

<u>Program Name</u>	Elluam Tunjiinun "Toward Wellness" Ellangneq Project and Qungasvik (Toolbox) Projects
<u>Sponsoring Agency</u>	Center for Alaska Native Health Research, University of Alaska Fairbanks.
<u>Director Names</u>	Stacy Rasmus, PhD (PI), Tara Ford, PhD (PD)
<u>Geographic Area</u>	Currently Southwest Alaska, Yup'ik/Cup'ik Villages
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Program Description

Elluam Tunjiinun is a community driven program that operates in cooperation with a team from the Center for Alaska Native Research (CANHR) at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Community project coordinators along with Elders, hold a variety of culturally-based activities designed to teach young people how to live healthy lives as Yup'ik people. Activities are delivered with the support and guidance from a local community planning group and CANHR staff. Activities and teaching strategies are described in a detailed manual called, "Qungasvik, a toolbox for promoting youth sobriety and reasons for living in Yup'ik/Cup'ik communities." Many of the activities actively engage young people in traditional cultural and subsistence practices. Communities are encouraged to modify and adapt activities to their own people and their own needs. The program is also developing a training model that can be used to extend the project to other communities.

Brief History

CANHR became well known among Alaska Native communities for its *People Awakening Project*, that looked at how Alaska Native people became sober or avoided problems with alcohol, and what gave people reasons for life. After the village of Alakanuk experienced a high number of suicides they asked CANHR for help. The program received grant funds in 2006 and through extensive community based participatory research in Alakanuk, the village and CANHR worked together to develop and implement the toolbox of activities. The project has received additional funding to develop a training model to sustain and expand the Qungasvik to other Yup'ik communities. Several other villages have been or are now also part of the program.

Program Goals

The overarching goal is for young people to be healthier, stronger and to value their lives and not turn to alcohol or suicide. The goal for participating villages is that they continue project activities, and that actively teaching youth traditional culture, values and life skills becomes part of the community's fabric.

Training Goals

There are two levels of training: First, there are the 36 activities or modules in the toolbox with specific goals and objectives for each activity/module. These activities range from learning ice safety skills and relating them to challenging life situations, learning how to survive in the wilderness, to openly discussing and understanding suicide, and coping with rumors and gossip and peer influences. Second, communities that have had success with the program become training sites where experienced community coordinators, with assistance from CANHR staff, train new community coordinators to implement activities in their own communities. Alakanuk and Hooper Bay are currently in the process of becoming training sites.

Who is trained?

Youth are trained, and community coordinators are trained.

Who are the trainers?

Youth are trained by the community coordinators (local residents) and by Elders and community members with specific expertise in traditional knowledge and skills. Community coordinators are trained by experienced coordinators and CANHR staff.

Where does training take place?

Youth attend activities in their own villages. Community coordinators are trained at training sites in villages with successful experience choosing and implementing Toolbox activities.

How long is the training?

While there are 36 modules in the training toolbox, the expectation is that the training becomes a regular on-going part of village life. As children reach the appropriate age, the training is there for them. Structured training for new community coordinators is currently being developed. Training will take place as part of one-week intensives in the training communities and at CANHR. An occupational endorsement course is under development with the UAF Kuskokwim Campus to certify Qungasvik project coordinators to deliver the prevention with fidelity to the Yup'ik process model and to gain college credits for their participation in the prevention work.

What does the training include?

The 36 modules of the toolbox include a wide range of activities from hands-on activities like ice fishing and making akutaq (Eskimo ice cream), to storytelling, discussion and role playing. The training for new community coordinators includes one-week intensives at CANHR to learn about the research and evaluation process, and one-week intensives at the training community sites to learn how the project has been adapted and implemented. Training includes interactive co-learning between Yup'ik community members and UAF research staff, and involves cultural and knowledge exchanges to build cultural core competencies in project staff and collaborators.

What follow-up is available after the training?

The youth activities are on-going. Community coordinators receive continued support from each other and CANHR.

What does the training cost?

Since its beginning in 2006 Elluam Tunjiinun has been grant supported and there have been no costs to participating villages. However, as the grant progressed the amounts available to communities has declined. Where the first village had funds for two community coordinators and frequent visits from the CANHR project coordinator, subsequent villages have had half the staff and fewer visits. It is estimated that a community project with funding for one full and one half time community coordinator would cost \$150,000/year.

Has the program been evaluated?

The initial 3-year pilot project in Alakanuk was evaluated and had strong positive outcomes. The 5-year prevention trial period added 3 additional villages but with less money and less time for project development at the village level. Analysis is not yet complete but preliminary results suggest strong positive outcomes for one additional community in the prevention trial and also demonstrates the importance of attendance at the prevention activities for the achievement of desired change in the youth and the community. An important learning is that the toolbox cannot just be taken and used by a community, but that the important thing is for the community to engage in a process to "make it its own".

Future Plans

During the current dissemination phase CANHR is developing a website, a training program for community coordinators and another edition of the toolbox with a training supplement. The hope is that a community will be able to use the new toolbox on its own, without assistance, but there is no evidence as yet that a project can succeed just from the book. CANHR also would like to see the project/toolbox develop to be used by other Alaska Native communities statewide.

Program Funding Source

The program is funded by the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD), first as a 3-year pilot project, then as a 5-year prevention trial grant, and currently as a 3-year dissemination project. The program received additional funding from the State of Alaska through an award to the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation to develop a training model to sustain and expand the Qungasvik to other Yup'ik communities.

Trainer Qualifications

Qungasvik Program staff have advanced degrees in Clinical and Community Psychology and Medical Anthropology. Community staff are respected long-term residents with cultural knowledge and subsistence experience. Elders are also involved.

Additional Program Information

The Qungasvik Toolbox is available at <http://www.uaf.edu/canhr/projects/elluam/Qungasvik.pdf>