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NUNAVIK 2017

# AKULIVIK

## COMMUNITY PORTRAIT

Results from the Community Component  
of Qanuilirpitaa? 2017 Nunavik Health Survey



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RÉGIE RÉGIONALE DE LA NUNAVIK REGIONAL  
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SOCIAUX DU NUNAVIK AND SOCIAL SERVICES

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## This community portrait for Akulivik is a result of the Community Component of the *Qanuilirpitaa?* Health survey, conducted in 2017 across the 14 communities of Nunavik.

### The objectives of the Community Component were to:

- 1) **describe Inuit conceptions of health and well-being** as they relate to health determinants and community living;
- 2) better **understand** how **community conditions and resources contribute to the health** of people living there;
- 3) focus on the sources of **strength and resilience** in each community to describe how the community responds to challenges to health;
- 4) **measure and describe community health and wellbeing** across all 14 communities of Nunavik;
- 5) provide **information** to the **Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services and community representatives** who will work to develop action plans and interventions to respond to the needs identified in the Community Component.

To ensure cultural relevance and to get a full appreciation of the social and cultural context surrounding health, we developed a model of health and well-being that structured our data collection, analysis, and results. The **IQI model of health** and **eight themes** — elements shaping the health of communities and people — were developed through an exhaustive analysis of data collected through workshops, discussions, and in-depth interviews with Nunavimmiut from the 14 communities in Nunavik. The model was validated by leaders, community members, and the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services.

The information presented in this community portrait is based on the analysis of 3 long interviews conducted with community leaders, and 23 short interviews with service providers (resources). Through these interviews, participants shared what they think of their community, what they perceived as strengths and challenges in Akulivik, and improvements they would like to see for their community.

This portrait starts with a description of the IQI model of health and of the eight themes, or determinants, shaping the health and well-being of Nunavimmiut. Then for each theme, the following information is presented: organizations offering services or programs, main assets and strengths of the community, sociodemographic groups that are most or least served by programs and services (see: What about the People?), and what Akulivimmiut would like to see improve in their community.

**We want to thank all Akulivimmiut for their participation and collaboration throughout the Community Component of the *Qanuilirpitaa?* 2017 Nunavik Health Survey.**



# THE IQI MODEL OF HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

**Ilusirsusiarniq, Qanuinggiarniq and Inuuqatigiitsianiq are three key concepts of health and well-being. They build on the foundation of language and culture to make up the IQI model of health and well-being in Nunavik.**

**Ilusirsusiarniq** concerns the body, in general. It is a condition of normal functioning without disease, pain, injury or sickness that impedes people from doing what they want and need to do. The concept carries the idea that health is the way the body is intended to develop and change over time. Ilusirsusiarniq is “the taking of intended form” progressing from birth to old age.

**Qanuinggiarniq** is a broad sense of “well-being” that encompasses feelings of being unworried, without pain, comfortable, free of emotional distress, and happiness. It is related to peace of mind, calmness, fulfilment, and being able to move forward and carry on with ease. A specific emphasis is placed on the importance of being with other people in emotionally warm and safe environments.

**Inuuqatigiitsianiq** refers to an ideal state of relations between people. Specifically, it is composed of the quality of interactions with people sharing the same place. Good relationships with family members, friends, neighbours, people in the community and beyond are a significant part of the definition of health.

# SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Eight social determinants of health that support people to be healthy and well were identified. Each of them influences the others and all eight are linked together within the broader conceptual IQI model.

**COMMUNITY** consists of the social, physical, and built spaces of the municipalities of Nunavik. It encompasses three sub-themes: ways of living together, infrastructure and housing. *Ways of living together* refers to a range of relational issues like respect, altruism and social support; the role of elders and intergenerational knowledge transmission; and interactions like visiting, the place of non-Inuit and inclusion. *Infrastructure* concerns buildings, essential and municipal services, leisure, sports and recreation, and justice. *Housing* concerns accessibility, quality and appropriateness of dwellings, their structural characteristics, and sense of home.

**FAMILY** focuses primarily on kinship and affective relations between family members across generations, with an emphasis on youth. The sense of family belonging, with its particular attention to harmonious relations, calls directly upon the inuuqatigiitsiani dimension of Inuit health. This determinant encompasses the extended family or ilagiit and Inuit-specific cultural customs, like the practice of customary adoption.

**IDENTITY** details the connection to culture, language, pride, cultural activities, history, childhood and adolescent experiences, as well as the influence of southern culture. Questions of identity, including perceptions of the strength and value of Inuit culture today are important aspects of the definition of community health and well-being.

