



PROJECT CREATES

Circumpolar Resilience, Engagement, and Action Through Story

*Project Report of the Arctic Council's
Sustainable Development Working Group*

Spring 2019



Sustainable Development
Working Group



ARCTIC COUNCIL



Even though our parents grew up with the trauma inherited from their parents, we are still here to be a better ancestor for the next seven generations. Even though we have the highest suicide rate per capita, we are still here trying to change the narrative.

-from the digital story Iñupiaq

The first sight of my home makes me recall the stories, passed down from my ancestors. I feel the culture that survived centuries of colonization, trauma.

*I too will survive, 'cause I feel the life of my mother tongue,
the me in it, the us in it.*

I feel the words from old times speaking to me in the now.

-from the digital story Airplanes

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Project Leads

SDWG Co-leads.....	
Technical Contributors.....	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1: Introduction

1.1 Background to Project CREATEs	
1.2 Methodology	
a) Digital Storytelling	
b) Focus Groups	
c) Knowledge dissemination	

2: Activities and Outputs

2.1 On-site workshop, Ottawa, Canada (September 2018)	
a) Program Description	
b) Key Outcomes	
2.2 On-site workshop, Inari, Finland (October 2018)	
a) Program Description	
b) Key Outcomes	
2.3 Circumpolar workshop and implementation meeting, Inari, Finland (January 2019)	
a) Program Description	
b) Key Outcomes - Digital Storytelling Workshop	
c) Description and Key Outcomes - Implementation Workshop	
2.4 Collaborative Project CREATEs website	
2.5 Outreach	

Table 1. Thematic Analysis by rising sun suicide prevention outcome

Table 2. Additional themes

3: Summary

4: Future Directions

ANNEX A Sample Program Agenda

ANNEX B Focus group guide

PROJECT LEADS

Scientific Project CREATEs Lead

Allison Crawford, PhD, MD, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and University of Toronto
This report was prepared by A. Crawford with the input and review of all Co-Leads.

SDWG Co-Leads

Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)

Monica Ell-Kanayuk, President, ICC Canada
Joanna MacDonald, Climate Change and Health Officer, ICC Canada
Selma Ford, Health Coordinator, ICC Canada
Tukumminnguaq Nykjær Olsen, Special Assistant, ICC Greenland

Canada

Sarah Cox, Director
Jyoti Bhargava, Policy Lead
Indigenous-Crown Relations and Northern Affairs Canada

Finland

Tuuli Ojala, Senior Specialist
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Meri Larivaara, PhD, MD
Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Heidi Eriksen, MD
Municipality of Utsjoki

Kingdom of Denmark

Catherina Hvistendahl
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Christina Viskum Larsen, PhD
Senior Advisor National Institute of Public Health (University of Southern Denmark)
and Ministry of Health (Greenland)

Sweden

Kristian Lindvall
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Technical Contributors

Carla Rice, PhD, Founding Director
REDLAB at the Re-Vision Centre for Art and Social Justice
University of Guelph

Hannah Fowle, Facilitator
Erin MacIndoe Sproule, Facilitator
Joshua Stribbell, Facilitator
Sara Wilde, Facilitator
Kavya Yoganathan, Facilitator

Special thanks to the Herb and Cece Schreiber Foundation who provided funding to the Scientific Project Lead, through the Foundation at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

The two quotations that open this report – the first from the digital story of a young Iñupiaq woman from Alaska, the second from a digital story by two Greenlandic Inuit women – showcase the strength and creativity of youth in making meaning from their life experience. This knowledge can contribute to understanding and action for youth suicide prevention in circumpolar contexts.

Project CREATEs – Circumpolar Resilience, Engagement and Action Through Story – is an initiative of the Sustainable Development Working Group of the Arctic Council. **Project CREATEs** aims to engage Arctic communities, particularly youth, in the suicide prevention and mental wellness efforts of the SDWG.

Bringing Indigenous youth together from across the Arctic, through the Permanent Participant organizations of the Arctic Council, to create digital stories, allowed us to learn about the lived experiences of these youth and their ideas for action. Youth from the Aleut International Association (AIA); Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC); Gwich'in Council International (GCI); Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC); and Saami Council (SC), met at Regional workshops and then came together at a circumpolar workshop in Inari, Finland.

The 36 youth participants created 30 digital stories, which were then screened to the youth groups, and also to a large gathering of policy-makers, Arctic officials, community-members, and academics at an implementation workshop in Inari, Finland on January 30 - February 1, 2019.

The youths' stories revealed areas that they consider important for understanding resilience, risk factors for suicide, and for suicide prevention. These include Indigenous identity(ies); political and environmental risk factors; early-life adversity; and the importance of their land, language, and cultural knowledge for wellness and healing. The stories were often 'double' stories, weaving experiences of intergenerational trauma and loss with stories of meaning and strength drawn from Elders and family. The youth depicted their anxieties and hopes for the future, demonstrating also that colonization and intergenerational trauma are not contained within the past, but also shape the future. Without stemming language, cultural and land loss, these youth worry about what it will mean to be Inuit, Gwich'in, Iñupiat, or Sámi, in the future.

The youth attested to the value of having a safe space to talk about suicide, suicide prevention, wellness and their ideas for the future. They valued the circumpolar network that was created through these events, particularly their discovery of shared challenges and shared meaning. They all expressed the desire to remain engaged and to participate in ongoing wellness and suicide prevention activities of the SDWG.

Future directions involve disseminating the youth stories through a **Project CREATEs** website, and other knowledge-sharing venues. Ongoing SDWG activities will aim to continue this youth network, and strengthen connections to Arctic communities.

The SDWG has made a commitment to continue the focus on enhancing community and youth wellness across Arctic States, and as part of that will continue to foster youth and community engagement in developing and implementing initiatives.



Digital storytelling workshop, Inari, Finland, February 2019

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to Project CREATEs

Project CREATEs speaks to several priorities outlined in the Arctic Council’s Sustainable Development Working Group’s (SDWG) strategic framework, including priorities of community vitality, educational opportunities, and human health. The project also stems from past efforts of the Arctic Council to reduce suicide, including the project under the Canadian chairmanship (2013-15), The Evidence-Base for Promoting Mental Wellness and Resilience to Address Suicide in Circumpolar Communities¹, which focused on community-based initiatives and establishing promising practices for suicide prevention in Indigenous circumpolar contexts. Under the US chairmanship (2015-17), the RISING SUN initiative focused on creating metrics for suicidal behaviours, key correlates, and outcomes across Arctic States.² Project CREATEs continues this work to address the high rates of suicide and mental health issues in the circumpolar Arctic.

In March 2017, at the last of the three workshops held under the RISING SUN, the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) hosted focus groups with the goal of exploring how the 25 suicide prevention indicators identified through the RISING SUN align with existing circumpolar suicide prevention strategies. Focus group participants highlighted the need to use Indigenous knowledge, strengths-based approaches, and enhance community involvement in decision-making for all aspects of suicide prevention, including research. ICC produced a discussion paper to advance these findings, with particular emphasis on the need to engage communities in suicide prevention, and to translate the knowledge from previous SDWG initiatives to the community level; and on implementation of some outcome and evaluation measures developed through RISING SUN.³

Community engagement and implementation are related. Awareness and understanding of ongoing community initiatives and community knowledge and voices are fundamental to the development and application of a community-based implementation science approach. In turn, building community capacity and expertise in implementation can ensure the success, sustainability, and scalability of suicide prevention activities.

Project CREATEs – Circumpolar Resilience, Engagement and Action Through Story – aims to engage community members, with a focus on youth, across Arctic States. Because the elevated rates of suicide across the Arctic disproportionately affect youth, it is important to ensure that their experiences, perspectives, and ideas are reflected in suicide prevention and intervention efforts. Through creating a culturally safe space in which to talk and create stories out of their experiences, our hope is to stimulate a dialogue across the Arctic, and engage youth in taking action for the prevention of suicide.

Some general aims of Project CREATEs include:

- ▶ To create an opportunity and methods for community engagement and knowledge translation to support the suicide prevention and mental wellness efforts of the Arctic States.
- ▶ To sustain the circumpolar network that has been established through the Arctic Council so that we can continue to collaborate and share best practices in suicide prevention. In addition, broaden the circumpolar network to include more community members and youth.

¹ Sharing Hope Report: Available online <https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/handle/11374/411>

² Collins, P. Y. *et al.* RISING SUN: Prioritized Outcomes for Suicide Prevention in the Arctic. *Psychiatric Services* (2018)

³ ICC. Continuing Our Unity: Advancing Indigenous Suicide Prevention in the Circumpolar Arctic <http://www.inuitcircumpolar.com>

1. INTRODUCTION

Project CREATEs was collaboratively developed with the Arctic Council, SDWG co-leads and the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC). The project has also undergone research ethics review by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, a research and teaching hospital affiliated with the University of Toronto. Each participant listed in this report has consented to participate in the project, and to share their digital story. Participants had the opportunity to make their digital story in the language of their choice, with or without subtitles.

In addition to engaging youth through the making and sharing of digital stories, we also explored specific questions:

- ▶ What do circumpolar youth see as main areas of risk and strength is the area of suicide prevention? Are there unique risk and protective factors for Indigenous circumpolar youth? What ideas do youth have for preventing and reducing suicide, and for building resilience?
- ▶ Specifically, does the thematic focus of the youth digital stories validate the suicide prevention outcomes generated by experts through the RISING SUN project?

1.2 Methodology

1.2.a. Digital storytelling (DST) DST is the primary method of the project. DST supports participants to use technology to tell their personal stories. The highly visual and engaging nature of the stories, and the fact that they are recorded, in turn allows the stories to be shared with other audiences. DST is a guided collaborative practice that is also a powerful qualitative research method that provides insights into what is important to the storytellers, and allows storytellers to intervene in areas of importance to them. In this case, DST will allow youth and community participants to engage in the arena of suicide prevention and resilience-building.

