



[Pictured above]: YIC4 youth participants and community-based monitoring representatives with Keynote Speaker and Dene Elder, Francois Paulette at an evening banquet during the YIC4 training, November 29th, 2017.



This community report describes outcomes from the **Yukon Indigenous Community Climate Change Champions (YIC4) Project: Mobilizing Knowledge for Developing Indigenous Community Champions for Climate Change Adaptation in the Yukon (2017-2019)**.

This project was led by the Arctic Institute of Community-Based Research (AICBR). The AICBR works with communities to develop their own solutions to complex problems that are relevant, community-driven and sustainable. Current priorities include: *climate change adaptation, food security and food sovereignty and youth engagement and leadership*. AICBR works in participatory ways to strengthen capacity and takes a 'whole-of-community' approach, built on the principles of respect, relevance, responsibility, and reciprocity.

WWW.AICBR.CA | 867-668-3393 | 308 HANSON STREET, WHITEHORSE, YUKON

INTRODUCTION

Between November 2017 to March 2019, four of our youth, Shauna Yeomans-Lindstrom, Christopher Kirby, Matthew Wesley, and Evelyn Folbar, took part in the YIC4 training project along with 37 other Indigenous youth (aged 18-30 years) from Yukon, Northern British Columbia, Northwest Territories and Nunatsiavut (Newfoundland and Labrador).

During Phase 1, youth gathered in Whitehorse at the Yukon Inn for four days of training, which built the foundation of knowledge in the area of climate change from a global to local perspective. **During Phase 2**, Shauna and Matthew worked with AICBR to complete a community-based assessment of the needs, strengths and opportunities for action related to climate change adaptation in Atlin.

In January 2019, another training session was held for new and returning youth to further their knowledge in the area of climate change action and develop leadership, communication and advocacy skills that they can apply to future climate change work in their communities.

The entire training project was grounded in both **Indigenous and western scientific ways of knowing** and involved trainers and speakers from community, academic and policy levels, including Elders, scientists and other youth leaders.

Our Elders have been telling us about “hard times coming” and that we need to be prepared.

This report shares our community’s story of climate change and what we learned from discussions about what it means to adapt.

We hope this report acts as a foundation of knowledge that may guide us in future community-based work and planning in the area of climate change.



An Excerpt from a letter written by the youth at the YIC4 Training 1, November 27th, 2019:

...We have learned a lot about climate change over the past few days and we are worried about our future. We are strong and educated and we will do whatever it takes to protect our homelands as well as educate and instil our knowledge and traditional values into the next generation.

Canada is a large country with many pristine natural resources. Our lands are who we are. But we are concerned that many who make decisions for and about our lands, walk solely on concrete. Our voices matter and we want to be heard on the issues that directly impact us and our Mother, the Earth. We will no longer be silent because we have a duty as land stewards and the right to call for action on climate change mitigation and adaptation from our leaders. We have our eyes and ears open. We are the witnesses of climate change for the rest of the world because we are at the forefront of the drastic and detrimental impacts that it causes. We expect our leaders and elected representatives to do more...

Our food, biodiversity and very survival are at risk. We need to look after our lands, animals, waters, air, as well as each other in order to protect our food and water security for longterm health and wellbeing. We need to plan together for our collective futures.

Will you join us?

