

# AKLAVIK COMMUNITY WELLNESS PLAN 2018



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# Background

Over the last 75 years Inuvialuit Beneficiaries of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) have had many lifestyle changes forced upon them, often without their consent or knowledge. These changes have caused many 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 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 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 day 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 Community Health Representative (CHR), 2 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.

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 Hamlet of Aklavik. Aklavik also has a Band office.

## 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 many comprehensive engagement processes with the Inuvialuit people therefore meant that the wellness planning did not have to start 'from scratch' as all the communities had well established formal and informal visions and strategies used to deal with wellness issues.

The wellness plan process involved CDD representatives travelling to each community and reviewing existing wellness plans. The review workshop included the community at large. The focus of the workshop was to assess 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.

Workshop results were charted and combined, and then this “living” document was presented back to the community for approval. 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.

Aklavik is a unique community as it has 3 governing bodies and the willingness to work in partnership and collaboration on the implementation of this plan is a strong desire of the residents.

What follows is the Aklavik Community Wellness Plan.

# 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 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.
4. Increased collaboration between IRC and school to ensure consistent implementation of policies.

### **Proposed Program and Plans to Address Goals:**

- IRC with the support of the Beaufort Delta Education Council have developed and implemented a Student Family Support worker position in Tuktoyaktuk. The Student Family Support Worker provides ongoing support to parents and students to address the many issues that are impacting them to reach their full potential while attending school.
- Student Family Support Worker position targets students at risk of dropping out. The position operates from a case management perspective developing stay in school strategies involving the student, home, school, psycho-social supports, and any other identified supports.

- IRC is completing a three-year pilot project in Early Childhood Intervention for children in the Early Childhood Programs and the school to address and support students who have speech and language challenges. The goal is to continue with this project as parents were involved with the training so that the support will continue in the home.

### Medium Priority Goals

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

#### **Proposed Programs and Plans 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.
- 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.
- IRC continues to support Early Childhood Programs and oversee the delivery of this program through Contribution Agreements with Education, Culture and Employment of GNWT. Funding is available to have a language teacher to deliver the cultural part of the program.

### Lower Priority Goals

8. Research culturally based learning models.
9. Increased programs for students who are exceeding their grade levels and need more challenge.
10. Promote more trades and technology programs in high school, including pre-apprenticeship programs.
11. Increase availability of summer work placements for youth

12. Increase the awareness and cultural sensitivity of teachers from outside the region to support retention of teaching staff.

13. Develop on-the-land based credits and curriculum

**Proposed Programs and Plans to Address Goal:**

- IRC through its participation on the Beaufort Delta Education Council will continue to bring the needs of ensuring that all relevant courses are offered in the community so that students are well prepared for post secondary education.
- IRC in partnership with Beaufort Delta Education Council will continue to promote culturally based learning models and propose credits for these learning models.
- Student Family Support Worker also provides ongoing support to new and existing teachers to address the retention issues. Provide cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity training to teaching staff when needed.

## 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

**Proposed Programs and Plans to Address Goals:**

- Research best practices and maintain ongoing consultation with ISR communities to keep current and on-going Professional Development Programs in the Region.
- IRC participates on a Regional Training Working Group along with many other groups who discuss training priorities and how the training will be most beneficial to participants. Training locations are discussed to give communities the best opportunities to succeed.



## Medium Priority Goals

3. Implement formalized professional development programs in Inuvialuit organizations
4. Increase skill levels among community leaders and staff

### **Proposed Programs and Plans 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.
- To increase and support the skills of community Corporation staff so that all Community Corporations are consistent in delivering of programs and in reporting requirements.
- Research and implement best practices and maintain ongoing consultation with ISR communities to keep current an on-going Professional Development Program in the region.

## Lower Priority Goals

5. Support adult academic programs to increase levels of literacy and numeracy among adults
6. Increase opportunities for adult learners through education and training

### **Proposed Programs and Plans to Address Goals:**

- Work in partnership with Aurora College and Sun Child programs to identify areas of their adult academic programs where they need to put more focus on, this is identified from programs that IRC offers and where an assessment identifies these needs.

# 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. Support the community in advocating for a regional addictions treatment facility and initiatives for addictions aftercare and counselling
2. Support initiatives for addictions prevention and intervention programs and mental health initiatives.
3. Support clients going for treatment to ensure that they are in a program that will be for a period where they can deal with their issues at a pace that is beneficial for them.
4. Implement counselling program to address residential school traumas

#### **Proposed Programs and Plans to Address Goals:**

- IRC will be available to provide support and direction to the community in advocating for a regional addictions treatment facility through the provision of resources to put together their case for planning. Resources will include time of staff and provision of current stats and data such as feasibility studies etc.
- IRC through the Counselling Services team will continue to communicate with communities to support various initiative for addictions prevention, intervention programs and mental health initiatives.
- IRC will support clients who are going into treatment programs to ensure the programs are to the term to meet the needs of the clients.
- IRC will continue to provide support to clients who are dealing with residential school trauma through the Resolution Health Support Program.

### Medium Priority Goals

5. Enhance mental health counselling in communities
6. In partnership help develop a strategy for recruiting and maintaining health care professionals who live and work in the region for extended periods of time

#### **Proposed Programs and Plans to Address Goals:**

- IRC through its Counselling Services team will continue to work with the Community Counsellor to address client needs.
- IRC have supported the training of staff in Mental Health First Aide and Counselling and is providing training to communities to ensure that all professionals have access to the training.

- IRC in partnership with NWT Health and Social Services will develop and implement strategies for recruiting and maintaining health care professionals who work in the region.

### Lower Priority Goals

7. Deliver prevention, treatment and aftercare programs with parents and expectant mothers to prevent substance abuse
8. Life skills programming
9. Promote recreation in the form of traditional harvesting and increase other recreational activities and facilities to foster healthy eating habits
10. Enhance access to health care services in remote communities and improve quality of service
11. Ensure addictions prevention, stop smoking, and sexual health programs are delivered.
12. Deliver parenting programs to address the residential school legacy
13. Increase healthy living initiatives
14. Increase health and physical fitness activities for all ages
15. Support programs for elders
16. Enhance access to dental care

### Proposed Programs and Plans to Address Goals:

- IRC will continue to provide pre and post natal programs to parents that will provide information on substance abuse, smoking, healthy eating and parenting programs.
- In partnership with local Recreation Departments and CHR, IRC will continue to promote recreation to include traditional harvesting and cultural activities to foster healthy eating habits.
- In partnership with the school IRC will ensure that health programs which will provide information on addictions prevention, sexual health and smoking cessation are delivered.
- IRC will continue to include life skills programming in all the on the land programming and other health promotion activities.
- 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 JK-12 /Total Immersion JK-12
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.

### **Proposed Programs and Plans to Address Goals:**

- In partnership with the Beaufort Delta Education Council and Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre IRC will continue to develop resources to support the delivery of language programs in the education system.
- IRC will continue to provide on the land programs through the Counselling Services team and this always includes a language and culture component. Traditional training is always a focus that participants fully participate in.

## Medium Priority Goals and Lower Priority Goals

5. Develop programs to support the consumption of locally harvested foods
6. Implement programs to support the Traditional Economy

### **Proposed Programs and Plans to Address Goals:**

- IRC will continue to support training programs for communities to utilize the Food Processing unit to ensure participants can fully utilized and prepare the locally harvested foods for consumption.

- In partnership with the Regional Training Working Group IRC will continue to identify programs that will support the traditional economy.