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# Evaluation Report

## *Made in the North*

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Formative and Summative Evaluation of the “Learning through Partnerships: A Pan-Northern Gathering Project”

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## Introduction

This report describes the formative and summative evaluation of the *Made in the North* project, administered by the Yukon Literacy Coalition (YLC) in partnership with the NWT Literacy Council and Ilitaqsiniq - Nunavut Literacy Council.

The evaluators, Brigid Hayes of Brigid Hayes Consulting and Sue Folinsbee, Tri En Communications, were contracted April 1, 2011 to conduct the evaluation of the project initially consisting of a three territory event and the development of a Pan-Northern Network.

Conducting the evaluation and preparing the report would not have been possible without the support of the following people:

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We would also like to acknowledge those *Made in the North* participants who spoke with us in person, on the phone and through the survey.

Sue Folinsbee and Brigid Hayes

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# Evaluation Highlights

Following is a summary of the highlights from the evaluation of *Made in the North*. It includes lessons learned, forum outcomes, and next steps as suggested by participants.

## 1. Planning the Forum: Lessons Learned

### A. Partnership Development

*Made in the North* was the creation of a partnership that involved three northern literacy coalitions. Two of the groups had worked together previously. Although the three executive directors knew each other, had had many opportunities to meet at various events, and had sat on the board of their national organization, working together to create the conference was a new and different experience. The development of the partnership before planning the conference is critical.

1. Take time and ensure resources to build the pan-northern partnership. This includes clarifying expectations about and getting agreement on:
  - roles and responsibilities
  - finances
  - capacity
  - leadership
2. Work to understand each partner's organizational culture and working style.
3. Come to agreement on a common vision, conceptual framework, and values before delving into planning. The leaders from each organization involved need to be on the same page.

### B. The Structure for the Planning Process

1. Create a working group who will do the major work on the conference. Hire a project manager at the beginning of the planning process to be part of the working group. The project manager needs to be available to the working group, understand the content, and be involved in some of the actual work.
2. The working group can take their direction from a steering committee responsible for the event conceptual framework, goals and objectives and major decisions.

3. Consider having a steering committee made up of people within the original partnership as it is difficult to have outsiders on an advisory committee when organizations are working out their own partnerships.
4. Spell out clear terms of reference and roles and responsibilities for both groups.
5. Acknowledge the efforts of the working group.

## **2. Making the Event Relevant and Meaningful: Lessons Learned**

### **A. Overall Impressions of the Event**

The praise for *Made in the North* from participants as exceptional was unanimous. Words used to describe the event included “powerful, respectful, exciting, life-changing, inspiring, collaborative, well-organized, awesome, and moving.” One of the forum organizers heard the best compliment from a participant: “The conference was so good I wasn’t even homesick.”

**Participants indicated that the event was important to them for several reasons:**

- the usefulness of sharing across the three territories the work each is doing; how they are addressing gaps and what is working
- the need for a northern solution because even though the territories are different they are “looking through the same lens”
- working together is a way to solve systemic problems because people tend to work in isolation.
- the North was described as unique with its shared issues much different from the South

### **B. What Worked About the Event Overall**

**Across participants, there was a common set of elements that worked:**

- the relaxed, friendly, inclusive, comfortable environment
- the diversity of cultures and people attending
- the event was well-organized with great choices for workshops, useful table sessions, good informal networking opportunities and cultural events
- participants were able to meet and talk to their counterparts in other territories and colleagues in their own territory

- the event was truly “Made in the North” because of the representation of participants especially Aboriginal northerners, showcasing of northern programs and issues, limits on participants from the south, and focus on northern concerns
- the attention to indigenous languages and cultural diversity

### **C. Suggested Overall Improvements**

#### **The main suggestions for improvement included:**

- repeating the sessions and having more time would have allowed participants to attend more sessions
- having fewer presenters on a panel and/or more time for discussion
- ensuring relevant keynotes given mainly by northerners

### **D. Forum Content**

- Overall, the feedback on the content of the event was unanimously favourable. Content that was important to participants included the focus on literacy, language, and the inclusion of culture and traditional values. The focus on northern issues and programs through the sessions, and speakers was equally important. The sessions were described as “excellent” and of “high quality” with presenters and speakers that were “provocative” and “exceptional.” Northern sessions generally resonated more with participants than the few southern sessions.

#### **Other aspects of the content that were rated highly included:**

- table conversations
- informal networking time
- Paul Andrew’s keynote address
- sessions that focussed on non-formal literacy, PLAR and embedded literacy
- successful initiatives
- the community feast at Dettah

#### **Areas for improvement:**

- more time to talk in table conversations in one’s own region
- handouts and resources for participants on successful models from sessions
- deeper and more sessions on language
- more topics that pertain to youth

## **E. “Made in the North” Focus**

The northern focus of the forum was rated as one of its greatest strengths.

### **The forum was “Made in the North” because:**

- participants were mainly from the North and represented diversity from across the three territories
- stories, programs and initiatives were based in the North
- the forum showed what works and what doesn’t in the North
- the forum focused on northern literacy issues
- there was limited southern participation according to what could be absorbed by the critical mass and to those who wanted to learn about the North

### **Areas for improvement:**

- have even more representation of diverse cultures and include traditional food
- interpretation was great but have it for other indigenous languages as well
- show the different languages around the forum room as a sign of respect
- have sessions in Aboriginal languages with interpretation

## **F. Event Organization and Design**

Participants identified the organization and design of the forum as key strength.

### **Participants indicated the forum:**

- had a vision that was inclusive and developmental
- was well thought out
- had a good mix of presentations and opportunities to talk
- was inclusive of diversity which allowed for the strengthening of literacy and language
- promoted innovation and innovative ideas
- had good pacing, flow , and timing

### **Areas for improvement:**

- prepare people for what is going to happen at the forum before they come
- introduce the regions and who is at the forum at the beginning
- have more informal and experience learning
- have active health breaks

- have a designated place other than the bar where people can meet and network

## **G. Event Tone and Atmosphere**

The forum was described as having “passion, enthusiasm, and focus.” The tone and atmosphere were described as “respectful, relaxed, positive, friendly, and safe.” This allowed for everyone to participate openly which led to a variety of thoughtful opinions being shared and the development of a community feeling.

### **What contributed to the positive atmosphere and tone was:**

- the design of the forum
- the cultural richness
- welcoming participants
- the informal atmosphere

The planning team echoed the participants’ thoughts about the tone. In the words of one working group member: “We set an intention to set a warm and welcoming space and that’s why it worked so well; in all our interactions we were putting that out and so people came to give of themselves. [The] most significant thing is to invite people to this kind of space.”

## **H. Event Logistics**

Overall participants reported favourably on the logistics. They liked the hospitality, the food and described hotel rooms as comfortable.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- sometimes hotel and session rooms were too hot
- air circulation was sometimes a problem
- have one laptop per session and have them loaded ahead of time
- have more technical support

## **3. Forum Outcomes**

The major outcomes of the forum at this point in time include:

### **What participants learned:**

- about successful northern initiatives to address learning and essential skills—a northern approach to learning with a common language

- confidence in own unique approaches to literacy and learning in the North including connections to traditional culture
- commonalities across the territories
- meeting and reconnecting with friends and colleagues and making new connections
- ideas they can use in their work
- the importance of non-formal learning and embedding literacy into non-formal programming
- the importance of indigenous languages to identity
- the importance of workplace literacy and having a northern approach that is holistic
- a better understanding on the part of government representatives of the differences across the territories and the challenges of the North

### **Participants' top outcomes in order of importance:**

1. the opportunity to network with others
2. the identification of effective practices for the North
3. the identification of shared challenges and solutions across the territories

### **New and strengthened partnerships and relationships:**

- 60% of survey respondents connected with people outside their usual network after the forum
- one person hired a consultant from the forum
- a business partnership was formed as a result of the forum
- the coalitions have been invited to a college meeting on planning their conference
- the learnings from the forum are informing work on new policy directions in one territory
- the learnings from the forum are being used to implement new approaches to reading
- one person will be using approaches to language revitalization learned from other territories
- the literacy coalitions have a better understanding of what goes into an authentic partnership among the three

### **More promotion of literacy and essential skills across the North:**

The media coverage from the forum included:

- three print articles
- two television interviews

- three radio interviews

#### 4. Suggested Next Steps

Participants consistently indicated that they wanted conversations and networking to continue after the forum both in their own territory and across territories. Participants see follow up as very important to keep up the established momentum and continue with the work that was started at the forum.

##### **They are hoping for:**

- a web site where they can access session presentations and be able to share their work and resources
- the forum final report
- a newsletter
- continuation of networking through Skype and blogs
- another forum like this one in 2 or three years
- policy responses that meet real needs
- more non-formal project based learning and more traditional activities integrated into learning

## Chapter 1 – Project Overview

The three northern literacy coalitions – the Yukon Literacy Coalition (YLC), NWT Literacy Council, and Ilitqasiniq - Nunavut Literacy Council – came together in 2010 to plan an event which was originally called “Learning through Partnerships: A Pan-Northern Gathering.” This event was one of several “regional” events that the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES), a division of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), had encouraged literacy organizations to undertake.

The groups proposed to “design, organize, and host a three day Pan-Northern learning event in the spring of 2011 in Yellowknife, NWT.” Learning would take into account both best practices from across Canada and the unique cultural and geographical needs of the three territories.

The challenges of building a partnership among the three organizations, working collaboratively over thousands of kilometres, and creating a uniquely Northern event, pushed back the date of the event to October 2012.

The project proposal acknowledged the literacy challenges faced by Northerners and the efforts that each territory was making. It made the case for a Pan-Northern Gathering to maximize learning for those working in similar yet different geographical locations and to break down the isolation faced by Northern adult educators, instructors, and community-based organizations.

OLES was the lead funder for the project with the three territorial governments providing \$25,000 each. OLES’ policy did not allow multiple recipients and so the responsibility for the contribution agreement and funds was given to the Yukon Literacy Coalition with the other two organizations listed as partners.

The OLES project funding began on December 16, 2010. Initially, the project had a one-year duration. Two extensions were requested and approved by OLES so that the end date of the project was December 31, 2012.

### **A. Main Objectives**

The project’s objectives were itemized in the funding proposal as:

- To explore and develop partnership building
- To share knowledge and best practices in the areas of capacity building through essential skills development

## **B. Secondary Objectives**

The project proponents also offered the funding agency, OLES, the opportunity:

- To showcase several tools that have been developed
- To hear about the challenges facing LES development in the North and some of the best practices and resources that have been developed in response to the challenges

For the organizations themselves, the project would also be an opportunity:

- To network and exchange information with administrators, government officials, policy makers, business, and labour
- To increase the organizations' ability to create and maintain a vibrant, dynamic literacy and essential skills infrastructure for North

## **C. Target Audience**

The original proposal named the following target audiences:

- Territorial literacy coalitions
- Adult educators, instructors, practitioners
- Other literacy and essential skills providers from outside of the territories
- Administrators, government officials, policy makers, business and labour

## **D. Expected Results**

The three coalitions envisioned the following results coming out of the Gathering:

- Greater collaboration between territorial literacy organizations and practitioners
- Partnership development with employers and other non-literacy organizations
- Increased sharing of best practices and resources
- A better understanding of the state and needs of literacy in Northern Canada
- Sharing of best practices which will improve service delivery to adult learners
- Delivery of workshops that include participants from the northern regions of Canada
- A final report that includes:
  - A summary of the presentations
  - A summary of the proceedings and discussions
  - Gaps and barriers identified
  - Best practices identified
  - A summary of workshop participant evaluations

- An evaluation report (conducted by external evaluators)

Initially the event was called a “gathering.” This term was subsequently dropped and the event was merely called *Made in the North*. Throughout this report, the terms “gathering”, “forum”, and “event” will be used interchangeably.

## **E. Pan-Northern Network Project**

From the outset, the three literacy coalitions had envisioned one tangible outcome of the Gathering – the development of a network of those active in literacy and essential skills activities in the North. To this end, in March 2011, Ilitaqsiniq - Nunavut Literacy Council made an application to the federal government’s Rural Secretariat.

The proposal outlined a project to “develop a multi-sectoral, collaborative partnership network to build the capacity of stakeholders across the North to foster action to address issues of poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage in Northern communities. The focus will be investigating gaps, barriers, and innovative solutions to addressing Northern First Nations and Inuit youth and adults’ participation in post-secondary education and training, and labour market engagement.”

Objectives were listed in the project proposal as:

- To develop and sustain an active network to increase knowledge transfer and partnership opportunities between the Northern literacy coalitions, government, colleges, employers, unions, communities, First Nations and Inuit organizations and other key stakeholders
- To develop an online community of interest centered on a knowledge repository that supports and enables learning through sharing, the continual exchange and creation of new knowledge, and collective problem solving amongst members of the partnership network

The proposal was originally submitted to the Rural Secretariat on March 7, 2011. In the spring of 2012, the three coalitions learned that funding for the network would not be forthcoming.

As a result, overt efforts to organize a formal network were temporarily abandoned. Nevertheless, many partnerships and potential collaborations were initiated at the event itself. Participants in the survey completed a month after the event, listed a number of follow-up activities that had taken place. These activities will be discussed later in this report.

## **F. Additional Funders/Sponsors**

The following organizations provided additional financial and in-kind support to the event:

- Conoco Philips – lunch sponsorship
- First Air – discounts on flights
- Arctic Cooperatives Limited – partial support of the Dettah feast
- Aurora College – sponsorship of all College participants
- Yukon Literacy Coalition, NWT Literacy Council and Ilitaqsiniq - Nunavut Literacy Council – staff support and financial contributions

The next chapter provides information on the evaluation process as well as the evaluators' analysis for the *Learning through Partnerships: A Pan-Northern Gathering project*.

## Chapter 2 – Project Evaluation

The three literacy coalition partners chose the team of Sue Folinsbee, Tri En Communications, and Brigid Hayes, Brigid Hayes Consulting to lead the evaluation. The work would cover both a formative and a summative evaluation of the project to create the Pan-Northern Gathering and Network. The contract began April 1, 2011 and was originally to end September 30, 2012. With the re-scheduling of the event, the contract will end February 28, 2013.

The evaluators created an evaluation guide and presented it to the executive directors of the three literacy coalitions in July 2011. The guide included objectives and evaluation questions.

From the outset, the evaluators flagged as a challenge the evaluation of the development of a Pan-Northern Network. The evaluators provided an evaluation plan to track the development of the network (formative) and whether the goal of creating the network was met (summative). They did not create a plan to evaluate the operation of a network because its creation would be contingent on the will of the event participants and beyond the scope of the project. They did however expect to create such a plan once a network was established. These plans were abandoned once it was clear funding would not be forthcoming for the establishment of the network.

### A. Evaluation Objectives

The evaluation would examine how well the project met its objectives. The evaluation plan was built on the following set of objectives:

#### **Learning through Partnerships: Pan-Northern Gathering**

- explore and develop partnership building
- provide a networking, information exchange and dialogue opportunity for stakeholders in the North
- share knowledge and best practices in the areas of capacity building through essential skills amongst Northerners and others
- showcase OLES tools that have been developed
- identify challenges around LES development in the North
- identify best practices and resources developed to address challenges in the North

## **Development of a Pan-Northern Multi-Sectoral Network**

- create and sustain a multi-sectoral network to share information, resources, and knowledge that will improve the ability of communities to address issues, challenges, and opportunities. The network may not necessarily be an organization but may be a virtual network
- foster cooperative action to address issues of poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage in Northern communities
- investigate the gaps, barriers, and solutions to addressing Northern First Nations and Inuit youth and adults' participation in post-secondary education and training, and labour market engagement

## **B. Overarching Evaluation Questions**

The evaluators created and presented a series of overarching evaluation questions to guide the evaluation. Following discussions with the three executive directors and the working group, the final set of questions were agreed to.

