

SCOPING POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPING NORTHERN INSTITUTIONAL POLICY CAPACITY: THE 2009 NORTHERN GOVERNANCE POLICY RESEARCH CONFERENCE

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ABSTRACT

Changes in the North's institutional development — the breadth and scope of the governance responsibilities of public and Indigenous governments — have surpassed Canada's outdated policy approach to Northern development. Politically, Indigenous peoples have moved from an era of recognition-seeking to an era of political agency *vis à vis* Canada. They have governments with significant responsibilities, authority, and economic and political capital. Territorial governments have also undergone an era of significant political development which is currently undercut by a federal hold on major elements of economic and political decision-making. However, this conference focused on two elements of overcoming the problem of Northern governments' being hamstrung by ongoing colonial federal control: the potential for Northern research to contribute to more effective Northern governance and potential ways to promote Northern institutional policy capacity.

THE PROBLEM: PRACTICAL, THEORETICAL — CORE AND PERIPHERY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

In recent years there has been a literal explosion of two competing literatures: a lament for the implications of climate change in the North both for ways of life of Northern peoples and the rest of humanity (Watt-Cloutier,

2006; 2007); and a literature of the geopolitical implications of a more accessible, resource-rich North (Byers, 2005; Young, 2005; Zellen, 2009). Arctic sovereignty has risen to the top of political concerns both nationally and internationally. Arctic science — mapping geological resources and projecting infrastructure needs — has benefited from a funding landslide (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada [INAC], 2007, Arctic Net, 2010).

The Northern Governance Policy Research Conference acknowledged that whatever happens — climate change, resource exploitation, a dwindling population of caribou — Northern governments need to manage and mitigate changes, and meaningfully involve rights holders, citizens, and economic players in decision making and impact management. For that, institutional capacity is critical. The conference was an opportunity for those working in and with Northern governments to take stock of our situation, frame an initial analysis, and make recommendations to policy makers about positioning governance institutions to engage effectively with future needs.

There are two main forms of government in the Canadian North: public governments, which are Canada and the territorial governments (Northwest Territories, Yukon, Nunavut), and Indigenous governments which are recognized through land claim and/or self-government agreements negotiated between Canada, territorial governments, and Indigenous peoples. Indigenous governments' distinguishing features include representing collective Aboriginal rights and benefits; as a result, they are significant political and economic players in Northern governance and development. Collective Aboriginal rights and benefits include land ownership, a say in resource management of natural resources, and the economic spin-offs resulting from cash components of land claim agreements that have promoted significant economic development initiatives benefiting both Northern and national economies.

To a large extent, implementing and developing the capacity of Indigenous governments requires that those governments engage in projects that promote their independent policy priorities, and policy projects for which funding is available. Those two types of projects may take research efforts in different directions. The latter category may require that Indigenous governments focus on policy directions that reflect priorities of funding sources such as INAC (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada). In this sense, public government departments such as INAC, having taxpayer funding to distribute, can determine the policy focus of Indigenous govern-

ments. Indigenous governments without independent sources of funding for research and policy development are forced to concentrate their efforts on areas of importance to other governments, building capacity by virtue of the funding available.

For example, project-based funding made available by INAC is generally dedicated to projects allowing Indigenous government participation in federal initiatives affecting Indigenous rights (e.g., mine remediation within a land claim settlement area, negotiating a self-government agreement) or related to other Indigenous-focused initiatives (e.g., Health Canada [formerly Aboriginal Healing Foundation] funding for addressing residential school impacts). Indigenous governments are, in that sense, essential for Canada to implement core policies of its Northern Affairs mandate, such as governance and economic development. However, the preference for project-based, rather than staff-based, approach to funding makes it difficult for Indigenous governments to develop a stable complement of human or institutional resources over time. The result is a “consultant culture” within Indigenous governance institutions, where consultants are called in for short-term contracts, almost always without developing capacity within the community. This does nothing to develop a robust cadre of Indigenous professionals, and further solidifies the position of Indian and Northern Affairs in Northern governance policy making.

