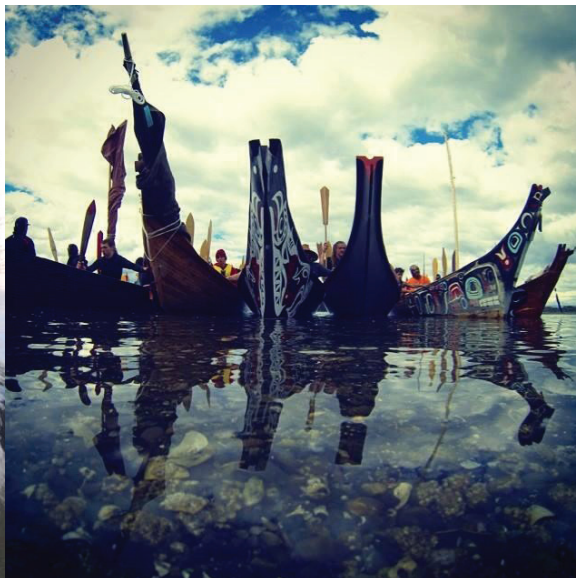


Learning From Indigenous Non-Governmental Organizations



A Case Study of Three
Indigenous Non-Governmental
Organizations in Canada
with Transformative Impact
on their Communities



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Executive Summary

The significant impact of Indigenous Non-governmental Organizations (INGOs) and the important role they play in achieving durable conservation outcomes is often overlooked. These organizations warrant significant attention for their deep work in communities. Operating at the intersection of social, cultural, and ecological issues, their work can result in lasting conservation. This report summarizes case study research based on three INGOs in Canada having a transformative impact in their communities—Qqs Projects Society, Storytellers' Foundation, and Ilisagvik Society.

They are unique organizations that reflect distinct places, people, cultures, histories, and socioeconomic contexts. However, they share many common experiences and observations about what has enabled them to succeed and what continues to challenge them in their work.

The primary purpose of this research is to deepen understanding of successful INGOs so that they can be better supported and established in other communities. There is a lot that can be learned from these successful INGOs. However, in order for new INGOs to develop, the idea needs to come from communities themselves.

The report provides:

- A history, mission, programming, and organizational growth of each case study.
- Attributes and conditions for strong and resilient indigenous organizations.
- Challenges to the continued success of each organization, and additional resources required to ensure success into the future.
- Lessons learned and opportunities for strategic grantmaking and investment to further conservation and human well-being across Canada and beyond by supporting INGOs.

Key Case Study Learnings

- Importance of the community driving the needs and growth of organizations.
- Need for strong, stable, and committed leadership.
- Focus on building capacity within the communities.
- An integrated approach that considers conservation and human well-being is paramount for success.
- Ability to take risks and have an entrepreneurial spirit.
- High value for physical space to create strong connections.



ILISAQSIK SOCIETY

Clyde River, Nunavut

STORYTELLERS' FOUNDATION

Hazleton, BC

QQS PROJECTS SOCIETY

Wagisla (Bella Bella), BC



1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Tides Canada's mission, to find uncommon solutions for the common good, is realized through seeking and supporting innovative organizations that have a transformational impact towards positive social change. Over the years, working towards conservation in some of Canada's most globally significant geographies—coastal temperate rainforest of the Great Bear Rainforest (GBR), the pristine watersheds of the Sacred Headwaters of northwest BC and the last frontier of the Canadian Arctic—Tides Canada has come to know the indigenous people and communities in these regions and understand how the long-term durability of these places hinge on the health and connection of these people to the resources they've been managing since before memory. In an attempt to better understand how to support the long-term durable ecological and human health of these places, Tides Canada has encountered a number of INGOs that have had an impact beyond any other program, initiative or funding source—these INGOs are transforming the communities they serve in an empowering and entrepreneurial way that should be widely known, understood and supported.

While it is difficult to attribute the transformation of these communities directly to the impacts of their respective INGOs, it is impossible to dissociate their work from the positive changes on the ground.

Tides Canada works from a theory of change based in the concept of 'building capacity for conservation'. In our history of working and supporting conservation efforts we know that conservation outcomes will only be achieved and sustained if the people and communities that depend on the ecological health of a place have the capacity to steward and manage the environments that they rely upon. The targets of Tides Canada's capacity for conservation programs are based on a conceptual model of the dynamics of socio-ecological systems pioneered by Elinor Ostrom (2009).

Ostrom's work identifies elements of social and ecological systems that have been shown to be key drivers of local self-organization towards sustainable conservation. Five of these elements help articulate the decision-making roles of local communities or the defining social and cultural conditions within these communities; they can be supported through constructive engagement by community development or conservation proponents. Ostrom's five social system elements or targets are:

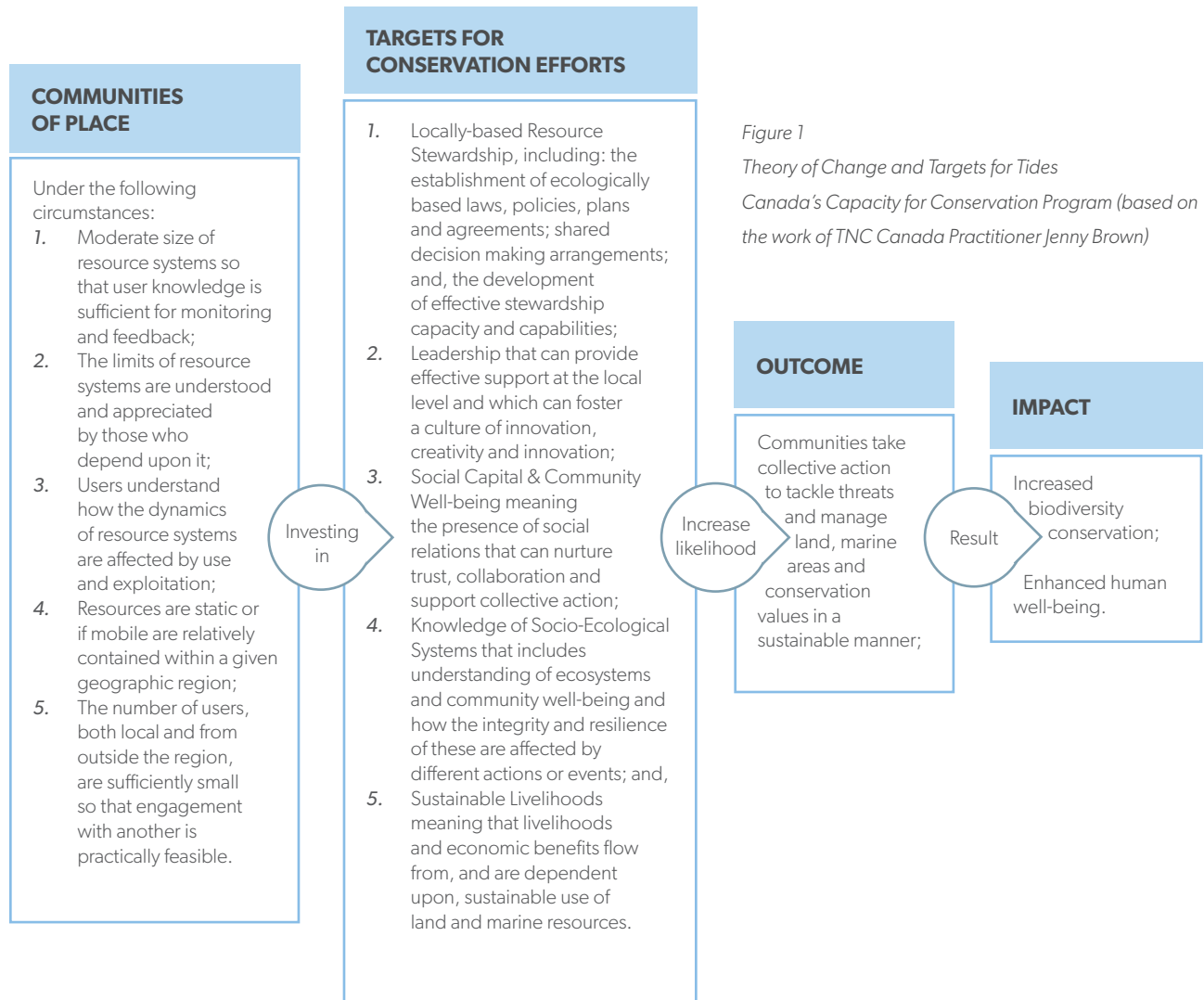
- Locally-based resource stewardship;
- Presence of leadership and entrepreneurship;
- Social capital and community well-being;
- Common knowledge of the social-ecological system;
- Perceived value of the resources towards sustainable livelihoods.

