

Report on the results of a Research Planning Workshop in:

Rankin Inlet

Held from December 9 - 10, 2009 in the Kivalliq Inuit Association Conference Room

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Canada

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Workshop background

Gita Laidler has been working collaboratively with the Qikiqtani communities of Cape Dorset, Igloolik, and Pangnirtung since 2003 on a project about Inuit sea ice knowledge and use. Through this work she has been documenting Inuit knowledge of sea ice through interviews, workshops, travelling with hunters, mapping, documenting local observations and implications of sea ice change, and recording Inuktitut sea ice terminology. Recently, she has also been working to combine these results into educational materials using interactive multi-media. Overall, her **research goals** are to: i) learn about northern environments and their connections to social and economic prosperity from local and Inuit experts; ii) conduct research of interest and benefit to northern communities; and, iii) look at the complementary aspects of Inuit knowledge and scientific knowledge to have a more comprehensive understanding of complex issues, and to learn from different techniques and perspectives.

In **March, 2007**, a workshop jointly facilitated and hosted by Environment

Canada, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, brought together Inuit and scientific experts to consider how to improve weather and sea ice forecasting services in Nunavut. Inuit elders and hunters who participated were mainly from the Qikiqtani region of Nunavut, but **Jerome Tattuinee** was also invited to represent the Kivalliq Region, and **Bob Konana** represented the Kitikmeot Region. This was a wonderful meeting, with fascinating exchanges about safety indicators and regional differences. We learned a great deal about the improvements needed in local weather forecasting services and sea ice monitoring with satellite imagery, in order to better meet community needs (see **Appendix 1**). At that time, Jerome and Bob also expressed interest in expanding this kind of research into other regions of Nunavut, and invited Gita (and others) to consider developing new projects in the **Kivalliq and Kitikmeot Regions**. At that time Gita committed to following up by searching for new funding opportunities. In this process, she was put in touch with **Veronica Tattuinee** to help connect with Jerome and work together on options for a new project in **Rankin Inlet**.

A unique funding opportunity provided by the **Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council** offered the chance to develop new research partnerships and facilitate discussions around ideas for new projects - including the assessment of community-specific priorities, interests, and feasibility. Gita, Veronica, and others worked together during the fall of 2008 to develop a **funding application** that included both Rankin Inlet and Gjoa Haven. We were very happy to learn that we received the funding in the spring of 2009. Therefore, preliminary planning for this **Rankin Inlet Research Planning Workshop** began in the summer of 2009, with the logistics and details mainly arranged in October and November, 2009. As part of this process, Veronica worked with the **Community Lands and Resources Committee (CLARC)** members to develop a list of invited participants that represented a range of types of contributions and experiences, including both men and women of various ages. In particular, there was strong interest from CLARC and Jerome to make sure that some **youth** were present, as research is seen as being undertaken for the youth and their future.



Meeting Objectives

The driving question of this meeting is also the title of this research development project: *Qanuittumik takuvit?* (What do you see?). This came specifically from expressions **Jerome Tattuinee** and **Bob Konana** used at the March, 2007 meeting, with both a historical and current context. In the past, they described how as youth they were always asked to go outside in the morning and observe the weather, and tell their parents what they see. This was not only an exercise in learning weather indicators and seasonal patterns, but also a broader lesson in observation, always being aware of your surroundings, and sharing what you learn with others. Today, as a project title, this question is used to ask workshop participants to think about what is most important to them in a community context. **The goal is to learn about local research interests based on community members' observations and experiences in various contexts.**

Gita Laidler, working with **Anne Kendrick** and **Bryan Grimwood**, was in Rankin Inlet to learn from the knowledgeable group of workshop participants, and to discuss ideas and priorities from their perspectives. This workshop was held to see if there was interest in working together to develop a new collaborative research project to follow up on earlier expressions of interest shared two years ago by Jerome. Initial **objectives** are outlined in the project summary (see **Appendix 2**), but workshop discussions were not strictly tied to this. The meeting **agenda** (see **Appendix 3**) was designed to change and be adjusted based on the directions that discussions would take the group. The main emphasis for this meeting was to be interactive, and driven by the interests and expertise of participants, with flexible formats to allow for direct participant contributions.

