendium (2013-14)*, (2014): 9. Accessed June 13, 2019. http://www.arcticnet.ulaval.ca/pdf/compendium2013-14/arctic_vegetation_2013-14.pdf.
- Inukshuk Planning and Development. *City of Whitehorse Trail Plan*. Last modified 2012. Accessed July 17, 2019, <https://www.whitehorse.ca/home/showdocument?id=246>.
- Kwanlin Dün First Nation. *Declaration of Commitment*. Last modified June 19, 2018. Accessed June 6, 2019. http://www.kwanlindun.com/images/uploads/Declaration_of_Commitment_Scroll.pdf.
- Kwanlin Dün First Nation. *Kwanlin Dün First Nation Traditional Territory Land Vision*. Whitehorse: Economic Development, Department and Lands Department, 2017.
- Kwanlin Dün First Nation. *Land and Resources Act*. Part 13, s. 85.C.
- Wall Kimmerer, Robin. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2013.
- McLaughlin, Les. "Whitehorse Rapids Dam". Accessed at "Yukon Nuggets," *Hougen Group of Companies*. Accessed June 6, 2019. <http://hougengroup.com/yukon-history/yukon-nuggets/whitehorse-rapids-dam/>.
- Natcher, David, Shea Shirley, Thierry Rodon and Chris Southcott. "Constraints to Wildlife Harvesting Among Aboriginal Communities in Alaska and Canada". *Food Security* 8, no. 6. December 2016), 1-15.
- Stephenson, Eleanor and George Wenzel. "Food politics: Finding a place for country food in Canada's Northern food policy". *Northern Public Affairs* 1, no. 5. March, 2017, 49-51.
- Yukon Hospitals. *Traditional Foods Program*. Last modified May 5, 2019. Accessed June 1, 2019. <https://yukonhospitals.ca/yukon-hospital-corporation/traditional-food-program>.

Tina Piulia DeCouto

Uncomfortable Inuk - Exploring Inuit
Qaujimajatuqangit





than any other group in Canada. For example, seven out of 10 Inuit children are reported to go to bed hungry²⁴ (see Figure 2) and the high school completion rate for Inuit is the lowest in the country at 40%.²⁵ If families are struggling to make ends meet, it interrupts their ability to foster our values or contribute to the betterment of our community.

This challenge is supported by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (see Figure 3), a well-known theory that suggests people are motivated to fulfill basic needs before moving on to other more advanced needs. In Maslow's Hierarchy, the most basic needs are physiological, which include food, water, sleep, and warmth.²⁶ CBC recently reported that Nunavut has a waiting list of nearly 5,000 people for housing, and that with the current level of federal investment in the area, it will take 60 years to house all those in need.²⁷ It is no wonder that young Inuit continue to have decreasing access to both Elders and our language, when the expectation remains for language and Inuit-specific learning (learning through, and application of, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit) to be through our "homes" and we don't even have enough homes to house all those in need.

INUKTUT IN GOVERNMENT

Given that language is intricately tied to culture and the transmission of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, it is important that we look at Inuktitut in the workplace.²⁸ The Nunavut Labour Force Analysis is an obligation of the GN that undertakes an analysis of the labour force in Nunavut, including language in the workplace. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Robert Phillipson and Robert Dunbar highlight that the Nunavut Inuit Labour Force

analysis shows that 20% of Inuit children go to bed hungry (see Figure 2). The high school completion rate for Inuit is the lowest in the country at 40%. If families are struggling to make ends meet, it interrupts their ability to foster our values or contribute to the betterment of our community.

This challenge is supported by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (see Figure 3), a well-known theory that suggests people are motivated to fulfill basic needs before moving on to other more advanced needs. In Maslow's Hierarchy, the most basic needs are physiological, which include food, water, sleep, and warmth.²⁶ CBC recently reported that Nunavut has a waiting list of nearly 5,000 people for housing, and that with the current level of federal investment in the area, it will take 60 years to house all those in need.²⁷ It is no wonder that young Inuit continue to have decreasing access to both Elders and our language, when the expectation remains for language and Inuit-specific learning (learning through, and application of, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit) to be through our "homes" and we don't even have enough homes to house all those in need.

analysis shows that 20% of Inuit children go to bed hungry (see Figure 2). The high school completion rate for Inuit is the lowest in the country at 40%. If families are struggling to make ends meet, it interrupts their ability to foster our values or contribute to the betterment of our community.

ᐃᓄᓂᓂᓂ ᓂᐸᓂᓂ

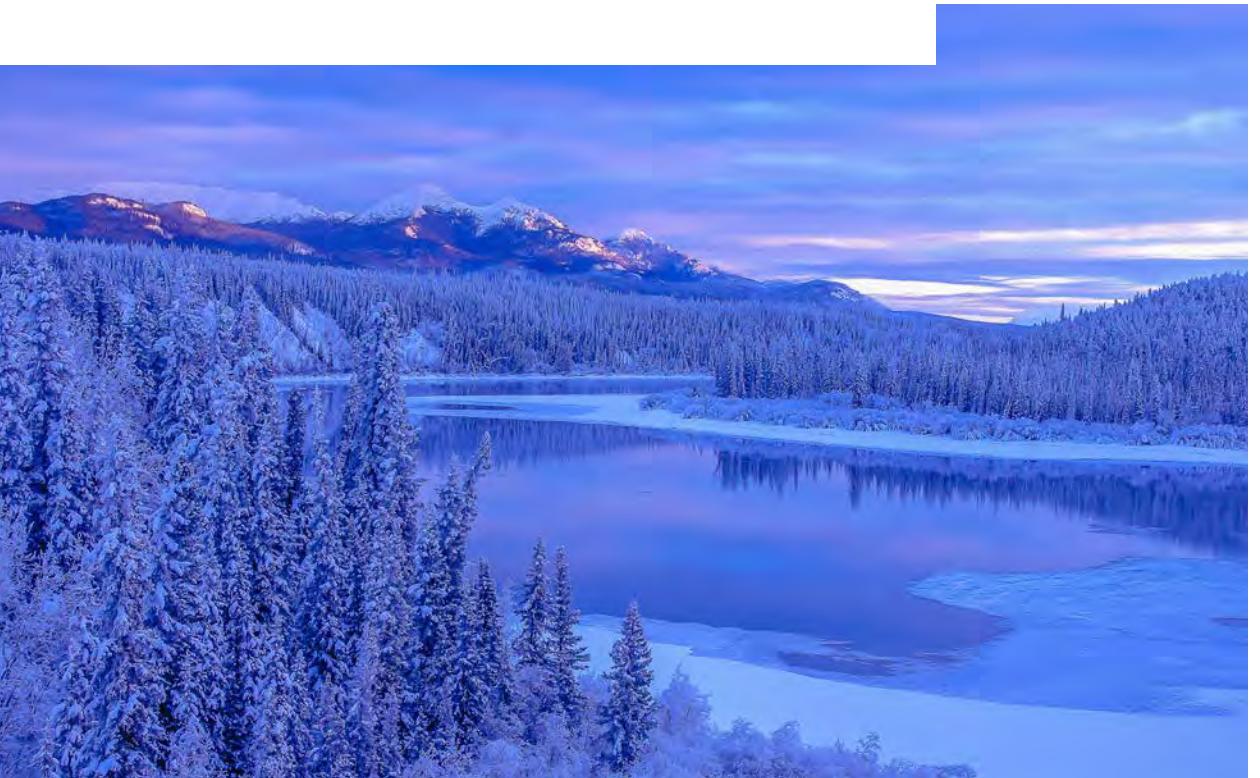
Given that language is intricately tied to culture and the transmission of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, it is important that we look at Inuktitut in the workplace.²⁸ The Nunavut Labour Force Analysis is an obligation of the GN that undertakes an analysis of the labour force in Nunavut, including language in the workplace. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Robert Phillipson and Robert Dunbar highlight that the Nunavut Inuit Labour Force

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Nunavut, Pinasuaqtavut : That Which We've Set Out to Do : Our Hopes and Dreams for Nunavut (Iqaluit, Nunavut: Government of Nunavut, 1999; Nunavut; Is it Working?, accessed July 30, 2019, <https://nunavutisitworking.weebly.com/the-bathurst-mandate.html>.
- 2 Frank Tester, Shirley Tagalik, and Joe Karetak, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit What Inuit Have Always Known to be True (Nova Scotia and Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2017), (178).
- 3 Tester Tagalik, and Karetak,), 121
- 4 Alexina Kublu and Mick Mallon, "Our Language, Our Selves," in Nunavut '99 (Iqaluit, Nunavut: Nortext Multimedia Incorporated and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, 1999), accessed July 30, 2019, <http://nunavut.com/nunavut99/english/our.html>.
- 5 Seth J. Schwartz, and Jennifer B Unger. "Biculturalism and Context: What Is Biculturalism, and When Is It Adaptive?: Commentary on Mistry and Wu." Human development vol. 53,1 (2010), 26-32. doi:10.1159/000268137, accessed July 30, 2019, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2840244/#B23>.
- 6 Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, First Canadians, Canadians First: National Strategy on Inuit Education 2011, (Ottawa: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2011), . 1.
- 7 Statistics Canada, Government of Canada, Census Provide, 2016 Census, Nunavut [Economic region], Nunavut and Nunavut [Territory], (2016), accessed July 30, 2019, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?B1=All&Code1=6210&Code2=62&Data=Count&Geo1=ER&Geo2=PR&Lang=E&SearchPR=01&SearchText=Nunavut&SearchType=Begins&TABID=1>.
- 8 Aluki Kotierk, "On the Inuktit Language, the Inuit May Have Been too Welcoming", Macleans, Feb 22, 2018, accessed Feb 15, 2019, <https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/on-the-inuktit-language-the-inuit-may-have-been-too-welcoming/>.
- 9 "Robert's Rules of Order," Wikipedia, accessed August 9, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert%27s_Rules_of_Order.
- 10 Willie Ermine, "The Ethical Space of Engagement", Indigenous Law Journal. 6 (2006), accessed February 9, 2019, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268043253_The_Ethical_Space_of_Engagement.
- 11 Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Task Force, The First Annual Report of the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) Task Force, (Iqaluit: Government of Nunavut, 2002),.
- 12 Nunavut, Pinasuaqtavut Nunavut; Is it Working?.,
- 13 Nunavut, Tamapta: Building Our Future Together: The Government of Nunavut's Action Plan (Iqaluit, Nunavut: Government of Nunavut, 2009;., accessed July 30, 2019; <https://assembly.nu.ca/library/GNedocs/2009/000201-e.pdf>
- 14 Nunavut, Sivumut Abluqta: Stepping Forward Together (Iqaluit, Nunavut: Government of Nunavut, 2014;., accessed July 30, 2019; <https://assembly.nu.ca/library/GNedocs/2014/001175-e.pdf>
- 15 Nunavut, Turaaqtavut (Iqaluit, Nunavut: Government of Nunavut, 2019;., accessed July 30, 2019
- 16 Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Task Force, 3-4.
- 17 Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Task Force 18-21.
- 18 Tester, Tagalik and Karetak.
- 19 Tester, Tagalik, and Karetak, XIII.
- 20 Tester, Tagalik and Karetak XIII-XIV.
- 21 Nunavut, Towards a Representative Public Service., Statistics of the Public Service within the Government of Nunavut as of: December 31, 2018, (February, 2019), accessed on February 16, 2019, https://gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/files/Finance/IEPstats/trps_2018-2019_q3_english_0.pdf, 8.
- 22 Janet Tamalik McGrath, "Isumaksaqsirutigijakka: Conversations with Aupilaarjuk : Towards a Theory of Inuktitut Knowledge Renewal", (PhD or master's thesis, Carleton University, 2011), 119.
- 23 McGrath. 127.

Julianna Scramstad

Learning to Listen: On Racism and
Power in Yukon Education



CONTENTS

188	Acknowledgements
189	Problem
190	Background
195	Options
196	Analysis
201	Recommendation
203	Support
205	Implementation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, thank you to Samantha Dawson for naming the streaming and systemic racism of her own Yukon education experience, and for calling for teachers to learn about colonization and decolonization. Your words informed this work.

I would like to thank the many people who spoke to me about education in the Yukon, including Tosh Southwick, Nicole Cross, Melanie Bennett, Rose Sellars, Ken Hodgins, Robin Bradasch and those who spoke to me anonymously. My hope is that this work honours your voices and your time. Thank you for all the work you do toward greater justice, safety, and wholeness for Yukon First Nation students.

Thank you to Melaina Sheldon for believing in each of us and in the transformative potential of anger.

Thank you to our group mentor, Tony Penikett, for sharing your depth of wisdom about the North with our cohort.

Thank you to Ken Hodgins for calling me to name the macro issues at play.

Thank you to Sidney Maddison for instilling in me a deep sense of social justice and a commitment to equality, Amanda Buffalo for feeding me and connecting me to key people, and Sabbir Ahmed for your listening and support over the course of months. Thank you to my dad, Rick Scramstad, for believing in the “brilliance” of my original idea and for pushing me to see this through. I love you.

Finally, love and thanks to the OSG and all my fellow fellows.

I was born in the Yukon, and went to school on Kwanlin Dün and Ta'an Kwäch'än territory. I finished school without knowing the history or political present of this land. I didn't know how I, a white settler, was connected with First Nation peers through treaty relationship and shared responsibilities.

As I was training to be a teacher at a southern university, I struggled with the way we were historicizing residential schools without uprooting (or even acknowledging) what continues to be a colonial education system. Interactive exercises and assignments about residential school told a story of pain and trauma that managed to obscure the resistance, existence and joy of present-tense Indigenous people. Even in my First Nation, Inuit and Métis elective, we didn't even begin to talk about ongoing political inequities.

These silences leave important truths out of the room, and amount to a deep failure of relationship. Ongoing colonial power inequities are replicated by these silences, and they violate the wholeness of each of us. Public school is where we learn how to be together.

After my eight months of teacher training, I had the basic qualifications to be certified as a Yukon teacher. Often, new teachers can be hired into rural Yukon communities. However, I did not feel I had been equipped with the requisite skills or knowledge to play anything but a colonizing role.

PROBLEM

I set out to explore what I thought was a sufficiently narrow problem: frequently, new teachers work in rural Yukon communities briefly. Yukon government staffing protocol implicitly encourages a stay of only three years in rural Yukon communities. I saw the use of the communities to train new teachers as compromising relationships and teaching quality for rural and Indigenous students.

Interviews I conducted confirmed that new teachers were often “just paying off loans”¹ or using the communities as “training grounds.”² As I spoke to Yukon teachers, they questioned the goal of working on retention in rural communities. Teachers leave for a variety of reasons – family reunification, high school for their children, escaping isolation, pursuing new opportunities – and they should have the freedom to relocate. Research also indicates that from small northern communities “attrition is inevitable.”³

I switched gears, and started exploring how to recruit and support teachers who, when placed in a community, can follow the community's lead and who can disrupt colonial violence. Potential solutions included stronger induction and mentorship, growing the First Nation Programs and Partnerships unit inside the government of Yukon, or changing certification standards to require more northern and First Nations knowledge. Ultimately, though, the problem is that the power in each of these scenarios was still squarely held by Yukon Government.

1 Discussion with the author, June 4, 2019.

2 Interview with the author, February 10, 2019.

3 Dawn F. Burleigh, “Perspectives on Teachers' Work in One Ontario Remote First Nation Community” (PhD thesis, The University of Western Ontario, 2016), accessed September 9, 2018, 53, <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5360&context=etd>.



BACKGROUND

Church-run, government-funded residential schools attended by Yukon First Nation students ran until 1975.⁴ As we know, children were removed from their families “not to educate them, but primarily to break their link to their culture and identity”⁵ as part of an overarching settler colonial effort to remove Indigenous people from the land.⁶ Indeed, Sara Jane Essau from Moosehide is quoted as saying to the Bishop in charge of the Choutla School in Carcross that “when they have been too long at school they won’t have anything to do with us; they want to be with white people; they grow away from us.”⁷

There is a long history of resistance to colonial education efforts by Yukon First Nations people. Both students and families resisted residential school. Parents refused to send their children, people like Sara Jane Essau communicated their concern, and children ran away. In 1973, the Council for Yukon Indians published *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, naming inequity in dealings with white people, problematizing the erasure of pre-contact histories and knowledge, and calling for local control of schools:

EVEN THE NEW CHANGES THEY ARE SUGGESTING WILL BE OF LITTLE USE, UNLESS THESE CHANGES ARE MADE BY THE INDIAN PEOPLE THEMSELVES. IT WILL BE THE SAME PROGRAM WITH THE SAME RESULTS – AN ALMOST ONE HUNDRED PERCENT DROP-OUT RATE.⁸

TOGETHER TODAY FOR OUR CHILDREN TOMORROW

4 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada’s Residential Schools: the Inuit and Northern Experience*, v.2 (2015), accessed December 4, 2019, http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Final%20Reports/Volume_2_Inuit_and_Northern_English_Web.pdf

5 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation*, 2015, accessed December 8, 2019, http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Final%20Reports/Principles_English_Web.pdf, 6.

6 Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang, “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor,” *Decolonization: Indigenization, Education and Society* 1, no.1 (September 2012), accessed December 8, 2019, <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630/15554>, 9.

7 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada’s Residential Schools: the Inuit and Northern Experience*, 65.

8 Council for Yukon Indians, *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, 1973, accessed December 8, 2019, http://www.eco.gov.yk.ca/pdf/together_today_for_our_children_tomorrow.pdf, 20.

In 1973, Yukon First Nations said “We demand the right to plan our future.”⁹ Forty-six years later, there is a Yukon graduation rate of only 49% for First Nation students, as compared to 81% for non-First Nation students.¹⁰

Yukon Government currently administers education in the Yukon for both First Nation and non-First Nation students. The General Tuition Agreement of 1964 transferred responsibility for First Nation education from the federal government to the territory.¹¹ The stated intent of this agreement was to ensure “the same educational opportunities and instruction” across the Yukon.¹² There was no consultation with Yukon First Nations about this transfer.¹³

These are some of the features of how Yukon Education recruits, trains, certifies and supports teachers currently:

RECRUITMENT

Yukon Government currently recruits teachers through an online database. It also hosts a website cheerfully outlining the advantages of teaching in the Yukon: “Yukon Education is seeking teachers who wish to live in the unparalleled beauty of Canada’s northwest.”¹⁴ Job postings usually contain a line requiring that applicants have “Knowledge of and sensitivity to the culture and aspirations of

Yukon First Nations and a culturally diverse student population.”¹⁵ Several First Nations have negotiated more involvement. In one community, several employees of the First Nation sit on the hiring committee, as is now protocol there.¹⁶

INDUCTION

Induction includes mentorship, training, supportive leadership and time set aside for collaboration or planning. Yukon First Nation New Teacher Orientation is currently an optional, two-day workshop that teachers can access before they start the school year.¹⁷ In August 2016, 46 new teachers participated. This workshop was created by Yukon Government’s First Nation Programs and Partnerships (FNPP) together with the Yukon First Nation Curriculum Working Group. The orientation takes place on the land, and consists of the Blanket Exercise, which is a participatory exercise detailing the history of Yukon-specific colonial violence, and some coaching on what to expect in their new positions.¹⁸ Some First Nations communities hold their own orientation sessions. Yukon teachers are compelled to take Yukon First Nations 101, offered by Yukon College.¹⁹ There is also a handbook created by First Nations Programs and Partnerships, containing information on local languages and traditional territories, working with elders, building relationships with community, connecting to curriculum and introducing FNPP staff.²⁰

9 Council for Yukon Indians, 24.

10 Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2019 June Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Yukon Legislative Assembly: *Kindergarten Through Grade 12 Education in Yukon—Department of Education*, 2019, accessed December 8, 2019, https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/yuk_201906_e_43400.html#.

11 Discussion with the author, September 16, 2019; Ken Hodgins, Digital discussion with the author, June 2019; Tony Penikett, email to the author, June 28, 2019; Discussion with the author, July 17, 2019; Discussion with the author, February 11, 2019.

12 Education Reform Project, *Yukon Education Reform Project Final Report*, 2007, accessed December 8, 2019, http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/pdf/publications/ed_reform_report.pdf, B.4.

13 Discussion with the author, September 16, 2019; Yukon First Nations Education Directorate, Yukon First Nation Control of First Nation Education: The Epic Journey, last modified September 16, 2019, accessed October 14, 2019, no longer online; Hodgins.

14 Yukon Education, *Yukon Education*, accessed December 8, 2019, <https://yukoneducation.simplification.com/WLSBLogin.aspx>.

15 Yukon Education, “19 T185a - ST ELIAS COMMUNITY SCHOOL - .90 FTE - Temporary - Math 8, Math 9, Physical Education 1, Distance Learning,” *Apply to Education*, posted January 8, 2020, accessed January 26, 2020, https://yukoneducation.simplification.com/Applicant/AttJobPosting.aspx?JOB_POSTING_ID=8a299885-fbed-47d7-bcf0-99f9a0757249.

16 Interview with the author, February 12, 2019.

17 Discussion with the author, June 4, 2019.

18 Discussion with the author, February 11, 2019.

19 Discussion with the author, February 11, 2019.

20 First Nations Programs and Partnerships, *Yukon First Nations Resources for Teachers 2019/2020*, accessed January 26, 2020,

CERTIFICATION

To be certified as a teacher in the Yukon, teachers can either have trained at the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program or have a teaching certificate from another Canadian jurisdiction. Teachers are to be “of good moral character” and a “fit and proper person to teach school students.”²¹ They have to provide teaching evaluations, references, and be in good standing with their certification body.

CURRICULUM

Current curriculum is largely imported from British Columbia. Yukon residential school content is integrated into Social Studies 10, and there are also grade 5 units on First Nation Governance and Citizenship, Ancestral Technology 10, and several English First Peoples high school courses imported from BC.²²

There are currently two First Nations curriculum consultants in Yukon Government, working



21 Yukon Government, *Yukon teacher certification*, last modified November 10, 2016, accessed December 8, 2019, <http://www.education.govyk.ca/teacher-certification.html>.

22 Government of Yukon, *How First Nations perspectives are incorporated into schools*, accessed December 8, 2019, <https://yukon.ca/en/first-nations-perspectives>

within the First Nation Programs and Partnerships Unit.²³ The Unit is tasked with First Nation language enhancement; creating resource materials and local curriculum; professional development; and relationship building with First Nation stakeholders. It is also dedicated to “improving the academic results of First Nations students in the K-12 system.”²⁴ The curriculum consultants are in charge of both rural and urban needs, providing support to teachers in 26 different schools. This same team is in charge of any new First Nation curriculum projects, including ensuring that Yukon First Nation ways of knowing and doing are reflected in the new BC curriculum.

CULTURAL INCLUSION STANDARDS

In 2016, all 14 First Nations at the Yukon First Nation Education Summit created a set of Cultural Inclusion Standards. These standards speak to the “cultural wealth, unique worldviews and ways of understanding and learning that have long been undermined by a colonial system [...] which today manifests in deep social problems and lower success rates among First Nation students.”²⁵ They include working on access to Indigenous language and knowledge, building relationships and addressing systemic racism via “cultural validation.”²⁶ These Cultural Inclusion

Standards are embedded in the School Growth Planning Process, and principals are expected to report on them.²⁷

This is not an exhaustive list of efforts made by Yukon Education to respond to calls made by Yukon First Nations to meet the needs of Yukon First Nation students. Yukon Education’s efforts illustrate their tendency to leave colonial power imbalances largely intact, while making small accommodations. For instance, Yukon government (with varying amounts of community input) might hire a certified teacher from the south to teach BC curriculum, but request that they take an optional two-day orientation on Yukon First Nations or ask about cultural sensitivity in the interview.

In a \$193 million total Education budget in 2018-19, Yukon Government explicitly earmarked \$5.9 million for Indigenous initiatives - native language teachers and First Nations Programs and Partnerships.²⁸ Nearly one-third of Yukon students are First Nations.²⁹ Spending per Yukon student in 2018-19 was \$20,081, which compares to British Columbia’s \$10,309 per student that same year.³⁰ Despite this spending, successive reports from the Auditor General have pointed out ongoing deep inequalities between First Nation and non-First Nation students.³¹

23 Yukon, *Introducing the First Nations Programs & Partnerships Staff*, last modified January 21, 2019, accessed January 27, 2020, <http://lss.yukonschools.ca/fnpp1.html>

24 Government of Yukon, Department of Education, First Nations Programs & Partnerships, *Yukon First Nations Resources for Teachers 2018/19*, accessed December 8, 2019, http://lss.yukonschools.ca/uploads/4/5/5/0/45508033/3_nto_2018-2019_booklet_final.pdf, 6.

25 Council of Yukon First Nations, First Nation Education Commission, *Cultural Inclusion Standards in All Schools*, 2016, accessed October 27, 2019, http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/pdf/schools/Cultural_Inclusion_Standards_in_all_Schools.pdf, 2.

26 Council of Yukon First Nations, First Nation Education Commission, 3.

27 Discussion with the author, September 16, 2019.

28 Yukon, 2019-20 *Operation and maintenance and capital estimates: Education*, 8-1, accessed January 27, 2020, <https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/fin/fin-budget-2019-20-main-estimates-education.pdf>; Yukon, 2018-19 Department of Education Statistics, updated December 13, 2019, accessed January 27, 2020, <https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/edu-2018-19-department-of-education-statistics.pdf>

29 Yukon, *Department of Education Annual Report 2018*, accessed January 27, 2020, <https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/edu/edu-annual-report-2018.pdf>

30 Yukon, 2018-19 *Department of Education Statistics*; British Columbia, *2018/19 Public School Per Student FTE Operating Costs*, accessed January 26, 2020, https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/independent-schools/public_per_fte_costs_18-19_recalc_for_sopsoc.pdf

31 Office of the Auditor General of Canada.

It may be difficult to understand why Yukon First Nations don't have power over education without understanding settler colonialism's logic: in order to claim the land, settler colonialism relies on racist ideology.³² Indigenous people have to be systematically framed as inferior so that settlers can legitimize our settlement. Colonialism uses numerous forms of violence, such as destruction of language and culture, in an ongoing way.³³ Residential school is an obvious example of that violence. As Cheryl Ward writes in her dissertation about teaching race, "education is central to the reproduction of oppressive social structures."³⁴ Education plays a role in maintaining unequal power beyond school walls, reproducing inequalities like in income and incarceration rates.³⁵

Schools were born in settler colonialism. As Erica Meiners argues: "Empire-building had always required control of institutional education."³⁶ Having never made a significant and conscious departure from colonial ways of educating, K-12 schools continue to feature western European views of people and our

relationships to one another and the earth.³⁷ In the Yukon, these systems "continue to this day [to] disenfranchise Yukon First Nations."³⁸

In the Yukon, 11 of 14 First Nations have settled land claims and self-government agreements.³⁹ These are agreements between the settler colonial governments of the Yukon and Canada and each of the First Nations. The self-government agreements allow for First Nations to take over and independently run programs and services such as education.⁴⁰ Through negotiations around what will be taken over, an agreement can be struck.

Several First Nations do have education agreements with the territory. These allow for initiatives such as culture camps, shared authority over hiring and training, and a Cultural Educator position.⁴¹ These agreements can involve a transfer of money, power and authority. For now, money, power and authority are still centred in the hands of Yukon Education. Only one agreement had some money attached.⁴²

32 Sheila Cote-Meek, *Cultural Safety in the Classroom: Addressing Anti-Indigenous Racism in Education Settings*, (presentation for the Indigenous Cultural Safety Collaborative Learning Series, January 25, 2018), accessed December 8, 2019, <http://www.icscollaborative.com/webinars/cultural-safety-in-the-classroom-addressing-anti-indigenous-racism-in-education-settings>

33 Cote-Meek.

34 Cheryl R. Ward, "Teaching about Race and Racism in the Classroom: Managing the Indigenous Elephant in the Room" (PhD dissertation, Simon Fraser University, 2018), accessed October 13, 2019, <https://summit.sfu.ca/item/18705>.

