

NGPRC Draft Recommendations¹

A: BUILDING RESEARCH AND POLICY CAPACITY

The Issues and Challenges

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 We need less bureaucracy to facilitate effective community-based research; and, 3) funding priorities are outdated, so we need to revise the process by which funding is allocated as well as do an evaluation of exactly what the community needs are.

Recommendation #1: Northern² Funding Foundation

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

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

Delegates of the NGPRC recommend to all parties involved in negotiating and implementing comprehensive land claim and self-government agreements to provide adequate and stable, long-term funding for

¹ As we compiled the priority areas/actions developed by the discussion groups, it became clear that there are actually four key areas. Harnessing new technologies was seen as a priority area that could inform the other four – full access to new technologies (i.e. internet) for all communities is necessary to support all the actions outlined below by strengthening capacity and ensuring increased community involvement.

² We need to be clear on what North means in this case. NT? NT/Nunavut/Yukon?

research capacity within regional aboriginal organizations. Creation of permanent research positions within Aboriginal organizations and Internal research units focusing on priority areas of research are required (e.g. Makivik Corp / Tlicho Government).

B: PRIORITY AREA: DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH AND POLICY NETWORKS

The Issues and Challenges

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

Recommendation #3: Develop a Northern Research Policy Advisory Committee³.

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

Recommendation #4: Intergovernmental Policy Networks

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

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

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

While this network would likely not become formalized, it could be agreed that the parties would meet annually to undertake a set of workshops or a working conference. This network would be extremely relevant for those groups involved in self-government negotiations/implementation with the GNWT⁴.

Recommendation #5: Expand Existing Research Coordination Frameworks

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

C: PROVISION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Issues and Challenges

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

Recommendation #6: An Arctic University

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

Recommendation #7: Community-based Researcher Education and Training

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

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

D: PRIORITY AREAS: IMPROVING RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

The Issues and Challenges

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

Recommendation #8: Making Research Accessible to Communities

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

Recommendation #9: Promoting Community-based Research Protocols

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

- 1) Identify research needs;
- 2) Encourage incorporation of local knowledge;
- 3) Provide guidance on the application of TK;
- 4) Implement community support systems to help communities deal with research problems that arise;
- 5) Outline translation requirements for research reporting, i.e. radio and consultations with communities in their own language
- 6) Specify ownership of data/knowledge by community;
- 7) identify a code of ethics for individual researchers, acknowledge by and enforced by the universities they are affiliated with, and,
- 7) Enforce complete return of information to the community – makes plain language summary a requirement for all research in the North;

Recommendation #10: University-Community Ethics Review Board

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