

Welcome, welcome to a new episode of Polar Times, the podcast that brings you science and stories from, literally, the coolest place on the planet.

My name is Damien Ringeisen, I would like to first, before I introduce the episode, I would like to thank everyone that I've been listening to our podcast because we've reached the 5000 listenings, so it's been great and thanks a lot for everyone out there interested in what we have to share.

So about the episode of today, this is the third episode of the sense of the Arctic miniseries from the APECS Science and Diplomacy Group.

I think I'm very lucky to be the person that actually make the final touches on this episode that I get to listen to the whole episode before everyone else and I have to say I really enjoyed this episode and I think that it's actually an essential episode for anyone that will or is going on the field in the north and I will not say more and I will let

I think that I will present their guests, they will have two guests today and I will only wish you a very good listening.

Hi everyone, welcome to the third episode of Sense of the Arctic, a special series of conversations organised by the APECS Science and Diplomacy Project Group and released as part of the APECS podcast Polar Times. My name is Inge and I'm a PhD candidate at University Laval in Quebec City. However, I'm working remotely from South Africa and I do studies in biogeochemical modelling of the ocean and sea ice using biogeochemical models on numerical models.

My name is Nicholas Parlato, I'm a PhD student at University of Alaska Fairbanks studying human geography and specifically the human geographies of maritime and coastal governance in the American

Russian Arctic. As we've heard from the first two episodes, community-based monitoring, traditional knowledge, boundary spanners and community-driven research are not just supplemental but essential to the success of contemporary interdisciplinary Arctic science. We will build on this foundation today and a conversation with two guests from the Inuit-led Organization Ikaarvik, which aims to encourage the conversation between Arctic researchers in youth in Canada's north. So our two guests are Justin Sigmok-Milton who is an Inuk from Mittimatalyk, I hope I pronounce that correctly, in Nunavut. Now, now living in Ottawa and

he is the manager of Ikaarvik. Hi everyone, yeah and you pronounced that perfectly.

Wow, well done, Nicholas. Our second guest is Shelly Elverum, the Inuit Ikaarvik programs northern coordinator and a fellow of the Ashoka program. Shelly has worked to reorientate traditional Western scientific research as a northern perspective and help youth in the North gained skills in scientific research and encouraged community-led research as well. Welcome both of you and I think we should just hop into the questions and the first one is "Could you tell us a bit about Ikaarvik and Ashoka?"

Yeah, for sure. So Ikaarvik was really born out of this place of really seeing how research was being conducted in the North in a way that actually wasn't capturing the full breadth and depth of the knowledge that exists here. So, you know, typically the status quo has always been researchers come up, they have their research questions or methods, everything's set in place and they're like, "Okay, we're going to hire some Inuit and they can hold the gun while I do my work" or "they can also drive the Skadoo and possibly be my camp cook." You know, rarely you would get occasions where Inuit would be hired as "field assistance" but really fundamentally Inuit were being left out of the whole entire process of research and it just it just it felt really wrong and seeing the results that were coming out that were not completely capturing what people here understand and know of the Arctic. Ikaarvik just sought to fill that place where Inuit youth could be the bridge between research and their communities to make sure that that not only is Inuit knowledge being understood properly and utilized in research but also for two-way capacity buildings so that researchers like yourselves can learn how to actually understand Qaujimajatuqangit, Inuit knowledge and be able to work properly with the community in a really meaningful way that I mean really, frankly, creates better knowledge for decision-making. Yeah, and so, Ikaarvik, like Shelly said, Ikaarvik really started with that passion of Inuit wanting more involvement and active decision-making in research instead of just being put on the side and just for a very brief history history lesson. Ikaarvik started with a bunch of students in the Nunavut Arctic College and they really wanted to see research being done differently in the north and so they took it upon themselves to create this thing called Ikaarvik and that was up over 10 years ago and since then, Ikaarvik's grown to a brand new non-for-profit with its own board and we have and from there we've been

extremely busy with making sure that research in the north is done effectively, authentically and collaboratively.

Yeah, and really, I think the only other thing I would add is this isn't rocket science. Anyone who's listening to this podcast is doing what they're doing because they're passionate, they're interested, they have support, they have mentorship and you're following your passion because you understand that

that the Arctic needs the best information for decision-making with rapid climate change, resource development,

everything that's going on, we need good knowledge for decision-making and Ikaarvik's belief is that the only way to get the best information and timely manners to combine Inuit knowledge and science. So I'm curious, what is the actual process for establishing these connections between Inuit youth and researchers? Do you go through government funding agencies or does it go, do you work with do you go directly to universities? How are these connections established from the outset?

We don't go anywhere. Everybody's knocking on our door. The reality is everybody knows that this needs to happen. Permitting agencies require in Nunavut for instance incorporation of Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit.

We actually haven't had to look for this. We're pretty much full up with people coming to Ikaarvik because they understand it needs to be done. But the problem is nobody is really clearly explaining how to do this. So Justin maybe this would be a great time to explain SciQ.

