

From colonized region to globalized region? Challenges to addressing social issues in Nunavik



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What's the issue?

- **Crushing social problems in Nunavik**
- **Nunavik moving toward regional government in 2011/2012**
- **Need for context-specific solutions to challenges**

Nunavik's challenges

- Physical and mental health
- High levels of drug and alcohol abuse
- High cost of living
- Pervasive child abuse and neglect
- Child sexual abuse
- High unemployment
- Positions of power held by non Inuit
- Critically high drop out rates

Challenges to increasing educational capacity in Nunavik

- Elementary and middle school levels offered within Nunavik
 - About 50% of population does not complete high school (through grade 11)
- Post secondary education delivered outside region
- Vocational school based in Inukjuaq services all 14 communities
- About 4% aged 25 to 64 in Nunavik had university degree versus 23% for total Canadian population (2006)

Residential Schools

- Begun in 1849; numbered 80 at high point; operated over 130 yrs
- Removal of children from their homes; denial of identity through attacks on language and spiritual beliefs
- Lack of basic adequate food, clothing and shelter, medical services, healthy environments
- Systemic abuse- physical, sexual, spiritual and emotional
- **"Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question (Duncan Campbell Scott, deputy superintendent general of Indian affairs, 1920)."**

What's being tried today?

- Resources available for education
- Language preservation (kindergarten through Grade 2)
- But there is still tendency to approach social issues from southern perspective
- Limited prevention programs, limited treatment programs

Regional government not a cure-all

- Legislative authority for health, education, social services institutions still remains with Quebec's ministries
- Even where traditional values and knowledge are reinstated, social work practices still be circumscribed by legal context of Quebec
- Inuit social workers still have to meet requirements of the Ordre Professionnel des Travailleurs Sociaux du Québec to practice in their communities

Learning from each other

- What has been your experience working with groups who have been socially excluded?
- In what ways can we work with communities as allies to contribute to finding community solutions to social problems?
- In what ways can we use technology to engage and network in ways that are meaningful and valuable for geographically remote communities?

McGill School of Social Work involvement in Inuit communities

■ Education:

- Foundation/bridging year in Nunavik
- Bachelor of Social Work in Nunatsiavut for Inuit students
- Indigenous Access McGill

■ Research:

- Community Capability and Development in Nunavik project



Project Overview

- To develop a foundation year for Nunavik students which will prepare them for university education
- To adapt McGill 90-credit Bachelor of Social Work degree to reflect Inuit student needs and Social Work practice requirements in Nunatsiavut

Guiding Principles for Nunavik/Nunatsiavut/McGill project

- Infused with **Inuit values**
- **Equality** between Inuit organizations and McGill University, between teachers and students
- **Open communication**
- **Engagement of and accountability to community**

Guiding Principles

- **Supporting students in own healing process**
- **Inuit perspective in curriculum and course content, and use Inuit approaches in teaching process**
- **Graduates must be able to function in both Inuit and mainstream worlds**
- **Curriculum should acknowledge both Inuit reality and broader Indigenous reality**
- **Inuktitut Language centred curriculum**

Indigenous Access McGill

- Program designed to provide support to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students in health sciences and social work and adapt current social work curriculum to reflect Indigenous realities in Canada (McGill campus)
 - Student support
 - Summer support
 - Curriculum Development

From colonized region to globalized region?

- “One of [globalization’s] essential points can be said to be a global adaptation of a set of so-called global standards to almost all areas of the globe...Therefore globalization can be characterized as a process of reduction or disappearance of ‘otherness’” (Nasu, 2006)

Thank you! Mange tak!

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