DST was facilitated in small group workshops held in Ottawa, Canada, and Inari, Finland, bringing together Indigenous youth from across Arctic States to create and share their stories. We worked with Permanent Participant organizations of the Arctic Council, which include the Aleut International Association (AIA); Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC); Gwich'in Council International (GCI); Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC); and Saami Council (SC), to invite youth, aged 18 to 30 years to attend the workshops.

Each three-day workshop could accommodate up to 20 participants. The workshops were held in English, with translation available. Over the course of 3 days facilitators supported the youth to tell their personal stories. Youth participated in story-writing exercises, responding to prompts to tell first-person accounts from their own life – “tell a story about living” and “tell a story about living, or about suicide, or both.” Participants developed their stories through storytelling circles in which the group provided feedback. Facilitators then supported participants to represent their through multimedia (audio, text, and visual) and to create a short film. Participants were then invited to share their stories with each other at a screening, which concluded each of the workshops. See workshop agenda, Annex A.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.2 Methodology continued

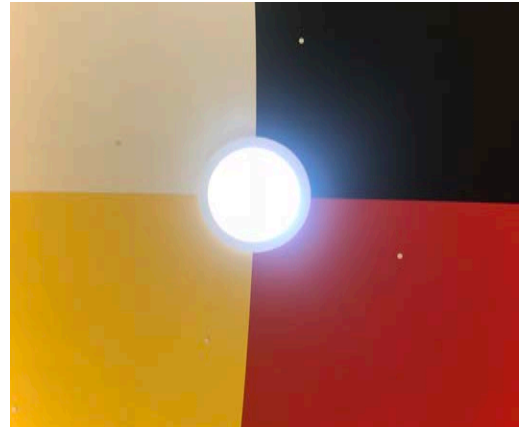
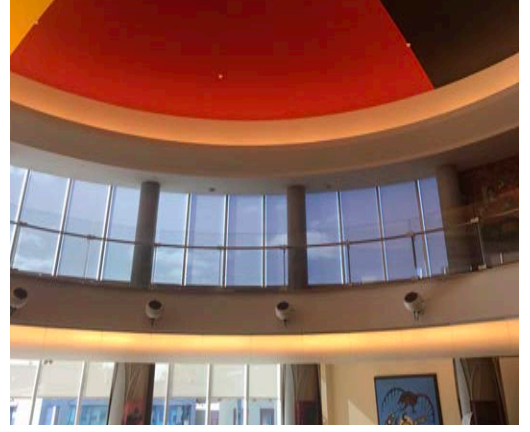
1.2.b. Focus Groups Focus groups were conducted at the close of each workshop with the participants from the workshop who consented to participate. A semi-structured interview guide was developed to elicit perceptions about the workshop and participant input about how the digital stories can contribute to knowledge and ideas about suicide prevention in circumpolar communities (see focus group guide in Annex B). The environment of the focus group is designed to be safe and exploratory. In contrast to interviews, focus groups draw on the collective; they allow participants to interact, to generate dialogue, exchange and consider ideas with each other.

The focus groups were audio recorded to allow for transcription and data analysis.

1.2.c. Knowledge Dissemination A key objective of the workshops was the sharing of knowledge – knowledge from the youth was conveyed through their stories and focus group dialogue, and knowledge related to suicide prevention from the activities of the SDWG was shared with the youth. Each workshop began with invited speakers relevant to that State and/or Permanent Participant organization. Speakers shared the history of the Arctic Council and the activities of the SDWG, including efforts in suicide prevention. At some of the workshops, participants were provided with electronic materials to supplement the presentations and to allow them to connect to relevant Arctic and Indigenous organizations.

Youth perspectives and knowledge, including the digital stories, will be shared with the wider SDWG, Arctic Council, Permanent Participant organizations and general public through the following fora:

- ▶ Film screening: In February 2019, at the Project CREATEs circumpolar meeting that concluded this work under Finland's Chairmanship, audience responses were gathered through discussion following the screening.
- ▶ Online curated exhibit: Will be launched April 2019, which will link to the Arctic Council and SDWG websites, and interested Permanent Participant websites. This will include the digital stories of youth who have provided consent to have their films posted on a social media platform. Participants may withdraw their consent at any time, and their digital story will be removed.
- ▶ Short documentary film: Is being developed to highlight the stories. This will be used on the website and at future presentations.
- ▶ Report: This project report will be made available online. Youth perspectives in this report will be presented to Heads of Delegation, SAO and Ministers associated with the Arctic Council. The report will be further disseminated to policymakers, youth, community practitioners and decision makers.
- ▶ Academic publication: will disseminate the findings to relevant academic, clinical and community audiences.



Ottawa, Canada, September 2018

2. ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

2.1 On-site workshop, Ottawa, Canada (September 2018)

2.1.a *Program Description* 14 youths (4 males and 10 females), aged 18 to 25 years, participated in the 3-day workshop in Ottawa in September 2018. 12 youths provided informed consent to be included in the research and evaluation activities associated with the workshop (focus group; inclusion of digital story in reports, publications, on a social media platform/ website). Youth affiliated with ICC and AAC came from communities in Canada and the US including: Bethel and Kotzebue, Alaska; Fort McPerson, Inuvik, and Ulukhaktok, Northwest Territories; Old Crow, Yukon; Makkovik, Nunatsiavut; Kuujjuaq and Kuujjuaraapik, Nunavik; Iqaluit, Nunavut; and Ottawa, Ontario. All participants identified as Inuit, Y'upik, Gwitch'in, Athabaskan or Dene.

2.1.b *Key Outcomes* 11 available stories (see pages 9, 10, 11) were analyzed for key themes, and explored through narrative analysis. One participant requested that his/ her story not be included directly in the report. Analysis was conducted by the Scientific Project Lead (A.C.), with member-checking with co-Leads and partners.

Prominent themes included explorations of the importance of specific Indigenous identities; and, the land as a source of memory, resilience, healing, and identity (see Table 1). While the stories spoke to problems the youth associate with suicide, the stories also conveyed corollary themes of strength, hope and belonging, particularly related to the development of survival and resilience. The stories were also compared with the 25 suicide prevention outcomes identified during the RISING SUN project (see Table 2).

The youths used a range of media to express these themes, including images of themselves, family and community. Videos showing the narrator/ story creator walking on the land were common (see stories 8, 9, 10, 11). Many stories incorporated cultural performances and games, particularly of the storyteller (see stories 5, 7, 10). Some adapted traditional cultural art forms to contemporary forms such as rap (see story 10).

The storytellers chose a range of addressees and corresponding styles for their stories, including more autobiographical / interior reflections (stories 7, 8); addressed to a loved one (story 4); addressed to other youth, such as in stories 2 and 10, usually with an inspirational style; and an educational tone (stories 1, 11, 12); while other storytellers adopted a more poetic, lyrical form (stories 3, 9).

2. ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

2.1 On-site workshop, Ottawa, Canada (September 2018) - continued

Focus Group During the focus group the youth spoke about the following areas:

Strengths of the workshop: There was appreciation for the workshop, and many expressions that it was enjoyable and worthwhile. In particular, they commented on the value “of a space like this to really be available, so people like us feel comfortable and vulnerable sharing our stories.” Several found it emotional, but felt supported, and others experienced containment of difficult emotions: “it helped take pressure off your chest.” Some participants liked the balance between individual and group activity, and independence and support.

Changes to the workshop: Many felt that they would have liked it to be longer than 3 days. A suggestion was made to have an ice-breaker before story circle to facilitate the group feeling more comfortable together first. The most significant feedback related to the story prompt which was purposefully left open and with a positive valence. The story circle invited participants to “tell a story about living.” This prompt was selected based upon previous youth feedback that they preferred to focus on life promotion rather than suicide prevention. One youth said, “It threw me off. I was prepared to come here and talk about suicide prevention.” Another, “As much as a heavy topic as it is we would like to share our feelings on it.” And specifically, “I think for suicide prevention you really need to talk about suicide. You can’t just beat around the bushes you have to directly speak about it.”

Suicide: Most of the youth expressed close experiences with suicide, including their own suicide attempts, and loss of friends and family. Several people in the group noted upcoming anniversaries of loss to suicide. One participant spoke about how he sees his story, which was about hunting, as acknowledging his own attempts to find hope:

everyone is isolated and some people don’t go camping or hunting and there is not much help. Its pretty hard for youth to reach out...sad to say my father committed suicide, my uncle committed suicide and a whole bunch of family and friends...instead of being home we have access to hunting..here’s a life worth living.

A suggestion was made that we have an educational session on suicide prior to the start of the workshop, especially to encourage the appropriate use of language about suicide in the workshop and in the stories, and to avoid perpetuating stigma.

There was concern that some youth who have experienced a lot of adversity in their life may not be able to generate a positive story about living, and would not want them to be left out of the conversation: “Some people who grew up in a community where there is a lot of suicide might have a hard time coming up with the answer to that [prompt to tell a story about living]”

2. ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

2.1 On-site workshop, Ottawa, Canada (September 2018) - continued

Most important messages in the videos: When asked the youth were clear that the most important messages related to suicide prevention. They did express some concern that the stories should not be viewed as a solution to the challenges they are struggling with in an ongoing way.

They also felt the stories conveyed a strong “appreciation of where we come from” and would help others “connect to our culture.” They see a role for the stories to spread “voices” and to “inform others.” They believed that the stories advocated for the importance of creating such a space for youth to tell their stories and to connect. At the same time, they do not want to convey the message that just because they have shared their story that their pain and/or challenges are resolved: “Sharing these stories doesn’t mean they are not done being dealt. It’s still a story you take with you every day from now...it is still inside of you.” And as another youth responded, “It’s an ongoing thing. Like Montreal it’s always under construction.”

