



**Rebuilding Lost Connections:  
How Revitalisation Projects Contribute  
to Cultural Continuity and Improve the  
Environment**

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# **Rebuilding Lost Connections: How Revitalisation Projects Contribute to Cultural Continuity and Improve the Environment**

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## **Executive Summary**

Disconnection from nature and the local environment is causing harm to indigenous peoples who have already become marginalised by limited wealth, power and status. The consequences of such disconnection include mental and physical health problems, social pathologies and cultural collapse. As they have come to appreciate the repercussions of disconnection, many groups are now taking action to protect and support their communities and cultures through what we term here ‘revitalisation projects’.

We reviewed 41 projects from nine countries across the world, identifying six categories of revitalisation projects for a new typology: i) Traditional Foods; ii) Ecotourism; iii) Education; iv) Language; v) Cultural; vi) Rights. Some projects target the community as a whole, and others focus on a specific group of people within a community, for instance the young. This paper aims to develop an understanding of these six project types, and their function and impacts within communities.

We suggest that policy-makers dealing with disconnected communities should look towards revitalisation projects as part of long-term solutions to a variety of social, health and environmental problems that have occurred in parallel with indigenous disconnection from land. By being community-driven, these projects are more likely to encourage long-term support and participation. As well as reviving activities and belief systems, revitalisation projects have the capacity to empower indigenous and non-industrial communities and to enable them to regain a sense of identity and pride, thus reinvigorating communities, cultures and connections with the land.

## 1. Introduction

Humans have evolved over several million years in natural environments. Subsequently, their cultures have shaped, and in turn been shaped by, local ecosystems and their constituent parts (Balée, 1994; Norgaard, 1994; Denevan, 2001; Maffi, 2001; Toledo, 2001; Gunderson & Holling, 2002; Harmon, 2002). Goodin's Green Theory of Value hypothesises that humans have an intrinsic need to set their lives in a wider context, and nature manifested as the local environment can provide this (Milton, 1999). In industrialised countries<sup>1</sup>, many communities live their daily lives in urban environments, with only intermittent exposure to green space. However, in indigenous<sup>2</sup> and non-industrial communities (such as subsistence-oriented hunter-gatherers, agriculturalists and pastoralists), most people retain much stronger links with the natural environment through resource use and management. For these societies, nature and the local environment provide not only the landscape in which human activities take place, but play a pivotal role in belief systems, cultural activities and livelihoods (Milton, 1998; Berkes, 2004, 2008).

In learning how to live off the land, human communities have developed and refined knowledge, skills and tenure systems that still persist in many non-industrial communities (Turner & Berkes, 2006; Pilgrim *et al.*, 2008). This extrinsic physical dependency has evolved in line with a more intrinsic dependency. For instance, many indigenous societies have evolved spiritual beliefs, ceremonial traditions, sacred designations and worldviews based on their own lands. Where this is the case, both personal and cultural identity is intertwined with the physical landscape and nature as a whole (Basso, 1996; Milton, 1998; Berkes, 2004). However, this interconnection is increasingly being lost in communities across the world as a growing number of peoples are becoming disconnected from nature, leading to significant mental and physical health repercussions (Kellert & Wilson, 1993; Nabhan & St Antoine, 1993; Pyle, 2003; Pretty, 2004, 2007; Pretty *et al.*, 2005, 2006, 2007).

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper, we use the terms industrialised and non-industrialised to refer to differing social contexts variously referred to as developed, modernised, developing, traditional, native, pre-industrial, in-transition, western, Third World or indigenous. None of these terms are without difficulty, as they seem to suggest that patterns of development or cultural change are linear and similar. Some indigenous communities, for example, participate in resource extraction activities consistent with industrialisation; others have never actively industrialised their own economies, but may use technologies, manufactured clothing, processed foods, and other products of industrialisation; some exist in developing countries, and others in industrialised countries. We do not imply an inevitable and singular pathway for change by the use of any of these terms.

<sup>2</sup> The definition of indigenous peoples used here is taken from Jose R. Martinez Cobo's working definition adopted by the UN, "*Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system*" (UN, 2004).

Cultures<sup>3</sup> themselves are complex and have the capacity to change rapidly, emerging as well as dying out. Pretty *et al.* (2008) use four intrinsic components to assess these changes; (i) beliefs, meanings and worldviews, (ii) livelihoods, practices and resource management systems, (iii) knowledge bases and languages, and (iv) institutions, norms and regulations. All four must be sustained if cultural continuity is to be successfully attained<sup>4</sup>. However, all depend in some way on a continued connection between human societies and their locally-distinct environments (Pretty *et al.*, 2008). The values and spiritual beliefs of many cultures are based upon landscape features and non-human nature, such as sacred groves in India or the animistic beliefs of the Bajo of Indonesia (Schaaf & Lee, 2006; Pilgrim *et al.*, 2007, 2008). By shaping and reworking local landscapes for livelihoods, communities have developed unique practices and management systems that strive to sustain natural resources at a level that supports local human populations (Feit, 1988, Agrawal & Gibson, 1999; Smith *et al.*, 2007; Pretty, 2007).

As a consequence of this dependence, local knowledge bases and languages of many non-industrial communities often centre strongly around nature, as community members observe, interact and tell stories about nature on a regular basis (Basso, 1996; Pilgrim *et al.*, 2007, 2008; Berkes, 2008). This land-based knowledge gives rise to socially-embedded norms and institutions that shape human interactions with the natural environment. These tenure systems of informal rules sustain social-ecological systems without the need for formal sanctions (Rudd *et al.*, 2003; Smith *et al.*, 2007). The knowledge and practices of such systems are today being drawn upon across the world for use in community conservation (Cinner *et al.*, 2005; Smith *et al.*, 2007). This demonstrates why distinctions made between social and natural systems are considered by some to be artificial (Berkes *et al.*, 2003; Pretty *et al.*, 2008). Cultural continuity is thus a primary objective of most reconnection efforts.

Disconnection from nature (depicted here as the local environment and all habitats) can be caused by physical or psychological separation. The former can be brought about through the physical dislocation of an entire community away from their homelands and to a different environment. Forced resettlement differs from voluntary resettlement where people migrate for jobs, lifestyle or simply nostalgia. One example of voluntary resettlement is the migration of individuals and families back to the villages surrounding Pripyat, the centre of the Chernobyl disaster (Pretty, 2007). Forced resettlement, on the other hand, results from exclusive policies or environmental destruction. Local communities are rarely consulted and displacement is often against their will (Cernea, 1988, 1997; Cernea & Schmidt-Soltau, 2006).

