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## CAIYUGLUKU

### Pulling from Within to Meet the Challenges in a Rapidly Changing Arctic

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#### Introduction

The Yup'ik drum song *Caiyugluku*, meaning “To Pull”, has become a touchstone for Pamyua, a contemporary dance and vocal group whose performances showcase Indigenous knowledge and history. The lyrics, sung in Yup'ik, are about looking for ground squirrels while on a hunt, but are also understood as a prayer for strength. *Caiyugluku* is especially relevant for understanding how Yup'ik in Alaska conceptualize the challenges they face – whether from climate, colonialism, or other societal stressors. It describes problem-solving by drawing on one's mental and physical strength, or from the strength of Indigenous culture. This chapter reframes the climate crisis as a *aaqsunarqelriitin* (crisis) in the frameworks and systems of institutions and organizations that lack the deep values-based relationships that lie at the center of Indigenous ways of knowing and being. As they face the challenge of climate change, Yup'ik communities seek to build genuine trust and understanding – prerequisites for governance and management regimes rooted in *ciungani atullruaqa* (peoples' lived experience) and that embrace multiple ways of knowing and being in a rapidly changing world. We explore efforts underway to rebuild, repair and renew those relationships in ways that exercise localized cultural values and governance with allied organizations and institutions.

In sharing our perspectives, we bring in both our lived experience from the Northern Bering Sea region and also draw on our first-hand knowledge from the fields of philanthropy, research, conservation and law in building more equitable spaces that include Indigenous Peoples. Jonella Larson is St. Lawrence Island Yupik with extended family ties in Savoonga. Raychelle Aluaq Daniel is Yup'ik and grew up in Tuntutuliak. Anne Henshaw is an anthropologist by training and has spent the last 15 years working in private philanthropy building relationships and supporting Indigenous-led organizations in the Arctic. Fred Phillip is the former Tribal Council President of the Native Village of Kwigillingok and is the Chair of the Bering Sea Elders Group. Erin Dougherty Lynch is the Managing Attorney of the Alaska Office of the Native American Rights Fund.

The Yup'ik terms referenced throughout this chapter are drawn from both our personal use of Yup'ik and St. Lawrence Island Yupik in use by Indigenous friends and colleagues and also

from a recent glossary of terms translated by 14 language experts from the Bering Strait region, compiled by Brenden and Julie Raymond-Yakoubian (Aluska et al. 2022). We recognize that terminology is not uniformly shared across linguistically similar peoples and that there are differences in spelling and meaning depending on the relationship that a family, clan, village, or cluster might have with lands and waters. We also recognize the majority of the terms we have highlighted are general Yup'ik terms and that there are many more descriptive and complex terms related to “sharing,” “respect,” and “responsibility” based on the above. Additionally, we center the scholarly work, experience, and knowledge from Indigenous Peoples contributing from different sectors of society to prioritize Indigenous ways of knowing and being and welcome correction and response to any errors we have made in spelling or meaning of terms.

### Setting the Context

Central to the Yup'ik worldview is that people are considered part of an interconnected system (*nunaput ellaput-llu elluatun eglertut*) and not separate from it. These connections were best expressed by Harry Lincoln, a Yup'ik elder (*tegneq*) in relation to the ocean he called home:

Imarpik. In my Yup'ik language, this means the big water, the ocean. This is the Bering Sea. It is where our stories come from and how we have survived since time immemorial. Almost everything our bodies need comes from the ocean – seal, whale, walrus, birds, fish and shellfish species. These are traditional foods, and are a foundation of our village economies. To us, the northern Bering and strait region is a special place, a whole ecosystem driven by the rhythm of sea ice forming in the fall and retreating in the spring. Each part is connected to all other parts, and our long human history here accounts for the large territory Yup'ik and Inupiat peoples use for hunting and fishing. Here, every spring and fall, one of the Earth's great migrations occurs. We wait for it and prepare for it – walrus, whales, seals, and millions of birds and shellfish species – all moving past islands and along the coast. St. Lawrence Islanders call this Katawhsaqa, or “pouring out,” because of the great abundance and movement of the animals. In Central Yup'ik, it is called Utarrluten, meaning “moving to another place.”

*(Lincoln 2016)*

Systems like those described above include aspects of the environment (*ella*) and all it encompasses, time, and how humans interact with these elements. This holistic view extends not only to spirituality, but to the values surrounding health and wellness. The system also could be described as “a way of life” or “subsistence practices” using various English terminologies. This way of life or *yuuyaraq* holds the foundation or framework for Yup'ik and is central to Elder teachings such as those shared by Dr. Chief Kangrilnguq Paul John and Peter Paniguag Jacobs (e.g., see John-Shields 2018). This Yup'ik philosophy brings together values, customs, Indigenous knowledge, skills, practices, and spirituality.

