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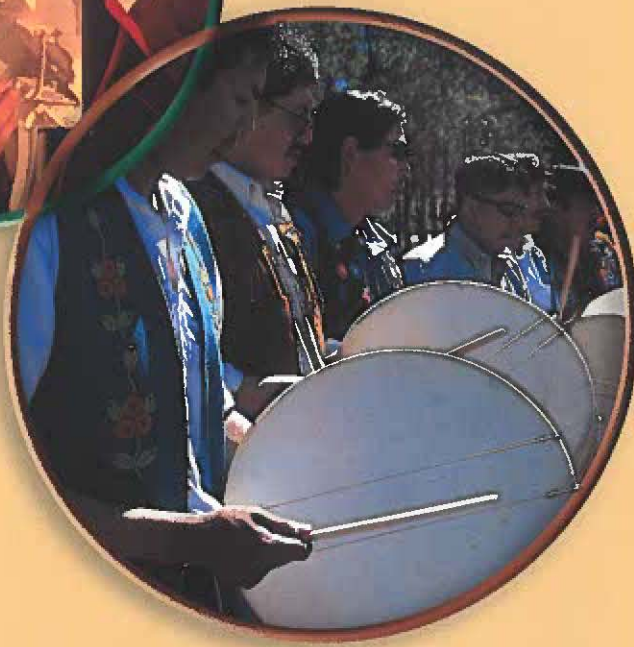
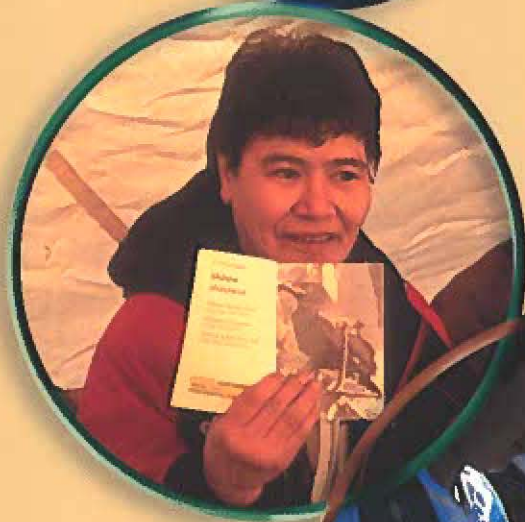
**Goal 1**

# **Pride In Our Culture**

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## **Culture, Heritage and Languages**

One of Five Goal Summaries of  
*Building on Our Success – Strategic Plan 2005-2015*



## Minister's Message



I am very pleased to introduce *Building on Our Success*, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's third Strategic Plan. This plan provides a framework for our activities over the next decade until 2015, and sets out a series of goals that reflect the concerns of the people of the Northwest Territories.

Our Territory is changing quickly. More than ever, it is clear that a solid education is essential for all Northerners. Effective early learning and school programs are needed to give children opportunities to grow and develop. Further education and training must be a priority for adults, so all Northerners can take advantage of employment opportunities.

At the same time, it is critical to nurture and protect our cultural heritage so that we do not lose the knowledge, skills and history that make us unique. Given the rate of change in the North, our languages and traditions are under considerable pressure. We must work together to celebrate and strengthen the cultures that have served generations of Northerners.

The goals in this Strategic Plan are the result of extensive consultation with Northerners. Over the past few years, you have told us what you want and need through survey responses, focus groups, public meetings and other correspondence. I appreciate your response. You will see in this plan that we have heard what you had to say.

This plan builds on two previous plans. The recommendations of our first plan in 1984, *Learning: Tradition and Change in the Northwest Territories*, led to the creation of our divisional boards of education and Aurora College, both essential parts of our education system today. Our second plan, *People: Our Focus for the Future*, was developed in 1994 when the Department of Education had expanded to become the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Goals set out in that plan led to extension of culture, education and career development services in Northern communities.

This 2005 Plan recognizes both the strengths and weaknesses of our past actions. It celebrates the success enjoyed by many who have accessed our programs and services, and proposes ways to build on that success.

