



NEW ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT GROUP
Le Groupe Éconov Développement

Nunavut Economic Forum – Review of Social Programs as Barriers to Workforce Participation

Final Report

Prepared for:

Nunavut Economic Forum (NEF)

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Ottawa, Ontario**

March 2007





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many individuals and groups of people in Iqaluit and the communities must be thanked for their participation in this study. We thank them for their time and for their honesty in responding to questions about barriers to workforce development and participation, in particular with regard to the Income Support and Housing Programs.

We also thank our partner company Uqsiq Communications and Kirt Ejesiak whose staff conducted many of the interviews and worked with local people in the communities to arrange the discussion groups and set up interviews. Thanks also to all the people who responded to our call for reports and other documents early in the project.

NEDG would particularly like to thank Sandy Teiman and staff from the Department of Education; Peter Scott and staff from the Nunavut Housing Authority; and the NEF Board President Monica Eil and NEF Board members who provided advice and guidance. Lastly, NEDG wishes to thank NEF Executive Director Glenn Cousins for his commitment and day to day guidance and direction on the project.



This study was made possible
through contributions from the
Government of Nunavut
Department of Economic Development and Transportation
Strategic Investments Program and
Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.





FOREWORD

An important chapter of the Nunavut Economic Development Strategy focuses on Our People. The introduction to this chapter states: “Economic and social development starts with people – our “human capital.” Our society’s level of literacy, education, skills and knowledge directly affects our ability to achieve our economic goals.” This is a critical element in the development of Nunavut’s economy.

As part of the development of our human capital, the Strategy emphasizes the need to develop a skilled local workforce in Nunavut and to create the education and training opportunities for Nunavut residents to be successful in the emerging economy. These opportunities are particularly needed for our large and emerging population of youth. The challenge to deliver education and training has been taken up by the Department of Education and other organizations in the development of the Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy, the Nunavut Community Skills Inventory System, the Nunavut Trade School, literacy programs, training programs and a host of other community based initiatives.

Although critical to the development of our human capital, education and training are not the only challenges. There is a range of barriers that prevent Nunavummiut from successfully participating in the workforce. These include a number of health and social issues, many of which are receiving attention from the appropriate government departments and non-government organizations.

Included in this list of barriers, both real and perceived, are the policies and programs of income support and the public housing rent scale. Members of the business community have expressed concern that these social programs create a disincentive to workforce participation and represent a barrier to business development. These concerns were brought forward as part of the findings of the Department of Economic Development and Transportation *Barriers to Business* study. A presentation based on the study delivered to the Nunavut Economic Forum Annual General Meeting and Conference, June 1, 2006 states: “Housing and income subsidies of income support create a disincentive to enter the workforce.” Nunavut is just beginning what promises to be a period of rapid economic growth and the need to motivate workforce participation is essential for Nunavummiut to reap the benefits of resource development, small and Inuit business and other promising sectors of our economy.

As well, the fiscal pressures on government are increasing and the long-term sustainability of social programs has to be considered in that context. With a young population that is quickly coming of age, expenditures will increase, consuming more of an already challenged budget.

This objective of this study was not to find ways to reduce social programs, but to investigate how social assistance programs and the public housing rent scale may create disincentives that influence individual decisions related to workforce participation, and to explore ways that the available programs can be more effective in contributing to workforce participation.

Glenn Cousins
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	2
2.1 Key Challenges to Fulfilling Pinasuaqtavut.....	3
3.0 NUNAVUT ECONOMIC, EMPLOYMENT AND DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW	4
4.0 INCOME SUPPORT AND SUPPORTED HOUSING PROGRAM UPDATES	7
4.1 Income Support	7
4.2 Public Housing.....	9
5.0 BARRIERS TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION.....	11
5.1 Systemic Barriers: Income Support, Public Housing and Career Development ..	11
5.1.1 Income Support, Allowable Earnings, and their Relationship to Public Housing	11
5.1.2 Interrelationships Among Government Programs	11
5.1.3 Staffing, Training and Managerial Support.....	12
5.1.4 Affordable Housing	12
5.1.5 Economic Development, Healthy Communities and Community-Based Supports	13
5.2 Individual Level Barriers: Workforce Readiness	14
5.2.1 Attitudes	14
5.2.2 Education, Training, Mentoring and Coaching	16
5.2.3 Individual, Family and Community Health.....	18
5.2.4 Child Care	18
6.0 CONNECTING POTENTIAL WORKERS TO WORK: LESSONS FROM NUNAVUT COMMUNITIES, OTHER JURISDICTIONS, AND WORK WITH OTHER VULNERABLE POPULATIONS	18
6.1 Lessons from Nunavut	18
6.2 Lessons from other Jurisdictions.....	20
6.3 Lessons from Connecting Other Vulnerable Populations to the Labour Market..	20
7.0 THE NUNAVUT ECONOMIC FORUM: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES	22
8.0 CONCLUSIONS	23
REFERENCES	24
APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH	28
APPENDIX B INCOME SUPPORT AND SUPPORTED PUBLIC HOUSING POLICY REVIEW	30



APPENDIX C: CONNECTING POTENTIAL WORKERS TO WORK: LESSONS FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS, VULNERABLE POPULATIONS 38

 8.1 Findings by Jurisdiction.....38

 8.2 Lessons from Connecting Other Vulnerable Populations to the Labour Market..44

 8.3 Application to Nunavut45

APPENDIX D: NUNAVUT ECONOMIC FORUM MEMBERSHIP 47

APPENDIX E: LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED 48

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Review of Social Programs as Barriers to Workforce Participation was commissioned by the Nunavut Economic Forum.

Formed in 1998, the Nunavut Economic Forum (NEF) is a broad coalition of over 30 member¹ organizations developed “to identify and share information and to support planning for economic development activity in Nunavut.” In 2003, the Nunavut Economic Development Strategy (the Strategy) was initiated at the Sivummut II Economic Development Conference. The Strategy was released in September 2003 and contains over 170 recommendations.

In 2005, NEF developed a member-driven Three Year Planning Framework, 2006-2008. The plan laid out a number of one time and recurring projects that could help NEF meet its mandate to support planning for economic development activity in Nunavut. One of the mechanisms to support economic development centres on supporting research and data collection related to Nunavut’s economy. Part of that research and data collection activity includes an examination and analysis of the factors that contribute both directly and indirectly to the implementation of the Nunavut Economic Development Strategy. As such, the NEF commissioned this independent study in order to identify and examine the range of workforce participation barriers in Nunavut, particularly the role of social assistance programs and public housing rental subsidies.

During the project’s 6 months of data collection, interviews and community discussions, there emerged a strong sense that Nunavummiut wish to take advantage of the growing economy, but that there are many real and perceived barriers to transitioning from an economy based on sharing/bartering, to a wage economy that requires more education and training. What also became evident is that not all communities in Nunavut are experiencing the same level of development in the key sectors of mining, tourism, fishing and arts and crafts. Moreover, not all adults of working age are capable and willing to become part of the wage economy.

The real barriers to workforce participation at an individual level include low levels of education and training among Nunavummiut, poor work and social skills, limited job opportunities, substance abuse, family violence, crowded housing conditions and limited access to childcare. In addition, there are perceived barriers that prevent people from transitioning off of income support to employment. Those barriers include generalized myths and misunderstanding of the Income Support and Public Housing Programs, and a lack of knowledge of the policy changes that have been made since 2002 that are designed to move people from dependency to employment.

In addition to the real and perceived barriers at the level of the individual, there are a number of structural barriers to the delivery of Income Support, Career Counseling, Public Housing and Economic Development that also act to prevent people from being able to get the support, training and education they need in order to become employed. The structural barriers include a school system that does not graduate enough Nunavummiut with the basic literacy and numeracy skills required for post secondary education and training; inadequate levels of staffing, training and support for income support workers and career and economic development officers; and insufficient communication/collaboration at regional and local levels between Housing Authorities, Income Support, Education and Economic Development organizations.

While there are considerable barriers to workforce participation for many Nunavummiut, there are some positive strategies being used within the Territory and elsewhere that can be built

¹ See Appendix A for the NEF Membership List

upon to develop a more integrated approach to workforce development and participation. These are described briefly as part of the report findings.

Poor performance on health and social indicators at the aggregate level is reflected at the individual level in negative feelings of self worth, hopelessness and dependency. Together, these are the unfortunate outcomes of low levels of education and high levels of unemployment in a wage based economy. The overwhelming conclusion of this report is that without an integrated approach to supporting workforce participation, high levels of unemployment among Nunavummiut will continue. In turn, the poor health and social outcomes experienced by Nunavummiut relative to the rest of Canadians will be exacerbated. The demographics of Nunavut communities illustrate very graphically the potential increase in demand for income support and public housing, particularly as the large population increase of the last 20 years comes of age. Without a concerted plan to increase workforce participation, the Government of Nunavut will be severely challenged to ensure that appropriate health services and social supports are available to individuals and families.

Lastly, this report concludes that the Government of Nunavut cannot be expected to address all the issues on its own. There is a requirement for the private and non-governmental sectors, and professional and economic sector organizations, to take an active, purposeful role in increasing employment opportunities in all sectors for the Inuit people of Nunavut. As such, recommendations for the Nunavut Economic Forum as a coalition of concerned organizations are included as essential elements of an integrated, focused approach to workforce participation.

Information on the Approach and Methodology for the data collection is contained in Appendix A.

Summary of Proposed Actions

The following actions have been identified as necessary steps on the road to increasing the level of workforce participation of Nunavummiut. The Recommendations for Action are divided into those for the Government of Nunavut (GN) and those for the Nunavut Economic Forum (NEF). The GN recommendations are designed to provide a focused approach in selected, economically advantaged communities to specifically address the myths and misunderstanding of the Income Support and Public Housing Programs and the way in which the programs are managed. Both the myths and misunderstandings and the lack of an integrated focus to the management of the Income Support, Career Development and Public Housing Programs prevent the full utilization of the policies that are designed to transition people off income support into employment. The NEF recommendations address some specific initiatives that the larger NEF membership could undertake that would help to change employer attitudes and increase employment opportunities for Inuit in Nunavut.

Although the Report takes note of many of the workforce development or education and training issues that are barriers to workforce participation, it does not make recommendations to address these as they are outside the scope of this Report and are largely covered by the recently released Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy.

The most significant recommendation out of the report concerns the development and implementation of a Community Workforce Participation Plan (CWPP) for Nunavut, which involves a holistic, integrated and community-centred approach to increasing workforce participation. The CWPP builds on lessons learned from Nunavut and other jurisdictions, and involves all relevant stakeholders in a focused approach to transitioning people from Income Support into employment. A focused approach will require that key stakeholders and other government departments come together under a Steering Committee for the duration of the

Pilots. Without a concerted, collaborative approach by all stakeholders, the CWPP will not be successful. The Steering Committee’s involvement will also be instrumental in ensuring that the lessons learned from the Pilot Communities are understood, and effectively applied across the Territory.

Other significant recommendations target specific stakeholders whose mandates make them responsible and able to carry out the proposed work. There are recommendations which reflect the GN’s responsibility for Income Support and Public Housing Programs, as well as recommendations aimed at the Nunavut Economic Forum which reflect its critical role as a liaison with employers other than the Government of Nunavut. Unlike the CWPP Pilots, collaboration among all stakeholders to achieve these mandate-specific actions is not as critical, but would certainly be an asset. By proposing mandate-specific recommendations, those organizations that are ready to implement specific recommendations may begin their work without being dependent upon the involvement of those that may require more development time. It is hoped that in the long run, this will ensure that Nunavut benefits from concrete actions both in the short-term, and in the longer-term.

Finally, many of the actions build on one another or are linked in some way and have to proceed concurrently. Some of the recommendations have time frames that are more critical than others – in other words nothing can proceed without the recommendation being implemented. These critical recommendations have been identified as Short Term (in the next 18 months); other recommendations fall out directly from the short term recommendations and have been identified as Medium Term (in the next 24 months); and lastly some recommendations require more extensive strategic planning and have been identified as Long Term (24 months to 5 years).

Proposed Actions

The Recommendations fall under three main groups. The first and most important is the creation of the Community Workforce Participation Plan. While this innovative initiative is being developed and implemented, a group of parallel actions is recommended that can be implemented within government, the private sector, and the economic development community. The findings of this study reinforce the notion that programs working in isolation often create unintended barriers. As such a number of recommendations are concerned with the integration of policies and some management functions between social programs, where they connect. Finally, the report includes recommendations for each of the separate players – Income Support, Public Housing and the Nunavut Economic Forum. The final set of recommendations aimed at the NEF concern the development of a Strategy to bridge the gap between employers and employees, to be entitled “Making the Employer-Employee Connection”. This strategy can be implemented by NEF, and can proceed independent of the other proposed work (although clearly all of the recommended actions will benefit from collaborative and concerted efforts from all stakeholders).

1 Develop a Community Workforce Participation Plan

The Government of Nunavut (GN) should develop and adopt a policy framework and funding model to support a Community Workforce Participation Plan. The foundation of a CWPP should include the adoption of coordinated and complementary arrangements which support a comprehensive approach by key government stakeholders. The CWPP would include agreements by the key stakeholders on joint and complementary training and a public communications strategy. The objective of a CWPP would be the development and provision of a comprehensive, integrated, (“wraparound”) approach to facilitating the transition from income support to the workforce, to be piloted in 3-5 selected communities.

The CWPP would be delivered by a core team of income support, career development, tenant relations and economic development officers. The CWPP would require the development of an Individual Transition to Work Plan for selected adults currently on income support that would provide them with all the required training and supports needed to transition to work. The supports required would include: career counseling; training/education; peer support and mentoring; child care; family counseling; basic budgeting and money management; and housing (including if the individual needs to relocate for training).

A Workforce Participation Plan builds upon lessons learned in Alaska, Yukon and Nunavut (the Heavy Equipment Operator Training), and from work with new immigrants. The CWPP is also meant to complement and extend the Adult Learning Strategy and needs to take into consideration key stakeholders, including the departments of Education (Career Development and Income Support and Arctic College), Economic Development and Transportation and the Nunavut Housing Authority. As such the CWPP would need to be managed by a Steering Committee of key stakeholders and departments that would provide guidance and direction to a 2-3 year initiative. The Pilot CWPP Initiative would need to be evaluated from its inception, and the lessons from the evaluation would be used to extend a CWPP approach to other individuals and communities.

The following recommendations provide a short-term to long-term action plan in the development of a comprehensive Community Workforce Participation Plan.

1.1 Short to Medium-Term (Planning Phase)

Develop and Pilot “Wrap Around Approach” to Workforce Participation in 3-5 selected communities during a 2-3 year time frame

1. Select 3-5 communities based on known availability of significant economic prospects i.e. growing economy, (e.g. mining, fishing etc) and the availability of Career Counsellors, Income Support Workers and Tenant Relations Officers and Economic Development Officers in the community who are provided with adequate supervision.
2. Develop a communications plan aimed at informing community people (at a public meeting) about the goals of CWPP, the policy objectives of Income Support and Public Housing, how they work, and how community people who want to transition off income support could get involved in the CWPP.
3. Develop and provide specific training and mentoring for income support workers regarding Productive Choice Options to enable development of work place skills and attitudes. Training for ISW should include modules on counselling, conflict resolution, the teaching of basic budgeting for clients.
4. Develop joint training for Income Support and Tenant Relations Officers regarding their respective programs.
5. Develop and provide specialized training and mentoring for career counsellors regarding the goals of the CWPP.
6. Develop and provide specific training and mentoring for EDOs for CWPP.

