

TASIURVIK FAMILY HOUSE :
HOW IT CAME TO BE
Assessing family strengths, needs and visions



Tasiurvik
center

HOLDING HANDS
FOR CHILDREN
AND FAMILIES OF
KUJJUARAAPIK

Sarah Fraser (PhD)
Professeur adjointe, École de Psychoéducation
Université de Montreal

Shawn-Renee Hordyk (PhD)
Stagiaire Postdoctoral, École de Psychoéducation
Université de Montréal

Fabienne Lagueux (PhD)
Professeure agrégée, Département de Psychologie
Université de Sherbrooke

Lena D'Ostie Racine (PhD)
Assistante de Recherche, Université de Montreal

And the Tasiurvik Team: Especially Jeannie Aragutak, Raymond Mickpegak, Rhoda Fleming,
Caroline Weetaltuk and Jennifer Hunter

Illustrated by Surina Meeko, Kuujjuaraapik

With support from Avenir d'Enfants team
Maryse Lemay
Ana Gerghel

Tasiurvik
center



AVENIR D'ENFANTS
DES COMMUNAUTÉS ENGAGÉES

Université 
de Montréal

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 4

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 5

PART ONE: A STORY ILLUSTRATING HOW TASIURVIK CAME TO BE 6

PART TWO: THE CONTEXT OF KUUJUARAAPIK 12

PART THREE: THE MAKING OF TASIURVIK 16

ANNEX :

THE MAKING OF TASIURVIK: THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCH 33

MOVING FORWARD: GUIDANCE OF THE ELDERS 34

TASIURVIK FOR YOU: SCRAPBOOK PICTURES 48



This book describes an initiative called Ilagiinut, “*for families*”, in Nunavik. Ilagiinut is about finding community based solutions for the wellbeing of families and communities of Nunavik. Kuujjuaraapik’s *Tasiurvik Family house* is the first initiative of Ilagiinut. This book describes the needs, visions, objectives, resources, and obstacles to developing Tasiurvik Family House in order to learn and support the regional vision of Ilagiinut.

In order to build Ilagiinut we listened to many voices. There doesn’t seem to be a good way of putting all those voices and experiences together. We wanted this document to be useful; therefore it had to be authentic and simple. This is not the only way of telling our story, but we believe that telling it this way might help those who will start on a similar journey.

If we had started with an existing model or under an institution, this story would probably be different, but we didn't. The purpose of us working together was to do the opposite: to start *from the community* and to work in collaboration with institutions, to start outside the box, to create links and to participate in creating cohesion and oneness within the community, *for families*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over the past few years of working on Ilagiinut we lived an experience created and led by many people. With time, we, ourselves, became a family. It's an unusual family made of people from all sorts of different personal, cultural, social, professional and economic backgrounds. But with time, we realised that despite our differences, we are all human; we all care; and that is what has kept the project going. We would like to acknowledge these people:

Those who started this path and believed in community leadership (the Aiviq), the members of the Regional Partnership Committee under the chairmanship of
Minnie Grey

Those who have been there all the time, thinking, experiencing, sharing, falling and, standing up again (our Tuktu)

Raymond Mickpegak	Jennifer Hunter	Rhoda Ittoshat Fleming
Jeannie Aragnutak	Caroline Weetaltuk	Sean Tookalook

Those who invested energy and heart in Tasiurvik as animators and coordinators (the Tiriganniaq)

Maria Hamid Fleming	Lizzie Calvin	Audrey Flemming
---------------------	---------------	-----------------

Those who shared their stories and knowledge (the Nanuq)

Sarah Hunter	Louisa Cookie Brown
Martha Sala	Dinah Napartuk
Sarah Bennett	

Those who provided listening and support (The Nirlik)

Maryse Lemay	Pierre Roussel
Marc Beaulé	Alex McComber
Lena D'Ostie Racine	Kim P Brouillette
Geneviève Chenard	

The organisations that have supported Tasiurvik's development

Avenir d'enfants	Quebec en Forme
Nunavik Board of Health and Social Services	
Kativik Regional Government	Makivik Co.
Administrative team at Université de Montréal	

Others who helped plan and who listened

Fabienne Lagueux	Georgia Vrakas
Pauline Ngirpatse	Shawn-Renee Hordyk

A huge thankyou to all of our families who have supported us through the beautiful and the difficult moments. Without your support none of this would be possible.

PART ONE: A STORY ILLUSTRATING HOW TASIURVIK CAME TO BE

THE STORY OF HOW TASIURVIK CAME TO BE

“One of the attributes of healthy community is that the residents abide with a sense of tranquility and calmness. That is only possible when the members of the community begin to see the positives in all situations and the character of the people around them.”

(Pierson, 2011, in: Creating Community)

EXPLANATION OF THE STORY

When participating in community development or community change, we listen to those involved and those who will be impacted. For Ilagiinut, we did interviews, held meetings, had phone exchanges, did community surveys, and shared stories¹.

The story you are about to read was inspired by dialogues and interviews with regional directors, local partners, and community members who shared of their experiences and ideas. We wrote this fable as a metaphor for how Tasiurvik came to be. It was written in collaboration with the local partners who chose the animal metaphors and who integrated new elements into the story in order to represent their experience in developing Tasiurvik.

In this fable you will meet:

Aiviit (walrus) who represent the members of the Regional Partnership Committee; engaging, strong and

protective, these are the regional leaders of Nunavik.

The **Nanuq** (polar bears) who represent elders; knowledgeable and wise they guide with their stories and their experiences. Often they blend into the landscape but trust that they are present, caring and observant.

The **Tuktu** (caribou) who represent the members of the community who have, taken risks developing Tasiurvik. Tuktu walk on, no matter what the weather, even on thin ice. When the ice breaks they swim to thicker ice.

The **Ukaliq** (rabbit), **Amaruq** (wolf), **Aqiggiq** (ptarmigan), and **Amauligaaq** (small spring bird) who represent different types of families, each with their own history, experiences, and needs. Family members may also have a dual role in providing informal or formal services in the community.

The **Tiriganniaq** (fox) who represent the coordinators and animators of

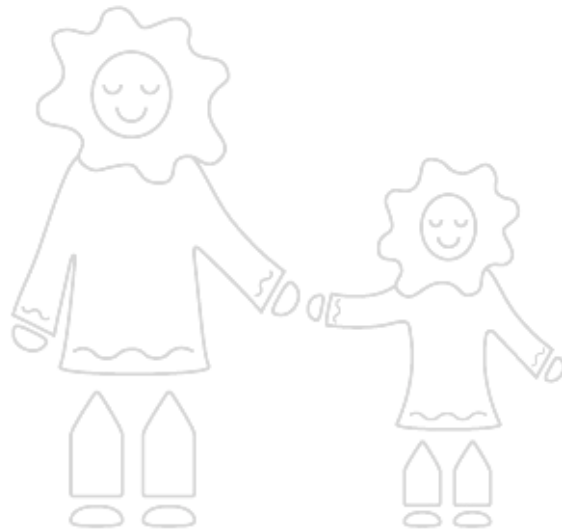
¹ See annex for details

Tasiurvik, present and to come. The Tiriganniaq are keen, agile, observant and can walk long distances.

Nirlik (geese) who represent the “outsiders,” service providers or researchers, people not originally from Nunavik but who come to support families for short or for long periods.

The project has been like people walking in the dark holding on to each other not to get lost. You need trust in each other, you need to go slowly, you need to communicate at times, and other times you need to stay silent to listen to the environment and determine your next step.