35 Yukon Government, "Corrections Statistics," last modified September 4, 2018, accessed January 26, 2020, <http://www.justice.gov.yk.ca/prog/cor/CorrectionsStatistics.html>; Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, *Poverty or Prosperity: Indigenous Children in Canada*, last modified June 2013, accessed January 26, 2020, https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2013/06/Poverty_or_Prosperty_Indigenous_Children.pdf.

36 Erica Meiners, *Right to be Hostile: Schools, Prisons, and the Making of Public Enemies* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 46.

37 Leigh Patel, *Cultural Safety in the Classroom: Addressing Anti-Indigenous Racism in Education Settings*, (presentation for the Indigenous Cultural Safety Collaborative Learning Series, January 25, 2018), accessed December 8, 2019, <http://www.icscollaborative.com/webinars/cultural-safety-in-the-classroom-addressing-anti-indigenous-racism-in-education-settings>.

38 Brian Lewthwaite and Mark Connell, "The Role of Teacher Education in Decolonizing Education in Canada's North: A Yukon Teacher Education Case Study," *Education in the North* 25, no.1-2 (2018), 10.

39 "Our Agreements," *Mapping the Way*, accessed January 26, 2020, <https://mappingtheway.ca/our-agreements>

40 *The Kwanlin Dun First Nation Self-Government Agreement*, KDFN-Canada-Yukon, 2005, accessed January 26, 2020, <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1298901032405/1542817159784>.

41 Government of Yukon, *How First Nations perspectives are incorporated into schools; Government of Yukon, Education Agreement signed between Government of Yukon and Kwanlin Dün First Nation*, last modified July 9, 2019, accessed December 29, 2019, <https://yukon.ca/en/news/education-agreement-signed-between-government-yukon-and-kwanlin-dun-first-nation>.

42 Discussion with the author, September 16, 2019.

OPTIONS

The following are three options to address the unequal power between Yukon Education and Yukon First Nations:

- 1. Yukon Education relinquishes power and control over Yukon First Nation⁴³ Education to Yukon First Nations and applies an “Indigenous-informed anti-racism”⁴⁴ lens to all of its activities going forward.**

- 2. Yukon Education and Yukon First Nations co-develop a Yukon curriculum.⁴⁵**

- 3. Yukon Education maintains the status quo by continuing to modify curriculum, programs, and professional development to create greater cultural inclusion.**

⁴³ Discussion with the author, September 16, 2019.

⁴⁴ Ward, 94.

⁴⁵ Melaina Sheldon, discussion with the author, May 7, 2019.

ANALYSIS

Option 1: Relinquish Control and Apply an Indigenous-informed Anti-Racist Lens

In the spirit of recognizing and shifting ongoing power imbalances and honouring government-to-government obligations, Yukon Education recognizes rightful authority, listens to the wishes of Yukon First Nation leadership, and when asked, transfers power and money over to Yukon First Nations to control Yukon First Nation education. As of June, there were reports that Yukon Government continues to come to negotiating tables assuming its jurisdiction over education of Yukon First Nation students.⁴⁶

Relinquishing control over education means ceding all of the pieces: staff recruitment, professional development, certification, location of schools and length of school years, curriculum, etc. With resources and control, First Nations can then choose whether and how to engage with mainstream school systems.⁴⁷

As Ken Hodgins notes:

“Canada has passed the burden of being colonizer and Yukon has embraced and exploited it fully. Imposition and preservation of power imbalance is the essential ingredient to an ongoing colonial relationship and Yukon has masterfully sustained this in education [...] for the sake of controlling and exploiting the money.”⁴⁸

In relinquishing control, Yukon Education need not lose sight of the call into ongoing relationship signified by land claims. We share this land, and relinquishing control does not mean we stop having responsibilities to live in respectful relations with one another. Building a team of anti-racist mentors empowered to activate an anti-racist lens in all realms of Yukon Education could help ensure these responsibilities are met.

An Indigenous-informed anti-racist lens is distinct from cultural approaches that have largely been employed by Yukon Education to date. At its best, culturally-responsive education infuses management, operations, curricula, programs and pedagogies.⁴⁹ Cultural approaches honour strengths, by focusing largely on cultural knowledge, land-based education, language, bringing in elders and recognizing kinship systems.⁵⁰

46 CBC News, “First Nations fed up with Yukon education system, after auditor general's report,” *CBC News*, June 20, 2019, accessed December 29, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-first-nations-education-auditor-general-1.5184081>

47 Hodgins.

48 Hodgins.

49 Brian Lewthwaite, Thomas Owen, Ashley Doiron, Barbara McMillan, and Robert Renaud, “Our stories about teaching and learning: a pedagogy of consequences for Yukon First Nation settings,” *Interchange* 44, no.1-2 (2013), 105-128.

50 Verna St. Denis, “Critical Race Theory and its Implication for Indigenous Cultural Safety”, *Indigenous Cultural Safety Collaborative Learning Series*, last modified April 27, 2017, accessed January 25, 2020, <http://www.icscollaborative.com/webinars/critical-race-theory-and-its-implication-for-indigenous-cultural-safety>.

Verna St. Denis, a Cree and Métis scholar and educator, observes that in culturally responsive education, Indigenous people are understood as knowledge-holders with distinct cultures, social organization and histories.⁵¹ While affirming of Indigenous people, this approach asks nothing of settlers. White people are cast as innocent, which leaves overarching structures, and the myths supporting these hierarchies, largely intact.

An anti-racism lens understands that racism is learned by default within a system that privileges whiteness. Being “not racist” is not enough: Anti-racism is *action* toward unlearning that deeply rooted hierarchy in each of us and in the systems in which we are complicit. Racism continues to morph to sustain itself and the colonial project it supports, adapting to seem neutral. Racialized settlers are themselves “marginalized by a white settler nationalist project,” while “as citizens they are nonetheless invited to take part in ongoing colonialism.”⁵² Indigenous-informed anti-racism is clear that advantages gained by all settlers through colonialism were neither legitimate nor earned.⁵³ It helps us see and name the power that underlies social and political inequalities that schools help perpetuate.⁵⁴

Distinct from a culture-only approach, anti-racist education explores the political context of marginalization and clarifies that unequal relationships are a social construct, rather than inherent.⁵⁵ It makes white supremacy explicit and demands a complicated, intersectional understanding of Indigenous people. Rather than staying at the level of the individual, anti-racism requires a social and political analysis.⁵⁶

Anti-racist education also asks significantly more from white people than culturally-responsive education. It names power, privilege, and the myth of meritocracy and asks for accountability for our complicity in maintaining unjust relations. White people have failed to honour agreements and we have stolen land and children.⁵⁷ These practices are embedded in our systems, including education. Anti-racism requires an honest reckoning with histories and presents, and our complicity in maintaining violent systems.

Culture and language are deeply important for healing individuals, connecting families and building and strengthening nations. First Nation culture and language need to be part of mainstream schools. However, in order to move beyond the default colonial approach

51 St. Denis.

52 Bonita Lawrence and Enakshi Dua, “Decolonizing Antiracism,” *Social Justice* 32, no. 4 (2005), 120 -143, quoted in Ward (2018).

53 St. Denis.

54 Ward.

55 St. Denis.

56 St. Denis.

57 St. Denis.

“

Anti-racism is
action toward
unlearning that
deeply rooted
hierarchy in
each of us and
in the systems
in which we are
complicit.”

to schools, Yukon Education needs to turn an anti-racist lens on itself. There is legislation and policy to support this.

The Safe and Caring Schools Policy, signed September of 2018, requires that the Department:

Provide opportunities for all staff to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to develop and maintain academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment.⁵⁸

Teachers are to support students in meeting “their full potential and develop[ing] self-worth.”⁵⁹ The policy requires respect and fair treatment across a number of human-rights protected grounds, including race. In an environment of white supremacy, we each absorb racism. Anti-racism can help the Department to address systemic violence, create safety and support teachers in welcoming whole students into their classrooms.⁶⁰

The Vancouver School Board has had an anti-racism and diversity mentor⁶¹ and Ontario’s Anti-Racism Directorate was designed “to identify, address and prevent systemic racism in government policy, legislation, programs and services.”⁶² The York Regional School Board recently trained more than 12,000 staff in the origins and prevention of anti-black racism.⁶³ Applying anti-racism to institutions is not without precedent.

Option 2: Co-Created Curriculum

A co-managed, made-in-the-Yukon curriculum would teach all students about the lands we live on, our relationships to each other, and would ensure First Nation students can walk confidently in both worlds.⁶⁴ This could be funded with reconciliation money⁶⁵ and ensure that curriculum creators, Yukon First Nation and non-, were working from the community up, equally and well resourced and on equal footing.

Building Yukon curriculum anew would demand an anti-racist lens be applied to mainstream education, decentering Western ways and making space and time for a shared curriculum. It would require the training and recruitment of teachers who would be prepared to teach local Yukon curriculum in ways that connect to land and relationship.

This option has the advantage of requiring a number of other pieces be addressed: teachers would need to be recruited for their knowledge of Yukon curriculum, they would need to be adequately supported to transition into this curriculum, and the creation would require genuinely equitable relationships be established. It is the kind of massive undertaking that has the potential to uproot mainstream ways of knowing and doing to the degree that is necessary.

58 Yukon, *Safe and Caring Schools Policy*, effective date September 1, 2018, accessed January 26, 2020, http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/pdf/policies/safe_caring_schools.pdf, 3.

59 Yukon, *Safe and Caring Schools Policy*, 3.

60 Sheldon.

61 Katie Hyslop, “How a Black Student Paid the Price for Racism at a Vancouver School,” *The Tyee*, September 11, 2019, accessed January 25, 2020, <https://thetyee.ca/News/2019/09/11/Vancouver-School-Racist-Video/>

62 Ontario, *Anti-Racism Directorate*, last modified October 22, 2019, accessed January 25, 2020, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/anti-racism-directorate>.

63 Dina Al-Shibeeb, “Over 12,000 York Region school board staff receive anti-Black racism training,” *Aurora Banner*, October 25, 2019, accessed January 26, 2020,

<https://www.yorkregion.com/news-story/9662113-over-12-000-york-region-school-board-staff-receive-anti-black-racism-training/>

64 Sheldon.

65 Tony Penikett, in discussion with the author, August 17, 2019.

However, there are a number of cautions regarding this option:

1. Curriculum is merely a tool.⁶⁶ In the absence of training, resources and genuine willingness to transition toward using this tool, old ways remain intact.
2. The Yukon is currently in the process of transitioning to a new BC curriculum, and working hard to update it with Yukon First Nation ways of doing.⁶⁷

The timing is not ideal to implement a new curriculum project.

3. Yukon First Nations were involved in the decision to transition toward this new BC curriculum, and a Yukon curriculum was an option that was rejected at that time.⁶⁸



66 Discussion with the author, September 16, 2019.

67 Nicole Cross, in discussion with the author, September 24, 2019; Discussion with the author, September 16, 2019.

68 Tosh Southwick, email to the author, September 18, 2019.



Option 3: Maintaining the Status Quo

Recurring reports from the Auditor General of Canada indicate that the under-resourced efforts of Yukon Education are insufficient to reduce significant gaps in achievement between First Nation and non-First Nation students.

As noted earlier, there are now years of data documenting these achievement gaps. Around half of Yukon First Nation students graduate, as compared with four-fifths of non-Indigenous students.⁶⁹ They are between 17 and 34 percentage points behind non-First Nation students in standardized literacy and numeracy tests. When a problem is widespread and ongoing, it points to systemic issues.

Yukon Government has been working on addressing achievement gaps in a variety of ways. In June, Bob Dickson, chair of the Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) said "We're still at the table going through the same situation, where nothing's changed — and now it's time for a change."⁷⁰

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend Option 1: Relinquish Control and Apply an Indigenous-informed Anti-Racist Lens.

The Yukon Education system's authority over Yukon First Nation Education relies on a hand-off of funding and control from the federal government — one that came with little accountability.⁷¹ When Yukon First Nations ask for control, Yukon Education needs to get out of the way of Yukon First Nation control over education of their citizens.⁷²

⁶⁹ Office of the Auditor General of Canada.

⁷⁰ CBC News, "First Nations fed up with Yukon education system, after auditor general's report," *CBC News*, June 20, 2019, accessed January 26, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-first-nations-education-auditor-general-1.5184081>

⁷¹ Discussion with the author, July 17, 2019.

⁷² Hodgins.

The settlement of land claims marks a moment of opportunity and a call to relationship. During so many of the conversations I had in creating this paper, people mentioned the necessity of building relationships between teachers, students, and communities.⁷³

Handing over education is a way to demonstrate respectful relations at a macro level. In taking this step toward rebalancing power, it could be tempting to turn away from these relationships and to continue in silos. However, land claims and the new BC curriculum provide a moment, an opportunity to stop historicizing colonialism and instead turn to face it in ourselves. As Tosh Southwick, Associate Vice-President of Indigenous Engagement and Reconciliation at Yukon College, wrote in an email, “Power shifts are at the core of true reconciliation.”⁷⁴ Yukon First Nations have been doing a lot of healing work on themselves and in their communities. When our systems cause harm, it is incumbent on settler citizens and educators to heal ourselves and to build just systems.

Anti-racism is a tool that gets at a key feature of colonial school systems: the deliberate dehumanizing of Indigenous people. Cultural approaches are deeply needed. But the work of non-Indigenous people does not end there: it is also the job of educators to turn a lens on ourselves, to examine our own biases and stereotypes and how those shape the systems in which education takes place and that continue to commit violence against First Nation students.

“
Power shifts
are at the
core of true
reconciliation”

TOSH SOUTHWICK

Residential schools are historicized as though students aren’t still being sent to Whitehorse from rural communities to finish high school, and as though they aren’t losing connection with their home communities in the process.⁷⁵

This school system is a system born of racism. Naming it anti-Indigenous racism is a way to name the power imbalance inherent in Yukon Education’s control over education and in the often-unquestioned centering of Western ways of knowing. This is an effort similar to decolonization, but as Tuck and Yang wrote, “decolonization is not a metaphor,” but about “the repatriation of Indigenous land and life.”⁷⁶ Moving toward equitable outcomes demands justice, and that is First Nation control over First Nation education. We have laid the groundwork in the Yukon for this to be a reality.

73 Discussion with the author, June 4, 2019; Cross; Interview with the author, February 10, 2019; Interview with the author, February 12, 2019.

74 Southwick.

75 Discussion with the author, September 16, 2019.

76 Tuck and Yang, 1; Tuck and Yang, 21.



SUPPORT

There is legislative support for an approach that aims to remedy unequal power and colonial violence. The Yukon's Education Act commits as a fundamental goal "to develop self-worth through a positive educational environment."⁷⁷ The Act claims to honour human rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Addressing systemic racism is also a key component of the Cultural Inclusion Standards, created by all 14 Yukon First Nations.

There are numerous calls for anti-racism education in both the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action⁷⁸ and the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing

Indigenous Women and Girls.⁷⁹ This moment of facing injustice and moving toward reconciliation is prime for non-Indigenous people to engage in the work of anti-racism. It is also a moment in which we are learning to talk about racism in this country.

Some students and parents may be interested in building schools that are honest, non-violent, and that aim to embrace the wholeness of each student. In speaking of wholeness, I am imagining students existing in confidence, with an unquestioned valuing of who they are and where they are from.⁸⁰ Tarana Burke, activist and founder of the #MeToo anti-sexual violence movement, speaks to the way violence creates trauma, which in turn "halts possibility."⁸¹

⁷⁷ *Education Act*, R.S.Y. 2002, c.61, s.4(b).

⁷⁸ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*, 2015, accessed January 26, 2020, http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

⁷⁹ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, "Calls for Justice" in *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, 2019, accessed January 26, 2020, https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1b.pdf

⁸⁰ Sheldon.

⁸¹ Tarana Burke, "Me too is a movement, not a moment," *TEDWomen*, 2018, accessed January 26, 2020, https://www.ted.com/talks/tarana_burke_me_too_is_a_movement_not_a_moment/transcript?blog#t-692600

In a bold reimagining of possibility, she argues that “unequivocally, every human being has the right to walk through this life with their full humanity intact.”⁸² Schools that are shaped by colonial violence “halt possibility.” Aiming to see and name how that happens, and creating spaces that are safer for everyone, has the potential to support the full humanity of each student.

Anti-racist work will also face opposition. Some non-First Nation teachers are already afraid of the change being asked of them by the new BC curriculum.⁸³ Non-First Nation teachers may hesitate to address topics that are unfamiliar to them, afraid of getting it wrong. However, the new curriculum and the uncertainty of teachers is also a moment of opportunity, an opening to add anti-racism to their cultural learning and to move through discomfort⁸⁴ toward significant learning.

This learning is challenging for people who have not had to engage with racism before. Most people are not explicitly educated about racism, as its continued invisibility in the white consciousness benefits the existing power structure.⁸⁵ When confronted with this learning, readers and learners may respond with denial, defensiveness, or “settler fragility.”⁸⁶

Anti-racism is a pedagogy designed to disrupt. In order to implement it, there will need to be strong leadership equipped with an anti-racist, “colonial-informed lens.”⁸⁷ Elected leaders will need to be firm in implementing this as a crucial reconciliation effort, and they will need to convince leaders across the department of education, school administrators, and teachers. Anti-racist mentors will need to hold real authority.



82 Burke.

83 Cross.

84 Discussion with the author, February 11, 2019.

85 Ward.

86 Ward, 65.

87 Ward, 115.

IMPLEMENTATION

In order to implement this policy recommendation, the following steps must be taken by Yukon Education:

STEP ONE

When requested, relinquish control over First Nation education.

STEP TWO

Build a team of anti-racist mentors empowered to activate an anti-racist lens in all realms of Yukon Education.

The team of anti-racist mentors would be available to field concerns about racism in schools, to provide workshops for teachers and administrators, and to track and offer corrective advice to leaders regarding systemic concerns.

THEY COULD CONSIDER OPTIONS SUCH AS:

- 1.** Requiring knowledge of Yukon First Nations, colonial histories and presents, and anti-racist pedagogies for the certification of Yukon teachers.
- 2.** Embedding substantive anti-racism in long-range plans and school growth plans.
- 3.** Ensuring there is sufficient staff in the First Nations Programs and Partnerships department.⁸⁸
- 4.** Running anti-racism courses for Department of Education staff, students, and school councils, based on the premise that white supremacy is learned and maintained unless actively disrupted.
- 5.** Supporting mini-assemblies by grade where students engage with race and learn to name and disrupt racism as part of building safe and caring schools, based on meetings currently held to ensure inclusion for 2SLGBTQ students.⁸⁹
- 6.** Revamping Professional Development so that it is multi-day, includes follow-up mentorship, and takes place on the land.⁹⁰ Continuing to include teaching about colonial histories and presents demands teacher learners sit in their discomfort and examine their complicity. Land-based learning explicitly de-centres Western ways of knowing and builds local relationships and connection to the land.
- 7.** Considering the school-to-prison pipeline and the overrepresentation of First Nation people in prisons, track school discipline by race and address inequalities.

⁸⁸ Cross; Discussion with the author, June 4, 2019.

⁸⁹ Cross.

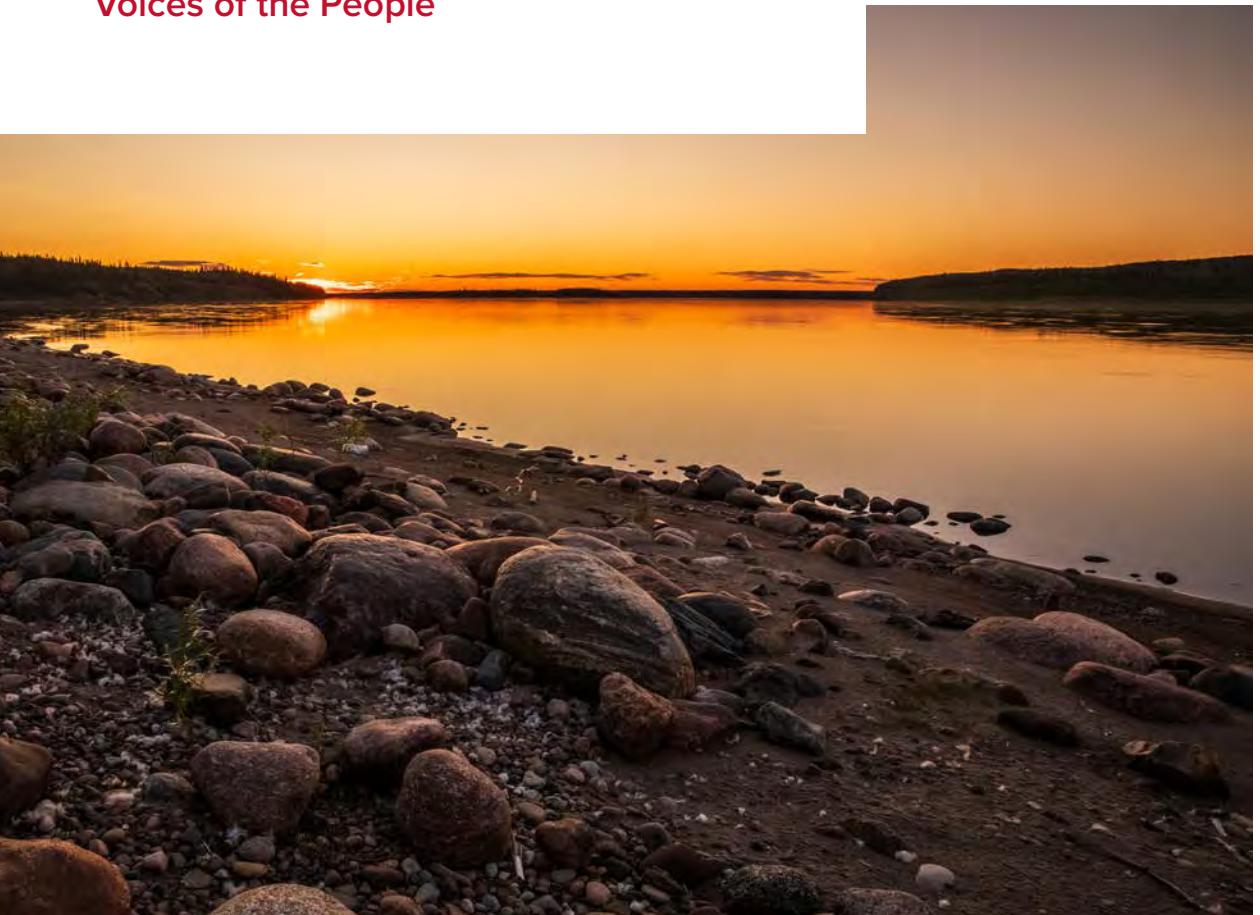
⁹⁰ Cross.

Kristen Tanche

Ways forward in addictions programming
in Fort Simpson Northwest Territories

Dene Gogondié

Voices of the People



CONTENTS

208	Personal Note
209	Problem Definition
	INTRODUCTION TO CONVERSATIONS WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS
211	Background
	ADDICTION
	ADDICTIONS IN FORT SIMPSON
	ADDICTIONS IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
	SERVICES IN FORT SIMPSON
216	Voices of Fort Simpson Community Members
222	Policy Options
	1. EVALUATE THE STATUS QUO
	2. DEVELOP ADDITIONAL SERVICES AND PROGRAMMING WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS
	3. ENCOMPASS INDIGENOUS HEALING PRACTICES AND METHODS WITHIN ADDICTION PROGRAMMING
223	Analysis of Policy Options
	1. EVALUATE THE STATUS QUO
	2. DEVELOP ADDITIONAL SERVICES AND PROGRAMMING WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS
	3. ENCOMPASS INDIGENOUS HEALING PRACTICES AND METHODS WITHIN ADDICTION PROGRAMMING
231	Recommendations
	1. THE GNWT AND COMMUNITY OF FORT SIMPSON NEED TO EVALUATE THE STATUS QUO OF ADDICTIONS PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, AND PROVIDE ADDITIONAL STAFFING AND COUNSELLORS
	2. THE DEHCHO REGION SHOULD DELIVER REGIONAL HEALTH GATHERINGS LED BY COMMUNITIES FOR COMMUNITIES
	3. FORT SIMPSON ORGANIZATIONS NEED TO PROVIDE MORE VARIETY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT ARE CULTURALLY RELEVANT
234	Conclusion
235	Appendix A: Research Methodology and Guiding Questions
237	Appendix B: Consent to Participate Form
239	Appendix C: Detailed Participant Responses

PERSONAL NOTE

Kristen Tanche súzhe, Łíídlıı Kúé gots'eh á aht'e, semq Catherine Tanche Simms úzhe, setá Gunnar Paulson úzhe.

My name is Kristen Tanche, I am from Fort Simpson/Łíídlıı Kúé. My mother is Catherine Tanche Simms and my father is Gunnar Paulson.

My mother's side of the family is originally from Fort Simpson, are Dehcho Dene, and part of the Łíídlıı Kúé First Nation. My father's side of the family is from Wynyard, Saskatchewan. Through my Grandfather I am partly Icelandic. My Grandmother came from a mixture of backgrounds including Danish and American.

As a traditional way of introductions in the Dehcho I introduce myself this way so that you, the reader, can place me.

For many years I talked about quitting drinking and drugs. I thought about it. Talked about it more. I attempted to get help, I went to a community counsellor in Fort Simpson. We didn't work out. I wished at that time for something more, an evening program maybe, or something and someone I could relate to. I did not find that support in Fort Simpson and I continued partying. I continued to hate myself. Throughout my life I have been exposed to the effects of addictions, and have struggled with it.

It wasn't until I enrolled in a social work diploma program, and moved away from my home community to pursue an education, that I was able to find services I could

access regularly. I sought counselling, attended groups that centered around addictions, and learned more through the social work program I was enrolled in. I have been sober for several years now. Since my return to my home community I have questioned "why?" Why do some of us have to leave our homes, our communities, to seek help?

I write this policy recommendation paper with hopes that we, the community of Fort Simpson, we, the Dehcho region, and we, the Northwest Territories, can work collectively to offer more to our people and residents in addictions programming.

Mahsi Cho to all those who participated in the conversations with community members I conducted. Your words were inspiring and have guided this paper's development. *Mahsi Cho* to those who assisted me in editing this paper, numerous people devoted their personal time and *Mahsi Cho* to my husband Nathan McPherson for his support.

I dedicate my work to those we have lost and almost lost to addictions, indirectly and directly. I dedicate this paper to my stepmother Lana Roeland; we miss you dearly and wish we had one more day with you. I dedicate this paper to those in the throes of addictions and self-blame. And to my family and my many nieces and nephews. I hope that collectively, we can offer you, the future generation, a better tomorrow.



Skyline in Fort Simpson (Photo by K. Tanche)



Sunrise over the Liidlii Kue Teepee (Photo by J. Antoine)

PROBLEM DEFINITION

Addiction programming and related services offered by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) in Fort Simpson, Northwest Territories (NWT), are not always culturally relevant to the Indigenous population, nor do they appear to take the voices of the community into full consideration when developing services and programming. With over half the population being Indigenous in Fort Simpson, there needs to be more culturally relevant programming and services truly based on the voices and needs of the people.

INTRODUCTION TO CONVERSATIONS WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS

While addiction to drugs and alcohol is an issue at a larger societal level, in this paper I focus on the community of Fort Simpson specifically. Partly because it is my home community, but also because I did not want to generalize any recommendations for the entire North. Each community in the North is unique in need, culture and resources. In developing community

driven and centered policy recommendations, it was imperative for me to hear from Fort Simpson community members about what they thought would be ideal in terms of addiction programming. While the GNWT has done community engagement such as the Minister's Forum on Addictions and Community Wellness in 2012, seven years have since elapsed.¹ Much has happened in the community of Fort Simpson since then, which could have affected community priorities and thoughts about wellness and addiction.

