

# ***The Miqqut Project***

Joining Literacy, Culture and Well-Being  
through Non-formal Learning in Nunavut

Research Report



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Nunavut Literacy Council  
Conseil des littératies du Nunavut

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A clear language summary report of the Miqqut research project is available in Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun (electronic version only), English and French. All reports are available on-line at:

<http://www.ilitaqsiniq.ca>

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through Non-formal Learning in Nunavut

**Research Report**

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Nunavut Literacy Council  
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# Executive Summary

Non-formal cultural programs, widely offered in Nunavut, are enhancing lives. This research documents the outcomes of non-formal traditional skills programs with embedded literacy. A community-based research team conducted one hundred interviews with participants and instructors of five non-formal cultural programs offered in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut. Four of the five programs focused on sewing and related practices of fur preparation, pattern creation, and esthetic design. The fifth program targeted fine arts ranging from drawing to ceramics. Each program embedded literacy to varying degrees. Two of the programs also targeted personal well-being.

Systematic analysis of instructor and participant testimonies reveals concurrent cultural, literacy and well-being outcomes in all five programs.

## **Cultural outcomes include:**

- Development of artistic, fur and skin preparation, and/or sewing skills;
- Enhancement of language and literacy practices related to the traditional skill;
- Concrete creations which are displayed and used (garments, decorative pieces);
- Reinvigoration of traditional Inuit intergenerational modes of learning;
- Cultural pride.

## **Literacy and essential skills outcomes include:**

- Enhanced self-expression and learning through multiple modes of communication, including non-verbal, oral and written;
- Language development in Inuktitut and in English;

- Increased ability, confidence and motivation in gaining, documenting, and sharing information;
- Development of life skills and work habits that favour success in school and jobs;
- Re-engagement in formal education and the wage economy following program participation.

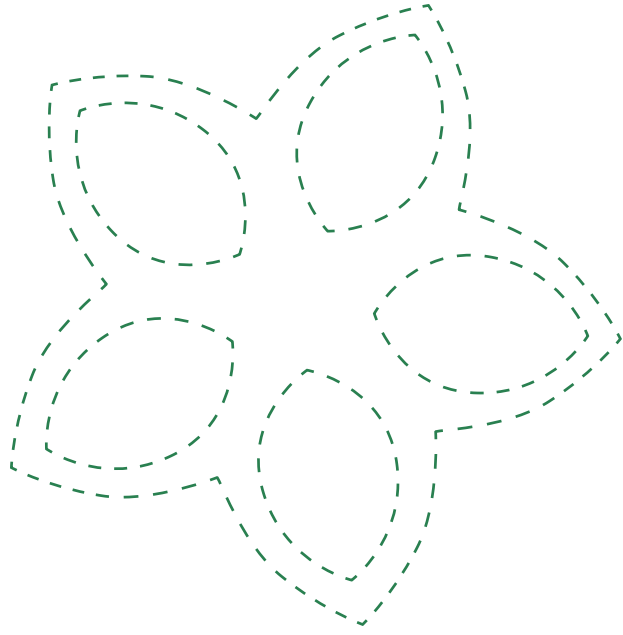
## **Well-being outcomes include:**

- Improved confidence and pride in one's abilities and in oneself as a person;
- Greater happiness; healing;
- *Inunnguiniq* – “Guiding the potential of the human spirit” - empowerment to act out cultural values including generosity, respect, patience, and forgiveness;
- Healthier lifestyle choices;
- Positive engagement with family and the broader community.

Depending on learners' goals, the program's focus and model of delivery, the relative importance of these outcomes varies. However, the overall findings are robust across participants and across programs. Participants' and instructors' testimonies show how culture, literacy and well-being overlap for strong impact in participants' lives.

Ilitaqsiniq's research confirms that non-formal cultural programs with embedded literacy are effective venues for literacy and essential skills development. Furthermore, such programs help participants develop as resilient individuals, contributing to stronger families and communities. This research shows the wisdom of investing in high quality non-formal programs with embedded literacy to ensure the best outcomes for Inuit learners.







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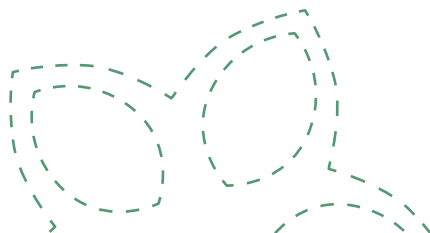




# Introduction

This report documents Iliqaqiniq – the Nunavut Literacy Council’s research into the outcomes of non-formal cultural programs with embedded literacy. Over two years, Iliqaqiniq conducted interviews with participants, instructors and coordinators of past programs incorporating literacy and traditional skill development in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut. Concurrently, Iliqaqiniq ran two pilot cultural skills programs with embedded literacy. The community-based research team documented participants’ self-evaluation at the beginning, end and six months following each pilot. Based on one hundred interviews and participant observation, results show how non-formal cultural programs with embedded literacy are effective for engaging a wide range of learners. Participants’ and instructors’ testimonies show that learners experienced significant outcomes related to traditional skills, literacy and well-being. The combination of literacy, culture and well-being within the non-formal learning environment contributes to broader impacts on participants’ engagement with their families and their communities, with formal education, and with the wage economy.





# Background

## Ilitaqsiniq – the Nunavut Literacy Council

Ilitaqsiniq – the Nunavut Literacy Council – is a small, non-profit, community-based organization in Nunavut, Canada. Its staff work out of Nunavut’s three regional centres (Cambridge Bay, Rankin Inlet, Iqaluit), as well as Ottawa. Volunteer board members from each of Nunavut’s regions oversee the organization’s work. Ilitaqsiniq’s mandate is to promote literacy development in the official languages of Nunavut – Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun, English and French. The organization’s Inuktitut name – Ilitaqsiniq – reflects its broad conceptualization of literacy, adapted from Gjoa Haven Inuit Elders’ definition: “Seeing, and knowing what you see” (Nunavut Literacy Council n.d.). Ilitaqsiniq advocates to policy makers for evidence-based responses to literacy and essential skills-related needs in Nunavut. It also trains front-line workers with literacy components in their jobs to enhance literacy programming. To these ends, Ilitaqsiniq pursues a rigorous program of made-in-Nunavut research. Research objectives address the most pressing issues and promising venues identified by Nunavummiut.<sup>1</sup>

**The *Kasuutittiaqatigiingniq*<sup>2</sup> project documents and evaluates a promising practice within many Nunavut communities – blending of traditional skills and literacy within non-formal learning programs.**

## Embedded Literacy

Literacy is “a skill that enables people to interpret and effectively respond to the world around them. Based upon language development from birth, it includes the ability to learn, communicate, read

- 1 Nunavummiut is the self-designation term for residents of Nunavut, inclusive of Inuit and non-Inuit.
- 2 *Kasuutittiaqatigiingniq* is the Inuktitut word Ilitaqsiniq staff created for the research project. Please refer to the glossary in this report or the summary research report for an explanation of this term.

and write, pass on knowledge and participate actively in society” (Nunavut Literacy Council n.d.). As Ilitaqsiniq defines it, literacy encompasses communicative practices in any language, and includes some non-linguistic practices.

Embedded literacy refers to the delivery of literacy instruction where the primary goal(s) or activity(ies) is not (only) literacy. Embedded literacy practices are directly related to the primary learning goal or activity (Rogers 2005). Literacy is thus highly contextualized. Embedded literacy programs follow the vision of literacy as a situated practice rather than a decontextualized skill: **“Literacy practices vary with cultural context, there is not a single, monolithic autonomous literacy...rather, there are... “literacies” or rather “literacy practices” whose character and consequences have to be specified for each context”** (Street 2000: 125). Through contextualized practice, acquired literacies are relevant to participants’ daily lives and thus more likely to be continually practiced and built upon. Continued practice is a sure sign of a literacy program’s success (Bhola 1990).

A number of models fall under the embedded literacy umbrella. At the one end, programs offer parallel delivery of literacy and another subject (e.g. vocational training), where literacy instruction has its own time segment and its own instructor (London Strategic Unit 2007). At the other end, literacy is an integral part of all activities to the extent that literacy learning may not even be a conscious activity. For example, Heath (2004) and Flood, Heath and Lapp (2004, 2007) documented how arts programming is a vehicle for literacy development, even when literacy is not explicitly targeted. Benseman, Sander and Lander (2005) identified research on factors contributing to success in embedded delivery models as a significant gap in the adult literacy literature. In the current research, Ilitaqsiniq set out to document literacy and essential skills outcomes in programs with varying degrees of embedded literacy.

## Non-Formal Programming

**Non-formal learning is non-obligatory, unaccredited learning, characterized by a more casual learning environment** (Eaton 2010).

While programs may be organized in advance, participants take responsibility for self-directed learning. Non-formal learning contrasts with formal learning, which takes place in schools, is accredited, and highly teacher-directed. It also contrasts with the informal learning that takes place within individuals' daily lives, which is entirely context-driven, sometimes without explicit planning or intention to learn. Formal, non-formal and informal learning thus exist on a continuum, with distinct approaches to teacher/learner relationship, learning environment, content, learning methods, and evaluation tools (see table in Appendix A, Peace Corps 2004).

Around the world, programmers have adopted non-formal approaches to reach marginalized individuals and those unlikely or ill-equipped to engage in formal learning without a bridging program. Non-formal arts programming such as YouthArts in inner city contexts in the United States, for example, has proven effective in re-engaging at-risk youth in school and work, in part through improved literacy and communication skills (Farnum & Schaffer 1998). Adult literacy development in primarily oral societies has privileged non-formal learning. The REFLECT (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques) model of literacy development, for instance, implemented in over 50 countries, is learner-directed, contextually-anchored, and focused on teaching literacy as a tool to reach learners' other goals (Kempere 2009). Indigenous language and literacy activists, for their part, have introduced non-formal programs such as land camps to reconnect community members to traditional language, land, and cultural practices (e.g. First Peoples' Heritage, Language & Culture Council [FPHLCC] 2011a and 2011b). Evaluation of these programs shows literacy development coupled with other outcomes relating to participants' felt needs, personal and community well-being (Archer & Cottingham 1996, FPHLCC 2011b, Farnum & Schaffer 1998, Riddel 2001).

In Nunavut, Inuit organizations among others have introduced non-formal programs to teach

traditional skills, language, art, and well-being, among other goals. Examples include Pirurvik's *Ingalangaittuurvik*, Reclaiming the Whole Woman, program (Pirurvik n.d.); the Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre's youth wellness camps (Noah n.d.), Blueprint for Life's wellness through hiphop programs (Blueprint for Life n.d.); the Embrace Life Council's Inuusivut Project (Inuusivut 2008). The programs documented through this research – Somebody's Daughter, Reclaiming our Sinew, Traditional Arts Workshop, and Miqqut deliberately embed literacy and essential skills within non-formal cultural programs. Such programs reach a wide range of learners, including those who may not access other educational programs. Bernadette Dean, in reference to past non-formal programs stated:

Many Inuit women in our region still need a stepping-stone program to provide immediate benefit to their self-esteem and encourage them to go further with their academic pursuits [...] If the government concentrates strictly on higher levels of academic learning with its funding, they're going to leave behind a lot of Inuit men and women who aren't qualified to set foot in a management studies or law program.

(quoted in Greer 2001)

Ilitaqsiniq staff members, in their current roles and as past adult educators in Nunavut, heard and noticed that traditional skills programs with embedded literacy, often considered only for their cultural component, appeared to be effective in improving the literacy and essential skills of adult learners. Anecdotally, Ilitaqsiniq believed, as did others actively involved in such programs, that **non-formal, context-based cultural and literacy programs assist participants to gain the confidence and foundational skills required to enter the workforce or take the risk and challenge of enrolling in higher level education. Non-formal cultural and literacy programs seem, further, to increase and promote healthy participation in family and community life.**

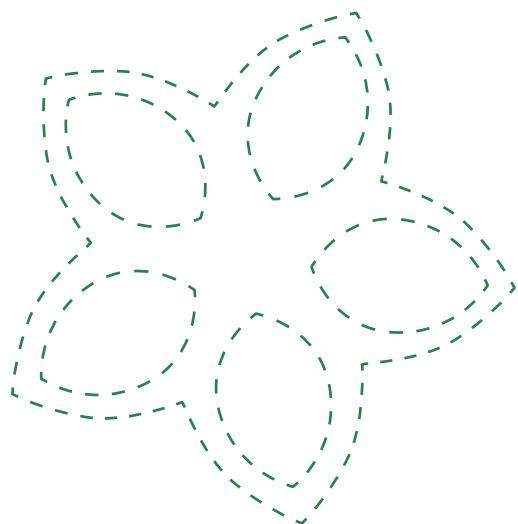
While non-formal traditional skills programs are increasingly common in Nunavut, non-formal cultural and literacy programs had not, prior to



this research, been systematically documented. Limited research into traditional skills programs with embedded literacy in other indigenous contexts identifies these as “invisible learning spaces” (Kral 2010b: 5). In the absence of the documentation of the process and outcomes of non-formal, cultural programming in Nunavut, **programmers sometimes found it difficult to access adult education or literacy and essential skills funding for what were seen as ‘only’ cultural programming. Moreover, those offering cultural programs such as traditional clothing production (as is happening in almost every Nunavut community) do not necessarily have the knowledge and tools to deliberately embed literacy or the awareness of the impact a literacy component could add.** Ilitaqsiniq thus developed this research project, funded by the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, HRSDC, to document and explore widespread but previously anecdotal beliefs about direct and indirect outcomes of non-formal cultural programs with embedded literacy.

## Examples of Non-Formal Programs with Embedded Literacy in Nunavut

The Ilitaqsiniq research team documented five non-formal cultural programs with embedded literacy. Three were previously offered programs: Reclaiming our Sinew, Somebody’s Daughter and Traditional Arts Workshop. Two were pilot programs developed and evaluated as part of the research: Miqqut 1 and Miqqut 2. The goals, target participants, instructors, format and activities of the programs are summarized below.



## Reclaiming our Sinew

Reclaiming Our Sinew was created by the Kivalliq Inuit Association with support from Nunavut Arctic College as a founding partner in both development and delivery, offered over a number of years in Rankin Inlet. Program goals were to pass on traditional knowledge of Inuit clothing production, as well as to develop essential skills for subsequent learning and employment. Target participants were Inuit women who were disengaged from formal learning and employment. Students attended full-time for 24 weeks. In that time, they learned to prepare furs and skins and to create traditional Inuit outerwear. They also upgraded literacy, numeracy and other employability skills. The two aspects of the course occurred in different buildings, at different times of the day. Inuit Elders taught the cultural component, while adult educators taught literacy and essential skills. The program was popular, with high retention and subsequent workforce and educational engagement. Reclaiming our Sinew has been held up as a model of promising practices in Inuit education, as have the other programs considered (e.g. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2005, Nunavut Literacy Council 2004).

## Somebody’s Daughter

Somebody’s Daughter is a two-week land camp coordinated by the Kivalliq Inuit Association. The program combines land skills, fur preparation, sewing, literacy and healing (Kivalliq Inuit Association n.d.). The program targets women who need an opportunity to re-engage with traditional practices, particularly those for whom intergenerational knowledge transfer was interrupted by residential schools. Instructors are Inuit Elders and cultural specialists. Depending on the year, a specific literacy coach may join the group. Otherwise, core program instructors facilitate both the cultural and the literacy components. During the days, women learn to prepare skins and sew traditional Inuit clothing. Literacy activities, including journaling and letter writing, normally occur in the evening and are integral to the healing aspect of the course.

## Traditional Arts Workshop

Traditional Arts Workshop is offered out of the Kangirqliniq Center for Arts and Learning, an outgrowth of Rankin Inlet's Matchbox Gallery founded by Jim and Sue Shirley. Participants learn artistic technique in print-making, drawing, ceramics, soapstone carving and others (Kangirqliniq Center for Arts and Learning n.d.). The program has had different focuses over the years, but always targets individuals with some artistic aptitude, and sometimes targets other specific groups (such as individuals who have been marginalized in some way). Instructors include the non-Inuit founders of the Workshop, local Inuit artists, and artists-in-residence brought in for specific purposes. The Workshop founders weave in literacy and numeracy instruction relevant to traditional arts, including reading aloud and math activities relating to pricing and sale of final products. The program is offered full-time, and is ongoing.

## Miqqut 1

Ilitaqsiniq designed and offered two pilot programs as part of the current research. Miqqut 1 was offered from January to May 2011, with a focus on traditional Inuit sewing. Participants were chosen based on a number of criteria, including youth who were not working or in school. Inuit Elders worked one on one with learners to teach them how to sew their selected garment. A trained Inuit educator worked alongside the Elders as a program coordinator. The participants worked at their own pace from 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday, over the course of the four month program. In Miqqut 1, literacy was modeled where it was relevant to the sewing practices and goals, but it was not explicitly taught.

## Miqqut 2

Miqqut 2 was offered following a similar model as the one developed for Miqqut 1. However, in Miqqut 2, language and literacy development were explicit goals alongside the sewing. A literacy instructor joined the team and deliberately embedded literacy activities throughout the day that were relevant to the students' other learning activities and goals. Literacy activities ranged from silent reading to creation of sewing portfolios. In keeping with outcomes observed in Miqqut 1, well-being was incorporated as a goal and was the focus of some literacy activities.

The programs above were chosen as examples of non-formal programming in Nunavut incorporating literacy and cultural knowledge, skills and practices. The Kivalliq programs included in the research are only a sampling of the rich non-formal programming across the Arctic. Each of the regional Inuit associations and youth associations offer regular land camps for traditional skills, language, and well-being. Most Nunavut communities have regular women's sewing programs. **Inuit and Nunavummiut identify these programs as highly desirable and worthwhile, but up until this point, their outcomes have not been systematically analyzed or compared. Through analysis of five sample programs, Ilitaqsiniq evaluated the outcomes of "made-in-Nunavut" non-formal cultural programs with a literacy component. By documenting these programs, we revealed the potential for engaging learners and maximising impact through embedding literacy in traditional skills programs.**





# Research Method

## Community-Based Research

Ilitaqsiniq pursues research as a tool to provide an evidence base for programming and policy decisions relating to literacy in Nunavut's official languages. **In keeping with a commitment to the research process as well as the outcomes empowering Nunavummiut, Ilitaqsiniq engages in community-based research. Inuit and Nunavummiut are the lead researchers and decision makers.** The broader community is kept involved throughout the research project.

