

Arctic Minded - English Transcript

Keep Learning, Keep Trying: The Importance of Country Food for Inuvialuit Youth Well Being and Community-based Research

Melody Lynch: Welcome to Arctic Minded, a podcast produced by ArcticNet about all things Arctic. I'm your host, Melody Lynch, and today we have cooked up a wonderful episode about something that everybody loves—food. More specifically, we're learning about youth experiences with country food in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (or the ISR), in the Western Canadian Arctic.

For this episode, I was incredibly lucky to speak with two experts working on youth experiences with country food in the ISR: Maria Ramirez Prieto and Kanelisa Noksana. Maria is a Colombian Canadian PhD candidate in the School of Public Health Sciences at the University of Waterloo. She brings the background in nutrition and nutraceutical sciences and international development with a Bachelor of Arts and Science from the University of Guelph. Relationality and collaboration are at the core of Maria's research as she works alongside Inuvialuit co-researchers and community members in the ISR. Kanelisa is an Inuvialuit from Tuktoyaktuk Northwest Territories. She's a community research lead in Tuktoyaktuk, and has worked on several research projects, including the one we're exploring today. Kanelisa is currently in her final year for her Bachelor of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta.

These two guests are not only incredibly knowledgeable about food and health, but in this episode, they also give us a masterclass on what meaningful and inclusive community-based research can look like. And they also offer some creative ideas for knowledge exchange. If you stick around until the very end, they also share their favourite stories from fieldwork—one of them involving a very big fish. So, grab your favourite snack and enjoy this food for thought.

All right, welcome Maria and Kanelisa! Thank you so much for joining us today.

[01:54] **Maria Ramirez Prieto:** Hi. **Kanelisa Noksana:** Hi.

[01:56] **Melody Lynch:** So, we'll start, we'll jump right in. Maria, can you tell us a little bit about your research?

[02:00] **Maria Ramirez Prieto:** Sure, I guess I will situate where my research is first. So, the ISR is at the very top of the Northwest Territories and it has six communities; Aklavik, Inuvik, Paulatuk, Tuktoyaktuk, Sachs Harbour and Ulukhaktok, and my research explores the experiences of Inuvialuit youth and elders within their food system to identify local and culturally centered avenues to support food security. We used PhotoVoice to engage with youth aged 13 to 30.

[02:33] **Melody Lynch:** Thank you so much, and your research goes into country food and this idea of country food. Kanelisa do you want to jump in and just share what country food is, what it means to you? Maybe what your favourite food is?

[02:46] **Kanelisa Noksana:** Country food is food that you harvested off the land. It's traditional food that we've eaten for generations. I would say my favourite country food would have to be fried caribou meat and muktuk, which is beluga whale. It's like the blubber of the beluga whale, and it's one of my favourites because whenever I go home from school, my dad always, it's the first thing my dad always makes for me when I go home. So, it always gives me like a sense of home. I always feel like I'm home when I get to eat that food—I finally get to reconnect with my culture.

[03:27] **Melody Lynch:** Thank you so much for sharing, and Maria I noticed that in your research you talk a little bit about this idea of food security, and you define it in a kind of a broader sense than what some of us might think when we think of food security. Can you talk a little bit about that, about your definition?

[03:44] **Maria Ramirez Prieto:** Yeah, happy to. So, the definition that we might hear more often is from the Food and Agriculture Organization or the FAO, and they define food security as when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets dietary needs and preferences for a healthy life.

This definition kind of tells us what food security would look like, but not really how to get there, and I think our paper really talks about maybe steps on how to get there. And so, we use more of a food sovereignty lens, which outlines, how to get there by supporting people with the capacity to control their food system, to have self-determination within their food system, and to have the knowledge and skills to access the food that they want. And then on top of this, Indigenous food sovereignty and what Indigenous food scholars emphasize is the interconnectedness of food to the natural world and one another. So, it's highlighting the importance of environmental justice—caring about climate change, culture, identity and community. And that's all interwoven into the importance of food and achieving food security.

So, I think with that, our findings really support the idea that culture, identity and holistic wellbeing is all interwoven into country food and all the related activities. Achieving food security is achieving all of these other things as well.

