



Nunavut Social Services Review

**Final Report
July 2011**



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Gordon Phaneuf, MSW, RSW
Chair, Nunavut Social Service Review
Director of Strategic Initiatives, CWLC

The quotations that appear throughout the report are taken from correspondence submitted to the Review.

INTRODUCTION

The intent of this Report is to focus on concrete and practical recommendations and accompanying suggested steps that can lead to meaningful change.

An effective social service system that protects children and supports families requires a number of components. Key elements include, but are not limited to:

- adequate numbers of qualified, culturally-competent staff;
- ready access to social supports and prevention services;
- a pool of foster and alternative care resources;
- on-going monitoring and evaluation;
- accountability mechanisms; and,
- communities and governments that assume responsibility for problem solving.

The eleven recommendations which are detailed in this report are intended to promote the conditions specified above. The recommendations, while presented individually, are intended to reinforce one another. The problems they address are complex and have many facets. Sadly, these problems have been years, in some cases generations in the making. They will not be surmounted overnight. Not surprisingly, the solutions that are recommended involve many elements that need to be addressed together and at the same time. Addressing these recommendations will require a major public investment in protecting children and youth. That is an investment that Nunavummiut have signalled, throughout the consultations, that they want the Government of Nunavut to make to better protect the well-being of their children, youth, families and culture.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The well-being of children and youth has been highlighted as a priority by past and current governments in Nunavut. The *Tamapta 2009-2013* document, which articulates the strategic priorities for the Government of Nunavut, identifies four priorities pertaining to child and youth well-being. They are:

- Help those at risk through the establishment of an office for advocacy and action on behalf of challenged and disadvantaged individuals and groups.
- Connect to the community by encouraging youth to expand their individual roles in governance and leadership, and increasing opportunities and programs to support social, sports, recreational, and traditional activities.
- Address social concerns at their roots by understanding what is causing problems and taking a more holistic approach and implementing early prevention and intervention initiatives to help reduce alcohol and drug abuse, suicide, and crime.
- Improve health through early prevention, with emphasis placed on those who are least able to look after themselves.

These are laudable goals which should be pursued, but without major investments in all aspects of social services in Nunavut they will not be realized.

In recent years there has been mounting pressure to revisit how social services are oriented and delivered in Nunavut. As a result, in August 2010, the Department of Health and Social Services of the Government of Nunavut engaged the Child Welfare League of Canada (CWLC) to carry out a Social Service Review to examine the *Child and Family Services Act*, related programs and service delivery structures.

The *Child and Family Services Act* was adopted by Nunavut in 1999 as the legal and procedural framework to guide interventions relating to the best interests of the child. Since its adoption there have been many calls to change the way child and family services in particular, and social services in general, are provided across the Territory. This Review is the first that has been completed since the Act was originally proclaimed.

This Report is intended to be a blueprint for action. Each of the eleven recommendations is intended to serve as a guide for practical change that will make a difference to children, families and communities in Nunavut.

The recommendations are accompanied by a number of suggested steps. These steps have been identified through the consultation and data collection stages of the Review. Some of the suggested steps are high-level; more often than not they are focused on concrete, practical, doable steps which can be taken if they are deemed to be appropriate and helpful at the time they are addressed.

In consultations with Nunavummiut the focus has been on pinpointing suggested steps that are realistic and achievable. Some are ambitious and will require significant expenditures, while others are more pedestrian and will entail little financial cost. The suggested steps are directed to many different actors. Some are directed to individual government departments others are focused at the hamlet-level.

It is recognized that the suggested steps that are identified are neither exhaustive nor unchanging. They should be thought of as helping to outline a blueprint for change. Most importantly these steps must make sense for those who will be affected by them. It is not enough that the ideas and inspiration for these recommendations and suggested steps came from Nunavummiut they must also be brought to fruition by Nunavummiut.

The eleven recommendations go hand-in-hand with each other and are intended to be viewed as a whole. They reflect an overall strategy that is intended to support community-based approaches which strengthen the child and family system, respect Inuit culture, encourage community ownership of change strategies, and result in greater transparency and accountability.

The interconnectedness of the recommendations reflects the complex and complicated nature of the problems that are being addressed. A strengthened social service system in Nunavut will not result from mere tinkering in one or two areas, rather improvements needed to be made in multiple areas simultaneously. Fortunately, positive changes in one area of focus lead to and facilitate positive changes in other areas (Diagram II).

There are a number of legislative amendments that are recommended. However, Nunavummiut do not have to wait for legislative change to act on the recommendations and suggested steps that they have called for. Legislative change, while important, is only one piece of a larger effort that is required on many fronts to improve the overall social service system. Changes in practice, enhancements to programs, and improvements in policies do not need to wait

on legislative change these areas of focus can and should be addressed immediately.

The Report calls for the creation of a number of accountability mechanisms both formal and informal. Just as transparency and accountability are essential to the effective and efficient administration of public services; they are equally important for generating the trust and confidence that social services, in particular, must enjoy if it is to fulfill its mandate of protecting children and serving communities.

To support the change processes that are needed the Report recommends the establishment of several forums, advisory committees, and working groups. Some of these organizational units will be time-limited, task-focused, and where appropriate short-lived. Others like the Youth Forum (Recommendation 8) and Social Service Development Forum (Recommendation 10) could be conceived of as core elements of a broader social development agenda that addresses child and family services but which also seeks to influence the broader social determinants of child and family well-being.

CONTEXT LEADING TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

On March 12, 2011, *The Globe and Mail* ran an editorial entitled *Young and neglected*, in which it asked regarding the plight of abused and neglected children and youth in Nunavut “Where is the leadership and urgency?” The leadership and urgency which Canada’s national newspaper has called for requires well-thought out, achievable action plans. Leadership in this context must be translated into responsible action plans; urgency requires actionable remedies that improve conditions for children, youth and families and do not merely react to the problems. This Report seeks to provide the “blueprint” for those action plans and remedies.

Overwhelmingly, throughout the Review process, community members and stakeholders forcefully expressed the view that change is long overdue. This need for change is far-reaching and requires a multi-dimensional response. The Review has attempted to distil the wide-ranging, diverse and sometimes conflictive views that were heard into a coherent, actionable set of recommendations, which when taken with the accompanying suggested steps can serve as a blueprint for effective change in communities across Nunavut.

The primary responsibility to protect and ensure the well-being of children, youth and their families is not being properly met by the Department of Health and Social Services. The Child and Family Service system is overwhelmed and greatly in need of resources. Several communities have front-line staff positions which are vacant and those vacancies have been left unoccupied for unacceptably long periods of time. When vacancies go unfilled there is a very real risk that vulnerable children and youth will not receive the care and protection that they require.

There is an acute shortage of foster and alternative care resources across the territory. This shortfall is chronic, longstanding and worrisome. The consequence for vulnerable children, youth and their families is profound and far-reaching. In the more extreme cases, children who could be housed in foster or alternative care beds in Nunavut, if they were available, are cared for in facilities located in Southern Canada, far removed from their families, home community and culture. This is not an arrangement that is intended to disconnect the child or youth from their culture, but too often that is the unintended consequence.

Specialized training is a significant deficit across the child and family service system. This situation can imperil children and youth who require intervention services. The need for training, cultural sensitization, and clinical support services is stark and deeply troubling.

Throughout the consultation process the Review heard moving and disturbing stories about how the social service system has failed many children, youth and families. Repeatedly the view was expressed that Inuit culture and traditional knowledge has not been adequately respected or reflected in social services. A flashpoint issue was the visceral anger many Inuit feel regarding out-of-territory placement of some children who come into the care of the child welfare system. There is an alarming degree of miscommunication, misunderstanding, and mistrust about out-of-territory placements.

Nunavummiut recognize, if only hesitantly, that there are special circumstances when children must be placed out of the territory when local services are not available (for example, medically fragile children or children who require specialized therapeutic services). They are, however, adamant that out-of-territory placements should only be an exceptional practice and not the default position for children who are found to be in need of protection.

Much needs to be done to address the underrepresentation of Inuit in the provision of social services. Inuit personnel are required at all levels in the social service system: from the community social service auxiliary workers through to the senior positions within the Department of Health and Social Services. As discussed later in this Report (Recommendation 5) an appropriately resourced strategy is required to develop a community-based training and skills acquisition strategy to address these systemic deficits.

Inuit culture places a high value on achieving consensus and working together for toward a common end. The sometimes adversarial character of the child and family services system can conflict with those values. In order to be culturally valid, approaches to social service practice must be more collaborative and focused toward group decision-making. This orientation is reflected both directly, and parenthetically, in several of the recommendations (Recommendation 2, 3 and 6).

Two diagrams (I & II) are appended to the end of the Report entitled respectively, *Vicious Social Service Cycle* and *Virtuous Social Service Cycle*. They

are intended to illustrate the way in which a constellation of risk or negative factors, and conversely a constellation of protective or positive factors, can reinforce and influence one another. The diagrams are rather crude illustrations of very complex, complicated and interrelationships between multiple variables. They are not meant to suggest that social service enhancement is easy or straightforward. Quite the contrary, they are intended to show how efforts and investments in one area can dramatically affect outcomes in related areas – which is a core principle of all child and family service work.

The Vicious Social Service Cycle captures:

Lack of social support, coupled with personal, family, and community problems, contribute to children being placed at risk. Insufficient staffing can result in interventions being conducted on an urgent basis. Lack of adequate staffing also adversely compromises compliance with standards. This can contribute to increased crisis intervention, leading to increased apprehensions. Lack of appropriate foster and alternative care resources results in out-of-territory placements, which in turn contributes to poor child and family service-community relations.

The Virtuous Social Service Cycle illustrates the positive interrelationships between protective factors for child and family well-being (Diagram II).

Culturally valid interventions express respect for the culture. Adequate social support, coupled with a skilled culturally competent workforce, leads to positive interventions that are supported by and involve the community. Community involvement normalizes social support thus helping families at risk to ask for help earlier and avoiding more urgent interventions. Adequate reserves of foster and alternative care services replace the need to place children outside the territory.

CWLC conducted 25 community, stakeholder and invitational consultations in eleven communities drawn from across the three regions of Nunavut. The level of citizen engagement in the consultations was remarkably high. The face-to-face consultations were of two sorts. Public consultations that were open to all members of the community, and stakeholder and invitational consultations which involved service providers drawn from social services, law enforcement, education, public health, early childhood education, elders, community leaders, elected representatives, and other key personnel.

The attendance and participation at the community meetings was notably high in virtually all of the communities that were visited. It is estimated that the total cumulative attendance at the consultative meetings held in support of the Review came close to 1,000 participants. When one considers that the total population of Nunavut is just over 32,000 people, that is an extraordinarily high level of citizen engagement. The exceptional level of interest of so many people, both young and old, Inuit and non-Inuit, professionals and volunteers, clients and providers alike in the Review process provides powerful evidence of the appetite for change.

The discussions in these meetings were guided by six key questions (Appendix VI) pertaining to social services in Nunavut. Namely:

- What can be done to promote community self-reliance?
- How can Social Services work better with communities?
- How can Social Services and communities improve prevention?
- What types of programs are needed to protect children?
- What resources do communities need?
- How can Social Services better respect Inuit culture?

These topics corresponded to the questions listed on the social service questionnaire that was distributed widely to Nunavummiut. The feedback received was frank, forthright, sometimes passionate, and often critical of the current state of social services.

Nunavummiut from all walks of life want to see major changes in how social services are delivered and provided. The consultations underscored the view that communities want to assume a greater role in addressing the many problems confronting them. Though it is evident that communities currently sorely lack the resources, both material and human, to rise to the challenge.

To ensure that every reasonable effort was made to hear from the residents of Nunavut, a wide range of methods were made available to facilitate input. A questionnaire addressing the six previously mentioned topics was distributed to each residence in the territory. The questionnaire was posted online on the Government of Nunavut website and email responses were solicited and analyzed. A toll-free dedicated telephone line and voice mailbox, operating in the four official languages, was created to receive input to the Review. Formal written submissions were received. These approaches, while not without their technical challenges, proved to be successful with an overall high response rate.

TIMELINE

The timeline of key milestones leading up to the completed Review includes:

December 2009

The Minister of Health and Social Services, The Honourable Tagak Curley, in December of 2009, brought together Inuit representatives from across the territory to participate in a knowledge sharing forum. The Forum was designed to create an event for community representatives and elders to explore the state of Child and Family Services in Nunavut. A key focus of the Knowledge Sharing Forum was to examine what could be recommended to strengthen service provision, design and delivery of child and family services.

September 2010

In September 2010, Minister Curley announced that the Child Welfare League of Canada had been selected to lead the Nunavut Social Service Review. He indicated that the CWLC would lead public consultations from September – November 2010, to canvas Nunavummiut for their input and suggestions respecting how the social service system in Nunavut should be improved.

