



May 2025

WORKSHOP REPORT

The Nunatsiavut Language Summit

PREPARED BY:



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Overview

The Nunatsiavut Language Summit 2025 brought together Elders, youth, educators, language advocates, and community members from across Nunatsiavut in Nain from May 5 to the 8th. Rooted in Inuit knowledge and guided by the deep care and connection our people hold for Inuttut, the Summit offered space to reflect on where we have come from, where we are now, and where we want to go.

Hosted by the Nunatsiavut Government Department of Language, Culture, and Tourism, this gathering is part of a long-standing journey to strengthen and celebrate our language. The Summit honoured the foundational work of the current Inuttitut UKâlalautta, Ilinniatitsiluta, InosiKalluta! Language Strategy and aimed to carry forward the conversations and commitments made during the 2019 Language Summit.

As we prepare to shape the next five years of language work, the Summit invited us to gather in community - to share stories, celebrate successes, acknowledge challenges, and uplift the voices and visions that will guide the development of the 2027–2032 Nunatsiavut Language Strategy.

Author's Notes:

- "UKâlalluta" was a typo in the original Language Strategy. The correct spelling for the word is "UKâlalautta", and is what we use to refer to this strategy in this report.
- 'Inuktut' is an umbrella term encompassing the dialects of Inuttitut / Inuktitut language. Inuttut is the umbrella term used for Labrador dialects. Different Inuktut terms may be used throughout, either to reflect dialects or because it is a name of a person, place, or organization.

Objectives

The objectives of this workshop were to:

1. **Reflect** on the [Inuttitut UKâlalluta, Ilinniatitsiluta, InosiKalluta! Language Strategy](#).
2. **Evaluate** progress made and highlight accomplishments.
3. **Celebrate** the ongoing work and dedication of individuals and communities supporting Inuttut.
4. **Gather** diverse voices, experiences, and ideas to shape the 2027–2032 Language Strategy.
5. **Identify** priorities & actions for Inuttut to thrive in Nunatsiavut.
6. **Inspire** hope, energy, and commitment to language revitalization across Nunatsiavut.

Overview of Report

This report is divided into the following sections:

PART 1: Where are we now?

Presentations & Activities

PART 2: Where are we going?

Visioning

PART 3: How do we get there?

Panel & Activities

Acknowledgements and Gratitude

Organizing Team:

NG's Language, Culture & Tourism Team

Jenna Gilbride, Makkovik
Shirley Jararuse, Nain
Robyn Martin, Nain
Cherlyn Allen, Rigolet
Natalie Lane, Hopedale
Brandon Lane, Hopedale
Aimee Lane, Hopedale

Facilitation Team

Jane Porter, Bridge Building Group, Ottawa
Jennifer Williams, Bridge Building Group, Ottawa
Kim Pilgrim, Inotsiavik/Bridge Building Group

Participants

Johannes Lampe, President of the Nunatsiavut Government, Nain

Tom Evans, Minister of Education and Economic Development, Makkovik

Gerald Asivak, Minister of Language, Culture and Tourism, Goose Bay

Jenna Gilbride, Deputy Minister of Language, Culture and Tourism, Makkovik

Robert Watt, Director for the Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages, Ottawa

Lema Ijtemaye, Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages, Ottawa

Angie Perkins, Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages, Ottawa

Brennan Richardson, Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages, Ottawa

Jodie Lane, Director of Education,
Nunatsiavut Government, Makkovik
Alana Johns, University of Toronto, Toronto
Susana Bejar, University of Toronto,
Toronto

Benjamin Mitsuk, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami,
Ottawa
Kumiko Murasugi, Carleton University,
Ottawa
Janine Lightfoot, Pirurvik, Makkovik

Isumatât

Joan Dicker, Nain
Rutie Lampe, Nain
Edna Winters, Nain
Sarah Townley, Northwest River
Gordon Obed, Nain
Christine Nochasak, Nain
Eva Obed, Nain
Nancy Ikkusek, Nain
Selma Saurak, Goose Bay

Inotsiavik

Nicholas Flowers, Hopedale
Vanessa Flowers, Hopedale

Youth & Elders Panel

Maria Merkuratsuk, Nain
William Andersen, St John's
Ocean Pottle-Shiwak, Rigolet
Erica Jacque, Iqaluit
Simeonie Merkuratsuk, Nain

Community Champions

Hulda Fox, Makkovik
Sophie Tuglavina, Makkovik
Selma Ford, Ottawa
Rutie Dicker, Nain

Elders

Fran Williams, Hopedale
Rosina Holwell, Nain
Rosie Piercy, Hopedale
Simon Kohlmeister, Nain
Buddy Merkuratsuk, Nain
Jenny Merkuratsuk, Nain

OK Society

Silpa Suarak, Nain

Language, Culture and Tourism Staff

Agnes Abel, Hopedale
Emily Abel, Hopedale
Beni Merkuratsuk, Nain
Naeme Tuglavina, Nain
Jenna Andersen, Makkovik
Gerald Asivak, Happy Valley - Goose Bay
Shirley Jararuse, Nain
Robyn Martin, Nain
Cherlyn Allen, Rigolet
Natalie Lane, Hopedale
Brandon Lane, Hopedale
Aimee Lane, Hopedale

