

AKLAVIK COMMUNITY WELLNESS PLAN 2013



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Background

Over the last 75 years Inuvialuit Beneficiaries of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) have had a number of lifestyle changes forced upon them, often without their consent or knowledge. Many of these changes have caused a number of negative social conditions which still exist today. These conditions include the loss of traditional values and lifestyle, increased levels of substance abuse and mental illness, increased levels of family violence, criminal activity, low education levels, low income levels and increased incidences of health problems like flu, cancer including chronic conditions such as diabetes.

Government social programs originally designed to address these issues have proven inadequate and ineffective and have at times further exacerbated the low education levels and dependency on government programs, specifically on income support. The trauma and cultural loss resulting from the Government of Canada's residential school policy, now a well-established legacy, are still impacting the communities in the region. Particularly problematic impacts include the lack of parenting skills, weakened family structure, and an overall cultural disconnection. Conditions are further compounded by the current under-resourcing in the area of early childhood programming, the social conditions within which many Inuvialuit live, and the lack of cultural relevance in education and government programming generally. (Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, 2007).

About Aklavik

Aklavik is located in the ISR, which is a Region that was created under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA) signed in 1984. The Agreement gave the Inuvialuit financial compensation and ownership of 91,000 square kilometres of land including 13,000 square kilometres with subsurface rights to oil, gas and minerals. The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) was created in 1986 to oversee the affairs of the settlement outlined in the final agreement. Overseeing such affairs involves programs and services that continually improve the economic, social and cultural well being of Inuvialuit. Aklavik like all Inuvialuit Communities has a community corporation with elected directors. The directors of the six community corporations elect a chair or chief executive officer to the IRC.

Aklavik began in the early 1900s with the Hudson's Bay Company opening a trading post in 1912 and the Roman Catholic Church establishing a mission in 1926 (Aklavik, 2013). At that time the community of Aklavik was more or less considered the administrative centre of the western Arctic but often experienced flooding. In those days experts believed the flooding would continue so in 1955 the decision was made to move the community to what is now called the Town of Inuvik.

Despite this formal move many people who lived in Aklavik at that time did not believe it would one day be under water and therefore remained in the community. And today Aklavik's boasts a population of well over 600 people earning their motto "never say die".

Aklavik's health services include a Health Centre open Monday to Friday with after hour's emergency services when the caller can speak with a nurse. Like all the NWT communities, Aklavik also has access to the NWT Governments Tele-Care service that provides telephone triage and health advice service 24 hours a day/7 days a week so that residents can access services without the requirement to travel to a health center. The health centre is called the Susie Husky Health and Social Services Centre and it houses the positions of 1 Nurse in Charge (NIC), 3 Community Health Nurses (CHN), 1 Dental Therapist, 1 Community Health Representative (CHR), 1 Home Support Worker, 1 Clerk and 1 Caretaker. Services and programs offered in Aklavik and the region including Community Counselling, Continuing Care, Dental Therapy, Diabetes Education, Health Promotion, Nutrition, Rehabilitation Services, Social Programs, and TeleHealth. Aklavik also has access to the Inuvik Hospital via a 20 minute plane ride or 2 hour drive on the ice road during the winter months. Other services include an RCMP detachment, an Aurora College Learning Centre, a Northern Store, a Stanton Store and the privately owned Aklavik General Store.

A. J. (Moose) Kerr School in Aklavik holds approximately 150 students and provides education for children from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The Municipal Government is represented through the Town of Aklavik.

Wellness Planning Process

The Community Development Division of IRC is the division that assists individuals, families, and the communities to set goals and develop solutions to cultural, economic, social, and health challenges. The CDD also works with other regional, territorial, and national organizations to identify, develop, and deliver programs that benefit Inuvialuit (Corporation, 2007).

In keeping with IRCs goal to continually find ways to improve the conditions of the Inuvialuit, IRC and the CDD welcomed the opportunity by Health Canada to partner in the development of a wellness plan for each of the communities in the ISR. This presented an excellent opportunity to gather, synthesize and prioritize a plethora of documented research accumulated by IRC over the last 20 years. Many of these documents included a number of comprehensive engagement processes with the Inuvialuit people therefore meant that the wellness planning did not have to start 'from scratch' as all of the communities had well established formal and informal visions and strategies used to deal with wellness issues.

The wellness plan process involved CDD representatives holding a public workshop in the community of Aklavik to ascertain how current programs related to health and wellness were fairing, and determining what issues were still a concern for the community and therefore still a priority. The workshop was an interactive discussion regarding four key areas that had been

previously identified by the region as contributing to overall community wellness. These four key areas form the framework for all community wellness plans and include: Education and Learning, Capacity Building and Training, Health and Wellness, Language and Culture.