1.2 Medium to Long-Term (Implementation Phase)

Develop and Pilot “Wrap Around Approach” to Workforce Participation in 3-5 selected communities during a 2-3 year time frame

1. Develop criteria/process for identification of selected clients to transition off income support through the CWPP.
2. Development of a Transition to Work Plan for selected clients by Career Development Officers, Income Support Workers and Arctic College Officials (joint work).

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3. Develop Training from Arctic College that is linked to realistic career goals (ABE, GED and/or specific learning and skills training).
 4. Mentoring/match clients.
 5. Conduct outreach to parents and students through the schools about CWPP to prevent young adults from going on to income support without a plan to transition off.
 6. Use Wellness Centres and Community Centres as an alternative delivery agency for GED and ABE.
 7. Provide extensive management support to the key CWPP team members (income support, tenant relations officers, EDOs and Career Development Officers) through face to face meetings, videoconferencing and ongoing conference calls.
 8. Provide coordination by the CWPP Team (Tenant Relations Officers, Income Support Workers, Career Development, and Economic Development Officers) with Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreements (AHRDAs), Inuit Economic Development Associations to link the CWPP with economic development activities in the selected communities.

2 Short-Medium Term: Establish Inter-Program Cooperation: Income Support and Public Housing Programs (Coordination, Training and Communication)

1. Create a Working Group at Senior Staff levels for Income Support, Public Housing and Career Development to harmonize policies and share information about policies and procedures to ensure clients have accurate information.
2. Create Regional Working Groups between Income Support and Public Housing (Local Housing Organizations) to share information policies and procedures, and implement communications /public information strategy.
3. Develop and Implement a Cross- and Joint- Training Program for Income Support, Career Development and Tenant Relations Officers to ensure that they have knowledge of the others programs and skill set.
4. Develop a joint communication/public information strategy with regard to current polices and practices to dispel myths and demonstrate how programs work for the common good of communities.
5. Standardize and build upon Best Practices whereby Hamlet fines and Housing arrears are worked off as Productive Choices, facilitated by the Income Support Workers, Tenant Relations Officers and By Law Officer.
6. Co-locate Income Support Workers and Career Development Officers and Economic Development Officers in all Hamlets where all positions exist.

3 Medium-Long Term Develop Policies and Programs that Support Workforce Participation

Income Support Program

1. Develop a Communications Strategy with regard to the policy goals of income support and how they work in order to dispel the myths and misconceptions. Deliver the presentation in all communities at community meetings over a 1-2 year period.
2. Examine pay scales for Income Support Workers to ensure that pay is adequate to meet the level of responsibility required.
3. Rationalize the deployment of Career Development Officers to larger hamlets; ensure that a minimum of one Career Development Officer in Hamlets over 800 population.

Public Housing Program

1. Develop a communication/information strategy designed to increase general awareness of the public housing rental structure with emphasis on policies that support employment.
2. Develop a communication/information strategy for resident responsibility with regard to basic house maintenance and prevention of damage.
3. Standardize best practice that ensures that damages to housing stocks are worked off through maintenance, painting etc.
4. Standardize training for tenant relations officers to ensure accurate understanding by housing/income support clients with regard to all aspects of the relationship between the income support program and the rental scheme.
5. Explore alternatives to short-term public housing options for individuals relocating for employment or education (swing space, hotels).
6. Examine Principles of Cooperative Housing for possible introduction into Public Housing Management (e.g. garbage management, control of vandalism etc).

Short –Medium Term: Nunavut Economic Forum

1. NEF to take a leadership role in “Making the Employer-Employee Connection.”
2. Develop a communications/awareness program of presentations on the policies of Income Support and Housing Programs for NEF members, Voluntary Sector organizations and employers. Presentations should focus on encouraging employees to access supports and reducing perceived disincentives.
3. Develop a “Nunavut Employers Code of Conduct” addressing issues of local workforce mobilization.
4. Develop an employer based mentoring and awards program to support workforce participation initiatives.
5. Develop and conduct an employer based training needs assessment and develop a subsequent training curriculum to address issues such as cross-cultural training and workforce integration. On-line and in-person formats should be explored as a part of the needs assessment.
6. Research and report on Social Responsibility Incentives for large employers to engage the Inuit workforce (e.g. tax breaks to hire mentors and coaches).
7. Research and report on entrepreneurial supports to self-employment. Emphasis should be placed on inter-sectoral initiatives that address barriers to self-employment in smaller hamlets (i.e. micro credit options and the development of income support and public housing policies that encourage entrepreneurial endeavours).
8. Utilize Sivummut III as a catalyst for launching the workforce participation initiatives and hosting the initial series of employer workshops.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Nunavut Economic Forum (NEF) is a broad group of over 30 member organizations which emerged in 1998 “to identify and share information and to support planning for economic development activity in Nunavut”. Member organizations include the Government of Nunavut, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI), Inuit development corporations and the Chambers of Commerce, labor representatives and a variety of non-government organizations.

In 2003 the Nunavut Economic Development Strategy (the Strategy) was initiated at the Sivummut II Economic Development Conference and was released in September, 2003. The Strategy includes over 170 recommendations. Its purpose was to “develop an economy that serves our future needs and incorporates knowledge gained from the past”².

In 2005, NEF developed a member driven Three Year Planning Framework, 2006-2008. The plan laid out a number of one time and recurring projects that could help NEF meet its mandate to support planning for economic development activity in Nunavut. One of the mechanisms to support economic development centred on supporting research and data collection related to Nunavut’s economy. Part of that research and data collection activity included an examination and analysis of the factors that contribute both directly and indirectly to economic development, and to the implementation of the Nunavut Economic Development Strategy.

As such, the NEF commissioned this independent study in order to identify and examine the range of workforce participation barriers in Nunavut, and specifically the role of social assistance programs and public housing rental subsidies. The objective is to document existing barriers to workforce participation; examine how these programs may create disincentives that influence individual choices, and explore ways in which these program barriers are connected to other workforce challenges; investigate responses to the identified barriers from other jurisdictions; and to examine ways in which Income Support and Public Housing programs can be more effective in contributing to workforce participation and overall development.

The specific lines of inquiry guiding this project are to:

- Follow up on policy change recommendations made in previous reports such as the Nunavut Standing Committee on Health and Education, Report on the *Nunavut Income Support Policy Review* produced in November 2001.
 - Based on the review, which of the recommended policy changes have been implemented.
 - Of the policy changes implemented, explore what outcomes have occurred?
 - How do these outcomes compare to the desired or anticipated outcomes?
- Review implementation of Income Support and Public Housing policy changes, including Report on the *Nunavut Income Support Policy Review* November 2001;
- Identify perceived barriers to workforce development and participation from range of stakeholders;
- Investigate perceptions of the Income Support Program and the Public Housing Program and how these perceptions influence decisions about workforce participation, including effects of changes to public housing rent scales and determination methods;
- Examine relative weight of contextual versus program barriers in shaping workforce development and participation;
- Recommend strategies for the removal of either documented or perceived barriers to workforce participation.

² Sivummut Economic Development Strategy Group, 2003: ii

In summary, the purpose of this study is to understand more fully the changes that have been made to Income Support and Public Housing policies and to come to some conclusions as to the relationship to those changes, including an examination of the myriad other factors that affect attachment to the workforce. The report concludes with a set of recommendations to assist the NEF in its support role to members which includes employers. It is hoped that this report will help the NEF act as a catalyst in removing barriers, and promoting workforce participation in Nunavut.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Nunavut Economic Development Strategy (NEDS) makes the case that economic growth is necessary if Nunavummiut are to advance what the Conference Board of Canada has described as the basic goal of any economic development strategy: “a high and sustainable quality of life”. The NEDS outlines four strategic areas for development: The Land, People, Community Economies and the Territorial Economy. The People area of the document refers to what economists call “human capital”. Human Capital encompasses human labour, but extends beyond this to include society’s level of literacy, education, skills and knowledge. Health status and general well-being come into consideration, as do attributes such as personal motivation, discipline and values. It extends beyond having a job to volunteering, being active “on the land”, supporting family, or pursuing education or training opportunities.

Pinasuaqtavut is a blueprint for the governance and development of Nunavut and has four priority areas for the Government of Nunavut: Healthy Communities, Simplicity and Unity, Self Reliance and Continuous Learning.³ The four priority areas are interrelated and reinforcing. Most importantly they speak to “the spirit of *Inuuqatigiittiarniq*; the healthy inter-connection of mind, body, spirit and environment.” The principles outline a vision for Nunavut and Nunavummiut of self-reliance and self-responsibility.⁴

However, the principles recognize the responsibility of the Government of Nunavut to “provide options and opportunities which build on the strengths of individuals, families and communities.”⁵ Those opportunities include access to education and training and to supportive health and social services, including housing and income supports. Housing and income supports can be used as levers to support Nunavummiut in their quest for education and employment.

The development of Nunavut economic-self reliance is dependent on creating an environment that can attract business, and thus jobs. Providing an attractive place to invest is highly dependent on a well-trained workforce that is available to work. To that end, the Government of Nunavut committed to “conduct a review of Income Support and related issues to find common commitments, and then implement a revised program, putting in place incentives for individuals and families to achieve self-reliance”.⁶

These issues are of central focus to the NEF work, and also to the recent Department of Education Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy, which details activities to address the need for an educated and trained workforce in Nunavut.⁷

³ Government of Nunavut, 2002.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, 2007. Adult Learning Strategy. Retrieved March 15th 2007 from http://www.gov.nu.ca/education/eng/pubdoc/English_ALS_FINAL.pdf

2.1 Key Challenges to Fulfilling Pinasuaqtavut

It is well understood by governments that non-medical determinants of health-issues, such as unemployment, income levels, the changing family, education and literacy, affect the health and well-being of a population. As such, Nunavut communities with high unemployment rates, low education levels, low income levels, a large number of single-parent families and poor housing conditions are at high risk for poor health. In addition, other factors must be taken into account when assessing the health of Nunavut's Inuit population. These include the trauma, grief and loss left from the experience of residential schools, cultural dislocation, forced gathering of families into communities, and other historical events.

Indeed, in the face of rapid social and economic change as Inuit society has 'modernized' and taken on many 'Southern' characteristics, the Inuit way of life has faced great challenges. The results of this rapid change have produced other unique elements that living in the North now offers, beyond pristine wilderness: often substandard housing and other infrastructure (including a lack of roads and telecommunications), lack of education, social and health care services, and a lack of economic opportunity. The collapse of the fur trade in the 1960s meant that Inuit were forced to give up their traditional nomadic ways and were encouraged by the federal government to establish settlements that changed their way of being in the world. Men and women were encouraged to adopt very Southern gender roles; children were taught Southern ways and ideas in schools, including replacing Inuktitut with English. This phase of life in the North saw Inuit losing their culture, their language, and their connection to the environment – in essence, their way of life.⁸

Social Change and Cultural Erosion

This social change has eroded aspects of Inuit culture that have been key to their survival in the northern environment. Two changes in particular have affected how Inuit now live: greater emphasis on the individual, rather than on the group and family, as the moral and social centre; and a dependence on systems of support beyond individual control rather than reliance on innovation, logical thinking, and respect for the environment. A number of factors have eroded the centrality of the family and group. Communal living has given way to more Southern nuclear family-based housing arrangements.⁹ Another factor that has downgraded the importance of the group over the individual is the penetration of more Southern-based values through multi-media and other social structures that focus on individualism and individual achievement. This is true in the educational sphere where individual achievement is what is valued, and in the economic sphere where individuals, not groups, are paid for their labour.¹⁰ The fall-out from residential school experiences and removal of children from their homes and families, high rates of teenage pregnancy and the prevalence of female led, single-parent families is profound. Parenting patterns have been altered, and there is a loss of confidence among many Inuit concerning their ability to discipline, parent effectively, and to provide a structured environment for their children.¹¹

The loss of community focus is seen in the way that Inuit now deal with those who break Inuit laws and customs. Whereas in the past elders were central to Inuit ways of 'making amends' and would have applied punishment where necessary, this community-based discipline has been replaced by a legal system that distances offenders from the consequences of their

⁸ http://collections.ic.gc.ca/heirloom_series/volume2/section6/69-75.htm

⁹ Stern, 2005.

¹⁰ Durst, 1992.

¹¹ FAS/FAE Technical Working Group 1997; Dion Stout and Kipling, 1999.

actions. Some believe that this fact has also contributed to the further erosion of authority and respect of elders within Inuit society.¹²

The use of technology to create towns and cities from permanent settlements has meant less 'survival' pressure on a day-to-day basis. At the same time, the increased reliance on technology has taken away significant sources of meaning, self-worth, accomplishment and pride from Inuit, and replaced them with a multi-layered dependency on forces and systems beyond individual Inuit control. For many, this includes the replacement of subsistence hunting and gathering activities with those related to the wage economy.

Together, a number of historical and present-day factors have contributed to the wide-spread sense of cultural dislocation experienced by many Inuit, and the emergence of numerous problems with depression, poor physical health, substance abuse, and relationship abuse. A number of determinants of health must be taken into account in order to improve health and wellbeing. This approach is called a population health approach. The factors determining, or affecting, health and wellbeing include income and social status, social support networks, education, employment and working conditions, housing, physical environments, social environments, biology and genetic endowment, personal health practices and coping skills, healthy child development, health services, gender and culture.¹³

In summary, the problem of low workforce participation among Nunavummiut is complex. Tackling the problem involves addressing issues of workforce development, literacy and numeracy – but also requires acknowledging and addressing the underlying issues of cultural dislocation, grief and loss, and dependency. This reality is reinforced by other recent reports, and confirmed by research findings, discussed below.¹⁴

3.0 NUNAVUT EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, ECONOMIC, INCOME SUPPORT DEMAND, AND DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

One of the current difficulties for Nunavut is the unavailability of agreed-upon, 'made in Nunavut' social development indicators that would help in measuring progress towards the goals of the Nunavut Economic Development Strategy, although there has been preliminary work done.¹⁵ In addition, the data that might indicate the level of progress is often not available. For example, until recently Statistics Canada has not conducted a Labour Force Survey, although they do conduct a census, in Nunavut. A Labour Force Survey is now being done for the 10 largest communities in Nunavut by Statistics Canada and Nunavut Statistics.

Employment

One good indicator of social and economic health is employment rates. In 2001, census figures estimated an unemployment rate in Nunavut of 17.4 %, which was an improvement over the rate of 20.7 % in 1999 as measured in the NWT Labour Force Survey. The census estimate is based on the national definition of unemployment, which requires a person to have actively looked for work during the month prior to the survey. This is not an entirely appropriate definition for Nunavut, as many residents in communities with weaker wage economies do not actively look for work because they know that if there is work available, it will be posted at the community store and/or announced on the community radio station. When the 'no jobs

¹² Oosten and Laugran, 2002.

¹³ Health Canada, 1999.

¹⁴ Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, 2007.

