

# **The meaning of ‘bonding with the land’: An attempt in Igloolik, Nunavut**

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## **Abstract**

This paper looks at a land-skills training course organised by Inuit elders in Igloolik, Nunavut to explore their meanings of bonding with the land.

The study demonstrated that for the people involved in the courses being ‘on the land’ was ‘life’ itself, and was tied strongly to their identity and well-being. Their attempts were significant in two ways: first in providing an alternative way to pass on knowledge, substituting traditional modes of transfer, and, second, by signalling that the Western form of education is not ‘universal’. The research points to the notion of ‘respect’ as being central to education for sustainability.

## **Introduction**

The seriousness of the environmental problems we face has been widely discussed, as has the role of education for sustainable living in addressing these issues (Palmer, 1998; Quarrie, 1992). In the UK and USA, much of environmental education theory and practice rests on the assumption that human disconnection from nature is a fundamental problem (Abbey, 1984; Lindholdt, 1999; Orr, 1994; Russell, 1999; Thomashow, 1995). Many environmentalists and educators suggest that indigenous peoples’ traditional beliefs and the way they relate to the natural environment have significant implications for sustainable living (Beinart & Coates, 1995; Lee & DeVore, 1968; Pálsson, 1999; Sessions, 1995; Simmons, 1993). While the terms ‘indigenous’ and ‘traditional’ are contested (Agrawal, 1995; Schmink, Redford, & Padoch, 1992) and the diversity among ‘indigenous peoples’ must be recognised, these terms are used here in contrast to global mainstream ‘Western’ culture which has a Judeo-Christian background and a highly industrialised society.

There seems to be a growing trend in ‘traditional societies’, including Inuit communities in Nunavut, to restore the connection with the land by establishing the outdoors as a learning environment (Kushman & Barnhardt, 1999; Rediscovery International Foundation, n.d.). However few empirical studies have been

undertaken to investigate what these endeavours actually are and why these people, who are perceived as having this deep connection already, feel the need to restore it.

This paper attempts to contribute to the filling of this void by exploring an educational programme organised by an Inuit elders' group in Igloolik, Canada that aims to connect young participants with the natural environment. Its focus is on people's relationships with their environment and how attempts are being made to address these through education. It explores the nature and significance of the educational programme in Igloolik, as well as its wider implications, particularly in the context of education for sustainability. The discussion of education for sustainability in literature documented by Western education researchers tends to be situated within an Euro-American framework, and this paper aims to add different perspectives to the discussion.

The paper begins by outlining the sources of the data, research design and methodology. The community is briefly contextualised geographically, historically and socially, the organisers and the study programme are described and the meanings of 'connection' with the land are explored. Finally, the significance and implications of the educational programme in Igloolik are discussed.

### **Research design and methodology**

This study is a part of a larger scale investigation of seven cases in other parts of the world, all centred around educational programmes selected through 'networking' (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). As the research purpose was to explore the complexity of issues around people's relationships with their natural environment, an ethnographical perspective was adopted with a mixed research design based primarily on participant observation and semi-structured interviews, supported by document analysis.

The Igloolik programme was called 'Paariaqtuqtut', meaning 'meeting on the trail'. The programme was organised by a group of Inuit elders, the Inullariit Society (IS),

who have run various projects over the past 10 years or more as part of a 'land-skills training course'. Paariaqtuqtut involved a 400km journey over frozen rivers, sea, lakes and tundra between 2 and 11 May 2002. There were 12 registered participants (three females), aged between 17 and 31, and six elders as official instructors. However, as the elders and the participants brought their family members, and people from other communities joined in, a total of 66 people, all Inuit, gathered and worked together at the destination. The elders instructed and taught everyone who was with them. Consequently, there was hardly any difference between 'registered participants' and those who just came along.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted after the programme with five participants (including one female) aged between 18 and 31, one parent, four instructors and organisers, and six involved community members. Conversations with many more young people and community members contributed to the analysis. Most interviews were done in English, but translators were used for two instructors and two community members. All interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed. The accounts were analysed based on themes which emerged from the transcripts themselves and other field data. Only with their agreement, programme organisers and key informants were identified in the text which contributed to determine their credibility. While all data played a part in understanding their attempts, this paper focuses on the perspectives of organisers and adults in the community.