We are looking forward to working with our partners and the citizens of the Northwest Territories to address the challenges and celebrate the successes that the next decade will bring.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles Dent". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Charles Dent**

**Minister of Education, Culture and Employment**

**2005**



## Pride in Our Culture

### Introduction

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment recently released a strategic plan titled, *Building on Our Success*. The plan describes the goals and actions that the Department plans to undertake during the period 2005 through 2015. To support the release of the Plan a series of five booklets have been prepared – one on each of the key areas of Departmental responsibility.


This booklet, *Pride in Our Culture – Culture, Heritage and Languages*, lays out the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment's goal, objectives, priorities and actions related to Culture, Heritage and Languages.

A summary of the goals and objectives for the complete plan is provided on the following page. This summary illustrates how the activities of the Department are linked together.

For further detail, please refer to the complete document *Building on Our Success – Strategic Plan 2005-2015* which can be requested from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment or found on our website at <http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/>.



Goals	Pride in Our Culture	Education of Children and Youth	Education of Adults	A Skilled and Productive Work Environment	People Participating Fully in Society
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preservation and knowledge of our heritage</li> <li>2. Promotion of the arts</li> <li>3. Support and promote our official languages</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A strong foundation for learning</li> <li>2. Students achieving their potential</li> <li>3. A results-based education system</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Access and choice for adult learners</li> <li>2. A responsive college</li> <li>3. An integrated adult learning network</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Northerners making informed career choices</li> <li>2. A skilled workforce</li> <li>3. A productive work environment</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An integrated system of program supports</li> <li>2. A comprehensive system of financial supports</li> <li>3. A responsive income security system</li> </ol>
Cross-Goal Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strong and Effective Partnerships ECE is committed to strengthening local, territorial and federal partnerships, and working collaboratively to address problems and achieve results.</li> <li>2. High Quality Human Resources ECE is committed to developing a skilled, productive civil service that represents the people it serves.</li> <li>3. Responsive Information Systems ECE is committed to the collection, analysis and provision of information about its programs and services through systems that are responsive, reliable, available, and serviceable.</li> <li>4. Facilities that Match Program Delivery Requirements ECE is committed to defining and addressing additional facility requirements.</li> <li>5. Effective Performance Planning, Monitoring and Measurement ECE is committed to managing itself effectively, ensuring that it spends responsibly, develops transparent decision-making processes, monitors and reports on its progress, and is accountable for results.</li> </ol>				



# Pride In Our Culture, Heritage and Languages



Culture, heritage and language are the foundation for learning.

We begin, at an early age, to understand the world through the lens provided by our culture and heritage. As we develop our language skills we begin to describe the world around us using words and grammar. Language shapes how we express ourselves and is essential to forming and understanding ideas and concepts.

The NWT has a rich fabric of culture, language and heritage. This is recognized by the fact that the NWT has eleven official languages. ECE, along with partners such as families and communities, has an important role to play in ensuring that the profound importance of culture, language and heritage is reflected in all aspects of Northern life.

During the development of this Plan we heard that it is essential to ensure that activities related to culture, language and heritage form an integral part of the ECE's responsibilities. People emphasized the importance of recognizing and celebrating the diversity of





# Culture

the NWT by working with communities to record and document histories, historic places, traditions and culture. People also wanted ECE, and the GNWT as a whole, to show leadership in supporting language, arts and heritage activities through a wide variety of programs and services.

## Objectives

- 1. Preservation and Knowledge of our Heritage*
- 2. Promotion of the Arts*
- 3. Support & Promote our Official Languages*

## Vision

*Northerners who are knowledgeable about and proud of their culture.*



## 21st Century Environment

### Heritage

Heritage refers to those aspects of our culture that we inherit from earlier generations. Knowing where we come from helps to ground us in the present and to prepare us for the future.

In the NWT, people are the main repositories of heritage information. Many Elders, who have lived much of their life on the land, have a profound knowledge of the heritage of the past generations. This information is essential in understanding how things were done in the past and why the past is important to the future. With the passing of Elders, the globalization of communications and thought, and the reduced focus on some traditions, we may well lose much of this traditional knowledge. Such loss would have a great impact on the people of the NWT.

