
IPS Update



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The cost of co-operation

Nearly a year ago, Arctic indigenous peoples gathered with other indigenous peoples from around the world in South Africa. They spent three days in the homeland of the San people, discussing the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which was to take place in Johannesburg the following week. One of the topics of discussion was co-operation with the governments of Arctic states through the Arctic Council.

For many indigenous peoples around the world, the co-operation seen between states and indigenous peoples in the Arctic Council stands out, as an example of what could be possible. Other indigenous peoples face governments that either pay little attention to their issues, or are actively hostile. The Permanent Participants (the six indigenous peoples' organisations represented at the Arctic Council) focused on the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) as an example of the kind of co-operative work being carried out at the council. There was great interest in the combination of indigenous and scientific knowledge.

The message of co-operation was continued at the World Summit, including at events sponsored by the Indigenous Peoples Caucus and another by the Arctic Council and the Northern Forum. With the support of several Arctic Council states, the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat produced a special brochure about Arctic Indigenous Peoples, climate change and sustainable development. Thousands of copies were distributed to delegates and the media.

A year later, work is proceeding on the policies that should be recommended in the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment. This is one of the most important parts of the assessment. It will build on the evidence of climate change in the Arctic, and recommend what steps Arctic governments and peoples should take. All six Permanent Participant organisations are represented on the group writing the policy recommendations. This is their opportunity to contribute their unique experiences and viewpoints, based on thousands of years of living in the Arctic.

However, this contribution is not as large as it could be, simply because the Permanent Participants are doing this

work without enough financial support. When the drafting team membership was decided upon, there was no discussion of how indigenous participants, working as volunteers and living across the Arctic would cover their costs.

The importance of indigenous participation was highlighted this spring, when the chairs of two Arctic Council working groups and the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat Board sent a joint letter to the Arctic states requesting funding. Canada immediately offered additional support. Other countries indicated they would study the request. Several have said that the funding they already provide for indigenous participation should be used to cover some of the additional costs to be incurred in the policy drafting work.

This is all part of a broader discussion about how to fund indigenous participation in the Arctic Council. There is a trail of paper going back to 1996 and the founding of the Council on this topic. Over the years a number of countries have made contributions to enable indigenous peoples to be active, and that support is appreciated.

Continues...

In this Issue

- | | |
|----|---|
| 2 | A Foreign Land – Relocations of Arctic Indigenous Peoples |
| 2 | The Thule case |
| 3 | The Finnmark Act Proposal |
| 4 | Arctic Council Permanent Participants: The Gwich'in Council international |
| 7 | Old Tongues Stay Alive |
| 9 | Book Review: "Movt áigi lea rievdan" |
| 10 | Schedule of Events |

However, as the work of the Arctic Council becomes more complex, and requests for indigenous peoples' involvement increase, the question of *consistent* funding becomes more important. Indigenous peoples want to be involved in all aspects of the council's work. Arctic states say they welcome that involvement. But the indigenous organisations do not have the resources of states, and that puts at risk their ability to play a meaningful part in the Council's work.

If the Arctic Council is to truly include the perspectives of indigenous peoples, and serve as an example to indigenous peoples and states elsewhere in the world, then there must be a serious discussion about what is needed to support expanding indigenous participation.

jpc



Arctic Flowers

A Foreign Land – Relocations of Arctic Indigenous Peoples

A common experience for Arctic indigenous peoples has been the pain of being uprooted from an ancestral home. When other peoples came to the Arctic, indigenous peoples were often pushed away, either on purpose, or because the newcomers' actions made it difficult to stay.

A good example of people being moved on purpose is the experience of some Inuit families from northern Quebec in Canada. In the summer of 1953, the Canadian government relocated seven families from their homes to places much further north in the Canadian Arctic islands. Those spots became known as Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay. Two years later, another 35 people joined the first settlers.

The Quebec Inuit were told that conditions would be better for them at their new homes, and that they could return to Quebec if things did not work out. There were both seals and musk oxen in their new homes. But these particular Inuit had no history of hunting those species. They had previously eaten water birds, fish, and caribou. One person who was moved, Anna Nungaq, spoke of her experiences in a book, (*Northerners*, by Douglas Holmes). She believes that the new settlers were lied to by the government. "It was very bad

when we came here. We were hungry for our own food, for what we used to eat. What was here was no good."

