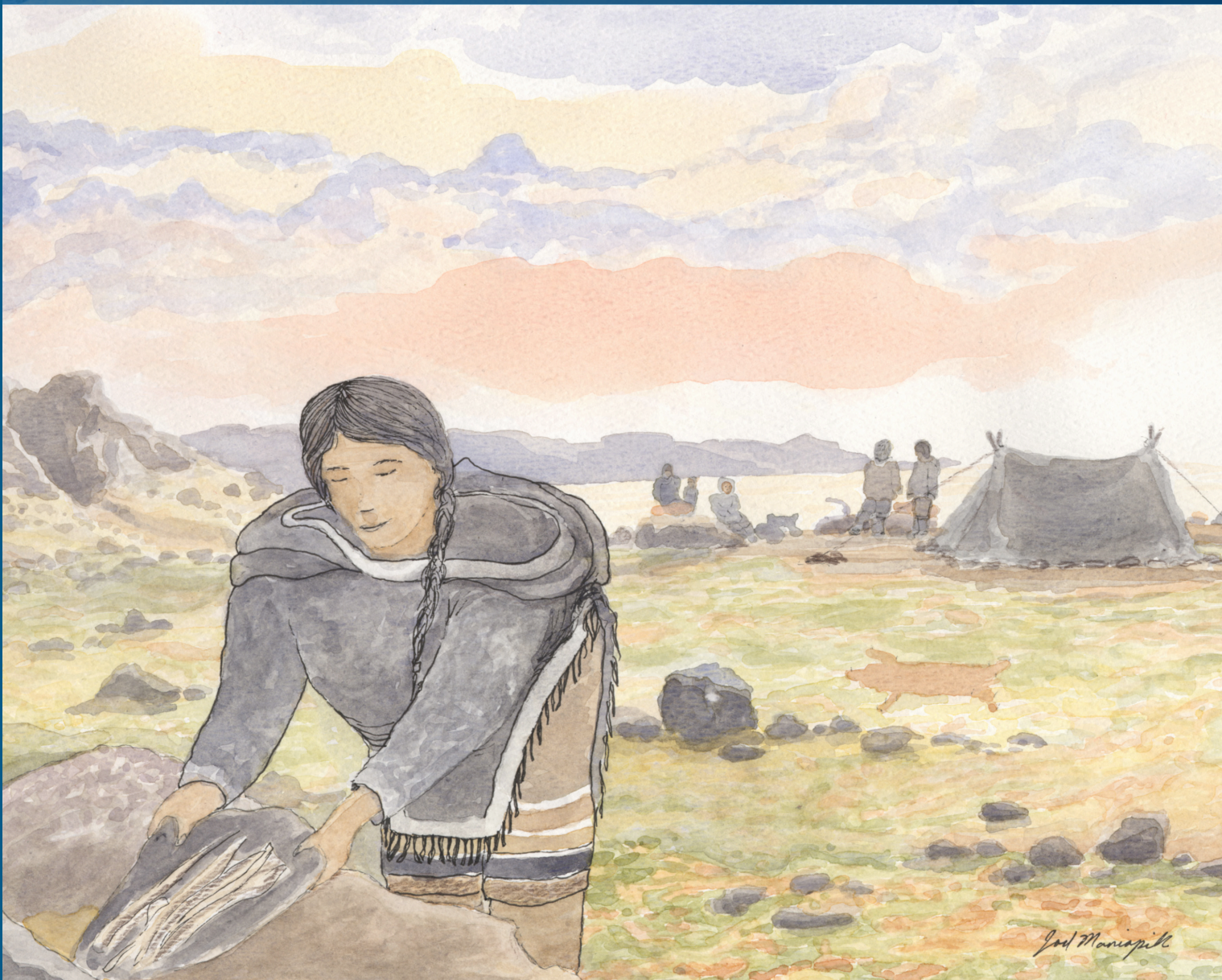


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*Inuit Customary Laws:  
The Foundation  
of Inuit Wellbeing*



# **Inuit Customary Laws: The Foundation of Inuit Wellbeing**

E N G L I S H   V E R S I O N

# Minister of Culture and Heritage, Honourable David Joanasie Opening Address, October 28, 2019

I would like to welcome all of you to the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Conference: Inuit Maligait Piqqusituqavut Inuuttiarnirmut – Inuit Customary Laws for Wellbeing.

Many of you have travelled long distances to be here; we welcome you to Iqaluit.

I would like to give special recognition to all our Elders in the room. You are the centre of this event and of our culture. We have the privilege of hearing your knowledge and wisdom over these two days, and we, as participants, are prepared to be humbled, inspired and challenged by your words. Thank you for being with us today.

The response to this conference has been overwhelming. We are 110 people here today eager to learn and share about Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Customary Laws. I am told one participant said she was holding on to her spot for dear life she was so looking forward to this event.

The inclusion of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit into government has long been one of the goals of our Inuit leaders that negotiated the Nunavut Agreement and the creation of our territory and government. They wanted to ensure that Inuit themselves would be in positions to make decisions that are important to them, including our culture. The GN has reaffirmed this commitment through *Turaaqtavut* by prioritizing Nunavut as a distinct territory through Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and the Inuit Societal Values.