Researchers view other cultures from within their own cultural frameworks (Ascher, 1991); in this case predominantly Japanese. Circumstances, including my birth, did of course influence the research in terms of both insights and biases. Not being directly associated with historical 'oppressors' of the Inuit may have provided me a kind of neutrality in relation to people's general feelings, and my Japanese appearance was sometimes received with positive curiosity and friendliness among people in Igloodik. Some thought I was an Inuk from a different part of Northern Canada, and many said "We are cousins", usually with a big smile.

## **Overview of Igloolik**

Igloolik is one of the 28 communities (including Umingmaktok and Bathurst Inlet) spread across Nunavut, and is located on Igloolik Island, just off the Melville Peninsula and about 300km north of the Arctic Circle. The nearest community is about 70km south of Igloolik, and there is only one other community within a 350km radius. The most significant environmental feature of Igloolik is the surrounding shallow sea which is rich in marine wildlife and migratory birds (Crowe, 1970; MacDonald, 1999; RT & Associates, 2002). The fertile seas and the positive location have permitted relatively dense human settlement, dating back perhaps as much as 4000 years (Crowe, 1970; MacDonald, 1999; Rasing, 1994; RT & Associates, 2002). Iglulingmiut – the people of Igloolik - traditionally lived in small dispersed extended-family hunting camps, moving seasonally in well-defined territories.

It was only in the late 1950s that the settlement, which was initially started by a religious group and a trading company, began to grow with governmental housing and health programmes. While there were still camps and families outside the settlements in the 1960s, by 1970 nearly everyone had settled in one of two communities, Igloolik or Hall Beach. The whole society began to lead a life that was very different from that of their ancestors, and drastic changes in their society have influenced every aspect of their lives since then.

However, Igloolik, with a population of about 1300 in 2002, is still considered ‘the traditional’ community in Nunavut. While 70% of Nunavut residents speak Inuktitut language as their first language (Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut, n.d.), virtually all Inuit in Igloolik spoke the language fluently when I visited in 2002. Moreover, most Igloolik households (84%) regularly participated in harvesting. People caught seals, walrus, whales, caribou, fish, birds and bears, and shared the ‘land food’ in the community (RT & Associates, 2002). Fieldwork suggested that, while only a few dozen people’s hunting activities were intensive (in frequency and hunting period) and extensive (in numbers, kinds of species and areas covered), most

men and women could and did hunt, harvest and catch fish, especially in spring. Evidence regarding the involvement of young people in these subsistence activities is contradictory, however, and requires further research. Above all, what made Igloolik ‘traditional’ was people’s attitude and willingness to engage in maintaining this ‘traditionalness’ and a wariness about exposure to powerful non-Inuit values.

### **Education**

When Iglulingmiut existed chiefly as semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers, their ways of learning and transfer of knowledge addressed the practical and social skills that were necessary to be an Inuk in their cultural and social environment. Gradually, however, ‘the white people’ began to impose their education system and values. Schools and missionaries facilitated this assimilation process and contributed to the alienation of indigenous cultures. The effects of enforced separation due to schooling and inculcation of Euro-Canadian values are extensively discussed (Duffy, 1988; International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2000) and current schooling is described as culturally unmatched (Rigby, MacDonald, & Otak, 2000; Shephard & Rode, 1996; Tompkins, 1998), despite a governmental initiative to develop a culturally appropriate curriculum for Inuit children, completed in 1996, called *Inuuqatigiit*.

### **Paariaqtuqtut: Setting**

The IS was established in 1993 as a not-for-profit entity with nominally all Inuit in Igloolik over 54 years old as members. Its stated objective was “to preserve and promote Inuit culture, language, heritage and traditional values” (IS file, 1993-1998). An example of IS’s annual land-skills training programmes is shown in Table 1, summarised from IS documents. The absence of the Paariaqtuqtut observed in the present study indicates that it was an irregular project.

Table 1 Land-skill courses of the Inullariit Society

<b>Season</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Themes and names</b>	<b>Approximate number of participants</b>
Spring	June	Seal: Nattirasuk	24 (12 females and 12 males)
Summer	July	Walrus: Sammung	8 (2 usually males students/ boat x 4 boats)
	August	Caribou: Tuktuliaq	24 (12 females and 12 males)
Winter	Nov - Jan	Winter land-skills	As many as instructors (1:1 mentorship).