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<sup>3</sup> Culture is a highly debated and contentious term. It can imply that groups of people are homogenous and bounded entities. Instead we use this term to depict a fluid and interchangeable concept that nevertheless describes the elements of distinctiveness of a people, such as connections with the land. In this way, the term can be used to define certain groups.

<sup>4</sup> Cultural continuity does not imply no cultural change; rather it suggests the need to maintain core components of cultures in light of cultural evolution caused by externally-driven change.

This forced resettlement has occurred over a long period of time through the policies of a large number of colonialising state entities, settler states and dominant populations that have expanded into the territories of indigenous and native peoples, creating physical and psychological ills amongst afflicted communities (Colson, 1971; Turnbull, 1973; Brody, 1981; Marcus, 1995; Gall, 2002; McKnight, 2002; Samson, 2003; McGrath, 2006). Examples of such dislocations can be seen in Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand, parts of Asia and Africa including the Kalahari, and throughout Amazonia. Dislocations, both small- and large-scale, stem from natural resource policies on the one hand advocating the expulsion, relocation and expropriation of particular lands and resources, and assimilation campaigns on the other. Assimilation does not necessarily separate communities from their lands physically, but strives to diminish and erode the intrinsic connection with land, spiritually, mentally and emotionally, leading to a form of psychological separation (Samson, 2003; Samson & Pretty, 2006; Pretty, 2007).

Albrecht *et al.* (2004) term the consequences of psychological separation “solastalgia”. This refers to the homesickness and nostalgia a person can suffer even when still in their home environment, usually as a result of landscape destruction. These feelings are generated from an inability to derive solace from a person’s homelands, leading to depression and associated ills. Thus disconnection from the land has the capacity to damage, and even destroy, cultures that remain closely tied to their environments. This, in turn, can lead to mental and psychological ills which can manifest as physical ailments and social pathologies, particularly if disconnection is rapid, for instance across one or two generations (Shkilnyk, 1985; Basso, 1996; Samson, 2003; Samson & Pretty, 2006; Pretty, 2007).

## **2. A Typology of Revitalisation Projects**

Rapid disconnection is most significantly felt today by indigenous and non-industrial societies marginalised by limited wealth, power and status and suffering from associated social pathologies and cultural collapse (Milton, 1998). However, many such communities that have fallen victim to disconnection in the past are now striving to reinvigorate their traditional cultures and reconnect with their homelands in spite of continuing pressures such as globalisation and commodification of resources (Berkes, 2001; Pilgrim *et al.*, 2008, Gigoux and Samson, *in press*). Realising the health and societal repercussions of disconnection, including the increasing prevalence of modern day conditions such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, hypertension and coronary heart disease, non-industrial communities in a number of locations are taking action to replenish their cultures through what we term here ‘revitalisation projects’. Like the cultures they seek to rejuvenate, revitalisation projects are very diverse, ranging from hunter-support schemes and local food policies to language initiatives and ecotourism projects.

These revitalisation projects share a similar objective: to maintain or reclaim the culture of local peoples and reconnect them to the land for long-term individual and societal health. Interestingly, these community projects are evolving independently of one another at a time when international policy-makers are only just starting to acknowledge the interdependence between human and environmental health (e.g. UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Program and UNEP’s 2007 flagship *Global Environment Outlook*). We have reviewed 41 projects (Appendix A) from countries across the world using published and unpublished literature, web-based material, e-mail contact, telephone conversations, personal communication and field trips, and consequently devised a typology (Table 1). The projects cover a wide geographic range, encompassing North America, parts of the Arctic and sub-Arctic, as well as locations in Asia and Africa. Traditional food, language and culture projects focus on reviving specific elements of community culture, such as local diets, languages, ceremonial traditions and land-based practices (e.g. specialised hunting techniques). Ecotourism projects have a similar objective, but utilise these cultural elements as an income-generating strategy to attract tourists. Education projects focus on developing culturally-appropriate education schemes and transferring traditional knowledge and practices to younger generations. The final type is based on the renewal and strengthening of traditional rights, most commonly land rights. This paper aims to develop an understanding of these six project types, and their function and impact within communities.

**Table 1. A Typology of Revitalisation Projects**

<b>Project Type</b>	<b>Objectives of Project Type</b>
1. Traditional Foods	To increase the consumption of traditional local foods and revive food collection and preparation practices
2. Ecotourism	To revive traditional cultural practices and ceremonies as part of an income generating strategy
3. Education	To provide a more balanced, culturally-appropriate education system either separate from or as part of a state education system
4. Language	To protect or enhance the competency of speakers of endangered languages and open communication channels between community elders and young people
5. Cultural	To revive particular aspects of a way of life that may have been neglected
6. Rights	To campaign for the recognition of the human rights and land rights of indigenous cultures with a view to ensuring cultural continuity and diversity into the future.

## 2.1 Traditional Foods Revitalisation Projects

Foods play a role above and beyond nutrition in human societies. They help to define identity and shape social structure, and are often used in communication, group activities and religious observances. As a result, it is not uncommon for traditional foods to be a major defining characteristic of a society. Local diets epitomise the ways in which a culture uses, classifies and thinks about its natural resources, and strengthens the connection between a society, its landscape and its ancestral roots (Pars *et al.* 2001; Tansey, 2004; Raine, 2005; Willows, 2005). Recognising this, a number of revitalisation projects have been established to reintroduce traditional foods into modern diets (Marquardt & Caulfield, 1996; Nuttall, 1998; Kishigami, 2000; IITC, 2003a, 2003b; Sonjica, 2004; Bersamin & Simpson, 2005; OHEP, 2008). Reintroduction usually comprises more than just a renewed consumption of these foods. In many cases, communities are reviving the livelihood skills, practices and knowledge needed to find, collect and prepare traditional foods. This information is often taught by community elders who retain knowledge of edible species and where to harvest them. Being able to locate and prepare local foods was vital to the survival of our ancestors. By strengthening this knowledge and these livelihood skills, non-industrial communities are reconnecting with their ancestral roots, their homelands and, subsequently, their identity (Samson & Pretty, 2006; Pretty, 2007).

There is now a growing evidence base that reverting to traditional diets offers more than just cultural benefits, it provides physical health benefits too (Samson & Pretty, 2006; Pretty, 2007). Many disconnected communities, unable to meet their daily subsistence needs from the land, have been forced to consume foods purchased in stores provided by private individuals, companies or the state. This deviation differs from the voluntary transition that has been seen in industrial communities in recent decades, for instance increased consumption of convenience and fast foods. The latter were created by the industrialization of agriculture and the processing of whole foods into packaged food products to fit the lifestyles of labour-oriented western societies in which families increasingly had less time available to cook and prepare meals (Pollan, 2007). Non-industrial communities have undergone a similar transition as a result of forced departures from traditional lands, the loss of skills and knowledge, and exclusive resource policies, but the transition has been of a different order shifting from wild foods to junk foods within a short space of time.