The desire for knowledge about IQ and for more guidance on incorporating IQ in the government has been felt across the GN and has led to the creation of *Iviqtipalliajut*. The Department of Culture and Heritage tabled this framework in the Legislative Assembly in 2018. This is a framework for the government that aims to strengthen the use of Inuit Societal Values in government workplaces, in policy and program development and in the delivery of government services to Nunavummiut.

Listening to our Elders' knowledge on IQ is the foundation as we move forward on this. Now is the time to be a public service and a government that is recognizably built on Inuit Societal Values. This is what we will see in the Government

of Nunavut when it is clearly functioning on the basis of Inuit Societal Values. We will see public servants working well together and building good relationships with stakeholders. We will see a future where departments are working together to create holistic and innovative ways to engage Inuit in addressing the needs of all Nunavummiut and their communities.

When Nunavummiut can look at the work of the government and the services the government provides and feel that they are respected, heard and understood, and that the government is clearly using the values and knowledge that have been handed to them over generations, then the government will be able to say that the pieces are in place.

I welcome Shuvinaï Mike, the Director of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit for the Government of Nunavut, who has done a tremendous amount of work to bring us to this point. She will lead us through the conversation during these next two days, and again, I want to welcome you once more from Department of Culture and Heritage and wish you a very enjoyable, informative two days together.





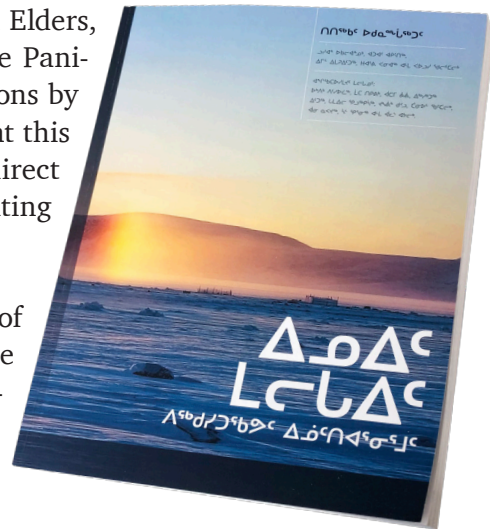
Lighting of the Qulliq, Kigutikakjuk Shappa, Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit Katimajit member

## The Launch of *Inuit Maligait: Piqqusituqavut Inuuttiarnirmut*

Shuvinai Mike, Director of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit at the Department of Culture and Heritage introduced to the workshop *Inuit Maligait*, a new publication in syllabics that was officially launched at the conference.

The contents were collected from four Igloodik Elders, Lucien Ukalianuk, Meeka Atoat Akittirq, Herve Pani-aq and Pauloosie Qulikhtalik, and from discussions by the IQ Katimajiit. It is not available in English at this time; to show respect, we need to study the direct words of the Elders in Inuktut before representing their words in English language concepts.

Each conference participant received a copy of the book as a support to the conference theme and deliberations. This book is a clear articulation of the basics of Inuit law.



### Highlights of Feedback Received from Participants

“Excellent conference. It will be highly recommended to others.”

“Thank you for this rare opportunity!”

“I’m so grateful for a conference like this.”

“The focus on Inuit Elders’ knowledge was very compelling.”

“I would like to see more of these IQ conferences being offered. The information we gained is extremely important for our people. These are guidelines to live [by].”

“The acknowledgement of the impacts of colonization [was very much appreciated].”

“I learned (again) how critical this work is and how we’re working against time. This is high stakes and we have to get it right.”

# DAY ONE



## KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

**Gamailee Kilukishak – Inuit laws as relevant, valuable and necessary**

## Summary

*Inuit Maligatuqangit* (Inuit Customary Laws): Gamailee says that people have been breaking Inuit laws and there are consequences. In any system of law, *surainiq* (violation of the law) has consequences, but also has fixes and corrections. There is a chain reaction when a law is violated : *piqujaq-surainiq-aaqqingniq*; in the qallunaat (non-Inuit) way it is the same: there is a law, a violation of that law, and a consequence for that violation. Using a personal example, he describes how he hid his violation of Inuit law in one case and he therefore suffered the consequences. He says Inuit would look for *pijjuti* (source, reason) when something was off course, such as if there were no animals, or if sickness was present. According to Inuit law, the origin of sickness can be found in the breaking of Inuit laws. He suggests that if Inuit were to follow *Inuit Maligatuqangit* there would be fewer people in the hospital because health and vitality practices are built into these laws and customs.

### Q&A: Summary and Highlights



## Inuit in the government workplace

A discussion was raised about the demands of Inuit to be expected to self-promote in government: many Inuit struggle to promote themselves because Inuit are taught to be humble and self-effacing. The qallunaat way is to promote themselves, for example, in job interviews and career advancement. Gamailee responds that in the current context it is okay for Inuit to adapt and promote themselves. He further explains that this cultural norm came from shamanism in the past. Inuit were taught not to boast in case it caught the attention of a shaman. Some shamans were threatened by power and could target someone who was promoting themselves. Gamailee added that in politics, in the voting processes when candidates' self-praise, we must really look and see how they live in their home life and assess what is the real character of the person. Self-promotion of any kind needs to be evaluated in the context of a person's integrity.