Archaeological and historical sites and culturally significant areas are also important parts of our heritage. They, too, are at risk of being lost as the pace of northern resource development increases. The proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline, mines, roads, municipal expansion and other types of development have the potential to damage the record of human occupation in the NWT. As a result, careful work with communities throughout the NWT is required to ensure that historical places are identified and protected.

We now have access to new tools to help us document and preserve our heritage. This new media can document, record and make available information and stories in a way that has never before been possible, and has the potential to provide information about our heritage to a much broader audience.

### Arts

Community health, personal identity and growth are nurtured by the visual, performing and literary arts. Artists support the culture and heritage of the communities in which they live. They also challenge our perspectives, and stimulate new ways of thinking.

This connection between the arts and social well-being was recognized by ECE and the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment in the 2004 *NWT Arts Strategy*, which advocates a holistic role for the GNWT in supporting education, creation, and appreciation





of the arts. The Strategy is not yet fully implemented, but is expected to guide future GNWT investments and activities in this sector.

## Language

Throughout history, languages have been in flux. Language strength increases and decreases with changes in economic, social and political conditions. However, the current pace of change in language use around the world is unprecedented as more and more traditional languages disappear. There are approximately 6,000 languages in the world and it is estimated that:

- Over 50% of these are endangered.
- 96% of these languages are spoken by only 4% of the world's population.
- On average, one language disappears every two weeks.

Most of the eleven official languages spoken in the Northwest Territories only exist in Canada, and a number are spoken only in the North. If they are lost from our region, they are lost entirely. The decline of these minority languages is a serious loss from a cultural, historic and economic standpoint. Although there are economic reasons for preserving language diversity, the emphasis must be on the relationship between language, culture and one's sense of self-worth. Languages embody the intellectual wealth of the people who speak them.

## Aboriginal Language Use

The NWT is home to Canada's second largest concentration of Aboriginal citizens, comprising nearly half of its population. **The official Aboriginal languages of the NWT are: Chipewyan, Cree, Dogrib, Gwich'in, Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey and South Slavey.**

Statistics for most Aboriginal languages show a persistent decline in the number of young speakers. While nearly 40% of the NWT's Aboriginal population report the ability to speak an Aboriginal language, nearly 35% of them are over the age of 45 (Canada Census of 1996). Between 1984 and 1999, the percentage of Aboriginal people who could speak their language declined by 9% among Inuvialuit speakers, 15% among those speaking Gwich'in,





16% for Slavey, 19% for Chipewyan and 13% for Cree. In contrast the number of Tlicho speakers declined by some 4%.

Among factors contributing to the declining health of the NWT's Aboriginal languages are:

- English and French are the principal languages of use in most parts of Canada.
- The intergenerational transmission of Aboriginal languages was interrupted by the attendance of students in residential schools.
- The segment of the population that is most fluent in Aboriginal languages is aging.
- Media, such as radio, television, print and Internet, are primarily available in English or French.
- The small numbers of people in each language group.

*“With more online resources available (such as the Lessons from the Land Idaa Trail), the web becomes a more useful teaching tool”  
– Survey Respondent*

The evidence suggests that important decisions must be made in the immediate future if the diversity of Aboriginal language usage in the NWT is to be protected.

## French Language Use

The NWT French language community is concentrated largely in Yellowknife, with smaller communities in Hay River, Fort Smith and Inuvik. In 2001, the total number of people that reported French as their mother tongue was about 950 or 2% of the NWT population while a total of 3,170 people, or some 8% of the NWT population, reported being able to speak French. The age distribution of people able to speak French has remained relatively unchanged between 1996 and 2001. Almost 90% of the NWT Francophone population was born outside the NWT.

The strength and sustainability of the community are bolstered by the language protection provisions in Section 23 of the Canadian Constitution, and a strong French-speaking population elsewhere in Canada and the world.

## Measuring Success

We will measure our success by the number of people who use their language, and who celebrate their heritage and culture in their homes, in the classroom, on the job and in their communities.

# Objectives, Priorities and Actions

## Objective 1:

### Preservation and Knowledge of our Heritage

Leadership in the preservation our heritage is a task that involves a broad range of individuals and groups. The Departmental focus must provide a broad basis to which family and communities can turn for support.

