



Work as a Driver of Development, Collaboration, and Pride in Nunavik

Cultural Safety Team
Reference Guide on Nunavik and Cultural Safety
Sheet 10 of 16



A group of Inuit people, mostly men, are gathered outdoors in a snowy environment. They are wearing heavy winter clothing, including parkas, hats, and sunglasses. Several individuals are holding megaphones, suggesting they are participating in a protest or a public demonstration. In the background, a large white sign is visible, featuring Inuktitut text at the top and a drawing of two people in traditional Inuit clothing. The overall scene conveys a sense of community action and advocacy.

“Economic growth must be Inuit-led and community-focused. Employment strategies must be long-term, sustainable, and adaptable. Investment in education, mentoring, and skills development is key.”

**Excerpt from the guiding principles of the Nunavik Forum
on Sustainable Employability
Kativik Regional Government (KRG), 2025**



WHY THIS TOPIC IS IMPORTANT AT UTHC

In Nunavik, work is much more than just a job: it is a way to contribute to the development of one's community, support one's family, and help shape the region's future. Regional organizations share a common goal: to develop a skilled workforce, promote / foster / support the next generation of Inuit leaders, and provide services that address the realities of the Nunavimmiut.

At the UTHC, we collaborate daily with numerous regional partners. Employees sometimes change organizations over the course of their careers to take on new challenges, acquire new skills, or meet different needs. However, their knowledge, experience, and the relationships they build continue to benefit all of Nunavik.

Employees who pursue their careers at another organization often remain valuable partners and become key contacts who facilitate collaboration between organizations.

Understanding this reality not only helps us better grasp the challenges of recruitment and retention but also allows us to recognize the strength of a network where organizations collaborate to support communities.



"Elders Dialogue" conference bringing together six organizations from Nunavik. – Photo: NRBHSS

LOOKING AHEAD

In Nunavik, talent moves, but relationships endure.

Career paths benefit all of Nunavik, not just a single organization. Every experience, every collaboration, and every new skill helps strengthen the services provided to communities.



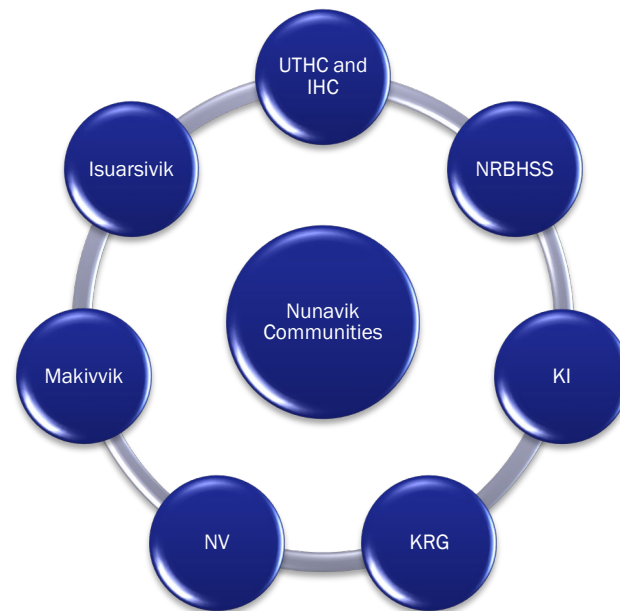
A NETWORK THAT WORKS TOGETHER

In Nunavik, regional organizations share a common goal: to improve the quality of life for Nunavimmiut. Although each has a distinct mandate, they collaborate on a daily basis to meet the needs of the communities.

This collaboration takes the form of joint projects, roundtable discussions, shared training, and the exchange of expertise. These partnerships make it possible to offer services better tailored to the realities of the land and to use resources in a complementary manner.

This collaboration results in numerous joint projects. Examples include Agir tût, the training programs developed with Kativik Ilisarniliriniq, support for the next generation at the NRBHSS, ESUMA's youth initiatives, and the many partnerships with Makivvik, the Kativik Regional Government, and northern villages.