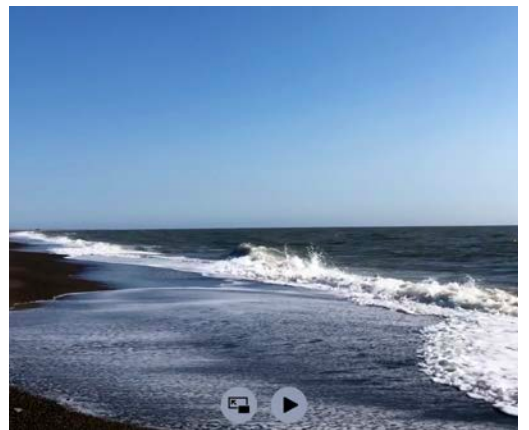
Audiences for videos: One youth summed up the sentiment of the group that the stories should be seen by “everybody everywhere.” Ideas included: education of governments and policy-makers; youth councils; schools; and to academic audiences through publication.

Connection to other youth: This emerged as a strong theme both in terms of the connection among participants who attended the workshop, and also interest in connecting in the future with other Arctic youth. One participant stated, “it was beautiful seeing people’s different types of views and perspectives,” and another expressed his thanks for other storytellers’ “courage” in sharing their stories. One spoke about the process of developing connection: “In the beginning...I don’t really know anyone here but now I feel like I know them a little after their video, that was very exciting. And I feel like you know a bit about me.” The idea was put forward that “we should all stay in contact,” leading to a discussion about the possibility of a virtual / videoconferencing platform to stay connected, notwithstanding some of the technical barriers to that.

The idea of sharing stories with youth outside of the group promised to extend that connection: “I think with sharing stories comes encouragement for other people to share their stories to help heal and get over troubles and issues. Connecting is really good.”

Youth action: As the quote above suggests, many of the youth saw the stories themselves as having the possibility of taking action in the area of suicide prevention. One youth stated she was drawn to this format of workshop on suicide prevention because, “I liked the idea of being able to direct your own video, to convey what I wanted to say.”

They voiced both commitment and also a sense of agency and strength to undertake this work. One young man stated, “Everybody’s got this. We’re all here,” and later stated, “We are some good-ass role models,” to appreciative laughter.



Left: [1] Finding My Language

Top right: [2] Street Smarts

Bottom right: [3] I am Alive



[4] *Old Memories*



[5] *What I Love to Do*



[6] *My Story*



[7] *[As I Gaze Across the Contrasts of Valley]*



[8] *Living*



Left: [9] Skoden: Not Worried

Top right: [10] Home

Bottom right: [11][Coming Back to My Community]



2. ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

2.2 On-site workshop, Inari, Finland (October 2018)

2.2.a *Program Description* 8 youth, aged 18 to 25 years, were registered to participate, and 6 participated in the 3-day workshop (3 males and 3 females), in Inari in October 2018. 5 youth provided informed consent to be included in the research and evaluation activities associated with the workshop (focus group; inclusion of digital story in reports, publications, on a social media platform/ website). The Sámi youth participants for the workshop were identified in cooperation with the Youth Council of the Sámi Parliament of Finland. The workshop also provided training for two facilitators who each created digital stories.

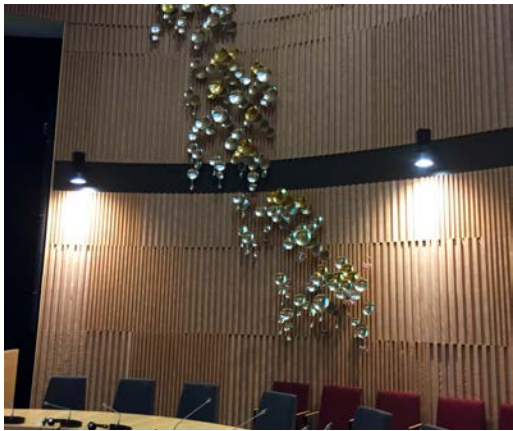
2.2.b *Key Outcomes* The 7 available stories were analyzed for key themes, and explored through narrative analysis. Many themes echoed those explored by the youth in the Ottawa workshop, with important additional themes of the political and environmental context of suicide within Sámi culture (see Tables 1 and 2).

There were also differences in the expression of Indigenous identity. While many of the stories (stories 12, 14, 15, 16, 18) incorporated Sámi identity directly, and also through the inclusion of Sámi clothing, traditional joik (song), and footage of reindeer herding activities, this was in tension with recounting the stigma and exclusion that many of the storytellers had also experienced (stories 14, 15, 16, 17). One storyteller emphatically stated, “they want us to disappear and become Finnish.” Story 15 directly addresses the connection between experiences of stigma and exclusion to despair and suicide through the narration:

“I don’t belong, even though I have built a life in the city. I feel that I am an outsider that something is missing. How can I be whole when others are trying to define me and my Sami identity? ... Now on my mind is despair, suffering, losing language, and death.”

An additional theme of importance was the direct mention of intergenerational trauma and colonialism and the links to suicide.

The story themes were also compared with the 25 suicide prevention outcomes identified during the RISING SUN project (see Table 2). With the exception of the “clinical” level of RISING SUN outcomes, the stories related to a range of outcomes that have been identified as important to suicide prevention.



Inari, Finland, October 2018

2. ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

2.2 On-site workshop, Inari, Finland (October 2018)

2.2.b Key Outcomes, continued

Focus group Findings from this focus group come from field notes, rather than verbatim transcription.

During the focus group youth spoke about how much they appreciated the workshop space. One youth spoke about the value of having a culturally safe space to explore the emotions related to suicide. She and other participants also acknowledged the time it took to open up and develop trust over the course of the workshop. One youth linked this to stigma she has faced related to being Sámi. For example, she did not wear Sámi clothing on the first day until she knew it was safe to do so. Once she was able to feel safe, she stated that being able to wear her clothing made her much more open and vulnerable in the telling of her story.

Another participant also spoke about not only stigma but fear. She expressed fear that if her story is made public she will be targeted and persecuted for her opinions and for her pride in Sámi culture.

This group was very inspired by the digital stories made by the Ottawa group, which they viewed, and also expressed great excitement at the possibility of meeting with other Arctic Indigenous youth.



[Photo credit: Kavya Yoganathan]



Left: [12][Untitled]



Top right: [13] Eallin Lea Cappis [Life is Beautiful]



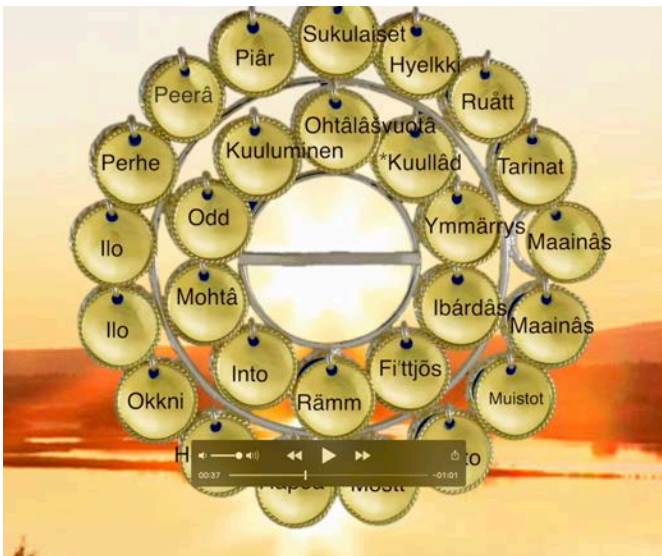
Bottom right: [14] Dát Lea Liigás [This is Enough]



[15] Moskkogáhta [Cloudy Street]



[16] Gáidat/Máhccat [Away/ Return]



[17] Gula Gula [Hear Me]



[18] Duoddar [Mountain]

2. ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

2.3 Circumpolar workshop and implementation meeting, Inari, Finland (January 2019)

On 30 January – 1 February, 2019, the Finnish Ministry for Health and Social Affairs in cooperation with the National Health Institute, Sámi Parliament of Finland, and SámiSoster association, hosted a digital storytelling workshop with Indigenous youth from across the Arctic and a workshop titled “Implementation of Suicide Prevention Activities in the Circumpolar Area”. These workshops occurred simultaneously and all participants joined together at the end for a film screening of the digital stories created. The Project Description and Key Outcomes of the digital storytelling workshop are described in detail below (2.3.a and b.), and the implementation workshop description follows (2.3.c).

