

Study name: Negotiating Pathways to Adulthood: Social Change and Indigenous Culture in Four Circumpolar Communities

Project number: EOI 1266

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Abstract:

The goal of the Circumpolar Indigenous Pathways to Adulthood (CIPA) project is to examine 80 youth life history narratives in an Alaska Inupiat, Alaska Yup'ik, Canadian Inuit, and Siberian Eveny community to identify shared and divergent stressors and patterns of resilience in the transition to adulthood. Contemporary dynamics of rapid social change have dramatically affected the political, cultural, and economic systems of circumpolar Indigenous people. CIPA is a comparative, collaborative, and participatory circumpolar research project. Its aims are to explore responses to rapid social transition through the life experiences of circumpolar youth. We seek to identify cultural strategies and resources that characterize resiliency across two age groups, ages 11-14 and 15-18, and across gender. The impact of a shared colonial history and contemporary social suffering among indigenous communities in the Arctic have been extensively documented through decades of Arctic social science research. The issue of healthy adaptation and resilience among Indigenous youth has not been adequately considered, leaving developmental trajectories of healthy adaptation and resilience relatively unexplored. We aim to build on Indigenous categories to describe the social experiences and resources shaping culturally patterned resilience strategies of young people responding to challenges distinct from those of their parents and grandparents. This will provide insights into the family, community, and cultural contexts that support healthy youth development, and identify key ingredients to successful prevention and intervention health strategies for Indigenous young people. This project builds on and sustains long-term participatory research relationships between local community institutions, community co-researchers, and a multidisciplinary team of international university researchers. Indigenous community co-researcher involvement and direction is emphasized throughout all phases of this project, whose aims respond to strong local interest in youth resilience and wellbeing. Project start up was in August 2008, and proposed CIPA IPY 2008 activities include: 1) Expansion of CIPA to include a Norwegian Sami site in close collaboration with the NSF funded four site project in an Alaska Inupiat, Alaska Yup'ik, Canadian Inuit, and Siberian Eveny community. 2) Completion of all institutional review board (IRB) and local human studies committee (HSC) approvals. 3) Identification and hire of a local community adult co-researcher and two youth co-researchers. 4) Establishment of Local Steering Committees (LSC) at each site 5) Select representatives to Circumpolar Steering Committee. 6) Planning for an international workshop to bring the co-researcher and investigator group to a face-to-face meeting. 6) Establish regular videoconference and teleconference meetings with the investigator group to direct the project.

Project Status: Active

Project Progress 2008:

Relationships were established with faculty at Sámi University College and University of Oslo to include a Norwegian Sámi site conducting 20 interviews with Sámi youth. This will increase the interview participants in the study to 100.

All required institutional review board (IRB) and local human studies committee (HSC) approvals were obtained.

A Local Steering Committees (LSC) has been established at each site, and each has begun meeting.

Project staff has been identified and hired at each site. This includes identification and hire of a local community adult co-researcher and two youth co-researchers.

A date has been set and supplemental funding has been secured for a planned international workshop at Scott Polar Center, Cambridge University, with adult and youth co-researchers from each community.

The investigator group has been meeting biweekly by videoconference and teleconference to coordinate start-up and LSC work in preparation for the Cambridge workshop.

Preliminary results (if applicable):

Allen, J., Kral, M., Mohatt, G. V., Ulturgasheva, O., Wexler, L. (September, 2008). *Negotiating Pathways to Adulthood: Social Change and Indigenous Culture in Four Circumpolar Communities*. Arctic Science Conference, Fairbanks, AK.

Plans 2009:

Continue biweekly investigator steering meetings.

Conduct a CIPA Cambridge workshop with a working group meeting of community and university co-researchers at Cambridge University, March 29-April 1 2009 to develop cross-site research questions and methods.

Continue Local Steering Committees meetings at each site.

Set up data collection procedures at each site.

Perform data collection, transcription, translation, and preliminary analyses at each site.

Conduct data analysis and interpretation with Local Steering Committees at each site.

Expected Completion Date:

July 2010

University Investigator Group:

James Allen	Lisa Wexler	Michael Kral
Gerald Mohatt	University of Massachusetts	University of Illinois
University of Alaska	-Amherst	Urbana-Champaign
Fairbanks		

Key Personnel:

Olga Ulturgasheva
Cambridge University

Consultant Group:

Benedicte Ingstad	Kristine Nystad	Kim Hopper
University of Oslo	Sámi University College	Columbia University