

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: IPY rejects Kunuk's Inuit Point of View
Date: Wed, 18 Jun 2008 08:33:24 -0400
From: Norman Cohn <cohn@isuma.ca>
To: FischerK@ainc-inac.gc.ca
CC: Nielsen, Ingrid <NielsenIN@ainc-inac.gc.ca>, Jamal Shirley <jshirley@nac.nu.ca>, Zacharias Kunuk <zkunuk@isuma.ca>, Steph Rituit <stephane@isuma.ca>, Peter Irniq <anaanaga@hotmail.com>, Paul Aarulaq Quassa <pquassa@qiniq.com>, Kathleen Tagoona <tagoona@itk.ca>, Jim Bell <jimb@nunatsiaq.com>, MacDonald, Gayle <GAMacDonald@globeandmail.com>, Odile Nelson <odile_nelson@cbc.ca>, Denis Seguin <seguin.denis@sympatico.ca>, etan vlessing <etan.vlessing@sympatico.ca>, Sheila Watt-Cloutier <siila@baffin.ca>, KIVALLIQ/Editorial <editor@arctic.ca>, Patricia Bell <patricia_bell@cbc.ca>

Kathleen Fischer
Executive Director, Federal Program Office
International Polar Year
Room 745, 10 Wellington Street, Gatineau, Qc
K1A 0H4
tel: (819) 934-6085 fax: (819) 934-0584

Dear Kathleen,

We were hoping to get a reply from you, something more informative than the first form letter rejection, and the second form-letter addressed to someone else.

Zacharias Kunuk's IPY communication project, "From an Inuit Point of View: Arctic Climate Change from the Inuit Side," got zero funding from your Office, while three self-promoting government films were approved: an IMAX film celebrating Canadian polar science, a documentary about researchers of sea birds and a documentary about the early 19th century chief biologist of the National Museum of Canada.

In the context of Inuit on the front line of global warming and its desperate impact on human rights and a 4000 year-old land based culture, it seems only logical IPY also might want to hear from Zach, Bernadette Dean, Mary Simon, former Ambassador to Denmark and now president of ITK, Sheila Watt-Cloutier, co-nominee with Al Gore for the Nobel Prize, and other Inuit about how their homeland looks from their own point of view.

We recognize many applications were received, this was a very 'competitive' process, limited funds, and etc. etc. all clear from the form letter. But under these circumstances, Zach and other Inuit would appreciate a more thoughtful response to why International Polar Year's Canadian Office didn't think 'From an Inuit Point of View' was needed for all Canadians.

Thank you for your consideration,

Norman Cohn
Zacharias Kunuk

----- Original Message -----

Subject: IPY rejects Kunuk's Inuit Point of View

Date: Thu, 12 Jun 2008 12:16:44 -0400

From: Norman Cohn <cohn@isuma.ca>

To: FischerK@ainc-inac.gc.ca

CC: Nielsen, Ingrid <NielsenIN@ainc-inac.gc.ca>, Jamal Shirley <jshirley@nac.nu.ca>, Zacharias Kunuk <zkunuk@isuma.ca>, Steph Rituit <stephane@isuma.ca>, Peter Irniq <anaanaga@hotmail.com>, Paul Aarulaq Quassa <pquassa@qiniq.com>, Davide Sapienza <asaltydav@alice.it>, Sara Minogue <saram@nunatsiaq.com>, Patricia Bell <patricia_bell@cbc.ca>, Jim Bell <jimb@nunatsiaq.com>, MacDonald, Gayle <GAMacDonald@globeandmail.com>, Odile Nelson <odile_nelson@cbc.ca>, Denis Seguin <seguin.denis@sympatico.ca>, etan vlessing <etan.vlessing@sympatico.ca>

Dear Kathleen,

Thank you for your apology about the mistaken letter sent below. It's exactly how we felt about the original rejection of Zacharias Kunuk's International Polar Year proposal; we must have received the wrong form letter. But please do not resend this one again replacing Dr. Van Coeverden de Groot's name with Dr. Kunuk's. A more personal response would be appreciated.

If the Prime Minister can tell the truth yesterday about racism, assimilation and abuse of Inuit and Aboriginal citizens, so can we.

A few weeks ago Dr. Zacharias Kunuk O.C. received a thoughtless and patronizing form-letter rejecting IsumaTV's IPY proposal to launch Canada's first interactive media website about polar issues by Indigenous filmmakers. While "From an Inuit Point of View: Arctic Climate Change from the Inuit Side" received no funding, IPY did fund three other self-promoting film projects: an IMAX film celebrating Canadian polar research, a documentary about researchers of sea birds and a documentary about the early 19th century chief biologist of the National Museum of Canada.