[05:18] **Melody Lynch:** Thank you. That's so interesting because it's much more than what we might think of just getting enough food to be able to survive. It's really much more interconnected in all these different aspects of our life. And so, one aspect of your research is

also related to youth access to country food. Kanelisa, do you want to share a little bit about what you found with Maria in this research about that aspect, about connecting youth with country food?

[05:47] **Kanelisa Noksana:** In our findings, we found that youth access country food mainly through family, school, and different programs that are offered in the community. These offers, like these programs in school, are really great because they bring in/try to bring in traditional food so that elders can also teach youth how to process food and how to cook food. So, it's one great way that the youth are able to connect with that part of our culture and the traditional food.

And also, I think that the IRC (**Melody Lynch:** The IRC is the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation.) has a lot of programs when it comes to traditional food, so if there's families who aren't able to go out hunting and to do these traditional activities, the IRC has programs so that all Inuvialuit around the region are able to get country food one way or another.

[06:50] **Melody Lynch:** Thank you, and so part of the way that you collected the data for this project involved this creative method called PhotoVoice. Maria, maybe do you want to talk a little bit about your experience using PhotoVoice? What was the motivation to use this method and how did that go?

[07:09] **Maria Ramirez Prieto:** Yeah, okay, so, I guess the motivation to use PhotoVoice really came from listening to our community partners and they had really talked about the importance of involving youth and elders into research projects. I guess maybe youth and elders aren't always involved in research projects and they also really wanted us to celebrate country food and keep it really positive.

So, with that, I listened to them and went back and started reading papers on like how I could do that. I had read a few papers that used PhotoVoice to engage with youth around the topic of food. So, I brought that back to another community meeting and our community partner said that—like they gave me the go ahead.

So, then we started hiring and trading community research leads like Kanelisa to start fine-tuning the interview guides that we were going to use and then start recruiting and participating youth. But before that, the interview guide became much better because we were able to hire and work with amazing community research leads that really tailored it to each community and made it a hundred times better. So, that's kind of how we got to use PhotoVoice.

[08:30] **Melody Lynch:** According to a great paper published in 2008, written by Heather Castleden, Theresa Garvin, and Huu-ay-aht First Nation, in the *Journal of Social Science and Medicine*, and the paper's called [Modifying Photovoice for community-based participatory Indigenous research](#). They call PhotoVoice a “community-based participatory research method that uses participant-employed photography and dialogue to create social change”.

[08:58] **Maria Ramirez Prieto:** I'd been working with Kanelsa and another community research lead in Paulatuk at the time, and we were about to start recruiting, and then COVID happened, and I think this really highlights the importance of investing in supporting capacity and working with community members.

I wasn't able to travel, so really the community research leads became the backbone of our research and started doing the recruiting. Because I live in Southern Ontario, I couldn't travel because it was a hotspot, nor was it really responsible. So, the community research leads started doing the recruitment and training, and then a few months later I was able to come up and actually start doing some interviews and working with the youth. But really the community research leads ran the show for a while, and it was really great.

So, with the talking circles, once the youth had collected all their photographs and then we did their interviews, we did a talking circle with elders and youth and the youth shared their photos and this was a really great opportunity to facilitate some intergenerational knowledge transfer and just to like spur conversation through photos. The youth can be, at least the ones I work with, can be quite shy at times but having those photos were a really great conversation starter for all of us. That was a really great opportunity.

Then the family interviews were the very last component of this study. From both the youth photo project and then our second project, which is the elder's interviews, family was just so important to accessing country food to learning knowledge and skills, that we wanted to interview families together with elder's, parents, youth, and children to understand how this knowledge transmission happens and how we can help facilitate it more. So, I'm really glad that, again, we're just really listening to community members to do this last piece of this study. And we just finished that up this summer. So, I'm excited to start analyzing it with a few co-researchers.

[11:20] **Melody Lynch:** Yeah, that's so great that you had such wonderful research leads to help you continue this important work during that time. And so, Kanelsa as one of those people, how was and what was your experience engaging in PhotoVoice and can you talk a little bit about any kind of training activities that you did as well?