In respect and sincerity,

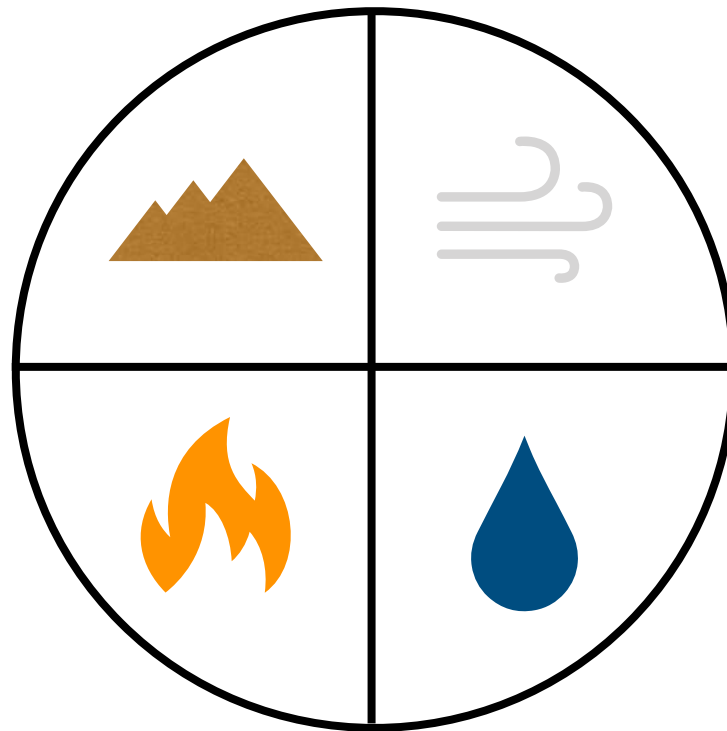
The Youth

Youth are the future caretakers of this land. We must learn how to stand tall in two worlds and make decisions to protect our future. We must do this by remaining grounded in the wisdom of our Elders as well guided by western science.

THE FOUR ELEMENTS of CLIMATE CHANGE

Earth, Air, Fire, and Water

These four elements guided us throughout the YIC4 training in understanding climate change and its impacts within our communities.



What is a Community Assessment?

A community assessment is a process used to identify strengths, needs and challenges of a specified community.

What sorts of changes have we seen with respect to climate change?

What are we doing now to adapt to these challenges?

What more could we do to adapt to and counteract these changes?



[Pictured above]: Shauna Yeomans-Lindstrom and Spokesperson, John Ward sign the community research agreement between TRTC and AICBR for the Atlin community assessment.

A **YOUTH TOOLKIT** was developed from ideas and research questions youth came up with during Training 1; this toolkit guided us in planning *HOW* to assess our communities, *WHO* to talk to, *WHEN* it is best to complete the work, and *WHAT* questions to ask.

The toolkit is also meant to help other communities lead an assessment.

**DOWNLOAD THE TOOLKIT
HERE:**

www.aicbr.ca/yic4

These are some of the questions we asked during our community assessment

More questions can be found in the toolkit.

During the Atlin assessment, we did 10 interviews, three focus groups and one discussion at the school. We talked with government officials, including our Spokesperson and those working in lands, mines and resources; our grandmothers and other knowledgeable Elders; gardeners and farmers; a group of school-aged children; and some of our land guardians.

What is one message we can leave for our young people on how they must survive in the long-term future?

How do all of these climatic changes affect our people's health?

What does the traditional Tlingit law say about wildlife management and taking care of the land?



What is the main source of energy in the community? How do we heat our homes and buildings?

What kind of animals do we have around here in the Taku River Tlingit area? How are the populations of key species doing? How do we preserve our species' for the future?

What are some economic opportunities for the community? Are we thinking about things like tourism and the green economy?

What is the biggest message we hear from our Elders in terms of our youth?

Is there any gardening or farming in the area? Are there any plans to start a food producing initiative? What could that look like?

What are some more action items that we can start doing in order to address climate change? How could we go greener and what are some small steps to get us started?



[Pictured above, from right to left]: Youth, Shauna Yeomans-Lindstrom and AICBR's Norma Kassi conduct an interview with Elder Jerry Jack during the Atlin community assessment.

CHANGES

The following section tells of some of the changes we have witnessed to our lands, waters, plants, animals, lifestyle, and community over the years. Climatic changes are dramatic and hard to talk about. We rely on our environment for survival even if we're not all living solely off the land. However, we know that like any problem, when we learn about it, we understand it, and when we understand it, we can solve it.

“You know, we never lost our culture; we just stepped away from it...

It's up to us to find that and to reconnect and revitalize and evaluate where we've been, where we're coming from, where we want to find our way back to — so our children can have good direction in their life, you know — filled with confidence and clarity...

Because I think for the First Nation people, the land is a vital connection to the clarity of our future. If we lose sight of that, we're just going to give ourselves more hard times [ahead]...”



We are hunters and trappers:

- * **We're seeing a decline in traditional food species.** There seems to be fewer rabbits, gophers, grouse, caribou, and moose in particular. There are likely multiple reasons for this decline, some which are human-caused and some due to climate change. Atlin is a sensitive area for caribou. Their lichen is being damaged from human encroachment. Everything is connected and exists in a delicate balance with everything else.
- * Atlin has always been a place where hunters from all over the world flock to. **Many community members are concerned that this leads to overhunting.** We worry most about the animals because we need to let their populations have a chance to bounce back; but this debate is also about feeding our people. There is an inequality that exists with food insecurity among First Nations people. Having access to our traditional foods is part of this.

“Traditional food is part of who we are.