**FOOD** is a necessity of life that carries important social, economic and knowledge dimensions. This determinant encompasses the knowledge and practices of harvesting and sharing, the quality and quantity of food available, food preferences, and the regulations that govern hunting. Likewise, food includes the many influences around the acquisition and consumption of store-bought foods. The harvesting of country food requires skills and knowledge. Who goes on the land, how, when, and where is linked to social and historical ties of families with different places in Nunavik. Sharing food and meals brings all foods into family and community practices.

**LAND** is practically and symbolically a fundamental determinant of individual and collective health, healing, and well-being in Nunavik. This determinant includes issues of accessibility for food gathering, travel between communities, healing, caring for the land and outdoor activities. Safety and security on the land are also important aspects and include search and rescue, practices and knowledge.

**KNOWLEDGE** is a prerequisite to effective action in the home, on the land or at work. As such, it is the first step leading to health, healing and well-being. This determinant incorporates aspects of leadership, governance, empowerment and inter-agency collaboration as well as skills development, schooling and administrative knowledge. Knowledge is inclusive of Inuit and Western or southern traditions.

**SERVICES** encompasses the many different aspects of community, regional and provincial resources that people access and which contribute to health. These include health-related services (mental, physical and community initiatives), as well as community-level institutions and actions that are sought out to address trauma and healing.

**ECONOMY** refers to the ways in which people make a living, either through the land-based and/or the market-based economy, and to local and regional development. It encompasses income, access to goods, cost of living, expertise, skill and funding.



# COMMUNITY

## Resources

- > Arena
- > Community gymnasium
- > Community wellness worker
- > FM radio
- > Garage
- > Garbage collector
- > Night watchman
- > NV office
- > Police
- > Post office
- > Project coordinator
- > Recreational coordinator
- > Social services
- > Youth House

## Community strengths

People find that Akulivik is a fun community where people enjoy each other's company. They believe it is important to treat everyone equally and to be welcoming and to spend quality leisure time together.

There are many activities for children and youth in the community. Hockey is a popular sport, but they also enjoy volleyball and baseball. The school and the wellness committee also organize activities on the land to help people get to know each other. Youth are asked to be involved in these activities and to help with children.

The Youth House is well attended by youth. It provides a safe place where they can participate in activities, play outside, and learn how to respect others and behave well.

Many activities and gatherings are also organized for the Elders, such as feasts, games, and activities on the land.

The community radio is a useful tool to provide important information to the community. People use it to advertise activities, fundraisers for youth, or food to share. Police officers, nurses, and wellness workers also use it as a prevention tool and to promote health.

People are proud of their community and try to keep it clean. They collaborate well with the garbage collectors. Cleaning up garbage creates a safer environment in which children can play outside. Children are also taught how to stay safe in the community.

The police officers are trusted by the community, in large part because they make an intentional effort to get involved and to get to know the people and culture. They feel it's very rewarding, especially because people seem to possess a good understanding of how the justice system works.



## COMMUNITY *(continued)*

### WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE?

- + Women are highly involved in the community and well-connected to each other. The sewing centre is a popular place for them to gather and participate in activities together.
- + Teenage boys have access to various activities, as do Elders.
- Teenage girls lack activities in the community. They also show up at the Youth Centre less often than boys.
- Men do not have a place, such as a carpentry shop, to gather.
- People are not visiting each other as often as they used to.

### PEOPLE WOULD LIKE

- A swimming pool.
- To see safer driving practices in the community, especially less drinking and driving.
- More activities for young girls and teenage girls.
- More housing.
- A community gymnasium.
- More and better infrastructure for activities and programs.
- For people to visit each other more often, especially Elders.
- A carpentry shop for men.
- To see less bullying.
- To see more involvement from the youth and the Elders in the community.



# FAMILY

## Resources

- > [CLSC](#)
- > [Daycare](#)
- > [Social services](#)
- > [Youth Protection](#)

## Community strengths

Kinship is important. People believe it is important to know who your relatives are and where people are from. They try to stay connected even when they are scattered all over Nunavik. Family members help each other by sharing food and providing support.

Akulivimmiut feel it is important that grandparents help with their grandchildren's upbringing. Grandparents see it as their duty to feed their grandchildren and enjoy doing so. They also think it is important to bring them on the land.

People firmly believe that good parenting practices make children happy. Parents know they should set good examples for their children and believe they should have a harmonious household.

The SIPPE program is a great resource for parents. They offer various activities as well as baby crib rentals for new mothers.

The Youth Protection is another good resource for empowering parents. It has added the services of a social worker, who helps parents to develop parenting skills, maintain a routine, and find solutions to major issues at home. The organization has more stability than before and therefore can conduct positive interventions with families.