Of course, decades of colonization, displacement, disempowerment and residential schools have compromised indigenous communities in Canada and have substantially disrupted these five social system elements.



The INGOs profiled in this case study are rebuilding these important social facets of healthy, ecologically dependent communities and are naturally fostering conservation and human well-being “targets” in the communities where they work.

Figure 1 illustrates how Tides Canada’s theory of change integrates these social system elements into conservation and human well-being outcomes.



Sustainability and resilience in the GBR, Arctic and northwest BC and any other remote and ecologically intact geography will not occur without local empowerment of indigenous communities and a full appreciation for the importance of the human dimension of ecosystem dynamics. We have pursued this case study report with the hope of better understanding these INGOs and sharing what we learn with other INGOs, indigenous communities, funders, educators, businesses and any other organizations interested in the health of ecosystem dependent communities. The INGOs profiled here demonstrate the growing understanding that social and ecological systems are deeply interconnected, interdependent and co-evolving.



1.2 Research Objectives

The primary purpose of this research is to better understand successful INGOs so that they can be better fostered and established in other communities. We wanted to identify the characteristics of effective INGOs so that these elements can be recognized in other geographies and nascent INGOs can be supported. We are also hoping to better understand the needs of these organizations so that we can more effectively draw resources towards their progress. We are also hoping that by profiling these INGOs lessons can be shared with other communities pursuing similar organizations. To do this, Tides Canada looked to three established and successful INGOs to learn from their experiences. In short, the research sought to better understand:

- What are the characteristics of successful INGOs?
- How can existing and emergent INGOs be better supported?
- What lessons can be shared with other INGOs or communities considering developing an INGO?
- How do the lessons from these case studies inform Tides Canada's grantmaking in rural and indigenous communities across Canada?

This report assembles and reflects on the observations and insights shared by these three organizations whose staff generously shared their time and their stories.

1.3 Introducing the Case Studies

Tides Canada's work in the GBR, NW BC and the Arctic has led to our valued relationships with the three organizations profiled here; Qqs Project Society in Wagisla, B.C.,¹ Storytellers' Foundation in Hazelton, B.C.,² and Ilisaqsivik in Clyde River, Nunavut³ were selected as the case studies for this research. These organizations are well-established INGOs that focus on building the capacity and meeting the needs of the communities they serve. They are all fiercely place-based and community-driven organizations. They are inter-disciplinary and entrepreneurial organizations that have taken a deeply holistic and integrated approach to community building and conservation. Because of this, they are having a transformative impact in the communities and landscapes in which they are based.

These INGOs were selected as case studies for this research because they have successfully navigated the challenges of establishing and sustaining a not-for-profit organization—guided first and foremost by the needs and ambitions of their respective communities. They have not been created or initiated from the “outside” but have grown out of the vision, commitment and strength of local people, forming strategic alliances and partnerships along the way. In so doing they have become strong and enduring institutions, capable of garnering resources, empowering community members, and affecting lasting change.

While mutual support is a fundamental element of most indigenous cultures, formal not-for-profit organizations like these are uncommon. Understanding how they were able to establish roots, build capacity, increase programming, and have meaningful impact on the well-being of local people and places can inform the investment strategies of funders and provide a valuable model for other established and emerging INGOs.

1 <http://www.qqsprojects.org>

2 <http://upperskeena.ca>

3 <http://ilisaqsivik.ca>



1.4 Research Approach

The primary approach used in this research was a structured phone-based interview lasting approximately 1.5 hours with a leader from each organization. A question set (Appendix A) was developed and provided to each organization prior to the interview for review and reflection. Interviews were supplemented with other background information gathered from each organization's website, as well as other Internet sources where available such as published papers, news articles, charitable reporting, etc.

From Qqs Projects Society we interviewed Jessie Housty, Director of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Director of Communications. Prior to the interview she consulted with Larry Jorgenson, Executive Director, on the question set. From Storytellers' Foundation, Anne Docherty, Executive Director, was interviewed. And, from Ilisaqsivik, Jakob Gearheard, Executive Director, was interviewed.

Kim Hardy, Program Lead, Western Canada at Tides Canada, and Karen Peachey, conducted the interviews.



2 Case Study Profiles

This section provides a quick orientation to each of the three organizations, touching on the history of their formation, their mission, their programming focus, and their organizational growth. This is a high-level summary to provide the basic context for each case study—a more textured discussion is provided in subsequent sections of the report.



Doug Brown, researcher and field station manager for the Raincoast Conservation Foundation as well as member of the Heiltsuk First Nation.

Image: Dean Azim

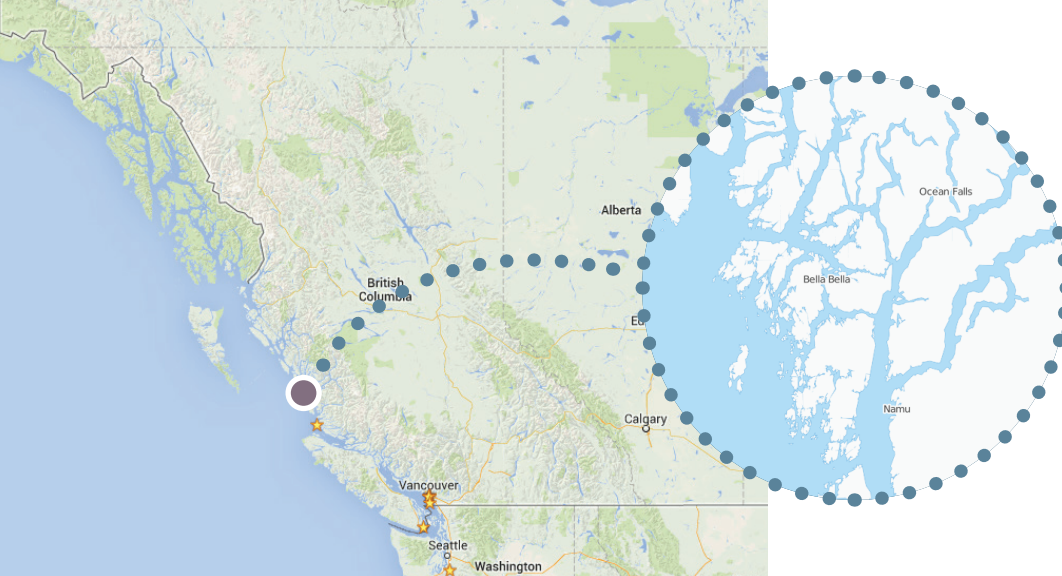
2.1 QQS PROJECTS SOCIETY¹

Qqs Projects Society (Qqs) is a Heiltsuk First Nation community organization based in Wagisla (Bella Bella), BC. Wagisla has an on-reserve population of approximately 1,200 people, with another 1,100 or more Heiltsuk members living off reserve. The word Qqs means “eyes” in the Heiltsuk language. The organization’s mandate is to open the eyes of Heiltsuk young people to their responsibility as stewards of their environment and culture.