Reflecting on historical Indigenous community social structures, I decided to take a bottom-up, community led approach. I have often heard elders and leaders speak of community life amongst Indigenous peoples. I have heard that heads of families would be involved in leadership, to not only ensure the voice of the people led the communities, but also to ensure each family had representation. Leaders would be guided by these voices, which meant having the community leading the leader.

¹ Health and Social Services, Government of the Northwest Territories. 2013. "The Minister's Forum on Addictions and Community Wellness Healing Voices." Vol. 17. Yellowknife, NWT. <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/hss/files/ministers-forum-addictions-report.pdf>.

At the start of my work, I sought the advice of experts and community leaders. After much consideration, and given my background and knowledge of the community of Fort Simpson, I concluded that an effective method of engaging community members would be to do one-on-one conversations with them. I also wanted to ensure I captured the voices of people who might not want to share their ideas in a public forum. Given that the topic of addictions can be sensitive, I wanted to ensure that people were comfortable and that the process was as confidential as possible. I conducted interviews in private places, I did not share any information concerning who I was speaking with, and kept all recordings and transcribed interviews locked on my personal computer. In the beginning, I requested permission to quote community members; however this was not congruent with my approach to keep information confidential. I therefore changed my

approach, and informed every community member who participated that I would only be quoting people anonymously. In this paper I have used a participant numbering system for quotations, for example, Anonymous 1, Anonymous 2 and so on.

I framed the community engagement research as “conversations with community members.” It included posing seven questions related to addictions programming to help guide the conversations. Appendix A provides a detailed outline of the research methodology and Appendix B reproduces the research consent form.

In total, 32 residents of Fort Simpson participated, and 29 recorded and written conversations were used as the basis for information for the recommendations in this paper. Three conversations were unusable due to technical recording difficulties.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS			
Gender	Female: 20	Male: 9	
Ethnicity	Dene/Indigenous: 16	Non-Indigenous: 8	Métis: 5
Age	25-44: 15	45-59: 7	Over 60: 5

The process of speaking with so many people about addictions in the community changed my thinking and their words will forever stay with me. Each person had amazing ideas for addiction programs. I believe each person drew from personal experiences and their experience touched my heart.



Fort Simpson Aerial (Photo by A. Tambour)

BACKGROUND

Fort Simpson is a community in the Northwest Territories that is located on the traditional territory of Łíídlı́ Kúé First Nation and the Fort Simpson Métis. With a population of 1296 people the community largely comprises of Indigenous peoples from the Łíídlı́ Kúé First Nation and the Fort Simpson Métis Nation, as well as other ethnicities.²

It is a regional centre for outlying communities, including Wrigley, Samba Ke, Jean Marie River and Nahanni Butte. The community is home to territorial and federal government offices, schools, a health centre and regional organizations (like Dehcho First Nations). In addition, the community has other necessary services like a local grocery store.

Through living in Fort Simpson for more than 10 years, I have witnessed a strong culture of community. People come together in times of need. For example, when tragedy occurs I have witnessed a strong culture of support being offered to families. I have also seen the community come together for joyous occasions and events, such as the annual spring gathering that Łíídlı́ Kúé First Nation leads. There are also cultural functions that occur, such as drum dances, hand games, feasts and family dances.

² Northwest Territories, NWT Bureau of Statistics, Population Estimates By Community, last modified July 1, 2018, accessed July 26, 2019, <https://www.statsnwt.ca/population/population-estimates/bycommunity.php>.

ADDICTION

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) describes addiction as “any behaviour that is out of control in some way.” There can be different types of addiction. CAMH defines addiction to substances, such as alcohol, by framing it with the “4 C’s”: “Craving, loss of Control of amount or frequency of use, Compulsion to use, despite Consequences.”³ “The harms of substance use can range from mild (feeling hungover, being late for work) to severe (e.g., homelessness, disease).”⁴ The effects of addiction to alcohol and drugs are detrimental to the health and well-being of individuals, families, communities, and entire generations. Effects vary by person, but overall addiction to alcohol and drugs can lead to liver cirrhosis, diabetes, heart disease, increases in violence, vehicle accidents and crimes. It can also lead to the presence of continuous blackouts, loss of income, anxiety, irritability, depression, loss of hope, and feelings of emptiness.^{5 6}

ADDICTIONS IN FORT SIMPSON

In my conversations with community members, I asked whether participants believed addiction to alcohol, drugs or both was an issue in Fort Simpson. All but one person said that it was an issue in Fort Simpson. The one person who said no clarified by saying that, “Alcohol and drugs is a symptom of the problem” (Anonymous 5). The following comments reflect the combined voices and views of the people I spoke to.

“It [drug and alcohol issues] is a prominent thing you see in our community.” Anonymous 23

“According to community members who attended meetings that were held while our community wellness plan was being formulated, drug and alcohol dependency is believed to be at the root of many social issues. Issues such as family breakdown, elder abuse, depression and hopelessness.” Anonymous 24

“I feel like addictions run rampant in this community and across the North.” Anonymous 14

Participants see addictions in the community. The impacts of addiction can be seen while walking in the community, in the line-ups at the local liquor store and through daily interactions.

“You see it daily everywhere, walking down the street” Anonymous 23

According to many of the participants I spoke to, drinking and addiction is normalized. Respondents stated they saw this through their social interactions, family lives, and community lives:

“I feel that there is an overuse of alcohol and drugs and maybe an over acceptance of the use, for a very wide range of ages, from teenagers to elders.” Anonymous 8

“You can get together with your friends, but even that, so many people socially drink here” Anonymous 23

“I would say personally raising kids here, it was really hard coming here with teenage kids and smaller kids. It was really hard because drinking was the norm when you go to barbecues, cookouts, everywhere. And then you're exposing your kids to it.” Anonymous 11

3 Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, “20103 Addiction,” CAMH. Accessed April 20, 2019. <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-illness-and-addiction-index/addiction>.

4 Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

5 Northwest Territories, Health and Social Services, Report on Substance Use and Addiction, last modified March 2015, accessed February 5, 2019, <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/hss/files/report-on-substance-use-and-addiction-2012.pdf>

6 Jiwa et al., “Healing the Community to Heal the Individual: Literature Review of Aboriginal Community-Based Alcohol and Substance Abuse Programs,” *Canadian Family Physician* 54, no. 7 (August 2008) 1000.e1-1000.e7. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Len_Kelly/publication/5226200_Healing_the_community_to_heal_the_individual_Literature_review_of_aboriginal_community-based_alcohol_and_substance_abuse_programs/links/54f099800cf24eb879412127.pdf.

Several respondents stated that they had direct experience with addiction through personal experiences of usage and through witnessing overuse of alcohol. Community members saw the impacts of it on their family, friends and the community.

“Ever since I was young the coolest thing to do was drink. I was trying to fit in with older people”
Anonymous 6

“I had young girls coming to my house where they were sexually assaulted, drunk, you know what I mean – passed out. I’ve had so much dealing with people stuck in addictions, young people like my kids are in their twenties, and this has started when they were sixteen. I saw it with their friends and all that, it was the norm. So, they don’t see it as an addiction because it’s the norm, yes. So, that’s how I see it.” Anonymous 11

Some stated they were seeing harder drugs (for example cocaine) more often in the community and that in the last ten years usage had increased in all age groups.

“I think drugs are more of an issue that are causing disconnection with socializing and being present in certain settings”- Anonymous 25

“We find it normal and nobody wants to deal with the elephant in the room. The drugs in this community, nobody wants to deal with it, that’s sad.” Anonymous 11

“I’m seeing more harder drugs coming in and younger kids are getting into it. And more people are getting into it. So, it’s becoming a big factor. Yes, our community has a big drug problem.” Anonymous 8

Community members saw alcohol use as a symptom of other issues such as trauma, depression, anxiety, abuse, colonization, residential school trauma, intergenerational trauma.

“...but I also think I know that the addictions is not the issue, the issue is the trauma that people have lived through in the past that has never been recognized and acknowledged and people do not know how to deal with anxiety when they are triggered.” Anonymous 15

Participants witnessed negative health effects, such as death from exposure or overuse of alcohol or alcohol poisoning.

“When I see members of our community die from exposure because they were too intoxicated to make it inside, or die from the overuse of alcohol, it is a sign it is an issue” Anonymous 27

“I remember at one point there were five people (from another community in the Dehcho) in the course of a year that died from alcohol, just going doing careless things, drinking and going to skidoo on the river and dying, you know, just carelessness caused [...] by alcohol. So, I saw [...] the most devastating, worst effect of alcohol on the people.” Anonymous 8

Participants provided historical context for addictions in the community. One participant stated that addiction issues were worse in the 1960s to 1970s, and spoke about the history of prohibition, as well as the alcohol purchase rationing system. Residents in Fort Simpson are limited in the amount of alcohol that can be purchased daily and taken home through the local liquor store and the two local bars. Several participants linked addictions to colonization and the residential school experience.

“[Alcohol] was brought in initially by the traders as rum, and only the white people or the Métis were allowed to drink, and if a Native, Dene person wanted to drink then they would have to give up their status. And there were a few amongst the Dene that did. But of the most part, Dene were not permitted to drink for a long, long, time. And then in the early ‘60s, they brought a liquor store to Simpson.” Anonymous 8

“I do think addictions is huge everywhere, but particularly devastating in small isolated communities that continue to suffer from intergenerational effects of colonialism and residential school trauma.” Anonymous 26

“I think our (Dene) culture was taken away and we were raised like Molah (Molah is Dene Zhatie/South Slavey for “white man”). So, it was hard. Just like you’re in two worlds. You don’t know if you’re Dene or Molah so you’re kind of lost and when you’re lost you want to drink and do drugs.” Anonymous 5

Participants mentioned a variety of other ways that they saw addiction: in the homeless population, within the court system (where many of the cases are related to alcohol use), and surfacing through youth who are accessing alcohol and drugs through adults.

“If it wasn’t an issue then I don’t think younger kids would be dabbling in this stuff, right?” Anonymous 1

“Being from a small community you can see the addictions more elaborate and in all generations.” Anonymous 28

“I find a lot of activities are alcohol related, everything is alcohol related.” Anonymous 11

ADDICTIONS IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

While it is apparent that community members in Fort Simpson believe addictions are an issue in the community, several participants stated that they believe it is an issue everywhere. Scholarly articles,⁷ news reports,⁸ government reports,⁹ and other sources reiterate that addiction to alcohol and drugs is a social issue faced at the community, regional, national and international level.



Liidlil Kue Rainbow Teepee (Photo by J. Antoine)

7 Jiwa.

8 Meaghan Richens, “Cost of substance use above national average: report,” Northern News Services, November 26, 2018, accessed August 1, 2019, <https://nnsi.com/nwtnewsnorth/cost-of-substance-use-in-territories-above-national-average-report/>.

9 Northwest Territories, Health and Social Services, Report on Substance Use and Addiction.

The Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research and the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addictions found that the cost of substance abuse is the highest in the Northern Territories compared to the other Canadian provinces. The Northwest Territories healthcare costs per person attributed to substance use was the second highest in the country at \$723 per person.¹⁰

In addition, media continues to shed light on the issues of substance use in the North. For example, a news report was published in 2019 about a drug bust in Fort Simpson where 60 grams of crack cocaine were seized with a street value of \$18,000.¹¹ The article sheds light on an increasing issue of addiction to drugs in the community.

ADDICTION RECOVERY SERVICES IN FORT SIMPSON

Fort Simpson houses the regional Dehcho Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) office, which operates under the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT). Through the NTHSSA, people in the community and some of the outlying communities (Wrigley, Sambaa K'e, and Jean Marie River) can access mental health and addiction services. The NTHSSA offers the community counselling program, referrals to southern residential treatment centres and other programs.¹² I have seen local advertising posters and social media posts indicating the organization offers evening group programs, one of which is called "Sober Skills." The sober skills program is a group led by Dehcho NTHSSA that discusses skills to help attendees remain sober, or other wellness topics; for example, one topic they have covered is meditation.

Currently in Fort Simpson, individuals interested in attending southern residential treatment centres can only do so through the NTHSSA. Residential treatment centres are live-in centres where individuals reside in a facility for 1-3 months. Centres offer a wide variety of services on site, but typically each centre has a focus area. Depending on the centre, the focus could be for trauma support or various other "mixed methods" treatments. "Mixed methods" refers to the combination of two or multiple methods of healing, for example combining counselling with the Indigenous practice of smudging.^{13 14} The NTHSSA offers several options for residential treatment facilities in southern Canada. Options available to residents of the NWT are Poundmakers Lodge, Fresh Start Recovery, Aventa Centre for Excellence for Women with Addictions, and Edgewood.¹⁵

Beyond the NTHSSA supports, there are programs that are delivered by other community organizations. Łíídlıı Kúę First Nation (LKFN) offers its members, in addition to Fort Simpson residents, a weekly men's sharing circle. There are also other programs that arise on occasion, such as grieving and traditional healing workshops, which support other existing mental health and addictions programming. LKFN also runs victims' services and community justice programming.¹⁶

Although not traditionally related to addictions programs, there are also recreational and arts programs in the community delivered by various organizations, such as the municipal government (Village of Fort Simpson) and LKFN.

10 Meaghan Richens.

11 "Crack Cocaine and Cash Seized in Fort Simpson Drug Bust," Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), March 20, 2019, accessed August 1, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/crack-cocaine-bust-fort-simpson-1.5064873>.

12 Dehcho Health and Social Services, Mental Health and Addictions, accessed April 20, 2019, <https://www.dhssa.hss.gov.nt.ca/social-services/mental-health-and-addictions>.

13 Margo Rowan, et al., "Cultural Interventions to Treat Addictions in Indigenous Populations: Findings from a Scoping Study," Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy 9, no. 1 (2014): 34, accessed August 1, 2019, DOI 10.1186/1747-597x-9-34.

14 Poundmaker's Lodge and Treatment Centres, "Programs & Services," Poundmaker's Lodge, accessed April 20, 2019, <http://poundmakerslodge.ca/programs-services/>.

15 Dehcho Health and Social Services, Mental Health and Addictions.

16 Liildlii Kue First Nation, Programs, Accessed August 2, 2019. <https://www.liidliikue.ca/programs>.

Examples of such programming advertised in the community are soccer, basketball, hockey, sewing, beading and various arts programs.

In addition, people who attended residential school, lived with someone who attended residential school and those experiencing or have experienced intergenerational trauma can access counselling services outside of the community. This is accessible through the Government of Canada, Indian Residential School Resolution Health Support Program, counselling services.¹⁷

By scanning services in the community, I observed that a majority of them were based on Western methods. Western methods of healing addictions originate from a non-Indigenous perspective, using methods such as psychiatric services and Alcoholics Anonymous. Indigenous methods of healing, on the

other hand, originate from Indigenous ways of being and include cultural, spiritual or land-based practices. Specific examples include on-the-land programming, drumming, and smudging, as well as other methods.^{18 19}

COMMUNITY OF FORT SIMPSON'S VOICES

This section highlights what was heard in conversations with community members to provide the foundation for the recommendations made.

While each participant brought unique perspectives, ideas and opinions, to seek commonalities and themes in participant responses I compiled all transcribed conversations and reviewed them several times for key words and themes. While community members had similar opinions about the issue of addictions, and a combination of healing methods being most effective, there was not always consensus when asked about



Teepee Aerial, Fort Simpson (Photo by A. Tambour)

17 Government of Canada. 2018. "Indian Residential Schools Resolution Support Program." 2018. <https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/services/first-nations-inuit-health/health-care-services/indian-residential-schools-health-supports/indian-residential-schools-resolution-health-support-program.html>.

18 Rowan et al., 34.

19 Poundmaker's Lodge and Treatment Centres.

solutions. For example, some participants focused on residential treatment options, while others focused on community-based treatment.

Participant's voices are organized below by the most commonly mentioned topics. For a detailed breakdown of the responses, please see Appendix C.

PARTICIPANT THOUGHTS ON NEEDS, REQUIREMENTS AND CHANGES IN PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES

Participants spoke about the need for more variety in programming and services related to health, wellness and addictions.

"I think that there has to be a variety, something to choose from, because it's not a one size fits all because we're all at different stages of recovery."
Anonymous 17

"I think we need to shift, shift in the way we're delivering programming. Maybe there are all these little things that contribute to that, like shutting down the rural college social work program. Saying that everybody that comes to work in the North needs their Masters – why?" Anonymous 21

"I would love to have multiple programming options for somebody to access every single night of the week. So if they had sewing and AA on Monday and then on Tuesday cooking and something else, like computer skills and then on Wednesday meditation and AA again, so that, there's something for you to do every single night of the week that helps you grow your sober circle and helps you connect with people who have similar interests to you that don't involve drugs or alcohol. And then if you feel shy to go, because it's such a small community and, there's someone at AA that you don't want to see, there's a second option for you." Anonymous 20

Participants spoke about the following examples of programming and services that are needed:

ON THE LAND PROGRAMS, i.e. in camps outside of the community and on the land in the community. Programming would include cultural and land based experiences and include long-term and short-term programming

"It would be great to see professional, intentional on-the-land programs for families healing from addiction." Anonymous 26

"I think if you have an on-the-land program at least you know the other people out there are from your own community. So, when you go back, you could say, 'Well, Jane Doe was there with me I could go talk to her. She knows what I went through, me and her made a connection.'" Anonymous 11



Drum (Photo by K. Tanche)

FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS, which would focus on encompassing the entire family unit, not just the individual. Participants stated that to heal the person you must also heal the family.

"I would like to see services offered for whole families in addition to support and services for people suffering with addictions." Anonymous 26

AFTERCARE PROGRAMS: there are few to no aftercare programs for people to access when they return to the community from residential treatment programs elsewhere.

UNDERLYING ISSUES PROGRAMS: there needs to be programs dealing with underlying issues such as trauma, grief and other issues.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMS: participants would like to see more variety of physical activity programming, for example yoga.

LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMS: there need to be programs that aid people in budgeting, parenting etc.

ADDICTIONS PREVENTION PROGRAMS: there needs to be programs that provide education about addictions.

PARTICIPANTS WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE COMMUNITY-LED, HOLISTIC, EMPOWERING COMMUNITY-CENTRED PROGRAMMING

Participants were clear that services should be more community led and planned with more community input. There needs to be a shift in the way services are developed. Indigenous organizations, community groups, government organizations and community members need to work together to plan and deliver services, events and programming in a holistic, community-centred, empowering manner.

“...but I think that an ideal program is, the community runs it and it’s out on the land. It’s community owned, you give ownership back to your own people, and I think we were just connecting with the land they always say ‘Go on it your own, do what you can and go out on the land, feel the energy’ You have to survive out there and you have no distractions. You would totally focus on yourself and connect with people and the land yourself. So, I truly believe it has to be an on the land-based treatment programs.” Anonymous 11

“I think people work too much in isolation.” Anonymous 21

“There is just no real way to slow it down. I think the best thing that could happen is for these programs to be developed based on what people need and for these programs to go through and be delivered.” Anonymous 12

“Well, one thing that would be ideal is we could have a community summit and to have people, an opportunity to have input on just that very question.” Anonymous 4 [When asked what they thought would be ideal in terms of addictions programming]

Participants spoke about the need for more community events. Furthermore, they spoke about attempting to shift societal thinking and stigma on the negative connection that the word “addiction” holds and programming should aim to empower people.

“Instead of labeling somebody with an addiction, as an alcoholic. How I had a hard time saying that my dad was an alcoholic and when we say they are an alcoholic it’s just putting them in a category.” Anonymous 17

“I don’t think addictions is a right way because it labels people.” Anonymous 3

“I think there needs to be greater awareness in our community that addictions are most often rooted in traumas in order to shift the stigma surrounding alcohol and drug addictions.” Anonymous 26

THERE NEED TO BE MORE STAFF AND COUNSELLORS WORKING IN HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Participants stated that the NTHSSA counsellors are typically hard to access (i.e., long wait times), that there is often limited staff, and there are very few or no Indigenous and northern culturally relatable counsellors available.

“Not that much of our people have that benefit and they sit there and wait, like my daughter waited about

three months to four months to the point where I was like, ‘Hey I got to get her out of here.’” Anonymous 11

“...it’s just kind of intimidating, to have to go and meet somebody, build that rapport, somebody that’s not from the community. And then mental health and social services has a really high turnover rate which makes it difficult for people as well, having to build that rapport constantly over and over and over again, right?... So, if you can find committed people that are actually going to stay, then I think you might see more success in dealing with addictions and stuff.” Anonymous 10

“A lot of social services workers come straight out of university, have not worked with Indigenous peoples before, it’s their first time being in the North, which is very frustrating.” Anonymous 14

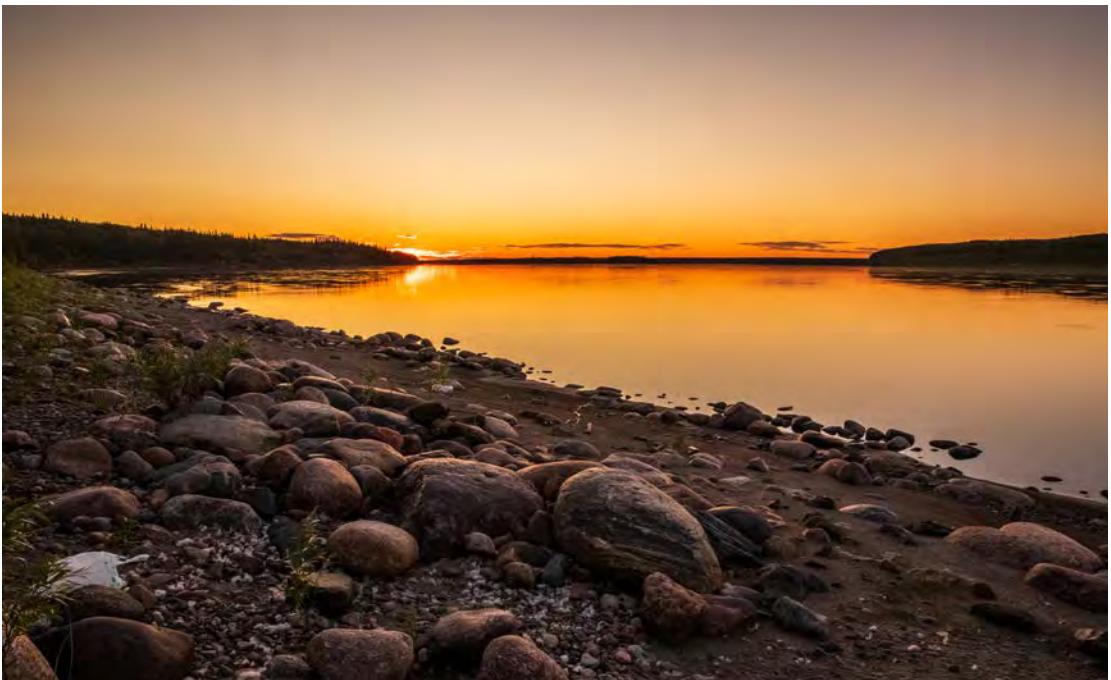
“I think we need to do better at working together and I think GNWT needs to do a better job of awareness. Yes you’re hiring people with Masters and those kinds of things, but when you talk to those people a lot of those people didn’t learn anything about our culture when they went to school.” Anonymous 21

“Have someone more attached to the band office so that it’s right there. And instead of hid away over in SISH [SISH Is the Stanley Isaiah Center in Fort Simpson, which houses GNWT child and family services, and community counsellors] sort of thing or in the government office somewhere.” Anonymous 8

MORE VALUE NEEDS TO BE PLACED ON TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND THERE NEEDS TO BE MORE OF IT IN PROGRAMMING.

Participants spoke about the need for more value and importance being placed on Indigenous Traditional Knowledge, including spiritual, cultural and land-based practices. It was noted that there needs to be specifically Northern-based culturally appropriate programming.

“I think learning the traditional way does help a lot. You know, it brings you back to your grandfather, your roots. When you hear your stories from your grandfathers and the traditional way” Anonymous 8



River sunset (Photo by A. Tambour)

“I would like to see something within the North for northern people, for Aboriginal people that supports more of a traditional lifestyle in getting people connected back that way.” Anonymous 23

“You could bring elders in and talk about parenting and your kids would be there, of course you would bring your kids out on the land with you. You know traditionally that’s what you did and you worked as a community.” Anonymous 11

THERE IS NEED FOR EDUCATION AND AWARENESS ON ADDICTIONS.

Participants believed there needs to be more education about addictions at all ages, but some spoke specifically about youth and children. Education and awareness also related to community empowerment, as several participants spoke about the need for education around addictions to aid in battling the stigma and shame attached to it. There was also a stated need for more promotion of existing services and programming.

“I think what the community needs more than anything is education on understanding that no one’s choosing to be a drug addict and no one’s choosing to be an alcoholic and no one, you know, and they’re little kid is like yes, I’m going to be an alcoholic when I grew up and I can’t wait.” Anonymous 20

“I get sick of people preaching about don’t drink, don’t drink, don’t drink. I think we need to start teaching harm reduction.” Anonymous 21

“I think that a lot of times we have to bring that pride back to the people. We have to bring that empowerment back to our people and the thing is that to not so much look at the past, but what we can do from today.” Anonymous 17

“I think the responsibility is in the education of and rather than looking at it as shutting it down, stopping it, rationing it, prohibition, but it’s the education of it, of the responsibility.” Anonymous 17

“It doesn’t matter where you go in the world. I mean alcohol and drugs are gonna be there regardless, but I think that there should be more education about it, especially in the schools.” Anonymous 1

“I think that what we need to help the healing process is a greater understanding that an addict isn’t necessarily at fault for their addiction and there shouldn’t be blame, which leads to shame. And then shame leads to secrecy. And then the secrecy-shame cycle continues and it’s hard to heal in that. So, if an addict were to have a person or a place where they could feel comfortable saying, I’m ashamed about my behaviour and I want to change it without the fear of being persecuted for that behaviour.” Anonymous 20

MORE INFRASTRUCTURE IS REQUIRED.

Participants talked about facilities such as a drop-in centre, transitional housing (both for those returning from residential treatment programs and for the homeless population), a community wellness centre, and year-round accessible on the land locations with cabins, etc.

“I think a safe house for active addicts would be helpful as well as a variety of culturally relevant and sound programming. I see a gap in services for people who have gone to residential treatment and are returning to their families and communities and struggling with sobriety, so transitional services and continued support for people who are trying to overcome addictions is key as well.” Anonymous 26

“It’s crucial that we have more facilities.” Anonymous 8

PARTICIPANTS SPOKE ABOUT THE CURRENT PROCESS OF RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT FACILITIES AND ABOUT THE NEED FOR A NORTHERN-BASED RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTRE

It was often mentioned that getting into a treatment facility was a long and complicated process. However, there were mixed responses from participants about the effectiveness of sending people to southern

residential treatment facilities. Some said attending a southern centre was effective in their recovery, while others felt that sending people to southern facilities was ineffective. Most commonly mentioned on this topic was the need for a Northern-based residential treatment centre.

“You know some people are so heavily addicted to alcohol and drugs and they have to wait three months. I had to wait, I had to wait three and a half months to go to my treatment program at Poundmakers and I wish I could’ve went sooner.” Anonymous 8

“I think we keep getting it all mixed up. We send our people south and they inherit beliefs that are from the south that are not really ours to believe in. So, they come back to the community and they have no support because people around them don’t go to sweat lodges.” Anonymous 11

“Everybody is sent south. There’s nothing right here. You know what I mean. This person is coming to you, they want to quit drinking today, they can’t wait two months, but there’s nothing in the community to address the issue of that person’s addiction. There’s mental health counsellors who have– I’m going to say the majority of the time is solidly booked, solid, can’t keep up, there’s no capacity to keep up” Anonymous 11

THERE IS A REQUIREMENT FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND PEER GROUPS

Commonly talked about was the need for additional support groups like An-Anon, Narcotics Anonymous and other community centred peer support groups.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND CAPACITY-BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES ARE REQUIRED

In order to deliver effective programming, or any additional programming, participants felt that additional financial and capacity building opportunities (such as training) resources are needed.