### **1. Formative Evaluation Questions**

#### **1. Pan-Northern Gathering:**

- 1.1. How representative is the advisory committee of Northern stakeholders and how well is it working to achieve project goals?
- 1.2. How is the workshop content being developed and how relevant is it to all the partners and Northern needs?
- 1.3. How easy/difficult has it been to attract participants for the workshop?
- 1.4. What are the strategies that are working to make the Gathering a success?
- 1.5. What are the greatest challenges in putting the Gathering together? How have they been overcome?
- 1.6. What are the expectations of the process and the outcome of the Gathering for each coalition?
- 1.7. How is the relationship between the three coalitions developing and working?
- 1.8. What, if any, changes have happened on the project?

## **2. Pan-Northern Network:**

- 2.1. What is the process going to be for developing the Multi-Sectoral Network and how is it working?
- 2.2. What steps are being taken to make the Multi-Sectoral Network reflective of Northern stakeholders?
- 2.3. How, if at all, will the Network be expanded beyond the three northern territories?
- 2.4. What is the vision for how the Network will work cooperatively to carry out the deliverables of the project after the Gathering?
- 2.5. To what extent was the Gathering able to lead to the development of a Northern network?
- 2.6. What are the plans and objectives of the Northern Network?
- 2.7. How reflective is the Northern Network of stakeholders in the three territories?
- 2.8. How will the network be expanded beyond the three northern territories?
- 2.9. What, if any, changes have happened on the project?

## **2. Summative Evaluation Questions**

### **1. Planning and implementing the Gathering**

- 1.1 To what extent did 1) the working group, 2) the advisory committee members, and 3) others participate in the planning of the Gathering? What was the impact of their participation?
- 1.2 To what extent did this project funding leverage other money and in-kind contributions?

### **2. Diversity of participants along with the relevance of the Gathering to them and their engagement in it**

- 2.1 Was the target number of participants met? Why or why not?
- 1.2. How successful was the project in reflecting the diversity of cultures in the territories?
- 2.3 To what extent were participants engaged in the Pan-Northern Gathering?
- 2.4 How relevant was the content of the Gathering to participants?
- 2.5 How relevant were the tools that OLES showcased to a Northern context?

### **3. Identification of gaps, barriers and solutions**

- 3.1 To what extent did participants identify the gaps, barriers, and solutions to addressing Northern First Nations and Inuit youth and adults' participation in 1)

post-secondary education and training, 2) labour market engagement, 3) families and 4) communities?

3.2 What strategies were discussed at the Gathering that worked well worked in different communities? What factors contributed to success? What resources are available or needed? How well have the strategies been shared?

3.3 In what ways did the Gathering identify needs and how to address them in a way that is unique to the North?

3.4 In what ways are the issues of the three territories related or not?

#### **4. Impact of the Gathering**

4.1 What was the impact of the Gathering on the learnings of participants?

4.2 What was the impact of the Gathering on relationships and collaboration among participants?

4.3 What potential new initiatives have been identified because of the Gathering?

4.4 To what extent did the Gathering affect the views of policy makers and influence policy?

4.5 In what ways did the event address each territory's needs?

4.6 What was the role of the territorial governments in the Pan-Northern Gathering? How did they help out?

4.7 In what ways has the project developed the relationship among the three territorial literacy coalitions?

#### **5. Pan-Northern Network**

5.1 How representative is the Northern Network of stakeholders in the three territories?

5.2 What are the plans and objectives of the Northern Network?

5.3 How will the Network be expanded?

#### **6. Overall project**

6.1 To what extent were all project objectives and deliverables carried out?

6.2 To what extent were the funders satisfied that the objectives were carried out?

6.3 What changes happened on the project and the reasons why?

### **C. Indicators of Success**

At the outset of the project, one of the evaluators met with the three executive directors to brainstorm what they would consider the indicator of success. These indicators guided the

development of the evaluation tools and were used to answer the evaluation questions in this report.

**The Northern Gathering will have been successful if:**

- we have a representative group (business, government, practitioners) attending for each of the three territories <sup>1</sup>
- participants learn from each other
- there are strong steps for the Network
- participants are enthusiastic and leave on a high
- there is evidence that the Gathering facilitated the development of relationships, partnerships and friendships among participants
- conference participants want another Gathering
- there is better understanding among sectors—business, labour and government
- there is evidence we have built our capacity as organizations
- we have increased our breadth and our relationships as a group
- we stay in touch with other colleagues
- there are new, collaborative projects in the territories
- there is interest in the Gathering from the media
- we identify and agree on the successes and challenges in the three territories
- ideas, strategies, approaches come out of the Gathering that influence policy
- there is more funding from businesses for projects

## **D. Evaluation Methodology**

In order to answer the various evaluation questions, the evaluators developed a number of tools, which were subsequently reviewed by the three executive directors and the working group.

The final set of tools used during this project to collect data was:

1. Check-ins with the three executive directors (three times) and working group (twice) during the planning phase (Appendix 1)
2. Interviews with the three coalition executive directors (Pre- and post-forum)
3. Evaluators' Interviews during the forum (27 interviews conducted)
4. Individual Session Evaluation Forms
5. Presenters Evaluation Forms

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<sup>1</sup> Although there will be attendees from Newfoundland and Labrador, this success indicator does not apply to Newfoundland and Labrador.

6. Daily Evaluation Form for the 2<sup>nd</sup> day (80 respondents – 57%)
7. Final Evaluation Form (100 respondents – 71%)
8. Evaluators' Observations during the forum
9. Post-Forum Interviews (14 interviews – executive directors, working group, coalition Board members, funders, sponsors)
10. Post-Forum Survey to all participants (139 invitations sent; 57 responses – 41% response rate) (Appendix 4)
11. Wrap-up Session with executive directors and working group

Evaluation tools may be found in Appendix 2 while Appendix 3 contains the results from the individual sessions, presenters, daily and final evaluations.

The forum provided daily prizes as well as a final prize for those completing their evaluation forms. This contributed to the excellent response rate throughout the forum. The 71% response rate for the final evaluation was due in part to the prize of an iPad.

The evaluators met face-to-face and by telephone with the three executive directors (3 times) and the working group (2 times) over the course of the planning phase.

The evaluators attended *Made in the North*. During the event, they observed the various proceedings, conducted spot interviews with 27 participants, and took part in daily de-briefs with the three executive directors, the working group, forum moderator, and communications consultant. They also oversaw the collection of the various participant evaluation forms.

On the day following the closing of the event, the evaluators met with the three executive directors and the working group as one group and then as two separate groups (executive directors and working group). During the full session, discussions were held about what worked and what didn't work. The separate sessions reviewed the summative evaluation questions (see previous section for these questions).

During the first month after the event, interviews were held via telephone with each of the three executive directors, the members of the working group, a member of each of the three coalitions Board of Directors, and sponsors and funders.

Evaluators reviewed all the documentation collected over the course of the project in order to prepare this report.

## **E. Evaluators' Overall Analysis**

### **1. Introduction**

This section provides the evaluators' overall analysis on how well this project met its goals and objectives along with the indicators of success as set out by the three coalitions. This overall analysis seeks to answer our overarching evaluation questions. This overview does not examine the questions related to developing a formal network for the reasons already stated.

### **2. Summative evaluation – results and outcomes for the event**

#### **a) Overall project objectives**

Evidence shows that overall, expected outcomes and project objectives were met and indicators of success generated by the coalitions were achieved.

The overall project met its primary objectives of 1) To explore and develop partnership building and 2) to share knowledge and best practices in the areas of capacity building through essential skills development.

#### ***Explore and develop partnership building***

The three coalitions engaged in partnership building to develop and hold a successful Pan-Northern forum that was immensely successful and exceeded expectations. They learned that partnership building is a complex undertaking that takes time, patience, and resources. Time and resources are needed to build trust, get to know each other's commonalities and differences, and uncover assumptions. These aspects of partnership building are necessary to develop a common project vision and a smooth process for carrying out the project. The lessons learned have served the coalitions well for other and future collaborative partnerships in which they are engaged. The Pan-Northern partnership successfully brought together participants from diverse sectors and from across the territories. The coalitions now have a heightened reputation with their funders, organizations they work with, and future potential partners.

#### ***Share knowledge and best practices in the areas of capacity building through essential skills development***

The forum was successful in sharing best practices in essential skills development in particular. This was evident in that the most highly rated difference to participants' work

was that they learned more about literacy and essential skills in the North. In addition, the identification of best practices was one of the top three outcomes for participants surveyed after the forum.

The project mostly met its secondary objectives of:

- The project proponents also offered the funding agency, OLES, the opportunity 1) to showcase several tools that have been developed and 2) to hear about the challenges facing LES development in the North and some of the best practices and resources that have been developed in response to the challenges.
- For the organizations themselves, the project would also be an opportunity 1) to network and exchange information with administrators, government officials, policy makers, business and labour, and 2) to increase the organization's ability create and maintain a vibrant, dynamic literacy and essential skills infrastructure for the North

***Showcase several (OLES) tools that have been developed***

Each territorial literacy coalition had a display table at the forum. OLES resources were displayed at this table.

***(For OLES to) hear about the challenges facing LES development in the North and some of the best practices and resources***

OLES indicated that the forum was useful learning in terms of both understanding key Northern issues and the differences among the territories. There is a better understanding of what it takes to ask these partners to collaborate.

***Network and exchange information***

This outcome was rated as the top forum outcome by those participants responding to the follow-up survey. Furthermore, the importance of networking, connecting and sharing information as an outcome was a predominant theme during the forum as well. Participants met with people from different sectors in their own territory, the other two territories and from across Canada

***Increase ability to create and maintain a vibrant, dynamic literacy and essential skills infrastructure for the North***

Participants attending the forum wish to have this kind of network. They would like to be able to share the work they are doing, access forum materials and communicate with

others through a variety of virtual tools. Additionally, participants have emphasized they want to have another forum in two to three years in a different territory to see what kind of progress they have made on issues raised at the forum.

The coalitions have set up a web site and Facebook page and plan to send out an e-newsletter four times a year in conjunction with maintaining an on-line space. These efforts will be publicized through Twitter, Facebook, and each organization's websites. They are also hoping to get funding to begin implementing a virtual network.

**b) *Planning and implementing the forum***

A strong partnership developed among the three territorial literacy coalitions. Although an advisory committee was struck, the three executive directors realized a clear mandate for this group was lacking. They re-organized the planning process, revising the advisory committee's mandate and creating a working group to plan the forum. This had a positive impact on the success of the forum.

The three coalitions leveraged \$25,000 from each of the three territorial governments. In addition, other sponsors contributed in-kind or meals. However because the nature of the event changed and the Rural Secretariat funding did not come through, finances were a significant challenge. This meant the coalitions had to contribute in-kind staff time and cash.

**c) *Diversity of participants along with the relevance of the gathering to them and their engagement in it***

While the original target of 200 participants was not met, this was the result of a deliberate decision by the three coalitions. The initial plan was for each participant to pay a registration fee and cover their own travel and accommodation. The coalitions changed this to a 'by invitation' event subsidizing travel and accommodation. This resulted in 140 participants.

The forum excelled in reflecting the diversity of cultures of the territories in who attended. Participants came from a range of community-based organizations, the colleges, government, and business. They represented adult educators, youth, Inuit organizations and First Nations. The forum also integrated language and traditional culture throughout the design of the forum. This included key notes, cultural events, opening night entertainment, prayers, plenary sessions, and panels.

Participants were extremely engaged because the forum was Northern focused and inclusive. All rated it highly. They got to learn more about their counterparts in their own and other territories, and their ideas were expanded. They shared successful strategies and challenges and gained confidence in their own Northern approach. They learned more about

how literacy and traditional culture can be integrated into learning and how language revitalization is a critical issue across the territories.

The majority of participants have connected with others outside their usual network since the forum and some have already formed new partnerships. Participants want to see this forum happen again in 2-3 years.

**d) Identification of gaps, barriers and solutions**

Participants identified issues and gaps at the forum but focused mainly on strategies that were working. Some of the issues that participants identified were language loss, few opportunities to share what is working across the North, the need for alternatives to formal learning at the college and ways to make literacy and essential skills learning appropriate to the North. An identified gap was around how workplace literacy and essential skills programming could work and be successful in the North.

In terms of solutions, participants learned more about how to make literacy and essential skills relevant in the North. They learned about successful non-formal approaches that integrate traditional culture and embed literacy and essential skills. The importance of indigenous languages and language revitalization were highlighted. Participants learned about the importance of workplace education and the need to have a holistic approach. Participants got concrete ideas they can apply to their work.

**e) Impact of the gathering**

The opportunity to network at the forum has led to strengthened and new relationships and partnerships. 60% of survey respondents connected with people outside their usual network after the forum. Others have begun to build relationships and engaged in new partnerships. For example, a business partnership was formed as a result of the forum.

In another instance, the coalitions have been invited to a college meeting on planning their own Pan-Northern conference. The learnings from the forum are informing work on new policy directions in one territory and are being used to implement new approaches to reading in another case.

**3. Formative evaluation – planning and partnership building**

The three northern literacy coalitions attempted to plan the Pan-Northern forum at the same time they were trying to figure out and build a partnership amongst themselves. The coalitions' expectations of the partnership was that they would stronger and have more

opportunities as “one voice” and would have more opportunities to work together as a Pan-Northern partnership in the future. The northern coalitions saw themselves as having unique needs, challenges, and solutions different from their southern colleagues.

One of the greatest challenges centred around having the time and resources to develop this partnership. The three coalitions had not worked together on a large complex project before and had different organizational cultures, working styles and visions for what the Pan-Northern event would look like. They needed to work out their different assumptions around the vision for the forum along with roles and responsibilities and leadership. In addition, they had different levels of capacity to contribute to the project. Different levels of capacity created tensions and unevenness on the project.

Originally, the three executive directors were responsible for planning the forum. This proved difficult because the executive directors did not have the time to do this on top of all their other responsibilities. When the structure changed to having a project manager with a working group, the momentum of planning the forum shifted in a positive direction. The working group in consultation with the three executive directors designed a forum that was inviting, truly Northern focused, and that overall exceeded the expectations of participants and themselves.

The coalitions reported that three meetings were held with the advisory committee. The advisory committee was made up of members from colleges, one federation of labour, territorial governments, and one businessperson. The advisory committee provided advice on presenters and participants. The advisory committee did not work as well as it could have because the coalitions were still working out their partnership and not clear on what they wanted from the committee. Through this project, the coalitions learned it is more effective if the executive directors of the three coalitions involved act as an advisory committee.

The strategy of ‘by invitation only’ and making the forum practice and policy based worked to serve the needs of the diverse participant base. The forum also had four pillars:

1. Learning for Work, Learning for Life: Workforce and Workplace Skills Development
2. From Nain to Arctic Bay, From Deline to Old Crow: Non-formal, Community-based Skills Development Programs
3. Do My Literacies Count as Literacy? Literacy & Essential Skills in Our Multi-cultural, Multi-lingual Regions
4. Formal Adult Education in the North: Challenges and Innovations in College Classrooms Today

These four pillars were the organizing scheme for the formal sessions, panels, and table conversations. This also worked very well. In addition, the forum integrated indigenous languages and traditional cultural throughout the forum which contributed to its success.

The participants invited represented a diversity of cultures, languages, sectors, and territories involved. The participant base was more expansive than originally outlined in the proposal and this was a successful strategy. The event was truly Northern in its focus, design, content, participant base, and approach. Southern participation was kept to a minimum.