## Research Team

**The research team, comprised of Ilitaqsiniq staff, community-based researchers and an academic research guide, work together on all aspects of the project, from research design through to reporting.** Kim Crockatt, Executive Director of Ilitaqsiniq, developed the original proposal in collaboration with Ilitaqsiniq project manager Cayla Chenier. Both are long-term Northern residents (although Cayla now works out of Ottawa). Kim, who serves as President of the Kitikmeot Heritage Society in addition to her role as Executive Director of Ilitaqsiniq, is closely acquainted with cultural and literacy programming across the territory. She oversaw the project from beginning to end. Cayla, a former adult educator in Rankin Inlet, brought a strong awareness of issues and promising practices in Inuit adult education. She contributed to project management, communications, and direction of the project. Ilitaqsiniq staff members Quluuq Pilakapsi, Gloria Kowtak and Adriana Kusugak took on the roles of lead researchers. Quluuq is an Inuit Elder and literacy specialist, with prior experience leading community-based research. Gloria is a younger Inuk educator with experience as a participant and instructor in a range of learning environments. Adriana is a lifelong resident of Rankin Inlet, completing a Masters of Education

degree with a research component. The three community researchers are bilingual in Inuktitut and English and respected in their community for their role in and commitment to language and literacy development. Shelley Tulloch joined the team as an academic research guide. She is a non-Inuit PhD researcher, living in Cape Dorset, Nunavut. Sue Folinsbee and Mary Ellen Belfiore provided external project evaluation. Through their different lens, they offered corroborating evidence for outcomes observed by the research team. Overall the team worked together within their specific areas of expertise, contributing individual strengths as needed, and helping each other to develop capacity in all areas of community-based research. The collaborative approach helped further Ilitaqsiniq's role as a centre of research excellence in Nunavut and for Nunavummiut.

## Research Location

### Nunavut

The research took place in the Inuit community of Rankin Inlet (*Kangiqliniq*), Nunavut. The territory of Nunavut was created in 1999, as the result of negotiations between Inuit of the then Northwest Territories and the Canadian federal government. Whereas in the prior Northwest Territories, and in Canada as whole, Inuit were a small minority, in the new Nunavut territory Inuit make up roughly 85 percent of the population. Some of the goals behind the pursuit of self governance were to enhance Inuit well-being, to step out of the minoritization previously suffered and to protect, preserve and promote Inuit ways of being, including Inuit culture and language (Nunavut Constitutional Forum 1983).

Article 23 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (Canada and Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut 1993) sets out parameters for enhancing Inuit

employment. However, the Conciliator's report on achievement of the land claims' goals found employment targets far from being met, and blamed inadequate, inappropriate educational opportunities (Berger 2006). The Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy advocates for more "non-formal, community-based literacy programs [...] to re-engage adult learners in life-long learning" (Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. 2006: 41). **Combined with formal and informal learning opportunities in Nunavut, adult educators believe that non-formal culture and literacy programs remove barriers and open doors to more equitable educational and employment opportunities in Nunavut.**

### **Rankin Inlet**

Rankin Inlet is a regional centre for the Kivalliq region of Nunavut. With a population of about 2250, of whom 80 percent are Inuit, it is the third largest community in Nunavut (Statistics Canada 2012). The community was founded in 1954 in response to growing mining activity in the region. Up until then, Inuit around the area had survived primarily within a nomadic subsistence economy. Sedentarization, formal education and introduction of the wage economy, among other factors, led to rapid cultural shift. Today, Rankin Inlet Inuit live in a mixed economy. Most still rely somewhat on hunting, trapping and fishing to supply food and the materials needed to produce appropriate clothing. The wage economy employs just over half of Inuit over 15 years of age. Major areas of employment are sales and service; trades, transport and heavy equipment; and business, finance and administrative occupations (Statistics Canada 2006). The territorial government, regional Inuit organizations, and mining and exploration companies are the main employers. Entrepreneurship is also a significant source of employment (Mason, Dana and Anderson 2009). Unemployment (i.e. the rate of those who are unemployed and looking for work) sits at thirteen percent. However, over one third of Inuit in Rankin Inlet Inuit over 15 years old are disengaged from the wage economy, neither employed nor looking for work.

Over the past fifty years Rankin Inlet has grown to offer secondary and post-secondary education opportunities. *Maani Ulujuk Ilinniarvik*, originally serving the whole Kivalliq region, was the first community high school in the region to offer up to Grade 12. Nunavut Arctic College's Kivalliq campus offers programs ranging from adult basic education to teachers' education, fine arts, business and management, health and skilled trades. Trades are offered in a new facility, *Sanatuliksarvik*.

Uptake of formal learning opportunities is slow. Canada's 2006 census showed, for example, that the population of Inuit aged 25 to 35 years old in Rankin Inlet was split, with roughly half not having completed high school or the equivalent, one quarter having completed high school or equivalent, and just over one quarter having attended some form of post-secondary. No one in this age group had completed a university degree, for which potential students must leave the region at least for part of the degree. This brief snapshot suggests that while formal learning and employment opportunities are available in Rankin Inlet, as many as half of the adult Inuit population is not benefiting from them. In the words of Pujjuut Kusugak, then mayor of Rankin Inlet, "We would like to see more beneficiaries in the higher positions, such as supervisors, managers, etc., but the reality is they don't have the experience, qualifications, or training. Hopefully... this will not be a problem for long" (Canada, House of Commons 2012).

**While increasing uptake in formal education and employment is a concern, Inuit also express concern over the lack of opportunities to learn and practice skills associated with the subsistence economy.** The contexts within which such knowledge and practices were naturally transmitted generation to generation are being lost (Laugrand and Oosten 2009). Children, now in school for the bulk of the day, no longer have the opportunity to repeatedly watch their parents executing traditional skills such as fur preparation, sewing, or hunting. **Inuit value traditional practices both for their identity function and their practical usefulness surviving in an unpredictable and harsh Arctic environment. Anecdotally, residents of Rankin Inlet highly value programs that create new contexts for learning traditional skills.**



Rankin Inlet is a bilingual community. Rapid cultural changes have led to shift from Inuktitut as the only language of most Inuit, to bilingualism in Inuktitut and English. Inuktitut encodes traditional knowledge through its vocabulary and grammar. It links Inuit Elders to younger Inuit. Contexts for learning Inuktitut though, and opportunities for learning from Elders in Inuktitut, are decreasing. In Canada's 2006 census, roughly 80 percent of Rankin Inlet Inuit identified Inuktitut as their mother tongue, but only 50 percent identified it as the language most frequently used at home. These numbers appear to have dropped below 70 percent and below 40 percent respectively in the 2011 census (Statistics Canada 2006, 2012). Inuktitut-English bilingualism increasingly favours English to the detriment of Inuktitut. **Many Inuit are looking for new types of learning opportunities to enhance their knowledge of the ancestral language and to be able to learn from unilingual Elders despite an increasing language barrier.**

As a regional centre, Rankin Inlet has learning and work opportunities as well as other programming not necessarily available in smaller Inuit communities. It is in many ways typical of communities across the Arctic, though. Most communities face similar tensions between two ways of life. **Many community members would benefit from increased opportunities to develop literacy and essential skills and to enhance knowledge of the Inuit language and cultural practices.** As such, although our research focuses on a specific community, we would cautiously apply the results to other Inuit and indigenous communities.

## Research Participants

The participants in our research were the instructors, coordinators, and participants of five non-formal cultural programs. The Traditional Arts Workshop program incorporated male and female students and instructors; the other programs had all female participants. Most research participants were Inuit, although a few were long-term, non-Inuit Nunavummiut. Most live in Rankin Inlet, while others reside in neighbouring Kivalliq communities.

Age ranges included young and middle aged adults and Elders, with the latter most frequently participating as instructors. Most participants would not otherwise have had the opportunity to learn the skills offered in the program, whether through interruptions to intergenerational learning or through disengagement with formal learning. Although the programs in some ways attempted to engage previously marginalized individuals, many participants would be recognized as highly successful community members prior to and following the program.

In terms of recruitment, all participants in the Miqqut 1 and Miqqut 2 pilots were invited to take part in the research, although they also had the option to join the traditional skills program without taking part in the research. In the case of past programs, research participants were identified through word of mouth, with past instructors and coordinators recommending people to talk to. Any and all participants were eligible to take part, including those who only attended a portion of their program. **In total, 14 instructors (roughly three per program, with the same instructor sometimes interviewed for multiple programs) and 52 program participants (roughly eight per program) were interviewed, for a total of 66 participants.** Participants chose whether their real names or pseudonyms would be used in reports, as reflected by quotations in the results section.<sup>3</sup>

## Data Collection

Data collection took place in two stages: 1/ documentation of three previously run non-formal cultural programs: Reclaiming our Sinew, Somebody's Daughter, and Traditional Arts Workshop; and 2/ creation, delivery and documentation of two pilot programs: Miqqut 1 and Miqqut 2. In the documentation of the two pilot Miqqut programs, researchers conducted an entrance interview, exit interview and six-month post-program interview with each consenting participant, and also administered a closed questionnaire at each stage. Instructors

<sup>3</sup> Pseudonyms were created using a fictitious first name and "Pseudo" as the last name.



were interviewed at the end of the program. In the documentation of past programs, only the post-program interview was used. Researchers interviewed program developers and past instructors, coordinators and participants anywhere from six months to years following their participation in the program. In total, we conducted 100 interviews.

Entrance interviews asked about expectations and goals for the program, and collected baseline data on the participants' self-perceptions of literacy practices, community involvement and personal well-being. Questions were designed based on literature reviews of identified outcomes in non-formal programs with a cultural and/or literacy component, as well as the team members' anecdotal observations of outcomes in prior programs. The exit interview asked similar questions about self-perceptions in areas of literacy practices and well-being, and also asked about perceptions of the program's processes, strengths and weaknesses. An identical interview script was used for the exit and six month post-program interviews.

Interviews with instructors similarly asked about their expectations and experiences of the program, as well as their perceptions of students' outcomes. Interviewers prompted for concrete examples of progress, indications of how widespread particular outcomes were, as well as for examples of outliers where outcomes were not observed. We conducted interviews in the participants' language of choice, sometimes in English, sometimes in Inuktitut, sometimes in a combination of languages.

We adopted an ipsative model of evaluation: the complete series of interviews (questions included in Appendix B) were designed to track goals and outcomes based on each student's starting point and progress. **Outcomes are identified based on students' self evaluation, corroborated by observations of instructors, fellow students and researchers.**

The community researchers also did participant observation in the two pilot programs, recording processes and outcomes. As community researchers are permanent members of the community, participant observation began in a looser sense long before this project. Researchers think back years and remember past impressions of courses' outcomes. Even after data collection formally ended, the researchers still hear about and see ongoing impacts of the programs, and continue to work in the implementation of the knowledge gained.

## Data Analysis

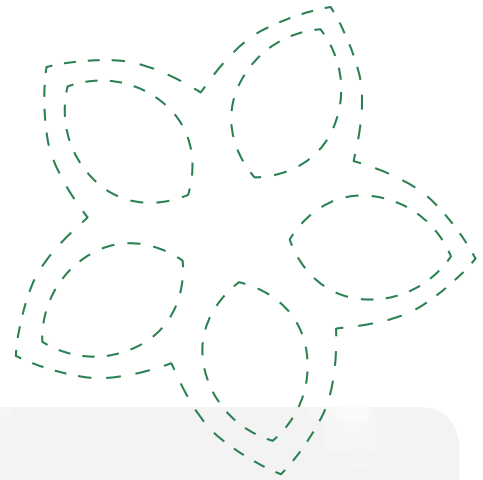
Interviews were transcribed word-for-word, translated into English where required, then systematically analyzed using NVivo software for qualitative analysis. Initial coding of data into thematic categories included HRSDC's eight literacy and essential skills (Canada 2013) as well as outcomes identified through preliminary dialogue about the data. Ongoing dialogue among team members was an essential part of our analysis. Our community-based approach was particularly helpful for identifying concepts for analysis in line with Inuit worldviews. For example, the outcomes of *pijunnautitaaqpaalliqsimaliqtut* ('confidence from skill') and *inunnguiniq* ('guiding the potential of the human spirit') jumped out to the Inuktitut-speaking team. Outcomes were ultimately grouped into three main (overlapping) categories: cultural skills and practices, literacy and essential skills, and well-being.

Our analysis is phenomenological, attempting to understand experiences and outcomes of programs from participants' points of view. Outcomes were identified by contrasting participants' self-identified starting points (e.g. in entrance interviews) and self-descriptions at the end of the program. In exit and post-program interviews, participants were also invited to contrast their current state with their state prior to the program. Corroboration of



findings was facilitated by the multiple paths to data collection (interviews, closed questionnaires, participant observation) and multiple points of view recorded (participants', instructors', researchers'). Depth of data analysis was supported by the combined insider and outsider perspectives of the community-based research team working with staff from other communities and an academic research guide. The community-based research team, in particular, offered highly contextualized and personalized insights into the data, anchored in relationship and shared community belonging with the participants.

As an ethical note, while participant observation notes were used in analysis and enrich our understanding of processes and outcomes of the pilot projects, examples and quotations in reports are taken from participants' 'on-the-record' statements during interviews.





# Results

The following sections document the three main outcomes of the non-formal cultural programs with embedded literacy: cultural skills, literacy and essential skills, and well-being. Cultural outcomes are understood in terms of skill development, concrete products, and the reinvigoration of intergenerational learning. Under literacy and essential skill outcomes, we consider how literacy is integral to the traditional skills. We also outline developments in reading, writing and numeracy, as well as in oral and non-verbal communication. Finally, we address indicators of re-engagement in formal education and the wage economy. Well-being outcomes include confidence, healing, and interconnectedness. Analysis shows how culture, embedded literacy, and well-being work together in the non-formal learning environment to favour positive outcomes in participants' lives.



## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Invest in high quality non-formal programs to ensure the best outcomes.

# Cultural Skills

## Skill Development

The non-formal programs considered were, first and foremost, about cultural or traditional skills. Program goals, participants' goals and learning activities all reflect a focus on the cultural skill. In four of the five programs (Miqqut 1, Miqqut 2, Reclaiming our Sinew, Somebody's Daughter), the programming targeted clothing production. The fifth program (Traditional Arts Workshop) focussed on artistic creation. Teaching was largely student-directed and hands-on. Elders and other instructors provided some group demonstration and explanations, and then worked one-on-one with participants, mentoring and modeling.

**All participants reported substantial progress in traditional and cultural skills.** Traditional Arts Workshop program participants learned and advanced in printmaking, drawing, pottery, and other arts. In the sewing programs, women who had never sewn before called themselves proficient sewers:

Before the program I could not sew. But now I can and I also enjoy sewing now.

(Bridgette Aqpa Tattuinee, Participant, Miqqut 2)

*Ajunnginnasugivunga.* (I think I am a better seamstress now and I think I can do it now.) At first, I didn't know how to sew; now I know how to sew.

(Alisa Makpah Udliak, Participant, Miqqut 1)

Women who sewed somewhat prior to the program enhanced their skills. They learned new ways of making what they already knew, and many emphasized that they learned to do each step properly:

I learned more how they make it or how they do it properly, sew it properly.

(Rebecca Gordon, Participant, Miqqut 1)

*Ajurunniiqaalliqtungamiqsukkanni&uni quvianaqtualuk.* (My sewing has improved and that makes me very happy.)

(Star Mama, Participant, Miqqut 2).

I've notice lots of difference in my skills. First time when I went there, I would just make it just anyhow, *taiminnamiasq* (anyhow), but after watching lots of us do that and our Elders telling us not like this, I've learned how to sew it better.

(Nina Bruce, Participant, Miqqut 2).

Participants learned new stitches. They learned how to make new garments they would not have attempted before, and how to enhance garments with pockets, zippers, cuffs, bias tape decorations, embroidery, and specialized designs:

[I learned] what kind of stitch is this, there's *ummukattaq* only (Baffin stitching) where usually Baffin people do their *kamiks* but us from Kivalliq-*qumut*, *amut*, *sanimut* (Kivalliq style stitch) like different stitches.

(Mary Tatty, Participant, Somebody's Daughter)

[I learned] so many things. I learned how to do new designs, to properly stitch, cut out my own patterns [...] With my sealskin parka I was able to cut out my design and then stitch another piece of sealskin in. I found that really interesting and fun to do. So many things. I learned how to hand-stitch properly. I've never ever made a parka; now I know how to make a parka on my own and doing the embroidery on the *kamikpak* (duffle socks) [is] another really good thing to know.

(Victoria Kakuktinniq, Participant, Miqqut 2)

Participants learned how to cut patterns, re-size patterns and create new patterns:





*Ilittivak&unga tauvani kamiliu&&arama,  
amma pualuliu&&arama  
nutaraqsiutikulungnik amma uvannut  
naammaktumik pualuliuqataulaurillunga.  
Miqsurnirmik ilittilauqtunga qanuq  
aaqqiumajariaqarmangaata. (I learned and  
made kamiks and then made mitts for a child  
and then for myself that fit. I learned the  
proper way and how to make it look good.*

(Aseena Pseudo, Participant,  
Somebody's Daughter)

I learned a lot about using patterns and how  
to make them fit because I was always making  
them too big for my family.

(Monica Pissuk, Participant, Miqqut 1)

They learned how to work with materials that they  
had not used before, including recognizing the  
grain of clay or the lay of certain materials and  
preparing (scraping, softening, stretching) skins and  
furs. Participants also learned how to choose, use  
and care for implements and tools related to their  
cultural practice (sewing machine, different types of  
needles, skin scraper, etc.):

Preparations of caribou skins and being able  
to recognize the stages of preparations even  
to listening to the skin texture and sounds  
and learning about the tools used to prepare  
them. Because you cannot sew a hard caribou  
skin the stitches will not hold it just rips the  
skin. It made us see and say, "Oh that is how."