¹⁵ Nunavut Tunngavik Timinga/Nunavumi Inuligiyyit 2003-2004.

available' definition is included – which includes people who reported that the reason they did not look for work in the last month was because they perceived there to be no jobs available – the unemployment rate rises to 25.2 per cent based on a labour force of over 13,000. The latest Labour Force Survey for Statistics Canada of the 10 largest communities in Nunavut paints a more optimistic picture but given the income support case loads likely does not reflect accurately the numbers of adult Inuit not actively looking for work from the wage economy. On average for December 2006 to February 2007, the number of employed people in the 10 largest communities in Nunavut was estimated at **8,800**, up by 1,200 from the 3 month average ending in February 2006. On average for December 2006 to February 2007, the employment rate was **63.3%** while the unemployment rate was estimated at **8.6%**.¹⁶

Education

In terms of other indicators of social and economic health, education levels have improved in Nunavut but still rank low compared to populations in other Canadian jurisdictions, and a number of papers have called for the need for improvements directed toward narrowing this gap.¹⁷ There are a number of additional indicators that rank very poorly in comparison to other parts of the country with regard to health status, crime rates, infant mortality, family violence and suicide. Nunavummiut have the poorest outcomes in many of these categories. The impacts of these outcomes have broad effects on individuals and communities, and are known to be factors at play in whether individuals are actively seeking work.¹⁸

The Economy

However, the good news is that Nunavut's economy is showing good growth.¹⁹ Construction, Mining, Tourism, Arts and Culture and Transportation are expanding. But the crucial issue for Nunavut continues to be ensuring that these new jobs are filled by workers from Nunavut, in particular the under-represented Inuit population.²⁰ As anyone who has traveled extensively to communities in Nunavut knows, many of these jobs are filled by itinerant workers from other parts of the country. Increased participation in the formal labour market is essential in order to improve health and social outcomes, and achieve the vision as set out in the Bathurst Mandate. Moreover, if overall social and health outcomes do not improve, many of the educated Nunavummiut will leave, with those not yet ready to participate in the new economy left behind.²¹ Nunavut's leaders understand these issues well and have taken steps to address them by building new schools and hospitals; hiring more teachers and nurses; and by enabling progressive legislation, including policy changes to Income Support and Social Housing.

Demographics

With the highest pregnancy rate in the country (102.8 per 1,000 women), Nunavut almost doubles the Canadian average of 55.2 per 1,000 women.²² Nunavut's population continues to grow with 14 communities reporting population increases of 30% or more in the last 20 years.²³ A high birth rate requires a high level of government focus and resources to ensure appropriate

¹⁶ Nunavut Bureau of Statistics March 2007

¹⁷ Berger, 2006; National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2003.

¹⁸ New Economy Development Group, 2006; National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2003.

¹⁹ Conference Board of Canada 2001, 2002; Impact Economics, 2005.

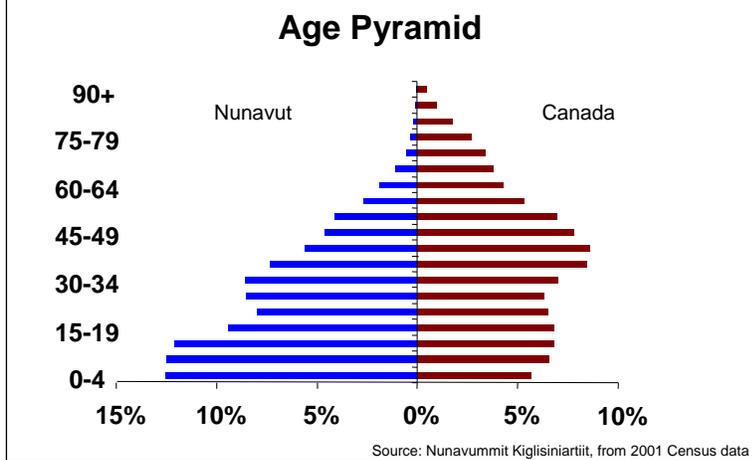
²⁰ Commissioner's Address, 2007. At the Opening of the Fourth Session of the Second Legislative Assembly of Nunavut Delivered by: The Honourable Ann Meekitjuk Hanson Commissioner of Nunavut.

²¹ Conference Board of Canada 2001, 2002; Impact Economics, 2005.

²² Statistics Canada, 2003. Retrieved from <http://www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/hlth64a.htm>.

²³ Department of Health and Social Services, 2005.

Nunavut Demographics



health services and social supports are offered to individuals and families as well as the communities in which they live.

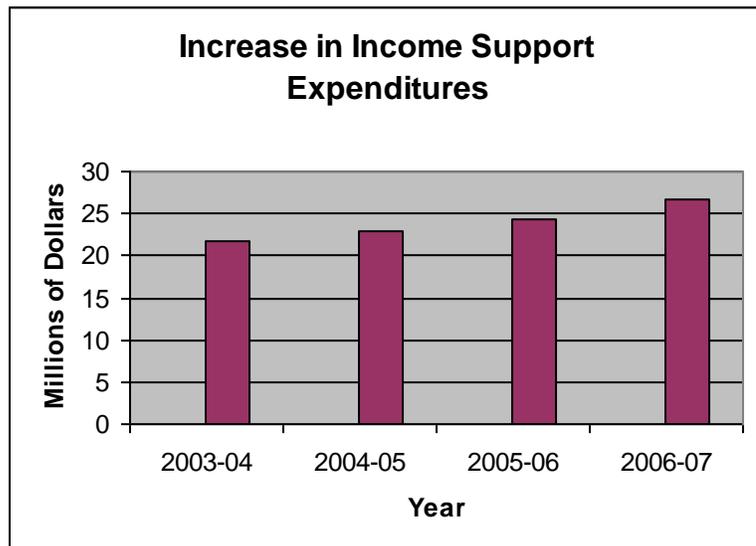
Nunavut has the youngest population in Canada, with sixty percent of Nunavummiut below the age of 25. Nunavut's working age youth population (aged 15 – 24) comprises 22.5% of the total working age population in the territory, 25% higher than the national average of 18%.²⁴

The Nunavut Demographics chart illustrates the large proportion of youth in Nunavut in comparison to Canada. There is huge potential

impact on the need for income support and public housing as the large population of children and youth in Nunavut becomes of age. Although it is anticipated that more jobs will become available over time, the opportunities may not keep pace with the growing size of the potential workforce and affordable housing options other than public housing may not be available.

Income Support Demand

From 1999 to 2003 income support caseloads and expenditures were relatively stable. Since 2004, caseloads and expenditures have started to increase at rates that will not be sustainable in the future, with monthly caseloads between 3,139 and 3,607. Approximately 5,806 different heads of household continue to seek income support during the year. This represents over 75% of all households in Nunavut that have been on income support at some point in the year 2005.²⁵ The chart to the right, developed from information available from the Department of Education Business Plans²⁶, illustrates the challenge of program sustainability facing Nunavut, with an expenditure increase of \$4.8 Million or 22% over the past four years. Demand for income support is already increasing among youth, and based on demographics one can assume this trend will continue. A further upward trend is also anticipated as new housing becomes available.



²⁴ Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, 2005; Statistics Canada, 2005.

²⁵ Department of Education Business Plan, 2007

²⁶ <http://www.gov.nu.ca/finance/2006business/>

4.0 INCOME SUPPORT AND SUPPORTED HOUSING PROGRAM UPDATES

A study completed in 1998 for GNWT indicated that Housing and Income Support required harmonization.²⁷ This document recommended a long-term strategy to completely harmonize policies and delivery of the two programs, including data management strategies. The report recognized that the two systems are inherently different in the way in which they are designed, and as such complete harmonization may not be possible.

Since that time, a number of subsequent studies or reviews concerning both Income Support and Housing have been completed in Nunavut. Prior to exploring the current barriers to workforce participation, it is necessary to examine the action taken on recommendations made to both the Income Support and Public Housing programs across a number of documents. This review did not examine the work completed on all recommendations, instead focusing only on those recommendations which have a potential impact on participation in the Nunavut labour market.

4.1 Income Support

In 2001 “*Ikajuqatigiit – Sharing Knowledge and Support, Nunavut Income Support Policy Review*” was released. The Review made recommendations for four separate groups: youth, adults, seniors and communities. Following is an update on the action taken on those recommendations, and their possible impact on workforce participation in Nunavut. The recommendations for seniors have not been included in this update, the majority of whom are not expected to be engaged in the workforce. The consultants would like to thank all of those who contributed, particularly the staff of the Department of Education in the Policy and Planning and Income Support Divisions.

All recommendations in the 2001 Review and proposals developed by the Income Support Division to address these issues have been examined. Many positive changes have been implemented since 2001 as a result of the examinations by the Income Support Program. However, there are a number of policy areas that remain unchanged. (See Appendix B, Table 1 for a complete update of all recommendations from the 2001 Review).

Education/Training

A series of incentives are available to Income Support clients in order to support their training/upgrading efforts. The IS Program provides bridge funding for students who are waiting for funding from Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students. The IS program re-introduced a program to support the development of basic literacy and numeric skills; Building Essential Skills Program. Both education and training are seen as productive choices by the Income Support Program and are further supported through an incentive of a maximum of \$200.00 per month. Reflecting the high youth population in the territory, one option supported by Income Support for on the job training has been in the area of apprenticeships. In Iqaluit, the majority of the focus for Career Development Officer is in the area of apprenticeships. Another innovative means of supporting training has come through the Labour Market Development Agreements. Funds from these agreements are used to support the development of basic trade courses that can assist people towards their career development goals. At the time of this review, the Department of Education has not indicated any initiatives to play a co-ordination role for all

²⁷ Terriplan Consultants and Martin Spigelman Research, January 1998.

training efforts by government and non-government organizations as recommended in the 2001 review.

Career Counseling/Labour Market Information

The Department of Education has implemented a Career Counselling program. There are a total of 12 Career Development Officers (CDOs) across the territory. Presently, the CDOs are not always housed with the Income Support Workers. This can cause difficulties for clients who may need to go to a different location to see the CDO after meeting with an Income Support Worker. While reviewing the 2006 version of the Policies and Guidelines for the IS Program, it was noted that the Youth Educational Support section is one sentence and provides no information or guidelines to either ISWs or CDOs. Effective career counselling requires the support of up to date and accurate labour market information. A monthly Labour Force Statistics Analysis is completed through Statistics Canada and distributed through Nunavut Statistics. Currently HRSDC has some responsibility for labour market information in the territory. However, the centre of responsibility rests in the Alberta/NWT/Nunavut region headquarters in Edmonton and the current web site hosts no territorial information.

Employment Incentives

The Income Support program has implemented a number of incentives or programs that can help Nunavummiut enter or remain in the workforce. Childcare User Subsidies are available and administered regionally. These subsidies are available to both employment and training opportunities. The employment exemption policy allows for a set amount of earnings before the level of income support is adjusted. This was increased in July of 2002 to \$200.00 (single) and \$400.00 (family) without reference to family size. There are additional variable exemptions for traditional activities such as hunting and trapping, carving and crafts. An exemption also exists for airline tickets as gifts which support productive choices. One of the innovative programs introduced to support workforce participation is the *Sivuniksaliuriniq* program. This transition to work program provides up to four months of support at a new job without having to claim the income. To date, it has not had a large uptake from Nunavummiut (a total of less than 10 at the time of the writing of this Report).

There were a number of recommendations in the 2001 Review which aimed to support self-employment / entrepreneurs in Nunavut. A recommendation to extend the "Assistance in Advance" policy for Hunters and Trappers was not taken up, the policy remains at 2 months. The short-term support for self-employed or entrepreneurs was extended from the one month support in the 2002 guidelines to six months of support.²⁸ As indicated previously, traditional activities (carving, hunting, and crafts) are given special exemption rules for earned income, increasing the impact of the short-term support incentive. The 2001 Review recommended that increased communication and collaboration was required by Income Support, the Department of Sustainable Development (now Economic Development and Transportation), Designated Inuit Organizations and other groups to ensure that entrepreneurs have access to all potential support programs. Interviews indicated low levels of collaboration between Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement (ARDHA) holders, Economic Development and Career Development.

Other Income Support Practices

In addition to the work completed on the recommendations from the Income Support Policy Review - 2001, a number of policies and guidelines may influence workforce participation. Food

²⁸ Guidelines and Procedures Manual, 2006.

allowance increases are introduced as required by Income Support.²⁹ However, increases to food allowances can be falsely interpreted as an advantage to being on social assistance by recipients. Access to Emergency Assistance for fires, family violence and other emergencies produce fears of leaving income support in case emergencies arise.³⁰ Finally, Income Support has introduced a housing arrears guideline.³¹ This practice allows Income Support to pay for housing arrears to public housing with a pay back schedule. Without a corresponding guideline for employed public housing recipients at Nunavut Housing Corporation, this practice can encourage recipients to remain on Income Support in order to be eligible for public housing.

4.2 Public Housing

A Minister's Task Force on Housing released its final report in April of 2000.³² The report made a total of 15 Recommendations. Three of these were directly related to Income Support or Workforce Participation. The review identified that the public at large required increased knowledge to understand the true costs of subsidized rent in the territory via a public awareness campaign. Although there was no documentation indicating a public awareness campaign, the Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC) has introduced a procedure to make all tenants aware of the amount of subsidy that NHC is contributing on their behalf each month. The review also suggested the simplification of the rent in order to reduce disincentives to work for both casual and seasonal workers. A large scale public consultation on the Rent Scale was completed prior to 2002, with a new rent scale being introduced in December of that year. Finally, the 2000 Task Force recommended that methods for determining income be consistent between Income Support and Public Housing and that the current \$32.00 rent for IS recipients be reviewed. An increase from \$32.00 - \$60.00 was introduced however no harmonization of assessing income has been completed between the two programs.

As indicated, the Nunavut Housing Corporation introduced its new (and current) Rent Scale in December 2002. In 2003, they completed a review of the changes made to the Rent Scale, including an examination of the changes made to support different labour market participants, particularly seasonal and casual workers, students and youth. (See Appendix B, Table 2 for a complete listing of the new provisions affecting these groups).

The introduction of a yearly rental review and assessment of income based on CRA data is accompanied by policies providing the possibility of more frequent reassessments. Local Housing Authorities (LHOs) were provided with the discretion to grant reassessments and utilize a manual verification of income as outlined in the Tennant Relations Manual.³³ The review found that LHOs did not automatically reassess as soon as an individual's income dropped. Casual and seasonal workers were most affected by this process and required a process that more accurately reflected their fluctuating income levels.

Full-time students are exempt from paying rent while in school or on breaks. The Rent Scale identifies that tenants attending training courses, upgrading programs, apprenticeship schools and other career development programs will be considered the same as full-time students, even if they are in receipt of an income for their studies. Despite the obvious supports to workforce participation intended by this policy, the 2003 review recognized that this policy required more publicity to encourage uptake.

²⁹ Bulletin 2005-001/002.

³⁰ Directive 2002-006/007

³¹ Housing Arrears Update, Bulletin 2002-001.

³² Minister's Task Force on Housing, 2000.

³³ October, 1996.

The Rent Scale differentiates between primary and secondary tenants. Primary tenants are a maximum of two tenants(s) that have signed the Tenancy Agreement. In relation to youth, the new Rent Scale caps non-primary youth tenants at an income of \$5,800.00 per year for the purpose of calculating rent. This policy was introduced to support a transition into the work force for youth engaged in entry level positions. However, the review expressed concern over the potential for “rent shock” at the age of 26; acting as a discouragement for continued participation in the work force, or a disincentive to leave social assistance for possible employment. The overall question posed by the 2003 review asked if this policy really supported productive choices and responsibility by youth.

The inclusion of income from all tenants (both primary and non-primary) in the rental calculation causes issues for other tenants as well. The fact that only the two primary tenants are accountable for the rent through the rental agreement continues to pose an outstanding issue for Nunavut Housing Corporation. Non payment of rent from non-primary tenants can cause back rent issues for the primary tenants and discourage the primary tenants from choosing participation in the workforce in order to minimize the total household income. This can also lead to primary tenants discouraging non-primary tenants from increasing their income, leading in an increase in the rent assessed.

In addition to the 2003 Review’s examination of the impact of the 2002 RentScale on specific client groups, there are a number of policies and/or procedural changes which have the potential to impact workforce participation. Annual review of income provides an opportunity for individuals to bank increased income for the period between the assessments. On the other hand, annual reviews through the use of third party information increases tenant disconnection with the review process for establishing rent and can lead to rent shock if the client is not supported to understand the increase before it happens. Although the regulations for rental reviews at anytime provides the opportunity for new, seasonal and casual workers to move in and out of the workforce, it is not effective if there is not generalized awareness of this option.

