

# YIC4 -YUKON INDIGENOUS CLIMATE CHANGE CHAMPIONS PROJECT

NEWSLETTER, FEBRUARY 2018

## OBJECTIVE

This two-year project focuses on training Yukon Indigenous youth, aged 18-30 years on climate change and leadership skills for gathering and mobilizing new and existing knowledge for climate change adaptation in Yukon communities.

A total of 27 Indigenous youth from across the Yukon, including six guest youth from Atlin, BC, NWT and Nunatsiavut and three Renewable Resource Council members are taking part in this training project. They will participate in two formal training sessions in Whitehorse where they will develop knowledge and skills in the areas of climate change and community-based research; following the training, they will be supported in their communities to plan and implement a community assessment, which will guide development of youth- and community-led project ideas for acting on climate change. Throughout the two years, Champions will be connected through a Yukon First Nations Climate Change Adaptation Network (YFN-CAN), which will involve regular sharing, networking and continued learning via webinar, teleconference calls and a Facebook Group.

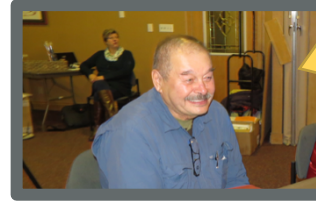
*[Pictured right from top to bottom]:* Scientific and Indigenous trainers, Dr. Catherine Potvin from McGill University; Dene Elder Francois Paulette from the Northwest Territories; Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Elders Chuck Hume and Mary Jane Jim (*image provided by MJ Jim*); Kluane First Nation's Elder Mary Jane Johnson; and Haida Elder Richard Wilson, a.k.a. Captain Gold from Haida Gwaii.



"We need to add a third 'c' to climate change. The courage to act."



"There is no word for climate change in Dēnesųliné – just *strange things to Mother Earth.*"



"If we don't work with our First Nations governments then science won't do a thing – it needs to lead to decision-making."



"If we use the energy of the youth and the wisdom of the Elders, we will move mountains. "



"When you are out on the land, you are the record keeper for future generations, for future decision-makers."



"I cleaned up the debris [at Skung Gwaii] to show my Ancestors that somebody cared"



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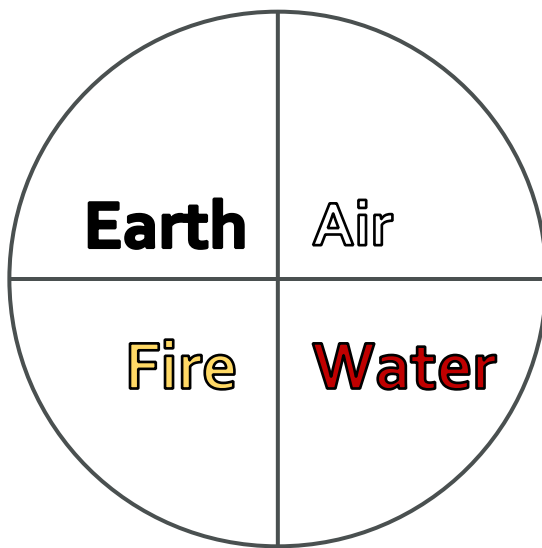
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## TRAINING SESSION 1, NOVEMBER 27-30<sup>TH</sup>, 2017

The first four-day training session, led by Norma Kassi and Jody Butler Walker, focused on building a strong foundation of knowledge about the causes and effects of and adaptation strategies for climate change from global to local perspectives. Youth learned from scientific, local and Indigenous experts and leaders and analyzed their communities through the lens of **Earth, Air, Fire, and Water**.

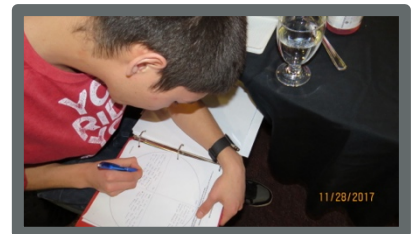
Figure - The Four Elements of Climate Change



The youth were highly engaged throughout the four days and came to the training with a wealth of knowledge already as well as many concerns about the changes they have witnessed to their homelands, which they were able to share with each other. While the topic of climate change can be overwhelming at times, they expressed incredible passion and dedication to working together toward positive change and building onto their communities' adaptive and mitigative capacities from a strengths-based, Indigenous-led perspective. As part of a facilitated process, youth also co-developed their own community assessment plan and tool to explore climate change adaptation work and future areas of potential for community action.

Participants analyzed their communities through elements of **Earth, Air, Fire, and Water**, which we are calling the Four Elements of Climate Change (pictured left).

This model guided the training and youth reflections throughout.



[Pictured top, from left to right]: Bobbi Rose Koe, from Fort McPherson and Travis Frost, from Old Crow; [second from top]: Dustin Gull, from Carmacks; [third from top]: Northern Tutchone youth analyze their communities; [fourth from top]: YIC4 participants doing group work; [fifth from top]: Shauna Yeomans-Lindstrom, from Atlin, documents adaptation strategies with other Tlingit youth

In addition to learning about climate change, youth were also developing skills in the areas of public speaking, active listening, individual reflection, advocacy, research and critical thinking, as well as leadership. A key focus of the training curriculum was to bring together multiple ways of knowing, promote intergenerational sharing between youth and Elders, build on youth's existing knowledge, through active participation, and give youth time to demonstrate and practice skills, so that the knowledge and plans for community assessment, developed in the training, lead to action on the ground.