Store-bought foods available to non-industrial communities usually comprise the lowest quality products of industrial agriculture that have been imported into the region, for example highly processed convenience food products like canned meats and cheese of little nutritional value. In many communities wild meat, low in saturated fats, has been replaced by farmed meat, high in carcinogenic saturated fats. At the same time, carbohydrate intake, linked with deficiencies and many modern

diseases, is increasing, whilst protein intake is decreasing. Compared with the low saturated fat, low sugar and low salt diets most non-industrial communities are used to, highly processed store bought foods, combined with the lack of physical exercise needed to acquire them, has led to substantial health costs, including obesity and related diseases such as hypertension and heart disease (Cordain *et al.*, 2000; Kozlov & Zdor, 2003; Waldram *et al.*, 2006).

More worrying still is the fact that younger generations have made large shifts towards these energy-dense foods. By reintroducing an interest in traditional foods, communities seek not only to shift their diets but also lifestyles, which could be the salvation of generations to come (Samson & Pretty, 2006). A range of incentives from local organisations and national governments are being used to promote this shift, including monetary support to facilitate the purchase of hunting equipment and the creation of markets for local foods (Marquardt & Caulfield, 1996; Nuttall, 1998; Kishigami, 2000).

In the Inuit communities of Akulivik in Quebec, Canada, a hunter-support program has been established to provide economic support for hunters whilst ensuring the distribution of traditional foods. Market channels have been created so that hunters in local communities can sell the meat and fish they catch to village councils for redistribution. Each village councillor is given a portion of the project funds to pay hunters and to buy and repair equipment. Every village that participates in the project is entitled to a community hunting boat and a communal cold storage house. If project funds are not used locally for hunter and fisher wages, then monies may be used to buy fish and meat from nearby villages to distribute amongst community members, in particular widows, elders or full-time wage earners who are unable to hunt. This provides local hunters with an income source and ensures continued consumption of traditional foods (Kishigami, 2000).

The Greenland government has created a similar market on a national scale. The Home Rule Government, established in 1979, has made the promotion and expansion of traditional country food markets a key policy. The government distributes licences (prioritising commercial hunters and fishers, and nationals unemployed for over 125 days per year) and territories to communities, and in doing so, ensures livelihoods and healthy diets even in isolated communities and settlements. At the same time, residents of more industrial towns who do not have the time to hunt (e.g. on the west coast) are able to purchase healthier traditional foods (Nuttall, 1998). Hunters are encouraged to sell their surplus catch to Royal Greenland, the national meat and fish processing and distribution company (Nuttall, 1998). The prices paid to hunters by Royal Greenland are determined annually by an agreement between Royal Greenland and the local hunters' and fishers' association. Hunters can also privately sell catch at local food markets, the *Kalaalimineerniarfik* (Marquardt & Caulfield, 1996; Pars *et al.*, 2001).

Country foods in Greenland include seal meat, whale meat (including beluga, narwhal, fin and minke), caribou meat, fish, sea birds (including guillemots and eider duck) and berries. To ensure sustainability, populations that show signs of decline are closed for the subsequent hunting season, and to ensure price competition does not drive down populations, all country foods are sold at fixed prices agreed upon by the local hunters' and fishers' association. Prices are set for two years at a time, but can be renegotiated if necessary based on the costs of hunting. The set prices are posted up and distributed widely amongst the community (Marquardt & Caulfield, 1996; Pars *et al.*, 2001).

Although Greenland cannot meet its total food demand this way, the Home Rule Government has reduced national dependence on imports and increased economic independence from Denmark. By providing a source of full time income, or even just supplementary income for households, the marketisation of country foods in Greenland has increased the self sufficiency and cultural continuity of Greenlandic communities (Marquardt & Caulfield, 1996; Nuttall, 1998; Pars *et al.*, 2001).

In South Africa, a different approach to the promotion of traditional foods has been taken by the Department of Science and Technology, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and groups set up to promote indigenous foods. In 2004 they launched Indiza Foods, a community-owned company aimed at developing sustainable community enterprise whilst promoting traditional foods. Indiza Foods encourages the consumption of country foods by publishing local recipe books that contain traditional recipes and tips on how to incorporate local foods into modern diets. One of its successes has been to set up processing centres to supply supermarkets and businesses with such foods. It also holds local, district and provincial food fairs to open communication channels and transfer knowledge about traditional foods (Sonjica, 2004).

Other community efforts to promote local foods and traditional diets include community food gardens, traditional harvest camps, traditional dish contests and the establishment of co-operative food stores as an outlet for local foods. There are examples of such projects that target young people in particular, for instance summer and after school programs where children are taught about traditional food preparation. Some communities have also set up traditional food distribution programs and allocated lands for the protection and sustainable harvest of local foods (IITC, 2003a, 2003b).

The rejuvenation of traditional skills and knowledge bases can also increase the livelihood security of non-industrial communities by reviving local income-generating activities. Knowledge of such activities was vital when communities in Chukotka had to suddenly return to traditional hunting lifestyles after the economic collapse of the Chukotka Region, Russia. Between 1985 and 2000, consumption of local foods overtook market foods. Many communities revived whaling, although forgotten skills meant that subsistence hunting led to a number of fatalities in the region. By 2002, however, most local residents under the age of 30 actually preferred the taste of native foods over

European imports (Ball, 2004; Kozlov, 2004). Ontario's Hunter Education Program teaches prospective young hunters the skills of identification, tracking and an understanding of the ecology of the area (OHEP, 2008). Reindeer herding programs have also been established amongst the Yup'ik of Alaska to promote the continuity of this traditional active lifestyle (Bersamin & Simpson, 2005).

Traditional foods revitalisation projects, from local to national in scale, have succeeded in market creation, the establishment of support programmes, the creation of new businesses, in particular the emergence of micro-enterprise, and incentivising traditional food collection and consumption. Projects tend to be inclusive of all local stakeholders and are often responsible for opening communication channels between generations and reaffirming cultural identity whilst ensuring livelihood security.

## **2.2 Ecotourism Revitalisation Projects**

Ecotourism schemes often target the revival of similar skills and knowledge bases to traditional foods revitalisation projects, however in this case these cultural practices are being used primarily as a source of income generation. Ecotourism is becoming increasingly popular as wealthy people from industrial societies seek to learn and experience non-industrial lifestyles and the 'back to nature' image they represent. Tourists are willing to pay high prices to enjoy this experience. Ecotourism projects thus permit an integrative approach to revitalisation by providing an economic market for traditional cultures and the knowledge and skills they hold. By relearning the practices of their ancestors, young people are not only reconnecting with their history and the landscape upon which it is based, but they are creating a livelihood for themselves utilising modern markets.

