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The Interlinking of the Six Dimensions

While no one of the six dimensions of food security is more important than the other, the decision-making power and management dimension directly influences the strength of all other dimensions. We are experienced in adjusting to changes within the environment. The rapid changes occurring today require our knowledge and expertise to account for short-and long-term disturbances to the Arctic. However, we are lacking in our ability to make daily adaptive decisions due to policies, regulations and other intervening factors that contradict our knowledge and traditional management practices or favor the interest of Outside cultures.

One way to strengthen Inuit decision-making power and management is to concentrate on the tools needed to maintain the integrity of the six food security dimensions. For example, there is a need for co-management practices within Alaska to include IK philosophies and methodologies in obtaining and assessing information and making decisions. This may require moving away from managing single species to paying closer attention to the relationships between given species and the rest of the environment.

Drivers of Food Security

Though there are points of vulnerability in today’s Alaskan Inuit food security; there are many drivers working to maintain it. Most of these are found within the Inuit Culture dimension of food security. For example, there are numerous initiatives that focus on the use and preservation on Inuit languages; sharing systems are evolving to account for new tools need to acquire traditional foods; education programs are being developed to provide an increased focus on IK; practices of obtaining processing , storing and consuming traditional foods and holding feasts, celebrations and dances continue on.

Conclusion

As mentioned above, this project has been ongoing for three-and-a-half years. Since the beginning of the project, impacts of the many changes occurring have escalated. Where before we discussed changes that had never been seen, today these changes are persistent, and abnormal events are becoming the new norm. For example, before, some mentioned having less meat to dry, whereas today, some have no meat to dry. There is no time to waste; we must begin to make changes today, not just for the sake of our culture, but for the sake of the entire Arctic ecosystem.

We hope that the summary and technical report will be of use to a broad spectrum of people. Villages may use the reports to aid in communicating with those from outside our communities. Decision-makers, academics, environmentalist, policy-makers and industry may use the reports as a tool to enhance their understanding of the Arctic.

The food security reports are accessible at www.iccalaska.org.

Who Is ICC-Alaska?

Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) – Alaska is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that exists to be the unified voice and collective spirit of Alaskan Inuit, to promote, protect and advance Inuit culture and society. ICC-Alaska membership includes regional organizations that represent the Inupiat of the North Slope, Northwest and Bering Strait; the St. Lawrence Yupik; and the Central Yup’ik and Cup’ik of the Yukon-Kuskokwim region.

Member organizations include the North Slope Borough, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope, NANA Regional Corporation, Northwest Arctic Borough, Maniilaq Association, Bering Straits Native Corporation, Kawerak Incorporated, Calista Corporation and Association of Village Council Presidents. Representatives from these membership organizations, along with the President, Vice President, and Youth and Elder representatives, compose the ICC-Alaska 14-member Board of Directors.

ICC-Alaska is a national member of ICC International, an international, non-governmental organization founded by Eben Hopson Sr. from Barrow, Alaska, in 1977. Its creation came out of the realization that Inuit need to speak with a united voice on issues of common concern. Today ICC represents approximately 160,000 Inuit in Russia (Chukotka), the United States (Alaska), Canada and Greenland.

ICC holds Consultative Status II with the United Nations and is a Permanent Participant of the Arctic Council. ICC strives to strengthen unity among Inuit of the Circumpolar North; promote Inuit rights and interests on an international level; develop and encourage long-term policies that safeguard the Arctic environment; and seek full and active partnership in the political, economic and social development of the Circumpolar North. ICC receives its mandate from Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Chukotka delegates gathered in a General Assembly held every four years. The ICC-Alaska Food Security Project began under the Nuuk Declaration (2010-2014) and continues through the Kitigaaryuit Declaration (2014-2018).