[11:41] **Kanelsa Noksana:** Yeah, of course. I'd never heard a PhotoVoice before, at least the word in general. But after Maria explained it to me, I thought it was a great opportunity for students, I mean, youth, to be able to express themselves in a different way than just speaking, because I know at least from experience, that a lot of youth can be very shy when it comes to speaking so giving them a different way to voice what they're trying to say towards country food and by taking pictures was a great way to give them the opportunity to do it.

And so, when it did happen, and when Maria did contact me and I did get my training, I thought about which youth I thought would be best for this type of project. Youth I thought that would enjoy doing something like this and taking pictures and getting an opportunity to show our culture to other people. So, I thought it was really great and then I just kept in contact with them, I answered any questions that they had. And when Maria came and finally was able to come down we had a pizza party. We got all the kids together and were able to go over like what kind of pictures that they can take, where they can take these pictures, and just gave them an easier opportunity to be able to express themselves.

[13:19] **Melody Lynch:** Yeah, that's great, and so, what were some of the key findings from this PhotoVoice activity and given that it was this visual kind of method, did you find anything that you think you may have overlooked if you used a different, more traditional, maybe text-based method?

[13:38] **Maria Ramirez Prieto:** Um, I guess, I'll start with your second point about findings if we hadn't used a visual method. Because it's so hard to say what we wouldn't have been able to capture. The youth were really like co-researchers and they kind of guided the scope. So, we had said like "what does country food mean to you?" "can you take photos of what that means?" and Kanelsa and I have talked about it a lot, sometimes it was a little too broad, so we had to do some brainstorming sessions. They really guided the scope. So, from there they took photos and their photographs guided the scope. And through that I was able to explore like these places and spaces that I just couldn't have anticipated, even if I had spent a long time in the community and worked on these interview guides a long time. I can't ever really be in these participants' brains and know their experiences fully so it was really great for them to take the reins and lead us. Then in the interviews they picked the photos they wanted to talk about, so again, they kind of led us to what they wanted to talk about in the scope. So I'm not sure what I would've, not captured, but I'm really glad I was able to capture as much as possible.

So, there was five themes, and they are:

- Country food being really important not only for food security, but overall wellbeing,
- Consistent country food preference among all the youth that we talked to,

- There was a country food network within each community and kind of analyzing these networks and how youth fit in,
- There was really strong foundational skills and knowledge,
- And finally, that last theme was cultural continuity.

So those were the five themes. Theme one really highlights the importance of country food related activities like harvesting, preparing, and eating, as a source of enjoyment and pride for many youth. A lot of the youth talked about being proud of harvesting, or preparing, sharing and overall showcasing their Inuvialuit culture. And they were really proud of doing some really hard things like shooting their first caribou, and that's a really proud thing to do, and enjoying a meal with family, or enjoying making bannock because they felt like they can get their stress out. So, we found that it wasn't just about food security, it was about overall wellbeing. Then maybe that kind of goes into the second theme about a consistent preference for country food, despite the fact that not all youth consumed country food very regularly. So some consumed it daily or weekly and some consumed a little more infrequently or participated in country food activities more infrequently. But they all really said that they liked country food and wanted more country food and they all had a favourite country food.

And then, the third theme, like I said, was exploring this network of country food access in each community. So Kanelsa talked about it with accessing country foods through family, through school, through different programs, and then also seeing that youth were taking on this cultural identity of sharing, and the importance of sharing, and then sharing their harvest that they did in these programs or at school with people in their communities. So that was really great to see. So, they were contributing to food security in their community.

Then into knowledge and skills, theme four looks at the strong foundational skills for noticing changes to the land and animals, which is super important for environmental monitoring and noticing climate change. So, it really showed that youth have all these cultural skills to notice these things and researchers can really listen to these youth because they're experts in it too.

Then finally, the youth participants really showed an eagerness for themselves and others to really continue learning more knowledge and skills. And then to pass on this knowledge, they said it was also super important to pass on this knowledge for their culture and for food security. Then this theme was defined as cultural continuity. So those were the five themes.

[18:13] **Melody Lynch:** Thank you so much. That is so interesting. Was intergenerational knowledge and skill sharing as well an important finding or theme in your research?

