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# NUNAMI SUKUIJAINIQ



A YOUTH ARCTIC ECOLOGY  
LAND CAMP PROGRAM

2018 AIP \$466,000 WINNER





**The Arctic Inspiration Prize** is the largest annual prize in Canada. It inspires, enables, and celebrates the achievements of the people of the North, recognizing diverse teams with innovative projects in the fields of education; health and wellbeing; culture, arts and language; science and traditional knowledge; climate change; food security; and the economy.



**Nominator:** Michael Barrette

*Associate Director, Renewable Resources, Environment, Lands and Parks  
Department, Kativik Regional Government*



**Team:** Jeannie Annanack and Eleonora Townley (Team Leaders), Anita Annanack, Susie Annanack, Qaajui Baron, Xavier Dallaire, Geneviève Dubois, Jimmy Emudluk, José Gérin-Lajoie, Gwyneth MacMillan



This report was compiled and created by the **Qatalyst Research Group**, with the help of **Ilitaqsiniq**, the project team, and AIP.



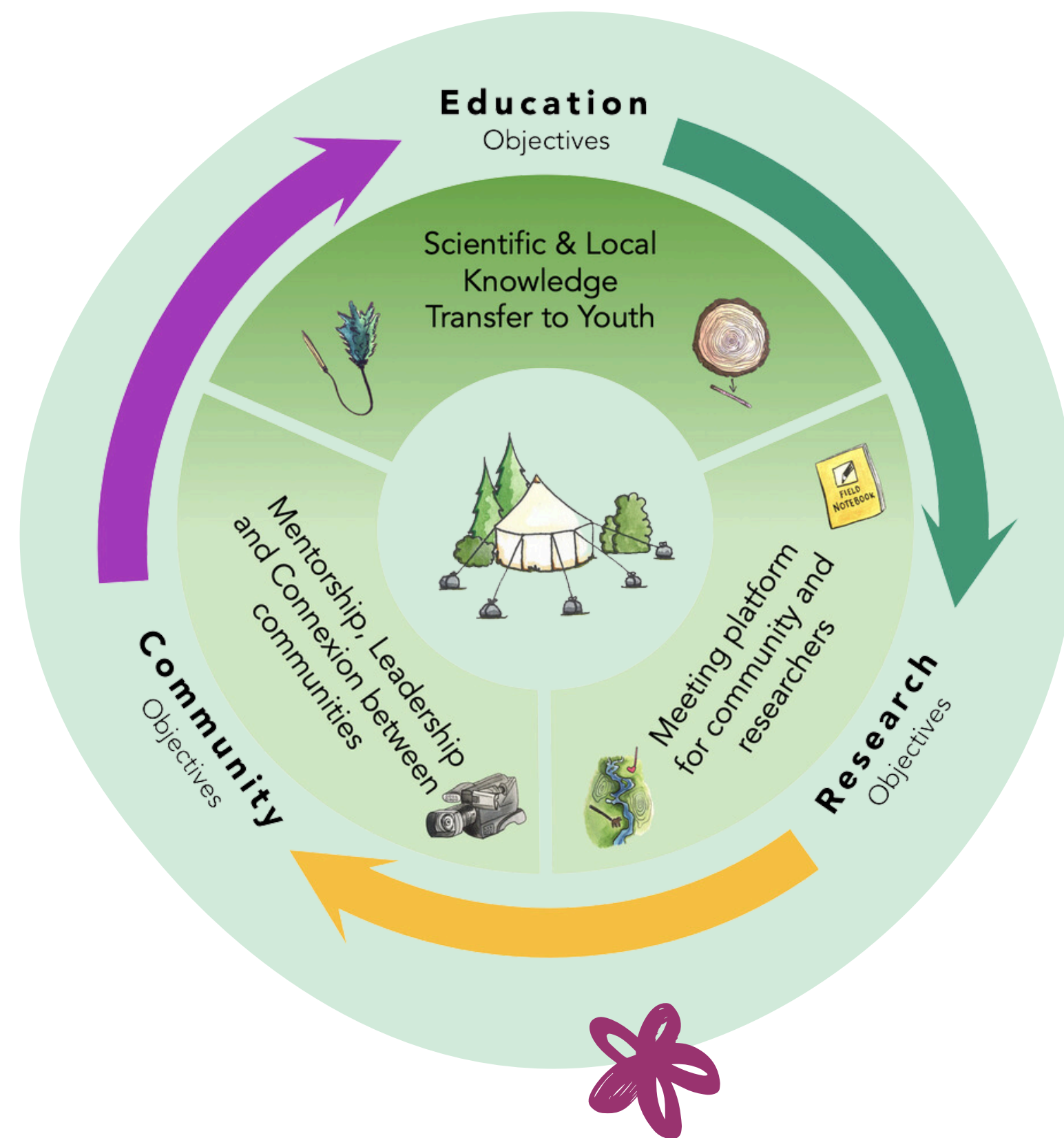


# NUNAMI SUKUIJAINIQ

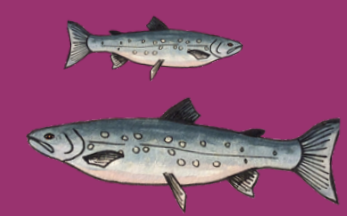
Nunami Sukuijainiq (Our Science on the Land) integrates traditional and scientific activities and knowledge systems, in a land-based, hands-on, and multidisciplinary approach unique in Nunavik.

The objectives of the AIP project were to:

- Introduce youth from all Inuit communities in Nunavik to Arctic Ecology through land camps.
- Provide mentoring opportunities for post-secondary students in Science programs.
- Produce short documentary films to inspire other Arctic communities.



**THE ARCTIC ECOLOGY LAND CAMPS FOCUSED ON THREE DIFFERENT THEMES:**



**MARINE ECOLOGY**



**WINTER ECOLOGY**



**FRESHWATER ECOLOGY**

# A MEETING SPACE ON THE LAND

Youth, community members, elders, and scientists work together on Arctic ecology topics and share their knowledge with Inuit youth during land-based, week long, science camps. Cultural activities have included fishing, bow-making, and throat singing.

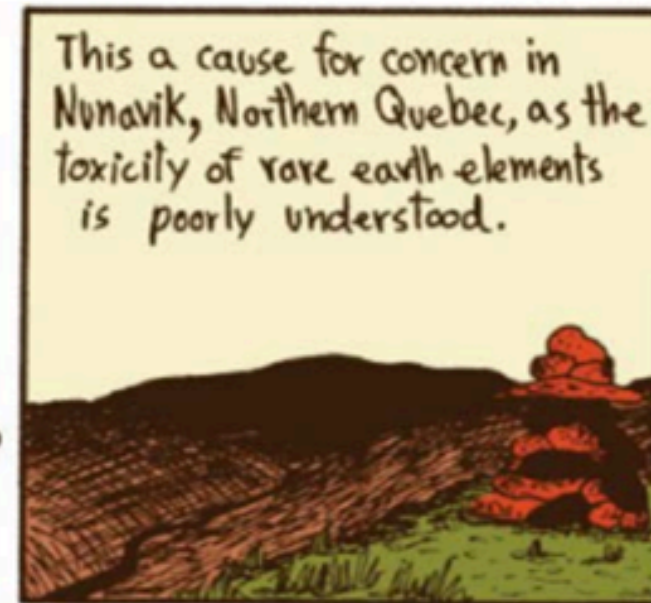
<b>SUMMER 2019 SCIENCE AND CULTURE LAND CAMP</b>	<b>AUGUST 2021 MARINE SCIENCE AND CULTURE CAMP</b>	<b>JULY 2022 MARINE SCIENCE AND CULTURE CAMP</b>	<b>APRIL 2023 WINTER SCIENCE AND CULTURE LAND CAMP</b>
<p>11 youth, 3 children, 3 elders, 2 coordinators, 7 researchers, 6 guides and one assistant, 2 cooks and 1 filmmaker</p>	<p>19 youth, 10 guides, 2 assistants, 3 Elders, 2 facilitators, 4 cooks, 5 researchers, 1 filmmaker-mentor, 1 local filmmaker and 9 kids.</p>	<p>12 youth, 5 children, 2 Elders, 4 cooks, 7 guides, 2 facilitators, 3 assistant guides, 5 researchers, 2 filmmakers</p>	<p>9 youth, 3 Elders, 1 facilitator, 2 cooks, 9 guides, 5 researchers, 2 filmmakers</p>