Workshop Overview

Day 1 (Dec 9, 2009)

Morning

Informal introductions were made over coffee and snacks as people arrived in the morning. **Thomas Suvisak** opened the workshop with a prayer. **Gita Laidler** introduced herself as well as the story of how we all came to be together on this day (see p. 1). This was followed by a round table of introductions, where each of the participants, facilitators, and interpreters introduced themselves and shared a bit about their interest in, or role for, this meeting. Unfortunately, **Jerome Tattuinee**, who had initially expressed interest in expanding research in Rankin Inlet, and provided a lot of support through **Veronica Tattuinee** in the planning stages, was unable to attend at the last minute. This may have made it more challenging for other participants to understand the background and purpose of this meeting, but we had an excellent, dynamic, and diverse group of participants that led to many meaningful and insightful discussions during the rest of the workshop. Overall meeting objectives were introduced (see p. 2), with the suggestion to begin discussions by getting to know what previous research had been done in or around Rankin Inlet, and with what degree of local collaboration.

Past projects

As we began learning about past projects conducted in or around the area, such as polar bear, peregrine falcon, aurora borealis, the old nickel mine, the Hudson Bay Working Group, the new road construction connecting Rankin with Manitoba, and family tree research, the discussion focused much more on **concerns with various types of research** rather than on particular projects. A number of concerns were raised about how research is being done, especially in relation to polar bear and other wildlife research. In addition, as part of the same process, a number of research priorities began to emerge, based on explanations of how participants wanted to address some of their concerns.

Learning about community concerns about research, as well as emerging local priorities, is critical to developing a successful collaboration, so we continued to identify both concerns and priorities as they were raised. Later in the meeting, we used the concerns along with additional discussions to help identify the elements of a successful research project, and we incorporated the priorities with the results of another more specific exercise to refine local research priorities.

Afternoon

New priorities

Building off morning discussions, **Bryan Grimwood** reviewed the notes that he and **Mary Rose Angushadluk** had made on the white board. We then broke into small groups to discuss **local research priorities** in Rankin Inlet. Although a number of potential priorities were raised in each group, discussions seemed to keep coming back to the concerns around how research is undertaken, and how Inuit knowledge can effectively be represented or shared in written form (if at all). Through these small group discussions, a number of very **important, deep-seated questions** arose around:

- the meaning of Inuit *Qaujimagatuqangit* (IQ)
- the utility of research in a community context
- strong concerns for local community health with the implications of the old nickel mine site and poor waste management services and facilities within town
- the appropriateness of documenting Inuit knowledge
- passing on knowledge to youth
- family ties
- feeling ignored by government (from local to federal levels)
- lack of credit for Inuit knowledge
- wanting more control over research and more funding for local research

These were important recurring themes throughout the afternoon, and into the next day. In addition, a great deal of frustration was expressed among participants about both research and government



practices, and the challenges raised by differences in perspectives between Inuit and *gallunaat* on various issues. Each group individually shared their research priorities and concerns raised, with facilitation of discussions being very effectively supported by the bilingual participants at the meeting. Through these exchanges we continued to add to earlier brainstorming lists of both research priorities and elements that should be included in a successful research project to deal with the concerns expressed.

Given all the powerful concerns that were raised during the day, at the end of the day **Gita** asked the group if they were still interested in continuing on with this workshop to try to develop ideas or plans for a new collaborative research project. All participants expressed the value in this group discussion, as they do not often have such a forum to share their concerns or voice their frustrations. Given that many of these issues were discussed at length, all were keen to continue on with another day and try to focus more on identifying local priorities for research. Based on this positive finish, we planned to begin the next day with a targeted discussion around identifying what makes a successful research project.