The harmonization with CRA’s definition/calculation of gross annual income allows for gambling (bingo) earnings, gifts of cash and in-kind nature to support workforce participation at lower paying and entry level jobs. However, the lack of harmonization with Income Support on the definition of income causes myths concerning earned income and its impact on rent to continue and acts as a disincentive to workforce participation. Further, the lack of understanding of the policies reinforces these misconceptions. For instance few people claim deductions from gross income for union, professional, child care or support payments on their income tax form, so they can not contribute to an accurate assessment of gross income through the tax system.

Eligibility criteria for housing support are established through each LHO. This policy is intended to protect the interests of local applicants who are on waiting lists. However, wait times in high employment centres like Iqaluit can be up to 1 year for public housing support. This limits the mobility of workers. (See Appendix B, Table 3 for a complete list of the changes affecting workforce participation).

5.0 BARRIERS TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION

5.1 Systemic Barriers: Income Support, Public Housing and Career Development

This section summarizes the main findings regarding the system level barriers to workforce development and participation in Nunavut, including the specific ways in which Income Support and Public Housing programs act as disincentives. Two key points of note:

First, these system level barriers do not sit in isolation from one another, nor from those impacting at the individual level. For a full understanding and appreciation of the situation in Nunavut, all must be considered as a whole.

Second, this section reports on barriers that are perceived to be in existence and which are supported by documented evidence, as well as those that are perceived to be real, but have not been documented as such. It is important to consider both types of barriers, because they each shape the choices and behaviours of Nunavummiut in relation to labour market participation.

5.1.1 Income Support, Allowable Earnings, and their Relationship to Public Housing

Overall, discussion group participants expressed a shared sense that the Income Support program is still very punitive, despite changes enacted since 2001. Indeed, interviewees reported that in some communities, income support workers are ‘spying’ on people and in some cases invading their lives; in the words of one participant: “The system creates liars and cheaters of us all”.

Regardless of whether they are harmonized at an operational level, Income Support and Public Housing programs are inextricably linked in recipients’ minds, and in many cases, in those of program workers and community leaders. Based on

“The system creates liars and cheaters of us all”.

(Discussion group participant)

the community consultations, there is generalized belief that whatever income people make is clawed back, and that rent is raised the minute people make a cent. Indeed, there was widespread belief that housing costs are what stop people from leaving income support for employment. These views were expressed by income support and public housing recipients, housing workers, community leaders, and those in related jobs. This, despite significant changes to the Income Support Program made since 2001 and program documentation which clearly lays out the eligibility requirements. These findings suggest uneven interpretation and understanding of the two programs even among those delivering them. Further, discussion group participants noted that the low minimum wage contributes to the reluctance people have for leaving income support for employment. The cost of living in Nunavut makes it substantially more difficult for people to make a living wage, particularly when a number of other factors are taken into account.

5.1.2 Interrelationships Among Government Programs

In general, discussion group participants articulated a sense that the multitude of government funded programs are poorly coordinated and for the most part are not structured to work together. These programs include the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreements (AHRDAs), Labour Market Development Agreements (LMDAs), Employment Insurance (EI),

Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students (FANS), Income Support and Public Housing. The need to have a coordinated effort was suggested by many participants.

There is some indication that partnerships between the programs are beginning to emerge with agreements with Kivalliq Partners in Development (KPID) and Kakivak Association and the Department of Education and Income Support. The partnership has funded the successful training for heavy equipment operators in Morrisburg Ontario.

"Shared vision and coordination (is necessary). A team of case workers (housing, Income Support Workers, Career Development Officers and Economic Development Officers) should work together with the clients to develop life and career plans/goals."

(Discussion group participant)

5.1.3 Staffing, Training and Managerial Support

The jobs of income support worker and tenant relations officer are difficult no matter where you live in Canada. They are doubly stressful in the isolated communities of Nunavut. Many income support workers work in virtual isolation with management support hundreds of miles and an air flight away. Interviews and community discussion groups indicate that income support workers in particular are subject to much verbal abuse and derision in some communities. In addition, tenant relations officers and income support workers often have as many as 200 clients to manage. This makes it virtually impossible to provide the kind of personal counselling support that the "Transition to Work" policies of the Income Support Program requires if the policies are to be utilized most effectively. Moreover the one week training programs that income support workers currently receive does not provide them with the skills and knowledge required to help people with a myriad of problems to transition off income support.

Moreover, the redeployment in 2000-1 of the majority of Career Development Officers to Pangnirtung, Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay means that the essential link between the career counselling function and income support is not consistently available in the majority of communities. With a population of over 6,000 people, Iqaluit has only one Career Development Officer. Lastly, there are jurisdictional issues at play that affect the management effectiveness of these key positions. For example, the income support workers in nine communities work directly for the Hamlet Offices through Contribution Agreements with the Department of Education. The remaining income support workers are supervised at the regional level directly through the Department of Education. In addition, the Career Development Officers are part of a different unit than Income Support in the Department of Education. These management structures make it very difficult to provide consistent direction and training to the Income Support and Career Development personnel.

5.1.4 Affordable Housing

The link between employment and housing is well-identified in the literature. Definitions of homelessness vary, with some narrowly defined as the lack of a physical dwelling – specifically houselessness – to those definitions which incorporate the notions of people who are at risk for homelessness, and/or whose housing situation is unstable or inadequate from the perspective of housing quality and safety. According to a recent study completed for Human Resources Development Canada, the Canadian National Homelessness Initiative has modified the UN definition to include both *absolute homelessness*, which refers to those living on the street in temporary shelters or in locations not meant for human habitation, and *relative homelessness*,

or those 'at risk' because they pay too high [50% or more] a proportion of their income for housing, or live in inadequate shelter.³⁴

In Nunavut, the interrelationship between inadequate housing and lack of attachment to the workforce is complex, but reflects some trends seen in relation to other vulnerable populations, including single mothers, persons with disabilities, and immigrants. This is in large part because income from entry-level jobs is rarely enough to pay for basic living expenses. The lack of a living wage is even more pronounced in Nunavut, where despite the highest minimum wage in Canada (\$8.50), the cost of living is two to three times above the Canadian average.

Community discussion groups clearly confirmed the workforce involvement-housing vulnerability relationship. Housing is seen as a major barrier in a number of locations, because there is a shortage of affordable housing; construction standards are seen as too high, making housing

"If you are moving to a community that has zero vacancy, where do you stay while you are looking for work?"

(Discussion group participant)

too costly; there is not the right mix of housing (e.g. a lack of bachelor apartments in Iqaluit; lack of 2-3 bedroom dwellings in other parts of Nunavut); and people lose their housing if they leave the Territory for training or employment, and upon their return they must wait three months before they can qualify to re-apply for

public housing, which in some places has a 2-3 year wait list. In addition, Local Housing Organizations have introduced residency requirements as a part of eligibility determination. While this supports those currently on the waiting lists for limited housing, it becomes a disincentive for re-location for the purpose of employment.

5.1.5 Economic Development, Healthy Communities and Community-Based Supports

Discussion group perceptions concerning the current state of economic opportunities in Nunavut were mixed. In some areas, participants noted that there were few job opportunities in their communities; in other communities such as Cambridge Bay there were many jobs available. For others the issue was less about job availability, and more about workforce readiness among the local population, and employer willingness to hire locally. Regardless, there was agreement that incentives should be available to the private sector to train and mentor the local labour force, including penalties where they do not meet hiring quotas set out in their contracts.

A number of key informants suggested that there is currently adequate funding for economic development opportunities in Nunavut, but in some cases Economic Development Officers (EDOs) lack the capacity to effectively access and utilize the available funds. In some cases training has been provided to these officers, but many often lack the necessary skills to effectively engage in the training.

There is also considerable variability in the extent to which communities have economic development plans in place and the extent to which these plans are integrated with local human resource development planning. In some hamlets, EDOs are helping people to start small businesses by securing grants to acquire necessary start-up equipment (e.g. carving tools and materials); by contrast, other discussion group participants indicated that they did not have an EDO in their community. In addition, many communities do not have Career Development Officers and so making the links between economic development and human resources development opportunities is impossible to do. It is apparent from the discussion groups that the

³⁴ Serge et al., 2005.

capacity for local economic development is uneven at best, and supports and processes to develop this capacity lack uniformity across Nunavut.

Recent work in this area encapsulated in the Health Integration Initiative (HII) Project report “*Piliriqatigiinniq – Working Together for the Common Good*” draws a direct link between community wellness and individual health and well-being, of which the development of meaningful work opportunities is a critical component.³⁵ Furthermore, the HII report articulates

“...Coping with life is better than drowning in it.”

(Discussion group participant)

the need for holistic approaches to supporting community wellness, which may begin with economic development, but which must extend to include opportunities for healthy recreational activities, and community based services and supports that enable

Nunavummiut to achieve their individual and collective potential. In keeping with the HII Report, when asked what is needed locally to get people to work, one discussion group participant for this study said they need “more Grief and Loss Workshops that the local Wellness Centre is putting on, to help people come to realize that coping with life is better than drowning in it.”

Consultation discussions reinforced the need to take a holistic approach to understanding the barriers to workforce development and participation in Nunavut, which are multi-layered and interconnected, and lend support to the recommendations made in the HII Report, and to the recent Department of Education *Business Plan*.³⁶

5.2 Individual Level Barriers: Workforce Readiness

This section summarizes findings from the community discussion groups and key informant interviews concerning the identification of workforce development challenges in Nunavut. These are grouped under the following headings, within which multiple perspectives are reported (where they were expressed): Attitude; Education, Training, Mentorship and Coaching; Healthy Relationships and Social Supports.

5.2.1 Attitudes

The issue of attitude plays out at two key levels, and includes the employer’s attitude toward hiring Nunavummiut, as well as the attitude of Nunavummiut towards working.

Employer Attitudes

From the perspective of employers, there is a pronounced lack of understanding of workplace norms and expectations among many Nunavummiut, which largely reflect cultural differences and often leads to misunderstandings and miscommunication. For example, Inuit culture is a private culture, and personal or family problems are not shared with others. One employer participating in a discussion group noted that in the case of parents with sick children, instead of calling to let him know that they were unable to come to work because of their child’s illness, the typical response by Inuit employees is to simply not show up for work, leaving the employer scrambling to find a replacement. While simplistic, similar examples of the disconnect between Inuit culture and business expectations were repeated at a number of discussion groups and in key informant interviews. Without a shared understanding of the two perspectives, the gap between Inuit employees and (particularly non-Inuit) employers continues to act as a challenge to workforce participation in Nunavut.

Many discussion group participants representing the employer perspective articulated a profound commitment to training, coaching and hiring people from the local labour force; this

³⁵ New Economy Development Group, 2005.

³⁶ Department of Education *Business Plan*, 2007.

was articulated by both Hamlet Office employers, and large and small employers. The reality for most employers is a high turnover rate among their employees, which they accept as current reality in Nunavut. However, this high turnover comes at a significant personal cost to many employers, some of whom take on the responsibility of picking their employees up for work in order to ensure that they arrive on time, and following up with them on a daily basis, even outside of work hours, to support them in making healthy choices and engaging in behaviors that will not put their employability at risk. Such commitment to their employees may reduce the need for constant retraining if turnover rates are reduced, but results in personal burnout for managers. The bottom line: while many say they are committed to hiring locally, they see a key role for various levels of government to support basic education and skills training; apprenticeship opportunities; life skills training; and continue to support and develop a broad-based community wellness strategy that takes a holistic approach.

On the other hand, employer perceptions concerning the local population's attitude toward employment was mixed, characterized in some cases as a 'casual outlook on employment' (sometimes referred to as laziness), to 'committed with a strong will to succeed'. Overall, there appears to be a certain amount of good will among employers, but a targeted employer engagement and information campaign is required. Some described a gender difference in attitude towards employment, with men appearing to be less motivated and less engaged than women, sometimes to the point where men are seen in some cases as pressuring their partners not to work.

Employee Perspective

From the perspective of employed and unemployed individuals, many expressed mixed feelings concerning the employment situation in Nunavut. A number of individuals expressed a lack of confidence in their abilities as a significant limitation to their employment. Many do not feel that they have the necessary skills to do the jobs available in their local communities, nor are they willing to leave their small communities to move to where work is available because this results in breaking family and friendship bonds that are at the heart of Inuit identity and sense of self.

Others discussed the role that shift work (namely the pattern of two weeks on, two weeks off common to mining jobs) plays in eroding family relationships, and in exacerbating feelings of

"There is a need to take in the human factor when developing strategies. Self-identity, who am I, what can I be proud of, who is my role model?"

"The clash between the traditional and wage economy continues. The traditional economy promotes independence, community and pride; Wage pays the bills and accumulates wealth/"stuff" and is more individualistic."

(Discussion group participant)

jealousy and abandonment among the women left to care for children when their husbands enter the camps. Respondents also struggled with feeling a desire and a need to work, get training, and be productive, while at the same time feeling a sense of despair and entitlement for support. Being productive in the traditional sense often has little relationship to a 9-5 job, or to the cultural values and historical skills that are central to Inuit culture (e.g. caring for children; hunting, trapping, fishing; carving, sewing and so on). This clash of culture was described by one discussion group participant: "There is a need to take in the human factor when developing strategies. Self-identity, who am I, what can I be proud of, who is my role model? The clash between the traditional and wage economy continues. The traditional economy promotes independence, community

and pride. Wage pays the bills and accumulates wealth/"stuff" and is more individualistic."

Moreover, when Inuit were taken off the land and housed in communities, they did so with the understanding that government would ‘take care of them’ in the broadest sense, from feeding, to housing, to health care. This ‘care’ was seen as the price they had to pay for leaving their traditional way of life.

Lastly, it must be noted that racism was raised on several occasions as one of the reasons preventing community people from obtaining a “good job” in the private sector.

"Income support is seen as a right, not a program of last resort - it is like a pay cheque - this is historically how it has been seen. There needs to be a huge education [initiative] on the notion of ISP as a safety net and not a lifestyle."

(Discussion group participant)

5.2.2 Education, Training, Mentoring and Coaching

At the level of the individual, lack of basic education, and the need for skill upgrading, training, mentoring, coaching and apprenticeship opportunities, are well-documented in the Department of Education’s recent *Business Plan*.³⁷ With an imminent jump in the population aged 19 to 23, the Department has identified a need for increased programming in the following program areas: post secondary education, student financial assistance, early childhood services, literacy, trades training, apprenticeships, adult basic education and income support.³⁸

The Department of Education’s report also identifies the need for Inuit-specific training programs, including opportunities to develop language and literacy skills in Inuktitut. The Department has identified the following as critical to the development of the adult workforce: continued implementation of the Bilingual Education Strategy; development of more Inuktitut learning resource materials; implementing the recommendations in the Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy (NALS) and the review of the Nunavut Teacher Education program; and the development and implementation of the Nunavut Cultural School.³⁹

Many of these issues were also a constant theme through discussion groups and interviews. At a very basic level, the majority of youth and adults eligible for employment are not job-ready. A number of factors were proposed in the interviews and community discussion groups as reasons for this current situation in Nunavut:

- Youth are leaving high school without having acquired basic levels of literacy and numeracy. As stated in Thomas Berger’s recent report to Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., “[t]he schools are failing...They are not producing graduates truly competent in Inuktitut; moreover, the Inuit of Nunavut have the lowest rate of literacy in English in the country.”⁴⁰
- There is considerable emphasis on academic achievement, and on preparation for government jobs. In part, this is in response to Article 23 of the Land Claims Agreement, whose focus is to increase Inuit participation in government employment to a representative level. The resultant emphasis on academic education likely has limited opportunities (however unintended) for those wishing to pursue trades based education. The low literacy and numeracy rates result in few Inuit able to pass pre-trades qualifying exams. Few educational programs appear to take into consideration that Inuit are visual and oral

³⁷ Department of Education, 2007.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid: G-8.