The forum worked by invitation only and most participants were subsidized to attend. The forum reached full capacity at 140 based on available funding. Many other people would like to have attended; this was not possible given the available funding.

The project met its objectives for the most part. The three coalitions responded to issues as they arose and re-organized their planning as necessary. The actual event was an unqualified success, exceeding the expectations of many participants.

There were many lessons learned through this project. The next chapter outlines the planning process, its challenges, and successes.

## Chapter 3 – Planning the Pan-Northern Event

### A. Introduction

This section documents the highlights of the planning process used by the three coalitions to put the Pan-Northern event together. It examines the evolution of the planning process over the life of the project and documents what worked about the process and what was challenging. Major lessons learned are highlighted.

### B. Highlights of Project Chronology

This project was originally a one year project with a start date of January 1, 2011 and an end date of December 31, 2011. The project was granted its first extension from Dec. 31, 2011 to August 31, 2012. The second extension was granted from August 31, 2012 to December 31, 2012.

Activity	Timeline	Participants
First face-to-face planning meeting held in Yellowknife with three coalitions.	February 1-3, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 coalition EDs</li> <li>- One staff from YLC</li> <li>- One staff from Ilitaqsiniq</li> </ul>
Second face-to-face meeting held in Cambridge Bay with three coalitions to plan Pan-Northern event.	June 7-11th, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 coalition EDs</li> <li>- One staff from YLC</li> <li>- Two staff from Ilitaqsiniq</li> <li>- One project evaluator</li> </ul>
Advisory committee teleconference	October 11th, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 coalition EDs</li> <li>- One staff from YLC</li> <li>- project advisory committee</li> </ul>
Third face-to-face meeting held in Whitehorse with three coalitions to plan Pan-Northern event	November 17-19th, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 coalition EDs</li> <li>- Two staff from YLC</li> <li>- Two staff from Ilitaqsiniq</li> <li>- One project manager</li> <li>- One project evaluator (one day)</li> </ul>
<i>Start of first eight-month project extension from OLES</i>	<i>December 31st, 2011</i>	
Fourth face-to-face meeting held in Vancouver with three coalitions to plan Pan-Northern event	Jan 31- Feb. 3rd, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 coalition EDs</li> <li>- Two staff from YLC</li> <li>- Two staff from Ilitaqsiniq</li> <li>- One project manager</li> </ul>

Activity	Timeline	Participants
		- One project evaluator (one day)
First set of dates established for the forum	April 23-26th, 2012	
Advisory committee teleconference	May 14, 2012	- 2 coalition EDs - One staff from YLC - project advisory committee
Fifth face-to-face meeting held in Yellowknife with working group.	June 2 -5 <sup>th</sup> 2012	- One staff from YLC - Two staff from Ilitaqsiq - One project manager
Sixth face-to-face meeting held in Vancouver with three coalitions to plan Pan-Northern event	Sept. 4-6 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	- 3 coalition EDs - One staff from YLC - One staff from Ilitaqsiq - One project manager - Event moderator
<i>Start of second four-month project extension from OLES</i>	<i>August 31st, 2012</i>	
Pan-Northern event takes place in Yellowknife along with wrap up evaluation meeting the day after.	October 22- 26th , 2012	- attendees from three territories and other places - project team
Official project end date	December 31st, 2012	

## C. Highlights of the Planning Process

### 1. Planning structure

Initially the three executive directors saw themselves as working together to manage the project. Each executive director would also coordinate the work in her territory around travel and registration. Each coalition had received an allocation to cover staff costs. Because the event was being held in Yellowknife and the task of organizing the event was quite large, the NWTLC used its allocation to hire an event organizer. Other roles included project evaluators, a communications person, and forum moderator. An advisory committee was formed with representatives from territorial governments, colleges and other sectors.

At the third face-to-face planning meeting in November 2011, this structure changed. A working group was formed with a project manager hired. The working group initially

included two staff from Yukon Literacy Coalition, two from Ilitaqsiniq - Nunavut Literacy Council and the new project manager. Later one staff person from the Yukon Literacy Coalition left the committee. There was no representative from the NWTLC on the working group, although the NWT-based conference organizer participated in most working group meetings. The executive directors became more of a steering committee with the working group of staff carrying out the “nitty gritty” of planning and organizing the conference.

## **2. Summary of face-to-face meetings**

### *February 2011 – Yellowknife*

The coalitions held their first face-to-face planning meeting for the Pan-Northern Gathering in February 2011 in Yellowknife. The meeting focused on a broad discussion of the key elements of the event as expected during initial planning. This included goal, theme, audience, roles and responsibilities, finances, a timeline, dates for the event and potential presenters. The coalitions were interested in broadening the event to make links between workplace literacy and family literacy with a broad audience that went beyond workplace stakeholders. At this point in the process, the group was also hoping to receive funding from the Rural Secretariat to build a Northern Network after the conference.

The parameters for an advisory committee and its members were agreed upon along with costs for travel in each territory and leveraging other dollars from territorial governments. Dates for the event were discussed.

### *June 2011 – Cambridge Bay*

The June meeting built on earlier discussions from the February meeting. The hotel was booked for April 23-26<sup>th</sup>, 2012 and the planning meeting went into more depth around the content, organization and other details of the conference. An evaluation team was hired for the event so evaluation parameters and details were also discussed at the meeting. Other topics discussed by the group included translation and interpretation, financing travel, and communications. The group held a conference call with the conference organizer to discuss logistics around the conference hotel and travel.

### *November 2011 – Whitehorse*

The November meeting began with a large group of the three executive directors and four staff working together. During the start of the meeting, it became clear that people had different ideas about the concept of the conference. Furthermore it also became evident that trying to manage the project as a collective was not working and that the executive

directors did not have the time to carry out all the needed activities. At that point, a working group of staff with a project manager as point person was struck. Once the working group was struck, the project began to move forward in a more systematic way. The group developed a process to work together with clear roles and responsibilities with the executive directors working more as a steering committee. In this meeting, the working group was able to start moving ahead on a conceptual framework.

It also became clear at this meeting that it was not realistic to have the event in April 2012 as originally planned. The executive directors approached OLES about and were granted a four month extension. The new dates for the Pan-Northern event became October 23-26, 2012.

#### *January – February 2012 – Vancouver*

The working group and the executive directors met again in Vancouver. A great deal of work had been completed before the meeting. This included a draft communications plan, themes for the event, and goals and objectives, a word mark and a title for the event. The event working title was *Made in the North: Policy and Practice for Skills Development*, which was finalized as *Made in the North: Policy and Practices Exchange on Skills Development*. By this meeting, the focus had moved from philosophical discussion to practical activities such as logistics and planning the details of the event content and promotional activities. The project manager developed a detailed work plan for planning the event, which took the project from January to December 2012.

Each working group members had specific roles. One YLC members was in charge of logistics and finance. Two members—one from Ilitaqsiniq - Nunavut Literacy Council and one from the YLC were responsible for the event content. Another member from Ilitaqsiniq - Nunavut Literacy Council was responsible for communications. These roles changed when one member from YLC left the committee. Then the two staff members from Ilitaqsiniq - Nunavut Literacy Council became responsible for putting together the conference content.

After the January meeting, the working group began to meet by teleconference once a week to discuss their work. From this time to the next meeting face-to-face meeting in June, the group worked on the details of the conference in every domain. Regular calls were also had with the three executive directors and the project manager to get agreement on key decision points that came out of the planning sessions.

#### *June 2012 – Yellowknife*

The project manager reported that the June meeting in Yellowknife was an “intense” working group meeting. The working group went through every detail they could think of

for the Pan-Northern event. The products that came out of it were tasks lists for the executive directors and the working group, a detailed work plan, content day, and revised themes, etc. The meeting gave the working group a good sense of direction on tasks left to do. The working group also met with the executive director of the NWT Literacy Council to review their direction. This was followed up later at a teleconference call with all three executive directors.

*September 2012 – Vancouver*

The executive directors along with three members of the working group and forum moderator met in Vancouver. Final details for the upcoming seven weeks before the event was to take place were reviewed. This included communication messages and tools, invitations, event content, and general tasks.

## **D. Key Changes in the Project**

Several changes took place during the course of the project that affected the planning phase. These included:

- The lack of funding from the Rural Secretariat meant that the Pan-Northern Network could not be launched.
- The change in the number of participants. Initially the target was 280 – 300 participants. Ultimately, the target became 120 due to the decision not to charge fees but rather to subsidize most delegates. The final tally was 140 participants including speakers.
- Originally, the project was to be coordinated by the three executive directors with the support of an advisory committee. The advisory committee was struck but did not play as prominent a role as anticipated.
- The executive directors created a working group to carry out the day-to-day planning and hired a project manager. Their role then became more of an overseer one.
- A forum moderator and communications consultant were also added to the team.
- Staffing was to be the responsibility of one of the three coalitions. With the addition of a working group, staff from other coalitions were assigned, resulting in an in-kind contribution from those coalitions and challenges in managing other projects.
- The original dates for the forum were April 22 – 26, 2012. This was changed to October 23 – 25, 2012 due to planning and funding challenges.
- A website was initially planned to launch September 2011. It was not launched until just prior to the event itself.

## **E. What Worked Well in the Planning Phase**

### **1. The opportunity to develop a common voice**

The coalitions agreed that they had many similar issues and a common set of values. As such, they indicated that they are a natural grouping. Working in partnership to plan the Pan-Northern event has allowed them to “compare notes”, act in a united way, and provide a united front on key issues. The united front is important because the values, ways of working and issues are very different in the North than the South. In addition, working together provides more opportunities for meeting collectively with important stakeholders. Gaining a better understanding of each other’s coalitions will help all three work together in the future. The planning process has allowed the coalitions to develop some common understandings. The present project has led the three coalitions to collaborate on other complex Pan-Northern projects.

### **2. Skilled and committed working group**

In November 2011 at the Whitehorse face-to-face planning meeting, a project manager was hired and a working group struck with staff from two of the coalitions. The executive directors became more of a steering committee responsible for key decision making. There were some initial bumps around clarity of roles, accountability, decision making, and communication between the project manager and the executive directors. These bumps appeared to be worked out over the duration of the planning process. Everyone saw the working group with a project manager as a positive step to moving the planning of the Pan-Northern Gathering forward. One of the executive directors remarked early after the working group was formed: “We have a bright, smart working group and a project manager. We have confidence in them. They have provided a good overview and are really focused.”

With the formation of the working group, a conceptual framework was worked out and the planning moved from philosophy to hands on and practical. As the project progressed, the working group took on all the details and the original bumps were worked out in terms of communications and accountability between the executive directors and the working group.

### **3. Unity of team**

Despite the challenges of planning the Pan-Northern event, everyone related to the planning team noted that people worked in unity to do everything that was needed whether it was their responsibility or not to make the event a success.

## **F. What was Challenging in the Planning Phase**

Although expressed from different perspectives, there was almost complete agreement from the coalitions on the major challenges in the planning process.

### **1. Time and resources to develop the partnership**

The three coalitions wanted to develop a true partnership and work collaboratively to develop and implement the project. This took a lot more time and financial supports than they anticipated or received. As a result, the project became behind with respect to its original timelines. OLES granted two extensions to the project along with an extra \$50,000 for the second extension.

There was a great deal of negotiation that needed to happen among the coalitions because they had different ways of working, diverse understandings of the focus of the conference and multiple ideas on how the conference would roll out. These different understandings slowed the planning process down. For example, two of the coalitions thought the forum would focus on policy where the third thought it would be more geared to practice. This was eventually ironed out when these two ideas were joined in the forum conceptual framework.

The NWT and Nunavut literacy coalitions had worked together on large projects in the past. However, this was the first time the three coalitions had worked together in partnership on a large complex, project. There were also different assumptions about how the overall project would be managed. The Yukon Literacy Coalition thought that the three coalitions would work collaboratively to manage and undertake the project while the other two coalitions believed that the Yukon Literacy Coalition, as the recipient of the funds, would take more of a lead and provide the staff support.

The staff in the three organizations who ultimately planned the event also had different working arrangements, decision making processes and reporting relationships with management in their respective organizations.

In terms of resources, the coalitions acknowledged their capacity within the scope of the project was limited given the great deal of partnership work that had to happen first. They also acknowledged that they were helping to build each other's capacity by working together—also taking more time. The executive directors recognized there was an unevenness in resources and opportunity among the three coalitions making it difficult for one of the coalitions to offer as much. This situation made it difficult to have an equal partnership. It created tensions in that there was either a feeling of having to contribute and

intervene too much or conversely a feeling of not being included, respected or involved in some of the decisions.

Isolation and distances across the North also added to the difficulty in building relationships. To schedule meetings to build these relationships, the coalitions often had to organize meetings around other projects because they did not have the travel money to do it on this project. This situation created pressure to accomplish the work on all the projects in these meetings in a short time. In addition, communicating through teleconferences and by e-mail to develop the partnership was also a difficulty in terms of time and capacity.

In the words of one of the executive directors: “We had to go through our process to be on the same page and build trust. We needed a year to build our business.” The three executive directors agreed that they needed more time, support and funding if they are expected to work as partners.

## **2. Initial project planning structure**

executive directors and their staff indicated that the original idea that the executive directors would collaboratively manage, coordinate, and design the Pan-Northern event was unrealistic and unworkable. The executive directors simply did not have the time to take on such a huge undertaking nor did they have the needed “hands on” experience. For several meetings, the discussion of the event stayed at a conceptual level with no real agreement or decision on a final conceptual framework for the event. Some comments indicated that initial meetings were not as effective as they could have been.

The coalitions put together an advisory committee. Members came from territorial governments, the colleges, one federation of labour, and one employer. The advisory committee met three times during the planning process. The coalitions agreed that it was premature to have a project advisory committee for a number of different reasons. First, it was difficult to engage the advisory committee when the coalitions were still working out their own partnership. They were not ready to solicit opinions from the advisory committee. Second, there was no clear role for the advisory committee and not enough attention paid to it. Furthermore, advisory committee members may have brought a perspective that was not broad enough to help the forum meet its objectives of inclusion from every sector. The major task that the coalitions could see for the advisory committee was to identify participants and presenters for the Pan-Northern event.

### **3. Working group issues**

Working group members indicated that overall, they worked well together and both enjoyed and learned a lot from the experience. However, they also noted that their work was stressful for a number of reasons.

One concern of the working group was that when they started their work, the three coalitions had not made a decision and were not in sync around the event concept. For example, they did not agree on whether the event was a policy or training one. Nor had they agreed on including indigenous languages as a focus at the event. The working group indicated that they were without clear direction at the beginning of their formation as a group.

Capacity was an issue in terms of both resources and experience. Working group members were generally not expecting to be involved in the planning of the event to the extent that they were because of the initial planning structure with the executive directors in charge. The magnitude of the work meant they had to work long hours and their other work suffered. The executive directors acknowledged how overworked staff members were and noted they were seriously underfunded for staff. In addition, most members did not have a lot of event organizing experience and certainly not of the complexity and enormity of this Pan-Northern event. They were learning as they went.

Other difficulties were around staffing of the working group. In one case, it was difficult when one member left the group because of philosophical and personal differences. In another case, one coalition did not have a staff person on the working group. This meant that its staff was not part of the relationship building with the other two coalitions.

Other concerns were that working group members did not always feel safe, supported or respected for their work, ideas, and tasks they had been asked to take on. They also noted they would have appreciated more acknowledgement for the effort and time they put into planning and executing the Pan-Northern event.

