

Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq Program Review

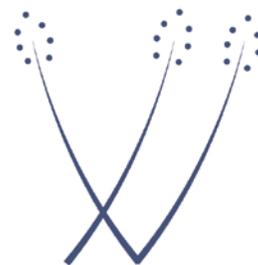
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Prepared by:

Arctic Willow Consulting

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ARCTIC WILLOW CONSULTING

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this program review is to identify how *Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq* can be improved and expanded in the coming years. The process included: a review of past activities; interviews and a workshop with stakeholders; and, a jurisdictional review.

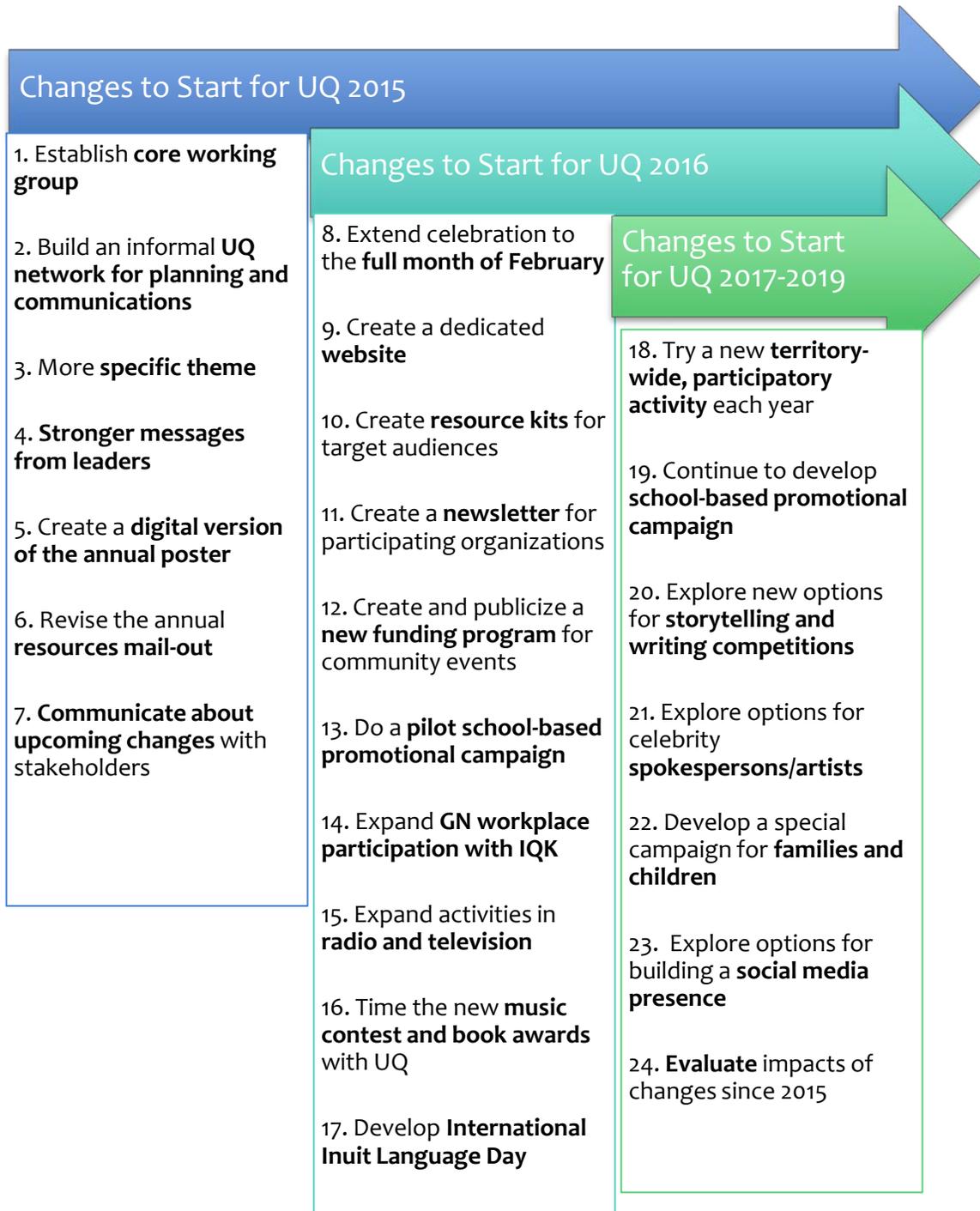
The **interview process** affirmed that stakeholders value the program and would like to see it strengthened and expanded. Several challenges were identified in relation to staff capacity, planning processes, limited collaboration with other organizations, and communications with participating groups. Interviewees expressed a desire for expansion of promotional activities related to children, youth, families, communities, workplaces, and territory-wide and international solidarity.

At the **stakeholder workshop**, participants discussed how to expand promotion activities and increase collaboration. They acknowledged the complexity of developing a territory-wide campaign and supporting community involvement in language maintenance. They said they want to establish a core working group each year to help CH plan the theme, core messages, and promotional activities. They also emphasized the need for greatly increased communications with participating organizations earlier in the year.

The **jurisdictional review** produced some useful options for strengthening the annual promotional activities, especially through social media, increased support for community-led events, making the annual themes more concrete and provocative, and advocating for stronger the messages from political leaders.

The **recommendations for action** provided in this program review may seem modest in comparison with the challenges and importance of language promotion. But, they have been designed to make use of existing resources and to support **gradual and collaborative program development that is sustainable**. The recommendations are designed to be implemented in **phases** over the next few years. They are outlined in the diagram on the next page. With limited resources, the first priority is strengthening the core activities, including increasing communications and developing an annual work plan and routine with major stakeholders. Then, over the next few years, staff should gradually expand their activities, focusing on one or two new major promotional activities per year. The expansions should always in partnership with key language stakeholders and should be carefully observed and evaluated.