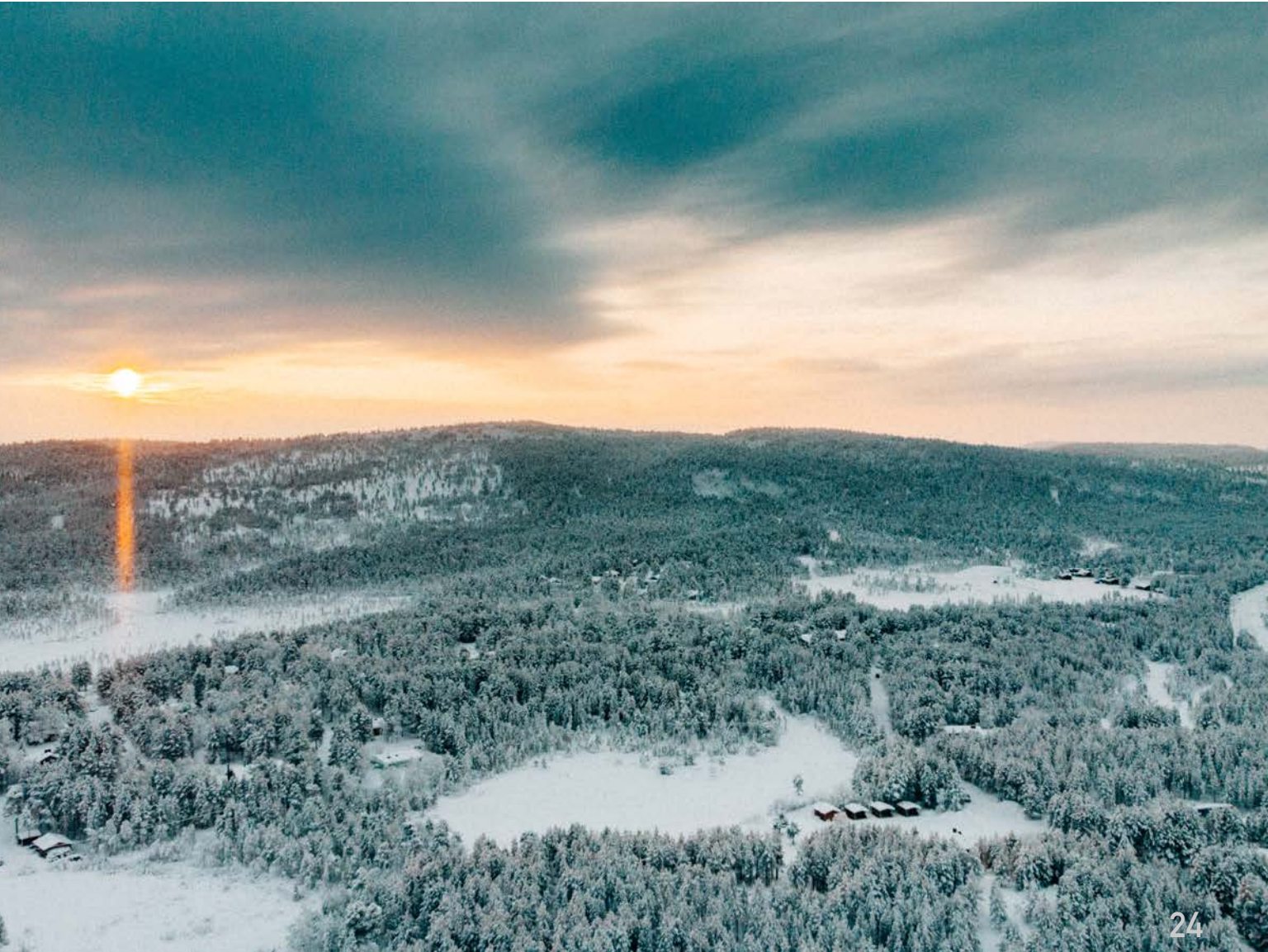
2.3.a Program Description 16 youths (3 males and 13 females), aged 18 to 28 years, participated in the 3-day workshop in Inari, Finland in January-February, 2019. Participants were recruited and selected through Permanent Participant organizations, including: Aleut International Association (AIA); Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC); Gwich'in Council International (GCI); Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC); and Saami Council (SC).

16 youths provided informed consent to be included in the research and evaluation activities associated with the workshop. Specific consent was obtained for the potential uses of each digital story, including on web-based platforms, and about how participants would like to be acknowledged in relation to their story if/when it is presented.

2.3.b Key Outcomes The 16 available stories were again analyzed for key themes, and explored through narrative analysis. There were cross-cutting themes related to Indigenous identity(ies); political and environmental risk factors; intergenerational trauma; survival/ survivance; and, the role of youth in mental wellness and suicide prevention. In particular, it cannot be overstated how important the land and place are to each of these storytellers, and how they locate their stories on the land (see Tables 1 and 2).

There were also new themes that emerged more explicitly through these stories, perhaps prompted by this group of youth viewing stories made by the two previous groups prior to making their own stories, and/or by the (new) collectivity and dialogue that arose from bringing a group of youths together from across circumpolar States and communities. These new themes include the double story; futurity; and connecting across circumpolar communities.

The ‘double story’ captures the core of many of these digital stories, where expressions of pain, loss, and despair co-exist alongside joy, growth, and hope. Both narrative threads define the story without erasing or resolving the other. This became a particularly powerful way to talk about intergenerational trauma, strength drawn from ancestors, and the links between generations, and the future. See examples and descriptions in Table 1 (p.30).



Inari, Finland [photo credit: Sara Wilde]

2. ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

2.3 Circumpolar workshop and meeting, Inari, Finland (January 2019)

2.3.b Key Outcomes - continued.

Futurity, or the ways that these storytellers envision the future and what it means for them, their families, communities and descendants, is a more explicit theme in these stories (See Table 1). These possible futures are impacted by the histories of colonization, land loss, and modernization experienced by these youth and captured in their stories. While some express feelings of anxiety, loss, disempowerment, and betrayal, many reflect on their own capacity not only to survive, but also to find renewed meaning and purpose in the idea of future generations, and this wish to positively impact the future.

Finally, connection and community across circumpolar contexts emerged as a theme in many of these stories. Broad connections and affinities with other Indigenous Peoples were expressed, such as in [21] *Symphonies Within*, which invokes the Second Article of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi between Maōri Chiefs and the British Crown. The storyteller links this with the Sámi experience of political oppression, and resultant loss of land. Through the story she dances to these discordant symphonies - her own lyricism in nature, the “chants, drums, ancient cords” of Indigenous Peoples, mingle with the “orchestras with blood on their hands.” Through this shared trauma of colonization she finds solidarity and also resistance. She invites us to “hear it,” even while exclaiming, “I wish I didn’t.”

In [28] *Missing Pieces*, two youths, one Inuk from Canada, the other Sámi from Sweden, partner to tell the doubled story of living between two worlds, and the impact of this on many factors related to suicide, such as identity, and belonging, as well as links to intergenerational trauma, colonization and modernity. Their dual voices present related, circumpolar perspectives, finding new connection and togetherness through sharing similar experiences:

We are born into two worlds. We are the generation born after the colonized generation. Modern and traditional. Academia or family. Swedish or Sámi. Canadian or Inuvialuq. What are we? Who are we?...Too modern for our cultural world. Too traditional from a Southern world. It feels like a piece is missing in my identity...Disconnected. Connected.

In the spaces where they feel disconnected, experience the “missing piece” of identity,

2. ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

2.3 Circumpolar workshop and meeting, Inari, Finland (January 2019)

2.3.b Key Outcomes - continued.

they find connection with each other in an imagined community. This imagined community becomes more realized through the digital stories themselves.

Across the films, one can begin to witness the shared visual vocabulary of this community - moving caribou; aerial shots of land; bodies of water; traditional clothing in common yet unique; vivid shawls against the forest backdrop; close-ups of faces with eyes that stare back at the viewer; youth holding diplomas; videos of cultural and artistic performances and accomplishments; portraits of family and friends. These are among the images that make up these highly personal accounts, while also creating a shared narrative of a developing community.

Focus group: The facilitated discussion that ended the workshop again highlighted the value that youth saw in the digital storytelling workshop. When they shared their reasons for deciding to participate they cited their involvement in suicide prevention activities; sense of responsibility in representing their Indigenous organizations; their wish to inspire others; their willingness to share their personal experiences to help others; and their personal losses to suicide:

I've been working with suicide prevention since 2014 in Greenland, active in media, speaking up to politicians. We have the highest rate in the world...I always thought I wouldn't be able to have a good life. I fought for the good life. I just want to inspire other people."

I have never been suicide, but I know so many of my own friends who have taken their own life, or have tried to do that. That's why it's important for me.

We work on a lot on suicide prevention... even though we have a lot of priorities as Indigenous youth...it is something that is really touching...we are trying to come up with initiatives.

I was invited by my Indigenous organization...I have a personal interest...I am at a point in my life where I am comfortable sharing my mental health journey.

They found the workshop enjoyable and positive:

I really enjoyed the creative process and really trying to make sense of our story

I thought it was really fun to try something new.

2. ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

2.3 Circumpolar workshop and meeting, Inari, Finland (January 2019)

2.3.b Key Outcomes - Focus group continued

They also provided useful feedback about improvements for the future. In particular, some of them found it frustrating to be in a parallel workshop, and to miss out on the implementation workshop. They would have liked the option to attend both; however, they valued being able to screen their stories to the larger group. In fact, when asked who should see these digital stories, one participant stated emphatically, "The people who are trying to implement suicide prevention initiatives, the people downstairs...they know where to get the funding from." They also appreciated the summary that they received from the other workshop at the wrap-up.

One of the most positive aspects of the workshop for the youth was working with other circumpolar youth, learning from each other, decreasing isolation, and increasing hope. In response to several of the questions, youth highlighted the value of connecting with youth from other circumpolar communities:

It was perfect. It was great to work with another person from across the world.

[It was valuable to learn] what they are doing in other countries and what is working for them.

Important with the [circumpolar] community [connection] because in Greenland it's easy to feel alone with these problems...when you share there is so much that you recognize...not to feel hopeless and alone in the process.

It's very uplifting...you realize there is other people out there doing these things, that are feeling these things...uplifting to connect with someone...gives you hope.

2. ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

2.3 Circumpolar workshop and meeting, Inari, Finland (January 2019)

2.3.c Description and Key Outcomes - Implementation Workshop

The ‘Implementation of Suicide Prevention Activities in the Circumpolar Area’ workshop (Implementation workshop) brought together over 80 health practitioners, policy makers, academics, Indigenous representatives, and youth to learn from one another about ongoing local programs and research on the topic of suicide prevention implementation.