Making full use of this emerging market, many Sámi reindeer herders have begun to open their reindeer farms to the public. The Inari Reindeer Farm, Finland, is one such example. Visitors to Inari Reindeer Farm enjoy coffee out of wooden cups, traditional game dishes and singing traditional joiks. It also offers an optional reindeer safari by sled. The current capacity of Inari farm is 150 visitors in summer and 100 in winter (Inari Event, 2008). The Purnumukka Reindeer Farm, Finland, offers a similar experience to ecotourists (Purnumukan Porofarmi, 2008).

Reindeer farms tend to be family owned, whereas other ecotourism facilities are community-owned or at least community-centred, with jobs and other benefits filtering back to local community members. Examples include Bathurst Inlet Lodge and Elu Inlet Lodge, both in Canada, which offer accommodation and participation in traditional local activities (Bathurst Inlet Lodge, 2008; Elu Inlet Lodge, 2008). Other companies offer outfitting services. With the growing ecotourism industry, many communities are working on developing their infrastructure and training the workforce in order to

develop their tourism potential based on local culture and traditional lifestyles, for instance Alaska Chukotka Development Program in Chukotka, Russia (ACDP, 2003). By developing tourism infrastructure locally and rejuvenating cultural traditions, non-industrial communities can utilise their traditional practices, foods and skills to generate income and compete in today's financially-driven markets.

Ecotourism projects incentivise cultural revival by combining it with modern day economic markets. Thus, some would say, offering an integrative approach to revitalisation and sustainable community development. However ecotourism can bring challenges too by incentivising traditional skills and practices through economic means rather than traditional values, creating a divide between elder and younger generations. An increasing number of external visitors with their own values and materialistic wealth can also shift local values and worldviews. As young people close their communication channels with elders, they threaten to replace them with channels to industrialised cultures. In some cases, the money generated from ecotourism schemes does not benefit the community as a whole and instead is only captured by a few with the most power, and money itself can change the values and cultural beliefs of a society.

### **2.3 Education Revitalisation Projects**

Some communities have been able to establish initiatives within formal education projects to restore or maintain cultural values and practices associated with the land (Crockatt & Smythe, 2002; Ball, 2004; Lepani, 2004; Takano, 2004; Pember, 2007). Such efforts are diverse, some more formal taking place within the standard school curriculum, and others informal promoting a rounded education in a child's own cultural environment. The latter often employ a combination of cultural tools (such as talking sticks as mnemonic devices), narratives and direct experience. The content of these courses also varies, although most tend to combine the modern day curriculum with a cultural education such as land skills, ancestral stories, and values and beliefs.

One such project was developed in Igloodik, Canada in response to Iglulingmiut elders' complaints that young people were failing to learn the knowledge and skills vital to the future survival of their culture. This project was organised by the Inullariit Society. It expands on young people's education, teaching them the knowledge and skills that would have traditionally been taught in the family and which modern education systems are failing to teach. Through this project elders teach young people how to "be and become an Inuk". Participants learn land skills, knowledge, values and beliefs that enable them to establish a traditional connection with and respect for the land (Takano, 2004).

A similar education project was developed in Russian Mission, a Yup'ik village in the Yukon Territories of Alaska. However, rather than a response to formal schooling, this project was established by the school itself as a consequence of the physical isolation of the village and its dependency on subsistence lifestyles. The project was set up in 2000 and was incorporated into the 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders' formal school curriculum. The school sought to provide education appropriate for the Yup'ik way of life. The initiative incorporates seasonal subsistence activities throughout the school year, outdoor experiences integrated into other subjects including reading and writing, and a three week field trip teaching students hunting and fishing skills. As well as equipping students intellectually, Russian Mission school works to equip young people practically, emotionally and physically enabling them to become contributing members to the Yup'ik community (Takano, 2004).

Following precedents with boarding school education for indigenous peoples in North America and Australia as well as for the Ainu in Hokkaidō, Japan, all of which began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Adams, 1995; Miller, 1996; Siddle, 1996; Bull & Alia; 2004), the realisation of the cultural failures of modern universal education systems amongst non-industrial communities is becoming widespread. Ethnic Tibetan children, for instance, under the modern education system can feel marginalised and culturally-isolated. Drop out rates are high and literacy rates in rural areas are low. In response, groups of ethnic Tibetans have established NGOs focused on setting up private schools to meet Tibetan children's cultural and educational needs. An example of one such NGO is the Junyong Community Foundation (JCF) established in 2004. JCF along with the Rigdzin Foundation have established an education initiative for local communities, particularly targeting nomadic families, in Eastern Tibet. The project aims to combine literacy teaching with appropriate livelihood and life skills training, cultural renewal and values education. The project targets three cohorts: young children not in school, 14-25 year olds and mothers with children (Lepani, 2004; Rigdzin Foundation, 2006).

The Nunavut Literacy Council's Family and Community Literacy Project has adopted a different approach. It focuses on teaching literacy and oral-history in informal but culturally-appropriate settings. For instance, in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, children put on their *atigis* (traditional coats worn by Inuit) after school and attend the local library's after-school homework club. As well as doing their homework, children learn traditional arts and crafts, and read stories, many of which take place in the reading tent painted by local artists (Crockatt & Smythe, 2002).

The need for cultural education is now being recognised by some state governments in the US. The Montana Indian Education for All Act (IEFA) was the first of its kind. It requires that all Montana schools, both primary and secondary, include lessons on the history, culture and contemporary status of the state's American Indian population as part of the school curricula (Pember, 2007). In Hawaii, entire schools have been set up to teach local culture, language and practical skills in addition to the

modern day curriculum. These are termed Immersion Schools (Boyea, *pers comm*). Schools in the North Slope Borough of Alaska previously included a special semester for Inupiat children during spring whaling. This enabled them to spend time on the ice with their families learning traditional skills, and when they were not on the ice other culturally relevant classes were organised by the schools. However, this has been banned for the last few years culminating in low Inupiat attendance during whaling season (Boyea, *pers comm*). Efforts are even being made to target pre-school children with culturally-sustaining childcare, such as Cree-ative Daycare (Ball, 2004).