Beyond each organization's individual mandates, this approach promotes a shared vision in which each organization contributes, in its own way, to Nunavik's development.



LOOKING AHEAD

The best results are achieved together.

In Nunavik, partnerships make it possible to pool knowledge, resources, and expertise to provide services better tailored to the realities of the communities.

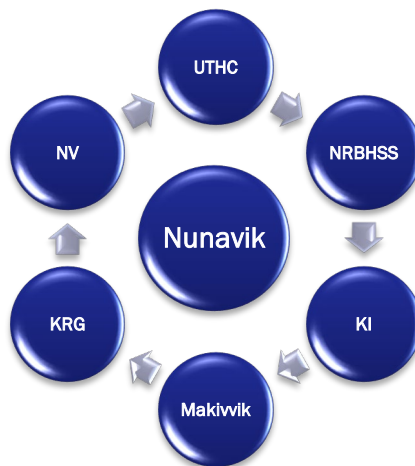


JOURNEYS THAT SHAPE NUNAVIK

In Nunavik, many professionals advance their careers within various regional organizations. This mobility is particularly evident among Inuit professionals, who put their expertise to work for different employers depending on community needs, new responsibilities, or opportunities for growth.

Each experience allows individuals to develop new skills, expand their collaborative network, and gain a deeper understanding of the realities of the land. When someone continues their career at another organization, they continue to contribute to Nunavik's development while serving as a valuable link between teams.

This flow of talent promotes / fosters / supports knowledge sharing, strengthens partnerships, and helps build collective expertise that benefits all communities. This vision encourages organizations to invest in their employees, knowing that the skills they develop will, in the long term, benefit the entire region.



Did you know?

When an employee moves to another organization, they often remain a valuable colleague and resource. The relationships built over the years facilitate joint projects and strengthen regional partnerships.

LOOKING AHEAD

Investing in a person means investing in the entire region.

Career paths rarely benefit just one organization. The skills, relationships, and experience gained over the years enrich a network of partners working together for the communities.



REALITIES TO UNDERSTAND

Like many northern and remote regions, Nunavik faces realities that influence how work is organized. Understanding these realities allows us to collaborate more effectively and adapt our practices.

The limited availability of housing remains one of the main challenges in attracting and retaining new employees in several sectors.

Housing



Family responsibilities, community events, cultural activities, and time spent on the land are all part of life in Nunavik. These realities can sometimes influence how work is organized.

Community Life



Travel between communities, weather conditions, and the distance from the South can complicate recruitment, staff replacement, and access to certain training programs or specialized resources.

Remote Location



Even when teams are short-staffed and facing high demands, they can still provide continuous, high-quality service. They achieve this by working together, staying adaptable, and supporting each other.

Service Continuity



LOOKING AHEAD

These realities are shared. So are the solutions.

Organizations in Nunavik face common realities. By working together, they develop tailored approaches that ensure high-quality services while respecting the realities of their communities.



WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR COMMUNITY



Community Well-being Program

Local Expertise Serving Communities

On the Ungava Coast, well-being workers operate directly within their communities. They develop programs to prevent health issues and promote healthy lifestyles, and collaborate with municipal councils, health committees, and local partners.

These positions are reserved for local recruitment. Proficiency in Inuktitut and knowledge of Inuit customs, beliefs, and traditional knowledge are among the essential skills sought.

→ Expertise that relies as much on professional skills as on knowledge of one's community.



Isuarsivik

A healing approach rooted in culture

Isuarsivik offers a healing approach developed in Nunavik that places great emphasis on Inuit culture, the land, and knowledge. Its model demonstrates how cultural knowledge and community experience can be integrated into the development of specialized services.

→ Developing professional expertise that also draws on Inuit strengths and knowledge.



Food distribution - Photo: UTHC

LOOKING AHEAD

Some skills can't be learned in school alone.



WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR COMMUNITY



National Parks

Working with the Land

National parks offer employment opportunities that rely in particular on knowledge of the land: visitor services, guiding, operations, maintenance, and protection of the natural environment.