The newcomers suffered from the colder temperatures and from lack of knowledge of the new land, which led to hunger and depression. It took years for them to be provided with proper housing. Many of the relocated Inuit believe that the real reason that they were taken to the northern islands was to strengthen the claim of Canada to those islands.

For decades, the Inuit simply accepted their situation. Then, in the 1980s, some began to push for an apology, and for some kind of compensation for their treatment. Eventually, the Canadian government agreed to pay the moving expenses and build houses in the northern Quebec community of Inukjuak for those relocated people and their families who wanted to return. This allowed some people to finally return to their original area. But for many it was too late. Either they had died in their new homes, or they believed that they would no longer fit in with their original communities.

In 1996 the Canadian government reached a further agreement with Inuit over the relocation. The government did not exactly apologize for the move, but acknowledged that, "despite good intentions", the relocation caused serious hardship and suffering to those involved. The agreement also provided a trust fund of ten million Canadian dollars to provide economic, cultural and social benefits to the people who had been moved.

The final word on this example of relocation goes to the Canadian Human Rights Commission, a government body set up to investigate abuses of human rights. After studying this example, and many other cases of indigenous peoples being moved by the government, the commission concluded, "The pattern that emerges does not, as a rule, reflect great credit on federal authorities. Aboriginal people were seldom adequately consulted on these moves, and although the decisions themselves were not motivated by malice they frequently had at least as much to do with administrative convenience, or the need to move communities out of the path of mining or hydro developments, as with the welfare of the communities themselves. The results were almost uniformly negative, and their repercussions often persist to this day."

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The Thule Case

In August 1999, the Danish high court ruled that the movement of Greenlandic indigenous people, Inughuit in Thule, by the Danish state was a forced removal. The ruling followed many years of protests by Inughuit, and three years in court. Denmark had repeatedly denied that the movement of Inughuit, to make way for a military base, was a "forced removal".

For many years, Inughuit lived in the northernmost area of Greenland. These nomadic people covered an enormous area,

traveling around hunting the available animals depending on the season. A Danish mission station was established in 1909, and in 1910 Knud Rasmussen established the "Kap York Station Thule". This meant that people settled nearby to be close to the shop and church.

In the 1950's the United States government wanted to establish a military base to be able to reach targets in the former Soviet Union. Within a short time, the Thule Air Base (known as Pituffik by the Inughuit) was established in northwest Greenland. It grew to be bigger than most settlements in Greenland, with space for as many as 10,000 people.

Inughuit lived in a settlement called Uummanaq, next to the Air Base. They had traditionally hunted in the area of the new military base. This was seen as a problem by the Danish authorities, who did not want interaction between the indigenous people and the people at the air base. The military also wanted local people kept away from the base.

In 1953, Inughuit around the Thule base were moved 150 kilometers further north to a newly-established settlement called Qaanaaq. The government called this forced removal "voluntary". It said that Inughuit did not mind being moved, because they got new houses in Qaanaaq, newer and better hunting equipment, and they were settled in a region they knew from their hunting tours.

This view was not shared by the Inughuit themselves. According to the hunters' board in Qaanaaq, the amount of animals taken in the area was reduced after people moved there permanently. It didn't help that some animals, such as foxes, moved into the area of the air base to eat scraps at the dump. Those animals could not be taken by Inughuit hunters because they were denied access to the military zone. This was one obvious effect of the move. There were also less obvious effects. Many Inughuit speak of the difficulties of leaving their home behind, of being forced away from the graves of their ancestors.

