

Engineering Public Service Excellence for Nunavut: The Nunavut Unified Human Resources Development Strategy

By Marcel Fortier and Francine Gauthier Jones

INTRODUCTION

IN 1999, for the first time since Newfoundland and Labrador joined the Canadian Confederation 50 years ago, the map of Canada will change. A new jurisdiction, called Nunavut, will be carved out of the existing Northwest Territories and officially instituted as Canada's third territory. To a small group of people, the Inuit, the creation of the new territory through the settlement of their land claims is an enormous achievement. Nunavut, which means "Our Land" in Inuktitut, brings increased opportunity to the 24 000 residents of the region, about 85% of whom are Inuit.

Nunavut will have a public form of government that respects and reflects Canada's political traditions and institutions, and will remain firmly entrenched within the bonds of Confederation. This public form of government will recognize and protect the political equality of residents regardless of culture, heritage, or beliefs. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms will protect the rights of all Nunavut citizens.

Nunavut will have its own federal member of parliament and its own senator. It will have a nineteen-member, popularly elected Legislative Assembly with a Cabinet and Speaker chosen from among its members.

BACKGROUND AND CHALLENGES

It was during their land claims negotiations that the Inuit persuaded the Government of Canada to divide the Northwest Territories. In 1993, following almost 20 years of negotiations between the Inuit and the governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories, Parliament passed the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act* and the *Nunavut Act*. The legislation paved the way for the creation of Nunavut and a public government in the eastern Arctic. One goal of the legislation is to increase Inuit representation in all job categories of the public service to a level that reflects the ratio of Inuit to the total population.

What makes this goal particularly challenging? Time is short: less than a year remains before the Government of Nunavut has to be up and running. The cost of education and training in the North is high, while the target population is small and widely dispersed over a geographic area about one-fifth the land mass of Canada. Most of the 27 communities in Nunavut have populations of less than 1000. Thirty percent of the Inuit labour force is unemployed, and few Inuit are qualified for management and professional jobs. Inuit representation in the Government

of the Northwest Territories stands at about 50% in the Nunavut region, but few Inuit hold high-level positions.

Most of the new jobs to be created in the Nunavut public service will require post-secondary training or the equivalent work experience. While the enrolment of Inuit students in post-secondary schools is growing at about 30% annually, the secondary school dropout rate remains close to 80%, about four times the national average. Many of those with post-secondary training are already employed. Despite the rapid growth of Nunavut Arctic College in the communities, more people need access to many of its programs. Pursuing academic studies in law, nursing, financial management, engineering, and other professional areas where the Government of Nunavut needs staff often requires participants to leave their northern communities.

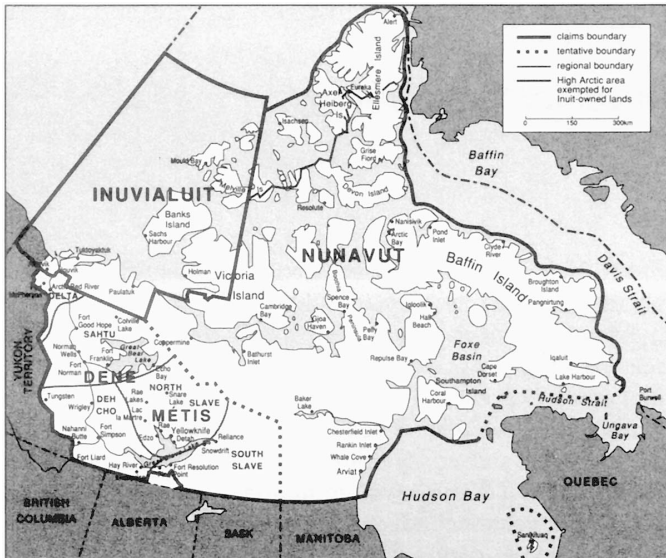
Moreover, three major dialects of Inuktitut are spoken in Nunavut, and expressed in two writing systems, as well as English and French. Strong regional allegiances, two levels of government, a government-in-waiting, and a half dozen Inuit organizations also make planning a challenge.

DEVELOPING THE TRAINING APPROACH: A UNIQUE PROCESS

Following passage of the *Nunavut Act*, the Nunavut Implementation Commission (NIC) set to work to design the Nunavut public government. In its 1995 report, *Footprints in New Snow*, the NIC recommended a series of education and training initiatives to prepare the government work force. The Government of Canada is contributing \$39.8 million to support incremental costs associated with education and training to 1999–2000.

In 1996, a partnership was formed between the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), the Government of the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI), the Inuit organization responsible for implementing the Nunavut Agreement. Together, they led the planning and consultation on human resource development. In Nunavut they brought in representatives from other organizations, including the Nunavut Implementation Commission, the Nunavut Implementation Training Committee, and the office of the Interim Commissioner, to form the Working Group on Human Resources and Training (the Working Group). Its mandate was to prepare a comprehensive training plan for Nunavut and to oversee its implementation.

In an unprecedented show of unanimity, the Working Group produced the Nunavut Unified Human Resource



Map of the Northwest Territories showing Nunavut. The boundaries marked with a broken line are no longer tentative. Some of the islands in Hudson Strait and northeastern Hudson Bay, which are shown outside the broken line, are now included in Nunavut. Reprinted from Dickerson (1992).