Results from the workshop were documented. The strategies and programs under each of the above headings were rated as high, medium or lower in priority and will inform any future program development provided through additional funding opportunities and in preparation for Self-Government Leadership.

What follows is Aklavik's Community Wellness Plan completed March 2013.

Education and Training

Every child will be given the best opportunity to learn and grow in their early years, preparing them for school, setting them up to reach their full potential throughout the rest of their life. With strong stay-in-school initiatives and culturally relevant education strategies all youth will achieve competency in core subject areas and graduate with functional skills that prepare them for employment or post-secondary education.

Inuvialuit youth attending school will be engaged and interested in their education; a broad range of learning opportunities and programs supported by both the school and the larger community will be made available to facilitate this. Programs will include a strong cultural component in both program delivery and content in order to further engage learners.

Our children and youth will have the best possible education experience delivered by teachers who are experienced, engaged in the local community, and who stay in their positions for extended periods of time. In addition, a high proportion of teachers will originate from the region. Parents will be engaged with their children's education both at home and in the school and provide crucial support for school and school related programming.

Higher Priority Goals

1. Increase stay-in-school initiatives, career counseling and other additional support for students at risk of dropping out of high school
2. Core math, science and shop classes available in all schools.
3. Increased support for children with speech and language challenges.

Projects or Programs to Address Goals

- Identify core funding to develop and carry out a Fundamental Skills Curriculum that ensures the attainment of skills in key areas such as literacy and numeracy, courses that are required for lifelong learning and employment. Also ensure funding in place for shop courses necessary to introduce students to the current employment market within the trades.
- Execute a joint research partnership with IRC, NWT EC&E, BDEC and Lakehead University to assess current GNWT Education Policy, identifying reasons for dramatic differences in graduation rates between Inuvialuit youth and the euro-Canadian population. Research to include substantial consultation with communities as well as possible recommendations to the GNWT for more culturally relevant learning models, for the ISR and /or in preparation for Self-Government Education portfolio. Identify gaps discovered with research project in teacher-parent communication and develop

programs accordingly. Develop policy that promotes and supports parent-school-teacher interfacing.

- Develop a **School Liaison** position to target students at risk of dropping out. Operate the position from a case management perspective developing stay in school strategies involving the student, home, school, psycho-social supports, and any other identified supports.
- Develop an **Ability Education Assistant** position trained to carry out assessments of students with learning abilities and disabilities, and develop Individualized **Learning Plans** for struggling students, as well as for over or under challenged students. Position to also aid in the instruction and support of multi-grade classrooms.
 - Learning Plans will be tailored to the individual and therefore flexible and creative in nature, potentially including on-the-land learning experiences, utilize a variety of teaching methods, with well developed links to existing programs like the Sun Child Program, and Distance Education programs. Plan choices will also include a program specifically tailored to support youth and adults in completing their Grade 12 via distance learning as an alternate option to leaving the community. The Ability Education Assistant position and the School Liaison position will be heavily linked.

Medium Priority Goals

4. Increased Inuvialuktun Language curriculum and cultural programming.
5. Promote participation in College, University and other post-secondary education including more course options leading to entry into post-secondary education.
6. Continue support for early childhood education programs and kindergarden programs.

Projects or Programs to Address Goals

- Develop and offer an Inuvialuktun language and culture curriculum within the school, including an on-the-land component, as an elective and /or core subject adapted to both elementary and secondary school. The Inuvialuktun language and culture class to be a credit course.
- Compare current and projected employment market within the local, regional and national realms to ensure East Three school trade and technology programs are current and forward thinking. Modify/develop curriculum based on any identified gaps and include apprenticeships/hands on learning as a major component
- Ensure both curriculum and specific grade expectations in high school grades 9 - 12 are being successfully attained by all students and therefore in sync with entry level college/university courses / requirements. Completion of grade 12 should be all that is required prior to entering a post secondary institution. The Ability Education Assistant will carry out on-going assessments in order to be alerted as soon as possible to any student falling behind or working below the competencies set for every grade.

- Develop culturally appropriate and relevant programming, including Head Start to operate out of the communities centre for early childhood development.
- Develop a regional early childhood program fundamentally entrenched within the Inuvialuit culture, including language, culture and Inuvialuit role models.