December 2010

A territorial Youth Forum was convened in Iqaluit from December 14-16, 2010. The Forum provided a unique opportunity to hear from youth regarding their views on a wide range social service issues. Nineteen youth from Baker Lake, Pond Inlet, Iqaluit, Pangnirtung, Igloolik, Kugaaruk, Arviat, Cambridge Bay and Coral Harbour came to Iqaluit to discuss a number of youth issues within the social service context. Roundtable discussions were used to draw themes and recommendations that would contribute to the Review.

February 2011

A Validation Forum was held in Iqaluit, February 22-23, 2011. Community leaders from across Nunavut joined with members of the Social Service Review

Advisory Committee to discuss, critically review and endorse the draft recommendations and suggested steps contained in this Report.

March 2011

To conclude the process of consultation and review a Follow-up Knowledge Sharing Forum was convened in Iqaluit from March 1-3, 2011. The Forum was convened under the auspices of the Minister of Health and Social Services. It brought together Health and Social Service Minister Curley's original advisory group. The Follow-up Knowledge Sharing Forum provided an opportunity to revisit the original strategic vision and examine how it was reflected in the current Review. The eleven recommendations and the associated suggested steps presented in this report were discussed and endorsed by the Follow-up Knowledge Sharing Forum.

The public, stakeholder and invitational consultations were instrumental in arriving at the recommendations and action steps outlined in this Report. Equally important was the extraordinary level of consensus that emerged through the review process regarding what the next broad steps are in moving to solutions. This consensual approach bodes very well for the planning and implementation stages that lie ahead.

APPROACH TO THE DATA COLLECTION

The Social Service Review consulted with many individuals and stakeholders to understand the current state of social services in Nunavut and to explore what can be done to improve the way social services are delivered across the territory. To help focus the Review process, a six item questionnaire was developed and distributed widely across Nunavut (Appendix VI). Additional data was collected through online and telephone surveys and mailed questionnaires.

In an effort to ensure inclusive consultations, several approaches were used to make the process accessible. The diverse methods for input underscored the commitment to consult widely. There were six ways in which people could share their views with the Review:

1. Face-to-face consultations (community and stakeholder meetings) across the territory;
2. A 1-800 number set up expressly for the Social Service Review to receive oral input in any of the four official languages;
3. An online questionnaire was posted on the Health and Social Services website which allowed respondents to post directly online in any of the official languages;
4. A hard-copy questionnaire was mailed to each residential address;
5. Residents were able to submit stand-alone written submissions; and,
6. Stand-alone email submissions.

The breakdown of how the data was collected by source type, and the breakdown of how the data was collected online and by mail is presented in Appendices I-III.

The information-gathering process was conducted between September and December of 2010. The Social Service Review held community and stakeholder consultations in eleven communities (Appendix IV) and community representatives from a further thirteen other communities were invited to participate in the process. The consultations, particularly the community consultations, were well attended. The stakeholder consultations were focused specifically on hearing from service providers and professionals in the community including foster parents, law enforcement, social services workers, teachers, clergy, income support workers, mayors and hamlet councillors, public health and other concerned parties.

A six-item questionnaire was developed to provide a general framework to guide the consultative process. This format was provided only as a suggestion; free text or open responses were also recorded. Given the challenges of geography, distance, cost and time, it was felt that a user-friendly series of options for input would be well justified.

The questionnaire was available online and in paper format. In addition to having been mailed to each of the residences in the territory, they were made available to the Regional Inuit Association offices, the Department of Health and Social Services offices and community health centers across Nunavut. They were also translated into the four official languages.

The data collected from these various sources was compiled and organized thematically. This analysis contributed to the evidence base that has informed the development of the recommendations. A descriptive breakdown of the data sources can be found in the Appendices.

The territory-wide consultations were a critically important source of qualitative and quantitative data for the Social Service Review. Beyond the utility of data collection, they allowed Nunavummiut to engage in dialogue to identify problems, concerns and solutions in an atmosphere of mutual respect and openness. The face-to-face consultations proved to be an important method for documenting the issues that were common across communities. Conversely, the consultations also highlighted regional and sub-regional variability.

The face-to-face consultations enabled a relatively high level of participation by elders who otherwise would not have been able to directly engage in the consultations. The inclusion of youth participation brought valuable insights and understanding to the process.

The stakeholder and public consultations, as well as the series of dedicated Forums (Youth Forum, Validation Forum, Follow-up Knowledge Sharing Forum, Family Law Forum), provided a wealth of insight and understanding. Participants were candid, clear-minded and forthcoming with their concerns, suggestions and ideas. The inclusive atmosphere and multidisciplinary approach, coupled with the wide range of participants, resulted in consultations that gave rise to excellent content which has contributed to the evidence base for the recommendations and action steps outlined in this Report.

RECOMMENDATIONS WITH SUGGESTED STEPS

RECOMMENDATION 1: REFLECT THE STRENGTHS OF INUIT CULTURE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MORE CULTURALLY COMPETENT APPROACH TO SOCIAL SERVICES

Throughout the Review process, the overwhelming theme that emerged was the need for social services as a whole, and Child and Family Services in particular, to better reflect, build upon and express the traditions and practices of Inuit culture.

There are some exciting and instructive examples of initiatives that are underway to reflect and build on Inuit culture within the sphere of social services, but these are fragmented and under resourced. Nunavummiut spoke about their desire to see further positive change in this direction. Specifically, they spoke passionately of the need to make every effort to keep children and youth, especially those who are placed in care, in touch with their culture and their home communities. Repeatedly, concerns were raised about children who are found to be in need of protection being placed in residential facilities outside of the territory.

It is widely accepted that children and youth who are found to be in need of protection should be able to access the services and treatment they require, even when those services are only available outside the territory. There was broad agreement, for example, that a medically fragile child requiring specialized medical assistance should receive that assistance even if it can only be provided out-of-territory. Similarly, it is recognized that a young person with severe psychological and behavioural problems may only be able to access the required specialized treatment outside of Nunavut. However, neither scenario provides a justification for decisions that see too many Inuit children and youth being placed out-of-territory because foster and alternative care beds are not available in Nunavut.

There is a widely held view that too many children who have been found to be in need of protection have been placed outside the territory when other options for their care should, and could, have been provided for them in Nunavut. Related to this view are layers and layers of miscommunication and

misunderstanding that have deeply damaged community perceptions of the practices and orientation of Child and Family Services.

In the context of social services, the issue of out-of-territory placements is one of the most explosive examples cited by Inuit when they speak of their culture and values not being adequately respected. However, this is not the only flash point: the underrepresentation of Inuit in the social service system is a major issue as well.

From community to community, significant concerns were raised about family members not having sufficient contact with children when they are placed in care, whether in the territory or outside the territory. These concerns contribute to the perspective that social services are disrupting cultural continuity and the services offered are too often disrespectful of Inuit culture. Many factors have contributed to misunderstandings about how social services are delivered and how decisions are taken respecting the protection of children. This is a critical issue to be addressed.

Respecting Inuit culture and making every reasonable effort to maintain children who are in need of protection within the territory are directly related. We heard throughout the consultations that the placement of children outside the territory should be avoided, except where absolutely necessary. Those who expressed views on the topic felt that every effort must be made to maintain children within the territory. Children in care who are removed from regular contact with their family, extended family, community and their culture, without their consent and the active support of all relevant parties, are at risk of adverse developmental outcomes.

Suggested Steps

- A governmental placement review committee could be established and led by the Department of Health and Social Services. The committee would be tasked with examining the practice and implications of out-of-territory placements of children and youth.
- The committee could be chaired by a senior departmental staff person. The placement review committee could be tasked with reviewing all requests for out-of-territory placements. They also could be tasked with ensuring that all reasonable alternatives have been considered before consenting to an out-of-territory placement. The committee (aided by line personnel) could be

responsible for monitoring the quality of care for children placed outside Nunavut. The committee could have discretionary budget authority to support the development of alternative planning for children.

- In the policy context, a formal linkage could be drawn between the reality of out-of-territory placements and the chronic social service deficits in Nunavut.
- The social service, financial, cultural, legal and ethical issues involved could be examined in the light of current public policy priorities.
- A clear, well-focused policy statement could be issued, clarifying the Department of Health and Social Services policy on out-of-territory placements.
- An interdepartmental working group at the officials' level could be established to move the governmental commitment into the specific policy and program initiatives presented in this Review.
- The *Inuit Quajimajatuqangit* principles (Appendix V) could be integrated into the orientation of prevention services. This could be addressed concretely on a number of fronts, including: in future training and orientation with new and existing social service staff; in the written materials and curricula used in training; and in the terms and conditions of social service funding (Recommendation 4).
- The *Inuit Quajimajatuqangit* principles define and emphasise a non-adversarial approach to addressing social problems. That orientation could be more fully reflected and built on in the overall approach to social service provision. Hands-on workshops could be used for social service workers, elders and other community leaders to explore, in practical ways, how the principles can be brought to life in day-to-day practice.
- The Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth could address what the Review heard was a growing language barrier between grandparents and their descendants. The Review heard from youth who do not want to lose their mother language. Educational, recreational, training and employment programs could take account of this reality.
- The Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth could provide resources for programs that help teach children and youth about Inuit heritage and culture, for example, community-level workshops involving elders and youth.

- Families who receive social services could be assisted in better understanding their rights. Easy to understand, simply expressed materials could be provided in the appropriate official language to explain the processes involved, including the steps that can be taken to address problems or concerns they may have.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:
ENHANCE THE ROLE OF ELDERS TO ENRICH AND STRENGTHEN
THE CULTURAL VALIDITY OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

“Perhaps we need Elder Advisory Groups to work with staff and Foster Parent Advisory Groups to advise on training and policies and practices.”

A special effort was made throughout the Review process to hear from elders. The consultations were enriched by the wisdom and understanding that elders brought to the discussions. They spoke movingly about the pain, anguish and cultural dislocations the Inuit people have experienced and offered unique insights into how to improve how supports can be provided to children, youth and families.

A concern frequently raised in the consultations was the need to enhance the role of elders in the provision of social support. Historically, elders in Inuit culture have been a valuable source of leadership, wisdom, understanding, social stability and cultural continuity. Unfortunately, that role has been compromised over the last several decades. Long term, effective remedies which would seek to address the range of challenges facing children in Nunavut must optimize the role of elders.

Creative, sensitive approaches should be used to draw on the understanding and traditional knowledge of elders in key aspects of developing and delivering social support. There are many wonderful examples across Nunavut where a concerted effort has been made to effectively engage elders in the design and delivery of prevention and social support programs and services.

The respectful use of elder advisory committees at the community level and the appropriate involvement of elders individually at the family level need to be systemically pursued. The involvement of elders should always be facilitated in a respectful and ethical manner. They are not a substitute for professional intervention, nor should they be treated as an economical workforce.

Establishing and, where they currently exist, nurturing elder advisory committees is a realistic measure that can address cultural concerns, supplement social service planning and potentially service delivery, and it can provide a meaningful income supplement for elders. Many communities have

elder advisory committees. In some instances these are active, focused committees that are effectively engaged in addressing a range of community activities. In other communities, the committees are dormant or inactive. In the context of respecting Inuit culture and providing culturally valid social support, they offer considerable promise.

A strength-based approach to prevention services looks for the resources that are available in a community. The recent initiative in Iqaluit (February 2, 2011) where five elders were certified as *Innait Inuksiutilirijiit* in Nunavut schools is a shining example of the sort of cultural validation that should be considered in the social services. Nunavut has a wealth of human resources among its elders. The critical challenge is to appropriately support elders so that their experience, insights and traditional practices can be marshalled to help support families and communities. This is not a vague ambition; rather it recommended as a purposeful strategy.

Suggested Steps

- Elder advisory committees could be re-focused to bring a valuable cultural overlay to social service provision. This practice could be systematically expanded in the area of social service delivery at the community level.
- Ideally, each community could have an elder advisory committee. The committees would require an adequate budget allotment to cover the cost of meetings, an appropriate per diem or honoraria for members, and a level of executive and administrative support to ensure the effective operation of the committees.
- Consideration needs to be given to establishing a formula for arriving at the appropriate amount for a per diem or honoraria. In absence of an agreed upon scale, some participants may feel unjustly treated if others are compensated when they are not.
- The Committees could be linked to hamlet councils and they could have a clear linkage to the Regional Inuit Association.
- A clear, well-defined relationship could be established between the local child and family service office and the community elder advisory committee. Together they could identify common areas of concern that impact children and families (e.g. the need for supervised visits with a caregiver, the need for foster care beds, etc.):

- The list of concerns may be lengthy and wide-ranging but it is a concrete starting point for nurturing the relationship;
- An inventory of services and supports that are needed could be identified together;
- The inventory could be listed in order of importance;
- Discussions could be undertaken to determine which services can realistically be pursued;
- It may be useful to put realistic timelines to items which are achievable in the next 12 months, 24 months and longer;
- If there is a social development worker in the hamlet, that person could be brought into the discussions;
- A staff person could be specifically designated to work with the Elder advisory committee;
- A training/skills development program could be developed to support work with Elder advisory committees;
- The implementation and operation of Elder Advisory Committees could be evaluated and monitored within the context of the Department of Health and Social Services evaluation and reporting functions;
- Some of the service gaps that are identified may only be resolved by bringing in outside help, whereas others may be achievable or partially achievable by building on strengths found in the community and strengths found on the committee;
- With a healthy, respectful relationship, culturally-valid approaches may emerge and be seen in a new light. Approaches that previously may have seemed unsophisticated and lacking in rigour can be profitably reassessed and their value appreciated in a new way;
- Social support services that have already been identified as needed in the community could be jointly re-assessed to evaluate whether there is a common perception of community need;
- Key to a relationship of this sort is the respect and sense of appreciation that can emerge. This helps to break down mistrust; it serves to build common understanding, and when nurtured patiently, can lead to a strong working relationship.