Levels of funding, and perhaps more importantly, the financial administration of INAC-based funding programs to Indigenous governments are issues that have come under increasing criticism in recent years, most notably by the Canadian Auditor General. In a recent report (Auditor General of Canada, 2010) she noted that for some programs — for example, negotiation of self-government agreements — INAC often does not provide funding until well into the fiscal year. This means that Indigenous governments either have to financially “carry” their negotiating teams, knowing that there will be no reimbursement for interest and bank charges; or, they are forced to reduce staff and slow progress to a standstill until INAC can provide an assurance that funding will be available for that fiscal year. The Auditor General has noted a similar situation with land claim implementation more generally, where institutions established through land claims are not given the resources to discharge their legal obligations and responsibilities (Auditor General of Canada, 2010). The Auditor General’s impartial findings reveal a culture of internal, bureaucratic procedure taking primacy over the needs and realities of the department’s clients.

Continuing along this spectrum, INAC has developed various funding programs for INAC-determined policy priorities about how Indigenous governments should develop themselves. Indigenous governments are invited to submit funding proposals for set amounts of funding that meet INAC-determined criteria. Should Indigenous governments submit acceptable proposals, they are informed of the funding level they will receive and how they must account for expenditures. Generally, Indigenous governments are also required to submit a report on the initiative which may include whatever is produced. Small amounts of funding generate a huge amount of accounting and auditing work for staff, which also promotes one-time, consultant based projects that are likely to develop little or no institutional capacity.

Policy discussions are often framed by the federal government, leaving understaffed Indigenous governments in a situation where they have to respond to this framing without staff, resources, or capacity. An excellent example of this is the recent McCrank Report (2008), reviewing the northern regulatory system, which led to the unilateral announcement that the former mayor of Hay River, John Pollard, will negotiate the complete overhaul of this system in the next nine months. This overhaul affects land claim and self-government agreements (jointly and separately negotiated over a period of 15–30 years each), and all the comanagement boards in the North. At this time, there is no corresponding announcement for funds to support Indigenous government engagement in this process.

A FIRST STEP TO CHANGE

The conference brought together an emerging resource of northern researchers to discuss how to connect effective research in the service of policy for Indigenous and community organizations. Specifically, its goals were to:

1. empower and encourage resident northern researchers who serve as researchers and consultants to burgeoning Indigenous and community organizations;
2. network researchers, decision makers, and Aboriginal rights agreement negotiators from across the NWT who have responsibility for making decisions based on information generated by community-based research;
3. discuss how research projects and their results contribute to building the knowledge and capacity necessary to assist in community development, and for negotiating or implementing land claims and self government; and,

4. make recommendations to governments and funders about support and promotion of community-based research that responds to the needs and priorities of communities rather than priorities of governments, universities, or funding bodies.

Outside of the management of natural resources, land claim and self government agreements have not envisioned Indigenous research and policy development capacity as a key need for effective policy making. There are rarely funded staff positions within Indigenous and community organizations that undertake the kind of stable and long-term focused research that is currently feasible in federal and territorial government departments. Indigenous governments, often overwhelmed by the administration and delivery of services, are unable to create the space or funds to determine their own research agenda. When funding is available, it is tailored to the research priorities of the funders. Often Indigenous governments must target their research to meet funders' research agendas that may not align with their own research or policy needs. This project-to-project approach, that may see multiple researchers move through a community in isolation of each other, builds neither capacity nor a strategic framework for research and policy within communities and their organizations. Researchers who work with Indigenous governments on a long-term basis are often challenged to work on broad issues, such as challenges of mineral policy or research on Child and Family Services. In the climate of consultancy, researchers rarely collaborate, and even more rarely publish findings, though theirs is often unique community-based policy research.