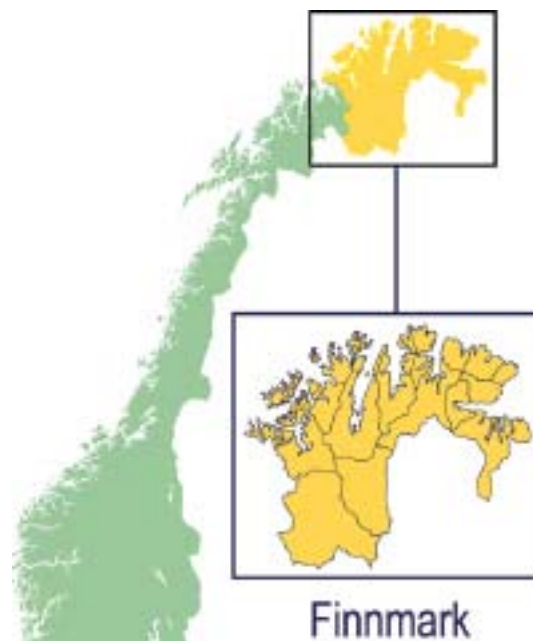
Inughuit have continued to claim the right to hunt in the closed area of the Thule air base. They also demanded some kind of compensation for the forced removal. Following the court judgement, Inughuit got part of what they were asking for. Denmark has had to admit what it had denied for years, that moving Inughuit was a forced removal, and in effect an assault on the rights of the indigenous people. Inughuit received a small amount of compensation; around \$76,900 US as collective compensation, and \$3,845 each for those were eighteen or over at the time of the move, \$2,307 each for those were aged between four and eighteen at the time of the move. Hunters are still denied the right to hunt in the area of the Thule Air Base.

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The Finnmark Act Proposal

The Norwegian section of the Saami Council strongly opposes a proposal from the Norwegian government for new legislation governing the traditional Saami land of Finnmark County. The Finnmark Act was presented on April 4th, 2003. The proposed new act is the outcome of a process started after the building of the Alta river dam in the Saami region of Norway in the early 1980's. The government's plan to construct the dam led to massive protests from the Saami people and their organisations. Following the protests, the government established a Saami Rights Committee to carry out a thorough review of the Saami traditional rights to land, water and natural resources. The Committee finalised its thorough report in 1997.

The Saami are indigenous people in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. They have continuously lived on and used the land of the Fennoscandinavian and Kola peninsulas for longer than recorded history. This gives them certain rights in those areas, including Finnmark County, Norway, which has been more or less used by the Saami alone.



Map from the Saami Parliament's web pages

Despite the report of the Saami Rights Committee, the new Act does not recognise any Saami rights in the region. The government will keep control over the natural resources in the area. This includes avoiding the recognition of Saami rights in the coastal and fjord areas, and Saami rights to mineral resources. The proposed Act does not give the important reindeer industry enough protection, and the government seems to place the responsibility on the so-called "conflict"

between Saami and Norwegians in the area only on the Saami. The Act ignores the rights of the Saami to the extent that it gives them only the same rights as non-indigenous peoples.

With the proposed new Act, the Norwegian government has failed to stick to its part of the agreement of 1981 between Saami leaders and the government. The agreement said that solutions to the issue of land rights in Finnmark should be based on the Saami Rights Committee's report. However, the government brought a totally new model to the table, which is not based on the recommendations followed in the report. The Saami Council says the Act also fails to take into account the individual and collective rights of the Saami that have been recognized both nationally and internationally, by such conventions as the International Labour Organisation's Convention no. 169 and the United Nations Convention on Civil and Political Rights.

Further, this policy is a fundamental breach of the Norwegian government's international position on indigenous issues. On behalf of the indigenous peoples of the world, the Saami Council is disappointed with the signal Norway is sending to other national states. In effect, the government is saying that it is acceptable for states to continue colonising indigenous peoples' lands.

The Norwegian Section of the Saami Council is concerned that the government proposal keeps outside control over natural resources on the Saami traditional lands. Also, the government did not even try to reach an agreement with the Saami on the proposal and did not consult them while drawing up the final version of the act.

In its spring session, the Saami Parliament in Norway called for the government to withdraw the proposal for the Finnmark Act and said that, "Saami rights as individuals and people have to be recognised in accordance with national and international law". It also wants negotiations between the Saami Parliament and the government to take place to reach an agreement on future legislation securing the Saami rights.