*If you take away what belongs to us.
It's like taking away part of us, because
that is part of us.”*

- * **In the past, we were cut off from our traditional foods.** There were laws governing our ways of life, banning us from practicing our cultural practices that we relied on for our survival. This caused a lot of disruption within and amongst communities. Today, we are trying to regain who we are and a lot of that relates to reclaiming our traditional food and practicing our traditional hunting and harvesting activities.
- * **We are a generous and welcoming people.** The debate over hunting rights is not an issue of greed, it's an issue of equality and culture. Our people are hungry and not everyone who hunts in our traditional territory follows our traditional laws and values, which honour sharing and treading lightly on the land, taking only what you absolutely need.





EARTH

“It is important to be connected to the land, to be connected to the fish, to be connected to the water.”



The forest and landscape are changing:

- * **Berry patches are drying up.** Last summer, our community harvesters noticed huge declines in mossberries, huckleberries and blueberries, in particular. The soap berries also ripened so quickly that they fell off the plant and were gone within a couple days.
- * **Trees are ‘sweating’ their oils in the hot summers.** There are oil secretions all along the forest floor. This is unusual. For some, this causes concern about the effect that this has on our forest medicines, which live under the trees.
- * **There is increasing erosion,** especially along the lakeshore, where a lot of our cabins are.

Shifting animal behaviour and new species:

- * **The moose and caribou are rarely seen in the places that they normally should be.** The animals seem to be farther out. In the past, animals roamed closer to the community. Many of our Elders remember going out as young as 10 or 12 years of age to hunt with a dog sled. Back then, we didn’t have to travel 20-miles from town to find a moose, we lived amongst their habitat and food was more readily available.
- * **While some species now roam farther away, some new species are coming closer to town.** We’ve seen lynx and deer right in town. They seem to be searching for food.
- * **With the deer moving north, there are more cougars in the area than there were before.** This is a new species to the Atlin area.



AIR

Weather versus Climate:

Weather is the day-to-day fluctuations in the state of the atmosphere (involving temperature, humidity, precipitation, cloudiness, visibility, and wind)

Climate is the weather patterns of a place over a long period of time (often 30 years). It includes the statistics of what is normal for that place and the range of weather extremes.

Weather is changing:

- * **Rain patterns are irregular.** We're getting rain in November, which is not normal. In Summer 2017, there was very little rain, which really seemed to affect our berry crops.
- * **There is more wind.** Our fishers have noticed more constant and stronger gusts of wind, which makes it more difficult to set net and catch fish out on the lake.
- * **The weather is hot and much dryer.** The snow doesn't melt like it used to either. It seems to just evaporate into the heat rather than melt away slowly over time. A slower melt causes puddles which eventually get absorbed into the earth, quenching Mother Nature's thirst.



FIRE

Forest fires:

- * **The drying up of forests and the increased oil secretions in the trees make fuel for fire.** Many are worried that if there is even a small fire on our territory, it will quickly grow and spread.
- * **Food security has also been linked with forest fires traditionally.** Forest fires create habitat for the moose. The First Nations all over used to purposely light fires to rejuvenate the forest in order to allow new growth and habitat for different animals. It was called controlled burning and it was the traditional way. However, now we are dealing with different forests than in the past. They are dryer, oilier and there is pine and spruce beetle infestation all over BC and some of Yukon. If you purposely light a forest fire, it could quickly get out of hand.





WATER



Importance of Salmon:

- * **Our salmon are not as plentiful as they used to be**, particularly in Sockeye Lake. Some Elders tell stories from when they were young and the salmon were so plentiful that you could almost walk across the creek on the salmon's back. Many of us are concerned about over-fishing within the Alaska commercial fisheries and how this means that fewer salmon are coming upstream. We believe that this is pivotal point in our fisheries protection, either we are 10-20 years from a fisheries collapse or 10-20 years from fisheries rejuvenation. We need to decide where and when to draw the line. With the current route we are on there might be nothing left for future generations.
- * **Our fisheries practices are an important part of our history.** In the past, when the salmon would run, there would be so much excitement and positive energy in the community. The salmon were thriving! This would bring with it a unity amongst our people, who came together for the harvest. Now, with their declining numbers, this same positivity is not there. There are fewer opportunities for the older and younger generations to come together, to work together and practice our old ways.

- * **Traditional knowledge of our fisheries no longer dominates people's fishing and hunting practices.** For example, when it comes to trout fishing, it is the largest of the fish (~20lbs) that you need to leave alone. These larger fish are the more mature ones, the breeding stock. It takes 10+ years for trout to start to reach breeding age. The smaller fish (~5lbs) however, are actually the tastier fish to eat. Yet many people don't know or follow this traditional knowledge and go after the larger fish as 'trophies', which contributes to further diminishing the future health of the fishery.

