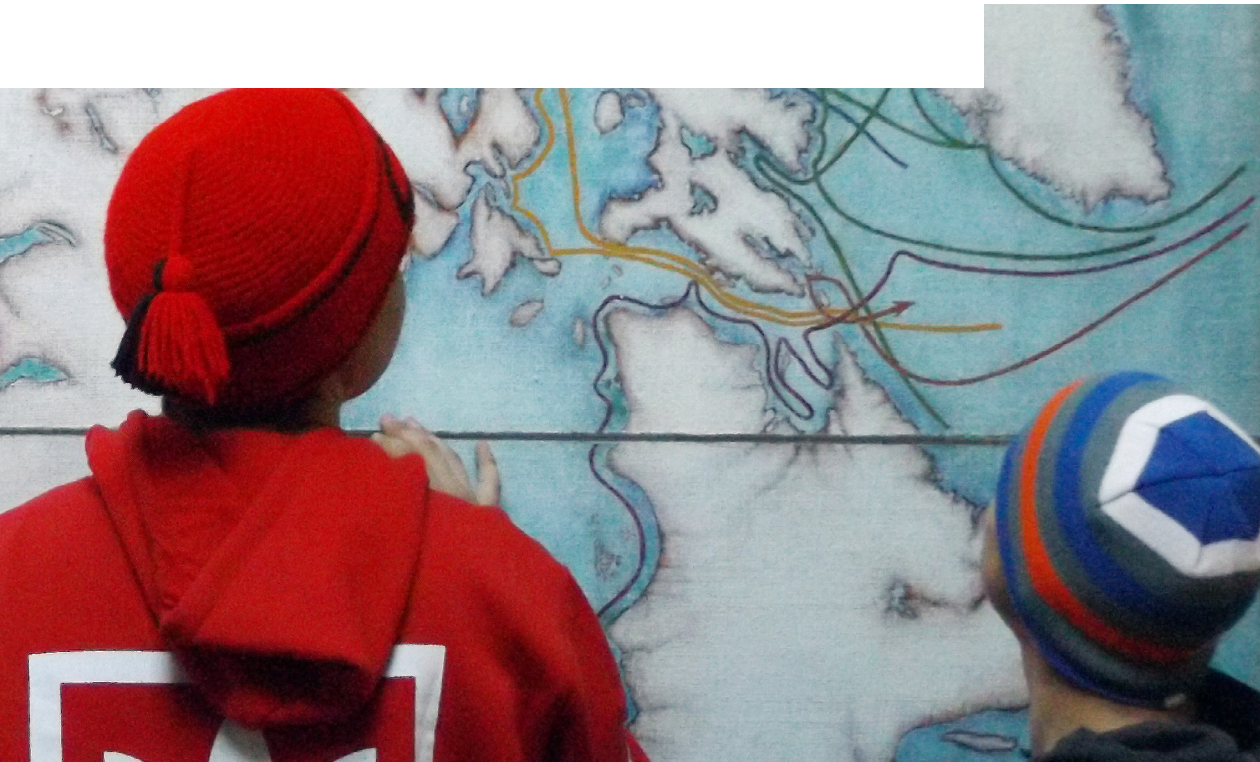


Angela Nuliayok Rudolph

Breaking Down Colonial Borders in Inuit
Nunaat Through Education



CONTENTS

- 2 Biography
- 3 Introduction
- 4 Traditional Inuit Education
- 6 Colonial History of Canadian Inuit
- 8 Comparison to Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools in Alaska
- 11 Current Education in Nunavut
- 13 Success Story
- 15 A Circumpolar Reality in Alaska
- 16 What an Inuit Circumpolar Curriculum Could Look Like in Alaska
- 18 Conclusion
- 19 Bibliography



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The Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship is a policy and leadership development program that recognizes leadership potential among young northern Canadians who want to address the emerging policy challenges facing the North. The two year long program is built around four regional gatherings and offers skills training, mentorship and networking opportunities. Through self-directed learning, group work and the collective sharing of knowledge, Fellows will foster a deeper understanding of important contemporary northern issues, and develop the skills and confidence to better articulate and share their ideas and policy research publicly. The Fellowship is intended for young northerners between 25 and 35 years of age, who want to build a strong North that benefits all northerners. Through the Fellowship, we hope to foster a bond among the Fellows that will endure throughout their professional lives and support a pan-northern network.