Overview of Recommendations



Introduction

What is *Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq*?

Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq, often called “language week” informally in English, is an annual celebration of Inuktitut and Inuit culture. *Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq* means “celebrating our language” in English.

The Official Languages Division of the Department of Culture and Heritage (CH) has coordinated the program each year since 2003.

The purposes of the program are to: promote the use of Inuktitut throughout Nunavut society; celebrate and raise awareness of the language’s importance, history, status, and diversity across Nunavut; and, publicize information and resources related to Inuktitut (in accordance with the *Inuit Languages Protection Act*).



Image from the 2012 promotional campaign, the theme of which was “Our language, our identity.”

About the Program Review

The purpose of this program review is to identify how the program can be improved and expanded in the coming years. The process included: a review of past activities; interviews and a workshop with stakeholders; and, a jurisdictional review.

The program review was conducted over several months, from August to November, 2014, by Arctic Willow Consulting, in partnership with staff of the Official Languages Division.

Review of Past Activities

Early Years

The first language celebrations were led by the Nunavut Social Development Council (NSDC), from 2000 to 2002, with funding from CH. NSDC staff in Igloolik named the celebration *Inuktitut Uqauttin*, a phrase in the Igloolik dialect that means “speaking in the Inuit way.” NSDC staff organized celebratory events in Igloolik, timing them with traditional return of the sun celebrations, and they also distributed funds to hamlets across Nunavut to support other communities to hold events. But, NSDC had difficulties managing the follow-up financial reporting of community funding recipients and decided to pass the program over to CH for the following year’s events.

Establishment of the Date and Name

For the 2003 celebrations, CH staff held the events in late spring. But, they decided to hold the 2004 celebration in February again, which coincides with the United Nations' International Mother Tongue Language Day (February 21). It has been held in the month of February ever since then.

In 2005, CH adopted a new name for the celebration because many people expressed concern that the original name *Inuktitut Uqauttin* was difficult to understand outside of Igloolik. The current name of the program, Uqausivut Quviasuutiqarniq, was developed through consultation with communities across Nunavut.

Core Communications Activities

In early years, CH staff used a variety of common communications tools each year to promote the celebration and encourage other organizations to participate, including: media releases; newspaper advertisements; a language week newsletter; web page updates; radio and television call-in shows; participation in a trade show; notices posted on through the Government of Nunavut Helpdesk; and, "fax-outs" to hamlets and other stakeholders. These core communications activities have been repeated each year since then (except for participation in trade shows and the language week newsletter).

Special Promotional Activities

Staff tried a variety of **targeted promotional activities** in the first few years, some with good success and others with some challenges.

In the first few years, there was a particular focus on **engaging young people**. CH worked in partnership with the Department of Education and other organizations on several projects, including:

- A **poster challenge** in which students across Nunavut were invited to submit drawings of what Inuktitut means to them.
- The **Inuktitut Uqauttin Ilinniarvingni School Challenge** in which schools were challenged to create a single project that celebrated Inuktitut. Entries included wall-hangings, video documentaries, posters, story writing, throat singing, drumming, photography, and various art projects.
- Development of a **mascot**, a white fox, intended to promote language initiatives to youth. There was a **mascot naming contest**. The winning name was Aputinguaq ("snowball"). The mascot and the name were intended to be used in future promotions, but were dropped a few



Aputinguaq, the white fox mascot of Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq.

years later as the focus of programming shifted from schools to the general public.

- An **activity book** and accompanying **teacher resource book** for elementary schools featuring the white fox mascot. These were developed and distributed to all K-6 schools and were posted online.
- A simple, one-page **calendar template** for school language week activities was developed and distributed to schools each year. The calendar included a short list of suggested activities (with just the activity name and no description).
- A series of **syllabics posters** and **posters that focused on young children**, encouraging them to speak Inuktitut, were developed and distributed in 2003.
- The **Inuktitut Youth DJ Search** (with Raven Rock CKIQ 99.9 FM and Inuksuk High School in Iqaluit) in 2004. This was a contest for youth in Iqaluit to become the new Inuktitut-speaking DJ on the local rock radio station.
- **Launching new Inuktitut resources**, such as the illustrated Inuktitut flash cards, which were distributed to schools and daycares.

In the early years, staff also developed several contests and awards to **engage the general public**, including:

- An **Inuktitut Literary Contest**, held in 2004 in partnership with Ilitaqsiniq-Nunavut Literacy Council. The contest called for original literary pieces in Inuktitut. Judges were overwhelmed by submissions and were not able to get through them all in time for language week that year. Winners were announced later that year. The winning submissions, along with other selected submissions, were published and released as a collection called *Taimaniit* during the 2005 celebrations. The contest was continued from 2006 to 2008, under the name *Titiraliritti*. Themes included legends, funny stories, amazing stories, and poems for youth. Over 800 submissions were received during those years. CH is still working to share the many stories collected. For example, in 2014, CH released *Iglarnaqtut!* (“Things that make us laugh!”), a compilation of funny stories that were received. They plan to release more stories in the future and to consider options for more writing contests.
- **Language awards** for the promotion and protection of Inuktitut were developed in 2003 in partnership with the Department of Education. Awards were established initially for four categories (adult, elder, youth, and project), but in 2004 the “project” category was removed. In the first year, the nomination process was heavily promoted but only 20 entries were received. After the contest, a media release was issued, announcing the winners and describing their contributions. In following years, two awards were given out in each category—one each for Inuktitut- and Inuinnaqtun-speaking nominees. Responsibility for the language awards program was given to Inuit Qausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit (IUT) in 2009 under the *Inuit Languages Protection Act*. IUT held a banquet for language champions in 2013. IUT has yet to establish an annual routine for

nominations and awards, but intends to make the awards cycle correspond with Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq.