Day 2 (Dec 10, 2009)

Morning

With a reminder from **Lizzie Ittinuar**, **Thomas** again opened the second day with a prayer. This was followed by a review of meeting objectives, and then we moved into activities around defining element of a successful research project.

A successful project

These discussions began with an individual exercise of noting (on cue cards) what aspects each person (participants, interpreters, and facilitators) would like to see in a project that is developed in collaboration with community members and takes into account Inuit knowledge and expertise. Responses were again quite varied, both identifying essential aspects of collaborative research projects, as well as additional points related to local research priorities. **Mariah Aliyak** and **Mary Rose** took turns reading out the cards in English or Inuktitut, and the individual who contributed the ideas would

then share more about what they meant with the points they raised. This served to identify a comprehensive **listing of 'best practices'** that community members were looking for in research projects, as well as a number of additional research priorities that were added to earlier compilations.

Afternoon

Overview and priorities

The President and Executive Director of the Kivalliq Inuit Association (KIA), **Jose Kusugak** and **Patrick Tagoona**, joined us briefly in the afternoon. Both had been very supportive of this meeting given the logistical support and meeting space they provided over the week. **Jose**, in particular, was encouraging us to recognize and appreciate the depth of knowledge in both Inuit and scientific approaches to learning, documenting, and sharing knowledge (i.e. conducting research in various forms). While **Jose** and **Patrick** were at the meeting, **Gita** reviewed the research priorities that had been identified through the previous day and a half as a refresher, and a means of getting feedback regarding which of the many priorities might be of most interest for starting a potential project. It seemed difficult for the group to prioritize these points, or agree on a particular direction in terms of research, but it did become clear that those in the group were glad to have discussed these issues, and were keen to take more initiative locally to address some of the concerns that were raised.

Broadly speaking, **overarching priorities** that seemed to emerge from the workshop included:

- i) waste management and community health;
 - ii) Inuit concepts of sustainability and conservation/stewardship (to inform wildlife research and management); and,
 - iii) the connections between cultural skills, knowledge, documentation, and education.
- Gita** offered that the things she could help with, and potentially find funding for, would relate to:

- placenames documentation/mapping
- community-based monitoring
- characterizing Inuit perspectives on conservation
- linking to the cultural school in Baker Lake, Igloolik, and Clyde River

- sea ice/weather research from local and Inuit perspectives (and linking to scientific research)
- documenting local perspectives/concerns related to health issues or wildlife research
- education - incorporating more IQ into schools, different approaches to teaching and learning
- developing a database to house monitoring or other locally important information for future access or use
- help writing grant or funding proposal applications the community organizations would run, or might need help with undertaking research