Raymond Mickpegak



Tasiurvik
center

THE STORY

A long long time ago, or maybe was it yesterday, a wise Aivik summoned a meeting. Standing strong on the rocks near the sea the Aivik asked, "What do we do? We and our children are being taken away to other lands; some of us do not recognise our homes any longer or speak our language; some of us are



hurting. Some are strong and well on this land, but others have not been taught how to listen to their own instincts. "

An Aivik spoke up, "We have always known our land better than anyone. We used to believe in ourselves. We knew what we were each capable of and when we needed to go to someone for help. For thousands of years we found our way on this land. We need to learn to trust ourselves again, to be strong and to find our own solutions."

Aivik: "We began to lose our confidence with contact with the Nirlik"

An Aivik responded, "But the Nirlik who have come from far away have also helped at times. They tell us what they can see from their perspective. But we cannot always trust them. Some have not listened and learned enough from us before they try to show us where to go. They cannot truly understand what it is like to live so close to the land. "

The grey Aivik talked next: "*We need both.* We must take care of ourselves, the animals living close to the land. We should also provide guidance to the Nirlik so that they do not lead our families astray."

After some more sharing, all agreed. "The solutions to the problems affecting our communities must come from the communities themselves. We



are all unique and will have to choose our own path. Our culture and our values will be our guide."

For our children, we must act.

"I know a way," said the one of the Aivik, "but it will not be easy. Let us

choose animals that we will bring together near the trees.²”

The meeting

Seven shadows wondered through the trees as daylight was falling, looking for their way: a Nanuk, a Tuktu, an Amauligaaq, a Tiriganniaq, an Amaruq, an Ukaliq and an Aqiggiq. Some came from the east, from the west, north and south. Some arrived from far; others had known this land for a long time. All were searching for their way to the clearing.

“Why are you all here?” asked the Amaruq (wolf).

“I was looking for food and now must find my way out before I freeze,” said the Aqiggiq (ptarmigan).

“My mother is waiting for me, I must quickly find supper or she will be hungry.”

The Aqiggiq started flying low in circles, trying to find the right direction back home. She hit a rock and fell to the ground. The others heard her; and stopped so as not to step on her, but couldn’t see her.

The Aqiggiq slowly got up from the ground, keeping her tears inside. “I’m here and I’m okay,” she answered.

Discouraged by her difficulty, no one else attempted to move.

The wind blew, filling the air with the aromas of the trees and land. The evening was growing colder.

The Nanuq (polar bear) cleared his throat and spoke, “I will tell you the story of how we got here. If we remember this, we may find our way out of the trees again.” Everyone stayed silent. The wind blew stronger and the snow swirled around the animals. Without realising it, the animals came closer together to cut the cold and to hear the stories of the Nanuq.

The Nanuq began:

“Before the Nirlik arrived, we lived beyond this forest and survived on this land. We hunted, we fished, and we made our shelters of snow. Then the Nirlik came and promised to lead us to



a better place in the trees where we would no longer have to build our own

² ¹NOTE: *The story takes place on land where trees, rocks and sand make up the landscape. We chose this landscape to represent the uniqueness of Kuujjuaraapik, one of the few Nunavik communities near pine trees. Even if most communities don’t have trees, the teachings of the story are for everyone and they may represent the struggles of many families in Nunavik.*

shelters, find our own food and take care of ourselves. Some of us followed the Nirlik; some did not. Later, the Nirlik said that we did not have a choice, that we had to follow them to where they wanted us to live, even if we were separated from our families and had to live with animals that we had never lived alongside of before.”

Ukaliq (The rabbit)

The Ukaliq (rabbit) came out from his hole and stood by the Nanuq. “Today our families have only few places to find shelter. The winters are cold and the food is scarce. We are together in our small homes, in the cracks of trees our forced locations, cold and hungry. Sometimes when we think about why we are hungry, we become angry, very angry and we are worried because we cannot always find food. Some eat poisoned berries to satisfy their hunger and they come back intoxicated; we get scared.

The Nirlik don't speak our language, and when we go for help we cannot speak the truth. We fear they might judge us and call us 'lost' and 'helpless' rather than try to listen. “

The wind grew loud again.

The Aqiggiq (ptarmigan) flew into the sky, then back down and landed close to the Ukaliq.

“I can understand why you stay in your hole. We too have lived these moments of fear and hurt and hesitate to tell anyone. What gave us strength

to keep looking was our love for our children. One day it was our child's time to practice flying away from our nest. A short time after she jumped, we heard her cry. We went to find her; we searched day and night behind every shrub. We called her name. She did not reply. As we were flying back to the nest we heard again soft crying. She was stuck between a tree and a rock. She had not gone far. We brought her in. We gave her food and let her rest. We slept; we slept, as if for many



days. And when we woke, we knew we had to be strong; we had to leave our nest to seek advice. Our bones rattled; our wings were heavy as we flew, but our hearts were strong thinking of our daughter, remembering her cry.”

The Amaruq

The Ukaliq (rabbit) and the Aqiggiq (ptarmigan) looked toward the shadow of the Amaruq (wolf). Tall, the Amaruq started to speak with a clear voice. “We work all day, go out to find food, we see tired and hungry animals on our way. Sometimes we give food to others, but sometimes we can't. We have tried to open our homes for others, but our own children are

growing; we need to protect them. They need to become strong. It is not always easy; there are moments we despair. But we know that if we stay together with our children, we can be strong. Some of us have parents who listen to us when things are hard. They guide us. But some of us don't have parents anymore. They have passed. And sometimes we are alone."

The Amauligaaq

The Amauligaaq (spring bird) spoke next, "Family... we also try to protect family, but our family is big. We have let in nearly everyone who comes near us. We go off into the forest and we try to show where there is food to those who might need it. We listen to those who need to share. Sometimes our hearts get heavy. We get overwhelmed, and our bodies get sore. We lose our peace. Sometimes we wish we could close our ears for a moment to sleep. The nights are short and the days are long. We have no place to cry, we keep the tears inside and they burn our throats. But we



must not stop listening to them, being there for them." The Amauligaaq's voice lowered, "But sometimes...

sometimes, when we see a hungry animal near our home, we turn our head and fly away. This makes our hearts heavy, very heavy. "

The Aqiggiq (ptarmigan) and the Ukaliq (rabbit) came close to the Amauligaaq. "When you look away, I think you are angry, I think you do not see me, that you judge me. Then I become angrier. But now I see, you turn your head because you are hurt too, you turn your head because sometimes it is hard to care."

"Why is it so difficult to care for our own?" They all asked.

The Nanuq (polar bear) tapped a stick to the ground.

The Tuktu (caribou) who had been watching closely, sighed.

Coming together

"So often we move against the blowing snow. We find food for our own, for a day, for two days, but we have to see further now," said the Tuktu.

"We do not recognise our lands, this is true. We do not know where to speak so that we can be heard. When we have tried, others have spoken louder, faster, with more assurance. And we have lost our voices. Now we whisper and we cannot hear our own. But today we will try again."

Suddenly the wind grew louder and stronger. The blizzard came with full

force. The heavy icy snow started falling from the thick clouds. Pellets of ice fell onto the animals. The Ukaliq hid inside a tree. The Aqiggiq (ptarmigan) flew for shelter. The wind whistled and trees stirred. Branches started breaking from the trees, falling onto, and wounding the Tuktu's back.

The Tuktu closed his eyes and filled his lungs with air. The Tuktu then slowly spoke again, "I will stand here, with all of you until we find a way. For our children, we must find a way."