## Two sets of laws in conflict for Inuit

Inuit have two sets of laws today: their parents' ways and the modern ways. How can we use Inuit laws today if someone is sick, for example? How do you identify the hidden reason and heal using Inuit law?

Gamailee says one has to become familiar with the traditional laws, techniques and approaches and then they can be a resource. As an example, he says if someone has almost drowned, there is a method used by Inuit traditionally to revive that person. This method is different from the western medical approach. There are many aspects of Inuit laws and practices, but the first step is becoming educated about them.

## Inunnguqsainiq: Making of a human being

Gamailee explains that in *inunnguqsainiq* (the making of a human being) everything influences the process: the pregnancy, the birth process, and the baby's first impressions. These experiences direct where a life will go, what the child will be like and what they will do in life; for example, there is a law that says a husband should never get angry with his pregnant wife because that negative energy affects the development of the child. Today it is taught not to drink while pregnant. There are other things that are taboo, and to be strictly avoided in pregnancy. This is a very complex topic that cannot be covered lightly.





#### KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Miriam Nilaulaaq Aglukkaq – Ongoing validity of Inuit laws today

## Summary

Nilaulaaq says that Inuit lived very independently and resourcefully. There were no modern supplies; there were simple methods of hygiene, for example, diapers - and it worked very well. Inuit also had many stories to go to sleep with at night; these stories taught them everything they needed to know about *Inuit Maligait*. The words and terms of the *maligait* are important and relevant today.

She explains that Inuit worked well together without sharing the same dialect. They made everything themselves; there was no metal, no sewing machines, no needles. They used found materials, such as driftwood. She asks for a moment to remember the ancestors, the ones who were able to live like this. Inuit were economical; even little things were not to be thrown away. Additionally, no animals were to be played with maliciously: this is a fundamental law because all survival depends on them.

#### Significant terms:

- Pinirluktailiniq – prohibition on wrongdoing.
- Ijiqsimanngiluni – no secrecy, ijiqtaqanngiluni – no secrets.
- Aturnirluktailiniq – no abuse of substances.

#### Q&A: Summary and Highlights



## Discipline and children rearing

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There was discussion around past and current disciplinary practices: *Iniqtiriniq*. In the addressing of wrongdoing, Inuit were clearly corrected and guided by traditional means in the past. Today this is not the case.

The Elders expressed the need to convene with youth to help the younger generations understand what methods were used before. Nilaulaaq shares how when she was a small child and when she was misbehaving, she was made to cry. She describes looking at the light of the qulliq through her tears hearing her mother say, “You were misbehaving, and you were made to cry. Now remember why this happened”; from this she was to learn the lesson.

Never yell at children, as they will listen less and less. Parents and teachers need to communicate together to address a child’s behaviours and needs.

If we can’t do something well, we will do better if we are not criticized, and expected to be good at something we are not. Understanding the feeling of the learner is important whatever their age.

## What of the middle generation that has made mistakes raising children?

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A participant expresses regret about some of the ways they have raised their children and asks how these wrongs can be corrected.

Gamailee responds with how Inuit learn and correct by role modeling and observation. Dog teams follow their lead member, and if the lead is astray, the whole team is. When the lead is back on track, the whole team will be. We pay attention to our example.

Nilaulaaq adds that Elders sometimes make mistakes with their grandchildren, such as giving them too much and then the grandparent has regrets about it. Meeting with others and sharing with each other about Inuit ways of parenting is a way to address it because you can see different ways of handling situations with children. This is how to heal the past and make for a better future.

Gamailee says that the child’s wrongdoings must not be spoken out to anyone once it is dealt with. This is important. Don’t perpetuate or shame someone through reminders or gossip.

Isaac Shooyoo speaks of the law *sirnaaqtailiniq* - parents are not to take sides in fights or arguments between siblings because it helps to avoid sibling rivalry. Siblings need to be in a firm position of helping each other for their general wellbeing.

Joe Karetak observes that it is triggering emotionally when one learns about the traditional Inuit ways before colonialism: we can see how we were raised, and how we raised our children differently from the traditional Inuit ways and moving on begins with our own healing process. It does make a difference. Our children will have to go through that process eventually as well when they become open to it.

David Iqarialu agrees that *Inuit piruqsaijjusingit* (Inuit child rearing) needs to be practiced. The modern way and the Inuit way are too different from each other. They don't always have a way of blending. This is a foundational issue.

## On living in two worlds

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The difficulty in navigating two different education systems when raising children was acknowledged. What is taught at school and what is taught at home are different. There is also a concern about how technology is playing a bigger role in the lives of young people and how this is interfering with childrearing.