## FAMILY (continued)

### WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE?

- + Parents have access to various resources for parenting advice, such as the Youth Protection, social services, and the SIPPE program.
- The Youth Protection does not offer long-term programs for struggling families because they are based on a southern model that doesn't fit well with the culture.
- Parents who do not work cannot afford daycare services.
- Even though recreation activities are intended to have a positive impact, their effectiveness is limited for youth who are dealing with troubled or disrupted family environments.

### PEOPLE WOULD LIKE

- To find solutions geared towards supporting families struggling with substance abuse problems at home.
- To find ways to encourage people to report abusive behaviour.
- More foster homes in the community.
- Support for grandparents who need to step in and foster their grandchildren.
- More collaboration between the school and the daycare.
- More resources adapted to the culture and an Inuit parenting skills model.
- A rest house for parents.



# IDENTITY

## Resources

- > [Community wellness worker](#)
- > [Daycare](#)
- > [Project coordinator](#)
- > [Recreational coordinator](#)
- > [Sewing centre](#)
- > [Wellness committee](#)

## Community strengths

The role of Elders is considered very important for the community, as they possess a great deal of important knowledge. They are the people who can guide younger community members and teach them traditional skills, such as carving and beading. They also do storytelling over the radio to talk about history and share what they know.

Inuit culture is still strong. People are proud of having cultural skills and of working to keep the culture alive. The wellness committee, the school, the sewing club, and the Hunter Support Program organize many cultural activities. Therefore, teaching cultural skills is deemed important by Akulivimmiut, as it allows people to keep their traditions alive, learn Inuit values, and help others. Toddlers learn Inuktitut songs at the daycare and children tend to follow their parents on the land. Mushers participate in the Ivakkak race just for the pleasure of leading a dog team, and most girls are taught how to make bannock, use an ulu, and prepare country food.

Sewing is a very popular activity in the community. Many mothers teach their children how to sew at home and the sewing centre is also an important resource for the community, where Elders teach people how to cut skins and sew. People love to share their knowledge about mittens, slippers, kamiks, and tent making.

The community has access to a Makivik program that pays people to do handicrafts and sell them to make a profit. It provides a very good income for participants in the program, while also supplying quality clothes and equipment to community members. It also encourages people to practice cultural activities.

People are proud that Inuktitut is still spoken fluently. Knowing French is also perceived as an asset.

## IDENTITY *(continued)*

### WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE?

- + Youth have various opportunities to learn cultural skills.
- + Elders are well recognized for their knowledge and people appreciate their teaching.
- Television and technology have impacted people's lifestyles. They do not visit each other as much as before or plan activities together.
- Mothers struggle to participate in activities when they do not have a babysitter.

### PEOPLE WOULD LIKE

- A carpentry shop for men.
- To have various programs that mix youth and Elders.
- To increase youth's interest and pride in well-made handicrafts.
- To have activities that enable youth to go on the land on a daily basis.



# FOOD

## Resources

- > [Community freezer](#)
- > [CLSC](#)
- > [Community wellness worker](#)
- > [Coop store](#)
- > [Hunter Support Program](#)
- > [Northern store](#)
- > [Project coordinator](#)
- > [Social services](#)
- > [Wellness committee](#)

## Community strengths

Sharing is an important component of community life and people are proud that the community has kept this strong value alive. People go on Facebook or the radio to announce that they have food to share.

The community freezer is helpful, especially for people who do not have access to country food otherwise. People really appreciate the free delivery service provided by the Hunter Support Program when there is enough fresh meat for the whole community.

Food is an important component of family relationships. People, especially older siblings and grandparents, invite their relatives to eat, sometimes on a daily basis. They want to make sure no one is hungry, and they really enjoy gathering around a meal.

The char program, managed by the hospital, allows people to have access to free fish while providing an interesting income to fishermen. The program is very much appreciated by the community and the surrounding villages, who can also get a share of the catches.

Pregnant women are given food coupons and fish to ensure they have access to nutritious food during their pregnancy.

When men go fishing or hunting for beluga, they share their catches with the whole community. They make sure everyone gets a piece. The whole community goes to the shore to collect a portion of the food.

## FOOD *(continued)*

### WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE?

- + Pregnant women are supported by food programs, which helps ensure a healthy pregnancy.
- + Children at the daycare get to eat country food.
- Some hunters have to sell their catches because they need money to survive.
- Some people only buy cooked and prepared country food, and do not know how to cook.
- People are afraid there might not be enough country food in the future due to the decline of certain species.

### PEOPLE WOULD LIKE

- A community kitchen.
- A butchering area in the community freezer.
- Cheaper food in the grocery stores.