			Male only)
All year round		Sewing in the community	

The IS selection procedures favoured participants who would not have had a chance to experience land-skills under normal circumstance. Those who dropped-out of school and/or who have social problems were given priority. Instructors were also selected by the society. They were usually elders who were experienced in living on the land, knowledgeable about traditional skills and cultural norms, and willing to teach and to act as role models for young Inuit. Instructors were often chosen as a couple (husband and a wife), but it was also usual for male instructors to bring their wives along. Pre-programme meetings with instructors ensured that they knew what to teach the young Inuit. Teaching topics included: navigation, place names, how to stalk caribou or seals, the recognition of hazard, firearm safety, vehicle management, sled loading, snow formation, weather prediction, etc. However, such knowledge and land-skills were seamlessly woven into the daily routine during the course.

The programme was usually held at a hunting or camping location used by Iglulingmiut for generations. Each instructor or instructors would be responsible for two to three young people, living in the same tent and acting as one unit, throughout the course. Each unit was functionally independent. This unit worked as a ‘pseudo family’, and it served as a vehicle to pass on life skills and values to the young people through sharing life during the course. There were times when several units would get together for an activity, in a close simulation of ‘traditional life’ where movement was conducted by an extended-family unit. It also replicated the way in which knowledge and values were traditionally passed down.

### **Paariaqtuqtut: A journey and learning**

Paariaqtuqtut was unusual for the IS in the sense that for the first time it involved the other communities. The groups of elders and youths from two communities met at Nagvaak, a traditional camping site approximately halfway between the two

communities, to celebrate their historic and family links, and their attachment to the land, by hunting caribou and fishing in the local area.

As mentioned earlier, a total of 66 people (around 40 people from Igloolik) gathered at Nagvaak, plus several people who happened to stop by while travelling. There was a reasonable age distribution in the group (the oldest was 76 years old whereas the youngest, the son of a registered participant, was nine months old), and there was an atmosphere of extended-family gatherings as a whole. About one third of the company were females. More than 20 snow machines, pulling sleds or sled-houses, transported the group to Nagvaak and once there, 14 canvas tents and some igloos were built.

Teaching and learning continued throughout the journey from the very beginning. On the morning of departure, each participant went to his/her instructor's house and helped with packing and lashing the sleds. Under the elders' guidance, they learnt how to pack sleds efficiently and safely as bad packing could lead to a loss of belongings and serious accidents. At the end of the first day, having covered about 120km from Igloolik, the group camped at a well-established area that was sheltered by hills and had been used by Iglulingmiut for centuries. The instructors had already taught their students the nearby place names, where a fishing cabin was located, who owned it, where certain kinds of animals and fish were to be found and so on. The young people were also coached in how to arrange the interior of a tent, maintenance of a stove and fire, and how to melt ice efficiently to make water etc. They were expected to learn by observing and doing rather than by being told what to do.

Later on the trail the leading group spotted four caribou on a hill a kilometre ahead and stopped to hunt. This was an opportunity to watch the way the hunter approached and caribou responded. After the caribou was shot and brought in, children and young people watched the skinning, the order in which parts of the caribou went to different people (e.g. female elders were first given the marrow) and the manner in which people behaved. An event like this conveyed cultural norms

and values without being explicit. During the course there were a number of collective events with similar functions, including a feast to eat the 'land food' and building a 'church' from snow. Learning mostly occurred when appropriate in a real setting, rather than in a prescribed manner.

### **Background and objectives of the land-skills courses**

The perspectives of the IS directors, elders and informants of the background and objectives of the courses fit within three categories:

- to preserve and promote Inuit culture;
- to counter the breakdown of traditional modes of knowledge transfer;
- and to address social problems among young people.

#### *Preserve and promote Inuit culture*

To preserve and promote Inuit culture was the IS's stated intention and this objective was repeated, sometimes strongly, by elders. For example:

We don't want them to forget the way in old days. We don't want [young people] to forget how people used to do things. That's why. That is why the Inullariit Society organises courses. That is why. (MJ, 25 May 2002)

[looking surprised at the question 'Why do you support the programme?'] I'm one of the old ladies and know quite a few things. There are no books and no records of what people used to do in old days. That is why I am here. People can't learn unless they come to camp. (NJ, 9 May 2002)

#### *Breakdown of traditional modes of knowledge transfer*

When asked the reason for organising programmes when many in the community were hunting and fishing regularly, the straight answer from elders was 'because many young people do not know land-skills'. Many comments from interviews and

the Igloodik Oral History Project at the Igloodik Research Centre document support this, suggesting that the lifestyle change from land-based to settlement-based life had resulted in the breakdown of the traditional modes of knowledge transfer. This traditional approach was based on a community directly sustained by the land and working together with extended-family members. Contemporary settlement life, with stores and governmental assistant programmes, made people less dependent on the land. Family members did not take their children out to the land, often due to lack of resources, money, equipment and time. In this respect, IS provided an alternative way of knowledge transfer. Life in town also made people less dependent on family and/or others. An increase in the number of children per household also contributed to the situation in which elders and adults did not spend much time with young people. Moreover, many young people would rather stay in town with their peers than go out to the land with their families.

