



Context

Today, Nunavik Inuit remain wildlife harvesters, but they are also members of modern communities and active participants in the wage economy. The signing of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* in 1975 was a pivotal event that transformed the region's administrative structures as well as relations with Québec and Canada. Over the past 35 years, responsibility for all kinds of community programs and services has gradually been transferred to locally elected decision-makers. Over this same period, Nunavimmiut have passed from dogsledding to the Internet.

A Few of the Challenges

Concerns and challenges in every sector converge in the communities: education, health and social services, economic development and employment, correctional services and justice, municipal services, telecommunications, the environment and wildlife, as well as culture and identity.

Despite major gains in local infrastructure and programs since 1975, community development continues to lag behind most other regions of Québec. Government funding moreover does not reflect high transportation and operating costs.

Whether referring to the population dependency ratio, overcrowded housing, the rate of criminality, suicide, substance abuse, life expectancy, poverty, unemployment, low literacy, the issue of school drop-outs, or food insecurity for elders and disadvantaged households, the situation in the communities is alarming and a source of preoccupation for local and regional leaders as well as residents.

Non-ethnic organizations such as the northern villages and the Kativik Regional Government have difficulty accessing Aboriginal funding for specific sectors such as community infrastructure construction and operations, even though 90% of the population is Inuit.

The high cost of living limits the purchasing power of Nunavimmiut and contributes to poverty. The high cost of doing business (transportation and operating costs, including most importantly municipal taxes) makes it very difficult to start up and run local businesses.

Economic development is hindered because the communities are not connected to the Québec electrical power grid or land transportation network.

Agreements concerning the construction and maintenance of local infrastructure, at the heart of community development in Nunavik for many years, must continue to be renewed.

Solutions and Priorities

Communities that will be impacted by the industrial development of Nunavik must be full participants in this development.