- Elders could assist in social service planning and delivery. For example, they could be involved in developing and delivering parenting support and family enrichment curricula. This does not mean that they would replace trained professionals who may be currently performing these tasks. Rather, they could be invited to supplement and enrich the way the service is provided.
- Each community could be supported in developing a concrete, achievable plan on how to make the best use of an elder advisory committee. As was expressed in the consultations, “one size does not fit all”. How a committee functions in one hamlet may vary from its operation in another hamlet.
- The possible involvement of elders in supporting the delivery of prevention services with other trained personnel could be guided by a simple, clear protocol on intervention. This is a resource that could be developed with elders, community leaders and social service professionals to guide and inform interventions.
- Procedures will need to be developed to ensure that privacy and confidentiality issues are respected and accounted for.
- Ethical engagement in a social service context requires a clear understanding of roles, purpose and practice. A statement of principles for ethical engagement of elders would be a valuable tool to guide elder involvement.

RECOMMENDATION 3: IMPROVE AND SUPPORT THE PROVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

Child and family services provide optimal support to their clients when they are shored up by communities that value the importance of social support, are prepared to assume ownership for their social problems, and demand and deliver the supports necessary for community well-being (Diagram II).

Input received from across Nunavut underscored the pressing need for more financial resources for social service support. Significantly, while many Nunavummiut expressed concerns about the social support they have received, they also noted that the current complement of social service staff is woefully inadequate to the needs of their communities. New financial resources must be applied to expanding the pool of qualified, trained, culturally-competent, social service workers.

"I think we need to utilize the resources we have in the communities already such as schools, youth centers, and churches to provide a resource for people. In addition to these we need so much more."

Changes are needed to the current practice and organizational structure that requires some child and family service workers to be on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week for extended periods of time. As a matter of priority, a rationalized after-hours service structure needs to be instituted. Unrelieved on-call status, emotional exhaustion, overwork and social isolation can compromise professional practice. These conditions contribute to staff burnout, absenteeism, job dissatisfaction, and compromise the ability to attract and retain qualified, highly motivated practitioners. Front-line staff must be supported by senior social workers who themselves have received specialized training in child protection and who have an advanced degree in social work. Additional social workers must be hired as soon as possible to ensure adequate coverage for each of the hamlets. Several hamlets do not currently have a child and family service worker. There are too many situations where positions exist on paper but they are not filled.

The current levels of child maltreatment, family violence, homelessness, children's mental health issues, family discord, school under-performance, self-harming and suicidal behaviour, FASD, youth violence and substance abuse warrant a major investment in the provision of culturally-competent, child and family services.

Suggested Steps

- A realistic, achievable Human Resources Plan could be developed with specific timelines to guide and reinforce a commitment to ensuring that Inuit are hired and promoted to occupy positions in all levels of the social service system.
- To support the implementation of the Human Resources Plan, the Department of Health and Social Services could launch a culturally-sensitive public recruitment campaign for social service workers. The campaign could promote social service and social work as careers.
- There are many factors (remoteness, geography, salary, benefits, stress, social isolation, etc.) which contribute to understaffing. The task of fixing this situation is sufficiently urgent as to warrant consideration for retaining an external human resources specialist to assist with recruitment, screening and hiring of suitable personnel.³²
- Build capacity to establish standards, training and support for case file transfers and case documentation, including methods to monitor compliance with file recording and case transfer standards to support service excellence.

“I think the start for this territory is to heal people, to develop a healthy community with a strong network of resources so people do not feel alone and helpless when faced with a challenge.”

- A social service auxiliary worker could be present in each community and be supported through close collaboration with the Arctic College to provide support and ongoing skills development options for post-graduate studies. These auxiliary workers could come from the local community, thereby reflecting Inuit culture and bringing with them important community connections. Hiring auxiliary social services workers could have a significant economic impact on community employment.
- Auxiliary workers could perform a variety of social services support functions, including: supervise families, monitor cases, write reports, parenting support, conduct training, ensure service compliance, family visitation, support kids in foster homes, etc.
- Social service auxiliary workers would need ongoing, regular, systematic, appropriately qualified supervision.
- The Department of Health and Social Services could modernize their case management processes. Many jurisdictions in Canada have moved to an “integrated case management” system. A formal collaboration with another province or territory to adapt the system could allow for major improvements with very manageable costs.
- Evaluate the feasibility of requiring accreditation for community based social service organizations.
- Consider expanding and encouraging the use of Plan of Care Committees, which can be effective when they are populated with dedicated community volunteers and representatives from the Regional Inuit Associations who are committed to making them work. The committees, which are used in some hamlets, could provide input and review plans for the care of children, including the possibility of out-of-territory placements, with a view to ensuring these placements are the options of last resort.
- Practice standards could be developed in conjunction with appropriate professional and Inuit associations.
- The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (Recommendation 7) as a matter of course, could receive compliance reports from the Department of Health and Social Services.
- Consider developing a three-year Child and Family Service Transformation Plan.
- The Child and Family Service Transformation Plan could serve not only to improve service design, delivery, outputs and outcomes, but address the need for monitoring and accountability controls. Effective social service delivery requires on-going monitoring, evaluation, transparency and accountability mechanisms.
- Key components of the plan could include, but are not limited to:
 - Detailed staffing projections for the next three years covering all levels: administrative, practice, supervisory, managerial and executive.

- A human resources specialist retained to address, in the short and mid-term, social service staffing vacancies.
 - Monitoring, data collection and analysis requirements
 - Data collection on risk of child maltreatment and cases of child maltreatment
 - Data to monitor quality assurance and compliance with standards and procedures
 - Data on placements, reason for service, social history, services recommended, offered and used
 - Data on out-of-territory placements
 - Demographics on service population
 - Demographic projections: children and youth
 - Training
 - Identify subject training needs (possible topics: interpreting the *Child and Family Services Act*, family group decision-making, differential response, cultural competence, risk assessment, etc.)
 - Number of workers to be trained
 - Cost of integrated case management
 - Services
 - Residential services (family-based resource development)
 - Non-residential services
 - Investigative services
 - Case load limits
 - Expanded inventory of care beds
 - Provision of clinical supervision
 - Office modernization
 - Technology enhancements
 - Improved physical facilities
- Consider working with other government departments and the individual hamlets to create an inventory of existing prevention and intervention services on a hamlet-by-hamlet basis (e.g. mental health, substance abuse, family violence, youth justice, etc.). A gap analysis could then be conducted to identify which services are missing that should be provided in various communities.
 - Consider collecting information about current out-of-territory placements and develop a plan for monitoring services, communicating with families and arranging visits.
 - A protocol could be developed to guide communication between the case managers/social workers and the families' and children's lawyers on child and family service files. This would facilitate opportunities for resolving differences outside of the Courtroom.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:
ESTABLISH A MULTI-YEAR, PREVENTION-FOCUSED SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT FUNDING PROGRAM TO BUILD AND
STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMMING**

Throughout the consultations, the view was repeatedly expressed that social service resources need to be improved and expanded at the community level. It is evident that many communities are in dire need of additional social support.

In addressing the need for increased financial support for social services, it will be critically important to develop a well-planned, integrated response to the need. Piecemeal, fragmented responses can help in the short term, but can actually sap community strength if they are not linked to a large context of social development and focused on the health and well-being of the whole community. A precursor to the implementation of the funding program is to ensure that asset-mapping and needs identification has been conducted in each of the hamlets.

A multi-year funding program should reflect a social development perspective, recognizing that individual programs need to be situated in a larger developmental context. Government partners at all levels (hamlet, regional, territorial, federal) understand this perspective. The priority that has been assigned to strategic investments in infrastructure development, telecommunications and mining, must be assigned to social development and specifically the development of social services.

The level of funding provided for this program will determine the scope and reach of the projects that can be supported. The political economy of social development recommends the use of pilot projects as an economical approach to new program development. With this approach the selection of “sites” or communities where the piloted service is most likely to succeed makes very good sense. The success of a pilot project in one community is intended to serve as a model for other similar communities.

SUGGESTED STEPS

- The terms and conditions for a multi-year social development funding program could be established. The terms and conditions would address:
 - The goals of the funding program

“Hands on education programs for the parents of newborn children and developing child would be an asset. Access to a community-based hotline to report endangered children or dangerous situations, could help in the de-escalation of certain situations.”

- The design of the program requires a multi-party approach involving government, Inuit associations, community groups, etc.
 - The type of projects and initiatives that would be considered for funding
 - The community support and involvement, for example, from the Hamlet Council, Inuit associations, youth groups, schools, public health, etc.
 - The overall objectives of the funding program
 - The criteria for who is eligible for funding
 - The selection criteria
 - The need to address the issue of sustainability
 - The amounts of funding available
 - The impacts that are being sought through the funding
 - The communication strategy to ensure adequate publicity and explanation of the program
 - The terms governing who holds the financial resources – the Government of Nunavut or the communities.
- The funding program’s goals would need to be clear, achievable and measurable. The application process, however, could be simple and straightforward.
 - Overarching goals for the program could address community ownership and community empowerment.
 - Funding criteria could be sufficiently flexible to account for regional variations.
 - The funding program could be administered centrally, but funded projects could be delivered locally.
 - While there is wide support for a multi-year funding program, the value of volunteers and the importance of donating one’s time should not be undermined.
 - To the degree that outside expertise might be used to assist in program delivery, the practice could be to train and empower community members to deliver, manage and administer the program.
 - Many excellent community-based initiatives have been discontinued because project funding has run out. Many worthwhile initiatives begin with great promise, but little or no thought is given to considerations regarding sustainability. To avoid this scenario, individual projects must be situated within a larger

context of social development. A multi-year, social development funding program can serve as a major driver for coordinated social service development. Program funding is therefore tied to capacity building.

- Regional Inuit Associations, hamlet councils and other key partners must be involved from the outset of the implementation plans for the funding program to ensure that it builds support for its goals.
- The principle that communities must share ownership for addressing their problems was expressed time and again at the community consultations. Not surprisingly, the territorial government was identified as having a lead role in funding programs. However, leadership also requires thinking past the immediate problem to creating structures and plans that foster a shared sense of ownership for tackling the social problems that put children at risk.
- There are many areas that warrant program funding. Input received through the Review suggested funding for the following areas:
 - Parenting courses and parenting support
 - Foster care training and support
 - Violence prevention
 - Substance abuse programs
 - Children’s mental health
 - Suicide prevention
 - Bullying
 - Sex education
 - Cultural awareness
 - Supported living
 - Community wellness
 - Nutrition (including shopping for healthy food, cooking)
 - Family wellness (including home economics, family planning and budgeting)
 - Preventative strategies for youth
 - Media programs – photography, video, music production and recording
 - Arts programs
 - Elder and youth workshops on the land
 - “Soccer for Hope” program
- In developing the format for proposals, it is important to include a requirement for each to have specific and measurable objectives,

for example, the acronym SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound). Each proposal should be required to address the need for an evaluation focused on measuring the impact of the proposed program on the community.

- The funding program ideally would formally capture and distribute the wisdom and lessons learned from the projects it supports. For example, knowledge exchange and learning between communities' development projects through face-to-face meetings, teleconferences, sharing documentation and reports, film and other avenues of artistic expression.
- Ideally, the funding program would be flexible enough to permit projects to address circumstances within individual communities.

RECOMMENDATION 5: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A COMMUNITY-BASED TRAINING, AND SKILLS ACQUISITION STRATEGY FOR CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE PERSONNEL

During the Review process, many people spoke of the need for improved training and support for child and family service personnel. A related concern was also identified, namely, the need for new workers, particularly workers recruited from Southern Canada, to receive culture sensitivity training.

These concerns must be addressed in a systematic way. A community-based strategy aimed at training and skills development for child and family services is needed. A key objective of the strategy must be to ensure that Inuit child and family service personnel are fully equipped and qualified for staff front-line, supervisory, managerial and executive positions. The revolving door of southern-based social workers needs to end. Too often these workers come to Nunavut for relatively short periods of time, with limited understanding of the culture, and end up feeling inadequately supported in their practice and leave with a sense of frustration. A systematic child and family services training strategy would go a great distance in stopping this revolving door.

Training and skills acquisition have been major components of the cultural transformation agenda in child welfare in most the western provinces. This strategy is showing promising results and has become a pillar of the trend toward emphasizing the importance of cultural competence in child and family services.