Some cited the introduction of schools as disturbing traditional knowledge transfer and all interviewees suggested that classrooms were not suitable for teaching and learning Inuit knowledge and land-skills. Undoubtedly, schooling played a significant role in the process of social change as 'foreign' educational institutions interrupted traditional modes of learning. The impact of schooling was significant and there was a continuing tension between school and the community.

Consequently, quite a few children were unable to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to live an Inuk life in the way in which their parents did. The government's failure to meet people's educational needs was often implied during interviews and conversations with adults.

#### *Social problems among young people*

Social problems such as alcohol and drug abuse were also cited as factors that had influenced the development of land-skills courses. Some informants explained that the land-skills course was a good way for young people to learn to be independent and live according to the 'land norms' as Inuit had always done. Rasing (1994) states that Iglulingmiut in the past had exercised a high level of both self-control and

social control, which enabled them to live in relative harmony and order. He suggests that it was a characteristic of Iglulingmiut hunters that they needed to control their emotions to increase their chance of success. The implication is that if young Iglulingmiut were trained to be adequate hunters, they might re-learn these qualities and the absorption of these skills might mitigate some of the social problems faced by young people.

### **The Modern significance of the land**

One could argue that as a society changes, the knowledge and skills required to live well in that society also change. Iglulingmiut life has changed dramatically over the past 40 years. They now live in houses with modern amenities including electricity, running water and satellite TV. Food is available in shops and restaurants and there is a government social assistance scheme. Faced with such changes, what is the point in learning land-skills and maintaining traditional culture?

The analysis indicated that IS promoted the traditional knowledge principally from safety concerns. Then why did people go out, risking their lives? Going out to the land was usually associated with subsistence activities such as hunting and fishing. However, several interviewees said they sometimes went out just for the sake of it. Whatever the motivation, being on the land and subsistence were *de facto* an essential part of their life, and promoting relevant traditional skills was seen as vital. There appeared to be three reasons for this:

- food as local economy and as cultural significance;
- being and becoming an Inuk;
- and relationships with the land and well-being.

#### *Food as local economy and as cultural significance*

Subsistence activities provided Iglulingmiut with food. From accounts of Igloodik residents and an officer in charge of a government income support scheme, financial support alone was not sufficient for an Inuit family to sustain themselves. If two people in a household worked at one of the two main stores in Igloodik, they could

pay for food for a family of four, but may not be enough for rent or other necessities such as fuel and clothing. In 1999 over 40% of the labour force in Igloolik did not have a job (RT & Associates, 2002) and 65% of residents were estimated to be receiving income support (A municipality officer, fieldnotes, 14 May 2002). Clearly people needed food sources other than the stores and the sharing of land food was strongly practised by Iglulingmiut. They ensured that anyone could get a share of the food and hunters were not paid for their efforts in cash.

However, hunting is costly. Though many people described the land food as 'free', hunters incurred real costs in both resources and time. Hunters needed cash to pay for fuel, oil, snowmobiles, boats, engines, ammunition, maintenance, trail food, camping equipment, emergency equipment etc. The present study indicated that the hunters were likely to be supported by someone's wages and/or social assistance. Though it may work out as costly for hunters, the country food they brought in had value for the community, which frozen meat at stores could not replace. It is significant to their cultural well-being. People expressed the intimate connection with land food in variety of ways.

We have to have meat. When you are an Inuk, you have to have meat. (UJZ, 23 May 2002)

It is our tradition to hunt for food. When you are an Inuk, you have to hunt for food. You don't get paid for it from others if you give food. (KL, 23 May 2002)

Sharing is based on and reinforces a sense of collective survival. Even those not involved in hunting can identify themselves as Inuit by sharing land food (Nuttall, 1991).

### *Becoming an Inuk*

The section above implies a link between eating land food and identity, and many elements in interviewees' accounts related to 'being and becoming an Inuk'.

