COMMUNITY RESEARCH COLLABORATION IN THE ARCTIC

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"A major goal of ArcticNet is to engage Inuit organizations, northern communities, universities, research institutes, industry as well as government and international agencies as partners in the scientific process and the steering of the Network."

- ArcticNet, 2005

Climate change adaptation and vulnerability research requires active collaboration with community members and researchers have an obligation to engage the people who are the focus of the research. Arctic communities are already experiencing and adapting to change and need to be parties in the research process. To effectively engage Arctic communities in collaborative research, some essential steps need to be followed: Initiating community, regional and national contact, working with communities to develop research proposals, early and ongoing communication, identifying and implementing opportunities for local involvement, and dissemination of results. This poster draws on the experiences of researchers in ArcticNet 4.2 together with the expertise of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), Inuvialuit Joint Secretariat (IJS) and community partners to outline steps that are important for successful community collaborative research.

Initiate Contact

- Talk to Inuit representatives about project ideas and development
- Engage the ArcticNet Inuit Research Advisors (IRA) and ITK

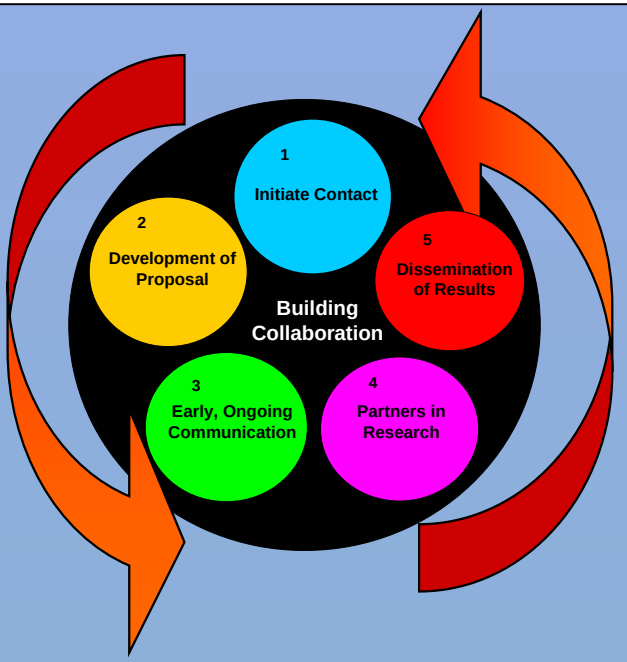
Ulukhaktok (Holman), NWT: Early contact was initiated with ITK, Inuvialuit Joint Secretariat, and Inuvialuit Game Council to discuss research opportunities. Early communication with Ulukhaktok Hunters and Trappers Committee (HTC) made it possible to integrate and address community concerns in the research proposal.

Development of Proposal

- Work with communities and representatives to identify community issues
- Establish communication plans
- Identify training opportunities

Nunavut: Preliminary community visits, a week and a half each, were arranged to Cape Dorset, Igloolik, and Pangnirtung. These enabled meetings with various community organizations to propose a sea ice project, to answer questions, to refine the project according to community priorities, and to plan appropriate field work timing and duration.

Ulukhaktok (Holman), NWT: During a preliminary community visit, community members identified the need to have a local interpreter present during interviews to facilitate communication in Inuinnaqtun. Opportunities to train young high school graduates in research were also identified.



Early, Ongoing Communication

- Keep the community involved and informed throughout the whole research process
- Identify work plans with the community that are respectful of community culture and values.
- Begin training local peoples

Arctic Bay, Nunavut: Discussions with community members revealed that the best time for the research would be in early summer before people leave to go to their summer hunting camps.

Nunavut: Bilingual trip summaries and interim reports were provided to community organizations as well as individuals who had participated in field research between each field work trip to Cape Dorset, Igloolik, and Pangnirtung. Research approaches were refined based on local feedback, to better reflect community culture and current events.

Dissemination of Results

- Provide feedback time for the community to look at the results and comment on the findings.
- Translate and back translate material
- Maintain ongoing communication with the community

Arctic Bay, Nunavut: Local researcher Mishak Allurut collaborated with project 4.2 team members and ITK to develop appropriate dissemination media. A bilingual presentation, radio show and leaflet were co-developed. These media were further refined with community members during the community dissemination trip.

Partners in Research

- Involve local peoples in carrying out the research process.
- Work with an interpreter to communicate in the local language and produce multi-lingual materials.

Ulukhaktok (Holman), NWT: Local researchers Robby Inuktalik and Fred Kataoyak helped plan and conduct interviews and collect community data. Interpreter Annie Goose conducted interviews in Inuinnaqtun and provided important guidance for communicating with local peoples.

Nunavut: Interpreters were highly involved as research assistants, translators, community liaisons, and guides. Respected Inuit elders and hunters were employed to refine and verify Inuktitut terminology and linkages independently after the field work was complete. This will ensure higher accuracy of results, and more meaningful presentations within the community context

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