“Education of the population is at the base of prevention. Identify the problems, identify the solutions, and give the population the choice.”

Suggested Steps

- A training strategy could be developed through a formalized, long-term partnership between the Department of Health and Social Services, Nunavut Arctic College, a university-based school of social work, and a recognized child welfare organization to support the development of a comprehensive, culturally relevant child and family service training program¹. Recruitment and retention efforts could be strengthened if a viable training program is available to both new and existing employees.
- A multidisciplinary focus could be pursued, actively seeking the involvement of family law practitioners, early childhood educators, law enforcement personnel, shelter workers, public health officials, child and youth workers, etc.
- Child and family service personnel require dedicated training in understanding, interpreting and communicating the terms and concepts in the *Child and Family Services Act*.
- Considerations should be given for the need for training on how the overall legal system works and how to distinguish legal, legislative and policy requirements. Confusion in this area has undoubtedly contributed to negative perceptions of the role of social service workers in many communities.
- A scan of possible funding support for the training strategy could be conducted. There may be opportunities for federal government support for an initiative of this magnitude. Similarly, there are philanthropic foundations in Canada that have provided support for comparable initiatives and the possibilities for support in that sector could be explored as well.
- In developing the community-based training strategy, comparable initiatives that are being developed and used in other jurisdictions in Canada could be studied.
- Designate personnel within the Department of Health and Social Services, aided with the appropriate subject specialists, could be tasked with developing a detailed plan for the training strategy.

¹ Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador has established a bachelor of social work program conducted entirely in the community of Happy Valley-Goose Bay for its Inuit citizens, the first of its kind in the country. The program was introduced to develop a social work program that to reflect indigenous and aboriginal culture and values.

- A major focus of the training strategy could address the recurrent concern expressed in the consultations about the extraordinarily high rate of staff turnover.
- Discussions could be conducted with the Nunavut Arctic College to examine the feasibility of supplementing the current human services program curriculum with courses pertaining to child protection. Course work that addresses the *Child and Family Services Act*, and related legislation could be an important addition to the program.
- Short-, medium- and long-term staffing needs are best understood and addressed within a systematic training strategy, and could be considered.
- The strategy could define the minimum requirements necessary for entry into the various facets of the training curriculum.
- The training strategy could take account both the current and future need for qualified and well-trained workers. A systematic training strategy could ensure that new social service personnel receive appropriate cultural competency training as part of their initial employment orientation.
- Consideration could be given to the impact systematic training has on creating and sustaining a culture of on-going or continuous learning, which in turn promotes improved social services.
- The culture of on-going learning can be supported in many ways. A key principle could be to build on the strengths and wisdom contained within Inuit culture and expressed by the Inuit.
- To support on-going learning and as a key aspect of the training strategy, an annual social services training conference could be held.
- The location of the conference could be rotated around the regions of Nunavut.
- The program for the conference could be established by a steering committee comprised of social workers, regional managers and central office personnel. This would assist in developing a program that is relevant and stimulating for participants.
- As part of the training strategy, and to underscore the importance of continuous learning in social service practice, the Department of Health and Social Services could establish a Knowledge Exchange Centre (KEC). It would be advantageous to consider undertaking this initiative with the Nunavut Arctic College. A defining focus of

the KEC could be cultural competence, child protection and strengthening social services. All media formats could be considered when selecting materials for the KEC, especially new technologies, including webinars, video conferencing, using the techniques that have made “tele-health” a success in many remote jurisdictions.

**RECOMMENDATION 6:
ADOPT A DUAL TRACK OR DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE MODEL
FOR SERVICE**

During the Review process many participants expressed concerns about children being taken into care before all avenues of support had been exhausted. When there is a limited spectrum of prevention services available, placing an at-risk child into care can prematurely or inappropriately become the only appropriate course of action.

Currently, the child and family services addresses all reports of alleged child abuse and neglect with the same set of procedures. However, most reports do not relate to severe cases but mostly to families under stress or in need of support. Unfortunately, many families often receive little or no assistance unless their problems become severe. A dual track model or “differential response model” seeks to expand the set of responses with a greater emphasis on prevention services. In so doing, the focus of service provision shifts to early preventative services to forestall the need for crisis intervention.

This approach makes use of two “tracks” for delivering service to children and their families, depending upon the risk level present. High risk cases, where the risk of abuse or neglect is greater, are put in an investigative track. Cases which are assessed as presenting a lower risk of child abuse or neglect are assigned to a “community” track. Several provinces in Canada have moved to a dual track model for providing child and family services.

The large number of child neglect cases is a compelling argument for a dual track approach to social service. The child maltreatment data from the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (2008) confirms that 34% of all cases of substantiated child maltreatment are cases of child neglect. It is not unreasonable to think that Nunavut’s rate of child neglect is as high, if not higher, than the national rates.

The social service improvements recommended elsewhere in this Report, if adopted, would help to create the services and supports upon which a dual track or differential response approach would be based. This approach emphasizes the importance of pursuing the least intrusive measure and it places a priority on the provision of culturally appropriate supports.

A dual track response model requires a high level of community involvement. A range of prevention and support services are needed to make the differential response possible. Similarly, there must be capacity within the social service response system to accurately distinguish between high and low risk families. With this approach, the overarching goal is to help families as early as possible, while making every effort to avoid bringing children into care.

A significant investment of time, money and energy is required to make the dual track response model work. However, there is a growing body of research that points to the effectiveness of this approach. One of the principal considerations needs to be: what value does the jurisdiction place on maintaining children in their families, rather than bringing them into care? Clearly, the prevention route is the preferred option, but it necessarily requires significant expenditures to shore up and develop social support services.

It is estimated that it would take twenty-four to thirty-six months to move from the current service configuration to a dual track model of service.

“Support community wellness groups, Inuit organizations and others willing to participate for the betterment of their community.”

Suggested Steps

- Partnerships could be developed between the full range of social service providers and the Department of Health and Social Services. The partnerships could address and define the conditions of ready access to the services involved.
- Practical working partnerships would require specific protocols, contractual agreements, or memoranda of understanding to define the conditions of access for the particular service. It is not enough that services should exist; there must also be ready access to those services when a crisis situation arises.
- Many jurisdictions use access protocols to define the responsibilities of the funder and service provider.

“Basically communities have been stripped of their ability to deal with a crisis, like child abuse, that requires so much introspection and so many tough questions. I think the key is to look outside the community, to what’s working elsewhere in other rural/aboriginal settings in Canada.”

- The principal stages involved in moving to a dual track response model of service would be:
 - I. Research and Design
 - Mapping of existing service infrastructure
 - Create a territorial directory of services
 - Gap analysis
 - Design of a differential response service development plan
 - Develop and implement a risk management strategy
 - II. Capacity Building
 - Supplement and develop a “community track” social infrastructure
 - Development of screening and assessment protocols/procedures (differential response screening tools are currently being used in Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, and Ontario, and a common assessment framework is used in Quebec)
 - Development of tools
 - Creating strategies of information sharing among partners
 - Development of enabling legislation
 - Modify intake/assessment procedures
 - III. Training
 - Curriculum development
 - Pilot test training
 - Training of investigative personnel
 - Training of multidisciplinary professionals
 - Technical assistance program for “community track”
 - IV. Implementation
 - Pilot test the intervention
 - Regional roll-out
 - Implementation of service plans
 - Coordination with regional, sub-regional offices
 - V. Evaluation and Monitoring
 - Indicator development
 - Use of outcome measures
 - On-going case monitoring
 - Post-service case tracking

RECOMMENDATION 7: ESTABLISH AN OFFICE OF THE TERRITORIAL CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE

It has been said that a child and youth advocate helps to give a voice to children and youth who too often lack a voice in their own affairs. In the course of discussing ways to better protect children, a number of submissions were made calling for the establishment of a Territorial Child and Youth Advocate. The experience of many provincial governments in Canada is that the work of their child and youth advocate's office has become a great ally for their overall efforts to better protect children and youth.

To its credit the Government of Nunavut has publicly announced the development of a Child and Youth Representative Office, which is scheduled to be established by 2013. While details pertaining to the function, orientation and structure of the proposed Office are limited, it may well complement what is proposed in this Report. Independence from government is the key element in the effective functioning of a child and youth advocate. While the office is funded by government it should not be run by the government.

"The government must look within the social service department and the community for willing and knowledgeable people that can counsel and encourage parents to participate in the development of the at risk child."

Suggested Steps

- The territorial child and youth advocate could report directly to the territorial legislature.
- The authority, mandate, scope and accountability criteria for the office should ideally be based in legislation.
- The child advocacy model used in the province of Saskatchewan provides an instructive example of the value of grounding the Office in legislation.
- The territorial child and youth advocate could produce an annual report on the focus of the work conducted through its offices and detail its accomplishments.
- The advocate's office could be mandated to be aware of new initiatives and policies that are being considered by the government. A protocol could be observed where the advocate has sufficient advance notice to render advice before major initiatives pertaining to children and youth are finalized.
- As an independent voice for children, the office of the territorial child and youth advocate could be located outside the offices of the Government of Nunavut. The perception and reality of

independence is reinforced by locating the office outside of government. Without true independence, the usefulness of the child and youth advocate could be severely compromised.

- The term of appointment for the child and youth advocate could be non-renewable and be set at five to seven years, as this would serve to support the independence of the Office.
- Independence requires stable funding support. A three-year budget for the Office would protect its independence from the pressures which can come from an annual budgeting cycle.
- The staff complement for the office in its first year of operation could consist of three positions: the child and youth advocate, an analyst/researcher and administrative support.
- If Recommendation 8 (Establish a Youth Forum) is adopted, the relationship of the Youth Forum and the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will need to be specified, as the Youth Forum could do double duty as an effective, vibrant source of ideas for both the Advocate's Office and the Minister of Health and Social Services.
- Key to a constructive relationship between government departments and the child and youth advocate would be success in building and sustaining working relationships with officials. To that end, steps would need to be identified to bring the child and youth advocate within the "corridors" of government. Practical gestures like inviting the child and youth advocate to be on the agenda for the annual child protection conference (Recommendation 5) would serve to build the relationship between key officials.
- The Government of Nunavut could liaise with the existing child advocates to examine the strengths and limitations of current models in use in other jurisdictions in Canada.
- A specific consideration is the scope of the Advocate's work. Should it pertain only those children in the care of the Government of Nunavut, or the children who receive social service support from the Government of Nunavut, or all children in Nunavut? There are strengths and weaknesses to each approach and attendant resource implications.
- Upon fully establishing, staffing and orientating the Office of the Territorial Advocate for Children, consideration could be given to joining the Canadian Council of Provincial and Territorial Child and Youth Advocates.

- With the establishment of the Child and Youth Advocate’s Office, it would be necessary, as a matter of priority, to develop a set of written procedures to guide, define and constrain the interventions undertaken by the Advocate’s Office.

RECOMMENDATION 8:

INVOLVE CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS

Establish a Youth Forum as an on-going advisory mechanism to provide advice and counsel to the Department of Health and Social Services on child and youth issues. This innovation will provide a valuable mechanism to elevate the voices of youth, particularly with respect to social issues that pertain to children, youth and their families.

“It is better to come from a broken home than it is to be in one.”

In the course of consultations, a Youth Forum was convened to hear directly from young people. The youth expressed their ideas and opinions about many aspects of life in Nunavut. They want to be involved in a broad range of issues concerning their lives. The youth delegates were drawn from all regions of Nunavut to assist in providing input with respect to the objectives of the consultation process. The input received was valuable and provided helpful insights into a range of prevention, protection and intervention issues.

It is critically important to involve children and youth in an age-appropriate manner in discussions and deliberations pertaining to their own well-being and protection. A Youth Forum is a unique vehicle to assist youth advisors in giving currency and profile to their views. The goal would be to observe the standard expressed in the African dictum: “Don’t speak about us, without us”. It is important to consult with a wide age range of young people. We heard from youth that they want to be involved and that they have a range of issues they want to discuss.

Suggested Steps

- Consider establishing an on-going Youth Forum composed of youth representatives drawn from all regions of Nunavut aged 14-25.
- Membership considerations could take into account representation by former youth in care, those who have received social services, as



YOUTH FORUM, IQALUIT, DECEMBER 2010

“Educate the Inuit youth and encourage them to take positions in the needed services.”

well as youth who have knowledge of, or are interested in, social services issues.