Less snowpack and warming waters:

- * **There is less snowpack than there used to be.**
- * **The warming ocean and river systems are causing changes in the fish.** Because of this, many have changed their eating practices, such as avoiding fish guts, which used to be a traditional delicacy. There is also increasing concerns that the warming waters may lead to contamination in the fish.

As First Nations people, we are at the forefront of these many changes. Despite this, we are still here. We persist. We are strong in our culture, in our traditions. It is our land which holds the history of our people and it is our history that holds the key to our future.

**We can learn from the past but we need to act on the future.
We can be a model for others, each of us individually but also as a nation.
All it takes is asking ourselves, how do I do my part to make this a better world?**

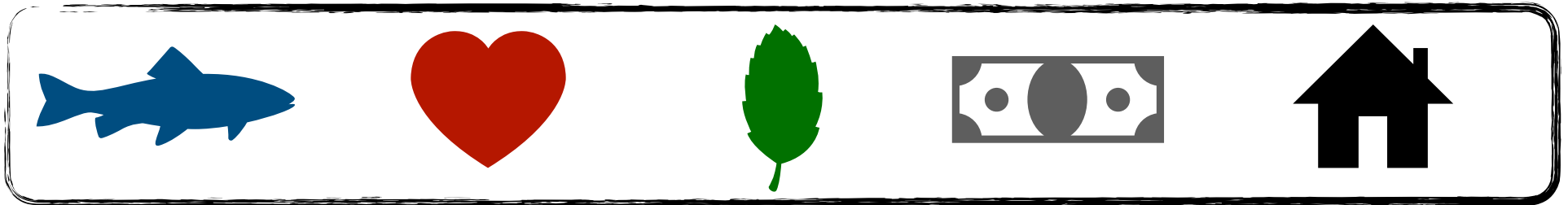
The next section of this report talks about action. It is a reflection on the areas where we are strong in counteracting and adapting to climate change already and it also provides hope and ideas for future work that could be done to preserve our future.

*It's not about managing our resources,
managing the wildlife, or managing the land;
it's about managing ourselves.*

Once we started exploring what changes were happening in our communities related to **earth, air, fire, and water**, it became clear how interconnected and complex the issues are.

The key areas of our community that are affected most by climate change are also the key areas where efforts can be made to adapt to and counteract further climate change damage.

These five key areas are:



**Food & Water
Security**

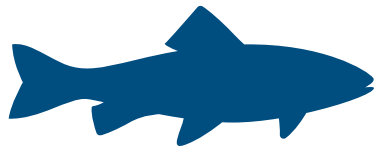
**Health, Social
& Culture**

**Species &
Habitat Areas**

Economy

**Infrastructure &
Transportation**

Assessing what the needs and priorities are within these five areas will help us to define where future opportunities for action are.



FOOD & WATER SECURITY

“Reclaiming our traditional ways comes with educating our young people about why traditional food is so important to us.

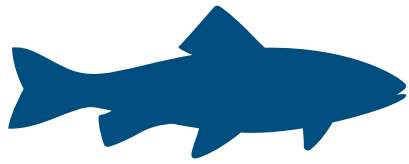
It’s important for young ones especially to eat first, to get a taste for traditional foods so that they grow up and learn to protect it. That is where it starts.”

Kids eat first:

- * **We should bring back the traditional ways around feasts, where children eat first.** It is important that children grow up to have a taste for traditional foods so that they will fight to protect them. Also, it is the children who are growing and need the strength. It is also important to pass on the knowledge of why: **“as a Tlingit nation, it’s part of all of us - our traditional food.”**

Food security is about being self-reliant:

- * **Building a community garden and greenhouse** are two opportunities that we are considering for increasing our self-sufficiency. Many people in our community see this as a viable way to encourage healthy eating and to increase access to fresh vegetables.
- * What we have learned from other communities is that we must **start small and build up** from there. We should **hire a garden coordinator** who can plan, plant and tend to the garden between February - October; they can work to get people involved. **We can also involve gardening mentors** to pass on key knowledge and skills. We can’t just rely on volunteers.
- * **We can utilize the technologies that are out there to grow year-round produce.** Options include building a partially underground, insulated LED-powered greenhouse. We can utilize the excess energy from the power plant during the winter. There are also aquaponics and hydroponic systems, which integrate fish and plants in a feedback loop - the fish feed the plants and the plants feed the fish. This would also ease pressure on our lake fish stocks.