- The **Traditional Word Contest** for GN employees was started in 2004. In the first year, one traditional word was posted on the front page of the GN's internal website each day, selected by the Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit Katimajiit (IQK). Employees were invited to send an email with the meaning of each word by the end of each day. All correct submissions were entered into a prize draw. Participants were encouraged to find out the correct meaning by asking coworkers, researching, or calling elders. The traditional word contest was very popular and has been continued every year since then.
- A **poster campaign** designed for the general public, with distribution to all hamlet offices. The poster themes have generally focused on the value of Inuktut and the connections between language and culture. A new poster has been designed and distributed each year.

Informal Program Review (2005)

CH staff conducted an informal review of the early years of Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq to help them prepare for the 2006 activities. Many of the issues raised then are still relevant today, including: insufficient staff time available to plan and implement promotional activities each year; the need to start planning much earlier in the year; the need to collaborate more with major partners and make annual activities complementary; the need for a budget specific to Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq so that staff can plan accordingly; the challenges of engaging community groups to organize local events; and, the need for increased engagement of senior staff in other departments to encourage government workplace participation and the need for increased engagement from political leaders to encourage organizational and public participation.

Typical Activities in Recent Years

In recent years, the CH's **core annual promotional activities** have included:

- Developing a **theme**, such as the 2014 theme, *Uqausiqput piqqusittinnut sangijjutauvuq* ("Our language keeps our culture strong");
- Developing a **poster** and distributing it to organizations across Nunavut;
- Distributing **boxes of Inuktut resources** to schools and libraries in Nunavut;
- Encouraging **government workplace participation** through traditional word-a-day contests and support from IQK;
- Developing a **media release** that highlights the theme and encourages Nunavummiut to participate in the celebration;
- Distributing **letters to stakeholders**, encouraging participation;

- Participation of the Minister, Languages Commissioner, and senior staff in **phone-in shows** on IBC, APTN, and CBC Radio;
- Posting **links, resources, and activity ideas** on the Department of Culture and Heritage’s website for families, teachers, work places, and community groups; and,
- Sponsoring **increased Inuktitut television programming** in partnership with the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation and Arctic Co-operative Limited, including special archival footage, *Nunatsiavut, Takuginai, Amiqturmiut, and Takujatsat*.

Special Events in Recent Years

CH has also coordinated several special events to coincide with the program.

- In 2010, CH hosted **Uqausivut Atausiujjutivut** (“our language brings us together”), a 5-day summit on strengthening Inuktitut in different spheres of our lives.
- In 2011, the Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit (Inuit Language Authority) hosted the **Inuit Language Standardization Symposium** in Iqaluit, with support from CH.
- In 2012, CH hosted the **Saqqitiriniq Uqausittinnik Showcase**, which brought together over 30 language champions from across Nunavut to exhibit Inuktitut materials they had created. The 3-day long event included presentations and an open house for the public.
- In 2015, CH will host a special **Nunavut-wide conference on language, culture, and identity** in partnership with the Office of the Languages Commissioner.

Typical Activities of Other Organizations and Groups in Recent Years

This review is focused on strengthening the activities of CH, but it is necessary to consider their activities in relation to those of other organizations to see how CH could better support other organizations and expand their activities in complementary ways.

- The **Office of the Languages Commissioner** usually participates in a television call-in show, posts information on the Office’s website, sends out a media release, and holds a promotional contest.
- **Schools** across Nunavut participate each year, with the level of participation varying from year to year and from school to school. Activities include playing more Inuktitut music, inviting Elders in all week, poster contests, and language and culture fairs. Some schools organize a full day of special activities.
- **Nunavut Arctic College** has become very active in recent years, establishing a planning committee to prepare for the event each year. In recent years, the committee has organized a full roster of activities that learners can participate in. The activities typically combine traditional skills along with the related Inuktitut terminology.
- Some **government and Inuit organization workplaces** participate, with typical activities including “word of the day” contests, short lessons for various levels, posting Inuktitut labels around the office, and special guests and country foods.

- Some **hamlets** participate, generally depending on a local language champion to organize activities. The most common activity is to host radio shows about language, with Elders and other community members sharing stories and discussing language-related issues. Other community events described by interviewees include community feasts and workshops, such as workshops on kinship mapping and kinship terminology.
- **Astro Hill Theatre** in Iqaluit has shown Inuktitut language films during Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq in recent years and plans to continue this each year.

Recent Themes and Posters

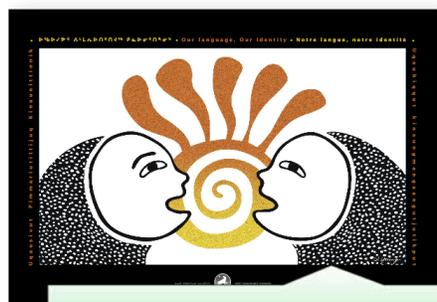
The annual theme is developed in Inuktitut first and then translated into English and French. To date, the themes have been developed by staff of the Official Languages Division. The posters are intended to be artistic and inspiring, enticing people to post them in workplaces, classrooms, and homes and to keep them for many years.