Shooyoo agrees that there are two competing ways: Inuit ways at home and there's a different way at school. There needs to be better communication between the systems for children's success because the two ways in competition with each other is hurting Inuit.

Gamailee adds that Inuit ways need to be documented and shared, so the challenges can be identified. There are two heads: one is Inuk and one is qallunaat. This is the situation today, but he says he only has one head - an Inuk one. The youth come to him and he is bewildered by their situation. Elders can convey what they know of the Inuk way, so that the younger generations can see what they are faced with, have a clear picture.

Iqarialu quotes from the *Inuit Maligait* book: "*pijariakkittuunngittut Inuit Maligan-git*" (Inuit laws are not instant). He says progress can be made by working together. It is a collective process. If we are learning together we can make a very long arduous job very short and effective.

Kigutikakjuk wants to make clear that Inuit are not against qallunaat when it is said that Inuit have their own ways. Qallunaat have rules and so do Inuit. Both cultures have good rules and both have consequences for not following those rules.





#### KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

**Kigutikakjuk Shappa – the importance of Inuit laws of childrearing and controlling influences**

## Summary

There was a strict taboo about children listening to conversations among adults. The children were sent outside, especially if adults were sorting out their own conflicts. Young minds were not supposed to be exposed to *aivautiniq* (arguing) between any adults because it can cause rifts. Nowadays this is not practised, but this law needs to be brought back.

Always be generous when children visit by sharing a little bit of something. They will always remember. The most destructive behaviour to give into is when children grab and demand things at the stores. If they don't have money, let them suffer a bit, so they will learn self-regulation.

#### Q&A: Summary and Highlights



### Highlights of Feedback Received from Participants

“The CH team is amazing – they do so much work on a daily basis to support departments. This conference furthered that dedication. Nakurmiik!”

“Meaningful questions, meaningful dialogue.”

## Teaching children healthy boundaries and self-discipline

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When serving children food, it is observed that often people ask their kids what they like and what they don't like. It is better to just give them food. If they are hungry they will eat. This will prevent fussy eating.

Kigutikakjuk says that even when she was given a small amount of something she was expected to share with younger siblings. Asking a child what they want and giving them too many options is destructive to their character. Asking them, "Do you want this or that? Do you want to go here? There?" they are made to be the boss. If they are denied a bit, the child will learn that life is not always agreeable if they are expected to deal with basic circumstances. Nowadays children slap their fathers and their mothers, and nobody corrects this terrible behaviour. This is the same for both the Inuit and qallunaat ways of raising children currently.

## Not exposing children to adult differences and conflicts

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As grandparents dealing with grandchildren, if we discipline our grandchild and their parent sides with the child, that disagreement needs to be dealt with in private – *suraksautauniqpaangujuq* (or it will destroy their character). Seeing adults disagree openly is the most dangerous behaviour for children to witness. Ask the other adult in private, "Why did you *sirnaaq* (take sides with) them just now?" Let them explain, and then they can learn from your experienced point of view.

## Infant feeding

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Kigutikakjuk says in her day there was no commercial baby food available like there is today. When babies are able to hold something, they can hold a bone of seal with a smell to help develop a good palate and a taste for healthy food. Don't ever say to a child, "Do you like this? Do you hate that?" Just give them a little bit and let them try it and experience it. Train their palate, so they have good food experiences.

Iqarialu adds that, as children, they favoured Inuit foods. What we feed babies is important to think about. With adoptions, the babies were given broth. Some adop-

tive parents could breast feed. All this needs to be reviewed and given as options when people adopt today. If children are adopted to friends or between Inuit, that is one thing, but if a child is adopted to another culture it can cause issues in the long term. These questions also need to be addressed in light of Inuit laws.

## Inuit custom adoption

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Kigutikakjuk remembers that Inuit used to only adopt a child out to relatives. Now children are sometimes adopted out because they are not wanted or can't be raised by their relatives. This part is new to Inuit. It costs a lot of money to raise a child. She thanks people who adopt children.

She observes that sometimes qallunaat adoptive parents choose not to tell the adopted child that they are adopted. She says this is not good as the child will grow up and be very hurt when they find out and realize they didn't know their biological family. Also, the child might ask about their looks and why they have a different skin color than their family. This is more of an issue when Inuit children are adopted to families in the south. How the child is told about their adoption has to match the stage of development of the child. Go slow. If they are told too much too quickly, they may wrongly believe that they do not belong with their adoptive family. Be open and go slowly, but don't forget that they need this information to know who they are.

## Apprehension of children

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There is discussion about child apprehension and how it is not the Inuit way of dealing with family issues.

Kigutikakjuk acknowledges it is a big subject. Inuit as a group look after the children. If a child is not wanted, that is one thing, but if they are wanted this is another. If a parent is immature and unconsciously affects the child there needs to be support to help the parents learn parenting skills. People generally do not mistreat others on purpose. It is a lack of experience or our untreated trauma.