(Monica Pissuk, Participant, Miqqut 1)

I learned a bit about skinning caribou skins  
and they told us how they used to handle  
them and work on them. They showed us how  
if the skin was too stretched, it was not easy  
to work with.

(Nellie Kusugak, Participant, Somebody's Daughter).

They worked on the seal and caribou skins  
from the time they were caught to cleaning  
and to the drying stages. When the skin  
dried they would then soften them or chew

to soften the soles for kamiks, and they knew  
because we would explain all the steps and  
expectations.

(Edie Pseudo, Instructor, Somebody's Daughter)

It got me to feel how it is to work with clay  
which is something I've never worked with  
before. And what I can do with it, whether it's  
pottery making, human figures, animal figures  
and all that is 3D, 2D and it taught me that I  
could do anything with clay as long as we're  
careful with it and learn how to work with clay.

(Anguti Pseudo, Participant,  
Traditional Arts Workshop).

*Mararmik qanuq sanajariaqarmangaat suurlu  
pigialisaaq&ugit panirnaluaqtualuungmata  
aggait paniluaraangata taanna  
paniqpallialiqattarmat. Paniqtittiluaqtailirnimik  
illittivaallilauqtugut taikani ilinniaq&uta. (How  
to work with clay and moulding it, the right  
way and how to keep it moist because it can  
dry quickly, this is what was learned there.)*

(Pierre Aupilardjuk, Participant/Instructor, Traditional  
Arts Workshop)

Participants recognize their own progress in the  
cultural skill, and this is corroborated by others'  
recognition and instructors' reports:

Some of them did not have a clue about  
sewing and at the end they were capable.

(Helen Iquptak, Instructor, Miqqut 1).

[Now] even my granny would say *taima  
nagliga* (there my love) knows how to do it.  
Get her to do it. [...] Like if anybody [...] in the  
family asked her for help [...] she would tell  
them to go to me and ask. [...] I was told that  
I was a good seamstress now.

(Ungahaimnaaq Pseudo, Participant, Miqqut 2).

*Miqqungillu makua kanaaliurutit miqqulingnik  
ujjiqtullattaakuttuk&utik piqattarmata  
tamanna sarimanaqtualuuaqtaqtuq. (I  
couldn't believe the level of skills the*



participants had and I was surprised.)  
 [...] Naalautikkuuqattaqtualuit  
 taikkua angajuqqaangujut  
 qujannamiiqtummarialuullutik. Imaa  
 miqsuqtanginnik angirraujjigaangata  
 niriuginngimmariktanginnik angajuqqaangita.  
 Imanna pijjujauninganik ilitauninganik  
 quviasuk&utik qujannamiilaaqtut  
 naalautikkuumattauluusuut.  
 Qagvaqtirittiaqattaqtukuluit  
 angajuqqaangujut ilagijaujut taikkua. (There  
 are many who go on local radio to say  
 how grateful they are. The parents see a  
 product that they just weren't expecting to  
 see completed. They're very pleased with  
 the skills taught and learned and they're so  
 thankful for that and give us great praise.)

(Isabelle Pseudo, Instructor,  
 Somebody's Daughter)

I became more capable and my work is now  
 more recognized. Sanajunnaqsivaallirama  
 atuutiqarniqsaulauqtuq sanajakka  
 niuviqtaujumaniqsauqattalaurmata. [...] I  
 became a better artist and my work is more  
 in demand.

(Pierre Aupiliardjuk, Participant/Instructor, Traditional  
 Arts Workshop)

Participants learned different skills based on their  
 goals, the items they chose to make, and their level  
 at the beginning of the program, but all showed  
 increase capability in the cultural practice. **The  
 non-formal programs provided participants with  
 an opportunity to learn and improve in a skill they  
 find highly desirable and valuable.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ★ Support, develop and offer non-formal learning opportunities which are relevant to learners' goals.
- ★ Facilitate student-directed learning. Support students to set goals and self-select activities to achieve their goals.
- ★ Build or adapt spaces in communities for traditional skills programming.

## Concrete Product

Perhaps the most salient proof of the learners' accomplishments are the actual products they created. Participants in the sewing programs created parkas, *amautiit* (baby-carrying coat), wind pants, hunting outfits, *atajuut* (toddler one-piece caribou snowsuits), *kamiit* (traditional boots), *kamikpait* (duffle socks to line traditional boots), *pualuit* (mitts), hats, hand bags, as well as decorative items such as pillows and hair clips. Participants in the Traditional Arts Workshop created artistic prints, drawings, as well as functional and decorative clay and pottery items such as vases, jugs, plates, cups, spoons, masks, and figurines.

The concrete products were important for learners as they provide tangible proof of their skill. Many reflected on themselves as *ajunngi* (capable) finishing these products:

After I made an *amauti*, I feel that I can make anything now.

(Neevee Pseudo, Participant, Miqqut 1)



The concrete products provide a touch-point for those outside the program to acknowledge and admire participants' skill and work:

They loved what I learned to make and they would be really impressed and they thought it was beautiful and how creative I was, but this is what I learned.

(Lucy Sanertanut, Participant,  
Traditional Arts Workshop)

*Qanuq takutittijunnarama ajunngittunga. Una sanalauqtara piujaluuliqtuq aktuinirisimajaa piujumiktauq saqqitittijunnaqtunga. Taimaluunniit pikani tingmisuuqarvingmi sanalauqsimajara ipuqannguaqtuq ukusinnguangujaaqtuq iqalunnguanik taqsaqaqtuq taingnattauq, takkuu piujukulungmik saqqiiqataujunnaqtunga. Kinatuinnaqtuq ajulauqtuugaluaq innaaluuliq&unga ilaa innaluunirarumanngittungaugaluaq irngutaqarama irngutaralu irngutaqaliq&uni takkuuk ajurunniiqtunga pigiarama. Pigiarama kisiani. (I can show someone how to do something and show my creation. This is what I made, a beautiful creation. Now I can show people I am capable. There is even my piece of pottery work that is displayed at the airport, the one with fish designs. That tells the world that I am also able to create a beautiful piece of work.)*

(Marianne Tattuinee, Participant,  
Traditional Arts Workshop)

Such recognition came as participants and family members wore these creations, or as the creations were displayed in fashion shows or galleries. In some ways, the tangible products act as a sort of certification, a concrete proof of acquired skill.

In the sewing courses specifically, **the garments produced also fulfill a felt need**. Participants were motivated to take part in the program because

they needed clothing for themselves and for their family members. As a result of taking part in the program, participants and their families were more warmly dressed:

They made so many things for all their families, their kids. They definitely benefitted from all the material that they got and learned how to sew for their family. I see, the people that are involved in this program I see all their families wearing all the items that they made here. And it's really good.

(Victoria Kakuktinniq, Participant, Miqqut 2)

*Quviahulauqturuuq atuliq&utik pianiktami'nik aturaangata ilami'nik uqauhiqaqtalauqtut quviatsagjuarniraitlutik. Ilangilluguuq tuhuttaq&utik. Uqaqtarmata quvianaqtauulauq. (They were very proud of themselves for finishing projects and that their families and children were proud to be wearing homemade clothing. Some were overheard saying how fortunate they were to be wearing sewn things.*

(Adele Angidlik, Instructor, Miqqut 2)

The one woman in Somebody's Daughter had never sewn before. She had about four children. She made *kamiks* and then mitts. I saw her in the winter time in Arviat and she was wearing something she sewed. She also said her children were wearing things she sewed herself. So hearing this is wonderful.

(Pujuut Kusugak, Coordinator,  
Somebody's Daughter)

Especially but not only for hunting families, the opportunity to create traditional fur garments can become a matter of life and death. Monica Pissuk, a participant in Miqqut 1, explained in her exit interview how motivated she was to create fur garments and how valuable these were to her husband:

*Tikimmalli uqaliq&uni Monica qujannamiiqtagi miqsuqattaliravit miqsurunnanngilauravit aullaqtautiqaliravit, aullaqtautiqaliq&ungalu amma qiniraraangama ilangit annuraaqautsiangittut piqatigijaraangapkit tunituinnaqattarlugu atuanikpaguli aisimaliqpat utiqtituinnaarluniuk naamagajarmat tianna pigaangata i&uaritsiamiagara tukisivaallirutigitsiamialaugara taamna. (My husband now appreciates that I know how to sew. He said he's very happy that he is able to have proper hunting clothing now that I know how to sew. We also provide extra hunting gear in case someone is in need of it, especially at times when my husband is out on the land looking for a person.)*

(Monica Pissuk, Participant, Miqqut 1)

Months after the program, Monica shared that her husband and son had been caught out on the land in a multi-day blizzard with nothing but their skidoo, *qamutik* (sled), and their winter clothes. Monica attributes their safe return days later to the warm clothing she had made in Miqqut 1. In this way, the traditional clothing created in Somebody's Daughter, Reclaiming our Sinew and the Miqqut programs are much more than just garments. **The traditional clothing is a survival tool and knowing how to prepare it is arguably an essential skill in the Arctic.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ★ Support hands-on learning with a concrete final product.
- ★ Recognize traditional subsistence skills as part of essential skills in the Arctic.

## Reinvigoration of Intergenerational Learning

Creation of these products involves systematic and complex step-by-step processes. In Traditional Arts Workshop, participants learned, for example, that clay needs to be worked in particular ways in order to produce a beautiful final result. In the same way, seamstresses learned the steps of preparing fur, cutting patterns, piecing together garments, and stitching them appropriately:

Like making an *amautik* is not a simple task. You need to know where to gather and where not to gather and how it has to be done properly. [...] They also made seal skin *kamiks*, they soften the sole by chewing them and this is not an easy way to soften but if they really want to they will find the will. [...] I know now that they can soften soles by chewing, and these were [those] who had never ever chewed to soften seal skins, that is the change. They know that they can do traditional garments and also learned to use sewing machines.

(Marianne Tattuinee, Instructor, Miqqut 2)

*Ilauqataugama sunani ai ilitsilauqtunga, tukilauq&uta and then tukianingmat tasitilauq&ugu. Tasittiaraaningmat uuktulauq&ugu amma miqsuq amma atunngirasuliq&uni qanuq pilluguai angulallugu, angulalauq&ugu unnualluktaa unani imannaisimatilauq&ugu. And then next day-ngurmat miqsurnialirmat uuktuqtautsialauq&uni mapjaaqtaulluni. Atunngirasuliq&uni alianaittualuk. Ok, what did I learn, stomping on seal skin and then stretching it with a stretcher. After that you cut out the pattern and pieced, sew and then you start on the sole of the kamik. First by chewing the skin to soften and then leave it overnight. And the next day before you sew it*

on you make sure the pieces are identical and then you thin out the edges (mapjaaq). It so much fun sewing the sole onto the legging.

(Aseena Pseudo, Participant,  
Somebody's Daughter)

For many of the participants, the program offered their first opportunity to learn these skills. Traditionally, sewing skills would have been passed on from mother to daughter, with the daughter observing until her mother deemed her ready to try. That context of daughters learning sitting beside their mothers has been partly lost. Participants in Somebody's Daughter, specifically, were largely those who did not have mothers to teach them:

*Uqainnaliqtarmata ajunngiliqpaallirniraq&utik  
ajunngikkaluarniramaalblutik.*

*Una aulajiluarniqaarijara  
naglingnaluviktalau'mata  
angajuqqaqaanngiliqtut  
anaanaqaanngiliqtulluunniit  
iniqsijaraangamik iqqainginnaqatalau'mata.  
Naglingnaqatalauqtut. Qialiq&uta atautsikkut  
taima miqsuqattaaraujaliqukata ublut  
tallimalluunniit arviniliilluunniit qaangiqaata,  
amisutsiamianguttarapta tupirmi,  
inikisarlammamik&uta, qiajuqaliialla'mat  
taima pianikhigami qaujittamialilauqtugut.  
Naglingnaqtu'juuttalauqtut. (The participants  
would say that they didn't know they could  
do it. One I remember so well are the ones  
who are orphaned or have lost a mother  
would always remember them when they  
completed a project. Your heart just went  
out to them. We would all cry with her. After  
they've been sewing for 5 or 6 days, we're  
all in the tent and even crowded because we  
were so many, and when you heard someone  
cry you knew that they were done a project  
and remembering. You had tremendous love  
for them.)*

(Edie Pseudo, Instructor, Somebody's Daughter)

While some participants had learned to sew somewhat from their mothers, aunts, or others already, others had not. Some mothers do not consider themselves highly competent sewers to pass on the skills. Even those who are recognized for their skill do not necessarily have the time after work, family, and community obligations to patiently sew with a daughter in the room and looking on (especially when family members are anxiously awaiting the parka to wear).

Participants explained that not having the foundational sewing skills, or patterns, becomes a barrier to any chance of learning when they are not comfortable asking for help. After the programs, participants felt that they knew enough to feel comfortable asking for help. They also felt more connected to a community of seamstresses with whom they can sit and sew and from whom they could ask to borrow patterns, receive inspiration, and receive guidance when stuck on particular items. All indicated that they would continue sewing and improving their skills. Instructors and the researchers observed them doing so:

*Taakkuninga piliriarjavut taakkua tagva  
pivaallirutaualauqtut. Qaujimajungali  
tauvanngat ilinniaqitsivalliaraujaqtilluta  
ilangit miqsurasuinnaqattalauqtut  
kajusisimajut taatsuminga  
piliriarilauqtaminik. Ajunngiliqpaalliqsimajut  
pijuumisuliqpaallilaurmata ilinniaqattaq&utik  
taikanituannungittuugaluarlu taikanilu. (All  
the things that we were doing were helpful to  
the students. And I know that there are still  
some who continue to sew who worked so  
hard to learn the skills. They improved a lot  
and got a desire to learn and keep sewing at  
the program but after that too.)*

(Elisapee Pseudo, Instructor,  
Reclaiming Our Sinew)

**For all participants, then, completion of the traditional skills program was not an end in itself but rather the insertion of participants into a**

community of learners and practitioners. Building of a network, and the motivation to learn, are important steps to reengagement with formal learning and work.

Participants in the programs went on to informally share what they learned with their own children (as well as friends and siblings), reinvigorating traditional intergenerational modes of learning:

*Ammaluttauq taapkua ilinnialauqtut ilinniaqtittijunnarniarmata paningminik miqsumniup miksaanut.* (The participants will also walk away with sewing skills that they learned and they will definitely pass on the skills that they learned to their daughters.)

(Allie Pseudo, Instructor, Miqquut 1)

I'm not scared to teach my girls or my granddaughters or anyone that needs help in stitching. Because I could say this is what I was taught when I took the program.

(Mary Tatty, Participant, Somebody's Daughter)

Several participants became instructors in comparable programs. One Miqquut participant

went on to fur and fashion design school. Even the instructors commented how much they enjoyed learning from each other. In these ways, the non-formal cultural programs were catalysts for ongoing learning – the participants continuing their own learning and contributing to others' learning.

Comparably, participants from the Traditional Arts Workshop also went on to teach others informally:

I can work with other people at my own place and learn from other artists and teach the younger ones as well.

(Anguti Pseudo, Participant, Traditional Arts Workshop)

Overall, the non-formal cultural programs offered learning as something that was fun, enjoyable, and directly relevant to participants' felt needs. Participants learned how to create fine arts, traditional and modern clothing, and completed tangible products that show their mastery. These products are displayed and used by community members and provide a connection to families and to communities. The process of learning reinvigorates participants' involvement in lifelong learning.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ★ Recognize non-formal programs as a means to reinvigorate intergenerational learning.
- ★ Support sustained intergenerational learning through facilitating relationships between younger learners and older knowledge-holders through non-formal programs.



# Literacy and Essential Skills

The non-formal cultural programs considered in this research were chosen based on the criteria that they also included a literacy component. The degree and the method of literacy teaching varied. In Miqqut 1, instructors modeled literacy practices and students engaged in literacies related to sewing without ever making literacy an explicit program activity or goal. In contrast, in Reclaiming our Sinew, time was split equally between morning sewing and afternoon classroom-based literacy and numeracy instruction (at least in some offerings – models of delivery varied from year to year). The other programs fall between these models, with various degrees of embedded literacy. **While learning the traditional skill was by far participants' most salient goal across programs, most were also motivated by the opportunity to upgrade literacy skills, especially in Inuktitut.**

## Literacy Integral to Cultural Skills

Literacy and numeracy are inherent in fine arts and sewing. Meade (1990), Balanoff and Chambers (2005), and Lipka et al. (2007) have documented the literacy and numeracy practices inherent in traditional sewing. As artists in the Traditional Arts Workshop created, they recorded their stories and visions through drawings, print and other media. The mental and physical work of artistic creation – proportion, design, transferring from one's mind onto paper or clay, even reading the materials one is working with - involves forms of literacy practices. As the seamstresses in the other programs designed garments, created, copied and cut out patterns (or learned to sew from sight, without patterns), adjusted for size, worked materials and fit pieces together in specific orders and specific ways for perfect end results, they, too, were engaged in literacy and numeracy:

Yes. Some pieces need to be gathered so some were puzzled how to make it fit when

there seemed too much material to fit. And they would be shown how to gather and make it fit and people learned.

(Monica Pissuk, Participant, Miqqut 1)

They now [know] ... how to cut patterns and I noticed [at the beginning] that some of them would want to cut out patterns for a jacket from the middle of the fabric and we taught them how to position patterns.

(Helen Iguptak, Instructor, Miqqut 1)

*Uukturnirmik, qanutuinnaquukturnirmikilittivaalliqitut qanurulutuinn-aqmiqsuriaqannginninganik, amma qanutuinnaquukturiaqannginninganikuuktuttiarutikaaqqiumaninganikuukturluutigutikaqqiumajunngarninganiktamatumingailittivaalliqitutnalunanngittiaqtuq. ([They've learned] that they have to try their best to cut out the patterns just right, if it isn't done right, it won't come together, it won't fit together well.)*

(Rachel Pseudo, Instructor, Miqqut 1)

The skills I learned were how to...look at a parka pattern and know how to put it together by myself...and I learned how to cut up fur to put on the parka. I learned how to measure how much fox fur I needed to put on a parka. [...] I learned all the different Inuktitut words for different patterns or pieces of a pattern.