2014
*Uqausiqput Piqqusittinnut
 Sangijjutauvuq*
 Our language keeps our culture strong



2013
*Uqausivut Sangijjuutillavut -
 Uqallaqattarluta Inuktitut*
 Keep Our Language Strong -
 Speak Inuktitut



2012
*Uqausivut Pimmariutittijua
 Kinaunittinnik*
 Our Language, Our Identity

Stakeholder Interviews and Workshop

The program review included **interviews with 15 stakeholders**. During the interviews, participants were asked a series of questions to help them reflect on the value of the program, what has worked well in the past, what has been challenging, and how the program could be strengthened.

The program review also included a **stakeholder workshop**. The purpose of the workshop was to strengthen partnerships between language promotion stakeholders, develop a shared vision for the program, and identify priority actions to strengthen the program. The workshop also involved intense discussion about language maintenance and revitalization more generally, demonstrating the complexity of the program in relation to the broader context of changes in Inuktitut and Inuit culture.

Participants in the interviews and workshop included staff from the Government of Nunavut's Department of Education and Department of Culture and Heritage, Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit (Inuit Language Authority), Office of the Languages Commissioner, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, Kivalliq Inuit Association, Kitikmeot Inuit Association, elementary and secondary school staff, Council of Nunavut District Education Authorities, Inhabit Media Incorporated, TV Nunavut, Pisuk Media, and Iilitaqsiniq-Nunavut Literacy Council. Workshops participants also included Elders engaged in language promotion.

Results

The Value of Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq

All interviewees and workshop participants said that they consider the program to be valuable and would like to see it continued, including those who did not know much about it or had not had many opportunities to participate.

Stakeholders said that the program is valuable because it provides everyone with:

- **Time to focus together** on language issues, even while we are faced other urgent issues every day;
- **Increased momentum** as we address the same issue at the same time;
- **Opportunities to reflect** on the status of Inuktitut and Inuit culture and how we are embracing it in different areas of our lives (personal relationships, home, work, community, school);
- **Increased awareness** of language issues, resources, and activities;
- Much-needed **affirmation** of our society's commitment to Inuktitut and Inuit culture;
- **Increased confidence** in Inuit identity and heritage;
- **Opportunities to strengthen relationships** by spending time together talking about issues that are very important in our society; and,

- **Inspiration to take action** even though language maintenance and revitalization can be intimidating.

Current Strengths

Stakeholders identified all current aspects of the program as strengths, including: the tradition of celebrating and focusing on Inuktitut all together annually; the presence of Inuktitut-related commentary in the media, especially the call-in shows; the availability of web-based resources and activities related to Inuktitut; having a theme and poster each year; and, the mail-out of books and other resources. Stakeholders would like to see all of these activities expanded and complemented by additional activities.

Ideas for Developing the Program

Strong consensus about the following ideas emerged from the interviews and the stakeholder workshops.

1. Collaborate More During the Planning Stage

Due to the complexity of language promotion, the need for community participation, and the limited resources available to spend on the campaign, much more collaboration and communication is needed during the planning stages. This would ensure that messages and promotional activities are embraced by more groups and regions each year.

Workshop participants suggested establishing a **core working group** that would include government staff, Office of the Languages Commissioner, NTI, RIAs, the Inuit Language Authority, and the Department of Education. The core working group could meet in the spring each year to decide on the following year's theme and to plan complementary activities. But, stakeholders do not want to see great funds spent on face-to-face decision-making processes. They would like to see an annual collaborative planning routine that is efficient and affordable, conducted mostly through telecommunications.

Workshop participants also said they would support a wider network of language champions interested in the the program. This could be an **informal advisory network**. Such a network could provide early feedback and support on plans for the year, would organize and participate in Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq events, and could also help with word-of-mouth communications. This network would not require face-to-face meetings. It could be activated through email updates. This network could be maintained through a **contact database** that is expanded each year.

2. Start to Plan Much Earlier (and Communicate with Stakeholders Earlier)

Most stakeholders said that planning and promoting the program earlier in the year would have a major impact on the success of the program. Participating organizations want to be notified of the theme and activities several months in advance each year so they have more time to plan activities. These recommendations were included in the 2005 internal program review. When asked why these simple solutions have not been implemented, some

interviewees explained that it is a matter of prioritizing Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq in relation to the Official Languages Division's many other responsibilities. Staff need to be fully supported by the Department to dedicate sufficient time to the program throughout the year. There was strong consensus that planning should start in the early spring each year, in collaboration with major partners.

3. Strengthen Communications with the Public (and Expand Promotional Activities Overall)

Stakeholders strongly agreed that greatly increased communication with the public is needed to strengthen the program. Stakeholders also agreed that many organizations can contribute to this, not only CH. On the second day of the stakeholder workshop, half of the group developed a communications framework to support CH staff planning along with many ideas for expanding promotional activities. The flip-chart notes from the discussion are included in Appendix D.

4. Establish Special Funds for Community Initiatives (and Non-governmental Initiatives)

Many stakeholders said they would like CH to establish a **small amount of funding for community events**. Although groups can apply for funding through the annual language promotion funds available from the Department of Culture and Heritage, the timing of that program does not fit well with Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq. (The deadline for funding applications is March 31 each year, while most groups do not start planning Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq events until the fall or even later.) Such a fund, and the promotion of activities based on the fund, could contribute to the Department's obligation under the *Inuit Language Protection Act* to promote community-level language initiatives.

Another suggestion is that there could be a **request for proposals each year** for the design and coordination of special, larger-scale and potentially collaborative projects between organizations.

5. Use the Program to Strengthen Territory-wide and International Solidarity on Inuktut

Several interviewees expressed the desire for the program to support territory-wide dialogue and solidarity on language promotion. One interviewee suggested that web-based activities could be used to build connections between groups across Nunavut and increased appreciation of diversity, such as between schools.