⁴⁰ Berger, Thomas, 2006. Conciliator’s Final Report, “The Nunavut Project”. Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Implementation Contract Negotiations for the Second Planning Period 2003-2013. Retrieved January 29th 2007 from www.tunngavik.com/publications/berger-conciliation/final-report2006-en.pdf

learners, and have not incorporated culturally appropriate processes or techniques such as oral examinations or other competency-based testing techniques, or curricula that incorporates practical skills such as small engine repair and carpentry. Some note that this emphasis on academic achievement has affected men more negatively than women, though women too are disadvantaged by the academic focus. Importantly, a recent report by the Department of Education⁴¹, and remarks in the Commissioner's Address both point to the need for a reintroduction, or enhancement, of trades-based educational and training opportunities in Nunavut.⁴²

- There is a cohort of adults aged 20 to 45 who received their High School training in Yellowknife or other residential schools such as in Rankin Inlet; many of these adults had very negative experiences with the educational system as children. Some did not complete more than their grade 8 or grade 9 and so have limited capacity to support their children with home work. In many communities there are few jobs, and so people have become reliant on Income Support. As a result, some parents do not fully understand the current need for formal education, and thus pass this attitude on to their children, many of whom then drop out of school or have very low achievement. All of this is occurring within a broader community context that lacks enforcement of child school attendance: although there is a compulsory school attendance policy, although there are limited means of enforcing it.⁴³
- Adult education is seen as important, but many schools are challenged to attract those disengaged adults; as well, adult education spaces are limited, and demand typically outstrips availability. Lack of evening adult education classes is seen as a barrier for adults who cannot attend during the day.
- Core curriculum is Alberta focused, and many indicated that this is a problem and contributes to lack of youth engagement in school. This is reinforced by the Department of Education *Business Plan*.⁴⁴
- There is a requirement for language training in English and in Inuktitut, as many cannot express themselves in either language.
- A number of educational and training opportunities require people to leave home for significant amounts of time, which is in direct opposition to Inuit culture which is family and community-focused. Combined with a number of other disincentives, the prospect of leaving home is a major barrier for many Inuit who might otherwise engage in training and educational opportunities.
- Many Inuit do not have the day-to-day living skills to manage their finances – pay bills, make a household budget and adhere to it, and so on – particularly those who have been continuous recipients of income support or public housing support. Many Inuit grew up in households where parents similarly did not develop these kinds of daily living skills, again in large part because most never had an income, and most of their needs were met through IS or PH where personal needs such as clothing, food purchases and so on were paid for using vouchers, not using cash. In essence, the system of income support or public housing has created dependence among many Inuit; in order to remove this dependence, many discussion group participants called for the creation of mentoring and coaching supports that enable Inuit to develop and practice the necessary skills of daily living.

⁴¹ Department of Education, 2007.

⁴² Commissioner's Address, 2007.

⁴³ Kwarteng, 2006.

⁴⁴ Department of Education, 2007.

5.2.3 Individual, Family and Community Health

Recent Inuit history, and the social and health-related repercussions, is well-documented in other reports.⁴⁵ Perhaps most critically, substance abuse and inter-personal violence and abuse pose significant barriers to workforce development and participation— not only from the perspective of the vulnerable individuals coping with addictions and abuse personally, but also from the perspective of employers who must manage a workforce that is highly vulnerable.

Discussions in every group consulted pointed to the effects of substance abuse and other negative coping behaviors on workforce development. In the words of one, “Substance abuse is sapping people’s desire and ability to work”.

“Substance abuse is sapping people’s desire and ability to work”.

(Discussion group participant)

Employers consulted told of the high toll of managing employees with substance abuse problems, and the challenge of supporting individuals to find healthy alternatives and outlets for their grief and loss while at the same time trying to run a business and be profitable. Consultations findings indicate that approaches to workforce development must understand the pervasive effects of grief and loss in Nunavut, and incorporate services and supports which help individuals and their families become healthy.

5.2.4 Child Care

Lack of affordable child care was identified across discussion groups as a critical factor in limiting workforce participation in Nunavut. There is confusion concerning eligibility for day care subsidy, the application process, and its relationship to income support and public housing. A number of participants pointed to the lack of available, affordable child care as the most important factor limiting their ability to engage in training, skill development, educational opportunities or employment opportunities.

6.0 CONNECTING POTENTIAL WORKERS TO WORK: LESSONS FROM NUNAVUT COMMUNITIES, OTHER JURISDICTIONS, AND WORK WITH OTHER VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

6.1 Lessons from Nunavut

Community consultations and key informant interviews revealed a number of innovative, positive responses already being taken to address some of the barriers to workforce development discussed above. These are briefly described below.

Adjusting Evaluation Methods in the School System

To address the problem of low literacy and develop culturally relevant educational approaches and evaluation methods, some have suggested applying accommodations currently used with people with learning disabilities to the Nunavut context. Specifically, using a broader range of learning tools and methods that acknowledge the highly verbal and oral nature of Inuit culture, as well as using a range of accommodations such as extending the time given for written examination, and offering the option of oral examinations and oral presentations.

Expanding the Use of Productive Choice

The concept of ‘Productive Choice’ was introduced in Nunavut under the Government of North West Territories in 1977, and has continued under the Government of Nunavut, Income Support

⁴⁵ New Economy Development Group, 2005.

Program. Productive Choices are ways for clients to become independent, and include activities related to enhancing wellness, and career development. Wellness activities centre on the areas of physical, mental, family and community health, and are either focused on self-care or supporting someone else in the community. Career activities include a variety of counselling, training, volunteering and employment based options, including those related to harvesting programs and traditional activities.

The Productive Choices program is based on the development of an agreement and plan of action between the Income Support Worker and the client. Any youth or adult capable of participating in the Productive Choices program, and not currently employed, is expected to participate. Each plan includes a commitment from the client to engage in the productive choice, and a commitment by the Income Support program to provide the resources necessary to fulfill the productive choice.

While the essence of the program has not changed under the GN, the use of the program varies from hamlet to hamlet, and is seen as being one of the more supportive and less punitive aspects of the program. For example, in one hamlet the community allows housing residents to barter work for repairs and arrears, while another gets recipients to sign contracts to carry out their productive choice Plan and monitors their activities.

Expanding Opportunities for Adult Education

A number of discussion group participants articulated the desire for adult education courses to be offered in the evening. This would alleviate a number of challenges that many interested in attending classes currently face – namely child care availability, and personal availability among those currently employed but wishing to enhance their skills. Expanding the hours of child care would also increase the number of child care jobs available.

Connecting Adults to the Educational System – Through their Children

A small number of High Schools are experimenting with various ways of engaging parents in the educational system. Centred around dispelling negative feelings, some schools are hosting movie nights and other recreational opportunities that create a non-threatening atmosphere and help establish a positive rapport between parents and school staff. Another principal has established monthly opportunities for parents to attend their children's classes and observe what they are learning: attendance reached approximately 40 parents at a recent Parents' Night. All of these point to the potential for further parent engagement, and the possibility of enticing parents to upgrade their own skills and education in the near future with targeted promotions.

“Wrap Around” Training—Heavy Equipment Operator

An important example of a “wraparound” approach to transitioning people to employment is the Heavy Equipment Operator Training in Morrisburg Ontario. This is a very successful initiative to train 19 people –all of whom had jobs upon completion. The training included career and personal counselling, job placement counselling, Inuit interpreters and country food on site and a toll-free phone number for families to keep in contact. It is also an excellent example of coordination and strategic use of funding from several sources including the Department of Education and Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreements (AHRDAs) holders in two regions.

Engaging Employers

Various employer engagement strategies were suggested, from providing incentives to train Inuit employees, to engaging employers in a workshop on how to manage well in the north. Suggestions specific to mining operations include the need for enhanced supports to the men working in the mines, and to their families. Supports are needed to reduce relationship

challenges and jealousy, and to enhance communications between the workers and their families. One participant suggested putting in place a liaison person in each of the key mining communities to facilitate communications between employees and their families based on an example from Northern Ontario. Another suggestion was to encourage employers to provide housing for their employees as an added incentive to remain in the job.

6.2 Lessons from other Jurisdictions

Work in the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Alaska was examined for its applicability to issues of workforce participation in Nunavut. Not all of the jurisdictions examined have socio-economic and cultural contexts comparable to those in Nunavut, although each offers an opportunity to learn from their experience. Despite some significant differences, there may be some lessons to be learned from Yukon's emphasis on developing a range of affordable housing supports. While this type of approach may not be possible in Nunavut in the immediate term, it likely merits consideration in a longer-term planning context. (See Appendix C for more information on findings from the jurisdictions reviewed).

Of particular note are the two innovations put in place to support the acquisition of trades skills – the first being the creation of “Trades Helper” and “Housing Maintainer” in NWT, and the second the development of the construction training that is being delivered by the university, in local communities in Alaska called ‘place based learning opportunities’. Both of these innovations respond to challenges also experienced in Nunavut and have direct application. The importance of re-establishing a trades-based curriculum in Nunavut that builds on local knowledge and practical skills, while also offering the opportunity to obtain formal certification, cannot be overstated. Recent plans for the development of locally based training and employment opportunities as a part of the \$200M CMHC/Nunavut Housing initiative uses some of the same principles as those in the NWT.

In Alaska, the focus on trades is to build on traditional boat building skills so that individuals can get licensed to build more than fishing boats. In replicating this in Nunavut, it would be important to focus on adapting a training program that built on skills that are culturally relevant and valued. The same holds true for the way in which the training program is delivered. By using an apprenticeship model, the program in Alaska offers students opportunities that make economic and cultural sense, because historically everyone was engaged in a lifelong learning process. The construction trade program builds on this apprenticeship model, and uses curriculum recognized by big construction unions. Although quite new still, this program is seen as highly promising and the way of the future in Alaska, with application to other types of skills sets such as management and accounting needed within communities.

For more information on these promising initiatives, see Appendix C.

6.3 Lessons from Connecting Other Vulnerable Populations to the Labour Market

There are a number of lessons to be learned from initiatives aimed at connecting other vulnerable populations to the labour market, including immigrants, persons with disabilities, youth, and homeless people. In general, prevailing wisdom indicates that initiatives that work have key characteristics in common, even if they differ at the level of specific program characteristics. These key characteristics are captured in a recent review of labour market

attachment programs, services and approaches for immigrants.⁴⁶ Key elements of success include:

- Solutions that are locally relevant and market driven
- Employer engagement, from labour market analysis, to planning, to program partnership
- Flexibility of delivery, in terms of timing; of delivery model (online; workshop; face-to-face); of location
- Integrated service delivery
- Continuum of programs and supports
- System coordination

A particularly effective and much-lauded model developed by the Maytree Foundation proposes a systems approach to facilitate labour market entry for skilled immigrants.⁴⁷ Key components of the system have been identified as follows:

- (1) Incentives for all stakeholders to collaborate in designing, delivering and evaluating programs and services.
- (2) Access by skilled immigrants to a continuum of programs and services that provide:
 - information on labour market, occupational requirements and available programs
 - assessment services to identify qualifications and any gaps to be filled
 - expert advice from Canadian practitioners
 - bridging programs to fill the identified gaps
- (3) A leadership council to foster collaboration, identify priorities and linkages, and communicate results.

The Maytree Model is seen in action in the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC), which exhibits a number of the components identified as important, in particular a focus on employers. One of these, a web portal called hireimmigrants.ca, helps employers to assess their organizational readiness to hire newcomers, provides information and supports for the ways in which they can become an immigrant-friendly employer, and so on. A public education campaign is central to their employer engagement activities, and a similar approach could be applied in Nunavut.⁴⁸

Other key components of the TRIEC model include the following:

- **The Mentoring Partnership:** Matches new immigrants with established professionals in their same occupation in order to assist newcomers to develop the requisite professional social networks, and provide them with ongoing mentorship and advice concerning Canadian workplace culture, norms, and expectations.
- **Career Bridge:** Offers paid internships with employers that provide experience to professional-level newcomers, in consort with a number of other career development services and supports.
- **Immigrant Employment Loan Program:** Provides financial assistance to immigrants and refugees to help them engage in short-term training and skill upgrading that leads to employment.
- **Immigrant Success Awards:** Recognizes organizations/employers that have innovative, immigrant-friendly Human Resource practices.

⁴⁶ SP Consulting, 2006.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ To view video clips that are part of this advertising campaign, go to <http://www.triec.ca/index.asp?pageid=0>.

Similar components could be developed to target the specific challenges facing workforce development and participation in Nunavut, with particular attention to educational and skill upgrading, including literacy, numeracy and trades-based curricula. Nunavummiut currently receiving IS and/or PH would require additional supports, but the other components of the TRIEC model are applicable to the Nunavut context with Nunavut-specific modifications.

7.0 THE NUNAVUT ECONOMIC FORUM: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

Another critical lesson from other jurisdictions is the need for government, the voluntary sector and private enterprise to work in unison to address broad community issues, and encourage long-term workforce attachment. Programs should be designed to address both those workers who are not ready for the workforce (development) and those that require assistance with attachment to the workforce (participation).

With its cross-sectoral membership and reach, the NEF is in a prime position to play a leadership role in this area, in particular in the area of workforce participation. The primary focus for the organization is to bring members together to collaborate on the implementation of The Nunavut Economic Development Strategy, each within their own area of activity and expertise.⁴⁹

In October of 2005, the NEF held two workshops on the Long Term Vision and Strategic Plan for the NEF. These workshops explored the mission and role of NEF, as well as forming the basis for a strategic planning process and the resultant Three Year Planning Framework 2006-2008. One of NEF's most important identified roles is that of information distribution among members. During interviews, employers and non-profit organizations indicated low awareness levels of the programs available to new or existing employees. Knowing about supports that are available could assist employers to maintain workforce attachment when issues arise. Staff turnover in the area of Economic Development and Human Resources is high and this supports an expanded role for NEF in ensuring that information is delivered between the sectors of its membership.

NEF could act as the catalyst for collaboration between all employers and the GN. Through its membership, NEF would be an effective body for making the links between the employment sector (for profit companies, voluntary sector, and professional associations) and the Government of Nunavut. NEF is well positioned to build the trust that can "bridge the divide" between the sometimes conflicting nature of these different organizations.

During interviews with employers, it was identified that the ability to hire and maintain an Inuit workforce was difficult, particularly for large employers who are attempting to meet local hiring targets. In its role of promoting Inuit participation in developing Nunavut's economy, NEF could be connecting employers and employees in order to increase the awareness of the existing 'ready to work' Inuit workforce in Nunavut. In keeping with identified best practices, this type of awareness-raising activity would also need to include a mobilization effort supported by an employer 'code of conduct'; a peer support initiative within the employment sector that demonstrates best practices for employers to support workforce participation; and training supports to ensure that hiring, coaching and employee support programs are appropriate for Nunavummiut and support the fulfillment of local hiring targets for employers. In addition, there is a need for collaboration between employers and government programs. As a part of the Three Year Planning Framework, NEF identified one of its roles as an 'advocacy/ representative

⁴⁹ Information retrieved January 19th 2007 from <http://www.nunavuteconomicforum.ca/public/index.php>.

organization’ that could ‘promote initiatives for program integration’ and ‘foster co-operation between agencies involved in economic development programs’. In order to fulfill these roles, NEF could work with employment sector representatives and government bodies in a number of ways. For example, together these partners could explore policy supports to workforce participation – such as tax incentives for mentoring, or recognition of in-house training programs as legitimate training/educational pursuits for social program recipients – as well as supports for entrepreneurial approaches appropriate to the business environment in Nunavut that cannot sustain large-scale employer/employee relationships.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

Social programs can both create and alleviate barriers to workforce participation. However, it is clear from this study that in order to be effective in their design and implementation, social programs cannot work in isolation: they require ongoing support from their economic development partners. While there are considerable barriers to workforce participation for many Nunavummiut, there are some positive strategies being used within the Territory and elsewhere that can be built upon to develop a more integrated approach to workforce development and participation.