(Victoria Kakuktinnaq, Participant, Miqqut 2)

*Qanuq amisuutigijunik qanuq angitigijunik material-taariaqarmangaarmaa ikkua kids. ([I know now] how much material to get when I buy fabric for my kids.)*

(Aeva Pseudo, Participant, Reclaiming Our Sinew)

Even before inclusion of a deliberate reading and writing component, participants learned and practiced forms of literacy and numeracy through the practice of the cultural skill. These findings are consistent with other research that shows how arts and cultural programs, even without targeting literacy, enhance it (Bhola 1990, Heath 2004).

The extent to which participants recognized the literacies implicit in the traditional skill varied. Participants in the programs with the most explicit literacy instruction seemed quicker to recognize their sewing as the practice of literacy:

What are some written materials that you use?  
[...]

Just patterns from my own sewings.

(Jennifer Paapik, Participant,  
Reclaiming our Sinew)

Participants and instructors in programs which did not make literacy an explicit goal seemed less likely to recognize the literacies inherent in their practice. When asked about use of written materials in Miqqut 1, Elder instructor Leena Pseudo replied, “*Takujuujalaunngittunga miqsurnirmik alutuqsalluavimiattiainnarmata nuqqalauratik uktuqattaqtuinnaqtualuukmata qimirruagalirijuujanngittiaqmata.* (They were so involved in their sewing and cutting they didn’t seem to have time for written material.)” However, later in the interview she explained how students created, used and adjusted patterns, looked in magazines for ideas, and wrote down the Elders’ instructions. Program instructor Allie Pseudo also explained:

We wrote the instructions on how to work with Leena Pseudo’s expertise. We wrote down instructions on the chart paper. I read the instructions of the caribou skin in Inuktitut to the participants and they realize that the instructions are important and of great use.

Although literacy activities were practiced in each program, participants and even instructors are less conscious of them in Miqqut 1, which did not state literacy as a goal. In Miqqut 2, in contrast, participants and instructors clearly recognized literacy activities and outcomes. Contrasting the Miqqut 1 and Miqqut 2 pilot programs shows that literacy outcomes are enhanced when literacy is named as a goal and literacy activities are clearly identified for participants.

Since literacy is integral to cultural practice, cultural programs are effective vehicles for literacy development. The non-formal programs we considered “place literacy into culture, rather than fitting culture into literacy”, as recommended by the National Aboriginal Design Committee (2002: 6). **A strength of the non-formal programs was the inclusion of highly skilled literacy instructors working alongside cultural instructors (or use of instructors skilled in both literacy and cultural instruction).** These instructors were able to seize literacy teaching moments as they presented themselves, keeping literacy relevant to the other goals of the programs. Our research confirms that literacies are practiced through cultural programming in Nunavut, even without a focus on literacy. However, the contrast in consciousness of literacy outcomes between programs suggests the value of deliberately and explicitly making literacy a goal. If literacy is an explicit goal, with associated, articulated activities, then participants and instructors appear more likely to take on literacy improvement as their own goal, and to recognize literacy outcomes.





## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ★ Support training of educators specializing in non-formal programming and embedding literacy.
- ★ Train educators and program deliverers in non-formal learning and embedding literacy.
- ★ Acknowledge and spread understanding of Inuit holistic conceptualizations of literacy and essential skills.
- ★ Recognize the importance of Inuit literacies to the practice and acquisition of Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit and traditional skills.
- ★ Document literacies of indigenous traditional skills.
- ★ In non-formal cultural programs, teach literacy by drawing out the literacies inherent in cultural practices.

## Reading, Writing and Numeracy

Program goals and activities explicitly incorporated reading and writing in all of the programs except Miqqut 1. Reclaiming our Sinew and Traditional Arts Workshop also included explicit math instruction. The programs combined technical instruction with modeling and opportunities for meaningful application of literacy and numeracy. Students said they learned “what was appropriate for them”:

*Ilinniariaq&utik ilittijariaqaqtanginnik tukisittialilauqtara. Ukua math-ruluit ajurnangittukuluungmata but ukua sunaikku divide-gialiit taikkua tukisijariaqaqtakka ilittariaqaqtakka tukisililauqtakka. (We learned what was appropriate for us. Things like math were easy but the division was harder to understand but I learned how to do it.)*

(Aeva Pseudo, Participant,  
Reclaiming our Sinew)

In Traditional Arts Workshop, participants enjoyed the math component because the instructor made it fun and directly relevant to the traditional skills outcomes:

Jim had these wild math lessons which everyone loved. They really did. If we didn't do math people would say, Where's the math? [...] Often in the math [...] we would do verbal problems...based on experience here like, three students, each made two drawings and they were going to sell them each for \$5.00 and then how much would they all have all together? That kind of idea but some of them could be very tricky, like \$5.00 drawings, \$10.00 this and they would add them all up. So you would get a lot of practical use and reading.

(Kelly Pseudo, Instructor,  
Traditional Arts Workshop)

Some of the reading and writing strategies included working with syllabics, vocabulary lists with explanations (Miqqut 2, Traditional Arts Workshop), silent reading (Miqqut 2), and reading aloud as a group (Traditional Arts Workshop). In silent reading, for example in Miqqut 2, students would select for themselves any book, magazine, or other text. In reading aloud as a group, for example in Traditional Arts Workshop, the instructor would choose a text at an appropriate reading level and with relevant northern content. Programs encouraged students to read for pleasure as well as to improve their cultural practice. For example, in all of the programs, participants used non-technical documents such as magazines and internet sites to inspire or enhance their work:

*Kisianili takujamingnik ujirusukpaaliqattaqtut  
miqsuqsimajunik ajjinnguanigluunniit  
takugaangami tamakkua  
pijuumisungniqsauliqtut inuit.* (I only know  
that they looked at magazines and got ideas  
for patterns or what they could make.)

(Elisapee Pseudo, Instructor,  
Reclaiming our Sinew)

[I] only [use the internet or magazines] when I'm going to miqsuq (sew) dresses. [...] I use these to] buy patterns.

(Josephine Makkigak,  
Participant, Reclaiming our Sinew)

I go on the internet a lot and art magazines, read a little bit about Inuit history so I can get some ideas about our history from a long time ago and somehow try to put some of those stories into my art. [...] That's why I love to read material... [It] helps me become more creative as well.

(Anguti Pseudo, Instructor,  
Traditional Arts Workshop)

Reading and writing outcomes included increased comfort, speed and interest in reading and writing:

[R]eading syllabics, I really improved in that.

(Tara Green, Participant, Miqqut 2)

[I] learn[ed] how to *miqsuq* (sew) and read and write in Inuktitut.

(Grace Tagonark, Participant, Miqqut 2)

I learned all the different like Inuktitut words for different patterns or pieces of a pattern. I definitely learned how to read and write Inuktitut faster than I did before. Because that was one thing I was really trying to focus on because it's one thing I need to improve in my life, because I wasn't very good at Inuktitut reading and writing. So when Gloria was teaching us all the different Inuktitut terms and she was writing them on a piece of paper, I was really trying to focus on that and I felt like I learned so much faster. [...] I noticed while I was here that I could start reading in Inuktitut a little bit faster.

(Victoria Kakuktinniq, Participant, Miqqut 2)

I write more and here I didn't used to like to write (laughter). [...] I got better at writing, mostly writing. [...] I was expecting to learn how to write but I've learned a lot about writing.

(Nina Bruce, Participant, Miqqut 2)

I'm trying to read Inuktitut more often.

(Alik Pseudo, Participant, Miqqut 2)

Learning how to read and write and when I was at Miqqut Project...every morning I was like in my mind but now when I go back I want to learn and write more and keep the stuff that they write and so when I get older I'll say ahh, I used to do this, look now you guys have to (laughter). I want to learn how to write and read and keep the papers that I write with the teachers. I know we've got to learn how to do English and Inuktitut right and do the stitches and all that.

(Star Mama, Participant, Miqqut 2)

They also definitely felt more comfortable reading. [...] The skill level definitely improved



and one of the most shocking things was how the reading got better without trying any official reading strategies.

(Kelly Pseudo, Instructor,  
Traditional Arts Workshop)

Participants also created and used documents relevant to program goals. For example, instructors taught students to use technical documents for their creations. In Traditional Arts Workshop, participants used colour charts to cross reference numbers and names on bottles of glaze with colour swatches, showing what that particular glaze would look like after firing the clay:

[T]hey would have to reference the sheet, find the book that particular bottle was labeled in, they would have to look up, there were two or three different books, two or three brands, they'd have to check the brand and then check which kind of color they were having. They would have to find the one that matched what they were going to, so they really learned to do this, professional technical documents.

(Kelly Pseudo, Instructor,  
Traditional Arts Workshop)

In some programs, participants learned to create, organize, write and store materials in portfolios. In Miqqut 2 and Somebody's Daughter, for instance, participants would document goals, steps, and accomplishments with words, diagrams and photos stored in their journals or learner portfolios:

I learned...the measuring parts and...we had binders...to keep our *uuktuutiks* (patterns) and remember them and *puigurupta* (if we forget) we can go back and *iqqaq* (remember).

(Alisa Udliak, Participant, Miqqut 2)

I remember everything that was taught to me by the Elders and I still have all my journals and the binder I wrote most everything down even when they were just talking and whatever I kept everything.

(Tara Green, Participant, Miqqut 2)

What we encouraged them to do was take time each day if they wanted to start writing down their sewing techniques or any notes they had just so they had a reference for sewing or any projects they wanted to do after the program was done. [...] When they started with the programs, we gave them journals and they can write whatever they wanted like we told them they can write about what they learned, what they had to do and review what they wrote at the end of each day.

(Pujjuut Kusugak, Coordinator,  
Somebody's Daughter)

**Journals and portfolios helped students to practice writing and document use. They also motivated students to recognize the usefulness of literacy and its relevance to their goals as artists and seamstresses.**

Finally, in at least two programs, literacy was a path to wholeness and healing. Participants journaled their experiences and feelings, using drawing or writing or whatever graphic representation of thought they found meaningful:

Evenings were for writing exercises, writing as healing, creative writing. You can do writing journaling, whatever; it was always an option to share whatever you wrote [...] Even if they cannot write, just letting them draw helps with whatever pain they have in their lives, or to start sharing. [...] Writing down whatever they remember as good or bad, it's a tool, it really helps the healing part.

(Tina Pseudo, Instructor, Somebody's Daughter)

Instructors led specific literacy activities to guide students in self-discovery and wellness:

Every morning when we would all talk together and do the literacy part, sometimes we wouldn't just be doing literacy but we'd be talking and letting things out and being able

to be in a comfortable atmosphere where you know you can trust them and be able to talk to them. That was what I needed.

(Tara Green, Participant, Miqqut 2)

Participants also explored reading and writing as a way to connect with others across geographic boundaries. For example, in one Somebody's Daughter program, participants wrote encouraging letters to suffering women in Africa. Overall, instructors embedded literacy into other program goals, including traditional skill development and personal well-being.

The explicit literacy and numeracy component of the programs, then, taught students the mechanics of literacy and numeracy while emphasizing literacy as a form of self-expression. **Students used literacy to further their traditional practice, as well to lay a foundation for other life goals and pursue greater personal well-being.** Participants speak of greater skills in literacy and in numeracy. They say they became more confident for instance selling their art, as they understood the math behind the sale. They also became more inclined to read and write. Participants were motivated by recognizing the relevance of literacy and numeracy to their cultural practices and personal well-being.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ★ Support dynamic, student-driven programs in which goals and activities develop as the program progresses.
- ★ Balance planning with flexibility and responsiveness to student needs.
- ★ Disseminate knowledge about promising practices in embedding literacy.
- ★ Prioritize embedding literacy and essential skills in traditional skills and other programs for maximum impact.

## Oral and Non-Verbal Communication

The non-formal programs' strengths include the flexibility for participants to develop according to their own goals. **Observation and orality are specialized, relevant, and commonly practiced forms of communication in Inuit communities.** Accordingly, participants' gains were particularly noticed in these areas in addition to reading, writing and numeracy.

Communication was somewhat bilingual in all programs, reflective of Rankin Inlet's demography. Miqqut 1 and 2 deliberately targeted improving Inuktitut language skills. **Even if bilingual participants were encouraged to speak, write, and read in whichever language they felt comfortable, the context of learning from Elders and engaging in cultural practices like sewing naturally led to Inuktitut's use.** Oral Inuktitut language development included expansion of specialized vocabularies and understanding of the Elders' rich language:

I noticed while I was here that I could start [...] even understanding how Elders would try to explain how to sew this and that. Communicating in Inuktitut...

(Victoria Kakuktinniq, Participant, Miqqut 2)

I really improved in understanding Inuktitut like the words and stuff.

(Tara Green, Participant, Miqqut 2)

Similarly, in Reclaiming our Sinew and Somebody's Daughter, the use of Elder instructors contributed to rich exposure to Inuktitut and increased opportunities to use the language. In Traditional Arts Workshop, literacy activities were more in English, reflecting the expertise of the instructors. Overall, the language practices and outcomes reflected the bilingualism of the community, as well as participants' and instructors' priorities and language abilities. **Allowing room for language of choice seems to contribute to participants' willingness to communicate and to take risks.**

At the same time, rich exposure to Inuktitut and English combined with a practical need to use these languages to access instructors and source documents leads to improvements in each language.

**Multiple modes of communication – observing, listening and speaking, reading and writing, artistic expression – worked together to enhance students’ learning and self-expression.** In the cultural skills components, for example, Inuit pedagogy through modeling and observation was favoured, developing participants’ observation skills: “The participants learned by watching and doing” (Allie Pseudo, Instructor, Miqqut 1). Instructors (and fellow participants) also gave oral directives. Writing came as a support to reinforce and document learning. As the learning was student-directed, students needed the confidence and ability to articulate their goals, ask for directions from the instructors, and understand the responses. Participants and instructors both noticed an outcome of improved willingness and ability to ask for help:

[I]n the beginning they were very quiet and couldn’t even ask for assistance. Now that they know each other more they’ve changed because they don’t seem afraid and are now asking for help if they need it.

(Marianne Tattuinee, Instructor, Miqqut 2)

[I am more comfortable] asking questions...to other people. [...] Like talking to people... it changed lots.

(Manitok Aliyak, Participant, Miqqut 2)

Improved oral communication, understanding questions and formulating clear answers is also seen in contrasting participants’ self-expression in the entrance interviews and exit interviews.

Similarly, the literacy components broadly incorporated multiple ways of communicating, gaining and sharing information. Some activities focused on oral communication. In one example, students interviewed each other, and then introduced that student to the group. Other

activities combined speaking, understanding, reading and writing. For instance, a favourite activity in Miqqut 2 was interviewing the Elders. Participants jointly developed a list of well-worded questions, took turns asking these questions, took notes on what they heard, and then jointly wrote a document summarizing the Elders’ responses. The written responses ultimately became a document shared with the Rankin Inlet public. Journaling activities included an opportunity to share orally. Participants could pick a sentence or a word from their journal or something from outside the journal to share, or even say nothing. Instructors, coordinators and participants kept the environment very safe, building confidence in each participant to share increasingly more as the program progressed.

Through these activities and others, participants improved in their ability to articulate their thoughts. Gwyn, for example, a participant in Miqqut 2, says she began with all the ideas stuck in her head and couldn’t express them, but by the end she could get them out. Participants became more willing to share about themselves and more willing to ask questions:

I learned how to express [...]Your feelings?] Yeah. With others too. [...] Talk to the other ladies that which I never ever express myself but I’m still learning. [...] They showed me how to communicate with other ladies. [I] just feel good that I express myself to other ladies how I feel.

(Grace Tagonark, Participant, Miqqut 2)

[Miqqut] helped us to talk to each other.

(Nina Bruce, Miqqut 2)

Some of the ones I was working with would be shy to ask and would not say anything because maybe they were scared to ask me so I would just ask them and later on they were able to come to me and seemed less shy of me.

(Adele Angidlik, Instructor, Miqqut 2)



Interaction. This is the most noticeable [outcome]. I keep going back to the shy ones, because you see how much they opened up, being able to ask questions and how they speak in Inuktitut...

(Pujuut Kusugak, Coordinator,  
Somebody's Daughter)

As was the case with the art and sewing, and with the reading and writing, participants learned to express themselves and share who they are. The oral communication contributes to the learning process and to healing and well-being outcomes, as well as being an end in itself.

The programs enhanced participants' confidence and ability to speak publically at multiple levels. All participants were invited to practice reading aloud (e.g. in Traditional Arts Workshop) or speaking to the group of learners (e.g. Miqqut 2, Somebody's Daughter). Some participants found the program helped them feel comfortable speaking publically outside the boundaries of their program. In Miqqut 2, two participants acted as masters of ceremony for the fashion show at the end of the program. Following a jointly written script, they introduced and commented on each garment. They were excellent, and the MC's said their willingness and ability reflected a significant change:

Definitely because before I couldn't. If I was put in front of a crowd of people I would freeze and not be able to say anything and words wouldn't come out of my mouth. But after that I feel fine with speaking in front of people. I don't feel like I'm being judged or you know? So yeah, that really helped me.

(Tara Green, Participant, Miqqut 2)

In a broader sense, confidence in oneself and one's culture gained through the program equipped participants to publically express opinions on local radio or in community meetings. Rhoda Karetak, a participant in the Traditional Arts Workshop program, explained:

Suurlu sunamikiaq  
isumaliuqataunasugajaruma  
katimaqataulunga  
quksasugunniiqpaalliqsimajunga  
nunaliptinnut atuutiqarniaqtumik.  
Inuusirmiglu ilinniaqtitsikanniriaqarnialuvut  
takuvaalliqsimaliq&ugu tamanna  
quksasugunniirnik pivaallirutaullattaaqturli  
taimanna. Tatigijauvaallirnaqtuq  
apirijaujariaksaq. (For example, if I have  
to make a decision that is concerning my  
community and I am not afraid or nervous to  
[voice] an opinion [if] it helps my community.  
I have also seen how much we need to teach  
our values about life and being more assertive  
helps, always. People depend on you more  
for answers.

In both instances, the confidence speaking publically and putting oneself out there, potentially to be judged, comes from positive experiences on a smaller scale, speaking and being listened to within the group. The oral communication becomes a tool for learning and self-revelation, but also for engaging with the community in a more public way.