Other interviews said they would also like to see connections with other Inuit regions in Canada and internationally. Just as UN Mother Tongue Languages Day helps build solidarity amongst many language groups, so could a special day dedicated to Inuktut and related dialects in NWT, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut, Alaska, and Greenland build solidarity and momentum. This could also support CH to meet the obligations in the *Inuit Language Protection Act* to promote dialogue and co-operation with other Inuit jurisdictions.

6. Expand the Duration of the Program

All stakeholders were asked about the timing and duration of the program. During the interviews, stakeholders expressed a variety of opinions. During the workshop, stakeholders discussed options and reached consensus. They agreed that the program should be extended to **one full month** and that it should continue to be scheduled in **February each year** (to keep with the now well-established tradition).

Benefits of extending the program include increased flexibility for diverse groups participating, options for activities that take more time than a week, and increased opportunity for promotion and engagement overall.

Most interviewees, except for school staff, said that the month of February is a good month for the celebration because it is already a known tradition and is a dark and cold time of year when a celebration is needed. School staff interviewed said that February tends to coincide with many other activities, but that if Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq were extended to a full month they would be able to accommodate at least a full week of activity.

7. Make the Annual Themes About Everyday Life or Specific Language Issues

Most interviewees said that they have not paid much attention to the annual themes, while a smaller number said they appreciate the themes and found them helpful. Teachers said that it is very helpful to have different themes each year to keep students interested.

Many interviewees said that the themes could be strengthened by making them more connected with everyday life or specific language issues. Most interviewees also agreed that some years could have concrete themes (such as “kinship” or “land skills”) and other years could have more conceptual themes (such as “Inuktitut in new media” or “valuing regional diversity”).

Workshop participants strongly agreed that the themes should always celebrate Inuit culture and heritage because pride in oneself and one’s culture is the foundation for language skills. One workshop participant said that the program “should be about being proud of who we are as Inuit first. That’s the foundation for wanting to learn or strengthen the language. If we start with this foundation of confidence, we will learn more.”

Workshop participants developed ideas for themes and core messages that could be used in future years. Their lists are included in Appendix D.

8. Try New Poster Styles and Create Corresponding Digital Posters Each Year

Most interviewees said that they appreciate the annual posters and that they are generally helpful in getting people involved in events in their workplaces, communities, and schools. However, many said that the style of the posters should be changed each year.

Some interviewees said that the posters are geared mostly toward adults and may be too serious to engage youth. To engage youth, the posters should be brighter and include real photographs or youth-oriented art. It was also suggested by one interviewee that youth would be better reached through newer media overall though, rather than posters.

Another interviewee suggested that the annual poster should also be produced as a smaller **digital poster**, small enough to be circulated on the Internet, such as in social media posts and newsletters.

9. Develop More Resources for Key Audiences (Schools, Communities, Families, Workplaces)

Almost all stakeholders said that it would be helpful to have access to more resources to support their event planning. Many interviewees said that it would be helpful to produce **small resource kits** for different groups that include examples of successful activities. Several interviewees said that resource kits should be available online, not just printed. It would also be helpful to have an **online archive** of previous years' resources, activities, and school and community events.

10. Refine the Annual Mail-out of Inuktitut Resources

Some stakeholders were not aware of the annual mail-out of Inuktitut resources. Those who were aware of it generally expressed strong support and said they would like to see it continued, with improvements.

For the **mail-out to schools**, interviewees expressed the following concerns and ideas for improvement:

- Include a more detailed cover letter that explains what is in the package and how it can be used;
- Could provide information sheets, extension activities for different age groups, and vocabulary sheets for each book that is sent out to help teachers use them;
- Could send out class sets of books rather than a great variety of single copies of books could make them more useful in the classroom, especially if accompanied by teacher resources;
- The mail-out should be different every year to spark more interest;
- The books are not always age-appropriate in content, especially for middle school and high school students;
- The syllabics books are not used in Inuinnaqtun-speaking communities and it would be better to send Inuinnaqtun books only;
- Could include resources in other media, such as music, audio recordings of books, and short films or television clips in Inuktitut. One interviewee said, "books are good, but we also need to hear our language."
- Could have content on the internet related to the books sent out that year, such as audio readings, contests, and opportunities to review and respond to the books.
- The books mailed out each year could also be chosen to highlight a specific author, illustrator, or theme.
- One suggestion that emerged through the interviews and was later supported in the stakeholder workshop is that students could be engaged in reading and reviewing and books as part of an organized program (like the Ontario Library Association's highly

successful “Forest of Reading” program). This could support dialogue between schools and regions. It could be accomplished through a partnership between the Department of Education, publishers, and the Department of Culture and Heritage.

- It was also suggested that the books mailed out each year could also be publicized outside of schools and be reviewed in newspapers and on radio. There could be a prize incentive for reviews of books from the public.

The interviews also revealed that the **mail-out to libraries** involves different challenges than the mail-outs to schools. The mail-outs to libraries should be redesigned in partnership with Library Services to customize the process.

11. Continue to Coordinate Contests and Prizes

Almost all stakeholders affirmed the value of contests. A few interviewees lamented that people are not motivated to participate unless there is a prize involved, but others explained that taking learning risks with language can be very intimidating and that fun games and prizes encourage people of all ages. Several interviewees suggested that contests should encourage using Inuktitut in songs, dance, rap, and other performance, not only in writing. School-based program organizers said that regional and territorial contests for students are popular. Workplace-based program organizers also said that contests are an effective way to engage employees. The annual “word-of-the-day contest” was identified by many interviewees as very successful.