### **4. Project finances**

Project finances proved to be challenging in a number of ways. The first challenge was that the funding from OLES did not cover the true cost of the project. Secondly, project dollars from the Rural Secretariat did not come through. In addition, costs were higher than planned. Even with contributions of each territorial government of \$25,000, and sponsors, the project still came short. Altogether, the coalitions contributed \$260,619.67 (in-kind and cash) dollars. Iilitaqsiq - Nunavut Literacy Council contributed \$227,949.00, and NWT

Literacy Council contributed \$55,441.34. Aurora College also contributed \$40,000.00 to bring staff to the event. Altogether, the OLES funding leveraged over \$431,000.00 in additional cash and in-kind contributions.

These extra dollars and in-kind contributions were needed because of additional staff necessary to work on the project, meetings to build the partnership and plan the Pan-Northern event and the cost of covering travel for participants.

Airline routes do not allow for direct trips between territorial capitals. There was no easy way for the three executive directors and the working group to meet. Travel for participants was expensive. Yukon participants came on a chartered plane saving money and time by avoiding flying via Vancouver.

## **G. Overall Lessons Learned in the Planning Phase**

This section articulates the major lessons learned for planning future projects. Although there were many smaller lessons, we articulate the two most important lessons that relate to the planning process.

### **1. Need for adequate project resourcing**

The coalitions agreed that if funders expect them to work in partnership on large, complex projects, they need to be adequately funded to do so. They also need extra time to build the partnership before getting to the planning stage of a project. They needed to figure out how to work together and clarify their assumptions about roles and responsibilities on the overall project. They need to work to understand the different cultures of their organizations, the capacity of each, and some of the differences in how they do their work. Building the partnership first with the necessary resources and time lines would allow the coalitions more ability to come to agreement on a common conceptual framework with common foundational values before the planning for the Pan-Northern event took place.

### **2. The structure for the planning process**

Closely linked to the first lesson learned is the idea that a project manager and a working group were needed from the very beginning of the event planning process. A full-time project manager would be able to ensure working group members implement the vision for the project. This person would have the time to connect with members and do some of the work. A project manager needs to have an understanding of the content and the context.

This structure would allow the executive directors to be the advisory group for the project and set direction for it. Overall direction would include the executive directors being on the same page with respect to goals and objectives, clear parameters and a concept for the event that the working group could then implement. This structure could eliminate the need for a formal outside advisory committee.

The next chapter discusses the reaction of the participants to *Made in the North*.

## Chapter 4 – Relevance and Interest of the Event to Participants

This chapter reports on how relevant and interesting the event was to those who attended. It examines all the different components of the event to identify what worked and what could be improved for another time.

More detailed information about the participants' evaluations of the individual sessions and the overall forum may be found in Appendix 3.

### A. Overview of *Made in the North*

The *Made in the North* forum opened on the evening of October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012 and finished on the afternoon of October 25<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the forum was to share innovations about adult learning practices, programs, and policies across the three territories. The forum also intended to facilitate and support mutual learning, problem-solving and creativity and build partnerships for action. The main focus of the event was having conversations. There were four moderated conversation rounds and four rounds of breakout sessions (23 sessions). The breakout sessions focused on mostly Northern programs and issues around community-based programming, language revitalization, and workplace education. In addition there key notes and plenary panels throughout the forum. On Wednesday night, there was a community feast at Dettah, a Dene community twenty miles from Yellowknife. All three territories showcased traditional dancing, drumming, singing, and games.<sup>2</sup>

Conference delegates were individually selected to participate in the forum. This was important success factor for the forum in that participants felt committed to participate. At the same time, there were many other people who could have been invited. 140 participants attended *Made in the North*. In one territory, invitees truly did not understand what the invitation they received was for and declined to come. These same invitees asked later on, why they had not been invited. In this case, a better process for inviting people and explaining what the forum was about was needed.

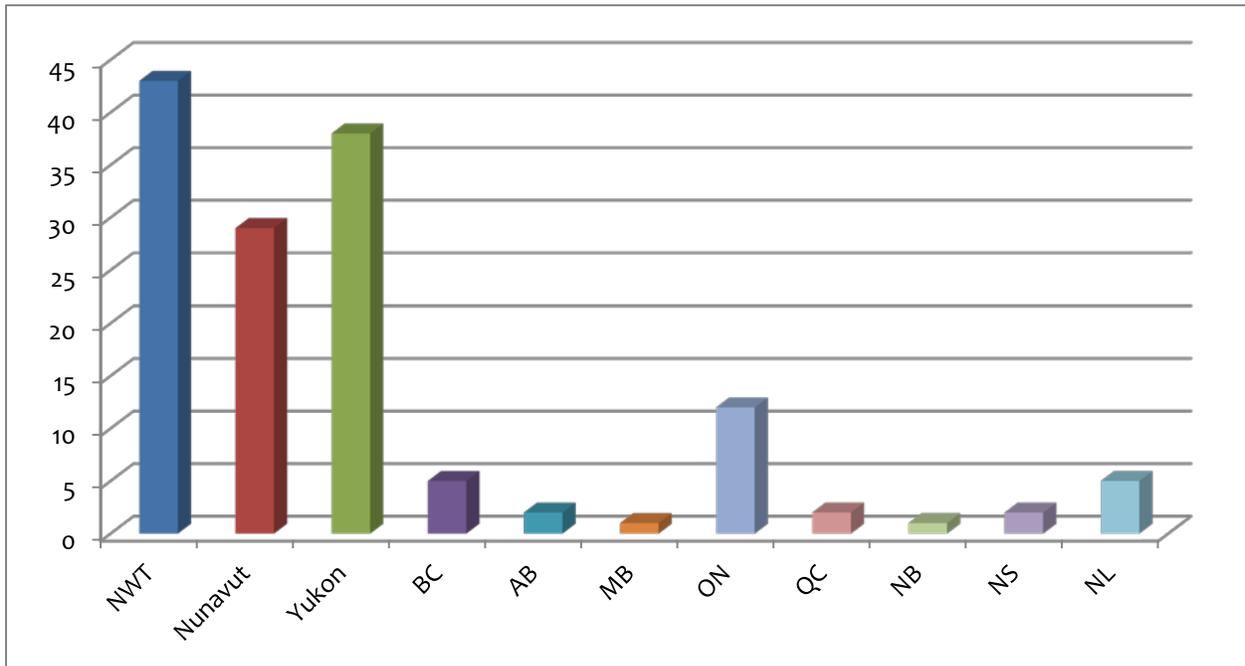
Early in the planning process, the three coalitions reached out to the Newfoundland and Labrador Literacy Council in an attempt to include participants from Labrador. This resulted in four participants from Labrador.

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<sup>2</sup> See forum program available at <http://www.madeinthenorth.ca/>.

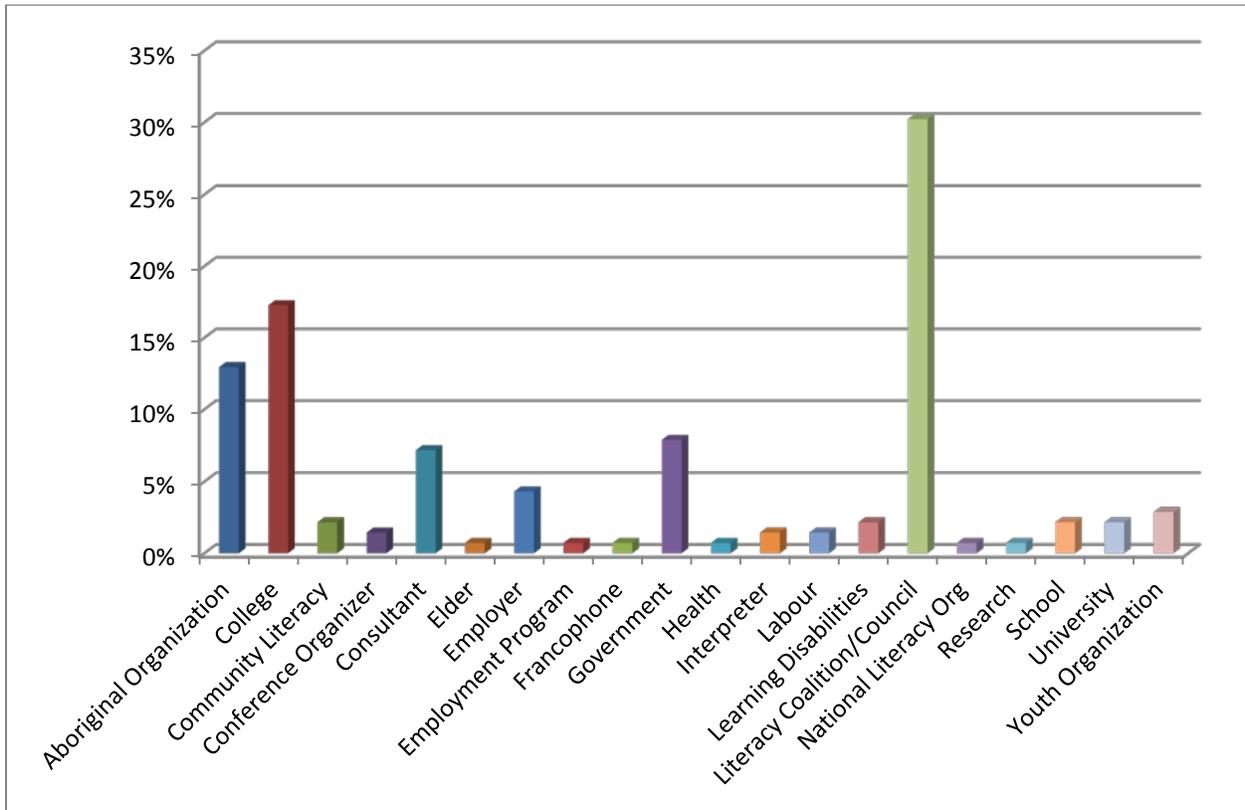
Overall, 30 participants came from outside the territories. These included several speakers, workshop presenters, representatives of other provincial literacy coalitions, some national organizations, and forum support consultants. Non-Northerners accounted for 21% of the participants (Figure 1).

**Figure 1 – Made in the North Participants by Territory and Province**



There was a mix of participants from educational organizations, community groups, adult educators, government officials, policy makers, business, and labour. Figure 2 displays the type of organization/role that participants hold.

**Figure 2 – Made in the North Participants by Type of Organization/Role**



## B. Overall Impressions of the Event

*Made in the North* participants had the opportunity to provide their feedback on the event throughout the three days through spot interviews and written evaluation forms during the event and at the end. They also had the opportunity to comment a month or more after the event through a Survey Monkey questionnaire and some follow up interviews.

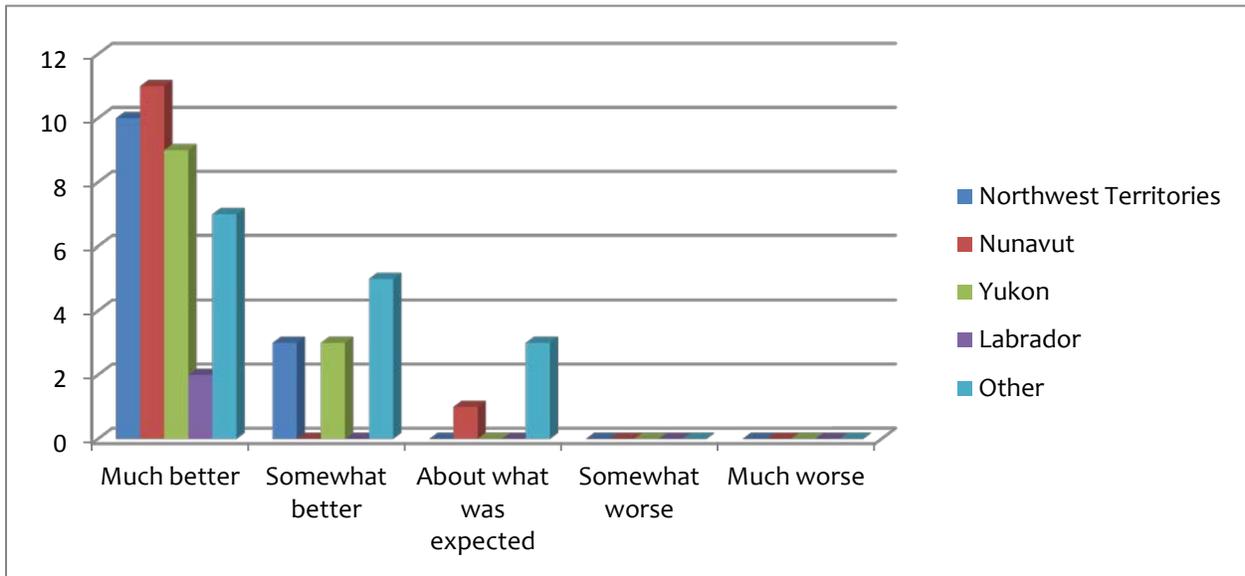
The praise for *Made in the North* from participants as exceptional was unanimous. Words used to describe the event included “powerful, respectful, exciting, life-changing, inspiring, collaborative, well-organized, awesome, and moving.” One of the forum organizers heard the best compliment from a participant: “The conference was so good I wasn’t even homesick.”

## 1. Participant Comments

- *Paul Andrews moved me. He set the tone for the conference.*
- *It's good networking and hearing people's stories. You can take information back to your communities. It's promoting new ways of doing literacy relevant to the North.*
- *[The forum is] well organized and interesting. The session of language revitalization was very powerful and moving.*
- *Everyone is friendly and open. I have never felt so connected.*
- *There is no other venue to bring people together. We need a Northern solution. We deal with resources that are not Northern relevant. We can compare notes across territories and we are building a network.*
- *I liked the range of workshops from high tech to traditional. There was something for everyone.*
- *I met people in my own territory and learned about neat programs and I made good connections.*
- *This forum shows us that we should seek forgiveness rather than ask permission. I feel emboldened to try new things.*
- *This is the best organized event I have been to so far. Lots of time to talk and not bombarded with information. It lends itself to reflection and learning.*
- *Everyone can share and feel valued and respected.*
- *It shows that what literacy in the North means that there are many Literacies including oral traditions.*
- *Very respectful to have interpreters.*

The responses from those who responded to the follow-up survey are shown in Figure 3. Over 72% said it was better than they had expected.

**Figure 3 – “Was the event better than what you expected, worse than what you expected, or about what you expected?” number of responses by territory**



Participants indicated that the event was important to them for several reasons. They noted the usefulness of sharing across the three territories the work each is doing, how they are addressing gaps, and what is working. The need for a Northern solution was underlined because even though the territories are different they are “looking through the same lens.” working together is seen as a way to solve systemic problems because people tend to work in isolation. The North was described as unique with its shared issues much different from the South.

One member of the planning team said, “We have an inferiority complex in the North. What I saw was that we moved away from that complex. It culminated in people saying ‘it’s not made in the North; we are making it in the North.’”

#### **4. What worked about the event overall**

Across participants, there was a common set of elements that worked. They appreciated the relaxed, friendly, inclusive, comfortable environment that was set. The diversity of cultures and people attending was cited as important. The event was described as well-organized with great choices for workshops, useful table sessions, good informal networking opportunities, and fabulous cultural events. Participants were able to meet and talk to their

counterparts in other territories and colleagues in their own territory. They talked about shared goals, challenges, and successful programs.

From a participants' perspective, the event was truly "Made in the North" because of the representation of participants especially Aboriginal Northerners, showcasing of Northern programs and issues, and focus on Northern concerns. Comments indicated that those who attended or presented from the South were viewed as respectful.

## **5. Suggested overall improvements**

The main suggestion for improvement focused on the amount of choice there was with respect to sessions. Repeating the sessions and having more time would have allowed participants to attend more sessions. Participants indicated they missed great sessions because there were "other equally great sessions."