As in the cultural skills, participants measured their own progress in literacy and orality. In environments that favoured learning and multi-modal communication, participants were able to focus on and develop the forms of communication most relevant and useful to themselves and in their communities. They experienced how literacy is relevant to traditional practices and other aspects of their daily lives. They improved in Inuktitut reading, writing, understanding and speaking. They also became more comfortable expressing themselves using various forms of communication and in different contexts. While the specific outcomes vary, **participants express a range of literacy and orality outcomes in line with their own goals, starting points, and priorities.**



## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ★ Encourage multi-modal communication in literacy programming.
- ★ Enhance oral communication by encouraging communication in participants' language of choice.

### Engagement in Formal Education and Wage Economy

One of the anecdotal observations the research team heard prior to this research is that non-formal cultural programs with embedded literacy help participants to gain the foundational skills needed to engage or re-engage with formal education and the wage economy. Certainly the literacy, numeracy and oral communication outcomes described above are foundational skills and practices which help students feel more confident going back to school or taking on a job. Tara Green, for instance, needed to improve her Inuktitut language in order to be accepted into the Nunavut Teachers Education Program (her goal). She did so, through Miqqut 2, and then enrolled in teacher education program at Nunavut Arctic College:

[L]earning new stuff, I really, really liked that and I just want to keep on learning and learning and learning so that's one of the reasons why I decided to go back to school. [...] And it opened the door for me to get back into school. [...] [I'm taking] NTEP.

Similarly, Shirley Aliyak credits the academic component of Reclaiming our Sinew to her desire and subsequent enrolment in an accounting program. Others credit the program more generally for helping them re-engage with learning and work.

The cultural component of the programs also set up participants to enrol in further learning and/or to

make money. Some participants went on to take or even teach similar traditional skills programs:

Since the Miqqut Project was done I took one sewing course and just made an outfit for my *panialaaq* (younger daughter) and then...got a job and started working.

(Brenda Aupilardjuk, Participant, Miqqut 2)

For Victoria Kakuktinniq, who described herself as a beginner sewer in Miqqut 2, the program opened the door for her to enrol in a nationally competitive fashion design college in Winnipeg:

I have learned to sew. I just wanted to continue sewing and I wanted to continue designing my own clothes so I decided to apply to this fashion program and if it wasn't for the Miqqut Project as my reference I probably wouldn't have made it in. And because of all my sewing projects that I finished at the Miqqut Program, I had to bring them here to my interview to show what I was sewing before I took the program here. So if it wasn't for that I probably would have not been accepted.

Participants from the sewing programs see the potential of selling what they sew. Although only one that we know of went on to do so, online sites for buying and selling traditional Inuit garments such as the Facebook group Iqaluit Auction Bids show a market for such items. Most participants from the Traditional Arts Workshop programs did indeed go on to sell their creations:

Art is one of the best ways to make money and to help the family.

(Anguti Pseudo, Participant, Traditional Arts Workshop)

With printmaking, I can make a drawing first and then sell it. I wasn't doing this before. [...] If I were to lose my job, I now know that I can pick this up and I wouldn't just be helpless

but I can try to make money out of what I learned. [...Others] can be 'woken up' to find new potentials for making some money and learning new things because that's what I experienced myself and now I know that if I make something, I can money from it.

(Lucy Sanertanut, Participant,  
Traditional Arts Workshop)

Through the literacy and the cultural skills, participants are better equipped at the end of their non-formal program to engage in further education or to make money.

Other program components also supported participants to go on to further education or employment. The healing component in *Somebody's Daughter*, for instance, motivated one of the participants to go on to study mental health:

There was a woman...in *Somebody's Daughter*...and she said she always wanted to be somebody's daughter because she didn't feel like she was a daughter because she was in an incest relationship with her father [...] After the camp, she went and took mental health counselling and she graduated from mental health counselling and she also taught how to sew parkas while going to school so there were a lot of positive changes.

(Tina Pseudo, Instructor, *Somebody's Daughter*)

On the whole, participants' and instructors' testimonies suggest that participants from these non-formal programs went on to a range of post-secondary programs and employment, in Rankin Inlet or even outside of the territory:

In literacy development, a lot of the women that were in the program have gained employment or some went further on to post secondary. [...] I just know that a lot of the women that were in *Reclaiming our Sinew* and some women that were in *Somebody's Daughter* went back to school to improve

their career choices and school requires a lot of reading and writing.

(Tina Pseudo, Instructor, *Somebody's Daughter*)

I will say we've got people that took this program over several years, there are at least four of them right now that have jobs. [...] In that respect I can never tell you how their lives would have gone but certainly on the whole nobody's gotten worse. Everyone's lives seem to have gotten better but then again they got older. Hard to say that one.

(Kelly Pseudo, Instructor, Traditional Arts Workshop)

Part of participants' success following the programs lies in practices and dispositions they developed which favour engagement in formal education and employment and cannot be taken for granted. The programs require the discipline and work ethic of full-time education or a job:

Before the Miqqut Project...I was kind of lazy not doing anything at home but when the Miqqut Project opened I started going there and it changed my life.

(Star Mama, Participant, Miqqut 2)

[...]Don't forget the program's like a job too, right. [...] If they come, there's a whole sense of responsibility. You've got to be here and do your bit. [...] Well to keep a job is being involved and you're able to go out in the world then you're not afraid to go there and be in a job and do what it's asking of you.

(Kelly Pseudo, Instructor, Traditional Arts Workshop)

**Participants developed life and work skills such as organization, self-discipline, timeliness, reliability, attendance, hard work, finishing what one starts, willingness to take correction and the pursuit of excellence:**

*Uqautittainnaq&ugit,aatqingniarmijug  
ajurunniiqpaallirniaqtualuugavit  
ilittivaallirumaaravit. Naammanginninganik*





*uqautittaq&ugit quviahuinnalauqtut.* (I would encourage them to keep at it because you improve with time and it is easy enough to fix. They were accepting of the help we gave when they made mistakes.)

(Leena Pseudo, Instructor, Miqqut 1)

I am definitely more well-organized. [...] I learned to finish what I started because that was another main thing in the program you were told to finish what you started so now with me...if I start something I have to finish it. Not only like in a project but with my life. If I want to improve it I have to, when I start then I have to finish what I started. So I have that drive to improve myself all the time and to just do the best that I can.

(Victoria Kakuktinniq, Participant, Miqqut 2)

They realized that they needed to attend class every day and would call to let us know if they weren't. It was obvious they changed.

(Adele Angidlik, Instructor, Miqqut 2)

[Miqqut] brought me to get up more and do things, finish what I need to finish. ...to have patience.

(Ungahaimnaaq Pseudo, Participant, Miqqut 2)

*Miqhurama uvamnik ujji ruhulauqtunga taanna miqhugara ujjangikkaangat ingminik miqhuujalanngi'mat pianiglugu kihianittiamiaq.* (I learned that if I just leave my sewing it will not finish itself I have to take it and finish it, that's for sure.)

(Ashley Pseudo, Participant, Reclaiming our Sinew)

Not to *sapiliq* (give up), *aniguqtarniaq* (know it comes to pass) and had to get up every day to go.

(Enith Pseudo, Participant, Reclaiming our Sinew)

I feel I learned a lot during those ten days because we had to listen, we couldn't fool

around, nothing, we had to listen and do it.

(Mary Tatty, Participant, Somebody's Daughter)

I've noticed that the students don't know what hard work is. If there are skins to be cleaned and prepared they will go right to it and do it. Whether they're working on legging or all black *kamiks* (traditional boots) they're so determined that nothing will get in their way...This brings great joy to us.

(Isabelle Pseudo, Instructor, Somebody's Daughter)

By putting participants in a position that mimics a job or school, participants see that they can live within the structure of formal employment or education. They are thus more confident and better equipped as they move into jobs or further learning programs.

**As participants developed literacy and essential skills, they also became more forward-looking and able to set goals:**

[P]ositive changes, that's for sure, like I think I have a pretty bright future coming up. [...] feel] more prepared for my future.

(Tara Green, Participant, Miqqut 2)

*Uqaanihaarama uvannik ilitsikannilauqtunga amma qanuq piguaqmangaarmaa tukihianarniqhauq&uni.* (Like I mentioned that I understand myself more and I now have more direction in my life.)

(Bridgette Tatuinee, Participant, Miqqut 2)

I am more capable now with more skills and I can think into the future.

(Lucy Sanertanut, Participant, Traditional Arts Workshop)

Positive experiences with learning sparked a new commitment to lifelong learning. **In addition to the skills, knowledge and practices they experienced as outcomes, participants expressed changed attitudes such as enjoying learning and wanting to learn.** Anguti Pseudo, a Traditional

Arts Workshop participant, for example, expressed his desire to learn more in order to be more successful financially:

[I would want to learn...] how to take courses, how to market my products, how to work with the galleries down South, how to find contacts and so forth. Because we have so much to share to the world not only in this community or industries but all over, that's what I would want to learn more.

Again, participants' starting points varied and their outcomes are considered relative to their own goals. In Miqqut 1 and 2, the large majority of participants described themselves as doing nothing, just staying home prior to the program. **By the six-month post-program interview, about half of the participants from Miqqut 2 had started new jobs or formal education programs.** Two had taken jobs as sewing instructors in other programs, one was working as a cashier, and another was babysitting. At least three were enrolled in college programs. In contrast, participants from Miqqut 1 expressed new ideas for engaging in education and the wage economy (e.g. thinking about opening a material shop or making sewing a profession "one day") but we have less evidence of actual carry through. Participants from Miqqut 2 attribute their engagement to the skills and confidence they gained in the program. Although too many variables intervene to be sure of cause and effect, it is interesting that **the program with the most explicit and embedded model of literacy (keeping literacy immediately relevant to participants' activities) also seemed to have highest levels of subsequent workforce and formal education engagement.**

Non-formal cultural programs are indeed a bridge to formal education and the wage economy. Some participants go on to take or teach other programs related to the traditional skill, and/or make money directly from the skill. Others go on to learning or work opportunities related to other program

aspects. This outcome is seen even though education and employment were not necessarily students' goals taking the program (with a few exceptions). Students gain foundational skills that enable them to engage in formal education and employment, including reading, writing and oral communication. They develop the habits of successful students and employees. They also gain in confidence and personal well-being which substantially favours their success in applying for and remaining in jobs and school programs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ★ Support non-formal learning opportunities as an alternative and effective route for re-engagement in formal learning and employment.
- ★ Recognize non-formal learning as complementary to formal learning.
- ★ Embed literacy and language in existing programs.
- ★ Develop materials to support non-formal programming and embedding literacy.



# Well-Being

Although we were expecting some well-being outcomes, based on earlier research into non-academic outcomes of literacy programs (Battel 2001), participants' experiences far exceeded our most hopeful expectations. **Participants said, 'I'm a better person,' 'I'm whole,' 'I'm a better mother,' 'the program changed my life.'** Even years after participating in the program, past participants still say it powerfully transformed their lives. When participants were asked what surprised them, answers frequently referred to being surprised at what one was able to do. When asked what they remember most about the program, participants talked about how fun or enjoyable it was, and about the people they learned alongside. Well-being outcomes were expressed in three main areas: confidence, healing, and interconnectedness.



## **Pijunnautitaaqpaalliqsimaliqut – Confidence through Skills**

Participants' confidence increased as they discovered they are able to learn and produce useful and beautiful items. Prior to the program, many didn't think that they could sew an *amauti* or make a beautiful piece of art. When they finished a garment or piece of art they felt confident in their abilities:

Yeah, that's how I was with that big hooded jacket. And I was like 'look what I made', feeling proud.

(Donna Tatty, Participant, Miqquut 1)

In the beginning [the participants] didn't have much confidence but once they're done you can see the change in them and they become much more willing and you can see that. [...] They were more confident because they were able to sew on their own instead of always asking. [...] They were so proud of the finished products and know that they sewed that themselves, this definitely lifted their spirits and it showed.

(Marianne Tattuinee, Instructor, Miqquut 2)

I felt like I was so *ajunngi* (proficient), like proud of myself learning. I was so proud of myself because my mother passed away close to that year and I was even crying when I finished my *amauti* (woman's coat).

(Rebecca Niviatsiaq, Participant, Reclaiming our Sinew)

*Ilaak, imanna inuk makkuktuq aktuqsigaangami piliriaksamik suurlu taututuinnaruvit kamingnik ajuqtualuujungaliiqsimanarmat kisiani kamiksamik tigusiguvit piliriarivallialirungni igvit ilitaqsijunnavit takkuuk imanna pilirijunnaqtuviniujunga ilingnik ilitarilirniaravit. taanna miqsuqtitavut taimannaiqattarmat. Miqsuqtitavut quviasuliqupaalliqattaqtut tukisivalliaqami. Inuugamilu qaujivalliammaq&uni una pijaksarijara ajunngittunga.* (Because, look at it this way, any young person can learn when they do hands-on just like you can learn faster when you actually work with it. It would be like you looking at a pair of sealskin kamiks and convince yourself that you don't have the skills to make one. But when you actually

take it and work with it you recognize and see that you're capable to learn and produce a product and that is how it is with sewing. Confidence builds with a realization that you're capable.

(Elisapee Pseudo, Instructor, Reclaiming our Sinew)

It has given me so much more confidence because beautiful creations were made. No wonder. We should be able to say that we can create or make wonderful things because the world is paying attention to us and want our creations. It has given me huge confidence.

(Marianne Tattuinee, Participant, Traditional Arts Workshop)

The hands-on cultural programs particularly contributed to this confidence because the participants had something to show for their work. **Their work, as it is displayed, whether in galleries, local buildings, or through being worn, is concrete testimony of their ability.** When participants' creations are praised, their pride and confidence increases further:

*Pianiktuaaranik uqautijauliq&uni mai piukuni! tia'na iliuraangata miqsuliq&uni isumannalisuuq ajunnginnama mai uukturiakkannirit uuktukkannirit tianna pinnarsurmat. (When other people notice the clothing that I make, and when they say nice comments about them, I feel much prouder. It allows me to boost my confidence level and I push myself even harder to make something better the next time.)*

(Monica Pissuk, Participant, Miqqut 1)

I feel proud when people say 'ohhh nice parka' [about] the ones I made at home and that *tuili* (fringed amauti) I had and the other jacket I made. They would say 'nice' and in my mind, in my heart, my heart feels melting, happy and I'm so happy when they say 'nice, nice parka, nice wind pants' and I thank the people when they say 'nice' I love it!

(Star Mama, Participant, Miqqut 2)

Acknowledgement from others was very meaningful to participants. When asked what surprised them, participants often responded 'that they could do it', or that others 'told them that they were skillful'. Participant observers noted that Miqqut participants seemed, as the program progressed, to be taking more care in personal appearance, with make-up, hair, and clothing. Researchers wondered if being noticed, and having others comment on one's clothing, also made the participants more willing to take notice of themselves.

In addition to opportunities for acknowledgement inherent in the creation of art and clothing, some programs also created deliberate opportunities for acknowledgement, such as giving prizes for best work in a particular category in Traditional Arts Workshop, and holding a fashion show of the creations in Miqqut 2, during which the communication skills as well the sewing were put on display. These opportunities increased participants' confidence further and demonstrated to the community the progress students had made.

Participants saw themselves as capable not only because of the traditional skills they acquired and the items they created, but also for other skills and practices they developed in the program. For some, participating in the program was a risk in itself. For example, in *Somebody's Daughter*, participants are proud of themselves for living in tight quarters on the land with a group of women they didn't previously know. For some Miqqut participants, their goal was to attend a program from start to finish. **Participants saw that they tried something and succeeded. Seeing themselves as capable, they have new confidence to take risks learning and trying new things:**

I feel a lot more confident in myself in trying new things like not to be afraid to fail. I just feel more confident in what I do.

(Tara Green, Participant, Miqqut 2)

I'm not afraid anymore to do whatever I feel like I could. [...] I notice, I have a lot more confidence in myself.

(Ataumi Pseudo, Participant, *Somebody's Daughter*)



It teaches you to stand up and do something about your life and realize you're quite capable.

(Rhoda Karetak, Participant, Traditional Arts Workshop)

I think I am producing more now that I know I can do this, I can do that because those courses have shown me that I have the potential to do this and to do that.

(Anguti Pseudo, Participant, Traditional Arts Workshop)

*Uukturumasuittuulaurama  
tamma&&arniarama taimanna  
uukturumasuittuulauqtunga tagva  
ajunngippaallirutiginajaqtara pisimangittara  
tamanna. Uuktuqattaq&uni kisiani  
aktuqsigattaq&uni pivaalliinnarnaqtuq  
kappiasugunniiqaallirnaq&uniluu. (I never  
took risks because I might fail and I could  
do so much better if I just took risks and  
tried. When a person really has absolutely no  
confidence in themselves don't want to take  
risks or try but the only way is to try and not  
be afraid.) [...] This is not the only change  
I notice but I know now that I am capable,  
there's many. If I try I know I can do it, that is  
a fact. We, the real Inuit (elderly) think we're  
not capable enough so we just don't even  
try. [...] Innalunirarumangittungaugaluaq  
irngutaqarama irngutaralu irngutaqaliq&uni  
takkuuk ajurunniiqtunga pigiarama. Pigiarama  
kisiani. (I was an Elder when I went to take  
classes...see I accomplished when I tried.  
Only because I tried.)*

(Marianne Tattuinee, Participant,  
Traditional Arts Workshop)

Participants expressed clearly that gaining skill in anything, producing anything, builds the confidence to go on and try new things.

Learning traditional skills, though, has particular meaning. For Inuit women, producing warm outerwear has traditionally been one of their

contributions to Arctic survival. Being able to sew is one way of taking care of one's family. As participants completed the non-formal cultural programs, they embraced this aspect of their identity and heritage:

I'm more confident in myself, like knowing I know how to sew is really big for me because living up north a lot of women their skill is sewing so I feel more whole as a woman [...] and I feel happy. [...] My mom is proud of me that I can sew. She says, You're going to be a better woman than me. [...] I feel more whole as a person, as a Inuk woman just knowing how to sew for myself and others makes me feel really good.