#### Priority: Preservation of our heritage

- Actions:
- Partner with communities to document traditional knowledge and archaeological and historical sites.
  - Working with communities, identify gaps in current documentation and develop plans to address information gaps.
  - Develop a strategy to systematically collect museum and archival materials for public collections.
  - Develop new exhibits that convey messages about the culture and heritage of the people of the NWT.
  - Develop a new policy to support community heritage organizations in their efforts to preserve and make heritage information accessible.

#### Priority: Provide access to heritage information

- Actions:
- Prepare new exhibits to travel to NWT communities.
  - Improve access to heritage information, including cultural and heritage information in the archival and museum collections, through the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre website.
  - Ensure that outreach programs are meeting the needs of schools and culture and heritage organizations in the NWT.
  - Fully integrate culture and heritage programs in the school and postsecondary systems.





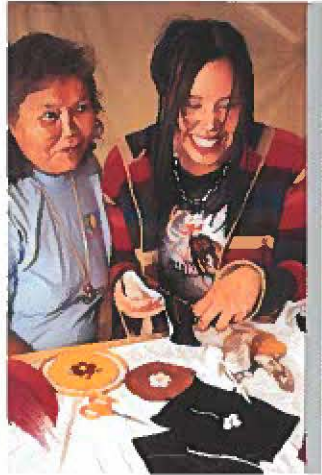


## Objective 2:

### Promotion of the Arts

Priority: Provide opportunities for people to learn about and engage in the arts.

- Actions:
- Develop fine arts curriculum for school use.
  - Develop promotional materials on opportunities in the arts.
  - Provide contributions to support community festivals.



Priority: Support creation of arts

- Actions:
- Implement the *NWT Arts Strategy*.
  - Provide funding to artists at various stages of their career through the NWT Arts Council.
  - Provide opportunities for artists to display their work to the public.
  - Partner with Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) to conduct regular reviews of the results of the *NWT Arts Strategy Implementation Plan*.

## Objective 3:

### Support and Promote our Official Languages

Priority: Provide program support

- Actions:
- Negotiate contribution agreements and support Aboriginal language communities and Aboriginal broadcasting societies.
  - Provide funding to create learning environments that support the efforts of language communities to revitalize their languages.

*Objective 3 con't ...*

- Provide funding and supports to promote the value of the NWT's Official Languages and their continued use in day-to-day activities.
- Support Aboriginal language communities in developing and implementing their strategic language plans.

**Priority: Develop resource materials**

- Actions:**
- Provide language resource materials to promote the use of NWT official languages as living and working languages in the following areas:
    - Geographic Place Names
    - Terminology Development
    - Aboriginal Languages Website
    - Language Planning
    - Language Promotion
    - Results-based Management and Accountability Framework Implementation/ Evaluation

**Priority: Ensure compliance with the *Official Languages Act***

- Actions:**
- Create an Official Languages Division within ECE to support and promote the language use within the GNWT and in communities of the NWT.
  - Consolidate administrative and policy support for the implementation of the *Official Languages Act* within that division.
  - Conduct routine compliance reviews within the GNWT regarding availability of language services as required under the *Official Languages Act* and the *Official Languages Policy*.
  - Report on an annual basis on GNWT activities associated with official languages.





## Pride in Our Culture

### Conclusion

This booklet summarizes the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's planned activities related to Culture, Heritage and Languages. It is one of a series of booklets that have been developed to illustrate the goals, objectives and priorities of the Department during the next ten years. There are similar guides available that review planned actions related to the four other Departmental goals: Education of Children and Youth, Adult and Postsecondary Education, A Skilled and Productive Workforce, and People Participating Fully in Society.

The Departmental Strategic Plan was prepared based on broad consultation with the public and various stakeholders. It outlines a framework for Departmental activities that builds upon the successes of the past decade. Within the scope of the Plan, the Department will continue to work closely with a wide range of organizations and individuals to develop detailed actions that will strengthen current programs and services and improve overall results. The Department is committed to reporting on a regular basis to the public on achievements and advances related to the Plan.

The complete document *Building on Our Success – Strategic Plan 2005-2015* also includes five cross-goal strategies. For those interested, the complete Plan can be requested from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment or found on our website at <http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/>.