The Tuktu continued, "We see all of you here; we see your families, and we see you. Ukaliq you hide. I know why and I see you now. Aqiggiq you fly fast; sometimes you are there; sometimes you fly home. I know why and I see you. Amaruq you are far off with your pack and now I know why. We see our lands, they have changed, yes but they are still beautiful and they are still ours. We must come together, those who can, and those who can speak. We will decide our fates together. Those who are ready will create an igloo for all of our families, a place for us all to come together, to learn from each other again, to be safe, and warm. Those who are ready can come; you will know when you are ready."

6. A new beginning

The young Tiriganniaq (fox) who had been quietly listening to everyone's story stood up. "I do not yet know my way, but I will listen to your messages and be guided by you. I need to hear

how each of you came to be here. Nanuq, I need to hear your stories."

The Tuktu spoke next. "We will walk, and we must all share our stories with other animals we meet on our path.



We must speak with our families who live on other parts of the land, far from our trees, so that we can learn from each other as we each find our own way."

"And what about the Nirlik?" asked the young Tiriganniaq.

After some reflection, the Tuktu replied, "Each of us must learn to listen to the knowledge that we carry inside of us that tells us where to go, how to find food, how to make our own shelters. When we learn to trust ourselves again, we will know right away when the Nirlik is helping us on our journey and when the Nirlik is leading us away from our path. But we have to create a safe place for ourselves in order to do that."

As the Aiviit watched from the shores, they smiled. "The walk will be long and at times extremely difficult, but it will be beautiful."

PART TWO: THE CONTEXT OF KUUJJUARAAPIK

THE LAND AND ANIMALS METAPHORS IN OUR STORY - KUUJJUARAAPIK TODAY

This is Kuujjuaraapik today.



Photo : Stéphanie Courchesne

The population of Kuujjuaraapik is about 700. The Cree population of Whapmagoostui, the neighbouring community, is approximately 900.

Community members say that Kuujjuaraapik is....

Home
Cold, beautiful
Unique, one of a kind
The most beautiful place on earth
My home, comfortable, no place like home
A beautiful but sometimes tiring place. Warm to visitors
My community, where my home is
Beautiful
Awesome :)
Great to live in!
A wonderful place and very warm to others



Photo : LenaD'Ostie-Racine

The animals in the story represent different family experiences of the people with whom we spoke who are living in Kuujjuaraapik. In the story, the animals portray different ways that families find their paths. In real life, families will use different strategies at different times and not only one. As with the animals, each family has different strengths, experiences, and needs.

Ukaliq (*rabbit*) represents the families that sometimes we do not see, so hidden that they are almost invisible. The Ukaliq have the ability to camouflage. They may be camouflaging their family struggles by hiding pain and not talking about their suffering and struggles..

The **Aqiggiq** (*ptarmigan*) represent families who have lived many hardships but feel that things must change and act on this, often 'for the children.' They go out and look for support. They ask for help but they are also worried of rumours, of judgement, and of the consequences of talking to service providers. Many have said however that service providers have helped them by listening or by giving food, medical care, or offering follow-up.

The **Amaruq** (*wolf*) represent certain families that are doing well overall. They have their challenges but they are strong together. To protect their children and to ensure their success in school and relationships, these families may close their

doors to the stresses of the community. Sometimes, people can feel frustrated with these families, wishing they would help community more. However, these families also know hardship and are seeking to equip their children to thrive as adults and eventually contribute to the community.

There are families that often keep their doors open to everyone in order to help their community. These families are represented by the **Amauligaaq** (*small spring bird*). The family *is* the community and the community *is* family but these families can get overwhelmed and tired very quickly as they often try to do too much and don't have many places to go for support.

Many **Amaruq** and **Amauligaaq** families feel caught between protecting their family from community problems and providing support to communities so that other families can be well. Sometimes it is very heavy to help neighbours and friends because the issues are so big. Sometimes families feel guilt for turning away to protect themselves and their families. Other community members described feeling anger, mistrust or abandoned and un-cared because of this.

FAMILY WORRIES

- Physical health problems
- Mental health concerns
- Addictions
- Violence
- Overcrowding
- No personal quiet space
- Lack of food, money, and housing
- Dependency

COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

Families also identified many strengths and resources in the community. In a survey done in Kuujjuaraapik people named the following community strengths:

Family cohesion

People talked about how family members could often rely on each other. Providing food was one example:

I try to help my brothers and my sister. Like for example, if there is a lack of food, if they need help in anyway, I try to help them if I can, when I can. We try to do the

same things with my in-laws. It works both ways so...when we need help they are there for us and when they need help we are there for them.

Culture and land

Families also described how going out on the land- fishing, hunting and camping were also sources of strength.

We often go to bush by plane. And... Or inland, camping... And we stay there 6 to 8 weeks. It helped a lot. Going... Inland, camping. It's... It's a routine for us now...And my kids are being taught by their father and grandparents. It helps a lot, going camping.

Language

Many individuals spoke of language as a community strength and the importance of speaking Inuktitut. Some were concerned that Inuktitut may be getting lost by younger generations. When talking about Tasiurvik, people said that they would like for it to be a place where people could learn and share Inuktitut

Elders

Elders were also an important source of strength for community members. As this person described, elders were both carriers of language and tradition:

We need more elders. Like, we need to be more around them 'cause' we are mostly now talking in English too and we don't have a lot of elders now, but when we... while we still have them I think we need to do stuff with them.

Spirituality and Faith

Faith was also important to many. One lady spoke of waking up one day with no money, no food in her house, no coffee. She explained the importance of faith:

So I was thinking It's ok. Oh God I'm just thankful that I'm awake and I'm ok no matter what we're going through. No matter people who are bringing me down, you're giving me strength. Give me what I need. That morning I saw my cousin on the road that I haven't seen for a while...She said come with me let's go store. She bought me coffee, mayo, bread, ham and baloney, chops. I was so thankful. It helped me out a lot. So I was blessed.

Others sources of strength included friends, grandparents, members of the Cree community, hunters, and other families

Within communities, families also draw on formal and informal services. Formal services include government initiated, funded and certified social and health services; these services are usually offered across Quebec or Canada. Informal

services are programs that are developed to meet the needs of local populations. They are often designed and run by community members.

Below is a list of resources that families used.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL RESOURCES ACCESSED BY FAMILIES

- Youth center
- Swimming pool
- Daycare
- School
- Gym
- Community freezer, hunters support program
- Sewing center
- Arena
- Breakfast program
- Youth protection
- Social services
- Nursing



Tasiurvik
center

PART THREE: THE MAKING OF TASIURVIK

THE AIVIIT – LISTENING TO REGIONAL LEADERS

A Commission on the rights of children was done in 2007. It showed many issues for children and families in Nunavik. Regional directors (Aiviit) from diverse human service organisations and institutions came together to discuss the needs of families and to brainstorm solutions to these needs.

They developed this list of what they saw as important in developing services for the families of Nunavik.

