

Expectation: “Inuit” and not Indigenous be recognized as the appropriate way to identify Inuit in Canada. Aboriginal be used in the context of the Constitution and Indigenous be used in the context of the United Nations and international human rights.

B. Gender based implementation of the UNDRIP and Truth and Reconciliation

Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada began using gender-based analysis in 2006, as a way to understand the impact of policies and programs on Inuit women and men. The organization developed an Inuit-specific approach that takes into account the effects of culture and history on the experiences of men and women.

“Inuit specific culturally relevant GBA is a way of gathering and using information about the different needs and social experiences of Inuit women, girls, men and boys in a way that reflects the unique characteristics of Inuit culture and society.” (Inuit Gender Based Analysis Framework: A Culturally Relevant GBA in an Inuit Context powerpoint, 2012)

Applying an Inuit GBA requires knowledge and baseline data about Inuit and the different roles and responsibilities of men and women in order to maintain the family, social and community structure. It also requires a cultural competency to examine data and stories and interpret them appropriately. Time and again, Inuit have not reaped the benefits of a consistent application of an Inuit specific GBA by governments, particularly in the development of legislation, policies and initiatives to ensure equality of outcomes. All too frequently an umbrella Aboriginal (First Nation Framework) is applied to Inuit women.

Traditional Inuit life was intimately connected to the vast land we inhabited. People moved with the seasons and survival was based on the successful harvesting of the animals. The adverse effect of climate change in the North was immediately felt by Inuit. Climate change has had a significant impact on the North.

Inuit women have always held important traditional knowledge of their environment, the animals and the resources. Men and women had to work together as equal partners to ensure our survival and our future. Despite the important cultural knowledge held by Inuit women being undermined by colonization, some of our greatest Inuit leaders around climate change have been women.

While the effects of climate change are apparent to Inuit women and their families, women’s specific knowledge has been undervalued and underappreciated in mainstream literature on the subject. The underrepresentation of women’s voices in various initiatives and processes—including climate change vulnerability assessments and community action plans—is not reflective of the level of women’s leadership on climate change issues in the North.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Pauktuutit would like to acknowledge the incredible work that has been accomplished as part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, particularly the Commission’s commitment to ensuring that Inuit history is recognized and shared. The TRC, however, did not include us from the beginning and we had to negotiate an Inuit sub-commission after their work had begun.

In reviewing the Calls to Action, Pauktuutit would like to offer a number of observations:

1. The Calls to Action are essentially silent around women, except in the call for the Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.
2. The Calls to Action are silent around violence against women, except in the call for the Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.
3. Historical and current child sexual abuse is a key issue impacting our communities and it was not identified.
4. The Calls to Action do not identify a community development framework to acknowledge the unique needs of each community and thereby provide adequate solutions.

We could take any issue in an Inuit community and see that there are significant challenges that will take the strength and abilities of the community to move forward. Just one example is the prevalence of violence in the communities. The data that has been collected around violence for Inuit show that:

- One-half (52 per cent) of women and almost one-half (46 per cent) of men reported having experienced at least one form of physical violence as an adult;
- About one quarter (27 per cent) of women and one in 20 (5 per cent) of men reported having experienced some form of forced sexual activity as an adult (Galoway & Saudny, 2012);
- The rate of violent crime in Inuit communities is nine times higher than for Canada overall;
- The police-reported rate of intimate partner violence in Nunavut is three times higher than any of the provinces (*Engaging Inuit Men and Boys in Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: A Gender Based Analysis*, Dianne Kinnon for Pauktuutit, 2013).

We know that these statistics are the direct result of the legacy of residential school and broader colonization practices. We also know that any solutions to address the violence will require the engagement of community. There is no single policy or program that can address the issues occurring in the community. Each community will need to use the programs and policies as tools to support them in addressing the issues facing the community.

As Dr. Joe Solanto pointed out when working with the Nunatsiavut Government in their development of their trauma informed service approach, the first step to a community plan is healing for the individuals and families. Yet those investments continue to be absent. There continues to be a lack of shelters, safe spaces and programs in the North to address violence. The one Inuit treatment centre in the country, Mamisarvik Healing Centre, lost all federal funding in 2016, only to have it restored for one year.

To achieve any of the TRC Calls to Action, it will require Inuit women, like Métis and First Nation women, to restore our health and well-being for the betterment of the family and the community. How will these roles be restored if there are no investments made in women to do our healing and take up their roles and responsibilities?

Expectations:

Our expectations for the Truth and Reconciliation implementation process:

1. Establish the National Council for Reconciliation with a clear Inuit presence that includes both men and women representation. Ensure that the process from the beginning is respectful of Inuit culture.
2. Re-establish the Aboriginal Healing Foundation which provided communities with the ability to design and deliver programs that were appropriate for their community around healing.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

There are three articles under UNDRIP that comprise the foundation of Pauktuutit's work with the different levels of government, national Indigenous organizations and a wide-range of partners.

Article 18

Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.