Agenda

DAY 1 - Monday, May 5, 2025



Welcome and Opening

DAY 2 - Tuesday, May 6, 2025



Presentation: Context Setting by the Nunatsiavut Government
Reflections: Why language matters
Presentation: Robert Watt and the OCIL
Presentation: Kumiko Murasugi & the Language Survey Results
Activity: Shift & Share - learn about the language programs
Activity: Strengths, Barriers and Possibilities
Activity: 'Where are we now' Statement

DAY 3 - Wednesday, May 7, 2025



Elder and Youth Dialogue
Activity: Headlines: Imagine 2030
Activity: 'Where are we going' Statement
Activity: Strategy Building Workshop

DAY 4 - Thursday, May 8, 2025



Day on the land!
Closing

Introduction

Welcome & Opening of the Workshop

To start the workshop, we gathered on Monday evening to share a meal, enjoy some entertainment and hear important words to start in a good way. Opening remarks were made by: President Johannes Lampe, Minister Gerald Asivak and Deputy Minister Jenna Gilbride. Maria Merkuratsuk lit the Kullik during these opening words and prayer.



"Language is more than just a collection of words. It's what connects us to each other, shaping our identity, our culture and our history. It is not just about speaking, it's about belonging. And I believe that we belong to each other as Nunatsiavut communities."

~ President Johannes Lampe

Key messages from the opening:

- This summit is a powerful commitment to revitalizing and uplifting Inuttut as a living, breathing part of who we are as Inuit.
- Language and culture are inseparable; to strengthen one, we must honour and support the other.
- Our children and grandchildren deserve to grow up surrounded by the Inuit way of life, knowing where they come from and who they are.
- The wisdom of our Elders - knowing every hill, river, and place name - is a reminder of the deep roots we carry and must pass on.
- Inuttut is more than words; it is identity, belonging, and connection - to each other, to our ancestors, and to the land.
- We are still here because our ancestors carried us through; now it's our turn to carry the language forward.
- The government alone cannot solve this; we need community voices, youth, Elders, and champions to guide the path forward.
- This Summit continues the momentum from 2019, calling us to shape the next chapter of Inuttut with vision, strength, and unity.

PART 1: Where are we now?

Context Setting

Shirley and Robyn from the Department of Language, Culture and Tourism began by setting the context for this gathering by speaking about the **2019 Nunatsiavut Language Summit**, which shaped the **2021–2026 Language Strategy**. Three guiding pillars emerged from that gathering:

- **Transmission**: supporting the passing of Inuttut to future generations.
- **Revitalization**: creating opportunities to learn and use the language.
- **Engagement**: building pride and connection through language use.

They walked through progress made across these pillars over the past five years, highlighting that this work is deeply rooted in community priorities and ongoing dialogue. In 2019, ten positions were dedicated to culture and language programs, and now there are 31 positions dedicated to language program funding in every community. This summit is about planning the next 5 years.

Reflections: Why Language Matters

The first day of the Summit was planned as a day on the land to ground, to connect and to share stories. The schedule was adjusted due to weather, but stories flowed naturally as the first morning passed. Below are some themes and reflections that emerged from the stories shared by Elders. Their stories emphasized that Inuttut is more than a language - it is identity, connection, and pride.

Inuttut is Core to Being Inuit

"As we speak, we feel it as an Inuk. It's in our being, which is very important."
— *Johannes Lampe*

- Language is a part of identity, a way of *being*.
- Speaking Inuttut isn't just communication, it's *feeling* like an Inuk.
- It's vital to pass that feeling on to children and grandchildren.

Loss and Grief

"Even when we were toddlers, English was already around us. I wish Inuttut was the language of our hometown."
— *Fran Williams*

- Many participants spoke of the pain of language loss through relocation and residential schooling.
- In places like Hopedale, hearing Inuttut brings joy, especially from Hebron descendants.
- There was a common concern that we're not working hard enough yet - but also that everyone is on their own journey.

We Want to Speak More at Home

"It's a privilege to say what we want to say in Inuttitut, and I want to talk more at home to our children and grandchildren in our language."

— *Rosina Howell*

- Some still use the language at home, but many want to use it more, daily and casually, at home and in the community.
- The desire is strong; what's needed is time, courage, support and encouragement.

Stories Connect Us to Language and Land

- Elders shared warm, funny, heartfelt stories, from stories of their aunt's cooking to the joy of ordering fish in Halifax.
- These moments remind us that language lives in *everyday life*.

No Shame - Only Pride

"We are Inuit, and there is nothing to be ashamed of."

— *Buddy Merkuratsuk*

- Elders expressed gratitude for the summit and a commitment to continue teaching the language.

Presentations

Director Robert Watt provided an update on the work of the [Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages](#), and shared a video titled "Our Languages, Our Voices" which can be viewed here:

 Our Languages, Our Voices (EN)

His detailed presentation can be viewed here: [OCIL Overview](#)



The vision: All Indigenous languages are safe, vibrant, and thriving.