[18:24] **Maria Ramirez Prieto:** Yes. That kind of goes into wanting to learn more skills. So, it is like wanting to spend time with elders learning skills, wanting to spend time with family, harvesting, and preparing to learn those skills and knowledge. So, in that cultural continuity, it's the knowledge transmission within that.

[18:47] **Melody Lynch:** Okay, great. I'd love to hear your thoughts Kanelisa about that importance of intergenerational knowledge and skill sharing with elders and youth.

[18:55] **Kanelisa Noksana:** I think the importance of sharing our skills and knowledge down generations is how we keep our culture alive. It's how we have sustained our culture for generations, right? We have always passed these traditions and stories down from each other and I think it's important that we learn from our elders because it gives us a different view on how the world is. Like we live in this world that's so different from our elders that lived in a world where we didn't have technology, where they grew up in the bush and on the land and lived in igloos. That's totally different from how we live today. And so, I think that when we share our skills and our stories and our things that are passed down, it keeps our culture alive and it keeps us—and it builds onto how important our culture is, right? You don't want to lose those important factors about our culture.

I think it's really important to learn from our elders because one day we're not going to have them and we're going to wish we had them and we're going to wish we were able to learn these traditions from them instead of having to read it in books because generations ago we didn't have books to learn from. It's not the way we learn. It isn't the way that our culture was based around. It was to talk, and to do, and to learn from each other.

[20:28] **Melody Lynch:** Thank you, that's great. So clearly this community-based approach to research is really, it gives you kind of this rich, ethnographic kind of detail. Maria, from the researcher's perspective, can you speak to some of the maybe the ethical considerations, the benefits or challenges when using a community-based participatory action approach to research?

[20:53] **Maria Ramirez Prieto:** Yeah, for sure. I think the main ethical considerations when doing community-based research and just research with a community is to ensure that there's community inclusion throughout the entire research process. From the research scope, so having community priorities center your research, to your interview guide, to your dissemination, I think that's really important.

I think spending time in community is really important for building trusting relationships, and I think supporting capacity is super important as an ethical consideration, and I think this allows

for the research to have greater relevancy in the community and support actual community needs. And maybe the biggest challenge to ensuring that this is done, is the time and funding it takes to work with remote communities and to build these relationships as an outsider. And then involving community members through paid positions also requires quite a bit of funding and time for adequate training as well.

So, I had the benefit that one of my supervisors has over 15 years of experience in the ISR, where working very closely with hunters and trappers committees and has really rich, relationships and friendships. So as an outsider, when I started as a Master's student, this really helped me start to build my own relationships and also helped me to be able to meet with the different boards. In terms of supporting capacity, again, I'm just really lucky to work with a great group that supports capacity in communities. To name a few examples, we hire and train community research leads to work on our projects throughout the process, and this is really important to making sure we contextually get it right. And I think the interview guide, everything is just better when it's done collaboratively. We've done cookbooks with schools, we've held elder and youth activities, we've purchased food processing equipment. So, I think all of this supporting capacities, all about giving back to the community, give so much to us when we learn and do our research. So, it's just investing in the communities as well.

And then, time and funding to build these meaningful relationships. It's a big challenge. I'm lucky I get to spend a lot of time there because I have some really supportive supervisors in funding. But it's really great to just spend time in community and get to know community members that will make the research better and I think it's a challenge because not everyone has as much funding. But it will ensure that you are doing ethical work because those relationships mean a lot and you want to uphold them.

[23:55] **Melody Lynch:** For sure, thank you. Then from the perspective of a community member, Kanelsa, what do you think are some of the benefits and challenges of this type of community-based participatory research?

[24:07] **Kanelsa Noksana:** I think having researchers in our community is very beneficial because we get to learn so many new things about our land that we didn't know, or things about youth that maybe that adults didn't realize because, you know, youth see things in a different perspective than we do in this totally different world than elders had, right? You get to see different things.

And I think that it also benefits community members who get to be a part of it. When I first got hired on, I didn't know how to interview people. I didn't know how to do different types of research, and because I've worked with many different researchers in my community, I now

have those skills that I would've never had if researchers didn't come to my community. So I think that these type of things are very beneficial because we get to learn more things about us, but we get to learn things from other people, and I think that that's the most important thing about researchers coming to our community, is that we get to learn from them and they get to learn from us. I think that in the outcome, we all get to benefit from each other.

