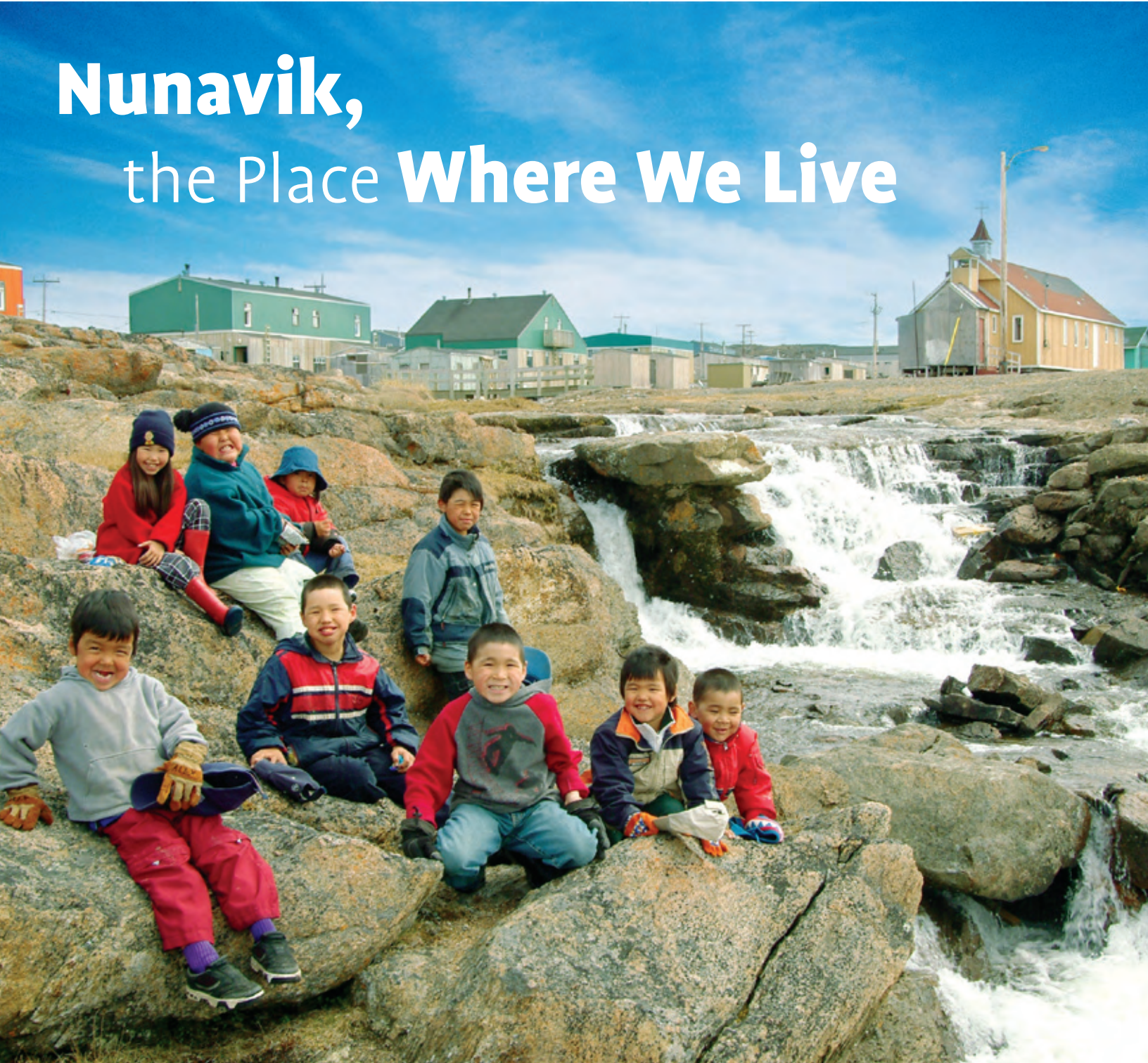


# DÉVELOPPEMENT > SOCIAL

VOLUME 9 • ISSUE 1 • JUNE 2008

## Nunavik, the Place **Where We Live**



# DÉVELOPPEMENT > SOCIAL

VOLUME 9 • ISSUE 1 • JUNE 2008

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PHOTO: MICHEL LEMIRE

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## Another Year for Our Journal

The journal *Développement social*, which deals with social development issues, is nearing the end of another year. This is both surprising and reassuring.

It is indeed surprising that this tentative, short-term step taken in 1999 by the *Conseil de la santé et du bien-être* since replaced by the Health and Welfare Commissioner), in cooperation with the *Association des régions du Québec* and the *Conférence des régions régionales de la santé et des services sociaux du Québec* (both no longer in existence and neither of them replaced), produced a journal that is still going strong. From its humble origins as a limited-circulation newsletter, under-financed and dependent on the contributions of 'associates,' the publication has become better known over time, its funding improves every year, and it has a good editorial team that it can count on. What is more, that small step in 1999 has brought it all the way to the lap of a sound, credible institution, the *Institut national de santé publique* (INSPQ). Quite an accomplishment!

It is also exciting for us to note that during all of those years, the partnerships supporting the journal continued to develop—at a time when, even regionally, interesting partnerships were being forged. For a number of years now, the annual partners' meeting has allowed exchanges between the representatives of the organizations of all stripes that lend their contribution to the journal, each in its own way. It is one of the high points of the year for us. The 2008 partners' meeting will play a decisive part in the journal's future. In addition to adopting orientations, the partners will be electing the members of the executive committee. This committee will play a key role in coming years in that it will be required to reinforce the partnerships around the journal and work towards improving its funding.

Another major challenge for the future executive committee will be finding the means to strengthen the editorial team and provide it with better support. The key to the journal's quality is a good balance between the members of the executive committee and the editorial team. The role of the editorial team—these are the people who perform the research,

conduct interviews, write, and edit—is both an exciting one carried out by individuals who are passionate about what they do and a difficult one because these people often have to work on their own. These 'artisans' of the journal deserve to be adequately supported. The current executive committee plans to stress this point at the next partners' meeting.

The 2008–2009 operating year will therefore be critical in all sorts of ways. Some of the challenges the journal will be facing are the renewal of partnerships; improvement of funding; more effective distribution; introduction of new forms of collaboration; reinforcement of the editorial team; and creating a new synergy between the executive committee and the editorial team. The journal has made great strides over the years, however, and the executive committee and editorial team are confident in their ability to address these challenges.

### Executive Committee

Denis McKinnon (TNCDC)  
Hélène Harvey (CSF)  
Sylvain Larouche (RQIIAC)  
Michel Morel (OPHQ)  
Louis Poirier (INSPQ)

### Editorial Team Changes

Mélanie Chabot, who has been associated with the journal since January 2007, was recently put in charge of the editorial team. She replaced Jean Tremblay, who up until then had divided his time between the journal and the community development team at the INSPQ, where his other responsibilities had increased a great deal in recent months. Jean will nevertheless remain a close contributor both on the production of articles on subjects connected with his new responsibilities and on different initiatives surrounding the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Forum sur le développement social*. Furthermore, it is accepted that the INSPQ will soon be hiring another resource to complete the journal's production team.

### Errata (Volume 8, No. 2, December 2007)

A number of changes have been made to two texts published in our last issue. To be fair to their authors, we suggest that you go to our website (<http://www.inspq.qc.ca/DeveloppementSocial>) for the full versions.

The texts in question:

- Page 16: "Tout sur le territoire – réflexion sur l'envers de l'approche territoriale intégrée" by Geneviève Giasson, Direction de la diversité sociale, City of Montreal.
- Page 29: "Les indicateurs de développement des communautés : un coup de pouce à l'intelligence collective !" by Réal Boisvert of the editorial team.

We apologize to the authors. Enjoy your reading!

### The Journal's Distribution

The journal is distributed through organization and agency networks in order to limit mailing costs. People who are actively involved in community work may receive more than one copy of the publication. We would appreciate it if they could return unused copies to the distributing organization and ask it to remedy the situation. In addition, to promote more effective dissemination of the journal, why not pass your copy on to someone else in your circle once you have finished reading it? This would help us reach the individuals and organizations involved in social development activities. Thank you.



# REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

This column provides information on social development initiatives in localities and regions. We receive this information from regional cooperation social development organizations (decision-making bodies), people responsible for social development with the regional conferences of elected representatives, and from local organizations themselves. Organizations are therefore invited to send information about their activities, in the form of brief news items, to our email address: [developpement.social@inspq.qc.ca](mailto:developpement.social@inspq.qc.ca).



## The Latest News

News gets around! To carry on the work of my colleague, France Fradette (Centre-du-Québec), I agreed last January, not without reflection and consultation, to chair the board of directors of the *Réseau québécois de développement social* (RQDS). Not to worry, France is still close by and remains a director.

Now that I have begun, I'd like to announce some other changes in the wind experienced at the last RQDS general meeting (on November 2, 2007). In addition to France's move, Chantal Lalonde (Lanaudière), who has done such a good job of orchestrating RQDS's administrative affairs since its creation, Roxanne Lauzon (Outaouais), and Huguette Boivin (Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean) have decided to pass the torch on. Also, Martin-Pierre Nombé (Île-de-Montréal) has embarked on a new path and taken on a new professional challenge. Our heartfelt thanks go out to all of you for your wonderful work.

There are therefore now some new faces on the executive committee. Patricia Hébert (Nord-du-Québec) and Ghislain Anglehart (Gaspésie-Les-Îles) were elected last November. Recently, Claire Mailhot (Montérégie-est) agreed to join us, at a time that is bound to be memorable in many ways. There are still two positions left to fill because Robert Bourque (Laurentides), who was also elected in November, was forced to turn down the mandate he had been given due to matters of availability. We hope this has been duly noted by anyone who might be interested.

With regard to the general meeting follow-up, as requested, RQDS's members, its partners, and other social development stakeholders were invited to a very special one-day activity.

With the financial help of the *ministère de la Santé et des services sociaux* and the *ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale*, the RQDS, along with *Université de Montréal* researcher Lise St-Germain and Joannie Rollin of the *Réseau québécois d'initiatives sociales*, offered a knowledge transfer activity geared towards optimal use of the information gleaned from

the research study "Pratiques et initiatives de lutte contre la pauvreté par le développement social intégré au Québec" (presented on November 1, 2008).

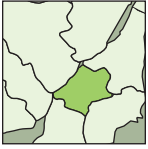
This activity, which was held in Quebec City on June 10, was also designed to determine, in laboratory fashion, the conditions required for greater appropriation of research knowledge. Concrete spin-offs for the regions, we hoped.

Another need expressed at last fall's general meeting, the RQDS volunteered to play a leading role on the national scene in order to emphasize the 10th anniversary of the *Forum sur le développement social*. At the time of going to press, however, it was not possible to present the details of this involvement, due to the lack of scenarios still being studied.

As far as the RQDS's routine activities are concerned, in addition to handling its day to day operations and funding, the RQDS took advantage of a number of networking opportunities last winter. These initiatives raised the RQDS's profile, highlighted its mission and, at the same time, prompted the development of a clearer picture of social development plans in Québec's different regions. This work is supposed to be disseminated in the near future.

So much for the latest news from the RQDS board of directors. Rest assured that the organization is doing well, and that the next issue of the journal will doubtless be confirming that it had a very busy spring and summer.

**Jude Brousseau, Chair of the RQDS**  
**Social Development Advisor, CRÉ de la Côte-Nord**  
**Tel: 418-587-5110**  
**Email: [jude.brousseau@crecotenord.qc.ca](mailto:jude.brousseau@crecotenord.qc.ca)**



# Centre-du-Québec Region

## Special Agreement and Knowledge

By France Fradette and Monica Jekovska  
Comité régional en développement social Centre-du-Québec

### Renewal of Special Social Development Agreement

As announced in the June 2007 issue of the journal *Développement social*, the application by the *Comité régional en développement social* (CRDS) for renewal of the special agreement was to be tabled at the *Conférence régionale des élus du Centre-du-Québec* (CRÉ du Centre-du-Québec) last June. And indeed it was: on June 14, the application for renewal (up until 2010) of the special social development agreement was approved by the board of directors of the CRÉ du Centre-du-Québec<sup>1</sup>.

### Better Access to Knowledge

When the five regional county municipalities were making their rounds, we often identified the important need for access to knowledge. Consequently, as a result of the joint CRDS and *Université du Québec à Trois Rivières* (UQTR) project, a reception process for processing requests for access to university resources has just been put in place. The objective is to give the UQTR greater presence in our region and facilitate access to a number of resources, whether it be in the form of internships or access to research and other tools linked to social development.

The agreement concluded between the UQTR and the CRDS applies to CRDS members and the decision-making bodies they represent, social development workers in the Centre-du-Québec region, UQTR personnel (professors in particular), researchers, and other people or organizations that meet the guidelines set out in the UQTR-CRDS agreement and have been approved by the partners who signed the agreement. A special form was created for the submission of requests. It will soon be available on our website. Meanwhile, you can get one of these forms from France Fradette, CRDS Coordinator, at 819-478-1717, Ext. 251, or ffradette@centre-du-quebec.qc.ca.

### Knowledge Committee

Lastly, the work of the CRDS knowledge committee is going well. We are currently working on three main files. First, in conjunction with Réal Boisvert's research (which was presented in the December 2007 issue of the journal *Développement social*), we collaborated closely on the organization of meetings dealing with the trial of the new tool for assessing different communities' development potential. These meetings were held in three parts of the Centre-du-Québec region in March 2008.

In addition, we are carrying on with our work related to the issues of mental health and psychological distress in a family poverty context. This research is based on the findings of a survey of two hundred regional stakeholders to find out what their needs were in terms of knowledge of different social issues. Within the framework of this project, we produced a document that was designed to cover the characteristics of the concepts of psychological distress, mental health, and poverty, and to suggest a number of paths for reflection on the links that can result from them. Also, we have attempted to sketch a national and regional statistical portrayal in connection with these issues by compiling data from various regional, Québec, and Canadian studies.

Lastly, the third file we are working on involves innovative social development practices in the Centre-du-Québec region. We believe that since it was created in 2004, the *Fonds régional de soutien à la réflexion et à l'action en matière de développement social du Centre-du-Québec* has contributed to the development of new social development practices and approaches in the Centre-du-Québec region. Furthermore, we consider that these innovative practices are mostly implicit knowledge and collective learning produced in the field with democratic decision-making bodies, and by practitioners rather than scientists. Nevertheless, they are rarely known or recognized, even within the organizations from which they emerge, and they are not necessarily systematized for broad dissemination. Thus, from a perspective of the enhancement of social development in general and cross-industry practices in particular, we decided that it was important to enhance the spin-offs from these projects by delving more deeply, primarily into the study of the innovative practices creative process as well as into the factors that influence their emergence.

<sup>1</sup> The financial partners to the agreement are: the CRÉ du Centre-du-Québec; the Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de la Mauricie et du Centre-du-Québec; the ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale; the ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation; United Way; the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec; and the Conseil régional des partenaires du marché du travail Centre-du-Québec. The other partners that signed the agreement are: the UQTR; the ministère des Affaires municipales et des Régions; and the region's minister.



## Estrie

### Local Know-how, Here!

By Céline des Ligneris

Corporation de développement économique  
et communautaire de Sherbrooke

At the end of 2005, the *Corporation de développement économique et communautaire de Sherbrooke* (CDEC) surveyed close to 100 businesses in the borough of Mont-Bellevue. Many topics were covered: local purchasing, employment for local workers, a vision for the economic development of the borough, etc. Many ideas for revitalization projects arose from this project. A committee, made up of entrepreneurs, elected officials and organizations from the borough, was created to choose which projects to introduce. Among them was the *Place aux savoir-faire d'ici* project, launched in October 2007.

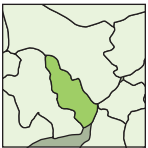
The project created a market where individuals and microbusinesses from Mont-Bellevue could make their products or services known. One of the objectives was to give visibility to small businesses without storefronts and artisans without sales experience. This project was also intended to foster personal and professional development among the residents of Mont-Bellevue and to make them aware that they are the development vehicles of their community.

Despite the cold and the rain, the first market was a complete success: twenty-six artisans, the majority of them residents of the borough of Mont-Bellevue, presented their creations and their know-how to visitors. Paintings, sculptures, handmade soaps, jewellery, ocarinas, pottery, scrapbooking and various fabrics are but a few examples of the products that were on sale to the market's visitors. The project also made space for youth: high school students from the *école secondaire Du Phare* promoted their *Magasin du monde* and others from the *école secondaire le Triolet* sold quite a few compost storage bins.

*Support, solidarity, sharing, contacts, visibility and confidence*, these are the words that were used by participants to express their enthusiasm for this project. *Place aux savoir-faire d'ici* gave local creators an opportunity to obtain recognition for their work, and the chance to visit with their neighbours.

Thanks to cooperation and the community's mobilization, the CDEC was able to implement a structured and innovative project to improve people's living conditions while integrating social and economic aspects. The partnership with the *Service d'aide aux Néo-Canadiens* and the company *Gestion Mor-An*, as well as the joint efforts of the City of Sherbrooke and the *Cité des Rivières*, also contributed greatly to the success of this event.

After this first phase of on-the-ground experimenting, the CDEC wants to put in place an entrepreneurial skills and abilities development phase for participants. Meetings will be organized on topics that include sales, marketing and customer-based approaches, in order to better prepare artisans.



## Lanaudière

### Sustainable Community Development Training

By Chantal Lalonde

Table des partenaires du développement social de Lanaudière

In February and April 2008, not less than 30 people from Lanaudière took part in new training on sustainable community development.

Very focused on the practical, real-world application and realities of Lanaudière and Québec, this training was developed by the *Réseau d'animation en développement durable de Lanaudière* (RADD-L), to support local organization and the sustainable development of communities.

It allowed participants to learn and understand the steps of a local sustainable development approach and it better prepared them to intervene in the region. During two sessions of two days each, the participants were given a dynamic introduction to sustainable development, as well as related concepts and techniques. Among other things, they learned:

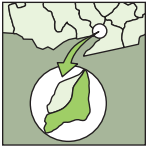
- the main steps of the sustainable development approach, namely the mobilization of residents, the definition of the territory, the identification of the development vision and action planning;
- the conditions for success, such as multisectorial partnerships, communication, shared vocabulary, events and evaluation.

A lot of attention was paid to exchanging information, sharing experiences and completing practical exercises. The training was positive and favoured a new synergy between the stakeholders from various sectors (health, social, community, municipal, economic).

Since 2005, the RADD-L has been a place of sharing and meeting for different existing and future territorial initiatives. The RADD-L's mission is to mobilize, raise awareness, train and support Lanaudière stakeholders from all backgrounds (development officials from various organizations, citizens, elected officials) involved or wanting to get involved in a sustainable development approach for the territory.

Today, the Lanaudière has more than 50 trained sustainable community development facilitators working for agencies such as the CLD, CLSC, SADC, CJE, CDRL, TPDSL, DSPE-ASSL, as well as municipalities, community organizations, and so on. Many of them are now assisting about 15 communities in the region with their sustainable development goals.

For more information on this training, contact Chantal Lalonde at the *Table des partenaires en développement social de Lanaudière* at 450-759-9944.



# Montreal

## Social Economy Businesses in Ahuntsic-Cartierville Get to Know Each Other Better

By Sophie Bourque  
Corporation de développement économique et communautaire Ahuntsic-Cartierville.

A little over a year ago, the *Corporation de développement économique communautaire Ahuntsic-Cartierville* (CDEC) created the *Regroupement des entreprises d'économie sociale d'Ahuntsic-Cartierville*.

The purpose of the association was to solidify a cooperative effort launched by the CDEC nearly three years ago. From the beginning, all of the promoters recognized the relevance of creating an association. The objectives of this innovative local initiative are twofold: first, to allow promoters to discuss and develop closer ties and, ultimately, to allow for the introduction of activities to inform the population of the social mission of these dynamic businesses as well as their products and services.

These businesses work in different fields of activity such as labour development and socioprofessional insertion, salvage, goods and services, restaurant services, domestic help, arts and culture as well as recreational tourism.

A major promotional campaign for these businesses was developed. A logo identifying the association was also created.

### Furniture businesses can count on AFAT!

By Diane Larocque  
Société de développement économique Rivière-des-Prairies/Pointe-aux-Trembles/Montréal-Est

The social economy business *Ateliers de formation et d'apprentissage au travail* (AFAT) has as its mission the development of pre-employability and employability skills for those aged 16 to 30. AFAT, which has been around for 23 years, inaugurated a second training facility in Rivière-des-Prairies nearly two years ago. It develops qualified workers and offers quality subcontracting of wood furniture assembly, reupholstering, recovering and manufacturing.

"In fact, the means used are but a pretext to acquire transferable skills to integrate into the labour market," explained development officer Serge Daigneault. "By cooperating with the *Commission scolaire de Montréal* as well as with youth protection centres, *Action main-d'oeuvre*, etc., we reach youth who are in difficulty and those of visible minorities (about 30 different ethnic groups are involved) living in situations that often make integrating into the labour market of their adopted country difficult. We help them overcome a lack of experience and acquire self-confidence through various non-specialized trades such as warehouse worker, sewing machine operator, store clerk, assistant upholsterer, loader and deliverer, with the goal of making them full citizens, taxpayers. It is as gratifying for them as it is for us!" Daigneault concluded.

With the addition of the Rivière-des-Prairies workshop, there are now 600 hours/week of production instead of 75 hours, and this, through five distinct, well-equipped work groups. They fill the subcontracting needs of the companies that use the AFAT's services, of which there are many. In addition, there are more than 40 businesses in the furniture and woodworking industries in Montreal East and the borough of Rivière-des-Prairies-Pointe-aux-Trembles. And even though some 2,400 people work in the industry, there are constant recruiting difficulties. AFAT also serves a loyal clientele such as the *Palais de justice de Montréal*, some hospitals, the provincial government and a number of private businesses, among others.

AFAT is pursuing the necessary investments to acquire equipment for both the optimal organization of production methods and to ensure unequalled quality in production and industrial subcontracting. This way of doing things allows for a balance between acquired labour skills, the needs of companies and the viability of the organization.



# Laurentides

## Signing of a First Specific Agreement on Social Development

By Robert Bourque  
Conférence régionale des élus des Laurentides

The *Conférence régionale des élus des Laurentides* (CRÉ) is proud to announce the signing of its first specific agreement on social development. This agreement is the result of careful efforts during which the partners worked together to support social development in the Laurentides. The official announcement was made in the fall of 2007 by the Minister of Labour and minister responsible for the region, David Whissel.

A financial contribution of \$660,000 will be invested over three years to support social development projects in the Laurentides' eight regional county municipalities. The financial partners in this agreement are the *ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale*, the *ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation*, the *Société d'habitation du Québec* as well as the *Agence de la santé et des services sociaux des Laurentides*. For its part, the CRÉ is investing half of the total envelope, or \$330,000, part of which will be used for the hiring of a social development advisor.

The main objectives of this agreement are the result of cooperation with the *Conseil régional de développement social des Laurentides*. It was agreed to favour and support local cooperation of social development in the regional county municipalities, by paying particular attention to the needs of families, housing, transportation and social exclusion.



BY MÉLANIE CHABOT  
EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

## The Place Where We Live

“Nunavik is not the north of Québec, it’s the heart of Québec,” declared Premier Jean Charest in August 2007 at the opening of the Katimajit Conference in Kuujuaq. And with reason. Situated north of the 55th parallel and covering 564,000 km<sup>2</sup>, this region represents a third of the province<sup>1</sup>. And perhaps more importantly still, this vast region is bursting with under-exploited natural resources. The absence of land links between inland and coastal zones, not to mention the short shipping season, have until now made it impossible to take full advantage of the territory. “This situation is however about to change and much sooner than you might expect,” wrote Louis Fortier, an oceanographer at *Université Laval* and director of ArcticNet, the largest research network program focused on climate change in Canada<sup>2</sup>. Northern waters are clearly expected to be free of ice for several months each year, making the Northwest Passage—which was so desperately sought by Henry Hudson—a reality. It should come as no surprise, then, that the federal government has recently shown renewed interest in reaffirming its sovereignty in the Canadian Arctic, while the United States and the European Union among other jurisdictions consider the Passage to be international waters. Yet, as pointed out by Marie-Andrée Chouinard, editorial writer for the daily newspaper *Le Devoir*, it is difficult to claim territorial sovereignty and, at the same time, neglect the wellbeing of its inhabitants<sup>3</sup>. Sovereignty is, by definition, the occupation of a territory. While Inuit have assured a Canadian presence in the Arctic over the years, measured against national indicators, they continue to live in disadvantaged conditions.

### A Difficult transition

Not more than 75 years ago, Inuit were still a nomadic people. Today, they live settled in 14 communities along the coasts of Hudson Bay, Hudson Strait and Ungava Bay. And, while the 10,000 Inuit of this vast region are truly a part of the Internet era, the price paid to join the modern world has been enormous.

In Nunavik, 40% of the population is under the age of 15. These youth state that they are proud of their origins, yet many have traded the trad-



itional Inuit way of life for the allure of consumer society, despite the difficulty encountered trying to fit in. “It is not unusual that a man who could have supported himself and his family hunting and fishing is today dependent on a social assistance cheque,” emphasized Thibault Martin, sociology professor with the social work and social sciences faculty of the *Université du Québec en Outaouais*. The shortage of jobs in the region and the lack of adequate training among Inuit workers inevitably leads to a situation of economic dependency, poverty and unemployment for a large part of the population. In addition to lack of work and employment uncertainties, youth face other obstacles. Their troubles were underlined in the recent report by the *Commission des droits de la personne et de la jeunesse*<sup>4</sup>: neglect, spousal and domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse, serious delinquency, school dropout, frequent teenage pregnan-

## A Few Socioeconomic Facts<sup>1</sup>:

### Population (10,784 inhabitants in 2006):

- 90% of the population is Inuit.
- Inuktitut is the language most often spoken at home by 76% of the population.
- An increasing population: the growth rate between 1996 and 2001 was 10.5% versus 1.4% in the rest of Québec.
- Close to 50% of Nunavik's total population is aged 20 or younger and 57% is aged 25 or younger.

### Education and employment:

- 53.8% of the population aged 20 and older do not possess high school diplomas (Québec 23.5%).
- 63% of the population aged between 15 and 24 do not attend school (Québec, 33%).
- The unemployment rate was 14.4% in 2001 (Québec, 8.2%).
- A majority of full- and part-time jobs (53 and 67%, respectively) are in the public and parapublic sectors.

- Average income was \$19,555 in 2000 for Inuit men aged 15 and older, while it was \$50,047 for non-Inuit men living in the region.

### Housing and cost of living:

- The home ownership rate is 3% (Québec, 58%).
- The average number of individuals per dwelling is 3.9 (Québec, 2.2).
- The cost of a weekly food basket for a family of four in Kuujuaq is \$230 (Montreal, \$144).

### Health and social adaptation:

- Life expectancy is 66.7 years compared with 79.3 years in the rest of the province.
- Between 2000 and 2002, suicide was the cause of 22% of all deaths (Québec, 2%).

<sup>1</sup> Data extracted from: *Nunavik at a Glance 2007*. Kuujuaq, Makivik Corporation, 2007.

cies, alcohol and drug abuse, mental health problems and suicide, to name but a few. Since individual wellbeing is generated by a multitude of factors, such as social and physical environments, schooling, income, social status, as well as one's neighbourhood and village<sup>5</sup>, it should come as no surprise that life-expectancy figures released by Statistics Canada in 2001 place Inuit 12 years below the life expectancy for all Canadians<sup>6</sup>.

Obviously, these phenomena can not be explained without taking into account Nunavik's recent past and the far-reaching changes that have marked the evolution of Inuit society in the last few decades. But these

realities hide yet another: the extraordinary adaptability of Inuit and their tremendous desire to shape their modern world to themselves.

### Defining their own modernity

It is well known—we endorse and even advocate the notion—that local actors often have an extraordinary capacity to find viable solutions to their problems by relying on individual and collective potentials. Nunavimmiut—the name for those living in Québec's far north—are no different. To support the development of their communities in recent decades, Inuit have encouraged projects that contribute to maintaining



THE AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE WAS SIGNED ON DECEMBER 5, 2007, BY CHUCK STRAHL, CANADIAN MINISTER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT, PITA AATAMI, PRESIDENT OF THE MAKIVIK CORPORATION, BENOÎT PELLETIER, QUÉBEC MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND THE NORD-DU-QUÉBEC REGION, AND JEAN CHAREST, PREMIER OF QUÉBEC.



KATIMAJIIT CONFERENCE, KUUJJUAQ, AUGUST 2007.

PHOTO: MÉLANIE CHABOT

**“Our culture can not be reduced to its traditional elements. Our culture is a foundation and it brings cohesion to our everyday lives – in the past, we hunted; today, we’re building cooperatives; tomorrow, we’ll control our own government and institutions.”**

– PUVIRNITUQ, SAGLOUC, IUUVIVIK, 1977.

EXTRACT FROM JEAN-JACQUES SIMARD, 2003. *LA RÉDUCTION. L'AUTOCHTONE INVENTÉ ET LES AMÉRINDIENS D'AUJOURD'HUI*, SILLERY, LES ÉDITIONS DU SEPTENTRION.

their way of life, by tapping into their own resources and employing their own talents while incorporating the resources proffered by the modern world. As summarized by Thibault Martin, Inuit are fighting for their survival on every front (political, social, economic, cultural, educational and environmental). Their aim is of course to ensure the continuation of a distinct way of life, and especially to make it compatible with new realities. In other words, the inhabitants of Nunavik are not pushing for the marginal development of the region, but for its development through the adaptation of institutions, services and practices to local realities and needs. This goal requires of everyone involved tradeoffs, flexibility, negotiation and cooperation so that local institutions and practices may be harmonized with other institutions and, voluntarily or not, other ways of living.