- The Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages (OCIL) is an independent body supporting Indigenous Peoples in reclaiming, revitalizing, strengthening, and maintaining their languages.
- OCIL consists of a Commissioner and three distinctions-based Directors. Robert Watt is the Inuit Director.
- It is not a federal institution, ensuring it operates at arm's length from government and political organizations.
- OCIL works in partnership with Indigenous governments and organizations, offering support through funding research, public awareness, and culturally appropriate tools and services.
- It provides mediation and dispute resolution services related to language obligations, agreements, and federal commitments, tools that Indigenous governments like Nunatsiavut can access to uphold language rights.
- OCIL can review complaints brought forward by Indigenous governments (such as Nunatsiavut) and issue recommendations to improve language supports or address systemic issues.
- Its mandate also includes supporting innovation, such as new technologies and education models, aligning with Nunatsiavut's interest in language preservation and community-led programming.
- OCIL reports annually on the vitality of Indigenous languages, funding adequacy, and overall implementation. These insights can inform and validate Nunatsiavut's own language strategy and advocacy.
- The *Indigenous Languages Act* established the Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages. The Act is a "living and breathing" tool meant to evolve and change to ensure things stay effective.

Kumiko Marasugi - Linguistics Professor at Carleton University

Kumiko provided a presentation on the results of the [Nunatsiavut Language Vitality Survey](#),

You can see her full presentation here - [Language Survey Presentation](#).

- This collaborative project between Carleton University and the Nunatsiavut Government's Department of Language, Culture and Tourism aimed to assess the current state of Inuktut and inform future language programming through community consultations and a language survey completed by nearly 400 beneficiaries.
- Key findings show 16% of respondents speak Inuktut as a first language, mostly Elders, with encouraging signs of second-language learning interest, especially among younger and middle-aged adults, despite barriers like limited time and resources.
- Survey participants expressed a strong emotional connection to the language, a desire for more supportive and judgment-free learning spaces, and emphasized the importance of revitalizing Inuktut for future generations, especially through programming for children and youth.
- Kumiko also referenced the developing Inuktut Atlas during her presentation. This atlas is being developed with the goal to strengthen Inuktut dialects across Canada. It can be viewed here: www.inuktutatlas.ca

Nunatsiavut Language Survey
Results of a survey conducted in 2020-2022
by the Nunatsiavut Government
and Carleton University

Prepared by
Kumiko Marasugi, Carleton University
in collaboration with
Brenda Jararuse, Shirley Jararuse and Robyn Martin,
Department of Language, Culture and Tourism,
Nunatsiavut Government
2024

Activities

Sharing Current Language Programs Offered

In order to highlight the work of the Nunatsiavut Government Department of Language, Culture and Tourism, Department of Education and the Pirurvik program, the workshop participants rotated around five stations to learn more about the current language programs. The small groups allowed for more intimate conversations and knowledge sharing. More information can be found in the [presentations folder](#) of participant resources.

STATION 1: Interpreter/Translator & Culture Programming

Leads: Peggy & Brandon (with Crystal, Eva, Selma, Matt, Simeonie, Mark, Sophie)

Focus: Translation, interpretation, and terminology development through a cultural lens.

Highlights:

- Brandon Lane is piloting Aullâsimapvet, a new land-based cultural program, with a suggestion box.
- Interpreter/translator team and Isumatât (expert) committee were introduced.
- Ongoing terminology workshops and translations.

Resources: Suggestion box, translation submission guides, staff/committee lists.

Challenges: Difficult technical translations; limited access to experts and workspace.

Opportunities: Use new cultural building; improve material sharing.

STATION 2: Education

Lead: Jodie Lane (with Janice Schoening, resource developer, not present)

Focus: Bilingual, culturally grounded resource materials in Inutut.

Highlights:

- Inukbook series ; two books published: The Christmas Drop and Nautaima. Currently working on a 24-book series (8 themes, 3 levels for each theme)
- Labrador Inuit Society & Culture (LIS&C) 2211: high school course for art/social studies credits, with textbook and accompanying teacher guide.
- K-2 Little Book series focusing on each Nunatsiavut community. Community photo submissions; alignment with Social Studies curriculum and outcomes.
- Feeling at Home on the Land - Photo book (Maria Merkuratsuk) - published through NG and includes lesson plans that align with Grade 3 Social Studies curriculum. The province has purchased this book to put one in every Grade 3 classroom in the province.
- Learning Through the Seasons - partnership with MUN. Includes lesson plans that align with different subject areas and grade levels.

Resources: *Inukbook* series (two completed books), LIS&C textbook/teachers guide, Learning Through the Seasons book with digital lesson plans, Feeling at Home on the Land book with Grade 3 Social Studies lesson plans..

Challenges: First book in *Inukbook* series leaned on English; gaps in Grades K-9 resources..

Opportunities: Add land claims content to future high school course development; build educator supports; deepen community input. Continue to develop culturally relevant resources for all grades and subject areas.

STATION 3: Nunatsiavut Language Programming

NG's LCT Department runs a multitude of language programs to support language learners at all levels.

Leads: Shirley Jararuse, Robyn Martin, Cherlyn Allen, Natalie Lane

Focus: Boost Inuttut use through community-based programs.