OTHER COMMON TOPICS BROUGHT UP

Beyond common responses on needs and requirements for programming and services, community members spoke about the following topics:

- ▶ They acknowledged that addiction issues will never stop. It is an issue that will be continuous within the community and in society.
- ▶ People within the community have had direct or indirect experiences where confidentiality was broken by health and wellness staff, or by other people in peer support groups.
- ▶ Some participants talked about fear of judgement by others in the community.

“There’s so much trust issues from residential schools and there was a residential school here in Fort Simpson. I was in it when I was 6 years old. So, there’s trust issues within institutions. So you know why you can’t aid somebody or help somebody in the community when there’s trust issues. I think you have to build that first before we really help anybody.” Anonymous 11

“This [referring to things that should be available to aid in the slowing and/or cessation of addictions issues] is a big one in Fort Simpson and also in the smaller communities in the region and in Canada and the United States on a larger scale in general, if we go back to the war on drugs really became the war on drug addicts. And so, there’s a lot of shame associated with use and shame really thrives in secrecy and that’s where it grows, and it becomes harder to carry and the shame becomes unmanageable and unbearable. And the anecdote to shame is really just honesty and the ability to speak openly about your struggle.” Anonymous 20



Trees with Moon (Photo by A. Tambour)

POLICY OPTIONS

Provided are three policy options, the numbering of them does not indicate their importance, as each option should be equally considered.

POLICY OPTION 1: EVALUATE THE STATUS QUO

The first policy option would be for the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and the community of Fort Simpson to examine and evaluate the status quo of the delivery of services. The services could remain similar, for example, the community counselling program, various workshops, and services that occur on a sporadic basis; however, more services could shift to being offered by different organizations, such as LKFN. Such models have been used in other communities in the North and throughout Canada.

POLICY OPTION 2: DEVELOP ADDITIONAL SERVICES AND PROGRAMMING WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

A second policy option is for the GNWT, Indigenous organizations, and community led organizations to develop services and programming with community members, not for community members. This would mean direct community engagement in the development process to promote partnerships with organizations in Fort Simpson, creating more meaningful and culturally relevant services. Direct engagement with community could be in the form of gatherings led by Indigenous organizations.

POLICY OPTION 3: ENCOMPASS INDIGENOUS HEALING PRACTICES AND METHODS WITHIN ADDICTIONS PROGRAMMING.

A third policy option is for the GNWT and Indigenous Organizations to implement a combination of Western and Indigenous healing methods for addictions programming through on-the-land programming.



Liidlii Kue Drum Circle (Photo by J. Antoine)

ANALYSIS OF POLICY OPTIONS

POLICY ANALYSIS OPTION 1: EVALUATE THE STATUS QUO

The GNWT needs to evaluate the status quo of its addictions programming in the Dehcho region, and consider how it could better meet the health and wellness needs of the community and the region. Given participant responses, the current system of addictions programming is not meeting the needs of the community.

“I think the process is not, I don’t think it fits our people. I really don’t think it fits our people.”
Anonymous 11

“I think our government and policy makers are missing a step in engaging people and families who are dealing with active addictions what they need for better quality of life in order to inform policies, right from early childhood education and prenatal care all the way through to adult employment.”
Anonymous 26

Within my work of “conversations with communities,” issues with the current system were often brought up,

such as long wait times to access services, services not being culturally relevant, and the existence of a lot of “red tape” to get help.

“I just feel like it has to get to a breaking point before something’s done.... I see people suffering and I feel like there’s such a huge process for somebody to get help. Whereas I don’t think it should be that huge a process. If someone’s struggling, I think they should be able to get help right away.” Anonymous 13

“A couple of times I phoned mental health and they can fit you in eight days from now sort of thing, I phoned about a person who was struggling and I was so worried, and they said, well you have to make appointments and go there. [...] and it’s not that they don’t care, we don’t have the resources here [...] if we decide we want to do something about it, we really, really have to pull together as a community.”
Anonymous 16

In Fort Simpson, the status quo involves counselling services offered by the GNWT; however, in other communities in the NWT, counselling services can be accessed through other organizations. For example, there are Indigenous organizations that have counsellors

staffed. The Yellowknives Dene have listed on their website a wellness area, where there is Dene wellness-specific support, with two workers who “provide education and awareness of addictions and its effects, assessment, counselling, case management, crisis intervention, referrals to treatment, recovery. Aftercare, follow up sessions.”²⁰

Participants in conversations with community members recalled previous times when there was programming offered to community through local organizations:

“We had a really good addictions program and it ran out of the Friendship Centre. They had a couple of addictions workers who worked with the people, were involved in the AA program and were involved in community wellness. It worked really good because the individuals that were working, really loved our community.” Anonymous 15

Community members stated they believe that there needs to be the option of accessing Northern and Indigenous counsellors, which is currently not always an option locally:

“We don’t have enough Indigenous homegrown people in those positions. So, it’s difficult to relate to the people that come up and it’s difficult as well because they don’t stay here. They’re only here for a short amount of time and to be able to open yourself up so in such a raw way, you need to have a connection and it’s not possible, connecting with somebody, if you know they’re going to leave in two months.” Anonymous 15

“It’s improving the programs that are available. It’s making sure that if somebody does come to you and they say, well I don’t want to do the western style of things, I want to go traditionally, like have an elder there that they can go to, or ‘fuse’ it. So they can pick instead of being limited just to one. Having those resources available to them would make a big difference.” Anonymous 10

“So, reading about it, will never do anything. And having a guy with a white tie, with a tie being in the knows, all and all just talk to them they won’t be convinced. You need a guy that’s been down and out and who can say, look, I been there, and I know how you feel.” [Referring to counsellors] Anonymous 9

In “Innovations on a shoestring: a study of Collaborative Community-Based Aboriginal Mental Health Service Model in Rural Canada,” research was completed on the Knaw Chi Ge Win service system in a Northern Ontario community. Knaw Chi Ge Win offers mental health and wellness services from a “holistic Aboriginal framework.” The centre offers its clients an approach to mental healthcare that blends Indigenous and Western methods of healing, and includes staff on hand such as psychiatrists and traditional healers. Through participatory action research, it was found that the model resulted in “... improved illness care and cultural safety, managed wait times, and reduction in professional isolation.”²¹ The research found that the model assisted in overcoming barriers in providing mental health care in a rural community with limited resources.²² Such examples show that mental health programming can achieve a blend of methods that serves the needs of the people.

“I just think there needs to be a lot more than just your typical counselling services” Anonymous 21

20 Yellowknives Dene First Nation, Wellness, accessed April 22, 2019, <https://ykdene.com/wellness/>.

21 Marion A. Maar, et al. “Innovations on a Shoestring: A Study of a Collaborative Community-Based Aboriginal Mental Health Service Model in Rural Canada,” *International Journal of Mental Health Systems* 3, no. 27, accessed August 1, 2019, DOI 10.1186/1752-4458-3-27.

22 Marion A. Maar, et al.

POLICY ANALYSIS OPTION 2: DEVELOP ADDITIONAL SERVICES AND PROGRAMMING WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

Participants said they would like to see more programming that is led by the community and co-developed with community members themselves. More specifically, they would like to see programming that assists in reducing the stigma of addictions and more local events that are alcohol-free and community inclusive.

“You need to let communities decide what they want to do, how to do, and then provide it. If you don’t it’s not going to be successful.” Anonymous 3

Community members stated a need for more community and family centred programming. However, this programming was to be in the community itself and not away from the community.

“When you want to treat addictions and all of that, I think you need to deal with the family as a whole. So that everybody goes through that whole healing process.” Anonymous 10

In the article entitled “Healing the community to heal the Individual,” an extensive literature review was undertaken that examined community-based or community mobile treatments for alcohol and substance abuse programs. Their review found that “community-based addictions programs are appropriate alternatives to treatment at distant residential addictions facilities.”²³ Such scholarly research and additional evidence-based work should be drawn upon further to model a holistic community-driven, culturally inclusive addictions program.

When considering community and Indigenous led initiatives and instances of success, Dehcho First Nations is a good example. They have successfully

administered and implemented the Dehcho K’ehodi guardian and stewardship program since 2014. This program includes a yearly gathering held by Dehcho First Nations that brings together partners, researchers, community members and others to share information and to further lead direction of the program. Dehcho First Nations has found that this model has been very effective in creating and implementing a regional program. The Dehcho K’ehodi has been community led and driven since the onset and has proven to be successful. This success has been demonstrated through their annual gatherings, delivery of a regional-wide training program plus other notable endeavours. The organization is actively engaged with communities on multiple levels, such as the delivery of language programming and hosting regional leadership meetings, and it currently has an education division. Originally established for negotiations purposes, it now has several departments including language, negotiations, education, and lands and resources.²⁴ Furthermore, in the Dehcho First Nations Agreement in Principle (AIP), chapter 23, “Traditional and Health Agreements,” there are provisions for the health and wellness of the Dehcho to be managed, administered and delivered by the Dehcho. Through the AIP, the region has future plans for the Dehcho First Nations to manage health programming.²⁵ With adequate resources, the organization could successfully lead health and wellness gatherings in the region that would not only assist in spreading awareness and education on addictions, but would provide a space for the region and community members to further lead local addiction programming.

“The small communities suffer just like us.” [Referring to addiction issues in the Dehcho communities] Anonymous 8

“I think what is needed is to really support and help people to bring out their voices.” Anonymous 4

23 Jiwa, 1000.

24 Dehcho First Nations, accessed April 22, 2019, <https://dehcho.org/>.

25 Dehcho First Nations, Agreement in Principle Rolling Draft #41, January 3, 2017, accessed August 1, 2019, <https://dehcho.org/docs/50-ROLLING-DRAFT-AIP-VERSION-DATED-JANUARY-3-2017-2-1.pdf>

“I think it's crucial thing that we do, bring our leaders in and address it, to our leaders and let them know that it's getting worse.” Anonymous 8

Since time immemorial, the Dehcho People took care of their wellness without outside influences, and the people of the area could lead empowering programming and wellness initiatives for the benefit of all residents.

In conversations with community members, participants offered ideas and stated where there were additional programming needs. If community members were engaged further, they could offer a variety of ideas for programming that is truly “from community for community.”

“I think that a lot of times we have to bring that pride back to the people. We have to bring that empowerment back to our people and to not so much look at the past, but what we can do from today.” Anonymous 17

“I've had friends that committed suicide in the North, and family members. I think it's crucial that we do have our leaders understand.” [understand addictions and wellness issues in the communities] Anonymous 8



Dehcho sunflower (Photo by K. Tanche)

**POLICY ANALYSIS OPTION 3: ENCOMPASS
INDIGENOUS HEALING PRACTICES
AND METHODS WITHIN ADDICTIONS
PROGRAMMING.**

“You hear that prayer song, and it’s like the whole, your whole, inner self just comes alive. And you just feel that vibration and that excitement and emotions at times too. But you’re feeling... it’s not a sad feeling, it’s happy.... like oh I’m home.” Anonymous 8

As noted previously, Fort Simpson is a predominantly Indigenous community. Despite this, when I scanned the local addictions services, there was little in the way of consistent Indigenous-related services. This is further reflected in the conversations I have had with community members. Services and supports such as Dene spirituality, culturally based programs, or land-based options are not always easily accessible in the community.

“On the land healing traditional programs for Indigenous people, because a lot of the people in this community are Indigenous and I’m sure they would like to see their own things reflected in that type of programming.” Anonymous 14

“I’m just so thankful that I was a part of it [a residential treatment program] from the spiritual, and the Indigenous side of it with the western side. I guess it depends on you. Everybody’s different.” Anonymous 1

“I think that’s very, individually, orientated because some people might find it better that a western way works rather than a traditional. But for Indigenous people maybe a traditional way would work a lot better or a combination.” Anonymous 7

Participants’ most common response was that a combination of Western and Indigenous methods would be the most effective for treating addictions. However, this would be dependent on the individual’s needs. Participants added that the methods for

treatment need to be relevant to the community, have to be done in the right way, and that both ways (Western and Indigenous) have value. Having a combination of options available for support would make programming more accessible to a wider range of people.

“It just depends on the situation and individual. But you have to be respectful, what works for you might not work for me.” Anonymous 3

“I think there needs to be some sort of bridging between Western and Indigenous ways. Western methodologies have been so ingrained in them [Indigenous people]. I think in a lot of ways it’s been literally beaten into them that this [Western ideologies] is the right way. So I think some sort of bridging of Indigenous ways is okay too, it can be helpful, it could be good, it can be better.” Anonymous 14

“I don’t think that one way completely, so the Western alone, would be beneficial. I don’t think that that would work to be honest, and I don’t think that coming from a full on, just traditional cultural way either would be completely helpful. I think that in this day and age we have to mix the two to have the best outcome.” Anonymous 12

“I think both systems of understanding the world have value, and I think there is ways to integrate both into programming, so that you’re really using the strengths of both ways of seeing things and understanding things to benefit people who need help. Because some people in our communities, feel really more at home and comfortable in ceremony and some people don’t and then some people may feel more confident with, maybe a western approach and some people won’t.” Anonymous 19

Within scholarly articles,²⁶ government documents²⁷ and Indigenous government documents,²⁸ there have been consideration and calls for more culturally relevant and community centred addiction programming for Indigenous peoples. This further reiterates the need for a shift in a programming.

Rowan et al, stated that “[t]he hope and promise of healing from addictions for Indigenous peoples are rooted in cultural interventions.” This scoping study then went on to review and examine the effectiveness of culturally relevant programming and effects on wellness. The findings concluded that culture-based interventions “improve client functioning in all areas of wellness.”²⁹

“You can combine it, but I have to say it would have to be relevant to the community.” Anonymous II

“I think a combination of both makes it more accessible to a wider range of people because as soon as they can identify with part of it, there'll be buy in. That with a combination you'll reach the best amount of people, and I mean there's the research behind the Western medicine, empirically speaking, but anecdotally speaking, there's so much power in the Indigenous healing and science just hasn't caught up yet. So, I think that combining them both together would make for the best outcome.” Anonymous 20

Within the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework, several recommendations were made including one for “culturally-grounded community development and capacity building that reduces risk factors and increases protective factors.”³⁰

“I never thought it would be possible for me to quit. But just by sitting there and listening and asking questions with the spiritual Advisors at Poundmakers [a residential treatment facility], it really made me realize so much that, if you really believe in whatever you believe in, God, Jesus, whatever, those prayers can be answered.” Anonymous I

In 2012, the GNWT conducted a territorial forum on addictions and community wellness which resulted in a report with 67 recommendations for the NTHSSA and communities. The first priority was on-the-land programs.³¹

Within Łíídlıı Kúé First Nation's past two multi-year wellness plans, plans were laid out to include on-the-land-programs.

Various organizations like Liidlii Kue First Nation and the GNWT Health and Social Services currently offer addiction related programs and services. However, within “conversations with community members,” several participants stated that organizations currently work in silos and there is a need for more community organizations to work together for the betterment of the community.

“I think sometimes each organization is so stuck in what they're mandated to do.” Anonymous 21

Currently there is a Fort Simpson interagency committee led by Łíídlıı Kúé First Nation. It is comprised of GNWT representatives, community organizations and Indigenous Organizations. The committee provides a forum for health services providers. The role of the committee is to: respond to community issues and needs,

26 For example, Rowan et al. and Jiwa et al.

27 Northwest Territories, Health and Social Services, Minister's Forum on Addictions and Community Wellness; Government of Canada, Health Canada, First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework, last modified January 2015, accessed August 1, 2019, http://publications.gc.ca/site/archivee-archived.html?url=http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/sc-hc/H34-278-2-2014-eng.pdf.

28 Liidlii Kue First Nation, Liidlii Kue Community Wellness Plan: Strength from Within [2017] Accessed August 2019, <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/hss/files/fort-simpson-community-wellness-plan.pdf>; Liidlii Kue First Nation, “Liidlii Kue Community Wellness Plan,” Accessed August 2019 <http://www.liidliikue.ca/sites/default/files/Liidlii%20Kue%20Wellness%20plan.pdf>;

Katloodeechee First Nation, Development Plan Dene Wellness Centre Project.

29 Rowan et al, p.1

30 Canada, Health Canada, First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework, 14.

31 Liidlii Kue First Nation.

communicate and share information, and to collaborate on special events.³² If this committee considered collaborating, but led by an Indigenous organization, on on-the-land programming with Indigenous and Western methods of healing that are culturally relevant and specific to health, wellness and addictions, it would be very beneficial for the community. All organizations could pool resources, such as infrastructure and financial and human resources, to better support the needs of the community and bridge the gaps that currently exist in the community in Indigenous healing methods. A more collaborative approach might help to bring different organizations and agencies out of their mandated silos.

Dehcho Elders and cultural knowledge holders often speak about how the land is a healing place and that you cannot separate the land from culture and language. Therefore, to have land-based programming led by Indigenous peoples is to have healing cultural programming.

“I went out to the bush with an elder for two weeks I think that did more for me than one month in a treatment program.” Anonymous II

There are several examples of community-led and run addictions related programs within the territories, such as the On the Land Mobile Addictions treatment program in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut;³³ Kwanlin Dun First Nations Jackson Lake Healing Camp in the Yukon;³⁴ Smith Landing First Nation Mobile Addictions Program in Fort Smith, NWT;³⁵ K’atl’odeeche Wellness Centre, K’atl’odeeche First Nation, Northwest

Territories;³⁶ and the Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.³⁷ All of the programs have integrated Western healing methods with cultural and/or land-based programming and/or spiritual programming. Such models prove that integrated programs in northern communities are not only possible, but successful.

The GNWT recently announced in the 2019-2020 budget that there would be “...\$1.002 million for mental health initiatives, including funding to implement the Mental Health Act and to support land-based mobile addictions treatment and aftercare.”³⁸ This could be an avenue for the community of Fort Simpson to seek resources.

While the recommendations in this paper are focused on the community of Fort Simpson, addiction and healing programming also serves outlying communities. If on-the-land pilot programs were successful, then those programs could be shared with other Dehcho Communities.

The concept of on-the-land programming for mental wellness is not new to the Northwest Territories. In fact, it has been a topic of discussion at the political and community level for many years. In 2013, the Department of Health and Social Services went on a territorial-wide consultation tour. As a result, a report titled *Healing Voices* was produced. This report includes recommendations from members of 22 different communities. The top recommendation was to provide more opportunity to participate

32 Fort Simpson Interagency Committee, Interagency Terms of Reference.

33 Karen McColl, “Graduate from Cambridge Bay’s Home-grown Healing Program Goes Back as Guest Speaker,” Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), November 25, 2018, accessed April 22, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/healing-program-second-year-1.4918088>.

34 Kwanlin Dün First Nations, “Justice- Jackson Lake Wellness Team,” Kwanlin Dün First Nations. Accessed August 1, 2019 http://www.kwanlindun.com/index.php/health/section/jackson_lake_healing_camp/

35 Northwest Territories, “Mobile Addictions Program Piloted in Fort Smith,” news release, September 11, 2017, accessed April 22, 2019, <https://www.gov.nt.ca/en/newsroom/news/mobile-addictions-program-piloted-fort-smith>.

36 Kristen Murphy, “Former Nats’ejee K’eh Treatment Centre Gets New Lease on Life as Dene Wellness Centre,” Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, January 10, 2019, accessed April 22, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/new-life-for-natsejee-keh-treatment-centre-1.4972862>.

37 Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation, accessed April 22, 2019, <https://arcticindigenousandwellness.org/>.

38 Northwest Territories, Finance, “Government of the Northwest Territories Releases 2019-2020 Budget,” news release, February, 2019, accessed April 22, 2019, <https://www.gov.nt.ca/en/newsroom/government-northwest-territories-releases-2019-2020-budget>.

in on-the-land programs.³⁹ The GNWT has taken specific measures by providing the on-the-land healing fund, which can be accessed by Indigenous governments and non-government organizations.⁴⁰ Another example of existing on-the-land funding is the On the Land Collaborative, which provides funding opportunities to implement community-driven on-the-land programs.⁴¹ Therefore, there is potential opportunity for the community of Fort Simpson to access currently available on-the-land wellness funding.

“I think yes there’s always going to be a need for people with Masters [in counselling positions]. There’s always going to be a need for people with the Western education, but there has to be a balance of that with the traditional.” Anonymous 2I

“Like I said you send them [community members], you have somebody who has been in residential schools, you’re sending them to a treatment program. You’re telling them, no phones, you’re not allowed to go out past this time, you’re not allowed to do this. It’s another residential school, it’s a trauma again. It doesn’t help, and I think when you’re at a land-based program you’re free to walk around.” Anonymous II



Teepee and Sunset (Photo by A. Tambour)

39 Northwest Territories, Health and Social Services, Minister’s Forum on Addictions and Community Wellness.

40 Northwest Territories, Health and Social Services, On the Land Healing, accessed April 22, 2019, <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/land-healing>.

41 NWT On the Land Collaborative, accessed April 22, 2019, <http://www.nwtontheland.ca/>.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1:

The GNWT and community of Fort Simpson need to evaluate the current status of addictions programs and services, and provide additional staffing and counsellors.

Presently, counsellors in the community are employed by the GNWT. Based on the responses received from participants, this first recommendation corresponds with community members' thoughts on the current system of community counselling programs and their words on local needs, such as having Indigenous counsellors who are from the North and are culturally aware; having counselling offices easily accessible in the community, in a band office and not hidden in a potentially intimidating government office; and ensuring there are enough positions that people can get immediate help when they need it.

There was a stated gap in services that could be filled by providing local organizations with adequate funding and resources to deliver their own community led counselling programs, in addition to the community counselling program that currently exists. Furthermore, local organizations should actively seek out financial opportunities to deliver such programming.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

The Dehcho Region should deliver regional health gatherings led by communities for communities.

Participants in conversations with community members said that more local voices need to be heard in community-driven, community-centred, and empowering programming, which would include families, be accessible and be more culturally relevant. Furthermore, participants spoke about the need for more education about addictions and that there is need for education to aid in shifting perceptions on addiction. One participant spoke about a need for a community gathering, so people could collectively create solutions to addiction programming.

The second recommendation is, therefore, for the Dehcho region to have several regional gatherings led by non-government organizations, such as Dehcho First Nations, and funded by the Federal Government, the GNWT, or both, and supported by various other organizations. The gatherings would focus on sharing knowledge about health, addictions and healing. They could bring together both people and organizations who work in the health field and also community members in the region.

The gatherings would seek to have community members from the region lead further recommendations and strategies for future regional-wide addictions, wellness and healing programming, thereby creating programming that is truly led by community.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Fort Simpson organizations need to provide more variety of programs and services that are culturally relevant.

Participants in conversations with community members spoke about the need for more variety of programming, that a combination of healing methods would be most effective, and that organizations work in silos. In addition to participant voices, there are numerous resources, referenced throughout this paper, that indicate a combination of Indigenous and Western methods of addiction healing would be effective in a largely Indigenous population.

The third recommendation is that Fort Simpson's organizations and community members currently involved with wellness programming work collaboratively to provide a wider variety of addiction programs and services, with a focus on Indigenous, culturally-relevant programming and services. The Fort Simpson interagency committee could collaborate on creating more culturally relevant programming. Should they be unable to, a community task committee should be formed. The task committee (interagency committee or a newly developed committee) needs to involve community members.

Given that on-the-land programming was so frequently discussed and that it involves Indigenous land-based cultural practices, there should be a pilot project for on-the-land healing camps. Based on the participants' responses, two different options are recommended:

- ▶ Short-term, phased program within a drivable distance that is done in the evenings and weekends to ensure it is accessible to the population of Fort Simpson.
- ▶ Longer-term on the land programming away from the community that lasts a month or longer.

CONCLUSION

It is evident from conversations with community members that much needs to be done in the community of Fort Simpson with regard to addictions programming. While there are services in the community that people can access and do find helpful, there are areas that could use improvement. A key area of improvement would be to have more community-driven programs that are Indigenous and culturally relevant, appropriate, and accessible.

I believe it is often forgotten that governmental policies have very real effects on community members. What works in one region or community may not work in another. While there are commonalities in northern communities, there are also many differences too. Let us remember that policy relating to addiction programming has real-life effects on people, families, and communities. The lack of relevant programming had an effect on my life, my family and my community. Programming can make the difference in aiding people in their recovery, but programming that is ill-suited can have the opposite effect.

I am not the only one in my community who had to leave my home to better my life and my situation. Some of the community members I spoke to mentioned the inaccessibility of services in the community. As an example, a young lady who shared her story with me outside of conversations with community members, stated she also struggled with addictions. She left the community where she was then able to access peer

support groups and full time counselling services with an Indigenous counsellor with whom she was able to relate. If those services had been available in the community, she said, “...*things would have been different. It’s not easy to leave your home to have to access services to better your life*” (name withheld by request).

I saw that community members have the answers on what would work best. Their words were insightful, heartfelt and wise. I heard hope, resiliency and strength in their voices. The people have the strength, resourcefulness and determination to help create solutions. If additional engagement with the community would occur in a relevant and significant way, there would be positive change.

With these presented recommendations, based on the voices of Fort Simpson, and with further community engagement, I am hopeful that the community members, organizations and the Government of the Northwest Territories can implement changes to the current addiction programming model and delivery. This will ensure that our community members can access culturally relevant services today, not tomorrow and certainly not 10 years from now.

“I think it is crucial that we all work together as a community.” Anonymous 8

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND GUIDING QUESTIONS

To guide the conversation and to ensure I received the information I required, I developed seven guiding questions. I had several professionals in the health field and academia review them before finalization.

The intent of one-on-one conversations with guiding questions was to find out if community members thought addiction to alcohol, drugs or both is an issue in Fort Simpson. Further, the conversation was designed to gauge what sort of services they knew were available, to find out what their ideas were about ideal programming, and to see if they thought Western or Indigenous methods were more effective. The topic of Western and Indigenous approaches to addiction services was brought forward because of my experiences and scan of services as noted in the body of this paper. The majority of the services were Western in approach, as mentioned, with few Indigenous services available. I sought to find out whether either approach, or both, would be effective for the community of Fort Simpson.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

I engaged with community leadership by informing local Indigenous governments of my intents and of my work in the community. In June 2018, I attended a Liidlli Kue First Nation Council meeting, where I presented the work I would be doing to the Chief and Council and made myself available to answer any questions or concerns. All members were supportive of the work and added that I could access any of them as participants. I also informed Dehcho First Nations' Grand Chief Gladys Norwegian of my work. The organization expressed verbal support of the work, considering it could have regional impacts.

RESEARCH METHODS

In order to ensure the process was done in an ethical manner that informed participants of their rights, and

to adhere to The Gordon Foundation's research policy, I created a consent form. There were two signatory areas on the form; one was for consent to participate and the other for consent to be quoted. The form also outlined the work I was doing, explained any risks/discomforts and the participant's right to withdraw, and provided additional information in the event that the participant had questions about their rights (attached as Appendix B).

Before I began to contact individuals for potential conversations, I reviewed the demographics of Fort Simpson to ensure that the people I spoke with were representative of the population.⁴² I contacted participants by my knowledge of community members and by recommendations from people in the community. People contacted were people I knew in the community, or active community members, or people who worked closely with others (either directly or indirectly). I also attempted to contact people who I knew had intimate knowledge of or had participated in programming, or had experience dealing with addictions.

The main method of initial contact of participants was through social media messaging, verbal communication, and by cellular phone, including texting. Each time I contacted a participant, I explained the work I was doing and the process I was using; I then asked if they would be interested in taking part. Every participant I spoke with accepted the invitation to participate.

Conversations were conducted in my personal household, by the river, in offices, and at participants' households. To ensure the comfort of the participants, I provided options on the location of the interview. I also reiterated that I was attempting to ensure that each conversation was as confidential as possible, so, we would have to avoid very public places.