Lower Priority Goals

7. Increased cultural relevance of early childhood programs.
8. Research culturally based learning models.
9. Increased programs for students who are exceeding their grade levels and need more challenge.
10. Increase support for children with speech and language challenges
11. Implement more trades and technology programs in high school, including pre-apprenticeship programs.
12. Increase availability of summer work placements for youth
13. Increase the awareness and cultural sensitivity of teachers from outside the region
14. Decrease turnover rates in teaching staff overall
15. Develop on-the-land based credits and curriculum
16. Increased connections between community and teachers, better teacher retention, and more teachers from local communities
17. Increase capacity to attract and retain teachers especially in small communities, and to train local people to become teachers

Projects or Programs to Address Goals

- Execute a joint research partnership with IRC, NWT EC&E, BDEC and Lakehead University to assess current GNWT Education Policy, identifying reasons for dramatic differences in graduation rates between Inuvialuit youth and the euro-Canadian population. Research to include substantial consultation with communities as well as possible recommendations to the GNWT for more culturally relevant learning models, for the ISR and /or in preparation for Self-Government Education portfolio. Identify gaps discovered with research project in teacher-parent communication and develop programs accordingly. Develop policy that promotes and supports parent-school-teacher interfacing.
- In partnership with the NWT Department of Education, NWT Human Resources (HR), the Beaufort Delta Education Council (BDEC) and local education authority representatives establish a **Community Attraction and Retention Working Group**

(CARG) in order to identify where and why retention is failing in the small communities, with the aim of developing strategies and policy changes to rectify.

- Also through CARG address the current non-inclusive (i.e. lack of community voice) hiring policies and practices of the GNWT, specifically within education. With an inclusive hiring process, a better teacher-community fit is supported. Ensure within hiring process the requirement of an onsite interview and minimum five day stay within the receiving community for a new teacher.
- Develop a **Community Liaison** position to provide practical and relevant information (local customs, community orientation, on the land safety, regional and local history, etc.) to new teachers. The Community Liaison position also introduces and connects new teachers with people within the community to help provide opportunities to experience and understand the Inuvialuit cultural way of life. The position provides on-going support to new teachers for the duration of their stay availing themselves for such things as troubleshooting problems and developing solutions. This position could potentially be jointly funded and regional to provide support to a number of newly arrived persons within various government/ non-governmental positions.
- Working with IRC, ITI, HR Development Canada identify funding/incentives to create student summer job placements. Placements don't have to necessarily be in the home community. Have these placements identified at the start of the school year.
- In partnership with the Regional Traditional Knowledge Committee and Aurora College develop a Traditional Teachings Program. Identify those community members skilled in the areas of Traditional Knowledge including activities, culture and language to ensure both local and regional content. Include this course as part of both the elementary and secondary schools core course content. Address and reduce any conflicts with harvesting times and Government and Aboriginal Government programs/ programming in order to maximize community access to on the land and traditional activities.
- HR to develop an Interview Preparation program that walks students through and prepares students for the interview process (including mock interviews as part of the training).
- Establish core funding for the necessary equipment and resources are available for both school and adult training and education initiatives, especially in the smaller communities. For example: ensure a low student-to-computer ratio to support a higher level of access, and therefore better chance of developing competencies with this important learning tool in today's society.

Capacity Building and Training

With locally available training programs as well as easily accessible upgrading programs, regional residents will be able to effectively compete for jobs available in the region. With the addition of strong professional development training programs, residents of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region will have a strong, managerial presence in local governance bodies and

community organizations. Regional residents will then be effectively competing for non-entry level positions and managerial positions within the region.

Higher Priority Goals

1. Increase availability of employment training programs and opportunities for adult learners, including on-the-job training and mentorship programs
2. Implement of a regional training and capacity program that addresses the needs of community and regional governments

Projects or Programs to Address Goals

- Develop an Employment Officer position with dedicated office space in every community. This position will provide information on current training and employment opportunities, provide up to date information on certifications, potential funding as well offer resources such as job preparation and interview workshops, help with criminal record checks/forgiveness, developing resumes, job sharing opportunities, work placements, identifying any employer EI incentive, etc., overall support for those trying to secure employment. In addition provide equipment and support for distance education including enhanced internet connection.
- Execute an employability scan of the ISR taking stock of each community's workforce, identifying the need for specific certifications required to keep people employable. With gaps identified provide the necessary certifications and for new employment initiatives include on the job training, apprenticeship and mentoring components. To ensure as much opportunity as possible promote training to take place in community utilizing distance learning programs, Sun Child Program, etc., including one to one tutoring support.
- Develop a Family Literacy Outreach Program to assess individuals and develop learning plans to help specific families upgrade their literacy and numeracy skills.

