

## Lack of understanding

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Rankin Inlet (Mar 30/05) - Seal-hunt protesters have no understanding of Inuit tradition or their way of life, says the Department of Sustainable Development's special advisor for arts and traditional economy.

Theresie Tungalik says education is the key to ending protests like the one on Parliament Hill in Ottawa earlier this month.

She says although confronting protesters may make for good media coverage, its impact is questionable.

"I'm not really convinced passing out information at a protest is all that effective," says Tungalik.

"They're usually a one-time shot and who actually goes home with more information, or a different opinion, than what they came with is a difficult question.

"We need to educate people about the Inuit way of life through books, film, video, and as many other forms of media as possible."

Caught in a rut

Inuit, who hunt ring seal, have been dragged into the East Coast white coat harp seal hunt dispute for the past 32 years.

Tungalik says it's tough for Inuit to escape that rut because most Canadians don't understand their way of life, and people outside Canada lump all Canadians together when it comes to seal hunting.

"Canada is a diverse nation and lifestyles vary greatly depending on where you're located in our country.

"People in the South don't understand what it's like to pay more than \$100 for a small box of groceries.

"They also don't understand Inuit need their country food to stay healthy."

### **Wrong not to use skin**

Tungalik says it's wrong not to use the skin of an animal killed for food.

She says as long as Inuit continue to eat the meat, there's nothing wrong with selling the skin.

"Because we are colonized aboriginal people who have been made to live in communities, we have to adapt.

"Therefore our ways have changed in many areas, but we still need the caribou, fish, seal and walrus.

"We are not trigger-happy people who just love to kill. We need what we hunt to survive."

In order for their traditional economy to continue, Inuit must do more than simply sell sealskins.

Tungalik says many Kivalliq youth have a flair for design and the potential exists for that talent to be developed and become prosperous.

"The activists have no understanding of any of this, yet they have tonnes of money behind them and all we have is the truth.

"In many ways, that's what this boils down to -- a battle of truth against money!"