Such ways of knowing and relating to all living beings continue to be passed down and embraced by generations who have followed – including a group of forty next generation Indigenous leaders who gathered in Anchorage in January 2020 eager to shape the future of their communities – and the globe. The convening was called “Our seas are rising and so are we” to reflect a growing trend in climate advocacy, research, and conservation where the next generation brings an awareness of the power, agency, and responsibility they hold

for themselves, their communities, and the planet – building on the generational values, experience, practical knowledge, and wisdom that make them who they are.

Much of this energy and enthusiasm is born from deep frustration and historical trauma since colonial structures took hold in the Arctic, including Alaska, centuries ago. These structures are defined not only by *all'am yuum alerquum* (someone else's laws) in which Indigenous communities currently have to navigate but also the economic and education systems that still dominate the Arctic today. The imprint of the colonial legacy has been devastating, often requiring people to cope with multiple and often compounding stressors including high rates of suicide, social inequality, poverty, dwindling access to natural resources, inadequate housing and health care, substance abuse, unsafe drinking water, low educational attainment, food insecurity, and most recently a global pandemic. As Huntington et al. (2019: 1218) rightly point out, “focusing on climate change as the only or the primary threat misses much that is more pressing and worrisome. The amount of attention given singularly to climate change in and of itself, as opposed to climate in the context of numerous other risks, can even distract from what matters to Arctic communities.”

It is against this backdrop that the next generation of leaders are interrogating and dismantling systems while reclaiming their values within institutions to protect their futures. Key to their approach is refocusing and reframing the way research, conservation, and climate solutions are carried out and supported. Increasingly Indigenous-led research and conservation models question the burdens historically placed on Indigenous Peoples by academic researchers and environmental groups that devalue Indigenous knowledge and stewardship practices while perpetuating power asymmetries and structural inequities designed to advance western governance, management, and knowledge systems (Bennett et al. 2021). What has resulted over time is deep seated mistrust and frustration over policies and practices not rooted in place or long-standing cultural values; in essence, a crisis in relationships. Or, as Kyle Whyte (2021) has argued in an analysis of discordant concepts of time related to climate change, a breakdown of kinship relations rooted in shared responsibility.

While such breakdowns stem from a range of root causes from colonialism to capitalism they continue to perpetuate structural inequities that disproportionately impact Indigenous Peoples across the globe. Meredith McCoy<sup>2</sup> and her colleagues at the Center for Humans and Nature call for the urgent need to shift our relational practices to address the threats to the lands and waters that sustain Indigenous communities, a return of governance to Indigenous territories, and a revitalization of Indigenous educational practices that prioritize preparing the next generation of Indigenous leaders to tend to the land, community, and one another. Indigenous approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation go hand-in-hand with rethinking governance and re-asserting the role of Indigenous peoples to steward the lands and resources within their cultural homelands. This allows for transformative emergent opportunities and for greater tribal self-determination. If the solutions for climate and social challenges continue to be made from external sources, opportunities for Indigenous Peoples in Alaska and around the globe will remain limited.

With the racial reckoning associated with the murder of George Floyd, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of advancing social equity and justice across all aspects of society. Western-trained researchers, conservationists, and climate change activists and advocates are starting to recognize that *yupit elisngalriit ayuquciat* (Indigenous knowledge) and values have key roles to play in protecting biodiversity, addressing the climate crisis, and for advancing knowledge and solutions that meet immediate local needs of Indigenous Peoples.

This is not just in the Arctic but globally (Gadamus et al. 2015; Ellis et al. 2021). The call for the “re-indigenization of principles” has been at the heart of a new era governing how we steward and govern rich biodiverse *nunaq* (land) and *imarpig* (ocean) in the midst of rapid change (M’sit No’kmaq et al. 2020).

Herein, we provide examples of how such relationships are taking root within new and existing organizational and management initiatives centered on the Yup’ik concept of *Auluk* (taking care of lands and waters). We begin with an exploration into relationality and its connection with broader Indigenous values of reciprocity, respect, and responsibility within Yup’ik and Yupik worldviews. We then present two case studies that demonstrate how Yup’ik and Yupik peoples are centering relationships in decision-making within new and existing governance structures that strengthen relationality and resilience through connection to community, place, and language.