- Terms of reference for the scope and mandate of the Forum would need to be clearly outlined. The youth forum discussions could be assisted by a trained facilitator.
- Ideally, the Youth Forum would include a training component so that youth can receive the preparation and training they require to participate in the forum activities.
- The Youth Forum could be held twice a year, with one meeting in Iqaluit and the other rotated around the regions of Nunavut.
- Part of the challenge of maintaining a Youth Forum would be discovering ways to reach out to young people of all ages (i.e. 13 to 30).
- The challenges of distance and cost would make the use of modern technologies important in the work of the Youth Forum. For example, the use of video-conferencing could be considered, as well as social media. Many of the hamlets in Nunavut make use of tele-health technology with very good results.
- The administrative support (secretariat) for the Youth Forum could be housed within the Department of Health and Social Services. Initially, at least, the focus of the Youth Forum would be more likely to result in success.
- The Youth Forum would need a well-defined connection with the proposed Office for the Territorial Child and Youth Advocate (Recommendation 8).
- Experience suggests that it is important to document the results of the Forum so that its usefulness is well established. Producing concrete results would also avoid any allegations of tokenism. Efforts could be made to document the discussion in a variety of ways, for example, written recommendations, videos and other forms of artistic expression.
- The Youth Forum could serve in an advisory capacity to the Minister of Health and Social Services. If the Office of the Territorial Child and Youth Advocate is established, a clear relationship to that Office could be defined. The Forum could do double duty advising the Department of Health and Social Services and the Child and Youth Advocate. In that situation, it would be important to define the reporting relationships to avoid any real or perceived conflicts of interest.

- Travel and any other hard expenses would need to be covered and an appropriate, standard honorarium provided for the Forum participants.
- It would be important to evaluate the usefulness and effectiveness of the Youth Forum after two years.

RECOMMENDATION 9:

ADDING TO THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Many references were made to the *Child and Family Services Act* during the community and stakeholder consultations. Many Nunavummiut spoke critically of the Act viewing it more as a “weapon” than a “tool”. Discussions on these issues underscored the broad recognition that children must be protected from child abuse and neglect. This view must be supported by a child and family services system that respects and reflects Inuit culture. Too often the relationship between communities and child and family services has been adversarial, and it must be focused on being collaborative. However, it is important to note many of the complaints directed at the Act, strictly speaking, pertain more directly to its application and how social service staff interpret and communicate issues relating to it, rather than the Act itself.

The following suggested steps can effect positive change but they will have limited impact unless they are accompanied by the initiatives presented in the other recommendations as well.

Suggested Steps

- The *Child and Family Services Act* could be amended to incorporate the *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* principles (Appendix V) into Section 2 of the Act. This would encourage the use of the principles in the interpretation of all aspects of the legislation.
- Consider revising the definition of a child under the *Child and Family Services Act*. A child could be defined as a person less than nineteen years of age.
- The definition of a child who needs protection (Section 7.[3]) could be expanded to include a section (p) which would pertain to a child who has been exposed to family violence by or towards a parent of the child and there is a substantial risk that the exposure will result in physical or emotional harm to the child and the child’s parent

fails or refuses to obtain services, treatment or healing processes to prevent the harm.

- Consider establishing an interdepartmental and inter-agency working group to conduct a formal legal review of the *Child and Family Services Act* and propose amendments that would ensure it complies with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as well as best practices in child welfare.
- Consider commissioning a comparative analysis of child and family service legislation in Canada to inform possible changes to the *Child and Family Services Act*.
- Consider conducting a detailed legislative review of the *Child and Family Services Act* to identify possible amendments and provide recommendations for legislative change.
- The *Child and Family Services Act* could contain a section that allows for the establishment of a multi-disciplinary child death review committee. The membership of the committee could include the Chief Coroner, the Director of Child Welfare or a designate, a legally qualified medical practitioner and a social worker approved by the Minister of Health and Social Services.
- The Department of Health and Social Services could develop formal procedures to guide an operational review of the death of any child under its care or for whom it has provided services.
- The *Child and Family Service Act* could stipulate that an advisory committee be established every five years to review provisions of the Act and the services and practices defined by it to ensure that the purposes and the spirit of the Act are being served.
- The child and family services regulations pertaining to the Plan of Care Committee (Section 2 [a] and elsewhere) could be amended to allow an elder or member of the child's extended family to be a member of the committee with full standing.
- Consideration could be given to amending the *Child and Family Services Act* to give Judges the authority to order family mediation for families.
- A concern was raised pertaining to children from Nunavut who are apprehended by child welfare agencies outside of Nunavut when the children are travelling outside the territory with family members, most often for medical reasons. For a variety of reasons these children are found to be in need of protection and, as a result, come into the care of the other jurisdiction. It is often problematic

for their parents, who have returned to Nunavut, to determine what is occurring in the child welfare proceedings affecting their children. To better understand and address this untoward situation, a dedicated task group could be constituted involving representatives from the department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Justice and appropriate senior level child welfare officials in the other relevant jurisdictions. As this matter has cross-jurisdictional relevance, it may be appropriate to invite the participation of federal officials from Human Resources and Social Development Canada who coordinate federal, provincial, territorial information sharing on child and families.

- Consideration needs to be given to the training and support provided to foster families and other alternative care providers to better understand the responsibilities and roles they play in protecting the cultural rights of the children and youth they foster. There is a lack of clarity on what foster families are expected to do in this regard, how they should do it, and what their rights are over the children they foster. At present there is little incentive for foster families to preserve, promote and support the cultural heritage of the children they foster. This area warrants further study and, depending upon the results of that study, legislative changes may be indicated.

RECOMMENDATION 10:

ESTABLISH A SOCIAL SERVICE DEVELOPMENT FORUM

During the consultation process, input was received indicating that stronger community-government collaboration would yield better results in the delivery and design of social services. The Social Service Development Forum would serve to review current social service practices, consider promising practices, stay abreast of current and emerging trends and developments in the sector, and report to the Minister once a year on their deliberations. It would also provide a platform for discussion and reporting on these items. This model of oversight is being used in other jurisdictions and it is seen to be an innovative resource in supporting excellence in services.

The Social Service Development Forum will rely on members who are well situated to comment on social service issues. Specifically, they would be tasked with tracking progress on responding to the recommendations offered in this

Report. One of the key lessons gained from the Social Service Review is the need to create a mechanism outside of the Government of Nunavut that will review and monitor the steps taken to fulfill its commitments to children, youth, families and communities.

The Forum is a way to ensure that the voices of community members, service recipients and subject specialists continue to be heard and utilized as strategies for improvement are implemented.

Suggested Steps

- The membership of the Forum could be drawn from Nunavut and members selected for their knowledge and understanding of the needs of their community in relation to social services.
- The size of the membership of the Forum could be eight to ten participants. Those participants who do not represent an organization could receive a standard “per diem” for their participation.
- Special consideration could be given to include though leaders within regional associations who are currently working on social policy issues.
- Key community leaders could be recruited to serve on the Social Service Development Forum, including elders, early childhood educators, individuals who have had prior contact and involvement with the child and family services, representatives from law enforcement, coroner’s office, women’s shelter, Nunavut Arctic College, and possibly from the Medical Officer of Health and Director of Education. Due to its key role in the policy development process, under Article 32 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, consideration should be given to Nunavut Tunngavit Incorporated (NTI representation in this Forum.
- In an effort to keep the membership in the Forum to a manageable size, it is recommended that there be a core group of members and other guests might be invited as the agenda of the Forum warrants.
- The Forum could be led by co-chairs: one drawn from government and the other from the community.
- Among its many possible functions could be the role of monitoring progress in the implementation of the eleven recommendations in this Report.

“Small communities have fewer resources and as a social worker I feel stuck and alone.”

- The Forum could provide a voice to help maintain the social service change agenda, as exemplified in the eleven recommendations.
- It is important to have a balance of Forum members drawn from the professions and from communities. This would help to ensure a breadth of focus and understanding.
- Administrative support for convening the Forum could be the responsibility of the Department of Health and Social Services.
- The administrative support required to make the Forum a reality would be relatively modest. The workload involved in setting up and maintaining the Forum could be assumed by a senior manager.
- Overlapping tasks with the work envisioned in Recommendation 5 (training) suggest both competencies could be assigned to the same position.
- The Forum co-chairs could be tasked with the following:
 - Monitor child welfare reviews in Canada and the social service literature in order to stay abreast with trends and developments in the field.
 - Access, review, analyze and synthesize the findings contained in current and future reports on these issues.
 - Participate in child welfare and social service conferences and meetings.
- The Forum could meet quarterly, either in person or through the use of technology.
- The Forum could produce a commentary report on an annual basis, submitted to the Minister of Health and Social Services.
- The Forum could be supported by the Government of Nunavut through the Department of Health and Social Services and report directly to the Legislature on the quality, safety and performance of social services.

**RECOMMENDATION 11:
IMPLEMENT A FAMILY-BASED CARE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY**

Supporting front-line social workers is essential to creating a strong family-based care strategy, and as such, the recommendations below were born out of the review process where the voices of front-line workers and foster parents were heard. The family-based care strategy needs to encompass both formal

and informal care including foster care, foster group care, kinship care, adoption and custom adoption in order to create a flexible, comprehensive approach for children in need.

A family-based care resource strategy requires a multi-faceted approach involving communities and government collaboration. The United Nations *Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children* should be used to inform the development of this strategy.

Suggested Steps

- Creation of a family-based care resource development strategy could address, but not be limited to, the following items:
 -
 - Determine the breadth of the problem through research. Current care providers, children currently in care and elders are valuable informants to consult when evaluating this problem.
 - Determine in consultation with the hamlets whether the foster care shortage should be addressed on a hamlet-specific basis or addressed on a regional or territorial basis.
 - Staff a care support worker in each community.
 - Provide training for the auxiliary workers.
 - Consult with key stakeholders, including elders and youth, to ensure the plan is created in a culturally-validated manner.
 -
 - Build in a respite care program for foster parents.
 - Determine if a committee or council is required in order to provide direction and discuss the successes and shortcomings of the plan.
 - Explore the feasibility of hiring a family-based care resource development specialist to kick start the process.
- In order to better serve and support children and their families in the system, consider incorporating innovative programming, including family group decision making, which is appropriate to Inuit culture.
- Foster care outreach could involve pro-active approaches (e.g. presentations to schools, church groups, civic groups, etc.). Print

“If we were able to change the perception people have about child and family services, it would be easier to develop a less intrusive way of assisting families in need of help. It should be possible to avoid a lot if there was a better relationship between social services workers and the families.”

materials have limited impact, whereas live presentations are more persuasive and allow for dialogue.

- It was noted that there is a need “homes” for elders who may be in need of “protection”. The reality of elder abuse makes clear the need to account for the protection of elders in family-based care planning.
- Consider supporting capacity building in Nunavut through the creation of in-territory family-based care homes, treatment foster care and group homes. When these supports are tailored to the needs of specific communities, they will decrease the number of children being sent out of territory for care.
- Consider development of a strategy for out-of-territory placements to improve communication and understanding of the plan of care between the child, her family and the community.
- Issues of privacy and confidentiality will arise and it is important to anticipate these challenges. Therefore, consideration should be given to establishing a task group to examine the practical issues involved.
- Consider means to ensure that policy and programs related to family-based care are created in a culturally-competent manner and be made applicable to the unique needs of Inuit children and their families.
- Consider that implementation of a culturally-competent parent education and training programs will need to include a resource strategy for children and youth, and new rates of compensation for carers. Collaboration with other locations doing similar work could take place, for example the Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories and Nunatsiavut Government in Labrador.
- Consideration should be given to implementing and adapting the *PRIDE* program. *PRIDE* is an acronym which stands for, Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education. It is currently in use in Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Yukon and the Northwest Territories.
- Consider creating a bilingual family-based care coordinator position, as well as retaining specialized expertise to lead and assist with the development and implementation of a family-based care resource development strategy.
- Informal kinship is already taking place in the territory (i.e. children and youth living with extended family members). Information and

statistics could therefore be researched and gathered in order to determine the level and extent of kinship care that currently exists, and in order to determine if these families are receiving adequate support.

- Consider requiring child protection workers to examine kinship options before foster care options. Research shows that kinship care is more successful and positive for the child than when placed in foster care.
- Consider developing a social service protocol to guide best practice in the use emergency placement options.

RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

RECOMMENDATION 1:

REFLECT THE STRENGTHS OF INUIT CULTURE TO DEVELOP A MORE CULTURALLY COMPETENT APPROACH TO SOCIAL SERVICES

RECOMMENDATION 2:

ENHANCE THE ROLE OF ELDERS TO ENRICH AND STRENGTHEN THE CULTURAL VALIDITY OF SOCIAL SERVICES.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

IMPROVE AND SUPPORT THE PROVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

RECOMMENDATION 4:

ESTABLISH A MULTI-YEAR, PREVENTION-FOCUSED SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING PROGRAM TO BUILD AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMMING

RECOMMENDATION 5:

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A COMMUNITY-BASED TRAINING, AND SKILLS ACQUISITION STRATEGY FOR CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE PERSONNEL

RECOMMENDATION 6:

ADOPT A DUAL TRACK OR DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE MODEL FOR SERVICE

RECOMMENDATION 7:

ESTABLISH AN OFFICE OF THE TERRITORIAL CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE

RECOMMENDATION 8:

INVOLVE CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS

RECOMMENDATION 9:
IMPROVE THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

RECOMMENDATION 10:
ESTABLISH A SOCIAL SERVICE DEVELOPMENT FORUM

RECOMMENDATION 11:
IMPLEMENT A FAMILY-BASED CARE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY

DIAGRAM I
Vicious Social Service Cycle

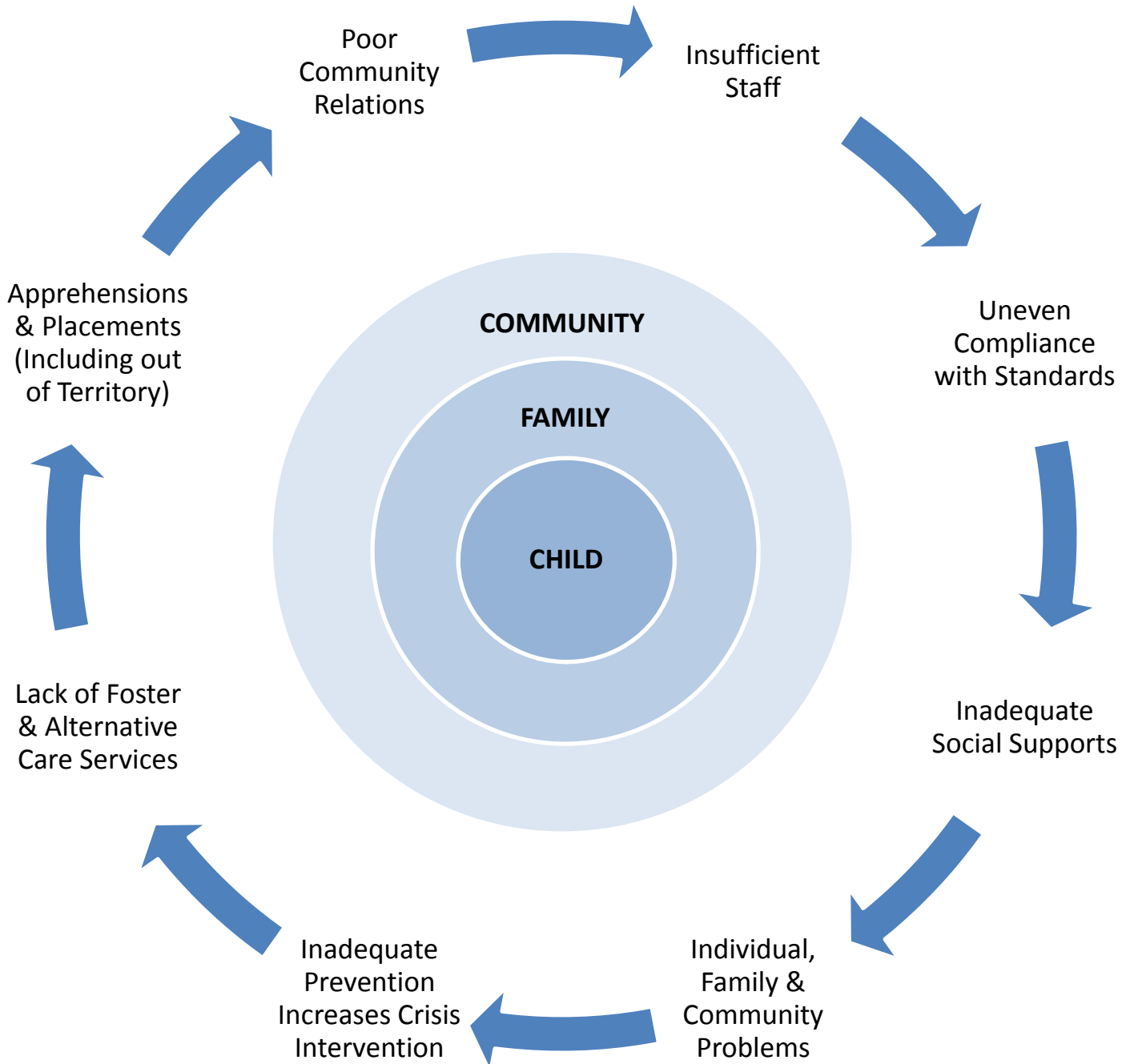
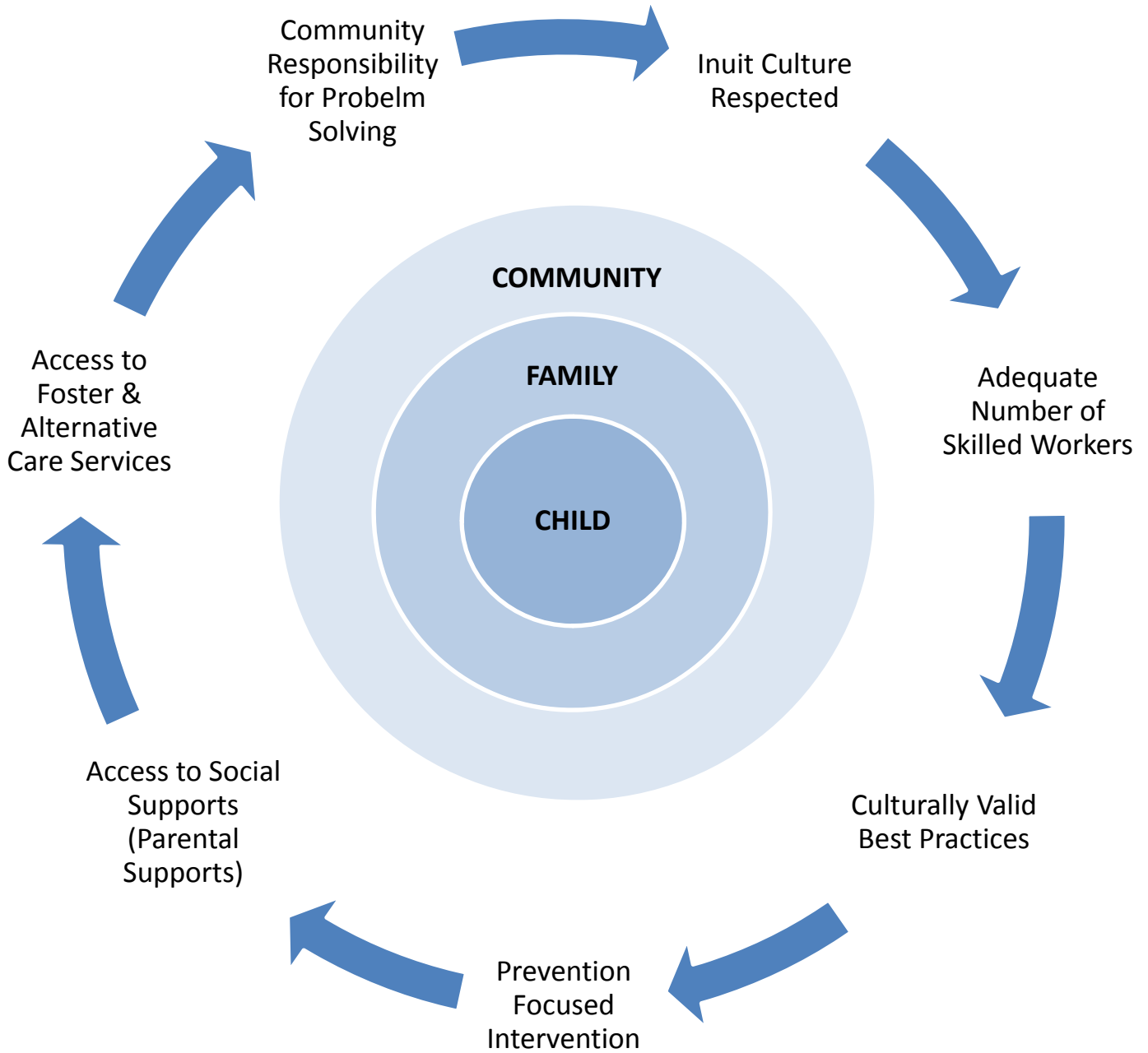


DIAGRAM II
Virtuous Social Service Cycle



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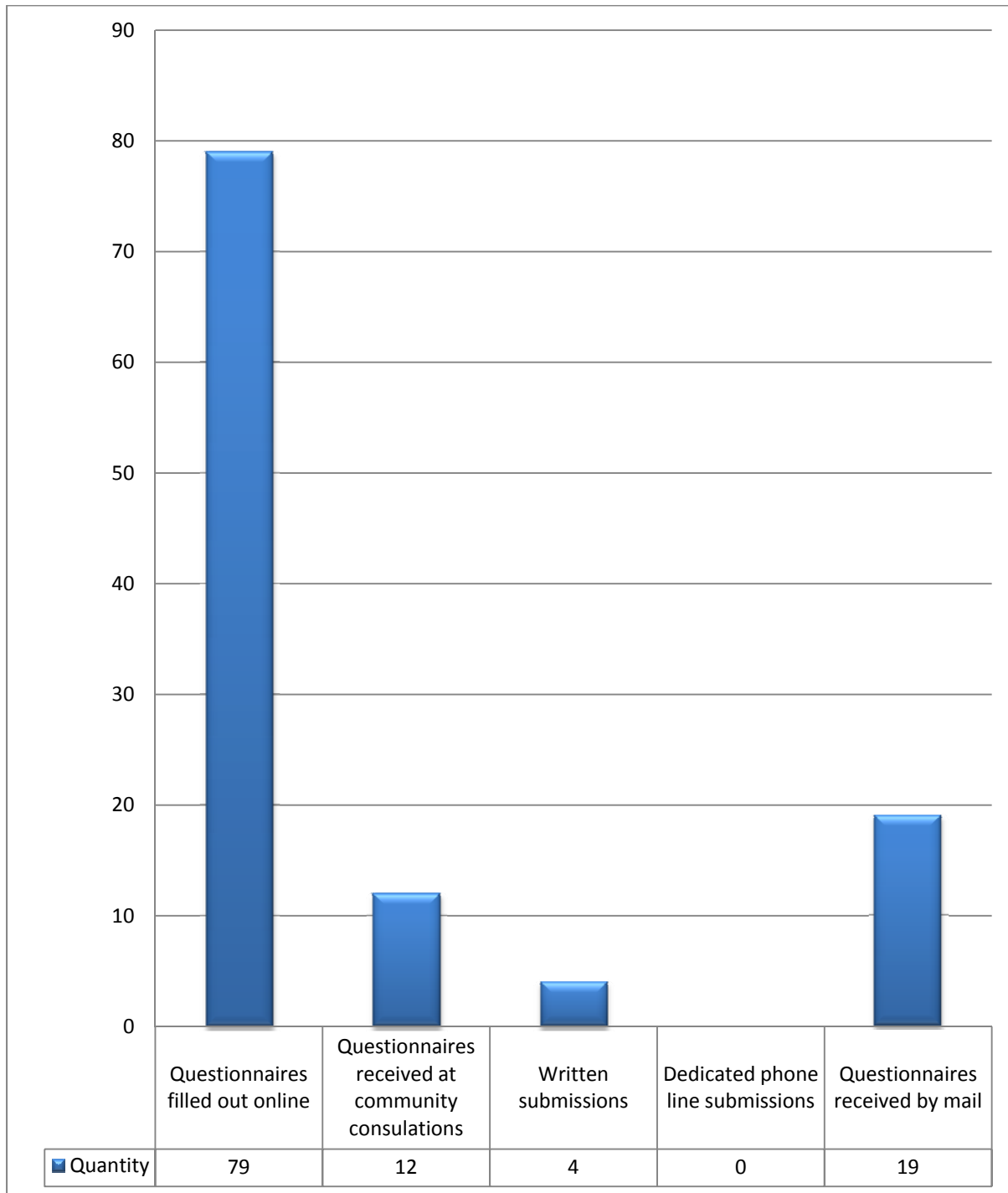
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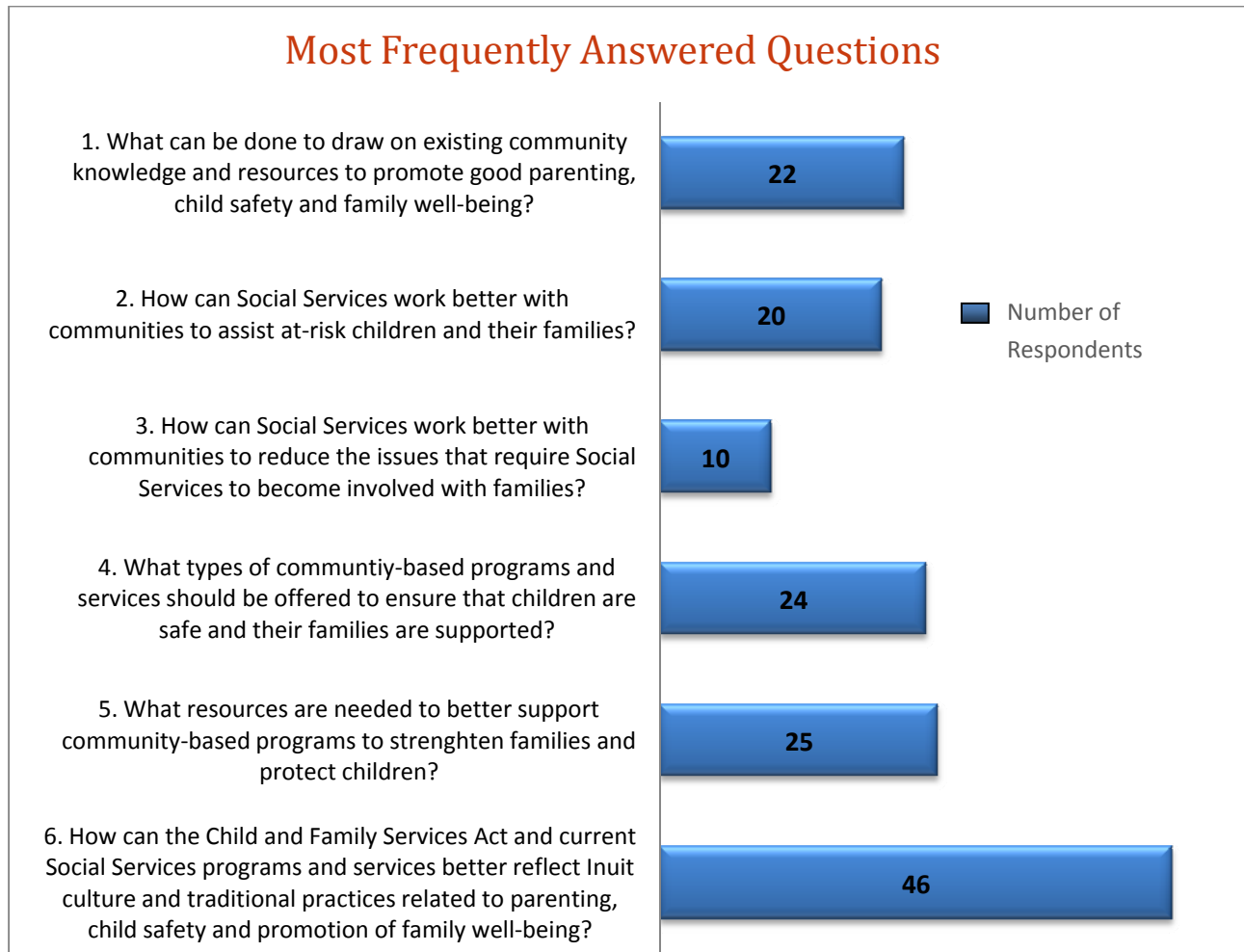
APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: DATA COLLECTED BY SOURCE TYPE