Angela Nuliayok Rudolph

Angela Nuliayok Rudolph is an Inuk from Gjoa Haven, Nunavut. Currently she is completing graduate studies at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, with a focus in Indigenous Arctic Policy. Through her master's thesis she is exploring how colonization has shaped the Inuit identity, and how Inuit gender cultural practices prepare Inuit men and women to endure and respond to colonization differently. Angela's policy focus in the Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship focuses on how Inuit throughout the circumpolar north can come together and build leadership capacity to address international issues that Inuit face. Prior to Angela's research endeavours, she worked as a high school teacher in her hometown of Gjoa Haven at the Qiqirtaq Ilihakvik High School, teaching grades 10–12 social studies and Aulajaaqtut (the Nunavut school health curriculum). Angela received her Bachelor of Education from Lakehead University with a focus in Intermediate and secondary levels in Native Studies and Social Science. Angela did her student-teaching in Thunder Bay at Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School and McKellar Park Elementary School, schools that serve an entirely Anishinaabe or majority Anishinaabe student body, respectively. This experience has helped her tremendously through this group project.

Inuit, despite the borders that separate them, share a similar culture, including their traditional education systems. However, this culture was disrupted with outside contact. Through contact with various nation-states, Inuit have experienced very similar colonial histories in which colonizers pushed assimilationist policies on them, especially in regard to education. Inuit, within their four nation-states, have been fighting for greater autonomy in order to take back control of their lives. A prime example of how effective this has been can

be illustrated through Nunavut's grade 10 social studies curriculum and the Nunavut Sivuniksavut program. These examples have guided my research question for this paper: "Would Inuit throughout the circumpolar north benefit from learning from these Nunavut-specific examples and expanding them to the wider circumpolar reality in which Inuit live?" Circumpolar Inuit from Inuit Nunaat face many of the same issues. It would be beneficial for Inuit to have curriculum in place to prepare them to address these circumpolar issues.

Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit

INUIT KNOWLEDGE

Traditionally, Inuit had their own education system. Education was guided by the practice of *inunnguiniq* – to become an able human being. To achieve *inunnguiniq*, a person had to understand *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* (IQ) – Inuit knowledge. Shirley Tagalik, an Inuit educational consultant, explains IQ as follows:

“IQ encompasses the entire realm of Inuit experience in the world and the values, principles, beliefs and skills which have evolved as a result of that experience. It is the experience and resulting knowledge/wisdom that prepares us for success in the future and establishes the possible survival of Inuit.”
Tagalik 2010, 2

According to *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Education Framework Nunavut Curriculum*, six of the guiding principles of IQ can be understood as learning outcomes.

PIJITSIRNIQ

The concept of serving

AAJIIQATIGINGNIQ

The concept of consensus decision-making

PILIMAKMAKSARNIQ

The concept of skills acquisition

PILIRIQATIGIINGNIQ

The concept of collaborative relationships or working together for a common good

AVATIMIK KAMATTIARNIQ

The concept of environmental stewardship

QANUQTUURNNARNIQ

The concept of being resourceful to solve problems (Nunavut Department of Education 2007, 31–36)

These expertly-chosen guiding principles needed to be learned by individuals in order for them to develop *inunnguiniq*, and ensured that Inuit were prepared to function and be a valuable resource within their society (Tagalik 2010, 1-2).

One of the single most important aspects of Inuit society was their *maligait* – Inuit laws that ultimately contributed to living the good life untroubled. The IQ guiding principles prepared Inuit to pursue, achieve and abide by *maligait*. *Maligait* directly translates into “things one should follow.” There were many *maligait*, which acted as laws that Inuit should follow, but there were four major *maligait*, which include, but were not limited to:

- ▶ Working for the common good
- ▶ Respecting all living things
- ▶ Maintaining harmony and balance
- ▶ Continually planning and preparing for the future (Tagalik 2010, 1-2)

Through the educational practices of *inunnguiniq*, IQ and *maligait*, Inuit were enabled to be valuable contributors to society, which allowed them to thrive for thousands of years in the circumpolar north. However, this traditional Inuit education system was disrupted when Inuit came into contact with non-Inuit.