### Formalizing regional governance

The institutions and governance model chosen by Inuit demonstrate their wholehearted desire for cooperation. Under the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* (JBNQA), signed by the Inuit, Cree and the Québec government in 1975, Inuit adopted public, non-ethnic institutions open to all the region’s residents. Consequently, at the local level, villages have a status that is comparable to a municipality with essentially the same powers and jurisdiction of other municipalities in Québec. They are headed by a mayor and municipal council elected by all their residents, Inuit and non-Inuit. At the regional level, the Kativik Regional Government is a supramunicipal organization responsible for managing public affairs in various fields such as economic development, employment, labour training, social insurance, transportation, policing, telecommunications, the environment, renewable resources, and land use planning. Other parapublic institutions were also created under the JBNQA, including the Kativik School Board as well as the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services, which are responsible for managing regional education, health and social services and programs.

But, like many other regions in Québec, Inuit would like to acquire greater autonomy in fields such as education, health and culture. Though Inuit are responsible for the administration of different services and programs, they would like to be empowered to define the nature and contents of these services and programs, by and for themselves, as well as to identify their own priorities. In brief, they wish to obtain sufficient powers to exercise genuine management in these fields. In this respect, the federal and provincial governments and the Makivik Corporation?

signed on December 5, 2007, an agreement in principle concerning the creation of a Nunavik regional government. The agreement does not provide for new powers, but instead amalgamates existing powers to allow elected officials to allocate resources based on local priorities. The amalgamation should furthermore permit more effective responses to local problems since it will be possible to deal with them in a comprehensive manner and not simply sector by sector.

Since the spring of 2007, a coalition comprising not less than 15 public figures from Québec's cooperative, university and community sectors has begun calling for regional governments to administer social services, health care, schools, natural resources, culture, roadways, land use planning, the environment, heritage, community justice, as well as economic and tourism development. It is not surprising in this context that the announcement of the creation of a Nunavik regional government has generated significant interest throughout Québec, whetting the appetites of the presidents of the regional conferences of elected officers for the Bas-Saint-Laurent, the Gaspésie-Les-Îles and the Côte-Nord<sup>8</sup>. Perhaps, it is best described as a collective issue with local characteristics!

#### **A socioeconomic forum: the Katimajit Conference**

Obviously, Nunavik possesses many distinct characteristics—not the least of which are the isolation of its villages and the harshness of the climate—that serve to multiply the challenges and issues. In August 2007, Nunavimmiut organized a major socioeconomic forum, called the Katimajit Conference, for the region's main stakeholders, main Québec-government ministers, as well as the Canadian Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The event was widely broadcast on regional radio airwaves. Preparations were carefully conducted by regional organizations which, in cooperation with all involved actors, were responsible for presenting the status of their respective sectors. In this manner, Katimajit allowed participants to take stock of the economy and employment, culture and education, health care, social and childcare services, public infrastructure and housing, community environments, and sustainable development. The conference underlined participants' many concerns, the enormous work needed to improve living conditions in the region, and importantly everyone's commitment to identifying solutions by strengthening dialogue and joint action, among other things. In fact, a Québec-Canada-Nunavik

## FORUM >

**Benoît Pelletier**  
Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs  
and the Nord-du-Québec Region



**“The Inuit nation is on the cusp of increased empowerment through a renewed partnership with all Quebecers.”**

**T**he Inuit nation is extremely proud of its traditions, some of which are thousands of years old. It is also striving for a brighter future hand-in-hand with a desire to assert its identity, which is characterized by deep-set community values and a distinct culture anchored in history. Francophone Quebecers are especially sympathetic to such aspirations since, in certain respects, they possess similar aims in North America.

Marked by two highly significant events, 2007 was especially exhilarating for the Inuit of Québec. I am referring of course to the Katimajit Conference, which carried on the aim of improving socioeconomic conditions in the 14 Northern villages. At the Conference, the government to which I belong committed itself to promoting the priorities of the region through major investments in the social and economic development projects proposed by the Inuit communities themselves. I am also referring to the agreement in principle signed on December 5 by the governments of Québec and Canada and the Makivik Corporation concerning the creation of a Nunavik regional government. The agreement is an unprecedented achievement in Québec and Canada alike. The creation of this institution will constitute a further step forward for Inuit empowerment and will consolidate Inuit's control over their own governance.

Despite their hunger for autonomy, Inuit remain committed to contributing to the development of Québec and living harmoniously with all Quebecers. Last year, with the Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences, better known as the Bouchard-Taylor Commission, Québec society initiated an in-depth analysis of its psyche and its future evolution based on tolerance between different groups. Beyond this probing, a few certainties stand out regarding the Québec government's relations with Aboriginal nations. For example, during the Katimajit Conference, the mobilization of government policy-makers and Inuit leaders illuminated new possibilities. And the beacons of our shared future were established. A little before that, in October 2006 at Mashteuiatsh, the First Nations Socio-Economic Forum also lead us to contemplate innovative solutions to the needs of Québec's First Nations. Following up, I would point out that major negotiations are progressing smoothly, in particular with the Innu and the Attikamek. Discussions are also ongoing with the Huron and Algonquin, to name but these nations.

These important talks make clear that the current relationships between the Québec government and Aboriginal nations in general, and the Inuit nation in particular, are founded on a genuine desire to produce a new solidarity. Together, we are shaping the Québec identity through respect for our differences and by pooling our efforts. I am certain that we are heading towards an even brighter future. In this respect, I would like to reiterate a personal objective which is to reconcile the rights of all in order to arrive at the peaceful and productive coexistence of distinct nations, obviously, but nations working in partnership towards a more prosperous, more just and more fair Québec.

## FORUM >

Pita Aatami  
President, Makivik Corporation



**“At the Katimajit Conference, we were able to foster a powerful dynamics among Nunavik organizations that was both effective and productive. We intend to do our utmost to ensure that this dynamics will endure, and that we may draw full benefit from it.”**

In terms of the social and economic development of Nunavik, the Katimajit Conference represents one of our greatest accomplishments in recent years. Beyond any doubt, the event was of historical importance since it brought together at the same table an unprecedented number of government ministers and representatives of Nunavik's different organizations to discuss the major social, economic and cultural challenges facing the region. In addition to the many commitments made by the governments of Canada and Québec, a significant result of Katimajit is the spirit of partnership that formed leading up to and during the event. We were able to foster a powerful dynamics among Nunavik organizations that was both effective and productive. We intend to do our utmost to ensure that this dynamics will endure, and that we may draw full benefit from it. It must furthermore become an essential development tool to be welded to meet the challenges before us. In this respect, the Katimajit Conference was a first step of a new and innovative approach that we would like to maintain.

As well, the greater autonomy promised by a Nunavik regional government will contribute to consolidating the dynamics of collaboration and partnership among all the region's players. This new form of governance will allow our elected representatives from across the region to discuss at the same table various issues, each according to their specific angle and perspective. It will make it possible both to establish priorities on a collective basis as well as to develop appropriate solutions. Obviously, the Makivik Corporation will not be part of this new government, but will continue to safeguard the ancestral rights of Inuit. It will make sure that the decisions of the institution comply with our traditions, in addition to contributing to the region's social and economic development.

In the future, we will have to complete the negotiation of major files such as the final agreement concerning a Nunavik regional government and a regional electoral division. But without the shadow of doubt, our youth will be at the centre of our attention. We will need to combine our efforts to ensure that they may grow in a sound, respectful and peaceful environment. My most heartfelt desire is to see my people take their place in a modern world, consistent with Inuit traditions and their Inuit identity. The Makivik Corporation will do everything in its power to transform this desire into reality in the coming years.

round table was established, the Katimajit Table, to continue the discussions that were begun at the Conference. In the first part of this feature, we invite you to join these discussions by presenting a few of the major challenges and issues faced by Nunavimmiut.

### To learn more:

Portal to Nunavik: [www.nunavik.ca](http://www.nunavik.ca)

Kativik Regional Government: [www.krg.ca](http://www.krg.ca)

Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services: [www.rrsss-17gouv.qc.ca](http://www.rrsss-17gouv.qc.ca)

Kativik School Board: [www.kativik.qc.ca](http://www.kativik.qc.ca)

Makivik Corporation: [www.makivik.org](http://www.makivik.org)

Canada Research Chair in Comparative Aboriginal Conditions:  
<http://www.chaireconditionautochtone.fss.ulaval.ca/En/index.html>

Nunivaat–Nunavik Statistics Program: a public, independent and permanent database of Nunavik realities. Compiled by the *Université Laval* in collaboration with the Kativik Regional Government, this database contains statistical data drawn from agencies such as Statistics Canada, the *Institut de la statistique du Québec*, as well as special compilations and studies: [www.nunivaat.org](http://www.nunivaat.org).

<sup>1</sup> Nunavik is a part of the administrative region Nord-du-Québec.

<sup>2</sup> Louis-Gilles Francoeur, “L'équilibre climatique en péril”, *Le Devoir*, April 24, 2008, p. A1.

<sup>3</sup> Marie-Andrée Chouinard, “Briser la glace”, *Le Devoir*, July 11, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Louise Sirois, Karina Montminy and Réal Tremblay, 2007. *Investigation into Child and Youth Protection Services in Ungava Bay and Hudson Bay–Nunavik–Report, Conclusions of the Investigation and Recommendations*, Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse.

<sup>5</sup> Gouvernement du Québec, 2007. *La santé autrement dit... Pour espérer vivre plus longtemps*, Québec, Direction des communications of the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux.

<sup>6</sup> Russell Wilkins, Sharanjit Uppal, Philippe Finès, Sacha Sénécal, Éric Guimond and René Dion, 2008. *Life Expectancy in the Inuit-Inhabited Areas of Canada, 1989 to 2003*, Statistics Canada. [<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/82-003-XIE/2008001/article/10463-en.htm>].

<sup>7</sup> Makivik Corporation: ethnic organization established by provincial statute in 1978 to supervise the implementation of the JBNQA. It also manages the compensation provided to Inuit under the JBNQA.

<sup>8</sup> Carl Thériault, “Gouvernement régional du Nunavik. Une idée inspirante pour l'Est”, *Le Soleil*, August 15, 2007, p. 23.

# Qanuippitaa? How Are We? A Comprehensive Survey of Inuit Health in Nunavik – 2004

BY MÉLANIE ANCTIL AND SUZANNE BRUNEAU  
INSTITUT NATIONAL DE SANTÉ PUBLIQUE DU QUÉBEC

A little more than ten years after the completion of a Nunavik survey by *Santé Québec*, the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHS) decided to organize a new survey in the region to track the evolution of the health and wellbeing of residents. In 2003, the organization's Public Health Department and the *ministère de la Santé et Services sociaux* (MSSS) gave a mandate to the *Institut national de santé publique du Québec* (INSPQ), in collaboration with the CHUL's *Unité de recherche en santé publique*, to plan, coordinate and manage this huge survey using the *Amundsen*, a Canadian Coast Guard vessel. The survey, known as *Qanuippitaa? How Are We?*, was scheduled to be carried out between August 31 and October 1, 2004.

Following a full year of preparations, a motivated team of workers was finally in place for the big journey. On August 29, after a few days spent in Quebec City training to perform the various tasks planned under the survey, the whole team was making ready for the flight to Churchill, Manitoba, where the *Amundsen* lay moored. The very same evening that they arrived onboard, the *Amundsen* set sail for Kuujjuarapik, the survey's first port of call. Cutting its way through wind and tides, the splendid red vessel moved from one community to the next, ending its journey in Kuujuaq on September 30, 2004.

While the *Amundsen* was following the coast, three teams of workers were already

in the region's communities laying the groundwork for the vessel's arrival. Based on a list of randomly selected households, the teams contacted and met with future participants to have them sign a consent form, to set their appointment time on the vessel, and to fill out a household questionnaire. A DVD was also presented to help participants clearly understand what to expect during their visit to the ship.

Every time the *Amundsen* dropped anchor in a community, that community literally lived the survey. Nurses would debark from the vessel at 6:30 a.m. and meet the participants whose appointments on the ship were scheduled for that afternoon, while a small watercraft would begin shuttling participants to the

vessel. Onboard, the participants were welcomed by a fellow Inuk and lead to the clinic where blood samples and anthropometric measurements were taken. Specific tests were performed for women older than 50 (bone densitometry) and for individuals aged 40 and older (heart monitoring, carotid ultrasound). Glucose tolerance and hearing tests were also done. Finally, the participants were invited to sit down with interviewers to complete two health-related questionnaires.

Between 40 and 60 participants were received each day. Overall, more than 1000 took part in the survey. Each contributed roughly three hours of their time to complete the different tests and questionnaires. And despite the long working hours, morale onboard the *Amundsen* was exceptional. Team members could be counted on to offer each other encouragement and support during the most difficult times.

Once the survey had returned to Quebec City, new teams of workers were mobilized to enter and analyze the data collected. Seventeen thematic reports, a nutrition report and a methodological report were prepared with the assistance of health and university professionals. Presented briefly in this article, these reports represent a snapshot, at a particular point in time, of the state of health and wellbeing of Inuit in Nunavik, and they provide a record of data on various health factors.



PHOTO: ISABELLE DUBOIS

### Physical health

Given their seafood-rich diet, Nunavimmiut have so far been relatively well protected from certain diseases (especially cardiovascular disease). Nonetheless, the increased presence of certain risk factors (obesity, glucose intolerance, smoking, drug use, drinking, changes in their diets, reduced physical activity) point to poorer physical health in the future. The problem of obesity in particular should be monitored due to its many implications on health. In 2004, six adults out of every ten was overweight or obese, a considerable increase compared with 1992. The highest levels of obesity were measured among women and older adults (aged 50 to 74), but the greatest increases between 1992 and 2004 were among men and youth. Although the level of diabetes among Nunavimmiut is similar to that for the Canadian population, the situation threatens to deteriorate in the future in light of the effects of obesity on diabetes (the majority of diabetics under the survey were overweight or obese).

### Health and lifestyle

Smoking is widespread in Nunavik. In 2004, three out of every four (70%) residents were smokers, compared with one in four (22%) elsewhere in Québec. The highest proportion of smokers (89%) was among youth between the ages of 18 and 29. Regarding alcohol consumption, the proportion of drinkers was 77% in Nunavik in 2004, 17% higher than in 1992. Moreover, nearly a quarter (24%) of drinkers reported having drunk five glasses or more per sitting at least once a week over the preceding year. This proportion is three times greater than elsewhere in Québec (7.5%). The data collected concerning smoking and drinking habits during pregnancy are also worrying, given their well-documented harmful effects on the

health of mothers and their unborn children: 82% of women indicated that they had smoked during their most recent pregnancy (Québec, 33%), and 44% had drank.

As well, six out of every ten (60%) participants stated that they had taken drugs at some time during the preceding year; this proportion is four times higher than elsewhere in Canada. Cannabis was reported to be the most common drug used in Nunavik. The survey results also show that drug use (cannabis, cocaine, solvents) has significantly increased in the region since 1992.

### Nutrition and eating habits

The survey also made it possible to assess the nutrition and eating habits of Inuit. Results revealed that the intake of fruits and vegetables, dairy and grain products the day preceding participation in the survey was especially low. Traditional foods

(acquired through hunting and fishing) were still important in 2004, though less important than in 1992. Traditional foods furthermore made up a greater part of the food intake of older adults, while store-bought products were more common among youth.

It is interesting to note that the “other foods” category—which, it is recommended, should be consumed moderately (butter, jam, candies, chips, soft drinks, coffee, tea, etc.)—represented the main source of calorie intake for Inuit the day preceding their participation in the survey. As well, snack food and beverage (soft and fruit drinks) intake was higher in 2004 compared with 1992. In fact, these beverages represented the main source of carbohydrates for Inuit the day preceding their participation in the survey, and their intake was much higher among young adults. It is

important to close this section by stressing that food insecurity is a major problem for a significant number of Inuit households. In 2004, close to one individual in four was short of food in the month preceding the survey.

### Psychosocial and mental health

Mental and psychosocial health is a relatively important health factor. That said, the majority of Inuit (73%) stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their lives in general. Nonetheless, 13% of participants (more women, youth and low-income individuals) reported a high level of psychological distress, often associated with alcohol and drug use as well as a history of sexual or physical violence. The survey data also shows that, in 2004, 14% of Inuit had seriously considered suicide during the preceding year and that 6.7% had attempted to commit suicide.

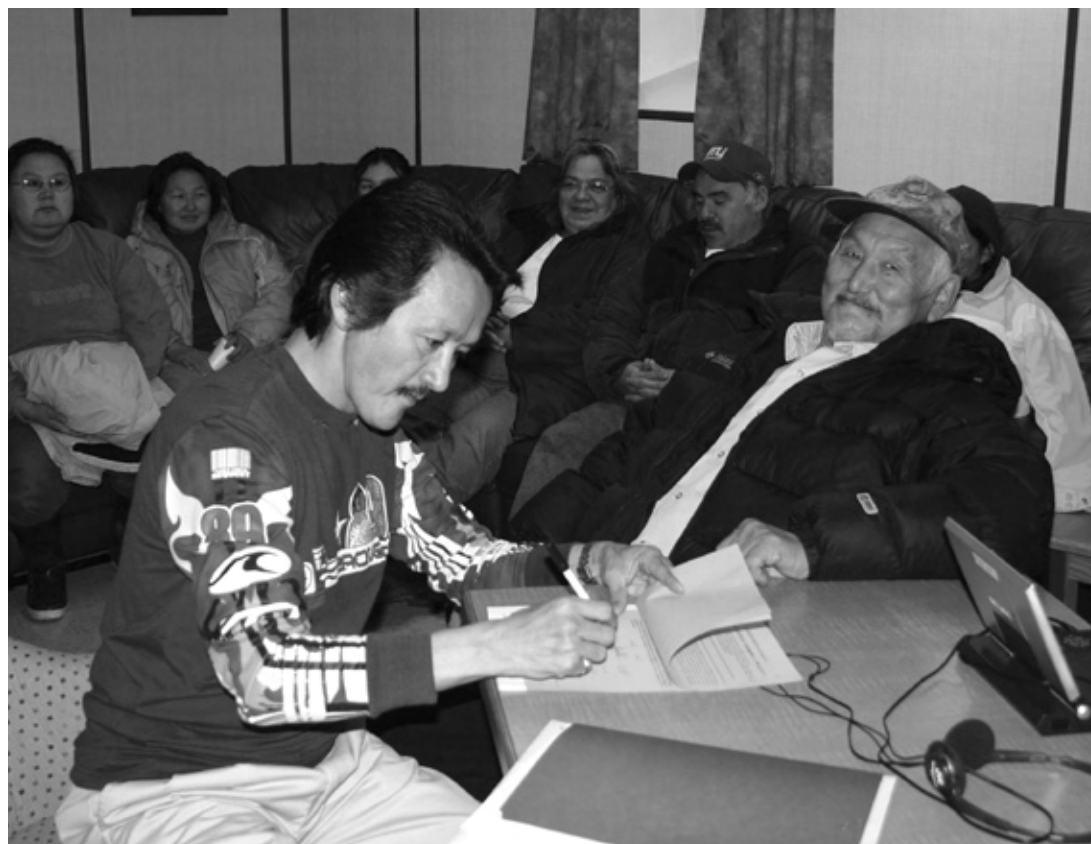


PHOTO: ISABELLE DUBOIS

The situation of violence is worrying: more than half of adults (54%) stated that they had been the victim of physical violence at some time in their lives. Also, 32% had been the victim of sexual assault or attempted sexual assault while a child or teenager, and 20% had faced similar problems in adulthood. Although sexual abuse was reported among men, the situation was more dramatic among women. One out of every two women (49%) indicated that they had been sexually assaulted or subject to attempted sexual assault while minors; one in four (27%) have faced similar problems as adults.

#### Environment and health

Regarding exposure to environmental contaminants, the survey results reveal much lower levels in the blood of heavy metals (cadmium, mercury and lead) and organic pollutants (PCBs and pesticides) between 1992 and 2004. Nonetheless, a large proportion of Inuit continue to present concentrations above the acceptable levels determined by Health Canada.

#### The next steps

In the months following the end of the survey, participants whose blood results presented anomalies received letters informing them of their results and inviting them to visit their local CLSC. In the fall of 2005, the preliminary results of the survey were presented to the board of directors of the NRBHSS and broadcast simultaneously over regional radio airwaves. A year later, a DVD containing footage from the survey as well as a few result highlights was produced and distributed to all households in the region. Recently, 17 thematic reports were released to the general public. A summary report on the survey's highlights remains to be translated into Inuktitut and distributed in every community.

The results presented in this article provide a succinct description of the state of Inuit health in Nunavik in 2004. The situation, which is far from positive, represents a major challenge for regional health officials. It should be added that, in recent decades, Inuit have experienced profound changes in every aspect of their lives. Ever-increasing contact with more southerly populations has led Inuit to modify their lifestyle, adopting, among other things, more sedentary habits, modern living conditions and new eating habits. Fortunately, Nunavik possesses a youthful population that represents an important motivator for improving the region's health. The challenge is tremendous but health officials know that they can rely on Nunavimmiut to implement health prevention and promotion programs adapted to this developing region.

To learn more: consult the website of the INSPQ at [www.inspq.qc.ca/pdf/publications/nunavik.asp?E=p](http://www.inspq.qc.ca/pdf/publications/nunavik.asp?E=p).

## FORUM >

Maggie Emudluk  
Chairperson, Kativik Regional Government



**“While institutions are among the tools that we have to effect improvements, every one of us must become involved and assume our responsibilities, so that our children can grow up in a healthy environment.”**

In the coming years, the Kativik Regional Government will play a major role in creating the Nunavik regional government, since it is among the organizations to be amalgamated. In my opinion, one of the major challenges facing us will be this amalgamation. Currently, the organizations go about their work without necessarily consulting one another. Yet, in order to respond to our needs, it is important that we be able to sit down together, to discuss the issues and identify solutions. A Nunavik regional government will do exactly this. Elected representatives will be able to focus on education, health, infrastructure and other issues, calling on the federal and provincial governments with a single voice. After each provincial and federal election, each of our organizations must begin its work again. Every time, each organization must educate the newly elected legislative members about our regional realities, our needs, because we can not be governed like the other regions of Québec. Generally speaking, programs and legislation are not well adapted to our realities.

In terms of social issues, we also have major challenges to address. The recent youth protection report describes the current dramatic situation faced by our children—our future leaders. In my opinion, it will take a generation and maybe two for the situation to improve. And correcting the situation will require not only the commitment of elected representatives, but the full participation of all our communities and of every family. We must say it now, loud and clear, enough is enough. We can not sit back and wait for institutions like schools, social services, the police, and the government to resolve the situation. The solution lies with each of us, in every community. While institutions are among the tools that we have to effect improvements, every one of us must become involved and assume our responsibilities, so that our children can grow up in a healthy environment.

My greatest hope for the future is that the residents of the region will learn to adapt to these major changes we are experiencing and, especially, take part and contribute. Things are evolving so rapidly that, very often, we do not even have time to adapt. Our culture is being transformed. Values that were important before, like respect for our elders, seem to have been forgotten by our youth. Preserving our traditions and culture while at the same time adapting ourselves represents one the greatest challenges ahead of us.

# Protecting Inuit Youth in Nunavik

## Report on the Investigation into Youth Protection Services in the Communities of Ungava Bay and Hudson Bay

BY LISA KOPERQUALUK  
SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR

The news hit like a tidal wave, and many Inuit were shocked when they read the investigation report prepared in April 2007 by the *Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse* concerning youth protection services in the communities of Ungava Bay and Hudson Bay. But as the shock waves receded and though the news was difficult to hear, it had to be acknowledged that much of the report was true. According to Louisa May, the director of youth protection services for the communities of Ungava Bay, “The report really made us realize the gravity of the situation, and that something had to be done right away.”

In 2002, two complaints were filed with the Commission concerning problems with the delivery of social services for children in Nunavik. Several issues were raised about whether the *Youth Protection Act* was being applied properly, as well as about the shortage of professional resources and their lack of training. In short, the question needed to be asked: Were the rights of children being adequately protected in Nunavik?

The complaints led the Commission to study a sample of the 633 active youth protection cases in 2003. The investigation entailed the detailed analysis of each selected case, including interviews with children, families, foster families, the youth protection directors for Ungava Bay and Hudson Bay, employees of the region’s two health centres, the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS), the rehabilitation centres in Salluit and Puvirnituk and the CLSCs, as well as teachers, police constables, judges, lawyers and mayors. The Commission also met with the anthropologist Bernard Saladin d’Anglure and reviewed some 60 documents and websites as part of their investigation.

“I was deeply shocked when I first read the report, and then I realized that I agreed with several elements. There is a shortage of workers and training. And alcohol is often a very big factor: for example, when parents go out to a bar for fun and at closing time—instead of going home—they buy more alcohol from bootleggers. Then, their behaviour becomes irrational; they drink way too much, and the lives of their children are disrupted. I believe that if alcohol consumption were to drop, just this factor would improve the safety of children,” stated Louisa May. “The illegal sale of alcohol on a daily basis in our communities is a huge problem.”

In fact, only the communities of Kuujuaq and Kuujuarapik have bars, but individuals can order alcohol once a month from the *Société des alcools du Québec* with the permission of their respective municipalities. Although there is a limit to the quantity that can be ordered, the supply of alcohol



PHOTO : ISABELLE DUBOIS

on the black market is boundless for anyone with enough money. A 375-mL bottle of liquor sells for more than \$100 in the region.

The problem of alcohol moreover serves to exacerbate violence. According to a study cited in the Commission’s report, domestic violence was 10 times higher in Nunavik than in the rest of Canada, a decade ago. For their part, police constables interviewed during the investigation emphasized that the violent behaviour exhibited by intoxicated men, and sometimes women, “is not ordinary violence. [...] They unleash violence that has been bottled up for years. They hate the whole world.” Obviously, the children of parents suffering from alcoholism are seriously affected by the violence. Parent behaviours and lifestyles are often indicated by youth protection services as the cause of their interventions. The Commission’s report describes cases of serious neglect, abandonment, as well as physical and sexual violence against children. Of the 255 cases studied during the investigation, 177 related to behavioural difficulties, 42 to physical mistreatment, 37 to sexual violence and 37 to serious emotional rejection.

The Commission’s report also noted that about 30% of the children being monitored by youth protection services were adopted, and that the rate of teenage pregnancy was high. Traditional adoption, *tiguarniq*—which involves the adoption of children by extended family members—has long been practised by Inuit. However, due to the current high teenage pregnancy rate and the settlement of Inuit in villages, children may now be adopted by any Inuk<sup>1</sup>, not just a family member. Non-Inuit are not permitted to make traditional adoptions. In the old days, when child mor-

tality was much higher and there were fewer children, grandparents could adopt a grandchild simply by exercising their parental authority. The situation today however is reversed, which is to say that people are asked to adopt a child. “Some find it difficult to refuse such a request, even though in their hearts they don’t really want to adopt. They feel a sense of responsibility to the unborn child and are unable to say no,” explained Louisa May. According to Sara Tagoona, the director of the Tunngasuvvik Women’s Shelter in Kuujjuaq, “We need to teach teenagers about family planning, and to have them ask themselves: What will my life be like with a child? How will it be affected? Should I have a child now, or later? Teenagers who have children at such a young age can not achieve all the things they want.”



PHOTO : ISABELLE DUBOIS

The cases studied by the Commission also revealed major deficiencies in the delivery of youth protection services under the *Youth Protection Act*. Thirty-five percent of the cases for example were not retained or follow-up assessments were not carried out because the concerned children refused to participate. And even in cases where assessments were completed, the Commission noted that, often, actions to ascertain the safety of the children were not performed, intervention plans were not implemented, and follow-up was not carried out.

“Currently, we’re focussed on solving problems as they arise. But our human and financial resources are sorely lacking. In this context, it’s impossible to turn our attention to prevention and family wellbeing,” explained Tagoona, in addition to noting that funding for the women’s shelter had recently been increased to permit the creation of a social worker position. For a social worker in Inukjuak, another problem is the flagrant lack of training. “We weren’t being trained here when I first began working, especially regarding the paperwork. I visit the school and a lot of homes, but in order for those things to work, everyone must be able to function at a professional level. When workers aren’t trained, it’s a problem. The report is a red flag, an eye-opener for us all.”

A 19-member committee was formed by the Makivik Corporation immediately following the release of the report to oversee the implementation of the Commission’s 21 recommendations. “We had our first meeting in December 2007 to review the actions required of all the organizations to ensure that all the recommendations are followed through, which we have a year to do,” stated Minnie Grey, the coordinator of the Makivik

committee. Also a member of the committee, Tagoona underlined that, “If we can work together, there will be improvement. The challenge will be to get the communities mobilized and to work hand-in-hand to address the recommendations through each organization’s mandate. Although we can’t go back to our traditional ways, we want to make improvements, which can only come from us.”

In Nunavik, the impacts of cultural change have been immense and the report by the *Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse* makes clear that children are not receiving adequate protection and that their rights are not being respected. Children are our future and they make up a large proportion of Inuit society. We must take care of them, by paying attention to them now. After all, they didn’t ask to be born.

<sup>1</sup> *Inuk* is the singular form of *Inuit*. *Inuk* signifies one person, whereas *Inuit* a group of people.