Highlights:

- Master-Apprentice pilot (which now includes Goose Bay); Inuttitut lessons and terminology workshops.
- The nunatsiavut.tusaalanga.ca site, IlinniaKatigennik radio show, Inuttitut Café, bingo, elder socials.
- The Nunatsiavut Government has expanded from 10 to 30 jobs in the Language and Culture Department in the last 5 years.

Resources: Website, signage, kids' packages, worksheets, cultural content.

Challenges: Incomplete resources; need a contractor to finalize and organize materials.

Opportunities: Recognition awards, virtual/school programming, community storytelling.

STATION 4: NG's Language Nest

NG's LCT Department runs two Language Nest programs, which are Inuttitut immersion programs for infants. There's the Nain Language Nest Centre and the Inuaggualuit Centre in Hopedale.

Lead: Aimee Lane

Focus: Immersive Inuttitut exposure for infants (6 months - 4 years).

Highlights:

- Daily 1-hour sessions with parent involvement.
- Updated materials: toys, books, posters, and household labels.

Resources: Shirley's book/poster; labelling kits.

Challenges: Limited staff/space; weak Nain–Hopedale links; low parent engagement.

Opportunities: Expand staffing/buildings; train fluent speakers; support community travel.

STATION 5: Pirurvik

Pirurvik is an Inuit-owned institute of Inuktut higher learning based in Nunavut's capital, Iqaluit. Since 2004, we have been dedicated to building new programs focused entirely on Inuit language, culture and wellbeing. ([https://www.pirurvik.ca](http://www.pirurvik.ca)).

Lead: Janine Lightfoot (Nunatsiavut Representative) & Leena Evic (co-founder; Iqaluit-based)

Focus: Inuit-led, land-based learning grounded in culture and wellness.

Highlights:

- *Aurniarvik*: designed specifically for Inuit who have grown up speaking English and who are wanting to build proficiency in Inuktitut. Courses in this program emphasize the skills of speaking, comprehension, reading and writing.
- *Qimattuvik*: provides professional language enhancement to Inuktitut speakers in the areas of advanced and traditional terminology, the Nunavut writing system, Inuktitut dialects and writing professionally and creatively.
- *Aqqusiurvik*: consists of 10 courses focused on the unique skills needed to be a successful Inuktitut instructor.
- *Reclaiming the Whole Man*: participants rebuild their connections with the skills, knowledge and environment that sustained past generations of Inuit.
- *Reclaiming the Whole Woman*: Courses combine the learning of Inuit knowledge and terminology with hands-on skills that are the legacy of countless generations of Inuit women.

Resources: Full-time Language Revitalization certificates, remote learning, Nunatsiavut dialect adaptations.

Challenges: High demand; housing crisis and travel costs.

Opportunities: Bring programming to Nunatsiavut; prioritize local applicants; model for language revitalization.

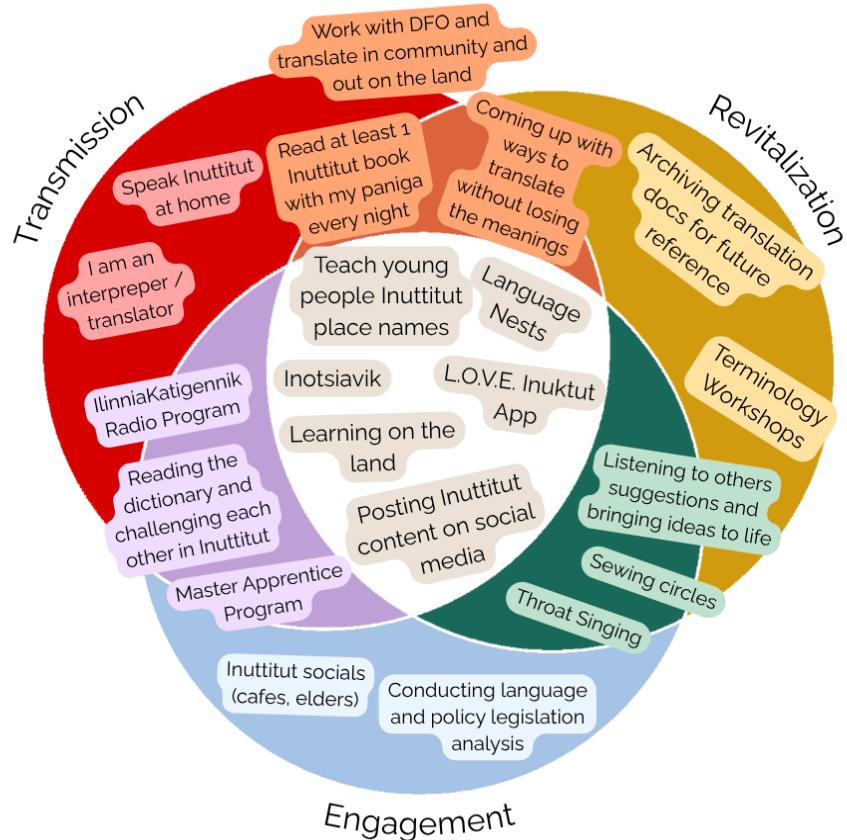
What else is happening in the community?