The development and implementation of a Workforce Participation Plan for Nunavut, which would take a holistic, integrated and community-centred approach to increasing workforce participation, is the logical response to the cultural dynamic at play in the Territory for thousands of years – a dynamic firmly focused on the family and the community, rather than the individual.

Poor performance on health and social indicators at the aggregate level is reflected at the individual level in negative feelings of self worth, hopelessness and dependency. Together, these are the unfortunate outcomes of low levels of education and high levels of unemployment in a wage based economy. The overwhelming conclusion of this report is that without an integrated approach to supporting workforce participation, high levels of unemployment among Nunavummiut will continue. In turn, the poor health and social outcomes experienced by Nunavummiut relative to the rest of Canadians will be exacerbated. The demographics of Nunavut communities illustrate very graphically the potential increase in demand for income support and public housing, particularly as the large population increase of the last 20 years comes of age. Without a concerted plan to increase workforce participation, the Government of Nunavut will be severely challenged to ensure that appropriate health services and social supports are available to individuals and families.

Lastly, this report concludes that the Government of Nunavut cannot be expected to address all the issues on its own. There is a requirement for the private and non-governmental sectors, and professional and economic sector organizations, to take an active, purposeful role in increasing employment for the Inuit people of Nunavut. As such, recommendations for the Nunavut Economic Forum as a coalition of concerned organizations are included as essential elements of an integrated, focused approach to workforce participation.

The interviews and consultations completed during this study reinforced that there is a great deal of work to be done with non-government partners in Nunavut, and that the NEF is in a prime position to introduce some of these necessary supports to workforce participation. In addition to changes to Income Support and Housing, Nunavut has recognized the importance of labour market participation and the economy to the overall health and well-being of the Territory, and to Nunavummiut. To this end, NEF has a unique role to play in promoting and supporting workforce development and participation strategies that will contribute to the implementation of the Nunavut Economic Development Strategy.

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APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

A number of information collection methods were used for this study. These are briefly described below.

Document and File Review

A document and file review was used to understand the nature of the workforce attachment problem in Nunavut, the operational details concerning income support and public housing programs, and the nature and current status of the proposed changes to key programs of interest following the 2001 Review, “*Ikajuqatigiit – Sharing Knowledge and Support, Nunavut Income Support Policy Review*”. Documentation was obtained in both electronic and hard copy formats. For a list of the documents used in the review please see the Reference Materials section of this document.

Analysis of Secondary Data and Information

Existing statistical data and GN Reports containing information regarding workforce participation, income security recipient and public housing recipient rates, and Nunavut economic performance were examined to provide a broader context for the examination of labour market attachment issues and challenges.

Inter-jurisdictional Literature and Policy Documentation Review

In order to capitalize on lessons learned in other jurisdictions, a web-based review of academic and applied documentation from selected jurisdictions who have undertaken similar changes to addressing disincentives to labour force attachment (LFA) was conducted. Jurisdictions examined include Yukon, Northwest Territories and Alaska.⁵⁰ The purpose for this inter-jurisdictional review was to describe the types of problems faced elsewhere, and compare and contrast the approaches taken to removing disincentives to LFA in different jurisdictions.

Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were used to collect in-depth information concerning the status of Recommendations made in the 2001 Review; to understand current Income Support and Public Housing Support operations in Nunavut, including perceived and real barriers to labour force attachment; and to understand in greater detail the experiences of other jurisdictions in tackling labour force attachment issues. Interviews were conducted with program representatives from Nunavut departments responsible for public housing, income support, economic development, and career development, as well as their counterparts in Yukon, NWT and Alaska. In addition, representatives of the business community such as Chambers of Commerce and the Mine Training Strategy, a program funded through the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP), were also interviewed in order to examine lessons learned concerning the importance of linkages between employment, education and social supports. Finally, a number of representatives from local organizations concerned with housing and career development were interviewed in order to examine the way in which policies impact the lives of Nunavummiut in their day to day lives. A total of 27 interviews were conducted in all, of which the majority (19) were conducted over the telephone; the remainder were conducted face-to-face.

Focused Discussion Groups

Focused discussion groups were used to collect multi-perspective information and engage stakeholders in in-depth conversations concerning the real and perceived impacts of changes to income support and public housing policies on workforce participation during the time period of

⁵⁰ Numerous attempts were made to contact representatives in Greenland, although none of these resulted in any useful connections for this project.

interest. A total of 11 focus group sessions were conducted across 5 communities in Nunavut during the weeks of November 13th to 24th, 2006. The communities visited included Iqaluit, Clyde River, Baker Lake, Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay. Two separate discussion groups were held in each community: a multi-stakeholder discussion group and a group with unemployed person. In Iqaluit, a third discussion group was held with employed individuals. Attendance averaged approximately 5 persons per unemployed/employed focus group, and 10 for the multi-stakeholder groups, for a total engagement of approximately 75 individuals in Nunavut.

Roundtable Discussion

A final roundtable discussion group was held in Iqaluit in February 2007 and was used as a participatory validation exercise with a cross-section of stakeholders involved in NEF to confirm key findings and options for reform.

APPENDIX B INCOME SUPPORT AND SUPPORTED PUBLIC HOUSING POLICY REVIEW

Table 1: Income Support Policy Updates on Recommendations from the 2001 Policy Review

2001 REVIEW - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIFIC GROUPS	
Recommendations for Adults and Youth	Action Taken ⁵¹
Career Counseling capacity should be established in all communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Counselling program is in place. • Current Community Development Organization (CDO) component: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – QIK – Iqaluit, Igloolik, Pangnirtung (3) – KIV – Arviat, Baker Lake, Rankin (3) – KIT – Cambridge Bay (3) • LMDA position currently vacant but managed by IS Director. • Head office in a different location to IS. • CDOs are not always housed with the ISWs.
The focus of the Income Support Worker should be on the assessment and appropriate referral for training of Youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training is the focus of the CDO more so than the ISW. • Large caseloads and limited training opportunities demand that the focus of ISWs be on financial support and management as opposed to training or productive choice. • There is recognition that productive choices should be the focus for the program (see section on Productive Choices for further information on this program element).
All youth receiving Income Support should be required to develop and make progress in fulfilling a Career action plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Educational Support Section is one sentence and provides no information or guidelines to workers (P51 Policies and Guidelines v2006).
Training should be based on client need and offered in a progressive fashion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of supports is available to IS clients. • Bridging funding is available to students returning to school through Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students (FANS). • Apprenticeship programs are available. • Transition to Work program (SIV) was introduced. • Investing in People was reintroduced.
The Department should institute a 'Training on the Job' program for Income Support clients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One focus of the Career Development program is apprenticeship – given the population distribution in the territory (high youth population), this is reflected in the majority of the CDO work in Iqaluit falling under the apprenticeship program.
Clients should demonstrate success and progression for continued support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients are responsible for demonstrating productive choices through submission of forms.

⁵¹ Information for the Action Taken to date column includes both program documentation (policy and guidelines as well as bulletins) and responses from interviews and community consultations completed during the months of November and December, 2006.

2001 REVIEW - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIFIC GROUPS

Recommendations for Adults and Youth	Action Taken ⁵¹
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verification methods to ensure training attendance appear to vary throughout territory.
The Department should develop training incentives within the Income Support program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An incentive for training is offered to encourage participation in training • Incentive level is a \$10/day or \$200 (which ever is less). • This is provided through a surplus cheque that is produced regionally.
Foundational workshops should be provided that focus on parenting, budgeting, literacy, numeracy and life skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the re-investment of IS dollars and the Labour Market Development Agreement the IS program funds Arctic College to develop basic trade courses to assist people in training. • These include basic literacy and numeracy skills. • Interviews indicated that basic life skills such as parenting and budgeting were not at an appropriate level to support workforce participation.
The Department should lead the co-ordination of training efforts by all government and non-government agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal structures which coordinate between levels of government, non-governmental organizations or even within the GN itself. • Department of Education is responsible for the LMDA and as such completes a summary of activities completed. • Under this role, Education is not currently completing a planning/coordination function.
The Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education should ensure that each new parent be visited at home to assist in the planning for the future of the child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referred to the Department of Health as it is outside of the Department of Education mandate. • Status unknown.
Childcare User Subsidies should be available in a timely fashion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administered through the regional office. • Must have agreement in place prior to application. • Must demonstrate income and/or acceptance at training institute.
Day Homes providing childcare should be encouraged to get licensed and supported in doing so by the Childcare program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional IS centres may direct contract day care services on behalf of clients. • Indicators are that child care lacks facilities and staff. • Both IS and AHRDA holders have done some training through Arctic College to train day care workers but often the rental costs prohibit new day care facilities from starting-up.
The Department should co-ordinate its efforts within Income Support and a "Stay In School Program".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading and attending educational classes is considered a productive choice for youth not living in a family home. • There was no indication of coordination between the "Stay In School Program" and IS.
Adults should have access to all the career development and career counseling opportunities within their community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Counselling program is in place. • Current CDO component: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – QIK – Iqaluit, Igloodlik, Pangnirtung (3) – KIV – Arviat, Baker Lake, Rankin (3)

2001 REVIEW - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIFIC GROUPS

Recommendations for Adults and Youth	Action Taken ⁵¹
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – KIT – Cambridge Bay (3) • LMDA position currently vacant but managed by IS Director. • Head office in a different location to IS. • CDOs are not always housed with the ISWs.
Income Support, the Department of Sustainable Development, Designated Inuit Organizations and other organizations need to work together to ensure the self-employed and entrepreneurs have access to all potential support programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LMDA programs are for EI eligible recipients excluding those who have been self-employed before coming onto IS. • Interviews indicated low levels of collaboration between AHRDA holders, Economic Development and Career Development.
Labour Market statistics concerning the potential types and numbers of jobs in a community should be made available to the local community to ensure that training programs can be developed that are focused on preparing people for actual jobs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A monthly Labour Force Statistics Analysis is completed by Statistics Canada and distributed through Nunavut Statistics at a territorial level. • Labour Market Information is available through HRSDC via the Alberta/NWT/Nunavut region in Edmonton; however, the current web site holds no territorial information.
Adults should continue to be supported through the Income Support while in training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults are supported through training as it constitutes a productive choice. • Re-introduced a Building Essential Skills Program. (see Investing in People Program below) • Introduced <i>Sivuniksaliuriniq</i>, a transition to work program - four months of support at new job without having to claim income. It has not seen a large uptake from Nunavummiut.
The Department should reinstate the “Investing in People Program”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-introduced a Building Essential Skills Program which provides the same support as the “Investing in People Program”. • Basic Adult Education (BED) has shifted to a focus on General Educational Diploma (GED). It was indicated that lower levels of literacy and numeracy may be an unintended outcome of this shift.
The current practice of hamlet counsels making the determination of whether a client is paid directly or through a voucher system should be continued. This should be done in consultation with those involved in the <i>Circle of Support</i> discussed later in this report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of Circles of Support was not completed. (see section below) • Inclusion of the Hamlet in the determination of direct or voucher payment is unclear. • Interviews and consultations indicated that many IS clients continue to have portions of their IS payments completed through vouchers.
The client should have the opportunity to choose which store they will use to accept the voucher cheque.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients can choose a food vendor for the voucher cheque (pg 24 Policies and Guidelines v2006)
The Department of Education should work with the Hunter Support program to extend support to 6 months rather than the present 2 months. The Department should work with Hunters and Trappers associations to ensure all recipients of the advance are truly hunters and have made arrangements for family not traveling with them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy remains at 2 months. (Assistance in advance policy v2006 pg 10)

2001 REVIEW - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIFIC GROUPS

Recommendations for Adults and Youth	Action Taken ⁵¹
<p>The Department of Education should review its food scale and rates, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community placement on the food scale; • The amount paid for the first and each subsequent member of the household; and • The amount and nature of the benefits for clothing, both basic and seasonal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount has been increased twice in since 2002. • Clothing is not seen as a basic entitlement for either regular or seasonal clothing. • It needs to be applied for and decided on individually. • Clothing allowances may be awarded and then clawed back where an overpayment exists.
<p>The Department should ask the Department of Finance and Administration to review the Food Mail program (Air Stage Program) in cooperation with the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada with a view towards considering linking the subsidy with the Income Support program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not addressed in the policies.
<p>The Department should expand its current short-term support for self-employed or entrepreneurs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was extended from the one month support and subsequent review of business viability policy in the 2002 guidelines. <p>Currently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six months of support – extended to seven if the recipient can be self-supporting following the one month extension. • Traditional activities (carving, hunting, crafts) are given special exemption rules for earned income, allowing for entrepreneurs to earn a specific amount of money prior to the exemption levels being applied. • All income must still be reported.
<p>The current Income Exemption policy should be changed to a sliding scale that promotes work and recognizes family size.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exemption increased in July 2002 to \$200 (single) and \$400 (family) without reference to family size. • New policy from 2002 includes variable exemptions for traditional activities such as hunting and trapping, carving and crafts. Once the exemption threshold has been reached, it is seen as income and remains in the same limits. • Family Size is not taken into consideration. • Other exemptions are included such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Airline tickets purchased on behalf of clients for productive choices – One time reimbursement programs from federal/territorial governments
Recommendations for Communities	Action Taken
<p>Develop a <i>Circle of Support</i> composed of all helping professions within the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not completed. • Interviews indicated a lack of communication between helping professions in the community.
<p>Mandate the <i>Circle of Support</i> to develop a Social Plan for approval of the Hamlet Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not within the Department of Education mandate. The Department of Health and Social Services is currently studying the option of Community Wellness Planning within Nunavut.
<p>Mandate the <i>Circle of Support</i> to function as the appeal committee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeals are completed through Social Assistance Appeal Committee. • Where no committee exists, an Administrative

2001 REVIEW - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIFIC GROUPS

Recommendations for Adults and Youth	Action Taken ⁵¹
	<p>Review Group (3 people from the community) can be established by the Regional Director to act as an appeal committee.</p>
Require the <i>Circle of Support</i> to report to the community on progress towards meeting the goals of the plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable as they have not been established.
Community leaders should be encouraged to lead this <i>Circle of Support</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable as they have not been established. • However, recommended participants for collaboration include Economic Development Officers, Income Support Workers, Local Housing Organizations, Career Development Officers, Business leaders, AHRDA holders, Local employers, Inuit Organizations, Federal government representatives, Mental/Health, Home Care, Arctic College.
The Department needs to provide additional training to the Income Support Workers, their supervisors (both hamlet and Government of Nunavut) and to the <i>Circle of Support</i> members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training is provided to all Income Support Workers (ISWs) – one week program that focuses on administration and financial management. • A ‘re-cast’ policy and procedures manual for workers and supervisors was completed. • Regular Bulletins are sent out to the ISWs for clarification on policy revisions. • There is a training coordinator for workers and supervisors. • Interviewees indicated that counselling and life support for productive choices would require, minimally, a further three weeks of training to each of the ISWs. • High turnover rates in ISWs means that training is an ongoing and a constant requirement to meet basic training. • Some difficulty has arisen with ISW availability to attend training – either due to workload or to no affiliation with the GN but a Hamlet employee.
Community contracts for Income Support mandate the salary and benefits paid to workers. Communities should ensure they are providing these salaries and benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulletin on application process provided by regional directors indicates a review of the income support worker salaries may be necessary.