GIVING POWER BACK TO COMMUNITIES: IDEAS FROM REGIONAL DIRECTORS

Need to be heard as Inuit

Need to acknowledge and honor the strengths, skills and experiences of Inuit leaders to make right decisions for its people

Need confidence in people's ability to self-determine and self-govern

Need community leaders to act as catalysts for community mobilization

Need to develop culturally and community-based solutions

Need to integrate "Inuit ways" within governmental services

Need to improve existing government-run care services

Need collaboration between and within existing and future institutions and organizations

Need sustainable financing of projects

Need recognition and credibility within the larger social and political arena

Need support from researchers and health and social professionals to create or

buffer the links between communities and the larger provincial and federal settings (e.g. **lending** their credentials and credibility when requested). They must however ensure that the community owns the process

Need adequate services as determined by local and regional Inuit representatives
Need mobilization of Nunavik communities to assure that decisions and services are locally and regionally driven and managed

The regional leaders (Aiviit) decided to *encourage community mobilization* and decision-making and to *develop a community program for children and their families*. This vision became “Ilagiinut” which translated means, *for families*. This regional initiative started in 2012-2013. Ilagiinut is a regional project. It is available to all communities who wish to start on a similar journey to strengthen families and communities for children.



Tasiurvik, in Kuujjuaraapik, is the first project of Ilagiinut (For Families).

THE TUKTU- THE ORGANIZING GROUP OF TASIURVIK

In 2013, six community members (Tuktu) from Kuujjuaraapik formed a core group (board of directors) whose goals were to organize the family house. They came together to talk about the needs of the community. This is what they identified as the needs of families in their community of Kuujjuaraapik:

GIVING POWER BACK TO FAMILIES: IDEAS FROM THE CORE GROUP

A community space

A safe place to be together where values of trust, being grateful and volunteerism are promoted and then replicated throughout the community

A space, a family house, a prevention-focused location for sharing without expectations, for teaching and learning, for improving connections between and within families, for connecting people and services, for promoting existing resources, a space to find hope and motivation

A place to go with the kids, to break out from the routine to relax and have a coffee

A place opened on evenings so people would avoid the casino and the bars

A place to have moments to share with elders and to learn from them where traditional language is spoken

A place to have privileged moments reserved for elders, other moments for women or men, or teens, or for father-sons, father-daughters, mother-sons, mother-daughters and for couples.

A place to address concerns of the community such as trauma and grief, family disruptions, community disruptions, community mistrust and negativity and mistrust in services

ULLURIAQ – THE VALUES AND VISIONS THAT GUIDE



The organizing committee, regional board, researchers and funding organizations sought to be guided by the following values to make decisions and to deal with challenges on their path:

VALUES GUIDING THE ORGANISING OF TASIURVIK

Sharing
Gratitude
Doing for others
Collaboration
Harmony of interdependence
Accountability
Cooperation and acceptance
Teaching and learning
Recognising our blessings

ILLU : BUILDING A FAMILY HOUSE : THE EXPERIENCE OF TASIURVIK

1. Developing a common vision

2. Creating a space and plan activities

3. Reconnecting to others, land, and culture

4. Building trust, share ownership of project

5. Creating space for community decision-making

6. Connecting community and services



STEP 1: DEVELOP A COMMON VISION

To develop a common vision for the community, we brought together different people from the community through workshops, meetings, and discussions.

In Kuujjuaraapik this took about 2 years, following these steps:

- We held a 1-week workshop with 6 community members – Tuktu – to make decisions about Tasiurvik’s priorities and about building an action plan
- We held three community workshops of between 1 and 3 days over a 1-year period. All community members were invited. Between 7 and 15 people came for each workshop to develop Tasiurvik’s mission and vision based on community expectation and needs.
- We conducted interviews and door-to-door surveys to hear the vision of community members for Tasiurvik.

These are some of the ideas that community members had for Tasiurvik:

I imagine families being able to go to a place to learn of, from each other, teach each other stuff or exchanging information.

For families, for people that want to learn things. It makes them proud when they know to do things, when they learn how to do things. The ones that come they’ll really appreciate. If it changes one person it’s good. It can spread after that.

This place, people can learn to always listen to the elders, not talk back. That’s what I would say.

There are families who never go out camping because they don’t have the equipment and don’t have people to take them. [...]. The families are not able. There are people who are now willing to find out what they can do to learn but they don’t have the courage to ask.

The best thing I know personally is hunting. Because hunting is a big part of living in a northern community. (...) that’s a lot of show and tell. Even if the child doesn’t realize, the child is learning. Yes. Some people consider it like family time, but it’s a learning process.... It’s something being done together like for example, if you are out on the land, he may be, he is just watching, but it’s a learning process.

I want the young mothers to be strong, [...]. And if they learn something in here,

what they're learning they would be proud of what they are doing. What they learn, that they can do something.

If there is grass available, maybe next spring we can pick up a lot of grass [...]. There is a lot of young persons who want to pick grass, but they don't know which one when or where pick grass. Probably we will need to go with them one first time or maybe more.

So in this house we have the opportunity now to talk about it, to show them, to share with them. At any level of age group or mental state or you know?

Out of these meetings came this vision:

VISION FOR TASIURVIK

Develop community programs throughout the region for young children and families to increase prevention and lower placements under youth protection
Encourage community mobilization
Develop a community program for children and their families
Build on the needs of young families
Collaborate with the various local services
Promote available resources and local knowledge
Develop support networks

Out of this process of creating a vision, the core group identified these objectives for Tasiurvik:

- 1. To encourage community members to make decisions and take action for the wellbeing of their families**
- 2. To facilitate families re-connecting to land and culture- getting back to their roots and supporting each other**
- 3. To improve connection to health services. This includes:**
 - a) Supporting access to services**
 - b) Improving quality and cultural appropriateness of services**
 - c) Supporting services seeking to connect with the community**

WHERE TO GET SUPPORT TO DEVELOP A VISION?

Avenir d'Enfants may be able to offer small grants to communities who wish to start their community initiatives before 2018.

Ungaluk program finances community projects for family prevention. Ungaluk has developed a partnership with Canada Safety Plan. An Indigenous consultant may be able to come to your community to offer a community mobilisation workshop to start creating a vision.

KSB has developed a decolonisation workshop, which can be conducted in your community.

Other external consultants are available to offer community workshops. Contact the Regional Coordinator at Makivik for more information.

You can also organise community events, conduct interviews with key people and families in the community, or plan radio talk shows. For more ideas and tools you can contact:

Sarah Fraser at sarah.fraser.1@umontreal.ca



Tasiurvik
center

STEP 2: CREATE A SPACE AND ACTIVITIES

We received the support of the Northern Village of Kuujjuaraapik (NV) who offered a building, formerly the municipal building, and had also served as housing for construction workers. We needed help in transforming this building into a home-like place that welcomed families. We asked for financial support as well as manpower to help us make Tasiurvik a home. Different local organisations helped renovate the building.

WHERE TO GET SUPPORT TO FIND A LOCATION?

See with your municipality if there is a building available.

KRG has developed a fund to support community family house projects.
Contact KRG for more information.

WHERE TO GET FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ACTIVITIES?

There are different funds available to finance activities and different programs that are already available to be adapted to your community:

Health Board funding and programs include:

Pregnancy and Early Childhood.

Good touch bad touch

Community kitchen activities

KSB: Baby book project

For funding and support for the activities, Tasiurvik received financial aid and business consultation from:

Avenir d'enfants

Quebec en forme

Nunavik Board of Health and Social Services

Landholding

Hunter Support

Community members

Makivik Co.

The local Coop

STEP 3 - SHARE- RECONNECT WITH OTHERS, WITH THE LAND AND WITH CULTURE

Before feeling comfortable in making decisions together, people reconnected by spending time together and doing positive activities. There were no other objectives than having fun, respecting each other, and learning from each other.

The best way to hold these positive activities was by asking people of the community to organise something, or to share something that they like doing. Through community workshops, we developed a list of activities or knowledge that people wanted to share with others.