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**ALASKAN INUIT FOOD SECURITY
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:**

**HOW TO ASSESS THE ARCTIC FROM AN INUIT
PERSPECTIVE**



INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR COUNCIL-ALASKA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

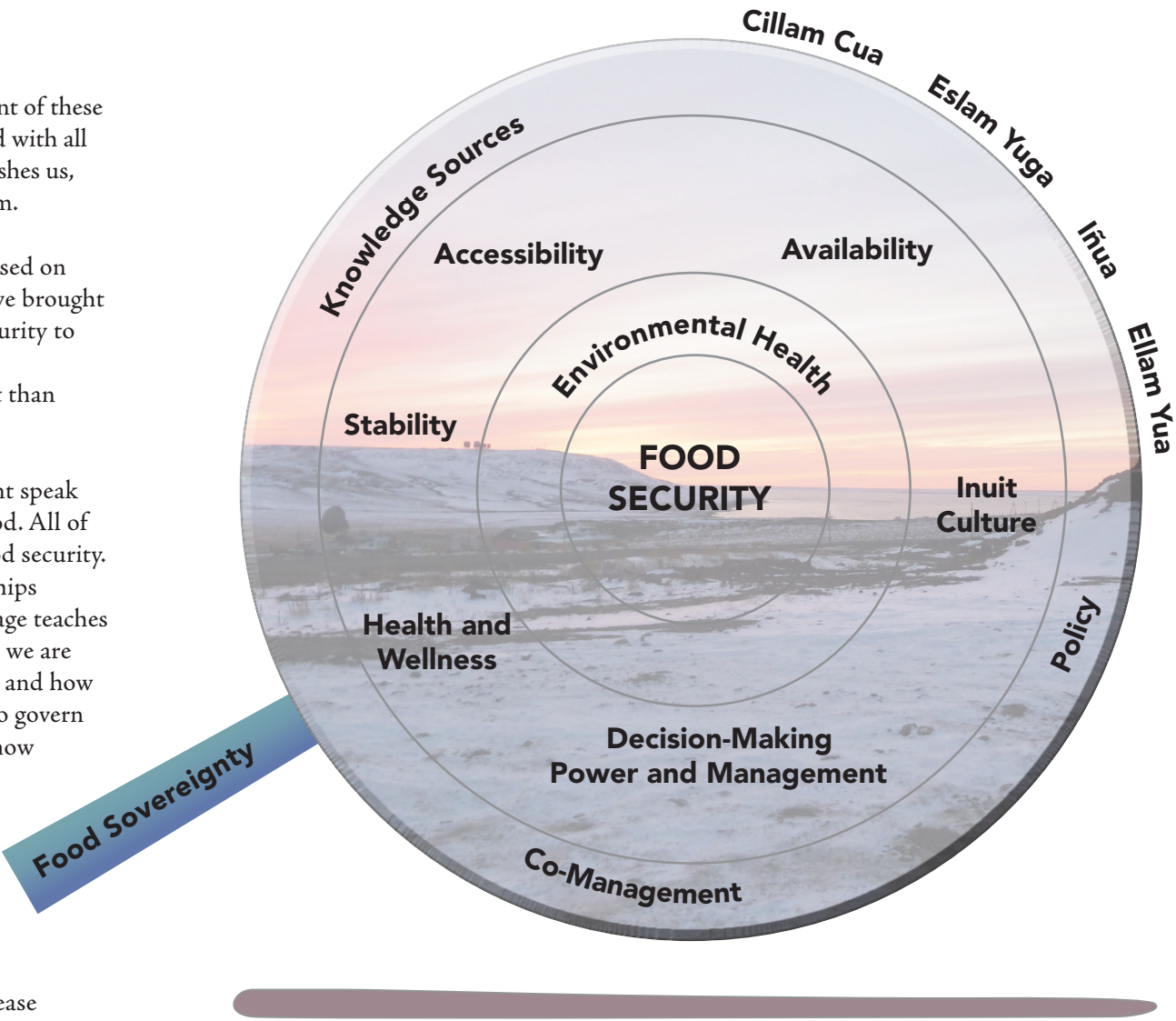
Drastic changes are occurring within our world. We are on the forefront of these changes. We have lived here for millennia and have grown and changed with all that is around us. All that is around us physically and spiritually nourishes us, and our culture reflects the Arctic because we are part of this ecosystem.

With these rapid changes comes the need for holistic information based on Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and science. With this understanding, we brought our concerns regarding the impact of Arctic changes on our food security to forums throughout the Arctic. Through these conversations, it quickly became evident that we were referring to something different than those we were holding the discussions with.