Zacharias's 'Inuit point of view' evidently could not compete with the interests of other IPY film projects that represent more directly the government's own view of its own achievements.

In light of the Prime Minister's sincere and detailed apology and call for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to address this history, we ask you, as the executive responsible for IPY Canada's decisions, to review Zach's proposal in the light of its intended and clearly articulated impact on this truth and reconciliation process.

The role of the media, and therefore the role of IPY Canada's communications funding, in this process of Truth and Reconciliation is as important as the role of the apology itself. Once spoken, no government agency, and IPY Canada above all, can just go back to business-as-usual.

In the International Polar Year, climate change and global warming are human rights issues 'From an Inuit Point of View.' IsumaTV is designed to allow Inuit and Aboriginal citizens to tell the truth about their lives, and to allow all Canadians to achieve some reconciliation of past injustices, using the enormous interactive power of the internet.

OF COURSE Zach's perspective may be different from an IPY IMAX promotional film, a documentary about a 19th century Arctic scientist, or from IPY's conventional 'professional' standards in general. That is the whole point. Canada's conventional 'professional' standards of treatment of Inuit, Aborigines and the Polar regions during the last century is precisely what the Prime Minister has just admitted was wrong. Shameful. Racist. And unacceptable.

Your IPY review process has just refused Zach's proposal to use the interactive power of the internet to engage Canada's Arctic in the first Truth and Reconciliation process in history, for which the entire political will of the government has just called urgent and necessary.

The Prime Minister accepted responsibility on behalf of his government and all governments before his to stop denying racism and call for a new way of doing things.

IPY Canada has enormous responsibility to shape the image of Canada's Arctic to the whole world. You have the responsibility to support a genuine truth and reconciliation process by Indigenous media producers, or to deny it by using the same obfuscating language of the past.

We don't object to IPY promoting its own government efforts and policies. We don't object to IPY celebrating Canadian researchers and 19th century scientists. We only object that in your mix, with the power of mass media, your evaluators chose not to include Zacharias Kunuk on climate change from the Inuit side.

In the event there remain any funds to correct this imbalance we would be very pleased to receive some.

Very sincerely,
Norman Cohn

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> FischerK@ainc-inac.gc.ca wrote:
>> Mr. Cohn,
>>
>> I have to apologize. This letter was not intended for you - it was
>> intended for someone else.
>>
>> My apology for this error.
>>
>> Lynn Jodoin
>> (originally sent this email on behalf of Kathleen Fischer)
>>
>> >>> Kathleen Fischer 06/12/08 10:23 AM >>>
>> Hello Dr. Van Coeverden de Groot,
>>
>> Ingrid Nielsen forwarded me your earlier email. Again, we would like
>> to thank you for submitting a proposal under the Government of
>> Canada's IPY Call for Proposals for Communications, Training and
>> Outreach Projects.
>>
>> This was a highly competitive process. The IPY Federal Program Office
>> received 178 proposals, requesting approximately 12 times the amount
>> of money available for this call. While we were very happy to see this
>> level of interest and excitement regarding IPY, it also meant that
>> some very difficult choices needed to be made.
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>> We conducted an extensive review process. This process included 5
 >> northern review sessions involving panels of northerners in five
 >> regions - Yukon, N.W.T., Nunavut, Nunavik and Labrador. The proposals
 >> were also reviewed by 2 national expert panels - one for
 >> communications and outreach proposals, and one for training and
 >> capacity building proposals. Recommendations were compiled and the
 >> selection of proposals for funding was made by a board made up of the
 >> Assistant Deputy Ministers Committee on IPY, representing the six
 >> federal departments of Canada's IPY program.
 >>
 >> With so many proposals received for training, as well as for
 >> traditional knowledge, and with the available funding for these
 >> components of the IPY program, only a few initiatives could be
 >> selected for funding from the more than 78 training and capacity
 >> building proposals received. Unfortunately, your proposal was not
 >> selected for funding.
 >>
 >> Thank you again for your interest in IPY. We wish you success in your
 >> future endeavours.
 >>
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 >>
 >>
 >> Kathleen Fischer
 >> Executive Director, Federal Program Office
 >> International Polar Year
 >> Room 745, 10 Wellington Street, Gatineau, Qc
 >> K1A 0H4
 >> tel: (819) 934-6085 fax: (819) 934-0584
 >>
 >> fischerk@ainc-inac.gc.ca <mailto:fischerk@ainc-inac.gc.ca>
 >>
 >>