# LAND

## Resources

- > [Community wellness worker](#)
- > [Hunter Support Program](#)
- > [Garbage collector](#)
- > [Project coordinator](#)
- > [Recreational coordinator](#)
- > [Youth House](#)
- > [Wellness committee](#)

## Community strengths

The recreational coordinator, the NV, and the wellness committee provide community members with many activities, which are well attended. These include hunting trips for teenage boys, fishing and canoeing trips for women and youth, and ptarmigan hunting for Elders. Experienced guides are hired to help people go on the land and teach them various skills.

People like to do outdoor activities with relatives, and many children go on the land with their grandparents. They go seashell picking, fishing, or mussel harvesting, and most people really like to go camping. These activities help to reinforce family ties and harmony.

People feel that children who grew up going on the land are healthier, and learning how to hunt is considered very important. Youth can experience the land with their loved ones, and the school organizes outings twice a year. A student summer camp, managed by the community wellness worker, also runs all summer long. When these youth are grown up, they will have learned how to take care of themselves and others, how to take care of the land, and how to hunt. They will also have their hunting equipment and will be able to provide food to their families.

The community barge is a good resource for bringing people on the land and feeding the community. Additionally, Elders who do not have hunting equipment have access to programs that allow them to go berry picking or hunting. A feast is organized after the expedition.

People go on the land to heal and find peace of mind. It's an enjoyable moment during which they only need to concentrate on the present. They come back refreshed and inspired. This positive feeling is even stronger when they come back with catches.

Seashell picking is an activity enjoyed by many people in the community. They collect them to make decorations. They feel it is an inspirational and relaxing hobby.

The garbage collectors encourage the community to keep the land and the village clean and to enjoy a tidy environment. They go on the radio to do talks about the environment, and community clean-ups are organized every year.



## LAND (continued)

### WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE?

- + Youth and Elders have many opportunities to go on the land.
- People with a regular job or who are highly involved in the community are often too busy to go on the land.
- Many people can't afford to go hunting and fishing.
- Handicraft funding is only available for two weeks during wintertime, whereas the best quality fur is available during fall.

### PEOPLE WOULD LIKE

- More programs that offer to bring adults on the land.
- Year-round funding for caribou furs, so that people can make high-quality clothing from the best quality fur, and for workshops on how to make mats for igloos.
- To have garbage bins in the community.



# KNOWLEDGE

## Resources

- > CLSC
- > Community wellness worker
- > Coop store
- > Firefighters
- > Garage
- > Landholding Corporation
- > Project coordinator
- > School
- > Social services

## Community strengths

The community has many leaders who are appreciated by Akulivimmiut. They have implemented strong by-laws and work hard to try to decrease alcohol consumption, which is considered problematic in the community. They also make use of the radio to ensure that everyone is aware of what is going on.

Being involved in the community tends to be very rewarding for people. People feel proud and empowered when they feel they are useful to the community and are given the opportunity to develop leadership skills. It keeps them busy in a positive way.

There is solid collaboration between most organizations in the community. The recreational coordinator works closely with the recreational committee and the teachers at the school to provide activities. The NV, the Landholding Corporation, and the Hunter Support Program work together to coordinate walrus and beluga hunting. The project coordinator also encourages some people to participate in activities that could be highly beneficial to them.

The students have access to various opportunities to learn cultural skills through the sewing centre, camps, and organized outings. They can also visit the Hunter Support Program to learn how it works. People are proud that traditional techniques are being passed down.

Students are encouraged to do well in school. The Coop gives prizes to the best students and graduates to congratulate them on their efforts.

The Youth House is very active and has positive impacts on the youth. The former Youth Committee worked hard to create the centre, and it is perceived as a valuable asset in the community.

## KNOWLEDGE *(continued)*

### WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE?

- + There are strong collaborations in the community to ensure people have access to activities and are safe.
- It is hard for community leaders to change certain policies and practices because doing so would require everyone to contribute.
- Organizations dedicated to youth do not have many other organizations to collaborate with.

### PEOPLE WOULD LIKE

- More trainings and refreshers for employees, such as those at the Coop and daycare, as well as first responders.
- More collaboration between all the organizations in the community in order to foster a multidisciplinary approach to addressing community issues.
- A better system for learning a second or third language in school, as the majority of people feel it is a burden to start a new language in grade 3.
- More housing that can be used to welcome training instructors who come to the community.
- To have a Youth Committee again, because it used to teach leadership and other valuable skills to teenagers and empower them.