Yeah. And so one of Ikaarvik's biggest outputs when it comes to products is this thing called SciQ, S-C-I-Q. And in a nutshell, SciQ is a list of different attitudes, different expectations and different ideologies about how to effectively do research in the north. Because the reality is there is two different realities between Northern Canada and Southern Canada.

And if you use SciQ in your own research, if you ever plan on traveling up north, then I can assure you that using SciQ will definitely make your research not only better, but your interaction and your relationship with the north will be that much more effective.

I'm going to ask, what's the importance in this specifically with engaging with youth? What do youth have to offer researchers that other community members, that maybe is something that other community members are not able to share or be able to guide researchers in proper conduct and to give

them that insight into indigenous cultures in the north? Very good question. Okay, here is the best

answer I can come up with for that question. So the reason Ikaarvik loves to engage youth in research is because in our eyes, Ikaarvik youth who are living in the north have two different sides that they can pull from and make something awesome. And here's what I mean by that. So if we think of Northern communities, we think of Ikaarvik. And a lot of times we think of elders and we all know that elders and communities are very wise, they're very knowledgeable. They have important knowledge and experience to share for the community. On the polar opposite side, we have the science world where

we have researchers and scientists coming up using their own scientific methods, ideologies.

And so what Ikaarvik sees in the youth is those two put together. Youth both have the first-hand experience of the precious indigenous cultural knowledge and experience from one end. Plus, they're young enough to be able to absorb all of the modern western science, if you will.

And so they do a really fantastic job of putting those two ideologies together and creating something that will benefit the community tenfold compared to if we just used non-youth in our argument.

You mean old people? I've probably not. I'd like to be referred to as a non-youth from now on.

Another thing that we find too is that oftentimes if you come from a natural science background, you have this superficial understanding that there's people that live up in the north and you haven't studied culture or you haven't studied history. So there's a blank spot in understanding a lot of the realities of northern history and northern culture. So when someone from a geology or biochemistry background shows up in the north, you may understand that there's indigenous people that live there but don't necessarily understand what indigenous knowledge is or any of the history that's happened to understand how all of this stuff interacts. And so my background's an anthropology.

And so I love to help early career researchers understand that when you enter the north, you're not just

entering this place where everyone's sitting around like waiting to share indigenous knowledge with you. There's a lot of really bad history that's happened in the north with people coming and taking and preventing culture and knowledge from being shared. And so working with the older generation can sometimes be, I guess, laden with that kind of fear and that that muscling of what Inuit have always known, whereas youth are in a different position. They haven't experienced all of the things that their elders have with having culture stripped away with being, you know, having your

children taken away with being told that your culture and your knowledge are not valid. And so the youth are also in a different headspace where they're actively looking to protect and really promote their knowledge in a way that the older generations have been prevented from doing.

So I know that, you know, everyone sort of told, "Go north, talk to another, get Inuit knowledge," but the best route that a carvac sees is that in order to do that you need to build the relationship. You can't just like, I mean, imagine someone walking up to your grandmother's door, ringing the doorbell walking and going, "Hi, can you give me your knowledge on like the best types of shoes to wear?" And I don't know about you, but my grandmother would be like, "Sorry, who are you?" And I mean, this happens all the time in the north. You get bright, shiny, enthusiastic researchers coming in and just thinking, "You know, there must be these elders that are just waiting to share their knowledge without realizing that you're like the 14th person that week to come in and want to talk to an elder who's pretty much exhausted and may or may not be the perfect person to be speaking with. Youth are the first step in number one determining who is the right elder to speak with. Who are the right people? Maybe your topic isn't about speaking to elders, but about speaking to active hunters and their 40s. And so the youth really help you to refine what you're doing, the questions you're asking, the methods you're proposing, and who within the community you should be speaking with. Maybe think also, I mean, there's this other element of natural scientists who go into indigenous communities. They often, you know, the most legible knowledge to them is the traditional ecological knowledge. And so if they're engaging in any kind of qualitative work and doing interviews with community members, elders or youth, they're likely to kind of strip other things that are less clearly applicable to their own research, you know, objectives from, you know, that what is a holistic kind of relational process. I was wondering if, you know, how we what COVID-19 also works with kind of like long term research product development and like ensuring that the process of involvement goes from the beginning to final publication and that the messages are not extracted. Well, first of all, if, if, just take it a step back, I think there, there needs to be some deconstructing on some words here, and which is like my favorite thing in the world. So, you know, you reference traditional ecological knowledge. So in Nunavut and with a Ikaarvik, we don't use that word. Inuit Qaujimaqatugangit is in Inuit knowledge full stop. To separate out the

ecological knowledge is kind of the thing that has led people to separate a certain aspect of information out of a holistic way of thinking. And so we don't use that at all.

You know, someone who's coming up to study seals is equally working in the realm of food security and

culture and sewing and language. It's, it's so tied together that it would be faulty to think that you can separate out one single way of knowing or thinking out of that. The other thing we don't use that was referenced at the beginning of this interview was community based research.