ACTIVITIES OF TASIURVIK

- Cooking
- Shared meals
- Movie nights
- Women's spa night
- Beading
- Sewing
- Meditation class
- Berry picking
- Qalinig making
- Embroidery
- Quilt making
- Basket making
- Hunting/Fishing
- Picnics

center

STEP 4: TAKE TIME – TIME TO BUILD TRUST IN ONE-SELF, TO UNDERSTAND THE PROJECT AND TO FEEL PART OF THE PROJECT

At Tasiurvik it took over 3 years for a group of people from the community to completely feel as if the project was THEIRS and that they could be the decision-makers. They explained that even if they were part of the project from the beginning and even if they created it, it could take 6 months or more to truly understand it and feel comfortable with it. Community decision-making based on community needs might be new for certain communities.

There are different actions you can take to help “appropriate,” take ownership, of your own process:

- At Tasiurvik we put ideas and values up on walls so that we were constantly reminded of them.
- Hold board meetings on a regular and consistent basis.
- Do “wrap-ups” or resumes of meetings at the end of each meeting to help ensure that everyone leaves with the same messages and understanding. Someone may take notes and send these out after the meeting as well
- Spend time as a group doing enjoyable activities with family members, like sharing a meal, doing traditional activities.
- Talk to people about the project. The more you talk about it the more you get to understand it yourself and feel clear about what you are putting together.



Tasiurvik
center

STEP 5: MAKE DECISIONS FOR THE WELLBEING OF OUR COMMUNITY

Once board members have a common vision, a safe space, and have spent time together learning to work together and trusting each other, then they will be able to start making decisions together as a group.

There are so many decisions to make throughout the process of developing a family house but here are some examples of important decisions that will have to be made:

- What is the mission of your organisation?
- How many people will be working at the center? Should people be paid for animating small activities or should it be volunteer work (sharing)? How much money should people get paid for different tasks?
- What should the board of directors look like? Community representatives? Organisational representatives?
- How should funds be spent?
- How should decisions be made? Should everyone agree on something? Or more than 50% agree? Should people vote?

Working as a group is hard. And we found that certain “ingredients” were important in order to feel positive doing group decision-making. Some ideas to help develop a strong decision-making team include:

- Identify the strengths of the different people involved in the team.
- Identify a “neutral” person who will be like an observer and a guide for the decision-making group without actually making decisions. Go to that person for support and guidance in difficult times.
- Develop clear values and guidelines of how you expect to work together on the project.
- Develop a group plan on how to deal with group conflict. It will often happen that two people don’t agree on something or someone might feel upset about what someone else says. Ignoring conflict will slowly make things worse.... So how would your group like to deal with these issues?
- Identify a communication plan: who tells who about what?
- Hold yearly or bi-yearly working sessions to make sure everyone is on the same page.
- Learn as a group how to hold debriefing sessions.
- Include activities not centered around tasks, such as the positive activities listed earlier.

HOW TO GET SUPPORT FOR FORMALISING THE PROJECT AND UNDERSTANDING IT

Link with other communities that have done a similar process. They will be able to share guidelines and protocols as well as of their experience.

We will also be planning regional meetings to help communities connect.

To qualify for support from the Nunavik Regional Health Board, you can write up bylaws for your project and make it into a not-for-profit organisation. The advantage of this is that you can receive extra funding; it ensures greater stability and sustainability of the project, and makes sure that there are clear guidelines/rules of working together.

The Health Board and KRG offer support to do this and can link you with a lawyer to help write your own bylaws.

The Ilagiinut team will be available to offer support as well.



Tasiurvik
center

STEP 6- CONNECT COMMUNITY AND SERVICES

People come from the South to work in the North. Just like the geese, these people often fly in and out of the community. Some have made the North their home, and others will only be there for short periods.

When interviewing community members and asking them about their experience with services they explained:

- Sometimes it feels safer to speak to people who fly out of the community because families know that their secrets are safe.
- But it can be frustrating because its long before you can build trust, and when you need support, the people are not always there.
- When people have a negative experience, they might be more discouraged to try again and end up even more isolated

WORKING WITH FORMAL SERVICE PROVIDERS, CONCERNS OF THE COMMUNITY

- Often services and community are disconnected
- Important decisions are being made by outside of the community, leading to a lack of trust within services and within the community
- There is lack of continuity between service providers, many providers leave.

Service providers also identified challenges in their work:

- Many are there because they care and want to learn and to help but are not sure how to do so in the best way.
- Sometimes they feel caught between the rules of the organization they work for and the needs of the community.
- Some also feel like they don't get to know enough of the Inuit families and culture outside of their jobs.
- Outsiders who work in clinics and the heads of the institutions often live in larger Northern or Southern communities and may make decisions do not fit with the needs of the community.

Hearing from both community representatives and service providers we came to understand that people would like to work together more. But we also came to understand that even if the best intentions are to all sit around a table together to make decisions, this can be very difficult, stressful and emotional. You might need to build trust and get to know each other slowly. There can also be some legal issues around who is allowed to do and say what to whom. Working in

collaboration can be done slowly and step-by-step to build communication and trust. Some questions you might want to explore with service providers are:

- How do we all work together to support people who are not well?
- How do we support families who are having difficulties?
- How do we get involved when a child is placed under youth protection?

HOW TO CONNECT COMMUNITY TO SERVICES

Decide what the objective is for you to connect with services: Do you want them to come and see you when they have questions? Do you want to provide them with ways of improving services? Do you want to offer a link between families and services? Do you want to advocate for families? Do you want to listen to what services offer in order to put in place other forms of services?

Depending on how you answer these questions, you can choose to do any or all of the following:

You can connect with formal and informal services from the beginning of the project by inviting service providers to the community workshops.

You might want to invite one service provider at a time to hear their experiences and to share your own experiences

You can also invite new service providers to meet with your board when they arrive to begin work in the community.

You can hire a community core agent who will be in charge of coordinating meetings with the support of the NV

You can start a local parnasimautik process in your community with the NV

For help in these questions you can connect agents at the health board who have already started exploring many issues related to connecting services and community. They can help with legal aspects and administrative aspects.

A research team has also developed some small tools to help you think about your community needs and how to collaborate with services. Contact sarah.fraser.1@umontreal.ca for more information.

ANNEX

THE NIRLIK : COMMUNITY MEMBERS WORKING WITH RESEARCHERS

Research activities:

Research topics and the methods of collecting information (conversations, workshops, surveys or audio or video interviews) were chosen by researchers and board members who met regularly together. These are some of their activities:

- Document the process of developing Tasiurvik so that other communities could have this knowledge.
- Document how families are doing in Kuujjuaraapik. Questions focused on physical, emotional and social well being.
- Document conversations with community members asking what they would like from a family house and how they would like to get involved.
- Document conversations with Inuit and non-Inuit service providers connected to institutions to identify how to work with children and families more effectively.
- Document stories and knowledge of elders for guidance.
- Facilitate workshops to invite community members to share thoughts and ideas for Tasiurvik.

Activities to share the knowledge:

- Knowledge transfer activities took place for four large groups of stakeholders. Local members, regional representatives, scientific community, and the general public. We try to make knowledge transfer as usable as possible by bringing small pieces of information that can help make decisions for concrete actions for the community.
- Researchers are now in the process of putting tools together for communities to use as they are planning their own family houses. This report is one of them. We can also share a short report that explains Tasiurvik. We put together a scrapbook of Tasiurvik. There are two videos accessible on youtube about Tasiurvik. We are putting together small pamphlets of Elder's stories.
- Researchers are also planning with the board in Kuujjuaraapik how to share the results from the community interviews.