The Saami politicians have brought up this recent development of Norwegian policy on indigenous peoples' policy to international bodies such as the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

For more information on the Finnmark Act and the proposal in English, visit the Saami Parliament's web pages: <http://www.samediggi.no/default.asp?selNodeID=313&lang=no>

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Arctic Council Permanent Participants: The Gwich'in Council international

The Arctic Council is the only high-level international forum in which Indigenous peoples' representatives sit at the same table as governments. Called Permanent Participants (PPs), each of these organisations has its own history, concerns and unique voice. Working together as Permanent Participants at the Arctic Council gives northern Indigenous peoples the opportunity to speak directly to the governments of the circumpolar states. Each issue of IPS Update will provide a brief sketch of one of the six Permanent Participants.

The Gwich'in Council international: An Interview with the Chair Joe Linklater

The Gwich'in people have been living, and still live today, in the geographical area of northeast Alaska in the U.S. and in the regions of north Yukon and the Northwest Territories in Canada. According to their own stories and beliefs, the Gwich'in have occupied that area since time immemorial. Academics believe the Gwich'in have been in the area for between ten and twenty thousand years. The Gwich'in life and culture has traditionally been based on the Porcupine Caribou herd, as a main source of food, tools and clothing. Fish and other animals to be found in the area have supplemented this diet. The Gwich'in lived mainly a nomadic lifestyle within the same geographic area up to the 1870's, when the fur traders coming to the area established forts, which were basically trading posts, and became the first settlements in the area. There are approximately 9,000 Gwich'in today.

What is the Gwich'in Council International?

The Gwich'in Council International (GCI) was created to ensure that all the regions of the Gwich'in nation are represented at the Arctic Council. The organization gives the Gwich'in status as one of the six permanent participants at the Arctic Council.

The GCI is an important council for the Gwich'in nation, because it facilitates our involvement in the Arctic Council, and also brings us together to discuss a whole range of other important issues that are not necessarily related to the Arctic Council.

What are the Gwich'in Council International's main priorities?

The Gwich'in Council International has a number of priorities that relate to the environment, youth, culture and tradition.

When we speak about environment we are referring to the protection of the land and the animals. GCI wants to ensure that animal habitat is not destroyed, and that animals do not become extinct or get driven away from their natural territory. We are aware of the need for certain development

to take place on the land, but that is balanced by our concern about development impacts on the land as well as on the livelihood of people in the communities. The goal for GCI is to protect the environment from activities that would destroy the land, and in turn affect the animals that live on the land. We have concerns about climate change since we already know about the impacts climate change is having on the land, animals and people.

In terms of priorities for our youth, GCI recognizes the need to involve our young people in activities that will assist them to continue learning. A priority is to develop international internship programs for Gwich'in youth. Participation in such programs will help the youth to develop work skills that they can bring back to their communities. The knowledge the youth get from international programs will also benefit the GCI as an organization, because it will give the youth the skills and experience they need to become leaders.

Promotion of the Gwich'in culture and tradition is another priority for GCI. We are meeting this priority by developing traditional knowledge projects to educate people about the Gwich'in tradition and culture. Since the language is a strong component of the Gwich'in culture, GCI recognizes the need to encourage the younger generation to learn Gwich'in if we are to retain the language. One of the priorities of the traditional knowledge project would be to have the Gwich'in language taught in the school system. If we are to retain our language, we must promote its use on a daily basis in the workplace, the home, and community. When this starts to happen naturally then we will see a definite retention of the Gwich'in language.

GCI recognizes there are still many issues under housing and education that need to be addressed. Participation in the Arctic Council meetings will allow us to assist in the development of policy in these areas and we hope that any change in these areas will positively affect the Gwich'in. We also recognize the ongoing struggle Gwich'in face in terms of having control over their environment so they could maintain normal living situations in their communities. These are just some of the priorities that come to mind and I'm sure more will be identified during our formal meetings.

How is the Gwich'in Council International organised?

The Gwich'in Council International has board members from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Alaska. There are two members from the Northwest Territories, two from the Yukon and four from Alaska.

Each region chooses its members by asking for interested people to put their names forward. The chairmanship of GCI rotates between the Yukon and Northwest Territories every two years, and each region determines who the Chairperson will be. The vice chair is always from Alaska.

