



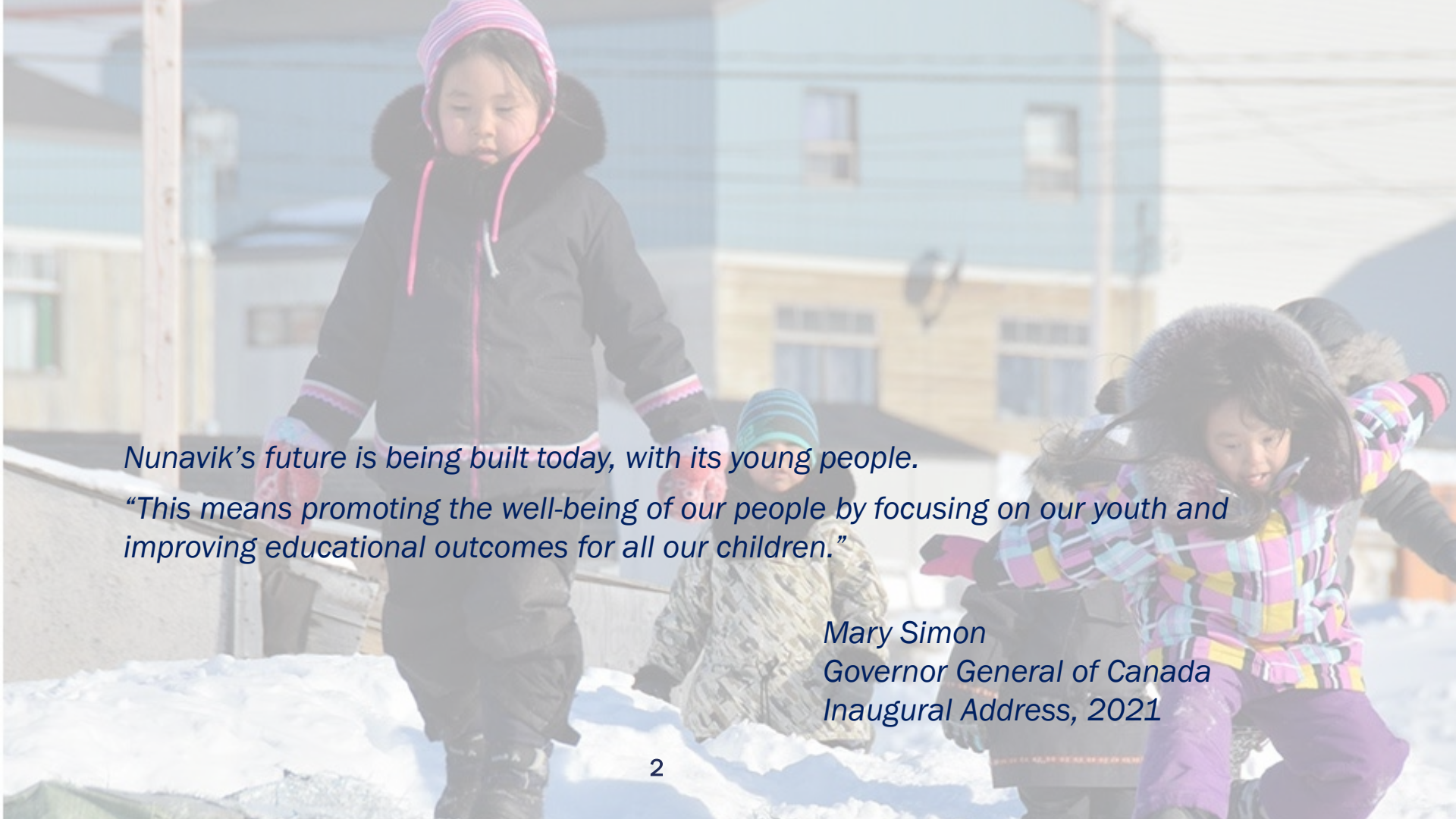
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UNGAVA TULATTAVIK HEALTH CENTER
CENTRE DE SANTÉ TULATTAVIK DE L'UNGAVA

FACT SHEET 8 – YOUTH IN NUNAVIK

Growing Up Between Tradition and Modernity

Cultural Safety Team
Reference Guide on Nunavik and Cultural Safety
Sheet 8 of 16



A photograph of three children playing in a snowy outdoor setting. In the foreground, a young girl in a black winter jacket with pink trim and a pink hood is walking towards the camera. To her right, another child in a colorful patterned jacket is crouching in the snow. In the background, a third child in a grey patterned jacket is visible. The background shows residential buildings under a clear sky.