# SCIENTISTS AS COMMUNITY PARTNERS

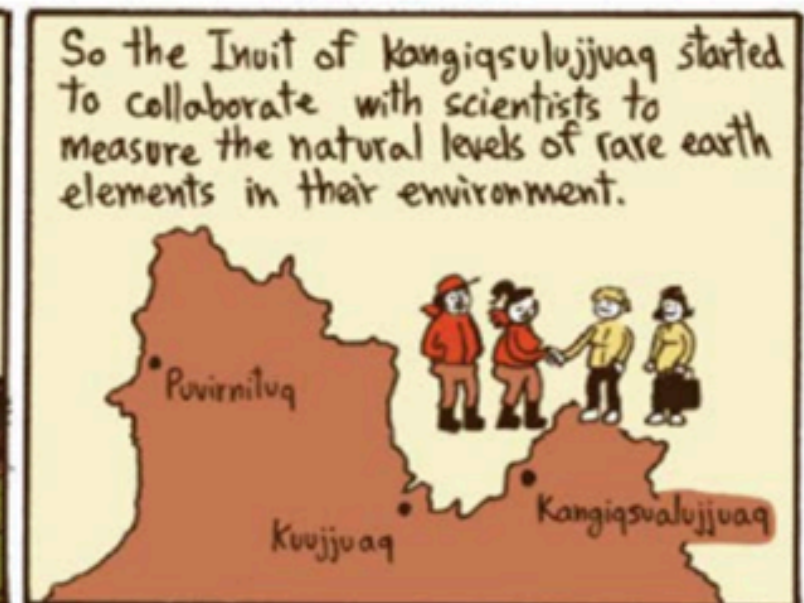
“IT IS IMPORTANT TO STUDY  
WATER BECAUSE WE HAVE TO  
KNOW IF OUR WATER IS GOOD  
OR BAD. YOUTH HAVE TO  
LEARN FROM IT TOO.”  
(ELDER, CAMP 2019)

The summer camps are a true collaboration between scientists and communities. Scientists work with and for communities, sharing data and knowledge to support communities in their decision-making. For example, the water quality measurements in the George River basin started in response to a proposal about the Rare Earth Elements mining project at Strange Lake/lac Brisson. The communities partnered with scientists to better understand what impact such projects would have on the environment and water quality.

About 97% of rare earth elements are extracted in China, creating pollution problems in mining areas. But mining projects are appearing elsewhere, including at least 200 under review in Canada, notably in the Arctic.



This a cause for concern in Nunavik, Northern Quebec, as the toxicity of rare earth elements is poorly understood.



So the Inuit of Kangiqsualujjuaq started to collaborate with scientists to measure the natural levels of rare earth elements in their environment.

Gwyneth Anne Macmillan  
and Martin PM



During the 2019 Imalirijit Science and Culture Land Camp, a collective sketch map was produced by Elders, guides, youth, and researchers. The map has become the 2019 Land Camp Flag, and is now hung at the Centre d'Études Nordiques Sukuijarvik Research Station in Kangiqsualujjuaq.

# LEARNING TOGETHER

**"WE ENJOYED THE CAMP AND ALSO LEARNING NEW THINGS ABOUT SCIENCE."  
(ELDER, CAMP 2019)**

# LEARNING FROM ELDERS

Elders Sarah Pasha Annanack and Susie Morgan told traditional and local stories. On the last night of the Land Camp, for the closing ceremony, Lucas Ammak Etok told stories about the time when people used to cut trees in the upper George River area and logged the trunks in rafts down the river, up to the village, where there was a sawmill at the time.