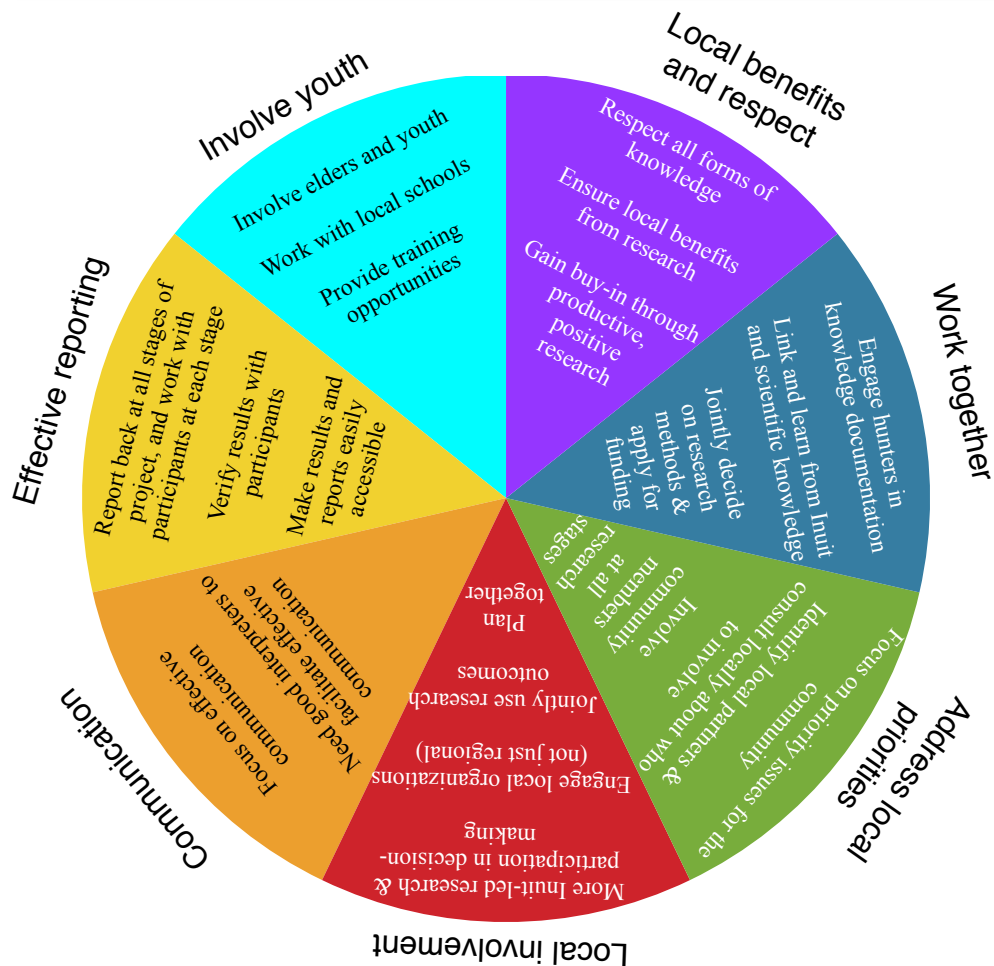
During the last part of the afternoon it was decided as a group that sufficient discussions had taken place, and the last half-day planned in the schedule (for Friday) was not needed. So, **Gita** had to leave to arrange for honoraria payments, and while she was gone **Anne** outlined some **potential funding opportunities** (e.g. Health Canada funding for community-based and directed projects, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council grants for longer term collaborative research working with university researchers) to see if anyone was interested in jointly pursuing funding to develop a project around some of the research priorities identified in the meeting. **Bryan** then followed up with an overview about what participants could expect in terms of reporting and feedback from this workshop. Once **Gita** returned, we reviewed the discussions that occurred over the course of the two-day workshop, and attempted to define major priorities to follow up with.