The Implementation workshop provided a circumpolar overview of suicide prevention strategies and implementation actions across all Arctic states. This included presentations on the Plan for Suicide Prevention among the Sami in Norway, Sweden and Finland ; the National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy; the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention in Greenland; and suicide prevention efforts in Alaska, Iceland and Russia. The presentations and subsequent panel discussions encouraged greater communication and engagement allowing researchers, community representatives and frontline health care workers to collectively access new ideas and approaches that could ultimately benefit all circumpolar communities.

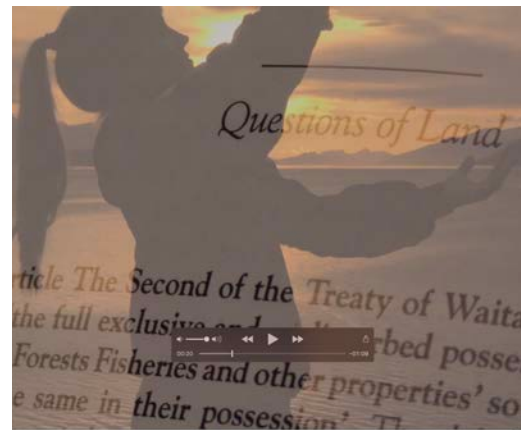
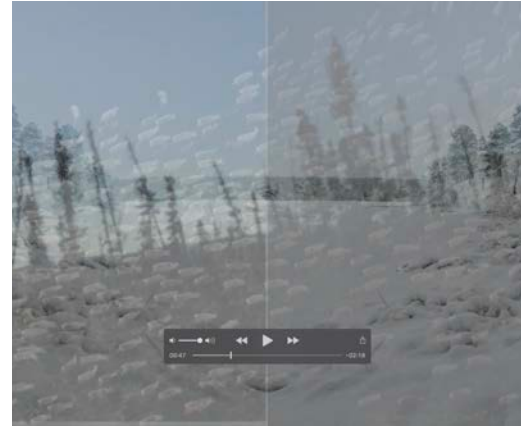
A youth panel was also held with four Indigenous youth participants from the previous Ottawa and Inari digital storytelling workshops. This panel served to exemplify the value and power of youth voices and leadership. Break out groups on the final day allowed for in-depth discussion about Arctic collaboration into the future. Some of the key messages included the importance of families in suicide prevention work and the acknowledgement of those who are left behind, the bereaved, as well as understanding suicide prevention as everybody’s business and not limiting the discussion to a conversation about mental health.



Left - [19] Children, My Hope for the Future

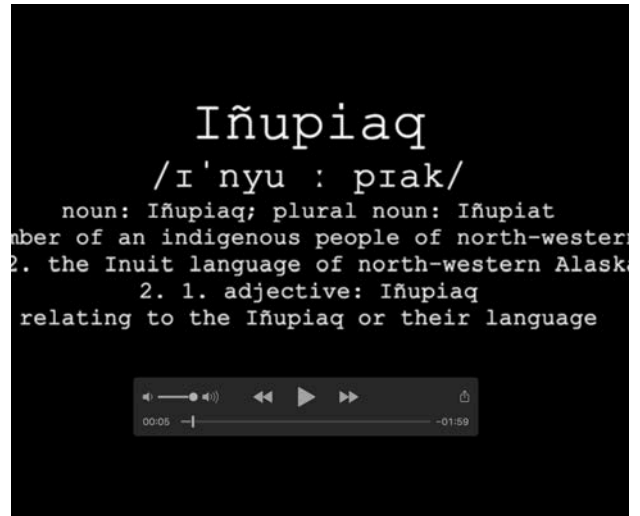
Top right [20] natihtun gwiintl'oo choo [A whole lot of love]

Bottom right [21] Symphonies Within





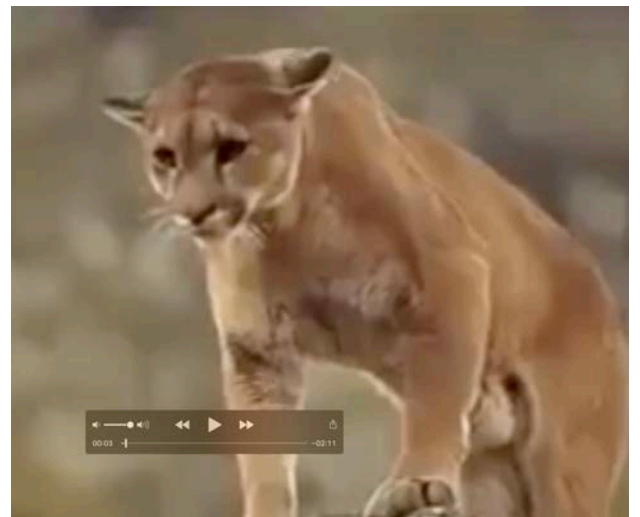
[22] *Lea Riejries Annje? [Are You Done Yet?]*



[23] *Iñupiaq*



[24] *Sápmelaš [Northern Sámi]*



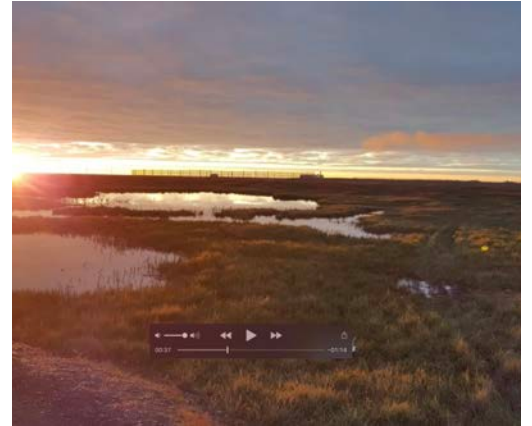
[25] *[Don't hide your pain]*

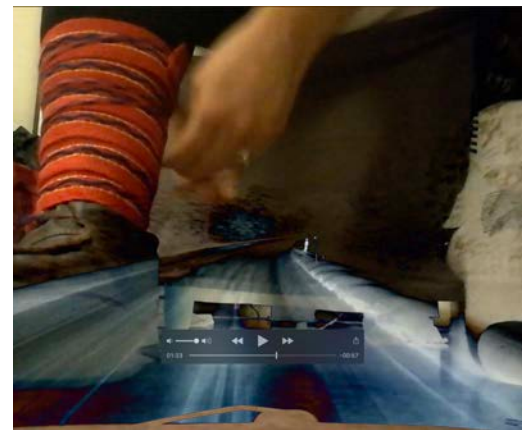


Left - [26] Missing Pieces

Top right [27] Courage and Motivation

Bottom right [28] Airplanes





Left - [29] Muv Iellem [My Life]
Top right [30] Toquvunga [I am Dead]
Bottom right [31] Heajat [Wedding]

2. ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

2.4 Collaborative Project CREATEs website

The digital stories, and a short documentary about Project CREATEs, along with the project report, will be curated on a website. There will also be representation of the project on the websites of participating States or Permanent Participant organizations to facilitate knowledge sharing.

2.5 Outreach

In addition to the outreach created by bringing together workshop participants as part of Project CREATEs, we will make the knowledge from the project available via presentations to interested groups, as well as through academic publication.

The youth who participated in Project CREATEs have already been invited to submit their films for the Youth portion of the Skabmagovat Indigenous Film Festival in Irari, Finland <http://skabmagovat.fi>. They each continue to hold the rights for their digital story and can also share and disseminate their story according to their own interests.



Ottawa, September 2018



gažaldat: eana, vástádus: eana [question: land, answer: land], Inari, Finland

TABLE 1. DIGITAL STORY THEMES

Themes	Digital stories that include this as a theme
<p>Indigenous Identity(ies)</p>	<p>In addition to the themes that relate to a sense of belonging, and the protective factors associated with community and culture (above), many of the digital stories spoke to the importance of their <u>specific</u> Indigenous identity, and connection to a specific community/ place.</p> <p>[9] <i>Skoden: Not Worried</i> The narrator incorporates rap into traditional music and dance. He raps, “Stories that I tell, and the stories that were told they’re the key to my identity it’s worth more than gold. And the knowledge that was passed is the reason we survive...I’m a Yu’pik boy keep the willin alive”</p> <p>[11][<i>Coming Back to My Community</i>] “my daughter, I repeatedly say to her, you are a strong Gwich’in woman. I want her to grow up and not just say that she’s native...I want her to say that she is a Vuntut Gwich’in woman and to say it with proudness, because we come from a strong bloodline.</p> <p>[6] <i>My Story</i> Describes the importance of the multiple cultures within her family and how she is now shaping her identity around that. In her story she takes great care to relay each family member and their respective ancestry. [27] <i>Courage and Motivation</i> takes a similar approach to placing the storyteller within kinship.</p> <p>[23] <i>Iñupiaq</i> Starts with the assertion that “I am Inupiaq,” linking this with images of the land and a narrative about survival (see below).</p> <p>In [20] <i>natihthun gwiintl’oo choo</i> the storyteller states “I am able to stand her today and be a strong Gwich’in woman,” which she relates to her close relationship with the land and caribou, with her Gwich’in language, and especially through the strength of her grandmother, whose advice for survival was <i>natihthun gwiintl’oo choo</i> “a whole lot of love.”</p>
<p>Political risk factors</p>	<p>Many of the digital stories, particularly the stories by Sámi youth, contained direct addresses to government, and linked suicide to feelings of hopelessness in the face of political pressures and to the feeling of not being heard.</p> <p>[16] “My friend doesn’t want to die. It is my Sami soul that doesn’t want to live in this colonial surrounding which tries to kill me. I’m so tired.”</p> <p>[14] “We could not cross the borders in our traditional land, Sámland. Our land, Sapmi, was split by foreign colonialists. They want us to disappear and become Finnish. They kill us sophisticatedly and slowly. What do we do when the State of Finland keeps violating its own laws? Especially the 17th paragraph of the Constitutional Law and the 9th paragraph of the Law of Sámi Parliament.</p> <p>Many of these stories also express a degree of silencing, alienation, political disempowerment and even fear of speaking out:</p> <p>[15] “Where can I return when there is nothing left to return to? My identity is not Sami, it is reindeer-herding Sami. Without reindeer-herding I have nothing. Sometimes I feel it would be easier to commit suicide than continue fighting. I feel sick because they do not listen to us.”</p> <p>[21] <i>Symphonies Within</i>; [22] <i>Lea Riejries Annje? [Are You Done Yet?]</i>; [24] <i>Sápmelaš [Northern Sámi]</i>; and [29] <i>Muv Iellem [My Life]</i> all link the current distress of Sámi to political decisions, and to corporate incursions into their land.</p>