The failures of modern day curricula for marginalised populations have been highlighted in past decades, however education revitalisation projects offer an integrative approach to education that has long been absent from the school curriculum. Despite this, efforts are still limited in scope and capacity. In Alaskan communities, for instance, the timing and length of vacations could be tied in with spring whaling. Similarly in whaling communities in Norway and other cultures that centre around the seasonal migration of animals. Among Northern hunting peoples in Canada, school calendars could easily be adjusted to allow for spring wildfowl hunting and seasonal caribou hunting. This is vital to ensuring that formal education comes at no cost to cultural continuity and intergenerational teachings, but many obstacles remain embedded in the bias of state educational systems towards uniformity and curricula homogenisation.

## **2.4 Language Revitalisation Projects**

Language revitalisation projects are similar to these education projects but more focused in content. These are geographically widespread amongst non-industrial communities and are a key tool to replenishing beliefs and practises by opening communication channels between generations both now and in the future (Crockatt, & Smythe, 2002; Martin & Tagalik, 2004). Often knowledge and stories within a culture lose their meaning if translated into another language. Perhaps more profoundly, indigenous languages contain vocabularies for specific places, topographies and weather conditions which assist in the understanding of the local environment more so than an imported language such as English. Languages also contain within them assumptions about the relationship of humans to the world that cannot always be replicated or made commensurate with imported languages. For these reasons, long-term cultural continuity is dependent upon the survival of a community's language (Maffi, 1998, 2001).

Like education schemes, language projects are highly diverse, ranging from modules in schools to informal sessions with community elders. Some language revitalisation efforts are part of larger education schemes, others however just focus on teaching younger generations the local language. The latter are often driven and developed by local linguists. Examples of such efforts are in Oklahoma

and Florida where Native American language teachers are being trained in the skills of language revival. Trained teachers then take these skills back to their communities and teach local people how to speak, read and write in their native languages (Hirata-Edds *et al.*, 2003). Other techniques used to maintain local languages include teaching stories and songs, and using written language in visible places (e.g. cafeterias, traffic signs and clothing) (Hirata-Edds *et al.*, 2003).

The Inuit language, Inuktitut, is being strengthened through more formal channels using the modern day curriculum in Nunavut. Three teaching models have been proposed: (i) early stage Inuit teaching should continue until later in communities where Inuit is dying out; (ii) Inuit should be developed throughout the school grades (alongside English) where Inuit is still strong but not the first language; and (iii) dual teaching should be introduced where communities are bilingual (focusing on Inuktitut as the first language and English as the second) (Martin & Tagalik, 2004). At the same time the Nunavut Literacy Council is working on publishing an array of Inuktitut reading materials including newspapers, magazines and elders' stories (Crockatt & Smythe, 2002).

Language projects have adopted many different approaches to encourage the revival of local languages, and the narratives and stories they hold. The importance of language to a culture, and the threat of its loss, has mobilised entire communities and cultures to establish local projects and reform school curricula. Some linguists are directing their efforts at documenting local languages now only spoken by community elders before they die out altogether. However the only assured way of protecting a language from extinction is to ensure continued use amongst its holders and in the environmental contexts where it is most meaningful.

## **2.5 Cultural Revitalisation Projects**

A culture comprises more than its practical skills and language. It is far more intrinsic with people belonging to the same culture often sharing the same belief systems, values and worldviews. These have often evolved in and around the natural environment in which the community is based (Milton, 1998; Berkes, 2004, 2008). This is one reason for the psychological ills caused by dislocation. Many communities retain their values and belief systems but are no longer surrounded by the components upon which they are based. These include ancient burial grounds or sacred sites, and traditional plants and animals used for ceremonial purposes. Hence spiritual beliefs, religious ceremonies and rituals lose their meaning outside of a society's traditional territory and the disconnected community loses all sense of identity (Samson, 2003; Samson & Pretty, 2006).

As a culture comprises many components, most cultural revitalisation projects just focus on one or two of these components, for instance reintroducing a particular event or ceremony, recreating a set of

spiritual beliefs or reviving traditional stories and arts (Crockatt & Smythe, 2002; Waldram *et al.*, 2006). Unlike other projects, cultural revival focuses on renewing non-income generating activities. Some of the earliest cultural resurgence efforts were amongst the Sámi of Norway in the 1950s and 1960s. After centuries of cultural repression and forced assimilation, the Nordic Sámi Council was formed in 1956 and Sámi rights to preserve and protect their own culture were recognised in the 1960s. Early small-scale revitalisation efforts included the publication of Sámi newspapers and magazines, Sámi television programs, story-telling sessions, poetry readings and culture days. The Sámi language was taught in schools and universities and, finally after 300 years of repression, Sámi Parliaments were set up in Finland, Sweden and Norway to protect the needs and traditions of its culture (Brenna, 1997; Nuttall, 1998).

Small-scale cultural revitalisation projects include the revival of the Spirit Dance ceremony in British Columbia. Spiritual leaders worked to pass on the traditions of the ceremony to young people, renewing a local sense of Aboriginal identity and cultural pride (Waldram *et al.*, 2006). Another example of community action is in Pelly Bay, Canada, where efforts are being made to record elders' stories, read traditional narratives aloud over the radio and publish the stories in local languages and English (Crockatt, & Smythe, 2002). However, some projects are more holistic in their focus.

Culture camps take many different forms and are becoming increasingly common amongst First Nations in the US. Camps run for a particular length of time and aim to teach participants about different elements of their culture in a traditional setting. Since they are run for a limited period and participants often stay on site, culture camps are able to give a more holistic experience of total immersion into a culture (Takano, 2004; ANKN, 2007; APRN, 2008; Aqqaluk Trust, 2008; KCAW, 2008). They are particularly effective at educating young community members and opening communication channels between generations. The camps are usually non-profit and are organised and funded by regional tribal associations, school districts, other local non-profit organisations or a combination of these (Droulias, *pers comm*).

An example of a culture camp is Gaalee'ya Spirit Camp which runs youth camps, spirit camps and elder camps, as well as educational workshops and language preservation schemes. Located near Fairbanks, Alaska, it aims to teach practical skills, knowledge, values and beliefs. Facilities include a smoke house, a cook shelter and a cache. Activities vary from season to season but may include berry picking and fish wheel building in the summer, and dog sledding and trapping in the winter. Participants also learn traditional skills such as tanning hides, drum making, food preservation, beading and story-telling (ANKN, 2007).

Another such camp can be found near Sitka in Alaska and is called the Dog Point Fish Camp. Visitors to this camp learn seasonal food collection techniques along with other skills such as drum making (APRN, 2008; KCAW, 2008). Camp Sivu (from Sivunniigvik meaning “the planning place”) is a summer camp that teaches similar skills in the Kobuk River Delta of Alaska. As well as teaching hunting and fishing skills, this camp revives hunting rituals such as setting animal spirits free. At Camp Sivu, all hunting and food preparation must be carried out according to Inupiaq values (Aqqaluk Trust, 2008).