Nunavik's future is being built today, with its young people.

"This means promoting the well-being of our people by focusing on our youth and improving educational outcomes for all our children."

*Mary Simon
Governor General of Canada
Inaugural Address, 2021*



WHY THIS TOPIC IS IMPORTANT AT UTHC

Nunavik has one of the youngest populations in Canada. Children, adolescents, and young adults play a central role in families, communities, and health and social services.

Understanding their realities, strengths, and the challenges they may face helps us build trusting relationships, adapt our interventions, and better meet their needs. Growing up in Nunavik often means navigating the interplay between Inuit culture, family, school, the land, and the realities of a constantly changing world.



Photo: Radio Canada – Félix Lebel

At the UTHC, every interaction with a young person is an opportunity to support their development, strengthen their sense of belonging, and contribute to their well-being and trust in services, while recognizing the importance of their family, community, and culture.

LOOKING AHEAD

Seeing Potential Before Challenges

Young people in Nunavik face certain unique realities, but they also possess many strengths. Recognizing their abilities, aspirations, and achievements is essential to fostering their confidence, autonomy, and commitment to their community.



A YOUNG POPULATION, A FUTURE ON THE MOVE

Nunavik has one of the youngest populations in Canada. More than half of Nunavimmiut are under 30, and the median age is much lower than that of Quebec as a whole.

This reality shapes community life. Schools, daycare centers, sports programs, health and social services, and community initiatives all place a central focus on children, teenagers, and young adults.

	Nunavik	Quebec
Median age	27 years	43 years
Population under 30	>50%	≈34%



This young population is a strength for Nunavik. It represents a new generation that is growing up by balancing traditional knowledge, Inuit culture, and the realities of an ever-changing world.

LOOKING AHEAD

A Generation Already Shaping Nunavik

Young people are not just the adults of tomorrow. They are already participating in the life of their communities, passing on their culture, getting involved in local projects, and contributing to Nunavik's development.



GROWING UP BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Growing up in Nunavik means living in an environment where Inuit traditions and contemporary life coexist on a daily basis. Young people develop their identity, self-confidence, and cultural pride by drawing both on the knowledge passed down by their families and Elders, and on the experiences offered by school, technology, sports, and community activities.

For many young people, language, hunting, fishing, time spent on the land, and family gatherings remain important cornerstones. At the same time, they attend school, use digital technologies, pursue their education, and participate fully in today's world.

Each journey is unique. The youth of Nunavik are building their future by balancing different influences, while remaining deeply connected to their culture, their community, and the land.



Photo: FB Nurrait, Karibus Youth – Expedition

LOOKING AHEAD

A Living Culture

Taking pride in one's Inuit culture and taking an interest in the world around us are not mutually exclusive. Every day, Nunavimmiut youth demonstrate that it is possible to preserve their identity while developing new skills, new projects, and new aspirations.



THE STRENGTHS OF INUIT YOUTH

The youth of Nunavik possess many strengths that contribute to their own development and that of their communities. Despite the challenges they may face, they demonstrate every day a great capacity to adapt, a deep attachment to their culture, and a desire to contribute to the future of Nunavik.

These strengths are rooted in their families, their Elders, their language, their territory, and their commitment to their community.

IN ACTION



A Strong Cultural Identity

Language, traditions, local activities, and family ties all help strengthen a sense of belonging.



A strong spirit of mutual support

Solidarity, sharing, and intergenerational support remain important values in communities.



A Strong Ability to Adapt

Young people navigate with ease between Inuit traditions and the realities of today's world.



A committed youth

More and more young people are getting involved in community, cultural, sports, and environmental projects.



Many talents

Arts, music, sports, hunting, crafts, academics, leadership, entrepreneurship... young people are already actively contributing to Nunavik's vitality.

OUTLOOK

Every young person has strengths

Recognizing young people's strengths fosters their confidence, independence, and ability to overcome challenges. A strengths-based approach supports each young person by highlighting their potential rather than focusing solely on their difficulties.