In, in my opinion, that term has been hijacked by people who drop in for like a week and they're like, I do community based research. And then for the other, you know, 51 weeks of the year, they're, they're somewhere else. And so, you know, if, if, if the intention is to talk about work that's being done in the community by the community, Ikaarvik prefers community driven research because there's a completely different reality around the community driving research versus research being based in a community. So I think, you know, we need to, to sort of discuss some of the concepts around

those words before we start getting to the point of where information feeds into final products.

Oh, I really appreciate, I appreciate that, that clarification. I feel like I was

trying to acknowledge that yes, I mean, like the indigenous perspectives worldviews, the culture is entirely holistic and that T, that traditional ecological knowledge certainly is a form of kind of compartmentalizing and, and then, you know, separating it out from all these other things. So very much, you know, appreciated. Inga, I don't know if you want to, we want to jump to the next question or keep, keep pulling on this thread. No, no, we can, we can jump to the next question.

I think the next question was, what kind of scientific research typically involves or impacts Arctic indigenous youth most? Because you, you did mention that it's the natural sciences that always come like a bit more retracted from the knowledge that actually it's like if you are, if you're studying seals, you, it's impact, sewing, it's impacts, food, sort of security and all of that. Could you give a bit of an example of like what, like what type of research actually it impacts the youth and is, is important for the youth as well? If, if I can think about this for a second, the types of research in the north that I've seen that involves that actively involves a lot of youth are the ones, yeah, they're the ones that are the natural science research. Maybe they'll want to

have an assistant or two of youth, maybe putting hydrophones in the water, maybe they'll want to put some, some species on a little petri dish in a scientific lab. So a lot of youth are exposed to, I like to say the fun part of science where you get to play with neat little gadgets and gizmos. And I don't see that as much when it comes to actually interpreting and publishing the research. And to answer your question, I say the things that impact the youth the most are the ones that are arguably superficial, but they're also the ones that are very fun to use tool.

So I would say that all research affects and impacts youth. When it comes down to it, people do research to try to affect change. And I think one of the reasons Ikaarvik loves working with early career researchers is that is that your group, your generation, really wants to do something meaningful and wants to do the right thing the right way. And so whether you're studying seals or rocks or the atmosphere, and the reality is your work is going to affect Inuit in one way or another. I mean your work ideally is going to be used to make some like profound changes in the way the world works. And that ultimately is going to affect Inuit. And that's why Ikaarvik feels so strongly about having youth involved in that research, because if you're going to tell a story about someone's life, it's only morally and ethically right that the people whose lives are going to be impacted are involved. I think the thing that I see that's a bit risky here is that most of the topics that actually impact Inuit lives the most are the ones being conducted by people that know the least about the culture and the people here.

So I guess I would illustrate that by saying if you come from the social sciences, you're going to check a box that says yes, I'm working with people, which means you're going to go through an ethics review process. You're going to have to spend a lot of time and energy thinking about how your work is going to impact the humans that you're working with, whereas in the natural sciences, you can study narwhal or bowhead or ocean chemistry and never have to actually spend the time or energy justifying or thinking about how your work is going to impact the people that live here. I think if you have a good supervisor, they will ask you to do that. So you're studying ocean salinity. Okay, so why is that relevant to the people that live here? You should be able to walk into the community and have a really great conversation with people about why your work matters and

be able to listen and learn from the community about their perspectives on your topic. But what I find is for the most part, people from a natural sciences background are coming in in that silo and separating out the natural world from the world that Inuit inhabit. And I think in my statement would be if you really want to make change in the world, in you need to involve the people that actually live here, your work is going to be so much better. You're going to have access to ways of knowing and thinking in a depth of knowledge that you wouldn't otherwise be able to have. And you're also going to be able to, I think the key thing that I see is how you interpret your data. So often in-u-u-u involvement, and I know the question was really about youth involvement, but having youth involved in cutting up fish is great. But it's so much better if you have youth involvement in working on your data analysis. And interpretation, because ultimately the story that your data tells should involve the people that live there. And again, I just use that example of imagine someone walking into your house, opening your fridge, looking at the contents of it, leaving, and then coming back with a report about your eating habits. I think you feel kind of, I mean, at the best, you'd probably feel kind of confused. And at the worst, you'd feel really taken advantage of because you didn't have any say in your own life. And so that's where, again, I really encourage people to consider how youth can build that bridge, because hearing from the community is different than understanding with the community. And so, you know, we get a lot of researchers that come up in the Holden open house and get people to circle things on a map and say, yep, I heard from the community. But what do those circles on a map mean? What do those numbers mean? What do those sizes of the whales mean? You can only really determine

what the meaning is if you work and you create a relationship with the people that live here.

I know that was kind of a long answer, but.

But it's a great answer because I find it's so important that it's not just the beginning of the research and at the end when you report back, it's the whole process that everybody needs to be included because if you're doing research in the community.

Well, can I can I give you an example on that of how it could go horribly wrong as well?