Table 2 – 2003 Review of the Impact of the 2002 Rent Scale

Impact of 2003 Rent Scale Review on Target Groups		
Group Affected	New Provisions	2003 Review Findings
Seasonal and Casual Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All tenants will have their income assessed at least once per year. This shall be done using information from the CCRA. Tenants may request a reassessment of their income any time they feel they have had a significant, long-term change in income. Local Housing Organizations (LHOs) will use their discretion in granting reassessments. If current CCRA information is not valid then the LHO shall verify income as outlined in the Tennant Relations Manual-Oct. 96 (Rent Scale Guidelines and Procedures Manual). 	<p>The 2003 Review identified two challenges to the rental review process;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LHOs did not automatically reassess as soon as an individual's income dropped; and, Casual and seasonal workers required more frequent rental assessments to more accurately reflect their fluctuating income levels.
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The income of all tenants, including students shall be verified. Full-time students are exempt from paying rent while in school or on breaks between consecutive school terms. Tenants attending full-time training courses, upgrading programs, apprentice schools, etc. will be considered the same as full-time students. This applies even if their employer and/or agency is paying them an income. (Rent Scale Guidelines and Procedures Manual) The LHO shall ask the tenants' educational institution to confirm that the tenant is enrolled as a full-time student. This shall be done every term. There shall be no reduction of rent for part-time students. If an LHO feels that a tenant is using the student exemption only to avoid paying rent, they may charge the tenant rent. Rent will then be calculated in the normal manner. The LHO Board of Directors must confirm this by a formal motion and inform the NHC District Director. (Rent Scale Guidelines and Procedures Manual) 	<p>Despite the obvious supports to workforce participation intended by this policy, the 2003 review recognized that this policy required more publicity to encourage uptake.</p>

Table 2 – 2003 Review of the Impact of the 2002 Rent Scale (Continued)

Impact of 2003 Rent Scale Review on Target Groups		
Group Affected	New Provisions	2003 Review Findings
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non primary tenants from the age of 19-25 inclusive will have their gross income capped at \$5,800.00 per year for the purposes of calculating rent. • Primary tenants who are youth will pay rent based on their full income. • For the purposes of this section primary tenant(s) are a maximum of two tenant(s) that have signed the Tenancy Agreement and are in care and control of the unit. If the youth were sharing the unit with the tenants over the age of 25, that tenant would normally be considered in care and control of the unit. (Rent Scale Guidelines and Procedures Manual) 	<p>The 2003 review identified concern about young GN employee tenants getting a major rent break. The intent of the policy was to support a transition into the work force for those engaged in entry level and lower paying positions, not to create an age based subsidy.</p> <p>The Review expressed concern over the potential for the creation of “rent shock” at age 26, which could discourage continued participation in the workforce for those people not on social assistance, and to act as a disincentive for those receiving income support.</p> <p>Overall the question posed by the 2003 review was “Does this really support productive choices and responsibility by youth?”</p>

Table 3 – 2002 RentScale Changes and Their Impact on Workforce Participation

Changes Introduced in 2002	Implications of Changes
Income assessment is completed on an annual basis, in line with the submission of an annual income tax submission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows the client to complete one process for identifying income. • The use of third party information increases tenant's disconnection with the process for establishing rent.
Rents are increased only once annually with renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an opportunity for individuals to bank increased income for the period between the assessments when income is increased. However, rent shock can be experienced if the tenant has not prepared themselves for the increased rent levels.
Rents can be reviewed at any time through a request by the tenant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides seasonal and casual workers with the opportunity to move in and out of workforce • Lack of awareness of this policy can create fear and reluctance to enter the workforce
Gross Annual Income aligned with CCRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceeds from bingo or other gambling ventures, gifts of cash or in-kind nature are not considered as income • Income Support program continues to differentiate between employment (earned income) and other sources (un-earned income), which are not included in the CCRA/Public Housing definitions.
Deductions from Gross Income include union, professional and like dues, child care and support payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few people claim these on their income tax • Resultant rent reduction is typically minimal (20%) of claimed amount
Rents are based on a percentage of disposable income, maxed at 28% from disposable income of more than \$5,000.00 per month.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent increases are incremental with smaller levels of rent increases at the lower end of the scale. This supports new and part-time employment, on-the-job training, and entry level positions.
Equalization of rent across locations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of Living Allowance • Under Accommodation • Unit Condition Deductions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These deductions are applied following the establishment of the actual unit rental costs and are not based on income of the tenant.
Eligibility criteria for housing support established at a local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait times in high employment centres like Iqaluit can be up to 1 year for public housing support. This limits mobility of workers.

APPENDIX C: CONNECTING POTENTIAL WORKERS TO WORK: LESSONS FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS, VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

The following questions were used to examine comparable income support and public housing programs provided in other jurisdictions:

- (1) Have other jurisdictions harmonized Income Support and Public Housing Supports at the program level; in other ways?
- (2) What educational supports are required/provided to recipients? Have other jurisdictions harmonized educational upgrading with Income Supports?
- (3) What are the basic numeracy and literacy skills being acquired in other jurisdictions (What are retention rates in schools)?
- (4) What programs or support are in place to help people acquire necessary soft skills? What type of basic living skills supports are provided to teach people how to manage finances, pay bills, budget, etc.?
- (5) How much flexibility is there on reporting any income?

8.1 Findings by Jurisdiction

Yukon

General Program Description and Harmonization

In Yukon, Income Support and Public housing Support programs are not formally harmonized, and at this time there is no identified need to do so. Of particular note, in Yukon First Nations clients are served directly by their First Nation (FN), or by the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA). Yukon Housing and Income Support meet with their FN and DIA partners twice a year to discuss issues and to ensure comparability across the programs.

For recipients of public housing who are also on Income Support (IS), Yukon Housing is paid directly by IS. IS pays rent based on the maximum shelter allowance provided under the SA Act, plus utilities. They have 3 rates (winter, spring, summer), and IS pays Yukon Housing the shoulder (spring) rate which may or may not include hydro. Where hydro is not included, they try to reduce the utility portion of bill so that there is enough left over in the entitlement to cover the hydro bill. Where this is not possible and HSS overpays, there is a reconciliation between Yukon Housing and HSS to receive back money that they overpaid at the end of the year. This was put in place a few years ago with Yukon Housing to develop more equitable pay for SA recipients. In this way, they pay a more realistic portion of accommodation expenses. Further, in order to encourage SA recipients who work to get off assistance, they are required to pay 25% of their earned income for rent. (This also means that YH receives more from SA than recipients who are employed).

Yukon's SA Act provides an allowance to adult SA recipients who are attending upgrading or training on a full time basis. Yukon does not fund post secondary education, but may support an applicant engaged in upgrading or training programs, providing the program or training is part of a self-sufficiency plan, is of short duration, and will lead to employment.

One of the operating principles of Yukon SA is to help clients be as responsible for their own well-being as they possibly can, and so wherever possible they pay clients directly. However, as

in Nunavut there is a portion of their client group that requires more support to ensure that they pay their bills, which is why housing is paid directly to YH on behalf of these clients. However, IS recipients manage their own money for standard benefits, food and incidentals. As a result of recent elections in Yukon, there is a planned review of social assistance rates, and examination of how to put in place incentives for those who want to enter the workforce, although the timing of this review is unknown at the time of writing.

Affordable housing is extremely important in Yukon and they have placed considerable emphasis on developing affordable housing units that enable home ownership even among those with lower incomes. Yukon Housing Corporation has a number of well-established lending programs which make home ownership more affordable. For example, their Home Ownership program uses the same financial analysis as Chartered Banks, with more flexibility: the YH down payment requirement is 2.5% (and includes mortgage insurance), whereas at CIBC it is 5% (and insurance is extra). They peg their lending rate below that offered by the Chartered Banks, which increases the amount of capital that people can borrow. This was done because housing prices have been going up and negatively impacting people looking for acceptable and affordable homes. For the same reasons, they have increased the maximum amortization period for their clients from 25 to 30 years to try to offer flexibility to meet their low income clients' needs.

For those who want to build or manage the building of their home, there is also an Owner Build Mortgage Program, which offers very attractive lending rates over 2 year period. This program tries to define a niche market of people who have may have a particular skill set, or who may work seasonally. These loans are fully recoverable with interest. As well, Yukon Housing lends to private sector developers to 'top up' what can get from chartered banks.

In addition, Yukon Housing has a Home Repair Program, which is separate from the CMHC Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) program from CMHC. The Yukon Program offers a 2.4% interest rate, and can lend up to \$35,000. This can provide a direct subsidy to clients based on income, family size and location, and they can forgive a portion of the loan. This program is used to address the quality of the housing stock, which is often very poor. Eligible clients can still access the RRAP program, and can even potentially access both programs. While the Yukon program focuses on repairs, not renovations, they do have provisions for accessibility and energy efficiency. In essence, Yukon Housing has found that expanding home ownership to lower income residents fuels the housing market in other areas.

Educational Supports and Harmonization

There are a number of ways that Yukon financially assists clients to go back to school etc., which include arrangements with educational institutions to fast track willing and interested clients. Clients are multi-barriered, and there is a requirement to educate both service providers and potential employers concerning the challenges they face.

Soft Skills Development

There are no specific programs or supports targeting 'soft skills development': the needs of each person are treated on a case by case basis. In Whitehorse, there is a case load of about 650, who are served by about 14 social workers (which translates into a caseload of about 45-55 cases). Within each program area, all are promoting best efforts on client's part to get employment. They work closely with advanced education and employment to ensure that clients have access to employment training and skills upgrading, including employability assessment, employment counseling, wage subsidy program and referral to other employment programs in the community. They work in partnership with the local chamber of commerce to run a pre-employment training skills course. There are various other community based organizations that

also run employment training programs. To address the complex needs of service recipients, case management is offered as a standalone service.

Flexibility on Reported Income

In terms of allowances, Yukon's Public Housing Act has the following income exemptions which include: up to \$100 per month for a family unit of 1 and \$150 for a family unit of two or more. In addition an applicant can exempt up to 25% of their monthly income from employment after their third consecutive month on assistance.

Northwest Territories

General Program Descriptions and Harmonization

The NWT Housing Corporation (NWT HC) develops policy and oversees the administration of the public housing program. Local Housing Organizations/Authorities (LHOs) with five regional offices determine initial public housing eligibility and assume responsibility for the management of public housing as per the guidelines established by the NWT HC. Website: <http://nwthc.gov.nt.ca>

Prior to April 1, 2006, the LHOs also assessed the tenants' rent and rental subsidies. Effective April 1, 2006 the Education, Culture and Employment, Income Security Division assumed responsibility for assessing the rent and rent subsidies. In an effort to minimize the transition challenges with this transfer, ECE agreed to maintain many of the rent eligibility policies and practices of the LHO.

With the recent addition of the PHRS program, the Education, Culture and Employment, Income Security Division now includes the following programs:

- Public Housing Rental Subsidy Program
- Child Care User Subsidy Program
- Senior Home Heating Subsidy
- Senior Citizen's Supplementary Benefit
- Income Assistance

PHRS and Income Assistance

Although harmonization is being considered, this practice has not been achieved to date.

- Applicants must complete separate applications for income assistance (IA) and public housing rental subsidy (PHRS)
- For IA eligibility, net income is assessed
- PHRS is determined by gross income, guided by assessable and non- assessable incomes policy as established by the NWT HC/LHO

This said, when an applicant is already residing in public housing and he/she applies and is eligible for IA, this applicant is automatically assessed rent of \$32.00 for the month and time he/she remains eligible for income assistance.

At this time program documentation is being revised in format and print to be consistent with other government policy documents. They are in the process of conducting a comprehensive review of all income security programs with a view to harmonizing the application process and eligibility criteria/need assessment etc. Content and policy revisions are inevitable for PHRS and the other programs administered by the Income Security Division, as they proceed through this process.

Educational Supports and Harmonization

At this time these program are not harmonized. The application processes and eligibility criteria differ for each program.

Soft Skills Development

Living skills supports are not formally presented through NWT programs, however where indicated, program personnel will assist clients with budgeting and household management.

Soft skills to include communication and job readiness are provided through the Career and Employment Development Programs

The Income Assistant Policy Manual and SA ACT/Regulations documents (<http://www.gov.nt.ca>) provide specific information on productive choices, support available and income reporting etc.

Flexibility on Reported Income

All incomes, regardless of the Income Security program, must be reported. These reported incomes are considered assessable or non-assessable, depending on the source and purpose of the income reported.

Particular Example: ASEP Mine Training Program

The Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) is a nationally managed program geared to providing Aboriginal people with the skills they need to participate in economic opportunities such as northern mining, oil and gas, forestry, and hydro development projects across Canada. Announced on October 3, 2003, ASEP is a five-year, \$85-million initiative. Its overall objective is sustainable employment for Aboriginal people in major economic industries, leading to lasting benefits for Aboriginal communities, families and individuals.⁵² Between 2005 and 2008, the Northwest Territories Industrial Mining Skills Strategy is one of the funded projects which is aiming to provide 1,100 training opportunities for Aboriginal peoples in the Northwest Territories, and place 380 Aboriginal peoples in jobs through its training and development programs.

According to an interview with the Coordinator of the Mine Training Project, there are well-developed links between Income Support and career development supports (of which the Mine Training Project is one). Individuals must file a career action plan to demonstrate how they plan to achieve their employment objectives; the plan may include a number of activities from educational upgrading to chopping wood for elders. While the prime target group is aboriginal persons, they draw equally from those on Income Support or Employment Insurance. Proponents (potential employers) assist in identifying potential employees; as well, individuals are identified through the Band office, and through local advertising.

The Training Projects include skills training for a variety of entry level jobs; job readiness training; funded apprenticeships in underground mining and related support occupations (e.g. cook); and finally occupational certification leading to trades designation. They have had some challenges in being able to serve some clients with very low literacy and numeracy levels who are unable to even take the pre-trades entrance examination. As a result, they do offer Adult Basic Education (ABE) and provide support to individuals to upgrade their level of basic education.

⁵² http://www17.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/AHRDSInternet/general/public/asep/asep_e.asp

In addition, to deal with low levels of literacy and numeracy, they have created new trades, one called the “Building Trades Helper” and another called “Housing Maintainer”. If an individual completes the training within either of these trades, they can get advance credit to apply to obtain certification in another trade. So for example people are getting their “Helper” designation, going back to school to improve their basic education, and then returning to upgrade to higher skilled trades.

Large private companies are key partners in the ASEP initiative, and help with the training. There is a requirement for large private companies to make a concerted effort to hire locally, and a recognition that it is important to invest in the development of the local labour force. This is particularly true in NWT, where a large amount of the land is aboriginal owned. First Nations therefore have some leverage with these companies, and have tied the requirement to train and hire local persons to water licenses.

While there is an acknowledgement that all workers suffer from the ‘two in two out’ mining lifestyle, there have been no support services targeted to either workers in the camps, or families at home, to assist in managing the social challenges created by this work rhythm.

The Mine Training Program has not been formally evaluated, but appears to be meeting its targets. To date they have obtained 107 permanent positions (the target being 380), and the retention rates look positive.

Alaska⁵³

General Program Description and Harmonization

The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) was put into place in 1996 and replaced what was welfare. The TANF provides assistance and work opportunities to needy families by granting states the federal funds and wide flexibility to develop and implement their own welfare programs. In Alaska, the Tribal Chiefs Conference (TCC) is a consortium of 42 first nation villages, and the primary mechanism through which TANF and Housing supports are delivered to the 42 villages of Interior Alaska. The TCC is guided by a belief in tribal self-determination and the need for regional Native unity.