After listening to a series of presentations, participants were asked to consider their own roles and experiences: what work have they been doing that supports language? This activity helped surface a wide range of efforts, both formal and informal, that contribute to language work across the region. It includes professional initiatives, but also more personal and community-based examples of where Inuttitut is showing up in daily life.

To help organize these ideas, we used a visual tool based on the 2019 Language Strategic Plan. The three pillars from the original plan were presented as a Venn diagram, recognizing the overlap between the pillars. Participants shared their contributions on sticky notes directly on the Venn diagram in the section where it best corresponded.

The purpose was to better understand the existing momentum and provide a foundation for identifying what's next. One takeaway was how interconnected the pillars are and how projects often intersect two or all three pillars.

The images include both a summary of the most commonly mentioned efforts from across the region (below) and a photo from the workshop (next page).





The above image was taken during the workshop where participants added their own work to the board.

Strengths, Barriers and Possibilities

After learning what is happening in the region, participants gathered in small groups to explore strengths, barriers and possibilities.

Strengths

What strengths do we have to build on?

- Passionate individuals and collective motivation to revitalize Inuttitut.
- K-12 language resources and programs.
- Presence of fluent speakers who are eager to teach.
- Community-led and grassroots language initiatives.
- Support and participation from Elders
- Hope and drive among workers.
- Eager and involved youth.
- Relevant and locally-informed language resources.
- Past successes (e.g., Arctic Inspiration Prize, 2019 strategy work).
- Collaboration and shared goals across communities.
- Second language speakers and silent speakers stepping forward.
- Places to hear and practice language (e.g., Inuttitut Café, socials).

Barriers

What feels heavy, stuck, or challenging in growing and sustaining this work?

- Resources exist but aren't used to their full potential.
- Safe and supportive learning spaces are not always available.
- Barriers to employability, including digital literacy and credentialing.
- Loss of confidence among learners and speakers.
- Lack of time to learn due to responsibilities.
- Not enough fluent speakers, teachers, or interpreters.
- Inconsistent, underfunded programming
- Disconnect between language and culture.
- Intergenerational gaps.
- Low compensation and recognition for language work.
- Intimidation and fear of speaking the language publicly.
- Lack of urgency and prioritization.

Possibilities

Thinking about this moment in time, what new opportunities are possible?

- Delivering meaningful, intentional programming grounded in culture and care.
- Increasing land-based programs and immersive language opportunities.
- Building capacity through training, job shadowing, and skill development.
- Expanding programming for all age groups, especially toddlers and adults aged 31–54.
- Honouring and including Elders and knowledge holders in all efforts.
- Strengthening youth engagement and reminding them they can shape the future.
- Increasing collaboration across Inuit Nunangat, NGOs, government departments, and stakeholders.
- Transitioning toward self-governance in education.
- Improving staff compensation, support structures, and recognition.
- Expanding the presence of Inuttitut in public, home, and workplace spaces.
- Hosting sessions, conferences, and training in Inuttitut.
- Holding onto hope for fluency, pride, and full cultural identity through language.

Drafting a collective “Where are we now?” statement

Participants reflected on all that they had learned about what is happening on language in Nunatsiavut by the Nunatsiavut Government and in the community and co-created the following statement:

Right now, in 2025, Inuttitut in Nunatsiavut is used by seniors, interpreters and translators, people interested in the language, and everyone at different levels, though not enough people overall. It's heard on the radio station, spoken at home, woven into daily life, and shared in church.

The trend is worrisome: first language learners are declining while second language learners are increasing, but overall, things are not improving.

Still, we have a collective spirit, openness to healing, fluent speakers, passion, the desire of learners, courage, and valuable resources to build upon.

We face barriers like getting more people involved in person, inconsistent programming, lack of incentives, underutilization of resources, lack of structure, the dominance of English, low confidence, and limited capacity.

Our community feels a mix of treading water, helplessness, hopefulness, big sighs, and nervousness or overwhelm about the current state of our language.

Yet, we also see that we're together, committed, and envision growth, a fluent Nunatsiavut, a lot of work, hope, and a thriving future ahead as we move forward together.

PART 2: Where are we going?

Day 3 of the Summit was focused on thinking about where we are going and how we are going to get there. We kicked this off in a space of imagination.

Activities

Future Headlines

In order to get our minds thinking of the future, participants took part in a Headlines activity.