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: IPY and IsumaTV
 Date: Thu, 05 Jun 2008 14:07:00 -0400
 From: Norman Cohn <cohn@isuma.ca>
 To: Ingrid Nielsen <nielsenin@ainc-inac.gc.ca>, Kathleen Fischer
 <FischerK@ainc-inac.gc.ca>
 CC: Zacharias Kunuk <zkunuk@isuma.ca>, Jamal Shirley
 <jshirley@nac.nu.ca>, Steph Rituit <stephane@isuma.ca>
 References: <4846BB2C.2070101@isuma.ca>
 <4847E1040200005100003774@smxhqksmtip.inac.gc.ca>

Thank you Ingrid. This letter is for Kathleen Fischer, Executive
 Director, International Polar Year Federal Program Office, who signed
 the letter to Zacharias currently in the mail.

Dear Kathleen,

On the day Zach receives an honorary doctorate from Trent University for
 bringing an Inuit point of view to worldwide attention, we are shocked
 and disappointed that the Government of Canada Training, Communications
 and Outreach Program for IPY, in which Inuit land and culture are so
 desperately implicated, would refuse to finance our proposed Inuit media
 and internet project, 'From an Inuit Point of View: Arctic Climate
 Change from the Inuit Side.'

Your form letter refusal 'following a thorough review process' gives no explanation why an Inuit media outreach project, led by the world's leading Inuit (and polar) filmmaker, would not be close to the top of IPY 'communications' priorities in Canada.

On Zach's behalf, please forward to us:

1. A more detailed explanation of why Isuma's two-year project to present an Inuit point of view was completely refused and awarded no funds at all;
2. A list of successful projects, amounts awarded and applicants so we can see against what competition, representing what range of geography and interests, our Inuit project failed to match up.

Please understand many people involved in developing this project had great hope for presenting Inuit concerns around Climate Change in a professional, public way, implicating elders, youth and prominent Inuit spokespeople across the north.

While other worthy projects must have been chosen for funding, Zach and his team deserve more consideration than a simple form letter rejection. Of course, as soon as we receive them, your explanation, and the list of successful applicants, will be circulated widely within Nunavut and Nunavik, and they will have an opportunity to respond directly to you.

sincerely
Norman Cohn
on behalf of Zacharias Kunuk

Ingrid Nielsen wrote:

> Hello, Norman.
>
> Thank you for contacting us. Below, I have pasted the contents of the letter that was sent to Zacharias Kunuk. The official signed letter is in the mail or may have already arrived at his address.
>
> thank you,
> Ingrid Nielsen

> May 23, 2008

> Zacharias Kunuk
> Igloolik Isuma Productions Inc.
> Box 223
> Igloolik, NU
> X0A 0L0
>
> Dear Zacharias Kunuk,
> On behalf of the Government of Canada Program for IPY, I would like to thank you and your colleagues for the considerable time and effort that you have taken to prepare a proposal for the IPY Training, Communications and Outreach call for proposals.
>
> Following a thorough review process, the Assistant Deputy Minister Committee on International Polar Year (IPY) has selected the IPY Training, Communications and Outreach projects to be funded by the

Government of Canada Program for IPY.

>

> Unfortunately, I regret to inform you that your proposal, From an Inuit Point of View: Arctic Climate Change form the Inuit Side, has not been selected for funding.

>

> This was a highly competitive process and a large number of excellent proposals were submitted. The selection process took into account several factors, including the geographical location of the projects, the variety of different types of projects and a balance of small and large initiatives. It was a very difficult task to choose from among so many high quality submissions.

>

> We thank you again for your submission and your interest in International Polar Year.

>

> Best regards,

>

>

>

> Kathleen Fischer

> Executive Director

> International Polar Year Federal Program Office

>

>

>

>>>> Norman Cohn <cohn@isuma.ca> 06/04/08 11:56 AM >>>

> hello Ingrid,

>

> I'm writing on behalf of Zacharias Kunuk and IsumaTV's IPY proposal,

> From an Inuit Point of View, filed last December for financing IPY

> training, communication and outreach projects.

>

> Jamal Shirley in IPY's Nunavut office just told me a notification letter

> has indeed been mailed to the Isuma proposal leader (Zach I presume)

> informing him of the outcome of the review. Zach is on the road down

> south right now and not likely to receive any letter for some time.

>

> I would appreciate your calling me at 514.576.0707, or emailing zach and

> me a scan of the letter so we can see the results as soon as possible.

>

> Zacharias Kunuk <zkunuk@isuma.ca>

> norman cohn <cohn@isuma.ca>

>

> Thank you for your consideration.

> Norman Cohn

>