# A Housing Crisis with Wider Implications

BY MÉLANIE CHABOT  
EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

The requirements and constraints posed by Nunavik's geographical, climatic, socio-economic and demographic characteristics generate enormous challenges on housing in the region. A population boom has created both immense needs and demand for housing in a location where remoteness and climate inflate costs, not to mention considerably limiting the construction season. For this reason, it is common to find 12 to 15 individuals, three or

particular, by creating conditions conducive to the emergence of social problems and then making it more difficult to eradicate them<sup>2</sup>. Given the dramatic shortage of housing, it is not easy to respond to the emergency housing needs of individuals in difficulty, like those with mental health problems, women and children who are the victims of domestic abuse and violence, elders with diminishing abilities, and so on.

**“Everyone is affected by the housing crisis. Not only is new social housing needed for families, but existing infrastructure is due for major renovation work.”**

— ANDY MOORHOUSE,  
PRESIDENT, KATIVIK MUNICIPAL HOUSING BUREAU, KATIMAJIIT CONFERENCE

four generations, living together under a same roof. In fact, the rate of overcrowding is 53% in the North, compared with 7% in the rest of the country. In other words, roughly 500 (25%) Nunavik families are in need of housing<sup>1</sup>. This need is especially striking among young families who are ready to strike out on their very own. In addition, the overuse of dwellings gives rise to their rapid deterioration. Result: those who obtain a dwelling often receive one in very poor repair.

As recently reported by the *Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse*, overcrowding in dwellings and the resulting lack of privacy impact on the living conditions of Inuit, in

### Housing projects that respond to specific needs

In response to these specific problems, Nunavik's organizations have formed different partnerships to spearhead client-adapted initiatives. One example is the development and implementation of a supervised residence project in Kuujuaq under the auspices of the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services, the Ungava Tulattavik Health Centre and the Kativik Municipal Housing Bureau (KMHB). In the words of KMHB director of client services, Pierre Roy, this project marked a shift for the organization to a “community” approach that has since been applied to other similar initiatives.



PHOTO: MÉLANIE CHABOT

The 100% occupancy rate at the *Ippigusugiursavik* project (meaning ‘learning to walk’ in Inuktitut) underlines the urgent need and pertinence of such a project.

Supervised residences, that aim to provide affordable social housing for individuals with mental health problems and intellectual disabilities, allow tenants to become more independent with professional support and coaching. As explained by Carolyne St-Denis, a supervised residence worker, “daily activities are organized to permit the greatest autonomy possible. Tenants pay rent, get up when they want, eat when it suits them, and come and go as they please. In short, as much as possible they make their own decisions. For my part, I offer my support as they make these decisions and carry out their daily tasks: grocery shopping, cooking, budgeting, housework, medication, and so on.” The project aims to offer respite care for families, at the same time as encouraging tenants’ progressive social integration.

Some will never fully integrate village life, while others could reach that point soon. Although according to St-Denis, integration remains a distant objective. “More work must be done in terms of education and awareness. We need to start talking about mental health, whether it’s on the radio or in the schools, to explain what it is, to demystify it,” noted the supervised residence worker. “In my opinion, if we could demystify mental health problems, the community could play a greater role, for example by taking our tenants out on the land to hunt and fish, and ensuring their true integration into community life,” added St-Denis. “In most cases, families don’t understand mental health problems, like schizophrenia. So, even if we prepare individuals to return to their homes, helping them to become as independent as possible, but the families and the community are left in the dark with no one to support them, quite obviously things just won’t work.”

**“The shortage of professional resources makes it impossible to deal with the full range of problems. But in addition there is a shortage of housing for potential resources.”**

— ALACIE ARNGAK,  
PRESIDENT, NUNAVIK REGIONAL BOARD OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES,  
KATIMAJIIT CONFERENCE

### Wider implications

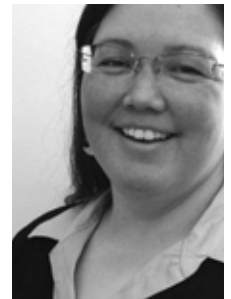
Obviously, the shortage of supportive care can be explained. “The meagre available resources are inadequate to respond to the problems. Currently, there are only two social workers for all of Ungava Bay. This is clearly insufficient,” explained St-Denis. Moreover, the housing shortage has an adverse effect on the hiring of new resources. According to Maureen Cooney, who directs mental health and suicide prevention programs at the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services, “The housing shortage prevents us from filling the positions necessary to offer

a full range of services. For the moment, we are only able to carry out interventions, and most of the time only emergency interventions. Not surprisingly, this situation overloads workers and contributes to the high turnover rate,” noted Cooney. It is difficult to hire a specialized worker for a small village when there is no housing; it is also difficult to transfer a worker from one village to the next for the same reason.

In 2005, an agreement was signed by the governments of Québec and Canada and the Makivik Corporation concerning a five-year housing construction program for

## FORUM >

**Alacie Arngak**  
President, Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services



**“We would like to foster the return of birthing to our communities.”**

One of the major challenges we face relates to the increase in staff employed in the health and social services sector. Every effort must be made to attract and retain more physicians, more nurses and more social workers to handle our immense needs. And this, in addition to training professionals among Inuit. A case in point is the challenge of obtaining recognition for the practice of Inuit midwives and the return of birthing in our communities. We are currently working to open a birthing centre in an Ungava community. The project has only just been launched, but we are hoping to move it along quickly. Due to the shortage of physicians, pregnant women in Nunavik are required to travel to other communities or Montreal to give birth, leaving their families and children behind sometimes for periods that can exceed a month. In addition to the pressure that this situation produces in the lives of these families, it also generates significant costs for them. We are optimistic about this project. At the recent Inuit health summit in Kuujuaq last winter, the Québec government appeared to finally take note of this need. I think that we will be able to work together on this issue and that the practice of Inuit midwives will obtain official recognition.



ARTIST: ALEC GORDON, KUJUAQ

approximately 275 dwellings. According to youth protection services for Hudson Bay, this agreement serves only to maintain the status quo since it represents the annual construction of roughly only 50 dwellings while the trend in population growth is placing tremendous pressure on housing demand<sup>3</sup>. In response, at the Katimajit Conference, the Québec government announced additional investments that will permit the construction of 130 more dwellings (80 for medical and social service staff and 50 for families in Nunavik). These investments will be helpful, but much remains to be

done to improve the situations of many families. Based on the estimates of Nunavik stakeholders, the region is currently short 750 dwellings, taking into account the needs of families and professionals.

<sup>1</sup> Louise Sirois, Karina Montminy and Réal Tremblay, *Investigation into Child and Youth Protection Services in Ungava Bay and Hudson Bay—Nunavik—Report, Conclusions of the Investigation and Recommendations*, Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse, April 2007, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

# Turning the Tide on Suicide

BY LOUISE BUJOLD, PH.D.  
FACULTY OF NURSING SCIENCE, UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL

In every society around the world, there are men and women, youth and the not-so-young, who choose to end their lives. Nunavik is no different. Nonetheless, over the last roughly 30 years, an alarming increase in suicidal behaviour has been observed in the region. The situation is all the more worrying since suicide represents the leading cause of death among young adults (aged 20 to 34)<sup>1</sup>. This age group also records the highest levels of suicidal ideation and attempts<sup>2</sup>.

### Evolution of the suicide rate<sup>3</sup>

In Nunavik, the suicide rate began an upwards climb in the late 1970s, as a rare but regular occurrence: one suicide was recorded annually from 1979 to 1982. Over the next ten years,

the phenomenon became more prevalent, seeming to stabilize for a short period from 1992 to 1995, before continuing its increasing trend. Between 1979 and 2005, 195 Nunavimmiut took their own lives.

The number of deaths by suicide compared with the overall mortality rate demonstrates the alarming increase of the phenomenon in Nunavik over the years. In 1982, suicide accounted for only 3% of the region's total deaths but, by 1997, had come to represent 20%<sup>4</sup>.

### Suicidal ideation and attempts

At the time of the latest survey on the health of Nunavik Inuit, conducted in 2004, 35% of participants stated that they had thought about suicide at some point during their lifetimes and 14% in the year

preceding the survey<sup>5</sup>. One participant out of every five (21%) admitted to having attempted to commit suicide at some point during their lifetimes, while 6.7% had attempted suicide during the twelve months preceding the survey. Compared

**Unravelling a complex dilemma**  
There is no single cause of suicide, and several factors can contribute to an individual's vulnerability. These factors incubate through a series of complex interactions and events that occur at the individual,

**“It is impossible to understand the phenomenon of suicide in the region without considering the recent history of Nunavik Inuit and the profound changes that have rocked the evolution of their society over the past fifty years.”**

with a health survey conducted in 1992<sup>6</sup>, the 2004 results demonstrate a significant increase in suicidal ideation and attempts in Nunavik.

sociocultural and environmental levels. Nunavik is no exception, and many risk factors associated with suicide are present: personal histories of suicide; depression and substance abuse-related psychiatric disorders or symptoms; alcohol, drug, substance and solvent abuse or addiction; poor self-esteem; poor problem-solving skills; poor adaptation skills; health problems; traumatism; physical, psychological or sexual abuse; recent loss or death; family neglect; childhood separation or loss; family or social isolation; difficult relationships (friends, families, sweethearts, crimes against persons); social values and beliefs (tolerance of suicide, act of heroism); economic pressures (poverty, underemployment, few wage earners, poor schooling); and loss of traditional knowledge—to name but a few<sup>7</sup>.

Although these factors closely resemble those documented for Québec society as a whole, they

PHOTO: ISABELLE DUBOIS



## FORUM >

Charlie Arngak  
President, Avataq Cultural Institute



**“One of the major challenges in Nunavik is to replace the often impervious institutional, professional and cultural divisions with a collective and synergistic outlook on suicide prevention.”**

must be contextualized. It is impossible to understand the phenomenon of suicide in the region without considering the recent history of Nunavik Inuit and the profound changes that have rocked the evolution of their society over the past fifty years. While the act of taking one's own life is tied to the personal characteristics of each individual, suicide can be connected to the erosion of traditional social organizations and the loss of identity that occurs during transition processes<sup>8</sup>. It is also commonly connected with conditions of alienation and anomie<sup>9</sup>, as well as adjustment difficulties exhibited through excessive behaviours, like those observed in the region (violence, sexual assault, substance abuse). Several researchers agree that the reaction of Aboriginal communities to culture clash and their attempts to adapt can explain, at least in part, the levels of suicide in these populations: Aboriginal societies going through intense transition are the most affected by the phenomenon of suicide<sup>10</sup>. Notwithstanding, change in and of itself is not fraught with harm. Rather, it is the stress generated by the actions necessary to face the concrete conditions of their existence that adversely affects the health and wellbeing of Inuit<sup>11</sup>. New

forms of sociality are colliding with core Inuit societal values, giving rise to conflict. Family and inter-generational relationships are being renewed, at the same time that peer socialization, schooling and a global perspective have introduced themselves into the modern identity. Traditional solidarities are being eroded, leaving certain individuals feeling very alone. At a very stressful period in their lives, young adults are especially vulnerable. They are old enough to start raising a family, and professional certification is growing in importance: they are ready to participate in the well-being and development of their communities. Yet, even as they seek to enter this productive role, young adults are encountering major obstacles and economic forces. Underemployment, dequalification and other uncertainties generate deficits in Nunavik in terms of lost potential. To this may be added the non-recognition of the personal values of a significant proportion of the population, a proportion that aspires to its self-actualization.

Suicide is a preventable cause of death. It is known that a large majority of the individuals who become so discouraged as to consider taking their own lives

**“For the Avataq Cultural Institute, the main challenge obviously remains our language...”**

**F**or the Avataq Cultural Institute, the main challenge obviously remains our language, which is to say the safeguard and strengthening of the Inuit language, Inuktitut. We realize today that many Inuit, especially youth, are losing fluency in their mother tongue. Often they understand Inuktitut and can speak it, but they pepper it with French and English. This is why Avataq has partnered with each of Nunavik's communities to promote various projects for youth and elders to strengthen and enhance the use of Inuktitut. The projects aim to bridge the gap between the generations, speaking to youth about their culture, reaching out to them through the issue of language protection. In order to preserve the vitality of our language and culture, we must understand it inside out, we must make it our language. To this end, one project stands out. The arctic survival training program aims to re-teach youth and the not-so-young how to master their environment. Today, we too often sit at home in front of televisions and computers; this is very hard on us. Every effort must be made to expose youth to Inuit culture—their culture—because, without it, I worry that they will not know how to survive.

succeed, alone or with the help of others, in preventing their suicide through alternative solutions to their problems. One of the major challenges in Nunavik is to replace the often impervious institutional, professional and cultural divisions with a collective and synergistic outlook on suicide prevention.

<sup>1</sup> Institut national de santé publique du Québec, Unité connaissance-surveillance.

<sup>2</sup> Kirmayer and Paul, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Suicide data are not presented in the typical manner (total, by age group, by sex). The small size of the reference population ( $n \leq 10,000$ ) and the fact that less than 1,000 deaths are attributed to this cause in Nunavik prompt us to be cautious in the presentation of the data.

<sup>4</sup> Bujold, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Kirmayer and Paul, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Jetté et al., 1994.

<sup>7</sup> Malus et al., 1994; Boothroyd, Kirmayer et al., 2001; Bujold, 2006; Kirmayer et al., 1994.

<sup>8</sup> Thorslund, 1991.

<sup>9</sup> Kirmayer et al., 1994.

<sup>10</sup> Berry, 1985; Chandler and Lalonde, 1997; Spaulding, 1986; May and Van Winkle, 1994.

<sup>11</sup> O'Neill, 1986.

# Creativity, Innovation, Flexibility and Adaptation: The Nunavik Experience

BY BEETHOVEN ASANTE

ANARAALUK REINTEGRATION CENTRE AND AANIAVITUQARQ REGIONAL INTENSIVE CARE CENTRE

## In the beginning...

The first time I travelled to Nunavik, in 1997, I could not have imagined the challenges that lay ahead of me... nor even that, ten years later, at the end of a holiday break, I would still regularly be making the five-hour flight from Montreal to Inukjuak.

I started my life in Northern Québec working for youth protection: first, as a social worker and, then, as acting director for the seven Inuit villages on the coast of Hudson Bay. In 2000, I was approached to set up a regional care facility for Inuit with mental health problems and intellectual disabilities, with special emphasis on those with persistent psychiatric disorders.

Although I had some experience in psychiatric social work and had also been involved in residential care, the responsibility of developing a new facility—the first of its kind in Nunavik, and from the ground up—represented an enormous challenge. Seven years later, however, I am proud that the Anaraaluk Reintegration Centre in Inukjuak is still in operation. We are still improving services in an environment where creativity and innovation are essential to maximize our limited resources.

## Evolution

The Centre's original mission was to provide services that would allow adults with severe and persistent mental health problems as well as intellectual disabilities to develop the skills necessary to successfully integrate into their communities. Over time, this mandate has evolved dramatically in response to the demands of families, as well as communities, health care professionals and the judiciary. The latter look to the Centre to provide a structured, safe haven for individuals who are a danger to themselves and to others due to psychiatric disorders that are often exacerbated by drug abuse and other substances. The Centre has gradually become the last resort for individuals rejected by their families and their communities. Obviously, we try to remain as flexible as possible, adapting to the needs of our clients, our health centre part-

ners and the community of Inukjuak. For example, we offer short-term, emergency accommodation even if it means the individual must sleep on the sofa for a night.

Since individuals with mental health problems present a complex array of behaviours and needs, a range of services to enhance the Centre's level of functionality were identified. These services include a secure, crisis intervention facility, supervised apartments in each of the 14 communities, and long-term care centres.

The opening of the Aaniavituqarq Regional Intensive Care Centre in Puvirnituq, a five-bed short-term accommodation facility for individuals in crisis, has relieved some of the pressure that had been building on the Anaraaluk Reintegration Centre in Inukjuak. Aaniavituqarq provides an alternative to hospitalization for individuals in crisis and serves as a back-up for Anaraaluk clients who exhibit severe and problematic behaviours. The Inuulitsivik Health Centre and various contributors are also cooperating in order to establish a supervised residence and a long-term care facility.



PHOTO: ISABELLE DUBOIS

### Many challenges

Staffing is a major challenge. Recruiting and retaining personnel, both Inuit and non-Inuit, is very difficult. Staff members routinely adjust their intervention strategies to handle clients with difficult behaviours who may be suffering from schizophrenia, borderline personality disorder, depression or intellectual disability.

As well, communities are increasingly reluctant to accept these individuals as they are often viewed as threats to the safety and wellbeing of community members. Although some clients are wrongly identified as dangerous, others are clearly capable of causing serious harm, particularly when under the influence of drugs or solvents.

The perceived and actual danger posed by clients with mental health problems inevitably creates tension between health care facilities and the communities where they are situated. Ongoing negotiations are necessary to maintain vital links with these communities.

Over the years, some residents of the Anaraaluk Reintegration Centre have made important strides towards greater stability and they have enhanced their ability to care for themselves. Nonetheless, Nunavik's housing shortage, which forces multiple generations to live in overcrowded dwellings, makes it impossible for these individuals to obtain their own lodgings. With no hope of moving on, clients begin to regress. The best solution open to them is a place at Aaniavituqarq, for a "change of scene."

Finally, on an ongoing basis and in every aspect of our work, which is based on southern medical treatment models, we must take into account traditional Inuit concepts of mental health. The prescribed medical treatment for each client is followed, but therapy fosters Inuit traditional activities, such as hunting and fishing, as well as counselling by elders and prayer.

Inuit society tends to be highly inclusive so that, in general, individuals who exhibit mental health problems are treated just like everyone else. While positive in many ways, this acceptance can also lead to tardy diagnoses. And natural caregivers are in short supply. In Nunavik, there is a widespread expectation that those with psychiatric disorders can be cured. But, when the disorder continues for months and then years, natural caregivers can become frustrated and angry, and ultimately reject the ill family member.

## FORUM >

Alacie Nalukturuk  
President, Kativik School Board



### "We need to develop a real partnership with parents."

In my opinion, one of the main challenges of the future will be to practice and enhance the use of the Inuit language, Inuktitut, as well as to heed our cultural values. The announcements made at the Katimajit Conference in August 2007 represent a step in the right direction. The funding announced by the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports will allow the Kativik School Board (KSB) to undertake the creation, and then the gradual implementation, of Inuktitut curriculum for grades 4, 5 and 6. This will have a very direct impact on the education of our children, who currently receive Inuktitut instruction only during their first three years at the elementary level. But, our culture is also tied to the natural environment; it's not only our language. That is why a new survival skills course that will soon be set up and integrated into the curriculum represents another step in the right direction. Especially since elders are to play a role.

Still another challenge faced by the KSB relates to the implementation of the Nunavik regional government. The amalgamation of our institutions will generate all sorts of benefits. It will eliminate the duplication of certain work. Currently, duplication occurs frequently, though unintentionally of course, as each organization is focused on only its sector and its priorities. Amalgamation will permit these priorities to be harmonized, as well as allow us to work more closely together. Obviously as we move through these developments, the KSB will continue to do its part, which is to say to ensure the delivery of education—adapted to the region's specific context—in all Nunavik communities.

Finally, I am hopeful that in the future Nunavimmiut will have an opportunity to talk about the social problems that plague the region and thereby foster wellbeing in our communities and among our children. I believe that the Québec government's announcements at the Katimajit Conference to improve health care and social services are part of the solution. But in my opinion, efforts must be directed towards parents. Youth for their part can call on student councillors for support when they are facing problems. In a certain manner, these councillors fill the gap between school and the home. But we need to do more. We need to develop a real partnership with parents, and we're trying to work on that. This partnership is one of the KSB's major concerns, one of our main priorities.

# New Information Technologies:

BY MÉLANIE CHABOT  
EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Strong support seems to exist to make information and communications technologies (ICTs) the driving force of a new revolution—technological and informational this time, instead of industrial—that will package economic growth and social development. ICTs “are expected to improve productivity in all areas of economic activity, to stimulate the development of new processes and products, to raise wages or foster employment in the domain, to increase access to and the efficiency of community services (health and education), and to expand the horizons of individuals and organizations through easier access to information as well as through the democratization of politics!”

Yet despite this strong support, it is also generally recognized that individuals, social groups and geographical zones that miss out on the informational revolution run the risk of being marginalized and excluded from society<sup>2</sup>. Statistics Canada noted in 2004 that the information disseminated on the Internet has become extremely important and prevalent, and that non-users could eventually see their ability to fully participate in community activities diminished<sup>3</sup>. Look no further than the government’s online-service project, or the increase in other services for citizens over the Internet.

In this context, it is easier to understand that ICTs present immense economic and social development potential for remote and isolated communities—like those in Nunavik—even as they seriously threaten to reinforce existing marginalization. In this respect, the federal government’s National Broadband Task Force identified in its final report published in 2004 “broadband access as key to strengthening the economies, improving health care and making available new learning opportunities to rural, remote and northern communities.” The Task Force also concluded that “being connected via the Internet would help to close the “systemic gap between the quality of life” of urban compared with rural Canadians, and of Aboriginal compared with non-Aboriginal Canadians<sup>4</sup>.”

## Northern and rural regions isolated by the digital divide

Following up on its 2007–2014 *National Policy on Rurality*, the Québec government recently created a task force to identify measures to stimulate services in rural areas. The policy not only recognizes the potential of ICTs to promote community development, it also underscores the different degree of access to these same technologies in urban and rural areas. And rightly so.

A Statistics Canada study revealed that, in 2001, even while ICT-access obstacles such as cost, availability

and lack of training are significant, place of residence ranks as one of the most important. The data showed that half of Internet non-users live in rural and northern areas, where access is more difficult. And regarding users in these areas, even while taking into account most of the socioeconomic factors of Internet use (age, schooling and income), they encounter more often all kinds of connection and navigation problems, not to mention that school and the workplace (and not the home) are the two main online access points for Northerners. Statistics Canada data therefore suggests that, in remote regions, Internet access is often limited to the village cores, which is to say institutions and schools<sup>5</sup>.

The law of supply and demand is at the root of many of these difficulties. In urban centres, competition among internet service providers can keep consumer prices low whereas, in remote regions, higher operating costs and the limited subscriber market scare away service providers.

Admittedly, in the 14 communities of Nunavik, the Internet access provider Tamaani delivers a wireless service by combining satellite and WiMax technologies. But the monthly subscription for a basic 500-Mb package is \$60. In the words of Bruno Guglielminetti, an ICT specialist, the service delivers “an Internet speed straight out of

“Non-users tend to be older, have lower levels of education and income, and live in rural or northern regions of the country.”

— STATISTICS CANADA

the distant past, that nonetheless enables contact with the outside world.<sup>6</sup>”

## Public investments to level the playing field

To optimize Internet use and ICT potential, Lawrence Canon, the federal Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, along with Nathalie Normandeau and Michelle Courchesne, respectively the provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs and Regions and the provincial Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports, announced at the Katimajit Conference investments totalling \$10.1 million for the Québec portion of a project to increase the bandwidth available to Nunavik communities. The project has been set up under the National Satellite Initiative, which aims to lower the cost of broadband access for communities in the Far to mid-north, and in isolated and remote areas of Canada. The project also includes investments that will increase the bandwidth available to commun-

# Investments to Bridge the Digital Divide in Northern Québec

ities in northern Manitoba and Ontario. Funding will be paid to the Kativik Regional Government for the Northern Indigenous Community Satellite Network, a partnership that also includes the Keewatin Tribal Council of Manitoba and the Keewatinook Okimakanak of Ontario. By enhancing satellite capacity, these investments will enable videoconferencing and, in particular, serve to improve certain services related to education, health and justice.

training are often neglected or not proportionate to equipment investments<sup>7</sup>. As a case in point *Communautique*, a non-profit organization dedicated to the integration of ICTs among the general public through its work with community groups and individuals at risk of technological marginalization, reported in 2001 that “despite the efforts [of the Québec government], investments directed to training for the general public and their initiation, compared with the moneys allo-

**“Our communities must be part of Canadian and Québec society.”**

— ANDY MOORHOUSE,  
PRESIDENT, KATIVIK MUNICIPAL HOUSING BUREAU, KATIMAJIIT CONFERENCE

## Effective use of ICTs: another digital divide for Nunavimmiut?

Without a doubt, the announced investments will increase available bandwidth, not only for institutions but in the communities they serve. However, access to equipment and infrastructure is not an end in itself; ICTs are tools that must be deftly welded to have an impact on the wellbeing and quality of life of individuals and communities. As mentioned above, while access and place of residence have important consequences on the use and appropriation of ICTs, so too do socioeconomic factors as well as skill deficits and training. Many studies have shown that the integration of these tools takes time; however, investments in

cated for equipment and infrastructure are low<sup>8</sup>.”

In other words, means and resources must be put in place to help Nunavimmiut acquire the skills necessary to access the Internet, make appropriate use of it, as well as contribute their own information. The participation of every member of society, the definition of the services to be delivered, the production of material that is responsive to a variety of needs and concerns, as well as access to diverse information represent major challenges to ICTs<sup>9</sup>. Just as community radio in Nunavik made it possible to produce material that was adapted to the region and its residents, energy should be channelled



PHOTO: YVON ROY

THE NEWLY CREATED NUNAVIK FINANCIAL SERVICES COOPERATIVE DELIVERS ITS FULL RANGE OF SERVICES TO NUNAVIMMIUT OVER THE INTERNET. PHOTO: AATTASI PILURTUUT, THE COOPERATIVE'S ADVISOR AND LIAISON OFFICER IN KUUJJUAQ.

to do the same with the Internet, perhaps in those areas where community resources are already present, so that ICTs may become tools for learning, participation, creativity and expression. The democratization of ICTs through their use by all citizens: that is the challenge that lies before Nunavimmiut.

<sup>1</sup> A. Rallat and F. Rochelandet, “La fracture numérique : une faille sans fondements ?”, *Réseaux* 2004/5-6, no. 127, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Susan Crompton, “Off-reserve Aboriginal Internet Users”, *Canadian Social Trends*, no. 75 (Winter 2004), p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Bruno Guglielminetti, “Souvenirs de vacances”, *Le Devoir*, August 13, 2007, p. b7.

<sup>7</sup> A. Rallat and F. Rochelandet, “La fracture numérique : une faille sans fondements ?”, *Réseaux* 2004/5-6, no. 127, p. 43.

<sup>8</sup> Communautique, *Plateforme québécoise de l'Internet citoyen*. [<http://www.communautique.qc.ca/reflexion-et-enjeux/internet-citoyen/plateforme.html>].

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

# Climate Change: On the Front Line

BY **MÉLANIE CHABOT, EDITORIAL COMMITTEE**  
AND **MARTIN TREMBLAY, ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIALIST, KATIVIK REGIONAL GOVERNMENT**

**D**espite their recent settlement in villages, Inuit remain closely connected to the environment and their ability to access the territory and its resources. In this vast region where no roads connect the communities, traditional trail networks—winter ice trails travelled by snowmobile and summer waterways travelled by boat—continue to be essential for local populations, as well as permitting the practice of traditional activities, which are very important for the regional economy and culture, as well as public health and food security. According to Statistics Canada (2001), considering all the regions of northern Canada, Nunavik reports the highest level of continuing traditional activities. In fact, close to 98% of the adults in this region practise hunting, fishing and gathering activities on

a regular basis for subsistence purposes. Yet, due to climate change, traditional activities are becoming, even for the most seasoned harvesters, dangerous activities.

### **Nunavimmiut are warming up**

According to specialists, Northern Québec is among the regions most affected by global warming. Between 1990 and 2002, three weather stations in Nunavik (at Inukjuak, Kuujjuaq and Kuujjuarapik) recorded sustained warming of close to 0.37°C annually<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, some specialists hold that, in 10 years, increased temperatures in the region will reach those forecast for 40 years hence. And if that doesn't send chills down your spine, these increased temperatures will transfer heat to the ground, threatening the partial or total melting of the permafrost, based on the actual

**“We are very worried about climate change. Certain areas no longer freeze in winter. Not to mention that we are finding plastic and all sorts of waste in the stomachs of marine mammals.”**

— PAULUSI NOVALINGA,  
PRESIDENT, HUNTING, FISHING AND TRAPPING ASSOCIATION OF NUNAVIK,  
KATIMAJIIT CONFERENCE

scale of warming through the 21st century. Already in Nunavik, the temperature of the permafrost rose an average of 1 to 1.5°C between 1990 and 2002, not to mention that the active layer, the surface layer of the ground that thaws in summer, now reaches a greater depth<sup>2</sup>. In this context, landslides, shifting buildings, potholes and buckling runways are common occurrences for Nunavimmiut. “In addition to putting lives at risk, these events are causing a good deal of conster-

nation among residents who rely on air transportation not only for food supplies but also for medical evacuations to larger hospital centres,” in the words of Pierre Gosselin, coordinator of the health and climatic change program at the *Institut national de santé publique du Québec*, as well as according to the Ouranos Consortium, a research network that is seeking to advance understanding of the issues and the associated requirements for adaptation resulting



PHOTO: MARTIN TREMBLAY

## One Man's Sorrow, Another Man's Joy

Even as access to traditional harvesting areas at certain times of the year is becoming more and more difficult for Nunavimmiut, climate change is making the territory more accessible to others. For example, climate change is keeping shipping routes open for longer periods and, in particular, allowing mining companies to lower their transportation costs. Beyond any doubt, the mining industry is a major part of the regional economy but, according to Pierre Gosselin, "this new traffic will place additional pressure on wildlife species that depend on ice cover and, consequently, on communities that rely on these species for their subsistence."