Iñupiaq Ilitqusiatic

IÑUPIAQ VALUES

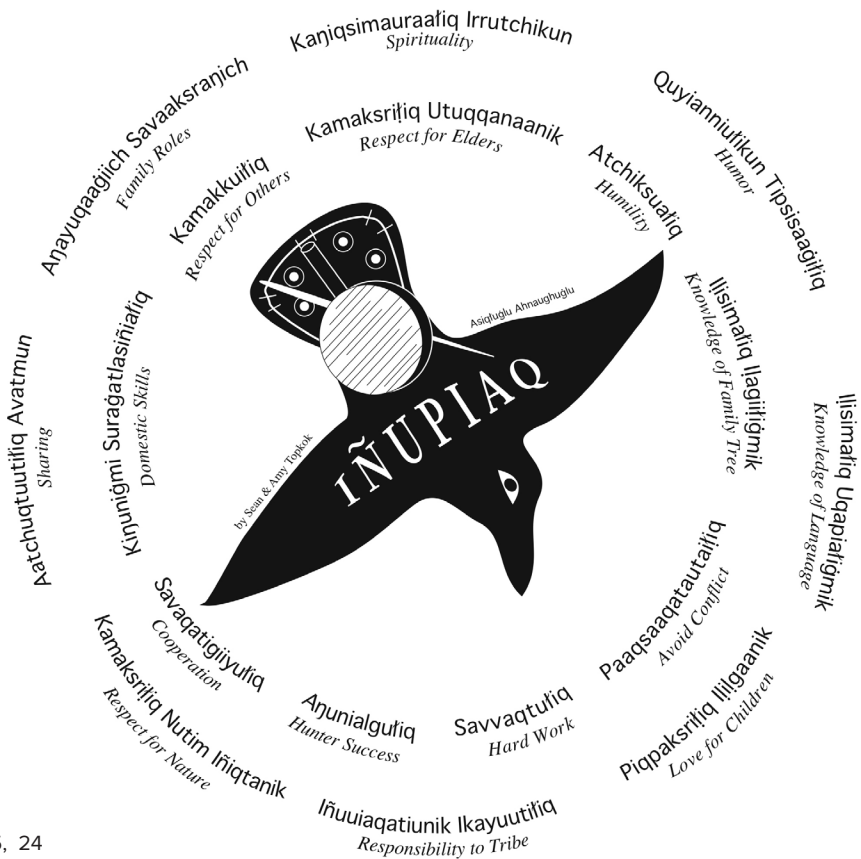
Like the Inuit in Canada, the Iñupiaq in Alaska had their own traditional education. This, although widely retained by Iñupiat elders, is documented to a lesser extent than IQ is in Canada. One of the lead researchers and documenters of *Iñupiat Ilitqusiatic* (II) is Sean Asiqluq Topkok, a professor at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in the School of Education. The traditional Iñupiaq education was taught

through II. The purpose of II, as explained by an Iñupiaq elder named Rachel Craig in Topkok’s dissertation, “is ‘the way people are.’ Their spiritual characteristics motivate their attitudes and actions. II actually means ‘how the Eskimo¹ are’” (Topkok 2015, 23). Furthermore, “[II] seeks to assert and validate Iñupiaq ethnic identity, reactivate and preserve Iñupiaq skills, and solve pressing social problems by using traditional wisdom that is part of the essential heritage of the Iñupiat” (Topkok 2015, 22). The II principles are described below, in a graph taken from Topkok’s dissertation.

Figure 1

Iñupiat Ilitqusiatic

With guidance and support from Elders, we must teach our children Iñupiaq values.



Source: Topkok 2015, 24

1 Eskimo is a commonly accepted term for Inuit in Alaska. However, the term is considered to be a derogatory slur in Canada.

Iliranaqtuq

**HAVING SO MUCH RESPECT THAT
IT BORDERS ON FEAR**

There is an Inuktitut word used by Inuit to describe the colonial history of Canadian Inuit – it is *iliranaqtuq*. *Iliranaqtuq* perfectly characterizes what Inuit went through during colonization.

Education of Inuit was the epitome of colonization efforts. The purpose of Inuit education during colonization was to destroy the “Indian² in the child” for the purpose of aggressive civilization (Government of Northwest Territories, Legacy of Hope Foundation 2012, 13-14). John Amagoalik, who is termed the “Father of Nunavut” for his efforts in negotiating the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and the subsequent creation of Nunavut, says of residential schools that schooling at the time was “designed to separate the children from their parents, teach them a new language, and to forget their cultures and traditions. It was their intention to ‘kill the native in the child’” (Government of Northwest Territories, Legacy of Hope Foundation 2012, 95).

Canada is currently going through a Truth and Reconciliation process to address the effects that residential schools had on Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The Truth half of the Truth and Reconciliation process provides the space for Indigenous Peoples to speak their truths about residential schools in Canada. Not only are they given the space to speak their truth but their truth is heard and honoured. The Reconciliation half is the restoration and creation of good relations between Indigenous Peoples and Canadians.