THE SCOPING – STUDIES AND DISCUSSIONS, PRECONFERENCE SURVEY

Each year, northern-themed national conferences and events are held in southern Canada, such as the Institute for Research on Public Policy's *2007 Art of the State Conference: Northern Exposure*; Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies annual Student Conferences; or special theme days or workshops held at northern studies institutes such as Arctic Research Days sponsored by the Canadian Circumpolar Institute at the University of Alberta. Governments, or government and industry-sponsored research projects also regularly hold conferences, such as INAC-sponsored *Northern Contaminants Program* (Jensen et al., 1997) conferences, or special projects such as the *West Kitikmeot Slave Study* (WKSS, 2001)

events. International conferences focusing on Arctic regions' research are held regularly, such as the biannual Northern Research Forum, and the International Arctic Social Sciences Association meetings. Generally, these northern-focused conferences and meetings emphasize narrow subject areas (contaminants research, resource management research) (Berkes et al., 2005) or are national or circumpolar in scope. They also are convened by the federal or territorial governments in accordance with government research priorities, or by university-based organizations showcasing research funded by, and therefore prioritized by, national or university-based funding sources. Occasionally organizations such as the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee (CARC) or the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation will convene conferences or policy forums. Notably, the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation has initiated subject-specific northern policy *fora* that are national in scope (Hodge et al. 2007). Such events are also both national in scope and galvanized by specific issues (Hodge et al. 2007, CARC 1988).

There are no universities or policy research organizations based in the North, nor northern-based networks of resident northern researchers. Until the SSHRC special call for funding proposals that funded this conference, there have been no funding opportunities for an interdisciplinary research conference convened by and for resident Northwest Territories researchers, who work, not in government or industry, but primarily for land claim, self government, and Indigenous community organizations. The impacts and extent of the lack of access of northern nongovernment organizations and researchers to necessary supports for developing northern policy research capacity has been documented by a study sponsored by the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation (Abele, 2006), which notes that:

Almost all northern non-governmental policy research is done by southern researchers under the auspices of southern universities and other institutions. Such institutional frameworks are not well-positioned to accommodate unique northern interests and sensibilities, including the central role of traditional Indigenous knowledge. (Abele, 2006, p. 4).

The same report's first recommendation is: "there is a need to enhance northern-based policy research capacity." (Abele, 2006, p. 6). Indeed, until recently, the trend toward university-based researchers conducting non-governmental research has been dominant.

The negotiation and implementation of land claim and self-government agreements, together with increasing attention being paid to impacts of social change and resource development, has resulted in a growing population

of resident researchers holding higher degrees from both Canadian and foreign institutions, whose skills are in demand for the conduct of long-term field-based research to support governance policy development and decision making. Without a university or university-accredited policy research organization in the NWT, resident researchers must seek affiliations with southern-based institutions to access funding from national research funding bodies, deepening the dependence on southern universities for research opportunities without furthering research network development that might enhance the NWT's northern-based policy research capacity. These researchers have no forum to discuss the issues, no infrastructure to support their work, and very little opportunity to share research findings.

Therefore, the conference brought northern researchers together for the first time to discuss:

1. how to harness research skills and networks to serve Indigenous governments and organizations;
2. how effective research and policy making efforts can be shared among these networks, and
3. what infrastructure, support, and funding is needed in order to promote effective research in support of strong northern policy making.

Prior to the conference, approximately 10% of conference participants participated in a survey to identify key issues and concerns that would form the basis of identification of recommendations at the conference. Participants emphasized four main areas. First, there is a basic lack of understanding about what policy is, how it is developed, and how it can be relevant to a government. Second, there are few resources for policy making and translation of research results into policy option. Without staff positions, time, or training, there is little capacity to do solid policy work. Third, policy development is often done by the regional, territorial and national agencies, so that Indigenous governments are responding to potential policy without having the time to design policy relevant research on their own. Finally, decision makers and the decision process do not always use the results of indigenous policy work. Organizations' research findings do not have a "voice": a recognized formal mechanism to inform governments and policy makers of the direction that should be taken. The NWT Social Agenda initiative, for example, was a promising start for social policy change, but without political support was not sustainable.