Moreover, the poor environmental protection reputation of mining companies seems to be entirely founded in Nunavik. Crisscrossing the region by air, over hundreds of kilometres, abandoned mineral exploration sites with deteriorating buildings, heavy equipment and fuel drums litter the landscape. And what can not be seen from the air is that this waste carries the potential to contaminate the soil, the water table and water courses. According to Johnny Peters, Vice-President of Renewable Resources at the Makivik Corporation, there appear to be 275 abandoned mineral exploration sites in Nunavik, and several of these are considered especially worrisome to the point of requiring urgent clean-up and rehabilitation work. "We're hunters and gatherers, and contaminated mining sites have enormous consequences on our way of life. Geese lay their eggs in these areas. Caribou migrate through them. The spring melt flows into rivers and the rivers into the sea, so that contamination even threatens the fish and marine mammals," explained Peters. When mining companies abandoned these sites in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, they were not obliged to clean them up or restore them to their original state. Today, since these companies no longer exist, the provincial and federal governments seem to have been left to cover the clean-up tab.

from climate change throughout North America. While much attention has been directed in recent years to the consequences of climate change on infrastructure in Québec's far north, more recently concern is being turned to their consequences on life in the region's communities.

ing is beginning earlier and earlier. Even seasoned harvesters indicate that they have become helpless at forecasting the weather. Traditional Inuit knowledge, that is thousands of years old, seems to be increasingly less reliable, and many accidents involving experienced harvesters are being reported,"



SEAL HUNTING ON HUDSON BAY.

PHOTO: MARTIN TREMBLAY

### Changeable times

In Nunavik, climate change is not just a distant and abstract threat; it is a daily reality. And not only are the weather stations reporting major changes in the environment, "Inuit are also noticing significant transformations: gentler and shorter winters that are affecting sea, lake and river ice cover. In fact, these waters are freezing later, the ice cover is thinner and less stable than in the past, and spring melt-

explained Gosselin. Yet, while access to the ice pack as well as hunting and fishing areas has become dangerous, the impacts on safety are just the tip of the iceberg. "Travel and access to harvesting areas are crucial to ensuring a supply of foods and to maintaining the social cohesion of a destabilized culture," added Gosselin. "With travel being riskier, the consequences on socio-economic and cultural aspects are obvious, but the transmission of

PHOTO: MARTIN TREMBLAY



PHOTO: JEAN-JACQUES ELIE



MUKTUK (OUTER SKIN OF THE BELUGA) IS EATEN AT A COMMUNITY FEAST IN AUPALUK.

traditional knowledge is also being adversely affected. In short, climate change is having repercussions on the individual and collective identities of this society which is already undergoing dramatic transformations.”

Not only has it become dangerous for Inuit to hunt seal in the fall and spring, caribou are finding it more difficult to pass through certain zones. As a result, their migratory patterns are changing, moving further and further away from communities. Other species such

as Arctic charr, seals and whales may also begin to migrate further north as ecosystems mutate. Some might say that this is good news for the grocery stores in the region, but much less positive for Inuit health. According to Health Canada, traditional foods are healthy and wholesome, and protect Northerners from a good number of diseases<sup>3</sup>. “Because the life expectancy of Inuit is already much lower than elsewhere in Québec, the substitution of traditional foods with imported products, that often contain more sugar, fat and salt, will lead to cardiovascular, diabetes, vitamin deficiency, anaemia, dental and obesity problems, not to mention that the immune systems of Inuit may become less resistant to infection,” emphasized Gosselin.

### Tools to smooth the transition

Inuit traditional knowledge is rich and represents an important tool for adapting safe travel practices. In particular, this knowledge helps Inuit to assess ice conditions in light of related climatic and environmental parameters. For this reason, the transmission of traditional knowledge should be fostered, especially for youth. The integration of traditional knowledge teaching in school curriculum should help prepare future hunters, fishers and gatherers to face a changing environment.

As well, the Kativik Regional Government, the region’s communities and university partners are actively involved in a project

aimed at combining traditional and scientific knowledge to develop tools to smooth the transition brought on by climate change in the daily lives of Nunavimmiut, as well as to increase awareness and disseminate related information. Soon, digitalized maps showing traditional trails and danger zones, and containing traditional knowledge of sea- and lake-ice dynamics as well as climate indicators to better assess ice development, will be available to the inhabitants of the region.

<sup>1</sup> A. Bourque, G. Simonet, P. Gosselin et al., “Quebec”, in *From Impacts to Adaptation: Canada in a Changing Climate 2007*, D.S. Lemmen, F.J. Warren, J. Lacroix and E. Bush (editors), Government of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, 2008. pp. 171–226. [[http://adaptation.nrcan.gc.ca/assess/2007/qc/index\\_e.php](http://adaptation.nrcan.gc.ca/assess/2007/qc/index_e.php)].

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Health Canada, *Ready-to-Use Presentation for Nutrition Educators on Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide - First Nations, Inuit and Métis*, [[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/educ-comm/\\_fnim\\_pnim/ppt-eng.php#slide-diapos\\_20](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/educ-comm/_fnim_pnim/ppt-eng.php#slide-diapos_20)].

## Perspectives on the Northern Québec Governance Project

BY MÉLANIE CHABOT  
EDITORIAL COMMITTEE



**Thibault Martin** is a Sociology professor with the department of Social Work and Social Sciences at the *Université du Québec en Outaouais*, where he also heads the Master's program in Regional Development. He is a member of the *Centre de recherche sur le développement territorial* as well as the *Alliance de recherche université-communauté/Innovation sociale et développement des communautés*. Martin's work focuses on the social and economic development of Aboriginal communities. He is also the

author of a publication on Nunavik entitled *De la banquise au congélateur : mondialisation et culture au Nunavik*, which was recognized by the *Association internationale des sociologues de langue française*. Martin moreover contributed to the drafting of the autobiography by Eddy Weetalutuk, an Inuk veteran from Nunavik (to be released in English by McGill-Queen's University Press and in French by *Éditions Métallié*).



After having completed a Master's degree in Anthropology in 1969 at the *Université de Montréal*, **Donat Savoie** entered the Canadian public service, where he worked for 37 years, holding several executive positions within the Inuit, Arctic and circumpolar directorate of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Up until his recent retirement, Savoie had for several years been the senior federal negotiator for the Northern Québec governance project.

**As long-time observers of Aboriginal issues, Martin and Savoie accepted to share their thoughts on the process to create a Nunavik regional government.**

**Développement social: Current discussions regarding the creation of a Nunavik regional government are part of a long-term process. While several steps have been accomplished, there are still others to come. On December 5, 2007, Jean Charest, the Premier of Québec, Pita Aata-mi, the President of the Makivik Corporation, and Chuck Strahl, the Canadian Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development signed an agreement in principle concerning the establishment of a Nunavik regional government. Can you briefly describe the foundations of the agreement in principle and what comes next?**

**Donat Savoie:** In 1994, the Québec government and Inuit, who were represented by the Nunavik Constitutional Committee, signed a framework agreement concerning the negotiation of a Nunavik government and elected assembly. Although the Government of Canada was not party to the framework agreement, section 8.2 was an invitation for it to partici-

pate in future negotiations relative to federal jurisdiction. The Canadian government accepted this invitation and gave me the mandate to be its representative for this purpose.

In 1995, discussions were put on hold with the approach of the Québec referendum, and were only reinitiated in 1997 under the government of Lucien Bouchard. At that point however, Inuit requested a change in the negotiation model that had been applied so far. They wanted to involve the federal government as a full partner and to establish a tripartite commission (similar to the Nunavut Implementation Commission and the Greenland Commission) to consult Nunavimmiut about the project to create a Nunavik assembly and government.

Subsequently, a vast public consultation was carried out, with stops in every Nunavik community and discussions with all the region's insti-

tutions, plus provincial- and federal-government departments. The consultation clarified people's concerns, their vision of an autonomous government, as well as their commitment to this major collective project. In April 2001, the Nunavik Commission presented its report to Inuit and to both levels of government, and this allowed formal negotiations to resume at the end of the year. As well, the Makivik Corporation replaced the Nunavik Constitutional Committee—which had been abolished—and became responsible for consulting regional institutions and organizations at every stage of the project.

Next, the parties agreed to follow the federal government's negotiating process, which may be summarized as follows: the negotiation of a framework agreement, followed by the negotiation of an agreement in principle, followed by the negotiation of a final agreement including a transition and implementation plan.

Accordingly, a tripartite framework agreement was signed in the summer of 2003 and the negotiation of the agreement in principle has been completed. As you mentioned, the agreement in principle was signed by the three parties in the Red Room at the National Assembly on December 5, 2007. Now that the agreement in principle is done, the negotiation of the final agreement should be able to proceed and, in my opinion, should not take very long to settle. The agreement in principle represents about 80% of the final agreement since it covers all the main points of a Nunavik regional government.

### **DS: Could you explain to us the governance model to be adopted by the new Nunavik regional government?**

**Donat Savoie:** One of the important elements of this governance project is the amalgamation of Nunavik's three main public institutions, which are already responsible for the delivery of many programs and services to Nunavimmiut. These institutions are the Kativik School Board (KSB), the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) and the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS). The Nunavik government will emerge from the amalgamation of these organizations with all the powers and responsibilities currently held by each, and the same resource envelopes. This single window approach, with education, health and other departments, will in my opinion increase cohesion both in the organization as well as the delivery of services. Currently, the three institutions function separately, parallel to one another, and this severely limits the scope of their actions. It should be said that, over the years, a bureaucracy has grown up around initiatives, which is not surprising after more than 25 years.

Moreover, a public assembly will be created for the residents of the region, Inuit and non-Inuit, and its representatives will be elected through universal suffrage. The assembly—which does not yet exist—is one of the key elements of the project. The assembly will replace the governing councils of the three amalgamated organizations, and these councils will

be abolished. Everyone involved believes that the assembly will increase citizen participation in the discussion of issues and the selection of priorities in Nunavik. Committees struck by the assembly will consult Nunavimmiut on topics of concern, such as education, language, culture, social problems, the economy, and so on.

### **DS: So, if I understand properly, the government model that has been selected is non-ethnic?**

**Thibault Martin:** Exactly. As Mr. Savoie just explained, all residents—even non-Inuit—will be able to participate in decision making. I have for a very long time wondered why Nunavik's self-government project was designed on a regional basis while most of the agreements negotiated by Ottawa and First Nations, not to mention the agreement negotiated with the Inuit of Labrador, have been and continue to be negotiated on an ethnic basis. This approach, which can be traced back to the *Indian Act*, has played a huge role, as we all know, in structuring relationships between Aboriginals and the State, making ethnicity an unavoidable fact for both parties. The current strength of Métis claims, boosted by the constitutional recognition of their "ethnic" status, demonstrates the weight of history.

### **DS: So why is it that the Nunavik government will not be based on the same model?**

**Thibault Martin:** For a clear understanding, we need to look back to the 1970s and the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* (JBNQA). When the federal government intervened to resolve the issue of Aboriginal title so that Québec could proceed with the hydroelectric development of James Bay, it expected to apply the ethnic model. In the end though, a different path was followed in the JBNQA that gave rights to all the residents of Nunavik—at that time known as Northern Québec—regardless of their ethnicity and it led to the creation of the public institutions we discussed earlier: the KRG, the KSB and the NRBHSS. Of course, the JBNQA also established the Makivik Corporation, an organization devoted to defending the rights of Nunavik Inuit. So, although Makivik plays a major role in administering the monetary compensation received by Inuit through the JBNQA—which enables it to spearhead the social, cultural and economic development of Inuit—it is the public institutions that hold the power to make political decisions.

In short, the future Nunavik government will simply institutionalize, though on a larger scale, the responsibilities contained in the JBNQA, in particular because the new structure will be formed from the amalgamation of three existing organizations, as we said earlier, and because the model for selecting public representatives and executive members will embrace all the residents of the region. Moreover, continuity will be ensured since the Makivik Corporation is not being called on to "disappear", but will also retain its mandate.

**DS: What impact will this citizenship model have on the future of Inuit communities?**

**Thibault Martin:** If Nunavik Inuit had founded self-government negotiations on ethnicity, they would very certainly only have obtained control of small pockets of the region, similar to the size of reserves. Through the creation of a non-ethnic government, Inuit will be enabled not only to govern themselves, but they will also receive partial sovereignty over Nunavik.

During this period where ethnic-identity is the leading story in Québec media, we should be very pleased to see Inuit defining a “social contract” that will connect them with the rest of Québec society on an inclusive basis. The choice of Nunavik Inuit to adopt a non-ethnic government is not only strategic, which is to say that they obtain shared sovereignty over all of the region, but it is also according to Harry Tulugak—one of the Inuit leaders most involved in the process to create the future Nunavik government—congruous with the Inuit tradition of welcoming strangers, demonstrating that Inuit are confident about collaborating on projects with other Canadians. This attitude reflects simultaneously this people’s pragmatic nature and their optimism about the future. They do not feel obliged to turn inwards to “survive”, but are open to the world to find the resources they need to build a strong future. In this respect, the President of the Makivik Corporation, Pita Aatami, stated during a symposium organized in 2005 by his organization and the network DIALOG that the philosophy of Inuit can be summarized in two words: permanent innovation. In my opinion, the refusal of an Aboriginal group to define itself from an ethnic point of view is in itself innovative. This approach must however be recognized as the result of a long, continuous process of hard work, begun in the 1960s, that has never attempted to exclude Nunavik Inuit from Euro-Canadian society, but instead has sought to foster partnership and agreement in order to develop, insofar as possible, according to its own aspirations, especially its cultural aspirations.

This in no way means that, in the name of universal principle, the ethnic option should be discarded. Rather, it represents a legitimate and effective means of guaranteeing the cultural survival of an Aboriginal group, notably when a small population threatens to prevent it from maintaining control over its own institutions. Such was the choice made by the Nisga’a when they negotiated their self-government agreement. The ethnic option is not necessarily a *repli identitaire* and, for First Nations, it represents a legitimate choice based on circumstances, even more so in light of decades of assimilation policies that have undermined the ability of several Aboriginal groups to transmit their culture to future generations. Erecting barriers to ensure cultural survival is not inappropriate, and many modern societies have taken this approach.

**DS: Is this citizenship model unique or can it be compared with others in Canada or elsewhere in the world?**

**Thibault Martin:** Once complete, the Nunavik government process will have created the equivalent of a new territory. In fact, the Nunavik government will have many of the same responsibilities and powers as the Government of Nunavut. The difference will be that Nunavik lies in a province subject to Québec legislation. But apart from this specific characteristic, both the provincial and federal powers to be devolved to the population of the future territory are akin to those received by the residents of Nunavut and to those in several regions of other countries, notably Greenland. In Québec and Canada, we like to believe and claim that the agreements signed with Aboriginal groups are avant-gardist and unique. The JBNQA has been called “the first modern treaty” and the *Peace of the Braves*, a new “nation-to-nation” partnership. Yet, if we put these agreements in a global perspective, they are not exceptional. For example, the political autonomy enjoyed by Greenland and its 37,000 inhabitants since 1979 permitted that jurisdiction to remove itself from the European Community—today known as the European Union—in 1985, while Denmark is one of the founding nations. Could Nunavut opt out of NAFTA if it chose to do so? The Cook Islands benefit from a status of free association with New Zealand, meaning that its population of 18,000 strong is completely self-governing. The former colonial power has only retained control of national defence and external relations, and Cook Islands citizens still carry New Zealand passports and money. This situation can in fact be described as equivalent to the sovereignty association demanded by Québec sovereigntists in the 1995 referendum. And much smaller states, such as Niue and Tokelau which each have roughly 2000 inhabitants, have succeeded in negotiating free-association agreements with New Zealand. Even a country like France, which has a reputation of being unwilling to share its sovereignty, signed an agreement concerning complete autonomy for New Caledonia. The 1950s marked the onset of decolonization, and this process has pushed Western nations, over the last 30 years, to adapt to the times and enable the realization of the self-government aspirations of Aboriginal populations. In this respect, Québec and Canada are simply responding to the pressure exerted by their different Aboriginal groups (First Nations, Inuit and Métis).

The modern state is no longer national, but pluri-cultural. The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* that was recently adopted by the United Nations institutionalizes the work achieved by Aboriginal peoples to have recognized their differences and their related rights. Why did Canada back the nomination of Sheila Watt-Cloutier, a Nunavik Inuk, for the Nobel Peace Prize on the one hand, and vote against the Declaration on the other hand? Is it because the Declaration is not progressive enough, not modern enough, or because the Declaration would call into question the Canadian approach to managing Aboriginal demands regarding the devolution of powers? Undoubtedly, the answer lies herein. What is characteristic about the Canadian approach is not the innovative

nature of the agreements, but rather the lack of leadership in Ottawa. Generally speaking, the federal government does not initiate negotiation processes; rather Aboriginal groups must instigate action by requesting a ruling from the country's judiciary. Such a ruling and international pressure forced the federal government to undertake Aboriginal title talks in the early 1970s further to the hydroelectric development plans in James Bay. Moreover, it is often the need to resolve the issue of Aboriginal title to permit natural resource development that convinces Ottawa to act. It is telling that Aboriginal groups not occupying land with highly coveted natural resources are not in the midst of negotiating spectacular agreements, like the Inuit of Nunavik or the Dene Tha' who mother nature placed, for better or for worse, directly in the path of a future oil pipeline.

### **DS: In your opinion, will this form of government permit Inuit to merge tradition and the modern world?**

**Thibault Martin:** First, it must be stated that the concepts of tradition and modernity do not adequately qualify the current social change processes currently being experienced by Aboriginal groups. In fact, the two terms suggest a rupture between two societal paradigms, between two incompatible cultural universes: the first, tradition, would seem to be immutable; the other, modernity, would seem to be progressing and evolving. Yet, the Aboriginal world is not static; Inuit society, like other Aboriginal societies, has never ceased to evolve, to transform, not only through internal innovations but also due to the influences of other cultures, particularly "White" culture. When Inuit speak about "safeguarding" their traditions, they do not want to stop time, to go back to the way things were. They simply want to gain control of the institutions that will allow them to shape their present and future in their own manner. The safeguard of traditions is characterized by action, the act of projecting into the future a culture, a way of life. Obviously, the culture has a historical basis, but it is not permanently fixed; it is constantly redefining itself according to the aspirations and introspective choices of the group and its individuals. Today, Inuit are focused on their language and they would like their children to carry their concern into the future. They possess a unique connection with nature, which they continue to nurture even as they adapt it to the modern world. And they want sharing to remain at the heart of their social relations, while becoming wage earners. Safeguarding their traditions involves equipping themselves with the tools necessary to define these practices and to institutionalize them.

### **DS: Will the new government give Inuit this power?**

**Thibault Martin:** Only time will tell. Nonetheless, it seems to me that the model being adopted is, in governance terms, not a genuine reflection of the recommendations expressed by Inuit through the Nunavik Commission, which was set up to initiate the Nunavik government project. In its report entitled *Amiqaaluta*—which means let us share, in Inuktitut—the Commission proposed the creation of a council of elders to oversee the

safeguard of Inuit language and culture. The council was intended as a type of senate with power to ensure that legislative debates would remain true to traditional values. Under this proposal, the traditional practice of elders acting as the guardians of Inuit values would have been integrated into the modern democratic system.

The Nunavik Commission also proposed the creation of community justice committees and that court judges would consult these committees before sentencing offenders. These two structures, local justice committees and the court, would have enhanced modern law through the addition of a traditional practice: the involvement of the entire group in passing sentences. The same logic was applied to public administration; advisory committees were proposed to mirror each institution so that provincial standards could be adjusted to prevent adverse effects on the Inuit way of life. It is interesting to note that the report proposed the amendment of Québec legislation to recognize and institutionalize the profession of midwifery—a central aspect of Inuit tradition—in Nunavik. It was also recommended that youth protection regulations be modified to better reflect Inuit values, especially regarding traditional adoption. In brief, the approach put forward in the report was not to systematically replace government programs with exclusively Inuit principles, but rather to set up committees that might influence the modern institutions and permit traditional practices to go on influencing the development of Inuit society.

This binary structure does not appear in the current, quasi-final version of the governance project. Admittedly, the agreement in principle provides that the initial Nunavik government structure will include permanent committees focused on elders, education, health and social services, as well as housing. It is also stipulated that the members of the Executive Council must receive the queries and recommendations produced by these permanent committees. This then being the case, even though the Nunavik Commission proposed that elders be given special status to institutionalize their role as the stewards of Inuit traditions, in the future government they will not have an advisory role. When we understand the high esteem in which elders are held within Aboriginal groups (and which may even seem to be more important than in former times), we have to wonder why the concept of a council of elders was dropped. There nonetheless exist several examples where elders play such a role, in particular the Nisga'a but also outside of Canada. In New Zealand, governance models that are classified as traditional because they are a-democratic play a greater role than is currently provided for in the current version of Nunavik's agreement in principle. Even France permitted the Kanaks to form an elders' senate!

In summary, the government model to be adopted in Nunavik is in line with the British parliamentary tradition, and it assigns a secondary role to traditional forms of governance. It would seem to me that the creation of this government represents the final step in the integration of Nunavik

into Québec and Euro-Western society. That being said, if the past can portend the future, there is hope that Nunavik Inuit will employ the institutions and the limited power devolved to them to establish social and economic practices in their image, as they succeeded in doing under the provisions of the JBNQA. And it is highly likely that Inuit tradition, passed on not in terms of ancestral activities but rather as a way of life, will be at the heart of the proceedings of the future government.

**DS: How might greater self-government positively impact on the region's social situation and improve the living conditions of Inuit?**

**Thibault Martin:** In my opinion, it is reasonable to expect that the new Nunavik governance model will improve the socioeconomic situation of Inuit. And there are several reasons for saying this. As Mr. Savoie explained, currently no coordination exists between the different institutions—the KRG, the KSB and the NRBHSS—that deliver essential public services in the region. The result has been bureaucratic obstacles and unnecessary expenditures. Moreover, with greater latitude to manage their affairs, Inuit will be able to collectively set their own priorities. They will be enabled to tweak the procedures of certain programs to respond to their immediate and long-term goals.

Quebec City—and to a lesser extent Ottawa—has already begun to invest in the region in a way that suggests a strategy to help Nunavik prepare for the implementation of a new governance model and to ensure that the celebration of a new partnership regime is not overshadowed by sombre statistics of the region's social situation. Nunavik is to receive \$200 million plus running expenses. According to observers in Nunavut, this surpasses the \$150 million obtained by that territory during its transitional phase, despite the fact that its population is two and a half times larger and its geographical area much greater.

**Donat Savoie:** It should also be stated that the creation of a Nunavik government will instil among Nunavik Inuit a sense of greater control over their own destiny and will put them on better footing in negotiations with the provincial and federal governments. The current amalgamation process is only the first phase of this governance project. The second phase, which is planned for a later date, should deal with the transfer of further provincial and federal government powers to the Nunavik government. In my opinion, public debate of the concerns of Nunavik residents and the power to determine regional priorities necessarily represent steps towards social, educational, cultural and many other changes.

**DS: In your opinion, what will be the biggest challenges to establishing this regional government?**

**Donat Savoie:** I feel that the biggest challenge lies in the amalgamation of the region's three public organizations. Amalgamation will require a

solid transition and implementation plan, developed jointly with all those concerned and mainly the three organizations. The past does portend the future: Nunavik Inuit have made huge strides over the last 30 years in the “modern” management of their affairs. A good example is the KRG; 70% of its close to 450 employees are Inuit. In addition, a training component should be incorporated into the implementation plan to facilitate the transition to the new government and to foster among everyone a clear understanding of how the Nunavik Assembly will work. For their part, the governments of Québec and Canada will have to adjust their procedures to nurture the proper functioning of the new government. In all these respects, I'm optimistic. The recent negotiations have permitted the various government departments, at both the provincial and federal levels, to grow accustomed to this eventual governmental body and to lend their support.

**Thibault Martin:** Absolutely. And to these challenges, I would point out that the autonomy gained by Inuit—and their non-Inuit compatriots—will concern only citizen and surface affairs, not subsurface rights. Consequently, to finance their autonomy, Inuit will still need to negotiate the transfer of government funding and agreements with mining companies interested in developing the region's natural resources. This means that some of the energies of the future government will be directed towards identifying outside funding sources. Several terms exist to describe this situation, the most common being “dependence”. When the future Nunavik government adopts its first budget, it will be deciding how to spend Québec City and Ottawa's money. It is said that the Nunavik government will enable improved governance, and I believe that this is true; however, it can't be forgotten that, when they go to vote, Nunavimmiut will be electing representatives not to spend their money but rather the money of others.

That being said, Québec, which wants to prove to the rest of Canada that it is capable of developing a new social contract with its Aboriginal groups, will have to—at least for as long as is politically viable—be generous with “its” Aboriginals. This augurs well for the new arrangement between Inuit and Québec, although Inuit will need some time to significantly improve their social and economic conditions. In any case and though there is limited leeway, all the gains made by Inuit through autonomy will be more effectively applied to their development. And that promises to be far from negligible.

**To learn more:**  
[www.ainc-inac.gc.ca](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca)  
[www.nunavikgovernment.ca](http://www.nunavikgovernment.ca)  
[www.makivik.org](http://www.makivik.org)



BY MÉLANIE CHABOT  
EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

## Nunavimmiut and the Power Within

The preceding pages of this issue make it clear that Nunavimmiut face many challenges and that, without question, one of these is the search for solutions suited to local and regional realities. Nunavimmiut want strategies that respect the culture of the majority and involve direct community participation. Indeed, over the years they have themselves produced various tools that foster self-management of community development.

### Prevention support measures

In 2002, close to 30 years after the signing of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement*, the Makivik Corporation, the Kativik Regional Government and the Québec government entered into a new agreement called Sanarrutik—an Inuktitut word meaning “development tool”. The agreement puts forward a common vision of the economic and community development of Nunavik and, more importantly, gives residents greater responsibility for this development. Under the terms of the agreement on correctional services, the Québec government undertook to build and operate a 40-place detention facility in Nunavik. This measure was intended to foster the gradual reintegration of offenders, by allowing them to serve their sentences close to their communities rather than in southern Québec. Four years later, in 2006, the parties amended these terms to reallocate the monies, over a 20-year period, to Inuit-designed crime prevention programs. This approach has allowed Northern communities to institute a series of culturally appropriate preventive measures to improve public health, safety and social justice.

### Other projects

Many of the experiences presented in the following pages have been made possible through Sanarrutik. The now-famous youth hockey pro-

gram, led by ex-hockey player Joé Juneau in partnership with the Kativik School Board, is currently up and running in several villages in the region. The agreement has also led to the organization of an anger management and domestic violence program for men, an arctic survival program taught by elders, and a support program for people dealing with drug and alcohol dependency, to name but a few. In addition, a number of programs established prior to Sanarrutik have also benefited the region, as have others that do not receive funding from the agreement. In the second part of this feature, we invite you to learn more about these initiatives and meet the men and women behind them.



PHOTO: ALINE ROY

# Saturviit Inuit Women's Association of Nunavik: Bearers of Hope

BY LISA KOPERQUALUK  
SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR

The role of Inuit women has indeed diversified since the time of family camps, when men and women had clearly defined roles. In former times, Inuit women were the heart of each family, tending the *qulliq* (oil lamp), keeping house, feeding and clothing members, gathering berries and roots, as well as acting as midwives. Today, women still assume a central role in contemporary Inuit society, working to keep their families together. They are mothers, breadwinners, midwives, teachers, social workers, childcare educators and community leaders. They are all these things, plus they continue to practise traditional activities such as sewing and berry picking. Unfortunately, women also bear the brunt of the violence that today permeates Inuit society. It is no accident, then, that Inuit women decided to form an association, which they call Saturviit, "those who bring hope for the return of peace."

This article examines the concerns of the members of this group, not only the elements that adversely affect families and communities but those things that bring Inuit women joy and happiness in the Arctic. These women are very attached to Nunavik, their families

and their friends. Their desire to live in the North, rather than the South, is categorical since life in Nunavik carries with it a sense of freedom. Inuit travel across the tundra and along the region's waterways for recreational and subsistence purposes whenever they please, which is not as easily done in the South. In the spring for example, a popular pastime among Inuit women is ice fishing. They flock by snowmobile to nearby lakes to enjoy some time together under the bright spring sun, catching arctic char and anticipating the arrival of summer and the small berries that always emerge.

Life has not always been mixed with recreational activity and simple pleasures. In former times, women used to launch themselves into their daily tasks as soon as they awoke, without even considering whether it was too cold or whether they were too tired. It was their duty to warm the home, fetch the water, sew and wash the clothing, among many other tasks. Yet, while their husbands were out hunting, they surely would have played games with their children and practised throat singing with their sisters, daughters and friends. Even today, the fascinating sounds of throat singing may still be heard



PHOTO: LISA KOPERQUALUK

among Inuit women. Inuit were forced to adapt to settlement life when the federal government introduced its education system in Northern Québec in the 1950s. Settlement life effected drastic changes in family living and community organization. Newly introduced housing offered more comfort and, in the villages, health care was more accessible. Although the life expectancy for Inuit women at that time was shorter than it is today, life expectancy nonetheless continue to lag 12 years behind the current average for Québec women (62.4 years compared with 81.3).

## An active lifestyle

In the 21st century, Inuit women make up an important part of the labour market. According to a survey published in 2006 by the Kativik Regional Government<sup>1</sup>, women hold 42% of all regular full-time positions, which is to say 1326 of the 3149 existing jobs, and 55% of the 979 regular part-time positions in the region. The survey also showed that the number of full-time jobs held by women grew by 84% between 1998 and 2005. This growth is largely due to the creation of many positions in Nunavik's childcare centre network during this period. The regular full-time jobs held by women were identified

in the following sectors: 22% work in the education sector, 36% in the health and social services sector (including childcare centres), 20% in non-profit organizations, and 22% in the private sector. The private sector consists of local cooperatives, Inuit-owned businesses, Makivik Corporation subsidiaries and other companies with head offices outside of the region.