FOOD & WATER SECURITY

Build up our soil:

- * **We need to research and find the area where the ideal combination of factors exist for a community garden.** The garden needs to be where it is accessible to the people who will use it, in a place that gets lots of sunshine and where there is access to water and good soil.
- * **Building up our soil is part of becoming self-reliant.** This means that we need to start composting to bring nutrients back to the soil. The soil around Atlin is what is called 'alluvial soil', deposited from the glaciers. It is a very delicately balanced layer of soil, which is quite acidic and has very little nutrients. This makes growing certain foods difficult. Good compost would have both animal waste and food waste in it. When we build up our soil quality, we rely less on having to ship in soil from other places and this also reduces our

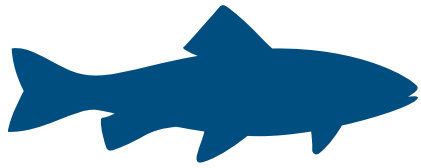
"We were able to survive on this land a long time ago with our wits, strength and we've lost a lot of that depending on ourselves to provide our own food. I think in certain ways we have to get back to that."

Animal husbandry:

- * **We can look into developing free-range animal husbandry,** raising sheep, goats, rabbits, and chickens. The emphasis for farming has to be small-scale and organic. We need to learn from the mistakes of southern agriculture, where there is a high density of farms, more use of dangerous fertilizers and pesticides and greater environmental impact. Small scale animal rearing, like raising chickens and rabbits is quite simple and productive. It gives you purpose, tending to another living thing. By utilizing the natural resources we have as well to feed the rabbits, one can also reduce the cost and need to buy grain. Rabbits can eat willow, fireweed, lamb's quarters, chickweed and dandelion, all plants that some consider weeds in the garden.

Reduce our carbon footprint:

- * **We rely on the highway for all our market goods.** When the highway washed out, we went into crisis within a few days. We had to fly up baby formula, fresh vegetables and other staples. On a normal day, many of us drive the 175.5km to Whitehorse and back, once every 10 days. The produce is not fresh for long and comes from all around the world, further increasing the carbon footprint of our food.



FOOD & WATER SECURITY

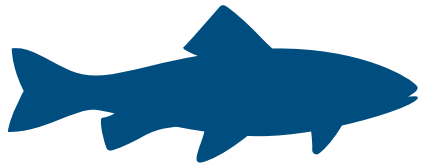
Conserving our salmon:

- * **We need to work together with our coastal brothers and sisters to protect our salmon.** There is a lot of concern over the ocean commercial fishing industry, so we need to sit at the same table and work together to raise our concerns and solve this problem. There are fewer fish making it upriver. Our people are going hungry. However, pointing fingers is not the solution and it's up to all of us to figure out how to move forward together.
- * **Salmon is a sacred food for the Taku River Tlingit.** It feeds our bodies, makes us strong, protects us from diabetes, but it also nourishes our soul.
- * **Some believe that the way to protect the salmon is to hold off on fishing them for a time.** This would be done to give them a chance to bounce back, before their populations get so low that it is too late. This is a choice for our First Nation to make together. It is a choice that we would make for our future children and our children's children, so that they may grow strong and healthy with salmon in their diets.
- * **Stream-keeping is another way to help the salmon reach the headwaters to spawn.** This ensures that the waterways are clear for them to swim up.

Food Sovereignty

"As Indigenous peoples we understand that food is a gift and we have the responsibility to nurture healthy, interdependent relationships with the land, water, plants and animals that provide us with our food. This also means having the ability to respond to our own needs for safe, healthy, culturally relevant indigenous foods with the ability to make decisions over the amount and quality of food we hunt, fish, gather, grow and eat. These rights are asserted on a daily basis for the benefit of present and future generations."

(First Nations Health Council, 2009)



FOOD & WATER SECURITY

Sharing:

- * **Sharing was part of normal community living back in the day.** We lived on sharing our moose meat. Some of this was a necessity due to the fact we didn't have freezers but we also looked after each other. This was a traditional teaching and a way we used to reduce food insecurity, ensuring nobody went hungry.
- * **Sharing also builds community.**

“We don't have meat in our freezer going freezer burned, you know. That shouldn't be. It shouldn't be a thing, but it is. So, getting back to these traditional knowledge and community — being an actual community with each other. I think that's a really important key to start addressing food security.”



[Pictured above]: Youth Matthew Wesley cuts up fruit to share for a community meal and discussion.