(Tara Green, Participant, Miqqu 2)

I feel more like a woman. I have more confidence in myself. [...] I feel more complete now. [...] Being a woman who is now learning and now accepting who I am.

(Mary Tatty, Participant, Somebody's Daughter)

As the women learned to sew, they embraced aspects of who they are and who they wish to be, and were better able to fulfill roles their community expects of them. Connecting with their Inuit ethnic identity also helped them feel proud and confident:

Some of them would say that...if they hadn't joined...they would have never been proud to be Inuk. It was a huge impact when we heard them say this. Even now they say they continue learning...but I especially am happy about how much prouder they are of the fact that they are Inuit.

(Pujuut Kusugak,  
Coordinator, Somebody's Daughter)

As participants learned about traditional ways and were inspired by the strengths of their ancestors, they also gained confidence and pride. Elisapee Pseudo, instructor of Reclaiming our Sinew, summed it up this way:



*Asijjirningali tautuqattaqsimajara  
ilinniaqtitsiarjuqattaqtilluta inuit  
piqqusinginnik quviasuliqpaalliqattarmata  
ilitsivaalliraangamik. (I have seen a lot of  
change in a student and you can contribute  
this to learning more about themselves and  
their culture.)*

The confidence participants gained from their skills, their creation, and their broader participation in the program extends to seeing themselves more generally as capable, valuable people:

*I'm more confident. [...] I got more  
confidence in my sewing. [...] It gave me more  
confidence in everything in general.*

*(Neevee Pseudo, Participant, Miqqut 1)*

*I am already feeling more confident in my  
sewing skills and in myself.*

*(Neevee Pseudo, Participant, Miqqut 1)*

*Qulalauqtunga tia'amiaq piguanngi&&unga.  
[...Kisiani] ajunngittunga. (Before the  
program) I didn't have confidence in myself.  
[...But now I know] that I can do it)*

*(Gwyn Kriqaliluk, Participant, Miqqut 2)*

*I now feel more confident. [...] Now I know I  
could do it. I'll never forget this experience.*

*(Nellie Kusugak, Participant,  
Somebody's Daughter)*

*One guy...his parents said, I can't believe it  
he's so wonderful and changed. And because  
he felt like a confident person because he was  
having a hard time before he came here.*

*(Kelly Pseudo, Instructor,  
Traditional Arts Workshop)*

The increase in self-esteem, confidence, and belief in oneself is a robust outcome. Observations of increased confidence are repeated across programs, and from multiple sources in each program. Participants notice the changes in

themselves and instructors and fellow students corroborate the changes:

*Taipkuakapsiarjjuitinnusingilliquviasuliqpaal-  
liqtuujaqtuttakusimajaruakkatagvungalaur-  
matanikallungammarinngikkaluaq&utikisian-  
iajuqtungaaqsimalualaurmatakisianiliquvia-  
suliqpaalliqtinuusingittakuksaulauqtut. (A  
few of them seem to gain more of a positive  
experience and it showed. I noticed the differ-  
ence because when they first came, they had  
very little self-esteem and were not confident  
in themselves but we saw afterward that it  
helped them in a more positive way.)*

*/Was it like that for all students?/*

*lingujaaqtuq, ujjirijakkullii.*

*Taimannaittuujalauqtuq. (It seemed like it,  
from what I noticed.)*

*(Rachel Pseudo, Instructor, Miqqut 1)*

*We noticed it in all the programs with all of  
them. ...They were so proud of themselves  
when they realized how they were able to  
improve and they held back tears in this.*

*(Pujuut Kusugak, Coordinator,  
Somebody's Daughter)*

*I think they really did become infinitely more  
confident. [...] The confidence would be the  
main change.*

*(Kelly Pseudo, Instructor,  
Traditional Arts Workshop)*

**Confidence comes from hands-on learning in a safe and supportive environment; being part of a group that accepts them; having opportunity to learn what they want to learn; seeing what they can do when appropriate supports are in place and when they have access to the right materials; having someone believe in them and encourage them to believe in themselves; having a concrete product at the end; and having opportunities to showcase their work and be acknowledged.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ★ Recognize the special values of non-formal learning spaces and the necessary elements that contribute to their success.
- ★ Prioritize creating and maintaining learning environments that are physically, emotionally, culturally and intellectually safe.
- ★ Develop funding criteria which focus on processes as much as content.
- ★ Create opportunities for acknowledgement of students' progress and achievements.
- ★ Facilitate co-operative learning.



## Inunnguiniq - Human Spirit

Participants and instructors also noticed more subtle changes in character and behaviour. We coded these changes as *inunnguiniq* 'guiding the potential of the human spirit'. **Participants embraced well-being. They aspired and chose to become better people, to live out the values of Inuit *qaujimajatuqanngit* (Inuit traditional knowledge). As they determined to respect others and themselves, some adopted healthier lifestyles and resisted negative peer pressure. They developed life skills transferable to work and family environments. They connected with others in the program, their family, and community.**

Somebody's Daughter specifically targeted healing. The program is designed on the premise that traditional skills and literacy work side-by-side to help participants embrace life. Tina Pseudo spoke from years of experience delivering the program:

Self-esteem development, a sense of pride and an opportunity to work on healing or

taking the next step and realizing potential. [...] We always noticed that all the participants seemed happier when they finished the program. [...] I think learning part of your culture and learning traditional Inuit skills is good for our mental and spiritual well-being. It's about connecting with your identity; it's about having an identity about who you are and where you come from. So I think it should always be incorporated in any kind of program because your self-esteem improves.

Participants confirmed that the program was life changing:

Before the program I wasn't the person I am today. I went home with a new me, a different person.

(Ataumi Pseudo, Participant, Somebody's Daughter)

It really heals, you know.

(Mary Tatty, Participant, Somebody's Daughter)

Through traditional skills, participants connected with their identity as Inuit and as women. Through literacy, women spoke or wrote about past hurts, identifying and sharing them, and then moving on. The program coordinator gave many examples of testimonies from participants and their family members of healing, including this one:

[...] When we were leaving, a husband was so grateful and said that his wife is changed and really at peace now, it seemed as if we had woken her up and he noticed that she was much happier and nicer. Even if they cannot write, just letting them draw helps with whatever pain they have in their lives, or to start sharing. [...] The husband was grateful and saying his wife received healing and he really noticed this, so this was surprising.

(Tina Pseudo, Instructor, Somebody's Daughter and Reclaiming our Sinew)

Open journaling contributes to healing, as do specific well-being activities. A favourite activity in Miqqut 2, for instance, was the Igloo of Life, a life skills resource, created by Inuk Elder, Meeka Arnakaq.

When we did that 'igloo of life', that really taught me how to be more in touch with myself, to really understand like if I'm going through a hard time just to look outside and why I feel that way and just to know that it's going to get better.

(Tara Green, Participant, Miqqut 2)

Emotionally, I learned how to look at myself in a better way which was mainly because of the 'Igloo of Life'. That helped me just think about myself and try to look at the positive things in life and how I could make myself better.

(Victoria Kakuktinniq, Participant, Miqqut 2)

For participants in Traditional Arts Workshop, self-expression through art, as well as the process of working and creating with one's hands, one's whole body, brought healing:

Art is one of the best medications for *ilukkut*, inside. It's one of the best healers when you're going through a hard time.

(Anguti Pseudo, Participant, Traditional Arts Workshop)

Working with clay and making art with my hands relieves any tension and stress I have and it helps me a lot.

(Lucy Sanertanut, Participant, Traditional Arts Workshop)

All of the traditional skills programs involved hands-on work creating, expressing oneself through art and sewing as well as through literacy activities. Even in programs that may not target healing specifically, participants and instructors said that the program helped them to heal and to become better people. These findings are corroborated by mental health research which documents the healing power of creative arts (Archibald and Dewar 2010) and of reconnecting with traditional practices (Kirmayer, Simpson and Cargo 2003).

One indicator of the healing is the overwhelming testimony of increased happiness as an outcome of the program:

*Quvisungniqsauliqtungaa ilinniaqattalaurama miqsumirmut.* (I am much happier since learning how to sew.)

(Sandra Nanorak, Participant, Miqqut 1)





Maybe they're much happier and I know that they have changed.

(Nana Pseudo, Instructor, Miqqut 1)

When you look at their faces you can see how much happier they are and this pleases me a lot. [...] It has rubbed off to me and I am also much happier.

(Aline Kabvitok, Instructor, Miqqut 2)

*Quvisungniqsaujunga* (I'm happier).

(Allik Pseudo, Participant, Miqqut 2)

*Ilangit quviahumiatialaurnarlia pianiliqmata qungajuimiaqtaulauqmata.* (Some were so happy when they were close to finishing that they couldn't even smile anymore.) [...] ...

*Quviahulauqpunga* (I am so happy for myself).

(Ashley Pseudo, Participant,  
Reclaiming our Sinew)

*Ilittivallianingit nalunalaunngittut quviatangningit. Tauvaniikkatta quviasuktuinnaaluulauratta quviananngittumik saqqititsinasuktuqalaunngi&&uni quviasuktuinnaaluulauratta taunaniitilluta.* (You could tell that they were learning and getting happier. When we were at the camp we were such a happy group).

(Aseena Pseudo, Participant,  
Somebody's Daughter)

[...] A lot of it was happy, at the end of the camp, everyone seemed happy and that was the best thing to see them happy and confident.

(Tina Pseudo, Instructor, Somebody's Daughter)

*Ilainirilauqtara tamauna aktuisimajuugaluaq, quvianaqtuugaluaq.* (Having taken the course has done wonders for me and made me very happy).

(Marianne Tattuinee, Participant,  
Traditional Arts Workshop)

Participants were learning something they valued, and were with others in a very positive environment. They were learning about themselves and letting go of hurts. They felt happy while they were learning and as result of the program.

The healing was also evident through changes to behaviour. Participants explained that they reconnected with deeply held values and learned to live out these values. For instance, participants learned patience:

I learned so many different things...too many things. I learned patience. [...] Not *ninngaq* (to get mad) and *aliktui* (rip) what I'm sewing. [...]

(Neevee Pseudo, Participant, Miqqut 1)

...[P]atience-*mi ilinniakkanniq&unga*... (I learned more about patience).

(Bridgette Tattuinee, Participant, Miqqut 2)

They learned generosity:

I learned that without cooperation or without people giving, without wanting anything back I think this program wouldn't have been successful because (our instructor) shared so many things with everybody. [...] And she really taught me and she never asked for anything back. All she wanted was for them to *ilinniaq* (be taught) and *ilitsik* (learn) and I really learned that like *anniruhuktariaqanngilluaviktugut piquitimiarylunngit* (we shouldn't hoard, they're just material things). *Anniruttaungittungaugaluaq* (I shared) but I would think, oh *save-niarakku aturumaarmijug* (I might need it someday) but like having that attitude *atunngilluavi'mat* (is useless). That's one thing I learned.

(Neevee Pseudo, Participant, Miqqut 1)

They learned to forgive:

I'm more patient with everyone. I'm more forgiving. ...I was always kind of a forgiving person but I would hold grudges and I would kind of hang it over their head for a while till I thought they *anullak* (get fed up) but now *tukihiniqhaugama huvaallilanngilluavikkatta* (I understand now that it is useless) holding grudges or like *i&uilliqhimagaluaruma* (if I'm resentful) what's that going to prove? What's that going to teach? It's just going to teach my kids that it's OK to *i&uilliq* (be resentful) and stay *i&uilliq* (resentful) forever when nothing's going to be resolved so I'm more forgiving that way. Just better.

(Neevee Pseudo, Miqqut 1)

I've noticed some changes. I found out that I can't be mad at this person for long period of time there's got to be a time to forgive.

(Ataumi Pseudo, Participant, Somebody's Daughter)

They learned to be kinder and compassionate:

The Miqqut Project helped me to learn to be nicer to people and kinder.

(Nina Bruce, Participant, Miqqut 2)

...During the program one of the things... was always to be supportive...so when I see someone that's feeling down I'll ask them, 'Are you OK?' and just try to encourage them.

(Tara Green, Participant, Miqqut 2)

*lkipigiliqtakka isumaqaqtuttauq aksuruqtuttauq sunataarutiksamik qiniqattaqtuttauq ujjirittialiqtakka.* (I am considerate now and know that they also have emotions and feelings and all are trying to make ends meet. I wasn't aware of that before.)

(Aeva Pseudo, Participant, Reclaiming our Sinew)

They practiced being respectful to Elders and their fellow learners:

...Elders-*ni uqaqatigiingnirmi*, respect-*nirmi tukisivalliluktaalauqquqtugut.* (I think everyone learned more about... communicating with Elders and also understanding more about respect.)

(Bridgette Tatuinee, Participant, Miqqut 2)

Participants explained that these behaviours correspond to values they learned growing up in Inuit communities, but might have let go of. **They explicitly attributed the changes in themselves to having spent time with and listened to Elders.** They reported feeling good about themselves as they are re-inspired to live according to these values.

In living out their values, participants also moved away from negative or destructive behaviours. They stopped swearing:

Very much, there were maybe two who would swear every time they spoke and eventually realized what they were doing and started to pay more attention to their words, and would cover their mouths when they swore. We didn't tell not to swear but realized that they didn't need to.

(Quluq Pilakapsi, Instructor, Miqqut 2)

Some gossiped less and were less judgemental of others:

*Inutsauniqhaujuujaq&unga* (I feel like a better person) not gossiping *uqauhiqainnaq*. Before...I'm not going to be afraid to admit I was deep into gossip like *tuharuanginnaq qanuiliurmangaataa* (nosy and what people were doing) you know. And then being around those ladies and like learning how to *inuuqatigiitsiaq* (get along with others), like they didn't even *uqaujjui* (lecture us)

anything they would just like *uqallamiaq* (have conversations). [...] I learned] ...not to be so judgemental so fast.

(Neevee Pseudo, Participant, Miqqut 1)

Others said they became less prone to angry outbursts:

I'm a better mother because I'm more patient. Right away *kipagiatuqattialluavik* (I would be angry) I would freak out (over) any little thing. And then, just being around all those ladies, not even the instructor but the other ladies too. Like I really learned lots from them and it just made me a better person.

(Neevee Pseudo, Participant, Miqqut 1)

*lpasaraittukuluulauqtunga  
ninngaksarai&&ungalu. [...]  
[Piqatiga] uqaqattalimat...  
uqallagiaqtuqattarlutit uvvaluuvva  
ilinniarraqpata ilinniaqatauqattaliruvigqai  
isumaksaqsiuluaqattarajanngippit  
naalamiarakku aaqkpaalliqtuuualauqtunga.  
([Before] I was easily bothered and  
angered. [...] When [my husband] started  
to say...go talk to someone or go to  
school maybe that I wouldn't have so  
much time to think and I decided to  
listen to him and it has helped me so  
much.) [...] Quviasuliquaallirutigiblugulu  
aaqkpaallirutigikkanniqtuujaqtara. (I  
am much happier and it seems that it has  
helped me.)*

(Aeva Pseudo, Participant, Reclaiming our Sinew)

Some turned their backs on substance abuse:

*Ajurunilirama miqsumnirmut and all that ilakka  
uqautiqattamialiq&ugit suvalikiaq imialuk  
atunngittualuk or ujarak atunngittualuk.  
(Since I learned how to sew I have told my  
friends that drinking didn't have any use  
for us or getting stoned was a waste of  
time when you can learn to sew and teach*

other people how to sew instead of going out and drinking.) So...they quit alcohol with me. [...] *Quviasungniqsaujut my kids... imisuittumik tautulirmata. ...Almost 11 years nuqqaqsimaliqtungu.* (My children are much happier with a sober mother... [I]t has been almost 11 years since I quit.)

(Josephine Makiggak, Participant, Reclaiming our Sinew)

The personal outcomes were different from participant to participant, but overall life changes were repeated across programs. The quotations above give samples of the outcomes that showed up repeatedly in different participants' lives. **Even without targeting healthy lifestyles and embracing life, the programs' combination of traditional skills and literacy in a non-formal learning environment helped participants to come closer to the person they want to be.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ★ Support, develop and offer non-formal learning opportunities which address the whole person.
- ★ Recognize that healing must accompany learning in Inuit communities.
- ★ Build instructional teams which can teach the whole person.

## *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq* - Interconnectedness

### *Within the Program*

*Inuuqatigiitsiarniq* – community, relationship, caring and respect - is integral to the process of these non-formal programs, as well as an outcome. **Programs were designed to create a safe learning environment.** Instructors and coordinators were careful to protect a positive environment through setting group expectations and parameters at an

orientation (e.g. Miqqut 2) and even asking people to leave who were being disharmonious:

Everyone really got a place to be, a program and a place and an activity where they could really feel harmonious, it's like it was a place where they were happy to come and leave. It is a program where you know, nobody had some bad energy. In fact if there is someone here that isn't able to function in a group in a friendly way they really don't last, like we ask them to leave, because you can't do it.

(Kelly Pseudo, Instructor, Traditional Arts Workshop)

Instructors, often Elders, respected and cared about and opened themselves up to participants. Through the programs, participants were encouraged and learned to open up to each other:

*Ingmini a'jani get along-nirmi ajunngililauqtunga and kannagusunnginniqauiq&unga.* (I learned how to get along with others and also I am not so shy anymore.)

(Bridgette Tatuinee, Participant, Miqqut 2)

What did I get out of the program? There was lots. I seem to become a better person than before, opening up to others. [...] After taking that trip...I seem to be more open...it made me a different person...so there was a lot of changes.