[25:25] **Melody Lynch:** Yeah, that is so great. Just on that topic of sharing knowledge. Maria, you were selected as the winner of the Arctic Science to Art Contest. Congratulations!

The Arctic Science to Art Contest is an initiative led by the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists or APECS Canada in collaboration with ArcticNet and the Arctic Research Foundation.

So, you're clearly interested in knowledge mobilization or sharing knowledge. How important is it to you to share your results with different audiences? So, you mentioned that you return your results back to communities. How do you decide what ways to do this? What formats to do this and what stage to start this process, and why is it important to you?

[26:12] **Maria Ramirez Prieto:** I think overall it's just really important to share results, and maximize sharing results with different audiences. But tailoring it to those audiences. So, although I think open access articles are really great and even been having the opportunity for them to be open access and not behind a paywall, it's wonderful, but many people aren't going to read it. They might not come across the article. I think the same goes for community reports that I would send to or present to the hunters and trappers committees or to the community corporations, those would only be seen or heard by a select few. So, I started to think about how to return results in a different way, and I really wanted it to be around sharing food.

So, I started returning results last February and during this time we held result interpretation workshops where we invited a small group of community members at one time to talk about the results and cook and eat together. So, I started returning results last February and during this time we held interpretation, result interpretation workshops, where we invited a small group of community members at one time to talk about the results and cook and eat together. So, in Aklavik we had a caribou stir fry interpretation workshop, where we invited community members to come and cut up a caribou leg and then prepare stir fry together.

During this time, we just had a conversation about the findings. So, I would tell them about the finding that I had and then ask them questions about it, and then they would talk about it and then the conversation could go in a million places. And that was really great, just to get that richness in a different way. And we had a wonderful note taker, taking notes while it went on so that we can all be really immersed in the conversation. And then with that, any themes that

had to be slightly refined, we were able to do that. And this also allowed that results were shared with community members first before anyone outside of the ISR and I think that's really important to give them the first look and make sure that they feel comfortable with everything. And then the results just were 10 times better because of these interpretation workshops. So, I think conversational and sharing based ways of returning results is a really great opportunity.

And then, like you said, I was the winner of the contest, which is just such a wonderful opportunity to share results in a different way. I am not an artistic person, so it was really wonderful to work with an artist and they basically made like a “graphic abstract” as the first board of the comic, which talked about where the research took place, who was involved, what methods we use, and the main themes. All in beautiful illustrations that were like a sunset of the purple and blues of the ISR. So, it just really evoked a sense of what the ISR looked like and felt like. And then, the next board was one of our talking circles with elders and youth, and it has really great quotes of youth talking about the importance of country food for nutrition, so how it's great in protein, and iron, and vitamins, and minerals, and how they really love being out on the land. And then elders speaking to the importance of it. I thought that was a really great way of doing it, and we're going to share that with the community through postcards and little bookmarks. Because one of the little illustrations worked really well in a bookmark, and then we're going to share it more broadly at ArcticNet, which is really exciting as well.

[30:05] **Melody Lynch:** That is so exciting. I can't wait to see it. [We've linked the poster](#) in the show notes. It's really beautiful, so go ahead and check it out and we've also put some information in there about how you can participate in the upcoming [Arctic Science to Art Contest](#).

And then Kanelsa you as well, as a community research lead and youth leader in your community, you've also presented results at conferences, including ArcticNet's Annual Scientific Meeting in 2022, and you've also won awards for your presentations. Can you speak a little bit to these experiences and to how important you think it is to have youth representation in these kind of events? Or the role that you play in returning research results back to your own community?

[30:49] **Kanelsa Noksana:** Yeah, of course. One of the awards Julia and I won was the ArcticNet's Best Northern Engagement and Research Award.

[30:58] **Melody Lynch:** Julia Gyapay is another researcher that Kanelsa has worked with in the past on projects related to country food and health messaging. If you're interested in learning about that project Julia, Kanelsa, and others have published a paper in the *Journal of Nutrients*

in 2022 called [Informing the Co-Development of Culture-Centered Dietary Messaging in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Northwest Territories](#). And we'll link that in the show notes.