So in, and I won't name the research and why it was done, but there was a study being done on fish. And so this team went out and they went to one of the fjords and they set their nets and

they did their work and they had a great research question they had, great methods, all the right nets, all the right tech, all the right stuff. And when the report, you know, again, you reference bringing the results back to the community, the report came back to the community and

it said, there are no fish of economic importance to Inuit in this field. And everyone was like, sorry, what? Yeah, because you chose the time of year after all the Arctic Char had gone back up the rivers. So no, that particular week, there were no fish. And so, you know, just a simple thing like that that if those researchers had worked properly with the community, they would have had people who understood what they were trying to do and would have been able to say, you're, you're timing is off. Just you need to bump that ahead two weeks, otherwise you're going to get nothing. And so, you know, that was was the science done properly? Absolutely. Great, you know, great thing. But without a real relationship with the community, they absolutely missed the mark because they neglected to ask a simple question of when is the best time to come up to do my work? That's that's actually so interesting. And I can imagine it's also that you might have seen cases where people will come with analyzed research and say, well, these are our conclusions, but it's actually, but have you thought about this? And it's can open a whole other window of actual answers to what people never even thought about just because they don't live in the North and experience the environment themselves. No, for sure. And I think the other issue that that needs to be, you know, it's kind of the elephant in the room, but everybody comes up between May and September. I mean, that's that's the time of year when everybody in bright colored Gore-Tex shows up and hops on helicopters and goes out and does stuff. And any Tudor saying, you know, that's like, yes, that is part of the year and it's an important time of the year for sure. But there's so much more knowledge around the rest of the year when nobody is feeling particularly inclined to come up into the cold and dark. But, you know, again, talking to people here to refine your research question, to refine your methodology, to actually work on you with the interpretation, that ultimately is what's going to give you the best knowledge.

So that leads me to ask, are most researchers approaching you all at the right time? Are you getting people who are, you know, kind of like more or less minute, like really hoping to, you know, engage after some work has been done? And additionally, I'm curious also about the long

term, the long term relationship around data analysis and interpretation and how you are involved in that and how you all are able to ensure that that any research conducted with your collaboration and your partnership does end up serving community needs.

Yeah. And I could give one example and Shelly, you could chime in. So when we try, when we look at the different relationships we have and the different relationships we could have with researchers, we start at the very beginning at the conceptual stage. And so if someone, if an organization, a bureaucracy, a university wants to collaborate on a research project with us, then we will start with the first conversation of, okay, you want to work with us?

We want to also make sure that the work that we're going to potentially do will be not only effective, but long term. And I'm just going to echo Shelly's point and say that long term relationships will get you much further ahead in the research world, especially in the Arctic.

And so at even before the proposal writing stage, we would meet with them and just set the boundaries, set our expectations very clear that if you want to have not, okay, not only for the relationship between e-calve and this external organization, we'll say, this is, these are the expectations that we have. And these are some of the, I would say, practices or best practices that Ikaarvik uses and we'll go from there. And so even before any project agreement is signed, we will make sure that in writing that we will have a very collaborative and what's the word I'm looking for. First hand experiences with the north. And this will also

make sure that the work within the community is effective. Sure. I think one of the key points to that we want to make is that, you know, Ikaarvik doesn't exist to make a researcher's life easier.

It exists to make the researchers work better. So when we first started, I think the default thought was, oh great, here's a bunch of youth that we can tap into, they can collect data for us, and that's great. So, you know, initially, we had a lot of our early contacts were organizations, universities, individual researchers who looked at this as a way to check the box about anyway engagement. And, you know, we made it really clear from the beginning that that's not what this is about. This is about creating the relationship to allow us to work better together.

And so, you know, it really attracted the people who were seeking to work differently and to work better. And so we get a combination of early career researchers who are just starting out and wanting

to know how from step one, do I do this properly? And as Justin said, those are the ones that we absolutely

love because they're willing to come in with an open mind, without an agenda and say, what, you know, I have tools and skills, what kind of work can I do that not only meets my needs, but meets the needs of the community as well? And so, you know, of course, the thing we need to call out is a funding structure, which doesn't necessarily fund students to go up and listen.

You know, generally speaking, you get your funding after you have your nice question and your methods and, you know, everything in place. Ikaarvik working really hard to try to make a shift in that, in that regard. We've been working with Polar Knowledge Canada to, to really consider how Arctic research can be different if you were to fund a student to go up to a community in advance,

build the relationships, hear the concerns, and then, you know, come in almost as a helper to the community rather than coming in looking for help from the community. So, you know, we've been really

lucky to have some awesome researchers who come in at that point. We also see the worst case scenario,

which is we get approached by people looking literally to have an Enoch name as the PI on their proposal because that will help them access funding. So, it's really a range, and we spend a lot of time and energy kind of weeding through the requests that we have to make sure that the researchers that want to work with Ikaarvik are genuinely researchers who want to work in a different way. And to answer the question about youth, we have different youth cohorts. So, Ikaarvik has presence, active presence in four different new and new communities. And we like to say that the communities appoint the youth. We don't advertise in the traditional sense when we say, "Hey, we would