As with all First Nations in Canada, Heiltsuk were subject to imposed colonial governance structures, residential school, and losing ownership of their lands. Qqs Projects Society evolved naturally out of two decades of local community organizing beginning in the 1970s. Community organizing had focused on reconnecting youth to their traditional lands and culture, empowering the hereditary leadership, and efforts to regain stewardship and ownership rights over the natural resources and lands of Heiltsuk territory. A crisis point was reached in the 1990s when youth suicides reached alarming levels. Qqs Project Society was formalized as a non-profit society in 1999 with the mandate to support Heiltsuk youth, culture and environment. Around that time, the Koeys Camp was established at the mouth of the Koeys River. This youth camp was established to build on and broaden the reach of a camping program that had previously targeted only at-risk youth at Roscoe Inlet. Two years later, Qqs obtained federal charitable status. This organizational development was, in part, hastened by the purchase and donation to Qqs of the Koeys Lodge property adjacent to its Koeys Camp site.

The organization has been led by Executive Director Larry Jorgenson and governed by a board of dedicated community members since its inception. Larry is a long-term resident of Wagisla who moved to the community in the 1970s and has roots there.

¹ A detailed history and overview of the Qqs Projects Society can be found on their website www.qqsprojects.org.



*Qqs Projects Society is based
in Wagisla (Bella Bella), BC.*

Qqs describes itself as a society:

- established by and for the people of the Heiltsuk First Nation;
- devoted to building capacity and revitalizing culture by supporting important community initiatives that will uplift the Heiltsuk people;
- that is values-based—guided by traditional Heiltsuk values and laws, respect, education, culture, youth, and environment; and
- dedicated to helping create a new generation of Heiltsuk leaders who are committed to the revitalization of our culture and to the sustainable management and use of our lands and resources.

Qqs focuses its projects in three key areas: youth, culture, and environment. Koeye Camp, a summer camp program that brings Heiltsuk children, youth, adults and elders together has had a transformative impact on the community. From the strength of that core program and the deep engagement of the community in it, many subsequent programs have since been focusing on territory stewardship, culturally informed scientific research, and community building and well-being. A detailed description of Qqs' programs can be found on their website at www.qqsprojects.org. A summary of their current programs can be found in Appendix B.

Qqs Projects Society staff levels and organizational revenues vary annually with project funding. Revenues have grown rapidly in the past five years as dedicated staff resources have increased and momentum and partnerships have been built. In 2013, Qqs raised almost \$800,000 supporting three full time staff and 40 part time/seasonal staff. This is almost double the revenue of 2009, 2010, and 2011 where annual revenues were closer to \$400,000. Prior to 2008, the organization's revenues averaged approximately \$240,000/year.²

² <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca>



2.2 Storytellers' Foundation

Storytellers' Foundation (Storytellers') is a registered not-for-profit organization based in the Upper Skeena River region of northwest BC in the village of Hazelton. Approximately 6,000 people (80% of whom are Gitksan) live in the Upper Skeena in 14 distinct communities including seven First Nation reserves, over 60 different Wilps or house groups, two non-incorporated settlements, three valleys and the municipalities of Hazelton and New Hazelton. This 30,000 square kilometer region is the traditional territory of the Gitksan Nation.

Storytellers' Foundation was first established in 1994, growing out of work commenced with the Gitksan hereditary Chiefs and the Gitksan Treaty Office. The work of this Office had demonstrated clearly that local values (Gitksan and more recent settlers) were not being reflected in the conventional external-investment driven approaches to development in the region. Storytellers' was officially incorporated as a non-profit society in 2000.

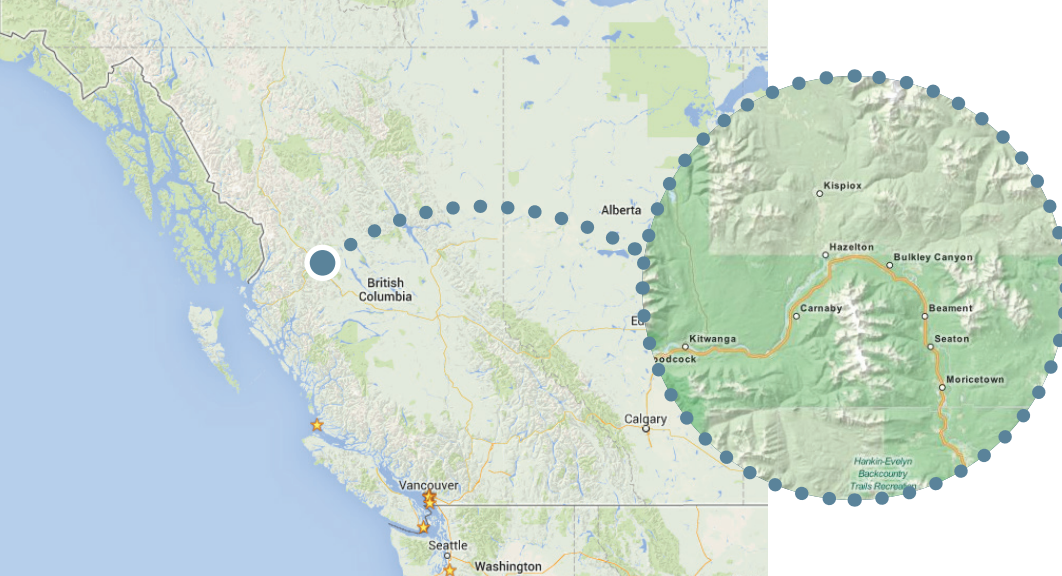
Since its creation, Storytellers' has been led by a staff team of three committed community members working under the guidance of a volunteer board: a husband and wife team, Anne Docherty and Doug Donaldson, and Bridie O'Brien. Recently, Anne Docherty has assumed the helm of the organization as Executive Director and recruited new staff as Doug and Bridie have moved on to pursue other professionally demanding work.³ Anne is a long-time resident of the Upper Skeena, originally from Scotland.

Storytellers' stated mission is to foster personal and political mobilization through the development of an active citizenry in order that residents of the northwest can further define their social and economic destiny.

The organization focuses on cultivating and sustaining assets⁴ within the community, engaging and learning alongside community members, and empowering people to determine their own future. The organization seeks to situate its work at the confluence of economic, social and ecological issues and to link this local work with broader networks outside the community.

³ Doug Donaldson was elected as the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Stikine, British Columbia, in May 2009 and re-elected in May 2013. He serves as Opposition Critic for Aboriginal Relations.

⁴ Asset-based community development considers local assets to be the primary building blocks of sustainable community development. It is a bottom-up way of working with communities that focuses on community strengths and assets rather than problems and needs. It identifies and mobilizes individual and community assets, skills and passions. It is community and relationship driven. For more information see: www.abcdinstitute.org and www.abundantcommunity.com.



*Storytellers' Foundation,
based in the village of
Hazelton, Upper Skeena River
region of northwest BC.*

Storytellers' currently focuses its programs in four areas: community learning and empowerment; community development analysis and research; youth empowerment; and food security. For the past ten years Storytellers' has served several functions in connection with community organizing. These functions have included:

- facilitating community development discussions and initiatives;
- research about the conditions in which oral and rural people live;
- participatory action research with youth;
- analysis of the local economy and our socioeconomic potential for non-industrial economies;
- communication and public education around Gitksan issues;
- and general socioeconomic analysis.