THE CONFERENCE – PARTICIPANTS, PAPERS, THEMES, AND OUTCOMES

The conference was held November 2–6 in Yellowknife. Beginning with a “Northern movie night” featuring both professional films and a youth research project centred on digital storytelling methods, the conference itself was composed of a series of participant workshops and presentation panels. The participant workshop component provided the opportunity for participants to develop recommendations to governments and funders to assist them in formulating policy conducive to building governance research capacity in the North. There were a series of four presentation panels per day, each consisting of 3–5 presentations focusing on different aspects of governance policy research. Each panel was allotted 1.5 hours. Panels included:

- research for new governing arrangements;
- research and wellness;
- research, story, and knowledge development;
- emerging Northern scholars;
- research for implementing new governance arrangements;
- challenges and success: research in Northern and Indigenous communities for university faculty;
- translating research into decision options: theory and reality; and,
- environmental and economic research.

These research themes were based on the paper submissions received. As abstracts were reviewed and accepted, theme areas were identified by the organizing committee and used as the basis for grouping presentations. It was clear that most of the research being conducted by Indigenous governments is directly related to the needs of Indigenous organizations. Most abstracts received were from researchers working with Indigenous organizations. Researchers were encouraged to submit abstracts which would include a community or Indigenous participant in the presentation of the research. Perhaps tellingly, there were no abstracts submitted in natural science fields. Abstracts submitted on research topics such as climate change and resource management were few. Those accepted were anthropological, where researchers had worked with communities in conducting fieldwork.

The third day of the conference was devoted to workshops, and ended with a plenary session reviewing a series of recommendations from

an Elders workshop which had run concurrent to the conference proper. Workshops were concurrent and focused on the following topics:

- oil and gas development;
- mining policy for Indigenous governments;
- working-level intergovernmental relations;
- Sahtu Elders knowledge workshop;
- stories, governance, and the Deline Knowledge Project;
- drafting effective policy instruments;
- research agenda: building best practices in a regulatory environment;
- research the Indigenous way;
- northern youth researchers; and,
- community governance and abandoned mines.

The workshop day allowed organizations, and communities of individuals (e.g., youth, Elders), to work together to discuss their experiences in specific areas, or talk about some of the issues and challenges they commonly face. Apart from social events, this was also an opportunity for participants to network and make connections that might not easily occur. For example, the mining and communities workshop allowed representatives of communities from different regions to discuss their experiences working with different mining companies on similar projects. The Research the Indigenous way workshop allowed Indigenous community members and Elders from different regions to share experiences and best practices, and academic researchers to seek advice on conducting research.

In addition to these workshops and panels, each day participants discussed conference recommendations in facilitated small groups. On the workshop day, conference recommendations were presented to participants, and feedback on the recommendations was opened up via a web-based distribution format to seek refinement. During the conference, panels and workshops were augmented by lunch-time keynote speakers, which included eminent academics, politicians, and Indigenous researchers.

The conference was fully subscribed, reaching its 150 person registration limit, with various “drop-in” attendees showing up for specific sessions. An interesting development was that leaders from every Indigenous government in the Northwest Territories dropped in at different times. For organizers, this was not a surprise: a number of the attendees and those involved in organizing the conference were well respected senior policymakers and

advisors to Indigenous organizations. The presence at and support for the conference by senior advisors created the circumstances where leaders were likely to stop in to network and sit in on panel sessions and presentations of interest to decision makers.

