

Atautchikkun Iłitchisuktuta **Coming Together to Learn**

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Project Objectives

- Build and strengthen the relationships necessary to ethically and meaningfully engage western and Indigenous scientists fully in collaborative research to holistically understand Arctic change.
- Develop a mutually respectful process for co-creating research questions and conceptual model that will guide and form the centerpiece of a grant proposal.
- Provide a safe space for mutual learning through the inclusion and mentorship of Indigenous youth as the next generation of scientists and community leaders.



Team meeting in Fairbanks, February 2020

Keywords: Indigenous science, self-determination, decolonization, Beaufort Sea, Arctic coastal riverine domain

Progress To Date/Future Plans

Our project team and partners are spending our first year of this planning grant building and strengthening existing relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous university scientists, Indigenous Tribes and organizations, international collaborators, and communities in the Beaufort Sea regions of the U.S. and Canadian Arctic (visit to Inuvik and the Inuvialuit Game Council in December 2019). In collaboration with sovereign Tribal governments, we are planning a workshop and learning event, likely to be hosted in Utqiagvik in winter 2021. This workshop will center on indigenizing and decolonizing approaches in Arctic sciences and practices, and considering how to best collaboratively develop an NNA Track 1 research proposal.

Highlights or Expected Outcomes

This approach sets the stage for building responsible and intentional relationships utilizing both Indigenous and western knowledge and science, co-conceiving how to most appropriately address the Arctic's most pressing questions and needs, and thus providing a roadmap towards the implementation of future research. This framework is intended to serve as a blueprint for developing other Arctic research activities that not only improve science, but work to advance Indigenous self-determination and wellness. Our early dialogues have revealed many tensions in this work that must be addressed, e.g., *"The word "co-production" is squirrely. It feels like knowledge extraction. The goal should be "plan not to plan" until you have the Native community in the room."* We need to change the paradigm on how science happens. There are many examples of scientists taking ownership and design over Native knowledge. Addressing and healing historical and current racial traumas should be central in this work.

NNA Community Collaboration & Advice for Overcoming NNA Project Challenges

The premise of this program has been the topic of considerable discussion among our team. Team members have shared concern and frustration about the framing of the work as *Navigating the New Arctic*. From Indigenous experiences, it feels more like *"the Iñupiat of the Arctic experience the gold rush."* We need to reframe the relationship where the place of power is from the communities. We need to right the relationship. What would it look like to indigenize this? Indigenous solutions should be dictated by the Tribe and community. Indigenous team members see the potential transformation of this kind work, e.g., *"our young people don't have to be subjected to attacks on their psyche."* The discussion of abstract academic or scientific debates: *"should villages continue?"* or *"debate whaling"* are so offensive. We see a key need for Indigenous-led community liaison office for the NNA community. What will the Tribes require of scientists engaged in this initiative?