GCI Board Members hold our meetings on the telephone, since our funds are limited and it would be costly to bring all our members together throughout the year. The GCI meets formally once every two years when the chairmanship is

being transferred from one region to another. During this meeting we will discuss our accomplishments, new priorities and other ongoing work from the previous two years.

Since the Arctic Council has several working groups and committees it is the goal of GCI to choose different representatives from the three regions. Over the years this has been one of the big challenges for GCI, due to all the other issues requiring work at the community, regional, territorial, national and international levels. GCI has recently had four new board members from Alaska appointed, which provides us with the opportunity to delegate some work. This makes the workload more feasible since we now have specific members following specific files.



Chief Joe Linklater
© "Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation"

Does the Gwich'in Council International have a permanent secretariat?

The plan is to establish a secretariat in Old Crow, Yukon that will be housed within the Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation office. Presently we have one person based in Whitehorse, Yukon who manages the GCI file and carries out the secretariat functions.

This individual is responsible for the distribution of all material relating to the work of the Arctic Council and its working groups, coordination of all GCI activities as they relate to the Arctic Council, and proposal writing to access project funds.

After March 2004 the Gwich'in in the Northwest Territories will manage the file. It will be up to the Board Members there to determine where the secretariat will be housed.

How is the Gwich'in Council International funded?

As permanent participants the GCI receives funding from the Canadian Government to participate Arctic Council activities. Some funding is received from the U.S., through the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat, to support Gwich'in that are

U.S. citizens. To supplement that, the GCI applies for money to take part in specific projects.

What is the Gwich'in Council International's relationship to other organisations working on Gwich'in issues?

In each of the three regions, the Gwich'in belong to several coalitions and they have relationships in particular with all the first nations surrounding the Gwich'in nation. Some of them are business-type relationships; some are to work on common issues. The Gwich'in in the Yukon and Northwest Territories also have a strong working relationship with the Canadian and Territorial Governments in the Yukon and Northwest Territories

Does the Gwich'in Council International cooperate with any of the other Permanent Participants?

Of the Permanent Participants, it is natural to have closest contact with the Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC), as some of their members and some of our members are part of the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) in the Yukon and the Dene Nation in the Northwest Territories. The contact is mainly through their head office in Whitehorse, Yukon, which is on an informal basis, through communication and information sharing on similar issues that affect the Gwich'in or Arctic Athabaskan membership.

How would you describe your work with the Arctic Council?

There are very committed people in the Arctic Council and because of that, the GCI has the potential to play an important role internationally as it becomes more and more established over the years. The issues that the Arctic Council deals with can have environmental, social and economic impacts on the people who live in the Circumpolar North. I would describe our work with the Arctic Council as positive. GCI is given an opportunity to affect change at the international level and we know any change at this level will eventually filter into our communities. Our work at the Arctic Council prepares us for these changes as we are provided with awareness about the changes so we are then not overwhelmed when these changes happen.

The recognition of the indigenous peoples and the role that they play is also an important aspect of the Council. I would like to take this opportunity to commend Canada for its leadership role in recognising the role of indigenous peoples, and the support the Canadian government has given to permanent participant organisations based in Canada. Participation in the Arctic Council meetings and its working groups has been a real learning experience for a lot of the other countries. I have seen changes and shifts in attitudes towards indigenous peoples and towards the impacts that global warming has had in the circumpolar north.

The Arctic Council has given indigenous peoples an opportunity to actively participate in policy changes that will affect those of us who choose to live in the Arctic. There is a genuine recognition of the role indigenous peoples can play at the Arctic Council meetings. As indigenous peoples we bring to the table a vast amount of valuable knowledge and we are

able to contribute effectively to the discussions on the environment, health, education and social impacts since we are the people who live in the ever-changing circumpolar north. Our input needs to be valued because we are going to be the people who are always there, we watch and see the changes in our regions on a daily basis and we know about impacts on our lifestyles because we live with these impacts on an ongoing basis. The challenge, however, will be to find sufficient human and financial resources to cover all the work of the Council and its working committees the GCI is invited to participate in. How this challenge is met, however, will depend on the Member States and Permanent Participants working together to come up with a plan to supply enough financial and human resources to allow us all to be effective participants in the relevant working committees.