**The violence must be stopped. The women of Saturviit have decided to break the silence and stand up for a safe environment for all the children and adults of Nunavik.**

This overview of Nunavik's job market illustrates just how active Inuit women really are, especially in the fields of public services, education as well as health and social services. It is not surprising in this context that a large number of women consider themselves as the caretakers of Inuit society. It is rare to find an Inuk<sup>2</sup> man teaching at the high school level, or holding a position of social worker

or childcare educator. Moreover, since the early 1990s, a midwifery program has been run with great success at the Inuulitsivik Health Centre in Puvirnituk. Inuit midwives have assisted many women from neighbouring Hudson Bay communities to deliver their babies. In this manner, Inuit women have been enabled to resume a midwifery role, a role from which they had been excluded for at least five decades. During this period, Inuit women were sent South to give birth, far from their homes and their families. Despite the success of the midwifery program, much work remains to be done, as expressed by the members of the Saturviit Inuit Women's Association of Nunavik.

**Saturviit: a voice for Inuit women**  
Saturviit<sup>3</sup> was created in the fall of 2004 during a three-day meeting of Inuit women held at a camp near Puvirnituk. Various workshops fostered animated discussions on the concerns of women. First, the problem of increasing violence (physical, psychological and sexual) in Nunavik communities was an important topic, as was how to deal with the violence and prevent it. During a plenary session, it was decided that a manifesto against all forms of violence would be drafted. When presented at the 2006 annual general meeting of the Makivik Corporation, the manifesto was ratified unanimously. The manifesto describes the urgent need to put an end to the silence and the cycle of violence, to stop the appearance of normality that greets violence in society. The

problem of increasing violence was furthermore confirmed in a report prepared through the *Qanuip-pitaa* survey conducted in 2004<sup>4</sup>: "The likelihood of being victims of violence in Nunavik is very high, whether you are young, old, male or female. One participant in two reported having been a victim of physical violence in the year before the survey. Moreover, one in three adults revealed having been sexually abused as a child. Women are victims of both physical violence and sexual abuse more often than men."

Participants at the 2004 women's meeting near Puvirnituk also discussed healing, in particular social healing through Inuit-specific values and remedies. Consensus was quickly reached on a few elements: time spent on the land, as well as hunting and camping, foster positive feelings; people going through healing need to receive support; and the notion of forgiveness must not be forgotten. As well, concrete support must be made available to victims, and the perpetrators of violence must be held accountable

**The Inuit women of Nunavik believe strongly that solutions must come from the communities of the region and Inuit themselves.**

for their actions and for the pain they have inflicted. Often in the small communities of Nunavik, it is difficult to break the silence. Victims fear compromising the family of their perpetrators; they prefer to remain silent. In speaking out however, Inuit women can do their

part to stop the violence. Many other topics such as parenting skills, Inuit identity, education and suicide were also discussed, but the issue of child safety received careful consideration. As mothers and concerned community members, Inuit women stressed the importance of protecting children and preventing child abuse. Too often children are the victims of neglect, their home environments are disrupted by alcoholic parents, or they are bounced from one foster home to another. There was agreement that children's rights must be more clearly understood and protected. One of the recommendations prepared at the three-day meeting was a call for the creation of a centre to focus on children's rights advocacy. This is a major priority for Saturviit, which is striving to establish a place where children's rights can be protected and where programs for the benefit of children and all Inuit society may be promoted.

Saturviit furthermore backs the recommendation contained in the investigation report released in

report invites all the parties involved to make children and families an essential priority, through the implementation of measures related to prevention, alcohol and drug addiction treatment, as well as improved parenting skills. Similar recommendations had already been made by Inuit women during their three-day meeting in 2004 near Puvirnituk.

The Inuit women of Nunavik believe strongly that our communities and Inuit ourselves must be the source of the solutions to our problems.

<sup>1</sup> *Jobs in Nunavik in 2005*, Kativik Regional Government, 2006. It is important to note that there are no separate statistics on the jobs held by Inuit women and those held by non-Inuit women.

<sup>2</sup> *Inuk* is the singular form of *Inuit*. *Inuk* signifies one person, whereas *Inuit* a group of people.

<sup>3</sup> Meaning those who help to find something that is lost, or those who bring hope.

<sup>4</sup> In the summer of 2004, the research ship *Amundsen* sailed to all the communities of Nunavik with a medical team to study and assess the health of Inuit in the region.

<sup>5</sup> *Investigation into Child and Youth Protection Services in Ungava Bay and Hudson Bay—Nunavik—Report, Conclusions of the Investigation and Recommendations*, April 2007. Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse.

# Qajaq Network: A Resource for Nunavik Men in Difficulty

BY JEAN-JACQUES ÉLIE  
QAJAQ NETWORK

During a regional conference of Nunavik elders in 2001, participants expressed concern about the abject lives being led by many Inuit men despite the fact that the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* had been in effect for 25 years. The social indicators were grim: high unemployment, rising rates of property crime, and even higher rates of crime against persons, record suicide, not to mention unprecedented levels of alcohol consumption and hard drug use.

A few months later, the assistant director of the Inuulitsivik Health Centre in Puvirnituq organized a round table focused on Inuit men for some of the health and social services representatives who serve the Inuit communities of Hudson Bay and Ungava Bay. Those who attended the meeting echoed elders' concerns as they discussed how Inuit men were responsible for more than 85% of crime and were over-represented in the judicial and correctional systems. It was noted that men rarely turned to social services for assistance and furthermore that very few men were actually working in the sector.

Pierre Rioux, a family violence and drug abuse program officer at the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS), came

away from these discussions firmly convinced that he something had to be done. With the consent of his supervisors at the NRBHSS, he networked with resource agencies and organizations in southern Québec that provide services for men. After the Avataq Cultural Institute lent its assistance and the NRBHSS provided funding, six individuals with related research or intervention experience agreed to team up with six representatives of the Inuit community in Montreal to form a consultative committee that would examine how to implement and adapt southern Québec intervention methods for Nunavik men.

After 18 months, the committee issued its final report, containing an action plan that adapted and adjusted activities and projects, so they could be used in the North. The report was well received by the NRBHSS and, on October 17, 2003, it led to the creation of a new community agency for Nunavik. Further to a suggestion made by elders, the agency was named the Qajaq Network. Traditionally, the *qajaq* (kayak), which was shared by all the members of a clan, was essential for survival, providing a lifeline between land and sea.

Although the enthusiasm shared during meetings made committee members feel that the sky

was the limit, their priorities were quickly dictated by the degree of availability of equipment and human resources. They set a goal to help reduce domestic violence by working directly with husbands, partners and fathers, as well as by offering therapy to Inuit incarcerated in southern Québec.

## Adapting projects to Northern priorities and conditions

The activities of the Qajaq Network were launched in the fall of 2002 through the Qaggig Program, which targets Inuit incarcerated in Saint-Jérôme. Qaggig, meaning a gathering place, offers group therapy and discussions led by two professionals. Offenders discuss their childhood, attitudes, behaviour and actions in an atmosphere of accountability, learning to understand the consequences of their actions. Since its inception, the Qaggig Program has worked with more than 200 men, who, to varying degrees, have expressed a desire to turn their lives around.

In 2003, the detention centre approached the Qajaq Network to ask it to study the possibility of launching an experimental project with Inuit inmates. The following year, the Puakak Program (meaning atmosphere of trust) was instituted to deliver workshops on issues such as accountability and

consequences through dynamic cognitive therapy. The personnel of the detention centre assumed leadership of the Program in 2006.

That same year, the Qajaq Network collaborated with the Unaaq Men's Association in Inukjuak. After obtaining credits from the National Crime Prevention Centre (Justice Canada and Justice Québec) under the Community Mobilization Program, Qajaq and Unaaq organized a joint project that took about 20 young men and teens camping for a day or two. During each of the six expeditions organized in 2004 and 2005, elders and hunters taught the young men survival skills and attitudes. With funding from the NRBHSS, the Qajaq Network was also able to fund an evaluation under the direction of a research team from the *Université Laval*.

The Qajaq Network and its partners have also produced three intensive customized training programs for workers at the Makitautik Community Reintegration Centre, located in Kangirsuk. The goal of this training was to enhance the skills of professionals and staff members with the intake and support of male clients. The first training program, given in 2004, helped participants think about their own values and preconceived notions about masculinity in Inuit

# Community Justice Initiatives

BY ANITA BARON  
MAKIVIK CORPORATION

At the time of the negotiation of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA), the Northern Québec Inuit Association focused special attention on provisions relating to justice. Inuit negotiators then, just like those today, believed that both Canada and Québec needed to change their approach to justice, and adapt it to the reality of the region.

In Nunavik, there appears to be a strong relationship between crime and the socioeconomic problems faced by Inuit, especially by youth: high unemployment, the erosion of Inuit culture, few recreational opportunities, drug addiction, suicide, domestic violence, and so on. The justice system, however, does little to address Inuit needs and cultural traditions through crime prevention measures, law enforcement, as well as correctional and post-correctional services, to name but a few fields.

About 20 years following the signing of the JBNQA, the Makivik Corporation formed a justice task force, composed of Inuit representatives and experts, to examine how the justice system was operating in the North and to propose improvements and alternative avenues. Published in 1993, the task force's report entitled *Blazing the Trail* suggested many orientations and tentative solutions concerning the administration of justice in Nunavik. These included the implementation of judicial mechanisms that would allow Inuit to increase their involvement in hearings and sentencing; the creation of a regional justice board; the establishment of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to foster greater community involvement in justice decision making; the creation of local courts in each municipality with specific jurisdiction; an increased number of qualified Inuit judicial workers; and so on.

With this report in hand, the Makivik Corporation undertook negotiations with the governments of Québec and Canada to create justice committees in Nunavik's 14 communities. These negotiations were successful and have permitted not only the creation of justice committees but the implementation of innovative justice-related programs.

## Justice committees

The underlying objective of justice committees is to support and oversee the implementation of community-based justice programs in those Inuit communities where there is a desire to promote culturally relevant activities, such as traditional-activity healing projects and elder counselling. The committees play active roles in mediation, alternative measure and diversion projects. They also make sentencing recommendations and contribute to community correctional programs, including family group conferencing, in order to foster the reintegration of offenders into their communities.

Justice committees have served to re-empower Inuit communities, as well as to promote cultural values that had been pushed to the wayside. Take for example, forgiveness, trust, honesty, humility, compassion, empathy, sharing, healing, and the sense of responsibility. These are some of the core values of Inuit society that serve to keep families together and Inuit culture alive.

Justice committees promote safe and healthy communities by implementing culturally appropriate measures to improve Nunavik's social environment. Justice committee members also offer support to the victims of crime and participate in community correctional initiatives.

culture. They were then taught other practical skills such as how to lead a support group, manage crisis situations (aggression, anger and rage), and monitor clients with dependency problems. The Qajaq Network continues to maintain ties with Makitautik; in the near future, this relationship should lead to mutual support between the organizations, as well as the sharing of information on Inuit clients and former offenders to ensure better follow-up in their communities.

The Qajaq Network also serves men awaiting trial or those on parole. Specifically, the court invites these men to contact the Network to start them on a process of change. It should be noted that the court cannot formally prescribe or force these men to explore this avenue. Also unfortunately, those men who accept the invitation usually feel that they have done enough after only two or three sessions. Working with attorneys and crown prosecutors, the Qajaq Network needs to fine tune its approach to foster greater commitment to the process on the part of male participants. In fact, this is one of the particular characteristics of men seeking help: there is an unwillingness to invest more than a little time in the process, which is of course wishful thinking. Habits and behaviours, sometimes entrenched for dozens of years, cannot be changed overnight.

## From correctional measures to prevention

Some 350 to 450 young men in Nunavik between the ages of 18 and 35 are considered vulnerable. Many of them are former offenders with serious alcohol and drug dependencies. They act inappropriately in



A FEW PARTICIPANTS AT AN ANGER MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP VALIDATION SESSION, IN MARCH 2007.

their family and in their conjugal relationships and are often isolated from their communities. Many of them are re-offenders or have violated their parole conditions. The Qajaq Network's Our Young Men, Our Connection Program, created with funding from the Safer Community Program<sup>1</sup>, works to reach these men to help improve their personal and social skills so they can regain their self-confidence and become active, positive forces in their communities.

The Our Young Men, Our Connection Program is an innovative approach, delivered in partnership with established or emerging organizations, such as women's shelters and justice committees (local elders' councils). In Kuujjuaq,

the Qajaq Network is working with the police and the Tungasuvvik Women's Shelter under a new family crisis intervention protocol. When the police receive a call for help, swift action is taken to safeguard the persons in danger and place them in the shelter, where they receive support and help during the crisis. As a new initiative under the protocol, contact is made with the aggressor to help defuse his emotions.

Through the sharing of information and follow-up performed by the women's shelter, the parties subsequently develop a joint process to provide assistance. The intervention may include innovative methods such as additional therapy. If a troubled couple is

prepared to participate, they attend a series of anger management workshops that emphasize how to identify mutual triggers.

Our plans in 2008 are to develop activities on fatherhood and family, and ensure that more ideas and information are exchanged on the profiles and actions of former offenders. We also plan to organize outdoor and fishing activities for families that will enable us to reach clients in traditional cultural settings. To this end, we have recently received substantial financial aid from the Safer Community Program for a first phase, which involves creating four life coach or mentor positions.

This new funding is also intended to enhance Qajaq's detention

centre programs in the South. For example, Qajaq currently supervises an elders' visit program, under which three elders are sent to meet with prisoners in the South. The elders lend their support and assistance, bring news from the communities and families of offenders and, through traditional rituals, help re-connect young incarcerated men with their cultural roots.

Community involvement in these various projects has improved the level of assistance available for men and their families, as well as enhancing the quality of life in Nunavik.

<sup>1</sup>The Safer Community Program was established further to an amendment to the *Partnership Agreement on Economic and Community Development in Nunavik (Sanarrutik)*—signed by the Québec government, the Makivik Corporation and the Kativik Regional Government—that provides recurrent funding over 22 years for initiatives that promote increased safety in Nunavik's communities.

## Isuarsivik Rises Again

BY AMÉLIE BRETON  
SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR

Isuarsivik, “a place of improvement”, was the name given to the addiction treatment centre that opened in Kuujuaq in 1994. At that time, Johnny N. Adams and other political leaders recognized the importance and urgency of dealing with drug addiction, particularly alcoholism, which was wreaking havoc in the Inuit communities of Nunavik and Nunavut. They therefore backed the opening of the centre with enthusiasm and hope.

Yet, despite all the efforts made over the first 10 years of the initiative, the centre’s managers faced daunting obstacles posed by internal management problems and the adaptation of existing rehabilitation programs to Inuit realities. Those programs reflected values that were not really consistent with Inuit values and were therefore woefully inefficient in helping addicts engaged in the rehabilitation process. The result was a gradual erosion of Isuarsivik’s reputation among community members through the years. The situation degenerated so much that the managers finally resigned themselves to closing the centre, although there remained a need for its services.

Two years of deep introspection, reflection and intense reorganization were needed to put the centre on its feet again. Isuarsivik finally re-opened its doors this year.

To accomplish this, David Forrest, chairman of the board of directors, began by recruiting new members for the board with the stipulation that they all be Inuit volunteers, which was unprecedented in Nunavik. He also wanted to ensure that the project was built solidly by community members committed to attacking addiction problems. He then surrounded himself with a mentoring staff composed almost exclusively of former addicts. “This way, we hope that each worker has an in-depth understanding of the difficulties clients encounter, so they can be offered more credible and solid support. Someone who has already lived through the steps and difficulties of rehabilitation,” Forrest explained, “would never look down on the clients they’re mentoring.” All the mentors are Inuit, except Forrest.

By reviewing the obstacles that preceded the closing of the centre, the board of directors was able to develop its own rehabilitation program, which they ensured was adapted to the realities of the Inuit communities



GRADUATION OF FIVE EMPLOYEES WHO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED REHABILITATION TREATMENT.

PHOTO: DAVID FORREST

served by the centre. The centre requested help from Poundmaker’s Lodge Treatment Centre, an Albertan organization known internationally for its unique approach to treating dependencies among Aboriginals. Poundmaker’s consultants helped create a new six-week program based entirely on Inuit values, combining it with a 12-step rehabilitation approach leading to abstinence. This holistic-based treatment emphasizes exploring the root causes of dependency and giving clients the tools and power to cure themselves.

The program’s groundbreaking approach is to focus on recognizing the traumatic experiences that lead to addiction rather than just concentrating on the immediate eradication of the problem. “Clients dealing with a dependency problem,” Forrest explained, “have to gain self-confidence, start feeling normal again, forgive themselves, regain their sense of pride and pride in being Inuk, and lastly re-learn how to live without drugs and alcohol. While the rehabilitation approach has changed, abstinence is still the goal of the program.”

In October 2007, five men between the ages of 25 and 40 underwent intensive training to work at Isuarsivik. The training period began with their mandatory participation in the six-week rehabilitation program, regardless of whether they were sober or not or had already been in rehabilitation. At the end of December, after completing all the phases of their training, participants finally received their certification as the second

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# Partnership that Promotes Healthy Childhood Development

BY CLÉMENT CHABOT AND ISABELLE RENAUD'  
PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF CANADA

Funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the program Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities reaches more than 4500 Aboriginal children (Inuit, Métis and First Nations) and their families at close to 130 locations throughout Canada. The primary goal of Aboriginal Head Start is to promote good self-esteem among children between the ages of 0 and 6, to instil an appetite for learning and to give them the tools they need to succeed as young adults.

Aboriginal Head Start relies on local initiatives to foster the spiritual, affective, intellectual and physical growth of Aboriginal children and to offer support to their families. Aboriginal Head Start consists of six components: culture and language, education and school readiness, parental involvement, health promotion, nutrition and social support.

## Local initiatives in Nunavik

In Northern Québec, this early childhood education program is be-

ing carried out in all 14 Inuit communities, at 16 childcare centres as well as through a region-wide home day care agency. Annually, the program promotes the healthy development of roughly 800 Nunavimmiut children.

The Kativik Regional Government (KRG) is responsible for implementing Aboriginal Head Start in Nunavik, with the support of the PHAC. The KRG coordinates childcare issues for the entire region: negotiating related funding agreements with the *ministère de la Famille and des Aînés*, Service Canada and the PHAC; assisting the 17 childcare services with their activities; as well as offering them professional support.

Nunavik's childcare centres are non-profit corporations headed by Inuit parent boards of directors. Generally speaking, 30 to 40 children are enrolled in each centre and roughly 10 full-time workers are employed. Some centres, like those in Kuujjuaq, Inukjuak and Puvirnituq, have capacities of 80

children. Childcare educators have participated in a specialized education training program that leads to an attestation of college studies. The program was designed by the Kativik School Board and the *Cégep de Saint-Félicien* to meet the needs of Nunavik. The training program is delivered in Inuktitut in all the region's communities.

## Childcare Founded on Inuit Culture

Inuktitut is the only language spoken in Nunavik's 17 childcare services and almost all workers are Inuit. Special attention is focused on developing a rich Inuktitut vocabulary among enrolled children.

As well, Inuit-specific family values and community traditions are a part of the children's day-to-day activities at the centres. Parents and elders are actively involved, sharing with the children stories and songs that tell of the accomplishments of their ancestors while taking into account Nunavik's modern setting.

The youth are often given opportunities to learn from elders, for example, about hunting and butchering seal, or about how to prepare the meat for eating and the skin for clothing. Sometimes, elders accompany the children on excursions and may teach them basic Inuit survival techniques that highlight bannock making, fishing, berry gathering and throat singing.

Finally, some of the teaching material used in Nunavik's childcare centres is prepared in collaboration with the Avataq Cultural Institute—the region's cultural agency—which has the mission to promote the full development of the Inuit language and culture.

## Nutrition: integrating public health and Inuit culture

The anaemia and iron deficiency initiative that targets preschool age children is one example of a partnership involving Aboriginal Head Start. The other partners include the KRG, the department of Nutri-

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PHOTOS: MARGARET GAUVIN, DIRECTOR, KRG EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, INCOME SUPPORT AND CHILDCARE DEPARTMENT



# Pigialaurnak Isumatsiarit – Think Before You Do It

## A Sex Education and Contraception Program

BY **ALINE ROY**  
COMMUNITY HEALTH LIAISON NURSE,  
PUVIRNITUQ

Nearly 25% of women who give birth in Nunavik are under the age of 19<sup>1</sup>. In fact, the region's fertility rate, at 3.6 children per woman, far exceeds the rate of 1.6 children in the rest of Québec. Nunavik's total rate of elective abortions is also higher at 0.65, compared to 0.58 in the rest of Québec<sup>2</sup>. In addition, infection rates of *Chlamydia trachomatis* and *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* are up to 10 times higher than in the rest of Québec<sup>3</sup>.

With these data in mind, it was decided that action was needed to improve the sexual health of young Inuit, and it quickly became apparent that sex education was the answer. If young people were to receive ongoing sex and contraception education at school, it was hoped that they might then make more enlightened choices in sexual matters. Also, CLSC and school representatives needed to be better equipped to help youth in matters of prevention and promotion of contraceptive methods. After several months of research and work, a pilot project was instituted in April and May of 2006 with secondary students in Puvirnituaq, Akulivik and Kuujjuarapik.



### Adapting material for a clearer message

Between 2004 and 2005, the public health department for Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine developed a project entitled *Le plaisir et la prudence...les deux font la paire!* With the permission of the project's design team and with the support of the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services, the program was adapted to the needs of Inuit culture, turning to sexology consultant Caroline Têtreault for help. After meeting with and observing young secondary students in Puvirnituaq and Kuujjuarapik, she quickly realized that the program did not take into account the realities of Northern youth.

In Inuit communities, sexuality is still a taboo avoided in public discourse. Instead, it is addressed progressively and in general terms. More specifically, discussion of sexuality should not be from the strict perspective of preventing STBIs and promoting birth control. It was necessary to add other topics to the program to deal with more general themes such as self-esteem. Currently, the program's instructional aids address the following themes: Planning Ahead, My Body and its

Functions, What does STBI Mean?, High-risk and Low-risk Behaviours, Games to Teach Proper Condom Use, and What's Contraception?

The program has been translated into English, with an Inuktitut translation to follow shortly. Language, in fact, has been a major hurdle in the adaptation process. The developers had to turn to interpreters for help in finding Inuktitut equivalents for some English and French terms, and also to come up with new terms. The invaluable help of Jennifer Lapage, an Inuk from Kuujjuuaq, should also be recognized: the excellent artwork used in the adapted program document is hers.

The program was presented to the commissioners of the Kativik School Board in Quaqtaq in March 2007. Reacting with great enthusiasm, they approved the program for Secondary I and II students, illustrating how well education and health can work together!

<sup>1</sup> Nunavik Department of Public Health, 2003b; Hodgins, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Nunavik Department of Public Health, 2003b.

<sup>3</sup> Proulx 2004.

(Continued from p. 40)

cohort of graduates. Just like the group of five women who had preceded and mentored them, the men are now qualified to help guide new clients through their rehabilitation experience.

Forrest believes that there is much work to be done to disseminate information and raise awareness in Inuit communities. “The closing of the old centre was marked by bitterness, and it’s still difficult to talk about addiction in the open. The people who work at Isuarsivik don’t think they’re above others—they’re simply searching for a new way of doing things, a new way of life. All they want is to help community members have a better life,” he explained.

Inuit have always been remarkably creative, as the resourcefulness and imagination of their past survival methods testify. Isuarsivik spent two years perfecting its tools and is now ready to offer better support to Inuit communities in Nunavik and Nunavut so they can embrace a new life and take charge of their own healing.

Isuarsivik has kept its name despite the sometimes embarrassing mistakes of the past. “Because to err is human”, one elderly Inuk woman once wisely told me; and because the people who rebuilt the centre did it with hope and by learning from the mistakes of the past. The average addict in Québec has to undergo therapy three times before achieving sobriety. The road is long and hard, but hope is ever present. The new Isuarsivik is intent on instilling this hope in the communities of Nunavik and Nunavut.

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tion at the *Université Laval*, the CHUL’s *Unité de recherche en santé publique*, the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services, the Kativik School Board, and local groups. Together, they have implemented the nutrition program in all of the region’s childcare centres.

Launched in 2003, the initiative aims to preclude developmental delays and improve the general health of children by fighting iron, vitamin A and vitamin D deficiencies.

The initiative ensures that children attending childcare are served meals that meet their nutritional needs and it recognizes that traditional foods can contribute positively to the modern Inuit way of life. Under the initiative, menus were developed, local cooks received training and a recipe book was produced featuring traditional foods, such as caribou, arctic char, seal and other local game.



PHOTO: MICHEL DORAIS

A participant for more than 10 years through Aboriginal Head Start, the PHAC has provided funding for this locally designed and managed initiative that is now implemented in all of Nunavik’s 14 Inuit communities. Based on the goals of healthy childhood development and family support, this innovative Nunavik model is founded on Inuit culture,

traditions and language that young Nunavimmiut can be proud of.

**To learn more:**

Public Health Agency of Canada:  
[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca)  
Kativik Regional Government:  
[www.krg.ca](http://www.krg.ca)

<sup>1</sup> We would like to acknowledge the invaluable information contributed by Margaret Gauvin, Director of the KRG Employment, Training, Income Support and Childcare Department, as well as by Maryse Turcot, a management consultant.

## Kayaking Their Way to a Healthier Life

BY AMÉLIE BRETON  
SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR

During the summer of 2005, six Inuit youth kayaked from Kuujjuarapik to Akulivik, stopping in Inukjuak and Puvirnituq. The following summer, six different paddlers took over, visiting Ivujivik, Salluit, Kangiqsujuaq and Quaqtaq. In the summer of 2007, still six other paddlers completed the itinerary along Nunavik's coasts, passing through Kangirsuk, Aupaluk, Tasiujaq and Kuujuaq, before their final landing in Kangiqsualujuaq. In every community, the young travellers were welcomed and invited to share their message of hope: that the youth of Nunavik can adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles. The messengers were already demonstrating that kayaking was a great way to start! Although the vessel was invented by Inuit, most Nunavik youth have never set foot in a kayak!

This disconnection from tradition is symptomatic of a broader problem: an identity crisis triggered by a rapidly changing lifestyle and the difficulty of hanging on to the cultural mores that once anchored their communities. There is a vast difference between the social and cultural environment in which elders were raised and the living environment of Inuit youth. Feelings of hopelessness and a cultural implosion are injuries that take a long time to heal and have

many consequences. It is hard to fathom that today's youth, growing up in villages of a few hundred residents and listening to hip hop while speeding around on ATVs, are directly related to their elders who were brought up in small, semi-nomadic family groups that crisscrossed the tundra in pursuit of their primary source of food and clothing, caribou. But this is indeed the case.

The magnitude of the social problems that have emerged over recent decades, most of which are described in this issue, reflects the identity crisis that now marks Inuit's recent history. Even though these problems are not confined to youth, the Saputiit Youth Association decided to take action against alcohol abuse, drug addiction and suicide. Three years ago, the Association launched a regional suicide awareness campaign by sending Inuit kayakers from village to village to promote among youth more than just healthy living, but a more urgent message to go on living.

It is often said that admitting that you have a problem is the first step to a cure. That idea is probably what motivated Jonathan Epoo, then president of Saputiit, to start

his bold campaign and spark public debate on a serious problem that no one was openly discussing. Visiting each village by kayak, the Saputiit Youth Association got the communities talking to each other and provided participants with a truly unique experience. First, simply by using kayaks as the means of transportation—even if they were modern versions of the vessel and not traditional sealskin *qajaq*—lit a spark in these youth. Most had probably never even been on the water except perhaps in noisy freighter canoes, so the experience necessarily reconnected them to their past. In fact, anyone who has seen Hudson Bay suddenly change from calm to stormy when the wind picks up knows that travelling in Northern waters can instantly bring you face to face with your own mortality.

The slow pace of kayaking also allowed the travellers to fully appreciate the vastness of the

region and think back to their ancestors, whose survival depended on the efficiency of their paddling technique and the precision of their harpooning. During fleeting moments as they were paddling, or even shivering, these youth likely felt profound respect for their ancestral culture. They may even have become conscious, in the howling wind or bracing cold, that it took incredible strength and tenacity for their grandparents to survive day after day in such an unpredictable environment. The travellers not only engaged discussions about suicide in the villages they visited, they also gained, if not cultural pride, then the pride of seeing a project through to the end and serving the cause of youth. Not only did they motivate Nunavik's communities to act in response to their social problems, the kayakers revived a unique ancestral tradition and highlighted the power of their culture in the modern world. As a



PHOTO : AMÉLIE BRETON

participant named Eli Qumak told journalists waiting on shore, “Sometimes I was frightened and I wanted to give up, but I remembered that there were a lot of youth out there who were ready to give up on life. So I pressed on.”

This project gave youth the opportunity to actively fight a problem and promote the establishment of a support network, the discussion of solutions and difficulties, and the sharing of experiences. By travelling from village to village, the kayakers traced a symbolic link between all of Nunavik’s communities and called for collective ownership of the problem and community action. Inuit villages know that when a youth in their small environment loses hope and takes his own life, his personal suffering extends to the entire community. Each resident must therefore ask, what can be done on an individual level to stem the tide of pain affecting the entire region? Perhaps with each paddle stroke dedicated to the mission of helping young people choose a healthy lifestyle, a dose of hope and strength was infused into the suffering currently being experienced by Inuit communities.

Now that these communities have heard the message of these youth, maybe they will have the courage to initiate real change and build community outreach programs solidly anchored in their culture and values. Let us trust that the solutions they come up with are worthy of the efforts the young kayakers made to spread their message of hope.

