

ARCTIC  
INSPIRATION PRIZE



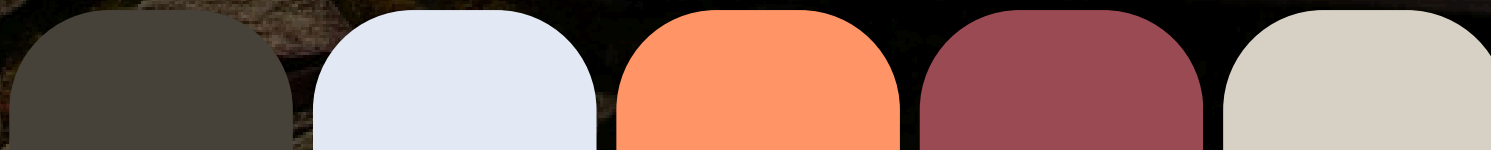
PRIX INSPIRATION  
ARCTIQUE



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## Niqihaqut

2020 AIP \$451,000 Winner



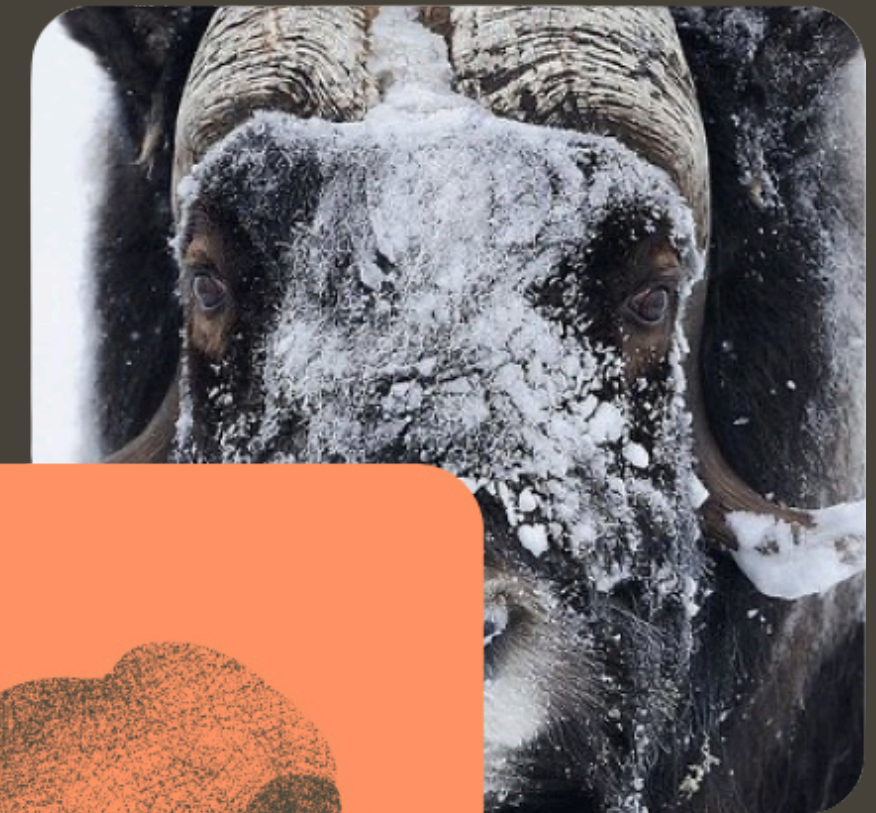
The Arctic Inspiration Prize is the largest annual prize in Canada. It inspires, enables, and celebrates the achievements of the people of the North, recognizing diverse teams with innovative projects in the fields of education; health and wellbeing; culture, arts and language; science and traditional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

Nominator: Frank Tester

*Professor Emeritus, School of Social Work, The University of British Columbia;  
Adjunct Professor of Native Studies, University of Manitoba*

Team: Jimmy Ullikatalik, *Manager, Taloyoak Umarulirigut Associations* (Team Leader), Tad Tularialik, Kublu Tucktoo, Joe Ashevak, Lindsay Anaija, Paul Okalik, Brandon Laforest, Vincent L'Hérault

