Investing in the Future: Inuit Early Childhood Development in Inuit Nunangat

International Meeting on Indigenous Child Health
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Presentation by: Jenny Lyall, Maryse Turcot, Lena Egotak, Maria Storr, and Anna Claire Ryan
Presenter Disclosure

Anna Claire Ryan, Jenny Lyall, Maryse Turcot, Maria Storr and Lena Egotak have no relevant financial relationships with the manufacturer(s) of commercial services discussed in this CME activity.

One author, Lena Egotak, does intend to discuss an unapproved/investigative use of a commercial product/device in this presentation and will note this in the presentation.
Outline

- Inuit in Canada
- What is Inuit Early Childhood Development?
- Who is the Inuit Early Childhood Development Working Group?
- Setting the context
- What is the state of Inuit ECD across Inuit Nunangat?
- Challenges & Successes
- Vision for moving forward

"Everything you know, you learned before you were five"
Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)

- National representational organization for Inuit in Canada
- The majority of Inuit live in Inuit Nunangat
- 53 Inuit communities
- **Four Inuit Land Claim Regions**
  - Inuvialuit
    - Nunavut
  - Nunavik
  - Nunatsiavut
What is Inuit Early Childhood Development?

- **Vision:** Giving Inuit children the best start to life
  - To have healthy Inuit children who grow up to be contributing community members
- Inuit Early Childhood Development includes Inuit language, culture and traditional ways.
- **Ultimate Goal is to achieve:** "Healthy, happy and safe Inuit children and families"
Inuit Early Childhood Development Working Group

- Working Group is made up of representatives from:
  - Nunatsiavut Government
  - Kativik Regional Government
  - Kakivak Association
  - Kivalliq Partners in Development
  - Kitikmeot Inuit Association
  - Inuvialuit Regional Corporation
  - Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.
  - Pauktuuit Inuit Women of Canada
  - Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

- A forum to come together to collaborate on national policy, programs and priorities in child care and Inuit Early Childhood Development
Children and Families in Inuit Nunangat

Young Population
- In 2011, 13.2% of the Inuit population in Inuit Nunangat was under the age of 5.
  - For the non-Indigenous population in Canada as a whole, the figure was 5.5%.

- 7,785 Inuit children aged 0 to 6 in Inuit Nunangat (2011)
  - Growing demand for child care spots and support for families

- 28% of Inuit children aged 0 to 4 living in Inuit Nunangat lived in a single parent family

Language
- Language: 63% of Inuit children aged 0 to 4 in Inuit Nunangat can speak an Inuit language

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey
Inuit children speak their language

63% of Inuit children aged 0 to 4 in Inuit Nunangat can speak an Inuit language. This varies from one Inuit region to the next. The table below shows the percentage of Inuit children aged 0 to 4 who can converse in an Inuit language for each region as of 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>% able to converse in an Inuit language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inuit Nunangat</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunatsiavut</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunavik</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunavut</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inuvialuit region</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Inuit Nunangat</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The bar chart below visually represents the data shown in the table.
Food Security

- When all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life

- High levels of food insecurity throughout the regions
  - Barriers to harvesting and consuming country foods
  - High cost, quality and availability of store-bought food

70%

Of Inuit preschoolers in Nunavut reside in food insecure households
## Food Security

### The Cost of Eating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Southern City (Ottawa)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Northern Remote Inuit Community</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$28.54</td>
<td>$16.19</td>
<td>$23.49</td>
<td>$41.29</td>
<td>$24.20</td>
<td>$104.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Housing

• Housing Crisis in Inuit Nunangat:
  • Housing shortage
  • Crowded homes
  • Homes in need of major repairs
  • Poor ventilation

Inuit are 8 X more likely than non-Aboriginal Canadians to live in Crowded homes
Housing
The Challenge of Overcrowding

- Represents 1% of households
- Represents 1% of overcrowded households
For example: 2006 Graduating Class, Hopedale, Nunatsiavut

- 21 students started in Kindergarten (1993)
- 5 students died by suicide
- 4 students graduated high school

“Students are tired of living in a community where people care more about alcohol and drugs than kids.”
**Social Inequity**

### Social and Economic Inequity in Inuit Nunangat

Many Inuit face social and economic inequities that impact their health and wellbeing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inuit Nunangat</th>
<th>All Canadians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39% of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat live in crowded homes</td>
<td>4% of all Canadians live in crowded homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29% of Inuit aged 25 to 64 in Inuit Nunangat have earned a high school diploma</td>
<td>85% of all Canadians aged 25 to 64 have earned a high school diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70% of Inuit households in Nunavut do not have enough to eat</td>
<td>8.3% of all households in Canada do not have enough to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$17,778 (The median individual income for Inuit in Inuit Nunangat)</td>
<td>$77,683 (The median individual income for non-Indigenous in Inuit Nunangat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 (The number of physicians per 150,000 population in Nunavut)</td>
<td>119 (The mean number of physicians per 100,000 population in Urban Health Authorities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45.6% of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat are employed</td>
<td>60.9% of all Canadians are employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70.8 (The average life expectancy for residents of Inuit Nunangat)</td>
<td>80.6 (The average life expectancy for all Canadians)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Average life expectancy for Inuit Nunangat includes non-Inuit.*

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1. [Statistics Canada](http://www.statcan.gc.ca) | 2010 Total Housing Survey
2. [Health Canada](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca) | 2011 National Population Health Survey
3. [Public Health Agency of Canada](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca) | 2011 Public Health Agency of Canada
4. [Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami](http://www.itk.ca) | 2014 Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
5. [The Canadian Institute for Health Information](http://www.cihi.ca) | 2014 Canadian Institute for Health Information
6. [The Northern Health Authority](http://www.northernhealth.org) | 2015 Northern Health Authority
7. [The Inuvik Hospital Foundation](http://www.inuvikhospital.ca) | 2015 Inuvik Hospital Foundation
Social Determinants of Inuit Health