More about the Gwich'in nations:

<http://www.oldcrow.yk.net>

<http://www.catg.org>

<http://www.gwichin.nt.ca>

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*The logo is the Vuntut Gwitchin Logo
© "Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation"*

IPS is moving

The week 42, October 13-17, IPS will be packing and closing down the office, to be able to re-open in the new office space:
Strandgaden, Copenhagen, Denmark

IPS will be settled in the new "Nordatlantiske Brygge", which will consist of the Icelandic Embassy in Denmark and the Home Rule Representations of both Greenland and the Faeroe Islands.

The historic building an old warehouse from the 18th century, used by the former Royal Greenland Trade Department, is situated in nice surroundings of Copenhagen Harbour.

More info on: www.bryggen.dk/

Old Tongues Stay Alive

In October 2002, participants at the Arctic Council Ministerial meeting agreed to present an Arctic Human Development Report at the next Ministerial meeting in 2004. Part of this 14-chapter report will focus on language issues.

Language has often been held to be the heart of a culture. In some Arctic indigenous cultures, this heart has been unhealthy for many years. But there are indications that this trend is being stopped, and in some cases, even reversed. What follows is a brief look at some of the Arctic languages, and their state of health.

Saami

When my mother went to school in the forties, she and her schoolmates were not allowed to speak the Saami language - not even in the schoolyard during the breaks. All the teaching was in Norwegian, and many of the kids had difficulty understanding what they were being taught.

When my brother and I went to school in the seventies and eighties, we could choose Saami as a subject or as a second language, which meant speaking Saami for two or three hours a week. However, there was little teaching material available, and hardly any teachers who could teach the language.

In the nineties I was trained as a teacher, and I was able to teach in Saami in all subjects. This shift in the usage of Saami in school has happened in one village over 50 years. I think this village reflects the recent change of status of the Saami language in Norway. The time scale for this shift varies in different Saami areas, some shifts taking place faster and earlier, and some slower and later.

In Sápmi, the traditional land of the Saami people, now known as north Sweden, Norway, Finland and northeast Russia, the Saami language with its different dialects, used to be the majority and natural choice of language for generations, the normal language. When the nation states were established in the 18th and 19th centuries, and the state authorities claimed control of the Saami people, the language started to shift from Saami to the state language. Some Saami associations tried to start a Saami movement in the early 20th century, but the revival of the Saami culture did not really get a kick-start until the 1960's. The language shift from Norwegian to Saami has slowed down a bit since, and in some places turned totally. There are approximately 20, 000 Saami speakers in Norway today.

In Norway, the language is reinforced by a Saami Language Act (of 1989) and a Saami Curriculum (of 1997). This has helped encourage Saami language use for official purposes in the areas where many Saami live.

Now that Saami use has returned to this extent, the questions are how to keep the progress achieved, how to develop further, and how to widen the reach of Saami language use, to Saami living outside of the core areas.

Gwich'in

Across the Arctic from the Saami, in Old Crow, a Vuntut Gwich'in village in Canada's Yukon territory, people also struggle to keep their local language. The Gwich'in language is considered endangered by the Canadian government. There are less than 1,500 speakers of the language, about a quarter of the Gwich'in people. Having recently regained more self government rights, the Gwich'in hope to be able to run their language and education programs according to their own priorities.

The existing curriculum for school is developed in British Columbia. Joe Linklater, Chief of Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation, says the curriculum does not relate well to the Gwich'in culture and conditions in north Yukon. All education and pre-school childcare is currently delivered in English. Chief Linklater believes that Gwich'in children might better learn their language and culture, when they are immersed into it out on the land. The aim is to gradually shift from the current system to one with more local influence.

Taking into consideration that 85 - 95 % of the children in the local school are Gwich'in, the Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation is developing a pilot project in Old Crow called "land based experimental learning", using cultural and language immersion as a teaching method. With a local curriculum, the intention is that the pupils spend most of the time on the land, however, to reflect the reality today some time need to be spent in the classroom as well. Issues like modern technology, international relations and organisation work as well as local community work will most likely be best transferred in a classroom setting. In short, the children should acquire different knowledge in the respective natural environment.