### Centering Yup’ik and St. Lawrence Island Yupik Relational Values

To understand the importance of relationality, we share a quote from Vera Metcalf, a longtime advocate and Yupik elder from St. Lawrence Island, as it centers many of the core values of what it means to be in “right relationship” with each other and all living beings:

Only by cherishing the blessing of a harvested walrus (or whale, or seal) are we worthy of continued successful hunting. Even our thoughts while accepting the gift offered to us must be proper and respectful, because they reflect how well we care for and conserve what is given. We give thanks. The cultural practice of humbly sharing our harvest is an expression of this understanding. While it is beyond translation, this profoundest Indigenous Knowledge and way-of-knowing in my language is Esla... . So while the natural world is acting strangely and the traditional rhythms of our lives are unsettled, the Arctic will always be our home, eternal and sacred. It seems that we now are struggling with our land and waters and are not in balance with them, as before; but our communities will continue adapting and will rely on our Indigenous Knowledge to maintain our relationship properly with our world.

(Metcalf 2021: 427)

Such sentiments are echoed across the Indigenous cultures globally that recognize receiving resources as a privilege with concurrent reciprocal responsibilities (Kealiikanakao-leohailiani and Giardina 2016). For the purposes of this chapter, relationality centers on three Yup’ik and Yupik interrelated values underpinning their holistic understanding of *Yuuyaraq* (way of life) and the greater powers of *Ellam Yua* (the spirit or person of the universe) (Ellam Yua et al. 2022; Ayunerak et al. 2014).

#### Aruqulluki (*Sharing*)

Sharing what you have will bring you abundance and plenty. For one word, there are many different aspects showing the depth of what it means to share. For example, in Jacobson (1984) sharing definitions originate from different contexts within the practice occurs. As translated it is *nengi*; to share a catch *aruqe-*, *kuyagtar-*; to share food with *naruyake-*; to

share with *avgute-*; to distribute ~s after a hunt *pitar-*, *tulimite-*, *uqicetaar-*; have enough to ~ *vevingqerr-*; not want to ~ *kiimurrsug*.

### **Takaq (Respect)**

Respect one another as everyone has something they can share. The concept of respect is applied across the human, non-human and the spiritual realms. Because of this, there are multiple values that relate to showing respect and the responsibility that comes along with knowing how to be respectful. Elders have shared, “never look down on people if they disagree with you. You should also never look up to people with envy. Instead, when we are faced with a challenge or opportunity is when we should look to people to help create the best solution and way forward.”

### **Aulukluki (Responsibility)**

Responsibility means understanding, caring for and nurturing your relationships. As a person, you hold different types of responsibility across time (past and future ancestors), dimensions (spirituality), systems (natural and built environment). It is within the values of *yuyaraq* that contain the instructions for living life and understanding how to carry out your responsibilities. Many of these values are rooted in ways Yup’ik pass knowledge on to younger generations which differ substantively from western-oriented educational practices. Traditionally, Yup’ik ways of learning are connected to a holistic approach guided by relationships and values.

While many of these values are passed down informally from one generation to the next, they are becoming more formalized through progressive education such as the Ayaprun Elitnaurvik Yup’ik Immersion School in Bethel, Alaska. The school explicitly takes a Yup’ik values-based approach to education in formative years in children with strong underlying values of relationality. The mission of the school is to:

*Ayaprun Elitnaurvigmi elluarrluta Yugtun qaneryaram tunginun elitnaurciqukut: ellaturivkarluki, taikanivkarluki Yugtun piciryaraput, qaneryaraput, yuyarput-llu.*

We, the community of Ayaprun Elitnaurvik, will strive to provide a high quality Yugtun immersion education: empowering our diverse students by strengthening their knowledge, use, and understanding of Yup’ik core values, language, and culture.

The school was established with values surrounding the responsibility to understand and know the world through the Yup’ik language and to foster values of mutual respect. Further embedded in this view is that the Yup’ik language provides insight into the worldview and a deeper understanding of culture. Agatha John-Shields (2018) talks about becoming aware (*Ellangeq*) and the role that education plays in a deepening understanding that shapes who you are as a person throughout life. An important part of that understanding includes the close association with family and community. Parents and community are critical in the curriculum of Ayaprun. Learning is hands-on and includes the learning of anatomy of fish and seals, to cutting fish, preparing traditional foods and celebrating through *yuraq* (dance).

