



Snowchange 2005

Alaska Native Science Commission

www.nativescience.org

www.nativeknowledge.org

Snowchange 2005

An International Workshop on Indigenous
Observations of Ecological and Climate
Change

September 27 – 30, 2005

Anchorage, Alaska

180 Indigenous Participants from 8 Arctic
Nations (Alaska, Canada, Russia, Finland,
Sweden, Greenland, Norway, Iceland)



Conference organized by:

***Snowchange Finland
Alaska Native Science
Commission
Inuit Circumpolar
Conference Alaska
Northern Forum***





“On the first day of the Snowchange 2005 somebody said: “It looks like this will be a gathering of the raven.” He was not wrong. Raven was strongly among us, in clothing and symbols, in the voices of the performers, incantations and as a releaser of knowledge. Sometimes one could almost hear the beating of mighty wings of raven above the Conference audience.

Raven has taught us to share. When a raven comes across a slaughtered or killed animal or other food source, it is not for him to keep it. He will inform his partners that food is now available. Because everybody does this, people of the raven, raven folk never go hungry. Those humans and peoples who have forgotten the teachings of the raven are thieves who steal and rob onto themselves what belongs to all.”

- Eero Murtomäki, Hunter, Finland

Traditional Circles

- Language & Spirituality
- Community Change
- Subsistence & Community Well Being
- Science & Climate Change



Recommendations – Spirituality & Language

- Documentation and climate change work has to recognize the traditional Northern spirituality grounded in the local ecosystems
- This spiritual relationship is best expressed in local languages and dialects tied into the local ecosystem and land
- We need spiritual leaders to determine the direction of our work



Spirituality & Language

- Future documentation of climate change work has to have mechanisms that give financial, material, educational and other ways of supporting local languages, many of which are endangered
- Spirituality, land, language and weather changes ARE related – program and new initiatives have to reflect this