like some Ikaarvik youth to join us for some projects." We actually ask the local Hamlet offices, the hunters and trappers organization offices, the local high school, just to give names that the community feels comfortable backing up. And when we work with the Ikaarvik youth, we like to joke that

they're a part of our family now. Because after we've gone through workshops with them, we work with

the researchers, we came up with community priorities. Then more often than not, the youth will decide

to want to stick around. And so, we'll have them for future projects, if they are up for it. And

it's really about that relationship building. Yeah, and I think the thing that is maybe not the first thought that's going to jump into your mind, but it becomes such a joyful process. I mean, the reason you're studying what you're studying is because you're passionate about it. And the thing you might not realize is that when you walk into a community, the community haven't had the time

and energy and space to be as equally passionate about what you're doing. And so, with Ikaarvik, what we really want to do is give that time and space for a young Inuit, which is really kind of similar to what you have down in Southern Canada. When you go to university, you have all that time and space and support to refine your interest to become kind of the best version of what you

can be around science and research. What Ikaarvik is to give youth that same time and space, because

it's really mentally exhausting watching researchers come in super excited and have the community go, "Uh-huh, right, but we have a broken sewage truck and we're just all trying to get food to eat."

Like, we don't have that parallel process that's allowing young Indigenous people to be as equally passionate about Arctic research, yet they're the ones that whose lives are most affected by this. So, just the, I guess, to really kind of sum some of this up in a basic way is

the Ikaarvik process really starts with asking youth if Arctic research was completely up to your generation, what is it that you would be studying? The youth come up with 10 priorities, they have to have a community meeting to make sure that there's consensus on that, but these aren't priorities

that are intended to be handed over to other researchers, there are priorities where we can invite researchers into work with us. And that, again, if you're coming from a geology background or a biology background, you might not be considering also the social, cultural, and mental health

implications of working in this way, but when young Indigenous people have the opportunity to be your partner, it is just such a joyful process, and it just, it not only creates better, more efficient research, but you're doing something so beyond just the scope of your research, you're actually

supporting your Arctic peers to be better, stronger, healthier. I don't know, I'm trying to,

I'm struggling how to say this, but ultimately, you're taking the passion that you have for your topic, and you're enabling your peers in the Arctic to have that same passion and interest and drive to make change, and that's a really powerful thing.

Those are all absolutely incredible points. Thank you both for waxing so poetic, because it's a really powerful process that you have in terms of just working through and maintaining these relationships and their accountabilities in a way that's traceable, and it is consistent, and it is, yeah, just a deeply, I'm trying to, I'm trying to, throughout the world too, but it's beautiful, and I think you have the joyful aspect of it. This is the years of scientists, anthropologists, especially, but more recently, natural scientists just coming up, and having no relationship, not a respectful one, this is definitely a process of cultural transformation, and I think you all are doing, yeah, it's absolutely amazing, and it speaks to what you were mentioning earlier, Shelly, about this difference in language and community-based monitoring, which obviously has very little sense of accountability in it and little sense of specificity in a way versus community-driven research, which is where things absolutely need to move in that direction. So I was going to ask about the kind of community-driven aspect, but you kind of mentioned it earlier, you already described the terminological distinction that needs to be made, so I don't, in good, do you have a question to ask while I continue just rambling? You do mention that within the North, and I find throughout the world, the elders are usually the ones that are seen to be wise, knowledgeable, and have experience, and so forth, but I find it in terms of the role of the youth, both in early career researchers as well as the youth in the community. You have touched on a bit of it about how it's using the youth actually is a bit more advances to research, and I was wondering if you could talk about this a little bit more.

Sorry about the dogs barking.

I think this is a perfect time to bring up what Ikaarvik actually means, so Ikaarvik, it's an Inuktitut word, and the translation of Ikaarvik means a bridge. So Ikaarvik sees the youth as, again, this bridge between the Western science world and the traditional Inuit cultural world, and yeah, it's been really interesting seeing the shift in dynamics between researchers wanting to swarm elders with questions and interviews.

I've seen in the past five, maybe 10 years, it's been sort of shifting the opposite direction, and I think there's good reason for that. Shelly also likes to say that 60% of the population of Nunavut is under the age of 30. So there's also that demographic that's, well, frankly, I think it's

a majority, that people under 30 or even under 25 are starting to get their hands in this new 2022 post COVID era. And yeah, it's been super cool to see the shift from elders saying, hi, I have the knowledge. So please interview me. That was how a lot of elders were seen even before like 2010. And it's starting to be more like, oh, here's an elder, and then the elder was like, no, the youth can speak for me. They they're mature enough. They're, and also they, their world is much more up to date compared to mine if I was an elder. So the shift in science and research in the north has been slowly going over to the youth. But I think that Ikaarvik is giving it that little extra push. And because we love love love to see youth not only being participants in research, but also leaders in research. And in the example of our specific Ikaarvik youth, and I'll use the cohort and pond in it, they've been really starting to get their hands on how the research world works, how you should think about research, how what kinds of attitudes and expectations you might have. So it's, it I think it's really cool. I don't know if that is answering your question. No, definitely definitely does. And I guess it's also AS could you maybe talk a little bit about also how early career researchers are actually also part of that bridge of like bringing together the older generation of researchers with the community. Yes, yes, thank you. And oh, that's it. That's a tricky one because I think there's a reason why we love working with the early career researchers because you're open to this different way of working whereas someone who's had a 30 year career in the north is like, no, I don't know how to do this. I'm good.