It is within this context of a value-based knowledge system and a changing climate, that we explore how Yup’ik communities are working within existing structures while

creating new models of decision-making and governance that are grounded in *aruqulluki*, *takaq*, and *aulukluki*. As we find it is not only important to adapt and change to physical environmental impacts but to be adaptable to relationship models that build on these concepts of shared values, respect and responsibility.

### The Bering Sea Elders Group (BSEG)

Knowledge is highly prized in Yup'ik communities. Yup'ik value the holders of that knowledge, recognize the need for those holders of the knowledge, and understand their responsibility to share that knowledge. It may have been implied, but these are not mutually exclusive. The responsibilities of these knowledge holders, while they may differ over time, is upon every Yup'ik person because all will play some role over the course of their lifetimes. These responsibilities are best expressed through *Caiyugluku* (the need to pull from the strength within) to meet the challenges Yup'ik communities face today.

To illustrate, we highlight the work of the Bering Sea Elders Group (BSEG) as an example of how Yup'ik values are reflected in broader Indigenous efforts to influence policy. Yup'ik Elders are recognized for their living knowledge carried across time to today and deepening understanding of *Ellangeq* comes from not only knowing values but practicing them in everyday life as is clearly stated in the mission statement of the organization:

The knowledge of the elders about how to live with the ocean and the land was given to us by our ancestors with instructions not to keep it for ourselves, but to pass it on to our children so that they may continue to prosper and continue our way of being.

(*Bering Sea Elders Group, Resolution Expressing Our Mission, November 3 2011*)

BSEG is an organization of 38 Tribes from the Kuskokwim Bay to the Bering Strait. BSEG member Tribes represent Yup'ik, Cup'ik, St. Lawrence Island Yupik, and Inupiaq people. Each appoints an Elder Representative to serve on the BSEG Elders Board. BSEG's mission is to:

[S]peak and work together as one voice to protect and respect our traditional ways of life, the ocean web of life that supports the resources we rely on, and our children's future. As Elders, we are messengers to our children, our tribal councils, and the people who make decisions that affect our marine resources, ecosystem, and ways of life.

BSEG initially formed in response to tribal concerns about the large commercial bottom trawl fisheries in Kuskokwim Bay and the possible expansion into the Northern Bering Sea Research Area, an area established by the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC). For over a decade, BSEG has understood the importance of working in coalition, and has worked closely with Bering Sea tribal partners including the Association of Village Council Presidents, Kawerak, Inc., and the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island.

One of BSEG's first projects was *The Northern Bering Sea: Our Way of Life*<sup>3</sup>, a detailed mapping project showing species and habitats critical to supporting the ways of life for communities along the Bering Sea. The maps were used as a basis for advocating for protection of these areas, including advocacy on specific issues before the NPFMC,

and for pushing for a stronger role for tribal governments in federal decision-making processes that affect the Bering Sea.

The full BSEG Elders Board meets annually for a multi-day summit at which Elder Representatives discuss changes that they are witnessing in the Bering Sea. The format and structure of the summits provide an open, equitable space that centers individual knowledge systems and Elder knowledge holders; the room is arranged so that there is no lead dictating the agenda, there is no firm time limit on conversation, and simultaneous translation is available so that Yup'ik, Cup'ik, St. Lawrence Island Yupik, and Inupiaq Elder Representatives can understand each other's perspective. At the Summits, the 38 Elder Representatives collectively draft and pass resolutions which guide the work of the organization. Resolutions have focused on food security, changes to federal management structures, the importance of incorporating and treating as equal Indigenous knowledge into federal management decisions, and tribal self-determination over the management of natural resources. Many of BSEG's resolutions begin by recognizing that the Bering Sea is an integral part of the Elder Representatives' identities as Yup'ik, Cup'ik, St. Lawrence Island Yupik, and Inupiat Peoples, and that the water is as important to them as the land.

These resolutions were the basis for BSEG's work with coalition partners to advocate for greater protections for the Northern Bering Sea. This advocacy paid off on December 9, 2016, when President Obama signed an executive order creating the 112,300 square mile Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area. The Executive Order provides a pathway for Alaska Tribes to exercise their self-determination and a greater role in decision-making over the northern Bering Sea and Bering Strait region. This is the first time a President has required that Indigenous knowledge and expertise be applied to federal management decisions, answering a decades-long drum beat of Native Peoples. While the designation was rescinded by President Trump in April 2017, President Biden reinstated the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area in January 2021 on his first day in office. BSEG and its partners the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), Kawerak, and the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island have continued their coalition efforts to now implement the Executive Order.