The president of IS, Arsene Ivalu, mainly stressed the need for physical survival in his comments about what young Iglulingmiut needed to learn. However, learning survival skills was also clearly tied to a recognition of 'who they are'. To master a range of interrelated survival skills, one needs to be out in wild areas for extended periods. These skills include knowledge about climate, navigation, animal behaviour, use of animal parts, mechanics, firearms, team work and a capacity to improvise as well as an appropriate attitude towards inherent danger and unpredictable circumstances. Being and working outdoors involves values and lessons for life. These values and attitudes include patience, persistence, calmness, humbleness, respect for elders' wisdom, respect for animals and spirits, not wasting resources, being in harmony with each other and respect for animals and *sila*, a complex concept to link the individual self and the environment (see MacDonald, 2000; Nuttal, 1991). This is how an Inuk should be in order to survive and be successful in living on the land. After all, 'being an Inuk' is a manifestation of retaining culture and knowledge, which is the stated objective of the IS.

Often 'being and becoming an Inuk' was referred to as 'being how they used to be', when Inuit were living a semi-nomadic lifestyle with a greater degree of independence. Many people seemed to revere this model of life and to feel that there was something amiss with 'contemporary Inuit'.

### *The relationship with the land and well-being*

Other notions identified as being linked to 'being on the land' included well-being, family ties, language, connection and survival training. These notions were interrelated and taken together also contributed to 'becoming an Inuk'.

The 1994 funding proposal stated that “Inullariit Society promotes proper relationship between Inuit and the land” (IS file, 1993-1998). This was not the romantic notion that outsiders might imagine, as Ivalu explained:

You have to be in relation to the land where there are the animals in order to survive...so that you can have country food. And it's good for your health to be out on the land because you grow up there...out there. You grow up out there, it's in you to be out there (15 May 2002).

This comment expressed his view of the strong bond between Inuit and the land. Moreover, this was how a ‘proper relationship’ was understood among Inuit elders: not only would you survive, as you would be able to hunt, but also remain healthy. One informant in her 50s, Iyerak, explained the importance of being on the land as the “well-being of the person, connection to the land. Connection to wildlife, to everything...the environment” (23 May 2002). This clearly indicates the Inuit’s perception of the intimate and inseparable relationship with the land. A notion of ‘well-being’ was expressed as health, happiness, pleasure, freedom, beauty and quietness. Some mentioned healing linked to a notion of ‘being on the land’, which included serenity and peace of mind. Some informants such as Iyerak and Ikummaq who had attended a residential school away from home powerfully emphasised the meaning of being on the land, perhaps because their personal experiences of being cut off from the land made them aware of the importance of such relationships.

Connection to and relationship with the land was also at core of the Inullariit worldview. This was expressed in many ways but were categorised in terms of ‘time’ (including ancestors and the past life), ‘place’, and ‘web of life’ (the bigger world including spirituality). The interviewees’ relationships with the land and the natural world could be represented by ‘respect’, which according to them, would naturally occur by recognising people as being part of the Earth.

Tapardjuk's comment below summarised how all the ideas around being on the land were interlinked and were also connected with the rationale of the Inullariit's training course. He spoke without a pause, as if everything inside of him just poured out:

Culture and dignity, and practical skills for sure. They all come together because Inuit look at them holistically, they don't look at compartmentalised. We try to promote the holistic approach. If you go on a survival programme, you are actually getting trained in everything from diversity of the land, communing with the land, all the spiritual aspect, and...the whole world...I mean, you have to be out on the land in order for you to recognise you are a part of the Earth, you are to respect the Earth in order for the Earth to provide you with your need. So there are a kind of the spiritual aspects that you have to train the young people including survival skills. With that comes the pride, dignity and a sense of self-worth, so we are working towards the sub-determination how young people can work on their own with proper coaching from the elders. (Interview, 23 May 2002)

### **Different opinions in the community**

The overwhelming majority of older community members considered hunting essential for an Inuk and that land food was important physically, culturally, socially and spiritually. However one respondent held a different opinion, arguing that people in Igloodik did not accept that the 'old culture' was declining:

I am not sure, but it is really a genuine desire to hold the identity as the way people used to be. Realistically, I think it is IMPOSSIBLE [original emphasis] to be like people used to be. It is 21st century. But it is a genuine desire for people to remain as it was. (14 May 2002)

He hunted only in spring. He ate land food only once a month. He grinned and said “I’m a funny Inuk, you know”. He went to a boarding school at the age of five, returning home only for the summers. After boarding school he went to many different places in Canada for work and further training. He had siblings who had not left home for school and he concluded that this was the main cause of the differences in thinking and attitudes between them. His vision of Igloolik seemed to be based on the practicality that the community would not be able to become self-sufficient with only subsistence activities. He did not deny the value of the Inuit tradition and culture, and he clearly identified himself as an Inuk, albeit ‘a strange one’.