Iqarialu adds that Inuit are told that if children are cared for correctly they will grow up to help their Elders in every way, they will treat their Elders well in return. There are consequences if we don't raise our children properly, it's a natural law. *Piruqsainiq* (raising children ) and *paqqittiarniq* (correctly guided care) need to be a priority today. Whether it is a biological child or an adopted one, the rules

need to be known. Even an unborn child can be impacted emotionally. If they are shielded from negativity while in the womb, that supports a good outcome. There are dangers to be aware of. It should be understood that we are making *ikajuqtiksat* (helpers) of our grandchildren and children. This begins in the womb and at birth. *Ajunngituksaliarinasuktugit* (making them able to become capable). It is regrettable that some of this knowledge has been lost and today it's often not fully understood.

## **Inuit traditional naming system – *Attiiniq***

Questions were raised about the practice of *attiiniq*, and how it can be followed according to tradition.

There is much to this topic, but there are two main guidelines: request the permission of the family to use the name of their relative who has passed away; and, if the child is named after someone who is dear to you, resist the temptation to spoil them because of that.

### **Highlights of Feedback Received from Participants**

**“It was excellent for the three regions to meet, from Qikiqtaaluk, Kivalliq and Kitikmeot.”**

**“There is an entire, and incredible team at Culture and Heritage that focuses on IQ!”**

**“It was very important to learn about *Iviqtippalliajut* framework.”**

**“This is the best conference in Nunavut I have been to...”**

**“The best part was the diversity of Elders, presenters and Q&A opportunities.”**

**“The conference was well organized with presentations of practical and relevant information for today's challenges.”**

**“The diversity of perspectives and the immensity of knowledge in the room – this is such a unique opportunity...”**

**“The conference was [a] very open, nurturing and welcoming atmosphere – everything was laid on the table.”**





#### KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

**David Iqarialu – Inuit foundational laws, governing practices and principles: Inuit perspectives and experiences**

David shares some of the resources used at Piqqusilirivik (Inuit Cultural Learning Facility of Nunavut Arctic College with programs in Clyde River, Baker Lake and Igloolik), such as the ancient history timeline of the Arctic as well as some of the books and resources used in the courses to understand history as a whole.

He says this research has been done by Inuit. There is a lot of documentation. There is no reason to say Inuit traditions have not been articulated. We still have Elders, but they are fewer and fewer, and it is urgent to work together with them – more than ever before.

#### Q&A: Summary and Highlights



## Inuit foretelling of newcomers

A participant said they had heard that before outsiders came to Inuit, someone had a dream. In that dream he saw the faces of the outsiders; some of them had light faces and some had dark faces. *Inutuinnaunngittut* – they were not typical looking Inuit. He said “*tikitaulaaqtugut*” (we will have other people come to us). Is this true?”

Iqarialu says they knew it was going to happen and they knew they had to be welcoming and accepting of newcomers. They had newcomers who were mean, and this was a breaking point. Our ancestors worked hard to know far into the future. They were awe-inspiring.

In the old days, people would try and figure out what the root of a suicide was. There was always a reason. Today we don’t ask. This is not our culture, but it seems accepted. Inuit need to practice their culture, so they have a means to deal with life. Can we look at this issue and ask “what are the reasons? *kisut pijjtauvat?*” We need to find solutions.

# DAY TWO

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

**Isaac Shooyoo: Inuit systems for social development**

Isaac begins to say he is not against Family Services or Justice, but says we need to acknowledge the impact of the systems imposed upon Inuit historically and currently because they do not reflect our values and ways.

## Preparing men for their responsibilities

Men had their tools and young boys would learn by observation and experimentation. Although he was raised this way, he shares that he feels he didn't do this properly with his own children. It is important to speak of the traditional ways today, so that future generations can know what is the real way of Inuit. Parents were central to the raising of children and teaching them Inuit Societal Values. If we leave behind these traditional ways of transmitting culture altogether, it puts into question the order of our lives. In Inuit culture, the work of learning was built into all of life based on the home and the parents.

### Q&A: Summary and Highlights



## Loss of cultural access

It was expressed that Inuit have lost so much and that so many traditional ways are not practiced. How do we deal with the current reality?

Shooyoo responds that some know, but many don't. We can only transmit what we actually have. It is important that IQ is recognized fully and taken seriously, based on the ones who really know. If we look back far enough both Inuit and qallunaat cultures have this strong ethic of listening to parents. *Naalattialaurlugit innait*: listening to the Elders, respecting their guidance.

A participant asks how one can arrange their home and their affairs according to IQ. The younger generation can feel criticized for a wrong approach to IQ, but feel they don't have a clear path on how to correct it.

Shooyoo says we have to work with the systems in place, such as the school, for example. But if IQ is fully accepted, and has clear recognition, it is a starting place and a good foundation.

Joe Karetak adds that a child needs to be recognized as Inuk. If the school does not reflect IQ as a standard, it denies something essential in the child.

## Anger

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The subject of dealing with anger is introduced: in the past, social and emotional intelligence was developed through the Inuk way. Today there are two ways of dealing with anger: the qallunaat way and the Inuk way. How does one deal with anger using IQ?

