

### **Title The Naalak Gathering: A Regional Dialogue on Indigenous Research Governance**

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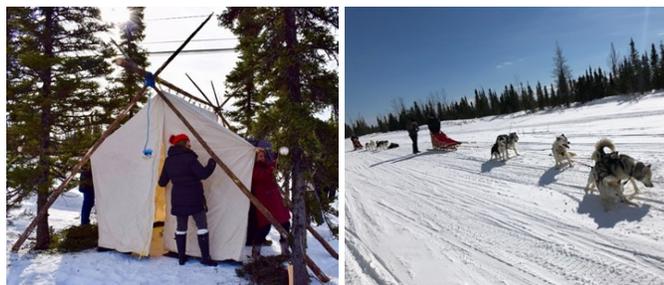
On March 20 and 21, 2019, the NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC) hosted a regional dialogue on Indigenous Research Governance in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador, Canada. Naalak is an Inuktitut word that means ‘to listen and pay close attention’. The Naalak Gathering was a knowledge-sharing, knowledge-mobilization, and knowledge-in-action event. The purpose was to convene a conversation between Research Ethics Boards (REBs), researchers, and Indigenous communities in Atlantic Canada to address the policy-to-practice gap that has been identified by researchers from Indigenous communities, academia and REBs.

Since early 2000s, several Indigenous communities and nations have created their own ethics review processes. This political legitimacy is reiterated by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and cannot be separated from discussions and applications of research governance. Researchers and REBs are required to know the ethical and legal dimensions of research with Indigenous Peoples, that includes Indigenous Peoples as rights holders on their lands. As self-determining peoples, Indigenous communities are (re)claiming and asserting jurisdiction through a number of highly effective community consent contracts (research agreements, research partnerships, etc.) and ethical review processes and protocols (community REBs, Research Advisory Committees, Elders councils’ directives, Band council resolutions, governance frameworks, etc.).

For Inuit in NunatuKavut, like many Indigenous

Nations globally, ethics is a conversation. The Naalak Gathering provided space for open dialogue between community and academic researchers, institutional ethics boards and Indigenous research review committees and community members by acknowledging past and current research practices from Indigenous Peoples’ perspectives; supported and encouraged community-led research; articulated and exemplified Indigenous ownership and control of data (including existing options for data sharing and research agreements); promoted and practiced ethical and responsible research with Indigenous Peoples; and supported and emphasized rights-based approaches within the current research regulatory system.

An emergent message from the Naalak gathering was the urgent need to re-conceptualize the existing system of research oversight and ethical review to respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and communities including the existing decision-making apparatuses that exist to make decisions regarding the research that is permitted on Indigenous lands and within communities. In this model, universities were asked to participate in a community-driven research project that is examining an issue that affects how



universities run their research.

The gathering was partially funded by Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) through a special call Indigenous Research Capacity and Reconciliation Connection Grant.

To see posts and pictures from the event, see #NaalakGathering on twitter.