The Reconciliation process also includes providing compensation for Indigenous People who are survivors of the residential school system.

There are five policy efforts put in place to achieve Truth and Reconciliation. The first policy addresses Healing. \$125 million has been allocated to support the Aboriginal Healing Foundation to aid healing programs and initiatives. The prime minister of Canada at the time, Stephen Harper, also delivered a formal apology on June 11, 2008 as part of the healing process. In his formal apology Harper said:

“The burden of this experience has been on your shoulders for far too long. The burden is properly ours as a Government, and as a country. There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian Residential Schools system to ever prevail again. You have been working on recovering from this experience for a long time and in a very real sense, *we are now joining you on this journey* (emphasis added). The Government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the Aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly. Nous le regrettons — We are sorry — Nimitataynan — Niminchinowesamin – Mamiattugut.” Government of Northwest Territories, Legacy of Hope Foundation 2012, 49

2 The term at this time included Inuit people. However, once Inuit political mobilization occurred, Inuit were able to identify themselves as a separate culture and identity from the “Indian” one.

The second policy initiative is the Common Experience Payment (CEP). \$1.9 billion was set aside for residential school survivors to access compensation for experience in the form of \$10,000 for the first school year and \$3,000 for each subsequent year. The third policy is Truth and Reconciliation. \$60 million was granted over five years to promote public education and awareness of residential schools and their legacy. The fourth policy initiative is

Commemoration. \$20 million was granted to commemorate the legacy of residential schools. And lastly, the fifth policy initiative is the Independent Assessment Process (IAP). Residential school survivors who suffered severe sexual, physical or psychological abuses, and who felt the CEP did not do justice to compensate their experience in residential school can apply for IAP (Government of Northwest Territories, Legacy of Hope Foundation 2012, 160-162).

“

Schooling at the time was designed to separate the children from their parents, teach them a new language, and to forget their cultures and traditions.”

Sadie Brower Neakok, whose life is detailed in *Sadie Brower Neakok: An Iñupiaq Woman*, serves as a great example of the Canadian Inuit experience. Brower Neakok was an Iñupiaq woman from Barrow. She began her schooling in Barrow at a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) School. There were two classrooms and the students learned arithmetic, reading and writing. Technically, the Iñupiaq students were not allowed to speak their language, because the purpose of BIA Schools was to acculturate and assimilate the children into Western society, much like residential schools in Canada. However, Brower Neakok recalls that they had an Iñupiaq teacher who sympathized with them and occasionally let it pass when they spoke their language. Brower Neakok recalls her schooling experience in Barrow as follows, which is very dissimilar to how Inuit in Canada explain their residential schooling:

“School was something we really valued and wanted; we were just happy to be in school. There wasn’t a kid that didn’t want to go to school, because that was the only place that we could go. Most of us loved learning.”

Blackman 1989, 65

Brower Neakok then went on to school in San Francisco. She lived in San Francisco alone with family friends. She describes the homesickness she experienced after her initial move to San Francisco, saying:

“The first year I was quite homesick. I waited for the snow to fall that winter, which never came. I missed the atmosphere — the cold, the snow. There was day and night all the time in San Francisco, and how strange it was to be living in an area where winter just never came”

Blackman 1989, 85

Brower Neakok doubted herself in comparison to the students who were from San Francisco. She felt that she was not as good as them, explaining, “I didn’t class myself as being good enough, equal to the white children that I was placed with in that great big school” (Blackman 1989, 87). Brower Neakok explains that her inferiority complex arose from two sources. One was her inability to speak English as well as her classmates. The other was that the education she experienced was so culturally irrelevant to her that she found it hard to be interested in what she was learning. She describes the experience of her history class as follows:

“I didn’t know what a president was, or his cabinet, congress, all those things. It was hard for me to learn and remember “important” dates ... [they] had no significance to me; why should I remember all these? These were people and events that had no bearing on my life, and I used to just about fall off to sleep when the history teacher would recite these things we had to learn, because I could never make heads or tails of it.”

Blackman 1989, 88

Ajurnarmat

**THAT WHICH CANNOT BE HELPED,
BUT WE WILL ENDURE AND MOVE ON**

There is another Inuktitut word that perfectly characterizes the experiences of Inuit schooling during colonization, and it is *ajurnarmat*. This word is used in the Inuktitut language most commonly when a person passes away. When people comfort the loved ones of the person who has passed away, they hug them and say “*ajurnarmat*.” When this is said, the person acknowledges the hardship that is experienced. They are letting them know that the hardship will be experienced, but that it will come to pass, and that things will eventually return to normal.