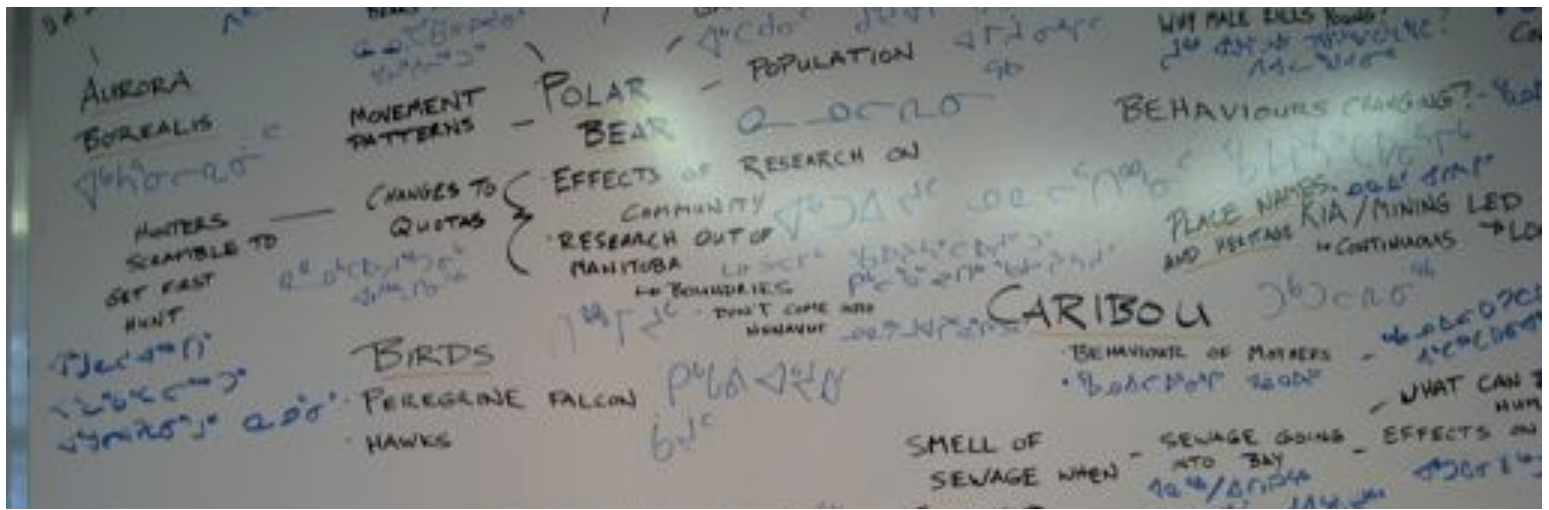
To conclude the meeting, we went around the table, and each participant, interpreter, and facilitator had the opportunity to share a few parting words. Overall, it was a challenging and eye-opening meeting, and there were many expressions of thanks for the ability to get together, share ideas and opinions, and to raise awareness amongst each other. It was a wonderful **learning experience**, and could become an **important foundation** for local collaborative research, if that is where the group decides that their priorities lie.



Important Findings: *Research Process*

What makes a successful, community-based, collaborative research process? Since so many concerns were raised around how research is conducted in the North, we spent a full session discussing important elements of the research process, and the group came up with the recommendations shown below (in their own words).





Important Findings: *Research Priorities*

*Over the course of the meeting, a number of community interests and concerns were raised, which were ultimately highlighted by the group as important **research priorities**. The suggestions for priority areas reflect either statements made in the meeting, or priorities noted during small group or individual cue card activities, and are in the words of participants.*

Wildlife

Wildlife study

- Conduct a local study of wildlife
- Observation of wildlife
- Document wildlife behaviour
- Do an annual report

Caribou

- Caribou numbers are going down in the region
- Better research methods have to be used to count the caribou
- Less caribou migrate together, but in smaller groups
- Solid numbers should be used per caribou, not guessing or estimating
- When researching caribou, hunters should be used during the air observations (by plane)
- Use of cameras should be investigated to count the caribou

Polar bears

- Health
- Scientific research results and methods are questionable
- Wildlife will not all be gone with reduced sea ice
- Is there really a decline in polar bear numbers?

Understanding and communicating Inuit conservation practices

- Caribou migration and trails; routes
- Fish (Williamson Lake); no more fish because told not to fish so they died off
- Sustainable development
- Lemming migrations
- Inuit responsibility for wildlife (it's not Inuit fault for declining wildlife), Inuit know how much to catch
- Respect for Inuit knowledge and hunting practices

Inter-cultural partnership

- Develop inter-community or inter-cultural groups
- Partner with other Aboriginal People in Canada and around the world
- Inuit organizations need to work more effectively with government, and incorporate more IQ

Inuit Advocacy

- Impacts of Green Peace on Inuit livelihoods
- Express concerns for the guesswork of science and partial truths of research (e.g. interpretation of tent rings, boundaries of polar bear research)
- Share Inuit traditions to raise awareness, different from other Canadians
- Inuit are not victims, need to speak up more about concerns with research, environmental activism, and government decisions (e.g. "Point the gun the other way")
- Inuit must start speaking about ice