We have often heard people within academia, policy and management speak to us of nutritional value, calories and money needed to purchase food. All of this is important, but not what we are talking about when we say food security. We are speaking about the entire Arctic ecosystem and the relationships between all components within; we are talking about how our language teaches us when, where and how to obtain, process, store and consume food; we are talking about the importance of dancing and potlucks to share foods and how our economic system is tied to this; we are talking about our rights to govern how we obtain, process, store and consume food; about our IK and how it will aid in illuminating these changes that are occurring. We are talking about what food security means to us, to our people, to our environment and how we see this environment; we are talking about our culture.

From the realization that we need to fully share what our food security means within the Alaska Arctic, this project was born. There has been a lot of positive work completed and ongoing to increase academic and governmental understanding of food security. The outcomes of this project come directly from us, Alaskan Inuit, to share what our food security is, how to assess changes occurring and how to move forward in a way that will strengthen our food security.

The objectives for the project were clear from the beginning – define food security, identify what the drivers (or causes) of food (in)security are, create a conceptual framework and provide an assessment process to determine Alaskan Inuit food security. What resulted is something much more. As we came together through community meetings, one-on-one and group interviews, regional workshops and numerous conversations, we realized that the drivers of our food security are all the same and that what make up food security within each of our identities, villages and regions is the same.



A Project Led by Alaskan Inuit

Over a three-and-a-half-year period, a group of IK holders, regional youth representatives and two cultural anthropologists acted as the Food Security Advisory Committee. The Committee guided ICC-Alaska through the development, implementation and analysis of information gathered. The final products of the project are the result of 146 Inuit contributing authors – a title fitting for those who provide all concepts, philosophies and recommendations that have come out of this project.

Defining Alaskan Inuit Food Security

Alaskan Inuit food security is the natural right of all Inuit to be part of the ecosystem, to access food and to care-take, protect and respect all of life, land, water and air. It allows for all Inuit to obtain, process, store and consume sufficient amounts of healthy and nutritious preferred food – foods physically and spiritually craved and needed from the land, air and water, which provide for families and future generations through the practice of Inuit customs and spirituality, languages, knowledge, policies, management practices and self-governance. It includes the responsibility and ability to pass on knowledge to younger generations, the taste of traditional foods rooted in place and season, knowledge of how to safely obtain and prepare traditional foods for medicinal use, clothing, housing, nutrients and, overall, how to be within one’s environment. It means understanding that food is a lifeline and a connection between the past and today’s self and cultural identity. Inuit food security is characterized by environmental health and is made up of six interconnecting dimensions: 1) Availability, 2) Inuit Culture, 3) Decision-Making Power and Management, 4) Health and Wellness, 5) Stability and 6) Accessibility. This definition holds the understanding that without food sovereignty, food security will not exist.

From here on, this is what we are discussing when we say food security.

Summary and Technical Report

A summary report and technical report have been created from this project. The summary report was created for those who are looking for a quick glimpse at what food security means to us, what it means to apply a food security lens to assessments, and recommendations for strengthening food security. For a deeper understanding and more in-depth discussion, a technical report has been created. Within both reports you will find: 1) recommendations, 2) key barriers, 3) the food security conceptual framework, and 4) drivers of food security and insecurity.

Food Security Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is provided thru an image of a drum and explains that food security is characterized by environmental health, which is achieved through the stability of six dimensions: 1) Availability, 2) Inuit Culture, 3) Decision-Making Power and Management, 4) Health & Wellness, 5) Stability and 6) Accessibility. Three tools support the stability of the six dimensions: policy, knowledge sources and co-management. The drum is held together by the spirit of all (Cillam Cua, Eslam Yuga, Iñua and Ellam Yua). The drum is held up by food sovereignty – a requirement to have food security. The conceptual framework aids us in seeing the underlying issues, described as “drivers,” to explain actions, components or causes of food (in)security as they push food security in a particular direction. The six dimensions of food security are made up of 58 drivers. The technical report explains how the drivers are interlinked and categorized under specific dimensions and how the dimensions are connected.

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