The hope is that the children will gain a lot more than they would do in an academic setting, using the kids' experiences on the land, and relate that back to the academic side of life, Chief Linklater says. The plan is to train teachers to teach using this method, and little by little also teach through the medium of Gwich'in, in this way the wish is to make the local language to be more heard among the Gwich'in.

Inuktitut

The language of the Inuit is Inuktitut. Inuit from throughout their homelands can understand each other, even though there are various dialects and accents. Today Inuktitut is still widely used among the Inuit, however there are arenas where a wider use of the language is desired.

In the Kitikmeot region of Nunavut, Canada, school officials are working toward bilingual schools to maintain the Inuit language. The goal in Nunavut is to make the local language the working languages of the territory. The responsibility lies not only on the local government, but also on the individuals, such as teachers, parents, students and on concerned citizens.

In an article available on the Nunavut government web site, linguists Alexina Kublu and Mick Mallon describe the efforts to make Inuktitut a living language. The dream is that in

hundreds of years, Inuktitut will still be the language of Inuit homes and offices, and the language of expression in literature and music.

The government and education institutions can not save the language alone, Kublu and Mallon say. A crucial factors for the survival of Inuktitut is the language spoken at home. The first signs of a language at risk are if the language is not transmitted naturally between the generations in the homes, or that the children do not use the language when playing, or if they reply in another language. To secure the future of the Inuktitut language, educators play an essential role in developing lessons, teacher training, and teaching Inuktitut as a second language for children and adults who have grown up without the language.

An objective for the Nunavut government is to make Inuktitut the working language of the government. One obstacle to this goal is the need for specialists. These positions are often filled by skilled southerners who do not know Inuktitut. The government is getting around this problem in two ways; by providing basic Inuktitut instruction for non-Inuit employees, and by trying to ensure that Inuktitut-speakers are trained to fill specialist positions in the future.

While there are challenges for the survival of Inuktitut, Kublu and Mallon are optimistic about the future of the language.

Yukon Native Language Center

Teaching children in indigenous languages requires trained teachers who can speak those languages. Finding enough of those teachers, and indigenous language teaching materials for them to use, can be difficult.

The Yukon Native Language Centre (YNLC) is trying to fill those needs for some languages in Canada's Yukon Territory, and in Alaska. Working with the Yukon College in Whitehorse, Canada, the language centre runs various indigenous language programs. They include native language teacher training, community instructor training, literacy training, development of teaching guides and translation and recording sessions of various native languages.

At the native language teacher training, participants representing different languages get together to give each other demonstration lessons, and receive instruction in teaching methods. This is part of a three-year certificate program at the Yukon College.

The centre offers training for community language instructors, who run language instruction programs for children in day-care, in pre-schools, elementary schools and for young adults. In many occasions they also give instructions for adults working in public offices.

The literacy training sessions are carried out in a series of workshops where the "students" together with instructors develop teaching materials at the same time as learning to read and write an indigenous language. To help learn the languages on computers, the students sometimes develop a

writing system that will better match computer keyboards. There is already a Gwich'in online language lesson project available on the centre's web-site.

The YNCL puts a lot of effort into preserving languages that have relatively few speakers left, and manage to integrate teaching methods with language training, and developing teaching material.

Web sties referred to in the article:

Nunavut: <http://www.nunavut.com/culture/english/index.html>

Yukon College: <http://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/ynlc>

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IPS Update

The Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat (IPS) was established in 1994. The main task of IPS is to facilitate the involvement of Arctic Indigenous Peoples' organisations - the Permanent Participants - in the Arctic Council, particularly with regard to sustainable development, the environment and traditional knowledge.

The Indigenous Peoples' organisations approved as Permanent Participants in the Arctic Council are:

- Aleut International Association (AIA)
- Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC)
- Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC)
- Gwich'in Council International (GCI)
- Russian Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON)
- Saami Council (SC)

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NB

IPS will be at a new address, from Oct. 20, 2003

Book Review: "Movt áigi lea rievdan" Nils Mathisen Sara

Published by Davvi Girji OS, Kárásjohka 2002.