Pauktuutit has a unique structure and relationship to our national Inuit organization, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK). Pauktuutit is both an incorporated independent organization and sits on the ITK Board as a permanent observer. We have not subsumed our voice under ITK, but rather we want our voice amplified at times through and with ITK. This model is not unusual in our culture and it does not seem to be confusing to the Land Claim Organizations who also sit on the national board. When it is Inuit women's voices that are to be included we have discussions about confusion and duplication.

This model of governance and representation is consistent with Inuit culture. The roles for men and women were complementary and input for both were required for decision-making. With the disruption of colonization, new organizations and structures have had to be established to ensure that both roles can be maintained for that complimentary relationship to remain and an imbalance does not get established. Like the Land Claim organizations, Pauktuutit is an organization that is an essential product of disruption in order to protect and ensure that rights are protected.

The launch of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women without an Inuk commissioner was a failure. However, we want to ensure that we have collectively learned lessons from this experience. It spoke to the lack of understanding and capacity of the government to understand this model of representation.

Expectation

Let us be clear, under Article 18, we require governments to develop the capacity to work with us within our model of representation. At times, Inuit women's voice will be through Pauktuutit and at other times our voices will be amplified through ITK.

Article 21

2. States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall

be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.

Article 22

2. States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.

When we address empowering women across the lifespan through supports and services then we respond to Article 21 and 22. (see below)

C. Empowering women across the lifespan

The Inuit Holistic Lifelong Learning Model, developed from traditional knowledge and prepared by the Canadian Council on Learning in 2007, identified five stages of the life span: infant and child, youth, young adult, adult and Elder (in the centre of the circle).



In addition to women growing through the life cycle wheel, women also have responsibilities for the different parts of the life cycle wheel, from birthing the babies, to raising the children and youth and caring for the seniors and Elders. In each stage of life, Inuit women need support for their responsibilities.

How do we get to a set of supportive services and programs in both the North and the South that will respond to the specific needs of Inuit women? We need to recognize that we are not fixing an individual mental health or social problem but restoring health to individuals and families and communities. Prior to colonization, everything was available to respond to issues in the community because Inuit had a cultural way to maintain life and restore balance. We need to recognize that there is already knowledge in the community that would inform the development of any program or policy. When we do not rely on the community to develop policies and programs then we are imposing ways of being that may actually cause further problems. Many times these programs and services are out of context and have limited or no impact when implemented.

There have been three consistent approaches that governments have applied to respond to the needs of Inuit women. Sadly, none have been effective. They are as follows:

- a) apply a southern based policy framework and program to the North;
- b) apply a First Nation policy framework and program approach to the North; and
- c) ask Inuit women in the south to use and integrate into programs, systems and processes that were designed for other cultural groups and are not appropriate.

We need to rethink the way we develop policy and programs that provide *“seamless services and supports that respond to the decisions that Indigenous women make for themselves, how they choose to build a safe home for themselves, and to where they choose to build and live their lives.”* (The Summit’s submission document)

Each issue needs to be responded to with an Inuit GBA so that we can look at the individual and collective impact on all those affected. If we want to have young girls graduating from school then we need to address the housing they need in order to be able to study; the school environment, curriculum and speciality services they need to thrive; the trauma informed approach needed in the schools and programs to ensure that they are not being misdiagnosed with a cognitive issues when they dealing with intergenerational trauma; safe spaces where sexual violence is not part of their lived experience; and exposure to community members and Elders who are role models, leaders and affirm their identity and role as Inuit girls.

In 2015, Pauktuutit received funding through the federal Urban Aboriginal Strategy to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the economic participation of Inuit women across Inuit Nunangat. The goal of the project was to engage diverse stakeholders in each region of the North to explore and categorize the barriers that Inuit women face in securing sustainable employment, through entrepreneurship or in the workplace. The final result of this project is the Angiqatigik strategy. The results of that study can be broadened to reflect the many challenges that Inuit women face across the life cycle.

Social Issues

Family violence, substance abuse, mental health issues and homelessness are all universally underserved areas of need across Inuit Nunangat. These and other social issues severely undermine attempts to improve one’s employment situation. It is only by addressing and providing supports for these foundational challenges that women will be capable of exerting the energy and effort required to seek out new economic opportunities and improve their lives.

Self-confidence

Many Inuit women face challenges related to self-confidence and self-esteem. The underlying causes of these challenges are complex and vary somewhat across the regions. They can, however, be associated with a number of social problems that are common to all Inuit communities, including: the legacy of the residential school system; cultural and language disconnects; the lack of employment opportunities; and a poorly functioning education system.

Childcare

The most significant barrier to economic and education participation for Inuit women is the absence of available, affordable and reliable childcare. Where childcare is available, there are often long waitlists

and fees that are too expensive for many families. Inflexible working hours of childcare centers also add a strain to balancing work-life requirements.

Programs and Services

Despite the availability of numerous programs and services to assist Inuit women, there are significant numbers of people who are not accessing these supports and may not even be aware of their existence.

