Qikiqtani Regional Gathering Report

Implementing
The Makimaniq Plan

Iqaluit
September 20, 2012
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This gathering was possible because to the resourcefulness and enthusiasm of the following people and organizations:

Our Elders, many of whom travelled at length in order to be present and to share their always powerful and inspiring observations. You kept us all grounded on the important things.

All the participants, who came representing every community, Inuit organizations, industry, and government departments, all of whom reaffirmed their commitment to finding ways to reduce poverty through their programs and initiatives.

Saint Jude’s Parish, for the use of their hall, a great space for large gatherings.

The region’s Senior Administrative Officers, and hamlet councils and staff, who helped bring everyone together by assisting with travel and with distribution of working documents to the participants.

Our interpreters, Elisapee Ikkidluak and Andrew Dialla who enabled the dialogues and made it possible for everyone to be on the same page.

*Grind and Brew*, for their fantastic catering of country food!

And, finally, Nunavut Anti-Poverty Secretariat staff members Andres Ibanez for organizing, and Ed McKenna for facilitating the Kitikmeot Regional Gathering in Iqaluit, Nunavut.

*Qujannamiik!*
IMPLEMENTING THE MAKIMANIQ PLAN

How will we know that the plan is being implemented?

Food Security, Nutrition, and Home Economics:

- Continuity and expansion of school breakfast programs;
- ‘Special support for orphans’;
- Need for food banks and food bank expansions;
- Importance of age-specific nutrition awareness, as well as budgeting and learning to cook;
- Self-mobilization to raise funds for food banks and to link existing programs and initiatives so they may collaborate in mutual support.

Income Support:

Major issue raised is the fact that access to income support requires a Nunavut birth certificate. For Inuit born out-of-territory this means no access to this support. This policy needs to change.

Local Infrastructure:

A number of communities need to find adequate space to house food security initiatives. In smaller communities it is not possible to rely on help from local restaurants, coffee shops, etc., as these do not always exist. Other options need to be found.
**Dialogue and Collaboration:**

“If we don’t include community people, we cannot help them.”

- Essau Tatatoapik, Arctic Bay.

We, the participants at this gathering and in this process, believe dialogue empowers, and builds real collaboration. Dialogue and collaboration mean that caring organizations learn from the individuals, families and communities they serve.

At this gathering, a senior member of the public service was approached by a community representative concerned about the current birth certificates requirement for income support, which prevents Inuit born out-of-territory from accessing services and programs they need. The issue was taken up on the spot by a senior public servant and the question was raised as to the need for a policy change.

Dialogue also means “ensuring” that “evaluation is a process that takes place throughout, not just at the end” of an initiative, project or program cycle.

By dialogue we also mean mutual support, mutual accountability, and learning together, from a shared experience enhanced by a participatory approach to change.

**Making Information Easy To Obtain**

It is necessary to make it easy – not just easier – for people to know about and to access land programs, educational and training opportunities, cultural development programs, etc.

A way, which at some point was mentioned, to resolve this communication challenge would be for agencies and organizations’ to coordinate how they inform the public about their programs and services. For example, link their respective websites, newsletters, etc. An inter-agency committee, it was suggested, is the most effective coordinating venue for communities.
Programs and services available in ALL communities.
QIA activities for youth, elders, families.
Brighter Futures school breakfasts, other support programs for individuals.
HTOs organize food-sharing events.
Health/wellness committee.
Community radio.
Sports venue.
Recreation Committee fundraisers and community events.
Moms + Tots program.
Income support and other government social services.
Prenatal programs and day cares through the Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program.
Airlines subsidize shipping price for country food.

*The Makimaniq Plan* calls for strengthening these activities.
FEATURED EXPERIENCE: THE TUKISIGIARVIK CENTRE, IQALUIT

Local organizations are key to implementing *The Makimaniq Plan*. We highlight one example.

The idea that became **The Tukisigiarvik Society** was born in 2005, from the concerned for the homeless and the ‘near-homeless’ which moved a group of people in Iqaluit to action.

Most of the people who rely on this centre are not from Iqaluit and do not have close family members here.

- **Inuit elder-advisors teach skills and listen.**
- **Hunter-guides take people on the land.**
- **Meals made with country foods brought by hunter-student teams.**
- **Evening and weekend skills-development workshops.**
- **Employment counselling.**

*Graphic: Nunavut Anti-Poverty Secretariat.*
FEATURED EXPERIENCE: THE TUKISIGIARVIK CENTRE, IQALUIT

Improving Wellness

The Tukisigiarvik Centre, operated by the Tukisigiarvik Society, provides help with personal and family issues, health care, the healing process, accessing education and training, and help with preparing for an employment search (resume writing, connecting with agencies in government, etc).

Inuit elder-advisors teach the traditional skills and are available to listen and to offer advice.

Hunter-guides take people on the land and teach hunting-skills, but regrettably cannot distribute hunting equipment to people other than for the duration of the trip.

The food that is collected (meat, fish, berries, clams, other sea foods) by hunters-in-training is taken back to the centre to be shared among its users.