BSEG's approach has been and continues to be grounded in *aruqulluki*, *takaq*, and *aulukluki*, and the organization provides a space for tribally appointed Elder Representatives to use their wisdom and traditional values and knowledge of how to live on the land and ocean to protect and manage the resources of the Bering Sea. As their founding vision for the Bering Sea states:

The teaching of our ancestors was based on respect for what the ocean provides. Respectful actions are rewarded by hunting success; disrespectful actions have negative consequences. We were taught never to waste what the Creator has given us, to share our food with the community and to listen to our Elders because they acquired wisdom over a long life and sharp observation. Today, while technology has changed, our traditional values and our hunting, fishing, and gathering ways of life, remain the foundation of our culture. Respect for the natural world and caring for our natural resources are necessary for our people to continue thriving off the ocean and land and providing for our children's inheritance.<sup>4</sup>

## Discussion

Throughout this chapter, we have described how values are central to understanding how Yup'ik communities think about the myriad of societal and environmental changes happening around them. Many of these values are best expressed through the power of relationships similar to what Daniel Wildcat, a Yuchi member of the Muscogee Nation of Oklahoma, describes from his worldview:

Can you imagine a world where nature is understood as full of relatives not resources, where inalienable rights are balanced with inalienable responsibilities and where wealth itself is measured not by resources, ownership and control but by the number of good relationships we maintain in the complex and diverse life systems of this blue green planet? I can.”

(*Wildcat 2013: 515*)

These values are important not simply as an abstract philosophy but are fundamental to how Yup'ik communities and other Indigenous Peoples across the Arctic connect their knowledge systems, climate solutions, and decision-making practices in relation to the environment and the climate crisis. As the climate crisis only worsens, Indigenous Peoples will continue to face basic human rights issues around climate-forced displacement, food insecurity, basic community infrastructure, and changes associated with a rapidly changing ecosystem.<sup>5</sup> Centering values, relationality, and Indigenous knowledge in decision-making processes, including how resources are allocated, is critical to driving durable solutions that meet community needs over the long term. Putting these values into practice is what gives meaning to *Caiyugluku* – the need to pull from values within is what provides the inner strength to face what can appear to be insurmountable and complex challenges.

Pulling from within also means ensuring that we are carrying forward the values connecting relationality whether in existing structures and processes or by creating new systems built on relationality frameworks. Both need to happen simultaneously; however, often such initiatives are occurring in siloed and compartmentalized sectors that lead to the “measurement of resources” Daniel Wildcat describes as a modern challenge. The inclusion of both Elders and youth is critical for meeting this challenge and bridging silos. Ayaprun Elitnaurvik and BSEG recognize the values of relationality we highlighted in this chapter which show the kind of complexity and diversity that would benefit “resource management.”

A persistent challenge is the dichotomy between Indigenous knowledge and western science. Indigenous knowledge should not be thought of as uniform; rather, Indigenous knowledges represent many diverse ways of knowing. Indigenous knowledges are valid knowledge systems, each of which is unique. Indigenous knowledge is not only connected in a holistic worldview – it is living body of knowledge that is a part of and cannot be separated from the people who steward lands and waters. In this rapidly changing climate, the importance of basing decisions on our best knowledge is even more critical in making decisions about lands and waters – Indigenous People and their ways of knowing must be part of the process (Daniel et al. 2022).

Strengthening partnerships with Indigenous Peoples includes supporting their sovereign right to make decisions and inform and create policy on behalf of their peoples and homelands. For too long, Alaska's Indigenous Peoples have had to react and respond to



policies and laws that diminish their decision-making power as it relates to protecting core values and their identity. Inverting this process and ensuring decision-making responsibility is in the hands of Indigenous Peoples in turn recognizes the sovereignty of the lands, waters, ecosystems, and all living beings.

A promising practice that provides a framework based on relations for equitably bringing together different ways of knowing and science (coming from a “western” worldview) is the “Co-production of Knowledge” approach (Ellam Yua et al. 2022). The elements of a Co-production of Knowledge approach form the foundation for equity. These elements described in Ellam Yua et al. (2022) include relationships, empowerment, capacity, means and ability, practice being deliberate and intentional, ethics, decolonization, sovereignty, and trust and respect. The framework itself is set in a relational space, recognizing that multiple elements need to be considered simultaneously when undertaking a (research, policy, or co-management) process that equitably includes Indigenous knowledges. A Co-production of Knowledge approach provides that roadmap for how to include people in a meaningful way in the process. In addition to the means of knowledge production, the role of public and private sector funding is also critical to ensuring more inclusive models of governance and decision-making as Indigenous Peoples navigate a new and changing Arctic.