[31:22] **Kanelisa Noksana:** And I think we won that at York University in Toronto. We did a Zoom call to do that, and we won that award for it, and it was great because that was my first time ever doing a presentation like that to a bunch of people, to a bunch of researchers. And I never thought that it would be something I would do, let alone something I would win. And it just made me feel more confident in myself and my research. And the one thing I think is important and I really enjoyed is that the entire time we do research with researchers is that they're never—they never say that this is *my* project. Like it's always, this is *our* project, which makes me feel really valued in the research that we've worked on. And it's just, it makes me feel part, it makes me feel that I am important to this type of research, and I think it's important to have that in our community because we co-work together to make this experience happen. And I think it's just really important for it to be done that way because it's not just a researcher coming and finding what they're wanting to find and then leaving. It's coming in, working with the community, working with the people, making this project and then giving back. Right? It's just, it's all of that. And I think when we had our get together, we had a feast. We had it for the whole community to come and see our findings on the research we did, and I thought that was a great way to give to back to the community and also show them the findings that we found.

[33:18] **Melody Lynch:** It sounds like you had an amazing research team there on this project. And so, I guess, just to close off, what do both of you feel was maybe the biggest challenge or most difficult part of this research so far?

[33:36] **Maria Ramirez Prieto:** I think probably the most challenging part of this work with just having enough funding and time to be in community. Like I said, it's sometimes hard to find that funding and I would love to stay for a long period of time. So not having enough funding to spend time in community, not doing research, but just like creating relationships, I think is really important. And sometimes when you have limited funding, you're pressured to just get in, do your data collection and then have to leave. Even though I had quite a bit of funding, I work in six communities, so this is especially difficult to just balance it all. But I'm really thankful for different funding opportunities like the Northern Scientific Training Program and the Global Health Policy and Innovation Research Centre, and my supervisors for having funding. Because this has really allowed me to just like, spend time in community. And like Kanelisa said, just doing data collection and sometimes doing presentations, but a lot of the time it's just spending time at the youth centre or going to play volleyball or just walking around and getting to know people. And I think that's really important and that could be challenging sometimes.

Maria Ramirez Prieto: We've talked about the overall strengths and challenges of using PhotoVoice and community-based research. But I think specifically for this study, the main limitation, was in terms of a representation of males and females within our co-researcher group. That was predominantly female with only two male co-researchers. And we think this is because overall, our research group was female, all our community research leads were female, and all our Southern University research team was also female. So we think this may have impacted recruitment, but overall, the youth were recruited were of varied ages from 13 to 30. So that was our desired sample age as well. And they all had various experiences. So, we do feel that although there was predominantly female, that the perspectives were still very important. And the main strength, I think, to our study specifically is that it fills a really vital gap in the literature about Inuvialuit youth and the Inuvialuit food system that really broadens how we're talking about food and food security. To not just talk about store food and income focused indicators that the current literature really focuses on right now. Then I think our study really compliments some really great youth and participatory studies in other Inuit regions such as Nunavut and Nunatsiavut, which are doing Photovoice studies and really connecting food to culture and wellbeing, which is really important.

[36:39] **Melody Lynch:** Thanks. Did you also want to give a shoutout to your supervisors?

[36:43] **Maria Ramirez Prieto:** Sure! Shout out to Dr. Kelly Skinner and Dr. Sonja Ostertag. They're so wonderful. And also, the greater research group, which is our C4FS Working Group and Country Foods for Good Health Working Group, so there's like Sonia Wesche, Tiff-Annie Kenny, and so many other wonderful researchers. And then all our research leads, I think there's like 12 research leads as well, everyone's just so wonderful. So, shout out to them!

[37:13] **Melody Lynch:** And Kanelisa, what do you feel was maybe the biggest challenge or most difficult part of the work?

[37:18] **Kanelisa Noksana:** I think one of the biggest challenges was being trained online because I've never been trained online before. And having to learn that, especially with internet that's not great in the North, was one of the craziest things that I've ever had to do. And then also, if I could have had Maria there with me or Julia there with me, I feel like it would've been a lot easier because I would've had someone to rely on and sometimes, I didn't have that. It was a little nerve wracking because I was doing things I've never done before, like interviewing people or, you know, getting youth to take photos and doing all that stuff. It was just, sometimes it was a little nerve wracking to coordinate all of that stuff, and I feel like if I had someone there with me to do it, it would've been a little easier. But yeah, it definitely pushed me to have to learn in a different way that I was not used to.