Inuit Qaujimajatungangit is the concept on which the centre designs and provides services and programs.

The center has sewing machines – to teach sewing to anyone who wants to learn – as well as basic personal hygiene services for people using the centre, like showers and laundry facilities.

The center also has a kitchen, which is the space that hosts workshops designed to encourage people to prepare a light meal of market bought and country foods.

However, the centre does not have a guaranteed supply of these foods.

When you visit Iqaluit, be sure to come by the Tukisigiarvik Centre and meet its volunteers and the people who make this space their refuge from hardship and their starting point for a better life.

Hours of operation:

- Services are available mornings and evenings on weekdays.
- Workshops and cultural programming are available evenings on weekdays and during the day on the weekends.

For more information call:
867-979-2400

The Tukisigiarvik Centre

Mailing address:
P.O. Box 759
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0

Fax: 867-979-2453

Watch an interview with Ellisapi Davidee-Aningmiuq, volunteer at the centre:
http://vimeo.com/12925366
FEATURED EXPERIENCE: THE TUKISIGIARVIK CENTRE, IQALUIT

Where is it located?

B – Tukisigiarvik Centre

A – Nunavut Legislative Assembly, included for reference.
MANAGING INFORMATION: HOW ARE WE COMMUNICATING?

For this gathering, the priority in terms of communications is to enable local access to available resources, where-ever they may be, and that can support community organization and local initiative, individual and/or collective.

What needs ‘communicating’

It was often mentioned that information about available programs and services – specifically how to access them – does not readily reach community members.


At this gathering, it was expressed that there are some immediate communication needs:

♦ Guidance to access programs, with priority given to wellness programs and food security.
♦ Targeted capacity-building, in terms of specific community needs, available to as many community members as possible (to ensure continuity if someone quits).
♦ Increase awareness of each other’s activities (as organizations and departments) through ongoing dialogue and collaboration.
♦ Talk about The Makimaniq Plan (as an ongoing process of dialogue, collaboration, and healing) on the radio.

Other communication needs, but not less urgent, are:

♦ Develop participatory and ongoing evaluation processes “from the beginning of programs”.
♦ Share success stories to inspire further innovation.
♦ Correct translation of the information being shared, including the correct translation of the name of the Nunavut Roundtable for Poverty Reduction.

During the group discussions, we learned that when it comes to engaging community members in poverty reduction initiatives, radio is the best way to share invitations, news, and other information about programs and how to access them.

Radio

Community radios currently function in most communities. They usually have a regular airtime schedule, with a few hours in the morning, after lunch, and in the evening.
Many radio stations have a phone-in number for community members to call to send messages over the airwaves. The radio station is integral to the wellbeing of the community. People often call asking for help finding warm clothing, food, and other necessities. Radio stations should be recognized as a poverty reduction support.

Involving our Elders

At every gathering where elders are present/have been invited, the agenda should reserve a specific time for the elders to have the floor. This exclusive space recognizes the elders and their right to frame their intervention as they intend.

Internet and Inter-Agency Committees

Many community members across the region are avid users of Facebook. And there are a few community initiatives that use Facebook in much the same way people use the local radio station. More communities are creating ‘groups’ on this platform to ‘sell and swap’ or to make calls for particular events, such as fundraising activities at the community hall.

The Facebook group “Feeding My Family” has inspired a debate in the territory, and in the case of Clyde River, a new food bank, which is volunteer run.

Our agencies and organizations have other means of communicating. Inter-agency groups have existed at some point in many communities, but they are often discontinued. The reasons for their discontinuity vary.

It was expressed that such committees are important and should be in place in every community, as they allow for coordination and dialogue that can inform local strategies for reducing poverty.
Youth

“We will achieve this in the later days. Our goal may be very far away”.

- Curtis Taqaugaq, Igloolik.

The youth presence at this and earlier gatherings included young leaders and people who arrived either by nomination (by their hamlet councils) or through an invitation by another participant.

We have not made an effort to invite youth groups or to create a space specifically for youth to meet and share ideas with the other participants.

Invariably, youth participants here and at the other two regional gatherings expressed that they appreciate the opportunity to engage in this dialogue, but are also critical of the process for not including them from the beginning.

The ages of the participating youth range from the late teens to the late twenties. As an age group, they feel that they are taking on a long-term responsibility, upon which the future of the territory will necessarily be built.
NEXT STEPS

Promoting The Makimaniq Plan in our communities

The Nunavut Anti-Poverty Secretariat exists to facilitate ongoing collaboration among all those organizations, institutions, businesses, and individuals working to support community initiatives that fall within the six themes of The Makimaniq Plan: A Shared Approach to Poverty Reduction.

Contact the secretariat to:

- Access support in organizing a community meeting, including covering the cost of refreshments and other necessities.

- Obtain extra copies of The Makimaniq Plan.

- Find information about – or prepare an application to current programs, such as the Country Foods Distribution Program, the Community Freezers Program, and others.

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