A notable aspect characterizing the conference content was that there were several panels where all presenters were Indigenous researchers currently working in Indigenous organizations in the North, conducting research as the basis for decision making in Indigenous governments. This underscored the fact that institutional and human capacity of a caliber on par with that in government and universities exists in the North. The challenge is providing enough stable funding to foster the growth of the pool of expertise and skill within the North.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS – CONFERENCE TO ACTION

The conference participants, through a series of three 45 minute small group discussion periods, came up with a number of suggestions and issues which were distilled into ten main recommendations. The recommendations were grouped in four theme areas: (1) building research and policy capacity; (2) development of research and policy networks; (3) provision of education and training; and, (4) improving research methodologies. The ten recommendations appear in Appendix A.

Within these themes, issues underlying recommendations were identified and solutions proposed. For the first theme, building research and policy capacity, participants identified the need for funding to promote long-term and stable research and policy capacity within Northern organizations as a main challenge. As discussed in previous sections of this paper, funding distributions premised on government fiscal years, tied to government research and policy priorities, and project rather than staff-based in nature are highly problematic to northern organizations. Such funding approaches actively promote a consulting culture and undermine attempts to build stable community capacity in the areas of research and policy development. As a result, recommendations included establishing a northern funding foundation; and, stable long-term funding to Indigenous governments for policy positions.

The second theme area emphasized the need for research and policy networks in the North to provide an intellectual and practical basis for sharing

information and best practices and increasing the quality of research conducted in the North. The lack of a robust research network means that many researchers work in isolation, and many organizations cannot coordinate strategic approaches to the conduct of research in support of governance decision making. Recommendations included establishing a northern research policy advisory committee; establishing intergovernmental policy networks; and, expanding existing research coordination efforts.

The third theme area was consistent with a more basic and broader concern with northern research: the need to provide more relevant education and training to northerners to promote their participation in research, and their ability to critically assess and make use of existing research. Policymaking skills among staff and leadership are essential to harness the information and options developed through northern research efforts. Youth also figured prominently in the discussion: as the inheritors of legacies created through actions as diverse as the signing of land claim agreements and climate change, youth will be making critical decisions in the coming decades. Recommendations under this theme included the establishment of an Arctic University, not just to train policy makers, but to establish a northern-based pool of expertise that would drive research and serve research needs into the coming decades; and the improvement of community-based researcher education and training.

The fourth theme area focused on the need for improving research methods in the North. The conference participants, in their recommendations, noted that: "there is still a need to ensure that research is carried out in a way which optimizes capacity building, assists in community development and which honors local knowledge and customs." There is still much to be done to incorporate local priorities or harness research knowledge and insights to community needs and solving the real world problems of northerners. Specifically, recommendations called for increased accessibility to research results; establishing community-based research protocols; and the establishment of a community-university research ethics board.

Taken together, the overarching theme of the recommendations is increased capacity in the North to give northerners greater control of the research process, and the ability to conduct high quality, governance-relevant research. The recommendations corresponded well with the initial findings of the preconference survey. They also echoed the conclusions drawn with respect to the form and potential effects of developing northern policy capacity (Abele, 2006).

CONCLUSION: A FRAMEWORK FOR GETTING ON WITH IT

Having developed recommendations, the next task for the organizing committee was to consider how to put the recommendations into action effectively and reasonably. The primary audience for the recommendations is Indigenous and public governments and their associated funding agencies. We needed to consider which governments could function as supporters and implementers of such recommendations. More thinking and research was needed to determine what instruments and political platforms could advance the recommendations in meaningful ways. To date, progress has been made in seeking and incorporating feedback from conference delegates.