## EVENING BANQUET, NOVEMBER 29<sup>TH</sup>, 2017

At an evening banquet, participants of the YIC4 training joined with the delegates from an Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada Community-Based Monitoring Forum [pictured below].



Two youth representatives, Bobbi Rose Koe, who is Tetlit Gwich'in from Fort McPherson and Derrick Redies, who is Kaska Dena from Ross River, were selected by their peers to speak to invited delegates. As a group, the youth came up with a letter and speech directed to the invited Ministers, Honourable Pauline Frost, Minister of Health and Social Services, Environment and Women's Directorate, and Honourable John Streicker, Minister of Community Services, French Language Services Directorate, Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission. The letter was hand delivered after the two youth gave their opening Call to Action. Minister Streicker and Minister Frost also delivered a speech.

## BUILDING EMERGING YOUNG LEADERS

*Some of the Champions' ideas for advocacy:*

- **Write political letters** – letters to Ministers of Energy, Mines and Resources, Community Services, Health and Social Services, and Environment
- **Vote!**
- **Social Media**
- **Photography and Film**
- Write **press releases** and **letters to the editor**
- Get on the **radio**
- Speak up at our **General Assemblies**



[Pictured above, left]: Derick Redies and Bobbi Rose Koe, the chosen youth representatives delivering a Call to Action speech, directed at Honourable Ministers Frost and Minister Streicker at the banquet; [Pictured above, right]: Youth, Shauna Yeomans-Lindstrom, Travis Frost and Geri-Lee Buyck give interview with CBC's Dave Croft

[Pictured below from left to right]: Minister Streicker and Minister Frost delivering their responses to the Youths' Call to Action.

"You are the renewable energy"

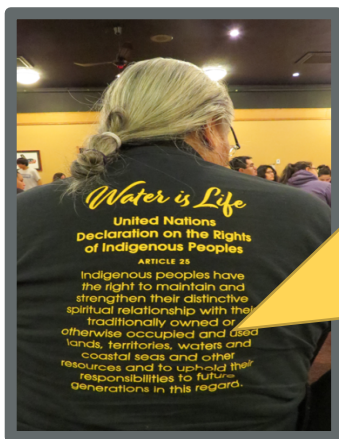
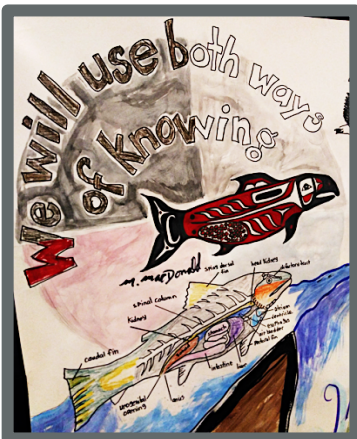
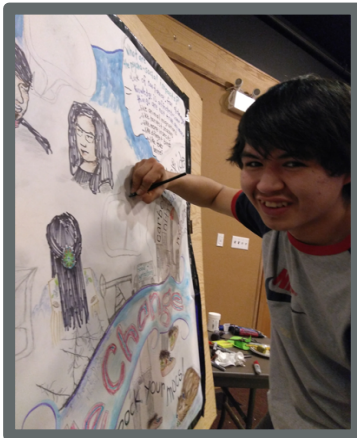


"Our future leaders of climate are in this room"



## ART AND CULTURE

“Climate change impacts more than just our Mother Earth, it touches all aspects of our lives. Because **our land is who we are as a people.**”



[Pictured top, left to right]: Carcross Tagish First Nation youth, Dominic Johns helps artist Heidi Marion with graphic facilitation; [second row, left to right]: “Two-eyed seeing”, the integration of science and Traditional Knowledge as complimentary ways of knowing, depicted by Heidi and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations youth Mariah MacDonald; Elder Francois Paulette’s jacket on the vital importance of water and Indigenous sovereignty.

### WATER IS LIFE

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples  
Article 25

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters, and coastal seas and other resources to uphold their responsibility to future generations in this regard.



[Pictured bottom, left to right]: Kaska Dena youth Derick Redies and Robby Dick along with Joshua Barichello from Ross River perform a drum ceremony at the evening banquet; [bottom]: Youth and other guests at the banquet participate in a drum dance.



**“The science behind climate change cannot stand alone without Traditional Knowledge.”**

- Minister Pauline Frost

**“Traditional Knowledge (TK) and science both have a place; they are two different types of knowledge. They support each other. You don’t need scientific knowledge to verify TK; it’s like putting a square into a circle. They just are.”**

- Dr. Catherine Potvin

**“Put your fear aside...We have the power.”**

- Francois Paulette, Dene Elder

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, we would like to wholeheartedly thank the youth and Renewable Resource Council members who are a vital part of this training project. Your passion, dedication and intelligence give us much hope for the future. To all the Elders and trainers, your traditional, local and scientific wisdom and guidance are what grounds this project. Secondly, we would like to thank our wonderful Advisory Committee and partners, namely, Alison Perrin from Yukon College's Research Centre, Mary Jane Johnson from Kluane First Nation, Stephen Roddick from the Yukon Government's Climate Change Secretariat, and Shailyn Drukis from the Council of Yukon First Nations for each of your contributions and support guiding the project thus far. And lastly, but not least, we'd like to thank our funders, for without them this project would not be possible. Thank you to Polar Knowledge Canada and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, our two main funders, as well as the Trudeau Foundation (through McGill University) and Canadians for a New Partnership for supporting some travel and training aspects.

*Photo credits: Tookie Mercredi and Molly Pratt.*

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CANADIANS FOR A  
NEW PARTNERSHIP



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