TABLE 1. DIGITAL STORY THEMES (CONTINUED)

Themes	Digital stories that include this as a theme
Environmental risk factors	<p>Loss of land and associated livelihoods is a prevalent theme. In [7][As I Gaze Across the Contrasts of Valley] the narrator laments “my people never did say goodbye...One day our people will return.” Both [15] and [18] incorporate photographs of a prominent public awareness sign about environmental protections (see page 24): gažaldat: eana, vástádus: eana [question: land, answer: land]. In the previous section on “political risk factors” - most of these have negative impacts on the land. In “Listen [22] Lea Riejries Annje? [Are You Done Yet?], the narrator entreats, “listen. The state will help us. The only thing we have to do to satisfy it is give away our land, mountains and lakes so that they can take care of it.”</p>
Land as source of healing / meaning/ identity (protective factor)	<p>This is one of the most prominent themes across the stories. Place, specifically the land, is the site of identity and meaning. The stories are replete with the youths’ personal photographs and video of their home/land. Most of the stories strongly relate to the specific land of the storyteller’s community and/or upbringing as a source of memory, identity, strength and healing. “The” land is often described in more personal terms, such as “our” land. Some exemplary quotes:</p> <p>[3]“We smell the land around us, we see the tundra. We know the sight of caribou excites us because we are living. The taste of soulfood brings us joy, satisfaction and connectedness because often it is connected with family...”</p> <p>[9] This is also an intergenerational connection, in footage of a row of Inuit men walking across tundra with mountain in background, dressed in traditional clothing.</p> <p>[10] “Being Inuk is one of a kind. No matter how much oppression is pushed done on us, I feel we go back stronger and higher. Being free on the land, being free in your community. No matter how isolated you feel, even when you are down you can always go outside and take a look at the land and just remember what your ancestors have lived for. Powerful. It’s very powerful and I’m lucky to be living in our land today.”</p> <p>[18] “when you come home, from city to the mountains, the first time after winter the feeling is like coming home. You can see miles away because there are no trees. There is only sky around you and you can breathe.... Do you hear the voice of life in the sound of the river and in the blowing of the wind?”</p> <p>[19] “when you are from a small, isolated community it is easy to feel lost or insignificant. My way of coping with overwhelming amounts of stress or sadness is to go out on our land.”</p> <p>Many of the stories depict the strong interconnections between the youth, their land, and the animals that live on the land and in surrounding waters. Caribou/ reindeer in particular hold a predominant place in these films. As the Gwich’in narrator in [20] says, “We are the caribou people. My heart is half a caribou. Since time immemorial...because I could not exist without the caribou.” The Sámi narrator in [29] <i>Muv Iellem [My Life]</i> similarly states, “My life is the reindeer,” making her own autobiography inseparable from the reindeer and the land.</p>
Intergenerational trauma	<p>A theme that emerged explicitly in several stories is the connection between intergenerational trauma, and current distress and suicide. This was not addressed as a specific outcome by the RISING SUN. For example:</p> <p>[14] Describes the Boarding School Period - Children were “forced to learn the dominant culture and languages...Far away from their homes. Many children were forced to be ashamed of their identity and mother tongue, and had a chance to go home only twice a year. Sámi language and culture had zero value. Many Sami people lost their language and culture. They had to suffer from psychological and physical violence.</p> <p>[16] <i>Gáídat/Máhccat [Away/ Return]</i> “...Hanging on. I live in a coping culture as my ancestors did. Intergenerational trauma. My wounds are overlooked.”</p> <p>[20] Alludes to the experiences of the storyteller’s grandmother, an “Indian Residential School survivor,” which remain unknown to her - “I don’t know what she went through.”</p>

TABLE 1. DIGITAL STORY THEMES (CONTINUED)

Themes	Digital stories that include this as a theme
<p>The double story</p>	<p>Many stories contained double (or intertwined) messages of pain and resilience, despair and hope.</p> <p>[23] <i>Iñupiaq</i> exemplifies this dialectic: “I am Inupiaq. I get to claim this label for all of the joys of Indigenous people, just as much as the sorrow our People have endured. My ancestors that have come before me not only survived harsh Arctic weather, but they thrived...Through the trials of colonization, which includes boarding schools, internment camps, missionaries, and the multitude of abuses, we are still here. Even though our parents grew up with the trauma inherited from their parents, we are still here to be a better ancestor for the next seven generations. Even though we have the highest suicide rate per capita, we are still here trying to change the narrative.”</p> <p>[31] <i>Heajat [Wedding]</i> uses the moment of planning for a wedding to examine the teller’s hopes and fears as she brings her life together with a non-Sámi partner, confronting the uneasy relation between cultures that exists in other areas of her life. She expresses her love for her culture, and in particular the traditional clothing or Gákti, which feels “like a second skin,” in relation to her own family’s reluctance to wear or speak about their heritage. She also laments her silence about issues related to Sámi social suffering, out of fear of losing these relationships. The story ends with a doubleness and a provisional adaptation as she declares, “I love all of my traditions, and still I modernize them to make them mine.”</p> <p>Other stories that capture this duality include: [7] <i>As I Gaze Across the Contrasts of Valley</i>; [9] <i>Skoden: Not Worried</i>; [13] <i>Eallin Lea Cappis</i>; [15] <i>Moskkogáhta [Cloudy Street]</i>; [20] <i>natihthun gwiintl’oo choo</i>; [21] <i>Symphonies Within</i>; [29] <i>Muv Iellem [My Life]</i></p>
<p>Futurity</p>	<p>Many of these stories extend their temporal frame into the future - into the imagined future of their own life, their family and their descendants. This can also extend the notion of “suicidal ideation” into the more abstract realm of what it might mean to be Indigenous in the future, and what continued modernization and/or cultural loss might mean for this future.</p> <p>Some of the storytellers imagine this future with anxiety, such as [14] <i>Dát Lea Liigás [This is Enough]</i>; [15] <i>Moskkogáhta [Cloudy Street]</i>, which relay fear of future and of lost livelihoods, culture and meaning with declining reindeer herding. [24] <i>Sápmelaš [Northern Sámi]</i> asks, “What will it mean to be Sámi if the language disappears? Mountains, Sámi handicrafts, reindeer, nature? I fear for the future. What will it be like?...Would it be easier to not be Sámi? To leave the Sámi way of life behind?” This dialogue is accompanied by an image of the storyteller, wearing traditional Gákti, losing focus as she runs from the camera’s view.</p> <p>In contrast, some of the storytellers imagine a more hopeful future: [19] <i>Children: My Hope for the Future</i> - “when I start to question the purpose of life, I think about all of my babies and realize that a whole team surrounds me to help deliver all of life’s meaning.” The story ends with footage of her passing on tradition of throat singing, face to face with the toddler before her.</p> <p>[30] <i>Toquvunga (I am Dead)</i> complicates the temporality of both the story-time and the time of a previous suicide attempt. The storyteller speaks as if from death, related to a failed suicide attempt 10 years earlier: “I am dead...I didn’t want to die. I want to go back! If I had chosen life, I wonder how my life would’ve looked?” The dead version of the self reflects forward on the life that would have been missed, including the birth of a new generation, ending with the present day reflection: “<i>Choosing life. I am alive.</i>”</p> <p>Some storytellers make a pact with the future - [23] <i>Iñupiaq</i> promises that “Even though our parents grew up with the trauma inherited from their parents, we are still here to be a better ancestor for the next seven generations.”</p>

TABLE 1. DIGITAL STORY THEMES (CONTINUED)