At the beginning of each interview I verbally reviewed the consent form with the individual, and once the

⁴² Statistics Canada, Fort Simpson, Village [Census subdivision], Northwest Territories and Northwest Territories [Territory].

participant agreed, they signed the consent section. I then offered a written copy for their records. Each interview was recorded on my personal cellular device, except for four that were typed out by the interviewees. An independent Canadian transcription company was contracted to transcribe all the audio conversations. The company was bound by a confidentiality agreement.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATIONS WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS:

- ▶ What is your age?
 - ▶ What is your Gender?
 - ▶ What is your Ethnicity?
 - ▶ How long have you lived in Fort Simpson?
1. Do you think that addiction, to alcohol and/or drugs, is an issue in Fort Simpson? Can you expand on that?
 2. What do you know about the addictions programming offered in Fort Simpson?
 3. What do you think would be ideal in terms of addictions programming offered in Fort Simpson?

Prior to asking question 4, I provided each person with the background information noted below:

4. Do you think Western or Indigenous or both methods of addictions programming is more effective in helping people to stop or slow down with their addictions?
5. What do you think should be available in Fort Simpson to aid with the slowing down or cessation (stopping of) addictions issues?
6. Are there any questions or additional comments you would like to make?

Background Information reviewed before asking question 4:

I'm going to ask a question about what you think is effective, Western or Indigenous or both methods of addictions programming. But I'm going to give a quick description so we are coming from the same understanding.

Western methods for addictions treatment would be Alcoholics Anonymous, some residential treatment programs, harm reduction programs. Essentially methods to treat addictions that come from a non-Indigenous perspective/way. Indigenous methods of treating addictions could be ceremony, drumming, on-the-land activities or having a medicine man work with a person. It would be methods of healing that originally come from Indigenous peoples. Examples that encompass both methods would be Poundmakers residential treatment center, where you can access traditional methods of healing, like sweats, combined with the AA 12 steps, and group therapy for example.^{43 44}

⁴³ Rowan et al.

⁴⁴ Poundmaker's Lodge Treatment Centers, "Programs & Services."

APPENDIX B: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE FORM

Consent to Participate in Information Gathering

Introduction and Purpose

My name is Kristen Tanche. I am a Fellow from The Gordon Foundation's Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship Program. I would like to invite you to take part in my information gathering/conversations with community members, which concerns Indigenous and Western methods of addictions' programming in Fort Simpson, NT. My intention is to have conversations with community members about what they think would be an effective way forward in addictions programming. Within my work it is very important to me to hear directly from community members and to have their views lead my final policy recommendations. I come from the belief that effective addictions programming must come from the recommendations of community members themselves.

Procedures

I will be conducting one-on-one conversations with community members, or I will provide written open-ended questions for participants to provide written responses to. I have developed several questions to help guide the conversations and written responses. The questions are focused on addictions programming in Fort Simpson and what you think would be ideal.

If you agree to participate in the one-on-one conversation, I will ask you several pre-developed questions. The conversation could take anywhere from 20 to 60 minutes depending on how much time you would like to spend speaking about the topics. With your permission, I will audiotape and/or take notes. The recording is to accurately record the information you provide, and will be used for transcription purposes only. The interviews will be transcribed by an external, independent, professional transcribing service, which will be bound by confidentiality. If you choose not to be audiotaped, I will take notes instead. If you agree to being audiotaped but feel uncomfortable at any time, I can turn off the recorder at your request. Or if you do not wish to continue, you can stop at any time.

If you would prefer to provide a written response I will provide you with the written pre-developed questions. If you agree to participate but feel uncomfortable at any time when providing the written responses you can stop.

Benefits

There is no direct benefit to you from taking part. The cumulated conversations of community members will inform policy recommendations for change in addictions programming. It is hoped these recommendations will be accepted and implemented by the Government of the Northwest Territories, and First Nations Governance Organizations.

Risks / Discomforts

Due to the size of the Dehcho and Fort Simpson there is a risk you may be identified even though all resulting information will be treated as anonymous unless you request otherwise below. If you are uncomfortable during the information gathering/conversation you are free to decline to answer any questions, or to stop the conversation at any time.

Confidentiality

All information will be handled as confidentially as possible. When the results of the information gathering are published or presented, individual names and other personally identifiable information will not be used unless you give explicit permission for this below. The final results of this information gathering exercise will be made available on The Gordon Foundation’s website (gordonfoundation.ca).

When the information gathering is completed, I will save the recordings and notes until the winter of 2020, at which time the 2017 Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship cohort will have completed the program. The information will be saved only for reference in the finalization of the final policy recommendation paper, after which I will delete the recordings and notes. The same measures described above will be taken to protect confidentiality and you will be contacted for permission before secondary use.

Sponsorship/Compensation

The Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship is a program of The Gordon Foundation. All funding for this project is provided directly by The Gordon Foundation. For more information, please visit the program’s website at gordonfoundation.ca.

Rights

Participation is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to take part in the project. You can decline to answer any questions and are free to stop taking part at any time. Whether or not you choose to participate and whether you choose to answer a question or continue participating in the project, there will be no penalty to you.

Questions

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at 867-445-7284 or at 867-695-3495, or at kristen_tanche@hotmail.com.

If you have any questions about your rights or treatment as a participant, please contact Kristina Fry, Information and Projects Officer at The Gordon Foundation either via phone 416-601-4776 ext. 230 or via e-mail kristina@gordonfn.org.

CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your own records.
If you wish to participate please sign and date below.

Participant's Name (please print)

Participant's Signature

Date

If you agree to allow your name or other identifying information to be included in all final reports, publications, and/or presentations, please sign and date below.

Participant's Signature

Date

APPENDIX C: DETAILED PARTICIPANT RESPONSES

The following section includes the questions that were posed to participants in conversations with community members, common themes spoken about, and some of their responses. Verbatim conversations could not be included in this paper because of length. Some quotes of the participants were included in the body of this paper and some are included in the following section. Because certain topics were commonly brought up during conversations with community members, those topics are duplicated in this section.

Question 2: What do you know about the addictions programming offered in Fort Simpson?

Almost all of the respondents had some knowledge of the addictions programming offered in Fort Simpson. Out of the twenty-nine people, one responded with “Not Much.” Some responded similarly stating they knew “very little,” but then expanded on their knowledge of programming.

“It’s pretty limited. I think they have something called Matrix which I think is just; I’m not even sure what it is. I think there’s also counsellors available with Health and Social Services and occasionally from time-to-time there is like pop-up programs, but it’s very few and that’s the extent of my knowledge of addictions counselling programs in Fort Simpson.”
Anonymous 19

Some stated they had previously accessed services in the community and so, had intimate knowledge of programming. Others had knowledge because friends, family or acquaintances had accessed services.

The following programs were the most well-known and most mentioned. They are listed in the order of how many times they were mentioned, with those mentioned the most at the top.

Alcoholics Anonymous meetings

GNWT, NTHSS Community Counselling Program

GNWT, NTHSS Residential Treatment Programs

GNWT, NTHSS Matrix Program

LKFN, Men’s Talking Circle

GNWT, NTHSS Sober Skills Group

Local Churches Programming

NAAW Week, National Addictions Awareness Week

LKFN, Justice Circle

Other: Justice system, Federal Residential school Healing funds/programs, Tree of Peace Friendship Centre in Yellowknife, Family programs, pop up programs by GNWT and other organizations, LKFN’s Victim Services, Sweats, Residential treatment programs (i.e. Poundmakers)

COMMENTS HIGHLIGHTS:

“Very little. I know that there’s a matrix program, I believe.” Anonymous 1

“I know there’s AA, there’s a matrix thing. That’s all I know. I just know the name of it. Other than that, I don’t know any.” Anonymous 7

“It’s sort of up to our community members to supplement it [referring to addictions programming] for themselves with church services and I know, they have a men’s talking circle and LKFN offers a lot of parenting groups and stuff. But in terms of things like strictly addictions based, it’s pretty sparse.” Anonymous 20

“Yeah it’s relatively sparse.” Anonymous 20

“I think there have been improvements over the years in available and culturally relevant programming to support people with addictions (i.e. intention to hire indigenous staff) but the model hasn’t changed much over the years- people can access residential treatment programs and counselling services and access AA but they don’t seem to be very effective for the majority of people.” Anonymous 26

“I have my own counsellor in Poundmakers [a residential treatment facility] that I phone once a week when I’m frustrated and I’m like oh no, I want to drink.” Anonymous 8

“I know there is community counselling, [in the community, through the GNWT] they have mental health and addictions counsellors there. I’m not sure; I don’t think they’re fully staffed again. I think that’s because they’re not always fully staffed.” Anonymous 21

Question 3: Is there anything you wish was available in the community for addictions support?

Answers to this question varied, however the overarching themes were as follows:

NEED FOR A VARIETY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Participants talked about the need to have a number of different programs to suit the needs of the wide variety of people. They wished there were the following programs: more aftercare for people returning from residential treatment, programs that address the underlying issues of addictions (trauma, stress), physical activity programs (yoga), more options for young adults and family orientated programming.

“I cannot identify one specific thing, but I think that there needs to be more services available for people to access.” Anonymous 10

“The other thing that would probably be also beneficial because we really see it in our communities, is if there were ever to be the opportunity for family-based programming because addictions affect an entire family unit. Sometimes, it’s more than one family member struggling.” Anonymous 19

“I firmly believe if you develop a solid base for your family and your support system, you’re going to have success and then you need to work with these individuals to see if their willing to share their story because if their willing to share their story, people can connect.” Anonymous 3

“I think it would be more beneficial and a better kind of like integration back into the community if it was actually done in the community. So it’s learning how to function within your community rather than going to a foreign place, learning your skills and then coming back here and having no support in order to, you know, to live an addiction-free life.” Anonymous 13

MORE PROGRAMMING ADVERTISEMENT, there is a need for more printed material and/or information sessions on what is currently being offered, and they wished that programming was more visible and available.

ON THE LAND (OTL) PROGRAMS, from short-term programs that could be hosted over a weekend, to long-term programs that would include addiction counsellors. One respondent stated that being on the land is for everyone, and everyone would benefit from it:

“An on the land based program where they have addiction counsellors. I’m going to say counsellors that are not from the community that don’t have a tie to people, like a personal tie because some people would rather see somebody who is that doesn’t

know their past or they feel comfortable sharing, but I think if there is on the land based program, somebody comes in today and says, 'I need help now.' You know, you're not going to say, 'Well, you got to wait a month.' You could say, 'Okay we have a land- based program, there's families out there already, let's go.'" Anonymous 11

"I would like to be in the bush, in my own territory with my own people, in my language and learning my history. Like you know traditional knowledge how to live on land, language, trapping, hunting." Anonymous 8

"I would love to see something on the land." Anonymous 3

"More young adult programs that connect us back to the land and active lifestyle. Whether it be winter camping with a ski/snowshoe component or short canoe trips with planning meals and learning about the flora and fauna, etc. Programs that take you out on the land and escaping technology and letting your mind process the environment and your surroundings reconnect you back to your roots." Anonymous 25

"As for me I would like to do on the land short term programming that is developed in stages/phases. Sometimes classroom settings make you feel trapped and if you are on the land you feel more comfortable to share your story." Anonymous 25

MORE STAFFING AND COUNSELLORS

There is a need for additional staff and counsellors. Specifically, a need for Indigenous and northern counsellors, experienced counsellors in alcohol and drug addiction, and increased access to counsellors, particularly after the typically working hours of 8:30am-5:00pm.

"More Indigenous counsellors, males especially, who community members can relate to." Anonymous 24

"More counsellors, more aboriginal counsellors" Anonymous 1

"Having more people, available for counselling. I have heard of lots of people who have tried to get in and there's a huge waiting list and they can't. If someone's feeling like they want to take that next step, you need to get them while they're on that path because it's so easy to take the turn back to drugs and alcohol." Anonymous 23

"I find when people come back from treatment there is not much evening support, like there's a lot of day time support with people that come back from treatment." Anonymous 18

INCLUDE MORE TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Participants stated that they would like to see more Dene Traditional Knowledge included in addiction supports, including more spiritual programs and Indigenous wellness options. Furthermore, there needs to be more emphasis, importance and value placed on local Indigenous traditional knowledge.

"Sometimes I think your western style of addictions treatment works, but I also think that there needs to be more emphasis on traditional knowledge and traditional way. I don't think they [Referring to the GNWT] put enough value into traditional knowledge." Anonymous 21

"There is a struggle with government because they still don't buy into a traditional healing traditional way of doing things." Anonymous 3

"I think revamping the program would definitely help instead of making it so clinical right? Make it more traditional." - [Referring to GNWT addictions programming]. Anonymous 10

"I think culturally specific programming, especially ones that address things like residential school impacts because indigenous communities really are still reeling from inter-generational impacts residential schools and I think that's where a lot of our addictions stem from" Anonymous 19

“Our number one thing that we could use is an elder that understands inter-generational traumas, an elder that understands how trauma affects a person’s life and how they could teach the tools to help.” Anonymous 15

“There could be more indigenous wellness stuff, so sweats. I don’t know if that’s a common thing around here or in the culture here, but if that was something that was advertised and something that I had the opportunity to take part of, or if other people that were struggling with addictions had the opportunity to take part of I’m sure that it would be utilized.” - Anonymous 12

“Within the GNWT there was a mental health and addictions position advertised with pay starting at \$40-\$50 an hour, then a traditional counsellor position was posted years ago for like \$29 an hour. That is a big discrepancy in pay and shows that there is not enough value placed on traditional knowledge.” Anonymous 21

INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure including drop-in centres, transitional housing, sober living areas, and a community centre facility.

“I wish we had transitional housing, that there was a place for individuals to go to when they are returning from a residential treatment program.” Anonymous 20

“I think a big barrier to staying sober once you return to the community after a residential treatment is housing and lack of available, and accessible, sober living.” Anonymous 20

“I wish there was a cultural centre where people could access whole hearted, non judgmental support in all stages of their personal development in dealing with trauma and addictions.” Anonymous 26

COMMUNITY AND EMPOWERMENT

Within the theme of community and empowering people, participants said that there needs to be less judgement on those needing help, and that as a community we need to empower people. Communities need to decide what they would like to do. For example, ideas for programming should come from community members and there should be more sober (dry) community events.

“...used to be the communities look after each other.” Anonymous 3

“If we can get role models of people that are willing to share their stories, its [addictions programming] going to be more successful.” Anonymous 3

SUPPORT AND PEER GROUPS

People would like to see additional support groups like Narcotics Anonymous, Al Anon and peer support groups.

“I’m not sure if there is Al-Anon here, but that would be something I would be interested in doing just for the people that are in my life, to be supportive in that way.” Anonymous 12

“I wish there was a like an Al-Anon group.” Anonymous 16

“I don’t think it’s so much as in addiction but I think it’s in life’s challenges because as a recovering alcoholic I am sometimes, I’m just barely keeping my nose above water just trying to deal with all the stressors of the community, of home, of work, of everything, and I think sometimes you just have to reach out and call somebody.” Anonymous 17

“Yes. A lot more [addiction support] – I’m going to say group support groups.” Anonymous 22

RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT FACILITIES

Two participants stated that we need a residential treatment facility in the North. One participant believed

that sending people south was positive and that it removed them from the situations they were in.

"I wish that we had a facility. I know that our population probably doesn't allow for that, but I do wish there was like a place where people didn't have to leave their home, like their home community, in order to access services." Anonymous 13

"It's ridiculous that people have to go south for treatment, when some people have never left Fort Simpson before." Anonymous 10

Question 4: What do you think would be ideal in terms of addiction programming in Fort Simpson?

PROGRAMMING

ON THE LAND PROGRAMMING

Participants spoke about programming that occurs on the land, that has cultural teachings, with cultural knowledge holders and counsellors. One participant stated intentional, professional on the land programs for families would be ideal. Another participant stated that short-term programs, and programs that are developed in stages would be ideal for accessibility.

"I think that more on the land type things. I think that people are really drawn towards things, the cultural things and things that of are their roots." Anonymous 12

"I just think we need a much more holistic program where there's somebody there 24-hours a day" Anonymous 16

FAMILY- ORIENTED PROGRAMMING

Participants would like to see more programming and support that would look at helping and assisting the entire family, not just programming for the person dealing with addictions issues.

"Whereas if, there was some, family sessions or whatever where the families were involved in; the families would learn how to support the person with addictions." Anonymous 13

"I think, ideally, there would be programs available to addicts and their families, sort of like an intervention process; families of addicts need support too." Anonymous 27

"There is not enough family supports currently, if family sessions were offered then families could learn how to support people in their lives with addictions. Addictions effect entire families." Anonymous 19

MORE VARIETY OF PROGRAMMING

Participants would like to see a wide range, demographic specific, and multiple programming options every night of the week to suit the needs of the community. With a wide range of programming, people would have options every day.

"So there's no ideal way because when you look at it right now the biggest thing would be grief because there has been so many losses and people don't know how to deal with that because there is nowhere to go and nobody reaching out." Anonymous 17

The following themes are sub themes of the theme "Variety of Programming":

NORTHERN-BASED/CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

There needs to be more programming that supports an Indigenous traditional lifestyle that is holistic and culturally specific.

"You will have to be able to work with our elders. You need to bring them in, because they have a lot of life stories and they've had lots of challenges and they survived...." Anonymous 3

"I think people would feel more in their element and more comfortable being in something like a healing workshop or some sort of cultural thing that could tie that in to addictions programming..." Anonymous 12

LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMMING

Participants would like to see more classes and programs like budgeting.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMS

There needs to be more variety of physical activity programs.

AFTERCARE SUPPORT AND PROGRAMMING

Some participants spoke about the lack of after-care support and programming for when people return from addictions programs.

"So a lot of after support programs. Sometimes, we focus so much on getting people into the program and then not enough helping them afterwards." Anonymous 19

YOUTH PROGRAMMING

Several participants spoke about the need for youth specific programming.

"So maybe, gearing programs towards youth so they can make changes for the next generation." Anonymous 27

"...there has to be a program for the young people nowadays." Anonymous 5

PROGRAMMING LOOKING AT UNDERLYING ISSUES OF ADDICTIONS

There needs to be more offered in grief, trauma, prevention, unemployment, stress and the effects of residential school.

SUPPORT AND PEER GROUPS

Participants spoke about the need for more peer support groups.

"Do not walk ahead of me, I might not follow. Do not walk behind me I may not lead. Walk beside me and be my friend.' That's one of the things that we have said and those are one of the things like there are just three little sentences, but they mean so much, yes." Anonymous 17

STAFFING AND COUNSELLORS

Several participants spoke about the changes needed for staffing of counsellors in the community. They would like to see more counsellors hired, mainly because participants felt that GNWT NTHSSA are understaffed, and that there are issues with availability, accessibility, and staff retention. One participant stated that there needs to be a re-evaluation of the education qualifications of counsellors because the standards are set too high and therefore they omit people who may be suitable for the positions.

COMMUNITY AND EMPOWERMENT

Participants emphasized need for community-based programs, driven by the community, to assist in empowering people by promoting self-discovery and self-reliance. Some stated that the community needs to work towards adjusting judgement of those seeking help. One participant said that we need to have community gatherings to get the input of the people on programming needs.

"You can't judge, and you should just be respectful and work towards it, you also need a place where they go in there and they feel safe." Anonymous 3

"I think there needs to be greater awareness in our community that addictions are most often rooted in traumas in order to shift the stigma surrounding alcohol and drug addictions." Anonymous 21

"It's a gradual process. It may be that somebody goes to a program and they don't drink for a few months, but invariably they fall off, that's because that person really needed to go again." Anonymous 8

PEER GROUPS

This theme was mentioned often, stating we needed more peer groups.

“I don’t remember my father being sober very often growing up as he has been an alcoholic since before I was born, so I can honestly say that, if I was informed about resources that were available to me to assist me in learning to live and deal with that, I would have taken advantage of it. Instead, I grew up hating my father because of his addiction. Then I hated my brother because he followed in our father’s footsteps. If there are programs that can be made available to families of addicts and help for them and no judgements for using those resources, I believe that may be enough to give families some light and in turn may help prevent young people from following in their addict family’s footsteps.” Anonymous 27

INFRASTRUCTURE

The same comments were provided as previously mentioned, drop-in centres and dry-out centres.

RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT FACILITIES

There needs to be more support for those who want to attend residential treatment facilities.

RESOURCES

One participant suggested that people who want to attend residential treatment facilities should be provided with funding to aid in compensating them for wages lost while at treatment.

Question 5: Do you think Western or Indigenous or both methods of addiction programming is more effective in helping people to stop or slow down with their addictions?

“It’s not just one thing that’s going to make everything better.” Anonymous 10

The most common response was that a combination of Western and Indigenous methods would be the most effective; however, what would be most effective would depend on the individual’s needs. Participants added that the methods need to be relevant to the community, had to be done the right way, and that both ways (Indigenous and Western) have value. Furthermore, programming would be more accessible to a wider range of people if there was a combination.

“You can combine it, but I have to say it would have to be relevant to the community.” Anonymous 11

“I think we need both and I think that a lot of what is needed is to help people feel that pride in themselves again.” Anonymous 22

“You know from my own experience anything helps.” Anonymous 9

“I think it’s definitely the combination of both. In order for any treatment method to be successful there has to be buy in from the participant, pushing a strictly western way of healing who may not be interested in accessing that isn’t going to be successful. And same with Indigenous, if you’re pushing that and there isn’t any buy in, I don’t think it will be successful.” Anonymous 20

“I think most Western addictions programming are rooted in the idea of stopping a negative behaviour and learning tools to make other choices. This can be effective for some people, but it seems like Indigenous methods are more holistic and help a person look at their whole identity, family and community history in order to heal trauma and find self-value.” Anonymous 26

"I'd say both. Because I'm native I'd want to learn more when I'm recovering." Anonymous 2

"..Inpatient treatment changed my life so far it really opened my eyes and made me realize that there's other ways to have fun rather than just drinking and drugging". ... "There is a better life than just drinking and drugging." Anonymous 6

One participant said that, based on their personal experience, traditional Indigenous methods worked best.

One participant stated that based on their experiences, they would personally choose to participate in Western methods of healing, but they were glad there are options for other people.

"But the western way worked for me." Anonymous 6

One participant said the key was to bring self-identity back, that people were dealing with residential school trauma and that they needed access to on the land treatment programs.

Question 6: What do you think Should be available in Fort Simpson to aid with the slowing down or the cessation (stopping of) addictions issues?

The most frequently mentioned responses to this question were as follows:

MORE EDUCATION

Participants thought that education should be provided to community members on how to drink responsibly, harm reduction techniques, and information about

services offered in the community. Furthermore, there should be training opportunities provided for those who want to pursue work in the helping field i.e. addictions counsellors, social services.

"I think some getting some current information about the roots of addiction out to the community would be helpful." Anonymous 26

"What they should do is, I feel somebody should go into the schools and give, a presentation or a talk with the students and give them not a lecture, like a talk, an education talk and say look, you know you do this, and this will happen..." Anonymous 1

MORE VARIETY OF PROGRAMMING

A common theme in all answers to all questions posed was that there needs to be more options for programming and that addictions issues cannot be stopped, but programming can help with the slowing down of issues. The following ideas were provided: aftercare programs, career development, parenting programs, more programs for youth and adults, more family supports, cultural relevant programming and more on the land programming.

"I think we need to be able to just have a lot of preventative things and we need to do more like family orientated things." Anonymous 21

"I think it would be really good for the counsellors to start dealing with all the youth." Anonymous 10

"Elders to help us... not focus on the harm that people have hurt us and not focus on the hurting that people have done to us. But to focus on what we want in life, where's our goals." Anonymous 15

"Keep people busy on the land doing cultural things." Anonymous 19

"If they want a western method of healing or traditional that needs to be provided." Anonymous 10

"I think there's lots of knowledgeable people who are not elders and who have had to face their own past and have had to find ways to overcome them. They could be really valuable resources." Anonymous 19

"On the land programming where childcare could be provided. Families who want addiction supports do not always want to leave their families, nor their children." -Anonymous 14

STAFFING AND COUNSELLORS

Participants stated that there needs to be more counsellors, and the counsellors need to work varied hours.

"Well, I think we need more workers.. I've certainly never seen the worker sitting on their butts. I think they work hard and long, but I don't think a nine to five model works very well for a lot of people because a lot of people don't want to go during work because it's causing attention to their issues." Anonymous 16

"There is so much red tape when trying to get help." Anonymous 13

Addictions Issues Will Never Stop- This was brought up several times by participants. They believed that

"we will always have alcohol and addictions because it is legal, in the past there was rationing but the issue is still there." Anonymous 22

COMMUNITY AND EMPOWERMENT

There is a need for more sober events, and there needs to be a realignment of services to make them more community centred.

Empowerment of the community and people was brought up. Specifically, that strong leaders and role models in the area of addiction are needed to lead, encourage, and influence people. Participants also commented that we need to start looking at reducing the stigma attached to addictions.

"It truly is a "community" effort. Perhaps we can use a method of mentoring, pair a sober individual with

a person that is trying to get sober." Anonymous 28

"Raise up the voices of the community." Anonymous 4

"I think you need to treat people with kindness." Anonymous 21

"We need to support and assist people, empower them to do things themselves." Anonymous 4

"Even in the North, going around to conferences, different communities, getting the community more involved to understand why there are addictions happening, all these drugs and alcohol, you know, where's it coming from?" Anonymous 8

"Another thing we need in this community, [is] to recognize that we have addictions and try to work towards a better life, right? Work on things." Anonymous 2

NEED MORE RESOURCES

Participants focused on the fact that organizations need to work together for the betterment of the community and that more financial resources are needed to successfully deliver programming.

"I think when people come back from treatment programs there's not enough support. I think what can aid them..... we just don't have the capacity. We don't have the money to hire people that could help. There's so much of red tape." Anonymous 11

"I think being on the land probably would be the most beneficial for our region because a lot of people know how to be on the land and enjoy it, but there is not enough programming or funding available to make those programs happen." Anonymous 18

NEED MORE INFRASTRUCTURE

There is a need for more facilities for: a territorial treatment centre, a community wellness center, transitional housing and safe houses for active addicts.

"We need our own treatment centre modelled after pound makers." Anonymous 24

Question 7: Additional Comments?

Half of the participants had no additional comments or questions. The participants that did respond to this question, mentioned the following:

STAFFING AND COUNSELLORS

Participants reiterated that there needs to be more counsellors available in the community, specifically ones that are from the North. They saw that currently the counsellors in the community are overworked, therefore, it can be difficult to make appointments. It was also mentioned that counsellors and employees needed to be provided with more cultural awareness about the community and engage more with the community. Participants also talked about high turnover rates of GNWT staff that come up from the south, which amplifies the challenges of accessing counselling,

COMMUNITY AND EMPOWERMENT

Participants stated that more role models are required. The community needs to work together and to focus on families.

RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT FACILITIES

Two participants spoke about the benefits of residential treatment facilities. However, another participant said that the process of being referred to and the wait time to attend a residential treatment facility was too long of a process.