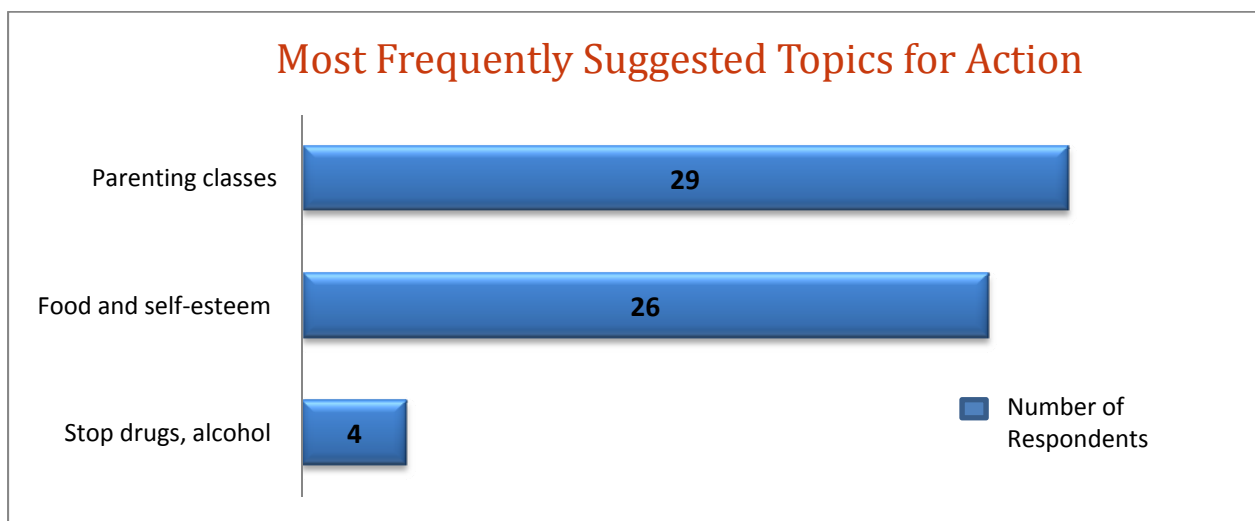


APPENDIX II: DATA COLLECTED ONLINE

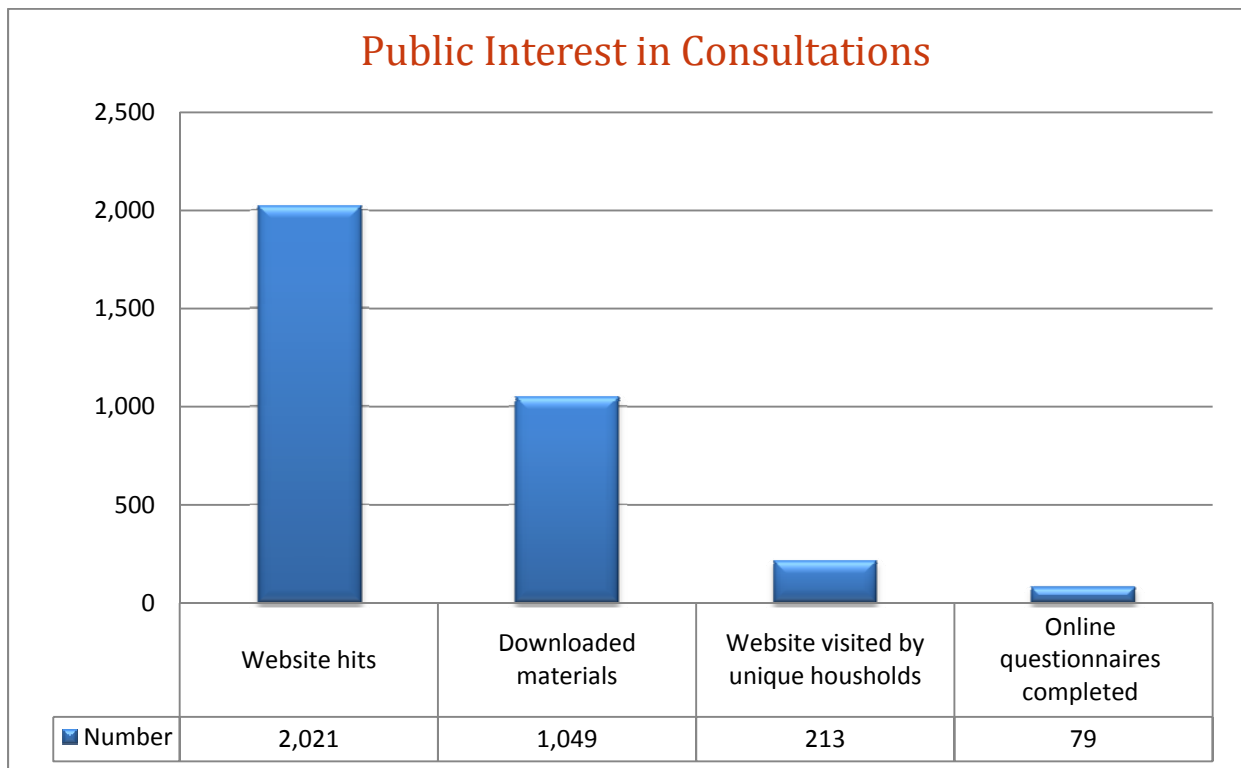
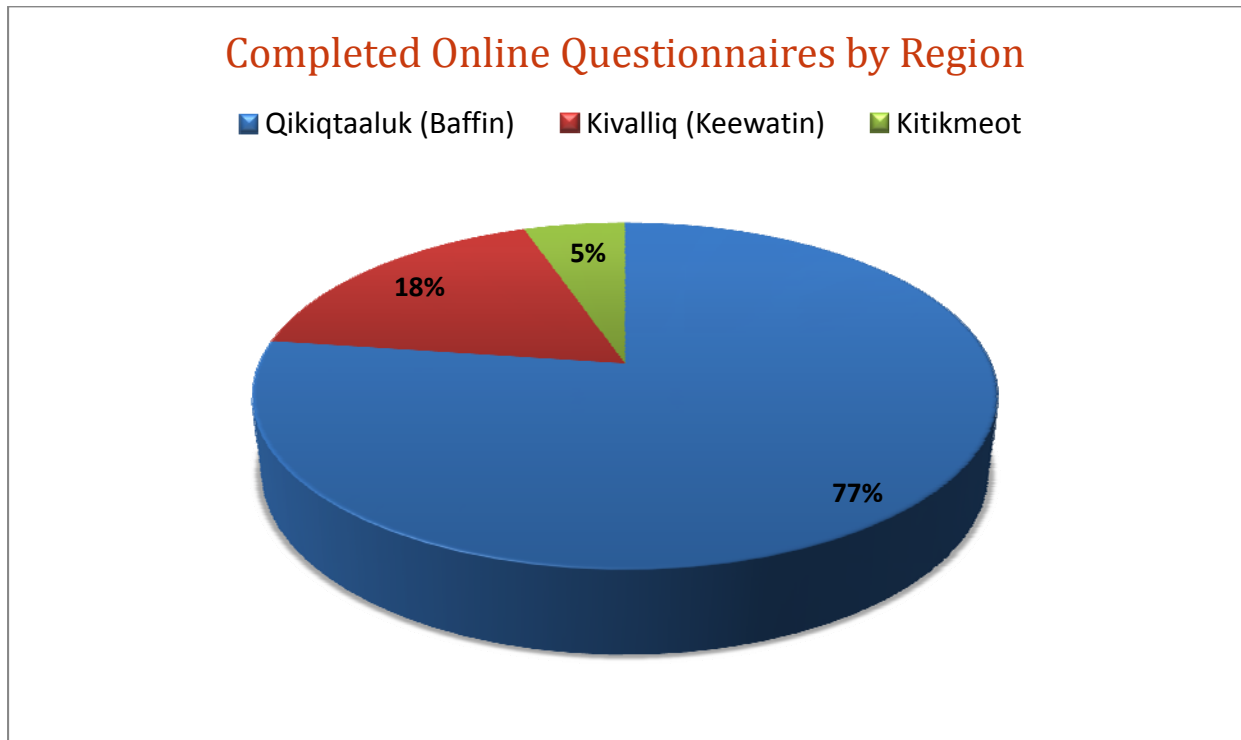
Most Frequently Answered Questions