Health Centre

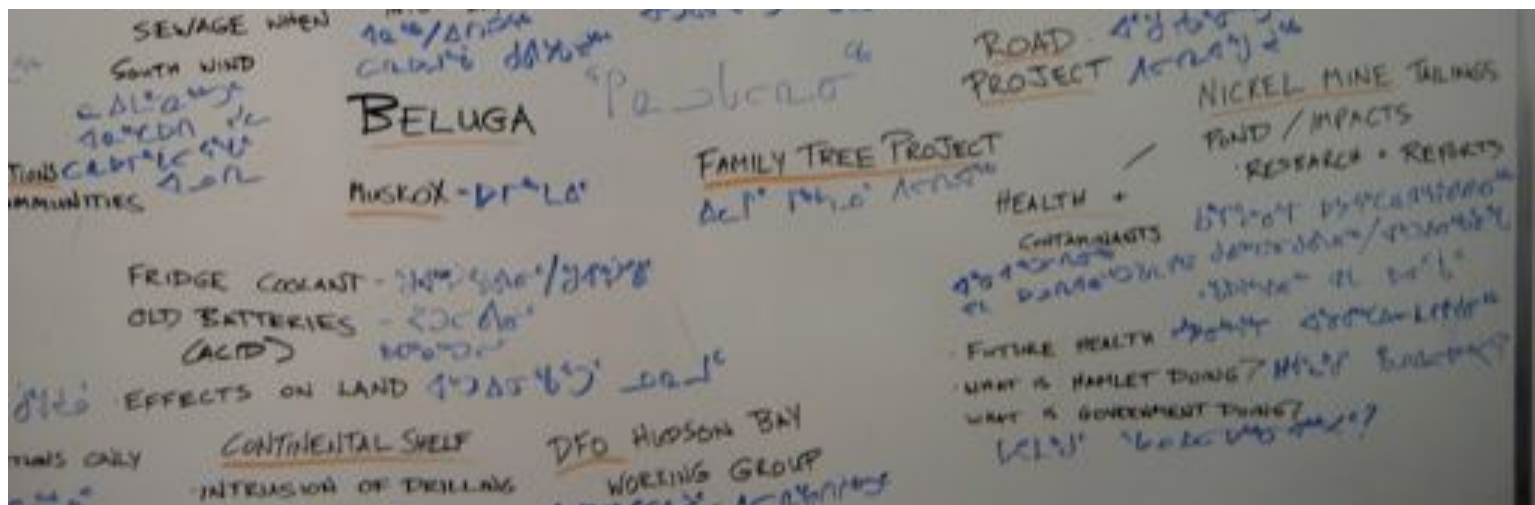
Kivalliq Health Centre

- Save money on air travel by having health centre/hospital in Rankin Inlet
- Kivalliq Health Centre is not used for the purpose it was initially proposed for in development stages
- Why are we not using the health facility as it was proposed originally as a regional facility? (i.e. people in the Kivalliq region were supposed to come to Rankin for medical but this is still not the case)
- How can we get more accurate and timely diagnoses locally?

Mining

Meliadine mining camp

- Concerns around tailings ponds
- Need a research/report on existing mines re: consequences on land, ponds, lakes, habitat, animals (e.g. Lynn Lake, Nanisivik, Diavik, Cullaton Lake)
- What will the mine do about these kinds of impacts?



Local Waste/Pollution

Local garbage blowing back to the community

- Why aren't we using the new dump yet (a lot of money invested, but lying dormant because of poor initial planning/consultation)?
- South wind causes garbage to blow back to the community
- Smell of the dump is more obvious now that the winds come from the south in the summer

Bad oil/gas

"Other" contaminants

- Concerns for the effects of environmental contaminants on human health (e.g. household cleaning supplies, batteries, refrigerators)
- Wondering about effects on the ozone layer

Garbage and community clean up (including on the land)

Sewage

- Sewage being dumped straight into cove/sea; can see evidence along the shore
- Staff at Public Works should start monitoring the sewage being released into the bay more and have the macerator run properly
- Parts for macerator should be readily available in case of breakdowns
- Research should be conducted with fish around the sewer outlet to monitor contaminants from the sewage being discharged to the bay.
- What are our options?