Themes	Digital stories that include this as a theme
<p>Survival/ survivance</p>	<p>One of the most striking features of these stories is the way that the “double story” holds the dialectic of adversity and resilience. Survivance is a term coined by Gerald Vizenor to capture the idea of active survival, resilience and even resistance. In these stories, challenges for ancestors and contemporary youth are often relayed alongside narratives of strength and resilience.</p> <p>A succinct articulation of this theme, from [2]: “You have purpose. Our hearts beat like our ancestors drums. If you don’t have reason, make one. We represent resilience, it flows throughout our bloodstream like rain flows down the mountain...”</p> <p>[26] <i>Airplanes</i> approaches the double story, linking the vital knowledge contained in stories of her ancestors with histories of colonization. Both are kept alive in her, but so is the hopeful knowledge that she too will survive. In such stories, intergenerational bonds are not (only) linkages of trauma but of strengthening. “...where the only thing that seems to be important is my beating heart, kept alive by the blood of my ancestors...The first sight of my home makes me recall the stories, passed down from my ancestors. I feel the culture that survived centuries of colonization, trauma. I too will survive, ‘cause I feel the life of my mother tongue, the me in it, the us in it. I feel the words from old times speaking to me in the now.”</p>
<p>Role of Youth in mental wellness and suicide prevention</p>	<p>Many of the stories present the “double story” of worry for youth futures and yet confidence in the self-determination and capacity of youth to fight for change.</p> <p>For example, in [14] the narrator worries, “What do we do when our children are afraid of the future? Draw the pictures of the railway dead reindeer and crying people?”. Similarly, in [15], “the narrator laments “I don’t belong, even though I have built a life in the city. I feel that I am an outsider that something is missing. How can I be whole when others are trying to define me and my Sami identity?” Yet, she asserts, “Our traditions are still alive today. I have something to protect. I work with reindeer and in our association for Sami youth. My identity is strong and I don’t want to lose it.”</p> <p>[27] <i>Courage and Motivation</i> talks about her own journey and feeling empowered to become a youth advocate and leader, and encourages other youth to find that motivation.</p>
<p>Connecting across circumpolar communities</p>	<p>[21] <i>Symphonies Within</i> invokes the Second Article of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi between Maōri Chiefs and the British Crown. She links this with the Sámi experience of political oppression, and resultant loss of land. Through the story she dances to these discordant symphonies - her own lyricism in nature, the “chants, drums, ancient cords” of Indigenous Peoples, mingle with the “orchestras with blood on their hands.” Here she is finding solidarity and also resistance through shared experiences with other Indigenous Peoples. She invites us to “hear it,” even while exclaiming, “I wish I didn’t.”</p> <p>In [28] <i>Missing Pieces</i> two youths, one Inuk from Canada, the other Sámi from Sweden, partner to tell the doubled story of living between two worlds, and the impact of this on many factors related to suicide, such as identity, and belonging, as well as links to intergenerational trauma, colonization and modernity. Their dual voices present related, circumpolar perspectives, finding new connection and togetherness through sharing similar experiences:</p> <p>“We are born into two worlds. We are the generation born after the colonized generation. Modern and traditional. Academia or family. Swedish or Sámi. Canadian or Inuvialuq. What are we? Who are we?...Too modern for our cultural world. Too traditional from a Southern world. It feels like a piece is missing in my identity...Disconnected. Connected.”</p>



Making the digital story Missing Pieces, Inari, Finland, February 2019

TABLE 2. THEMATIC ANALYSIS BY RISING SUN SUICIDE PREVENTION OUTCOME

Level of Intervention	Suicide Prevention Outcomes ^a	Digital stories that include this as a theme
Clinic	<p>Increased access to and participation in mental health follow-up services for those who have attempted suicide or self-harm ^b</p> <p>Development of skilled, caring, and culturally reflective healthcare workforce and more accessible, timely, and culturally safe behavioral health treatment and support for mental and substance use disorders ^b</p> <p>Increased trauma-informed support for survivors ^b</p> <p>Increased early intervention for depression, anxiety, drug use, and violence</p>	<p>Very few of the digital stories mention clinical/ diagnostic approaches to suicide prevention. None occur in health settings.</p> <p>[6] <i>My Story</i> - Recounts the story of recovery from loss to suicide and sexual assault.</p> <p>[13] <i>Eallin Lea Cappis [Life is Beautiful]</i> Describes own efforts to manage depression.</p> <p>[16] <i>Gáidat/Máhccat [Away/ Return]</i> highlights depression and suicide, and challenges of reaching out to friends who are struggling with depression and suicide.</p> <p>[20] <i>natihthun gwiintl'oo choo</i>; [25] <i>[Don't hide your pain]</i>; and, [27] <i>Courage and Motivation</i> talk about substance abuse, mental health, need for treatment and silence/ stigma around seeking help.</p>
Community	<p>Increased number of trained and educated community members who understand resources for care and who can provide support in a crisis ^b</p> <p>Increased peer, community, and social network support ^b</p> <p>Increased number of cultural protective factors (e.g., cultural pride, engagement in cultural activities) ^b</p> <p>Increased access to relationships with elders, including an increase in the number of places and activities to promote inter-generational activities ^b</p> <p>Increased community involvement in suicide prevention, including increased number of youth who are equipped to provide peer-to-peer support ^b</p> <p>Increased number of youth that are engaged in traditional indigenous activities</p> <p>Increased opportunities for youth</p> <p>Increased self-determination, ownership for safety and well-being, and community ability to address suicide</p> <p>Decreased number of non-fatal suicide behavior and injuries (e.g., reduced suicide attempts and re-attempts, reduced suicidal ideation, and reduced non-suicidal self-injury)</p> <p>Reduced likelihood of being a victim of sexual abuse/ assault during childhood</p> <p>Increased employment</p>	<p>[1] <i>Finding My Language</i> Importance of language for transmitting culture and as a protective factor. [18] <i>Gula Gula [Hear Me]</i> and [20] <i>natihthun gwiintl'oo choo</i> also explore the importance of language and language preservation for mental wellness.</p> <p>[2] <i>Street Smarts</i> Importance of connection to Elders; creating sense of connection with culture in an urban environment.</p> <p>[3] <i>I am Alive</i>; [20] <i>natihthun gwiintl'oo choo</i>; [23] <i>Iñupiaq</i>; and [26] <i>Airplanes</i> discuss connections with Elders and ancestors as sustaining.</p> <p>[4] <i>Old Memories</i>; [7] <i>[As I Gaze Across the Contrasts of Valley]</i> Both talk about connection between memories, place, and intergenerational/ family connection.</p> <p>[6] <i>My Story</i> Recounts the story of recovery from loss to suicide, and sexual assault. Discusses pain of not being believed, blamed, ostracized from community. Also losing connection to culture as a result.</p> <p>[5] <i>What I Love to Do</i>; [9] <i>Skoden: Not Worried</i> both document the roots of creativity in culture, family and community, while also adapting their own craft.</p> <p>[24] <i>Sápmelaš [Northern Sámi]</i> values community and the sense of belonging it gives her: “It means so much to me to feel I belong in my community”</p>

^aCollins, P. Y. et al. RISING SUN: Prioritized Outcomes for Suicide Prevention in the Arctic. *Psychiatric Services* (2018)

^bTop 10 ranked suicide prevention outcomes identified through the RISING SUN

TABLE 2. THEMATIC ANALYSIS BY RISING SUN SUICIDE PREVENTION OUTCOME

Level of Intervention	Suicide Prevention Outcomes ^a	Digital stories that include this as a theme
Community (continued)		<p>[10] <i>Home</i>; [11] [<i>Coming Back to My Community</i>] Describe land as protective and a place to return to for sustenance.</p> <p>[16] <i>Gáidat/Máhccat [Away/ Return]</i> Challenges of reaching out to friends who are struggling with depression and suicide.</p>
Family	<p>Improved social and emotional coping skills among children and youth ^b</p> <p>Increased number of, and access to, positive role models who deal with adversity without suicide ^b</p> <p>Reduced children’s exposure to substance misuse in the home</p>	<p>[3] <i>I am Alive</i> discusses connections with family as a strong foundation to return to.</p> <p>[4] <i>Old Memories</i>; [7] [<i>As I Gaze Across the Contrasts of Valley</i>] Both talk about connection between memories, place, and intergenerational/ family connection.</p> <p>[13] <i>Eallin Lea Cappis [Life is Beautiful]</i> Shares strategy for managing emotion.</p> <p>[14] <i>Dát Lea Liigás [This is Enough]</i> Presents the historical roots of The Boarding School Period (1940-1970) and implications for intergenerational trauma, and youth futures.</p> <p>[25] [<i>Don’t hide your pain</i>] and [3] both present the importance of naming/ sharing emotions, and the stigma around this.</p>
Individual	<p>Increased sense of belonging</p> <p>Increased number of protective factors (e.g., social support)</p> <p>Increased hope for the future</p> <p>Increased reasons for living</p>	<p>All of the digital stories address reasons for living, though generally this is not presented as something at an individual level. Reasons for living are presented as very interconnected with family and community.</p> <p>[3] <i>I am Alive</i> [13] <i>Eallin Lea Cappis [Life is Beautiful]</i> Central theme is hope and reasons for living.</p> <p>[2] <i>Street Smarts</i> About adapting and belonging, and helping others to feel sense of self-worth/ belonging.</p> <p>[16] <i>Gáidat/Máhccat [Away/ Return]</i> Belonging through connecting with other Sámi youth.</p> <p>[19], [20], [23], [25], and [30] all deal with hope and / or hope for the future.</p>
National/ Regional	<p>An increase in sustainable funding for interventions</p> <p>Increased quality of life during childhood and decreased adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)</p> <p>Increased intersectoral collaboration across systems</p>	<p>[14] <i>Dát Lea Liigás [This is Enough]</i> Presents the historical roots of The Boarding School Period (1940-1970) and the roots of current suffering in national policies. The digital story also shows the impact of National borders on Indigenous groups whose traditional land crosses borders.</p> <p>Many of the stories reflect on adversity in childhood and the need to protect children. In particular, see: [6], [19], [25], and [27].</p>

^a Collins, P. Y. et al. RISING SUN: Prioritized Outcomes for Suicide Prevention in the Arctic. *Psychiatric Services* (2018)

^b Top 10 ranked suicide prevention outcomes identified through the RISING SUN

3. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Storytelling was an effective way of eliciting personal experience related to both suicide and resilience. These stories surfaced areas of interest and importance to this group of circumpolar youth, such as: aspects of identity(ies); the political and social context of their lives; the importance of land and place, and of ancestry and community; and the residue of intergenerational trauma, even as the youth face the future with strength and hope. Many also carry the memory of friends and loved ones with futures lost to suicide.