YOUNG PEOPLE CAN COUNT ON A STRONG SUPPORT NETWORK

Young people in Nunavik are supported by numerous organizations and programs that promote their success, well-being, leadership, and participation in community life. These initiatives complement the essential role played by families, Elders, schools, and communities.



ESUMA

- ESUMA brings together schools, families, and various partners to promote educational success, student retention, and the development of young people's full potential.



NURRAIT

- Through on-the-land expeditions and adventure activities, Nurrait helps young people develop their confidence, independence, leadership, and resilience.



YOUTH CENTERS

- Located in several villages, these centers provide a safe environment where young people can participate in sports, cultural, and social activities, develop their talents, and build relationships.



QARJUIT

- The Nunavik Youth Council enables young people to make their voices heard, participate in decisions that affect them, and develop their leadership skills.

LOOKING AHEAD

Growing Together

Youth development relies on a collective effort. Families, Elders, schools, community organizations, and institutions work together to provide young people with the tools they need to grow, learn, and contribute to their community.



CHALLENGES, BUT ALSO MANY INITIATIVES

Like all young people, the youth of Nunavik may face challenges that shape their lives. Some are related to the unique realities of the North, while others stem from social, economic, or historical factors.



*Photo by Allen Gordon (CBC) – “Go Nunavik.”
Delegation to the Arctic Winter Games.*

However, communities, families, and regional partners are developing numerous initiatives to support young people, enhance their well-being, and foster their success.

CHALLENGES MAY INCLUDE...



Housing

Overcrowding can affect studies, rest, privacy, and well-being.



Academic Success

Access to certain programs or postsecondary education often requires leaving one's community.



Mental health

Young people may experience stress, anxiety, or other challenges, which is why support and prevention services are so important.



Transitions

Moving from a small community to a large city to study or work often presents a significant adjustment challenge.

LOOKING AHEAD

Every challenge is an opportunity to take action

Challenges do not define the youth of Nunavik. By working with families, communities, and partners, we can support their development, build their confidence, and create conditions conducive to their success.



YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ALREADY BUILDING NUNAVIK

Young people in Nunavik are already actively contributing to the development of their communities. Through their studies, their work, their creativity, and their community involvement, they are already helping to build the Nunavik of today.

Throughout Nunavik, they are helping to build a future that combines innovation with Inuit culture and traditional knowledge.



An ultrasound technologist at the CSTU. One example among many young Nunavimmiut who are developing their skills while contributing to services in their community..

THEY GET INVOLVED IN MANY WAYS



Studying and Learning

More and more young people are pursuing college, university, or vocational training—in Nunavik and elsewhere in Quebec



Working for their community

Young people are choosing careers in healthcare, education, public services, local businesses, and regional organizations.



Creating and Promoting Culture

Artists, musicians, filmmakers, artisans, and digital creators help promote Inuit culture in Nunavik and beyond.



Protecting the land

Many young people are involved in projects related to the environment, traditional knowledge, hunting, fishing, and knowledge transfer.



Getting Involved in Their Communities

Volunteer work, youth councils, sports, cultural activities, and community projects allow young people to actively participate in the life of their village.

LOOKING AHEAD

The future is already underway

Every young person who learns, works, creates, or gets involved helps build a strong, dynamic Nunavik that is deeply rooted in its culture.



IN MY WORK AT THE UTHC

Young people in Nunavik are, above all, individuals with strengths, aspirations, and potential. Every interaction is an opportunity to foster their confidence, independence, and participation.

In my work, I can, in particular:

- ✓ **Welcome each young person with respect and without judgment**, recognizing their strengths before their challenges.
- ✓ **Involve family or loved ones**, when the young person wishes, to foster an approach tailored to their reality.
- ✓ **Value their identity, language, and culture** by showing interest in what matters to them.
- ✓ **Take the time to listen**, explain information clearly, and check for understanding.
- ✓ **Be familiar with available resources** so I can refer young people and their families to the appropriate support when necessary.

LOOKING AHEAD

Every encounter can make a difference

A respectful welcome, attentive listening, and a relationship built on trust can have a lasting positive impact on a young person's journey. At the UTHC, every employee contributes, in their own way, to the well-being of Nunavimmiut youth.