They make it possible to combine local employment, knowledge transmission, land conservation, and tourism development.

→ Turn knowledge of the land into professional expertise.



Akkivik – Kangiqsujuaq and Salluit

Creating Opportunities Through Regional Development

Established in connection with the Raglan Mine, Akkivik supports initiatives in Kangiqsujuaq and Salluit focused on entrepreneurial development, job creation, training, and leadership.

These initiatives enable regional economic activity to also contribute to skills development and the creation of opportunities directly within the communities.

→ Turning economic development into local opportunities.



Purchase of hydraulic rescue tools by the Kangiqsujuaq Fire Department. – Photo: Glencore

LOOKING AHEAD

Knowledge of the land, trades, entrepreneurship, and the development of new skills can all serve as drivers of employment and development for communities.



WORKING IN A SMALL COMMUNITY

In Nunavik, working in a small community often means taking on a role that extends beyond the boundaries of one's job description. Colleagues, partners, and the people we serve know each other, interact regularly, and may cross paths in various aspects of community life.



Relationships That Matter

Trust is built over time. The way we interact with, listen to, and respect others can be just as important as the professional role itself.



Great versatility

Small teams often require employees to collaborate, share their knowledge, and sometimes take on a variety of responsibilities.



Close-knit networks

Local organizations, the northern village, the CLSC, the school, and other partners often work with the same families and individuals. Effective collaboration is essential.



Special Attention to Confidentiality

In a community where people know one another and family ties are strong, protecting confidentiality and respecting professional boundaries requires special vigilance.

IN PERSPECTIVE

We don't just work in a community—we work with it.

Understanding relationships, taking the time to build trust, and collaborating with people already in the community are an integral part of working in Nunavik.



IN MY WORK AT THE UTHC



I view partners as allies. → I build relationships with other organizations and seek to understand their contributions rather than working solely within my department.



I contribute to people's professional development → I share my knowledge, encourage learning, and give colleagues the opportunity to develop new skills and take on more responsibilities.



I recognize different forms of expertise → A degree is not the only source of competence. Knowledge of language, the land, families, culture, and the community can be essential to the quality of our services.



I adapt to the realities of the environment → Before jumping to conclusions about an absence, a recruitment challenge, or a different way of working, I seek to understand the context and realities of the individual and their community.



I maintain relationships → When a colleague leaves the UTHC for another organization, I stay in touch. That person may one day become an important partner in a joint project.

LOOKING AHEAD

Contributing to Nunavik's development is also part of our work.

Every time we share knowledge, develop a skill, create a partnership, or support a colleague, our contribution can extend far beyond our own job.



A FEW WORDS IN INUKTITUT

ᐱᓇᑭᐸᐅᐆᐃᑦ – Pinasuaqatigiit

Working Group

Refers to people who work together toward a common goal.

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To lead

Refers to taking the initiative and exercising leadership.

ᓂᐅᕕᓂᐅᕕ – Niuvirniavik

Store • Shop

Refers to a place where one shops or conducts business.

ᐱᕐᕈᕐᕐ — Akkivik

To give a helping hand

An expression that refers to the support that enables a person, a project, or a community to move forward.

DID YOU KNOW?

In Kuujuaq, the name Newiq'vi comes from Inuktitut.

Newviq'vi is an anglicized form of an Inuktitut word meaning a store or a place where people trade. The name of the local business thus directly draws on a concept from the Inuit language.



DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

..... asking about someone's job isn't always a harmless question?

In some cultures, a person's identity and value can be closely tied to their job title. In Inuit culture, a person may instead be valued for their way of life, responsibilities, knowledge, skills, and contributions to family and community.

..... being unemployed does not mean having no role?

On-the-land activities, supporting one's family, knowledge transmission, and community involvement also represent work, responsibilities, and a significant contribution to community life.

..... Makivik is also a major economic player?

Makivik owns or has a stake in several businesses across a wide range of sectors, including Air Inuit, Unaaq Fisheries, and Construction Kautaq, in addition to other subsidiaries and partnerships. These activities help create jobs, develop skills, and keep a portion of the economy under Inuit control.