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





## NIQIHAQUT (OUR FOOD)

**"WE ARE ONE WITH THE ECOSYSTEM  
AND WE WANT TO KEEP IT THAT WAY."  
- AQVIQTUUQ.CA/NIQIHAQUT/**

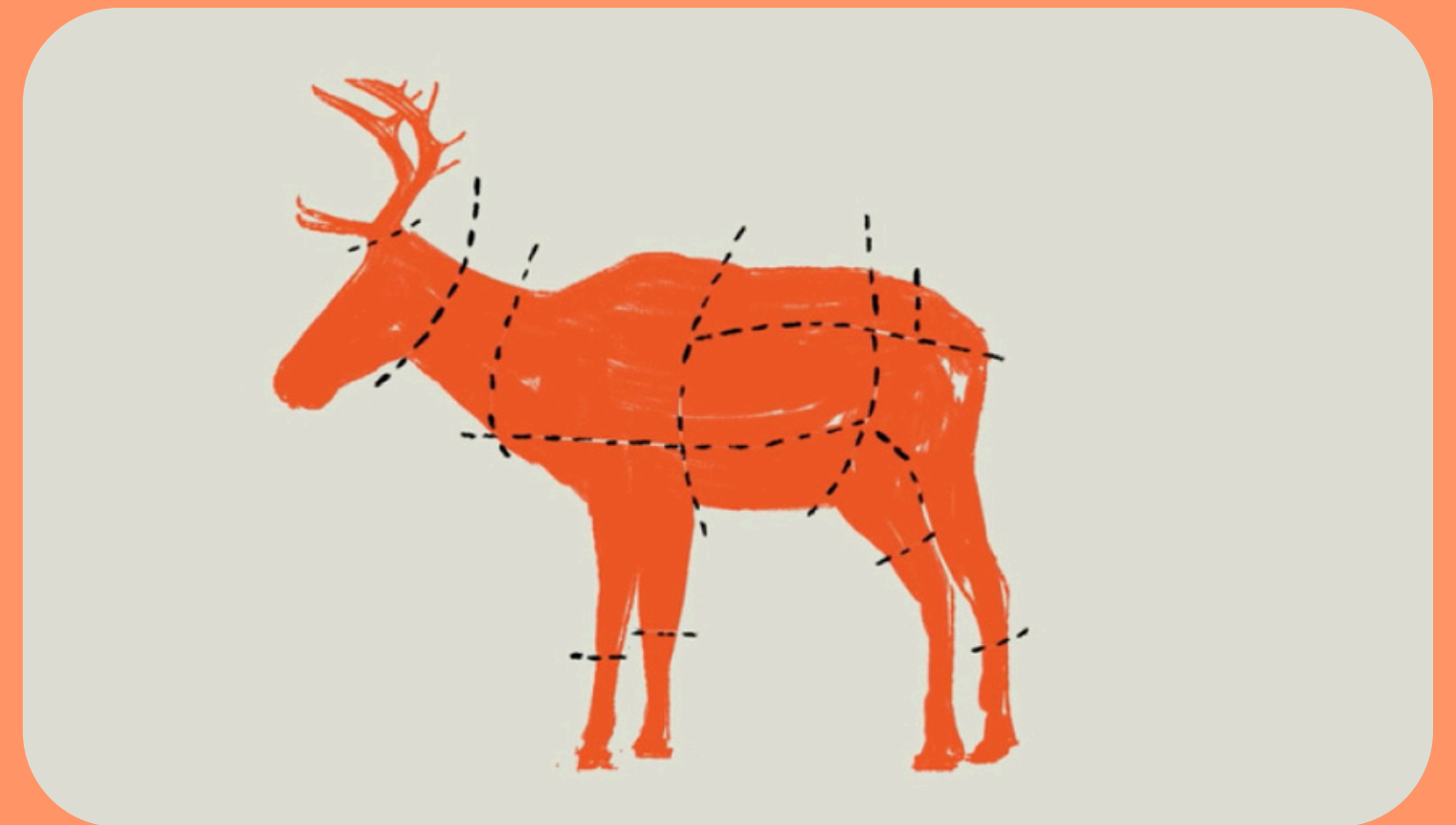
Vision: Country food as a social and cultural catalyst in a community where Inuit help and support one another and is based on Inuit values of creating together:

- The project team engaged with communities through surveys and other means to discuss what they need.
- Sustainable food production: sampling waters, environment, wildlife, fish, to include in the management plan and ensure that resources are not over-harvested.
- Creating a social enterprise model for food business.
- Developing a cut and wrap facility.