12. Expand the Use of New Media and the Arts

Many stakeholders talked about the value of using new media and the arts for language promotion, especially for young people. Nunavummiut, especially youth, need to see Inuktitut connected with their everyday lives and contemporary issues more. New media and the arts provide learners with opportunities to strengthen their language skills by hearing and feeling the language, rather than just by reading or thinking. Many stakeholders said that they would like to see more Inuktitut resources in film, television, video clips available online, podcasts, music recordings, digital books with audio recordings, apps, and digital games. They would like to see video clips each year that teach language skills and inspire people to think about the theme or promotional activities.

13. Identify an Inspiring or Provocative Spokesperson Each Year

Many stakeholders suggested identifying a spokesperson each year, as is done for French language week. The spokesperson could be a learner, teacher, expert, or prominent public figure engaged in language issues or the arts.

14. Continue to Support Language Promotion Grounded in Culture

Many interviewees and workshop participants talked about the importance of grounding language promotion in culture. When asked about examples of successful language promotion activities, interviewees almost always gave examples of culture-based language activities. For example, the College coordinates a full week of workshop options for

Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq, each based on doing or learning a culture-based skill. They explained that this creates a natural space for language acquisition and it also affirms the value of Inuit language and culture. Culture-based programs, with terminology woven in, were identified as the best way to inspire participation in Innuinaqtun-speaking communities.

16. Focus on Families, Children, and Youth

Engaging children and youth should be a priority for the program. Stakeholders identified the need to: engage families with young children to use Inuktitut at home; engage youth through innovative programming that combines contemporary culture, tradition, and language; strengthen relationships between different generations, as this is the foundation of the transmission of language and culture; support creative projects that make Inuktitut “cool” and that promote its use in youths’ lives today; and, support programs that get young people out on the land, learning language and culture skills simultaneously.

Many said that **a list of suggested activities and background information** about Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq should be developed and distributed to schools, day cares, and families along with fun Inuktitut resources for each age group. Some school staff commented that they do language-related activities all year, so they want ideas for how to make Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq activities special. Some interviewees said they want to

A few interviewees said that many youth today are learning Inuktitut as a second language, but that programs are designed as if they are learning it as a first language. Such programs may discourage them. Programs need to be inclusive and non-intimidating. Some interviewees also talked about the need to address the shame that many youth about their skills levels and when they are learning.

17. Encourage More Participation in Workplaces

All interviewees and stakeholders would like to see increased workplace participation.

Some stakeholders described very successful years of coordinating activities in their workplaces, but said that it is always difficult to find the time every year. They said that it is impossible without strong support from managers. Most said that the GN’s “word a day” activities and contests are easy and very popular. When coordinators have had more time, they have tried and found success with many other activities, such as inviting Elders and other guest speakers in to share stories and talk about language, share country foods, post and discuss terminology, offering 15-minute Inuktitut lessons each day for different skills levels, giving certificates to staff who participated in a full week of mini lessons, organizing discussion sessions on terminology or technical issues for language experts, and having “Inuktitut only” times.

Most stakeholders said that it would be helpful if they had reminders earlier in the year and **a resource kit** available online. Some stakeholders also suggested that inter-organizational/interdepartmental events could be organized, such as **one-hour workshop sessions** with prominent figures or on specific topics.

Jurisdictional Review

The purpose of the jurisdictional review was to gain a better understanding of related activities in other regions and to learn from their efforts. We researched the United Nation's International Mother Tongue Language Day and we also conducted a search for promotional language celebrations in other Inuit regions in Canada and Greenland and other Aboriginal language celebrations in Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. Here, we provide an overview of the most relevant programs we found and select ideas that could be adopted and adapted.

Note: Detailed notes from the jurisdictional review are included in Appendix C. We present here the examples we think will be most helpful.

United Nations' International Mother Tongue Languages Day

The United Nations declared February 21 to be International Mother Tongue Languages Day in 1999. The purpose of International Mother Tongue Language Day is to promote the use of mother tongue languages because, as the event web page states, “[l]anguages are the most powerful instruments of preserving and developing our tangible and intangible heritage.” The main annual activities of the UN for International Mother Tongue Language day are:

- Developing an annual theme and poster;
- Releasing a short, inspiring statement from the UN Secretary General about mother tongue language and a longer, explanatory statement about the year's theme from the Director General of UNESCO;
- Including the United Nations' overall calendar of international events;
- Presenting annual awards for work related to promoting mother tongue language, in partnership with The Linguapax Institute (see Appendix C for details);
- Organizing a short conference about the year's theme each year at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, with notes from the discussions posted on their webpage.

UN Annual Themes

The annual themes tend to be about specific language revitalization and language rights issues. For example, the 2014 theme was “Local language and Science.” The UNESCO Director General's statement explained the significance of the theme:

Local languages constitute the majority of languages spoken across our world in the field of science. They are also the most endangered. Excluding languages means excluding those who speak them from their fundamental human right to scientific knowledge.

The United Nations, like the Department of Culture and Heritage, tends to announce the annual theme quite close to the actual event, so it would be difficult to align the Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq theme with the UN theme. But, the UN themes and related

communications provide a good model for creating themes that are provocative, inspiring, and concrete.

Greenland's International Mother Tongue Languages Day Activities

The only official annual celebratory event we found in Greenland is the annual marking of International Mother Tongue Language Day. For February 21 each year, the Greenland Language Secretariat coordinates:

- A ceremony/celebration at a large venue that usually includes traditional artistic performances, storytelling in different dialects, and a reading of the UN Director General's statement in Kalaallisut;
- A media release;
- Facebook and webpage updates; and,
- Statements from political leaders.