In response, Joe Karetak shares his personal story: His father had to deal with his son's anger. When Joe was three years old, he was sent to Clearwater Lake for a year and a half for medical treatment. During this treatment he was not to get off the bed or touch the floor. He remembers being home later and feeling anger. He learned the importance of dealing with and containing anger as it is likely the most dangerous of all emotions. Anger cannot be resolved by using words or talking. It needs to be digested and understood. He worked a long time to do this, even to the point in his life of becoming a grandparent. He can see the good effect on all of his relationships. His grandfather would say if you always get angry you won't be helped as much in life. It took 20 years of working closely with Inuit Elders daily that it shifted for him, as well as taking an anger management course to help him see the patterns he was dealing with.

## Christianity and Inuit traditional spiritual system

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Shooyoo says he was aware of *angakkuit* (shaman), but not raised by that system. There is only one *tungavik* (foundation); only one creator-force. He's witnessed that religion can have a negative effect because people can get divided and have claims on different gods. Even the Catholics and Anglicans were in competition. He

says he's not criticizing this; he's just explaining his observation. He does not claim to be superior or one or the other. His IQ work is different from this. Before religion there was a system that was spiritual. Today it is different because everything needs to be written down, not like it was before.

Joe Karetak adds that human beings have a tendency to have a belief in something for whatever reason. He shares that one time in January he was with his son, and an ice pan broke off. He says that in that moment he was aware of the strength of the belief he was taught. When going through hardship, it strengthens your belief. When life is easy it doesn't have that effect. Like anything else, religion is a system that is helping us to follow our beliefs. To be better than one or the other is not the Inuit way. *Ukpirniq* (belief) is a subject of interpretation. Like everything else, religion and belief have positive and negative sides to it. Belief is like a particular diet – what works for one is not going to work for another. People from different places eat differently.

## Inuit Maligait

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A participant shared that he was reading the *Inuit Maligait* publication in the office for two weeks. He says the wisdom in it is “truly ... foundational. It is a very important piece of work.

## Early waking rituals for children

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We are taught that our children are supposed to go out early in the morning. What is the origin of that?

Joe Karetak explains that while working with Angalik, he learned that Inuit are of the environment, so they need to be oriented to everything happening in the environment. At sunset, they would look to see what would come tomorrow. They would try to guess and learn by trial and error. The cold outside also wakes up the system. As we cannot ignore the environment, Inuit need to have this training and attitude to feel encouraged to keep going. It's a practice that helps breath and body regulation, as well as connection to the changing environment.

Shooyoo says he was raised this way, getting up early and going outside. This is an example of laws that are not recorded, but are passed down and are known to be of great value through direct experience.

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**

**Joe Kayakyuak Karetak: Elders work in Arviat**

## Summary

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Joe shares that he was named Qayakyuak (Qajaarjuaq) by his dad after Joe Curley. For some years now he has worked in Arviat with unilingual Elders from all the regions in an advisory capacity. He is thankful to the Department of Education because it let the Elders work in their own way. The Elders are consulted on how they want everything to go. They direct the process. Remembering the impact of residential schools is important. Inuit need opportunities to share the experiences of residential school to better understand the impact on people in the communities. These wounds effect everyone in the system, and we need to keep that in mind when we are working with the Elders. The topic of residential schools came up slowly over time.

He says he had a good upbringing, but the qallunaat way was in competition for time and attention with our traditional ways of hunting and surviving on the land. The qallunaat way is to prepare someone for a single job, such as a fireman; but, what if I want to grow up to be a hunter? That was not acceptable. IQ instruction in school needs to prepare a child for a range of future roles, including western and traditional skill sets.

There is a lot of similarity in IQ laws across Nunavut, but there are variations depending on the particular environment - whether ocean or inland, for example. People were taught that when visiting other Inuit lands to follow the rules of the people there.

The way of the Elders is not to assign leadership easily. This process takes a long time and careful observation.

*Inuusiqattiarniq* - having a well-functioning *inuusiq* (life) - is the fundamental goal of life. Everything returns to this. Balance is restored when one's life is based on *inuusiqattiarniq*.

We see it *iluittuullugu* - in a holistic way - not in little parts. An example of how our

culture is viewed in little parts and not in the whole as it should be is when Elders are brought into the school for one lesson when they should be a constant presence; it's about all the aspects of life, not just one skill and this can only be received properly in the whole, and not in a small part. IQ needs to be organized on its own terms based on the ways of the Elders and with their direction. We are filling in the pieces together. Joe says his father gave him three main rules: no lying, no giving up, and look up to the Elders. He says he has followed those three laws pretty well. Then his father also added – ‘don't cause conflict’. This one is hard, so his father said, “well just don't start the fight.” His father also said if dogs are not behaving, whose problem is it really?

If we don't heal, it keeps coming around again and needs to be dealt with.

#### Q&A: Summary and Highlights



## What would give IQ its rightful place?

Gamailee asks what would it take for IQ/ISV to have its rightful place in Nunavut.

Joe believes that today writing can be used, especially to speak to the younger generations, but it's still best conveyed person to person. The direction of Elders is needed to make this integration. The people are always needed for it to be authentic.