Document Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ)

Place names

- KIA has a GIS system so the community should get together and collect place names
- Talk to elders and hunters to preserve traditional place names
- Communicate and apply traditional place names for land, lakes
- Include place names in defining polar bear boundaries, establish traditional birthing grounds and hunting grounds

Document IQ for future Inuit, not for someone or somebody else

- Define IQ...need to understand it's true meaning
- Important to combat language loss
- Need to consider IQ more alongside scientific knowledge and in decision-making
- Encourage more youth to go on the land
- Support more Inuit-run research
- Interview elders while they are still around
- Respect oral history

Family tree project

- No longer closely tied to family or traditional group members
- What kind of funding is available for this?

Climate Change

Global warming

- New growth of weeds, vegetation, plants
- No more year-round ice on hills and mountains
- Changes to prevailing wind (summer)
- Traditional underground "freezers" no more (near, across Marble Island)
- Different food and insects

Land and sea

- Why later freeze-up?

Snow and ice

- Conduct local snow and ice observations
- IQ collection of past observations
- Identify local people that can coordinate a project
- Identify local people that will conduct the community based monitoring
- Collect the info monthly and produce annual reports

Education, Traditional Skills, and Cultural programs

Teaching and educating IQ more effectively

- "Education" vs. learning from ancestors

Sharing knowledge openly to aid future generations

- When will IQ be shared with others (e.g. government)?
- When will we open up?
- Government response to community concerns needs to be improved

Opportunities for youth

- No craft shop in community
- Children's shelter (research locally to see if there is a need)
- Child welfare officials, need to train Inuit to be child advocates

Inuktitut Language

- Need more Inuktitut teachers
- Teach kids that the language is important
- Part of our culture; show importance
- Part of our oral history

Learning on/from the land

- Design on-the-land workshops
- Traditional skills on land should be taught throughout the year, and involve elders
- Need more cultural programs specific to each community
- Teach youth traditional skills in schools, or develop local cultural school
- Today a lot of us don't know how to sew traditional clothing (i.e., hunting clothes, kamiks, etc.) or cut up animals
- Travel more with family to help kids learn about the land

Education imbalance between north and south

- How do we better educate our youth?



Future Directions

Some important conclusions related to process...

- the meeting provided an important opportunity for community members to get together and share their ideas and concerns around community issues - although this was not always explicitly focused on developing a research project, it was very fruitful in determining community interests and actions they would like to take locally to address their concerns (and results of this workshop could be used to help in lobbying efforts with the Hamlet Council, the Government of Nunavut, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI), KIA, etc.)
- many concerns were raised about how both scientific and community-based research are conducted that suggest that these are important discussions to have at the outset of any project, and that current approaches or methods cannot be taken for granted as effective or appropriate (e.g. of worlds colliding around polar bear management issues, and questions raised about: When IQ is recorded / documented / written down, it loses its meaning. How then can IQ compete with Science or professors, whose credentials are legitimated and authorized through practices of documented and written words?)
- many concerns were expressed with the amount of input community members have in government, research, or mining development decisions
- wanting to work together (Inuit, researchers, government, industry) for the future, and for northern youth
- work with local organizations to identify ongoing research priorities or develop projects
- Inuit knowledge cannot be effectively captured or communicated in written form, ongoing tensions surrounding use of this kind of knowledge as not representing the truth about Inuit, concern about due credit and misunderstandings being propagated through research where someone has only spent a short time in a community and makes assumptions about how things work

- with brainstorming sessions, many issues arose that were problem-focused, and discussions were at times quite intense, which can lead to a feeling of being overwhelmed by a large set of "community challenges or issues" or feeling helpless; however, in the end, it helped to give participants perspective and they took the lead on identifying new directions which included efforts to take more action in the community to address some of their concerns
- when developing new projects, it is important to find a balance between coming in completely open-ended (which can be overwhelming and confusing) and being well-defined (which can be too externally driven, narrowly defined, and does not allow enough flexibility for refinement or change with local feedback)
- research needs to be beneficial in the community context (i.e. more applied dimensions) not only in the academic context (i.e. typically more in theoretical dimensions)
- workshop model is well suited to participatory action research approaches
- need effective compensation and due credit for local contributions to research
- Inuit organizations can be good partners in research and to support relationships with local community organizations and individuals

Some important conclusions related to priorities...