It is clear more intergovernmental work is needed to move this type of agenda forward. Since the conference, at least three Indigenous governments in the NWT (Inuvialuit, Tłı̄chǫ, and Deline) have begun discussing common concerns and potential solutions for more effective intergovernmental relations through a joint policy development project. The representatives involved in the project have found that each are at different stages of progress in specific areas of governance (such as health or education, for example). The diversity of experiences of each with respect to the intergovernmental relations underpinning policy development efforts have been informative for potential solutions and best practices both for governance and intergovernmental relations. The group has concluded that mechanisms need to be built for strong intergovernmental policy engagement (Irlbacher-Fox, 2010). Further, funds need to be available in the North, without programmatic focus, so that they can be targeted to staffing policy positions. This is a policy discussion that can be aired publicly, but ultimately will need to be funded within each administration, be it in health, education, social services, or other areas of governance.

We are currently working toward this torch being taken up in the short term by circulating both the recommendations and an analysis of potential options for their implementation. This could be done by:

1. making intergovernmental mechanisms a specific agenda item for northern leaders' forum discussions generally;
2. bringing these policy recommendations to the attention of funding bodies, and key government departments with responsibility for funding and governance development in the North;

3. promoting continuing discussions between leaders of the newly existing institutions arising from land claims and self government; and,
4. initiating public discussion on potential legislation for recommendation implementation, such as revising the territorial Scientists Act or related legislation to mandate and regulate an increased capacity-building orientation to research in the North and with northern communities.

APPENDIX A: CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

NGPRC DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS¹

A: Building Research and Policy Capacity

The Issues and Challenges

1) We need funding opportunities for long-term, multiyear research, with a priority for First Nations; 2) we want to see changes to the way funding is allocated, as well as the way funding schedules are determined, in order to respect and recognize the many different experts in a community as well as respect the community rhythm. We do not all operate on a fiscal year model and we need funding opportunities to reflect and respect that. We need less bureaucracy to facilitate effective community-based research; and, 3) funding priorities are outdated, so we need to revise the process by which funding is allocated as well as do an evaluation of exactly what the community needs are.

Recommendation #1: Northern² Funding Foundation

We recommend the formation of a Northern Funding Foundation, where funds earmarked for northern research by major funding agencies (i.e., SSHRC) are redirected. This Foundation could be a component of the overall role of the Aurora Research Institute. Funds would be distributed to support community research initiatives. As well, the Foundation would recognize and fund community researchers (therefore not always needing a university-affiliated researcher on a project). Another role of the Foundation would be to help northern-based researchers navigate bureaucracy and access funding. The Foundation would make community-based research a requirement. A Northern Funding Foundation would also challenge assumptions about who is “expert” by recognizing the contribution/expertise of Elders and Indigenous research experts.

Recommendation #2: Community-based Indigenous Governments in the NWT Need Research Capacity

Delegates of the NGPRC recommend to all parties involved in negotiating and implementing comprehensive land claim and self-government agree-

1. As we compiled the priority areas/actions developed by the discussion groups, it became clear that there are actually four key areas. Harnessing new technologies was seen as a priority area that could inform the other four – full access to new technologies (i.e., Internet) for all communities is necessary to support all the actions outlined below by strengthening capacity and ensuring increased community involvement.
2. We need to be clear on what North means in this case. NT? NT/Nunavut/Yukon?

ments to provide adequate and stable, long-term funding for research capacity within regional aboriginal organizations. Creation of permanent research positions within Aboriginal organizations and Internal research units focusing on priority areas of research are required (e.g. Makivik Corp/Tłı̄chq Government).

B: Priority Area: Development of Research and Policy Networks

The Issues and Challenges

We need northern networks and advisory bodies to ensure we are sharing our work and collectively identifying our research priorities and policy requirements. This will help us in identifying priority areas for research and policy making, specifically with respect to the mandates and needs of Indigenous community-based organizations.

Recommendation #3: Develop a Northern Research Policy Advisory Committee³

It is recommended that a Northern Research Policy Advisory Committee be created to advise funding bodies (e.g., Northern Funding Foundation) regarding priority areas for research and policy in the North. The Committee would largely comprise representatives of regional aboriginal government bodies, boards, and research organizations to identify research and policy development priorities. Canada and GNWT should also participate in some capacity. The Committee should also advise external agencies regarding education and training initiatives required in their regions to ensure beneficiaries are engaged in research and policy development.