A detailed description of Storytellers' programs can be found on their website at www.upperskeena.ca. A summary of their current programs can be found in Appendix B.

Like Qqs, Storytellers' Foundation staff levels and organizational revenues vary with projects. On average, the organization brings in approximately \$250,000/year. This allows for seven part-time staff working two to three days per week. The organization relies on many unpaid volunteers and volunteer hours from staff and board. Anne Docherty, the organization's Executive Director, is working with the board to diversify and increase its funding. Currently, Storytellers' does not have charitable status and is in the process of applying for it. In the interim they have developed strong partnerships with local charitable organizations to work collaboratively with in charitable activities.

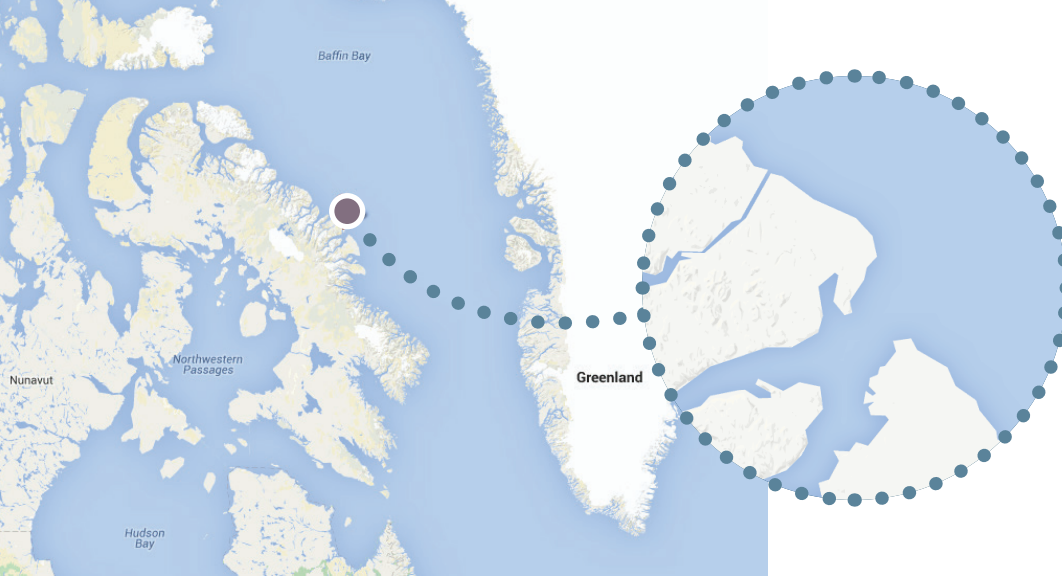


2.3 Ilisaqsivik Society

Ilisaqsivik Society is a charitable non-profit community-based Inuit organization in Clyde River, Nunavut, an Inuit community of approximately 1,000 people on Baffin Island. This is a very remote community with the closest neighbouring village 400 kilometres away and is accessed only by air plane. Inuit have faced similar impositions on culture as First Nations—forced out of nomadic lifestyles and into stationary communities, a shift to wage economies and extraordinary food and housing security issues. Incorporated in 1997, Ilisaqsivik grew out of the initiative taken by a group of Inuit residents and local teachers who came together in 1996 in response to a high rate of youth suicide in the preceding years. Tired of the failed attempts of conventional “Western” social workers and councillors arriving from Ottawa to “fix” the problem, this group was driven by a commitment to a different vision for their community—one of community wellness, health and healing rooted in Inuit values. In 1999, Ilisaqsivik obtained registered charitable status and not long after purchased a building (formerly the community’s health centre) and established the Ilisaqsivik Family Resource Centre.

For the first five years, Ilisaqsivik was coordinated by one of its founding members. After her departure in 2002, the Society hired two interim coordinators. But, with the pressures of a large building to operate, challenging finances, and growing programming demand, Ilisaqsivik looked outside the community and to the south (USA) to recruit coordinator Jakob Gearheard in 2004. Almost a decade later, Jakob continues to lead the organization as Executive Director, working closely with Ilisaqsivik’s dedicated community-based board.

Ilisaqsivik strives to support community development and wellness in a way that maintains respect for traditional Inuit teachings and learning and is accountable to the community. Ilisaqsivik is Inuktitut for “a place where you can recognize yourself.” The Centre offers a range of Inuit culturally based programs supporting the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of community residents from infants to Elders.



*The Ilisaqsivik Society
based in Clyde River,
Nunavut, on Baffin Island.*

Ilisaqsivik's programming focuses broadly on:

- Providing access to educational, health and nutrition, cultural, and counseling programs;
- Promoting the participation and leadership of Elders in all programs and activities;
- Promoting and demonstrating healthy lifestyle choices, positive attitudes, creativity, and resourcefulness;
- Providing a safe, healthy and accepting place for Clyde River residents to meet;
- Promoting Inuit culture, values, livelihoods, knowledge, language, and traditions in all programs and activities.

A detailed description of Ilisaqsivik's programs can be found on their website at www.ilisqsvik.ca/programs-and-services. A summary of their current programs can be found in Appendix B.

With a foundational approach of empowerment, Ilisaqsivik seeks own source revenue and entrepreneurially offers consulting, training, and service delivery on a contract or fee-for-service basis for the Government of Nunavut, other Baffin Island communities, mining companies, research and educational institutions, and non-profit organizations. In addition, it is currently pursuing the development of a Bed & Breakfast in Clyde River as a means to generate a new revenue stream for the organization.

Not without its struggles along the way, Ilisaqsivik has grown from a starting team of six staff members to become the largest employer in Clyde River with a staff of 50–60 individuals and many more employed on a project-specific staff and honoraria basis.⁵ The revenues to Ilisaqsivik have grown to over \$3 million in 2013. The Family Resource Centre is “bursting at the seams” and has built partnerships with the Hamlet, school, college and others to extend and deliver its programs and services.

⁵ Information on 2013 staffing provided by Executive Director, Jakob Gearheard.



3 Case Study Findings

Qqs Projects Society, Storytellers' Foundation and Ilisaqsivik Society are unique organizations that reflect the distinct places, people, cultures, histories, and socioeconomic contexts from which they have grown. However, they share many common experiences as well as shared observations about what has enabled them to succeed and what continues to challenge them in their work. These findings give us a compelling picture of what attributes and conditions make for strong and resilient rural indigenous organizations.

3.1 Communities in Crisis

Both Qqs Projects Society and Ilisaqsivik Society were, in part, formed in response to the devastating impact of colonization and the resulting youth suicide in their respective communities. In both places, this compelled community members to come together, to organize, connect with their own cultural practices and approaches to solving the immediate needs of their communities in pain and the bigger issues behind the sense of hopelessness among their youth.

Storytellers' Foundation grew from a similar crisis in the Upper Skeena—one where a legacy of colonization and industrialization had left the Gitksan Nation with some of the highest levels of poverty, unemployment, and suicide rates in the province. The current pressure exerted by the oil and gas and mining industries is creating a renewed sense of fear that local values will be forced to give way to global and corporate interests—and once again it is this crisis which is catalyzing action between local organizations like Storytellers' and other community groups and environmental organizations in northern and coastal BC.

While crisis isn't necessarily a precursor to community organizing, it has had a galvanizing effect in all three communities. The realization that alienation from land and culture was leading to a loss of identity and hope brought people together. It engendered a deep and shared commitment to healing and renewing the connections between people, place and culture. In all three cases, community members felt compelled to assume responsibility, to offer an alternate vision of the future, and to respond to the crisis in a culturally- and place-specific way.