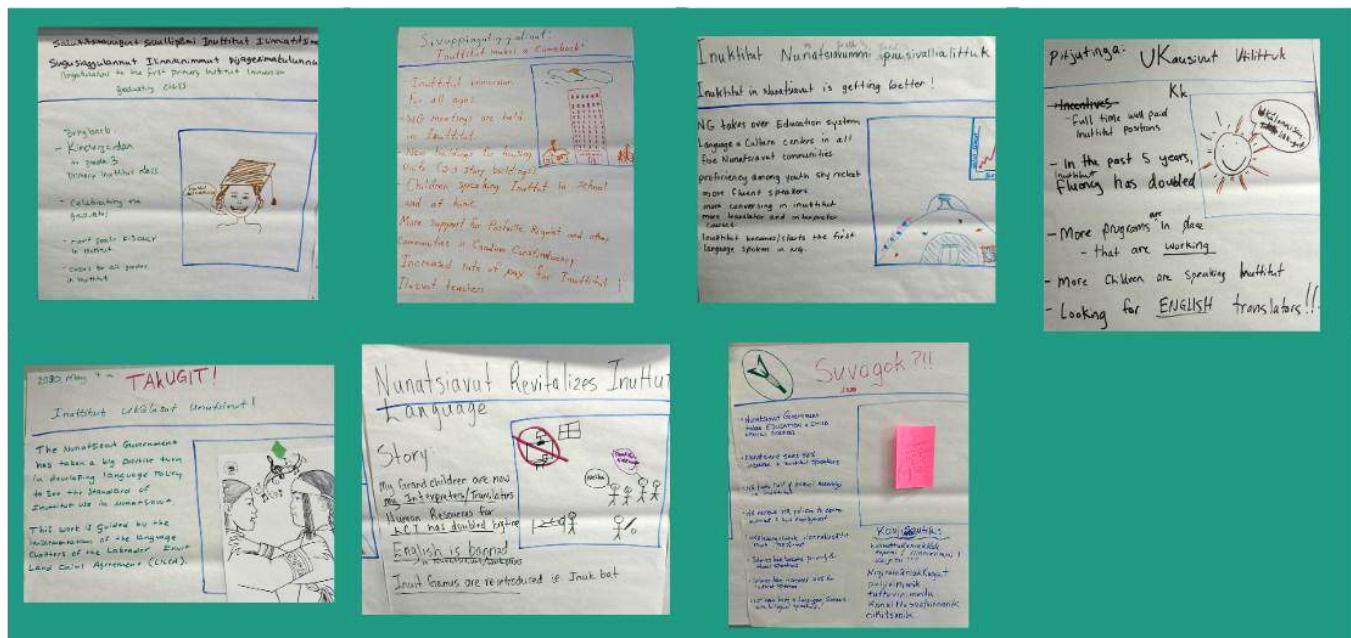
Here are some of the top headlines imagined:

- Pitjutinga: UKausivut Utilittuk
- Takugit! Inuttitut Ukâlasot Unutsivut
- Suvagot?!!
- Sivuppiagutigigialivut!
- Salutitsimavugut Sivallipâmi Inuttitut Ilinniatitsima Sugusiaggulannut Ilinnianimmum Pijagesimakulunna
- In the past 5 years Inuttitut fluency has doubled
- The NG has taken a big positive turn in developing language policy
- NG takes education and child and family services
- Inuttitut immersion for all ages
- Congratulations to the first primary Inuttitut immersion graduating class

DAILY NEWS

Word • Business • Finance • Lifestyle • Travel • Sport • Weather

Imagine it's 2030 and Inuttitut is flourishing in Nunatsiavut, so much so that you have made the headline news across the country... ?



Drafting a collective “Where are we going?” statement?

Participants considered where they wanted to go and co-created the following statement:

In five years, Inuttitut in Nunatsiavut is alive and thriving. Inuit can speak their language with pride, including a bilingual president leading the way.

Our goal is to keep it that way: to continue speaking, to create new speakers, to ensure the language has presence, and to keep healing ourselves and our communities through Inuttitut.

We aim to ensure it continues to be spoken, passed on, and strengthened, so that we can all be fluent, speak more confidently, and live fully in our identity. Through language, Inuit can release guilt and move forward with pride, confidence, and strength.

We'll know we're making progress...

When the feelings of blame, guilt, and shame around language begin to fade.

When we're connecting more on the land.

When there's more infrastructure in place.

When we choose to speak Inuttitut over English.

When children are playing in Inuttitut, and we hear it spoken everywhere, even to the point where we have to ask someone speaking it to 'shhh'.

When fewer government barriers stand in our way.

When the Inuttitut language is a visible, living priority in every part of the Nunatsiavut Government.

PART 3: How do we get there?

Elder and Youth Panel

On the final day of the Nunatsiavut Language Summit, a youth and elder panel was held to help create an inter-generational vision and come up with ideas for building a shared future of Inuttut in Nunatsiavut. The structure of the panel was unique - instead of a typical panel where panellists sit at the front of the room and are asked questions by the moderator and audience, the panellists sat in a circle within a circle of audience members to foster conversation. The panel also invited audience members to enter the inner circle and engage in the conversation as well, creating an opportunity for a range of perspectives to be heard.