HEALTH, SOCIAL & CULTURE

Rebuilding community:

- * **The key part of the word community is 'unity'.** What it means to build community is bringing people together, either for hunting, for bake sales or garage sales; we just need activities for people to get to know each other again. Back in the day, we used to live so close together that we knew what each other were thinking. There are so many changes now that make it hard to go back to the way things used to be completely, but we can start by talking to each other more and having fun together. That builds connection and that connection only grows out from there.
- * **We can host more community gatherings - large and small.** Our Salmon Ceremony is a good way to bring people together to learn from each other, however we need an ongoing space for more informal sharing to take place. In the past, people would gather around the smokehouse and you'd know whose fish was whose by the way that they cut it. The smokehouses were big; they used to be made of poplar poles. They were a gathering place for discussion and teaching.

***Here are some other ideas for harnessing the unity of our community:**

- * **Host harvest camps** - We can host a camp twice a year (in spring and late summer/early fall) for two weeks, where families can come for part of it or stay the whole time. By giving people options, it is more likely that they will participate.
- * **Cooking together** - We can return the ways of our traditional potlatch where we used to all cook a single meal together with ingredients from everyone's household.
- * **Hire a communications specialist** - People are busy, there are a lot of competing interests these days, so we need to find creative ways to encourage participation, to grab people attention.
- * **Incentivize participation** - The Health and Social Services department provide monetary support for families to take their children out on the land. Hunting is not a cheap activity so many can't afford to take a day off work to go hunting. We need to encourage use of this program.



HEALTH, SOCIAL & CULTURE

Let spirituality guide us:

- * **There is a power in our spirituality.** It is what connects us to the past and can guide us through the future. It grounds us and feeds us; it heals us.
- * **Everyone has the wisdom within.** Each and everyone of us has the wisdom and love of the creator coming through us in some form. True knowledge is the knowledge that is lived. Harness your truth and trust in that wisdom. When connected to the creator, we are powerful.
- * Part of letting spirit guide us is also **reconnecting with our ancient tools**, like the First Nation calendar. It tells us what people do on different weekends, where we go to harvest and when, as well as how we adapt to changes. We can also use the moon calendar, which is Mother Nature's calendar.

Culture and connection to the land:

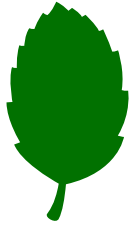
- * **Standing strong in our culture, connected to the land** - The land is where we come from. **Being out on the land is like taking a walk through our history.** So knowing about the land is about knowing who you are. We never lost our culture. We just stepped away from it for a time. It's there as it's always been there.

Honour women:

- * **Mother Nature is Woman.** When we look at the terrible state that we have left our environment in we can draw parallels to the treatment of women in our society; one just needs to look at the stories of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls across North America. We need to take care of our women, as they are the flesh of the Earth. We need to take care of our Earth, as she is our Mother, she is woman. She gives us life. Women are at the heart of it, as they carry life through the generations.

- * **Women are the backbone of the Tlingit Nation.** Traditionally they were the matriarchs; everyone listened to them. We need a strong backbone so we can stand tall as a nation, as a people.





SPECIES & HABITAT AREAS

Education is a powerful tool for change:

- * **Education about climate change is a crucial topic for everyone to learn.** Once you understand something you can hope to solve it. It's the biggest issue of our time.
- * We need to start looking to the future and **encourage our children to go to school** and get educated so that they can make a difference in high-level decision-making. **We also need to ground them in our traditional ways and teachings.** With both these forms of education, they can change the world.

Community workshops:

- * **Some ideas for interesting and useful workshops are:** learning about safe harvesting practices; protecting plant species (plant grooming and best ways to rejuvenate future plant growth); and seed propagation to grow traditional medicines, berries and other wild plants for education, harvesting and land remediation purposes.

“It’s little things that need to change so that maybe [these actions] can change the big things.”

Waste reduction, recycling, & composting:

- * **Here are some ideas for reducing our waste:**
 - * zero tolerance of recyclables and food ending up in the landfill
 - * garbage & cigarette butt clean-up
 - * potlatch bags instead of paper plates at feasts
 - * banning plastic bags
 - * household lists for what is recyclable
 - * steel garbage bins (reduces bear/dog infiltration)
 - * celebrating champions who already do these things
- * **Compost can be used for growing food.** A head of lettuce that ends up in a plastic bag will take 20+ years to decompose. Lettuce in the landfill emits more methane gas than lettuce in a compost heap. Methane is one of the three greenhouse gases contributing to climate change.

Land use planning and guardians:

- * **Land use planning provides us with a framework by which we can fight to protect our lands.** The Land Guardians program is really embedded into our land use plan; the guardians monitor and preserve our traditional territory and educate the public about Tlingit ways and responsibility to the land.



INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORTATION

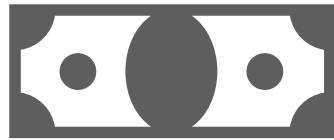
Build on existing resources:

- * **We need to build on what is already here, what is already working.** We can utilize our cabins that already exist and get people using them more often. The guardian program can help to bring people out on the land. The key thing is that we can act now, in small ways, even with little funding.
- * **Part of this is also knowing the resources that are around and taking stock of what we have.** We can work together with the mining companies in the area as well as the non-Indigenous community who lives here so that in the case of an emergency, we can help each other.
- * **We are an isolated community, with only one road in and one road out.** What happens in the event of a fire on the north end of the road? Where do we go and what do we do if the highway closes again due to flooding or forest fire? These are the questions that our community members are asking. **We need an emergency plan.**
- * **Some residents including our First Nation office have installed solar panels** as a move towards more renewable, green energy systems. Ideally, more community members would have a system and they could sell it to a central grid, reducing the cost of the system overall.

Build green and safer spaces:

- * **We need to protect our elderly from the heat and to build a place for them to go as we deal with the global warming aspect of climate change.** This space could be underground, where it's cool; it could be a safe haven for our young babies, Elders and those whose immunities are compromised. People can die in extreme heat if they are not used to it. As our climate changes, we will have more extreme weather and more frequent extreme heat episodes.
- * **Build more, 'green' houses with solar panels and tin roofs.** Eventually, all houses in Atlin should be powered by solar.





ECONOMY

Opportunities for growing the economy:

- * **We are already leading the way with a switch to greener energies.** For example, we have reduced our reliance on diesel significantly through our hydro-electric project. This also saves us money as we sell the energy to BC hydro.
- * **Our two main economies in Atlin are government and mining.** In the winter it is mostly government, while in the summer there is a lot of placer mining going on.
- * **Atlin is a beautiful, pristine place which draws a lot of visitors.** We are increasingly seeing this as a viable option to advance our economy in more renewable ways, while providing opportunity for TRT-led cultural enrichment and sharing. This could be built into the Land Guardians program.

Train our youth for decision-making:

- * **We recognize that youth are the future.** We need to train them in our history as well as modern ways, bring them to conferences and boardroom tables where decision-making is going on and enhance their networking and communications skills. This not only builds them up as leaders but strengthens the capacity of our community as well.

Land Guardians:

- * **Our Land Guardians program is a success;** the guardians are learning a lot and contributing in positive ways to the community. **However, with inconsistent funding,** it results in a lot of turnover due to lack of job security. We need to look into creative ways to sustain this promising program.



[Pictured left]: CBC reporter Dave Croft speaks to Shauna and two other YIC4 youth about the changes they have witnessed in their communities. (First training session, November 2017)

OUR HOPE for the FUTURE

Reconciliation is about working together and action:

- * **Reconciliation has many directions** - We need to reconcile with the past, within our communities and between them, amongst First Nations and non-First Nations peoples. We all share this earth, we all need to survive here and one person's (or groups') action affects the whole. Part of this is taking ownership of what is happening on our shared lands and getting involved in solving the problems that exist today. We need to get involved. **"The world is not going to change for you; you better change for the world."**
- * **It is also not just an individual's responsibility.** We are also asking the various levels of government to meaningfully involve First Nations people in decision-making and the economy. We all need a seat at the table because we need to work together. In order to do this we need to look beyond the end of our pointed fingers, towards a shared solution.
- * **We need to start seeing each other as allies not threats.** As First Nations people, each and every one of us have a lot to offer the discussion and the decision-making processes, no matter our background or expertise. Everyone has a voice.
- * **Learn from the past but start acting for the future.** We need to apologize for how we've left things for future generations. But we still have time to change our behaviours.
- * **Listening to the stories of our Elders helps us to understand our truth.** The stories can be painful at times to hear but it gives us perspective, helps us to hold others to account, to spread the truth, and uphold our rights. It provides the necessary background to firm our arguments and demands for advocating for a better future for all people. We see some of the same patterns playing out today, but in different ways. The stories are our strength. Use them.

A MESSAGE

FOR THE YOUTH

“Get involved. Be part of it. Move forward with dignity and pride and take full part in the administration of our land. Otherwise we’re going to lose it. Very, very important. We can’t sit back anymore. No more.”