THE NANUQ – LISTENING TO KUUJJUARAAPIK ELDERS

Life in Kuujjuaraapik changed tremendously over the past 60 years; some of these changes have been harmful. An elder spoke of how she had witnessed her own elders question their own self-confidence and capacities when outsiders had communicated that they were not as good or were less important. As Tasiurvik continues to grow, the elders bring us back to what is essential.

MOVING FORWARD GUIDED BY THE VALUES OF THE ELDERS

- Learning through experience, sharing, activities and being on the land
- Respecting each other
- Caring for one another
- Having faith
- Change, healing from trauma, adapting, trying to heal
- Being proud of being Inuit

Next we include the words of two of the elders living in Kuujjuaraapik.

Interview with Sarah Hunter Conducted by Rodrigo Valencia

When we were growing up I was always told to respect Elders. Even if they're a few years older than you, you have to respect them. Especially the old people. We were not told why. We were told to respect. Cause it was disrespectful to even ask the name of an old person. And some of them, like the other coast, I



heard one time this lady was telling me she couldn't even look at her older sister, she had to look down. Even talking to her, to respect her.

Ok. And what do you think about the youth, like let's say teenagers. What's your perception about the youth towards the elders today?

Maybe more can talk to an elder, more than we did.

They talk more to elders than you did?

And then to figure actually showing, and like “you do it like this”. But we weren’t taught that way, we were taught to look and just listen. They didn’t say “you do it this way, don’t do it that way” they didn’t say that.

You were just shown how to do it and that’s it.

That was the only way to transmit...Knowledge, yeah.

Okay. And what about nowadays, what do you think about the way that youth are, how they are interacting with others? Do you think it’s intrusive, or... ?

It’s kind of intrusive to me.

But maybe not with the younger person cause they grown up different than me, probably not as close to them cause we had to be, cause we had to live together. Daily living was more sharing than actually going one to one.

Yeah it was either that or you’ll be lost somewhere way back, left behind or something (laughing). Then you have to catch up. It was always me, because of my school and my illness when I was growing up. I was the one in the back. In the 1800’s the Inuit didn’t really live here, they were more nomadic. But once they start building the store, they started coming here. And the church, the church was the only one in all of Nunavik. And people used to walk from all over for the Christmas service. And my grandmother married a guy from the other coast when they came for church here.

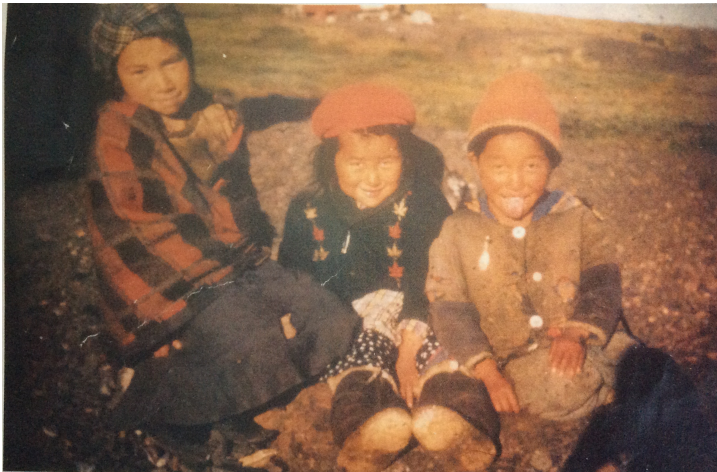
Maybe she was the stronger person because of where she was born, they didn’t go back. It was a bigger place than the place I was from. Because we were just living us, families or cousins, and there were a lot of people here, to me there were a lot of people. Cause more of the people were still nomadic.

Very fast, it changed fast.

It was scary, you don’t even think about what is going on around wherever, it was so much change. Like alcohol was a big change.

We were so adaptable to changes, we had to be.

It's slowly changing anyway back to family life, but it's still not as good as it was. And 70's it was not good, when the alcohol was introduced.



And the residential schools broke up lots of families. But we still wanted the best for our children, it's like that. We always do. Grandchildren.

When they organised us getting together. When we went to Inukjuak, first time we were asked to go to the

place. There was this place, they would say you're the mother, you're the dad and you're the child, you're the aunt you're the grandma, and it was a family unit but when this child that everybody loves was taken away, the other family started breaking up. It really affected me, I was thinking my mom what was she thinking when her child was taken away. And when they were sending me here when I was going on a plane she said don't let them cut your hair and when I first came here the first hour they chopped off my hair. And I remember mountains... we were all girls in that house, I remember the mountain of hair. When I used to remember that, it was hurtful. Just something's like that.

I think because I grew up mostly outside of my family, I used to ask "how come my mom is angry, always angry" just barely under the surface and just like that it comes up. And they used to tell me "cause you didn't grow up with your mom". I used to think "what does that mean, does that mean I'm different or what?" You know? I don't know... I never had any other life besides this. And there was a lot of alcohol abuse. Lots lots, like you wouldn't believe. Unspeakable things. Things you wouldn't want to live through.

The healing process is...It's long, it doesn't happen just in one night you have to go through it, like right inside it. In order to heal. You can't just ignore it, like "oh it will go away", you know? You have to go right through it, right in the middle of it.

And when I put the government to court I had to tell them how I felt, how it was inside me. And as I learned to numb out, that means no more feeling, no pride, just talk and talk and talk. Nothing touching me, and we went for a break and my

lawyer told me “you cried and cried when we talked about it, now what’s happening with you?” she was mad at me cause I was numbing out, I said I was numbing out, it’s the only way I could go through this. If I don’t I’m gonna go nuts you know.

And when I was looking at the white people they looked so much like... they looked like they were standing tall besides me, and they don’t get angry like me.



Like they just go along when something was happening. Things like that (laughing).

It was strange people looking right at you in the eyes, like for long, not just a glimpse or something. It’s like looking at the soul of someone, I don’t know.

And when people started complaining like my age, they went further to school than me cause I got married, but they went to further school than me and they start thinking “Sarah you don’t know we’re oppressed, we’re second class citizens”, or whatever it is down there. And I was thinking “what is she talking about” I was just living in my little corner, I had no idea. Just go along like everybody else, never dare to go the other way.

Is there any, I don’t know, more and more I’m here, I learn about the north, about people, the more and more I realized it’s not up to the strangers to change things to the way they were before.

I just realised that, we used to say “that person talks so nice, we should try and get him up here” but there’s already lots of stuff here, at home. Elders know but they’re just waiting to be asked. But they’ve been oppressed so long, it just become a way of life. We have lots of knowledge but we don’t always realise it or acknowledge it.

One day I went out at dawn to look for nests. And it had birds, just birds, just birds, just birds! And some are attacking us. Sometimes we picked the eggs but there’s already baby inside, so we have to put them on the water, if they float there’s a baby inside but if they sink they are still egg. So we pick only the ones that don’t float. But we leave some for the bird. And there’s usually lots of (inaudible) they have lots of driftwood there, it’s like out of this world.

I like it.