Forget everything you have learnt about how a book should start, be built up and end, because that might influence your expectations when reading Nils Mathisen Sara's "Movt áigi lea rievdan". You should rather lean back and try to recall the atmosphere when somebody told you a story of how things used to be in the old times. That is exactly what Sara does in his book. There is a clue that this will be old-time storytelling in the book's title, "How Times Have Changed".

Sara is an elder that has made a living from reindeer herding all his life. He has experienced the changes from before the Second World War to today; going from a traditional lifestyle when the herders were walking, skiing or travelling with the reindeer, to using snowmobiles, four-wheelers and helicopters in their work.

The book documents the knowledge Sara developed from close connections to the land and a lifelong experience with reindeer herding. The author's language is rich, describing the places and the practices of reindeer herding, as well as other traditions such as those connected to marriage and weddings. This is all packed into only fifty pages, so the reader does not really get into the depth of his knowledge.

Reading Sara's book raises some questions about how to share Traditional Knowledge. The fact that it is published only in Saami excludes most readers. Even those who can read Saami might find it difficult to understand some of the discussions of reindeer herding, which only people who have taken part in that activity would understand.

This is a way of protecting your knowledge. Even though published in a book, it is reserved for people who belong to the same culture and traditions. It is said that knowledge is power; if you give away your knowledge, you also give away your power. However, in a fast changing environment with modern technologies replacing many traditional ways of doing things, it is essential to gather the knowledge for later generations.

On the other hand, this might be problematic when it comes to traditional knowledge. Elina Helander says in an article¹ that: "Traditional Knowledge has been acquired through empirical methods within the context of concrete life situations". This means that it is difficult to transfer the knowledge between generations if the younger generation is only reading about traditional knowledge, and is not actually

present during the traditional activities being described. They need to be able to try out the newly acquired knowledge in practice. Traditional knowledge is best expressed and transmitted through its own language, but it may also need to be physically demonstrated to be passed on.

Traditional knowledge has, rightly, been of greater interest among researchers and other people recently. Scientists who want to include traditional knowledge in their research should be aware the need to invest in the time necessary to build confidence with local people where the research is carried out, and they should have some language ability for easier access to the knowledge. Who owns the knowledge once it has been collected is a long ongoing debate, but Sara puts it in a neat way:

"I have been discussing with the veterinarians, or with those who do research on '*larva of oedemagena tarandi*', and if they now have come to the same conclusions, as I have been arguing and meaning, then it is my achievement, and it is my research or detection."

There is no doubt about the importance of a book like this one from Sara, which is written, in close cooperation with "Gili Silju", the local museum of Guovdageaidnu, Norway. It will be most useful for future generations within the Saami culture, but it also a step towards documenting Saami Traditional Knowledge.

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Movt áigi lea rievdan
Davvi Girji OS, Kárásjohka, 2002
ISBN no 82-7374-550-3
55 p.

The book can be ordered online from:
<http://www.davvi.no/english/bestill.html>

¹ Helander, E.: "Traditional Sámi Language", in Arctic Centre Reports 26: Human Environmental Interactions: Issues and Concerns in Upper Lapland, Finland. Müller-Wille, L. (ed.) Arctic University of Lapland, Rovaniemi 1999.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**August**

3 - 8 ACIA Policy Meeting, Svalbard

September

8 - 17 5th World Parks Congress – Benefits beyond Boundaries, Durban, South Africa

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11 - 14 12th International Congress on Circumpolar Health “Nuna Med 2003”, Nuuk, Greenland

Contact: ICCH12, Postbox 1001
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Deadline: May 1, 2003

Tel./Fax: +299 34 44 06 / +299 34 44 25

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<http://www.icch12.org>

29/9 – 3/10 World Conference on Climate Change, Moscow, Russia

October

19 -22 PAME Workshop, Svartsengi, Iceland

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20 - 21 Information and Communication Technology in the Arctic, Akureyri, Iceland

22 SDWG Meeting, Svartsengi, Iceland

23 - 24 SAO Meeting, Svartsengi, Iceland

November

7 –9 Havighurst Center for Soviet & Post-Soviet Studies Annual International Young Researchers Conference: Russia in Global Context: Peoples, Environments, Policies

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Miami University, Oxford, OH

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11 – 14 ACSYS Final Science Conference, St. Petersburg, Russia

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