Other ideas for improvement centered on panel discussions. Participants noted that there were often too many presenters and not enough time for discussion. Fewer presenters or longer sessions were the recommendations to address this situation. Some participants also felt that a few keynote speeches were not relevant and would like to see more keynote speeches made by Northerners.

The planning team agreed with the idea of repeating sessions or having them longer. They indicated that interpretation would take more time in a session and that perhaps sessions also had too much packed into them. They also raised the cultural perspective of not cutting people off especially if Elders are telling a story.

Other recommendations included having other northern areas such as Nunavik and Nunatsiavut represented at the event, and more senior people from government attend.

## **C. Forum Content**

Overall, the feedback on the content of the event was unanimously favourable. Content that was important to participants included the focus on literacy, language, and the inclusion of culture and traditional values. The focus on Northern issues and programs through the sessions, and speakers was equally important. The sessions were described as "excellent" and of "high quality" with presenters and speakers that were "provocative" and "exceptional." Northern sessions resonated more with participants than the few southern sessions. Session evaluations showed that the large majority were consistently rated highly.

Table conversations and informal networking were rated highly. Some suggestions for improving table conversations included more time to talk in one's own region, and a reporting back from the Thursday table conversations from the three territories and Labrador on the top four messages they would like the other regions to hear.

Participants appreciated Paul Andrew's opening keynote as a foundation for setting of the tone of the conference. Sessions rated highly were those that focused on non-formal learning programs, PLAR and embedded literacy. People were pleased to see examples of success. They would have liked handouts and resources for these models. Participants would also like to have seen more and deeper sessions on language especially on language protection from Nunavut. Another idea was to include more sessions and topics that pertain to youth.

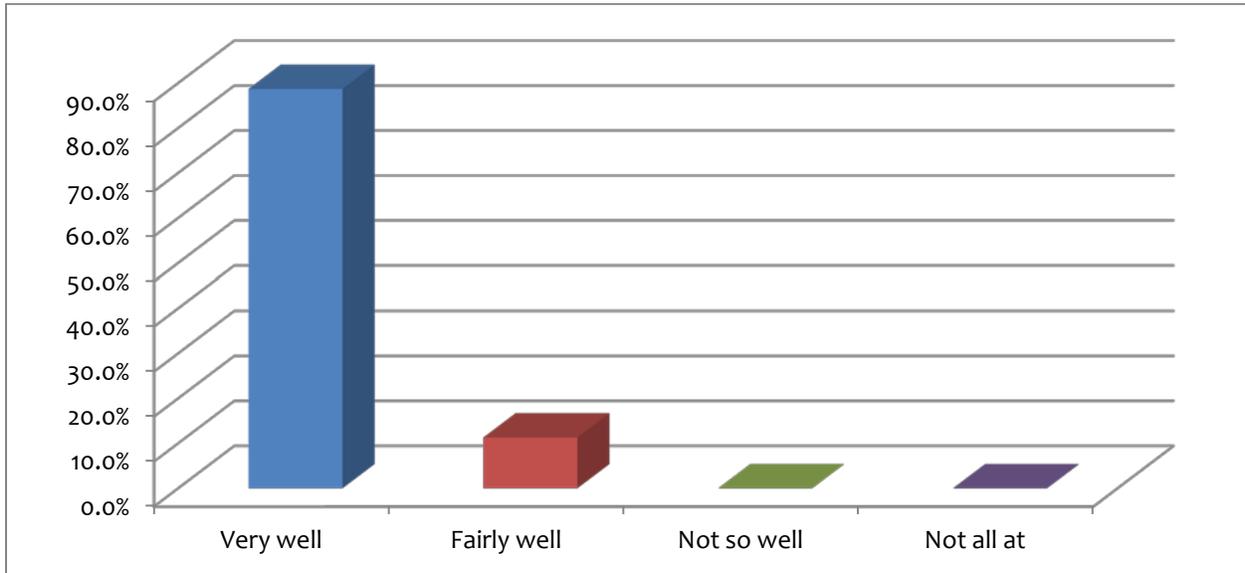
Other important content included the cultural events such as the feast at Dettah and the morning prayers. Comments indicated that in the future it would be important to have the hosting territory at the community feast entertain first.

#### **D. “Made in the North” Focus**

The Northern focus of the forum was rated as one of its greatest strengths. The forum was “Made in the North” because of participants represented diversity from across the three northern territories, the forum addressed Northern issues, and was held in the North. Participants valued meeting new people from across the three territories, sharing with them, and hearing about great programs and initiatives from across the North. In addition, stories told were based in the North. The forum was seen as realistic and applicable to Northerners. It showed what works and what doesn't in the North, and focused on Northern literacy issues. The comment “I don't know how it could have been done better,” reflects the overall feedback on the Northern focus of the forum.

Figure 4 confirms the strong sense that the event reflected a Northern perspective. A month following *Made in the North*, 88.7% indicated “very well” in response to the question “How well did the event reflect a Northern perspective?”

**Figure 4 –“How well did the event reflect a northern perspective?” by percentage**

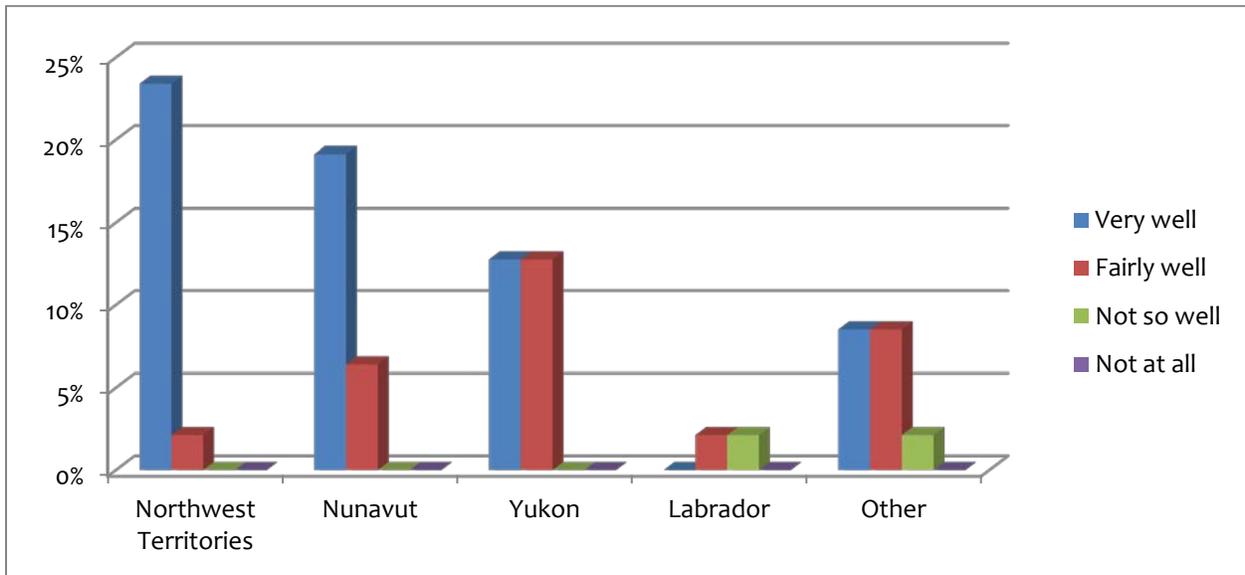


Some participant comments indicated that even more representation of diverse cultures and “citizens” would have been good along with having traditional food. This theme was also confirmed by event organizers.

Participants commented positively on the interpretation for Inuktitut speakers and would have liked to see this for other indigenous languages as well. A suggestion was to show all the different languages around the room in the forum as a sign of respect. Another was to have one session entirely in an Aboriginal language to truly appreciate the multilingual environment.

Figure 5 displays how respondents felt about how well *Made in the North* reflected their own territorial interests. Those from the NWT and Nunavut felt the event reflected “very well” the perspectives and interests of their territory. Those from the Yukon were evenly split between saying the event reflected the perspectives and interests of their territory “very well” and “fairly well”.

**Figure 5 – “How well did the event reflect the perspectives and interests of your territory?” by percentage**



The planning team reiterated the point that the forum was for Northerners. However, the coalitions indicated that southern literacy organizations wanted to attend. To keep the integrity of the Northern focus, southern participation was limited to provincial literacy organizations and close national partners. As one working group member noted, “I think when we are doing this kind of work there are a certain number of people [southerners] who can be absorbed by the critical mass—and I think we were just at that number. That percentage can be welcomed and learn.”

## **E. Event Organization and Design**

Participants identified the organization and design of the forum as a key strength. Participants indicated the forum had a vision that was inclusive and developmental, and was well thought out. It had a good mix of presentations and opportunities to talk and there was time for informal networking. The forum was inclusive of a diversity of cultures from all three territories, which allowed a strong focus on literacy and language, and language revitalization. Innovation and innovative ideas came out the forum design. They also noted that the pacing and flow were good. Timing overall and scheduling of breaks was also commented on positively.

Some suggestions for improvement included preparing people for what is to happen at the forum before they come. Other suggestions were to introduce the regions and who is at the forum at its beginning. Some participants would have liked more time for informal and

experiential learning. Others suggested having more active health breaks and a designated gathering place other than the bar where people could meet informally.

## **F. Event Tone and Atmosphere**

The forum was described as having “passion, enthusiasm, and focus.” The tone and atmosphere were described as “respectful, relaxed, positive, friendly, and safe.” This allowed everyone to participate openly which led to a variety of thoughtful opinions being shared and the development of a community feeling. What contributed to the positive atmosphere and tone was the design of the forum, the cultural richness, welcoming participants and the informal atmosphere.

The planning team echoed the participants’ thoughts about the tone. In the words of one working group member: “We set an intention to set a warm and welcoming space and that’s why it worked so well; in all our interactions we were putting that out and so people came to give of themselves. [The] most significant thing is to invite people to this kind of space.”

## **G. Event Logistics**

Overall participants reported favourably on the logistics. They liked the hospitality, the food and described hotel rooms as comfortable. There were a few issues with respect to logistics. One was heat. Sometimes hotel and session rooms were too hot. Air circulation was a problem for some. Another concern was noise issues and acoustics. One problem centred on technology. A suggestion was to have one laptop for each session that is loaded up before the presentation and more technical support.

Feedback from presenters indicated that they felt adequately briefed about the forum to prepare for their session. They also felt they had received what they needed for their sessions (equipment, room set-up) although a few mentioned some of the technical issues they encountered. Presenters rated participant engagement as meeting or exceeding their expectations.

The planning team explained that some of these technical problems occurred because of fewer staff and new management at the hotel. The hotel was the best hotel in town and only hotel that could accommodate this size event. The single technical person was run off his feet. They admitted that in the future it would be good to push harder for presentations to be sent in ahead of time.

Having executed a successful event, the next chapter looks at the outcomes and results.

## Chapter 5 – Outcomes and Results of the Event

This chapter focuses on the outcomes and results of the forum. Outcomes and results are based on feedback and information received through final evaluations at the end of the forum and interviews and surveys in the two months following the event.

### A. Participant Comments

- *My eyes were opened to much I was not aware of—people and programs and challenges they faced.*
- *Colleges are looking outside the box. They had not thought about something outside packaged curriculum for the workplace.*
- *It was really good value – it’s benefiting the adult educators; there was a whole policy level – sat with the policy makers so that was great.*
- *Our government was well represented at the session, which was good because we’re developing a new strategy – good way to learn what was happening in other territories so it can contribute to our strategy.*
- *People went and heard about things happening across the North. People saw that other people were doing things. But don’t know if that will translate into change.*
- *I got to explore and celebrate our “Northernness” and focus on our students. We are working with and for Northerners and that needs to be our focus.*
- *It was great to see young people from Nunavut fluent in their language and the fact that there were interpreters at the event. In the Yukon we are not as far ahead as NWT and NU because our languages are not official.*
- *[An important outcome was] Influencing the bureaucrats and funders to see what we do is more than touchy feeling and nice time.—sewing. The funders had a better idea of the benefits.*
- *We rolled out of the Gathering to go to a literacy summit. I was able to share everything from the gathering there.*

## **B. What Participants Learned Overall**

Overall participants indicated they learned that there is a wealth of successful initiatives that address learning and essential skills across the North. They gained confidence in their own unique approaches to literacy and learning. Even though each territory is unique, there is a great deal in common across them. Participants noted they learned a lot about and from other jurisdictions. Some felt that their own directions were confirmed by what they heard at the forum. Meeting and reconnecting with friends and colleagues was seen as just as important as meeting new like-minded people that participants can connect with.

The large majority of participants indicated that they have new ideas they can use in their work, and an interest in continuing to connect with people they met.

## **C. Literacy and Learning in the North**

Specifically participants learned more about literacy and essential skills and how wide that definition is in the North. The large majority indicated they have a better understanding of literacy and essential skills. They heard about different approaches to literacy including ones that connect to traditional culture. Participants learned more about embedding literacy into learning, workplace programs, and other new strategies for literacy. Another approach that people learned about was the idea of an emergent or a contextualized curriculum instead of a pre-packaged one. Linked with this idea was the need to consult with sectors and communities to find out their interests before bringing in a program.

In her thank you note to the forum organizers, an Aurora College manager indicated, “In total, Aurora College had 17 participants at this event. Our staff travelled from all across the territory and represented all five regions of the NWT. This forum created considerable interest and excitement for Aurora College staff at the grassroots and management areas especially around the topics of non-formal, community-based skills development, essential skills learning, workplace education, and adult education in the North.”

The coalitions noted that the most important strategies identified at the forum were Northern approaches to learning, a common language around learning in the North and the integration of traditional culture into learning. Northern approaches included the importance of non-formal programming and embedding literacy into non-formal programming. Participants also saw that adult education and learning happen in other places than just colleges and that it’s just as valuable.

Government representatives who attended gained a better understanding of the differences in the North, what literacy and essential skills look like and some of the unique issues related to learning in the North. One government representative noted, “We overestimated the commonalities and underestimated the differences.”

## **1. Non-formal approaches to learning**

An important strategy that arose from forum was that of non-formal learning. Participants observed that there were similar approaches to non-formal learning across the three territories. One coalition representative commented: “This [non-formal] programming is important I think because of who we serve. A lot of people experienced barriers in the school system and are not ready to return to a formal system.” Another coalition representative said, “I think the most important strategies were approaches to learning in the North along with the elements and context. These Northern approaches are important because of climate and geographic similarities. We have different cultural approaches to a similar environment but we are challenged with similar things. Taking those things into account is the most important lesson.” Comments from a third coalition confirmed the previous points: “I think there was a reaffirmation that culturally based, community based, non-formal programming is really important and that it is overlooked and unsupported. Now these programs will have a much higher status. People didn’t understand how important this programming is.”

## **2. The importance of indigenous languages**

An important outcome of the forum was a deeper understanding across the three territories of the critical importance of indigenous languages. The importance of this issue was commented on throughout the feedback on the forum. Comments from participants indicated how important it was to have language and culture a focus at the forum. In a follow-up e-mail from a presenter from the South noted: “For decades I have said and read that language is important. But it wasn’t until this conference that I think I truly understood what this really means. I sat in on the Day 3 Nunavut group and heard via translation how elders can’t talk to their grandchildren because of language issues, how people of all ages are taking their lives because they have no sense of identity anymore, and how young people are facing a crisis of culture and economy. At this moment, I finally fully understand that language = culture, and culture = identity.” One of the working group members noted that a key strategy identified at the forum was around language revitalization. She indicated the importance of language revitalization because “people have lost their language and identity, lost a part of themselves.”