Although the experience of residential schools was hard, the hardship did not last, and it was not all bad. Paul Andrew, a man from Tulita, NWT, and a residential school survivor, says about residential schools that “on the balance, certainly the negatives will win, but we cannot forget the positive that has been brought around” (Government of Northwest Territories, Legacy of Hope Foundation 2012, 69). This is a sentiment shared by many. Edna Elias, who has acted as commissioner of Nunavut and is a residential school survivor, says that “life is too short to dwell on the negative. If I’m going to do wonderful things in society, if I’m going to contribute to society, I can’t dwell on the past” (Government of Northwest Territories, Legacy of Hope Foundation 2012, 121). This shows how resilient Indigenous Peoples are, that no matter how hard the experience is, they will find ways to make the negative a positive.

There were some positives to take away from residential schools, although these positives should not overshadow the very real negative experiences of Indigenous Peoples in residential schools. Residential schools did empower Inuit to become valuable members of their society as newfound Canadians. Many residential school survivors went on to mobilize their peoples politically in response to their colonial experiences; to take back control over their lives. Peter Irniq, who was commissioner of Nunavut and is also a residential school survivor, has said that Inuit “have never said anything negative about the education system that we got. If anything, we have said the school that we attended, the education system that we got in English was a top-notch education system. We all became leaders in the end” (Irniq n.d.). He followed up that statement by explaining:

“In the early 1970s, we saw the formation of The Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, the Inuit Brotherhood of Canada, and regional associations that were established in various Inuit homelands in the Arctic, so there were lots of changes. We started to talk about the creation of Nunavut, which means “our land” in my language. We started to see the development of political structures for Inuit in the 1970s. Some of the changes that we saw in the 1970s were the changes that I myself helped to make those changes in regard to the creation of Nunavut.”

Irniq, n.d.

This is a phenomenon that was not only experienced by Inuit in Canada. Like Inuit in Canada, Brower Neakok felt obligated to use her education for the betterment of her people. Her first experience in education, outside of being a student, was with Eklutna Vocational School. She was the headmistress of the woman's dorm. She helped to take care of the Alaska Native women. As a former Iñupiaq student who spent time away from home, she understood what the students were going through. She realized that students were struggling with the new Western food they were provided at Eklutna, so she fought to have Native food once a week for the students. She helped greatly to alleviate students' homesickness (Blackman 1989, 100-104).

Brower Neakok then went on to study at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, where she trained for two years to become a teacher. She then went to teach in Barrow. In her role as teacher, Brower Neakok tried to use her education and influence to change what she saw as inappropriate in education. Brower Neakok realized as a teacher that "the education kids got [in Barrow] wasn't related to life up [there]" (Blackman 1989, 113). As a result, Brower Neakok acted as an advocate for Iñupiaq education. She would travel often to discuss educational matters with the BIA to better the education of Iñupiaq. However, family issues arose that pulled her out of teaching. She never returned to education, but she did become the first Iñupiaq magistrate (Blackman 1989, 110–114).

With their newfound education and skills, Inuit in Canada were able to build the foundation to take back control of their lives, and education. Mary Simon, who has received many accolades as an advocate for Inuit, but, more important, she advocates strongly for Inuit education, was the lead proponent behind Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's National Inuit Education Summit held in Inuvik in April 2008. Simon said, while at this summit:

"I heard the sound of rolling thunder. That is the sound, in Nunatsiavut, in Nunavik, in Nunavut and in the Inuvialuit Region, of Inuit rising up to reclaim our role as stewards of our children's education. Through our land claims, Inuit have taken back the stewardship of our land and our resources, and now, we have our eyes firmly set on transforming our education systems. We must build on our successes."

Akulukjuk 2008, 62

Addressing the Education Deficit, written in 2011, states that nationwide in Canada only one out of four Inuit students will graduate from high school (Simon 2011, 50). This statistic has not improved from a report written in 2006 (Berger 2006, 38). There are many reasons as to why this may be true. One major reason is that the history of residential schools has tainted many parents' views of education. Other reasons include a lack of bilingual education for those Inuit who speak Inuktitut as their first language, as well as a lack of community involvement, and a lack of culturally relevant education (Simon 2011, 50-52). Kerri Tattuinee, an Inuk student who graduated from the Nunavut Sivuniksavut (NS) program, wrote an article for *Naniiliqpita Magazine* called "The Problem with Passion." In her article, Tattuinee writes about all the amazing culturally-relevant education that she learned while at NS, and explains why she is baffled and frustrated as to why Inuit did not learn this material in their homeland. Tattuinee goes on to state that:

"It just amazes me how much work had to be put into all this – into Nunavut. It bugs me though, that a lot of young people don't realize it. People don't know, because they really aren't taught our history in schools or elsewhere. It's because our education system still follows Alberta curriculum, and besides having a few courses like Northern Studies and Aulajaaqtut, we don't really have the time to learn about our own history."
Tattuinee 2007, 28-29

There has been some movement in creating culturally relevant education in Nunavut. The social studies grade 10 curriculum is all Inuit- and Nunavut-focused. The course is broken down into four modules. Module one is called *Staking the Claim: Dreams, Democracy and Canadian Inuit*. In this module, students learn about Inuit history and the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. This module is an education resource created by NS. It is accompanied by three 20-minute documentaries. The documentaries were filmed by three NS graduates who interviewed prominent Inuit and non-Inuit leaders who were involved in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (Nunavut Sivuniksavut 2009).

The second module is called *Rights, Responsibilities and Justice*. In this module, students learn about traditional Inuit rights, responsibilities and justice; modern-day rights and responsibilities as an Inuk member of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement; and they learn about their rights and responsibilities as Canadian citizens and the justice systems in Nunavut and Canada (Department of Education 2012).

Module three is called *Governance and Leadership*. Students learn about governance models that are relevant to them, such as the Inuit governance that has emerged as a result of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement; they also learn about the Canadian and Nunavut governance systems; and about Inuit and non-Inuit leadership at various levels (Department of Education 2012).

Finally, the fourth module is called *The Residential School System in Canada: Understanding the Past — Seeking Reconciliation — Building Hope for Tomorrow*. This module emerged as a result of an initiative of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to educate Canadians about Canada’s residential school history (Government of Northwest Territories, Legacy of Hope Foundation 2012). The Nunavut social studies grade 10 curriculum is an amazing and wonderful achievement in culturally relevant education for Inuit in Nunavut. However, that is what it is — it is culturally relevant education to be used almost exclusively in Nunavut.

”

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Nunavut Sivuniksavut

OUR LAND, OUR FUTURE

Nunavut Sivuniksavut was created in 1985 when Inuit leaders saw a growing need to educate Inuit youth to negotiate and implement the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. NS has grown into a unique college program for Inuit students in Canada. It is a two-year program; however, students decide on their own accord if they want to attend the second year. Students who are accepted into the program move out of their Inuit community and live in Ottawa for nine months. While at NS, first-year students take Inuit-specific courses such as Inuit History, Land Claims Agreements, Contemporary Issues, and Inuit-Government Relations. They also take practical courses to help prepare them for their future, such as Inuktitut, English, computer use, and Inuit music. Along with courses, students also act as Inuit ambassadors to teach southern Canadians about the Inuit and Arctic culture. They do this by performing as a group at various events in Ottawa, within Canada, and internationally (Hanson 2011, 32-37). The NS program is as successful as it is unique. NS has a graduation rate of 80 to 85% (Hanson 2011, 41). This statistic is astounding compared to the high school graduation rates of Inuit in Canada, where only one out of four Inuit youth graduate.

Morley Hanson and Murray Angus are both instructors of the NS program. In “The New Three R’s,” they explain what makes

the NS program so successful. Hanson and Angus largely credit the success of NS to the cultural relevancy of their education, stating:

“[NS teaches Inuit youth curriculum that is] from their perspective of their own – a.k.a. Inuit – experience. Students find it highly engaging because it helps them to understand, not only the world they’re stepping into as young adults, but also how that world came into being.... They leave with a passionate commitment to building the Nunavut dream.”
Hanson 2011, 45

