



Inuit Circumpolar Council

Circumpolar Inuit Protocols for the Ethical and Equitable
Engagement of Inuit Communities and Indigenous Knowledge

Virtual Workshop Series Summary Report December 2021



Pictured from left to right: (1st row) Annga Lyngø, Johnnie (JD) Storr, Vivi Vold, Inaluk Jacobsen, Paul Irrgaut, Michael Milton, Justin Milton; (2nd row) Dalee Sambo Dorough, Nukannuaq Mathiesen, John McIntyre, Jody Illasiak, Harry Brower, Liubov Taian and Inrina Mishina, Vera Metcalf; (3rd row) George Edwardsen, Richard Ungarook (Aqi), Cyrus Harris, Inge Olsvig Brandt, James Stotts, Linda Kristiansen, Vivian Korthuis; (4th row) Jim Goodie, Kuupik Kleist, Jason Dicker, Regine Møller, Taqulik Hepa, Tukumminnguaq Olsen, Svetlana Burton; (5th row) Lisa Guy (Notetaker), Carolina Behe (Facilitator), Jeremy Etuangat (Notetaker), Roberta Tuuraq Glenn (Facilitator), Eilene Adams, ICC Canada - Hazel Ootoowak, Kaare Sikuaq Erickson (Inuk), Teymur Suleymanov; (6th row) Betsy Turner-Bogren (Notetaker), Craig Chythlook (Facilitator), Victoria Qutuuq Buschman, John Cheechoo (Facilitator), Kuba Grzeda (Zoom Tech), Eva Kruemmel (Facilitator), Vanessa Raymond, Vernae Angnaboogok, Kelly Eningowuk.

Some Delegates, ICC leadership, and support were not available while taking the group photos. However, they were also invaluable to this discussion. Not pictured - Sophie Abelsen, Amalie Jessen, Monica Ell-Kanayuk, Nicole Kanayurak, and Hannah Loon.

"We often must make clear to people internationally that our Indigenous knowledge is living, part of our culture, and is always changing."

"Our environment is something we can all relate to, and that can be our core value - is that we protect it. When it comes to climate change and development - we protect it."

"There are so many layers to who we are as Inuit, and our strength is in knowing who we are and where we come from."

"In order to have Indigenous Knowledge acknowledged, our governments should also acknowledge it. Self-determination is so important for us."

"Historically we learn as people how to manage interactions not only for us but for our children, to succeed in knowing."

"We should expect more from ourselves, we need to know when a group of researchers come to land. We should demand knowing what for and why they are there."

"If we don't understand our own values as Inuit, how can we expect others to understand? We must be able to communicate our values amongst ourselves before we try to communicate to others."

"All of you [Inuit] should walk into each meeting/the room like your ancestors sent you there."

"Our relationships are lifelong and our dependencies on those relationships are strong."

"Every one of us has that breath of knowledge that we are talking about, because we ourselves have gone out to figure out the western world."

"We got to be equal on everything, with engaging and making decisions, we must have a seat at the table."

"Across Inuit Nunaat we don't have to explain so much, we already have that connection, we already understand each other."

"Our knowledge needs to be valued and utilized and it's up to us, Inuit, to bring that to the table and how it will be used."

"Working within our own framework, we have very specific skills. We need to continue to support, encourage and utilize the resources we have."

"For Inuit our past is our path to the future. This workshop and all the work that has gone before to inform today's discussions, embodies a great deal of wisdom and knowledge – our knowledge, Inuit knowledge."

All Quotes from Delegates provided throughout the EEE Workshop Series.

Summary of Workshop Purpose

On August 30th, September 28-30th, October 12-14th, and November 16-17th, 2021, nominated Delegates from across Inuit homelands came together in a series of virtual workshops to hold in-depth discussions on our values and how they guide our relationships within the Arctic, meaningful engagement processes, and key actions to inform the drafting of the Inuit circumpolar protocols. This series of workshops deliver on the commitment made in Article 28 of the Utqiagvik Declaration, as adopted at the 2018 ICC General Assembly in Utqiagvik, Alaska, which directs ICC to facilitate the development of circumpolar protocols on the equitable and ethical engagement of Inuit communities and Indigenous knowledge to provide guidance to international fora, such as the Arctic Council and the United Nations. While there is a growing awareness of the importance of Indigenous knowledge and involvement of Indigenous peoples, many international fora continue to take a top-down approach and are rooted in processes that raise barriers to the meaningful engagement of Inuit communities and utilization of Indigenous knowledge. The international protocols developed around these workshop discussions and the EEE Synthesis Report are a crucial tool to enhance the equitable and ethical engagement of Inuit in national and international fora, research, and decision-making approaches and processes and will advance Inuit sovereignty, directions, and priorities.