### **3. Workplace literacy**

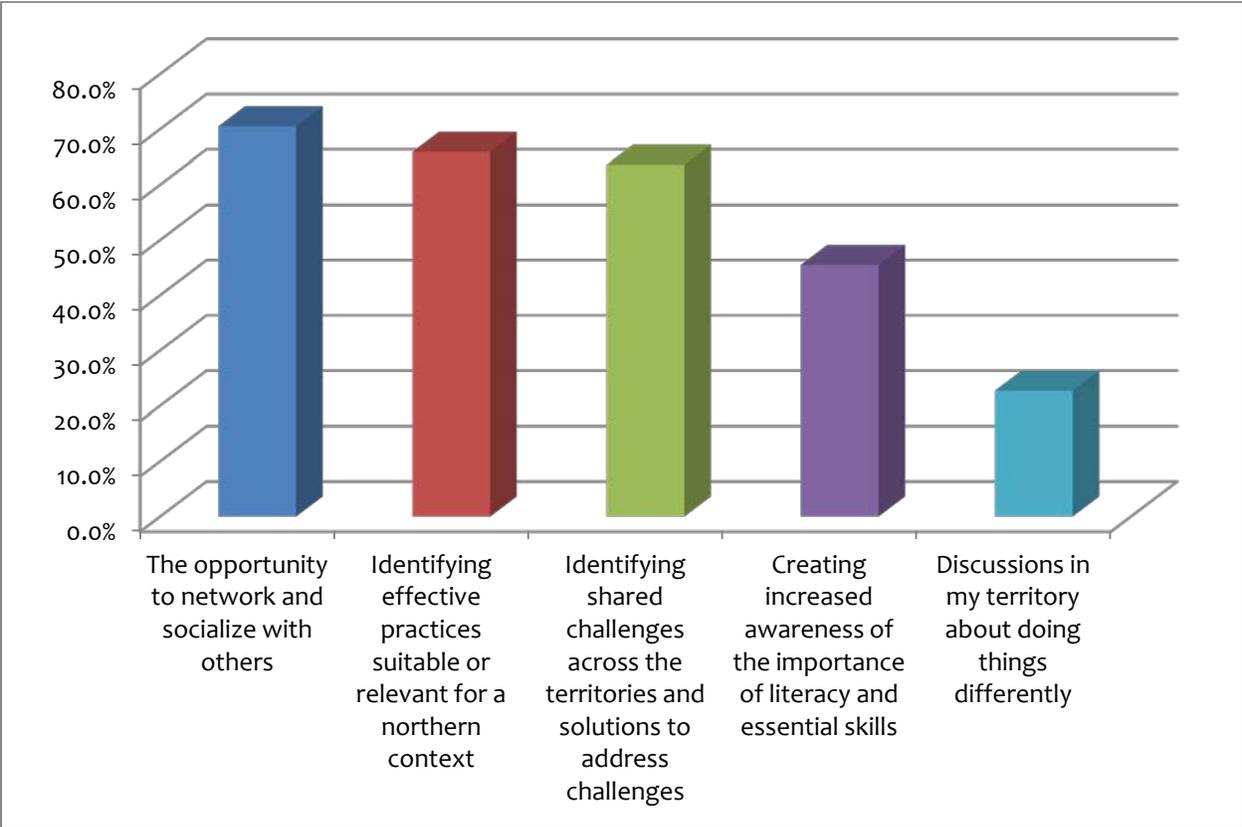
Learning and understanding around workplace education and its importance were also better understood by participants especially employers. Both participants and the coalitions noted the importance of workplace learning. However, the approach to workplace learning also has to be “made in the North” because southern approaches generally do not work. One coalition staff person involved in workplace education said, “Southern focused employment solutions don’t work well. The path to this looks different than the south... we need to draw from the culture and language that are already there and how people develop confidence within the context of their small communities. A singular focus doesn’t work. It [workplace education] needs to be holistic. A singular focus only focuses on the cash economy. This is only one piece. The results are profoundly different. Building confidence is the most important thing according to Elders. How do you build confidence in a singular focus?”

#### **D. Outcomes: After *Made in the North***

As noted in Figure 6, respondents to the follow-up survey indicated that the top three outcomes of *Made in the North* were:

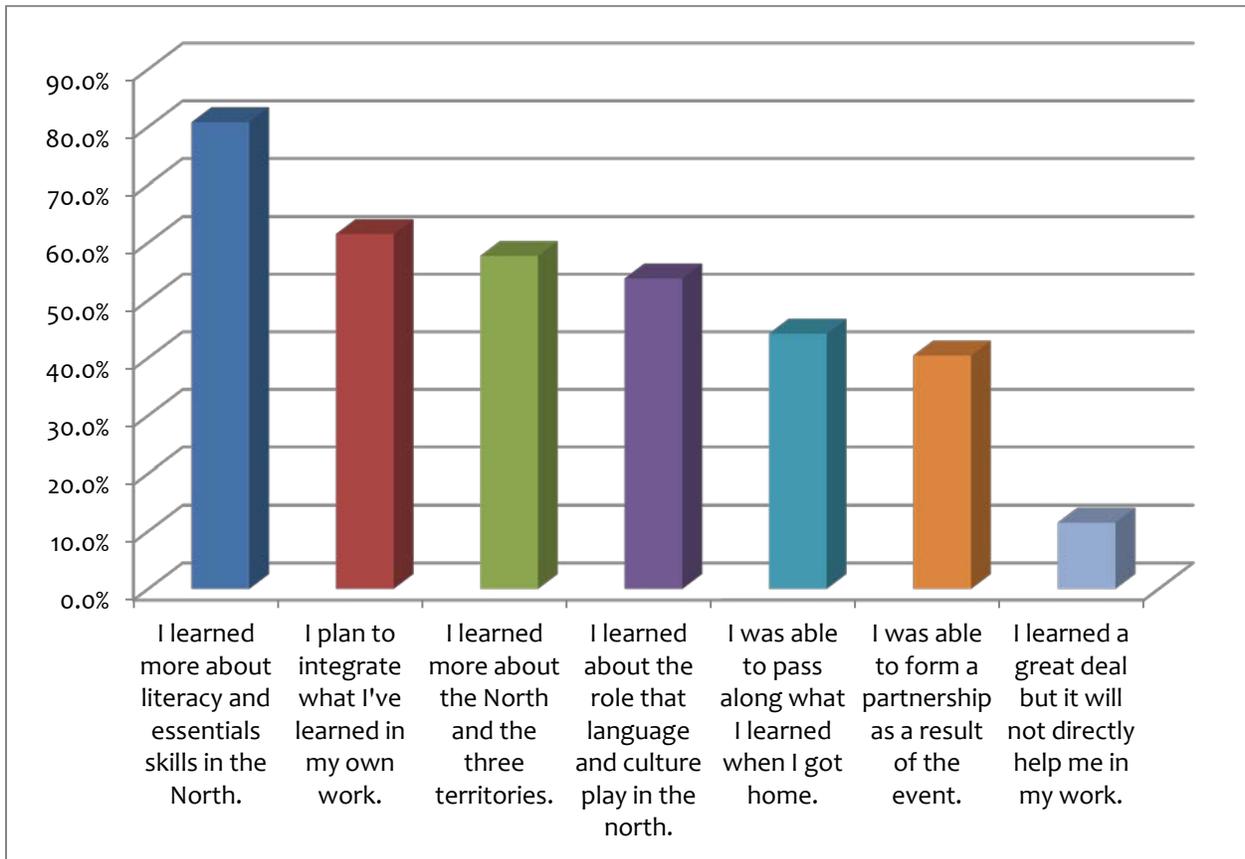
- 1) the opportunity to network with others
- 2) the identification of effective practices for the North
- 3) the identification of shared challenges across the territories and solutions to address these challenges

**Figure 6 – “From your perspective, what were the top 3 outcomes of the event?” by percentage**



The biggest difference to participants’ work that resulted from the forum is that they learned more about literacy and essential skills in the North (Figure 7). The majority plan to integrate what they learned in their own work. The majority of participants have connected with people outside their usual network since the forum. Many participants indicated that they made contact with people in other territories and put faces to names they have seen. They indicate that they will be following up with these new contacts in the future.

**Figure 7 - What difference did the event make to you and/or your work?  
multiple responses by percent**



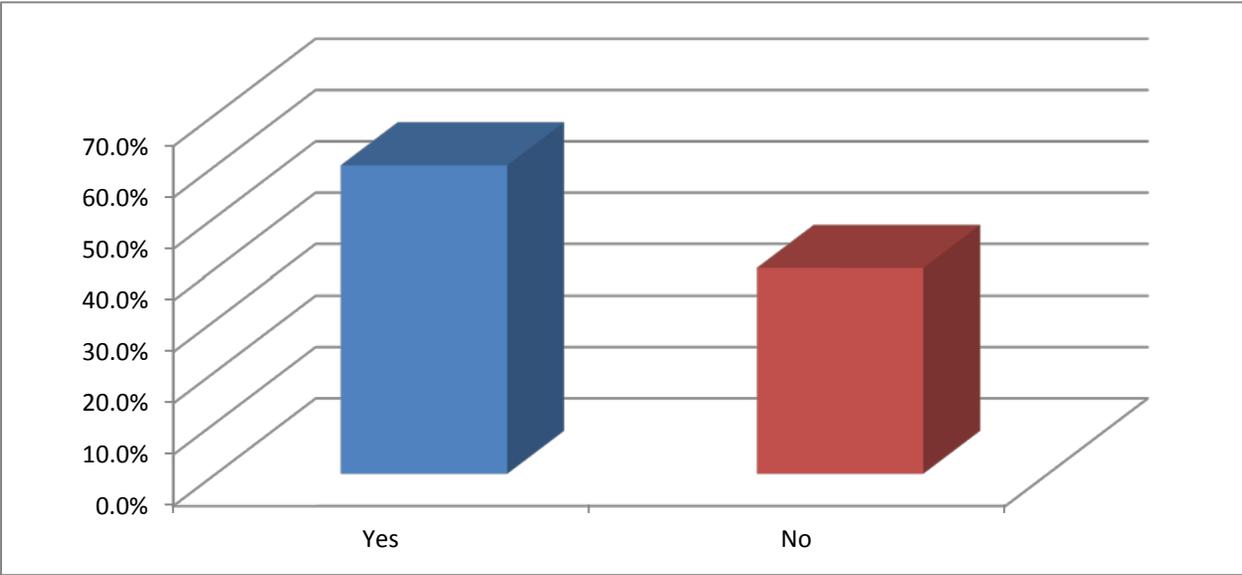
Funders of the forum indicated they have a better understanding of the uniqueness of learning in a Northern context. Those surveyed indicated that their expectations were met and that they are pleased with the outcomes of the event so far. They saw the outcomes of the forum as people across the territories having a chance to meet and share what they are doing and learn more about literacy and essential skills. In addition, participants had a chance to mix with others from sectors that they might not normally network with. Another important outcome is being able to use what was learned from the forum for future planning. Finally, an important outcome was the collaboration among the three territories to put the event on.

### **1. New partnerships or relationships**

Even shortly after the forum, participants and the forum organizers identified new relationships and partnerships that have been formed because of the *Made in the North*

Forum. 60% of survey respondents connected with people outside their usual network after the forum (Figure 8).

**Figure 8 – “As a result of the event, have you connected with anyone outside your usual network?” by percentage**



Participants have connected with other policy makers, followed up with presenters, and connected with new people in their own community and other communities that they would not normally have met. One person has hired a consultant, and another has formed a new business partnership. In another case, two people from Nunavut have been invited to the college’s Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE) Territorial In-Service. One participant has applied his learnings from the forum to introduce new approaches to reading in a school. Another will be using approaches to language revitalization learned from other territories.

In addition, the coalitions have been invited to the first planning meeting of the colleges’ upcoming conference to share what they have learned through “Made in the North.” the learnings from the forum are informing work on new policy directions in one territory.

The three northern literacy coalitions have a better understanding of what it takes to work together in authentic partnership. They have already applied their learnings to other Pan-Northern projects in which they are all presently involved.

Some coalition board members indicate they have strengthened their relationships with other board members of their coalition as a result of the forum. Boards do not meet that

often because of the distances among them. The face time together at the forum has strengthened relationships, which will makes future communication easier.

## **2. More awareness of literacy and essential skills in the North**

The media coverage of *Made in the North* was considerable. It included two print articles, two television interviews, and three radio interviews.

The three print articles were in *Nunavut News*, *Northern Journal*, and *Northern News Service*. Articles focused on unique approaches to literacy in the North including cultural non-formal programming that embeds literacy.

The two television interviews were with two separate CBC North programs *Northbeat* and *Igalaaq*. These interviews included forum organizers, coalition board members, Elders, and others. One included footage from the Miqqut program, a non-formal cultural program highlighted at the forum. The other focused on expanded definitions of literacy in the North.

The radio shows were CBC North, CKLB Radio, and CBC Montreal. They focused on the forum itself and the issue of language revitalization.

## **E. The Coalitions' Assessment of the Project**

Overall, the staff and executive directors of the three coalitions indicated that the forum surpassed expected outcomes and “more than met its objectives. They described the forum as a “huge success.” They indicated that it had been risky to bring so many different cultures and languages together but that it had worked well and that positive “cross pollination” had occurred. They also indicated that they had been very successful in representing diversity across the territories but could have even done more. They indicated that a good job had been done of mixing policy and practice. Their assessment was that the forum had generally met the needs of all three territories very well.

There was acknowledgement that the road had been bumpy and challenging during the planning and partnership building phase of the project. The coalitions indicated they had been seriously underfunded and understaffed to do the project. In spite of the challenges, they felt that that they had worked hard for three years to pull the project off together. They acknowledged that being understaffed had caused tensions and high feelings. In spite of these obstacles people worked together in unity to make the project successful. There have been many lessons learned and a base set for future collaboration.

The coalitions indicated that there were lots of examples of innovative and transformative programs representing good practice especially around non-formal learning and embedded literacy and the idea that “there is a huge potential now for people to think outside the box.” In addition, they mentioned how participants saw the importance of language and language revitalization. New and existing relationships have been formed or strengthened. Participants had a feeling of belonging to a “community.” Strategies that came out of the forum addressed First Nations, Métis, and Inuit youth and adults in their families, post-secondary education, labour market, and communities. Solutions and strategies coming out of the forum were seen as “Northern made.”

The coalitions now have a mandate to move forward on developing some link or network and are seen as the leaders to do so. The importance of building on the momentum generated was highlighted. The coalitions hope to get funded in the future to start building this network even though just virtually. Right now, there is a web site and a Facebook page. There will be a newsletter coming out and perhaps a blog.

## **F. Suggested Next Steps**

Participants consistently indicated that they wanted conversations and networking to continue after the forum both in their own territory and across territories. They are hoping for a web site where they can access session presentations and be able to share their work and resources. They want to see the forum final report and suggested having a newsletter.

Other Pan-Northern mediums that could be used to continue the conversations are Skype and blogs. Participants see follow up as very important to keep up the established momentum and continue with the work that was started at the forum.

Participants are also clear that they would like to see a Northern forum like this one in the next two or three years. The forum should move to another region and focus on the changes that people have been able to implement since the present forum. In future forums they would like to see more focus on language revitalization.

Participants would also like to see policy responses that meet real needs and follow accountable response schedules. They suggest more non-formal project-based learning, and more traditional activities integrated into learning.

## Appendix 1 – Questions for Periodic Check-in's by the Evaluators

The project evaluators will check in with the project's three executive directors and the working group from time to time. The following questions reflect the type of information they will be seeking. This information will assist in gathering data to inform the formative evaluation.

