PINNGUAQ

ᐱᙳᐊᖅ Proposal

The Iqaluit Makerspace

At: September 11, 2018

Overview

This document will serve as an initial exploration of what a Pinnguaq Makerspace site would do, how it would be run, and the types of partnerships and sponsorships it could develop. The purpose of this document is to map out a clear direction for the makerspace while outlining a path to permanent sustainability.

Background

The momentum surrounding the current popularity of makerspaces worldwide supports a vision of the future which necessitates the creation and control of technology, lest we give in to apocalyptic narratives of machines taking over the world. Yet makerspaces are also grounded in a "DIY" culture which outlines an ethics of creation and sustainability that promotes skill-building and self-directed learning, which grew popular in the United States and Canada in the 1960's and 1970's and were aligned with civic and social movements of the time. Similarly makerspaces encompass an ethos of "hacking", understood as a practice of taking an object with a specific use and repurposing it; or "hacktivism", which involves the subversive use of computer programs and networks.

For Inuit, the more recent concept of hacking largely refers to practices of innovation and adaptation that are deeply embedded in their history and culture; responding to change and social upheavals with teamwork, creativity, and consensus building. These very principals are built into the guiding Inuit values called Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit or "The Inuit Way of Knowing". Makerspaces are a natural extension of this history and philosophy.

Pinnguaq is working to provide that support and enable a space for education that supports Inuit values alongside 21st century skills like collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving, while emphasizing relationships to the land and the environment.

Mandate

The Iqaluit Makerspace will provide a central hub for creativity, innovation, and knowledge-sharing in Nunavut. The space will serve as a centre for exploration for growth in science, technology, engineering, arts, and math that converges with everyday living, language, and culture. If it's creative in any shape or form, it will have a home at the Pinnguaq Makerspace.

Vision

The Pinnguaq makerspace envisions a collaborative and social space that embraces an Inuit worldview alongside a creative approach to technology, enabling learning through practice and experimentation, and promoting innovation in all walks of life.

The Iqaluit Makerspace will provide a central hub for support, resources, and tools to learn and create for community members of all backgrounds in Iqaluit.

Mission

The Iqaluit Makerspace is an open and welcoming space for people of all ages and backgrounds to learn, explore, and create with technology while integrating Inuit culture and values and engaging all aspects of daily life in the City of Iqaluit.

We provide an open concept and drop-in centre for members to experiment with the tools, technologies, and resources made available at the space, while at the same time scheduling regular workshops, classes, events, exhibitions, camps, and residencies for our members and community to support targeted, in-depth explorations and learning.

We support the creative capacity of individuals by providing opportunities for collaboration, skill-building, and knowledge-sharing that will carry forward the culture of our community.

Types of Programming

The space offers the opportunity for all types of creativity and we are proposing the following model for the Makerspace that makes it available to people of all backgrounds and experience.

A Drop In and Create Centre

The Pinnguaq Makerspace will be available as on 'open lab' in which anyone wishing to come in to a creative environment and work on their own projects while accessing the equipment and learning resources in house are welcome to do so. This includes creative professionals who need a place to work and youth who want to come in after school and utilize technology they may not otherwise have access to. Our computer lab will be the centre of the space and feature high end computers that will be available for use, as well as VR headsets, 3D printers and other tools and technologies.

Programmed Classes and Workshops

We will program and facilitate a series of workshops, demos and classes that are programmed in response to the interests of our members. These will include:

te(a)ch Coding Camps

The Iqaluit Makerspace will regularly host regular coding and tech camps using material and resources developed by and available at pinnguaqlearning.space.

Family Workshops

Within our programming we will develop workshops and events that will be targeted towards families, in an attempt to include different generations to share knowledge and traditional practices while at the same time encouraging the participation and support of older family members in the explorations being undertaken by youth. Family programs will be inclusive of Elders, Adults, Youth, Children and Infants.