## Envisioning IQ local structures

Joe observes that one of the things about Inuit structure and IQ is that if you study the way people managed their family, that structure is a model and it provides support. He feels strongly that it would help build IQ structures and supports in communities if there was a funded Elder advisory support committee in every community. In his experience, when Elders are on staff at the Department of Education and are given the chance to review plans, the input of the Elders enhances the proj-

ect. They make sure nothing is left out. The Elder advisors need to be a part of the planning from the beginning, and not just brought in along the way. There needs to be a person who is available to communicate everything with them and people who can be the bridge as well. Working this way takes more time and working in a bilingual setting can slow things down, too. We want a bilingual system, but then try to squeeze it into one small structure. We need to allow for a wider view.

**Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajiit (IQK) is an external non-governmental committee of Elders that is a resource for all government departments to consult on their IQ initiatives. This committee is supported by the IQ Division of the Department of Culture and Heritage. The IQ Katimajiit members are advisors in their home communities as well.**

## **IQ Educational material**

In education, assessment and evaluation of students is key. For IQ, though, assessment and evaluation require something very different: it requires looking at the whole child and over a long time on a very individual basis. 60% or 70% of an igloo is NO igloo at all, yet the Western standards require a grade, which is not the Inuit

way of assessing success. Also, it is difficult to break things up into lessons because in Inuit culture everything is connected. Book learning by itself is not acceptable to Inuit. There is also a shortage of competent teachers to carry out the curriculum.

## Anger in men

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Joe shares about anger and about his healing process. He says it is an individual journey. People express it differently, but by gaining an understanding of Inuit history it brings an understanding of why people are the way they are. For a while he saw a counsellor. The people helping in a therapeutic role need to understand the societal change Inuit have experienced and the hurt that is carried collectively. One can experience the effects of trauma without having experienced something directly by being in a society with societal wounds. He runs a Friday evening support group for men who don't feel safe to go anywhere else. The Elders help sometimes. This space creates opportunities for interaction. He says it is more difficult to address if the person is struggling with mental illness. There is a lack of services in the communities to deal with mental illness. It does help greatly to have an understanding of the impact of colonialism on Inuit. He says this was part of his own healing, understanding what Inuit went through. It helps if you have someone to go to. He says that family support helped him get through it. When self-understanding is not developed, we have trauma.

## Understanding the meaning of IQ

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Gamailee explains that IQ is an important term with a deeper meaning. It is not at all like anything in English. There is a single, a dual and a plural, and IQ is a collective matter based on its actual phrasing: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit [plural form], not Inuk [singular] or Inuuk [dual]. If it is the knowledge of a person it would be: *inuup qaujimaninga*, which describes an individual's experience and perspective, and everything they have learned. But *Inuit Qaujimaningit* (their knowledge) *Qaujimajatuqangit* (their traditional knowledge) is collective and relational. It means we are in this together and are interdependent.



## IQ healing method

A participant shared that when Isaac Shooyoo was on the Justice standing committee his perspective was helpful. People were visited in jail, and because of his work there were new initiatives in justice. Thank you to him. There is an initiative to try to get more Inuit counsellors. There is a new place that will be opened.

Isaac Shooyok says he wants to share more about *mamisarniq* (healing): it is *pirjuaq* (essential) and *pillaktaa* (real). We all have ... secrets. What is missing are safe places to disclose these things in order to heal; for example, when something has happened, someone shares it with someone else, and when it is spread around this causes more trauma. A person is broken even more when this happens and can even be at risk of suicide. *Inuusiliriniq* (re-balancing life the Inuk way) is *pirjuaq*, as well as not to *siammak* (spread) stories, and to respect confidentiality. *Pinnguanngunngimmat inuusi* (life is not a plaything, not to be taken lightly). He wants to see *inuusiliriniq* (re-balancing life the Inuk way) unfold, to be taken seriously. The struggles to get it recognized in government was a very long hard road. It has been his experience that government has more *tuluqtarutit* (barriers) than *ingirraviiit* (pathways). We need to address this.

## IQ can be used superficially

David Iqarialu observes that it is clear schools do not reflect the principles Inuit live by. There were people who came to Piquusilirivvik to talk about IQ like they knew what it is. They didn't share Inuit culture and were not informed at all. There are many people who can speak Inuktut, but don't have the way of thinking; the perspective is completely missing; there is no *tunngavik* (foundation). One has to learn Inuit culture before anything can be understood at all. We want to infuse IQ in government systems, but there are barriers. In law, for example, the perspective is different between the Inuit and western systems. This is controversial and the reality is contentious. Inuit have to speak the truth and deal with it rather than be idealistic.

In order to help a child using IQ principles, he describes how he can see the signs of imbalance in a child, and will work with that child, overseeing them and helping in some way. He says he is in awe of Shooyoo and of how Isaac bridged the two systems and brought together something of value. Inuit love children and love to guide them. Inuit value their culture above all. He says that when Inuit go through the hardships of cultural loss, their youth don't have a mechanism to learn what they should value. They lack a sense of their rights and what their heritage is. Back in the old days, a 13-year old would be very capable, but today even 25-30 year old people are still struggling for a job. The 13-year old knew he had to learn to keep his family warm, to make an iglu, learning was survival based.