3.2 Responsiveness

Ilisaqsivik grew in direct response to a crisis in the community but it also grew from the community's recognition that they themselves were best positioned to respond to this crisis: outside agencies were well intended but ineffectual.

To this day, Ilisaqsivik continues to build programs and initiatives that respond to local Inuit needs, priorities, and ambitions.

Storytellers' also describes itself as a responsive, locally relevant, and solutions-oriented organization.

Storytellers' approach is rooted in the understanding that the issues people and communities struggle with, and which may seem small to the outside eye, are in fact deeply interconnected to the larger

We help people fix problems. The content changes as the community determines what problems need fixing. We start by working on these practical intervention needs and then we work on the systemic and sustainable interventions.

—Anne Docherty, Storytellers'





social, environmental and economic sphere. By responding to and creating dialogue around global forces that impact Gitksan way of life, and perpetuate poverty and a sense of oppression, a sense of confidence, purpose and hope emerges in young people, and any associated efforts to change these systems for the better.

Qqs describes itself as a pragmatic organization, responding to community needs and often acting as a stopgap organization, doing the initial work and handing it off to other established or new entities in the Heiltsuk community. Qqs very much understands its role as one of service to the Heiltsuk. Jessie explains the importance of responding to direction provided by the community no matter how difficult or impossible the task may seem. By jumping in to address practical and pressing community needs, these organizations demonstrate value to the communities where they work and build the needed support for ongoing engagement in their work.

3.3 Community Driven

Qqs, Storytellers', and Ilisaqsivik are organizations that emerged from local community organizing and leadership. In all cases, these organizations were created by community members, in response to community issues, and led by community volunteers, staff and boards. They are all very much organizations created "by and for" the communities they serve. They emerged organically and naturally from the efforts of individual community members dedicated to changing the status quo.

All three are deeply entrenched in and accountable to the communities they serve. They are committed to engaging, listening and learning from community members first and foremost. They are committed to training, employing, teaching and supporting community members—from young children to youth, adults, and elders. These organizations are very much "owned" by the Indigenous communities they serve. This feeling of local ownership is reflected in many ways but perhaps most strongly in the voluntary hours dedicated to the work of these organizations by board members, staff, and community members alike.

Ilisaqsivik was built from base up, created from the inside out. This is our organization, built on our ideas. Ilisaqsivik is owned by our board; owned by the community.

—Jakob Gearheard, Ilisaqsivik



The partnerships and relationships they have forged with outside individuals, funders, organizations and companies have been entered into with great care, never losing sight of the community's values, priorities and needs. This can be a difficult balance to manage, but all three organizations felt strongly that their respective boards enabled them to navigate this path by providing strong guidance and a consistent adherence to the organizations' mission and vision.



3.4 Clarity of Focus

Another source of strength for these organizations has been their strong sense of clarity about what they are doing and why. Without this kind of focus, many organizations waver, get pulled off track, or struggle to engage people and build support. All three organizations commented on the strength their mission or vision provided, enabling them to make decisions and pursue the work secure in the knowledge that it “fit” their higher purpose. How these organizations have approached realizing their vision has naturally shifted over time (i.e. early days for all three was crisis response) but the vision has remained consistent and constant: empowered, healthy, self-sufficient communities deeply connected to place and culture.

The group that started Ilisaqsivik had the strength of vision and passion for that vision—the guts to do it. Their approach was: do it—the money will follow.

—Jakob Gearheard, Ilisaqsivik



3.5 Holistic Approach

Qqs, Storytellers’, and Ilisaqsivik have all taken an interdisciplinary or holistic approach to the community work they are doing. A quick review of the programs listed in Appendix B for each organization demonstrates the wide range of activities they are engaged in. Programs range from basic needs and empowerment support, to traditional and cultural experiences out on the land and integrating indigenous knowledge with conventional scientific research and monitoring (just to name a few). While we often see “culture” and “arts” programs separate from “environment” or “stewardship” initiatives in

urban centers and large organizations, these are integrated in indigenous communities and INGOs are able to foster that integration and build on it.

Our success was more an accident than anything else. We got ambitious. We were started by people with a profound desire to change things. They diagnosed the bigger problems and the connections between all. We’ve taken a very holistic approach to community issues. This has built interest, buy-in, involvement and shared interest in seeing success... My advice to others: stay grounded in timeless values, be broad, be inclusive, be holistic, move forward as many issues as possible, bring in more people.

—Jessie Housty, Qqs

This approach has been a source of strength for these organizations, enabling them to take on a wide range of initiatives that respond to the short- and long-term priorities of the community. It has also enabled them to partner with a wider range of funders and collaborators and to not become dependent on any particular funding relationship, program, or partnership. This responsiveness and independence builds legitimacy on the ground with the community who see the organization acting first and foremost in their common interest and resiliency for the organization as key relationships with the outside world shift.

3.6 Capacity, Empowerment, Self-Determination

Qqs, Storytellers’, and Ilisaqsivik are all organizations focused on empowering individuals, building individual and community capacity,¹ and strengthening local leadership and self-determination. They are focused on building this capacity broadly within the indigenous communities they serve and within their respective organizations. This focus on building from within and creating opportunities for community members to engage in meaningful programs and employment has led to compelling results.

¹ Community capacity building can be defined as the process of strengthening the ability of individuals and organizations to effectively pursue their vision for community development and the strengthening of community assets.



For instance, Qqs' mission statement states: "We are devoted to building capacity and revitalizing our culture by supporting important community initiatives that will uplift the Heiltsuk people." Fifteen years in, Qqs speaks of a generation of Koeve Camp graduates as the "Koeve family"—people connected to one another through shared personal development experiences that connect them to each other, to their culture and to the land. Many of these people are stepping into leadership roles in the community, in their workplaces and in their families. This is a "long-game" as Jessie Housty puts it, but one that is clearly yielding results.

Ilisaqsivik describes its central vision as "empowerment," enabling people go on a journey of healing and self-realization and to proactively name and pursue their goals. Ilisaqsivik has created hundreds of temporary, part- and full-time jobs for people in Clyde River, engaging many people in the wage economy for the first time. Most of these are jobs that would not otherwise have been created—Ilisaqsivik has built a formidable array of programs and initiatives in direct response to the

needs and interests of the community. These jobs in turn have built the opportunities and self-reliance of the community and enabled people to work in jobs aligned with their values.

There is huge value in working with people to build a strong and grounded identity of who they are and where they come from—a cultural identity of place. Strong people build a strong community of stable individuals and leaders.

—Jessie Housty, Qqs

Our vision has continued to be one of empowerment. This was the vision from the start. At the beginning the focus was on trauma, hurt, healing. Now, we look more at what we have done, what we've overcome, and where we are going. Not just healing, but enabling people to do what they want: to be empowered.

—Jakob Gearheard, Ilisaqsivik

Similarly, Storytellers' mission is the "personal and political empowerment of the people of the Upper Skeena". This deep commitment to the vision and language of self-determination has been reflected in their work with vulnerable women, youth, and other marginalized groups. Their programming is geared to empowering people as individuals, to validating a distinctly northern way of life and economy, and to pursuing a vision for the future that reflects local values. One highly effective project of Storytellers' created the space for marginalized community members to share their stories of the "Salmon Economy". Identifying, valuing and talking about the importance of salmon to the Gitksan economy empowered the community and gave them words to assert their values into planning processes.

3.7 Imported Capacity

It is interesting to note that all three of the case study organizations have also relied on the capacity and knowledge of people that have come from "outside" the community. Larry Jorgensen, Anne Docherty, Doug Donaldson, and Jakob Gearheard have all migrated to these communities from elsewhere. All, for various personal and professional reasons, have become deeply committed and connected to these places and communities. Their role in these organizations is important to acknowledge—through a combination of deep personal and professional commitment to people and place and thoughtful approaches to fostering local solutions, they have embodied the "magic mix" of attributes needed for these organizations to get established, sustain themselves, and/or thrive.