Started in 1998, the Kodiak Island Borough School District and the Native Village of Afogonak introduced its own Science Camp. Science Camp runs two separate week-long sessions during the summer in which students live in tents in the spruce forest without modern amenities. Experiential education is emphasised at Science Camp and participants are expected to carry out science projects which integrate traditional cultural knowledge with modern science. The bonds and knowledge transfer between children and elders at the camps is viewed as vital to a child’s development and to becoming a member of the Alutiiq people (Takano, 2004). Similar efforts to revive and expand the ethnic base of Ainu cultural traditions in Hokkaidō are being made despite being surrounded by a rapidly modernizing Japanese culture. These include seasonal camps established at important Ainu sites, the making and reinterpretation of traditional arts and crafts, sewing and weaving, boat building, storytelling and salmon fishing (Ohtsuka, 1999; Kayano, *pers comm*; Keira, *pers comm*).

Many cultural resurgence efforts have succeeded in inspiring the younger generation about their cultural identity and their ancestor’s way of life. Cultural immersion schemes, however, are still often limited by funding and resources. Participation, therefore, is usually sporadic and short-term, limiting the impact they have. If the benefits of these more holistic approaches can be demonstrated, then economic funding may be secured to enable longer periods of cultural immersion and greater community respect.

## **2.6 Rights Revitalisation Projects**

A number of revitalisation projects focus on altering the policy or promoting the rights of a community to enhance cultural revival and continuity, for instance by legalising access to traditional lands for hunting and gathering. Many such schemes are, directly or indirectly, based upon legitimising free access to and use of land enabling continuity of cultural activities. These projects often reach beyond the level of community to alter regional or even national policy. One of the most important policies passed in this respect was the designation of Nunavut, meaning ‘our land’ in Inuit. This 200 million hectare territory was designated in 1999 and is seen by many as a step towards resolving Inuit native land claims and harvesting areas. In Nunavut, situated in the Canadian Eastern

Arctic, Inuit have free access to hunt and fish. Approximately 29,000 people live in Nunavut. Although Nunavut has its own government, it is still strongly led by the Canadian Constitution and the terms of the agreement required the Inuit to extinguish their legal aboriginal title to the land. Despite this, the territory itself, both land and sea, is under permanent Inuit management (Nuttall, 1998; Jull, 2001).

A social movement for the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples can be dated back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but the political agitation for the promotion and protection of indigenous distinctiveness has mushroomed into a global political force since the 1980s. Around the world indigenous peoples have become ever more conscious of their right to an indigenous identity. Much of this has been fashioned against the growing number of threats from development projects, such as logging, mining, hydroelectric power generation and farming, which often compromise or destroy their ways of life. The movement also combats assimilation measures such as the North American boarding schools and the removal of Australian Aboriginal children from their families, as well as more general policies to diminish indigenous beliefs and practises and culturally blend indigenous peoples into the dominant ethnic population.

Global indigenous political organisation has centred around the promotion of international legal and human rights instruments. The International Labour Organization led the way with its Resolutions 107 and 169. Additional standards are provided in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Inter American Commission on Human Rights. After over a decade of debate, the UN finally adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007. This sets standards for states, many of which had constituted indigenous populations as having inferior rights to other citizens. The Declaration gives indigenous peoples collective rights to their lands, languages, religions and laws, as well as rights to determine their own political status (although it does not condone the break-up of nation-states).

The UN Declaration would not have been possible without the social movement of indigenous representatives who traveled several times a year to Geneva and New York (Niezen, 2003; Morgan, 2004). The goal of these representatives focused around the promotion of their rights to their own distinct practises, all of which are based on active engagements with nature. While it remains to be seen how well states will respect and enforce these human rights standards (Samson, 2008a), the adoption of the Declaration is widely seen as a triumph for those indigenous groups channelling their efforts into cultural preservation through legal protection.

### 3. Outcomes of Revitalisation Projects

Up until recently, efforts to deal with the range of ill-health and social pathologies arising from disconnection and loss of cultural continuity have been western in their approach. Examples include equipping communities with modern health clinics and teams of mental health counsellors (Samson, 2003; Samson, 2008b). However, these approaches have been limited in their success because they fail to deal with the root cause of the problem. They remain external to the local culture and therefore community, and in doing so have the capacity to contribute further to a community's sense of dislocation and loss of identity. Featuring prominently here are medical and psychological approaches emphasizing individual sickness and removing the problem from the historical and contemporary experiences of people with cultural dispossession. Revitalisation projects offer an alternative to these extrinsic and externally-imposed projects. They are often established by or with communities. Rather than targeting the symptoms of the illness, revitalisation projects target the cause by attempting to revive community cultures and reconnect people with their lands. Many factors are likely to affect the success of these projects, such as longevity, available resources, policy frameworks and organisational capacity.

As many revitalisation projects are either recent to emerge or not widely reported, their ability to promote cultural continuity and alleviate local health problems has not been formally evaluated or assessed, but there exist localised reports of success stories. For instance, students from Russian Mission school in Alaska, although unable to fluently speak Yuuyaraq, still share traditional Yup'ik belief systems and values with their elders. An Inullariit Society informal education project in Igloodik, Canada, had similar success. When interviewed, young participants expressed the same value of "being on the land" as their elders. Participants' also based their identity on the land and held an intrinsic respect for their home environments, although they admit that they would struggle to live off the land for long periods (Takano, 2004). Thus revitalisation projects have the potential to positively impact individuals and communities in a variety of ways, in terms of health, economic security and knowledge regeneration.

Based on the typology of revitalisation projects devised, and using published and unpublished accounts of different projects, we carried out an informal assessment of impacts of the six categories of projects (Table 2). Understanding the potential impacts of different types of projects facilitates communities looking to establish similar initiatives. By understanding the most significant factors affecting a community (e.g. mental or physical health ailments, lack of cultural identity or low average income) and the impacts of different revitalisation projects, communities can establish individual/combined projects that target their needs as a group.

Table 2 indicates that amongst communities afflicted by health problems, Traditional Foods Revitalisation Projects and Rights Revitalisation Projects are likely to yield the greatest benefits in terms of mental and physical health. On the other hand, if a community is suffering low household income levels or employment rates, then Ecotourism Projects are likely to offer the greatest benefits by providing opportunities for livelihood diversification within households as well as a new stream of income for the community as a whole. Most categories of project target young people, although some strengthen community bonds by opening communication channels between older and younger generations (e.g. Language and Cultural Revitalisation Projects). All categories of revitalisation projects have the potential to teach new/replenish old knowledge or skills, many teach both. For the array of benefits they offer, all projects have the potential to make a significant local impact, some even nationally, for instance Greenland’s Home Rule Government and the establishment of Nunavut (Nuttall, 1998). The potential impacts of ecotourism schemes extend into the international arena, offering holiday opportunities to wealthy travellers looking for a unique cultural experience.

