

Environmental Stewardship

“Inuit tend to consider
all wildlife and living things
on an equal footing.”

Source: <http://www.tunngavik.com/publications/environment/climate-change-inuit-perspective-en.pdf>

Survival on the Land

“To hunt seal, my stepfather taught me this. There is a seal hole and you put your feet so the hole is just in front of you. You place something under your feet, like a caribou skin, so when you move your feet to keep warm they don’t make a noise on the snow. If you have nothing under your feet the seal could hear you moving.” *

–Jack Alonak, Inuinnait, Irons

“There were no musk oxen in this area, so we travelled east towards Tree River to get them. We used their skins for bed mats and we ate the meat. We didn’t waste anything.” *

-Joe Otaoyoakyok, Inuinnait, Iron

* Source: Bennett, John and Rowley, Susan. “An Oral History of Nunavut.” McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004.

IQ Evolves

“The IQ when I used to live out on the land...I had to use certain tools to do whatever I needed to do. ... One day I went out fishing and my husband went out goose hunting and the goose he caught he couldn't get to. ... so he came to me and asked me how ... well we have a long rope ... so we got hold of the rope and I was looking at some certain rocks ... so I tie a knot to the rock ... and swing it toward the ice. ...I pulled that rope and as I was pulling it I pulled it very slowly ... and when I did this there was no problem, I got it. ... It's my own creation.”

Siassie Kenneally
Artist, Cape Dorset

Seasons

- There are eight seasons traditionally identified by Inuit.
 - Ukiuq (December, January, February)
 - Upirngakajaaq (March)
 - Upirngaksaaq (April)
 - Upirngaaq (May, June, Beg. July)
 - Aujaq (End July, August)
 - Ukiaksajaaq (September)
 - Ukiaksaaq (October)
 - Ukiaq (November).

Seasons

Inuit depend on signs from the environment to help detect seasonal change.

For example;

- “...in Avunnivik (March), caribou miscarriages, frost in the air due to the severe cold, and because of the extreme cold, sled runners do not slide well in the morning, but traveling improves later in the day.” *
- Ukiuq (January, February) the sea ice is frozen over, is the darkest period of the year, winter solstice, *tivajut*, camps on the sea ice, etc. *

*Source: Bennett, John and Rowley, Susan. “An Oral History of Nunavut.” McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004.

Environmental Justice

‘Pijariiqpunga*’

In Inuit culture, each person has an *isuma*, which is a sacred mindset.

One must not interrupt a speaker until the speaker indicates that they have put across all that they wanted to contribute. Even if all they wanted to contribute was thoughtful silence, all must listen, respect and wait their turn.

The speaker declares “*pijariiqpunga*” when they have finished and now someone else can take their turn at sharing an opinion*

- Rachel Attituq Qitsualik

*Nunavut '99. *Living With Change*. 10 Feb 2007. Source: <<http://www.nunavut.com/nunavut99/english/change.html>>

The Implications of Global Warming

- Higher sea levels lead to larger scale erosion and flooding
- Some activities that depend on the existence of sufficient sea ice, such as hunting, traveling and fishing, will be threatened
- The sudden changes make weather prediction more difficult
- Certain animal species could be threatened by the changes in climate or forced to behave out of character
- Communities are forced to abandon their homes

Progress So Far

A Climate Change Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Nunavut and the federal government on October 31, 2003, and it indicates agreement to work on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and various organizations, such as ArcticNet, have been founded to aid in the study of Arctic Climate.

Relationship between *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* (IQ) and science:

- Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit cannot be incorporated or integrated into science because societal values are broader than traditional knowledge which is anyway, by nature, unlike scientific knowledge
 - Both need to parallel each other Inuit observations complement scientific measurements, and vice-versa o Knowledge must be shared in both directions
 - Especially because of the lack of coordinated data on Nunavut's environment, Inuit observations are essential in informing and guiding scientific research
- While it is unusual for Inuit to predict years ahead into the future, scientific knowledge can help to anticipate change and prevent being so suddenly faced with it.

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Adaptation Priorities:

“Inuit, governments,
leaders and scientists
need to work together if
anything meaningful is to be accomplished
on this issue.”

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“I think that it [the world] will be constantly changing
and it’s going to be a lot of pressure on people to constantly adapt.

... I see definitely that up here ... the people using IQ will be able to adapt,
but it will take more time.

But I definitely see them adapting as well as they can
and using everything to the best.”

**Mr. Andrew Dunford,
Researcher, Nunavut Research Institute
September 2006**

“Whether, in fact, there are indications in there [in Inuit knowledge systems] that relates to changes in the environment that could have been significant ...

[This] may teach us how this community will be able to adapt in the future and... adaptation to the changing environment is going to be the only solution.”

Professor Graham Daborn
Acadia University

**Adventure Canada Voyage, Iqaluit – Cape Dorset
September 2006**

“The Department of Environment has taken and will continue to take a number of steps to incorporate *Inuit Qaujimagangit* into programs, service delivery and day-to-day operations. *Inuit Qaujimagangit* provides the context in which we are open, responsive and accountable, and is incorporated in the day-to-day business of the department. We strive to operate in a flexible, culturally sensitive manner both internally and in the delivery of our programs and services.

Our mission commits us to the IQ principle of *avatimik kamattiarniq* (environmental stewardship), to ensure a balanced approach is taken in the way Nunavut’s environment and resources are used.

Source: Department of Environment, Government of Nunavut, Business Plan 2005 - 2006

<http://www.gov.nu.ca/finance/bp0506/env05.pdf>