It's probably the biggest source of frustration that we hear from early career researchers who would like to work this way is having supervisors that say, nope, nope, that's not relevant or it's going to take too much time or it's, you know, it's not meeting the needs. And so it's it's a shift that's happening and actually this year at ArcticNet, I feel like it was almost palpable. You could feel the shift that's happening and that shift really is coming from the early career researchers and I'm not not trying to say that the older researchers aren't, you know, older, more experienced researchers aren't able to make that shift, but I think that there's something special about the early career researchers. You know, you are then working with your peers

in the north. So youth in Nunavut is is 18 to 30. These are generally speaking the same age as a lot of the masters and PhD researchers that are coming up. And so this this this bridge that Justin

refers to is built in a different way with that peer group. I think the other thing that that's really important to note about that is and one of the reasons why we don't use words like traditional knowledge is that it sort of artificially creates a sense that it's this old people thing in this old timey way and that it's this old knowledge. And that's the other thing that the youth are able to do is show that this is currently used very, very timely knowledge that can be used for decision making. So when when we talk about Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit, we're not putting that that sort of old timiness on it because it it is something that's being used and working with a wide variety of age groups within the community means that you have access to not only the the older knowledge and and the some of the baseline knowledge, but you have the knowledge of the active hunters, the women who are currently cutting up a seal and understand what's going on with the body condition. You have the perspectives of the youth who are that biggest demographic in Nunavut. And so

you know, really rounding out your ability to access information means that working with the youth can help you to build those bridges to the to the people that you need to. Yeah. And the last thing I'll add is we are also seeing firsthand that early career researchers are making that shift and with the example of ArcticNet. It was really, really amazing to see. And I know it is a slow process to try and shift this entire dynamic of listening instead of thinking you know what to do, but it is moving. And we've seen we are seeing that early career researchers more and more are becoming more open to to places like the indigenous Arctic. Oh, that's a really good point Justin is, you know, sometimes we sort of tease people that nobody teaches humility and university. So you know, you're actually rewarded for coming up and saying, I know this stuff. Here is my question. This is what I'm doing. And you're not actually given any training in being able to say, yeah, I don't know the best way to answer this question or I'm curious about how I could change my way of thinking. And so part of the process that we call the two way capacity building is ensuring that when you come up to the north to work, you're able to sort of shed that thing that that you've been rewarded for, which is being really confident about your knowledge and your training and be able to be a human being first. Be able to say, I'm coming into to this world that I've done a lot of reading on, that I've done a lot of lab work and I'm pretty sure I have some really great tools to understand it. But could I gain more by listening? Could I gain more by coming in with some humility to say,

maybe I don't have all the right questions yet. And so it's that capacity building for you was an early career researcher that I guarantee will make you a better, a better researcher, a better colleague. Nobody wants to be working with that jerky person who's like, oh yeah, I totally know all this stuff. You want in your life to be able to be that person who's constantly curious and constantly open to new ways of thinking and learning. And that's the reason somebody people spend so many years

in the university because there's there's a bit of a high that comes from being able to learn new things. And so working in this way also ultimately just makes you a better researcher and a better human being. I'm totally convinced of that. I fully agree that it opens your curiosity even more.

That's like be curious even more. Thank you both so much for all those insights. I think

did you just shared some extremely powerful and valuable messages? And I wanted to come back to kind of

one of the themes that this podcast has been focused on. We've interviewed people who are associated

with ELOCA with the Arctic Observing Summit. I work closely with the Indigenous Sentinels network that's based in the Bering Sea. And then we know people involved in CECU and other, you know, these large networks that are largely Indigenous, led and driven that are about gathering and and kind of standardizing in a way, but also just keeping a data with a data sovereignty focus and ensuring that communities are able to control information about critical food resources, their immediate environment, etc. And Canada as far as I understand recently launched a program that's

being called the Indigenous Guardians program. And I was wondering if you all could speak a little bit to

how your work interacts with any of these ideas like long-term, arctic monitoring, the ways that it interfaced, you know, obviously, the ways that it interfaces with like the global scientific community, but how that can kind of drive, how more community involvement can drive decision making in positive directions, things dealing with climate change, food security, etc. Could you speak at all to some of this like the long-term projects that are being established right now in the Arctic?

Justin, do you want to have a go with that? Let me think about it for a second. So yes, there are, there is actually also a Guardians program up in the high arctic,

up in Nunavut. And yeah, the long-term relationships, I'm going to be honest, I've yet to think about

yet. And the only reason is because a colleague is really, like Shelly said, really, really careful about the types of relationships that we would like. And for the Guardians program, specifically, we haven't had much discussions with the folks from over there yet.