Livelihood diversification has been shown to be an effective tool at increasing livelihood security and household income (ODI, 2003; La Rovere *et al.*, 2006). Although many non-industrial communities pursued a diverse array of livelihood activities in the past, modern lifestyles are driving the convergence of livelihoods into just one activity. This creates instability by forcing dependence on an individual market rather than a combination of markets, thus depleting household and community resilience (Ellis 1999; Start 2001; FAO 2004; Smith *et al.* 2005). This realisation has led NGOs and development groups globally to actively promote livelihood diversification amongst financially insecure households and communities (ODI, 2003). Revitalisation projects are an effective means of creating a shift towards divergent livelihood models based on local cultures and ecosystems, reversing the trend of convergence that has led to so much instability.

**Table 2. Some outcomes of different categories of revitalisation projects (n=41)**

<b>Project Type</b>	<b>Characteristics of Project Type</b>
1. Traditional Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity to benefit community health both mentally and physically</li> <li>• Potential to generate income and jobs where markets are successfully created</li> <li>• Effective in the transfer of new skills and knowledge associated with traditional foods collection and preparation</li> <li>• Likely to strengthen community bonds, particularly where hunting groups are established, and intergenerational knowledge transfer</li> <li>• Target young people and community elders alike</li> <li>• Likely to positively impact local people, ecosystems (where combined with effective resource management) and economies (where traditional food markets exist)</li> </ul>
2. Ecotourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where activities are physically demanding, projects are likely to benefit the physical health of participants</li> <li>• If established in line with values and not just with income generation in mind, ecotourism schemes are likely to reinforce cultural identity and therefore offer mental health benefits</li> <li>• Successful at job creation and income generation, although measures need to be taken to</li> </ul>

	<p>ensure equitable benefit sharing amongst communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective at teaching/reviving traditional knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Ecotourism schemes often target the younger generations for training and employment opportunities</li> <li>• Unlikely to strengthen community bonds and may weaken traditional values</li> <li>• Likely to benefit local people and economies, and ecosystems only where land-based activities are revived and sustainably managed</li> </ul>
3. Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Likely to offer mental health benefits and physical health benefits where projects incorporate the teaching of physical activities</li> <li>• Heavily focused on knowledge transmission and the revival of traditional skills and knowledge</li> <li>• Where elders are involved in projects, education schemes are likely to strengthen community bonds</li> <li>• Primarily target younger generations</li> <li>• Offer very few employment or income-generating opportunities</li> <li>• Potential to benefit local people, but no direct impact likely on local economies and ecosystem</li> </ul>
4. Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the reinforcement of cultural identity, successful language projects are likely to benefit community mental health, but not physical health</li> <li>• Capacity to create jobs for local linguists, but unlikely to increase income generating opportunities for the society as a whole</li> <li>• Successful at transferring new knowledge, although practical skills are rarely taught</li> <li>• Likely to strengthen social bonds, in particular by opening communication channels between older generations and young people</li> <li>• Can target adults and young people, but many focus on younger generations</li> <li>• Potential to benefit local people, but no impacts on economy or ecosystem likely</li> </ul>
5. Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity to benefit community health mentally, and also physically if physical activities are taught, depending on the longevity of the project</li> <li>• Effective in the transfer of new knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Likely to strengthen community bonds, particularly where community elders are recruited to teach young people</li> <li>• Have the potential to benefit children and adults alike, but most established schemes target young people</li> <li>• With the exception of project organisers, cultural projects are unlikely to increase jobs and income-generating activities</li> <li>• Likely to benefit local people and capacity to benefit local ecosystems if traditional land management regimes revived, but unlikely to benefit local economy</li> </ul>
6. Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity to offer both mental and physical health benefits to community members</li> <li>• Although traditional skills and knowledge are not directly taught, where land rights are re-established communities have the capacity and resources to relearn these traditional skills and practices</li> <li>• Potential to strongly enhance community bonds, particularly where hunting groups are established and intergenerational lines of knowledge transfer reopened through land-based activities</li> <li>• Benefits accrued by community elders and young people alike</li> <li>• Unlikely to directly increase full-time employment options, although renewed access to traditional lands will increase income-generating opportunities for many, particularly where markets for traditional foods exist</li> <li>• Likely to benefit the local people, the local economy (where traditional foods collection and practices are revived on the land) and ecosystems (where traditional resource management is reintroduced and sustainable in the long-term)</li> </ul>

This initial assessment provides the first indication of the possible impacts of different revitalisation projects, however there is the capacity and need for future research to take this analysis forwards,

assessing impacts in detail on a case by case basis. Such research may consider the longevity of projects, the security of funding and project impacts, and carry out more in-depth analysis of the physical and mental health benefits of reconnection. Some projects combine elements from two or more of the different categories, for instance combining language renewal with culture camps, and traditional food projects with increased land rights. Future research may consider whether projects are more likely to be successful if they are supported by other initiatives instead of standing alone. For instance, the Hunter Support Program in eastern Canada is supported by an indigenous curriculum in most Nunavik villages, and the establishment of The Tshikapisk Foundation and its Kamestastin Lake Initiative (Appendix B).

#### **4. Future Priorities**

Although exclusive to non-industrial countries to date, revitalisation projects established by indigenous and marginalised groups offer insight into elements that may be used to reconnect industrialised communities harbouring long-term disconnections from nature. For instance, green exercise and green care initiatives are an emerging trend, particularly in the UK and across Europe. Such projects offer health benefits to participants, have the capacity to create and strengthen social relationships, and are open to all community cohorts. Bushcraft and foraging courses have also increased in popularity, teaching participants new skills and practices, strengthening bonds and benefiting human health. Therefore, many of the principles that revitalisation projects centre around can be applied to efforts to reconnect modern industrialised communities with the local environment, for instance new business creation, a need to incentivise reconnection, the establishment of support networks and local knowledge transfer.

Revitalisation projects, although highly diverse, are currently being developed independently of one another in communities around the world. Their emergence is in response to shared concerns about disconnection and motivations to revive traditional ways of living, with a view to reconnecting with the land ensuring cultural continuity into the future. Some projects target the community as a whole, whereas others focus on a specific group of people within a community, for instance young people. Small-scale revitalisation projects are even being trialled as remediation treatments for alcohol and drug abusers. The People Wakening Project in Alaska is an example of one such project that is community-based and culturally-anchored. It uses the revival of story-telling traditions to promote sobriety amongst native Alaskans (Mohatt & Rasmus, 2004).