Education

Inuit women without secondary education are entering the local workforce with limited levels of education and skill, and are therefore struggling to find employment for which they are qualified. Less than half of younger women have completed high school. Many Inuit women without secondary education are interested in upgrading, but are not able to access the necessary programs and services to complete their GED in their own community and on their own time.

Housing

Overcrowding and poor housing conditions impact Inuit women's abilities to pursue employment and training opportunities. The health impacts, as well as the lack of a quiet, peaceful place, undermine studying and homework habits for students. Furthermore, social housing policies can make starting a business or finding a job counter-productive for some as their income support payments or subsidized rents may be adjusted to take into account new sources of revenue.

Geographical Isolation

Perhaps one of the most difficult challenges for Inuit women is simply the lack of jobs and business opportunities that exist, and the lack of supports and services particularly in the smaller and more remote communities. With the fastest growing population in Canada, Inuit communities may not have the capacity to respond to the diversity of issues they are facing using the current program and policy framework.

Internet Connectivity

Lack of affordable, adequate and reliable internet continues to impede not only the development of the northern economy, but also the ability of Inuit women to access education, employment, support programs and in some cases safety.

With national initiatives we need to move to community development frameworks similar to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. At the national level, broad outcomes would be developed and the investments would be in ways to support communities to develop and design the programs and services that they need to address the issues, including community developers, funding for community based programs and services and communication networks that support communities to share resources and knowledge. The focus is on building capacity at the community level.

We need to keep our focus on the overall goal for all of these programs which is to restore Inuit women to strength based health and wellness that will ensure healthy individuals, families and communities. When Inuit women are strong and healthy, they will take up their roles and responsibilities in a way that builds and strengthens family and community.

Expectations:

Apply a community development framework that ensures that individual communities receive the proper supports to develop a plan to address what is happening in their community.

D. Access to opportunity

While this conversation is intended to be about “opportunity’ around economic development, when applying an Inuit GBA this is about broader opportunity. When talking about access to opportunity for Inuit women, we are talking about two distinct contexts:

- Opportunities for education, employment and a sustainable life in the North and in the south.
- The broader context: an individual job with a salary will not address systemic issues in the communities including lack of educational institutions to provide the necessary education for jobs; food security; and the lack of adequate housing.

The reliance on government programming, through policy frameworks developed by policy makers that do not use an Inuit framework and rely on limited consultations for Inuit content, is not resulting in the programs we need in communities.

Government programs and services exist for three primary reasons:

- They have replaced the social, economic and family structures that were integral to the core of the community.
- They exist to respond to the legacy of colonization (like healing and addiction services).
- They are intended for Inuit to successfully integrate into the dominant ways of living.

Service providers and stakeholder organizations must build or strengthen partnerships to share expertise, resources and knowledge around the needs of Inuit women. Communications should use a variety of mediums tailored to different audiences, including in-person, media, social media and online resources. Opportunities to build Inuit women’s leadership capacity and empowerment must be developed and promoted.

Inuit cultural awareness training programs should be developed for workplaces. Employers must fulfill their responsibilities to protect the rights of women in the workplace and ensure a safe environment free of discrimination and harassment.

Mentorship and networking opportunities must be developed to connect Inuit women with each other, elders and topic experts for ongoing guidance and support. Educational institutions, programs and services must seek to engage youth and accommodate their needs to support the development of future leaders, businesswomen and executives. Opportunities for youth to gain hands-on experience in careers and business should be increased through summer employment, job shadowing, apprenticeship programs, mentorship, internships and practicums.

Expectations

Inuit women must be directly involved in the decision-making and development of policies and programs that will affect them. All programs and services must take into consideration the context of Inuit women’s lives. This should include programming for single parent families, address social and health challenges of women and reduce barriers to academic upgrading and post-secondary opportunities.

E. Expectations coming out of this Summit

In summary, our expectations coming of this Summit are:

1. “Inuit” and not Indigenous be recognized as the appropriate way to identify Inuit in Canada. Aboriginal be used in the context of the Constitution and Indigenous be used in the context of the United Nations and international human rights.
2. Establish the National Council for Reconciliation with a clear Inuit presence that includes both men and women representation. Ensure that the process from the beginning is respectful of Inuit culture.
3. Re-establish the Aboriginal Healing Foundation which provided communities with the ability to design and deliver programs that were appropriate for their community around healing.
4. Under Article 18 of the UNDRIP, we require governments to develop the capacity to work with us within our model of representation. At times, Inuit women’s voice will be through Pauktuutit and at other times our voices will be amplified through ITK.
5. Apply a community development framework that ensures that individual communities receive the proper supports to develop a plan to address what is happening in their community.
6. Inuit women must be directly involved in the decision-making and development of policies and programs that will affect them. All relevant legislation, programs and services must take into consideration the context of Inuit women’s lives and be based on the informed outcomes of an Inuit GBA. This should include programming for single parent families, address social and health challenges of women and reduce barriers to academic upgrading and post-secondary opportunities.