Yeah, you know what though? I think this is a really good example of you guys have access to information about these bigger picture things, which I'm just going to be really honest, when you live in a small community, in a small remote community, there's an absolute bottleneck of information into the communities. So you're referencing things that honestly, most people in the communities have no ideas going on. And so this becomes one of the strengths also in that relationship

is as an early career researcher, you can bring in information about this stuff. You can bring in your networks. You can bring in your connections because I guarantee you the most of the stuff that's happening on the world stage where small remote communities could actually have a role to play,

they're not necessarily even knowing that these things are going on.

That being said, I think that one of the things that you're tapping into here is that ability to make that change in these larger programs and larger initiatives. And I think that again, there's a bit of a moral and ethical responsibility that everyone has. If they're coming to the north is to make sure you're not doing this so that you can go out and tell somebody's story, but that you're working with the people that live there to help them tell their own story.

And I think that's been a bit of a failure of science in the past is that if you come in with your filters and your viewpoints and your ways of knowing, and then you're going out to the rest of the world to try to explain what's happening here, you're probably not going to tell the story in a way that absolutely meets the needs of the community. And so again, that partnership allows you then to be arm and arm with the people of the north, to be able to tell the story of a changing arctic in a way that's actually meeting everyone's needs.

Yeah, I really appreciate all those points. And you know, yeah, you can look at the way that arctic changes is conveyed in newspaper, you know, major newspapers from like, you know, the temperate zones. And yeah, it's very sensationalized, oftentimes it ignores the human element entirely. And there's absolutely a need to make sure that the world understands exactly,

you know, that these changes are not just a headline and not just purely environmental, but there's entire, you know, ways of life at stake and that this is, this is, and also that the, you know, the world that we live in down, you know, in being from Alaska, I always think about the lower 48, and you guys talk about Southern Canada, but that, you know, this is a very kind of myopic and limited space where you can't, you know, you can't necessarily, it has a universalizing quality to it that makes you not be able to kind of relate to what's happening in other parts of the world, especially in rural or more remote areas. For sure. And you know, you could add to that, like, there's something that needs to change because if you were to Google arctic scientists and look at the images, I guarantee you it's going to be white people in red jackets and probably an iceberg in the background because those are, you know, we've done this before with with the carve youth. I'm like, okay, this is what the world sees as an arctic scientist. Now, if you are to contrast that, though, and this is one of the things that when we first started Ikaarvik, you know, I came in with the question of who was the, who were the first arctic scientists? And so people, even here in the north have been skewed to think that a scientist is somebody who comes in from somewhere else wearing

brightly colored Gore-Tex and carrying these tools, but when you fundamentally look at what research and science is, it's observing and testing. And so Justin, I'm gonna, you know, you know, where I'm going. I know, I know. Yeah. And so yeah, we love to think that scientists aren't just, you know, people with degrees, people with lab coats and Canada goose jackets. And yeah, there was, there was a plenary in Vancouver about a few years ago and where I said the quote, Inuit, are the original arctic scientists. And I'm not going to lie, that put a lot of people caught, that caught a lot of people off guard. And I think in today's world that makes more sense, but that's, that's what fundamentally research and science is to us is, is where we are the original arctic scientists. Inuit, know this land better than anyone else because, you know, we've lived here since time immemorial. And yeah, it's, it's so amazing to see the different shift in perspective in the last few years. And I can only hope that it's gonna continue with this power shift. Yeah. And you know, you think about Inuit as the original arctic scientists and you go right because Inuit have been here observing, they've been here understanding, they've been here coming up with hypotheses about is that I safe, they've been testing their

hypotheses. And you know, we sometimes laugh and say, you know, when you think about it, as peer reviewed knowledge, Inuit knowledge is so fantastic because if you get it wrong, your peer review process is death. So, you know, it's, it's, it's incredible knowledge that if you work with Inuit to understand the knowledge that people are sharing with you and to understand how to actually listen and understand and incorporate that knowledge, it's just, it's incredibly rich and deep and powerful. And so, you know, I guess the final thing from the Ikaarvik standpoint is we think we're on to something really great with side cube because we also know that this is, this is a space that can be very politicized and very heavy. And we're not gonna judge you for not knowing what you don't know. So if you come in and, and you can be honest and say, you know, I kind of have a sense of what indigenous knowledge is, but I'd really like to be able to understand how do I hear it and listen to it and understand it and can you help me to know how to interpret it and incorporate it, then, you know, you have that humility as a human being to come in with an open mind, you're going to walk out with, with a life-changing experience on top of research that is fundamentally more effective, more efficient and more meaningful.

I actually, I quite like that you brought up psyche again because actually my next question is, are there some examples? I know that psyche is, is it's a long document in itself, well, not too long, but it's with multiple points on it. Could you maybe give a couple of examples for our listeners of things that they should keep in mind as well as we will be putting a link to the psyche document on, on, on in the bio, the written bio for the podcast for anybody that's listening, but yeah, if you could give a couple of examples, that would be great.

