



UAKN
Urban Aboriginal
Knowledge Network

RCAU
Réseau de connaissances des
Autochtones en milieu urbain

RESEARCH PROJECT SUMMARY

UAKN Atlantic

Name of Project:

Re-storying NunatuKavut: Making connections through multi-generational digital storytelling

Research Start-up Summary and Abstract:

Southern Inuit from the NunatuKavut region of Labrador have started to challenge the established historical narratives that have been shaped by settler colonialism to reflect dominant interests about the land and its people. The historical re-production of the life and culture of the Southern Inuit has often been portrayed by merchants, doctors, academics and researchers with ambivalence and uncertainty. Much of what has been written has been produced from a western, male perspective, informing a knowledge base that tends to reflect and privilege patriarchal ideals. As a consequence, the female Southern Inuit voice and diverse versions of indigeneity have been minimized and in some cases erased from the narrative or *story* making process.

Southern Inuit also live in urban centres within NunatuKavut territory, such as Happy Valley-Goose Bay (HVGB) and Labrador City, but urban realities and experiences are often not equally valued within these narratives, and people's Indigenous identities are sometimes compromised or questioned, both externally and internally. As a result, the urban Southern Inuit population is often left with minimal voice and participation in informing Southern Inuit life and culture.

Engagement Objectives:

This research seeks to examine the identified gaps between knowledge formation and translation between remote communities and urban communities. The identification of this gap in Southern Inuit knowledge formation and translation is useful in that it informs research that intends to bridge the gap between remote and urban communities in multiple ways. Firstly, it seeks to validate the voices and stories of Southern Inuit women as legitimate and authentic Indigenous knowledge holders. Secondly, this works proposes to engage urban Southern Inuit youth in a way that will allow urban youth to engage with Southern Inuit women as storytellers from both urban and remote NunatuKavut communities. Urban youth thereby become a part of the story making and translation process, with Southern Inuit women as the knowledge holders and providers.

This project that aims to engage urban NunatuKavut youth in validating their own experiences and stories by connecting their stories with those of multiple generations of women within their own family or community, thus creating new understandings of how historical processes have affected and continue to affect the choices and the personal identities of multiple generations of Southern Inuit families of NunatuKavut. We aim to engage youth in actively re-storying the

historical narratives of NunatuKavut, and in working to revise dominant narratives that have enacted violence through their silences and erasures.

Our research questions are:

1. How can the practice of storytelling by NunatuKavut women destabilize established historical narratives and understandings?
2. How can the involvement of urban youth in multi-generational digital storytelling create new interpretations of the diversity of experiences and Aboriginal identities of Southern Inuit?

This project will have three main objectives:

- 1) To encourage urban NunatuKavut youth to participate in the re-storying of historical narratives about the region and its people;
- 2) To provide opportunities for urban NunatuKavut youth to develop their skills in digital storytelling, historical research, and interviewing; and
- 3) To provide opportunities for women and youth from NunatuKavut to connect stories from multiple generations in order to create new understandings of historical experiences and Indigenous identities.

Methodology:

This research will use interviewing to collect stories within families and multi-generations of women. Narrative methods used will be an Indigenous methodological approach recognizing storytelling as a significant way of collecting data. Workshops will take place where Elders, youth, community members, researchers and others will gather to learn from each other about through stories, histories, research and digital storytelling techniques. The end result will be the creation of digital stories to be shared with the community and others.

Collaborators / Research Team:

Dr. Sylvia Moore (Labrador Institute, MUN) is an Assistant Professor (Education) and a specialist in indigenous education and digital storytelling.

Amy Hudson is a PhD student at Memorial University from the Southern Inuit community of Black Tickle.

Dr. Andrea Procter (MUN) is a postdoctoral fellow with over 15 years of experience in working collaboratively with indigenous communities in Labrador and Nunavut on issues related to indigeneity and women's storytelling.

Dr. Lisa Rankin (MUN) is an Associate Professor (Archaeology) who has worked closely with Inuit communities throughout Labrador.

Eva Luther (Elder), from the Southern Inuit communities of Spotted Islands and St. Lewis, is a renowned expert in the history of NunatuKavut.

Darlene Wall is the Manager of the Social Sector Department for the NunatuKavut Community Council.

Denise Cole is a well-respected leader from Charlottetown who currently lives in HVGB.

Patricia Nash is a biologist working for the NunatuKavut Community Council in HVGB who has over 20 years of experience in developing community-based environmental programs.

Main contact:

Dr. Sylvia Moore

sylviam@mun.ca