## A NEW MODEL OF SOCIAL ECONOMY AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Niqihaqut embraces a new model of social economy and food sovereignty based on the sustainable harvest of wildlife and fish from Aviqtuuq - the world's first Inuit-protected zone and conserved area. Local hunters provide for the community and Niqihaqut wants to create jobs for them to support food security in their community. Animals that are harvested will be processed in their Food Processing Centre, which will also employ local residents. The grassroots initiative is steered by committee members from the Taloyoak Umarulirigut Association (TUA) Elders, youth, and women. The funds won from the 2020 Arctic Inspiration Prize are being used to develop the business plan, develop partnerships, for training, developing the blueprints for the processing plant, and building the plant.



**"WE NEED FOOD SECURITY FOR OUR PEOPLE AND NEW SOURCE OF INCOMES. WE ARE HUNTERS AND GATHERERS, AND THAT MEANS WE ARE NOT FARMERS. OUR FOOD COMES FROM THE LAND."**

**- JIMMY ULLIKATALIK (TEAM LEADER)**



## LOCAL FOOD PROCESSING CENTER

**"THE CUT AND WRAP FACILITY WOULD BRING BACK TRADITIONAL HUNTING, THE PROPER WAY OF TEACHING THE YOUNG HUNTERS TO SKIN AND PREPARE AND BUTCHER ANIMALS."**

**- JOE ASHEVAK, ELDER**

The facility is planned and will employ workers who will process raw country foods, what's caught locally as opposed to expensive store food flown up from the south, into ready-to-eat products. The organization has identified a contractor to build the plant and have been developing blueprints. Once it is up and running, the Food Processing Center will prioritize the distribution of products in Taloyoak, and when possible to the rest of Nunavut. By building capacity, the long-term goal is to diversify their products, create more jobs, and open their market to other territories and provinces.





## IMPROVED FOOD SECURITY

The aim of Niqihaut is to help Taloyoak residents meet their dietary needs by improving the access to traditional foods, currently limited to some raw country-food made available through the community freezer & delivery programs, particularly for low-income families, Elders, widows, and single parents. The organization would like to use profits to bring young people out onto the land and help them connect back to their roots.

An additional side project in Taloyoak, the Guardians, have been giving back to their community by hunting, having youth cut and prepare meat and fish packages, and supporting the most vulnerable members of their community who may not be able to purchase healthy foods. Their intention is to provide access to country food and combat ongoing issues with food security.





## IMPROVED HEALTH

By increasing access to country foods known for their high nutritional value, promoting healthy diets, and encouraging youth to be more conscious of their nutrition, Niqihagut is helping to improve the health of community members in Taloyoak and the rest of Nunavut.

**"SINCE TALOYOAK HAS VERY GOOD WILDLIFE RIGHT NOW, WE WANT TO PRESERVE IT AND EAT THE RIGHT KIND OF FOOD WITH A CUT AND WRAP FACILITY."**

**- KUNNUK OLEEKATALIK, ELDER**





## PROMOTING CULTURAL HERITAGE

Niqihaqut created a culturally meaningful economy that promotes traditional skills, language, and the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ). Protecting country foods and the harvesting lifestyle protect the local culture and traditions.

The use of country food creates learning opportunities for youth in harvesting, food preparation and processing while practicing language and IQ.

Young women learned how to process skins and hides, and pass that knowledge along to other community members who become more connected to their culture. The Niqihaqut team intends to bring these traditional skills to the forefront of community members' lives with the cut and wrap facility.





## CREATED EMPLOYMENT

Niqihaqut program provided employment opportunity to up to twenty people, mostly hunters and trappers. They provide a supply of char, whitefish, trout, cod, muskox, caribou, bowhead whale, polar bear, duck, and goose.

Youth have spent time delivering country foods that they've helped to process. They feel valued and are contributing to the health of their community by helping to prepare and deliver nutritious meals within the community.