Panelists:

Moderator: Kimberly Pilgrim

Elder: William Andersen

Elder: Maria Merkuratsuk

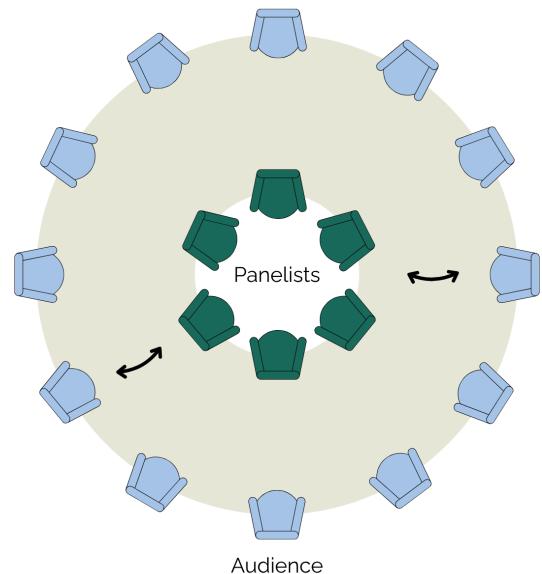
Youth: Ocean Pottle-Shiwak

Youth: Erica Jacque

Youth: Simeonie Merkuratsuk

Guiding Questions:

- 1) How can we encourage and engage learning and practicing Inuttitut? What would help elders teach what they know and what would help youth learn?
- 2) What actions can you take in your life to contribute to Inuttitut revitalization?



Main Observations:

- Inuttut is a core of our identity as Inuit across generations.
- The panel was an opportunity to share stories of language in the lives of youth and elders, and let go of some heavy feelings that have come up over the week.
- Intentional daily practice is key to language transmission.
- The past plays a big role in where we are today, and we must call on some of the past skills and experiences to influence the future, such as Inuttut-only meetings and gatherings.
- Mental health and healing around guilt and shame for all Inuit of all knowledge levels is an utmost priority.
- Land-based learning is a strong connection point across generations.

- It is important to address the middle-aged group between youth and elders as well.
- Systemic challenges must be overcome in order to advance Inuttut in our region.
- Collective responsibility - we all have a role to play in our language.
- Generating hope - Inuit are strong, smart and capable.

Quotes:

"Our language, culture, mindset, our heart, it's attached to the land, to the animals, to the char, to the ducks, to the trees, to the rocks. Our language is attached to them and it knows it's the only way. We need to heal our language"

- Johannes Lampe on the importance of land-based learning of Inuttut.

"We rely so much on our elders, it's ok that you (elders) don't always know the answers and what to do all the time... it's ok - we just appreciate listening to you and learning"

- Kim Pilgrim shares her feelings about elders who may feel they do not know the best way to approach sharing aspects of language and culture.

"The puzzle is there in front of us, we just have to pick it up and work at it. Start with verbs, there are a lot of Inuttut verbs and then follow your heart"

- Simeonie Merkuratsuk on the importance of putting together the pieces of language learning from the perspective of a fluent youth speaker.

"We need to get together as a group and we need some help to start a healing circle to talk about how people are hurt and angry with the system all the time. Blaming blaming blaming - including blaming ourselves"

- Maria Merkuratsuk on the importance of focusing on healing and removing blame from others and ourselves surrounding Inuit and cultural learning.

Strategy Building Workshop

Through a consensus-building workshop, participants of the summit identified **9 key categories** of actions that can be taken to support Inuttut in Nunatsiavut:



To create these categories, participants were asked to reflect on the conversations of the workshop and write down actions that would help us move forward in the direction we want to go to advance Inuttut in Nunatsiavut, and address the barriers we face. Participants were free to brainstorm actions at a personal, professional, or systemic level.

Once participants identified their actions, they worked together as a group to cluster and name categories to which these actions fit. Within these identified categories, participants documented their top priorities for taking action to strengthen Inuttut in Nunatsiavut.

Within each category, the ideas are listed with actions of utmost importance at the top of each respective list. The order of the listed actions was sorted by participants placing stickers on the ideas they felt were the actions that were most important at the end of the activity.

Out of all the actions, these were indicated as the most important by participants:

- 1) Make up our own rules about land-based learning.
- 2) Build a healing lodge.
- 3) Have the Nunatsiavut Government give the Education Division a mandate to start the process for taking over jurisdiction/control of the schools in Nunatsiavut.
- 4) Acquire funds for language infrastructure, programs, and services budget.
- 5) Prioritize hiring Inuttut teachers in all schools.