## Nunavik’s Youth Centres: Teaching Youth How to Help their Peers

BY FRANCINE HUDON  
TRAINING CONSULTANT

Today, Nunavik has 14 youth centres where youth between the ages of 6 to 19 can take part in activities any day of the week between 3:30 p.m. and midnight. Each centre is administered by the local municipal council, but the staff, services and programming are handled entirely by youth. These centres have been opened gradually in the region’s different communities, as material challenges—such as lack of space—were overcome. Their introduction was also gradual as youth learned to deal with the problems that they themselves had identified in the preceding years.

### Responding to community-identified needs

The youth centre experiment was begun during regional workshops held in each of Nunavik’s 14 Inuit villages in preparation for the *Sommet du Québec et de la jeunesse* (Summit). At these workshops, youth participants expressed concern about loneliness, drug use and suicide in their communities. Many of them said that they needed safe places to go to, where they could enjoy some peace, get together, talk, have fun, and find help if necessary.

The Summit, held in Quebec City, provided an opportunity for Nunavik’s political organizations, such as the Makivik Corporation, the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) and the Saputiit Youth Association, to call attention to the needs of Nunavik’s youth and lobby all levels of government to lend urgent assistance.

Recognizing the need to counter the sense of despair among Nunavik’s youth, the *ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux* (MSSS), in cooperation with the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS), announced a plan to open a youth centre in each of Nunavik’s municipalities.

The centres evidently had to be tailored to urgent lo-



PHOTO: ANNE-MARIE TURCOTTE

cal and regional priorities. With this in mind, activity programs were designed for youth between the ages of 6 and 19, and job creation programs, for youth from 16 to 30. A mission statement was formulated around the needs voiced at the Summit: “Youth centres are safe places where young people between 6 and 19 years of age can develop responsible citizenship skills. Under the guidance of proficient facilitators, they provide a venue where young people can gather together, take part in activities and develop healthy relationships with adults. The centres fulfil needs expressed by the communities and their youth.”

The MSSS youth centre program laid down the basic rules but gave the regions full latitude to assemble resources adapted to the needs of youth. The overall budget provided enough funding to hire one coordinator, two full-time facilitators and two part-time facilitators in each municipality.

### Customized basic training

Given that none of the youth in the communities knew how to operate a youth centre or organize recreational activities, the NRBHSS (which was appointed by the MSSS to oversee the project in the region) hired two staff members to develop a training. The training builds on youth workers’ basic knowledge and gradually helps them learn to take charge of organizing activities at their local centre.

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## School Retention Initiatives for Young Inuit

BY MÉLANIE CHABOT, EDITORIAL COMMITTEE  
AND AMÉLIE BRETON, SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR

It is well known that geographical remoteness has the unpleasant habit of magnifying prices. Unfortunately, Nunavik is no exception to the rule. A study carried out by the Canada Research Chair in Comparative Aboriginal Conditions shows that most products and services are, on average and to varying degrees, more expensive in Nunavik than in the rest of the province. Food products for example cost on average 57% more than in the Québec City region; a litre of milk that generally sells for \$1.88 in the South costs \$3.56 in cooperative stores in the North<sup>1</sup>. Taking into consideration that a large majority of the population, which is to say 58%, receive an annual income below \$20,000<sup>2</sup>, the Northern inflationary tendency appears all the more alarming. These figures demonstrate one thing: a very large majority of Nunavimmiut live below the poverty line.

Yet, “Nunavik is not doomed to poverty and it can even represent a goldmine for some. The factor that determines poverty is still ethnicity,”<sup>3</sup> stated Thibault Martin in 2004 at a symposium of the *Association internationale des études québécoises*.

While only 47% of the region’s residents aged 15 and older hold full-time employment, it is not because there are not any jobs in Nunavik. In fact, there are more and more. Between 1995 and 2005, the number of regular full-time jobs doubled. Another study by the Canada Research Chair in Comparative Aboriginal Conditions indicates that the “ever-increasing numbers of school-aged children in the education system have forced public authorities to increase educational services, which translates into more personnel. This same reasoning can also help explain job growth in other public service fields. As well, the transfer of new responsibilities to the Kativik Regional Government by the governments of Québec and Canada has also contributed to job creation.”<sup>4</sup> The problem however is that Inuit only hold half of these jobs while the non-Inuit minority—less than 10% of the population—monopolizes more than 50% of all the income earned in Nunavik<sup>5</sup>. According to a study produced by the Kativik Regional Government, over the last ten years “the newly created regular full-time jobs have been assumed more often by non-beneficiaries of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement*, which is to say in most cases individuals hired from outside of Nunavik for fixed periods, individuals who have qualifications not normally held by beneficiaries and permanent residents.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, the high rate of Inuit unemployment, which is behind poverty, appears to be the result of poor skill levels and a low number of graduates.”

**Nunavik is not doomed to poverty and it can even represent a goldmine for some. The factor that determines poverty is still ethnicity.**

- THIBAUT MARTIN

The school dropout rate among Inuit students is also very worrisome. Although youth generally have achieved a higher level of schooling than their elders and most plan to continue their studies, only 22% of Nunavimmiut aged 15 and older have actually obtained their secondary V diploma<sup>7</sup>. As a result, Inuit are almost entirely absent in fields that require a university or college diploma. Many factors have contributed to this situation. First, several studies show that socioeconomic situations influence student retention and success. This means that children from poor families are over-represented in school dropout statistics and they are twice as likely to quit school before obtaining diplomas or adequate skills as compared with students from more privileged settings. In addition to social setting, other factors may impact on learning difficulties, such as home environment (the quality of parent-child relationships, educational style, etc.) and school environment (school structures, educational practices, etc.)<sup>8</sup>. And once again Nunavik is no exception to the rule. Finally, some might add that school is unappealing to Inuit because

it serves no purpose for them and it is poorly adapted to the realities of the North.

For Daniel Lafleur, a second language curriculum coordinator at the Kativik School Board (KSB),

it is essential that school programs be better adapted to the realities of Northern Québec. “For example, while self-development and social courses have been eliminated throughout Québec, in Nunavik—where households consist on average of 12 individuals living under a same roof—it is necessary to do just the opposite, to put more emphasis on these types of courses because they allow youth to develop the skills and capacities needed, notably, to overcome difficulties,” explained Lafleur. “We have to be more flexible and adapt these programs to the different realities. And not only do we need to adapt the programs, we need to adapt their contents. In this respect, the new land survival skills program, announced last August, is a step in the right direction. Designed with elders, it aims to teach survival techniques through a mixture of traditional and modern knowledge. The transmission of this knowledge is important, since the natural environment continues to be central to Inuit culture. But, this knowledge is also important, not to say essential, for anyone who lives in the Arctic.”

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## Work Experience Group at Aupaluk's Taqsakallak School: An Integration Program with Northern Flair

PHOTO: AMÉLIE BRETON



This work experience group was launched in 2006 to help youth aged 16 and older who are unlikely to complete Secondary V before the age of 19, as required by Québec law. The program has helped establish a small business that produces stained glass and fine soaps and operates a mechanic's shop and welding service. The goal of the program is to replicate on-the-job conditions for the youth participants. The products they make are sold in Kuujuaq, mainly to visitors and tourists. Rather than a simple technical evaluation, the students receive a salary that varies according to the work they sell. Eleven of the group's 14 positions were filled in the fall of 2006. Students' excellent attendance and the quality of their products augur well for the program's third year.

## Independent paths of learning at the Iguarsivik School in Puvirnituk

This kayak- and sushi-making program helps 15 youth, aged 13 to 17, who have major learning disabilities or behavioural problems that would otherwise prevent them from staying in school. The goal of the program is to encourage the youth to continue with their studies by offering hands-on educational projects that are more suited to their needs. Alain Cloutier, who teaches in the program, reports that several students have returned to school since the beginning of the school year. Under the program, students follow an educational program but spend eight hours out of the 30-hour school week making kayaks. They also take four hours of gym class, six hours of cooking and three hours of arts and crafts, and spend the rest of the time learning mathematics and language arts. The wooden kayaks are prepaid through advance orders from neighbouring villages that need more kayaks or from private customers in the South. In addition, the students make sushi with smoked fish supplied by a local company and sell it to the public one night a week. Sushi nights are very popular in the village, where restaurants are practically non-existent. With the money they earn, the students hope to finance a trip to the South at the end of the year.



PHOTO: AMÉLIE BRETON

## Joe Juneau Hopes to Score a Success in Nunavik's 14 Communities!

PHOTO: AMÉLIE BRETON



What more could one want in life than a rink, complete with Zamboni, pucks and hockey equipment? Joe Juneau has set out to equip all 14 villages in Nunavik with indoor rinks that will allow his hockey program to run for the entire school year. Similarly to sport-study programs offered in some schools in the South, Juneau's project is to use hockey, already a very popular activity in Nunavik, as an incentive to stay in school. The idea is simple: if a student shows up to school, it means that he is committed to learning and therefore earns the right to participate at practices. The program goes even further: the players must sign a contract pledging that they will uphold the rules of the game, including abstaining from alcohol and drugs and behaving well. If a parent, neighbour or teacher witnesses a player behaving unacceptably, the coach is advised and the player is barred from practice. Since the youth are generally more motivated to play hockey than go to school, many people are happy that this program is now being offered in the North.

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The Québec government seems to be sensitive to the KSB's concerns relating to the adaptation of programs and their contents. In addition to the new land survival skills program, the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports announced last August major funding support to develop Inuktitut curriculum for grades 4, 5 and 6. Currently, when students reach grade 3, their parents must choose whether their children will be taught 50% of their courses in English or French. From the fourth grade on, 80% of courses are taught in this second language. This clearly explains the learning difficulties and low morale of some students. With the new program, the transition from Inuktitut to second-language instruction will be more gradual. As well, the creation of a working group mandated to find solutions to college education in Nunavik was announced at the Katimajit Conference. Students who currently want to pursue a post-secondary education must do so in the South, most frequently in Montreal. Dropouts at this level are sometimes due to the problem of adapting to an urban environment and difficulties related to remoteness. Finally, it was also announced that a committee would be created to oversee the implementation of a curriculum development centre for courses, work books and teaching aids (in Inuktitut, English and French) based on Inuit culture, as well as to ensure that these tools are tested, assessed and then approved for use.

While the need to adapt these programs and contents is urgent, teaching in Nunavik also requires teachers to adapt. A large majority of teachers come from outside of the region. For just such a purpose, the organization Pauktuutit-Inuit Women of Canada republished in 2006 *The Inuit*

Way. The document is intended to assist non-Inuit who work in the North to gain a better understanding of Inuit culture and the impacts of cultural differences on trans-cultural education. By encouraging improved understanding of the specific characteristics of traditional Inuit culture, Pauktuutit is attempting to weave positive links based on collaboration and mutual understanding.

Several programs targeting student retention are being implemented throughout Nunavik and they offer youth the possibility to find meaning in what they are doing. Those responsible for implementing the programs play an important role in helping these youth to develop their self-esteem.

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- <sup>1</sup> Nick Bernard and Gérard Duhaime, 2006. *Nunavik Comparative Price Index 2006*, Quebec City, Canada Research Chair in Comparative Aboriginal Conditions. [<http://www.chaireconditionautochtone.fss.ulaval.ca/en/PDF/Nunavik%20Comparative%20Price%20Index%202006.pdf>].
  - <sup>2</sup> Danielle Saint-Laurent (ed.), 2007. *Nunavik Inuit Health Survey 2004*, Quebec City, Institut national de santé publique du Québec/Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services.
  - <sup>3</sup> Thibault Martin, 2004. "Vers la définition d'un contrat social post-colonial au Québec?", in *Le Québec au miroir de l'Europe. Actes de colloque*, under the direction of Robert Laliberté and Denis Monière, Quebec City, Association internationale des études québécoises, p. 253.
  - <sup>4</sup> Gérard Duhaime, 2007. *Socio-economic Profile of Nunavik 2006*, Quebec City, Canada Research Chair in Comparative Aboriginal Conditions, p. 14.
  - <sup>5</sup> Thibault Martin, 2004. op. cit., p. 253.
  - <sup>6</sup> Danielle Saint-Laurent (ed.), 2007. op. cit.
  - <sup>7</sup> Danielle Saint-Laurent (ed.), 2007. op. cit.
  - <sup>8</sup> Gouvernement du Québec, 2007. *La santé autrement dit... Pour espérer vivre plus longtemps et en meilleure santé*, Quebec City, ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, p. 6.

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During the first year, a coordinator was hired in each village with the primary responsibility for finding an appropriate venue. With input from the coordinators, basic training was developed to address their immediate needs. During the second year, after each community had hired a facilitator, training was focused more on routine concerns such as organizing from scratch youth activities ranging from art and magic to indoor and outdoor games. Staffing was completed during the third year when a second full-time facilitator and two part-time facilitators were hired in each community. After six years, more than 104 facilitators and 42 coordinators have taken part in some training. It is delivered

each year through two five- or six-day sessions. And so far, over 20 coordinators and 30 facilitators have fully completed the training, which for coordinators corresponds to 450 hours and for facilitators is 225 hours.

### A group effort

The project's success is due most of all to the dedication and involvement of the youth in Nunavik's communities. Without their unflagging efforts, the youth centres would be empty, cheerless spaces. These youth are on the frontlines, looking out for the safety of their peers, giving them opportunities to connect with each other, as well as youth in other villages and in the rest of the province, thanks to the Internet.

Through the years, these youth have also received support from regional organizations and the MSSS through a regional advisory committee that meets twice a year. The committee is composed of representatives of the MSSS, the Makivik Corporation, the KRG, the Saputiit Youth Association, the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services, and since 2005 the Nunavik Youth Centre Association. Just as the youth centre program cannot function without the leadership of local youth, the youth themselves need ongoing support and help from local and regional leaders.

# Young at Heart!

BY LISA KOPERQUALUK  
SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR

Elders in Nunavik are very active and have been vocal on many important issues for some time. Since the creation of the Avataq Cultural Institute in 1981, elders have guided the activities of this organization in matters related to culture and language protection: preservation and promotion of Inuktitut, traditional medicinal knowledge, garment making, traditional food preparation, the Inuktitut writing system, genealogy, museums, archaeology and cultural groups, to name but a few. The role and contributions of elders in defining the goals and orientations of Avataq have been essential. Moreover, as many new words are required today to express new realities, elders are still acting as language experts at annual workshops organized by Avataq. The workshops aim to enrich the vocabulary of Inuktitut. There is no doubt that elders will continue to play a vital role as the specialists and guardians of Inuit culture.

## A new elders' advocacy group

Recently, Nunavik elders adopted a new structure. With the support of the Kativik Regional Government (KRG), the Nunavik Elders' Committee was formed to voice elders' needs and to foster relations with other seniors' groups in Québec. The Committee, which is set up at the KRG offices in Kuujuaq, operates as a section of this organization. It has enabled elders to focus attention on the socioeconomic aspects of their living condi-

**“Elders need more assistance, because they are supporting their children, their grandchildren and sometimes even their great-grandchildren. This adds to their burdens.”**

— BOBBY SNOWBALL  
PRESIDENT, NUNAVIK ELDERS' COMMITTEE,

tions in the communities of Nunavik. This orientation was not truly possible through the biennial conferences organized for elders by the Avataq Cultural Institute; the organization's mandate is essentially connected to culture. The Nunavik Elders' Committee provides a forum for its members to discuss the challenges posed by current living conditions, while at the same time delivering support that ensures their continued meaningful role in Inuit society in Nunavik.

Johnny Epoo, a former president of the Avataq Cultural Institute and member of the Nunavik Elders' Committee, described the stages that led



to the creation of the Committee. “We really began the effort to create our committee after a meeting with the Minister of Culture, Communications and the Status of Women, in Kuujuaq in 2006. At this meeting, the Minister herself said that our living standards were not up to par with those of elders elsewhere in Québec. In particular, that our housing conditions are appalling and that our old age security pensions are sorely lacking given the high cost of living in Nunavik. The Minister indicated that she hoped to see our living standards improved.”

Nunavik has an elders' population of 419 individuals aged 60 and older, representing 4% of the region's total population. Eighty-five percent of elders are unilingual Inuktitut speakers, and only 11% can express themselves in English. Whenever an elder meets healthcare staff at a CLSC or travels to the South to consult a physician, they are almost always accompanied by an interpreter. The *Socio-economic Profile of Elders in Nunavik*, published in 2005 by the Canada Research Chair in Comparative Aboriginal Conditions, reveals that the average annual income of Nunavik elders aged 65 and older is \$19,250, which is to say 13% lower than in the rest of Québec for the same age group. Moreover, 69% of Inuit aged 65 and older depend entirely on government security benefits for their subsistence, representing an average annual income of \$12,882. When this low income is coupled with the cost of living, which can be two to three times higher than elsewhere in Québec, Nunavik elders are among the poorest individuals in the province.

As president of the Nunavik Elders' Committee, Bobby Snowball of Kuujuaq stated during an elders conference held in Kangiqsujuaq, “Elders need more assistance, because they are supporting their children, their grandchildren and sometimes even their great-grandchildren. This adds to their burdens.” At the Nunavik session of the Québec government's Public Consultation on the Living Conditions of Seniors, the new Minister of Culture, Communications and the Status of Women asked to learn more about the social and economic concerns of the region's elders. Besides the high cost of living, elders must also deal with many uncertainties related to housing. They live mainly in rented dwellings that are

often overcrowded, which is to say shared with on average five other individuals. Elders also drew attention to the lack of services adapted to their needs and the few residences for elders. On a more positive note, several communities such as Puvirnituq, Kangiqsujuaq, and Inukjuak have recently built elders' residences that offer new services on a daily basis.

Similar to the elders' conferences organized by the Avataq Cultural Institute, Inuit aged 50 and older are members of the Nunavik Elders Committee, and they total roughly 600 individuals. The Committee hopes to play an active role in the coming years and to encourage intergenerational cooperation. A special retreat for Nunavik elders and the leaders of various regional organizations was conducted in August 2007, at Old Chimo

**The Seniors' Parliament gave us an opportunity to insist on our participation in the political process and to demand the recognition of our rights and the protection of our environment.**

— JOHNNY WATT

on the banks of the Koksoak River near Kuujjuaq. Discussions revolved around matters relating to the role of individuals, families, elders and youth, as well as a mandate for the future Nunavik regional government to build a strong society. During the retreat, elders adopted a seven-point declaration:

1. Strongly welcome the recommendations contained in the report on youth protection in Nunavik;
2. Reaffirm the commitment of Nunavik elders to developing and perpetuating a strong Inuit society based on the principles and characteristics that define Inuit culture;
3. Urge Nunavik organizations and the governments of Québec and Canada to make every effort possible to provide a safe and nurturing environment for Inuit youth in Nunavik;
4. Call upon the federal and provincial governments to recognize the inherent rights of Inuit with respect to the sustainable co-management of resources and the practice of hunting and other subsistence activities;
5. Receive with appreciation the important involvement of Nunavik youth;
6. Welcome with gratitude the guidance received from Inuit elders at this retreat;
7. Request Nunavik organizations and the governments of Québec and Canada to accurately determine the nature and scope of the changes necessary to enhance Inuit wellbeing while protecting Inuit identity and culture.

#### Productive exchanges with other seniors' groups in Québec

Since May 2006, the Nunavik Elders' Committee has been a member of the *Association québécoise de défense des droits des personnes retraitées et pré-retraitées* (AQDR), which in particular has permitted Nunavik elders to participate at the AQDR's annual meetings in different localities in Québec. Through these meetings and with the assistance of interpreters, elders have been enabled to share their concerns with seniors' representatives from other regions. The 8th Seniors' Parliament, which included members of the Nunavik Elders' Committee, also permitted these concerns to be shared.

"The Seniors' Parliament, which was organized at the National Assembly, allowed us to participate in the democratic process, and to make a statement about the importance of including our points of view in political decision making. Too often in the past we were ignored, and decisions were made for us without our knowledge. The Seniors' Parliament gave us an opportunity to insist on our participation in the political process and to demand the recognition of our rights and the protection of our environment," explained Johnny Watt, an elder from Kuujjuaq, who took part in the Parliament between September 10 and 12, 2007.

During its sitting, the Seniors' Parliament adopted two laws. The first concerned the responsibilities of citizens and the government on matters of environmental and sustainable development. The second dealt with the implementation of the rights and obligations of individuals, in particular by highlighting the security of persons in difficulty in Québec.



PHOTO: FRANÇOIS NADEAU, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

# Social Development through Traditional Knowledge?

Because knowledge of where you come from can help you to know where you're going.

BY AMÉLIE BRETON  
SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR

Inuit elders carry the cultural traditions that have assured the survival of this Arctic people for thousands of years. A new way of life, settlements and modern services have however transformed traditional Inuit social and family structures, and disrupted the time-proven channels for passing on know-how. Changes in the Inuit way of life are so dramatic they even throw into doubt the need to transmit ancestral knowledge: What purpose can these old skills serve in the modern world?

Confident that Inuit traditional culture holds many of the answers to the identity crisis faced by younger generations, Inuit elders decided to hold biennial conferences to regularly take stock of the social situation. In 1980, following up on one such conference, the Avataq Cultural Institute was created and given a mandate to protect and promote Inuit language and culture. Since, its many initiatives in these fields have made Avataq an influential organization that contributes to fostering renewed intergenerational and intercommunity ties. In this manner, elders found a new channel to pass on

traditional knowledge and to promote the value of tradition in modern Inuit society.

## Developing traditional knowledge

Inukjuak on Saturday, February 16, at 1 p.m.: In a small building filled with sunshine, roughly a dozen women aged between 18 and 78 are gathered together. Each is assembling a pair of *kamiik*, sealskin boots. Nellie, the elder, is busy doing the same, all the while patiently passing on tips to the others. To temper the sealskin soles, you need to chew on them and stretch them. Next, following the pattern made out of a cereal box, Nellie shows how to carefully cut each piece. Every step is carried out with an eye to detail. The different pieces must fit perfectly together if the final product is to be watertight. The elder shares her know-how whenever asked. Since each participant progresses at her own pace, a single stage may be demonstrated several times. *Kamiik* making requires patience and careful attention. This Inukjuak workshop runs twice a week for three hours each session, over 12 weeks.



PHOTO: AMÉLIE BRETON

This traditional skills workshop is one of many Avataq initiatives. In each Nunavik village, small groups, consisting of a teacher and several students, gather to pass on knowledge about *amauti*-, *kamiik*-, *qamutiik*- or *qajaq*-making. The groups submit their project to Avataq, which pays the teachers. Moreover, participants can receive financial support from the regional government to cover the costs of purchasing material. This aspect is well appreciated since it provides the means for even the least affluent to participate.

## Mini-glossary:

*Amauti*: a woman's coat with a large hood for carrying babies.

*Kamiik*: sealskin boots.

*Qamutiik*: a sled that is pulled either by dogs or by snowmobile.

*Qajak*: a traditional kayak built from driftwood and sealskin.

### A continuing role for culture and ancestral skills

It may be asked: Why cling to these ancestral skills? First, because quality still has a place in the modern world, even though there is a definite tendency towards enticing and expensive, but ephemeral, products! Only once you have confronted the cold and stormy Arctic is it possible to fully recognize that modern, mass production technologies are a poor substitute for these time-honoured traditions. A pair of custom-made *kamiik* are adapted to the Northern environment and inexpensive (if you make them yourself), and so will always be much more effective than the synthetic boots that are sporadically stocked at the village's two stores, and that are often too big or too small if you don't get there before the rest of the village! Economic reasons may also be invoked for fostering the continued use of traditional knowledge. After all, these reasons are most often used to justify investments in this sector: culture creates employment, stimulates tourism, and has the potential of generating important spin-offs. The average price of a pair of *kamiik* at a local cooperative store is \$450. For some women, *kamiik*-making is their main source of income.

But really, Inuit elders say it best: culture has a social role that is much deeper than meets the eye! Knowledge of where you come from can in fact help you to know where you are going. By passing on their traditional knowledge, elders

are trying to help Inuit youth to grow. Pride in their roots passed on by their elders will permit individuals to stand more firmly against the biting north wind. This is the benefit that youth can draw from Inuit traditional knowledge. Regardless of our origins, culture transmits to us meaning, a sense of purpose and internal cohesion, confidence in our environment, and the feeling of belonging to a group.

For some, traditional skills workshops are a unique opportunity for personal development that combine the joy of crafting something, sharing friendship, and accomplishing something useful. Without these workshops, certain individuals, whose circles of acquaintances or family members do not sew for example, would have no other opportunity to explore the richness of their culture. Certainly then, these workshops encourage social inclusion in Nunavik's villages.

More than anywhere else, Inuit have every reason to promote opportunities for their youth to explore their cultural traditions and to adopt those that seem

the most meaningful in their modern world. In the crucial search for their identity, Inuit youth still have many paths open to them. If the roots of this culture are like those of the dwarf willows that blanket the tundra, it is not surprising that Inuit elders incessantly advise their

youth to put on a good pair of *kamiik* before setting out to explore!



PHOTO : AMÉLIE BRETON

# Voice of the North: A Tool for Social, Community and Cultural Development

BY MÉLANIE CHABOT  
EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Programming that mirrors local concerns, and broadcasts produced by and for communities: local media in Québec have a well-proven role to play. In addition to contributing to the diversity of information sources, they serve to democratize access to media by fostering citizen participation. They “permit local populations to talk and hear about issues that affect them, to debate topics that directly concern them, to put forward their talents and their accomplishments, and to mobilize local and regional efforts for projects that are important to them.” For the *ministère de la Culture et des Communications*, “local media represent for their communities unique economic and social development tools. They are venues for community action and education that permit diverse sociocommunity, cultural, local and regional organizations to regularly broadcast their messages and transmit information on topics that concern local and regional populations. In this manner, they serve as special partners that support a wide-range of public service organizations.”<sup>2</sup> In fact, the role played by community media is all the more important because large media outlets tend to ignore local and regional information, focusing instead on national and international news, as well as current events in urban centres.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, in rural areas community media is often the only voice for local and regional concerns.

It is therefore not surprising that, in some regions, local and regional stakeholders provide support for community media. Such is the case for the regional conferences of elected officers in Lanaudière and Côte-Nord, and for the *Municipalité régionale de comté de Témiscamingue*, that have considered it important to include community media and communications in their respective action plans.<sup>4</sup> This is also the case in Nunavik, where the main regional organizations have prioritized the development of effective communication tools. In the face of a rapidly changing way of life and living conditions, the communication needs of Nunavimmiut have steadily grown in recent decades. Whether in the communities themselves, or between the communities and their regional administrative institutions, or with the rest of Québec and Canada, the need for effective communications was identified early on as an essential condition of the region’s economic, social and cultural development.

In 1973, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) applied to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission for a

licence to operate television stations in two communities of Nunavik. The project was exclusively for English- and French-language programming that would be produced in Montreal and Toronto, but it received a cold reception in the North. No provision for local programming had been made, let alone for programming in the language of a majority of the region’s residents. And why had CBC proposed to limit live, colour-television programming to two locations, when it was still unable to deliver adequate radio services across the region? Eager to assume greater control of the communication tools set up for their communities and, especially, to participate in production, Inuit decided to submit their own application. To this end, a working group was put together to consult the region. The resulting document entitled *The Northerners* established a strategy for all the region’s communities and led to the creation in 1975 of Taqramiut Nipingat Inc. (TNI)—the voice of the North.

“At the very beginning, communications were ensured by radio. In fact, these radio monitoring systems, that were operated by the municipal councils, served to improve communications between people on the land and the villages, and especially to increase the safety of harvesters,” explained Claude Grenier, executive director at TNI for more than ten years. “Then, TNI designed and implemented with small levels of funding low-power FM radio stations in each of the communities. We started recording broadcasts on audio cassettes that were distributed to the different stations. But soon after that, TNI acquired a real structure. There was training, and we picked up some old CBC equipment. With that, we were able to initiate Inuktitut programming that could be distributed by CBC via satellite in each of the region’s communities.”

Today, even while TNI also produces and broadcasts television shows on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, radio remains the organization’s main focus. Moreover, a little more than a year ago, TNI acquired its own distribution network, which considerably increased the number of hours of broadcast. “We went from three to 12 hours of programming daily, five days a week, relying heavily on close cooperation with the residents of the region,” added Grenier. “Obviously, we’re not broadcasting only information. Programming includes roughly six hours of music, daily. What you need to understand is that our listening audience is only 12,000 strong. In this context, it’s difficult to imagine enough material for

12 hours of continuous information programming. Nonetheless, culture, politics, local and regional news, interviews, and live coverage are all part of what we offer. Regional and national organizations take advantage of this service to deliver updates on their activities. For example, Makivik Corporation president Pita Aatami often speaks on the radio to explain his organization's activities and report on the work accomplished. In fact, most organizations use the radio in this way."

But at times, information fills TNI's broadcasting hours. The Katimajit Conference held in August 2007 for example, a forum to discuss the major challenges and issues facing the region, was broadcast live in its entirety by TNI. On several occasions, speakers at the conference even directly addressed the region's residents who were listening at home. "And we do that often. It was in fact one of our objectives when we came up with our idea for the network. We wanted to go out and provide coverage of public events for the general public, to increase awareness of the issues being dealt with in the region. When you consider the distance between communities, transportation costs and all that, the coverage and transmission of information over TNI airwaves is extremely important, not to say essential," according to Grenier.