I always hang-out with these two elders. They're both 71 and 70 I think and they know so much so much compared to me cause they didn't go to residential school. And one time this lady I hang-out with a lot in the spring time and she started going "there's young seal skin, they're nice. In the freezer, let's go get some". And I took two, and every time she would say let's go get some and in the end she got seven seal skin. But then you have to clean, stretch, clean again and stretch again. Which I never did, cause I was always hanging around white people or white husbands (laughing). They don't go seal hunting. I gave one away to another elder and I decided I'm gonna try and do the other one but I'm not gonna tell anyone what I'm doing, in case I make a mistake. I took off the fat, then I stretched it on to dry, but I called one time to ask "do I have to do something else?" She said "you have to wash it with soap, it's all fatty". I putted on the wood to dry, then she called me few days later "let's go and scrape the fat of the dry part". And I took my skin, and she took some of her skin that she had, she finished them all in maybe two hours, and I was still at this one. It was part of her life before, just doing that all day. Here I am, cause I have the stigma of not knowing "she doesn't know, she doesn't know". And I wont dare say "show me", you know? Out of respect for them.

What they're trying to do (The family house), the work your daughter (Jennifer Hunter), is trying to do with others...

I think it will bring good to the community.

Cause the women is always the center of the home, if only she starts helping herself it would go around the family. It would be good for young moms to be here.

In what sense do you think?

For families, for people that want to learn things. It makes them proud when they know to do things, when they learn how to do things.

Do you think that younger generations will appreciate this place as much as you do?

Yes I think so. The ones that come they'll really appreciate.

Now do you think this project it's going to change something? Do you have any hopes?

If it changes one person it's good. It can spread after that.

To always listen to the elders, not talk back. That's what I would say.



Not talk back?

Yeah, cause talking back was a sign of disrespect. They survive by themselves many thousands of years and here we are putting them down. It's like they stop becoming part of the community

I always think about the young mothers, cause they don't seem to have the base tool, like really be a parent to their child, because they were like that at home with their moms, they tend to be like that to their children. Always outside stuff affecting them. I want the young mothers to be strong, not to be influenced from the outside.

And blaming people for your situation that's one of the biggest "I'm like that because of somebody..." that's always the case "cause he's like that I'm like that". But you realize you can change yourself without that person "Even if he's like that I can change like that".

And if the parents learn something in here, what they're learning they would be proud of what they are doing. What they learn, that they can do something. That they can't always depend on someone else. That it's up to them. Cause I couldn't fit it both worlds completely, I got the education but I didn't get my culture, kind of, not really. Cause it was a family unit and when I came into my family unit I didn't know the language, I didn't know the culture. And cause it's really really physical world they live in like depending on people to survive, and I didn't know how to even start a fire. They would say "we can't let her do it cause she can't, she can't do it". So for many years I was thinking I can't do it, it stuck to my head that I can't do things. And I was looking at other women like my age starting on their own and I was thinking "she's not scared to start something on her own" and I'm always scared to start, just in case I make a mistake. And somebody will say she can't do it. It's stuck in my head. But now I'm ... Even when the artists

came this fall, two of them stayed with me, and I was thinking “they can do it, anybody can do the beautiful things they make, except I’m thinking, I can’t do it, I can’t do it.”, you know. How come, they went to school the same as me and they make these beautiful art.

Elders we get stuck in our life, one or two maybe (laughing).

You need to be more adventurous?

Yeah.

You would like that? To feel more power, to get rid of that state of mind.

That stigma.

Yeah, and say “yes I can do it”.

Yes.

Well hopefully the family house will bring a little help for the youth and their families.

They are already doing it.

Anything else you would like to add ?

With words, be careful to people, what you say with words. You have to respect the person all the time no matter what.

After note

Sarah Hunter has been very inspiring to me. She always welcomes us with a beautiful smile. In February 2016 my five-year-old son and I were visiting Sarah. As usual Henkka was rummaging through her fridge stealing all the berries he could find. The \$13 price tag encouraged me to silently pull the small plastic container away from him. Sarah looked at me with a scolding look. « Feed him, he wants them? Give them to him ». Sarah was sitting on the floor with her friend plucking ptarmigan’s for supper. Henkka, curious, ran around to sit by her side. He watched. She then gently placed the ptarmigan close to him. She let him pull a few feathers. Then she put her hand close to his and pulled more feathers than he had. He watched silently and then imitated. They laughed. There were feathers

everywhere. My child was silent for at least thirty minutes plucking feathers, content. We all were. Thank you Sarah for sharing your story. Thank you for teaching us and for trusting.

Sarah Fraser

**Interview with Louisa Cookie Brown
Conducted by Rodrigo Valencia**

What do you think about this beautiful place?

Ah I'm so happy that we do have a family house. For many many years we have been waiting to get a place like this. People have been talking about how we can get something positive that they can share and get together. There are some adults who don't like to play bingo, to go drinking or using drugs so we are always kind of stuck at home or visit each other but not really a place to share all their knowledge or just to enjoy everyday work. Things can get really heavy and you don't have anybody to talk to. So when they started to think about getting this place I was so happy because it has a lot of values and a lot of potential to connect again with different age groups. I'm excited about that.

At the opening, you saw the amount of people, a lot of faces. What would you expect for all these people.

I was so happy to see the house packed with people when there was an opening. I barely made it in. I had to push myself through. I had to say "excuse me" to go all the way to where I was going to sit. I could see everyone. They were eager, they were anxious to hear what this place is going to be about. And I was also so happy to see some of the people who are kind of against getting this place. I said ah I'm so glad they came here to see what it means for people in town. The people who need this kind of set up...because it is new, they didn't have any other place they could use and it is as an example, they started, like the ages from 20-40 are the one's who are I feel very eager to get this place going because when we were in that age group we too wanted a place but couldn't find any because there wasn't any building and nobody to get it going, who are leaders.

When you were small how was life for you?

Before the government ever came to get the families together all over northern Nunavik, camps and places like that they had their own system where they functioned and lived by and they were very very strong and I think that is what those younger people were they say now that we are strong, we are strong culture, we are survivors, when they said that, I do remember the things we used to do. When we had to get a leader for the camp they used to be



appointed. They knew what their capabilities were and what strength they had and their ability to communicate and their ability to go out on the land, ability to be as a politician or appoint people who have different talents. But when we were brought here our lives were very much changed. We were told to vote and whoever wanted to become a leader had to sell themselves. In the past we never had to do that. I can do this; I can do that like campaigning. They never had to do that in the past because the people they were with already knew their abilities. They didn't have

to say that they are able to do that. They already saw what they were able to do and when we did live in that system, the obedience was very strong.

We were taught to obey not just to our adults but to our neighbours and they even taught us to obey who is the creator of this world and they made sure we understood that. They used to say he is the one who changes the seasons, he is the one who created these things and he is the one who created the animals and the Inuit and the people so. To learn that was ongoing at different level of age as you grew up and we were also taught to respect and if we didn't respect we really got scolded or we were put to shame almost, for us to really understand what it is to be respected and if people made a mistake people would say its okay, everything will be alright, so the respect even when you were a small child it was taught and you understood what it meant to respect and elders used to say if you respect who you are what things you do and what you are able to do, people will respect who you are. If you treat them horribly, if you treat them with anger you will never get the respect that you should have. So those were the different things we were taught, we were also taught to share, it was really big part.

We were also taught to care for one another. Not just to make sure that everyone is okay but to care even when you are not close to them. For example, when we have extra material for kamiks, we make them for people because we

know that they are in need. So we saw the care through that, we saw the care through raising puppies, that was because we didn't have paper and pen, most of the things were shown to us through the behaviours, through the voices, through the stories, through the activities.

