

Language

The establishment of Nunavut created a unique opportunity to ensure that the Inuit language remains a healthy and vibrant language for many generations to come. In 2008, the Government of Nunavut reached an important milestone in the journey towards the realization of the Nunavut dream. After years of consultation, research and development, new language legislation was adopted to protect and promote the Inuit language in the most significant way.

The Inuit Language

The Inuit language is an integral part of Inuit culture and history. It reflects the way Inuit see and relate to their world, and expresses the values, history, and knowledge that have sustained Inuit for over a thousand years. To this day, the Inuit language is the first language spoken in the majority of families, and for many Nunavummiut, it is their only language. It is also a dynamic language of the twenty first century that can be heard around the world through music, film and over the internet. The Inuit language is a defining characteristic of Inuit as a distinct people, and an important foundation for what Nunavut is and will become.

In Canada's north there are 3 main variants of the Inuit Language, but remarkably all comprehensible with some efforts to each other: Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun and Inuvialuktun.



Inuktitut is a group of dialects primarily spoken in the eastern part of Nunavut, Nunavik and Labrador. Inuinnaqtun is spoken in Cambridge Bay, Kugluktuk, Umingmaktok and Ulukhaktok. Inuvialuktun is spoken in the Beaufort Delta region of the Northwest Territories. By including Alaska and Greenland, the total population of natural speakers of the Inuit language is on the order of over 100,000 people worldwide.

Nunavut Language Legislation

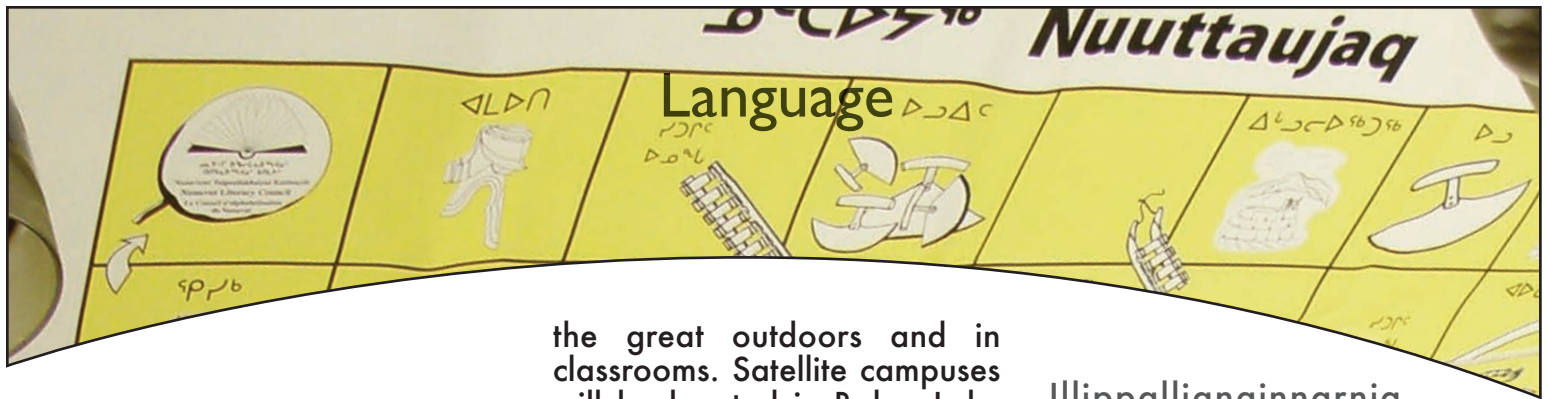
The Inuit Language Protection Act and Official Languages Act were both approved in 2008. Taken together, these Acts help to ensure that the Inuit language remains at the center of education, work and daily life throughout Nunavut while

protecting the existing rights of the English and French languages. It

provides for the positive action required to respect unilingual Inuit and improve their access to services, to reverse the language shift among our young people, and to strengthen the use of the Inuit Language by all Nunavummiut.

Pijarnirniqsat Katujjiqatigiittiarnirlu

The Inuktitut expression Pijarnirniqsat Katujjiqatigiittiarnirlu (Simplicity and Unity) is an Inuit Societal Value (ISV) that guides the Government of Nunavut (GN) so that every activity and expense must have a productive purpose. The Pijarnirniqsat Katujjiqatigiittiarnirlu ISV is why Made-in-Nunavut language legislation fosters the use of Inuktitut in the workplace, in both public and private sectors.



Terminology Workshops

Toward the ongoing development of new words and expressions in Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun for the Government of Nunavut (GN), workshops have been completed on the topics of Finance, Statistics, Climate Change, Land Claims and Human Anatomy. This promotes the Inuit language as the working language of the GN by increasing vocabulary and reducing misunderstandings. It also improves Elders' access to goods and services, by standardizing medical terminology for example. Terminology Workshops call upon interpreters Nunavut-wide and include many Elders from various communities across the Territory. Terminology workshops are vital to the government's goal of making the Inuit language the working language of its operations.

Piqqusilirivvik

Planning for an Inuit cultural folk school, Piqqusilirivvik, is well underway. Final designs have been completed for the school in Clyde River and program development has begun. Piqqusilirivvik will allow traditional knowledge, customs and language to be passed from Elders to youth, in both

the great outdoors and in classrooms. Satellite campuses will be located in Baker Lake and Igloolik. 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.

The Government of Nunavut (GN) is working in collaboration with Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) and Development Associations from the communities of Clyde River, Baker lake and Igloolik. Final designs and drawings for tenders have been submitted and construction of the facility should be completed by 2011.

Illippallianguinnarniq

The Inuktitut term Illippallianguinnarniq is the Inuit principle describing "continuing learning".

Implementation of the GN and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) plans for the Piqqusilirivvik Project, where the living language of Inuktitut will be spoken, recorded, written, sung, taught, preserved and advanced for all Nunavummiut follows the principle of Illippallianguinnarniq,

by helping to strengthen Inuit culture for future generations while advancing the Inuit Language at home.