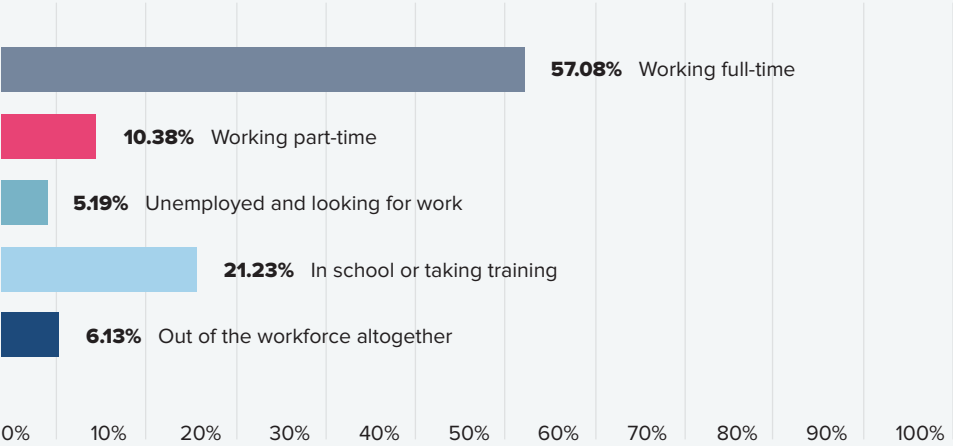
Inuit youth do leave the NS program with a passion to build on the Nunavut dream. Not only do these Inuit youth leave passionate and empowered, but the Government of Nunavut and Inuit organizations in Nunavut see the value in hiring them, because they understand the Inuit world that these governing structures function in. The two figures below show the employment rate of NS graduates.

The NS program is a highly successful program. However, like the social studies grade 10 curriculum in Nunavut, it is most useful and relevant to Nunavut Inuit.

Figure 2

What are you doing now?

ANSWERED: 212 SKIPPED: 2



If you're working, who do you work for?

ANSWERED: 181 SKIPPED: 33



Source: Nunavut Sivuniksavut, 2015

Inuit Nunaat

INUIT LAND

The circumpolar north is facing many issues. The Gordon Foundation conducted a survey and released it in a 2015 report called *Rethinking the Top of the World: Arctic Public Opinion Survey, Vol. 2*. One of the survey questions asked respondents from Canada and the United States what they think the biggest threats are to the Arctic. The top threats, in ascending order, include climate change; environmental damage; resource, oil and gas exploration and exploitation; lack of political support, representation and sovereignty (The Gordon Foundation 2015, 28). These are international and trans-boundary circumpolar issues that cannot be addressed by one nation-state alone. Inuit, who are a circumpolar people and whose homeland is the Arctic, often find themselves at the heart of these issues.

Inuit live in a vast territory making up the majority of the circumpolar north. The land they occupy can be called *Inuit Nunaat* (Inuit lands). *Inuit Nunaat* extends from Russia to Alaska to Canada and finally Greenland. Borders are a new concept to Inuit, imposed on them by nation-states. Pujjut Kusugak, a modern political leader who has served on many Inuit organizations, says, in regard to his Canadian Inuit identity that, “First, we can go back and say this: Inuit did not pick Canada. Canada picked the Arctic and Inuit happened to live there” (The Gordon Foundation 2013, 20).

Inuit, despite the borders that separate them, recognize their shared culture and identity. Describing Inuit connections, Natan Obed, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, has said, “Our families spread across jurisdictional boundaries. Our bonds are not cemented in our land claim silos, and

our love for one another is not confined to cultural or linguistic attributes ... and we connect meaningfully despite distance” (Obed 2015, 2). This is something many Inuit leaders have known for a long time. As early as 1976, Eben Hopson, an Iñupiaq leader from Barrow, was advocating for the creation of a pan-Inuit political unit to create Arctic policy to address issues that Inuit were facing. Hopson was successful in gathering Inuit for the first Inuit Circumpolar Conference. Inuit were given the platform to discuss policy concerning mineral and energy resource extraction that affected them. In 1980 this evolved into the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) and Hopson was the first president to serve ICC. ICC represents 155,000 Inuit across the circumpolar north. Later, in 1991, it became apparent to nation-states that there was a need for an Arctic organization for countries to collectively address issues in the Arctic. Thus, in 1996, the Arctic Council was established to enable Arctic nations to create Arctic policy (Anjum 2013). Governing structures such as the ICC and the Arctic Council now play a major role in the lives of circumpolar Inuit.

With the ever-growing and pressing concerns that Inuit from the circumpolar north face, which are largely transboundary, there is a need to prepare Inuit youth to address these international issues; this is their circumpolar reality. Kirt Ejiesiak, an Inuk from Nunavut who has served as executive director of ICC-Canada, passionately advocates for a pan-Inuit Union or Inuit State. In the Inuit Union, Inuit would form a union similar to the European Union. Inuit in the Inuit Union would still be members of their respective nation-states. However, there would be political tools put in place where Inuit would have more of an ability to govern their lives to best fit their circumpolar reality.