“We need a treatment centre in the North, however that terminology is troublesome as it is reminiscent to the residential school term - Residential treatment centres and residential schools have links to residential School. People are sent away, essentially locked up, disconnected, which can re-traumatize them. Land-based programming would be best there are no limitations if you are on the land, in

addition to helping you can learn other essential land-based skills that involve the community (i.e. bringing in elders, kids)- This is what communities did traditionally. - Would like to see community centred and focused programming.” Anonymous 11

PARTICIPANTS ALSO ADDED COMMENTS THAT DID NOT FALL INTO ANY THEMES MENTIONED ABOVE:

“I really don't know what would stop it [addictions issues]. I feel like intergenerational trauma from the residential schools is still very much here, and I don't know if that can really stop on its own.” Anonymous 12

“You can't always trust [counsellors] and then they have that westernized view. It's people that come up from down south. It's not someone you know, how the hell are you supposed to leave your kid with people that you have no clue about [referring to community social workers] people that are here. There's no experience, they have just come straight out of university and then are coming into the North and have never been here in their lives before or never worked with Indigenous people. That's really frustrating to see as well.” Anonymous 14

“Having local people trained up to assist in the healing/treatment and aftercare programs. I believe this would assist in the journey.” Anonymous 28

“There are other additions, like gambling.” Anonymous 5

“I know with me, I've been sober for over three and a half years now and I still struggle, especially here. Like I won't go to AA Meetings, I just have no confidence in going there just because of the whole confidentiality and the trust has been broken. I have no faith in that. Basically with me, I just kind of stick to myself. I do other things, I read and it's okay to have fun when you sober.” Anonymous 1

“I just wish the band and the government would help people that want to get into that field [Drug and Alcohol Counselling].” Anonymous 1

“...so, maybe with addictions, I think it's the biggest thing is getting people to realize they have addictions, and finding a way to enlighten them, about the fact that they have addictions and how to overcome them.” Anonymous 7

“You name it we've done it, we've gone through those programs ourselves. I think that something to help people is to know this is not a shameful thing. That we need to really somehow embrace, and I think more celebrating, when people have stayed sober for so long, celebrating that.” Anonymous 22

“I deal with people who come in with addictions. A lot of addictions, but there is nowhere to refer them. No sound base to refer them. There's mental health, but there's such a high turnover and they're technically not addiction counsellors, they're mental health counsellors.” Anonymous 11

“We already have social workers that are at full capacity like the Auditor General even said it already. So, how do we expect them to take on clients as well or help those clients when they're out of capacity with their case loads?” Anonymous 11

“I think we need to really, really look at what we're doing. I just think we're doing a terrible job right now.” Anonymous 16

“I think the other part is that the people that are supposedly counsellors or addiction counsellors or helpers have to get out in the field and away from their office.” Anonymous 17

“I went to addictions treatment centre, ...but I never; I don't have an alcohol addiction or drug addiction. That was never my problem. My problem is I have how can I explain this – I have traumas that are so overwhelming that overlap each other and are so compound and complex that when way I get triggered sometimes it's so overwhelming that it doesn't trigger me back to one trauma it triggers me back to like maybe 20, and I've had to learn what PTSD is.” Anonymous 15

“I think a strong leader would be helpful too, for someone to come in and say I can help you or I lead you, or I can point you in the right direction and I'm sure that there are people out there that do that.” Anonymous 12

Balancing Worldviews: Climate Change Solutions in Canada's North

Chloe Dragon Smith, Tina Piulia DeCouto,
Ashley Carvill



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

CONTENTS

252	Group Research Question
253	Policy Statement
254	Current State
256	Climate Change and Indigenous Worldviews
256	HUMANS' PLACE IN NATURE
256	HOLISM AND INTERCONNECTEDNESS
257	PROGRESS OR 'GROWTH'
259	Policy Options: Current Initiatives by Northerners
260	1. INDIGENOUS GUARDIAN INITIATIVES
261	2. INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREAS (IPCAS)
261	3. LAND BASED HEALING ACTIVITIES
261	4. CULTURAL ON-THE-LAND EXCURSIONS
262	5. OTHER INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE
263	The Opportunities – Policy Recommendations
263	1. SUPPORT NORTHERN SOLUTIONS
263	2. ADAPT INTERNALLY
263	3. ARTICULATE WITHIN WESTERN INSTITUTIONS
264	Conclusion – Indigenous Way of Life is Climate Action

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.¹ 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.² 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'.³ Scientists are well intentioned in bringing us tools and knowledge; however, we all need to acknowledge that these are their tools, and their knowledge.

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 often allowed

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

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

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.



Photo Copyright © Qikiqtani Inuit Association, Nauttiqsuqtiit Program. Please do not reproduce without permission from QIA.

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.

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.⁴ This foundation is exemplified by tenets of Christianity that describe how Land and other species were created to serve humans.⁵ 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.⁶ 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.



Jonah Muckpa of Arctic Bay, Nunavut, Nauttiqsuqtiit Program. Photo Copyright © Qikiqtani Inuit Association, Nauttiqsuqtiit 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.

Today, mainstream society tends to silo these dynamic relationships into categories. This categorizing and streamlining 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.⁷ 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.⁸ 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.⁹ 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.

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.



Photo Copyright © Qikiqtani Inuit Association, Nauttiqsuqtiit Program. Please do not reproduce without permission from QIA.

1. INDIGENOUS GUARDIAN INITIATIVES¹⁰

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.¹¹

EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- ▶ **NWT:** Ni Hat’Ni Dene, a program by the Łútsèl K’è Dene First Nation¹²
- ▶ **Nunavut:** Uatjijit (recently renamed to Nauttiqsuqtiit), Tallurutiup Imanga Pilot Guardian Program¹³
- ▶ **Yukon:** Dane Nan Yé Dāh Network (Kaska Dena)¹⁴



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)¹⁵

As defined by the Indigenous Circle of Experts for the Pathway to Canada Target 1,¹⁶ 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:** Edézhzié National Wildlife Area/ Dehcho Protected Area¹⁷
- ▶ **Nunavut:** Tallurutiup Imanga National Marine Conservation Area¹⁸
- ▶ **Yukon:** Ch'ihilii Chik Habitat Protection Area Management Plan¹⁹

3. LAND BASED HEALING ACTIVITIES²⁰

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.²¹

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

EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- ▶ **NWT:** Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation²¹
- ▶ **Nunavut:** On-the-Land Addictions and Trauma Treatment in the three regions of Nunavut²²
- ▶ **Yukon:** Jackson Lake Healing Camp run by Kwanlin Dün First Nation²³

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 Aqqiumavik Society²⁴
- ▶ **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

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/

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-chihilii-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/

24 Aqqiumavik Arviat Welless Society. Home. Accessed February 24, 2020, <https://www.aqqiumavik.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,²⁵ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,²⁶ the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples,²⁷ treaties, agreements, and other constructive agreements, including section 35 of the Canadian constitution.²⁸

EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

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

- ▶ **Nunavut:** Iviqtippalliajut, Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit within the Government of Nunavut²⁹
- ▶ **Yukon:** Yukon College, an institution looking at incorporating Indigenous worldviews³⁰

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.³¹ 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

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

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

30 Yukon College. Accessed December 30, 2019, www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/?gclid=CjwKCAiA3abwBRBqEiwAKwICA8OznNE3MfgB3bDbjXDuyIvbeua6oT4Ubln3t669L2lp504DjRvaxoCfloQAvD_BwE

31 Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. Arviat Wellness Centre. Accessed December 8, 2019, <https://www.itk.ca/nuluaq-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.

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.³²

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.

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



'Inuit Children of Arctic Bay, Nunavut'. Photo Copyright © Qikiqtani Inuit Association, Nauttiqsuqtiit Program. Please do not reproduce without permission from QIA.

CONCLUSION

Indigenous Way of Life is Climate Action

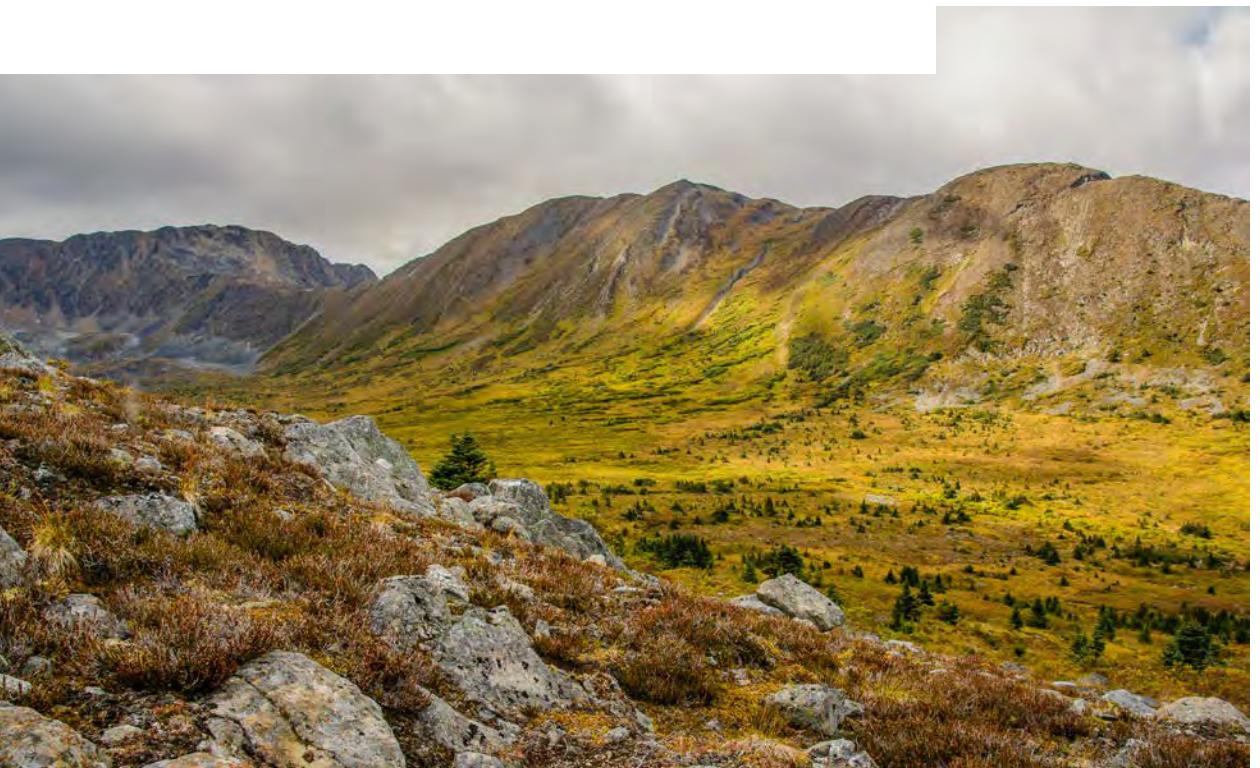
The solutions we are all looking for come from Land, and they come from people who know their Lands. Indigenous solutions to many issues in our society come from the ground up – they are self-determined solutions. These solutions, coming from Indigenous worldviews, tend to be inclusive of all things 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.



Language, Community and Legends in Post-Secondary Education

Kristen Tanche, Luke Campbell,
Julianna Scramstad, Hilda Snowball



CONTENTS

- 268 Introduction
- 268 Policy Opportunity
- 269 Background
- 272 Options
- 273 Policy Analysis
- 276 Recommended Option

INTRODUCTION

Yukon College is currently in the process of becoming Yukon University. With these changes, and considering that its campuses reside on First Nation lands, the college has been considering how to respectfully include Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing in the post-secondary education policy landscape. With 14 First Nations in the Yukon, and a college that serves numerous ethnicities from many backgrounds, there are many cultures and First Nations that must be respected, engaged and involved.

When our Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship group was tasked with working with Yukon College, we held discussions based on our experiences, knowledge and cultures. We came to the themes of “Language, Community and Legends” as a basis from which policy development and maintenance could include Indigenous people. Language, community and legends are commonalities within Indigenous cultures, not only in the Yukon but, one could argue, worldwide.

Language is at the heart of Indigenous cultures and ways of being; to understand a culture, one must have an understanding of how it is all tied to language. Community is at the centre of Indigenous cultures; we are all tied together by community, whether it be a physical community, a family community or a clan system. Legends are stories that exist throughout cultures that not only provide a source of entertainment, but have teachings of vital importance attached to them. Every legend comes with a teaching of some sort, encompassing cultural values, morals and spiritual beliefs.

With these three themes at the forefront, the Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship Yukon College Group has developed a policy recommendation paper for Yukon College. While the paper is intended for the Yukon College, the concept of “Language, Community and Legends” can be applied to policy in other institutions and organizations.

POLICY OPPORTUNITY

The Yukon College Group of the Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship was asked by Yukon College to consider the following question:

“How can Yukon College be inclusive of Indigenous people through policies, existing and new, that range the span from university governance and operations? Please provide a set of recommendations on how Yukon College could move forward in respectfully including Indigenous world views and ways of knowing in our policy landscape.”

BACKGROUND

The main campus of Yukon College is located in Whitehorse, on the Territory of the Kwanlin Dun and the Ta'an Kwach'an First Nations. Yukon College also has community campuses throughout the Yukon.

At a national level, colleges and universities have a long colonial history. Early education initiatives throughout Canada were established with the intent to “civilize” Indigenous peoples: to force Indigenous peoples to accept western ways of being and knowing. The first colleges in Canada were established in the 1700s in Nova Scotia and were created by “colonial legislatures.”¹ Systems of governance in universities across Canada have had various forms of governing bodies. Often called committees or councils and usually modeled after commissions in the United Kingdom, they are designed to provide “strategic advice on policy issues, and [to protect] the institutions from direct government intervention.”² Over time, students and faculty demanded a greater role in the governance of university structures through senates and boards.

Yukon College was founded in 1963, as a Whitehorse-based vocational and training centre aimed at teaching skills for employment. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Yukoners wishing to pursue academic post-secondary studies continued to pursue education outside the territory. In 1977, the Yukon Teacher

Education Program was launched: a two-year university-level program in collaboration with the University of British Columbia. Following a 1979 Yukon Government-commissioned study, it was suggested that a Whitehorse-based post-secondary and continuing education institution be established.³

By 1982, the Teacher Education Program had morphed into studies in liberal arts. In 1983, the then Minister of Education, Bea Firth, announced that the vocational institute and the UBC-linked courses were to merge into Yukon College. It existed entirely under the auspices of the Yukon Department of Education. Under the New Democratic Party government of 1986, led by Tony Penikett, the role of the College's community campuses expanded. Governance of the College was moved out of government hands, and into those of a Board that was to consist of at least 30% First Nations people and an additional 30% rural community members; power was to be held by the predominantly Indigenous rural communities. The Yukon College Act now specifies that there be 12 members, including three community campus representatives, a staff representative, a student representative and three First Nations representatives.^{4 5} Since the President of the College is a non-voting member, rural and First Nations members still hold the balance of voting power.⁶ The Board of Directors oversees the College's mission and strategic plan.

1 Glen A. Jones, “Introduction to Higher Education in Canada,” *Higher Education Across Nations*, 1 (2014): 3, accessed Aug. 2, 2019, https://scholar.googleusercontent.com/scholar?q=cache:YQzKrFAnDcJ:scholar.google.com/&hl=en&as_sdt=0,5.

2 Jones, 8.

3 Aron Senkpiel, “Post-Secondary Education in the Yukon : the Last Thirty Years,” *The Northern Review*, 13 (Fall 2007): 6–19. <https://the-northernreview.ca/index.php/nr/article/view/136/81>

4 Government of the Yukon, *Yukon College Act*, RSY 2002, c.234. Accessed December 4, 2019, http://www.govyk.ca/legislation/legislation/page_y.html; or at http://www.education.govyk.ca/pdf/policies/yukon_college_act.pdf.

5 Yukon College, “BOG-17 Board Member Selection Process, Board of Governors.” Accessed August 31, 2019. <https://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/BOG-17 Board Member Selection Process.pdf>.

6 Senkpiel.

Policy development and changes at the college are done through the Senior Executive Committee (SEC). The Senior Executive Committee is composed of the vice-president, president, deans, directors, and the registrar of the college. In August 2019, there were 16 members of SEC. Like many other post-secondary education institutions in Canada, the college has a formal process for policy development, which includes the requirement that all policy recommendations be submitted for review and approval to the SEC. Policies created adhere to relevant “federal and territorial legislation, agreements, policy(s) and other documents.”⁷ The policy development policy specifically encourages relying on pre-existing policies from other institutions. The order of consultation is also made explicit: student union, employees’ union, occupational health and safety, academic council, and other boards or subcommittees. SEC members are expected to lead consultations with their staff. If there is an expectation that First Nations be consulted, this is not made explicit. Neither is any potential role of the President’s Advisory Council on First Nations Initiatives (PACFNI) specified, though presumably the President would have the option of seeking their advice before signing the policy. The policyholder is then responsible for the administration of the policy.⁸

Yukon College includes the First Nations Initiatives Department (FNI), which is an arm of the President’s office. The department has the aim of “integrating an understanding

and awareness of the culture, traditions, and history of Yukon First Nations.” The department also coordinates the President’s Advisory Council on First Nations Initiatives. PACFNI has representatives from each Yukon First Nation. The council assists Yukon College with the goal of increasing the effectiveness of the College’s programs and services. Its mission is to “provide strategic direction to the Yukon College, specifically the Board of Governors’ and the senior management team.” It aims to encourage and support First Nation involvement within the institution, including enhancing the role of First Nations in the college and by developing First Nation Partnerships.⁹ The committee provides recommendations to Yukon College on the College’s overall direction, internal reviews, principles important to First Nations, programming, increasing First Nation involvement, achieving higher success for students, and curriculum development.¹⁰

Not only does Yukon College have PACFNI as a model to engage and include First Nations, the college has worked towards engagement with First Nations though the 2008 report *Sunrise: a Report to Yukon College on the Training Needs and Dynamics of Yukon First Nations*, led by the First Nations Initiative division and PACFNI. The report was generated from the information gathered at a summit on post-secondary education that hosted numerous Yukon First Nations. The report includes information from intensive community consultations with First Nations on training needs.

7 Yukon College, “PO-01, Policy Development and Format, President’s Office,” last modified February 2014, https://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/PO-01_Policy_Development_and_Format_-_Approved_February_2014_-_signed.pdf, 6.

8 Yukon College, “PO-01 Policy Development and Format, President’s Office.”

9 Yukon College, “First Nations Initiatives.” Accessed September 2, 2019, <https://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/first-nations-initiatives>.

10 Yukon College, “President’s Advisory Committee on First Nation Initiatives, Mission and Mandate.” Accessed September 2, 2019, https://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/PACFNI_Mission_and_Mandate.pdf.

According to the report, the creation of PACFNI has allowed the college and First Nations to “walk two trails” that will form “one future.” PACFNI identified areas of priority and focus for the college: Leadership and Governance, Health and Wellness, and Heritage and Culture. Through the process of community visits, PACFNI members assisted in inviting each of their respective communities to meetings centred around education and training needs. “They met with 9 communities, 11 First Nations, and received one written response.”¹¹

Through this process, many education and training-related issues and opportunities were identified, and 17 recommendations in response to the issues, opportunities and needs were made. Two of the recommendations urged Yukon College to communicate with Yukon First Nations more effectively, to enhance the exchange with YFN, and coordinate with them and the community campuses. Sunrise also encouraged an increase in First Nation staff, and building additional institutional policies to expand the relationship with YFN.¹²

¹¹ Yukon College, Sunrise: A Report to Yukon College on the Training Needs and Dynamics of Yukon First Nations, last modified February 2008, accessed September 2, 2019, https://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Sunrise_%28Complete_with_covers%29_February_2008.pdf, 13.

¹² Yukon College.

POLICY OPTIONS

The JGNF Yukon College Group identified three policy options in response to this policy opportunity:

1. Root Yukon College policy in Language, Community and Legends.

2. Continue with the College's current plans for Indigenizing or decolonizing policy as the college evolves into a university.

3. Become a university without disrupting colonial ways of being and doing.

POLICY ANALYSIS

1. ROOT YUKON COLLEGE POLICY IN LANGUAGE, COMMUNITY AND LEGENDS

This policy option requires making three changes that focus on Yukon First Nations Language, a strong culture of community, and having policy focused around legends. This option is presented in a holistic way. Each of the policy changes we present cannot occur without the others; all intertwine, relate, and must all be worked upon. These changes are outlined in detail below:

Have Indigenous language at the forefront of any changes to and within the College, by having the Yukon College fund free, year-long Indigenous language learning for staff, board members and community members.

If the College wants its policies to include Indigenous ways of knowing, those who work within the organization need to have a basis for understanding Yukon First Nation ways of being. This would provide an opportunity for staff to have a fundamental understanding of the worldview of First Nations people. Language is a method of transfer: a way to transport worldview to the core of the work of Yukon College policy creators. Language can connect people; it creates a bond and an understanding of how a people function and their patterns of thought. In addition, language classes would provide local First Nations people with access to language learning. With this knowledge, policy writers could act as translators or channels of the information gained through thorough consultation.

Yukon College needs to truly include Yukon First Nations in creating new policy and in amending existing policy.

The moment of transition to a university is an opportunity to start at the beginning and to take time on a process that could deeply uproot the college's current practices. This process would be grounded in the overarching belief that no member of the Yukon College community be left behind. This central value is that communities must help one another and requires that Yukon First Nations be consulted about how they want to be involved in policy development.

Yukon College needs to start from the beginning and do comprehensive consultations with communities. Throughout this process, it is of utmost importance for those carrying out the work to make consultations comfortable and meaningful for community participants: Where does it make sense to meet? Could it be on the land? What local protocol should govern the meeting? It is deeply important to listen and to remember that each First Nation has its own set of values and ways of being. Each community campus will reflect this uniqueness. This is similar to the engagement that informed the report Sunrise.

To be truly inclusive of Indigenous people, the college must respect Indigenous ways of being, beginning with the creation of policy through working with community. In the college's instance, its community would be staff, students, various board members and First Nations.

PACFNI and the FNI could undertake a similar engagement and consultation process to that taken when creating the Sunrise document.

Yukon College needs to ask the communities what stories and legends they would use to aid in informing policy. If First Nations are in agreement, then legends could inform policy creation and amendments, as well as College administration.

PACFNI and FNI need to engage with First Nation communities further, to inquire about the usage of legends to assist in the creation and maintenance of policy.

Legends are what would tie the recommendations of language and community together. Legends are universal to Indigenous groups all over the world. Legends are told in Indigenous languages and are often what teaches a community its guiding principles and values.

Yukon First Nation people have survived within this great land for time immemorial. They have thrived on this earth by sharing their language and culture orally. As the people progress and flourish, one thing will remain the same: their stories.

Only if First Nations are freely willing to share legends to inform policies should this approach be pursued. If they are not in agreement, Yukon College should pursue other options. To impose an idea on pre-existing nations would be re-colonizing.

Several times throughout our group's process, it has seemed that Yukon College has been looking for a list of Indigenous principles to guide policymakers. Ideally, these would be principles common to all 14 Yukon First Nations. This is reminiscent of efforts in Nunavut to integrate *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* (IQ), Inuit worldview, into imported southern governance structures often staffed by non-Inuit visiting for a few years from the south.¹³ In short, our fellow fellows have said that IQ as a checklist in the hands of non-Inuit is insufficient on its own.

The legends they have passed on through their people have intrinsic and important lessons, and contain guiding principles and values. Incorporating legends into policy will make policy more engaging, relatable and inclusive.

13 Francis Lévesque "Revisiting Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Inuit knowledge, culture, language, and values in Nunavut institutions since 1999," *Études Inuit Studies*, 38, Issue1–2 (2014): 115–136. Accessed December 4, 2019, <https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/etudinit/2014-v38-n1-2-etudinit01719/1028856ar/>

2. CONTINUE WITH THE COLLEGE'S CURRENT PLANS FOR INDIGENIZING OR DECOLONIZING POLICY AS THE COLLEGE EVOLVES INTO A UNIVERSITY.

Yukon College, as we understand it, is already committed to move away from colonial ways by working to Indigenize in five key areas: programming, services, space, policy, and governance. The FNI unit at the Yukon College has been working on Indigenizing policy; the college could continue down this route.

However, keeping in mind that at the core, post-secondary education institutes are western and non-Indigenous, to truly work with all Yukon First Nations, is it enough to “Indigenize” an institute’s policy? Is that doable?

The Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship Yukon College Group grappled with this concept, and come from the belief that it is not enough to create band-aid solutions and throw Indigenous things onto policy and then call it “Indigenous.” In order to truly Indigenize a western and non-Indigenous institute, the core assumptions need to be revisited. Therefore this option is not recommended. We recommend revisiting language, community and culture, which are core components of Indigenous cultures, and making those also the core of the institution.

3. BECOME A UNIVERSITY WITHOUT DISRUPTING COLONIAL WAYS OF BEING AND DOING.

Yukon College could continue adhering to its current policy on policy development, whereby all policy is reviewed by the Senior Executive Committee. This current policy specifies that anyone can be involved in the policy process, which indicates inclusiveness. However, there is no explicit requirement to involve First Nations as stakeholders. Given the college’s communicated commitment to Indigenizing, this is not what they plan to pursue as an institution.

The college is actively attempting to be more inclusive of Indigenous peoples. Historically, western education institutions in Canada did not always have an Indigenous-friendly atmosphere nor policies. As previously mentioned, one original intent of education institutions was to westernize Indigenous people. If colonial ways of being and doing continue to be followed, then the college needs to review and update its existing direction to Indigenize and be more inclusive of Indigenous people, because it will never fit. Therefore, if Yukon College truly wants to be more inclusive, it should not continue down this path.

OPTION 1

Root Yukon College Policy in Language, Community and Legends

Yukon College can be inclusive of Indigenous people through policies, existing and new, that range from university governance and operations through Language, Community, and Legends. However, this process will take time. Because of the history of academic institutions and their origins in western perspectives, any attempts to Indigenize policy and academic institutions will take a considerable amount of time, work and devotion.

Indigenous cultures are visual and oral. Storytelling often involves descriptive words, and cultures are very much tied to land and the environment, including the animals and beings on it. To keep true to these principles, images have been chosen to represent the policy recommendations.

We strongly urge the Yukon College to take further steps by working with Yukon First Nations groups, the college community and PACFNI in creating an artistic rendering that would fit the Yukon College community's vision on making these recommendations come alive through imagery. Not only would this create more of a community through working together to create imagery that is applicable to the college, as non-Yukon College community members, the Yukon College Group believe that imposing an image on the community does not fit with the idea of decolonization. As mentioned, to truly Indigenize policy and the College's way of being, all steps to policy creation and maintenance must be carefully thought out, and each step must be respectful of Indigenous cultures.



LANGUAGE

Provide free Language Classes in immersive settings to staff, students, and affiliated board members to increase people's understanding of Indigenous worldview.

The image of the river was chosen to represent language, as it is ever changing, you cannot live without water, and nothing can be sustained without it. Without language, there are key cultural components of Yukon First Nations missing.



COMMUNITY

The college needs to include all cultures when looking to create policy and can do so by engaging Yukon First Nation communities and the college community in a meaningful way to pose the question on how the Yukon College could include Indigenous peoples in policy development.

The image of a wolf and raven/crow was chosen to represent community because together those beings create a community. While they may not always follow the same path, the beings must learn to live together in harmony and balance.



LEGENDS

Legends are traditional governing mechanisms in many Indigenous cultures. Yukon College could consult with Indigenous groups in the Yukon to look at having Legends inform the governance of the College. PACFNI and FNI could lead initial engagement and consultation.

The image of the ground was chosen to represent legends. Legends keep us all grounded and together. Legends are the foundation for many First Nation cultures and their use was how many traditionally governed themselves.



Govern the university by language, community and legends.

As a constant reminder and as a guiding system for the policy process we recommend that the Yukon College utilize the imagery and recommendations concurrently, not separately.

Realizing Indigenous Law in Co-Management

Killulark Arngna'naaq, Heather Bourassa,
Don Couturier, Kaviq Kaluraq, Kelly Panchyshyn



CONTENTS

284	Introduction
284	Background
286	Challenges in Co-Management
289	Opportunities to Reflect on and Transform Co-management Systems
291	Summary of Recommendations
292	SYSTEMIC REFORM THROUGH LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENT OR PROTOCOL RATIFICATION (WHO DECIDES)
296	CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION (HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE, HOW RESOURCES ARE MANAGED)
300	EXPLICIT RELIANCE ON INDIGENOUS LAW IN DECISION-MAKING (WHAT IS DECIDED)
305	Conclusion
307	Bibliography
308	Endnotes

INTRODUCTION

Co-management boards (“the Boards”); the governance structures through which Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments jointly manage lands and resources in Nunavut, Northwest Territories, and Yukon, are a bittersweet addition to the northern governance landscape. For some, the Boards enable Indigenous groups to effectively participate in lands and resource management. Over time, the Boards have evolved to serve regional needs well. Yet their ability to transform governance in a manner that reflects Indigenous sources of law and culture is limited. The statutes that give them life and perhaps the culture instilled in them is potentially to blame. Final decision-making authority often rests with the responsible minister, and local decisions can be circumvented. The minister also has the ability to direct the Boards through binding policy direction. This process usually follows the well-worn path of western bureaucracy. Our intention is not to deny the utility of the Boards in their current form, but rather to interrogate how the lessons of Indigenous legal traditions might adjust and improve how they operate. The Boards have been operating for several decades – now is the time to reflect on their use of Indigenous legal traditions, discuss pathways of potential change, and reaffirm the inclusion of Land Claim implementation objectives. Growing awareness of Indigenous law revitalization presents an opportunity to address apparent imbalances in legal perspectives and enhance co-management systems through Indigenous laws and traditions. We offer three recommendations aimed at entrenching Indigenous law in co-management decision-making to more equitably balance the world views between Indigenous peoples and Canadian governments.