### **Findings**

Elders’ accounts and field observations all suggest that the traditional mode of knowledge transfer was not fully functioning in Igloolik. As a result, some young people were not equipped with sufficient land-skills and knowledge to live off the land. This concerned elders and community members from a safety perspective as well as from the standpoint of future survival of their culture. They also associated young peoples’ lack of land experiences with other social problems.

The IS programme was devised as a response to the perception that schools were failing to provide what the elders and community members felt to be important. Their rationale was that by taking over some of the land-skills educational responsibilities traditionally located in the family, young people were guided to ‘be and become an Inuk’, the core of this being establishing a connection to the land. For elders and other community members, being on the land would deliver everything necessary to learn as a whole person, an Inuk. This involved land-skills, values, knowledge and other interrelated elements they would need in order to fully sustain their lives in contemporary Igloolik, not only physically but also emotionally and spiritually. The implication is that learning through the land would equip young people to cope with life in the midst of rapid social change.

Survival was defined collectively as well as individually, and identity was strongly tied to an awareness of connection to the land through time, place and the 'web of life'. In general, people's lives in Igloodik were directly involved with the land. Their relationship with the environment was intimate, tangible and inseparable, and their well-being depended on it. Amongst elders and community members, the core social and cultural value was indicated as 'respect'. This applied to all relationships, including those with elders, animals, spirits, *sila* and the land. By 'respect' the Inuit mean 'sustainability' (H. Brody, personal communication, 20 July 2004) as, in their worldview, by treating it with 'respect' the land will provide what they need.

The extent to which the IS's mission to promote and preserve Inuit culture has been successful is not clear from this study. However, if Paariaqtuqtut and similar land-skills training initiatives offered by the IS were responses to a political failure to meet the Inuit's social and cultural needs, there was enough evidence to suggest that their programmes could help in resolving these issues. Brody (1983) states that importing a Western educational culture into Inuit society created "nervousness about the future and weakness in the present" (p. 210). The community needs both cash earners and meat providers and in this respect Inullariit's efforts have eased 'nervousness' in the community. Attempts such as the IS's were significant contributions in two ways: first in providing an alternative way to pass on knowledge in traditional ways, and, secondly, by signalling that the Western form of education is not 'universal'.

Ways of learning and teaching as well as curriculum content should be locally adequate and culturally appropriate. Perhaps the Nunavut Government could help to sustain local educational efforts, since the formal school system alone is not meeting the educational needs of Iglulingmiut involved in this study. At the same time, Iglulingmiut would need to establish a framework to support non-wage-earning hunters in order to retain their connection with the land and to strengthen their future.

Contemporary life in Igloolik relies heavily on external assistance. In the current economic framework, the way of life in this large Arctic settlement cannot be maintained without such assistance. Almost everyone I met expressed concern that the assistance might not last forever. They felt that in order to secure a living without relying on external assistance, they had to know what the ancestors knew so that, in theory, in the event of an extreme situation they could continue to survive.

In connection with the issue of sustainability, it was the Iglulingmiut's strong desire that their immediate environment should continue to support them. The Iglulingmiut's way of life was rooted in certain relationships with animals and the wider environment. They relied on the environment for their physical and cultural survival. Their lifestyle and their relationship with the land were expressed as continuous, as they used the land that was used by their ancestors over generations and that would be used by future generations. An elder, warning that the Inuit are losing respect for wildlife, states that "A long time ago Inuit would prepare for the future. Because we did not want to experience hardship we were told not to kill wildlife just for the sake of killing them" (Nunavut Arctic College et al., 1999, p33). The goal of sustainability is believed to be realised when people continue in a proper relationship with the land. In order to achieve this, people need knowledge of the land, proper treatment of the animals they hunt and respect and awe for *sila*, the universe and outer world. In this sense, the IS's programme was Iglulingmiut's response to questions about a sustainable future.

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