

Culture

Developing culturally relevant programs and preserving Inuit culture were driving forces behind the creation of Nunavut. With the creation of the territory, the Government of Nunavut has actively worked towards both goals.

Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajit

The Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajit is a prestigious group of wise and talented Inuit who advise the government on making programs and services more culturally relevant. They are appointed from outside the Government of Nunavut (GN) and, since the committee's formation in September 2003, have contributed greatly in the progression of Inuit Societal Values (ISV) in the administration of Nunavut. They have been available and have been invited to comment on and respond to Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ – Inuit traditional knowledge) issues within the Government of Nunavut. GN Departments are informed of meeting dates and requests can be made for advice from the IQ Katimajit on various issues such as legislative proposals, terminology, concepts, reports, documents and so on. They have guided important projects, such as Piqqusilirivvik

and the Cultural Centre, and made programs more relevant to Nunavut, such as child protection and elder's support.

report increased awareness of Inuit Societal Values and more access to Elder knowledge and counseling.



Piqqusilirivvik

Piqqusilirivvik, the Inuit cultural folk school, will allow traditional knowledge, customs and language to be passed from Elders to youth, in both the great outdoors and in classrooms.

Piqqusilirivvik addresses a core need, to help capture and pass cultural

knowledge, skills and language, in an age of television, instant messaging and video games.

Elders Assistance Program

Residents of the low-risk correctional facility in Kugluktuk assist Elders in setting, checking and repairing fish nets, equipment maintenance, tool making, engaged in hands on activities such as repairing, carving and other needs. In doing so, the offenders develop skills which they can use to support their families. Elders are better able to participate in traditional and cultural activities and harvest their preferred country foods.

Inuit Societal Values Projects

Clyde River set out to strengthen the influence of elders in their community to address social issues in a holistic way. This Inuit Societal Value (ISV) project has begun to reverse the trend where Inuit knowledge was being marginalized in the community. Elders now mentor and lead community based events. They participate regularly in community programs, like preschool, daycare, counseling, prenatal care, healing and cultural land based retreats and workshops. Elders have become very active in organized community events, programs and committees, increasing their overall influence in the social and political structure of the community. Community members

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Oral History Project

Recording and documenting the traditional knowledge and oral history of Elders is a priority. Projects help in the retention of Inuit language, create a record of how things were done in the past for the benefit of future generation, create a record of family histories, and record a body of accessible Inuit traditional knowledge to inform the larger world. The Igloolik Oral History Project, for example, is a collaborative project run by the Inullariit Elders Society and the Nunavut Arctic College. Amitturmiut Elders have conducted more than five hundred interviews on topics as diverse as dispute resolution and social control, child rearing, traditional medicine and childbirth, spirituality and shamanism, the introduction of Christianity, animal behaviour and biology, tool making, snow drift formation, and legends and myths. The choice of topics are determined variously by the Elders themselves, by the staff of the Igloolik Research centre, and sometimes by visiting researchers.



Inuit Curriculum for Public Schools

Extensive work has occurred to make learning more relevant to Nunavut students' language and culture. To assist in this

goal, three Elders are employed by the Department of Education, in the curriculum office, and Elder Advisory Meetings are held with an independent group of Elders. Two of the three Elders on staff are unilingual Inuit language speakers. They research Inuit Societal Values and build curriculum for use in public schools across the territory, including methods for assessment.

Nunavut Heritage Centre

The 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) Article 33 recognizes the need to establish facilities for the management and conservation of Nunavut's archaeological heritage. In 2002, the GN Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth (CLEY) commissioned a feasibility study for a heritage centre in Nunavut which considered 8 site options: Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet, Arviat, Cambridge Bay, Baker Lake, Igloolik, Pond Inlet and Kugaaruk. The decision to locate the Centre in Iqaluit was reached through extensive consultation and consensus. A Capacity Assessment and Fundraising Campaign Readiness Study have been completed. The Nunavut Heritage Centre will serve as a focussed resource of cultural enrichment for Nunavummiut, providing educational, cultural and inspirational programs year-round, while ensuring the security of Nunavut's cultural legacy and the repatriation of Nunavut's cultural treasures from other jurisdictions.