Stories included:

- *A Blind Boy Saved by a Loon* (Susie Morgan)
- *A Girl That Was Taken by a Golden Eagle* (Susie Morgan)
- *Story about Elisapie from Labrador* (Susie Morgan)
- *A Man Who Met a Little Mermaid on His Way to Kuujjuaq* (Sarah Pasha Annanack)
- *Logging Times in Kangiqsualujjuaq* (Lucas Ammak Etok)

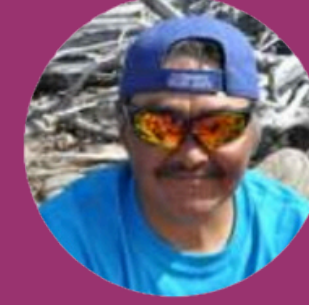


# LEARNING FROM KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS



During the 2019 camp, local Knowledge Holders taught participants how to make a bow and arrows, how to light a fire in the pouring rain, and also prepared a shelter from cut trees.

From left to right: Peter, Matthew, Jimmy, Lucassie, Neekalak, Henry, and Mark.





# INCREASING SCIENTIFIC LITERACY AND LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AMONG YOUTH



Youth learned about Arctic Ecology, water quality, marine and freshwater ecosystems. Skills developed in scientific methods and traditional knowledge about how to build a shelter; how to collect gum from trees, medicinal plants, navigating the rapids, and learning boating skills.

**“...STUDENTS ARE VERY SHY AT FIRST BUT THEN THEY ARE MORE OPEN AND POSITIVE MORE AT THE END, YOU CAN SEE THE CHANGE IN THEM AFTER SPENDING A WHOLE WEEK ON THE LAND WITH THE ELDERS. YOU CAN SEE THEM OPENING UP.”**

**(JOSE)**

# INSPIRING INUIT YOUTH'S INTEREST IN SCIENCE



The land camp gives opportunity to those who may not have the means to go out on the land and learn their culture as well as learning science.

- Hilda Snowball



# ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Youth are involved in monitoring and protecting local ecosystems. There is increased awareness of environmental issues.



# CREATING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



**“BEING OUT ON THE LAND FOR A WEEK. IT IS  
ALSO A GOOD WAY TO MAKE MONEY FOR  
GUIDES, COOKS, ELDERS, COORDINATORS  
AND OTHERS THAT WORK AT THE CAMP.  
CAMPING IS VERY FUN TOO.”  
(ITTULAK FAMILY)**

The camp provides employment opportunities for local community members.

# SHARING THE EXPERIENCE THROUGH DOCUMENTARIES

In addition to the documentary about the 2019 Science on the Land summer camp on the George River, Nunami Sukuujaniq were able to film three other documentaries: *Marralik* in the summer of 2021, *Akilasaaluk* in the summer of 2022, and *Qamanialuk* in the spring of 2023. View the trailers for each adventure below.

THE FOLLOWING TRAILERS ARE SMALL SNAPSHOTS INTO THE LAND CAMPS THAT NUNAMI HAS HOSTED. FULL DOCUMENTARIES ARE FORTHCOMING, PLEASE KEEP AN EYE OUT!



**MARRALIK**

<https://vimeo.com/783284715>



**AKILASAALUK**

<https://vimeo.com/969868029>



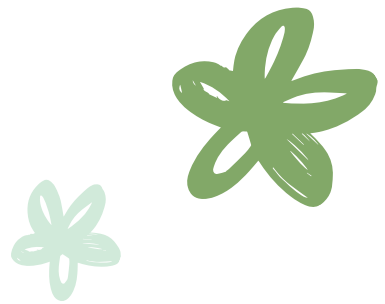
**QAMANIALUK**

<https://vimeo.com/970117963>

# FUTURE PLANS

The project team hopes to continue to engage with communities through their mentoring services, which means they help communities find financial, material and human resources, share an activity and logistics toolkit, provide counseling on how to start their own Science Land Camp program tailored to their community needs and realities.





# OTHER PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