EEE Workshop Objectives

This workshop series had three particular focus areas including:

- Developing the Inuit circumpolar protocols for the ethical, equitable engagement of Inuit communities and Indigenous knowledge
- Identifying what values and actions characterize successful engagement at an international scale
- Identifying what values and actions researchers, decisions makers, and others must follow while working in Inuit Nunaat

Products of the EEE Workshop Series

The primary purpose of the workshop series was to inform the development of the Inuit circumpolar protocols on the ethical and equitable engagement of Inuit communities and Indigenous knowledge as a crucial tool in advancing Inuit sovereignty, directions, and priorities within institutions and international fora. This workshop report provides a brief summary of the key points highlighted during the discussions. Beyond the tangible products, additional invaluable products include strengthening the dialog among Inuit across our homelands by connecting individual and sharing knowledge, stories, and experiences.

Meeting Structure

Structure Overview

The EEE workshop series was organized with the goal of aiding in the development the ICC international protocols on the ethical and equitable engagement of Inuit communities and Indigenous knowledge. While this workshop was intended to be held in person, the global corona virus pandemic necessitated an online workshop to protect the health and wellbeing of our people and communities. Each ICC's office facilitated the nomination of Delegates within their respective countries. The workshop series reflect a mixture of voices from those that were involved. All voices were able to diversify the discussions and provide rich perspectives that contribute to the development of the international protocols.

Overarching EEE Timeline



Meeting Set-up

The workshop series itself was organized into four parts shown above including the:

- Introductory Meeting - August 30, 2021
- Workshop 1 - September 28-30, 2021
- Workshop 2 - October 12-14, 2021
- Review Meeting - November 16-17, 2021

Please note that the meeting dates were one day ahead for the Delegates calling in from Chukotka.

While there were consistent messages and threads about engagement throughout the workshop series, Workshop 1 was designed to discuss how Inuit values guide engagement and the delegates' experiences of the challenges and successes of past engagement processes. Workshop 2 primarily focused on identifying actions and potential directives to improve engagement with Indigenous knowledge and our communities.

Despite the online format, each meeting day was structured to accommodate Inuit preferred means of communicating and sharing. Each meeting began with a moment of silence for our ancestors and the lessons they have given us, with opening remarks from ICC leadership or an invited delegate, and an open floor for any immediate questions or concerns. The introductory meeting additionally included a qulliq lighting to honor the opening of the meeting. These meetings ran for approximately three hours with a break in the middle. These breaks were filled with cultural performances, sharing of stories, or fun activities.

In the online format, it was especially important to create an informal atmosphere that encouraged the Delegates to take off their hats from their various professional engagements to discuss the issues of ethical and equitable engagement from their personal perspectives and experiences. To further facilitate this open and informal dialog, the workshops offered both open discussions among all Delegates as well as smaller breakout rooms for more focused sharing. All discussions and comments were captured by our dedicated note takers. During back-to-back meeting days, we often shared key points expressed by the Delegates the previous day to support Delegates in reviewing their previous discussions as well as allow them to clarify or add any points.

Guiding Questions - The meeting was facilitated in part by guiding questions intended to begin the discussions. These questions reflect many of the topics that were discussed during the workshop series:

- What values are core to guiding our relationships?
- What core values guide the use of our knowledge?
- What core values should researchers and decision makers be using in working with us and in gathering information?
- What are concerns about the engagement of our communities by researchers and decision makers?
- What are concerns about the utilization and involvement of Indigenous knowledge?
- What values and actions characterize successful engagement?
- What has been a strong example of how something has worked and why did it work?
- What has been a strong example for you of how something hasn't worked and what do you think would have improved the situation?
- What are the largest barriers to the utilization of Indigenous knowledge?
- What actions help us move from unsuccessful engagement to successful engagement?