TNI is the region's radio. It disseminates information pertinent to all the communities, thereby fostering among them a sense of shared purpose, of belonging to this vast region that is known as Nunavik. By presenting a regional overview, TNI strengthens the social and cultural cohesion of the communities. "Each community has distinctive characteristics and a well-formed identity. Regional radio offers an encompassing vantage point for understanding and taking part in developments. It is an excellent tool to promote a strong regional identity," explained TNI's executive director. "But eventually, we would like the communities to participate in programming, for a community to say to us, 'we'd like to handle an hour of programming on your network? TNI would be very open to that. We'd even be prepared to purchase the necessary equipment, to provide support for those involved, and to deliver training.'" While this project is still at an early stage, the communities can nonetheless count on their local stations to reflect their interests and their concerns. "Each is independent. From village to village, their structures and operations are completely distinct," noted Grenier. "In some villages, especially the larger ones, the local radio stations are well organized. There are regular employees, and everything runs smoothly; there are bingos and so on. These local stations are very important in their communities, and they play a number of roles. If messages need to be passed along, people call the local radio station; if you're looking for someone in town, you call the local station. Local stations are truly community radio. So much so in fact, that it leads to problems since there is sometimes a lack of control."

In addition to technical support, TNI offers training for local radio station operators. "Because it can't be forgotten that local radio stations have developed locally, and each community has developed its own habits. It is extremely difficult to change these. The communities are small and everyone knows one another. You can try to do a 10-minute interview, but after



PHOTO: JEAN-JACQUES ÉLIE

JACOB PARTRIDGE, WHO WORKS FOR THE QAJAQ NETWORK, DISCUSSES COMMUNITY WELLBEING OVER LOCAL AIRWAVES.

30 minutes the person may still have more to say. At TNI, though, we have a structure: our shows start and end at set times. Lack of programming is perhaps the biggest shortfall of Nunavik's local radio stations, especially in the smallest communities where less funding is available. So, through training we try to give local operators different tools." A training program was set up with the Kativik School Board. However, as is the case everywhere else in Québec, staffing remains a major problem for local radio stations. Funding for many stations is precarious and they are unable to offer competitive working conditions. Staff turnover is a major obstacle to effective training, because it is never-ending. "It's really unfortunate. We're like the poor relation of regional organizations. Yet, TNI and local radio stations are key tools for promoting the use of Inuktitut, the only public tool in fact. In my opinion, this means of communication has still not been utilized to its full potential. It could better serve the public, in particular by disseminating information to help individuals. And we're far from short of ideas," concluded Grenier.

<sup>1</sup> Ministère de la Culture et des Communications, *Les médias communautaires au Québec. État de la problématique*, Québec City, Gouvernement du Québec, 2005, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

# The Impact of Collective Entrepreneurship

## Inuit Economic, Social and Political Autonomy and Cultural Identity

BY MÉLANIE CHABOT  
EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

PHOTO: FEDERATION OF COOPERATIVES  
OF NORTHERN QUÉBEC  
ARTIST: ELI ELIJASSIAPIK, INUKJUAK

A recent issue of the journal *Développement social*<sup>1</sup> reported that the cooperative movement exercised a profound impact on the evolution of Québec society and influenced its development. The movement traces its humble beginnings to the mid-19th century, when a few associations came together as savings cooperatives and credit unions to share risk (some later branched out as mutual insurance companies and workers' associations). Today, cooperatives exist in all sectors. Some have grown to an imposing size, while others are just emerging in response to present-day challenges. Although the deep roots of cooperatives in our history are well understood, most Québécois, unaware of the history of cooperatives in the far North, do not understand how important they were and still are not only to the region's economic development, but also to its social and political evolution and the development of cultural identity. As will be shown, the cooperative movement gave Inuit the tools to define, on their own and for themselves, the type of development they wanted and the ways to re-appropriate control over their resources and development.

### From a subsistence to a market economy

The structure of the traditional Inuit way of life changed quickly and dramatically early in the 20th century. A permanent Euro-Canadian presence was established in Northern Québec as trading posts were set up and missionaries

arrived, followed shortly after by the mounted police. In his seminal writings on the subject, sociologist Jean-Jacques Simard describes how the elements of a new system were gradually put in place: "Credit was necessary for trading, and trading created new consumer needs. But in hard times, the credit advanced by traders morphed into government assistance. These factors together changed practices in relation to work, trade and mobility."<sup>2</sup> One can only imagine the scope of the crisis that occurred when the fur trade collapsed after the Second World War. The resulting economic upheaval led to destitution and forced the government to step up its interventions in the Canadian Arctic. To rationalize the delivery of services, it was necessary to settle people in villages, open nursing stations, and establish schools.

Searching for a way to ease the integration of Inuit communities into the Canadian economic system, the federal government in the 1950s viewed cooperatives as a development model that they could establish without much difficulty and that would help teach local communities the rudiments of trade and the basic rules of capitalism. Thibault Martin, a sociology professor with the department of Social Work and Social Sciences at the *Université du Québec en Outaouais*, explained that, "From the Canadian government's perspective, Inuit were experiencing problems because of underdevelopment. The solution therefore lay in modernizing their

lifestyle. For government officials, this meant that Inuit had to give up hunting and enter the market economy. This was the motivation behind the federal government's efforts in the late 1950s to encourage Inuit communities to establish cooperatives in their villages."

### From a market economy to social economy

Although the federal government had provided the impetus and knowledge for launching cooperatives, Inuit—with their prodigious talent for adaptation and with the help of mentors—quickly took in hand the management and control of their affairs by founding their own cooperatives. Two cooperatives were launched in 1959 and

pennies. They had to find a way to repatriate the profits by managing carving sales themselves, so they came up with the idea of establishing cooperatives. This would allow them to organize their artisanal production and make it a profitable economic activity." For Clément Guimont, former coordinator of the *Caisse d'économie solidaire Desjardins*, these events show the Inuit entrepreneurial genius: "The purpose of founding cooperatives was not to bring products up from the South as much as it was to send artisanal products from the North to the South. It showed that the group's intent was not to organize itself into a relationship of dependence but to re-appropriate the benefits and management of their artisanal production."

**"Atautsikut/Together – working to develop as a people, leaving none behind. This is the founding vision of Nunavik's cooperatives."**

– FEDERATION OF COOPERATIVES OF NORTHERN QUÉBEC

1960, in Kangiqsualujjuaq and then Puvirnituq<sup>3</sup>. Others quickly followed in Kuujjuaq (Fort Chimo), Kangirsuk (Payne Bay) and Kuujuarapik. Each new cooperative was opened in response to people's desire to re-appropriate the management of their carving production, which until then had been marketed by the Hudson's Bay Company. As Martin noted, "Inuit had learned that their carvings were selling at high prices in the South, but the Hudson's Bay Company was paying them

As a sociologist, Martin believes that despite the dramatic enlargement of activities by these cooperatives, which now handle much more than artisanal production, these organizations are and always have been a key component in Inuit's strategy to defend their identity. Inuit carving received a large boost from the development of cooperatives, which brought revenue to more people by distributing among members the profits earned on national and international markets.

“The success of cooperatives resides in the fact that a large number of Inuit feel motivated to produce carvings, because the cooperatives purchase most of them, and offer the artists a fair price. The principle is simple: the revenue generated by carvings sold at good prices in stores and museums in large cities offsets any losses for the carvings that do not attract buyers.

held meetings, quickly became a pattern for social and municipal organization. The purpose of gathering the cooperatives’ members together was “to unite the community and let members voice their interests.”<sup>4</sup> Before too long, new economic activities would give rise to new political initiatives. But first, it was necessary to consolidate support services for the various organiza-

explained that, “These events led to FCNQ representatives approaching the Québec government in 1969 to demand the creation of a regional government. However, even before Inuit were substantially able to develop their political plans, the Québec government launched the James Bay hydroelectric projects, dramatically altering the political landscape in Northern Québec. Despite the conditions in which they had to function, it is indisputable that cooperatives triggered the political emancipation movement among the Inuit of Nunavik.”

services. For its part, the FCNQ plans to open a completely independent Inuit financial cooperative in the near future [see article on p. 57]. The cooperative movement also aims to open and occupy a variety of niche markets, including tourism which is considered one of the most promising industries. “The hope in some quarters is that the tourism venture will repeat the success of the arts experience, by contributing to Nunavik’s economy while sustaining traditional activities,” concluded Martin.

### Continuing to grow the regional economy

Today, cooperatives continue to be crucial social and economic levers in the region. Managed exclusively by Inuit and Cree members, they provide employment for 270 full-time and more than 50 seasonal employees in Nunavik, in addition to 120 full-time employees in Montreal, making them the largest non-government employer in the region.<sup>6</sup> Their annual sales rose from \$1.1 million in 1967 to over \$106 million in 2000. At the end of

### To learn more:

Federation of Cooperatives of Northern Québec: <http://fcnq.netc.net>.

Thibault Martin, 2003. *De la banquise au congélateur : mondialisation et culture au Nunavik*, Québec City, Les presses de l’Université Laval, 202 p.

Jean-Jacques Simard, 2003. *La réduction. L’autochtone inventé et les amérindiens d’aujourd’hui*, Sillery, Les Éditions du Septentrion, 430 p.



LIZZIE PAPIGATUK, AN ADVISOR IN SALLUIT, INTERVIEWS A NEW COOPERATIVE MEMBER.

In the art world, where artists have no assurance of being paid for their work, such a cooperative approach is unique. “In an Inuit cooperative, all the artists are paid for their work, which no doubt encourages artists of all ages to continue producing art. Cooperatives have led to the perpetuation of a traditional activity by turning it into an economic initiative,” Martin explained.

### From local to regional development

In addition to fostering Inuit’s appropriation of their economic and cultural development and the development of their identity, the cooperative movement taught its members political mobilization. Indeed, they quickly adapted to the democratic opportunities offered by the cooperative model. The model developed by the Puvirnituk cooperative, in which members

tions and centralize buying and lending. This was accomplished when the Federation of Cooperatives of Northern Québec (FCNQ) was founded in 1967. Jean-Jacques Simard characterized this period as a transition from local community development to regional development, during which the village model was supplanted by “Inuit nationalism” and local projects were replaced by economic planning.<sup>5</sup> These initiatives mark the dawning of a national conscience among Inuit. As they gathered together for the FCNQ’s annual meetings, they were in essence attending public forums that provided the only opportunity, in their region of isolated villages, for participants to learn about and discuss important issues that were affecting the entire region. It also was an opportunity to discuss their collective situation and the development of the region. Martin

the cooperatives and the FCNQ held over \$91 million in total assets.<sup>7</sup> This development has evidently been accompanied by a wide diversification of activities. First food and consumer cooperatives were organized, giving competition to the monopolistic Hudson’s Bay Company. They were followed by restaurant and hotel services, and then construction, fuel distribution, postal, banking, and labour training services, to name but a few. In fact, the cooperatives are active in every sector of the economy and all facets of life. There are cooperatives in every village (currently, there are 14 cooperatives with a total of 6,000 members), operating as general stores and offering increasingly diverse products and services. To better control the future of all cooperatives, the movement is currently looking into offering financial and banking

<sup>1</sup> Mélanie Chabot (Editor), “Quand le social flirte avec l’économique”, *Développement social*, Vol. 8, No. 1, June 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Jacques Simard.

<sup>3</sup> “The Kangiqsualujuaq cooperative, founded in 1959, was the first official cooperative on record. According to Simard et al. (1996), however, the cooperative movement began in Puvirnituk in 1955, with a pooled funds account launched by the future director of the FCNQ.” In Thibault Martin, 2003. *De la banquise au congélateur : mondialisation et culture au Nunavik*, Québec City, Les presses de l’Université Laval, p. 140. *La réduction. L’autochtone inventé et les amérindiens d’aujourd’hui*, Sillery, Les Éditions du Septentrion, p. 143.

<sup>4</sup> Source: FCNQ [<http://fcnq.netc.net/cgi-bin/index.cgi?page=c1&langue=fra>].

<sup>5</sup> Jean-Jacques Simard, 2003. *La réduction. L’autochtone inventé et les amérindiens d’aujourd’hui*, Sillery, Les Éditions du Septentrion, p. 148.

<sup>6</sup> Source: FCNQ [<http://fcnq.netc.net/cgi-bin/index.cgi?page=c1&langue=fra>].

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

# A New Client Service Centre for the Caisse d'économie solidaire Desjardins: Nunavik Financial Services Cooperative

BY MÉLANIE CHABOT  
EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Last November, the first trilingual Desjardins financial service and product counter opened in the Sugluk Cooperative Association store in Salluit. With the help of the new advisors, Arnaituk Papigatuk and Lizzie Papigatuk, the people of Salluit now have access to all Desjardins services: they're able to open a chequing or savings account, pay bills, apply for credit, etc. "Up until now, the cooperatives have stood in for the absent financial institutions in the far north, cashing cheques, providing small loans, etc.," explained Yvon Roy, the man in charge of the project with the *Caisse d'économie solidaire Desjardins* (CECOSOL). "But thanks to the Internet and new technologies, we will soon be able to offer full, quality services to everyone in the region. By 2010 all of the villages in Nunavik will benefit from the same services currently being tested in the villages of Salluit, Kangiqsualujuaq and Akulivik. The long-term objective is to give the region an additional economic development tool in the form of its own, completely self-sufficient financial cooperative," Roy went on to say. Once all the services are in place and critical mass has been reached in terms of business volume and regional profitability, Inuit themselves will take charge of the financial cooperative and it will be affiliated with the Desjardins network. "In fact, with this project, the leaders of various Nunavik institutions—the Kativik Regional Government, the Makivik

Corporation, and the Federation of Cooperatives of Northern Québec (FCNQ)—came to us and said, 'Help us to build, through the CECOSOL, the critical mass needed to develop our own setup.' In other words, 'Help us to leave you', which does not really make sense in the business world but it fits us like a glove," said Clément Guimont, the former CECOSOL coordinator. "We are very sensitive to local development, regional development and, above all, the empowerment of local and regional communities. We always aim to do things in such a way that communities have the means to take over and organize things as they see fit, in keeping with their own dynamics and culture. And that's what we have done here too, by developing this project with the people in the North, not for them," added CECOSOL president Gérald Larose.

The CECOSOL's presence in the region is nothing new. It has been playing an active role there since 1993, investing over \$29 million in different cooperative projects. "In fact, we arrived in the early 1990s, when cooperatives were having problems getting funding—a bit more of a risk—to promote their development. Financial institutions would only agree to finance the FCNQ, which in turn had to fund its cooperatives. But the FCNQ was intent on building a real cooperative network and, to do this, each cooperative had to begin to become self-sufficient. So, they

were assisted in this process and compromises were reached that allowed them to develop quite rapidly," pointed out Guimont. In his opinion, the Nunavik Financial Services Cooperative is the logical outcome of the region's progress towards its goal of economic empowerment. "Basically, it's a development tool and an instrument for taking charge of their own destiny, one of many other tools they have given themselves over the years."

Between November and February, the first three service centres recruited 550 members. By the project's completion, the CECOSOL hopes to have signed up 60% of the region's adult population. "Obviously, this is also a huge undertaking in terms of education, training, and assistance," Guimont explained. "In Nunavik, there is no banking culture. In particular, there is no credit culture, no concept of stocking up or saving. Culturally, Inuit have more of a survival mindset—tomorrow doesn't really exist. It is no wonder that their relationship with the concept of saving is completely different. This is why an extremely important part of this project is that of increasing people's awareness of how to manage their assets," added Guimont. "And we will have to adapt our services, making them more flexible. Because, if we put credit applications from people with no credit history through the normal process, these loans will automatically

be rejected. We need to innovate and find a way to create an interface that can both take our obligations into account and respect the reality of the North." According to Larose, "The goal is to offer our expertise so that people can empower themselves in terms of their savings and credit practices. And I think this is a responsibility that we have, as an organization—that of transforming our services so that they are accessible to all individuals, even those isolated in Northern communities."

During this first phase, the project will create 13 full-time jobs and a few part-time positions. "This whole exercise opens up previously unheard of career prospects in Northern Québec. With the launch of the second phase, and especially the opening of a head office in the North, there will be job openings in human resource management, financial service management, administrative management, etc. For the time being, we have hired advisors to assist people, heighten their awareness, and train them. Needless to say, while they are trained the Desjardins way, everything is adapted to fit the local context," concluded Roy.

**For more information:**  
[www.nunavikfinancialservices.coop/](http://www.nunavikfinancialservices.coop/)

## City Living: Qallunaanimiut or Urban Inuit

BY AMÉLIE BRETON  
SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR

Many Inuit move to the city from Northern Québec. Some of them settle there for good while others eventually return to their home communities. Although there are all sorts of things that prompt them to leave, there are also many reasons that give them the urge to return home. According to anthropologist Kishigami Nobuhiro, “The sum of all the things that make Inuit leave the North added to all the things that attract them to the city has an influence, in each case, on how long a person will stay and how this stay will be experienced.” The path taken is different for everyone.

There are many attractions that can draw people to the South: the possibility of finding work, having a private space of one’s own—an apartment—or a chance to get away from the vicious circle of certain forms of violence that continue to be part of the Nunavik reality. In other cases, some people want to leave the north due to inadequate housing, domestic violence, or a lack of job openings. This means that there are many different types of *Qallunaanimiut*, or urban Inuit, to be found in Montreal. Some leave the North to accompany a non-Inuk spouse, for post-secondary education, or to work for an Inuit organization, such as the Avataq Cultural Institute, the Makivik Corporation, or the Kativik School Board, all of which have offices in city and offer good employment opportunities. But there are also unemployed Qallunaan-

imiut who initially came to the city for hospital treatment or for the occasional visit and who decided to stay, while others stayed because they had to. All of them manage to survive, thanks to the help of many different organizations. Some homeless Inuit develop drug or alcohol dependency problems. This build-up of problems limits their chances of coming into contact with other Inuit living in the city and their lives can become very precarious.

In spite of the variety of reasons why Inuit move to the city and the many differences in their individual lives, they nevertheless share certain problems and this arouses a need to reach out to other Inuit. For they all find themselves in a multi-ethnic setting that is completely different from their Northern villages. Their feelings of being isolated and far from their communities and families lead many of them to search out others and get together despite how different they are.

The Association of Montreal Inuit, which was founded in 2000, aims to create and sustain Inuit culture in the city. It offers *Qallunaanimiut* opportunities to socialize and talk to each other, and reinforces their cultural identity by creating social networks and solidarity within Montreal’s Inuit community. Once a month, the Association coordinates a real feast of traditional foods such as caribou, arctic char, and *muktuk* (outer skin of the beluga). The popularity of these monthly

suppers—over a hundred people come every month and way more than that at Christmas time—shows how important it is for Inuit to hook up with each other.

But in the opinion of Lisa Koperqualuk, who was behind the creation of the Association, these monthly get-togethers are not enough: “Even though the feasts are very positive and help bring together part of Montreal’s Inuit community, the needs are far greater than meeting up to share a meal. My dream is that we’ll be able to find ourselves a place to set up a real Inuit cultural centre.” In her view, it is essential to create a place where Inuit can take part in socio-cultural activities, meet other Inuit, speak Inuktitut, and organize Inuit cultural events and trips outside the city, just as the Polish, Spanish and Greek cultural centres do to promote their respective cultures. A centre like this would make it possible to forge ties between Inuit from different urban environments.

In addition to making it possible to establish better social networks, develop a united community, and maintain a strong Inuit identity, a cultural centre would allow the dissemination of information that is harder for Inuit newcomers to access. For instance, it could contain all of the information needed for Inuit to learn how to get organized outside of land claim regions.” An Inuk who wants to start up a business in Nunavik is entitled to receive help from the Kativik

Regional Government. In the city, though, he or she has to find other resources and go through Canadian or Québec government agencies. This information has to be easy to obtain if Inuit who live in the city are to have every chance to succeed,” Koperqualuk explained. An open place to talk and exchange views would enable everyone to benefit from the experience of others and help each other make their way through the process of adjusting to the urban environment. Lastly, a cultural centre would make it possible to demand better distribution of resources and grants. The way things are now, they are allocated by the two levels of government according to a pan-Aboriginal approach that does not recognize the differences between the various Aboriginal and Inuit cultural groups. If these resources were distributed better, they could provide an opportunity to develop social and community services that are more focused and better adapted to the reality of urban Inuit.

In May 2007, the Association of Montreal Inuit organized a fund-raising event so that it could begin looking for a place to set up the first Inuit cultural centre in the city. Let’s hope that it finds one soon so that all of these hopes and dreams may finally come true!

## Social Innovation Process and Participants in Québec

# A Study by the Réseau québécois en innovation sociale



BY NATHALIE PERREAULT  
SOCIAL INNOVATION  
CONSULTANT, MDEIE



BY JOANIE ROLLIN  
RQIS PROJECT  
COORDINATOR,  
UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC

**A**s announced in the last social innovation column, in this issue we are offering you a summary of the work of the Réseau québécois en innovation sociale (RQIS) in conjunction with its study: *Acteurs et processus d'innovation sociale au Québec*. The goal of this presentation is to continue to increase the awareness and understanding of how social innovation works in Québec.

### The RQIS Research

The study is one of the outcomes of the first phase of the RQIS project, a joint undertaking with the Université du Québec (headquarters), the ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation (MDEIE) and the Centre de recherche sur les innovations sociales.

Over the past ten years, researchers, decision-makers, and all kinds of socioeconomic practitioners have become very interested in social innovation. Although these participants initially focused on the definition of social innovation, they are now looking more closely at the social innovation process. In other words: How is a social innovation accomplished? Who are the participants? What are the stages involved? What are the factors that favour the introduction of social innovations and what are the obstacles that stand in their way? These are the questions that the RQIS attempts to answer by analyzing eight case studies.

### The Social Innovation Process

The schematization of the social innovation process is one of the original, beneficial effects of the study (see website: [www.uquebec.ca/rqis](http://www.uquebec.ca/rqis)). The diagram developed illustrates the path taken by participants attempting to solve a problem, fill a need, or respond to a desire by implementing an innovative strategy or social innovation.

### Social Innovation Participants

Based on the case studies, there are four types of participant involved in the introduction of social innovations: the proponent, backers, supportive partners, and receivers/beneficiaries of the innovation. The special features of these participants are that they come from structured networks, they group together around shared interests, they are motivated by similar values and ambitions, and they share a common vision of their socioeconomic reality.

### The Process

Whether the social innovation stems from the public or private sector, or the associative/social economy sector, there are similarities in the process. It is characterized by four phases. In all cases, the social innovation process began with the identification of a prob-

Factors that Favour Social Innovations and Obstacles that Stand in their Way

	Favourable Factors	Obstacles
<b>Participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership approach</li> <li>Multidisciplinary approach</li> <li>Dissemination/promotion</li> <li>Leadership</li> <li>Credibility</li> <li>Shared vision</li> <li>Shared values</li> <li>Creativity</li> <li>Concern with continuity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners' culture shock</li> <li>Differing interests in the process</li> <li>Reticence of certain participants</li> <li>Participant involvement changeable</li> <li>Lack of knowledge and skills</li> </ul>
<b>Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participatory management</li> <li>Aligned management</li> <li>Risk-taking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problems managing risks</li> <li>Funding problems</li> </ul>
<b>Context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Openness of the community, business or organization</li> <li>Spirit of solidarity</li> <li>Mode 2 research context (research-action)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of flexibility of hierarchical structures</li> <li>Conservatism of certain environments</li> <li>Discrepancies between timetables</li> <li>Lack of awareness of certain environments</li> </ul>

lem to be solved (emergence); then, new strategies were formally or informally tested (trial). Once these first two phases were completed, the strategies were introduced into a receiving environment (appropriation) and, finally, the new idea, the new approach, the new service, or the new type of intervention was promoted and transferred for others to use (alliance/transfer/dissemination).

### A Reference Tool

The RQIS study constitutes a reference tool for everyone who participates in or is directly or indirectly interested in the social innovation process and all those who wish to learn more about the subject. It also includes a number of ways of supporting social innovation as well as some findings and tips or suggestions for action. This information may allow different participants to strengthen and

coordinate their efforts to support the development of initiatives.

In concluding, this study was part of the first phase of the RQIS project. The second phase has been under way since the spring of 2007. Its goal is to strengthen the coordination initiative of the RQIS, perfect assistance tools to facilitate the delivery and transfer of knowledge between the research environment and receiving environments and, finally, to try out these tools with the assistance of social innovation projects.

There is a good chance that you will be hearing about the research and tools produced by the RQIS in your respective settings over the next few months.

## Integrated Urban Renewal: No One Model

BY TEPNY POU

MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES MUNICIPALES ET DES RÉGIONS

**O**n January 30, 2008, the room was packed with people who had come to explore the issues involved in integrated urban renewal: representatives from cities, regional conferences of elected officers, and government departments and agencies, as well as other local and regional partners who wanted to improve the living conditions of the citizens of Laval, Montreal, and Longueuil. Participants in this one-day 'consciousness-raising' activity, an initiative of the *ministère des Affaires municipales et des Régions* (MAMR), learned about integrated urban renewal projects in Quebec City, Trois-Rivières, and Montreal, and discussed the winning conditions and challenges.

### Three Inspirational Models

#### • Community strength

Marked by strong citizen presence, the projects described in the presentation by Jean-François Aubin, the coordinator of the *Démarche des premiers quartiers de Trois-Rivières*, were instilled with the values of democracy, inclusion, social justice, and participation. This initiative involved 700 people and mobilized all those who wanted to play a concrete role. Focusing on projects likely to produce short-term results, while adopting a sustainable development approach, the initiative achieved real economic, social, cultural, and environmental renewal in the four target neighbourhoods.

#### • Sound municipal leadership

Jacques Faguy, land-use planning manager for the City of Quebec, demonstrated how the city administration and local partners came to focus on and transform Saint-Roch. Between 1992 and 2005, over \$415 million was invested in this neighbourhood, \$215 million of which was contributed by the private sector, producing 4,362 new jobs, the inflow of 4,067 students and student trainees, and over 1,000 housing units. Thanks to an approach that took the existing urban fabric into account and promoted three broad development themes—culture, education, and new technologies—the City of Quebec managed to create an urban functional balance against a backdrop of population diversity.

#### • Productive cross-industry cooperation

Working on the assumption that the coordination and concentration of public interventions in neighbourhoods in distress could make a big difference in the battle against poverty, the members of the social development arm of the *Conférence administrative régionale de Montréal*<sup>1</sup> decided to concentrate their efforts on the Montréal-Nord area in order to lend their assistance to a local community initiative. Cross-industry cooperation, local-regional partnership, and municipal leadership were

key factors in implementing this project. The initiative also demonstrated the leeway and influence of the regional branches of government departments and agencies when it came to adapting their measures and programs to fit local realities.

### Cooperation, Partnership, and Community: Indispensable Ingredients!

Frédéric Lesemann, a researcher at the *Centre Urbanisation, culture et société* of the *Institut national de la recherche scientifique*, pointed out that it is how secure the ties are between territorial experience and extraterritorial actions that determines whether an outcome will be successful or not. 'Solutions' to problems are found by sharing knowledge, know-how, and experience, and by explaining each other's respective skills and responsibilities. Citizen mobilization is therefore essential in order to stay in touch with the community's needs. Involving citizens makes it possible to reconcile differences and is favoured by concentrating on a few structuring projects that are likely to produce short-term results and long-term policy support. This dynamic also makes it possible to establish a viable balance between economic or physical interventions (e.g. improvement of surroundings, attracting people who are more affluent) and social interventions (e.g. measures to support certain client bases, allowing residents to remain in the neighbourhood).

### An Opportunity to Build a Communication and Support Network

By the end of the day, there was so much enthusiasm in the air that people were calling for more get-togethers like this in order to take things further. They were favourable to the idea of an inter-city committee of Montreal's three large cities to develop information and discussion activities focusing on integrated urban renewal; propose promotional activities; organize training sessions for stakeholders and project workers; and evaluate projects.

While the City of Montreal has already developed several integrated urban renewal projects for Laval and Longueuil, which are engaging in this type of initiative for their first time, this one-day activity is bound to have represented a rich source of inspiration and a profitable networking opportunity.

<sup>1</sup> The *Conférence administrative régionale de Montréal* is presided over by the assistant deputy minister for Montreal and it comprises the regional managers of government departments and agencies with an impact on development in the region, as well as representatives of the regional conference of elected officers and of the City of Montreal. It is responsible for interdepartmental cooperation and the harmonization of government actions.

# Integrated Urban Renewal Project in Longueuil

BY JANNICK LACHAPELLE

MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES MUNICIPALES ET DES RÉGIONS

Located just a hop, skip and a jump from Montreal, and with a breathtaking view of the downtown area, there is nothing suburban about Longueuil but its name. With a population of almost 400,000, Longueuil and its four interlinked cities represent the third largest urban area in Québec, after Montreal and Quebec City. Generally speaking, the population benefits from surroundings and living conditions that are conducive to its wellbeing. But the charming homes and flower gardens sometimes conceal a harsher truth: areas characterized by deteriorated surroundings and a socially and economically excluded population.

With its partners, the City of Longueuil defined a large intervention area for integrated urban renewal: certain underprivileged parts of the boroughs of Vieux-Longueuil, Saint-Hubert and Greenfield Park – and of the City of Brossard. These deteriorated areas contain significant signs of an underprivileged population: the proportion of income needed to pay rent, the number of housing units requiring major renovations, and the average household income, which is almost \$20,000 less here than it is in the rest of the larger area.

The area has undeniable potential, starting with the presence and proximity of services and public transportation. Strong community mobilization can give impetus to urban renewal initiatives. Although there are many stakeholders and this is definitely an asset, it does make cooperation more difficult. For this reason, the agenda for the first year includes the implementation of the process, mobilization of the community, and development of a diagnosis and a collective, consensual action plan for the targeted area.