(Ataumi Pseudo, Participant, Somebody's Daughter)

They learned how to get along with and support each other:

*Ahu tamaitigut pilirijumalikkannirnirmut qaujimajatuqanginnik inuit pilirijusinginnik amma inuuqatigiqnirmut inugiaktuni amisuni ikajuqatigiingnirmut, support like? Inuusirmunaglaat uqumaiksarniruma uqallagiarunnalirnirmut. [...] Tia'nalittaqtinik qaujittalau'mijunga. Uvangatuangunngittuq taikkua piliriqatigittalauqtakka, taimattauq unikkaaksaliit. [...]*

*Ikajurniqalaangunasugilauqtara uqaaniktaraujaali'mijuq apirikannira'ni inuuqatigiingnirmik amma inutuanguunngitnavit tagvatuanguunngitnavit ilaqanngitsugigaluaruvit inuktaqainnasurmat ikajuriarumajunik nagligusuktunigluunniit uqaujutsiarunnaqtunigluunniit tamanna ikajuqniqarugijara tagvuuna.* (I would guess [what was most helpful was] the whole program and the traditional ways of Inuit and how to cooperate with one another and support one another. Even to be able to share my life with someone. [...] That is what I saw there. The other instructors would say the same. [...] Being there for each other and learning to live with others, socializing and that you're not alone in your difficulty there's always someone who wants to help and sympathize with you and offer counselling. I think they learn this at camp.)

(Evie Pseudo, Instructor, Somebody's Daughter)

Participants expanded the range of people with whom they feel comfortable interacting and developed deep new friendships. Especially in intensive courses (e.g. two week land programs) participants became like family. **They learned to get along with a wide range of people, supported each other, and bonded to form a strong community.** This connection persists beyond the program's timeframe and is what some participants remember most:

I'm feeling more comfortable, interacting with others, because I usually stick to my own group. My comfort level before was to stick with my own group but now I am making more friends...I am making new connections with other people.

(Neevee Pseudo, Participant, Miqqut 1)

I remember the ladies, all the ladies, I remember this so well, our conversations. I remember our conversations and our interactions more than I do [the sewing]. I



sewed, I am kind of proud of my sewing, but the company was more.

(Participant, Miqqut 1).

To me the best part was the social aspect of the program because we became friends and we were all happy, all of us.

(Leena Pseudo, Instructor, Miqqut 1)

I really noticed the changes in the participants. I noticed the participants became good friends with each other and we even became their friends. We became comfortable with each other. We would talk to each other through both the good and bad times. I really like this. When we see each other on the road, I can tell that we have more of a closer relationship between us now.

(Allie Pseudo, Instructor, Miqqut 1)

Whenever I see any of the women I was there with, we have a bond now. Some of them shared of their struggles through tears. I learned a part of their life's struggles and I felt compassion for them.

(Nellie Kusugak, Participant, Somebody's Daughter)

Participants developed personal connections through the programs. They became more willing to engage with others and are less shy. Through new friendships, they found a new support system. They feel more part of a community through lasting bonds of friendship that persist long after the program. These connections are an end in themselves also contribute to participants' successful reengagement with work and school.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ★ Privilege programs that offer learning support and development of a learning community.
- ★ Nurture relationships and respect between participants and instructors.
- ★ Fund and maintain low student-teacher ratios in non-formal programs.

### *Within Families*

The improved relationships extend to participants' families. Family members benefited from the healing and resulting changes:

[Since Miqqut] I'm more closer to my boys. [...] My boys like spending time with me.

(Grace Tagonark, Participant, Miqqut 2)

[Miqqut made] me more open to my family and friends. [...] My girls are talking more [...] They're mostly at home now, not out trying to be busy. [...] Everybody's happier and more talkative, asking what I learned and [...] everybody's more talkative to each other not like before. [Miqqut] changed my life, much better, even with my kids, my girls yeah.

(Manitok Aliyak, Participant, Miqqut 2)

I've noticed lots of lots of things change with my family. We are a lot closer now my girls love going school and talk about school. [...] I've learned how to be a better mother. [...] My life got easier after taking Miqqut Project. It got me doing something instead of stressing out from my kids. [...] Miqqut Project was the best! I've learned to write, to sew, be a better person, and it was always good.

(Nina Bruce, Participant, Miqqut 2)

Almost everything [improved]: how to look after my kids and how to communicate and with my *piqatik*, my kids *tusunngippaalliqut quviasulirniqsaujut*. *Panigalu aisimaniqsauqattalilaurmat tukisijukuluungmat aaqqikpalliajungaqai qaujingmat. Taimannainnimnik ujirusutsialirama naalaqattamialilauqtunga.* (...with my partner, my kids are not envious of other kids and much happier. My daughter is home more and has understood my life more. When I realized what kind of a person I was I started to listen.)

(Aeva Pseudo, Participant, Reclaiming our Sinew)

Somebody's Daughter really held the path between me and my biological daughter...I think we finally understand now so we talk.

(Mary Tatty, Participant, Somebody's Daughter)

### Participants related better to their family members following the program as a result of their healing and improved communication skills.

New skills and practices in sewing also brought together mothers, daughters, sisters, grandmothers, grand-daughters, aunts and nieces. Participants explain that they connected to their female relatives in new ways following the program:

...With my mom ... I am finally communicating with her about sewing and learn more from her too

(Shelby Autut, Participant, Miqqut 1)

Me and my sister we've been able to sew together. Like she comes over to my house all the time and we've just be able to bond. Before it was just like I would go over and just watch her sew pretty much but now even I'm able to teach her stuff. [...] And my *panik* (daughter) like I'm able to sew her like little *kamik* or parkas so that like we connect in that way too.

(Victoria Kakuktinniq, Participant, Miqqut 2)

I'm having fun taking part in this course and it brought me and my granny closer and my mom is proud of me because I'm learning how to sew so thanks.

(Nadine Angalik, Participant, Miqqut 2)

[My girls] want to help me too because I'm sewing and I'm telling them now they want to *miqsuqatau* (sew along) with me. [...] I'm closer to my kids. They stay home and help me more.

(Allik Pseudo, Participant, Miqqut 2)

Yeah, like when I'm looking for a pattern or sewing like I always go to my auntie and she'll tell me what to do and how to sew it and like how to make things look really nice and she'll give me patterns and stuff like that. [...] A stronger bond has come. She's really happy that I know how to sew and I enjoy it.

(Tara Green, Participant, Miqqut 2)

I was always close but I feel a lot closer to my relatives.

(Ataumi Pseudo, Participant, Somebody's Daughter)

With my mother...We're getting closer and sew together.

(Judy Angootealuk, Participant  
Somebody's Daughter)

Participants explained that although they never used to talk much to their parents, they do now. Improving seamstresses now have a productive and pleasurable activity to share with their female relatives.

Traditional skills also brought together husbands and wives, girlfriends and boyfriends, sisters and brothers. Now that the women know how to prepare the skins and produce warm hunting outerwear, they are able to support men going out on the land by making sure they are dressed warmly and by fully using the animal the hunter brings back:



My brother-*tauq maqaikkaaluuliqtut ajurunnirama*. My brother *maqaikkaaluuliq, natsiqsiuq* caribou *tuktuliaq*. (I know that if I didn't learn I wouldn't be doing anything right now and I wouldn't know what to do with the caribou skins my father and partner catch. My brother does more hunting now too since he knows I will save it whether it is caribou or seal skin.)

(Josephine Makiggak, Participant, Reclaiming our Sinew)

*Taimannatuinnaq ilagiannguarajaqtara ikajuqatigiiklutik taakkuak nuliariik piqatigiik. Taikkuali qaujilauqtara tamaani ilinniaqtilauqsimangmijara tainna miqsuqattaqtuq miqsuutinut taannalu piliulauqtanga quviasuliquaallilaurmat qaujimannallattaaqtuq piqatingata, annuraaliulaurmagu quviattakpaalliq&uni sarimasuk&uni uvannut uqalauqsimangmata taana qaujimajaraugaluaq.* I would just add that a couple has to work as a team. One of the students would sew for her partner and the happiness it brought him and it showed. He was very proud and said so himself, that is all I know.

(Elisapee Pseudo, Instructor, Reclaiming our Sinew)

Children and boyfriends or husbands are pleased to wear the new garments sewn for them and feel proud of the women for learning these skills. Women feel proud that their children and husbands are well dressed in clothing they made:

I feel better about myself...My kids parka qalirmata, piuniqsauliqtuq. (Now that my children have parkas, it's a lot better and I feel so much better about myself and for my children.)

(Alisa Udliak, Participant, Miqqut 1)

Quviasungniqsauliqturilaa ahijjirniriqquuqtangit quviahungningit nutaqqami'nik a'nuraaqtaarniqturamik

quviasungniqsauliqtutik utiraangamik ujjimattialauqtuq ilanginnik. (I think some were much happier with themselves and proud to be providing for their children, I think that was the change with some of them.)

(Leena Pseudo, Instructor, Miqqut 1)

[My family] were so amazed, proud and happy for me.

(Nellie Kusugak, Participant, Somebody's Daughter)

Participants are proud to provide for their families through the program (making winter clothes, earning stipends, gaining marketable skills) and feel more able to fill expected social roles (e.g. preparing the skins that the hunter brings home).

Finally, learning and practicing traditional skills provides a powerful way to remember and connect to parents, grand-parents and more distant ancestors who practiced these skills years before:

It has taught me, hey this is what my parents did, my grandparents probably some of them too...so it brought back some memories.

(Anguti Pseudo, Participant, Traditional Arts Workshop)

It was very touching for me. I don't have parents so I thought of my mom guiding me all the time. [...] I was the one that needed help before I took the program, so to me there's a lot out there that need help to understand what a woman's (role) is with sewing or other, like working on skins and we should try to learn more because our Elders are going so quick. I wish my grandma was around to see me or my mom with my new pairs of kamiks because when I first finished mine, I said, Mom, I'm done and that's all I said and I just put them up in the air and I knew she was watching down on me. When you look at it our Elders are the ones there, let's use them, to me, Elders are more professors because they've lived out land, they've survived the cold, some of



them went through starvation, some of them went through hardship but they know how to survive because of their skills, as husband and wife also.

(Mary Tatty, Participant, Somebody's Daughter)

Preparing and using this clothing links participants to their parents and ancestors who created and relied on such clothing to survive. Acquiring traditional skills builds respect for and connection to the strength and innovation of generations of Inuit came before. In some ways, including the valuation of these knowledges and practices in an organized learning environment helps to overcome the perceived colonizing force of organized learning and the wage economy. Learners, and their families, who may have felt culturally alienated and disenfranchised in schools or workplaces, embrace the strength of Inuit qaujimatugangit. Recognizing and developing these strengths helps increase their confidence as potential participants in and contributors to formal education and the wage economy, especially in the Inuit homeland.

### **Within the Community**

As participants became more connected to their family and culture, they also connected with their broader community, personally as well as publically. Participants reported, supported by instructors' observations, that through the program they learned to be more aware of and open to other people and their needs. As they became more able to ask for and receive help, they also became open to helping others. With their skills and confidence, they became better equipped to help others:

*Sivanigaugaangama aullaqtautiksamigli sanasimavagiiqpi atuqtuarunnaqpunga tiannailijausurama. (Our relatives usually call me and ask me if they can borrow hunting clothing if we have extra pair.) Uvanga uqahuqtunga, ii, aik&irlugu atuqtuulluaqtasi miqsugaksaqangnirupsiluunniit qaitsigupsi miqsurutijuulluaqtasi laaqtuqattaralarapkit*

*uvvaluunniit uqautihuraluaqtakka ilauqatauqattarajalaravit ilitsivaallirluni ajurnarunniirnaraluarma. (I usually tell them, Yes, we have extra pair of clothing, come and pick it up. I also tell them that I am open to making them clothing if they buy the material.) Once you learn to sew, you get that feeling that yes; you are able to sew anything.*

(Monica Pissuk, Participant, Miqqut 1)

Because sometimes young ladies ask me for help. When I can I try and help.

(Rebecca Gordon, Participant, Miqqut 1)

I just think I'm more willing to get involved and not afraid to like push myself to get involved.

(Tara Green, Participant, Miqqut 2)

I'm doing sewing myself [to] help the other people [...] I'm like wow I'm proud I'm doing this for them but I love it, I love to help other people.

(Star Mama, Participant, Miqqut 2)

Everybody has needs. And I've noticed that after taking that trip. [...] I found out that I'm not afraid to help out with the community.

(Ataumi Pseudo, Participant, Somebody's Daughter)

**With their new skills, participants know they have something to offer. Their healing gives the freedom to offer it. The confidence gives them the impulse to contribute whatever they have to offer.**

Rhoda Karetak, a participant in Traditional Arts Workshop, explained how the program helped her recognize how able she truly is. As a result of the program, she overcame her shyness and feels more confident in her workplace and in her community:

*...Ilinniarutiksaliuqpallianginnaqattarmitilluta katimaqattaqtillutalu piliriarilauqtakka ilinnialauqtakka pivaallirutigisimallattaaqtakka. Asimniktauq quksasuluatuinnaqtunik*



*kanngusuluatuinnaqtunik  
inuqasuungungmat. Sunaluktaanuk  
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suqutaunngitsiaqtuq sunaubva. Tamakkua  
ilaitigut ajurasugiluakkaaluugatta  
pivaalliqsimajungali  
tamatumingasunaluktaanut. (When we have  
curriculum development meetings what I  
learned in the program has definitely helped  
me. There are many people who are nervous  
and afraid. With everything, after living in  
Rankin Inlet has helped me and not being so  
shy or nervous of white people and seeing  
them members of your community and it's  
alright. Some of us believe that we're not able  
but I have changed so much.)*

**Participants in the non-formal culture and literacy programs became more confident to participate in community events, to speak up at community meetings, and to take their place in the community. Through their learning, they feel the confidence of becoming givers in the community. While they are empowered to ask for help, they also feel confidence in no longer being a burden, but being able to do things for themselves.**

Finally, the well-being extends past the participants to the instructors. Elders, who increasingly live in an English-dominant community felt comfortable working with younger people in a context where Inuktitut was widely used:

*It was fun to be part of it and because they spoke Inuktitut since I have absolutely no understanding of English.*

*(Leena Pseudo, Instructor, Miqqut 1)*

Elders who might have felt that their work or teaching ability was not valuable or valued learned that it is. They recognized their own value. They felt satisfaction in the students' achievements. They

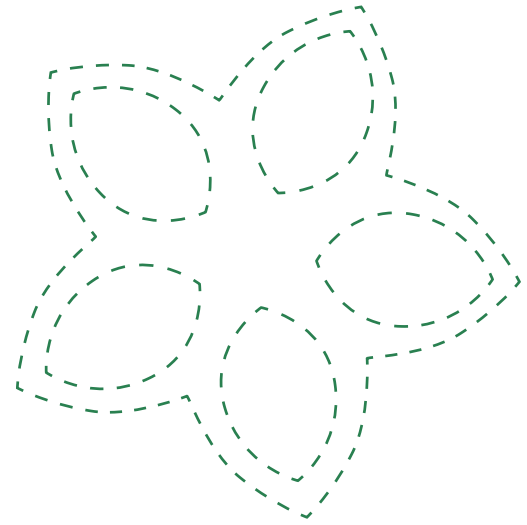
felt happy being part of the community. They felt relieved that traditional skills, essential to Arctic survival, are being passed on. Aline Kabvitok, instructor in Miqqut 2 shared:

*I have never been a sewing instructor before and have never tried it because I am shy about my sewing and don't like being watched when sewing but I really enjoyed myself and have learned that it is nothing to be shy about and realized I'm not shy of you which I'm really proud of.*

Quotations incorporated in other sections show that everyone who took part in these non-formal programs, instructors as well as participants, was positively impacted in some way.

Well-being outcomes, while present in all programs, were seen most clearly in the two programs that were designed to include healing and well-being: Miqqut 2 and Somebody's Daughter. In these programs, the literacy component served as a vehicle for understanding oneself and healing, through journaling and other directed activities. In addition to healing and well-being through literacy activities, participants in all programs found healing through the process of creation and having one's creations acknowledged; through comradery with fellow learners and Elder instructors; through the modeling of Elders; and through taking time to care for themselves and learn what they really wanted to know. Participants became more confident, happier, prouder of who they are, and motivated to live up to their own expectations of themselves. Participants said they are better people following the course. Some moved away from unhealthy life choices to more positive life choices. Others developed and practiced acting out values that might have been dormant in their lives, such as generosity and respect. All seemed to benefit from greater connections to family or community.

While confidence, well-being and interconnectedness are salient outcomes across programs, each person's life was impacted in different ways. Coordinators, instructors and participants admit that aspects of un-wellness may persist. One instructor spoke with great sadness of participants who continued to struggle personally following the program. While these programs are not a miracle cure for all personal and societal troubles, they nonetheless have dramatic personal outcomes, and even more so when programming deliberately targets well-being.



### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ★ Recognize that reducing the social and intergenerational isolation that results from complex personal divisions in Inuit communities is part of supporting the transition to work.
- ★ Create community through positive interactions within learning programs and through engagement between programs and the broader community.

# Discussion

Analysis of five non-formal cultural skills programs with embedded literacy shows inter-related outcomes of cultural skills, literacy, and overall well-being. **Although we discuss cultural skills, literacy and well-being as separate outcomes, research on Inuit role models' vision of bilingualism and biliteracy suggests that subsistence, language practices and socioeconomic and social development are instead conceptualized as parts of an integrated package.** Whale Cove Elder Jackie Napajuq, for instance, is quoted alternating between subsistence, jobs, language, and well-being when asked about jobs and desires for his grandchildren's future:

**QULUAQ:** What *job skills* [italics added] would you want your grandchild to have in Inuktitut and English?

**JACKIE:** I would like for the girls to know how to make traditional clothing, such as *kamiks*, *amauti*, mitts, and caribou skin parkas. It is our tradition to know these skills. I want them to know about today's jobs skills for their future. [...] They have to know the two languages for today's lifestyle... I tell them the keep their language but it is also be much better to learn both. [...]

**QULUAQ:** What would you want in your house as a teaching material that has to do with language?

**JACKIE:** Learning to sew and welcoming conversation in Inuktitut because it gives you comfort and strength. Learning about snow and making iglus if you do not want to learn in the house. [...]

**QULUAQ:** What type of skill would you think your grandchildren or your great grandchildren should have for the future?

**JACKIE:** There will be many different things happening when we are gone. I want them to know about religion and the Bible ... I want them to care for others and be good to them. I want them to be good to those who have no parents and share with them what they have. (quoted in Tulloch et al. 2009: 138)

For Elder Jackie Napajuq, language and literacy development is integrally linked to traditional skills, to job skills, and to being kind and caring people. The non-formal traditional skills programs with embedded literacy encompass this range of practices for whole person outcomes.