Recommendation #4: Intergovernmental Policy Networks

It is recommended that a network be developed for face-to-face sharing opportunities between GNWT and Aboriginal governments with respect to policy development, policy reviews, etc. These networks would:

- promote community-government policy coordination;
- encourage the development of systems for aligning government policies with community needs;
- develop new structures for improved coordination between different policy and research actors; and,
- promote mutual mentoring needed between governments (community, territorial, federal, Aboriginal) on policy needs and development.

3. This was expanded on by the facilitation team. We took some liberties here re: linkage to Foundation (see rec #1) and a possible governance model.

While this network would likely not become formalized, it could be agreed that the parties would meet annually to undertake a set of workshops or a working conference. This network would be extremely relevant for those groups involved in self-government negotiations/implementation with the GNWT.⁴

Recommendation #5: Expand Existing Research Coordination Frameworks

It is recommended that we continue to expand research coordination (taking the Institute of Circumpolar Health Research as an example of “best practices”) between communities and university-based researchers to ensure community research priorities are heard.

C: Provision of Education and Training

The Issues and Challenges

Organizations need resources to ensure policy maker skills are developed, and methods are developed for leaders to consider policy options and their potential implications for decision making. In particular, youth are not being trained in policy research, possibly leading to a generation gap.

Recommendation #6: An Arctic University

We would like to see the concept of an Arctic University take flight as soon as possible and call upon parties involved in existing discussions engage with northern based researchers, knowledge holders, and policy makers, as well as existing non-government organizations and initiatives (i.e., ICHR, Dechinta) to start working with us to make an Arctic University a reality. We envision such an institution to take on the role of undergraduate and graduate education, but also be a site for policy development (i.e., “think tank”). As a conference group, we would like to make the collective call for increased funds and other support to coordinate different efforts that are already underway (i.e., ICHR, ARI, Dechinta) in pursuit of increased post-secondary and research infrastructure in the North.

Recommendation #7: Community-based Researcher Education and Training

Mentoring and training programs for researchers: mentoring must be recognized as central to learning. We call for the development of community programs that would support Elder-youth-research relationships. We also

4.

call for Elder advisory committees for community research. We also call for community policy workshops: develop a network for community-based education in policy and research

D: Priority Areas: Improving Research Methodologies

The Issues and Challenges

Southern researchers are coming to the North in larger numbers. In the past, northerners in small communities have been the subject of scientific inquiry that has not always directly benefited them, has not always incorporated their ways of knowing or been aligned with community goals for development or problem-solving. Most researchers working in the North today are working alongside community members and in concert with community leadership to achieve meaningful outcomes that directly benefit communities, however, there is still a need to ensure that research is carried out in a way which optimizes capacity building, assists in community development and which honours local knowledge and customs.

Recommendation #8: Making Research Accessible to Communities

It is recommended that research be conducted with the aim to develop more effective tools that will improve research accessibility: 1) possible outcomes of this research could be the development of an open access research database.

Recommendation #9: Promoting Community-based Research Protocols

It is recommended that research protocols/guidelines for community-based research be developed that can be adapted by individual communities. These protocols should aim to:

1. identify research needs;
2. encourage incorporation of local knowledge;
3. provide guidance on the application of TK;
4. implement community support systems to help communities deal with research problems that arise;
5. outline translation requirements for research reporting, i.e. radio and consultations with communities in their own language
6. specify ownership of data/knowledge by community;
7. identify a code of ethics for individual researchers, acknowledged and enforced by the universities they are affiliated with, and,

8. Enforce complete return of information to the community – makes plain language summary a requirement for all research in the North;

Recommendation #10: University-Community Ethics Review Board

We recommend that ACUNS (the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies) and SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council) consider an ethics review system that better coordinates university and community ethical considerations.

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