Jakob acknowledges the timing of his hire as an "outsider" was critical. Ilisaqsivik was at a point where hard decisions needed to be made—decisions that were particularly difficult for community members to take and implement. His management skills and experience and entrepreneurial bent were needed to complement the strength of the community and the board's vision for the organization.



Almost two decades in, all three organizations are now laying the foundations for transitions of leadership at the executive staff and board levels, and building up internal capacity in anticipation of this shift. Like any successful non-profit organization that successfully grew from the vision, passion and commitment of its founders, this transition of leadership is one that will require much careful thought, planning and deliberate action.

Recently, Storytellers' has looked beyond the borders of the community at both the board and staff level for the knowledge and leadership they seek. Ilisaqsvik has also anticipated possibly recruiting externally for its Executive Director position in the future, securing housing for this position to ensure that does not become a barrier to recruitment. Qqs is in the process of organizing their administration so that it can be more easily shared and understood by new staff and board members.

3.8 Governance and Leadership

Strong governance and leadership has been a hallmark of all three organizations. All three organizations have long-serving and voluntary boards made up of respected community leaders. They have also had long-serving Executive Directors.

When asked, "what accounts for success?" Ilisaqsvik's Executive Director, Jakob Gearheard, quickly answered "our board." He went on to explain that the board is made up primarily of Clyde River elders, deeply committed to the vision of healing and community empowerment and providing strong direction to the organization. With this source of strength and unwavering commitment, Jakob feels focused and empowered to pursue programs and funding. Furthermore, as Jakob explains, these board members have influence and social respect and, "they have my back" when times get challenging. As new board members replace elders who have passed on, board and institutional memory does get lost. This is a new challenge Jakob is now trying to deal with by pursuing funds to support board development and training—something that is especially critical as the organization increases in size and complexity.

Jakob, too, has demonstrated a deep commitment to Ilisaqsvik and the community of Clyde River. He has now lived and worked in Clyde River for almost a decade, working first as Coordinator for Ilisaqsvik and naturally growing this position into the new role of Executive Director as the organization grew. This has offered a long period of not only management stability but also exceptional organizational leadership.

We have a very strong volunteer board with strong vision... they are important and respected elders and their intention is very clear. This really helps me.

—Jakob Gearheard, Ilisaqsvik



In Jessie Housty's words, Qqs has "a strong and incredible board." The organization has been blessed with a very stable board made up of respected hereditary leaders, community leaders from other agencies in the village, and a representative from the elected tribal council. With this make up, the board is able to provide a big picture and holistic vision, coordinate initiatives and information between different groups and agencies, and build understanding and support for Qqs in many parts of the community.

Qqs has also benefitted from the committed leadership of the organization's Executive Director, Larry Jorgensen. Acting as Executive Director since the organization's formation in 1999, Larry has given the organization years of both dedicated and voluntary service. It was not until 2008, that Qqs was in a position to hire Larry as the full-time paid Executive Director. Prior to this, Larry continued to maintain other employment and to operate Qqs in his spare time.



When the Gitksan Chiefs tasked Storytellers' with "bringing people together to dream a future of self-determination" it was also determined that the organization's board should be made up of the young wing-Chiefs² preparing themselves to take on leadership roles in their communities and well suited to navigating the Gitksan and non-Gitksan worlds. This intentional approach to building the board was very successful for Storytellers' in its early years as an organization, providing the vision, leadership and engagement the organization needed. Over time the Board membership changed and some of its initial strength and focus was lost.

In recent years, Storytellers' has consciously revisited its approach to staffing and board membership, opening it up to both non-Gitksan and non-local people. This has had the effect of infusing new energy and ideas and re-invigorating the board and the organization. The board is currently made up of a mix of "powerful" people that are navigating the traditional and western worlds in their work and bringing that perspective back to the organization, pushing Storytellers' to continue evolving and engaging with people around its vision of community well-being. Storytellers' is still early in this journey of governance change. It will be interesting to watch how this profoundly locally defined organization will evolve in response.

3.9 Funding follows, doesn't lead

Qqs, Storytellers', and Ilisaqsivik have very different funding realities and operating budgets. Ilisaqsivik has grown to a \$3 million organization, Qqs' budget has grown in recent years to \$800,000, and Storytellers' income averages about \$250,000. One thing all three organizations have in common, however, is that they all started out their work with no or few financial resources. This "just do it" attitude or "stubbornness" in the words of the interviewees, saw these organizations through the difficult start up years and through the lean times since.

You make the road by walking.
—Anne Docherty, Storytellers'



By adopting a holistic vision, these organizations have been able to tap into a wide range of funder relationships and to maintain a strong sense of autonomy. When one funding source is no longer available due to shifting priorities, funder fatigue, or program realignment, these organizations have the flexibility to seek out other funding sources that align with different components of their

vision. Their holistic vision enables these organizations to match program elements to specific funds.

At times, this approach requires rather elaborate reporting gymnastics to meet a funder's requirements. This may mean one program (for instance land-based youth programs) is supported by a number of different funders that each focus on a particular element of the program be it environmental stewardship, health and wellness, or education.

Sometimes, however, even successful and cherished programs become difficult to fund. This is a very frustrating aspect of charitable fundraising and one that has led to these organizations to pursue their own revenue streams.

2 Described by Anne as "Chiefs-in-training."



3.10 Entrepreneurism

Ilisaqsivik sees entrepreneurial thinking and initiatives as an extension of its empowerment mandate. The organization has developed a number of training courses and curricula, hosts Clyde River's internet service, developed a film and video editing service, and has recently created an arms-length corporate entity to develop, amongst other projects, a Bed and Breakfast in Clyde River. Ilisaqsivik doesn't see this spirit of entrepreneurialism as something new. It is simply a reflection of the same "let's do it on our own" attitude that saw the organization get started by a group of community members no longer willing to accept the status quo.

They are taking a similarly proactive approach with an incoming mine project, Baffinland, that will have a significant impact on life in Clyde River. Ilisaqsivik has developed a successful proposal to provide family assistance, counseling and transition programs for mine workers. From Ilisaqsivik's perspective, engaging with the project early on to secure local benefits and minimize negative impacts was a better position to take than to sit back and simply accept the social ills that can flow from such projects. This engagement with a mega-project also creates awareness with the community around Inuit rights, implementation and the strength of their land claim and the impacts on their lands.

Qqs and Storytellers' have been entrepreneurial in many ways as well. For instance, Qqs has acquired and operated a lodge property adjacent to its Koeve Camp, opened a café and library in Waisla that has also become a community hub, launched Nūmas Native toys, and bought a small sawmill to support construction projects. Storytellers' has developed YouthWorks, a social enterprise providing youth with employment and training opportunities, and also provides professional consulting and training services to other communities and clients engaging in community development work.

3.11 Gathering Space

Though none of the organizations specifically credits physical space as a key element to their success, it is a common element among them that seems to have played an important role for each organization.

Storytellers' founding staff, Ann Docherty and Doug Donaldson stepped up to finance the purchase of a storefront building from the Village of Hazelton. From this physical base, Storytellers' was able to establish itself as a local organization with a strong and welcoming presence on the street. Though Ann is quite clear they could have done their work from another place, she acknowledges that the storefront space has acted as a "lighthouse," signalling to people in the community that Storytellers' Learning Shop is a place of safety, security and community should they feel they need or desire to access it. It has also enabled Storytellers' to maintain a very public presence for their work and to create an energized space—full of people, dialogue, laughter and fun—connecting the people of the organization with the people they serve, and community members with one another.