The complex outcomes of non-formal traditional skills programs with embedded literacy are reminiscent of definitions of indigenous literacy(ies):

Native literacy is a tool which empowers the spirit of Native people. [...] As part of a life-long path of learning, Native literacy contributes to the development of self-knowledge and critical thinking. It is a continuum of skills that encompasses reading, writing, numeracy, speaking, good study habits and communication in other forms of language as needed. Based on the experience, abilities and goals of learners, Native literacy fosters and promotes achievement and a sense of purpose, which are both central to self-determination. (George, n.d.: 6, quoted in Antone et al. 2002: 8)

**Literacy is about empowerment. Combining literacy with traditional skills and well-being in non-formal programs for adult Inuit learners enhances the goal of improving lives.**

The healing and wellness seen across programs is an important aspect of bridging from non-formal programs to greater involvement in formal education and the wage economy. For some Inuit, engagement in formal education and the wage economy is, or was, experienced as an alienating, colonizing experience. Healing may be a necessary step for many Inuit to feel comfortable and willing to continue to engage in formal education, **“The Aboriginal people have experienced great trauma in their educational journey [...]. Therefore, factors such as healing, reclamation of identity, language, cultures and self-determination, play a major role in the complex issue of Aboriginal literacy and learning”** (Antone et al. 2002: 8). In this sense, non-formal programs that bring together healing, traditional skills and literacy address a specific need within Inuit’s educational journey.

Traditional skills programs give back what some learners may feel they lost through their or their parents’ engagement in formal education and wage labour. Barriers of time, space, language and other priorities block some Inuit from acquiring specialized practices from their parents and grandparents as would have happened generations ago. Non-formal traditional skills programs give adult learners the opportunity to acquire highly specialized traditional skills such as fur preparation

and clothing production. Even more importantly for many, they recreate opportunities for younger Inuit to learn from Inuit Elders. Inuit participants testified that being with the Elders and having the opportunity to reconnect with traditional skills is a healing experience in itself.

Throughout our interviews with participants and instructors of non-formal cultural programs with embedded literacy, we heard how culture, literacy and well-being work together. **Participants experience powerful impacts because the programs engage them as whole people learning what motivates them and what is relevant for their daily lives.**



# Recommendations

The *Miqqut* project confirms the value of non-formal programs for re-engaging Inuit in learning and work. Based on our research outcomes, we suggest the following recommendations for those funding, supporting, and delivering adult education in Nunavut. Rationale for these recommendations are found throughout the report. Page numbers in brackets provide references to most relevant sections for each recommendation.

## Recommendations to the Canadian Government

1. Invest in high quality non-formal programs to ensure the best outcomes.
2. Support non-formal learning opportunities as an alternative and effective route for re-engagement in formal learning and employment.
3. Recognize non-formal learning as complementary to formal learning.
4. Acknowledge the special values of non-formal learning spaces and the necessary elements that contribute to their success.
5. Encourage delivery of literacy programming through programs which are relevant to participants' own goals.
6. Support dynamic, student-driven programs in which goals and activities develop as the program progresses.
7. Develop funding criteria which focus on processes as much as content.
8. Support non-formal learning opportunities which address the whole person.
9. Privilege programs that offer learning support and development of a learning community.
10. Recognize that healing must accompany learning in Inuit communities.
11. Recognize that reducing the social and intergenerational isolation that results from complex personal divisions in Inuit communities is part of supporting the transition to work.
12. Acknowledge Inuit holistic conceptualizations of literacy and essential skills.
13. Recognize traditional subsistence skills as part of essential skills in the Arctic.
14. Support training of educators specializing in non-formal programming and embedding literacy.
15. Prioritize embedding literacy and essential skills in all community programs funded by the federal government.

## Recommendations to the Government of Nunavut and Inuit Organizations

1. Invest in high quality non-formal programs to ensure the best outcomes.
2. Support, develop and offer non-formal learning opportunities which are relevant to students' non-academic goals.
3. Recognize non-formal programs as a means to reinvigorate intergenerational learning.
4. Support sustained intergenerational learning through facilitating relationships between younger learners

and older knowledge-holders through non-formal programs.

5. Support, develop and offer non-formal learning opportunities which address the whole person.
6. Prioritize creating and maintaining learning environments that are physically, culturally, emotionally and intellectually safe.
7. Train educators and program deliverers in non-formal learning and embedding literacy.
8. Fund low student-teacher ratios in non-formal programs.
9. Support hands-on learning with a concrete final product.
10. Recognize the importance of Inuit literacies to the practice and acquisition of Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit and traditional skills.
11. Develop materials to support non-formal programming and embedding literacy.
12. Build or adapt spaces in communities for traditional skills programming.

## Recommendations to Northern Literacy Coalitions

1. Document literacies of indigenous traditional skills.
2. Disseminate knowledge about promising practices in embedding literacy.
3. Spread understanding of Inuit holistic conceptualization of literacy and essential skills.

## Recommendations to Literacy, Wellness, and Traditional Skills Programmers

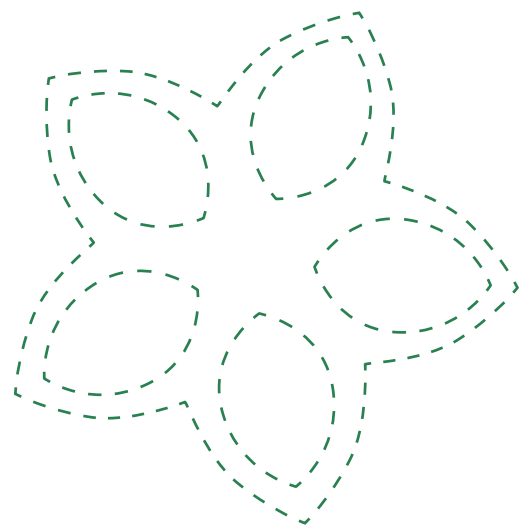
1. Facilitate student-directed learning. Support students to set goals and self-select activities to achieve their goals.
2. Balance planning with flexibility and responsiveness to student needs.
3. Facilitate co-operative learning.
4. Support hands-on learning with a concrete final product.
5. Create opportunities for acknowledgement of students' progress and achievements.
6. Embed literacy and language in existing traditional skills and wellness programs for maximum impact.
7. In traditional skills and wellness programs, develop literacy by drawing out the literacies inherent in and relevant to cultural practices and wellness.
8. Enhance oral communication by encouraging communication in participants' language of choice.
9. Encourage multi-modal communication in literacy programs.
10. Build instructional teams which can teach the whole person.
11. Nurture relationships and respect between participants and instructors.
12. Maintain low student-teacher ratios.
13. Create community through positive interactions within the program and through engagement with the broader community.

# Conclusion

Our research set out to document the outcomes of non-formal traditional skills programs with embedded literacy. We considered four traditional sewing, design, and fur preparation programs and one traditional arts program in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut. The program participants' and instructors' assessments confirm that such programs are effective venues for adult learners to improve their literacy and essential skills. Furthermore, participants' and instructors' testimonies show how non-formal traditional skills programs with embedded literacy assist participants to gain the confidence and foundational skills required to enter the workforce or take the risk and challenge of enrolling in higher level education. In addition, non-formal culture and literacy programs increase and promote healthy participation in family and community life.

Non-formal traditional skills programs offer a promising model for addressing the whole person in Nunavut youth and adult learners. They invite learners to work on skills and practices that they see as highly relevant and to produce tangible products that they (and their families) are proud of. The creative activity, cultural connection and relationships with instructors and students contribute to increased confidence, which in turn supports engagement in the community, education and the workforce. Success factors in these "made in Nunavut" programs such as learning that addresses participants' perceived needs; hands-on learning; relationship, respect and safety; and addressing the whole person, echo those documented in successful adult education programs around the world (Vella 2002). They also resonate with documented strengths of indigenous approaches to education, including linking learning and community (CCL n.d.).

While on the one hand, statistics show difficulties in recruitment and retention for adult learning in Nunavut, non-formal cultural programs are multiplying across the territory, generally with waiting lists and high retention. Programs may target cultural skills or other arts, healing, literacy or school and work readiness. **This research suggests that cultural programs with relatively modest goals may actually be achieving much broader outcomes than they are targeting, or recording.** It is hoped that this research might support programmers, instructors, and participants to articulate and possibly more actively pursue the breadth of outcomes these programs offer. **Perhaps understanding the impact of such programs may help policy makers and funders to make informed decisions supporting the Government of Nunavut's goal of *ilippallianguinnarniq*, lifelong learning, as well as the desires of many Nunavummiut to find a safe, stimulating, and relevant context in which to pursue their learning goals.**







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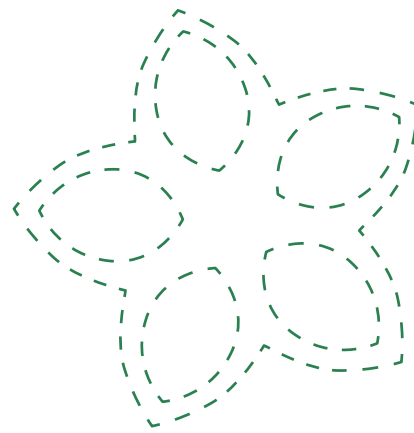
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# Glossary

## Ancestral language

The language spoken by one's ancestors. May or may not be the mother tongue.

## Bilingualism

Knowledge and use of two languages. Can occur in individuals and/or in communities.

## Curriculum

A plan or program for delivery of particular content in a learning program

## Embedded literacy

Embedded literacy programs deliberately incorporate literacy skill development in programs which are concurrently focusing on development of another set of skills and practices (e.g. vocational, traditional, artistic).

## Essential skills

The Government of Canada defines essential skills as those that "are needed for work, life, and learning", including reading, writing, document use, numeracy, computer use, thinking, oral communication, and working with others.

## Explicit learning

Refers to learning outcomes that are deliberately taught and consciously acquired

## Formal learning

Formal learning is usually classroom-based and accredited, where the teacher, the "expert", chooses content and uses standard evaluation tools (tests, etc.) to monitor achievement.

## Holistic approaches

Approaches to teaching which integrate multiple elements of learners' lives (e.g. literacy, cultural practices, and work skills taught as a package). Holistic approaches focus on the learner and the community, not just on skill delivery.

## Implicit learning

Refers to learning outcomes that are achieved unintentionally through other practices aimed at enhancing other outcomes.

## Ipsative evaluation

Evaluation that is based on each learner's individual *progress*, rather than the attainment of standardized targets.

## Inuit qaujimajatuqangit

Inuit qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) refers to Inuit cultural knowledge, skills practices and values. Passed on through generations, IQ contributes to resilient individuals and communities.

## Kasuutittiaqatigiingniq

Is the Inuktitut term *Ilitaqsiniq* created to describe culture-based embedded literacy programs. It refers to the coming together of many different groups from great distances to one designated place. The formation of this group into a unified whole - the strength, the mutual feelings of connection, the shared and open communication it brings - is viewed as an accomplishment which is celebrated by all at this meeting place.

### Literacy

Literacy is a skill that enables people to interpret and effectively respond to the world around them. Based upon language development from birth, it includes the ability to learn, communicate, read and write, pass on knowledge and participate actively in society. (Nunavut Literacy Council n.d.)

### Mother tongue

First language learned, generally in the home. Individuals may have two mother tongues when they grow up surrounded by two languages.

### Non-formal learning

Non-formal learning is non-obligatory, characterized by a more casual learning environment. While programs may be organized in advance, participants take responsibility for directing learning.

### Phenomenological

Phenomenological research seeks to understand its focus based on the perceptions of those directly experiencing and affected by it.

### Skills

Skill is used in the Inuit sense to reflect a combination of knowledge, ability, and practice. "Skills" are what one is able to do, for specific purposes, and what one actually does in particular contexts.



# Appendix A

## Continuum of Formal, Non-Formal and Informal Learning

### CONTINUUM

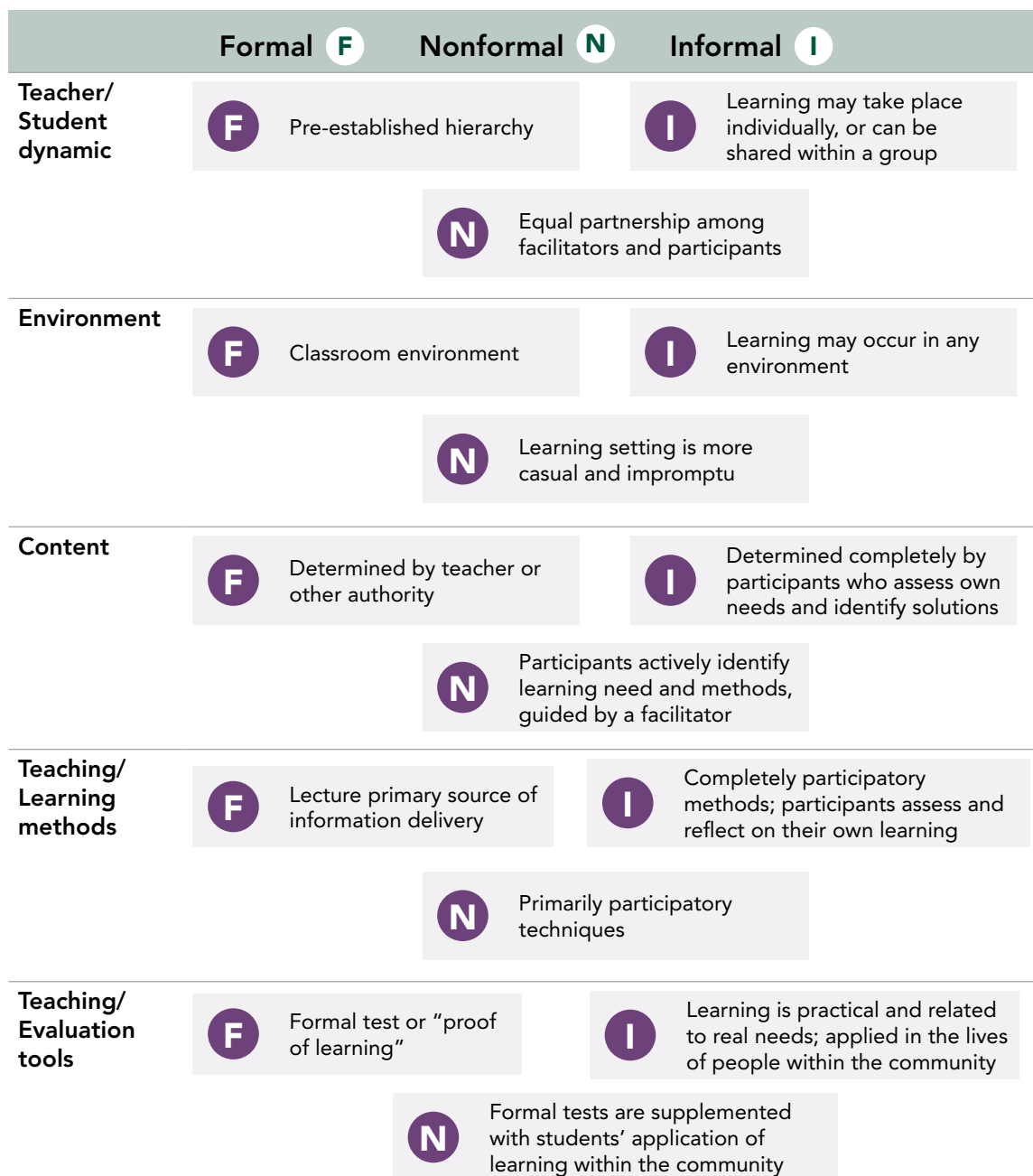


Figure from Peace Corps 2004: 9













In what ways did literacy – reading, writing, documenting, communicating – help you reach those goals?

- b. What are some written materials that you use? (newspapers, public signs, recipes, myspace, books, library material, internet, weather reports, info on community TV, job ads, etc) How do you use these?**

Have you noticed any changes in what you do?

For practices that they mention, prompt: how did you use these before the program?

How do you use them now?

Can you give me an example? You can also prompt based on what they said in the pre-program interview: you said you thought... X... would change – did it?

ኛይወልጋም በበኛኛባሉት ልጋኛይኮለ? (ጋህሌካና, ዲጋዲግ/በበኛኛ, ማኔጋሪያ, ጋህሌካና, internet, ስራገጽ, ኛይገለጽበካል ወይም ርኅራኄገጽ, ካዲካል በበኛኛ ካኔዎርጋኛ)

ኛይጋ ልጋኛይኮለ?

ሎም ገንዘብኛይ ለሌሎችም ኛይወልጋም?

ልጋረጋግጥኛይ ኛይ ልጋኛይሮሮኛይኮለ?

ገደር ኛይ ኛይ ልጋኛይሮኛይኮለ?

ገንዘብኛይ ለሌሎችም ለወልጋም?

- c. Have you noticed any changes in how you feel about yourself since you took the program?**

(Prompt: get them to give examples from before the program and now)

ገንዘብኛይ ለሌሎችም ኛይ ለሌሎችም ለወልጋም? ኛይ ለሌሎችም ለወልጋም ለሌሎችም ለወልጋም? (ገንዘብኛይ ለሌሎችም ለሌሎችም ለወልጋም ለሌሎችም ለወልጋም?)

- d. Have you noticed any changes in how you feel about your life and your future?**

ገንዘብኛይ ለሌሎችም ለወልጋም ለወልጋም ለወልጋም?

- e. Do you think the program changed the direction of your life?**

If yes, how?

ልጋረጋግጥኛይ ለሌሎችም ለወልጋም ለወልጋም?

ሌሎችም, ኛይ ለሌሎችም ለወልጋም ለወልጋም?

- f. What doors/opportunities has the program opened for you?**

ልጋረጋግጥኛይ ለሌሎችም ለወልጋም ለወልጋም?

- g. Have you noticed any changes in your relationships with your family?**

ገንዘብኛይ ለሌሎችም ለወልጋም ለወልጋም?

- h. How did the program affect the way that you see other people around you?**

ልጋረጋግጥኛይ ኛይ ለሌሎችም ለወልጋም ለወልጋም ለወልጋም ለወልጋም?















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