"…I am not a scientist"

Our Weather in Pangnirtung

We interviewed an elder named Joanasie Qappik. We asked him questions about how the climate has changed. Joanasie said, "The wind has always come through Pangnirtung but what I've noticed is it comes unexpectedly. Back then we used to know when it was going to be windy. And that's when the clouds gathered in big chunks and they would turn into black."

We also asked him what he has noticed about the ice. He said the ocean used to start to freeze in the middle of October. Today you can see there's no ice even in a little area, even though this is the month that the ocean would freeze. He also told us that the ice used to break apart in the month of July, now it starts to break in the middle of June. "I've also noticed that the ice gets thinner each year."

"These days, I see black clouds almost everyday. They used to turn black only if it's going to get windy or when the weather is going to be warm. So my guess is that the weather is going to get warmer each year."

What do you notice about the glaciers? "The river are starting to flood faster because the glaciers have been melting. That's why our bridge washed away because the rivers are flooding fast."

I also asked him what he has noticed about the snow. He said, "It used to snow more back then but we don't get much of snow anymore. The weather used to be a lot colder, we could even see our breath from far away because of the coldness. Now we can only see it from up close."

"I am not a scientist nor am I a meteorologist, but I am telling you what I've noticed from the past," Joanasie said.

— Janet Evic

"…what about cultural change?"

Salt Water is not as Concentrated

The salt water in the ocean has changed over the years. Two elders Leah and Anna came to our environment class. They were talking about plants and how they use the land for traditional healing and other uses. One of my classmates asked the elders what they used for a healing remedy, for food and what was useful and important. What was surprising to me was the fact that they used salt water to heal sore throats and make Uuju (stew) instead of using table salt. The change of salt water concentration is the result of more fresh water being released into the ocean because of the increased amount of glacial melt. Climate change, what about cultural change?

— Julie Alivaktuk

Portraits of Resilience is part of the Many Strong Voices Programme. It illustrates in a personal way what climate change means to young people in the Arctic and helps communities create their own visual archive of the changes they are experiencing. More @ www.manystrongvoices.org