1. What have you accomplished since the last meeting in terms of the planning for the Gathering?
2. What has changed since the last meeting?
3. What's working particularly well?
4. What's been challenging? What have you done to address that challenge?
5. Do you feel that you're on target to meet the goals you set out in the proposal? (e.g. getting the targeted number of participants)
6. How is the relationship between the three coalitions working?
7. How are the partnerships developing with all the players?
8. How is planning progressing for the development of the Gathering?
9. Is there anything in particular that the evaluators need to know?
10. What are the greatest lessons you've learned so far?
11. Is there anything you would do differently? If so what?

# Appendix 2 – Made in the North Evaluation Forms

## Session Evaluation Form

Session Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this form. Circle the number that describes your experience.

1. I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community.

Not at all very much

1            2                            3                            4                            5

2. The session was relevant to my work or community.

Not at all very much

1            2                            3                            4                            5

3. There was good interaction and discussion.

Not at all very much

1                            2                            3                            4                            5

4. Overall, the session was valuable to me.

Not at all very much

1                            2                            3                            4                            5

The most useful part of the session was:

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One suggestion for tomorrow is:

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Thank you!

## Daily Evaluation Form

Day 2 – Wednesday, October 24, 2012

Please complete this form. Circle the number that describes your experience.

1. I learned new information about literacy and essential skills.

Not at all very much

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2. I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community.

Not at all very much

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. I think this event is relevant to my work or community.

Not at all very much

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

The most useful part of the day was:

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One suggestion for tomorrow is:

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**Thank you!**

**Be sure and pick up your ticket for a prize draw when you hand in this evaluation!**

## Final Evaluation Form

<b>Content and focus of the event</b>	Not at all			Very Much	
The content of the event was relevant to me	1	2	3	4	5
I think the event was relevant to the North	1	2	3	4	5
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	1	2	3	4	5
I have more of an understanding about literacy and essential skills	1	2	3	4	5

<b>Networking and Conversations</b>	Not at all			Very Much	
I had opportunities to meet new people	1	2	3	4	5
I had opportunities to talk about issues important to me	1	2	3	4	5
I am interested in continuing to network with the people I met	1	2	3	4	5

<b>Event Activities &amp; Logistics</b>	Did not meet expectations			Exceeded expectations	
Keynote Speakers	1	2	3	4	5
Panel – Day 1	1	2	3	4	5
Sessions	1	2	3	4	5
Experiential Sessions	1	2	3	4	5
Table Conversations	1	2	3	4	5
Social Events	1	2	3	4	5
Overall organization	1	2	3	4	5
Session rooms	1	2	3	4	5
Accommodation	1	2	3	4	5
Food	1	2	3	4	5

What were the main strengths of this event?

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What were the highlights for you?

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In what ways did the event reflect a northern perspective?

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How would you make this event better?

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What would you like to see happen next?

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Additional comments:

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**Thank you for completing this evaluation and thank you for coming to *Made in the North*.**

**Be sure and pick up your ticket for a prize draw when you hand in this evaluation!**

## Presenter Evaluation Form

Session Name: \_\_\_\_\_

We would like your feedback as a presenter. Please complete this form. Circle the number that describes your experience.

1. Were you adequately briefed to prepare for your session?

Not at all very much  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2. I got what I needed from the organizers for my session (equipment, room set up).

Not at all very much  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. Participants were engaged in the session.

Not at all very much  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5

The strengths of the session were:

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One challenge was:

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Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Thank you!**

## Post-Gathering Interview Guide – Participants

1. In what ways were your expectations for the Gathering met?
2. What would you like to have seen different?
3. What were the three main outcomes of the Gathering overall for you?
4. What were three important “take-away’s” for you from the Gathering?
5. What difference did the Gathering make to you and/or your work (i.e. new initiatives, partnerships, collaboration)?
6. How well did the Gathering reflect a Northern perspective?
7. How well did the Gathering reflect the perspectives and interests of your territory?
8. Have you connected with anyone outside your usual network since the Gathering? If so, in what ways?

## Post-Gathering Interview Guide – Gathering Funders

1. What were your expectations when you funded the Gathering?
2. Were your expectations met? If so, how were they met? If not, where were they not met?
3. What were the three main outcomes of the Gathering?
4. What did you learn about literacy and essential skills in a Pan-Northern context? Is there anything you will do differently as a result of new information?
5. Did the financials meet your expectations?
6. Overall, how satisfied were you with the value you received from funding the Gathering?

## Appendix 3 – Session Evaluation Results

Not at all

1

2

3

4

very much

5

<b>Session 1a - Northern Innovations in Family Literacy</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	0%	13%	38%	50%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	6%	6%	31%	56%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	0%	25%	38%	38%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	6%	31%	63%

<b>Session 1b - Inuinait Literacies: Ulukhaktok Literacies Research project</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	0%	0%	67%	33%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	0%	67%	33%	0%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	17%	50%	33%

<b>Session 1c - Non-formal, Community-based Programs for Adult Learning</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	0%	18%	32%	50%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	0%	5%	52%	43%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	5%	59%	36%

<b>Session 1d - Introduction to “Workplace Education” (a.k.a. Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	12%	52%	32%	4%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	8%	40%	40%	12%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	4%	32%	44%	20%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	4%	40%	40%	16%

<b>Session 1e - Welcome to Dechinta</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	0%	12%	24%	65%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	0%	6%	41%	53%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	0%	0%	18%	82%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	0%	24%	76%

Not at all

1

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3

4

very much

5

<b>Session 2a - Igloo of Life: An Inuit Model for Personal Development and Well-being</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	0%	20%	47%	33%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	0%	13%	50%	38%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	6%	19%	38%	38%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	0%	44%	56%

<b>Session 2b - Practitioners Workshop on Embedding Skills Development</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	0%	25%	50%	25%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	0%	17%	42%	42%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	0%	33%	25%	42%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	17%	50%	33%

<b>Session 2c - My Word: Storytelling and Digital Media Lab Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	0%	6%	6%	88%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	0%	13%	13%	75%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	0%	6%	6%	88%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	6%	0%	94%

<b>Session 2d – Practitioners’ Workshop on Experiential Math</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	0%	0%	25%	75%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	0%	13%	13%	75%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	0%	25%	75%

<b>Session 2e - Pijunnaqsilauqta Hands-on Learning Session</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	0%	11%	22%	67%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	0%	11%	22%	67%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	0%	0%	33%	67%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	0%	22%	78%

<b>Session 2f - Interpretive Tour of the Northern Images Art Gallery</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

<b>Session 2g - Interpretive Tour of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	7%	36%	36%	21%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	7%	50%	29%	14%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	0%	21%	7%	71%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	7%	50%	43%

<b>Session 2h - Interpretive Tour of the NWT Legislative Assembly</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	0%	43%	43%	14%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	0%	57%	29%	14%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	0%	14%	29%	57%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	14%	57%	29%

Not at all

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very much

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<b>Session 3a - The Miqqut Program: Embedding Literacy into Non-Formal, Culturally-based Skills Programs</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	0%	0%	37%	63%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	0%	11%	11%	79%
There was good interaction and discussion	21%	7%	36%	14%	21%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	11%	21%	68%

<b>Session 3b - New Directions in Adult Basic Education: Perspectives from the Three Territorial Colleges</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	12%	27%	54%	8%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	0%	23%	54%	23%
There was good interaction and discussion	13%	13%	33%	33%	8%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	8%	8%	68%	16%

<b>Session 3c - Where It's At: ideas in non-formal, community-based youth programming</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	0%	0%	27%	73%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	0%	18%	18%	64%
There was good interaction and discussion	10%	0%	10%	40%	40%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	9%	9%	82%

<b>Session 3d - The Métis Culinary Arts Institute and Embedded Skills Development in Action</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	0%	22%	67%	11%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	0%	33%	44%	22%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	0%	33%	11%	56%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	22%	56%	22%

<b>Session 3e - Literacy: Simple Idea, Complex Reality</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	0%	15%	35%	50%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	0%	0%	25%	75%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	5%	5%	15%	75%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	5%	21%	74%

Not at all

1

2

3

4

very much

5

<b>Session 4a - Language Revitalization and Adult Education in the North</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	0%	9%	27%	64%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	0%	0%	27%	73%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	0%	20%	10%	70%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	0%	9%	91%

<b>Session 4b - The Story of ACCESS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	11%	11%	33%	44%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	17%	11%	28%	44%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	0%	19%	38%	44%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	6%	12%	35%	47%

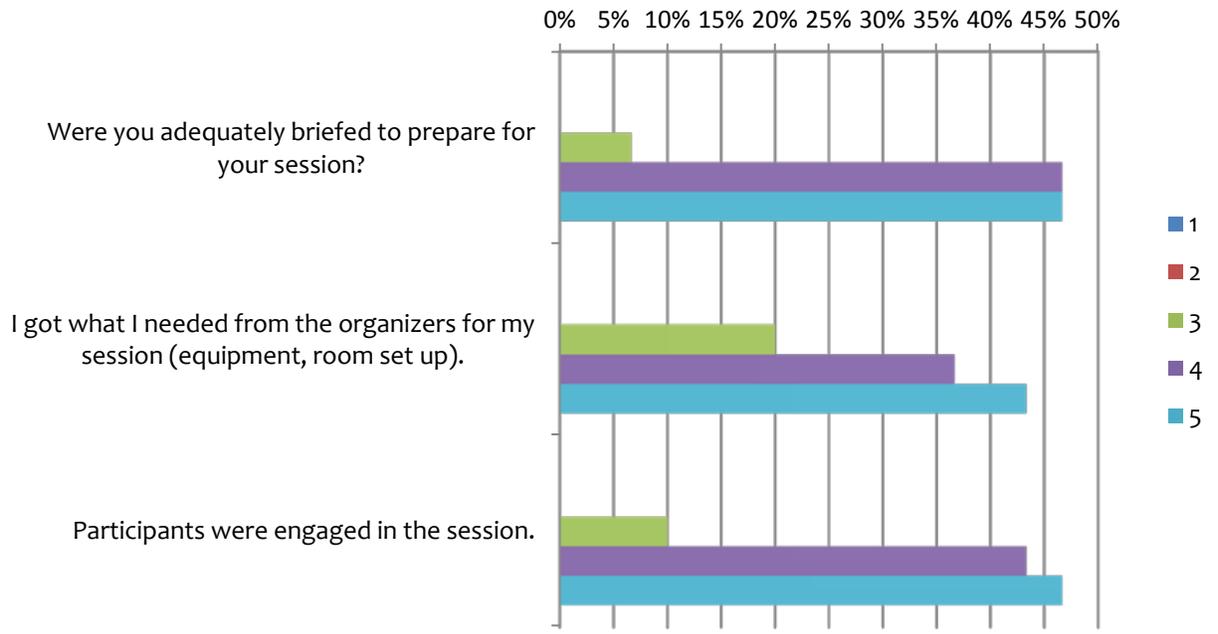
<b>Session 4c - Holistic Portfolio Development at Nunavut Arctic College</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	0%	14%	32%	55%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	0%	14%	36%	50%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	18%	27%	27%	27%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	14%	36%	50%

<b>Session 4d - What is the Potential for Workplace Education in the North Today?</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	0%	24%	38%	38%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	5%	10%	29%	57%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	0%	5%	52%	43%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	10%	45%	45%

<b>Session 4e - Reflections on Adult Education in Multi-lingual, intercultural and post-colonial Northern contexts</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I now have new ideas that I can use in my work or community	0%	0%	23%	38%	38%
The session was relevant to my work or community	0%	0%	15%	46%	38%
There was good interaction and discussion	0%	15%	23%	23%	38%
Overall the session was valuable to me	0%	0%	8%	54%	38%

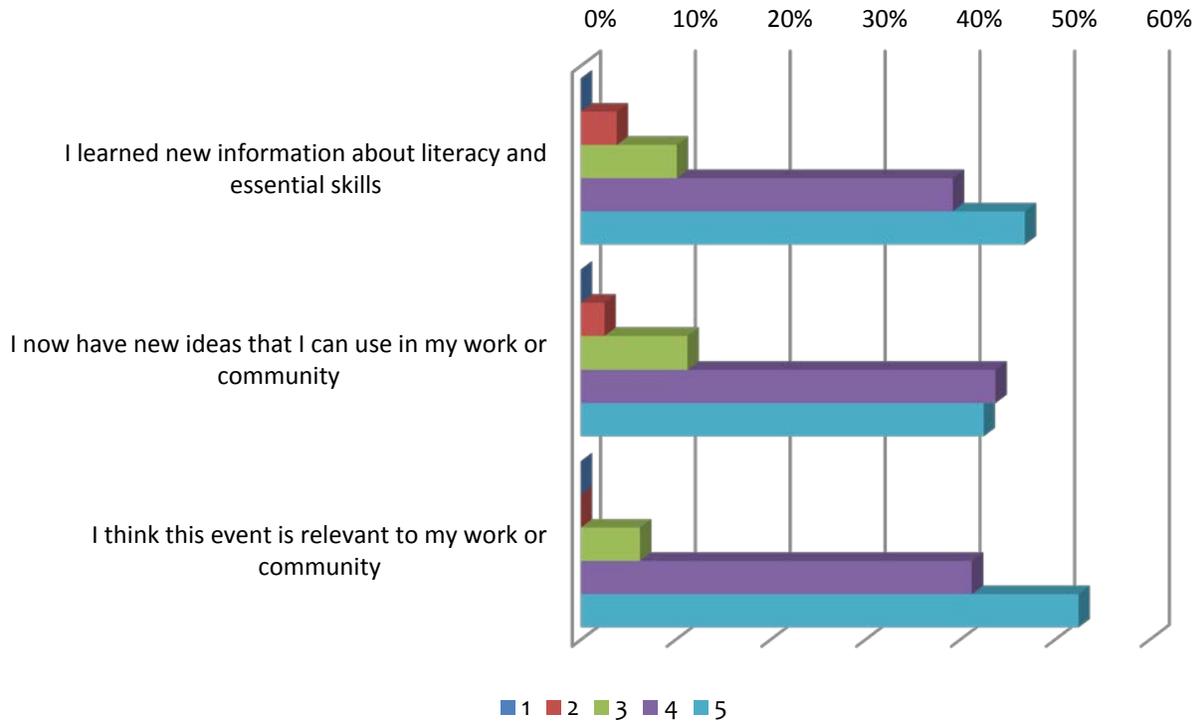
# Made in the North Presenter Feedback

Did not meet expectations (1) ←→ Exceeded expectations (5)