A FEW WORDS IN INUKTITUT

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Child

The word qiturngaq refers to a child, whether a boy or a girl. In Inuit communities, children play a central role within the family and the community.

ᐃᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ – ilinnianiq

Learning • Studies

This word refers to learning and education. It reminds us that education takes place not only in school but also through experiences within the family, with Elders, and on the land.

ᐃᑭᑭᑭᑭ – ilisaaq

Student

The term ilisaaq refers to a student (a form used in the Ungava dialect). It reflects the importance placed on the development of knowledge and the educational success of young people.

ᐃᑭᑭᑭᑭ – ilisaiji

Teacher

A teacher is someone who guides young people in their learning and development. This word naturally ties into the next fact sheet on education and the transmission of knowledge.



DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

..... Nunavik has one of the youngest populations in Canada?

More than half of Nunavimmiut are under 30, and the median age is about 27, compared to over 43 for Quebec as a whole.

..... many young people pursue their education outside of Nunavik?

To access certain college, university, or vocational training programs, many young people must temporarily leave their communities—a transition that requires a great deal of adjustment.

..... traditional knowledge continues to be passed down to young people?

Activities in the territory, cultural camps, hunting, fishing, and the teachings of the Elders remain essential means of passing on Inuit knowledge, values, and identity.

..... young people are already making a difference?

Whether as students, artists, entrepreneurs, workers, or volunteers, young Nunavimmiut contribute every day to the development of their communities and the future of Nunavik.



THE ESSENTIALS

Key Points

- ✓ Nunavik has one of the youngest populations in Canada.
- ✓ Young people are growing up by balancing Inuit culture, traditions, and modern realities.
- ✓ They possess many strengths and are already actively contributing to their communities.
- ✓ Families, Elders, and many organizations support their development.
- ✓ Every interaction with a young person is an opportunity to build their confidence, independence, and potential.

LOOKING AHEAD

The youth of Nunavik are not only the future of their communities—they are already a driving force within them.



REFLECTING ON MY PRACTICE

Let's take a moment to reflect...

- How can I help create an environment where young people feel heard, respected, and valued?
- Do I first recognize a young person's strengths, interests, and potential before focusing on the challenges they may be facing?
- How can I adapt my communication style to build a relationship of trust with young people and their families?
- Am I familiar with the resources available in the community so I can better refer young people when necessary?



UTHC RECOMMENDATION

North of North

Television Series (2025) Available on Netflix and CBC Gem.

With humor, authenticity, and sensitivity, this series follows the journey of a young Inuk woman as she seeks to forge her own path within her community. It offers a contemporary look at the aspirations, family relationships, cultural identity, and daily lives of young people in the North.

Why watch it?

Because it presents a current, positive, and nuanced portrayal of Inuit youth, free from stereotypes, while highlighting the strength of communities and the importance of family ties.



TO LEARN MORE



If the Weather Permits (NFB 2003)

A personal documentary by artist Élisapie Isaac. In the vastness of the boreal wilderness, on the shores of the Arctic Ocean, lies a village: Kangirsujuaq, in Nunavik. Here, tradition and modernity intersect on a daily basis. The laughter of children joyfully fills the streets; the young are drawn to “southern” culture, while the elders are still trying to adjust to their unfamiliar sedentary lifestyle.



Inuuvunga: I Am Inuk. I Am Alive (NFB 2004)

In this feature-length documentary, eight young Inuit teenagers offer their cinematic perspective on contemporary life in the Canadian North and provide an insightful account of the transition to adulthood in an era of confusion and cultural disintegration.



ᐃᓄᓕᑦ^{sb} – L'inugagullirq Students at Ivujivik's Nuvviti School (2023)

A magnificent children's book created by Inuit students from Ivujivik, based on a traditional story passed down by an Elder. The project illustrates the convergence of oral tradition, the Inuktitut language, and the creativity of today's youth.



ESUMA – Nunavik Youth Projects

Discover regional initiatives that promote school retention, leadership, and youth development.

Every interaction with a young person can help strengthen their confidence, sense of belonging, and sense of agency.

By adopting a caring, respectful, and strength-based approach, we each contribute, in our own way, to the future of Nunavimmiut youth.