Within philanthropy, direct grant making to progressive, Indigenous-led, non-profit organizations advocating for themselves and their priorities provides an important avenue to ensure adequate resourcing (Henshaw 2013). There is also a host of new initiatives that revolve around more participatory approaches to grant making itself whereby Indigenous Peoples themselves decide on how and where resources should be directed (Scott-Enns 2020; Angarova 2020; Meyer et al. 2021). The Arctic Indigenous Fund is one example of how philanthropic initiatives are being designed to shift power, advance decolonization, and to recognize that Arctic Indigenous Peoples themselves are best positioned to make funding decisions. The Fund is directed by a set of advisors from Inuit, Northern Dene, and Sámi communities who oversee the grantmaking. As one of the original advisors Dewey Kk’oleyo Putyuk Hoffman notes the Advisors “rely on broad-based Indigenous approaches to this work, each with their own distinct beliefs, cultural practices, and communication styles. We acknowledge the interwoven history that includes interests that actively work to destroy Indigenous ways of life, those who actively uplift the dignity and honor of Indigenous lifeways, and others somewhere else along the spectrum. This requires an ongoing constant process of filtering things out based upon our individual *and* collective value system and beliefs. We can apply teachings from one set of experiences to another and begin to uphold a holistic worldview.”<sup>6</sup> The Arctic Indigenous Fund and Indigenous led funds that are starting to flourish globally reflect how Indigenous Peoples are centering values in decision-making to better meet the current needs and priorities of communities so they thrive into the future.

In another example of progressive philanthropy, the Alaska Venture Fund (AVF) is working on methods to capture, communicate, and elevate the narratives of Indigenous leaders in Alaska who are working to protect and sustain cultural values amid complex challenges, including climate change and social injustice. The emergent approaches create opportunities for people to document and communicate information that is culturally appropriate, contribute to equitable conversations and understandings of Indigenous ideologies and strategies, and ultimately increase the financial support for those who are

working toward a just and sustainable Alaska. These efforts are core to the Alaska Venture Fund.

AVF recognizes that Alaskans are at the front lines of the climate crisis and are experiencing accelerating impacts with every season. To effectively address and counter the negative impacts of climate change, it is imperative for human societies to rethink their relationship with the planet. One approach AVF takes is through the cultural lenses of Indigenous Peoples. A part of this process recognizes the validity of Indigenous knowledge systems and the profound values these systems uphold when it comes to cultural understandings of how to live in relationship with the land, waters, and environment. Another part of the process is for humanity to fully understand the impact western policies and imposed systems have had, and in some cases continue to have, in diminishing Indigenous Peoples' ability to fully exercise and sustain their fundamental values. Society must find radically creative ways to support the new and emergent systemic approaches that are created, designed, and implemented by Indigenous leaders. Doing so will help them maximize opportunities they need to reclaim, strengthen, and share their knowledge and rebuild communities.

AVF works to develop partnerships across sectors and issues while amplifying diverse voices, cultures, and talent to benefit everyone through the values of collaboration, equity and inclusion, innovation, insight, and integrity.

## Conclusion

Pulling from within / pulling from within  
 My people I come to you  
 Are you looking for ground squirrels?

Yup'ik elder Marie Meade learned *Caiyuguluk* from Chuna McIntyre, the Yupik culture bearer from Eek, who founded the dance troupe Numamta. According to Meade (as cited by Christianson 2012: 1), "the first line describes the muscular strength and internal discipline required to live off the land and provide for a village." It emphasizes how the intersection of sharing, understanding your responsibility to community may be manifested. She goes on to say that "the second line may be interpreted as a promise that the land will provide." We believe it further speaks towards the importance of knowledge about relationality and your role in the value of responsibility therein. She continues on to say that "the third line can be baffling – it places the smallest of land mammals as something to be sought after. Meade, when asked about the ground squirrel, said there are no small animals. "They're all big to me. They're all big and they're all important," she said. "The song is a prayer for survival and for sustenance and you rely on all that is available." Understanding nuances or what might not be apparent shows the importance of Elder wisdom; and the BSEG example shows how modern policy solutions can benefit from this knowledge. Yup'ik continue to rely on "all that is available" to meet the challenges of their present-day circumstances through building on their long-standing values in new ways. It is what provides strength in working as a collective in the best interests of communities today and for future generations.

## Notes

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