<h3>Exercising Self-Governance</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make up our own rules about land-based learning. • Make Inuitut top priority. Make it an Inuit Law in our self-government. • Inclusion for all beneficiaries, including those outside Nunatsiavut. • Move away from top-down decision making processes. • Make our own guidelines and laws. • Make it easier to take language classes. E.g. give time off work, provide childcare. • Create enforceable legislation to deliver Inuitut programs. • Lift the caribou ban as a resource to teach Inuitut. • Increase political will. • Revisit and review current language policies. • Decision makers need to actively listen to front line staff. • Have a timeline on the goals to implement. 	<h3>Prioritizing Incentives for Language Work</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language experts should have top level titles and pay. • Fill the vacant positions. • Get rid of temporary and contract positions, or give temporary/contract positions the same benefits as permanent positions. • Increase capacity in the language department. • Increase compensation for language workers, especially Inuitut speakers. • Full support for incentives from the NG, NGC and HR. • Incentivize with money: raises and promotions. • Change qualifications so fluent speakers can teach. • Keep Elders/knowledge keepers in all programs. • Hire a community cultural liaison. • Hire based on experience instead of certification. • Train workers to promote and grow into higher positions. 	<h3>Implementing a Nunatsiavut K-12 Schooling System</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the NG give the Education Division a mandate to start the process for taking over jurisdiction of the schools. • Prioritize hiring Inuitut teachers in all schools. • Create partnerships between Memorial University and NG for teacher education with a focus on Inuitut. • Mandate cultural awareness training for staff from outside the region. Provide cultural packages to them as well. • Support for Upper Lake Melville beneficiaries to be taught Inuitut in schools. • Have fluent speakers on administration / staff / working for the school. Ensure admin are language experts. • Staff in schools who are fluent in Inuitut should be awarded the equivalent of a degree in order to have influence in the school system - their language is their "degree".
<h3>Strengthening and Engaging our Communities</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a healing lodge and establish healing circles. • Create Inuitut language committees including Elders. • Celebrate and honour knowledge holders. • Designated Speakers: have speakers paid to speak Inuitut in public with everybody. • Equal opportunities and resources for every community. • Invite community members to attend classes at the NG. • Create and support local craft shops. • Awards, video tributes, books, magazine articles, social media posts for language champions. 	<h3>Healing</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let go of shame. • Take chances on people by hiring with on-the-job training. • Speak more Inuitut at home. • IkajuKatigennik (helping each other). SuliaKatigennik (working together). • Language support ilonnata! (for all of us)! • Lessen the divide between generations and between speakers and non-speakers. 	<h3>Creating Spaces for Language Programming</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire funds for language infrastructure, programs, and services budget. • Increase programming space. • Create infrastructure for Nunatsiavut Government employees. • Incentivise with money (or anything). • Create designated craft spaces. • Eliminate generational barriers in the workplace.

Producing, Utilizing, and Sharing Resources	Collaborating Through Relationships and Partnerships	Developing In-Person and Immersion Programming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a guidance plan for parents/families in what would help to keep our language in the homes. • Develop workbooks for individual learners who want to learn Inuttitut independently. E.g. workbooks by grade level, subject area, games, so on. • Inuttitut in everyday places. • Produce more than vocabulary lists. • Re-introduce A-B-Pat. • Continue with term posters around town. • Increase funds for current/more radio shows in Inuttitut. • Use the Rose Jeddore dictionary • Provide families opportunities to produce materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tap into Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages collaboration opportunities. • Partner with current K-12 staff and offer Inuttitut classes in school either as a supplement to already existing Inuttitut classes, or to provide them. • Invite our neighbors (Nunavik) to come and teach us! • More support for independent projects • Support Inuit in theatre, music, comedy, and television. Laughter is medicine. • More involvement from NG, community, and partners in youth-led projects/organizations. E.g. seasonal meetings, debriefings, gathering info and resources together. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Inuttitut translator programs. • Focus on in-person connections. • Shift the focus: immersion for all ages. • Inuttitut speaking facilitators at events, gatherings, and summits. • Have Language Summits happen more frequently. • Create more master apprentice programs with added value. • Diversify the current master apprentice program. • Have program fairs in all communities. • Commence an Inuttitut only Mini Language Summit annually. • Bring all NG Beneficiaries home for a healing summit. • Implement Inuttitut speaking cafes in communities.

Conclusion

The NG Language Summit in May 2025 served as a vital gathering for reflection, evaluation, and strategic planning for Inuttut revitalization in Nunatsiavut.

Key takeaways emphasized the deep connection between Inuttut, Inuit identity, and the land, alongside a collective desire to strengthen and transmit the language to future generations. Participants identified both significant strengths and persistent barriers, ultimately outlining priorities and action categories focused on areas such as land-based learning, healing, educational control, funding, and teacher recruitment. The summit fostered a shared vision of a thriving Inuttut future, setting the stage for continued momentum.

Next steps include sharing this workshop report, conducting additional engagement activities as needed, and developing a comprehensive draft language strategy based on the collective insights and priorities established during the summit.

Appendix

Ullumi UKausitsauniattuk - Word of the Day

Our goal with Word of the Day was to incorporate Inuttut learning in an intentional way that was welcoming to all levels of learners. Word of the Day gave participants the opportunity to share words that were coming to mind of the theme of each day, words to encourage the group, and words to share a laugh with too!

Tenistâg - Tuesday

kukejautek - Nail clippers
Anugitsuavuk - It's blowing a gale
IkajuKatigelautta - Let's help each other
IlinniaKatigelauttâ - Let's learn together
AmikKaKatigelautta - Let's share
Oktuvugut - We are all trying

Metivog - Wednesday

Suvagok - What's happening?
kangusunnak - Don't be shy
Âjugak - Cracks in the ice
Ilagevugut - We are together
Itluatovugut - We are worthy
Nalligivagit - I love you
Aullâsimavik - Cabin time
Pegiagit - Excuse me / get out of my way

Tonistâg - Thursday

Kisittotet - Tree boughs

Land-Based Day

On the final day of the summit, we spent a day on the land connecting with nature and each other, playing games, telling stories, and enjoying a meal. This day was planned with the intention to bring a joyful close to the summit and allow participants a chance to reflect on what they learned, shared, and look towards the future. Nakummek to everyone involved in making this summit a huge success!