On the basis of these stories and our knowledge of the health problems associated with disconnection, we suggest that policy-makers dealing with disconnected communities should look towards

revitalisation projects for a long-term solution. Government funding would facilitate the establishment of such projects. In the long-term this is likely to be compensated by reduced healthcare costs and reduced loss of earnings caused by social pathologies and ill-health. The establishment of community networks would provide support for communities hoping to establish, or with established, revitalisation projects. By opening communication channels, communities can share best practices, success stories and guidance with one another.

Revitalisation projects offer a new community-centred approach to dealing with the problems of disconnection. By being community-driven, these projects are more likely to encourage long-term support and participation. Their diversity reflects the diversity of cultures they represent. As well as reviving activities and belief systems, revitalisation projects in any form have the capacity to empower non-industrial communities and enable them to regain a sense of identity and pride, thus reinvigorating communities, cultures and connections with the land.

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## **Appendix A. Revitalisation Projects and Initiatives Analysed**

Aboriginal Head Start, British Columbia, Canada  
After-School Homework Club, Cambridge Bay Childcare Society, Cambridge Bay, Canada  
Ainu Seasonal Camps, Hokkaidó, Japan  
Akulivik Hunter Support Program, Quebec, Canada  
Alaska Chukotka Development Program, Chukotka, Russia  
Bathurst Inlet Lodge, Nunavut, Canada  
Camp Sivu, Kobuk River, Alaska, USA  
Cree-ative Daycare, British Columbia, Canada  
Documentation and Revitalisation of Inuktitut Stories, Pelly Bay, Nunavut, Canada  
Dog Point Fish Camp, Sitka, Alaska, USA  
Early Childhood Educators, British Columbia, Canada  
Eastern Subsistence Project, Chukotka, Russia  
Elu Inlet Lodge, Nunavut, Canada  
Gaalee'ya Spirit Camp, Tanana River, Alaska, USA  
Greenland Home Rule Food Policy, Greenland  
Inari Reindeer Farm, Finland  
Indiza Foods, South Africa  
Inullariit Society's Paariaqtuqtut Study Program, Igloolik, Canada  
Junyong Community Foundation's Language and Literacy Project, Junyong, Tibet, China  
Kitikmeot Heritage Society's Project to Document Elder's Stories, Nunavut, Canada  
May Hakongak Library's Reading Tent, Cambridge Bay, Canada  
Montana Indian Education for All, Montana, USA  
Native Immersion Schools, Hawaii, USA  
Native Language Seminars, Florida, USA  
Native Language Seminars, Oklahoma Native Language Association, Oklahoma, USA  
Nordic Sámi Council and Sámi Revitalisation Efforts, Norway  
North Slope Borough's Spring Whaling Special Semester, North Slope, Alaska, USA  
Nunavut Language Teaching in Nunavut Schools, Nunavut, Canada  
Nunavut Literacy Council's Family and Community Literacy Project, Nunavut, Canada  
Nunavut Literacy Council's Publication of Nunavut Reading Materials, Nunavut, Canada  
Nunavut Native Land Claim, Canada  
Ontario Hunter Education Program, Ontario, Canada  
People Awakening Project, Fairbanks, Alaska, USA  
Purnumukka Reindeer Farm, Finland  
Russian Mission School Project, Yukon, Alaska, USA  
Spirit Dance Revival, British Columbia, Canada  
The Academy of Elder's Science Camp, Afognak Island, Alaska, USA  
The Native Agriculture & Food Systems Initiative, First Nations Development Institute, USA  
Tshikapisk Foundation, Labrador, Canada  
Western Reindeer Herding Project, Chukotka, Russia  
Yu'pik Reindeer Herding Program, Yukon, Alaska, USA

## **Appendix B. The Tshikapisk Foundation and the Kamestastin Lake Initiative**

The Innu people are Northern Algonkian speaking hunting peoples of the Labrador-Quebec peninsula in Northern Canada. In the mid 1990s disenchanted with the assimilation-based and pathology-ridden way of life in the government-built settlements, Innu hunting families established the Tshikapisk Foundation. Tshikapisk is an organisation dedicated to revitalising Innu country life through the promotion of land-based and experiential educational projects for young Innu. It has attempted to undertake such projects through applying for grants and revenue generating activities such as small-scale ecotourism in the vast Labrador-Quebec interior.

The Foundation secured funds for the construction of an Innu cultural centre comprising of a large building for cultural activities and smaller cabins for guests at Kamestastin Lake. All buildings are made principally from local sourced materials. Kamestastin is an important crossroads for the Innu in their travels past and present. From Kamestastin and other locations, the unspoiled terrain of boreal forests, rivers and tundra affords numerous opportunities for fishing, caribou migration viewing, trekking, cross-country skiing and variants of cultural tourism in which clients can share in Innu country activities of fishing, hunting and gathering. It is envisioned that such clients would also learn camp skills, Innu crafts and storytelling, including Innu legends and cosmology. Although yet to realise any substantial financial returns, it is hoped that ecotourism could provide valuable funding for the various Tshikapisk projects, while at the same time offering land-based employment for keen Innu youth, thus lessening their dependence on welfare and government funds.

The Foundation believes that in the context of the Canadian government's assimilation policies there has been a drift away from the Innu valuing their own foods, manufactured items and culture, and that this has been at the core of the process of diminishing their well-being. Thus promotion of diets incorporating and celebrating Innu life and the locally produced foods it generates is an important part of the Tshikapisk Kamestastin initiative. When the Kamestastin Center is fully operational, locally produced foods including caribou, rabbit, ptarmigan, arctic char, goose and a variety of wild berries will be available for guests and Innu participants.

The Tshikapisk Foundation is in the process of assembling a power system for Kamestastin which will rely on solar and wind generating technologies. This will distinguish the Innu Cultural Center from all other remote camps currently operating within northern Labrador and northern Quebec that rely on polluting diesel generators.

Tshikapisk also has a well-established relationship with the Arctic Studies Center at the Smithsonian Institution and is promoting the facility at Kamestastin Lake for use by other universities and educational centers. Tshikapisk's facility has also been host to scientists from the Canadian Government's Environment Department.

As an additional way of generating revenue for the educational activities which are the main focus of the Foundation's plans, Tshikapisk proposes to host small groups of students and educationalists in such fields as archaeology, biological sciences, anthropology, sociology and business for an experience of cultural immersion in the world of the Innu.