Medium Priority Goals

3. Implement formalized professional development programs in Inuvialuit organizations

Projects or Programs to Address Goals

- Identify the skill set required for leadership and staffing in the ISR, including the development of core competencies required to address the unique needs of each community. Tailor a program for the region that addresses lacked skills or expertise.
- Research best practices and maintain ongoing consultation with ISR communities to keep current an on-going Professional Development Program in the region.

Lower Priority Goals

4. Increase skill levels among community leaders and staff
5. Run adult academic programs including increasing levels of literacy and numeracy among adults
6. Increase opportunities for adult learners through education and training

Projects or Programs to Address Goals

- Identify the skill set required for leadership and staffing in the ISR, including the development of core competencies required to address the unique needs of each community. Tailor a program for the region that addresses lacked skills or expertise.
- Research best practices and maintain ongoing consultation with ISR communities to keep current an on-going Professional Development Program in the region.

Health and Wellness

All residents of the ISR should experience good levels of physical health and well-being supporting giving them the ability to be active and productive members of their community. In particular, recreation and cultural activities should support and enhance physical fitness and healthy lifestyles. High levels of mental health and well-being are reflective of healthy communities overall.

All residents will be able to access supports to enhance and maintain their mental health and well-being. In particular, addictions treatment that is culturally relevant and locally accessible is important. All residents will have access to health care services and the provision of accessible and high quality services locally and regionally. Services will be culturally sensitive and of a quality reflective of the Canadian average. A comprehensive regional health promotion strategy will mitigate the rates of diabetes, obesity, smoking, cardiovascular disease, addictions, and dental decay.

Higher Priority Goals

1. Develop regional addictions treatment facility and addictions aftercare and counselling programming in communities
2. Support initiatives for addictions prevention and intervention programs and mental health initiatives

3. Implement counselling program to address residential school traumas

Projects or Programs to Address Goals

- The Community Wellness Centre (CWC) in Aklavik will be connected to the Inuvik Community Wellness Centre- a multi-use centre. CWCs' will enable service coordination and cooperation, and will provide services that come to the people, providing many missing pieces in the continuum for individual and family mental health and well-being. This CWC Inuvik would provide the following programs: Detox and Treatment Services, Transitional Housing Program, Counselling & Support Services, Drop-in Centre, Sober Club Activities, Cultural Activities, Health and Wellness Library, and Partnering Agency Time, etc. The CWC is based on the following four concepts Evidenced Based Psychosocial Treatment Interventions, Continuum of Care, Case Management, and Front-line Training in Evidence Based Practice. The community of Aklavik would have access to all these resources to support aftercare and transitional support including the following:
 - A detoxification service in the Beaufort Delta Region is an important piece to the addictions recovery system. Inpatient Services - Detoxification is often the first therapeutic contact between patient and clinician. A detoxification episode should provide an opportunity for a bio-psycho-social assessment, stabilization and the fostering of the individual's readiness for and entry into a treatment system and plan. Because motivation can be fleeting, it is important that community front line staff is prepared to engage in the process of getting the patient who is in need of detoxification services into the addictions recovery system quickly. Evaluation of this service would be measured, in part, as to whether individuals continue on in the addictions recovery system post detoxification.
 - Outpatient Services - Outpatient Detox Services would be for those needing daily medical monitoring and /or psychological withdrawal support and services. This unit would also include beds for those who are too intoxicated: to be put in cells, to return home, who are homeless, and/or those who want to sober up, but don't medically require it. This unit would also provide the opportunity for those who make the decision to initiate physical withdrawal.
 - Counselling and Support - It is critical that the CWC have on-site a range of support and counselling services. These positions have relevant training and or expertise, and are culturally competent. Important roles and positions would include both formal and informal supports: Mental Health and Addictions Counsellor, Elder Support Worker, Resolution Health Support Worker, Outreach Worker, Advocate, Peer Support Workers, Wellness Workers, Cultural Support Workers – whomever the community deems an important helper.

Medium Priority Goals

4. Implement a comprehensive health promotion strategy
5. Enhance mental health counselling in communities

6. Implement strategy for recruiting and maintaining health care professionals who live and work in the region for extended periods of time

Projects or Programs to Address Goals

- In partnership with the BDHSSA, local Health Centre and community of Aklavik develop a culturally competent Family Health and Fitness strategy and subsequent programs, providing education, and activities to insure increased physical fitness for all family members. Programs will target key groups including Elders with their specific social, psychological and physical needs, Youth including education on sexual health, and Young Families with a focus on parenting and pre and post-natal care. Community ownership and direction of programming will be the major vehicles in the success of this strategy.
- In partnership with NWT EC&E, BDHSSA and Aurora College develop a strategy to increase locally held health care positions. Include mentoring and /or laddering opportunities and increased funding and loan forgiveness programs.
- Utilizing data acquired through the IRC MH&A Study develop a mental health and addictions prevention strategy for Aklavik with connections to regional strategy. Through a community effort ensure strategies include programming targeting addictions such as smoking and gambling, are culturally appropriate and repeat prevention programs two to three times a year.
- Through trained Beneficiaries within the ISR ensure two workshops a year of each MHFA and ASIST
- In partnership with BDHSSA and in consultation with the communities develop strategy for better access to health care services for those communities at a disadvantage due to distance and population size. Improved satellite support such as Tele-health. The development and support of both formal and informal home supports, transitional supports and others will be a major component of this strategy.