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**

**Shuvinai Mike: *Iviqtippalliajut* - a framework for IQ**

Shuvinai Mike describes the work leading up to the tabling of *Iviqtippalliajut*. On November 7th, 2018 *Iviqtippalliajut* was accepted by the Legislative Assembly officially as the framework for how government will operate using IQ, and as the foundation for IQ/ISV work. She explains they worked long and hard in the IQ Division. The real issue for them was the lack of a collective framework within government. In the IQ Division, the Elders are their authorities, their bosses, guides and educators and the IQ Division works hard to give voice to that. This date, November 7th, is so significant and important to us - the tabling of the framework - that there's the suggestion to create an "IQ/ISV Day" to be celebrated on November 7th each year, and to commemorate it with a gathering.

They have been working on *Iviqtippalliajut* for a long time, making the foundation. Though people have been saying here at the conference that there is no authoritative basis for IQ; fortunately this foundation is *Iviqtippalliajut*. It is a process, a verb not an act that is completed just once. This framework allows for a basis for Inuit to work with people who have a different culture from Inuit to really begin to hear and support what Inuit require and what our intent is.

Why do we so easily follow other cultural traditions, such as using Mother's day and Father's day. We even use those occasions and terms in our language; however, we have a more urgent need for our culture to be respected at a deeper level than that of mere translation.

It was back in Igloolik (1998) that the term *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* was brought forward. *Kajungiqsaijugut tamaani* – this gathering is bringing forward exactly what the Elders intended back then. So many people had to be turned away from this two-day forum. It's on each one of our shoulders here to bring this forward now, those of us fortunate enough to be here, we are privileged – and we represent a new collective that is tasked to realize the goals of *Iviqtippalliajut*.

The foundation is already accepted by the Legislative Assembly for this framework. With *Iviqtippalliajut*, there is a clear way for the smaller initiatives and efforts – the pieces to be gradually placed together. This includes a framework for review, monitoring and the collecting of data on the efforts being made and the gaps to address.

Peesee Pitseolak adds that Inuit ways are not used in the workplace because it is

said that an explanation is needed. *Iviqtippalliajut* is a real support to this barrier. Inuit ways have a rightful place in government, and everyone is tasked to support this mandate. The framework offers space for all the aspects that have been spoken about over the past two days. It is not just needed in the workplace, but everywhere in the territory.

#### Q&A: Summary and Highlights



## Momentum and commitment for IQ/ISV

A participant commented that there are many examples where work done by Inuit has been thrown out, and there is a need to keep up with the demand for what Inuit need and to not let it slip away.

Gideonie Joamie (ADM, Department of Culture and Heritage) says it will require inter-departmental effort for *Iviqtippalliajut* to be implemented.

Shuvinai Mike adds that there will be a working group to bring it all forward, but *Iviqtippalliajut* is the basis for this. The framework makes space and opportunity for all the relationships to be guided by Inuit ways.

David Iqarialu agrees with *Iviqtippalliajut*. It is clear and it will be helpful. It is short, but effective. It is agreed to by government and this is a good basis. With it, Inuit can work with others who are not from Inuit culture. It is an effective framework and basis for building something together. He states he is in awe of the Department of Culture and Heritage for creating this. Nunavut began in 1999, and nowhere were there laws for IQ. After nine years in Piquusilirivvik, they have created a lot of IQ curriculum on their own. The way to work with IQ is to do it by example and demonstration. We are all putting all the pieces together.

# Conference Summary

The following is based on a review of feedback gathered and overall comments made during the sessions.

There was acknowledgement of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Culture and Heritage team that ran the logistics of the conference; an impressive model for conference delivery. Each table was supported by a departmental staff, the staff presence and caring and consideration for many small details was very noticeable and appreciated.

The overall conference was a success with regards to gathering diverse employees (GN Departments, NTI, other) and Inuit Elders and their supporters into a forum to explore Inuit Maligait as the basis of Inuit wellbeing. The critical importance of *Iviqtippalliajut* in supporting IQ/ISV in policy, programming and workplace functioning was acknowledged as timely in the context of the conference theme. *Iviqtippalliajut* is the practical and authoritative means for re-establishing Inuit wellbeing through consensus building on Inuit Maligait.

The conference provided needed inspiration and connection to IQ/ISV and Inuit Elders, but it can also be viewed as a needs assessment, as a foundational gathering from which many streams of IQ/ISV activities and initiatives were identified through the written feedback forms. The conference from this perspective offered much concrete advice to the Department of Culture and Heritage and the IQ Division for how to further provide outreach, connection and support for the IQ/ISV mandate.

## — Highlights of Feedback Received from Participants —

**“[The conference was] timely, meaningful, inclusive, reflective, respectful, important, empowering..”**

**“Very humbling experience! It always amazes me to see Elders at the same level as everyone else.”**