Qqs too has a strong physical presence. From early on, Qqs has operated a camp at the mouth of the Koeve River, which has become a "home away from home" for many Heiltsuk young people, families and elders. Adjacent to the camp is a former fishing lodge and private land parcel that is also owned by Qqs.³ This lodge property supports camp operations as well as other Qqs programs and partnerships. Qqs has also built a network of rustic cabins throughout Heiltsuk territory for community members and others to use. More recently, Qqs opened a café and community library, creating an accessible gathering

³ The lodge is currently being reconstructed after a fire destroyed the original property. The new property will be developed in a way to better support Qqs programs and partnerships.



space right in Bella Bella.⁴ When both the lodge and café fell victim to arson within a year, both were immediately put on a path to reconstruction. They are cherished spaces that enable Qqs to pursue its mission and engage the community.

Ilisaqsivik won access to a building early on in its development trajectory. The Hamlet of Clyde River sought proposals from the community to utilize the former health centre building. Ilisaqsivik won the competition with a proposal to create the Family Resource Centre. Upon purchasing the building (for \$1), Ilisaqsivik invited other small committees, informal groups and organizations in Clyde River to use the space for meetings and programming. In these early days, Ilisaqsivik did not have the capacity to use the building to its full potential and saw the value in bringing the community together. Before long, the capabilities and efficiencies of Ilisaqsivik became apparent to many groups in the community, and they began looking to Ilisaqsivik to take on shared administrative and fundraising functions. The building is now an incredible centre of activity and energy in the town. The demands for the space have grown with every year and Ilisaqsivik has now outgrown the building and looks to other spaces in the community to accommodate the full range of programming it offers.

Owning physical infrastructure such as buildings is not without its challenges. Buildings can be expensive to maintain and operate, especially in remote locales. They require a source of reliable core funding, something that is often difficult to raise. In Ilisaqsivik's case, the financial pressures that came with owning a building threatened its very solvency in the organization's early years. However, it was these same pressures that also catapulted the organization into a more ambitious and diverse range of activities and programming and have urged it along a path of innovation and social enterprise.

4 The library and café are under reconstruction as a second fire destroyed the original building.



4 Challenges

When Qqs, Ilisaqsivik, and Storytellers' were asked what key challenges threatened the continued success of their respective organizations, and what resources would assist their organizations to address these, the following issues were raised.

4.1 Stable Funding

Funding is cited as one of the primary challenges Qqs, Storytellers', and Ilisaqsivik face in the ambitious work they do. Qqs and Storytellers' report challenges in paying people adequately and fairly for the work they do, instead relying heavily on voluntary contributions from staff and community members. This places a heavy burden on even the most committed people, leading to burn out, and limits the true potential of these organizations whose most important resource is their people.

Program funding is also challenging. While these organizations have wisely diversified by seeking funding from a range of private donors, government sources, foundations, etc., they are vulnerable to the changing priorities of their funders, funder-fatigue with even highly successful programs over time, and small grant sizes that often place an onerous burden on these organizations to raise, manage, and report against. It is an especially demoralizing and exhausting process to constantly seek new funding year after year for highly successful programs that deliver clear and measurable local benefits.¹

There is a general expression of need for more funding for core staff and operations, for organizational management and development, and for unexpected or unplanned programming that enables these organizations to quickly respond to the needs of the communities they serve. As these organizations succeed and grow, so too does their need for core funding to support their expanding footprint, growing professional staff, and the building out of strong internal systems of administration and governance. More than a decade in, all organizations report the need for funding to support a range of initiatives from strategy development, policy development, board training, succession planning, etc.

There is not a strong inclination for funders to invest in small organizations on the ground to do the work.

There is a need to invest more in local capacity.

—Jessie Housty, Qqs



A strength of all three organizations is their dedication to working from the vision and needs of the community as a starting point. This means often jumping into projects ahead of funding in order to respond to a crisis or an unexpected development affecting the work they do. Then comes the difficult scramble to find the money to support these initiatives.

¹ All three organizations track impact through tools such as program evaluation surveys, employment statistics, well-being surveys and assessments, program participation counts, suicide rates, etc.



4.2 People and Staffing

As mentioned, the people building these organizations are essential to their success and ongoing survival. In all small communities it is especially difficult to find or attract the local talent needed to govern, lead and staff organizations. Those who do have the interest and skills are often pulled in many directions as their abilities are highly sought by local government and other employers or their ambition takes them outside the community itself. Furthermore, many of those involved in these organizations as board members or staff are also involved in their communities in many other capacities limiting the level of engagement. As mentioned above, funding to support recruitment, retention, succession planning, training, and mentoring is key to the long-term operations of these organizations. There is a need to deepen the management expertise within these organizations to help relieve the reliance or dependence on the Executive Director position.

4.3 Managing Growth

For Ilisaqsivik, rapid growth has created stress on the organization as the Executive Director, Board, and staff race to keep up with the pace of change, the increased demands, and the general management of an ever-expanding range of programs and initiatives. Ilisaqsivik is especially cognizant of the potential gap that can grow between the organization and the community when change happens quickly and people feel disconnected from the organization and its work. Communicating out has become a bigger priority with growth to ensure the organization continues to be deeply rooted in the local community.

For Storytellers', the need to grow bigger is what is now pressing on the organization. While they have done much good work as a small local independent organization, with the pressures on the region from the oil and gas and mining industries they feel a strong need to "step into the big issues", to respond to the communities fears and concerns, and to connect with other regional organizations and ENGOs organizing into influential alliances.

4.4 The Long Game of Community Development

Perhaps another challenge is simply the "long game" that community development work is. Now well into their second decade of operations, these organizations are beginning to witness the impact of their community development strategies, in particular working with youth to give them the tools and confidence to pursue their goals and to know themselves, their community, and their culture. A generation of young people are now emerging who are ready to step into employment and leadership positions in the community and whose values, sense of community, and sense of place have been strongly shaped by these organizations. This has been a "long game" but one well worth playing.

4.5 Replicating Success

The three case studies associate their own organizations' survival and success most strongly with the stubbornness, risk taking, and dedication exhibited by local community members who worked to get these organizations started, funded and sustained over time. One also offered that a good dose of 'magic' and sheer luck has also helped.

When asked if there was value in sharing lessons learned and experience amongst other new and emergent INGOs, the general feeling among the three case study organizations was there is much to share and learn from one another and that mutual support and exchange is very valued in this challenging work.



However, the replicability or transferability of their success was less certain. There is not a sense that there is a single model or template for INGO development. For instance, Ilisaqsivik's success has drawn the attention of the Nunavut government, which has sought to bring the Ilisaqsivik model to other communities. However, Ilisaqsivik warns that this approach simply doesn't work: unless these initiatives come from the communities themselves, the communities do not take ownership.

The Government of Nunavut has tried to model Ilisaqsivik and export it to other places. It doesn't work. The community doesn't take ownership. If you have a community group that already wants to create something similar, you have the seeds that can grow into something like Ilisaqsivik.

—Jakob Gearheard, Ilisaqsivik



Image: Ilisaqsivik Society.



5 Lessons Learned & Opportunities for Grantmaking

The significant work of Indigenous NGOs and the important role they play in achieving long-term, durable conservation outcomes cannot be overlooked. Through deepening our understanding of the experiences of Qqs Project Society, Ilisaqsivik, and Storytellers' Foundation we have garnered invaluable insights into how these organizations can be better supported.

The following observations from this research help inform successful grantmaking and investment strategies towards conservation and human well-being outcomes across Canada and elsewhere.