BACKGROUND

Co-management Boards were created by federal legislation and Comprehensive Land Claim Agreements to create local decision-making authorities and councils for aspects of natural resource management, land use, and wildlife. They are directly tied to aspects of Indigenous culture and values that are important to Indigenous life and prosperity. These Boards are quasi-judicial bodies guided by common law principals and are subject to judicial review. Boards are equally represented by members of the Indigenous nation and the government with varying mandates and authority depending on legislation and the Board’s role. In many cases, co-management boards are able to unilaterally make decisions on resource management through their own processes however, for major projects, authority for final approval of Land Use Plans and wildlife decisions ultimately resides with the Crown or its delegates. For the purpose of this paper we will focus on the decisions of the Crown.

In the Yukon, the Regional Land Use Planning Process emerges from the Umbrella Final Agreement and the Final Agreements of 11 First Nations. Under this process, the Yukon has been divided up into seven regions.ⁱ Each region may establish a Regional Land Use Planning Commission with one third consisting of nominees from the Yukon First Nation government, one third consisting of nominees from Yukon Government, and the final third formed of members from the public, which must proportionally reflect the demographic ratio of Indigenous peoples in the planning region.ⁱⁱ This commission prepares a recommended regional land use plan for the territory and First Nations to consider. After consultation with each other and



affected communities, both Yukon Government and First Nation government may accept the plan, reject it, or propose modifications. If the plan is rejected or modifications suggested, it returns to the commission who can reconsider the plan and make a final recommended plan. At this stage, Yukon Government may reject or propose modifications to the parts of the plan referring to Non-Settlement Lands and the First Nations may reject or propose modifications on the parts of the plan that refer to their Settlement Land.ⁱⁱⁱ

While First Nation governments can have tremendous influence and participation in the planning process for non-settlement lands inside their Traditional Territories, the final decision-making authority for these lands remain concentrated within colonial governments. The cumulative area of Settlement Land in the Yukon totals 6.5% of the territory's land base. Further, there are First Nations within the territory who do not intend to negotiate a settlement agreement, contributing to the reduction of the total land which Yukon First Nations are able to

reject or modify. While reflecting on why White River First Nation has chosen to not sign a final agreement, Chief David Johnny responds, "You get a say, but you don't get the last say." First Nation governments in the Yukon do not have equal say in the majority of their Traditional Territories.

While First Nation governments can have tremendous influence and participation in the planning process for non-settlement lands inside their Traditional Territories, the final decision-making authority for these lands remain concentrated within colonial governments. The cumulative area of Settlement Land in the Yukon totals 6.5% of the territory's land base. Further, there are First Nations within the territory who do not intend to negotiate a settlement agreement, contributing to the reduction of the total land which Yukon First Nations are able to reject or modify. While reflecting on why White River First Nation has chosen to not sign a final agreement, Chief David Johnny responds, "You get a say, but you don't get the last say."^{iv} First Nation governments in the Yukon do not have equal

say in the majority of their Traditional Territories. As in the Yukon, the NWT process around land use planning, resource development and regulation emerged from the negotiation of land claims. However, Indigenous governments in the NWT continue to be constrained by the hierarchical nature of the legislative and policy regime in place. The Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act^v is a crucial part of this system. The Act grants rights to Crown governments to the use and flow of all the waters in the Mackenzie Valley, subject to any rights or privileges granted under the Dominion Water Power Act.^{vi} The Act outlines the function of boards as an opportunity for residents of the region to participate in the management of its resource for the benefit of the residents and of other Canadians.^{vii} This serves to establish Mackie Valley residents as participants in the management of resources, rather than managing partners. However, residents selected by the Tłı̄cho Government must be appointed by the federal Minister to sit on boards.^{viii} After consulting with a planning board, the Minister also has the power to give binding policy directions to the Board.^{ix} Final say on development also rests with the Crown: “once a land use plan has been adopted, it is submitted to the first nation of the settlement area, who approves it. It then goes to the territorial minister, who must approve it. It then goes to the federal minister, who must approve it”.^x

Land use planning and resource management in Nunavut has a different context owing to its unified Nunavut Agreement. The Nunavut Agreement and subsequent legislation seek to involve Nunavummiut Inuit in all decision-making processes and infuse these decisions with *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*. The Nunavut Agreement establishes five Institutions of Public Government [IPGs], four co-management boards, plus the

Nunavut Surface Rights Tribunal. Among these boards are the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board^{xi}, rules for managing conservation areas^{xii}, land and resource management institutions^{xiii}, the Nunavut Impact Review Board (Article 12) and the Nunavut Water Board^{xiv}. Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) is the body responsible for holding the Government of Nunavut (GN) accountable for implementing the Nunavut Agreement. While Inuit participation certainly occurs under this framework, and business is generally intended to be conducted in Inuktitut, its decision-making logic follows the same pattern as co-management in the Yukon and the NWT. For example, the Wildlife Management Board provisions, for example, specifies that “government retains ultimate responsibility for wildlife management.”^{xv} All decisions of the Boards must be forwarded to the responsible Minister who may either accept, reject, or modify a board’s decision. The Minister is required to provide reasons to the Board explaining its decision for disallowing a decision. Like the Yukon and NWT, the co-management regime in Nunavut clearly relies on principles of Canadian law, policy and procedure to a much greater extent than Indigenous legal perspectives.

CHALLENGES IN CO-MANAGEMENT

It is important to distinguish between Indigenous participation in an otherwise colonial system of governance, and co-governance between the Crown and Indigenous peoples. The former considers Indigenous input into decision-making and renders a final decision at the Minister’s discretion, which we suggest is the current state of affairs across the territories. The latter structure seeks to empower Indigenous peoples to decide in partnership with the Crown under a binding process. Some Indigenous groups

may be satisfied with their ability to influence decisions under the current regime. In our view, however, movement toward greater representation of Indigenous law will consolidate and enhance the ability of these groups to be self-determining, creating concrete steps toward reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and Canada. Co-management should be a shared responsibility held by two or more distinct governance bodies to reach consensus on the governance of land and people. This structure requires transparency, mutual accountability, and rational decision-making involving the input and values of both parties. There must be give and take between the Crown and the Indigenous group without fear of unilateral action by one government. Process matters as well; when incorporating Indigenous values in governance systems, decolonization must be at the root of each system. In this context it means that Indigenous legal traditions and values must be inherently integrated within the co-management design and the Crown must integrate these values in co-management agreements to achieve equality.

In the early days of co-management, boards had direct access to the responsible minister and often had direct communication with their office. As government has devolved its decision-making powers, this relationship has become more bureaucratized. For example, once a Land Claim Agreement is finalized, government takes over the implementation of the claims. The resulting revolving door of bureaucrats and the technocratic nature of these agreements obscures the fundamental partnership. The Boards represent an opportunity for Indigenous Governments to utilize existing expertise to aid in the implementation of Land Claims and in the strategic management of resources. However, the Boards are generally poorly resourced, their

mandates are often diminished to specific parts of the Claims, and they rarely participate in the implementation of Land Claims' objectives.

The Sahtu and Gwich'in Claims define the objects of very clearly and are similar. The Tłjcho and Nunavut Claims do not define the objectives as clearly, but their claims have similar discussions. The objectives of the Sahtu claim is outlined below. These simple objectives best serve the overall implementation of the claim and cannot be ignored in any interpretation of resource management in the region.

Moreover, the western legal principles binding the Boards informs and shapes the processes they use to conduct their business. Examples include their quasi-judicial nature, reliance on print/text-based records for evidence, transcription, language that is highly technical, and presentation styles that may be intimidatingly formal for the average person who is not accustomed to these forms of consultation. This structure may leave community members both disconnected from the process and frustrated about their ability to provide input. This frustration is captured in the testimony given by Michael Peryouar, a youth of Baker Lake, during the Kiggavik Uranium Mine hearing of the NIRB. Peryouar stated that:

Our -- our fourth concern is this process. We are very concerned about the Nunavut Impact Review Board process because this setup is not very welcoming to the average person. We think people in the community are not attending because the language is difficult and hard to understand...

“

An integral aspect of this ongoing implementation challenge is the need to understand how to apply Western-style written policy developed from a First Nations-rooted vision of co-governance.”

We started this last week. We were not comfortable with the process, and it was scary to walk into the room, but now that we understand a bit of the process, we can share our concerns with you.^{xvi}

Peryouar’s intimidation and frustration may be a common feeling among community members because the process of conducting hearings is not reflective of Inuit culture, instead it is a modified version of Western quasi-judicial processes redesigned to implement Inuit language and culture. The process itself is imported from Western styles of governance.

Paul Nadasdy, author of *Hunters and Bureaucrats*, describes how the uneven distribution of power is embedded in land claims and co-management frameworks, and that by agreeing to participate in these frameworks: “First Nations peoples are not merely agreeing to engage with government officials in a set of linguistic fields in which they are at a disadvantage. They are also agreeing to abide by a whole set of implicit assumptions about the world, some of which are deeply antithetical to their own”.^{xvii} Nadasdy’s perspective has been critiqued in recent years. In *Keeping the “Co” in the co-management of Northern Resources*, Clark and Joe-Strack argue that while it is easy to criticize current co-management frameworks as ‘neocolonialist’, doing so fails to recognize the agency of Indigenous governments and the progress and commitment made by northerners to improve co-management.^{xviii} The authors add that “when interpreted from a literal Western-style policy stance, the dynamic spirit of partnership and collaboration is commonly lost in the hierarchical delegation of authority and

ownership. An integral aspect of this ongoing implementation challenge is the need to understand how to apply Western-style written policy developed from a First Nations-rooted vision of co-governance.”^{xix} In other words, current approaches to policy development inherently conflict with Indigenous values; a new method of implementation must be developed to better align modern policies with Indigenous co-management parties. Our approach builds on this insight. We recognize the value co-management has offered to communities, but it can be improved.

OPPORTUNITIES TO REFLECT ON AND TRANSFORM CO-MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

With increasing frequency, many Indigenous nations are undertaking the work of revitalizing their legal orders and codifying their principles. The Indigenous Law Research Unit (ILRU) at the University of Victoria (UVic) is one such institution supporting this work. ILRU works with a nation’s sources of law to draw out and codify their legal principles. Clients have access to a year of free legal services and community members engage in a knowledge exchange focused on researching, applying, and enforcing Indigenous law. While not every nation views codification as the proper forum for communicating their laws, capturing their essence in written form allows them to be asserted in relation to Canadian law. It also transforms them into cognizable existing governance systems, which operate under written law and policy. The value of this exercise is increasingly recognized. These developments provide an opportunity to improve co-management frameworks in the north as envisioned by Clark and Joe-Strack. For example, the policies and procedures used by a co-management board might assume

the style of western policy, but their content can be directed by Indigenous law. Through this process, an Indigenous-rooted vision of co-governance will emerge in a forum that government can engage with.

Fort Nelson First Nation citizen and UVic Law PhD candidate Lana Lowe emphasizes the importance of community-led revitalization initiatives. Lowe describes how other revitalization projects have served as a tool for industry to commence the groundwork for resource development in the area, but also that she believes in the importance of community led legal development work. She distinguishes the other revitalization projects from the work of RELAW, saying “the RELAW Project is different because it is something for us, by us, that is grounded in who we are. We can’t forget who we are as Dene, because this work needs to change and it will change, and either we stay who we are as dene or we forget and I think the RELAW project helps us remember who we are.”^{xx} Lowe’s insights illustrate that process matters just as much as content. It is not enough to support Indigenous law revitalization, the appropriate people must direct the process from the beginning. Communities, as knowledge-keepers of their sources of law, must be at the centre of revitalization efforts. Similarly, Dean Billy from the St’át’imc Nation describes how the RELAW project in his community involved all St’át’imc citizens in a process of identifying legal principles within the nation’s stories to determine how these principles “can and should be used to make decisions.”^{xxi} The process itself encourages community participation. Spencer Greening of the Gitga’at Nation expresses how he hopes the latest resurgence of Indigenous Law will bring on the realization that “the legal world, is bigger than these human-to-human

relationships, that it extends to a relationship, and a responsibility obligation to plants, animals.”^{xxii}

Greater use of Indigenous law in co-management involves initiative and will from both the Crown and Indigenous peoples. Government must be open to transforming protocols to better reflect equitable decision-making. This transformation might involve amendments to legislation, and certainly will involve the ratification of agreements and policies and procedures. Using the tools of western bureaucracy that all parties are now familiar with, northern co-management can evolve to create space for the Indigenous-rooted vision of governance that Clark and Joe-Strack espouse. In addition to these changes, Indigenous groups must engage in an internal process of developing and defining their legal systems in ways that can inform these changes. The more access communities have to their legal traditions, the greater their ability to share and assert their beliefs with their co-management partners. Communities must insist on indigenous laws being built into the foundation of co-management; in turn, government must be willing to listen. To be successful in implementing Indigenous law and cultural norms into co-management processes, Land Claim organizations, the Boards and governments need to be better linked to the implementation of the Land Claim’s objectives or principals that define the relationship of the parties. Additionally, parties need to refocus their efforts to support these objectives and review their interpretation of their respective mandates subject to those objectives. Interpretation of these objectives should be assessed against historical and current cultural practices by the appropriate Indigenous organization when clarity is needed.

1. Fulfilling the objectives of Land Claims through co-management boards and systemic reform through legislative amendments/protocol ratification (**who decides**)
 2. Practice Indigenous culture in Co-management processes (**how decisions are made, how resources are managed**)
 3. Explicitly use Indigenous law in equitable ways (**what is decided**)
-

RECOMMENDATION ONE:

Systemic reform through Legislative Amendment or Protocol Ratification (Who Decides)

PROBLEM

The current regime gives final decision-making authority to the responsible Minister, giving rise to a power imbalance between the Crown and Indigenous governments. Addressing the uneven distribution of decision making authority is vital to building strong co-management systems. This imbalance has led to disputes between Indigenous governments and the Crown. While the courts help to build clarity, litigation impedes both development and implementation, harms relationships, and offers little benefit to any of the parties involved.

CONTEXT

To the extent that final decision-making authority rests with the Minister, the decisions of the Boards are not binding. In other words, Board decisions can be overridden by government. When the decisions of a co-management board are overridden it erodes trust between the Crown and Indigenous governments, relationships fray and the potential for legal conflict rises:

“after seven years of work the Peel Watershed Planning Commission produced a plan in 2011 that was unacceptable to the Yukon government because of the high degree of protection recommended within the watershed. The government’s response was to unilaterally alter the planning process to produce a plan with much less protected land area... That governmental action became the subject of legal action by multiple First Nations and environmental organizations.”^{xxiii}

Examples of similar conflicts can be found across the three territories and Inuit Nunangat. Even where the co-management board has adapted its policies and procedures to better reflect Indigenous knowledge and law, the decision-making process itself must uphold and preserve the ability of these decisions to stand. The ability of a co-management board to manage the issues it is responsible for extends only until the government has a contrary interest. This is why, in conjunction with our other recommendations, structural changes to the decision-making process itself are necessary to ensure co-management decisions made on the basis of Indigenous law are reliably followed.

In the Northwest Territories, unilateral changes to the decision-making structure itself have resulted in legal challenges. Amendments proposed in 2014 as part of the Northwest Territories Devolution Act attempted to restructure the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board by creating a “superboard”, amalgamating currently existing boards. The Tłı̄chǫ Government and Sahtu Secretariat Inc sought and obtained an injunction on this change. While the Government of Canada and Government of the Northwest Territories eventually launched consultation processes that informed a revised Bill C-88 in 2018, this process was only initiated after an injunction was granted. Like the Peel Case, legal action was necessary to have the perspective of Indigenous governments be taken seriously within the co-management framework.^{xxiv}

In Nunavut there are two recent examples of federal Ministers setting aside the recommendation of a board after conducting additional directed consultations outside of those envisioned by the Nunavut Agreement: the Minister’s decision¹ to not accept the NIRB’s determination that the Sabina Gold and Silver Corp.’s Back River project not be approved to proceed, instead referring the proposal back to the NIRB for further assessment, and; the Minister’s rejection of the NIRB’s determination that Baffinland Iron Mines Corp.’s Production Increase proposal not be approved to proceed², instead approving the increased production rate subject to terms and conditions. In both cases the responsible federal Ministers

expressly relied upon submissions from the Proponent and Regional Inuit Associations provided post-NIRB assessment, considering information which had not been made available to the NIRB or subjected to an open public discourse and examination. Boards interact with communities on a regular basis during an assessment to understand and address public concerns and have established public consultation and evidence-testing processes enshrined in land claims agreements which inform their decision-making (e.g. public hearings, rules of procedure). In contrast, the directed consultations carried out by ministers’ post-assessment are conducted beyond the public view with the industry proponent and/or other select groups, without clear rules for engagement or testing of the evidence received; this appears in conflict with the co-management approach negotiated through land claims agreements and may undermine both the credibility of the public processes administered by the boards and the final decisions of the responsible Ministers.

OPPORTUNITIES

Recent court rulings, political commitments, and agreements have opened the door for our governments to improve co-management systems through consensus building and moving away from unilateral decision-making. Recent developments include *Canada’s 10 Principals Respecting the Government of Canada’s Relationship with Indigenous Peoples*^{xxv}, which formalized a shift in the Government of Canada’s approach.

1 January 12, 2017 Letter from the Honourable Carolyn Bennett to Elizabeth Copland, Chairperson of the Nunavut Impact Review Board Re NIRB File 12MN053
2 September 20, 2018 Letter from the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc and the Honourable Carolyn Bennett to Elizabeth Copland, Chairperson of the Nunavut Impact Review Board Re NIRB File 08MN053

While they don't touch directly on co-management, *the Principles* lay the foundation for a redefined relationship between Crown and Indigenous governments. For example, Principal 1 calls for the federal government to base its relationship with Indigenous peoples in "recognition and implementation of their right to self-determination, including the inherent right of self-government". Without the acceptance and support for Indigenous self-determination, co-management relations will continue to replicate uneven power relations. Thus, Principal 1 may have a great deal of implementation potential within co-management contexts. Other new developments include:

- ▶ The Clyde River Protocol was an agreement attempting the govern relations between the GN and NTI. The agreement sought to foster a working relationship in which the GN and NTI identify shared priorities based on mutual recognition and respect. Decisions were to be made with transparency, cooperatively and constructively, with the view of securing public input and participation. The protocol is valuable for thinking about how, in spite of forming legal relationships and responsibilities, parties might agree to conduct themselves in the spirit of partnership and collaboration. Reiterations of this protocol are the Iqqaanaijaqatigiit from 2004, and the Aajiiqatigiingniq from 2011.
- ▶ The most recent example between the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated is the Katujjiqatigiingniq Protocol^{xxvi} where both parties agree to collaborate on priorities through bilateral and trilateral mechanisms,

make practical commitments to work together on leadership, oversight and administration, and to fully implement Article 32: Nunavut Social Development Council by developing a policy for the GN to fulfill these obligations and to develop an Information Sharing Agreement.

- ▶ The Haida Gwaii Management Council (HGMC, the Council) forms part of a framework established under the Kunst'aayah Reconciliation Protocol, a decision-making agreement to encourage more collaborative relationships between the Haida Nation and the province of BC. The HGMC has the authority to make joint determinations with the province. The framework covers land use planning, allowable cut, approval of management plans for protected areas, and developing policies and procedures for conserving heritage areas. The parties operate under their respective authorities and jurisdictions, signaling shared space in which Indigenous law can inform the decision-making process. Specifically, Schedule B of the protocol outlines the decision-making framework for the Council. Decisions of the HGMC are arrived at by consensus. Should a decision not be reached by consensus, it is decided by a vote of the Council. Dispute resolution mechanisms are available where agreement is not possible.
- ▶ Discussion in the North, British Columbia, and elsewhere is now moving beyond co-management to "co-governance" of resources, in which the latter term denotes a sharing of both authority and control, as opposed to simply shared technical duties.^{xxvii} Perhaps this trend stems from growing

recognition that even at its fullest expression, co-management is still only a part of what's required to realize the vision of self-determination that land claim agreements were intended to move society towards. A vital part, to be sure, but co-management can apparently function in the absence of co-governance,^{xxviii} so disentangling these concepts will become increasingly important. Perhaps too, in the heady early days of land claim implementation, co-management was burdened with unrealistic expectations that accumulated experience is only now making clear. It's possible that such expectations, when unmet, could be contributing to diminished enthusiasm for the term – if not the actual principles and practices of – co-management. Researchers, especially, should reflect on what role we may have had in miscalibrating expectations about co-management, both in the North and outside of it.^{xxix}

Alternative mechanisms can both streamline processes and result in more productive partnerships. A useful partnership example in a non-co-management context that resulted in an out-of-court settlement is the Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corporation (MITC). MITC is responsible for using and distributing \$175 million to enhance training and employment for Nunavut Inuit.^{xxx} The corporation was created through a partnership between Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the Government of Nunavut, and the Government of Canada in 2015. The mechanism by which to distribute funds targeted for Inuit through a shared mandate and a unified strategic plan, allows the partners to focus on funding actions rather than putting time and funds to court disputes.

ANALYSIS

How do we respond to those who say alternative approaches are too difficult? We say 'it's worth it' because there are:

- ▶ Fewer disputes;
- ▶ Clearly defined roles and responsibilities;
- ▶ Stronger, and more sustainable outcomes;
- ▶ Less resistance and more applications for resource development;
- ▶ And it's been done successfully already.

RECOMMENDATION TWO:

Cultural Transformation (How Decisions are Made, How Resources are Managed)

PROBLEM

Co-management boards often don't reflect the culture in which Indigenous legal spaces operate. For Indigenous laws to retain their proper context, they must be understood through their appropriate cultural lens. When Indigenous law is separated from culture, it becomes less intelligible. Misunderstanding and misinterpretation are real dangers in co-management boards where Indigenous knowledge becomes subsumed within the culture of western bureaucracy. Efforts to introduce Indigenous culture elements into the practices and procedures of a co-management boards will establish the proper cultural foundation for Indigenous law to operate.

CONTEXT

As John Borrows reminds us, law is a cultural phenomenon.^{xxxix} He writes, "a Eurocentric approach to legal interpretation must not be allowed to undermine Indigenous legal traditions."^{xxxix} Additionally, "messages 'are a part of culture'...they are expressed in the language of a culture and conceived, as well as understood, in the substantive terms of a culture."^{xxxix} Taking

culture into account is therefore necessary to properly communicate the substance and form of Indigenous law. Indeed, "to be properly understood, they must be viewed through the lens of the culture that recorded them."^{xxxiv}

This is true within co-management boards. As Nadasdy writes, Indigenous peoples have been required to adopt "Euro-Canadian political institutions" "[...]co-management, and other elements of the new relationship between First Nations peoples and the state simply would not be possible without the bureaucratization of First Nations societies."^{xxxv} Co-management, in terms of its structural foundations, is premised on western bureaucratic methods. To effectively introduce elements of Indigenous law into decision-making, then, requires introducing Indigenous cultural elements into co-management structures. Co-management procedures must account for cultural difference in order to seriously engage with and respect Indigenous ways of knowing.

How a co-management board makes a decision, whether meetings begin with ceremony, whether those who are making the decisions are familiar with the land and water subject to these decisions --all of these features, to the extent that they can access the cultural practices of the Indigenous group, will provide the appropriate cultural lens through which the Indigenous legal principles can be understood. Where co-management simply clones western bureaucracy, a cultural environmental is established that removes Indigenous law from its proper context.³

³ Supporting research:

"First Nations peoples have also had to completely restructure their societies by developing their own bureaucratic infrastructures modelled on and linked to those of the governments with which they must deal. This reorganization has included the adoption of Euro-Canadian political institutions and the creation of a bureaucratic infrastructure – both of which were prerequisites for sitting down at the table across from government wildlife managers and land claims negotiators. Indeed, land claims negotiations, co-management, and other elements of the new relationship between First Nations peoples and the state simply would not be possible without the bureaucratization

OPPORTUNITIES

We identify two ways in which culture can become embedded in co-management practices. The first is by incorporating cultural elements into the decision-making processes of co-management boards. This process would include opening meetings with ceremony, incorporating consensus-building and deliberation into meeting protocols, emphasizing relationship-building and trust as a precondition for co-management, as well as other relevant practices. The second way is to allow cultural management practices to express themselves in the actual management of the resources. Adaptive management practices are a good example. Adaptive co-management allows local community-based organizations to integrate traditional knowledge in a “learn-by-doing” manner. Rather than western bureaucracy and scientific methods of management, co-management is directed by local communities. Trust is built by applying it practically on the ground. Here are some positive examples:

SUPPORTING RESEARCH⁴

- ▶ In Nunavut, while caribou protection is overseen by the GN, they work collaboratively with communities, Inuit organizations, and industry to monitor and manage caribou populations. For example, Agnico-Eagle’s Caribou Management Plan for the Whale Tail Pit Project reflects the adaptive management approach by using the Terrestrial Advisory Group [TAG] to develop thresholds and share data around observations and impacts to caribou from the project. Organizations such as the Baker Lake Hunters and Trappers Organization are involved both in monitoring by having HTO monitors in the project area to conduct observations, as well as play an advisory role on the TAG, as a means to address local concerns and integrate the use of traditional knowledge in the co-management of caribou specifically related to the project.⁵

of First Nations societies. This bureaucratization must be recognized for what it is: an essential aspect of the new structure of Aboriginal-state relations in Canada (Nadasdy, Hunters and Bureaucrats, p. 2).

As a result, in many ways First Nations offices across Canada now resemble miniature versions of federal and provincial/territorial bureaucracies. They are staffed by wildlife officers, lands coordinators, heritage officers, and a host of other First Nations employees who deal regularly with their bureaucratic counterparts in federal and provincial (or territorial) offices. This bureaucratization of First Nations societies has had a number of far-reaching effects. Most significantly, many First Nations people now have to spend their days in the office using computers, telephones, and all the trappings of contemporary bureaucracy. This necessarily takes them off the land and prevents them from engaging in many of the activities that they continue to see as vital to their way of life. Day in and day out, they have to think, talk, and act in ways that are often incompatible with (and even serve to undermine) the very beliefs and practices that this new government-to-government relationship is supposed to be safeguarding (Nadasdy, Hunters and Bureaucrats, pp. 2-3).

Yukon’s Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA) may seek ‘to recognize and promote the cultural values’ and the ‘knowledge and experience’ of Indigenous Peoples in co-management processes, however, these processes are implemented within a political context where western values and knowledge hold a dominant position (Section 11.1.3-4, UFA, p. 93, Retrieved from <https://cyfn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/umbrella-final-agreement.pdf>).

4 Article by Allan Kristofferson and Fikret Berkes, Chapter 12 in *Breaking Ice*, “Adaptive Co-Management of Arctic Char in Nunavut Territory”. “Adaptive co-management systems are flexible community-based systems of resource management, tailored to specific places and situations, and supported by, and working with, various organizations at different levels” (250). “institutional arrangements and ecological knowledge are tested and revised in a dynamic, ongoing, self-organized process of learning by doing” (250). Lots of opportunities for cultural integration here. Focus of this study is on the arctic char fishery in the Cambridge Bay area. A “rediscovery of traditional systems of knowledge and management”. Co-management requires a level of trust, building relationships and cross-cultural understanding is an important aspect.