Carving Workshops

In time we will look to build a deck around the front and back of the building and promote carving workshops that involve local artisans and carvers. We look forward to being able to to host outdoor carving events and connect these events with 3D modeling and 3D printing indoors. Ultimately hosting physical art creation out and inside of the makerspace will provide an important connection between visual, sculptural and digital arts.

Kitchen and Cooking

We welcome programming surrounding cooking and baking along to provide valuable life learning experiences and creating a community around food.

Sewing Workshops

The makerspace will also seek to purchase high end sewing machines to allow for access to lessons and high end sewing opportunities that involve local artisans and seamspeople. In the same way carving opportunities will bring artists to the building, we hope sewing does the same.

Computer Refurbishment

Through our partnership with Computers for Schools Nunavut we will endeavour to be a house for refurbishment and distribution of computers. We will host courses and hire people to help build these relationships and support the CFS program across the territory.

Fundamentals of Computing

These workshops will be aimed for beginners of any age and will introduce the fundamentals of computing and digital skills through courses that range in content, including: The Absolute Basics (using and troubleshooting a computer), Introduction to Coding, The Efficient Workspace, Web Safety, Web Development, Online Banking and E-Commerce, Search Engines, Wikis and Research, as well as how to use Social Media and VoIP applications.

Teacher Training

While we focus on being a space open for everyone in the community, we hope to create a special relationship with teachers and involve them in workshops that would increase their skill in understanding, integrating and delivering computer programming and coding lesson plans as part of their teaching routine. These teacher training workshops are part of a larger collaboration with the Department of Education and the Nunavut school system that aims to integrate computer science into the curriculum.

Artist Residencies

Visiting artists, elders, carvers, sewers, printmakers, hunters, and other local craftspeople can come work, inspire, demonstrate,and guide young learners in their practice throughout a season. By creating at the Pinnguaq makerspace, the resident will work on their own projects while collaborating with staff and youth to guide learners on their discoveries.

Gallery and Exhibitions

The Pinnguaq Makerspace will showcase student work in house, and in partnerships with local galleries, museums and other organizations. It will be a platform for the display and celebration of the achievements of our members and act as a point of entry for the discussion of the processes and intentions that are part of each person's work.

Events and Collaborations

On occasion, Pinnguaq will schedule special events and host special guests and collaborators of the organization, including artist talks, special workshops and others. These will be special opportunities for conversation and knowledge-sharing that will be open to everyone in the community.

All in all, there will be very few limits on what can be hosted in the Pinnguaq makerspace. If it involves creation, particularly under the S.T.E.A.M envelope, it will have a home.

Membership

The goal of the Pinnguaq makerspace is to be open and available to everyone who has an interest while also being sustainable and working within a cost-recovery model. This will involve a combination of drop-in free events and activities along with some fee-based workshops and camps. Some scholarships and bursaries are available to community members.

To ensure that memberships can be obtained by all interested community members, regardless of socio-economic standing, we will work with local businesses and government to provide subsidized memberships.

Partnerships

A number of potential partnerships exist in Iqaluit already that could benefit from the Makerspace and vice versa. Beyond our existing relationships with QHRC, NAM, NAMA, NACA, and Embrace Life, that space will work to create partnerships across the territory and country. This will start during the opening week with Canada Learning Code's visit.

Comparable Sites/Influences

YuKonstruct - yukonstruct.com
A larger space in downtown Whitehorse, YuKonstruct functions as both a programming site and drop in/work centre. Open from 1-9 every day, YuKonstruct hosts a variety of programming and features membership fees that run from $50 monthly to $135 monthly. The most expensive option providing 24/7 access to the site.

Gamma Space - www.gammaspace.ca
A co-working studio and formerly the office space for some Pinnguaq staff. They offer some valuable influence in how we want to run a space and the sort of support we want to offer. Home of 'Dames Making Games', Gamma Space prioritises the LGBTQ community and the creation of inclusive events. Gamma Space builds community first and creates a place for it to congregate second.