[38:28] **Melody Lynch:** For sure. And what was your favourite part of the research to date?

[38:31] **Maria Ramirez Prieto:** My favourite part has been trying a ton of foods. I really like—that caribou stir fry we made was really great—like a dry fish is also really great, we had coordinated to do a cooking workshop at this school, and we had just picked up a food donation, which is this huge fish. I don't even know what kind of fish it was, but I was like carrying this ginormous fish around and Kanelsa was just—is laughing, laughing, laughing. And then, she took a picture of me and I kind of realized how little I looked or maybe how big the fish was. Like I just don't know which one. But I finally understood why Kanelsa's dad was referring to me as her tiny friend because the fish was almost as big as me and I think that's just a story that really stands out to me.

[39:19] **Melody Lynch:** That's so funny, we have to get a picture of that and link it in the show notes if you have one!

[39:25] **Maria Ramirez Prieto:** Oh, I do. Yeah!



[39:26] **Melody Lynch:** Okay, and Kanelsa do you have any story to share about your favourite part of the research?

[39:33] **Kanelsa Noksana:** That was actually my funny story I was going to tell because Maria, it was really funny because Maria was holding this huge fish that if you like, held it beside her, it was almost as long as she was, it was hilarious. And I didn't want to hold it because I was scared I was going to smell like fish. So, Maria's like, "oh no, I'll carry it." and then I turn around and Maria just like has this huge fish and I'm just like "that is way bigger than I thought it would be."

And just getting to be with the researchers was great. I think one of the days before we did the community feast and gave our findings is that I actually took the researchers and I brought them to the Pingos with a sled and a snowmobile, and we got to climb the Pingos, and we have a photo of that too!



[40:30] **Melody Lynch:** According to a 2021 article in the *Ottawa Citizen* called [Pingos galore: Digital mapping project doubles known number of iconic Arctic 'ice volcanoes'](#). Journalist Blair Crawford explains that quote, “Pingo's form when small tundra lakes drain exposing the lake bottom to the freezing Arctic air. Groundwater in the soil freezes pushing the earth upwards.”, end quote. So, these really do look like little ice cube hills, or little ice volcanoes and Inuvialuit have used Pingos as navigational aids and as viewpoints for hunting on the tundra for centuries.

[41:08] **Kanelsa Noksana:** I just got to like, show them my community from my perspective. Things that I got to do and things that, you know, like they wouldn't have gotten to do on their own. Because, you know, it's different.

[41:22] **Maria Ramirez Prieto:** That was a pretty great experience.

[41:24] **Kanelsa Noksana:** Yeah. It was just, it's the relationships that I built with each researcher, which is great because now I have all of these different friends from different places and I get to learn different things from them, and they all gave me opportunities and different types of skills that I never had before.

[41:42] **Melody Lynch:** Oh, that's so great to hear that. To close off for the, for the final question, do you have any takeaway message that you'd like to share with the Arctic research community?

[41:52] **Maria Ramirez Prieto:** I'd just say invest in spending time in community, building those friendships and relationships, centering your work around community identified priorities, listen, participate, and just be really humble. Because there's just so much to learn. I guess for me it's just a really big thank you to all my community partners and all the community members throughout the ISR that opened up their homes to me. So big thank you!

[42:20] **Kanelsa Noksana:** I feel the same way. Get to know the community. Get to know the people. Being from a northern community, I love sharing my culture, I love sharing my food, I love meeting new people, and when people are interested in that, it only makes me want to do it more. So, get involved! There's always going to be people who want to connect with you and learn from you and have you learn from them.

[42:47] **Melody Lynch:** If you're interested in learning more about Maria and Kanelsa's research, you can check out their fresh article that has been accepted for publication in *Global Health Research* called "[Keep Learning, Keep Trying: Exploring Food and Cultural Experiences and Supports of Inuvialuit Youth in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region](#)". We'll link that in the show notes. That brings us to the end of our episode. I really hope you enjoyed it, and until next time, this has been Arctic Minded.

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