We were also always told you have to have faith. If were going to go hunting, you have to have faith that you are protected. If animals are coming to attack there is a strong force that will protect you. You have to have faith that your husband, who is out for a month, will come back with food. You have to have faith that people will get healed again. If they go crazy a little bit, you have to have faith that they will come back to normal a little. The word faith, today, is used for religion, which is really not the right definition for the word faith. So when we try to talk to people about it they say oh she is just talking about religion, when I'm not. You know what I mean? So in this house we have the opportunity now to talk about faith to show them to share with them, at any level of age group or mental state.



Also, we have to remember people have been very very broken, their only transportation was taken away, like the dog teams. As an illustration...when the government said that they were going to kill all the dogs, I made sure that they were all tied-up. But regardless of whether they were tied or not, the RCMP still came and shot them anyway, and I was trying to stop him. I was trying to get in front of him. My dad had 14 dogs that we used to go out hunting with. My father covered himself and couldn't say anything for days. So later on he tried to find something to recover the pain he was going through, so he got into gambling and once he decided that gambling what not what he should do, he got into drinking. And he was used as a ranger to go on the land cause he knew the land a lot and I am mentioning this because he was not the only one that had gone through that. There were others who struggled in life. Their spouses were gone for a year in the hospital or for many months and having to raise their children without getting help, because all the other helpers were gone as well.

Another illustration... if we were to look at the tent, which has 14 strings that represent respect, faith, love, and other values that make a family strong, some strings were stripped away. So if we were to look at the tent, it would not stand

properly anymore. So eventually at one time, people would give up, like my father. If we were to have the two strings in the tent, that represents my family, one fell, and my mother was the only one trying to keep everything up and it was a struggle. And then the school came and then the only help she gets, the children, were taken into school and we had no choice but to go to school. So that is another thing that broke.

And then there were other things being introduced, things we had never really known and that nobody would explain to us, just like for example finances. And the government said we had to function this way in order to fit in their system. For finances, they said you could get credit but didn't explain about debt. It was a struggle to keep up to pay with things that they owed and I see that even today. Also the house has to be payed for and all these other expenses were introduced. And sometimes they only got half of what they had to know because of the language barrier. None of these new things were translated properly. They look at other people and say: maybe I could do it this way and okay.

The young people always look for something to do because from the time that they were children they were shown from the school different activities and when there are no activities they say its boring. But when I was a child no one had to tell us; we went straight outside. We had activities outside and if its too cold we would do activities inside. We would do a lot of pretending because our parents would encourage us and say go play, pretend to do that and we used to play with things.



Today I don't see the connection between children and parents because parents are saying that they are busy, they don't have time for kids. And for those who have time, kids rather do something else. Like today I see a 2-year-old child taking a camera to take pictures. They know what to do. They go around taking pictures. Technology has changed our dynamic. In between all that, the changes that I have seen, there was a lot of cheating, sexual abuse, hurting each other, child being born from another man or another women, so the family system is broken because of that, so therefore there is more suicide.

I mean it's not all bad. There are times when we did have a really good time, but the good times today require money. People will not go out and have fun without money. And if we were to have prizes and food here tonight we would have more people coming here because they want to see what they can win. Its sad and we have to get away from that and this place is going to help.

There are some things we will never get back, like the culture. There are families who never go out camping because they don't have the equipment and don't have people to take them out. There are people who do, but a hand full. The others, the only time they experience it is when the school takes them. The families are not able and they don't even push because they didn't have a chance to go themselves when they were young. There are people who are now willing to find out what they can do, but they don't have the courage to ask. So they end up staying in town.

What is it for you to be Inuit? Are you proud ?



YES I am. It is engraved in me, to be proud of who I am. My grandfather, he said "there are very few Eskimos that were put to this earth. Be proud that you are part of it. Take it, hold on to it, make it strong within you, learn about it so you will never let go, no matter what goes on in these days of hardship". Hardship meaning another culture coming in, other cultures taking over. I always remember those 14 things that I have taught you and one of the things he had taught me that I will never never forget when I has a child, when we were on the dog tea m, he took me out and he said when we were quite far from our camping area, he said smell.

And I said : I don't smell anything, what is it that I am supposed to be smelling. He said stop and smell and I stopped and smelled. I don't smell anything and he said close your eyes and I did and I said I don't think air has odour. And he said no it shouldn't have, unless you are in front of the smoke or something that is passing by or if you can smell animals but I'm not asking you to smell those things I'm asking you to smell the world itself. So I stopped and smelled and kept sniffing. And then he said close your eyes and I did that. Hold yourself, feel the air around you and then you can also hear and I started to hear things that I was not able to hear. I had to really calm myself in order to be really where he was asking me to be and he said now smell. (Smell) and I said : OHHH I think I smelt it. He said what did you smell? The change of whether, the whether is changing

the air is changing. "Oh ya you got it. That is the sense I want you to have in your life, in other words wake your sixth sense. You have five, wake your sixth sense." I said okay, now I understand. I don't see that in other cultures although people talk about the sixth sense.

He taught me that, I'm able to sense when people are in fear. I'm able to feel when things are happening. One time when we were picnicking I sensed the change and told others : « Ahhh change, we better get going now its going to rain or its going to get cold again ». And they didn't listen so I said : « okay you stay here, I'm going ». And half an hour later : « ah it got really cold. It got really windy or it started to rain ». And I said : « I told you, I told you had to get ready to go ».

Were you able to transmit your knowledge?



To some I was able to only when we were out on the land. It is very hard to do when you are in the house. Except when I used to do the counselling. I would talk to them to be aware of being aware of a child because there is always something behind what is being told. So some learned. I'm mentioning these because am I proud to be Inuk, yes I am. There are a lot of things that we have in our culture that other cultures are not able to recognise no matter how many times we show them. We are a very unique group of people. They have survived 60 below with no electricity nothing and it is from the food they have learned to eat to keep warm. I used to make sure that I didn't have game like caribou, seal or ptarmigan before I go down south for three days to cool my body in order to survive the weather down south. Because if I didn't I would sweat and sweat I would find it so hot and uncomfortable so I had to cool my body I learned. I would stop eating all game for 3 days before going south. At winter time when I used to travel I used to eat game before I travelled to get my body ready to cope with the weather here because the food that we have up here it affects. That is why when you see Inuit down south, they sweat because of the food that they had.

Even people my age we have to relearn to give. Pass on the knowledge that we had because they are good values. I'm not saying we should let go of everything because there are quite a few things that we need now in order to function and in order to survive in this technical world. We cannot go on without having to

pay for the house. We need a lot of things that were given to us. But we have to learn how to maintain everyday life.

I think some are ready to listen and to receive and some are not and will not. Unless their friends get really into it and really interested and then they will join in.

After note

One Friday evening, sitting on my sofa at home I picked up my computer and listen to the interview that Rod had done with Louisa. I stopped, started, went back, started again. Every theme could be directly related to our experience with Tasiurvik and to my experience as a mother. We had had so much difficulty with leadership within the project. People taking on tasks were often seen as threatening or overbearing. No one could « take on » leadership it had to be earned. It was only with time, through observable actions that people would « become » leaders to the eyes of others. You cannot just be elected, you need to emerge. This is a long and painful struggle. But Faith, not necessarily a religious faith, but a deep belief and trust that things will go well, is the only thing we could hold on to. How often have we, partners of Tasiurvik, had to remind ourselves “trust, remember, everything will go well”.

Thank you Louisa, it is through this interview that our experience started « making sense » to me.

Sarah Fraser



Tasiurvik
center

E. TASIURVIK FOR YOU : SCRAPBOOK PICTURES



center