# ECONOMY

## Resources

- > Arena
- > Bank services
- > CLSC
- > Coop hotel
- > Coop store
- > FM radio
- > Garage
- > Gas station
- > Hunter Support Program
- > Landholding Corporation
- > Northern store
- > Project coordinator
- > Recreational coordinator
- > Youth Protection

## Community strengths

People have various opportunities to gain skills that enable them to earn an income. Teenage boys and men can become guides once they've learned how to hunt and survive on the land, and women can sell homemade clothes when they know how to sew.

The community has a good rate of success with obtaining funding. The project coordinator can usually find money for events or specific projects, and the Coop provides discounts to programs related to students or youth. The recreation committee also has consistent success with bingo activities and the canteen. The profits finance community activities.

People feel there are enough jobs to sustain the community. When people have a well-paid job and feel recognized, they are motivated to do better and provide quality service.

Various programs managed by the NV, the school board, or the Landholding Corporation provide jobs to people in the community, such as students or guides who teach traditional skills. Makivik also subsidizes people to make handicrafts, equipment, or clothes. It provides a good income to the community and enables people to buy quality things.

The community can rent 4-wheelers to people who don't have vehicles and who want to hunt. It also sells hunting gear at half price to JBNQA beneficiaries to counteract the high cost of living and promote hunting.

## ECONOMY *(continued)*

### WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE?

- + Students have access to part-time and summer jobs.
- + Many women have jobs in the community and sell more handmade creations than men.
- The cost of living is high.
- People who live in a troubled household struggle to find a job or participate in community projects.
- Some people struggle to afford food and basic necessities because of their life choices.
- When people have a low-paying job, they are often not motivated to work and tend not to stay in their position.

### PEOPLE WOULD LIKE

- More funding to create more and better-paid jobs.
- Easier access to funding for low-budget projects and more flexible criteria for funding.
- To find ways to increase worker retention and counteract absenteeism and turn-over.
- To feel more recognized for their work.
- An increased Northern allowance to offset the high cost of living.
- Experts who will work to bring back the carvers' association and make it successful.



# SERVICES

## Resources

- > Church
- > CLSC
- > Community wellness worker
- > First responders
- > FM radio
- > Medical doctor
- > Police
- > Social services
- > Wellness committee

## Community strengths

Community health initiatives can be effective. For example, a lot of nasal hygiene education has been done, which has led to fewer respiratory problems in the community. Additionally, such initiatives have helped parents know how to care for their children when they are sick before deciding to go to the health centre. The community radio is an efficient tool to educate people about health and provide reliable information.

People feel that access to health care in the community is better than it is down South. The nurses have a close knowledge of the population, as well as expertise, and can provide a quick diagnosis to most patients.

The interpreters are very helpful. They are devoted, reliable, and eager to learn. They receive medical training for various tasks, such as triage and instrument sterilization. The health professionals work closely with them to provide different solutions to health issues that are more connected to the culture, such as freezing raw meat before eating it.

The community workers and the community wellness worker are also very knowledgeable and helpful to the community. They try to be nurturing and welcoming and to treat everyone equally. They provide numerous activities geared toward educating people, such as workshops in the school, talks, and outings.

Faith and spirituality are considered very important for well-being. Grandparents teach their grandchildren how to pray.

People feel that when a person stops abusing substances, they can afford to engage in leisure activities and enjoy life more thoroughly.

Elders are important resources for the community. They help people deal with the problems in their lives.

When a major trauma happens in the community, people tend to stick together to cope and carry on for the children. The Coop also supports mourning families by providing food.

Debriefing is deemed essential after a traumatic event. Police officers get together and discuss what happened after a difficult situation in order to learn from the experience and ensure everyone is coping well.

## SERVICES *(continued)*

### WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE?

- + Many women participate in the activities offered by the community wellness worker.
- Men are harder to reach out to. They do not open up easily.
- Some patients who need medical treatment avoid the nursing station.
- There are many qualified people to conduct healing activities, but they can't do it freely.
- Conflicts can arise from misunderstanding because most health employees are non-Inuit.

### PEOPLE WOULD LIKE

- More healing activities that are culturally adapted and conducted by paid, qualified people.
- More education to empower people and make them more knowledgeable about their health.
- More staff and resources for prevention and health promotion activities, and for palliative care.
- A security guard at the health clinic.
- A health clinic that is open 24/7.
- To have access to tools, support groups, and a healing centre for people who wish to stop drinking.
- Better collaboration between all health services, first responders, and the wellness committee.
- To find ways to encourage victims to report abuse.
- To have more support for emergency workers after they face trauma.
- To debunk myths about the Youth Protection and find ways to foster trust toward non-Inuit health employees.





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