Summary of Key Themes and Concepts - During discussions around ethical and equitable engagement, the Delegates highlighted many key points, some of which are captured here. The following summaries of key points and actions in the remainder of this workshop report are not exhaustive lists of the content covered over the course of the workshop series.

Key Points on Inuit Values

Delegates expressed the importance of being guided by Inuit values as these values are central to who we are and how we work together. These values are held both individually and at the community level. By exploring, upholding, and showcasing our values, we can teach others how to engage with our communities and our knowledge ethically and equitably. Below is a summary of key points highlighted:

- Togetherness - moving forward together with a common vision, making decisions together, working together, collective responsibility
- Equality – we are equal to all human beings
- Relationship building – with each other, with people coming to our communities
- Sharing – we give what we receive, maintains food security
- Respect – for our culture, way of life, knowledge, each other
- Language – ability to share in our language, passing language on to youth
- Patience – listening – learning – watching – observing
- Teaching – youth learn from being with us and watching us
- Trust - many points and examples provided about the importance of trust
- Expectations – we expect the same from ourselves as from others
- Resourcefulness – we utilize what we have, don't make decisions based on money
- Humility – we are always learning and listening first

Key Points on Context and Overarching Guidance

Delegates continually stressed the need for the international protocols to address the behavior and power dynamics exhibited by people working with us and in our communities. Delegates shared that:

- The ICC international protocols should address the behavior of those people coming into our communities.
- Inuit know when something feels wrong, and when something should be common sense – it's about how to be human and how to treat each other
- Decolonizing institutions and addressing power dynamics is important
- Indigenous problem solving, Indigenous governance, Indigenous research, and all of our frameworks are needed and need to be actively used

Key Points for Engaging with Indigenous Knowledge

During the workshops, Delegates also contributed important perspectives on why and how others coming to our communities should engage with our knowledge. The Delegates stressed throughout the workshop series that how we share our knowledge and how we interact with our communities are interconnected, but it was helpful to distinguish different key points for these two topics.

- IK is everyday, stand alone, defined by us, cannot be separated from our lives and these contexts, an important part of intergenerational exchange, taught by observing, and is equal to all other knowledges and does not need validation by science
- Equity for knowledge holders – respect and trust for community members providing knowledge, to be held on the same or higher level compared to scientists
- Importance of ownership, control, and compensation for our knowledge
- Being on the land should be recognized and valued as an education
- Our knowledge is verified through our activities daily
- IK should guide research questions
- IK holders inform basic science methodologies – where, when, how to conduct research
- There is a strong connection between respecting our sovereignty and respecting our IK - IK should be embedded in our institutions and taken seriously
- Stories are about providing information and knowledge, should not be dismissed nor cherry-picked for pieces that support scientific claims
- Importance of learning from good co-production of knowledge projects
- Research and IK shouldn't be used against Inuit
- Youth need access to IK in our education programs, should have access to science education, and should be teaching and learning from researchers

Key Points for Engaging with Communities

The Delegates highlighted many important points and concerns about engagement as they discussed their engagement experiences at all scales.

- Importance of reconciliation, self-determination, self-governance, recognition of colonial histories
- Inuit need to define the terms of engagement (consultation, trust, partnership, ethics)
- Inuit should be in charge of activities occurring around our communities
- Work and decisions must be driven by Inuit through Inuit approaches and values
- Governance structures should be representative of our communities
- While we are often accused of not having capacity, it is the people coming into our communities that don't have the capacity and do not understand us
- Inuit engagement should not be treated like a checkbox
- Lack of formal/western "education" should not be an obstacle for Inuit to engage
- Importance of building long-term relationships – knowing values, building trust

- Researchers need to understand that research is second to our way of life
- Research and consultation should address community priorities, agency in directing research efforts, need better control over research and more engagement, current engagement is insufficient, need better communication in objectives and timing
- Imbalance in power dynamics – community members should have authority in logistics
- Importance of intermediary peoples to connect researchers to communities
- Research must also give back in meaningful ways
- Reporting - sharing knowledge back in accessible language or appropriate languages
- Challenges of unethical and inequitable hiring practices - prejudice, issues in pay-scale and compensation, over-work

Key Points for Communication

The importance of communication was clearly articulated by many Delegates and was often referenced in discussions around barriers to the ethical and equitable engagement of Inuit communities. While many other important points about communication are embedded in other parts of this workshop report, here are some of the key points that Delegates raised.