1. **Invest in organizations that are rooted locally.** Look for community-driven ambition, ownership, vision, and accountability.
2. **Indigenous communities know what they need best and have the solutions to their own challenges**—work to support community-identified priorities and find ways to foster conversations that result in local indigenous solutions.
3. **Ensure flexibility in grantmaking**, allowing for INGOs to respond to pressing community needs and priorities. This responsiveness builds trust and legitimacy on the ground.
4. **Recognize the value of a holistic approach** and mandate rather than one that is narrowly focused. Work with INGOs to identify how their integrated approach to conservation and human well-being bridges funding “boxes” or “silos” and find flexibility to support blended initiatives.
5. Funding by bits and pieces is exhausting, demoralizing and inefficient. **Providing larger, longer term grants that are easier for organizations to manage and administer**, resulting in greater focus on building out sustainable and meaningful programs and foster the empowerment these organizations are cultivating. Finding ways to reduce proposal writing and reporting and emphasizing reciprocity and building trust through the grantmaking process results in deeper impact for all involved.
6. **Support local organizations to build internal capacity** and manage growth successfully. Key areas for capacity building include: human resource development, board support, internal systems and policies, and succession planning.
7. **Recognize the value of physical space in creating human connections**, building community, and catalyzing local action. Infrastructure is not always easy to fund, but it is essential to community building and the success of INGOs.
8. **Connect INGOs with one another** and other emergent organizations to co-learn, share experiences, and further build a model for successful INGOs.
9. **Flexible grantmaking is key.** Finding ways to share decision making in how funds are designed and grants are deployed helps create more effective funder grantee relationships through collaboration.
10. Explore new ways to resource INGOs and their projects that **foster empowerment and ownership** such as providing loans to social enterprise or establishing micro-grants that are deployed in partnership.



6 Author Biographies



Kim Hardy is Program Lead, Western Canada at Tides Canada where she works with funders and grantees to find uncommon solutions for the common good with special focus on Canada's West Coast and Northern geographies. Kim has worked extensively with First Nations, development corporations, and rural communities on local economic development, stewardship, leadership, and social enterprise projects in BC and the Yukon. Kim completed an MBA in Community Economic Development at Cape Breton University after studying psychology at the University of Victoria and completing the Community Economic Development certificate at Simon Fraser University. She has been an active member of the Canadian Community Economic Development Network, participating on the BC/Yukon Council, and is currently contributing to Genuine Progress Pacific as a Board Member.



Karen Peachey is an independent consultant based in Vancouver specializing in community planning, local economic development, facilitation and engagement, and project management. She has worked extensively with the not-for-profit sector and with First Nation clients, offering assistance from enterprise specific business plans to integrated resource management and community plans. Prior to launching an independent practice in 2008, Karen worked at Ecotrust Canada as Director of Programs. There her work focused on coastal and First Nations community and economic development planning, ecotourism planning and development, land use planning, and a broad range of local planning, capacity and governance initiatives. Karen also worked as an associate with EcoPlan International, leading several business and economic planning initiatives and taught at the Native Education Centre in Vancouver. Karen has an M.A. (Planning) from the School of Community and Regional Planning at UBC (1997).



7 Appendix A – Interview Question Set

Formation

1. What is the history or story behind the creation of the organization? What led to its formation?
2. Who was involved in the formation and subsequent building out of the organization?

Focus

3. Where did the organization focus its efforts at first?
4. How has this focus shifted or evolved over time?
5. Why have you focused or grown your programs in the way that you have?

Role in Community

6. What is the long-term vision for the role the organization plays in the community?
7. What is the connection between your organization and the empowerment or capacity building of the community?
8. In general, how does the community perceive or value this organization?

Successes

9. What are the primary “factors for success” that have allowed this organization succeed over time?
10. It is not every community that has managed to create and sustain an organization like this.
What exists here or in the history of your organization that has allowed it to succeed?
11. Has the governance model or leadership of your organization been important to the organization’s success? If so, how?

Challenges

12. What are the key challenges threatening the continued success of your organization and the programming it delivers?
13. What resources would assist your organization to be even more successful in its work?

Shared Experience

14. Can other organizations or communities learn from the experiences you’ve had?
15. What advice could you provide that would help new or emerging community-based non-profit organizations?
16. Is there anyone else you think we should talk to about your organization and that can offer perspective on it?



8 Appendix B – Program Summaries

8.1 Qqs Projects Society Current Program Areas

Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Koeve Camp: youth culture and science camp program at the Koeve River• Koeve Lodge—facility managed by Qqs to support youth programs, families, and volunteers at Koeve River (under re-construction)• Goose Island Projects: reconnecting youth to the outer coast• SEAS¹ Internship: a program to engage youth in fieldwork and technology in collaboration with Coastwatch program
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bighouse Project: an initiative to see a potlatch Bighouse built in Bella Bella• Numas Native Toys: handcrafted toys produced by youth apprentices, made from beach-combed wood• Cabins Project: small cabin building project aimed at increasing access to and presence on the land, building skills, and supporting the traditional model of family camps• Koeve Café and Thistalalh Memorial Library: community gathering space, café library, gallery, gift shop, and visitor centre (under re-construction)
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coastwatch: Heiltsuk-driven scientific research initiative providing baseline ecological data and building local skills and knowledge• Goose Island Projects: scientific research and monitoring

1 SEAS stands for Supporting Emerging Aboriginal Stewards



8.2 Storytellers' Foundation Current Program Areas

Community Learning and empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Learning Shop: an informal storefront education centre• The Hub: network of people working together on social, economic and environmental projects, meeting monthly at Storytellers' Learning Shop space• Rural Roots: a coalition and peer learning network of formal and informal educators who support the promotion and validation of northern remote, rural life
Community Development Research and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Northwest Community Economies: regional advocacy strategies for community-based economic development and sustainability• Genuine Progress in the Hazeltons: a project focusing on naming assets and developing Genuine Progress Indicators
Youth Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth Works: a social enterprise providing young adults with temporary employment that allows them to build their personal assets• Check Your Latitude: a youth-driven grassroots group that encourages young people to take action on issues that affect their lives and their rights and responsibilities as citizens
Food Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Backyard Gardeners: organizing local people to grow food in their yards• Demonstration Backyard: hands-on workshops in the Learning Shop's garden to learn food growing, composting, and waste reduction• Neighbourhood compost depot: waste diversion and year round compost depot collecting organic waste from kitchens and producing soil for households• Sustainability initiatives: varying, but often centering on food security and stewardship education



8.3 Ilisaqsivik Current Program Areas

Land Based Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healing and cultural retreats• Dog teaming• Country foods harvesting• Youth justice on the land program• Men's group on the land program• Women's retreat on the land program
Research and Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ittaq Cultural Heritage and Research Centre• Research support to outside research initiatives
Children and Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healthy meals for families• Inuktitut preschool, parents and tots; after school program• Parenting support, home support visits• Literacy programs, special needs tutor• Community radio show
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Land-based programming• Youth leadership retreat• Youth drop-in program, hip hop program
Elders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elders Committee, Elder counselors program, and Elders' mentoring program• Inuit Societal Values program and workshops• Heritage and family tree projects
Mental Health and Counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Counseling services, counselor training programs, regional training, and mental health workshops
Health, Wellness, and Personal Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diabetes initiative• Nutrition and country foods• School breakfast program• Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder education• Breastfeeding education• Personal development workshops from personal finances to anger management
Professional Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work training programs tied to Ilisaqsivik staffing needs• Inuit youth summer work experience program• Regional training in counseling, youth leadership, film, and digital media
Film and Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Media coordinator, video recording, filming, editing, sound services• Local and regional media training workshops