Most Frequently Suggested Topics for Action



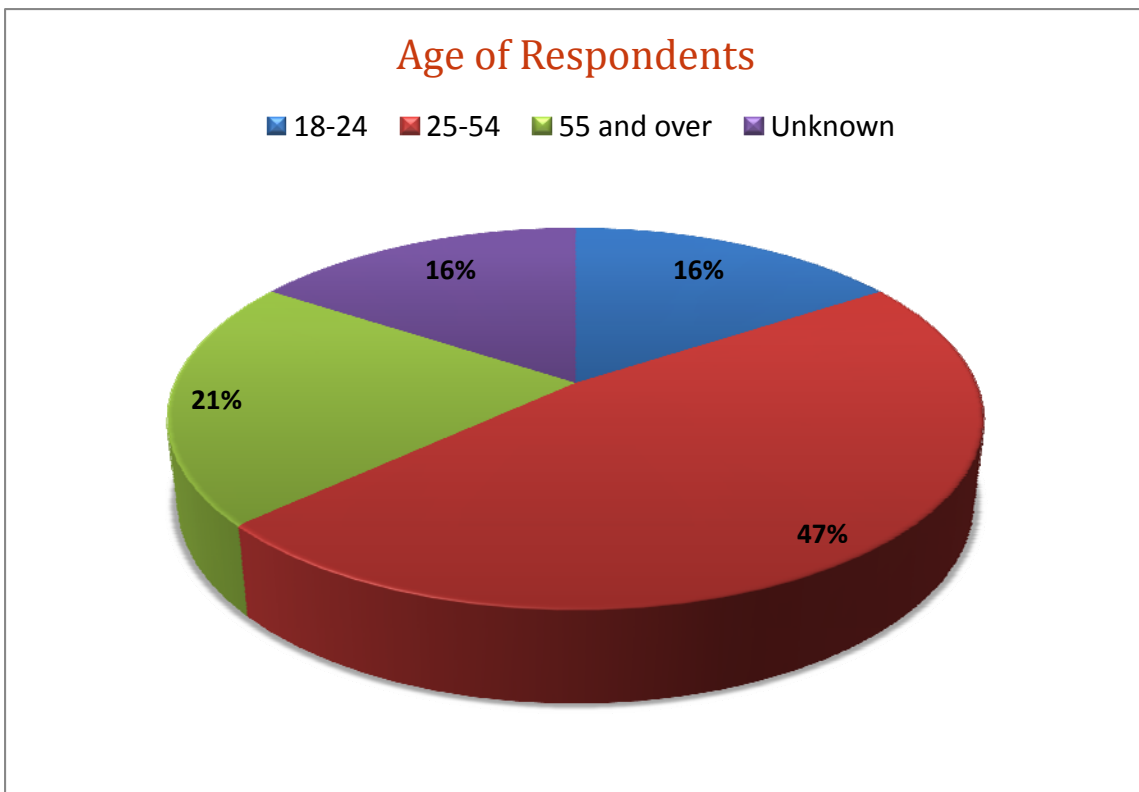
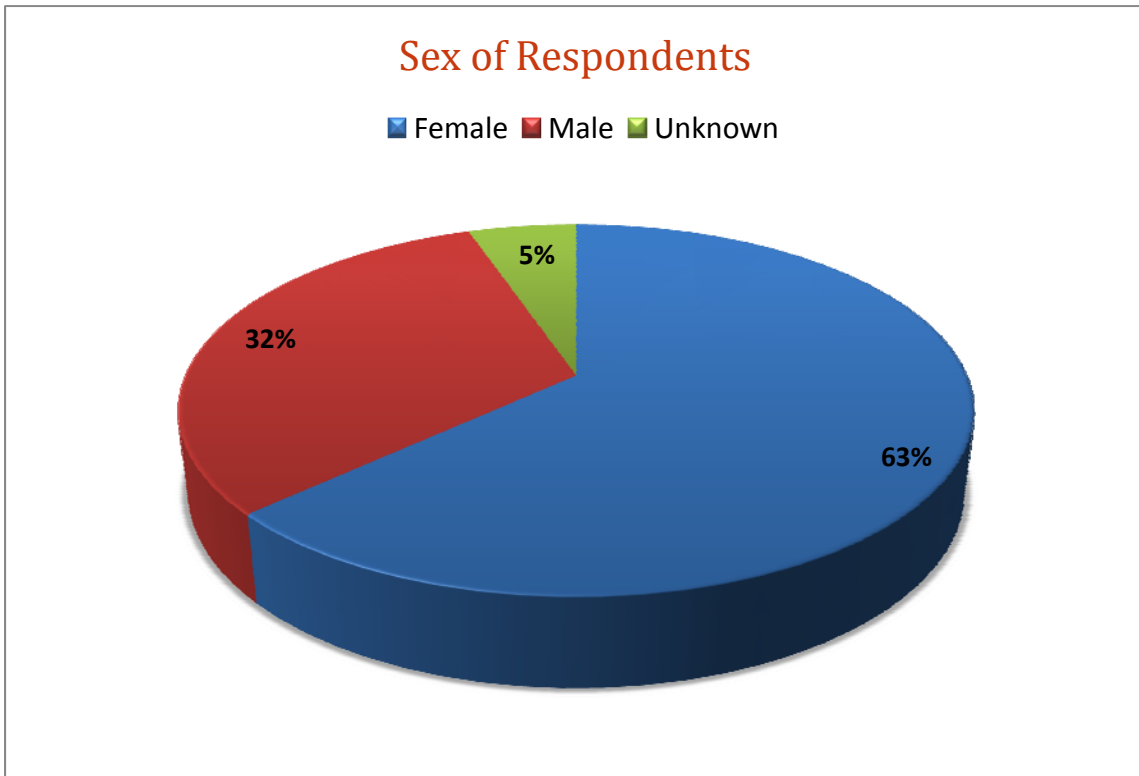
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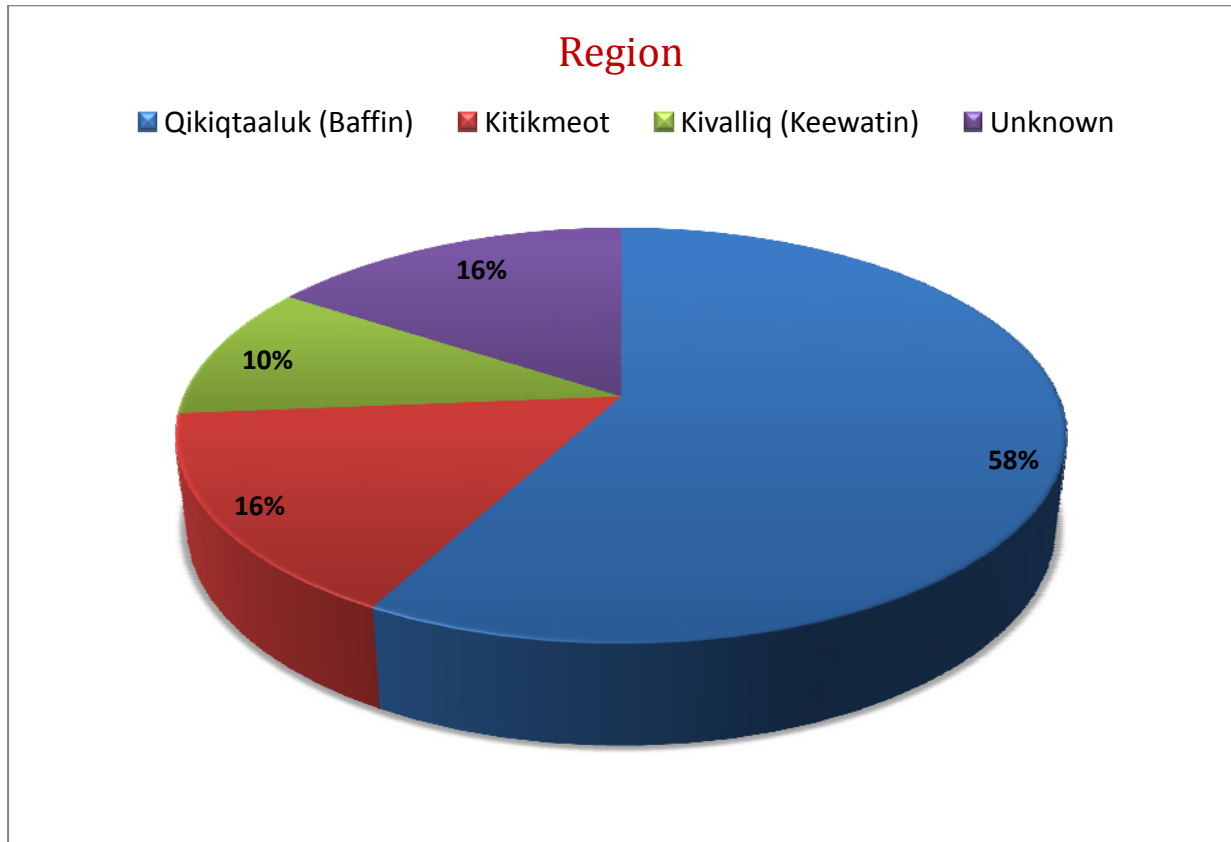
DATA COLLECTED ONLINE

Hamlet	Postal Code	Questionnaires filled out
Qikiqtaaluk (Baffin)		
Arctic Bay	X0A 0A0	2
Grise Fiord	X0A 0J0	2
Igloodik	X0A 0L0	3
Iqaluit	X0A 1H0/X0A 0H0	35
Kimmirut	X0A 0N0	1
Pangnirtung	X0A 0R0	1
Resolute	X0A 0V0	1
Sanikluag	X0A 0W0	1
		44
Kivalliq (Keewatin)		
Arviat	X0C 0E0	3
Rankin Inlet	X0C 0G0	6
Whale Cove	X0C 0J0	1
		10
Kitikmeot		
Cambridge Bay	X0B 0C0	1
Gjoan Haven	X0B 1J0	1
Kagluktuk	X0B 0E0	2
Taloyak	X0B 1B0	1
		5
		Total: 79 (20 questionnaires without postal codes)

APPENDIX III: DATA COLLECTED BY MAIL



DATA COLLECTED BY MAIL



APPENDIX IV: CONSULTATIONS HELD

Qikiqtaaluk	Communities Invited	Consultations Held	Number of Consultations
Family Law Consultation	Territory Wide	Family Law Consultation	1
Validation Forum	Territory Wide	Elders & Community Consultation	1
Follow-up Knowledge Sharing Forum	Territory Wide	Elders & Community Consultation	1
Youth Forum	Pond Inlet, Pangnirtung, Igloolik, Arviat, Kugaaruk, Kugluktuk, Coral Harbour	Youth Consultation	1
Iqaluit	Kimmirut	Public & Stakeholder Consultation	2
Pangnirtung		Public & Stakeholder Consultation	2
Pond Inlet	Clyde River	Public & Stakeholder Consultation	2
Igloolik	Hall Beach	Public & Stakeholder Consultation	2
Resolute Bay	Grise Fiord, Arctic Bay	Public Consultation	1
Cape Dorset	Kimmirut	Public & Stakeholder Consultation	2
Sanikiluaq		Public & Stakeholder Consultation	2

CONSULTATIONS HELD

Kivalliq	Communities Invited	Consultations Held	Number of Consultations
Rankin Inlet	Chesterfield Inlet, Coral Harbour, Repulse Bay	Public & Stakeholder Consultation	2
Baker Lake	Arviat, Whale Cove	Public & Stakeholder Consultation	2

Kitikmeot			
Cambridge Bay	Kugluktuk	Public & Stakeholder Consultation	2
Gjoa Haven	Taloyoak, Kugaaruk	Public & Stakeholder Consultation	2
TOTAL NUMBER OF CONSULTATIONS HELD			25

APPENDIX V: INUIT QAUJIMAJATUQANGIT

1. **Inuuqatigiitsiarniq:**
Respecting others, respecting relationships and caring for people.
2. **Tunnganarniq:**
Fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming and inclusive.
3. **Pijitsirniq:**
Serving and providing for family and/or community.
4. **Aajiiqatigiinni:**
Decision making through discussion and consensus.
5. **Pilimmaksarniq/Pijariuqsarniq:**
Developing skills through practice, effort and action.
6. **Piliriqatigiinni/Ikajuqtigiinni:**
Working together for a common cause.
7. **Qanuqtuurniq:**
Being innovative and resourceful.
8. **Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq:**
Respecting and caring for the land, animals and the environment.

APPENDIX VI: QUESTIONS AND CORRESPONDING RECOMMENDATIONS

QUESTIONS

1. Community self-reliance: **What can be done to draw on existing community knowledge and resources to promote good parenting, child safety and family well-being?**
2. Community government collaboration: **How can Social Services work better with communities to assist at risk children and their families?**
3. Prevention: **How can Social Services work better with communities to reduce the issues that require Social Services to become involved with families?**
4. Types of support: **What types of community-based programs and services should be offered to ensure that children are safe and their families are supported?**
5. Resources for communities: **What resources are needed to better support community-based programs to strengthen families and protect children?**
6. Respecting Inuit culture: **How can the *CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT* and current Social Services programs and services better reflect Inuit culture and traditional practices related to parenting, child safety and promotion of family well-being?**

CORRESPONDING RECOMMENDATIONS

<p>RECOMMENDATION 1: REFLECT THE VALUES AND STRENGTHS OF INUIT CULTURE INTO A MORE CULTURALLY COMPETENT APPROACH TO SOCIAL SERVICES</p>	Question 6
<p>RECOMMENDATION 2: ENHANCE THE ROLE OF ELDERS TO ENRICH AND STRENGTHEN THE CULTURAL VALIDITY OF SOCIAL SERVICES.</p>	Questions 3, 4, 5 & 6
<p>RECOMMENDATION 3: IMPROVE AND SUPPORT THE PROVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES</p>	Question 4
<p>RECOMMENDATION 4: INITIATE A MULTI-YEAR, PREVENTION-FOCUSED SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING PROGRAM TO BUILD AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMMING</p>	Questions 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
<p>RECOMMENDATION 5: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A COMMUNITY-BASED TRAINING, AND SKILLS ACQUISITION STRATEGY FOR CHILD AND FAMILY PERSONNEL</p>	Questions 3, 4 & 5
<p>RECOMMENDATION 6: ADOPT A DUAL TRACK OR DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE MODEL FOR SERVICE</p>	Questions 2, 3, 4 & 5
<p>RECOMMENDATION 7: ESTABLISH AN OFFICE OF THE TERRITORIAL CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE TASKED WITH PROVIDING AN INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN NUNAVUT</p>	Question 5
<p>RECOMMENDATION 8: INVOLVE CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS</p>	Questions 1, 4 & 5
<p>RECOMMENDATION 9: IMPROVING THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK</p>	Question 5
<p>RECOMMENDATION 10: ESTABLISH A SOCIAL SERVICE DEVELOPMENT FORUM</p>	Question 2
<p>RECOMMENDATION 11: IMPLEMENT A FAMILY-BASED CARE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</p>	Questions 1, 2, 4 & 5