Yeah, I could give a few examples and then I'll let Shelly add some more. Okay, so we broke down the psyche document into three sections. So before your research, before you do your fieldwork, during your research, so when you're in the communities, and then after your research, when you go back to your institution, university, etc. And one of the things we love to tell, the early career researchers is before you even step foot in the Arctic, have some work with someone from the north and just run through and filters through your questions with them. So if, and this is because, like I said, there's two different realities between the north and the south. And so if you run through, say, your research questions to an, you know, who you're going to the

community with, they will be able to suss out on the spot, which questions are effective, which ones are inappropriate, which ones could go in, go in another direction. So bottom line is work with someone before you even step foot in the north. And then one of the bigger ones, this overall rule I like to say is be a human first. And that will make your life so much easier in the north. So when you introduce yourself to Inuit and Northerners, instead of saying, hi, I'm Professor Blank from University Blank, I study blank, I have these degrees. I have some questions for you. Instead, you can say, hi, my name is Justin Milton, I have, I don't have two kids, but I have two kids and I'm interested in these hobbies. I'm interested in these interests. Who are you? So just starting off the relationship right off the bat with being honest, sincere, and human, that will lay the foundation for the rest of your relationship journey with the north. And if you start off like this on the right foot, then you will have more trust from the community. Inuit and Northerners will be more eager to be involved in your research. And overall, it's going to be a good research experience.

And it's also going to be a good relationship experience for the north owner as well.

I think the only thing I would add to that is if you're going to read side queue, the point of reading it is again to acknowledge, like, you don't know what you don't know.

And very often as an early career researcher, you're being asked to incorporate

Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit, which I'm going to guess many people can't even pronounce, let alone know what

it means to incorporate it. And so rather than trying to figure it out on your own,

side queue was written to try to help you to understand that it's not just about collecting

indigenous data, it's about learning from indigenous northerners how to work better to mutually

understand each other. And so if you come in with this idea that it's not a checklist of things to do,

so you can say, yep, I incorporated indigenous knowledge. But rather a way of saying, oh,

when I'm being asked to incorporate Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit, what I'm really being asked to do

is to think and work differently in a way that allows the relationship to be built,

to be able to not only access information, but to understand it better. And so I think that the key to all

of it really is about coming into somebody else's world in a way that allows you to be a human

being who has really great skills and abilities that can ultimately be useful in creating better

knowledge for decision making. So it's to me, this is not rocket science. But as a former researcher myself, I sit in this middle ground between communities and researchers, both trying to accomplish the

same things and not necessarily having reached that place where you understand that we're all in this together. We all want to do the best job possible and we all want the best knowledge for decision making. So, side cue and working with youth in my opinion is just the easiest, most joyful, most relevant, most meaningful way to be able to do that. Go a car, Vic.

2022. Thank you. Amazing. Well, thank you. We really appreciate your guys time and all of the valuable knowledge that you've shared today. And, you know, having mentioned a bunch of those networks,

I would love to just talk again at some point later and, you know, tell you about some of the work happening in Alaska right now and maybe we could build some more connections in that regard. But today, I think this was absolutely. Oh, yeah, seriously. The thing that we know because we also work with youth in the Yukon is that the youth consistently say it is absolutely ridiculous, that it's easier to connect with counterparts in the cell than it is to connect with your counterparts across the North. Like it is one of the goals of a car, Vic is to build a north to north research network of youth because there's no reason that people in Greenland and in the yellow eat settlement region and Alaska shouldn't be able to connect and bridge youth in a way that that really makes again a much more functional.

Um, place for research to have them 100% and that's good. That process has to be done with utmost care because, uh, yeah, the international Arctic research community can be a little bit hegemonic at times. Yeah, you know what, we ignore all that stuff though. Like honestly, that's here's the thing not to tell the early career researchers, but just do it and do it with joy and passion and, you know, just shrug when people try to convince you that that's not the way things are done. Um, you know, with the car, Vic, honest to God, we do not spend much time thinking about these larger processes. We're just doing what we believe is the right thing. And so, you know, just hidden tip fight fight the powers that be. Rock on. Yeah, we will take that to heart and to be. Thank you, though. Uh, the only outro is for, for all of our listeners, uh, you can look in as Inga mentioned, you can look in the episode bio, um, for information on Justin and Shelly, uh, as well as, uh, many links to the, um, the projects and resources that they have discussed

today. And we really appreciate their time and hope that this leads to, uh, further collaborations in a variety of spaces. Um, thank you both so much. Yes, I'd like to read just reiterate that.

Thank you for allowing us to talk in your podcast. It's been amazing. Thank you. Thank you for joining us.

Well, thanks a lot for listening to our episode. I hope that you liked it. Um, and, uh, I would encourage you to listen to the two previous episodes of the sense of the Arctic mini series. And also,

if you liked it, uh, I would encourage you to rate us on your favorite app. You can always contact

us on, uh, the email address: thesearepolartimes@gmail.com , thesearepolartimes@gmail.com

Thanks and have a great day.

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