- Importance of having discussions in our own language was stressed.
- There is a need for “two-way communication”
- Everyone should feel welcome and comfortable to speak, regardless of age or position.
- Cultural interpretation is just as important as language interpretation
- Poor translation makes communication difficult - process should be reversed so the primary discussions can occur in Inuit languages
- Community needs to be included in decision making, people try to come and just meet with one person, don’t recognize our values and collective approaches

Potential Actions

During discussions around improving engagement of Inuit communities and Indigenous knowledge, and particularly in Workshop 2, the Delegates focused on turning the challenges and inequities into desired actions that could remedy the problems. These potential actions are being considered and incorporated into the ICC international protocols alongside the guidance provided by the EEE Synthesis Report.

- Recognize and respect Indigenous values, worldviews, knowledge, perspectives
- Community protocols, customs, and processes need to be respected
- Take responsibility to know about us, our governments, approaches, histories, etc.
- Build long-term relationships by taking the time to stay in the community
- Implement a co-production of knowledge approach in gathering information, research, decision making, etc.
- Support Inuit community driven activities and priorities such as in management, information collection, monitoring, and research; address questions put forward by communities; community defines role that Inuit play in research
- Follow communities leads on identifying what may be needed to address challenges, questions, and needs
- Eliminate redundancy in research projects coming to communities
- We should identify who our experts are - not all Inuit are Indigenous Knowledge holders

- Accept IK as a unique knowledge system, with its own methodologies, evaluation, and validation processes
- Open seats for Inuit in all international discussions and work related to our homelands
- Include cultural interpreters. Involve Inuit and/or Inuit organizations in the development, setting the agenda, and facilitation of meetings
- IK methodologies and final products have to be peer reviewed and validated by IK holders
- Importance of addressing cultural differences in communication and behaviour
- Obtain permission from communities through mechanisms like consent and contracts
- Funding provided – rates to be determined by Inuit and agreed upon prior to beginning work, this includes funding management groups, boards, and decision-making processes,
- Learn from mistakes, take responsibility for it, make it right
- Ensure that research materials remain in the communities in which they are produced
- Ensure Inuit uses are prioritized over other uses (i.e. research, land use, etc.)
- Embed Indigenous rights into governments, organizations, institutions, etc.
- Boards and other advisory mechanisms should be representative of Inuit communities
- Address high rates of turnover in governments, organizations, and institutions
- Ensure research results are not used against the community
- Come to us with an openness to listen, learn, and be patient; recognize and respect our authority, knowledge, and culture
- Agree upon processes before work begins, including information exchange, ownership and accessibility of information and data, questions, methodologies, analysis processes
- Researchers and decision makers should build their capacity to learn about our cultures, knowledge, governance, histories, etc.
- Acknowledge and address how research can be life-altering for communities in both good and bad ways

Process for Developing the Protocols - The ICC EEE Drafting Team is working on preparing the ICC international engagement protocols to be reflective of the spirit and discussions that occurred both during this workshop series as well as the information gathered in the EEE Synthesis Report and previous ICC works. During the review meeting, Delegates were asked to reflect on discussions shared during the workshop series as well as for their input on the development, structure, and dissemination of the international protocols. Many Delegates recognized that similar and equally important protocols are also in development at many other organizations and governments, and it was shared that ICC should communicate widely about the international protocols in development. Delegates also stressed the importance of focusing on disseminating and implementing the protocols at the international level.

Regarding the structure of the protocols, the Delegates also discussed the importance of having protocols that are concise, to the point, short enough to be easily accessible and understood, and be grounded in our values. It was shared that the protocols should include the purpose, the areas of focus, and the concrete actions that Inuit want.

In addition to all Delegates present in the workshop series, each of ICC's offices will facilitate a review process within their respective countries. Upon approval, the international protocols will become publicly available and forwarded by ICC in all international fora in which Inuit partake.

Conclusion - This workshop series provided a space to explore how Inuit should be involved in shaping the future that we want - how we are engaged in the research, policy, and decision making that occur