Many services are family-centred, and are aimed at supporting and promoting family stability and safety. The services assist individuals to attain the education and skills necessary to support healthy lifestyles, develop meaningful careers and engage in the traditional activities of their communities. Programs include individualized training, information and referral, crisis intervention, counselling, case management, financial assistance, housing, transportation, respite, foster and child care, nutrition and other supportive services. The programs are designed to address immediate and long term needs associated with family well-being, financial self-sufficiency and overall contribution to Tribe and community. (See Appendix C, Gila Initiative).

Services are provided in collaboration with Tribes and key state, local, faith-based and private agency partners. Client Development provides services to infants, children, youth, adults and elders through a variety of prevention, intervention and support oriented programs. Village-based personnel, who provide the services, are supported by itinerant specialists and centrally located technical and administrative project staff.

The programs are supported jointly, through contracts and agreements with private, local, state and federally funded agencies, with the majority of resources generated from federal grants.

⁵³ Much information was taken from the TCC website, at <http://www.tananachiefs.org/index.asp>

Eligibility for public housing is based on income, and they use a sliding fee scale where individuals are charge 25% of their income. In Alaska they have similar challenges to Nunavut in trying to support individuals to move off of the TANF and into paid work. As in Nunavut, when people initially go off the TANF their wages are below subsistence level, a fact that acts as a significant disincentive.

Context of Workforce Development

The context in Alaska, particularly in communities on the northern rim, is very comparable to that in Nunavut: communities are small, geographically dispersed, and isolated. The majority are inaccessible by road. In contrast to Nunavut, the fishing industry is well-developed in some communities in Alaska. The subsistence lifestyle does not translate very well into a 9-5 rhythm: even those who are literate may want the summer off for fishing, because what is valued in the culture might be fishing, not working in a mine. A number of communities that are more subsistence-based (Barrow; Manilaaq; Bethel; Nome) are experiencing changes with the disappearing ice, and this is introducing changes to their way of life in general.

Similar to Nunavut, multinational companies are developing natural resources, and like Nunavut, there are agreements in place that require them to give hiring precedence to the local labour force. However, many companies argue that the local workforce does not have the requisite skills or educational level to be employed, and so local governments have had to work hard to develop protocols and to put in place processes that ensure that they are informed well enough in advance of future economic developments so that there is time to train the local workforce.

In Alaska, it is the Tribal Rights Employer Officer's job to monitor all activities to ensure tribal employment when economic opportunities have been identified for an area. Experience has shown that First nations/local representation must be front and centre and that contracts must not be awarded unless training and in particular apprenticeships are built into the contract. This guarantees that local people will be trained on a project. As well, they ensure that contracts include a clause requiring that the first round of interviews be conducted by the foreman *in the home communities* before they go outside for hiring.

Educational Training and Soft Skills Development

Educational supports and training are provided as part of a full range of services and supports. There is a requirement for soft skills supports. The TCC supports what they call the Aang Centre, which in Aleut means "Welcome", where individuals are offered all of the services and supports they need to access in order to enter the labour force. This includes classes on what employers expect, on the culture of work, and so on.

A most promising Construction Training program is currently being implemented through Alaska University. The program is implemented in partnership with local housing authorities, and it is unique in that they take the training to the community where there is a project. For example, where they have a house to build, there is a classroom component, followed by the practical, hands on component. They learn safety first, and are then supplied with tools to build something, such as additions on fire stations, housing for elders, a garage for ambulance etc.

As in Nunavut, there are problems with the literacy and numeracy levels of the local population, which is supplemented with ABE which has been tailored to the language requirements of trades. Many local residents have difficulty translating what they know how to do in practical terms onto paper in an academic or testing situation, and so in some cases testing is done as a practicum so that core competencies are observed in practice, rather than being tested only on paper. Requirements to participate are very rigorous: applicants must be able to show up on

time, stay clean and sober, and for more advanced training be able to read blue prints. This program has shown success with men and women.

The focus on trades is in part intended to build on what in Alaska is a traditional skill – boat building – but to extend this beyond so that individuals can get licensed to build more than fishing boats. It would be important in replicating this in Nunavut to focus on adapting a training program that built on skills that are culturally relevant and valued.

In order to meet the demand for ABE, they have developed an online program so that anyone with high speed can get on and can talk with instructors in Anchorage. They have a goal of video conferencing but are finding some resistance to this to date. As in Nunavut, many have had poor or negative experiences with the formal education system and so it is a constant battle to re-energize people and get them attracted to the program, and to keep them motivated. This is particularly true for those with difficulty in math and reading.

An important element of increasing the basic literacy level of the population has been to also educate employers to require a High School diploma as the basis for employment. Up until this point, many employers have simply hired people regardless of whether they held their HS Diploma, which meant that people did not see a link between employment, and the desirability of staying in school. By using an apprenticeship model, they are offering students opportunities that make economic and cultural sense, because historically everyone was engaged in a lifelong learning process.

The construction trade program builds on this apprenticeship model, and uses curriculum recognized by big construction unions. They can see that this model may be applied to other types of skills sets needed within communities (such as management, accounting). Although quite new still, this program is seen as highly promising and the way of the future in Alaska (see Appendix C, Construction Trades Flyer).

8.2 Lessons from Connecting Other Vulnerable Populations to the Labour Market

There are a number of lessons to be learned from initiatives aimed at connecting other vulnerable populations to the labour market, including immigrants, persons with disabilities, youth, and homeless people. In general, prevailing wisdom indicates that initiatives that work have key characteristics in common, even if they differ at the level of specific program characteristics. These key characteristics are captured in a recent review of labour market attachment programs, services and approaches for immigrants (SP Consulting 2005). Key elements of success include:

- Solutions that are locally relevant and market driven
- Employer engagement, from labour market analysis, to planning, to program partnership
- Flexibility of delivery, in terms of timing; of delivery model (online; workshop; face-to-face); of location
- Integrated service delivery
- Continuum of programs and supports
- System coordination

A particularly effective and much-lauded model developed by the Maytree Foundation proposes a systems approach to facilitate labour market entry for skilled immigrants (SP Consulting, 2005). Key components of the system have been identified as follows:

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- (1) Incentives for all stakeholders to collaborate in designing, delivering and evaluating programs and services.
 - (2) Access by skilled immigrants to a continuum of programs and services that provide:
 - information on labour market, occupational requirements and available programs
 - assessment services to identify qualifications and any gaps to be filled
 - expert advice from Canadian practitioners
 - bridging programs to fill the identified gaps
 - (3) A leadership council to foster collaboration, identify priorities and linkages, and communicate results.

The Maytree Model is operationalized in the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC), which exhibits a number of the components identified as important, in particular a focus on employers. One of these, a web portal called hireimmigrants.ca, helps employers to assess their organizational readiness to hire newcomers, provides information and supports for the ways in which they can become an immigrant-friendly employer, and so on. A public education campaign is central to their employer engagement activities, and a similar approach could be applied in Nunavut.⁵⁴

Other key components of the TRIEC model include the following:

- **The Mentoring Partnership:** Matches new immigrants with established professionals in their same occupation in order to assist newcomers to develop the requisite professional social networks, and provide them with ongoing mentorship and advice concerning Canadian workplace culture, norms, and expectations.
- **Career Bridge:** Offers paid internships with employers that provide experience to professional-level newcomers, in consort with a number of other career development services and supports
- **Immigrant Employment Loan Program:** Provides financial assistance to immigrants and refugees to help them engage in short-term training and skill upgrading that leads to employment.
- **Immigrant Success Awards:** Recognizes organizations/employers that have innovative, immigrant-friendly Human Resource practices.

Similar components could be developed to target the specific challenges facing workforce development in Nunavut, with particular attention to educational and skill upgrading, including literacy, numeracy and trades-based curricula. Nunavummiut currently receiving IS and/or PH would require additional supports, but the other components of the TRIEC model are applicable to the Nunavut context with Nunavut-specific modifications.

8.3 Application to Nunavut

It is important to note that the jurisdictions examined are not all comparable to the Nunavut socio-economic and cultural context, although each offers some lessons. For example, the Yukon has a very long standing and developed housing market in Whitehorse, where 75% of the population lives, with the other 25% living in rural communities. Only one community is inaccessible by road, whereas in Nunavut all communities are accessed by barge or by air, making all transactions more expensive as a result. A similar comparison can be made between NWT and Nunavut, with some variations. Economically, Yukon has a large tourism industry in part due to the Alaska Highway (the only way to get to Alaska is through Yukon). They also

⁵⁴ To view video clips that are part of this advertising campaign, go to <http://www.triec.ca/index.asp?pageid=0>.

have a lot of mining, gas and oil exploration, and overall the economy is quite active. This impacts on the housing market, which has also seen steady growth. Also in the Yukon, First Nations own and administer their own housing stock, so that if an aboriginal tenant is evicted from a Yukon Housing unit who is First Nation, they can obtain housing from their First Nation directly. In this way, First Nations persons have more options in the Yukon.

Respondents reiterated the importance of the issue of critical mass in shaping policy and program responses to issues. Quite simply when there is a small population, the cost of necessary infrastructure is excessively high per capita. This is certainly the case in Nunavut, where transportation and material costs are significantly higher because there are no road connections between communities. Interviewees noted that if the exact same house was built in Iqaluit and in Whitehorse, there is not question that it will cost more to build in Iqaluit. Also in Nunavut, there are issues of “over-housing” due to overcrowding, which adds to potential for social and health problems. From a straight physical performance perspective (air exchange etc.), houses are not designed to perform in overcrowding situations, which can cause or exacerbate other problems. Finally, the demographics in Nunavut require different types of housing, where the population is younger and there are greater numbers of families.

Despite these significant differences, there may be some lessons to be learned from Yukon’s emphasis on developing a range of affordable housing supports. While this type of approach may not be possible in Nunavut in the immediate term, it likely merits consideration in a longer-term planning context.

Of particular note are the two innovations put in place to support the acquisition of trades skills – the first being the creation of “Trades Helper” and “Housing Maintainer” in NWT, and the second the development of the construction training that is being delivered by the university, in local communities (called ‘place based learning opportunities’). Both of these innovations respond to challenges also experienced in Nunavut and have direct application. The importance of re-establishing a trades-based curriculum in Nunavut that builds on local knowledge and practical skills, while also offering the opportunity to obtain formal certification, cannot be overstated. Recent plans for the development of locally based training and employment opportunities as a part of the \$200M CMHC/Nunavut Housing initiative uses some of the same principles as those in the NWT.

APPENDIX D: NUNAVUT ECONOMIC FORUM MEMBERSHIP

INUIT ASSOCIATIONS	REPRESENTATIVE
Atuqtuarvik Corporation	Rod Hick
Kitikmeot Inuit Association	Donald Havioyok
Kivalliq Inuit Association	Tongola Sandy
Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated	Monica Ell
Qikiqtani Inuit Association	Terry Audla
INUIT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS	
Kakivak Association	Gordon Miles
Kitikmeot Economic Development Commission	George Bohlender
Kivalliq Partners in Development	Ron Dewar
Qikiqtaaluk Corporation	Lynn Kilabuk
Sakku Investment Corporation	Brock Junkin
CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE	
Baffin Regional Chamber of Commerce	Chris Cote
Iqaluit Chamber of Commerce	Ken Spencer
Kivalliq Chamber of Commerce	Ellie Cansfield
MUNICIPALITIES	
Nunavut Association of Municipalities	Elisapee Sheutiapik
Nunavut Economic Developers Association	Jennifer Patey
LABOUR	
Nunavut Employees Union	Doug Workman
GOVERNMENT OF NUNAVUT	
Department of Economic Development & Transportation	Paul Suvega
Nunavut Arctic College	Jason Brown
Nunavut Business Credit Corporation	TBD
Nunavut Development Corporation	TBD
Qulliq Energy Corporation	Anne Crawford
GOVERNMENT OF CANADA	
Department of Indian and Northern Affairs	Hagar Idlout-Sudlovenick
Nunavut Federal Council	Todd Wilson
SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES	
Ajjiit Nunavut Media Association	Charlotte Dewolff
Arctic Co-operatives Ltd.	Barry Cornthwaite
Baffin Business Development Corporation	Bob Long
Baffin Fisheries Coalition	Ben Kovic
Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association	Beth Beattie
Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation	Lorraine Thomas
Nunavut Tourism	Alison Dubeau

APPENDIX E: LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

Name	Title	Location	Contact Information
Vicki Aitaok	Manager Public Housing	Cambridge Bay	
Tim Brady	Manager, Community Adult Service Unit Health and Social Services	Yukon	Tim.Brady@gov.yk.ca (867) 667-5691
George Bohlander	Executive Director Kitikmeot Economic Development Commission	Cambridge Bay	gbohlander_kedc@qiniq.com (867) 983-2095
Barry Cornthwaite	Regional Manager Arctic Co-ops	Iqaluit, Nunavut	bcornthwaite.nu@arcticco-op.com 979-2448
David Fredlund	Program Officer, KEDC	Kivalliq Partners	katfservices@qiniq.com (867)-645-2123
Vivian Gustafson	Committee Policy Liaison Income Security	NWT	Vivian_Gustafson@gov.nt.ca (867) 920-3008
Karen Gonné Harrel	Education, Training, Related Services Coordinator, Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association, Inc.	Anchorage, Alaska	kareng@api.ai.org 907-276-2700 ext 231
Brenda Jancke	Regional Director Department of Education Government of Nunavut	Cambridge Bay	bjancke@gov.nu.ca
Hilary Jones	General Manager, Mines Training Project	Yellowknife, NWT	generalmanagermts@yk.com 867-765-0445
Bob Long	President Baffin Regional Chamber of Commerce	Iqaluit, Nunavut	Bob.long@baffinbusinessdevelopment.com
Terry Ma	Manager for Nunavut, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation	Iqaluit, Nunavut	tma@cmhc-schl.gc.ca 979-2250
Mark MacKay	Director Policy and Planning Education	Iqaluit, Nunavut	mmackay@gov.nu.ca 975-5606
Roberta MacLean	Career Development Officer, Career Counselling Education	Iqaluit, Nunavut	rmclean@gov.nu.ca 975-6573
Ed McKenna	Director Policy, Planning and Communications, Policy and Planning Economic Development and Transportation	Iqaluit, Nunavut	EMcKenna@GOV.NU.CA (867) 975-7817
Gordon Miles	Manager of Business Development Kakivak Association	Iqaluit, Nunavut	gmiles@kakivak.ca 979-8951
Todd Nadeau	Director Human Resources North West Company	Winnipeg, Manitoba	tnadeau@northwest.ca 1-800-782-0391 Ext.361
Don Routledge	Yukon Housing Corporation	Yukon	Don.Routledge@gov.yk.ca (867) 667-8086
Peter Scott	President Nunavut Housing Corporation	Iqaluit, Nunavut	pscott@gov.nu.ca (867) 975-7201
Ken Spencer	Vice President Northwestel (Iqaluit Chamber of Commerce)	Iqaluit, Nunavut	KSPENCER@nwtel.ca 979-1499

Name	Title	Location	Contact Information
Susan Spring	Manager Iqaluit Housing Authority	Iqaluit, Nunavut	iha.generalmanager@northwestel.net 979-5301
James Stewart	Regional Director Pangnirtung Regional Office	Pangnirtung, Nunavut	jstewart@gov.nu.ca 473-2601
Lydia Tatty	Regional Income Support Supervisor	Rankin Inlet	ltatty@gov.nu.ca (867)645-5076
Sandy Teiman	Director Income Support Education	Iqaluit, Nunavut	STeiman@GOV.NU.CA 975-5685