Development Strategy (Unified Strategy) in the fall of 1996, following months of meetings and consultation. The Unified Strategy integrated the NIC's recommendations in *Footprints in New Snow* and in its 1996 report, *Footprints 2*. Together the partners provide the leadership for human resource development. They maintain a clear focus on bringing maximum benefit to Northerners and enhancing the capacity of northern institutions, such as Nunavut Arctic College, to deliver training in Nunavut.

THE UNIFIED STRATEGY

The Unified Strategy is a "living" document: an iterative plan that can quickly be adjusted to meet changing circumstances and training needs. It articulates a common vision, goals, and guiding principles, as well as training, education, and development plans designed to meet the need for qualified Inuit in each job category of the Government of Nunavut and in the broader labour market.

The Unified Strategy envisions a Nunavut Territory that is a political entity where Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun is a working language and where Inuit culture is valued, protected, and prominent. It strives to create a territory where people work in unison toward common goals, and where local, territorial, and provincial/federal governments are strong partners.

The guiding principles of the Unified Strategy are:

1. The public service of Nunavut should be representative of the people of Nunavut.
2. Development and training for the Nunavut public service should be sensitive to the culture, language, and values of

the Inuit majority, while respecting Canadian norms of government and administration.

3. The Government of the Northwest Territories has primary responsibility for education and training of residents in readiness for territorial division. Upon division, the Government of Nunavut will assume primary responsibility.
4. To prepare Nunavut residents for employment in the Nunavut public service and to achieve a representative public service, the federal and territorial governments, Inuit organizations and agencies must cooperate, coordinate their efforts, and maintain an open dialogue with communities.
5. The development and training of a Nunavut public service must build on the strengths and competencies of Nunavut residents and institutions.
6. Education and training to provide qualified labour for the Nunavut public service must be seen as ongoing and part of a long-term developmental process, and education and training programs must be accredited wherever possible.
7. There should be equal opportunities for men and women in all education and training initiatives for Nunavut residents.
8. Education and training programs and initiatives should be delivered as close to the participant's home community as possible.

The Unified Strategy builds on existing federal and territorial programs and resources. It uses federal funding through DIAND's Nunavut Secretariat to supplement existing programs and to create new ones in areas of need. Funds are used as seed money to leverage additional funding sponsorships. Activities and funds are reviewed quarterly in deliberation with the partners to insure ongoing relevancy to the people of Nunavut. The Unified Strategy maintains three key dimensions: 1) creation of additional training opportunities for unemployed Inuit who wish to prepare themselves for employment opportunities; 2) creation of additional opportunities for Inuit already employed in the public service who aspire to increase their responsibilities and remuneration; and 3) expansion of the pool of educated and skilled Inuit through training, education, and support.

The Unified Strategy plans for training activities and funding investments to 31 March 2000 in the following domains: 1) public service job-related training to prepare Inuit for specific jobs in the Government of Nunavut; 2) stay-in-school initiatives to encourage a greater graduation rate and post-secondary pursuits; and 3) specific academic preparedness for Inuit to access training opportunities.

The six categories of the Unified Strategy and their percentage allocation of the \$39.8 million budget are outlined in Table 1.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Unified Strategy is now well under way with major progress on all fronts. Inuit are leading the implementation process, and northern organizations and institutions are

TABLE 1. The six categories of the Unified Strategy and their percentage allocation of the \$39.8 million budget.

Category	Activities	% of Budget
Planning, Developing, and Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> symposia on training human resource development planning in each Nunavut community development of management information systems for human resource development monitoring and evaluation studies 	3%
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> training of Inuit trainers and instructors career counsellor training innovative projects programs to develop the capacity of northern institutions to deliver effective, ongoing training 	4%
Youth and School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> communication campaign to encourage Inuit youth to stay in school community-based stay-in-school programs peer counselling career workshops summer employment for youth 	5%
Labour Market Development	<p>Executive Managers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> management training under a Canadian Center for Management Development and Nunavut Arctic College partnership executive development programs, Government of the Northwest Territories Banff School of Advanced Management, Senior Executive Development Program <p>Middle Managers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Service Career Training Program, Government of the Northwest Territories Management Studies Certificate Program, Nunavut Arctic College Financial Management Program, Nunavut Arctic College educational leadership training, school boards <p>Officers and Professionals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in-service training, federal Aboriginal Employment Program university and professional study programs Community Administration Certificate Program, Nunavut Arctic College <p>Paraprofessional and Technical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Lands Administration Diploma, Nunavut Arctic College Human Resources Training Certificate, Nunavut Arctic College Pre-Engineering Technical Certificate, Nunavut Arctic College Health Professional Certificate, Nunavut Arctic College Computer Studies Certificate, Nunavut Arctic College Legal Studies Program Certificate Inspector Training Program trades training <p>Support Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office Administration Certificate, Nunavut Arctic College Corrections and Community Justice Certificate, Nunavut Arctic College Clerical Certificate, Nunavut Arctic College 	77%
Staff Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> federal and territorial staff development programs basic skills training in the workplace 	8%
Support Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> student/youth mentoring support to counsellors, Nunavut Arctic College peer tutorial services career promotion 	3%

providing most of the training. There are new or strengthened training programs in each community in Nunavut and more employment opportunities for graduates. The co-operation among federal and territorial government departments, agencies, institutions, and Inuit organizations is unparalleled. Many new organizational and institutional partnerships have strengthened. They are likely to continue for the benefit of all Nunavut residents long after Nunavut becomes a reality in 1999.

SUGGESTED READINGS

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