

# ENGAGING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

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# MY ORIENTATION/BIASES



- ✦ Focus on engaging Indigenous peoples in reducing risk to natural hazards (not integration into non-indigenous ways of thinking)
- ✦ Avoid false dichotomy of the “Scientific” vs. “Traditional Knowledge” debate -- support **“Dialogue of Knowledges”**
- ✦ Distinguish between Indigenous Knowledge and Intellectual Property

# THREATS TO INDIGENOUS WAYS OF LIFE



Indigenous communities have a deep understanding of and respect for the environment and ecosystems.

**However**, outside influence and practice are too often adversely affecting their environment, leading to secondary disasters and at times, making traditional knowledge irrelevant.

# THREATS TO INDIGENOUS WAYS OF LIFE



- ✦ Colonialism (loss of language/culture/spirituality)
- ✦ Involuntary relocation (reservations/reserves)
- ✦ Changes in land/marine environments
- ✦ Benign Ignorance: “Modernization”
- ✦ Greed: Taking advantage of marginalized communities for profit
- ✦ Racism and Xenophobia

# IMPORTANCE OF ENCOURAGING A “DIALOGUE OF KNOWLEDGES”



- ✦ TIK (values and culture) are, in themselves, important risk reduction tools and should be incorporated into local, national and international DRR strategies.
- ✦ TIK and non-Indigenous experience can be synergistic. A “Dialogue of Knowledges” should be encouraged in local, national and international DRR strategies.

# ENGAGING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN DRR



- ✦ Indigenous peoples must have a voice to reduce disaster risk and vulnerability. The practice of imposing centralized and at times inadequate solutions to local problems can lessen the community's capacity to reduce risk and save lives.
- ✦ Indigenous peoples must have opportunities and resources to develop their own strategies as well as participating in national and international research, planning and policy-making.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FROM INDIGENOUS DRR FORUMS



- ✦ Definitions, concepts and standards related to disaster risk reduction and response must reflect both indigenous and non-indigenous perspectives.
- ✦ An emphasis should be placed on ensuring cultural and linguistic relevance in development of DRR strategies as well as training materials and other information about those strategies

# EXAMPLES



- ✦ The Ten Essentials for Making Cities Resilient Checklist was developed by UNISDR/UNDRR. Each of these has relevance to any community.
- ✦ Ultimately, each “essential” must be considered by community leaders and decision-makers and adapted or modified to be relevant to their experience and understandable by community members.

# UNDRR RESILIENT CITIES

## Essential 1



Put in place organization/coordination to understand and reduce disaster risk, based on participation of citizen groups and civil society. Build local alliances. Ensure all departments understand their role in DRR and preparedness.

*Adaptation: Ensure community leaders know who, specifically, is the appropriate liaison for information and other resources, and how to contact them. Ensure that non-Indigenous local organizations are aware of the best ways to approach the community for dialogue regarding DRR awareness/training, early warning and adaptation strategies.*

# UNDRR RESILIENT CITIES

## Essential 8



- ✦ Protect ecosystems and natural buffers to mitigate hazards to which your city may be vulnerable. Adapt to climate change by building on good risk reduction practices. *(Note: This “essential” was conceived without appreciating that many Indigenous communities don’t have autonomy over their natural or built environment.)*
- ✦ *Adaptation: new DRR strategies likely require advocacy on the part of the community at risk. Documenting change in the environment (e.g., mapping) can support that advocacy.*

# UNDRR RESILIENT CITIES

## Essential 7



- ✦ Ensure that education programs and training on disaster risk reduction are in place in schools and local communities.
- ✦ *Adaptation: Indigenous communities must be supported to build long-term human capacity. Without professional/lay community capacity to understand, mitigate and adapt to climate change communities are at risk. In the long term, DRR strategies should include improving educational and professional capacity-building in strategic areas (law, public policy, science/technology, sociology/ anthropology, etc.)*

# NEED FOR EDUCATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING



## Employment Summary of the Government of Nunavut Public Service

Category All Departments, Agencies, Boards and Corporations

	Total Positions				Nunavut Inuit	
	Total Positions	Vacancies	Filled	% Capacity	Hired	% IEP
Executive	37.00	10.00	27.00	73%	10.00	37%
Senior Management	167.00	27.00	140.00	84%	24.00	17%
Middle Management	471.00	130.00	341.00	72%	87.00	26%
Professional	1,776.10	482.60	1,293.50	73%	355.00	27%
Paraprofessional	1,058.70	317.70	741.00	70%	447.50	60%
Administrative Support	1,370.98	360.05	1,010.93	74%	863.88	85%

# GOING FORWARD



- ✦ Share relevant literature, case studies, best practices, model laws and legislation community experience and traditional indigenous knowledge; impacts of recent disaster events.
- ✦ Create and share information about opportunities for Indigenous participation in regional/international forums; legislation; events; funding opportunities
- ✦ Exchange information on strategies to promote DRR to tribal councils & other community leadership

# IN CONCLUSION



## Indigenous Knowledge and Disaster Risk Reduction Network

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