Perhaps more could be done in Nunavut to publicize the connection between Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq and International Mother Tongue Language day. This would situate Inuktitut maintenance and promotion work in the context of a global community of mother tongue language activism and strengthen the affirmation of Inuit language and heritage by connecting Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq with Greenland's efforts.

National Aboriginal Languages Day in Canada

Ten years before the UN declared February 21 to be International Mother Tongue Language Day, the Association of First Nations (AFN) declared March 31 to be National Aboriginal Languages Day in Canada. The AFN appears to mostly mark this day with a media release and webpage updates, rather than by supporting specific promotional events. Our Google research showed that some university departments, friendship centres, and First Nations have organized special events for the day over the years, but nothing on a region-wide scale that could be applied to Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq (examples are included in *Appendix C*).

Aboriginal Languages Month in the Northwest Territories

The Government of the Northwest Territories declared the full month of March to be Aboriginal Languages Month in the NWT. The GNWT's annual activities are part of a general increase in the promotion of Aboriginal languages in the last few years, following the release of their Aboriginal Languages Strategy. The strategy supports each language group to develop its own 5-year action plan, allowing for diverse, customized solutions, including local annual events for Aboriginal Languages Month.

The GNWT has tried some territory-wide initiatives, experiencing some challenges similar to Nunavut's in terms of staff capacity, limited resources, and designing messaging and activities that will appeal to diverse groups. They have supported community-led events

with greater success. This may offer a valuable lesson for Nunavut's programming, in that Nunavut's communities also have a great diversity of dialects, needs, interests, capacity, and goals. The territory-wide events can contribute to broad solidarity and momentum, but will always be challenging to design and implement because of diverse needs and interests. A balance of territory-wide initiatives and support for locally developed initiatives is needed.

Most territory-wide initiatives done by the government itself in the NWT are different each year, but usually include:

- Development of a slogan or main concept;
- A media release;
- Statements from leadership;
- Update of web content;
- Radio advertisements across the territory in local languages; and,
- Contests on local radio shows across the territory (with enticing prizes provided to each community by the GNWT, including iPads loaded with recently developed Dene language apps).

Special territory-wide promotional activities done in recent years include:

- Photo-contest featuring traditional activities, with the goal of entrants expressing their culture visually and in words – in both English and an official Aboriginal language;
- “Northern Voices Posters” – A poster series featuring a language champion from each language region; and,
- Bookmarks in each language, with an inspirational saying about community action and language promotion.

The GNWT also supported the NWT Literacy Council to create supportive resources for community-led events and for families. These resources are still available online and redistributed each year. They include:

- An official languages map;
- An Aboriginal language quiz;
- An information package on how children learn languages;
- Ideas kits for adult education programs, families, family literacy programs, schools, and communities;
- Resources in each Aboriginal language, including storybooks and activity guides.
- Bibliographies of publications and other resources in each Aboriginal language.

The focus for Aboriginal Languages Month 2015 in the NWT will be language transmission at home, with an aim to support families to teach children more.

Te Wiki o te Reo Maori – Maori Language Week

Like Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq, Maori Language Week is promoted as a time to celebrate the language and use it more in everyday life. It has been celebrated for over forty years and is part of a much larger promotion effort that seems to have contributed to a major increase in the status and stability of the language, including increased use among youth. It is a week-long event held during the last week of July every year (which is part of the school year in New Zealand).

Regular annual activities led by the Maori Language Commission include:

- Development of a theme or focus area for the year (the focus for 2015 will be engaging parents in using more Maori at home);
- Statements from elected leaders;
- Hiring of celebrity spokespersons, such as a Maori-speaking rugby player and popular Maori-speaking mayor;
- Maori Language Awards in 11 categories, including technology, community, and local government;
- Music videos and album launches by popular Maori artists;
- Highly active social media promotion; and,
- Links to download signs for offices, including a “welcome” sign in Maori.

The Commission’s 2014 multi-platform “word of the week” campaign, called *Te Kupu o te Wiki*, may be of special interest. It was initiated during Maori Language Week and will continue for the whole year. The campaign involves broadcasting one Maori word per week through the Maori Language Week Facebook page, national radio and television media in New Zealand, and on the resource website for Maori Language Week. The campaign is designed to help all New Zealanders build their Maori vocabulary and spark dialogue about language. Such a campaign could be adopted for Nunavut support dialectical awareness, reclamation of terms that have fallen out of use, and skills development for second language learners.

Other organizations, such as libraries, schools, and media outlets, have also made interesting contributions to the event each year, such as online, interactive storytelling programs and “flash mob” events for youth (see Appendix C for details).

In addition to Maori Language Week, there is also Maori Language Day, which is celebrated on September 14 each year. Maori Language Day was the first language celebration in New Zealand. It was extended to a full week to support more promotional activities. Then, it was moved to the month of July to better coincide with the school year. Today, Maori Language Day is still celebrated in addition to Maori Language Week in July. The focus of Maori Language Day is the announcement of language award recipients.

Much can be learned from the well-funded and high profile promotional initiatives taking place in New Zealand. But, a distinction to consider between the Maori initiatives and Nunavut-based initiatives is that in Nunavut the annual campaign has to engage much more diverse dialect groups and communities.

Ideas to Adapt and Adopt

In the coming years, there are several ideas gained from the jurisdictional review that could be adopted and adapted to expand Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq.