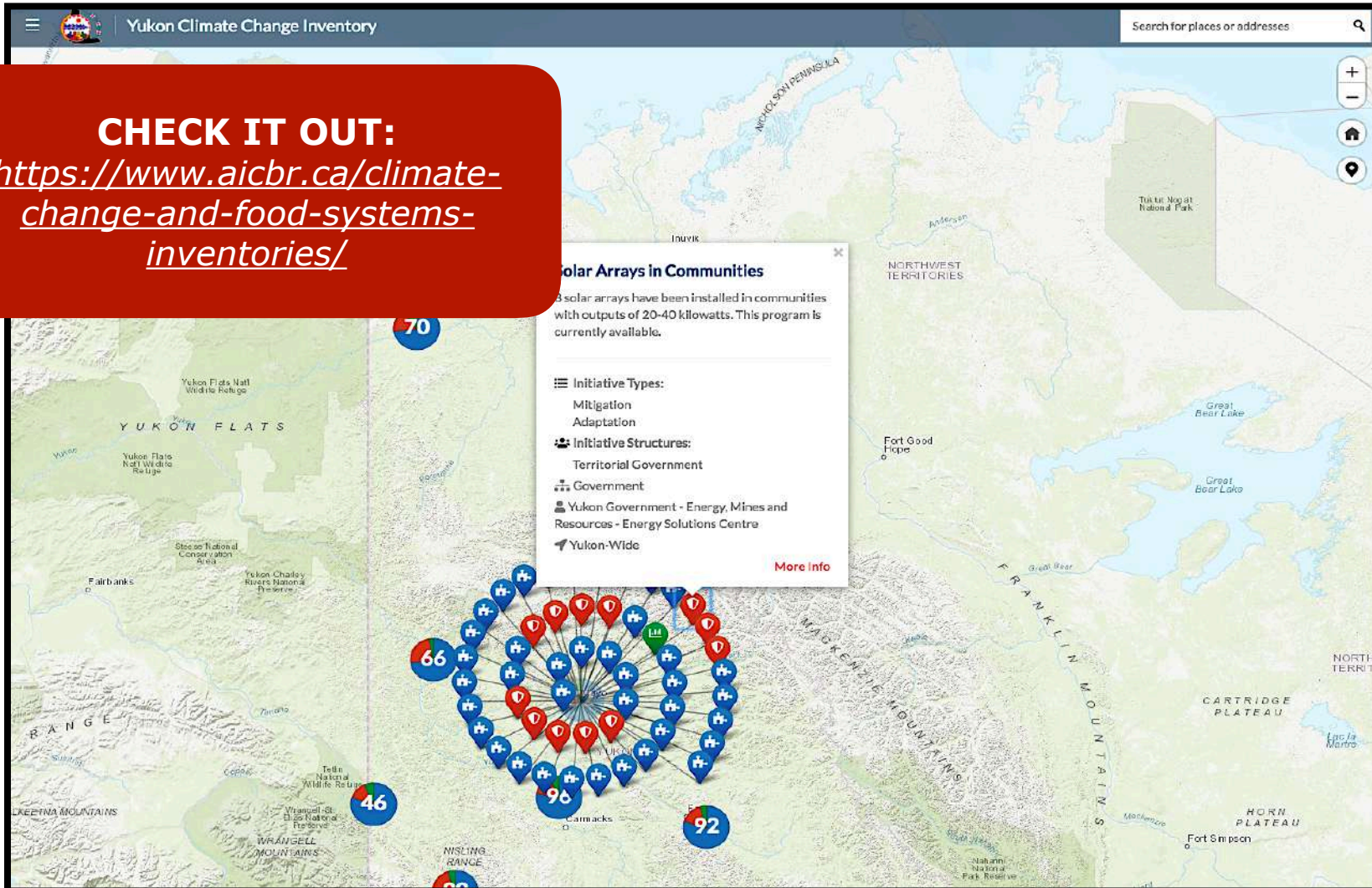
“I think it’s really important to really know our truths — the really hard truths especially. So, when we come into those situations where people are questioning and belittling and stuff — that we can really voice our truth and we can say it with strength in our voice and really try and educate and help people understand that — our history and why the things are the way they are today.”

Mapping Climate Change & Food Systems

Also part of the YIC4 project is the development of two mapping tools which show the number of climate change and food systems initiatives across Yukon communities (and beyond). The map contains detailed information about each initiative and allows the user to filter and search by community and project type. These maps help us to get a better picture of our current strengths and allow us to learn from and be inspired by other communities.

CHECK IT OUT:

<https://www.aicbr.ca/climate-change-and-food-systems-inventories/>



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Taku River Tlingit
First Nation



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