- Social determinants of Inuit health include:
  - Quality of early childhood development
  - Culture and language
  - Livelihoods
  - Income distribution
  - Housing
  - Personal safety and security
  - Education
  - Food security
  - Availability of health services
  - Mental wellness
  - Environment
Current state of early childhood development in Inuit Nunangat

- Child care centres and early learning programs are primarily funded through two federal programs:
  - First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (ESDC)
  - Aboriginal Head Start (PHAC)
- Number of child care centres: 70
- Number of Aboriginal Head Start Programs: 27*

Challenges:
- No comprehensive, holistic national strategy or framework
- Long waitlist for child care spaces: Need for at least 1500 spaces
- Little/ no choice in programs and supports for children and families
- Lack of infrastructure and equipment/ need of major repairs
- Recruitment and retention of educators
- Training
- Lack of support for children with special needs.
Nunatsiavut

- 5 Communities
- Population 5000
- Current Programs
  - Child Care
  - Aboriginal Head Start
  - Family Resource Centre
  - Language Nest
Nunatsiavut

- Challenges
  - Recruitment of trained educators
  - Retention of educators
  - Parental engagement
  - Children in Care
    - Sent outside of community
Nunatsiavut

- Successes
  - Language Nests
  - Country Food in Programs
  - Family Connections Program
Nunavik “The place where we have landed”

- 14 communities situated in Northern Québec along the coasts of Hudson Bay, Hudson Strait and Ungava Bay
- 14,000 permanent residents, 90% of whom are Inuit; Inuktitut widely spoken
- Approximately 2,000 children aged 0 to 5
- Parent-operated childcare centres located in each community, with technical support provided by the Kativik Regional Government
- 19 Integrated Aboriginal Head Start and Child Care programs

http://newtallestbuilding.blogspot.ca
Nunavik

Challenges:
- Staff retention
- Recruitment
- Training
- Educators don’t feel valued
- Language & literacy
Nunavik

Successes:

- Inuit Political Leadership for Inuit ECD
  - Block funding
  - Licensing/ Regulation
- Educator Salaries
- Community based training program
- Nutrition Policy and Program
- Nunavik Early Learning Monitoring Tool
Nunavut

- 25 Communities
- Population 30 000
- 3 Regions - Qikiqtani, Kivalliq, Kitikmeot
- Current Programs:
  - 36 Child Care Centres
  - 7 AHS
Challenges

- Lack of ECD coordination in Nunavut
- Recruitment and Retention staff
- Lack of training programs
- Lack Inuit ECD Resources/ Curriculum
- Language
- Food
  - Break and enters
  - Lack of country food in programs
- Long waitlists
Nunavut

Successes

➢ Community Based Training Programs
➢ Working relationship with ECE Officer/ GN
➢ Language programs
   ➢ Ex. Tumukuluit - Inuktitut Daycare in Iqaluit
   ➢ Would like an Innuinaqtun/ Inuktitut programs
Inuvialuit Settlement Region
Inuvialuit

- Current Programming:
  - 3 Child Care Centre's (FNICC)
  - 2 Aboriginal Head Starts (PHAC)
  - Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program
  - Brighter Futures (programs/services varying from Community to community)
Challenges:

- Policies and procedures of GNWT
- Staff Recruitment and Retention
- Training
- Attendance
- Parental involvement
- Low pay for educators
- Cultural resources
Inuvialuit

Successes:

- Inuvialuit leadership and operating philosophy
- Aurora ECE Certificate Program
- Early Intervention Pilot Project
  - Hanen Training “Learning, language and loving it”
Early Intervention Pilot Project- 3 year Project

- Learning, Language and Loving It!
- Focus on social language and literacy development
- In 5/6 communities in Inuvialuit
- Training involves 4 blocks
- Works directly with educators, casual staff and SLP’s
- Parents are involved
- Seeing great outcomes in all communities
A successful model but...

- Amalgamated from 3 programs
- Children’s First Centre in Inuvik - 127 child care spaces
- Inaccessible for many Aboriginal families due to high cost attend
An Opportunity For Change

- National Indigenous Early Learning Child Care Framework
- Inuit Engagement and Submission
- Opportunity for a holistic, comprehensive national approach to Indigenous ECD policy and program
Inuit ECD Principles

- Inuit early childhood development is grounded in Inuit language, culture and ways of knowing and being.
- High quality - as defined by Inuit
- Affordable - recognize remoteness factors and high cost of doing business in the north.
- Flexible - respects regional and community diversity
- Inclusive - carried out in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration amongst Inuit stakeholders and government agencies with the best interest of Inuit children and families at the centre.
- Accessible and equitable - choice of program and services to meet the needs to Inuit children and families.
Our Vision for Inuit ECD

- Every Inuit child and family has access to quality Inuit ECD programming
- Elders involved in all programs
- On the land programming in all programs - supported and respected
- Inuit-specific resources - in our language (dialect specific)
- Early childhood educators recognized as outstanding professionals & valued by their community
- Warm, safe, state of the art facilities/ buildings & maintenance
- Integrated, support services to meet the needs of all children and families
- Sustainable integrated funding

EVERY INUIT CHILD IS PROUD OF THEMSELVES, HAS A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY, IS THRIVING AND REACHES THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL
Nakumekk! Nakurmiik! Quana! Quyanni! Qujanninmiik! Matna! Thank you!
Photo Credit

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