It is urgent to act quickly to restore the image of these neighbourhoods and free them from the prevailing insecurity. By committing itself to this urban renewal project, the city of Longueuil is demonstrating how serious the situation is and showing its willingness to give these neighbourhoods a new lease on life.

# Laval Chooses Chomedey-est for its Integrated Urban Renewal Project

BY SYLVAIN PROVOST

MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES MUNICIPALES ET DES RÉGIONS

Aware of the importance of defining an area corresponding to a true living environment within an integrated approach of a war on poverty, the Laval partners quickly decided on Chomedey-est. This choice was certainly no coincidence, considering its socio-economic profile: a combination of an aging population, many single-parent families, low education levels, a high proportion of immigrants, and very low-income households. These realities show in the deteriorated housing, particularly the Val-Martin apartment complex, with its 534 social housing units, and the overall appearance of the area, which causes its share of urban safety problems, such as drugs, prostitution, vandalism, and street gangs.

The situation is not entirely bleak, however. Although Chomedey-est has a high incidence of poverty and exclusion, it is fertile, organic ground, with the foundations in place, for territorial and community solidarity.

In fact, Chomedey-est is not without resources and programs. For instance, there is the *Centre communautaire Val-Martin*, with its youth centre, second-hand clothing store, drop-in daycare centre, and family as-

sistance programs. Another example, the Place des Aînés, a sociocultural and sports leisure centre, has over 6,000 members age 50 and older from all over Laval. Also found in the area are meals with wheels, two daycare centres, CLSC services and, of course, the AVEC project: a sustainable development educational program focusing on the revitalization of the schoolyard and area surrounding Quatre-Vents primary school. Considering all this, the partners began by suggesting that this program be made the cornerstone of the integrated urban renewal project.

As early as this spring, the *Conférence régionale des élus de Laval*, the City of Laval, and the government departments involved in the agreement will be working with the population and local partners on a good land diagnosis that will make it possible to develop an action plan that will hopefully contribute to improved social, economic, and environmental conditions for the people of Chomedey-est.

## A Social Development Fund for Communities in Southern Countries

BY MÉLANIE CHABOT  
EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

A social development fund for communities in southern hemisphere countries, the *Fonds Solidarité Sud* (FSS) was officially launched last autumn. The first launch was at the Centre Saint-Pierre in Montreal, with over 75 individuals from different backgrounds coming to show their solidarity and support for this project. Then the fund was launched in Outaouais, in the western part of the province, at the instigation of professors from the *Université du Québec* and the *Carrefour jeunesse-emploi de l'Outaouais*. Finally, it was launched in the Saguenay region by a group of teachers from the *CEGEP de Jonquière*, with Gérald Larose, who was passing through, in attendance. This fund originated with a network of people active with Development and Peace, an organization that has been working for 40 years now with approximately 200 partners in the southern hemisphere (NGOs, grassroots organizations, cooperatives, unions, and peasant organizations) towards the economic, social, and political empowerment of communities in nearly thirty countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

### A Fund with a Good Return for your Money: Intelligence and Solidarity

Slowly but surely, things are falling into place. In terms of income, the fund's initial capital is one million dollars, received in the form of life insurance policies and bequests from a few important donors. One group of six people have set a good

example. They decided to contribute together on a regular basis for five years for a life insurance policy. They each contribute \$480 a year (a net after-tax amount of about \$300). They chose one of their group as their authorized agent for the policy. When the five years are up, this policy will have contributed almost \$50,000 to the FSS.

Regarding organization, a group from Quebec City is looking into the creation of a regional committee, while in Montérégie, a group of nurses has met to talk about international solidarity and the form their participation to the fund will take. As René Lachapelle, one of the fund coordinators, puts it, "The FSS has been built so that our ideals will outlive us." And he is right: the fund is a financial tool that needs to work over the long term. The fund is also supported by a number of high profile, socially engaged individuals: Pauline Marois (Parti Québécois), Claude Blanchet (former manager of the Solidarity Fund QFL), Gérald Larose (former CSN president, and guest professor at UQAM), André Beaudoin (secretary general of UPA-DI), Hélène Simard (president and CEO of the Conseil québécois de la coopération et de la mutualité), Robert Favreau, filmmaker (director of *A Sunday in Kigali*), and Fabien Leboeuf (former director of Development and Peace).

The FSS is based on an English approach that is not very widespread in Québec: monthly or annual donations, for sure, but also bequests (1%, 5% or 10% of your

### Examples of Projects Supported by the South Solidarity Fund

#### In Rwanda: Césarie, President of a Peasant Organization

"Before, I had to birth and look after my husband's cows, that was all..." says Césarie Kantamara, 45 years old, smiling softly. "Now, I'm the national president of the Ingabo trade union, with a membership of 20,000 farmers and livestock raisers, mostly women. I'm swamped with work and unending meetings... plus there's myself and my eight children to take care of. My days and nights are too short..." Césarie lost her parents and brother in the 1994 massacre. Her husband, grief-ridden and in despair, died shortly after. "Then someone suggested that I join Ingabo" (literally: shield against poverty and drought). It was to be the discovery of her lifetime. Ingabo is a peasant trade union supported by Development and Peace. "I learned how to speak French and how to speak in public, to state my opinions. I made my way up the local, regional, and national ladder by being elected." Like her country, and at the same time, she began all over again.

#### Support for the Creation of an Emerging International Social Economy Network: RIPESS

In Lima, Peru, in 1997, an international meeting attracted 200 people from about thirty southern and northern countries. What they all had in common was that they were engaged in solidarity economy and local development initiatives. The goal: creating the conditions for international communication showing real solidarity between partners in northern and southern hemispheres. Then in 2001, Quebec City hosted a second international meeting, which was attended by over 400 individuals from 37 countries. The work began with the Declaration of Quebec City and led to the creation of an international liaison committee. The third conference was held in Dakar in 2005, in keeping with the north-south alternation principle, and it attracted over 1,200 people from 66 countries. Five main topics were covered: solidarity finance, popular alternatives to current models of development, local development, fair trade, and promotion of the solidarity economy. Development and Peace was the first NGO to support this international networking initiative and was one of the rare DNGOs to support the infrastructure for the meetings.

estate, for social causes of your choice) and life insurance policies, with the organization you choose being the policyholder or beneficiary. But that's not all: as with a foundation, all of the money

accrued in the fund constitutes inalienable, or non-transferable, capital. Projects are supported by the interest from the fund. In other words, the \$100 you contribute today will still be there in 10 or 20

years because it is invested and only the interest is used for projects. The FSS is also a dedicated fund for sustainable development and solidarity with communities and movements in southern countries that are striving for social justice, democracy, and development. It does not devote any money to humanitarian aid. "It's all of these things that make the FSS a financial tool that gives you a good return for your money: intelligence and solidarity," points out one of the fund's coordinators and founder's, Lucie Fréchette, a professor at the *Université du Québec in Outaouais*.

### Fuelling the International Solidarity Debate

What are the current international solidarity issues and challenges? How can and should international cooperation promote the empowerment of local communities in the southern hemisphere? What are

CIDA's present policies with regard to government aid? Have we entered a phase where the order of the "three Ds" of our foreign policy has been reversed, from development, diplomacy, and defence, to defence, diplomacy, and development? So that we may reflect on these questions collectively, the FSS intends to organize talks and lunchtime discussions with southern country partners passing through Québec, to fuel the debate on current international solidarity issues.

The fund's coordinators invite those who are interested in this project to take a first step in the right direction and find out more about the fund by checking the Development and Peace website, at [www.devp.org/devpme/fr/donate/fonds-fr.html](http://www.devp.org/devpme/fr/donate/fonds-fr.html), or by emailing the person with Development and Peace who is in charge of the fund, at [npepin@devp.org](mailto:npepin@devp.org). The strength of



PHOTO : DÉVELOPPEMENT ET PAIX

BETWEEN 1994 AND 2001, THREE VETERANS ASSOCIATIONS FROM CONDEGA AND PUEBLO NUEVO LAID DOWN THEIR ARMS AND MADE PEACE. TOGETHER, THEY HAVE SET UP COOPERATIVES AND OTHER ECONOMIC MEASURES. THEY ARE NOW PLAYING AN ACTIVE PART IN THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR REGIONS. DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS TRANSFORMATION.

this fund lies with the fact that it pools all of its members' money. The fund's objective for 2008 is 200 members and \$100,000, so that it can begin supporting projects as quickly as possible. The \$1 million is

planned capital which becomes disposable capital upon the death of those individuals who contributed via a life insurance policy or bequest.

## Towards a National Gender Policy for Mali

BY BÉATRICE FARAND  
CONSEIL DU STATUT DE LA FEMME

The government of Mali plans to adopt a national gender policy soon, the equivalent of Québec's gender equality policy. The Minister for the Promotion of Women, Children, and the Family is in charge of the planned policy and her department will be directing the whole process, from the drafting stage through to implementation.

The Québec government has just completed a similar exercise, which led to the adoption in 2007 of the gender equality policy entitled *Pour que l'égalité de droit devienne une égalité de fait*. The process leading to the adoption of this policy began in May 2005 when the *Conseil du statut de la femme* (CSF) filed a notice entitled *For a New*

*Social Contract of Equality Between Women and Men*.

Last March, CSF President Christiane Pelchat, went on a mission trip to Bamako, Mali, in conjunction with PROJES, a gender equality project of the *Centre d'études et de coopération internationale* to share her expertise and experience with Malian authorities.

During her trip, she met with the Minister for the Promotion of Women, Children, and the Family, Maiga Sina Damba, who completely approved the proposed idea of her adopting a process similar to that used in Québec. A white paper – the equivalent of the notice filed by the CSF in 2005 – will



PHOTO : CONSEIL DU STATUT DE LA FEMME

MAIGA SINA DAMBA, MINISTER FOR THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND THE FAMILY, WITH CHRISTIANE PELCHAT, PRESIDENT OF THE CONSEIL DU STATUT DE LA FEMME.

be drafted by consultants, since Mali does not have a council for the status of women or a gender watchdog or oversight body. After that, a parliamentary committee will conduct public consultations in three regions in addition to the capitol, Bamako. The opinions expressed the most frequently during these consultations will be used to draft the national gender policy, complying with the parliamentary committee's recommendations as much as possible.

During this mission trip, the CSF President also met with the

President of the national assembly, Dioncounda Traoré, and Mali's Prime Minister, Modibo Sidibé, with whom she stressed the importance of equality between women and men and the merits of the process approved by the Minister for the Promotion of Women, Children, and the Family. She also suggested that they set up a gender oversight body in their country.

# HOT OFF THE PRESSES >

## Canadian Centre for Community Renewal, "Community-Controlled Health Care," Making Waves. Volume 18, No. 3 (Autumn 2007)



The debate over the future of Canada's health care system has bogged down in a stand-off between two options: the public or the private sector as designer, provider, manager, and insurer. This attitude overlooks another, critically important alternative: the potential for community ownership of health care solutions and their implementation. This special edition of *Making Waves* magazine starts to reframe the national dialogue by outlining the case for a vast expansion of community-level capacity and authority in the health sector. It is available in English and French.

For more information, see the website of the Canadian Centre for Community Enterprise: [http://www.cedworks.com/mw1803f\\_01.html](http://www.cedworks.com/mw1803f_01.html)

## Michel Venne and Miriam Fahmy, Dir. (2007). *L'Annuaire du Québec 2008*. Montreal, Éditions Fides, 480 p.



### Is Québec Veering Right?

The political landscape changed with the March 2007 election. To help us better understand some of the waves rocking the boat, a number of sociologists, political scientists, and journalists analyze the election results. Michel Venne makes some suggestions for reflection in answer to the question: Is Québec veering right?

### Are Québécois Happy?

From January 15 to 28, 2007, in collaboration with *Les Productions Virage and Léger Marketing*, the *Institut du Nouveau monde* (INM) conducted a large survey on the 'happiness' of Québécois. The goal was to define the conditions that a society needs to fulfill for the welfare and quality of life—the happiness, basically—of its citizens. *L'Annuaire* presents a preview of the survey findings.

Living up to its tradition, *L'Annuaire du Québec 2008* is the perfect reference work on contemporary Québec, covering:

- the big debates and controversies of 2007;
- all the statistics for Québec: demographics, employment, economy;
- important dates and anniversaries in 2008;
- a chronology of the leading events of 2006;
- a description of Québec's regions;
- laws passed by the National Assembly;
- key dates in Québec history;
- a tour of the research being conducted in Québec; and
- the main Canadian and international issues.

For more information, see the INM website: [www.inm.qc.ca/index.php](http://www.inm.qc.ca/index.php)

## Tools for Understanding the Effects of Neighbourhood on Health

Insecurity, inactivity, fast food... all of these unhealthy things can stem from a person's living environment or neighbourhood. It is known that there is a link between the local environment and health but the data supporting it is scattered. The Lea Roback Research Centre therefore decided to go over the research findings regarding the effects of neighbourhood on certain aspects of health. It has just launched its first two publications on this topic. One presents the nature of this influence and its components, while the other attempts to determine the extent of the influence of neighbourhood on obesity.

### The Neighbourhood: One of Many Factors

The publication *Mieux comprendre l'effet de quartier* describes the close relationship between the different spheres of an individual's life. The family environment, work environment, and neighbourhood all have an impact on health. According to research, some variations in health are associated with the local environment, particularly in the case of the more vulnerable groups. There is also a complex, reciprocal influence between personal baggage and environmental context. A better understanding of this dynamic will provide us with ideas for intervention.

### Obesity: Not Just a Lack of Willpower

The second publication summarizing the research deals with obesity. Gaining weight is not just a matter of a lack of willpower. There are also social or economic class distinctions: being underprivileged can affect an individual's waist measurement right from childhood. Even more surprising, though, is the finding that the place where a person lives can have an impact on body mass. The research findings presented in this issue are used to evaluate this hypothesis.

At each stage of the process, the review of the research on which these publications were based benefited from the contribution of decision-makers, managers, and stakeholders. The resulting summary and outlines will be used to define the knowledge gaps that need to be filled and create suitable tools. This information will also be added to the database that the Centre is building on inequalities in health.

For more information, see the Lea Roback Research Centre website: <http://www.fondationlearoback.org/>



Andrée Fortin, Isabelle Côté, Sylvie Rousseau, Myriam Dubé (2007) **Soutenir les mères pour prévenir les effets néfastes de la violence conjugale chez les enfants**. Montréal, Centre de recherche interdisciplinaire sur la violence familiale et la violence faite aux femmes.

This guide is based on recent scientific knowledge on the impact of conjugal violence on children, and it proposes actions targeting the mother, child, and mother-child relationship. It is intended both as a reference at the conceptual level and a practical tool. The guide was designed to respond to the training requests expressed by workers in shelters for battered women and their children. It is also likely to benefit many other people working in community or institutional settings who are concerned about the future of children exposed to spousal abuse.

For more information, see the website of the *Centre de recherche interdisciplinaire sur la violence familiale et la violence faite aux femmes*: <http://www.criviff.qc.ca/>

Louis Favreau (2008). **Entreprises collectives. Les enjeux sociopolitiques et territoriaux de la coopération et de l'économie sociale.** Montréal, Presses de l'Université du Québec, collection pratiques et politiques sociales et économiques.



Over the past decade, collective enterprises in Québec have entered a new era, due both to the cooperative revival and the economic change in direction by part of the urban community movement. This first collection (collective enterprises: socio-political and territorial issues of cooperation and the social economy) on the 'other economy,' which relates to economic and social sciences, does not just go over its accomplishments: it studies its origins; the conditions under which it emerged; its economic, ethical, and social foundations; its contribution to territorial development; the political architecture of national groups; its relationship to government powers; an assessment of the past decade; and international progress.

**For more information:** <http://www.uqo.ca/observer>

Chantale Doucet and Stéphanie Doré, under the direction of Louis Favreau (2007). **Entreprises collectives et développement des territoires : Guide d'introduction aux outils de la recherche et de la formation en économie sociale.** Cahier de l'ARUC-ISDC/CRDC, UQO, 212 pages.



Over the past decade in Québec, there has been a new social economy boom. As a result, quite a number of research studies, sites, books, articles, educational programs, and tools have emerged to inform, train, sustain, and support this sector. An initial inventory of the related research and training tools was needed. In fact, there are many people who are only aware

of the visible tip of the social economy. How would they be able to find their way through this world when they needed to? This question formed the basis for our introductory guide to the research and training tools for collective enterprises and community development, covering five topics: 1) The main books in French about collective enterprises (cooperatives and social enterprises). 2) Research centres in this field. 3) The key collective enterprise support networks. 4) Social economy programs in Québec's universities and specialized training offered by a number of large organizations. 5) Tools created by development organizations (CDCs, CDÉCs, CLDs, SADCs, CRÉs, etc.).

In a sense, this guide is a reference tool for the managers of collective enterprises (cooperatives and associations involved in economic activities); promoters, such as CDRs, CDÉCs, CDCs, CLDs and SADCs, found around the immediate perimeter of the social economy; municipal urban planning departments; advisors from certain central government departments, etc. This guide will likewise be relevant to students in certain disciplines who are called on to work directly or indirectly with collective projects or enterprises (students of community organization, regional development, management...).

**For more information:** <http://www.uqo.ca/observer>

Jean-Louis Paré, Carole Pelletier and Pierre Vigeant (2008). **Le bénévolat de participation citoyenne en centre communautaire de loisir.** Québec City, Fédération québécoise des centres communautaires de loisir.

This is a collection of five fact sheets dealing with topics drawn from interviews conducted in conjunction with a research study for the *Fédération québécoise des centres communautaires de loisirs* (FQCCL). This research documents the positive aspects of volunteering in a community leisure centre (CCL), in an environment where the people of all generations involved act from a perspective of citizen participation.

The collection *Le bénévolat de participation citoyenne en centre communautaire de loisir : cinq « points phares » pour une réflexion et une intervention* focuses on the following: the motivations, obstacles, and impacts for each volunteer; empowerment; the democratic work process, significant volunteering experiences, and community leisure. Intended for managers and the people in charge of volunteers in CCLs and other community organizations, these fact sheets can also be used as a tool for reflection, reference purposes, quotation in a document, in a training context, or in questioning a policy or implementing a measure.

**For more information,** see the FQCCL website: [www.milieudevie.org](http://www.milieudevie.org)

Annie Aubertin and Marcelle Bastien, with the collaboration of Carole Pelletier and Pierre Vigeant (2007). **Guide de démarrage d'un centre communautaire de loisir.** Québec, FQCCL.

#### **Who Is It For?**

The Fédération québécoise des centres communautaires de loisir (FQCCL) had this community leisure centre start-up guide written for citizens who would like to mobilize a given population through leisure activities focusing on development of the individual, family, and community. The proposed guide is in line with the FQCCL's values, encouraging the application of the community approach to leisure. This is what distinguishes interventions by a leisure centre or municipality from those by a real community leisure centre.

Step by step, this guide tells you how to set up a new community leisure centre. It answers all sorts of questions, including those on what administrative and legal steps to take.

#### **Why?**

More and more citizens are understanding that individual, family, and community development requires a shared reference and mobilization venue. When this connection is leisure-oriented and promotes and supports volunteering, the spirit of a community leisure centre is born.

These citizens are looking for help and support. By conducting a search online or calling Communications Québec, they will find out about the FQCCL.

**For more information,** see the FQCCL website: [www.milieudevie.org](http://www.milieudevie.org)

Alex Ellyson and Denis Bourque with the cooperation of François Marchand and Mathieu Proulx (2007). **Implication de CDC dans des processus d'élaboration de projets cliniques de CSSS.** A co-publication of the ARUC-ISDC and the LAREPSS, Research Series, No. 14, Université du Québec en Outaouais, 31 pages.

This publication presents the results of exploratory research on the involvement of community development corporations (CDCs) in Québec in developing *Centre de santé et de services sociaux* (CSSS) clinical projects. Firstly, the authors explore the different types of CDC participation and other actors in the clinical projects and, then, identify the expected impacts of the clinical projects on community organizations, the social factors of health, as well as the practices of CSSS community organizers. The results of this research also allow for analysis of the main challenges raised by the clinical projects for the community environment.

**To learn more:** <http://www.uqo.ca/aruc>

Denis Bourque, Jean Proulx and Lucie Fréchette (2007). **Innovation sociale en Outaouais. Rapport de recherche.** An ARUC-ISDC publication, Research Series, No. 13, Université du Québec en Outaouais, 52 pages.



Some have noticed that the Outaouais region has been, over the last 20 years, the source of numerous successful social initiatives. Some have been picked up outside the region or, at the very least, interest has been expressed. Take for example, the *Carrefour jeunesse-emploi de l'Outaouais*, which was the origin of all of the youth employment centres in Québec, or *La Relance Outaouais*, which was the first integration business to be created in Québec.

This publication documents the successful social initiatives in the Outaouais to determine if they are effectively social innovations and in order to identify the key factors that could influence, positively or negatively, their emergence.

**To learn more:** <http://www.uqo.ca/aruc>

# ANNOUNCEMENTS >

## The Carrefour action municipale et famille

### Wants to Participate in the Governmental Strategy on Sustainable Development

BY JACQUES LIZÉE  
CARREFOUR ACTION MUNICIPALE ET FAMILLE

Last fall, in the framework of the consultation on the governmental strategy on sustainable development, the *Carrefour action municipale et famille* (CAMF) tabled a brief that addresses three main elements: the importance of quality of life for both present and future generations, the contribution of families to this development, and the role of municipalities and regional county municipalities in this matter.

As an organization dedicated to bringing together municipal agencies involved in the development of municipal family policies, which reach nearly 80% of families in both urban and rural areas across all of Québec, the CAMF is aware of the importance of sustainable development and being associated with the new strategy.

The third challenge of the strategy, "favouring involvement" is especially pertinent for the CAMF. Municipal family policies include measures and actions in three areas of sustainable development. By way of example, the environmental component includes the planting of trees at the birth of a child and the adaptation of recycling bins to meet family needs. The economic component includes municipal service taxation adapted for families and the spreading of tax accounts. Finally, the social component includes housing measures, community kitchens and help for families living with a handicapped person.

The law on sustainable development requires that 16 principles be taken into account. The CAMF has prioritized seven:

- 1) Health and the quality of life that clarify the context;
- 2) Equity and social solidarity that contribute to the equality of opportunities;
- 3) Protection of the environment that respects future generations;
- 4) Participation and involvement that recognize citizen and collective approaches;
- 5) Access to knowledge that facilitates involvement;
- 6) Subsidiarity that brings power closer to communities;
- 7) Prevention that supports follow-up action.

The CAMF wants to invest in a humanist approach to sustainable development supported by families. Moreover, by way of example, whenever we look at health in sustainable development, we quickly end up talking about the promotion of healthy lifestyle habits through families. And municipal agencies are also targeted by this field of activity (the Perrault report on the adoption of healthy lifestyle habits, particularly among young people, challenges municipalities directly). This tendency to turn to families also applies to the goals of consuming in a responsible manner, responding to demographic changes and favouring participation in community life. Families must be considered major partners in sustainable development, and the CAMF is proud to see that the current initiative has identified families, regardless of their form, among the avenues for sustainable development.

## The 5th Edition of the Institut du Nouveau monde's summer school: in Quebec City from August 12 to 16, 2008



This event is recognized as an official event of Quebec City's 400th anniversary celebrations. It will take place at the *Université Laval* and at *Espace 400*, a centre for the city's celebrations.

The summer school organized by the *Institut du Nouveau monde* (INM) is a citizenship school that offers participants fun and informative activities, with the goal of passing on citizenship knowledge and encouraging youth participation.

The 2008 edition of the summer school promises to be colourful once again. More than 1,000 young people, from 15 to 35 years of age, will take part in more than 100 activities, including lectures, round table discussions, citizenship challenges, workshops on current events and the major social, economic, political and cultural challenges facing Québec and the world. The 2008 summer school will also include more than 20 shows, coordinated events and activities at *Espace 400* (in partnership with *Les Offices jeunesse internationales du Québec*) and many special activities as a part of the United Nations World Youth Day on August 12, 2008.

**To learn more** and to register, visit the INM's website: [www.inm.qc.ca](http://www.inm.qc.ca)

## From October 6 to 10: 2008 World Leisure Congress in Quebec City



The *Conseil québécois du loisir* (host organization) and the City of Québec (host city) are proud to welcome the 2008 World Leisure Congress from October 6 to 10, 2008, at the *Centre des congrès de Québec*. The five-day congress will primarily focus on leisure as an engine of community integration and development around the world. How can diverse communities, regions and countries use leisure

for their social cultural, economic and environmental development? Also, how can individuals, civil society, governments, industries and associations be committed to leisure development (social, cultural, outdoors, tourism, sports, scientific and other)? And what lessons can be learned from these practical experiences? Three subthemes will be raised: 1) Leisure: plurality, identity, solidarity: how to take into account plurality, diversity, while preserving identity and solidarity? 2) Leisure: public and private places: can leisure in its general sense give rise to individualism or be a creator of social and community ties? 3) Leisure: prevention, health and quality of life: how and under what conditions can communities think of benefiting from the strengths of leisure concerning prevention, health and quality of life?

**To learn more:** <http://www.loisirquebec2008.com/>

## Rights and Social Participation among Disabled People: A Society for Everyone



The 21st World Congress of Rehabilitation International – Québec 2008, which will be held in Quebec City from August 25 to 28, will be an opportunity to discuss the rights and social involvement of people with physical, intellectual and mental health disabilities, as well as to create and reinforce their partnerships.

The general theme of the congress is in line with the priorities of Rehabilitation International aimed at international dialogue for the implementation of the United Nations' convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

The congress will bring together disabled people, human rights advocates, experts, governmental representatives, service suppliers and societal leaders from every continent. The objective? Present concrete practices arising from local, regional, national and international achievements that can serve as examples.

**To learn more** and to register, visit the following address: [www.riquebec2008.org](http://www.riquebec2008.org)

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## September 24 and 25, 2008: Initiatives des communautés, politiques publiques et État social au Sud et au Nord: les défis de la prochaine décennie



This international conference will be held on September 24 and 25 at the *Université du Québec en Outaouais*. You can register and consult the program for the two-day event organized jointly by the ARUC-ISDC, the Canada Research Chair in Community Development, the *Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale* and the *Groupe d'économie solidaire du Québec*, by consulting the following address: <http://www.uqo.ca/ries2001/conference2008/>

## Forum citoyen mauricien: October 23, 24 and 25, 2008



The first citizens forum organized by and for citizens of the Mauricie will be held on October 23, 24 and 25, 2008. It will be a major event bringing together citizens of the Mauricie in a vast dialogue on the social challenges touching the region. On the program: important lectures, discussion workshops, exhibition kiosks, artistic performances and even more. It is a true gathering where numerous innovative ideas for the Mauricie of tomorrow will be discussed.

**To learn more:** <http://www.forumcitoyen.org/Default.aspx?idPage=1>

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Office des personnes handicapées du Québec  
Association québécoise d'établissements de santé et de services sociaux  
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Réseau francophone international pour la promotion de la santé  
Réseau québécois de développement social  
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**Publisher:**  
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945 Wolfe Ave.  
Sainte-Foy QC G1V 5B3

**Executive Committee:**  
Hélène Harvey, Conseil du statut de la femme  
Sylvain Larouche, Regroupement québécois des intervenantes et intervenants en action communautaire (RQIIAC)

Denis McKinnon, Table nationale des Corporations de développement communautaire (TNDCD)  
Michel Morel, Office des personnes handicapées du Québec  
Martin-Pierre Nombré, Réseau québécois du développement social (RQDS)

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Jean Tremblay, Institut national de santé publique du Québec  
Michael Watkins, Office des personnes handicapées du Québec  
Coordination of this issue:  
Mélanie Chabot

**Contributors:**  
Annie Alaka, Mélanie Anctil, Jean-François Arteau, Beethoven Asante, Debbie Astroff, Danièle Aveline, Réal Boisvert, Robert Bourque, Sophie Bourque, Amélie Breton, Jude Brousseau, Suzanne Bruneau, Louise Bujold, Jean Chênevert, Manuel Cisneros, Clément Chabot, Stéphane Champreux, Josée Depatie, Sophie Desjardins, Michel Dorais, Chantal Doucet, Jean-Jacques Élie, Miriam Fahmy, Béatrice Farand, Louis Favreau, Luc Fortin, France Fradette, Lise Gallant, Monique Gagnon, Pierre Gosselin, Julie Grenier, Francine Hudon, Marie Hudon, Mylène Jaccoud, Monica Jekovska, Richard Kouri, Lisa Koperqualuk, Jannick Lachappelle, Chantal Lalonde, Diane Larocque, Lily Lessard, Céline des Ligneris, Jacques Lizée, Danielle Marcoux,

Thibault Martin, Danielle Massé, Robert McKey, Bob Mesher, Bernard Murdoch, Martin-Pierre Nombré, Elisapi Novalinga, Annie Ouellet, Nicole-Louise Pepin, Nathalie Perreault, Tepny Pou, Yvan Pouliot, Sylvain Provost, Marie-Reine Roy, Isabelle Renaud, Joanie Rollin, Aline Roy, Pierre Roy, Donat Savoie, Maria Eugenia Silva, Martin Tremblay.

**Revision (French):**  
Chantal Forest, Michael Watkins.

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**Technical support:**  
Igor Baluczynski, Amélie Dugué, Marie-Cécile Gladel

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Kasern l'atelier créatif inc.

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**To reach us:**  
**Journal Développement social**  
190 Crémazie Blvd. E.  
Montreal QC H2P 1E2  
Telephone: 514-864-1600  
Fax: 514-864-1616  
Email: [developpement.social@inspq.qc.ca](mailto:developpement.social@inspq.qc.ca)

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# Le Nunavik ou la terre où vivre



This issue is also available in French.

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