..... one job can support several others?

A large portion of salaried employment in Nunavik is linked to public, parapublic, and regional organizations: health care, education, municipal and regional governments, among others. These jobs, in turn, generate demand for housing, transportation, food, maintenance, retail, and various services.



THE ESSENTIALS

Developing a person means developing more than just a job role

The skills an employee acquires can benefit multiple teams, organizations, and communities in succession throughout their career. → **Investing in a person is also investing in Nunavik.**

Not all skills come from a degree

Language, knowledge of the land, families, and the community, as well as lived experience, can constitute genuine professional expertise. → **Recognizing prior learning begins with recognizing different forms of knowledge.**

Relationships are part of professional capital

In an environment where organizations and people are closely interconnected, relationships built over the years facilitate collaboration, the sharing of expertise, and the completion of joint projects. → **A well-maintained professional relationship continues to have an impact long after a change in position.**

Employment must be adaptable to life in Nunavik

Family and community responsibilities, on-the-land activities, and the unique realities of small communities are all part of the context in which work is organized. → **Adapting certain practices can promote / foster / support participation and retention rather than lower expectations.**

Nunavik's economy functions as an ecosystem

Public and regional organizations, Inuit businesses, and local shops are interdependent. Jobs create economic activity, which in turn generates more jobs and services. → **The impact of a job often extends beyond the organization that created it.**



REFLECTING ON MY PRACTICE



How do I define a “good employee”?

Are my expectations based solely on my own professional experience, or do they take into account the realities of the workplace?



What skills do I recognize instinctively?

Do I place as much value on knowledge of the language, the land, the families, and the community as I do on skills acquired through training?



How do I react when a colleague leaves the organization?

Do I see it solely as a loss for my team, or also as expertise that remains in Nunavik and a future partner with whom to collaborate?



Do I create space for learning?

In my work, do I share my knowledge, let others try, accept that learning takes time, and gradually encourage autonomy?



Do I distinguish between adapting and lowering expectations?

Can I maintain clear professional expectations while adapting certain approaches to family, community, and cultural realities?



UTHC RECOMMENDATION

Atautsikut / Leaving None Behind

John Houston (2019), [Vimeo](#)

This documentary traces the development of the cooperative movement in Nunavik and shows how the Inuit created economic organizations based on collaboration, self-reliance, and community needs.

Why the UTHC recommends it:

Because it concretely demonstrates that work and economic development can become tools for collective autonomy, skills transfer, and community development.

Also available:

Webisodes: A series of short documentaries produced prior to the film and available on YouTube. They showcase various stories, experiences, and perspectives that contributed to the creation of Atautsikut / Leaving None Behind.

Conversation: An interview in English hosted by Bill Swan for Adventure Canada, which explores the film's creation, its approach, and the stories that inspired the project.





FURTHER READING



Nunatta Ataani – Beneath Our Feet ([YouTube](#))

A documentary exploring the relationship between the Inuit of Nunavik and the mining industry. It focuses on local employment, economic development, and the impacts of mining activities.



Nunavimmiut - Janice Grey-Scott ([Spotify](#))

Hosted by Janice Grey-Scott from Aupaluk, this regional news podcast covers social issues, culture, and the economic barriers and opportunities that directly affect the people of Nunavik.



Sivumut: Towards the Future Together - Fiona Walton, Darlene O'Leary ([2015](#))

This book brings together autoethnographic essays written by nine Inuit educators from Nunavut and Nunavik. It provides an in-depth analysis of the evolution of the education system and how to develop local leaders firmly rooted in their values and traditional knowledge to guide the labor market of tomorrow.



Ivritvik – [Kativik Regional Government](#)

Designed for the Inuit community, Ivritvik promotes / fosters / supports employability and skills development among Inuit aged 18 and older. The project offers tailored support that helps participants develop their skills, build on their talents, and forge connections with the community.

**In Nunavik, working also means contributing.
Every skill taught, every person supported, and
every partnership built helps strengthen Nunavik.**