- climate change was only one among many other prominent issues raised by workshop participants, in fact local health, cultural vitality, and wildlife seemed to be the most important points of discussion
- wanting annual gathering like this meeting to express concerns or identify progress or priorities
- work with local groups advocating for more local support services and counseling (e.g. with Elder's Group)
- dealing with cross-cultural conflicts around wildlife management
- community members need to take on some of these priorities, researchers cannot help with important issues such as child abuse or health care

- local community committees and organizations need to communicate and coordinate better amongst each other, as each is dealing with many of these issues / challenges independently
- work together to understand more about what is involved in starting up a local grassroots "concerned citizens committee", and need to learn how this can be established and identify key goals in doing this

Three major items were identified as being **priorities for follow-up** after the meeting:

- i) workshop participants agreed to develop a **concerned citizens committee** to advocate with the Hamlet, local health centre, Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTO), their Member of the Legislative Assembly, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI), etc., regarding many of the concerns that were raised during the workshop;
- ii) Gita should coordinate with Gabriel to follow up on ideas of developing community-based research regarding **Inuit concepts of sustainability or stewardship** (including monitoring environmental or wildlife conditions and documenting related Inuit knowledge, in collaboration with NTI Wildlife Dept. and HTO); and,
- iii) Gita should coordinate with Donna to follow up on ideas of developing more appropriate means of **documenting and communicating Inuit knowledge** to the rest of the world.

Many important and highly insightful ideas came through these intense discussions with a dynamic and thoughtful group. As the coordinator of this overall workshop and research development project, **Gita Laidler** extends her help in an advisory, research project development, literature analysis, or funding application capacity to support the priorities and concerns raised by the group over the two-day meeting. There are many directions we could take given all these important questions, and she is **seeking direction from the community** as to how they would like to follow up, and what role she could play in the process. This meeting was only meant to be a starting point, and in fact it has resulted in many possible starting points in terms of community activism, collaborative research, and potential new partnerships.

List of Participants

We are grateful for the openness and insights that each of the workshop participants, facilitators, interpreters, and visitors brought to this meeting.

Donna Adams
Women's Group
representative

Mariah Aliyak
Independent
interpreter/ translator
(Meeting interpreter
and facilitator)

Mary Rose
Angushadluk
KIA interpreter/
translator (Meeting
interpreter and
facilitator)

Bryan Grimwood
Carleton University
(Meeting facilitator
and logistical
support)

Lizzie Ittinuar
Community
representative

Louie Innuksuk
Elder's Group
representative

Jack Kabvitok
CLARC member

Paul Kanayok
CLARC and HTO
member

Anne Kendrick
Carleton University
and Inuit Tapiriit
Kanatami (Meeting
coordinator and
facilitator)

Gita Laidler
Carleton University
(Project lead, Meeting
coordinator and
facilitator)

Celestino Makpah
CLARC member

David Ningeongan
Community
representative

Gabriel
Nirlungayuk
NTI, Director of
Wildlife

Mike Nukapiak
High School student,
youth representative

Thomas Suvissak
Elder's Group
Chairman

Veronica Tattuinee
KIA Lands
Administrator
(Meeting coordinator)

Additional visitors to the meeting:

Betty Autut (CBC North)
Joseph Curley (High
school student)
Bert Dean (NTI Wildlife)
Jose Kusugak (KIA
President)
Patrick Tagoon (KIA
Executive Director)

Acknowledgements



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Questions or comments about this report?

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