- Shift toward **more specific, provocative annual themes** (like the UN's and Maori Language Week) that link Inuktitut with everyday life or raise specific issues related to language maintenance and promotion.
- Seek an **annual statement from the Premier and other high ranking elected leaders**, such as the NTI President, in addition to the Minister. And, **expand the Minister's statement** to be a more provocative and informative explanation of the year's theme, touching on specific issues stakeholders have agreed should be addressed to contribute to language promotion or to celebrate Inuit language and heritage.
- Use **social media and participatory public events** – learning from the work of Maori Language Week (and from small examples from the Francophone community in Yukon, including in Appendix C).
- Hire a celebrity **spokesperson or musician/band** in future years to promote the event.
- **Increase resources to support community-led and community-specific events** building on what has been developed by the GNWT and NWT Literacy Council, including the Northern Voices poster series, support for local radio show contests, and ideas kits for different groups.

Conclusion

A Challenge Worth the Investment

Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq is a celebration—it is also an important tool for dialogue, discovery, and working together toward shared language goals. It can play a significant role in fulfilling the mandate of the Minister of Languages under the *Inuit Languages Protection Act* to promote the use of Inuktitut, language learning, community-level action, public awareness and appreciation of the language and language rights, and awareness of available resources.

Although an annual celebration of language and culture may seem simple on the surface, this program will always be challenging to plan and execute. This is due to the inherent challenges related to: coordinating a territory-wide program for diverse audiences; stakeholder engagement; limited resources; and, most significantly, the complexity of language promotion and revitalization overall, including political intensity and regional diversity in dialects, interests, and needs.

But, staff should not be daunted by these challenges, for they are the very reason the program is worth investing in! The *process* of planning and coordinating the program each year can help to strengthen language promotion in Nunavut overall. It is an opportunity for all stakeholders to strengthen partnerships, take steps to resolve challenges related to dialectal diversity and other regional differences, work inclusively and collaboratively, and support community-based action and partnership building.

Past activities have created a good foundation for developing the program more. This foundation includes the establishment of the program as a well-known annual tradition, the regular cycle of communications and promotional activities, and the implementation of several major events over the years that have contributed to a territory-wide community of language champions. To develop the program more, staff should work to strengthen core processes first and then gradually add new promotional tools and activities for specific groups over several years. This should be done in close collaboration with major partners, including the Office of the Languages Commissioner, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, and other Government of Nunavut departments.

Recommendations

The recommendations are organized into three phases, for 2015, 2016, and 2017 – 2019. Making changes in phases will ensure sustainable and efficient expansion and will provide time for collaborative processes with diverse partners, which is essential for increasing participation and impact. Too much change all in one year could overwhelm staff, would not allow time for strengthening and building partnerships, could create confusion for the organizations and individuals that participate, and may not allow for sufficient reflection and course corrections along the way.

Note: Appendix A provides suggested actions to implement these recommendations.

Changes to Start For UQ 2015

As UQ 2015 is fast approaching, staff should mostly continue the regular annual activities for this year. The following small changes will improve the regular activities and lay the groundwork for more substantial changes for UQ 2016.

1. Establish a **core working group**, including the Office of the Languages Commissioner, IUT, NTI, RIAs, and other government departments.
2. Build an **informal UQ network** of language champions to support planning and promotion throughout the year. Connect the network through telephone and email.
3. Start using **more specific themes** that are linked with daily life or specific language revitalization issues.
4. Publicize **more substantial messages from leaders** each year, including political statements about language revitalization and the year's theme.
5. Create a **digital version of the annual poster** to be posted on partners' websites, newsletters, and in social media.
6. Revise the **annual resources mail-out** to schools and libraries. Specific suggestions for revisions to the school mail-out are included in this report. Changes to the library mail-out should be made in collaboration with Library Services.
7. **Communicate about upcoming changes** for 2016 and beyond with stakeholders through announcements and a newsletter.

Changes to Start For UQ 2016

Staff should prepare to make substantial changes for UQ 2016 to strengthen the core annual program. This work should start in March 2015. To initiate these changes, support will likely be needed from additional staff, including departmental communications staff, and contractors. (Changes that cannot be made in time for UQ 2016 should be the first priorities for UQ 2017.)

8. **Extend the celebration** to the full month of February.
9. Create a **dedicated website** that can be used to promote the event each year and serve as an archive for previous years' information, resources, and records of community events.
10. Create **resource kits** for target audiences, including schools, communities, families, and workplaces.
11. Create a **planning newsletter** for participating organizations (not the general public).
12. Create and publicize a **new funding program** for community-led initiatives.
13. Do a pilot **school-based promotional campaign** in partnership with the Department of Education and others.

14. Expand **government workplace participation** in partnership with IQK.
15. Expand activities in **radio and television** in partnership with Pisuk Media, CBC, and TV Nunavut.
16. Time the **new music contest and book awards** with UQ.
17. Begin to develop **International Inuit Language Day** in collaboration with other Inuit jurisdictions.

Change to Start For UQ 2017-2019

For the 2017, 2018, and 2019 campaigns, CH staff and the core working group should focus on refining the activities introduced for UQ 2016 and stabilizing an annual routine for planning, collaboration, and communications. Then, based on available resources, staff should plan to introduce new activities incrementally, focusing on one or two new initiatives per year, in partnership with other organizations.

18. Try a **new territory-wide, participatory activity each year**, building on successful projects in New Zealand and NWT and made-in-Nunavut ideas.
19. Continue to develop the **annual school-based promotional campaign**, trying variations each year in partnership with the Department of Education and others.
20. Explore new options for **storytelling and writing competitions** for the public and specific audiences.
21. Explore options for **celebrity spokespersons/artists** as done in Maori Language Week activities.
22. Develop a **special campaign for families and children**.
23. Explore options for building a **social media presence** to support all other campaign activities.
24. **Evaluate** impacts of changes since 2015.