Storytelling enables the telling of these “double stories” - of conveying experiences of adversity alongside experiences of resilience, and hope. Gerald Vizenor has used the term *survivance*¹ to capture this meaning of active survival, resilience and even resistance. *Survivance* underlies the way many of these digital stories bear witness to double narratives of adversity and pain, while also asserting strength and resilience.

This storying process not only conveys meaning, but helps to build meaning, and to share that with others. The exchange of stories among the youth from different circumpolar communities generated a strong imagined community of shared meaning, and shared bonds.

The youth stories were readily shareable through the digital medium, both among the youth groups, across circumpolar youth groups, and to other audiences. The storytelling activities accomplished the goal of engaging youth in a way that they experienced as meaningful.

Through follow-up focus groups, youth spoke about the use of the storytelling space as a safe space to speak directly about suicide, and about their life and emotional experiences. They expressed the wish to address suicide and to have an impact on suicide prevention.

Specific conclusions, including actions that youth would like to see undertaken, and to be part of:

1. Youth want to be involved in suicide prevention efforts, and they have meaningful contributions to make.
2. Youth want a culturally safe space to talk about suicide, and many want to have direct conversation about suicide in addition to talking about resilience.
3. Youth value a circumpolar forum and opportunity for dialogue with other youth across circumpolar communities and contexts. They derive a sense of belonging, hope and decreased isolation from this community.
4. Youth validated many of the outcomes from previous areas of focus of SDWG suicide prevention activities (e.g. *RISING SUN*). Many stories addressed stigma and used youth voice to defeat silence around mental health, addictions, and suicide.

¹ Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (Lincoln: Nebraska, 1999)

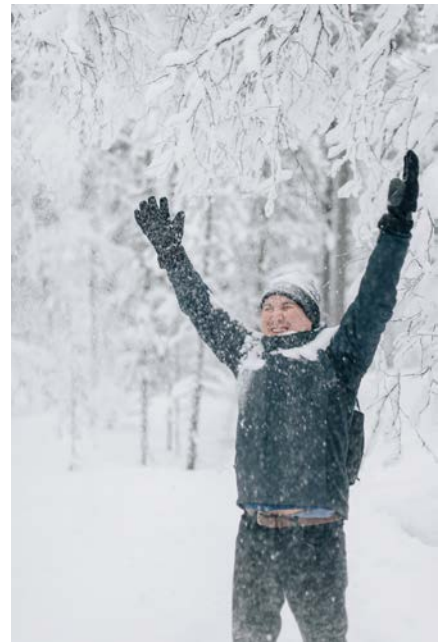
3. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5. Yet youth also understand suicide within a wholistic framework that goes well beyond “clinical” understanding of suicide. In particular, themes related to their view of political contexts and environmental stressors were prominent.

6. Some of the stories spoke either directly or indirectly of the importance of nurturing children, and of the devastating impacts of adversity and developmental trauma, including sexual assault, neglect, and being exposed to parental substance use.

7. Family, community and cultural strengths were strongly represented throughout the stories, underlining the importance of family, community and culture for any circumpolar suicide prevention and resilience-building efforts.

8. The youth stories were embedded in their ancestral lands, and all of the other strengths and protective factors, such as identity, belonging, language, culture, occupation, family and community, etc., are linked in the stories to the land. Some youth expressed anxiety about the future if there is ongoing disruption and loss of traditional lands. Some of the youth living away from the land, such as in urban areas, found ways of making these environments meaningful and found meaning through ongoing connection to homelands.



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Based on the findings and outcomes of **Project CREATEs** presented in this report, the following recommendations are presented for consideration in moving forward:

1. Understanding that suicide rates continue to be at a crisis level in many Arctic communities, especially among Indigenous Arctic youth, it is recommended that the Arctic Council and SDWG continue to advance the work of promoting mental wellness and suicide prevention in the Arctic region.

An additional digital storytelling workshop is planned for Greenland in collaboration with the Kingdom of Denmark in April 2019.

2. Activities under the CREATEs initiative reaffirm the value of an international forum and opportunity for dialogue between Arctic Indigenous youth across circumpolar communities. Youth should be involved in suicide prevention efforts as they have meaningful contributions to make.

3. Circumpolar knowledge sharing events and activities are essential. The SDWG work should promote stronger circumpolar cooperation, including via sharing of knowledge, good practices and lessons learned. This would not only benefit the mental wellness practitioners and caregivers but also Arctic Council stakeholders engaged in resilience activities more broadly. Further opportunities for knowledge sharing are being actively sought, in both national and international contexts. Online curation of the project stories will allow wider knowledge-sharing.

4. While the Project CREATEs digital storytelling workshops clearly showed that many themes related to mental health and suicide prevention are common across the circumpolar Arctic, and that youth can be empowered by sharing their stories with youth from other parts of the Arctic, further effort is needed to reach more youth at the community level. A particular focus should be on reaching youth at risk.

5. The SDWG should continue to benefit from the extensive Indigenous Knowledges of Indigenous communities and Permanent Participants and local knowledge from Arctic communities. Follow-on activities from CREATEs should be grounded in culturally relevant suicide prevention interventions across the Arctic.

6. While suicide prevention and mental health is a priority identified within the SDWG, the momentum and effectiveness of this work has been challenged by the two-year project cycle. Future SDWG suicide prevention and mental health projects should be long term, spanning multiple chairmanships.

7. Building from a base of strong community-based awareness and leadership on suicide prevention efforts, Arctic Council suicide prevention work should focus on the implementation of suicide prevention strategies. Understanding successes and failures of implemented activities and programs provides vital information on how to best scale local initiatives up and out

8. The importance of communications cannot be understated. All Arctic Council projects should strive to ensure accessible and ongoing communications of project activities to a diversity of audiences, especially Arctic communities, using appropriate communication tools.

ANNEX A – SAMPLE PROGRAM AGENDA

Creating Resilience, Engagement and Action Through Story – Project CREATEs

DAY 1	TELLING STORIES	Friday
5:30 – 6:00 pm	Dinner	
6:00 – 6:30 pm	Welcome & Introductions	Inuit Circumpolar Council Joanna and Selma
6:30 – 7:15 pm	Making a welcoming space Digital Storytelling: What is it? Some examples, and agenda for the next few days	Allison & REDLAB facilitators
7:15 – 8:10 pm	Writing Exercise and Story Circle Five-minute writing exercise, and story circle where we share ideas, start story development	Allison & REDLAB facilitators
8:15 p.m.	Check-out & review plan for Day 2	Allison & REDLAB facilitators
DAY 2	RECORDING & EDITING YOUR STORIES	Saturday
9:00 – 9:30 am	Check In	
9:30 – 10:15 am	Final Cut Pro X Tutorial Overview/refresher of video editing software and key tools	
10:15 – 11:30 am	Break	
10:30- 12:45 pm	Script development time/ storyboarding/ voiceover recording Working in small groups, story pairs, or with facilitators to finalize scripts, record audio, and develop images.	
12:45 – 1:15 pm	LUNCH	
1:15 – 4:30 pm	Open Studio (editing, image and video production, organizing) Working alone or with facilitators to capture video, images, and edit your piece.	
4:30– 5:00 pm	Check-in and plan for Day 3	
DAY 3	COMPLETING AND SHARING YOUR STORIES	Sunday
9:00 – 9:30 am	Check In	
9:30-12:00 pm	Open Studio (editing, image and video production) Editing alone or with facilitators' support	
12:00 – 12:30 pm	LUNCH	
12:30 – 2:00 pm	Open Studio (editing, image and video production) Editing alone or with facilitators' support	
2:00 – 2:30 pm	Finalizing stories and adding credits/ titles	
2:30 – 3:00 pm	Exporting Stories	
3:00- 3:45 pm	Screening Final Stories/ Videos Participants share their videos	All participants
3:45 – 4:30 pm	Focus Group – participants reflect on the weekend and discuss the impact of the workshop	Allison Crawford
4:30 – 5:00 pm	Closing thoughts and check-out	



Questions about the workshop itself:

1. Questions about the workshop itself: How did you originally hear about the workshop? What made you decide to participate in the workshop (what motivated you)?
2. Did you have any concerns or reservations about participating in the workshop?
3. What was participating in the workshop like? What things worked/ did you enjoy? Was there anything about it that you didn't like/ didn't work for you? How was it to spend time with the group?

Questions about making your story

4. Do you remember how you chose your story? Do you have any ideas about why you selected that particular story?
5. Can you tell me about the process of making the digital story (enjoyment, frustrations, surprising aspects, emotions)? How did you decide what images to use? Music to use?
6. What do you think are the important ideas or themes that you address in your story? What matters about expressing those ideas in a story (instead of another form like a painting, an article, a conversation)?
7. Did you learn anything through making your story? About yourself? About your culture? What stands out for you the most?
8. How did you feel about your story after you completed it? Did you show the story to the other participants? What was that experience like (or why did you choose not to share)? Have you shared it with anyone outside of the workshop?

Shaping Circumpolar Wellness

9. As you watched other people's stories in the workshop, what stood out for you as important messages in the stories?
10. Who do you think should see the stories that were shared in your workshop?
11. Do you think storytelling is helpful? If so how? Who is it helpful for? For the person telling the story and/or the person listening?

Prompts: Do you think stories can play a role in wellness?

In building resilience?

In involving youth and community members?

In expressing identity or culture?

In thinking about the future?

Any other ways?



Snow angels, Inari, Finland, February 2019 [photo credit: Sara Wilde]



Canada

EXPLORING
COMMON
SOLUTIONS

**FINLAND'S
CHAIRMANSHIP
2017-2019**



ARCTIC COUNCIL

www.ProjectCREATeS.com



Sustainable Development
Working Group



ARCTIC COUNCIL

www.sdwg.org