**"WE WANT HEALTHY FOOD AND WE WANT IT AVAILABLE."**

**- JOE ASHEVAK, ELDER**

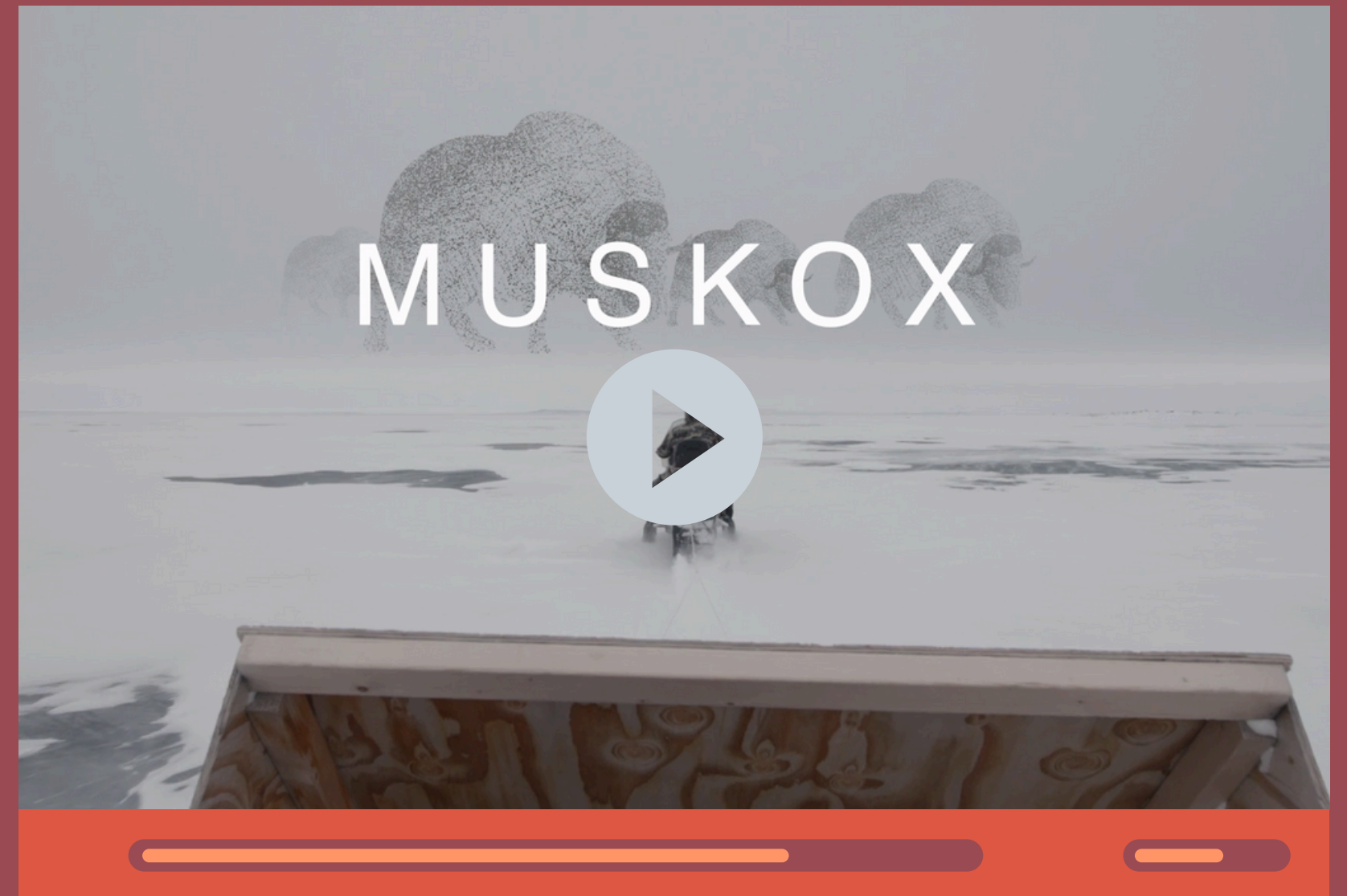


## IMPROVED ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

A Sustainable Harvest Plan anchored in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is being developed with the help of Elders and hunters. A maximum number of animals and fish that can be harvested for the processing centre (per year and season) also takes into account other local hunters who are harvesting animal products. The plan supports the education of the next generation of hunters and teaches sustainable harvesting.

The Taloyoak Umarulirigut Associations have developed a wide range of programs, including having a space at night for kids for soup and supper, investing in youth, and ensuring nutritional food are available.

**LEARN ABOUT HOW THE INCREASING MUSKOX POPULATION IMPACTS AQVIQTUUQ'S ECOSYSTEM AND HOW NIQIHAQUT PLAN ON MITIGATING ITS EFFECTS.**



<https://vimeo.com/906786389>



## OTHER FUNDERS AND SPONSORS



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