Lower Priority Goals

7. Enhance recreation programming – more opportunities and more culturally relevant programs
8. Run prevention, treatment and aftercare programs with parents and expectant mothers to prevent substance abuse
9. Life skills programming
10. Promote recreation in the form of traditional harvesting and increase other recreational activities and facilities to foster healthy eating habits
11. Enhance programs to support local people being trained in health care professions
12. Enhance access to health care services in remote communities and improve quality of service

13. Implement sexual education and addictions prevention programming in high schools
14. Run addictions prevention, stop smoking, and sexual health programs
15. Run parenting programs to address the residential schools legacy
16. Implement education programs for new parents including pre-and post-natal programs
17. Increase healthy living initiatives
18. Increase health and physical fitness activities for all ages
19. Support programs for elders
20. Enhance access to dental care
21. Increase support for parents

Projects or Programs to Address Goals

- In partnership with the BDHSSA, local Health Centre and community of Aklavik develop a culturally competent Family Health and Fitness strategy and subsequent programs, providing education, and activities to insure increased physical fitness for all family members. Programs will target key groups including Elders with their specific social, psychological, inclusion, physical and safety needs, Youth including education on sexual health, and Young Families with a focus on parenting and pre and post-natal care. Community ownership and direction of programming will be the major vehicles in the success of this strategy.
- In partnership with GNWT Department of Health and Social Services and GNWT HR identify where and why retention of healthcare professionals is failing in the small communities. Establish an IRC/NWT HSS/NWT HR partnership to develop new hiring protocols that will better determine best fit for health care professional and community. Establish IRC participation in hiring and include an onsite interview component within the community in need.
- Increase funding to programs combining harvesting and recreational activities such as “Take a Kid Trapping”.
- In consultation with communities and BDHSSA Regional Wellness Worker develop a regional lifeskills program that includes skill building in areas such as budgeting, money management, healthy relationships, balanced lifestyles, etc.
- In partnership with BDHSSA evaluate Dental Program, looking at level of access, frequency of visits, quality of services, etc. Make recommendations for changes based on the results balanced with capacity of service.

Language and Culture

Traditional skills programs and support for the traditional harvesting lifestyle and traditional economy will enable Inuvialuit Youth to learn their culture and traditions.

Country foods are an important part of Inuvialuit culture as well as a healthy source of nutrition. The use of country foods is supported through a variety of regional and local programs and initiatives. Including local business that supports the traditional economy will have positive impacts for both Inuvialuit culture and local employment.

Higher Priority Goals

1. Language Learning Program K-3 /Total Immersion K-3
2. Enhance culture and language programming
3. Implement on-the-land programs and traditional training
4. Ensure adequate and dedicated resources to encourage language revitalization.

Projects or Programs to Address Goals

- In partnership with the Regional Traditional Knowledge Committee and Aurora College develop a Traditional Teachings Program. Identify those community members skilled in the areas of Traditional Knowledge including activities, culture and language to ensure both local and regional content. Offer this course as part of both the elementary and secondary schools core and/or elective course content.
- Address and reduce conflicts around harvesting times and Government and Aboriginal Government programs/ programming system in order to maximize community access to on the land and traditional activities. Develop and establish on the land programming to span the entire year, in order to access all season's offerings.

Medium Priority Goals and Lower Priority Goals

5. Strengthen professional language training and education.
6. Increase availability of formalized programs teaching traditional activities, culture and language
7. Develop programs to support the consumption of locally harvested foods
8. Implement programs to support the Traditional Economy

Projects or Programs to Address Goals

- In partnership with the Regional Traditional Knowledge Committee and Aurora College develop a Traditional Teachings Program. Identify those community members skilled in the areas of Traditional Knowledge including activities, culture and language to ensure both local and regional content. Include this course as part of both the elementary and secondary schools core course content.
- Assess cultural resources in school to determine level of need for children to engage in traditional activities like sewing, carving, etc. Develop proposal to access funds from ITI to develop proposals and initiate new programs.