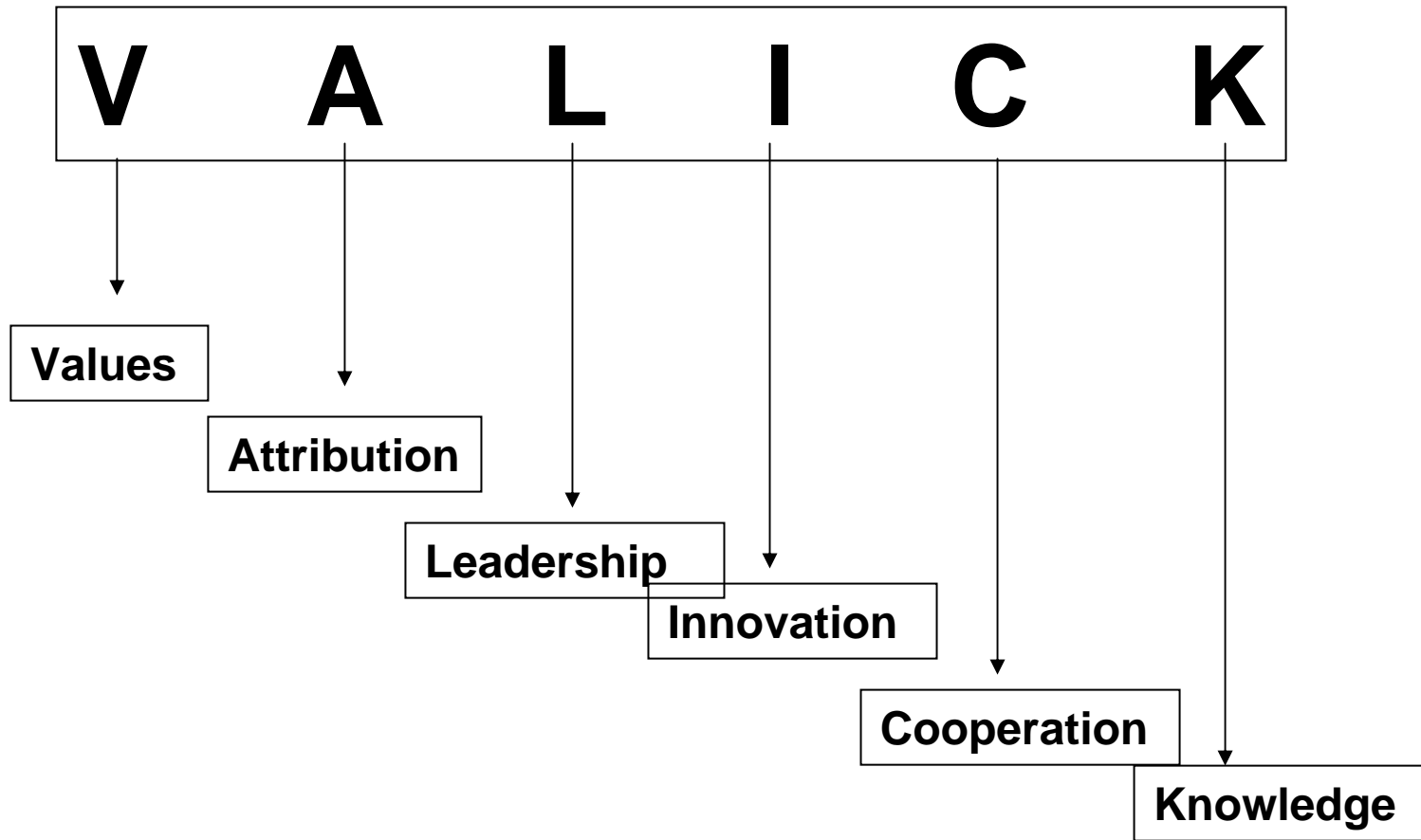


Spirituality & Language

- Sensitivity of work in relationship with spiritual knowledge is needed
- Spiritual leaders for example among Evenki in Yakutia (shamans) know weather and have strong relationships with different existing phenomena – we have to make sure our ways of life and local knowledge are kept despite colonization and the predicted changes that are affecting our realities



Recommendations – Community Change



Values

- What **values** do you want to **protect**?
- How are these **values realized**?
- How are these **values passed-on**?
- Keep these **values strong** so you can interact with other communities/organizations which may have different values.
- How can these values be maintained **while using different materials and resources as familiar ones disappear and new ones appear**?



Attribution

- Take **responsibility!**
- Don't assume “**help**” will come to you.
- Identify your resources and optimize them.
- Decide what other resources you need and get them.
- **Find others** who you can work with toward a common goal.
- **Use the system to your advantage**, fight it only when it is necessary.



Leadership

- Value our Elders, they represent our “Body of Knowledge”.
- Listen to the lessons they have learned so that **mistakes are not repeated and successes are.**
- Cultivate and protect those who are committed to achieving a goal. **Give them all the support you can.**
- Raise youth in a culture of “warriors” (pride, determination, honor, justice). Remind them **they will lead at some point**, whether it is their families, a Center, a School, a business, etc.



Innovation

- Be aware of, learn about and apply the **latest technology** to be as efficient as possible (this fits into Knowledge).
- Find novel ways to use tools and **strategies that fit your community's culture** and values to achieve a goal.
- Use the wisdom of **many Ways of Knowing** to become more powerful and adaptable.



Cooperation

- Realize that sometimes the individual must **make sacrifices for the community**.
- The community must recognize these individuals.
- Greed, mistrust, apathy, laziness and other human emotions are natural but **must be controlled** if goals are to be achieved.
- Build, develop, maintain and use **extensive networks of knowledge, people and resources**: locally, regionally and globally.



Knowledge

- Be wise in “**both worlds**”: our traditional one and the “western” one. This is powerful.
- Value **education as a tool!**
- Educate our communities, especially our youth.
- Realize that knowing something in many ways can give you **perspectives that make you better able to cope with change.**
- We cannot assume “western science” will come to our service: **we must seize it ourselves through education of all kinds!**



Recommendations -Subsistence and Community Well-Being

- The Arctic needs to tell its story to the rest of the world as a cautionary tale of the cultural impact of climate change
- Must speak with one voice
- The International Polar Year should have a human focus to document cultural, health, and environmental conditions and concerns
- Local empowerment for natural resource management and community program administration is required to allow for rapid action and flexibility



Subsistence and Community Well-Being

- Community-based programs to actively engage youth and elders in cultural expansion efforts should be implemented
- Arctic communities should become the model of sustainability for the rest of the world
- There is so much change, happening so quickly, that we must use our best knowledge and behaviors to support each other, our cultures, and the world



Recommendations -Science and Climate Change

- Maintain and advocate for the position that Arctic Indigenous peoples and local communities be equal partners in scientific research when such research involves the use and application of traditional knowledge and wisdom
- Recommend to all appropriate scientific bodies and funding agencies that research on climate change and global warming utilize ecosystem approaches as a priority and focus research at local and regional levels
- When appropriate and with our allies respond proactively to scientists and policymakers who publicly deny that global warming and climate change are occurring by publicly challenging the ignorance, misuse of science, and denial of the reality of what is occurring



Science and Climate Change

- Strategically examine, with Snowchange partners, use of existing local, national, and international laws to deal with issues involving global warming, climate change, and protection of traditional ways of life and food security
- Funding agencies mandate that researchers use and apply research protocols adopted by Arctic indigenous peoples
- Funding agencies set aside funds for, and require, the translation of research so that is understandable and usable by the general public
- Form strategic worldwide partnerships, adopt unifying statement and develop comprehensive strategic plan including public education and media campaign



Science and Climate Change

- Convene a forum between scientists, policy makers, and indigenous peoples to explore the issues, challenges and opportunities for use and application of traditional knowledge
- Encourage research funding priorities be directed at socio-economic, cultural and community impacts of climate change and global warming on Arctic communities
- Recommend to scientists and policymakers that the best they can do to help Northern communities adapt to changes created by climate change and global warming is to listen first, then partner with the local community or organization to address issues of adaptation and mitigation
- Indigenous arctic communities must explore the creation and use of our own terminology when describing global warming, climate change and its existing and potential impacts