5 NIRB 2019 Reconsideration report and Recommendations for the Whale Tail Pit Expansion Project Proposal from Agnico Eagle Mines Limited discusses the TAG and amendments to caribou management plans, can be viewed here: https://www.nirb.ca/portal/dms/script/dms_download.php?fileid=327165&applicationid=125418&sessionid=33u853ihndkve9la1u2j88bbq1

- ▶ In Nunavut, the Government of Nunavut and some Institutions of Public Government obligate cultural training of employees, and provide Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Days whereby employees are encouraged to participate in Inuit cultural activities either on the land or in the community learning about and practicing Inuit culture as a means to reinforce the significance of IQ in their practices and to educate anyone working with Inuit about Inuit language and culture. Activities on IQ days often include going on land trips to harvest, sewing, making traditional tools, and learning about Inuit history from Inuit. These activities demonstrate IQ in everyday life, in Inuit history, and provide an opportunity for people to carry lessons from IQ into their professional practice and also develop a better understanding of how IQ can be applied in public service in more meaningful ways. This process of enculturation through IQ days allows public servants to actively work towards transforming systems of Eurocentric processes to processes grounded in Inuit values, principles, and ways of being.
- ▶ The Yukon Forum is a quarterly meeting between the leaders of Yukon First Nations, the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Government of Yukon. The Forum was originally established in 2005 under the Cooperation in Governance Act of Yukon^{xxxvi}, however, it seldom met. In 2017, the Yukon Forum was revitalized when the Parties of the Yukon Forum signed a declaration committing them to meet four times a year to find solutions for shared priorities. As part of this revitalization, Council of Yukon First Nations Grand Chief, Peter Johnson, gifted a potlatch bowl to the Yukon Forum.^{xxxvii} Carved by Ken Anderson, the bowl is a symbol of the new relationship that being built between the First Nations and the Yukon Government through the Forum. In Yukon First Nations Culture, the potlatch is an important is a way of bringing people together. At every Forum, the bowl sits at the front of the room, atop a beaver pelt, in between the Primer and the Grand Chief. The bowl has helped to create a sense of tradition around the Yukon Forum, as it is often expressed that the bowls presence is what make the meetings official. The bowl carries a message of honor and respect for one and another, which it imprinted into the operation of the Forum.⁶

⁶ How do we respond to those who ask who this responsibility will fall to? We say: crown government can't dictate what cultural process is but they have a role in making space for it. It is everyone's responsibility to uphold it. Everyone has a role to play.



Premier Sandy Silver and Grand Chief Peter Johnston, as well as Yukon government Cabinet and First Nations Chiefs, met at the fourth annual Yukon Forum in Whitehorse.



Jane Glassco Northern Fellows 2018 - 2019
Group Reception

RECOMMENDATION THREE:

Explicit Reliance on Indigenous Law in Decision-Making (What is Decided)

PROBLEM

Current approaches to Indigenous Knowledge incorporation often misrepresent, tokenize, minimize, dismiss, or detach Indigenous legal principles from their original context in co-management practice.

CONTEXT

Where co-management boards operate under policies and procedures grounded in Canadian law and administrative practices, space for Indigenous law to influence decision-making is minimal.

The problem manifests in different ways, some of which are more easily detectable than others. The most obvious is when the basis for making a decision relies on non-Indigenous forms of evaluation or political considerations. Sometimes, however, a decision purports to follow Indigenous knowledge or law, but in effect has only given token consideration to these knowledge systems without relying on them in any serious way. This also limits the ability of Indigenous law to find expression in co-management. Most difficult to identify is when a decision appears to follow Indigenous law, but has decontextualized the substance of that law to such a degree as to change its meaning or intent. The latter is an example of a good-faith effort to incorporate Indigenous law but one that must be guarded against. We must also guard against pan-Indigenous application of law; the depth, nuance and complexity of specific Indigenous legal traditions is too great. Wherever Indigenous law relied on, it must draw from the particular traditions of the relevant Indigenous group.⁷

7 Supporting research:

“Ultimately, it should be expected that administrative boards constituted pursuant to treaties and expressly tasked with consideration of Aboriginal perspectives on resource management may produce rules, decisions, and interpretations that can be differentiated from other regimes. Seen in this light, the provisions of the MVRMA that allow for participation also permit participation to impact its interpretation. Judicial review of a board’s decisions without consideration of unique perspectives contradicts the essence of the MVRMA as a legislative attempt to institutionalize such perspectives through participation. That is, while harmonization and differentiation are both very much a part of the MVRMA, they must both account for the incorporation of Aboriginal perspectives in order to be just. Within this suggested approach, limiting the impact of Aboriginal perspectives without recognizing it as such is problematic”. (Sari Graben, living in perfect harmony, page 23).

“Going forward, co-management research should draw more from Indigenous research methodology (e.g., Chilisa, 2013). As LaVeaux and Christopher (2009) point out, an Indigenous research approach differs from community-based, participatory research in a number of ways. Their recommendations for indigenizing research practice are of particular relevance to Northern co-management. These recommendations focus even more on Indigenous sovereignty, overcoming the negative history of research on Indigenous Peoples by stressing attentiveness to the specific history and cultural context of the communities involved, and the utilization of Indigenous ways of knowing. Such an approach would enrich co-management research by grounding it in practitioners’ perspectives; it would also create space for reciprocal acts of giving back so that research tangibly enhances co-management practices, policies, and outcomes for those most affected by it (Wilson, 2008). Comparative studies are ambitious but still necessary, and would need to be both long-term and sufficiently resourced to meet Northerners’ contemporary and future expectations of research practice, which keep evolving (Korsmo & Graham, 2002; Grimwood et al., 2012; Wolfe et al., 2011) (keeping to co in co-management in the north, jocelyn joe-strack and douglas clark).”

1999 Arctic Bay, Nunavut co-management of narwhals. Experimental program between Nunavut Wildlife Management Board and Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. In order to participate, local Hunters’ and Trappers Organizations (HTOs) had to develop by-laws to regulate the hunting of narwhals. Knowledge is a precondition for learning through change, yet in many co-management processes the drive to “integrate” indigenous and western science knowledge has simplified the complexity of the knowledge-learning connection. Historically unequal power arrangements disadvantage indigenous knowledge holders. Institutional practices often require their knowledge to fit within a scientific management system even though the knowledge of indigenous people can be fundamentally different from that held by scientists (i.e., oral vs. written, compartmentalized vs. holistic). A fuller account of the role of knowledge in narwhal co-management (see Dale and Armitage, 2011) reveals the complexity of the issue and illustrates how knowledge practices within co-management management institutions are one of the critical mechanisms or processes that enable or constrain opportunities for learning (Derek Armitage et al., “Co-management and Co-production of Knowledge: Learning to Adapt in Canada’s Arctic”, *Global Environmental Change* (2011) 995 - 1004 at 998).

OPPORTUNITIES

Enough scholarship and real-world experience has developed around this issue to yield positive examples from which we can learn. Often the problem can be traced to the process through which Indigenous law is incorporated. The structure of co-management might enable Indigenous law to come in, but how things are done is just as important as the willingness to draw from Indigenous law itself. Where co-management boards have implemented good-faith efforts to incorporate Indigenous law into decision-making, there is an opportunity to critically examine the process used by these boards to ensure Indigenous law is being used appropriately in context. When co-management boards allow decolonized methodologies to guide the development of their decision-making protocols and administrative practices, Indigenous law is more authentically present in their operations.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

- ▶ **Indigenous Administrative Law**
- ▶ **The Qikiqtani Inuit Association's (2018) report on Qikiqtaaluk Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Qaujimajangit Iliqqusingitigut for the Baffin Bay and Davis Strait Marine Environment**
- ▶ **The Kugluktuk Hunters and Trappers Organization, in collaboration with federal agencies and Sabina Gold and Silver Corporation, use the Fisheries Offsetting Plan from the Sabina Gold and Silver Project to restore Bernard Harbour, where Inuit would traditionally harvest Arctic Char.^{xxxviii} This location was chosen by the community because of its historical significance as well as the observed deterioration of the site for traditional fish harvesting. The selection of the site and**

purpose for restoring it are Inuit led. Inuit, using their traditional knowledge and experience, strategically decided how to manage their environmental resources and meet community needs.

- ▶ **Nunavut Wildlife Management Board**
- ▶ **Bluenose Caribou Management in the NWT; "We don't know what the future will hold at this time because what was natural laws before, it kind of has to be mitigated by human nature.- John B. Zoe, senior advisor, Tlicho government."⁸**

While co-management boards currently function within the limitations of Canadian quasi-judicial practices, they can find ways to make their processes more reflective of Indigenous laws and principles. For example: within the NIRB rules of procedure, when considering evidence from Inuit traditional knowledge, "The Board shall give due regard to Inuit traditional knowledge in all of its proceedings. The Board may, in an oral hearing, receive oral evidence from Elders, and shall give them the opportunity to speak at the beginning of a hearing, during a hearing, or at the conclusion of a hearing."^{xxxix}

Additionally, elders and Inuit traditional knowledge holders are considered experts of Inuit traditional knowledge who are not required to substantiate their expertise through the use of resumes. The knowledge Inuit share through the NIRB process is not subject to typical Western forms of cross-examination and fact checking. This is more in line with Inuit culture because as Kublu, Laugrand, and Oosten (1999) state "Elders have always been held in high respect in Inuit society... each elder had his own knowledge and experience and was prepared to acknowledge the value of different opinions and experiences related by others."^{xl}

8 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/bluenose-east-caribou-plan-1.5093340>



ANALYSIS

HOW DO WE RESPOND TO THOSE WHO ASK HOW PROCESS WILL DEMONSTRATE FAIR AND EXPLICIT USE OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE?

Beginning with established Western bureaucratic policies and procedures and then looking to Indigenous law as a source of knowledge (add Indigenous law and stir) is unlikely to produce contextually appropriate use of Indigenous legal principles. Rather policies and procedures must be built from Indigenous-led methodologies of knowledge gathering (use Indigenous law as the foundation for distilling policy instruments). This inverts the process. The final product can still be expressed in terms of written policy, but the process through which the knowledge is derived and ultimately applied allows the legal principles to retain their context.

We can learn from the examples of the UVic Indigenous Law Research Unit's methodology for codifying Indigenous law as well as Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*.¹²

- ▶ **Step 1:** discover the research question you are trying to answer. Example: how does this Indigenous group respond to harm within the group?
- ▶ **Step 2:** bring the research question to the stories. Example: identify and articulate the legal principle within the story. In law ILRU retells these stories by using the “common law case brief method” to create a body of legal principles using stories expressing Indigenous law. Format is - name of story - issue/problem (what is the main human problem deal with in the story) - what are the facts of the story - decision/resolution (what is decided to solve the problem?) - reason/ratio (what is the reason behind the decision?) - bracket (what do you need to “bracket” or put to the side within the story for yourself?).
- ▶ **Step 3:** Create a framework or legal theory from the collection of stories
- ▶ **Step 4:** Implementation, application, critical evaluation

1 ILRU's methodology: Hadley Friedland & Val Napoleon, “Gathering the Threads: Developing a Methodology for Researching and Rebuilding Indigenous Legal Traditions” (2015) 1:1 Lakehead Law Journal 17.

2 Decolonizing Methodologies, Linda Smith – theory. Just talking about Indigenous methodologies is not enough. They must be “done”, or put into action. Learn, think, listen and work in ways that are “centered” in the community. Privileging of localized, community ways to know is crucial. Protocols of “how to be” in the community are particularly relevant and useful. The research & knowledge-gathering itself is inherently political.

How do we respond to those who ask how you protect Indigenous Knowledge and Knowledge Holders in bureaucratic systems?

During the NIRB strategic environmental assessment for Baffin Bay and Davis Strait, the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) made considerable efforts to structure participation and influence the process itself to be more reflective of Inuit culture. During the assessment, they conducted community tours throughout the Qikiqtani region to talk about the study area. Those consultation activities resulted in the QIA collecting and learning localized Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit about the study area and led to the development of two reports: Qikiqtaaluk Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Qaujimajangit Iliqqusingitigut for the Baffin Bay and Davis Strait Marine Environment and Evaluating the Role of Marine Harvesting in Food Security in the Eastern Arctic. This ground-up approach of developing these reports by starting with what is known, what has been done, and how the environment is currently used is a ground-up approach, they started with specifics and worked towards creating general recommendations that could be supported by the formal assessment process and ultimately used by government decision makers. The QIA reports included community-specific seasonal marine calendars for marine mammals and sea conditions, documenting in a very visual manner Inuit knowledge relevant to the assessment. One of the lessons learned through this process is that many of the gaps in Western science, particularly for an area as chronically under-researched as the Arctic, can be addressed by Inuit knowledge in very pragmatic applications.



Jane Glassco Northern Fellows 2018 - 2019

CONCLUSION

Co-management practices in the north began by bridging relationships through land claims, sharing resources by distributing parcels of land, and distributing duties to manage the environment collectively. This leaves a system where there are segments of responsibility between the federal government, territorial governments, and Indigenous organizations. A segmented system can leave things fragmented and make gaps in responsibilities more visible. These gaps are often filled by co-management boards as a way to unify and streamline the management of resources. Now that these co-management boards have been in operation for several decades and as territories are working on devolution, we believe that it is an important time to reflect and learn from historical approaches.

Historically, the co-management processes improved their involvement of Indigenous people by doing consultation in directly affected communities, using Indigenous languages through interpretation, beginning to use traditional place names, making space for Indigenous knowledge, and allowing their processes to incorporate Indigenous values. However, the final authority in the process is still centralized to a government body nowhere near these affected communities, led by people who have not lived and do not live, nor represent people from affected communities. To that end, the system is still colonial.

If the end goal is for Indigenous people to reclaim sovereignty over their homelands and the resources within them, the systems

to manage them still need to be transformed. The power over resources needs to be more equitable, and this is where the authority to decide between the federal ministers and Indigenous bodies has to become lateral, leaving them to decide through consensus. Secondly, within these systems, many people work on interpreting information and placing value on what is worth knowing and using to inform decisions. If the people working in these processes are to understand and value knowledge and resources as Indigenous people do, they need to be immersed into Indigenous culture as a way to understand those positions and perspectives. This can be done, and has been done by doing cultural immersion. People working with Indigenous communities should continue to be obligated to learn Indigenous culture so that they may build their experience with the world from an Indigenous lens. By doing so, they can internalize similar values and carry out their work upholding the same values and goals that Indigenous people hold. Lastly, there is a growing body of knowledge from Indigenous people around how to conduct business within Indigenous frameworks, this needs to be done within co-management systems.

We aim to provide critical recommendations that work towards a more equitable relationship within co-management regimes by promoting the use of Indigenous culture, because it is within the culture that the Indigenous principles and laws are maintained.

By implementing these recommendations, co-management between the federal government and Indigenous peoples moves towards the reconciliation between nations by more fully recognizing the right for Indigenous peoples to both govern themselves and manage the resources within their homelands. It is imperative for co-management models to begin to take these transformative steps towards realizing Indigenous laws and principles within their frameworks so that they may continue towards fulfilling the spirit and intent of land claim agreements with Indigenous peoples in Canada.

As Indigenous people and the federal government develop and implement devolution agreements, these recommendations can be considered as initial insights into how new ways of governing and co-managing may take place where Indigenous law is used in meaningful and legitimate ways.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Burrows, John (2010). *Canada's Indigenous Constitution*. University of Toronto Press Incorporated.
- Clarke, Douglas and Jocelyn Joe-Stark (2017). "Keeping the 'Co' in Co-management of Northern Resources" *Northern Public Affairs* 5, no. 1 (April 2017).
- Council of Yukon First Nations. *Umbrella Final Agreement*. Last updated 1990. Accessed June 14, 2019, <https://cyfn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/umbrella-final-agreement.pdf>.
- Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corporation (n.d.). Background. Retrieved from: <https://www.makigiaqta.com/about/background/>
- Nadasdy, Paul (2004). *Hunters and Bureaucrats. Power, Knowledge, and Aboriginal-State Relations in the Southwest Yukon*. UBC Press.
- Nunavut Impact Review Board (2015). Nunavut Impact Review Board's hearing regarding the review of the Areva Resources Canada Incorporated's Kiggavik Uranium Mine Project, File: 09MN003, Volume 10, March 13, 2015 [Transcript].
- Nunavut Impact Review Board (2018). Nunavut Impact Review Board: five year strategic plan 2018-2022.
- Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (2020). Katujjiqatigiinni Protocol between Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and Government of Nunavut. Retrieved from: <https://president.tunngavik.com/files/2020/01/Katujjiqatigiinni-Protocol-English.pdf>
- Oosten, Jarich and Frédéric Laugrand (eds) (1999). Introduction. *Interviewing Inuit Elders*, Volume 1, Iqaluit, Nunavut Arctic College / Nortext.
- Qikiqtani Inuit Association (2018). Qikiqtaaluk Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Qaujimajangit Iliqqusingitigut for the Baffin Bay and Davis Strait Marine Environment. Prepared by Heidi Klein, Sanammanga Solutions Inc. for submission to the Nunavut Impact Review Board for the Baffin Bay and Davis Strait Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- Sabina Gold and Silver Corporation (2015). Bernard Harbour Restoration Project and Traditional Knowledge Update, June 2015. Retrieved from: <https://backriverproject.com/wp-content/themes/gold/assets/pdfs/English%20Posters/June%202015%20Bernard%20Harbour%20Presentation%20-%20ENG.pdf>

ENDNOTES

- i <https://www.planyukon.ca/>
- ii Section 11.4, UFA, pp. 95-96. Retrieved from <https://cyfn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/umbrella-final-agreement.pdf>
- iii Section 11.6, UFA, pp. 97-98. Retrieved from <https://cyfn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/umbrella-final-agreement.pdf>
- iv Yukon College Perspectives Series, 24, October, 2018. Retrieved from <https://mappingtheway.ca/stories/perspectives-series-paths-self-determination-outside-umbrella-final-agreement>
- v <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/m-0.2/>
- vi Section 7.1, retrieved from <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/m-0.2/page-2.html#h-3>
- vii Section 7.1, retrieved from <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/m-0.2/page-2.html#h-3>
- viii Section 9.1, retrieved from <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/m-0.2/page-2.html#h-4>
- ix Section 50.1(1), retrieved from <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/m-0.2/page-6.html#h-18>
- x Section 43(1), retrieved from <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/m-0.2/page-5.html#h-15>
- xi Article 5, Part II, retrieved from https://nlca.tunngavik.com/?page_id=268#ANCHOR319
- xii Article 9, Part III, retrieved from https://nlca.tunngavik.com/?page_id=931#ANCHOR951
- xiii Article 10, retrieved from https://nlca.tunngavik.com/?page_id=1037
- xiv Article 13, Part II, retrieved from https://nlca.tunngavik.com/?page_id=1488#ANCHOR1493
- xv 5.2.33, retrieved from https://nlca.tunngavik.com/?page_id=268#ANCHOR365
- xvi NIRB, 2015, p.2168
- xvii Nadasdy, Hunters and Bureaucrats, p. 6
- xviii Northern Public Affairs, retrieved from <http://www.northernpublicaffairs.ca/index/volume-5-issue-1/keeping-the-co-in-the-co-management-of-northern-resources/>
- xix Northern Public Affairs, retrieved from <http://www.northernpublicaffairs.ca/index/volume-5-issue-1/keeping-the-co-in-the-co-management-of-northern-resources/>
- xx Living Indigenous Law, 4:46, 6:35, retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Q8zkz25Rj8>
- xxi Living Indigenous Law, 4:30, retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Q8zkz25Rj8>
- xxii Living Indigenous Law, 6:10, retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Q8zkz25Rj8>
- xxiii Clark & Joe-Strack, 2017.
- xxiv Bill C-88
- xxv <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/img/postereng.JPG>
- xxvi https://www.scribd.com/document/443784567/Katujjiqatigiinniq-Protocol-English#from_embed
- xxvii Feit, 2005; Simms et al., 2016
- xxviii McConney et al., 2003
- xxix Douglas Clark and Jocelyn Joe-Strack, *Keeping the 'co' in the co-management of northern resources*, Northern Public Affairs.
- xxx MITC, n.d.
- xxxi Burrows, 2010.
- xxxii Burrows, 2010, p. 140.
- xxxiii Jan Vansina, *Oral Traditions as History*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, p. 124
- xxxiv Burrows, 2010, p. 140.
- xxxv Nadasdy, 2004, p. 2.
- xxxvi <https://yukon.ca/en/your-government/find-out-what-government-doing/yukon-forum>
- xxxvii Yukon Forum Minutes, January 13, 2017, p.2
- xxxviii Sabina Gold and Silver Corporation, 2015
- xxxix NIRB, 2009, p. 21
- xl Kublu, Laugrand, and Oosten, p. 9-10

Author Biographies



KILLULARK ARNGNA'NAAQ

Killulark Arngna'naaq is an Inuk originally from Qamanit'uaq (Baker Lake) Nunavut, but spent most of her childhood in, and is currently based in Yellowknife, NWT. She completed her BA through Trent University, her Masters of Management and Professional Accounting with the University of Toronto, and attained her CPA, CA designation through the Institute of Chartered Accountancy Ontario. Killulark is currently working for Tides Canada as their Northern Program Specialist.

Killulark hopes that the Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship will help her focus her goals.



HEATHER BOURASSA

Heather Bourassa is a business owner and active community member of Fort Good Hope. She attended school in Fort Good Hope, Cochrane, and at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology in Calgary. She has been a co-owner in her family business since 2000. The business is in general contracting, primarily carrying out long-term GNWT contracts.

She is on several boards, including her local Land Corporation Board since 2005, Sahtu Land Use Planning Board since 2012 (chairperson), and the NWT Liquor Licensing Board since 2015. She is a life-long resident of Fort Good Hope and beneficiary of the Sahtu Land Claim Agreement. She is married with two young children. She enjoys time with family and indulging her love of aviation with her private pilot's license and small Cessna aircraft. Living in Fort Good Hope, her family takes advantage of the easy access to the land harvesting wood, and traditional foods.

Heather hopes to contribute to the fellowship with her northern experience and passion for northern issues. She also hopes to gain a broader northern perspective networking with other fellows.



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.



DON COUTURIER

Don Couturier was born and raised in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, and recently completed law school and a Master of Public Administration at Queen's University. During his studies, Don spent summers working for a boutique Aboriginal law firm in the Northwest Territories and for West Coast Environmental Law in Vancouver, BC, where he co-authored a report on Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. In June of 2020, Don will clerk at the Court of Appeal of Alberta for his articling year, and following this, for Justice Kasirer at the Supreme Court of Canada (2021-2022). Don previously worked as a policy advisor with the Government of Northwest Territories, most recently in the Office of the Secretary to Cabinet, where he helped coordinate the transition between governments during the 2015 territorial general election. Don is interested in the ways in which the revitalization of Indigenous legal orders can give content and meaning to Indigenous rights alongside Canada's common and civil law traditions. Part of this project involves thinking about how Canadian constitutional and criminal law can make space for Indigenous jurisdiction. In a forthcoming article in the *Queen's Law Journal* (Spring 2020), he discusses and evaluates recent criminal law judgments in Nunavut that incorporate principles of Inuit law in their reasoning. Don is honoured to have been a 2018-20 Jane Glassco Fellow, and thanks the Gordon Foundation and his cohort of Fellows for a truly educational and empowering experience.

Author Biographies



CHLOE DRAGON SMITH

Chloe Dragon Smith was born and raised in Yellowknife, NWT. Of Dënesųłíné, 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 B.Sc 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.



MARJORIE KAVIQ KALURAQ

Kaviq Kaluraq lives in Baker Lake, Nunavut. She is an instructor in the Nunavut Arctic College's Nunavut Teacher Education Program. She is also the Acting Chairperson of the Nunavut Impact Review Board, currently serving her third term. Kaviq completed her Bachelor of Science Degree in Environmental Science at Trent University and is currently a graduate student in the Master of Educational Studies Program at Trent University. Kaviq travels to communities across Nunavut to teach, and to meet with community members to learn about how they live and what they strive for in terms of resource development in their communities. Through this fellowship Kaviq hopes to learn more about policies and practices surrounding Inuit environmental literacy and language. She has seen changes around the ways in which Inuit of different generations have relationships with land, and a growing gap of Inuit knowledge about the land among youth. She is interested in policies that allow for knowledge and skills mobilization for traditional Inuit knowledge about the environment using Inuktitut, as well as barriers to mobilization created by policies. Kaviq is interested in learning about the ways people across the North face and address the gaps of traditional knowledge and language about the natural environment; and ways that people are mobilizing traditional knowledge programs through the development of asset oriented and collaborative policies.



KELLY PANCHYNSHYN

Kelly was born and raised in Whitehorse, Yukon, on the Traditional Territory of the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation. In 2017, her passion for advancing social and environmental movements across the North led her to apply for the Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship. As a Fellow, Kelly's research focused on food sovereignty, community identity and co-governance in Yukon. She remains committed to deepening her understanding of challenges facing Northern peoples and will continue this work through a Master's of Community Engagement, Social Change and Equity at the University of British Columbia's Okanagan Campus.



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.

Author Biographies



JULIANNA SCRAMSTAD

Julianna Scramstad was born in Whitehorse, Yukon, on land that has been cared for by the Ta'an Kwäch'än and the Kwanlin Dün for generations. Certified as a teacher and trained in sociology and women's studies, she is a dedicated feminist and activist. As a volunteer, she has worked on political campaigns, civic engagement projects, feminist and anti-racist organizing, and school governance.

Julianna spent several formative years working on the prevention of violence against women at the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre in Whitehorse, where she collaborated on shifting prevention efforts toward building a consent culture. She then grew hopeful that teaching and school curriculum might be key to fundamental social change and left the Yukon to study education. She spent a year teaching in a small Algonquin community.



KRISTEN TANCHE

Kristen Tanche is Łı́ıdlı́ Kúę First Nation, Dehcho Dene. She is also of Icelandic and settler Canadian ancestry. She was raised in Wynyard, Saskatchewan, and Whati, Gameti, Yellowknife and Fort Simpson, Northwest Territories. As a young adult she returned to her mother's home community of Fort Simpson to re-connect with her family, community and Dene culture. Through Dechinta, Kristen attended three semesters of post-secondary land-based education. She then attended Aurora College and graduated with a Social Work Diploma program in Yellowknife. She hopes to continue her education either in post-secondary education or from elders and cultural knowledge holders on the land. Kristen currently works for Dehcho First Nations. Throughout her time at Dehcho First Nations, Kristen worked on regional on-the-land programming, within the Dehcho K'ehodi Guardian and Stewardship Program. She has seen and experienced the success of on-the-land-programming. Kristen has worked in the fields of office administration, tourism, and education. She became involved in local leadership, by serving on the Łı́ıdlı́ Kúę First Nation Band Council, the Fort Simpson District Education Authority and the NWT Tourism Board. She believes in being actively engaged with her community and region by being involved within local politics, or by working in areas that could benefit the region. She is passionate about the people in her community and the people of the North's well-being.

Photo Credits

Aaron Tambour: p. 50, 60, 62, 206, 211, 216, 219, 222, 230

Amos Scott: p. 314

Ashley Carvill: p. 34 - 39

Chloe Dragon Smith: p. 66 - 90

J. Antoine: p. 209, 214, 223

Kalen Emsley: Back cover

Kelly Panchynshyn: p. 128 - 123

Killulark Arngna'naaq: p. 8

Kristen Tanche: p. 208, 217, 226

Minnie Clark: p. 186, 190, 192, 200, 201, 203, 204, 266, 277, 278, 279, 280

Pat Kane: Front cover, p. 53, 57

Qikiqtani Inuit Association, Nauttiqsuqtiit Program ©: p. 255, 256, 259, 264

CONTACT

The Gordon Foundation
11 Church Street, Suite 400
Toronto, ON M5E 1W1

416-601-4776
info@gordonfn.org
gordonfoundation.ca

🐦 @TheGordonFdn
🐦 @GlasscoFellows