Inummarik

THE REAL HUMAN BEING

Education is the best way for Inuit to address the issues of their circumpolar context. Education has the amazing power to shape an entire peoples and their future. Inuit need to create curriculum that promotes what Rachel Qitsualik, a prominent Inuit writer whose written work strives to include Inuit traditional practices, calls *inummarik*. Qitsualik explains *inummarik* as follows:

“The Inummarik, too, is a ghost-concept, a model alone, though it is one toward which Inuit have aspired since ancient times. This model is the free human, sovereign over the self, respectful of the self-sovereignty of others. It is the human whose awareness not only renders self-sovereignty possible, but comprehends how self-sovereignties — those of others in society — synergize toward a system of self-perpetuating health.”

The Gordon Foundation 2013, 36

Curriculum needs to be created by Inuit for Inuit to enable them to live successfully in their circumpolar world. If NS, with its culturally relevant education to Inuit in Nunavut, is so successful within what Obed calls its “land claim silo,” then imagine the implications a circumpolar-wide culturally relevant curriculum would have on Inuit of the circumpolar north. Inuit would be able to walk away from their educational experience feeling empowered. Perhaps they would feel as Sadie Brower Neakok felt when she learned culturally relevant education from her husband, Nate Neakok:

“I was born into Eskimo life, I knew what it consisted of, but I was so young when I was taken out to school. So, I had to learn it all over-learned to sew all over again, how to make clothing, mukluks, parkas, tan hides. Some of the life of my people just really sank into me that first year of our marriage, because it showed me how much I had missed, and how much I didn’t know that existed in our native way of life. Nate was a hunter; it was his livelihood. He never went to school, but he knew more than I did, a college student, a teacher. From him I learned how to be an Eskimo all over again.”

Blackman 1989, 124

There are education policies from various Inuit organizations already put in place that Inuit could use. In Canada, there is the *First Canadians, Canadians First: National Strategy on Inuit Education 2011*, which was released by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. Education policies recommended in this report which could help Inuit create curriculum for Inuit circumpolar empowerment include developing leaders in Inuit education, and investing in Inuit-centred curriculum (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2011). In Alaska, there is the *Alaska Inuit Education Improvement Strategy 2015*, which was released by ICC-Alaska. Education policies recommended in this report could help Inuit create curriculum to address their circumpolar reality:

- ▶ Promote the indigenization of education frameworks to more clearly align with Inuit ideologies
- ▶ Suggest, advocate for, and influence policies related to Inuit education
- ▶ Research, advocate for, and promote the development, implementation, and sharing of culture based curriculum that focuses on students' identity as Inuit
- ▶ Foster educational leadership capacity among Alaska Inuit. These are frameworks that provide Inuit the foundation to build upon and create an Inuit circumpolar-wide curriculum (Inuit Circumpolar Conference — Alaska 2015)

“
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world.”

It was through colonial policy that Inuit were separated into four different countries: Russia, Alaska, Canada and Greenland. Education was considered the epitome of colonization efforts. Inuit in Canada were colonized through the residential schools. Inuit in Canada express their experience with residential school as *iliranaqtuq*, whereby so much respect was given that it induced fear. Inuit in Alaska were colonized through BIA schools. Inuit in Alaska, as seen in the example of Sadie Brower Neakok, commonly expressed their experiences as inducing an inferiority complex similar to *iliranaqtuq*. Prior to this, Inuit had their own education frameworks. In Canada, Inuit describe this education framework as *inunnguiniq*, which means the process of making a capable human being. To achieve *inunnguiniq*, Inuit followed the guiding principles of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, which were governed by *maligait*. In Alaska, Inuit practiced *Il̥upiat Il̥itqusiat*.

Throughout the circumpolar north, there are ever-growing and pressing international

issues. Although Inuit are separated by four nation-states, they share a common culture. This common and shared culture prompts Inuit to respond to these circumpolar international issues with the same attitudes. However, because Inuit are separated by four nation-states, it makes it difficult for Inuit to come together to address these issues. Therefore, it is important for Inuit to unite — despite the borders that separate them — to address these issues. One way that this can be accomplished is through international education efforts, which promote *inummarik*. The case study of Nunavut Sivuniksavut as a success story can provide valuable insight into how this can be accomplished and the successes that may follow as a result. There are policies from Inuit organizations that provide the foundation and frameworks for this to be accomplished, such as Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's *First Canadians, Canadians First: National Strategy on Inuit Education 2011* and Inuit Circumpolar Council Alaska's *Alaskan Inuit Education Improvement Strategy*.

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