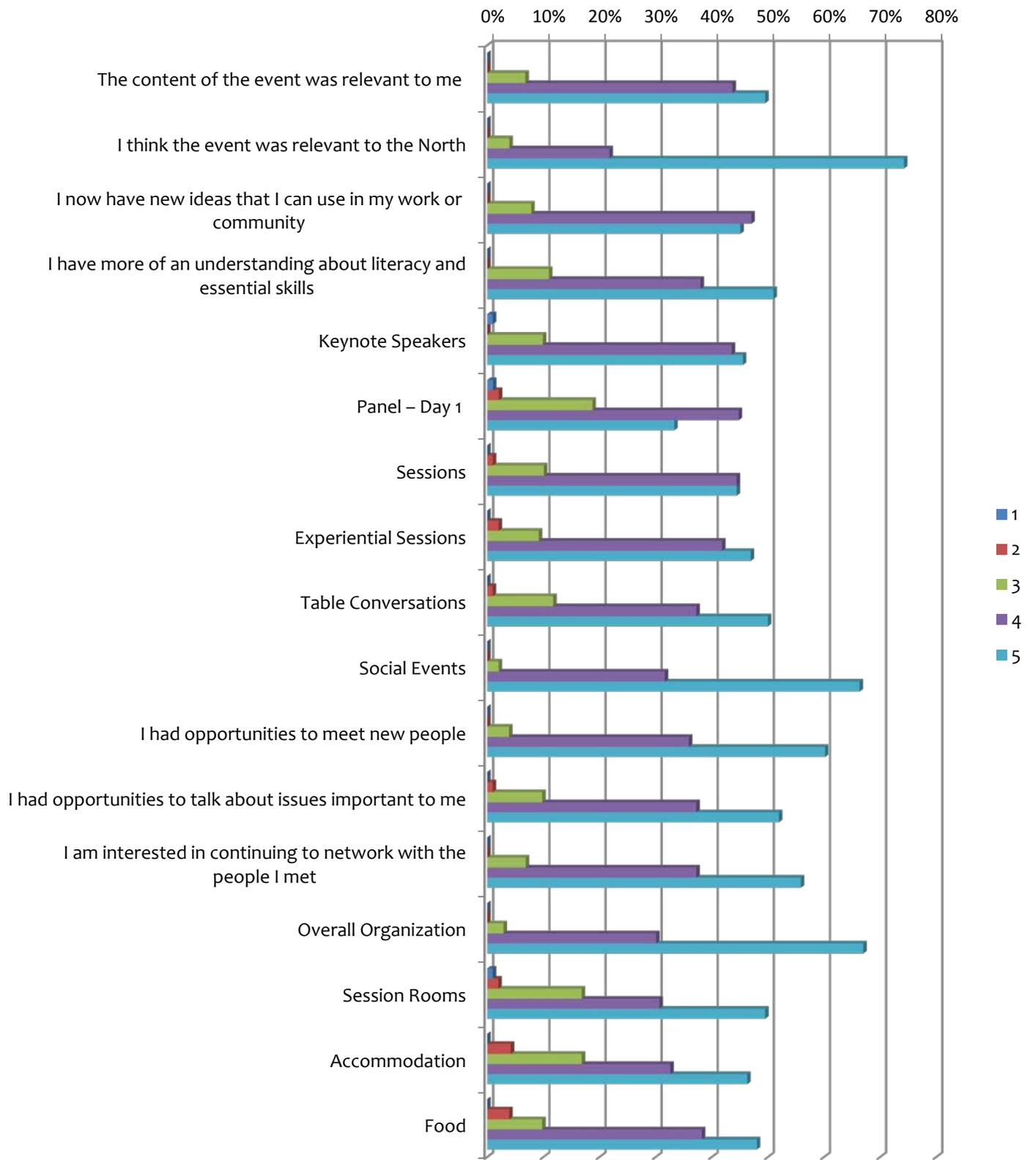
# Made in the North - Day 2 Evaluation

Did not meet expectations (1) ↔ Exceeded expectations (5)



# Made in the North Final Evaluations

Did not meet expectations (1) ↔ Exceeded expectations (5)

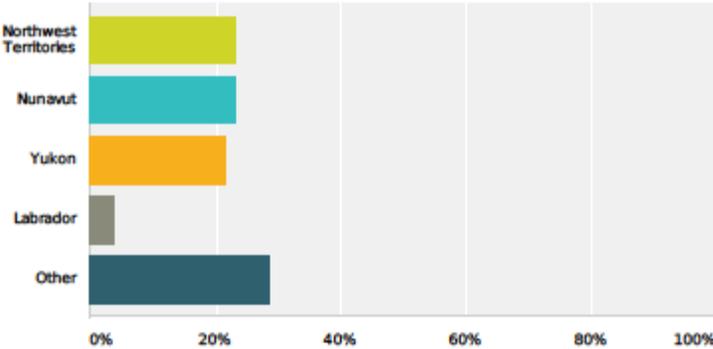


# Appendix 4 – Participant Follow-up Survey Results

Made in the North - Follow-up Survey

## Q1 Where are you from?

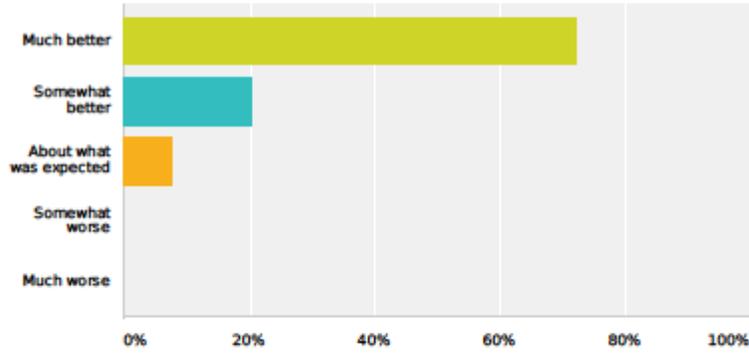
Answered: 56 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
<b>Northwest Territories</b>	<b>23.21%</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Nunavut</b>	<b>23.21%</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Yukon</b>	<b>21.43%</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Labrador</b>	<b>3.57%</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>28.57%</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>56</b>

### Q2 Was the event better than what you expected, worse than what you expected, or about what you expected?

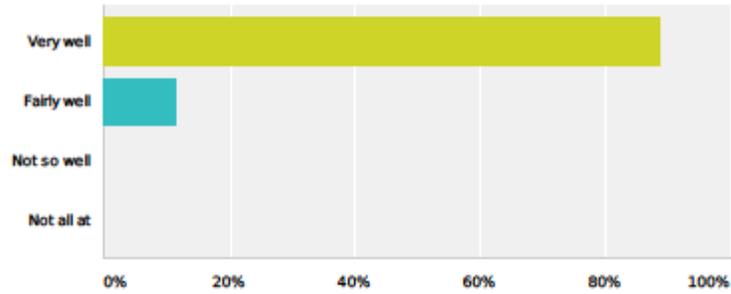
Answered: 54 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Responses
<b>Much better</b>	<b>72.22%</b> 39
<b>Somewhat better</b>	<b>20.37%</b> 11
<b>About what was expected</b>	<b>7.41%</b> 4
<b>Somewhat worse</b>	<b>0%</b> 0
<b>Much worse</b>	<b>0%</b> 0
Total	54

### Q3 How well did the event reflect a northern perspective?

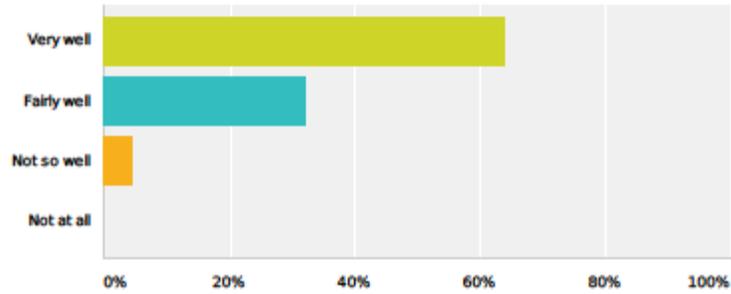
Answered: 53 Skipped: 4



Answer Choices	Responses
<b>Very well</b>	<b>88.68%</b> 47
<b>Fairly well</b>	<b>11.32%</b> 6
<b>Not so well</b>	<b>0%</b> 0
<b>Not all at</b>	<b>0%</b> 0
Total	53

### Q4 How well did the event reflect the perspectives and interests of your territory?

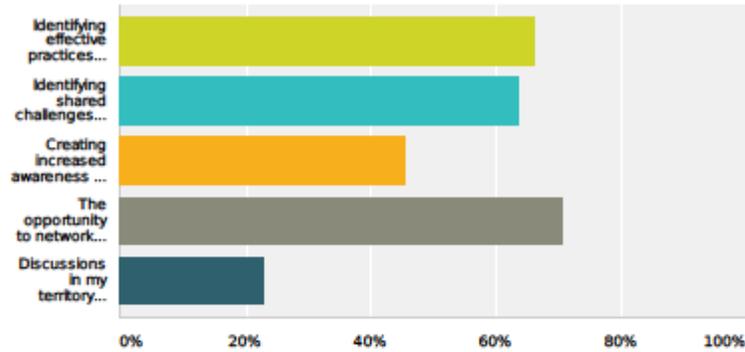
Answered: 47 Skipped: 10



Answer Choices	Responses	
<b>Very well</b>	<b>63.83%</b>	30
<b>Fairly well</b>	<b>31.91%</b>	15
<b>Not so well</b>	<b>4.26%</b>	2
<b>Not at all</b>	<b>0%</b>	0
Total		47

### Q5 From your perspective, what were the top 3 outcomes of the event?

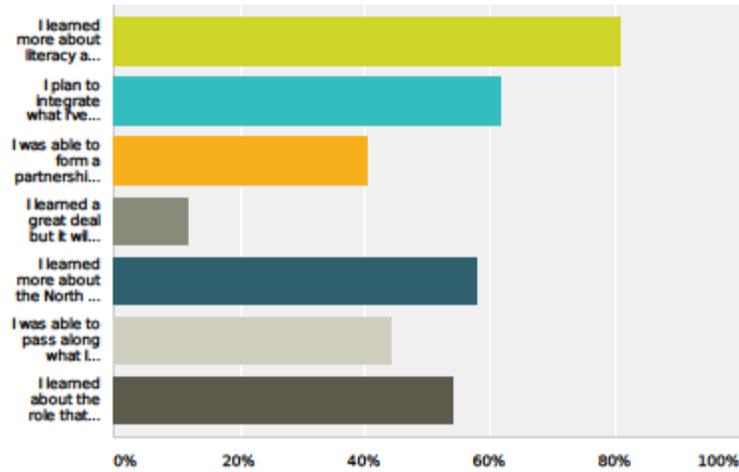
Answered: 44 Skipped: 13



Answer Choices	Responses
Identifying effective practices suitable or relevant for a northern context	65.91% 29
Identifying shared challenges across the territories and solutions to address challenges	63.64% 28
Creating increased awareness of the importance of literacy and essential skills	45.45% 20
The opportunity to network and socialize with others	70.45% 31
Discussions in my territory about doing things differently	22.73% 10
Total Respondents: 44	

### Q6 What difference did the event make to you and/or your work? (choose as many answers as apply)

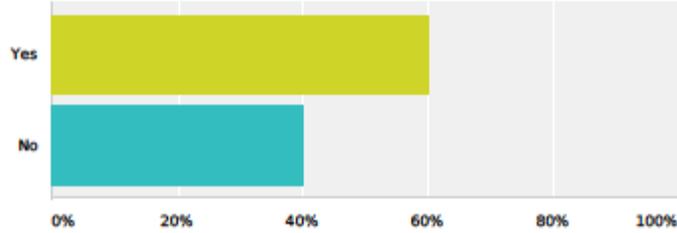
Answered: 52 Skipped: 5



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
I learned more about literacy and essentials skills in the North.	80.77%	42
I plan to integrate what I've learned in my own work.	61.54%	32
I was able to form a partnership as a result of the event.	40.38%	21
I learned a great deal but it will not directly help me in my work.	11.54%	6
I learned more about the North and the three territories.	57.69%	30
I was able to pass along what I learned when I got home.	44.23%	23
I learned about the role that language and culture play in the north.	53.85%	28
Total Respondents: 52		
Other (please specify) ( 5 )		

**Q7 As a result of the event, have you connected with anyone outside your usual network? If you have, tell us a bit about how you've connected.**

Answered: 50 Skipped: 7



Answer Choices	Responses	
<b>Yes</b>	<b>60%</b>	30
<b>No</b>	<b>40%</b>	20
Total		50

Tell us how you've connected with someone outside your usual network ( 24 )

## Appendix 5 – Media Coverage

*Nunavut News* (print): by Nicole Garbutt

Interviewed: Cayla Chenier regarding Miqqut project

Ran: Oct. 15 (see story below, “Pan-territorial focus on literacy”)

*Northern Journal* (print): by Sarah Ladik <[reporter@norj.ca](mailto:reporter@norj.ca)>

Interviewed: Cayla Chenier and Jeanine O’Connell for intro story and Erin Freeland Ballantyne and Spencer Tracy for follow up on specific initiatives

Ran: Oct. 23 (see story below, “Literacy forum seeks homegrown answers”)

Ran: Oct. 30 (story not yet available)

CBC North (television): by Shannon Scott for *Northbeat* <[Shannon.scott@cbc.ca](mailto:Shannon.scott@cbc.ca)>

Interviewed: Dawn Marino, Adriana Kusugak, Helen Kitekudlak; included footage from the Forum’s Miqqut session

Aired: Oct. 23: <http://www.cbc.ca/player/News/Canada/North/ID/2295722675/?page=2> ; go to 38:17 minutes

Related story ran on cbc.ca: “Northerners expanding definition of literacy”

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/story/2012/10/24/north-literacy-redefined.html> and below

CBC North (television): by Rassi Nashalik for the show *Igalaaq* <[Rassi.Nashalik@CBC.CA](mailto:Rassi.Nashalik@CBC.CA)>

Interviewed: Quluaq Pilakapsi, Meeka Arnakaq, and Lizzie Aliqatuqtuq, and included footage of Dawn Marino, Helen Kitekudlak, and Adriana Kusugak

Aired Oct. 24: <http://www.cbc.ca/player/News/Canada/North/ID/2296340209/> ; go to 15:58 minutes

Aired Oct. 25: <http://www.cbc.ca/player/News/Canada/North/ID/2296700743/> ; go to 22:43 minutes

Aired: Oct. 26: <http://www.cbc.ca/player/News/Canada/North/ID/2297262432/> ; go to 17:10 minutes

CBC North (radio)

Interviewed: Helen Balanoff

Aired: Oct. 23 (see transcript below, “Yellowknife hosting pan-territorial literacy forum”)

CKLB Radio: by Megan McBane

Interviewed: Mary Rose Sundberg on language revitalization

Aired: Oct. 25 (see transcript below, “Made in the North”)

CBC Montreal (radio): by Caroline Nepton for “*Boreal hebdo*” <[CAROLINE.NEPTON@RADIO-CANADA.CA](mailto:CAROLINE.NEPTON@RADIO-CANADA.CA)>

Interviewed Patricia Brennan, Board member of Yukon Literacy Coalition

Aired: Oct. 29 [listen here: <http://www.cbc.ca/borealhebdo/episodes/2012/10/29/education-concue-dans-lenord-un-gage-de-reussite/> ]

*Northern News Service* (print): by Sara Wilson <[editorial@nnsi.com](mailto:editorial@nnsi.com)>

Interviewed: Helen Balanoff and several NWT delegates

Printed: Oct. 29 (go to: [http://nnsi.com/northern-news-services/stories/papers/oct29\\_12lit.html](http://nnsi.com/northern-news-services/stories/papers/oct29_12lit.html) or read below)

CBC North/Iqaluit (television): by Sara Minogue <[SARA.MINOGUE@CBC.CA](mailto:SARA.MINOGUE@CBC.CA)>

Will interview: Adriana Kusugak and Qluaq Pilakapsi about the Miqqut project and Cayla Chenier and Noel Kaludjak for the Men’s project; will reference Made in the North

Aired: tbd

NALD posted the press release on its home page on the opening day of the Forum:



October 10, 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Forum will Explore “Made in the North” Adult Literacy  
and Skills Development**

**October 23 – 25, 2012 – Explorer Hotel - Yellowknife**

Some 160 educators, policy makers, literacy experts, elders, businesspeople, and other northerners are coming together for a unique pan-territorial forum to explore effective northern approaches to adult literacy and skills development.

“Made in the North: Policy and Practices Exchange on Skills Development” is organized by the Yukon Literacy Coalition, NWT Literacy Council, and Ilitaqsiniq—Nunavut Literacy Council. It is sponsored by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) and the three territorial governments. The forum will be held Oct. 23 to 25, 2012, in Yellowknife.

“Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut share similar challenges and opportunities, particularly relating to building the capacity of their workforces. The ‘Made in the North’ gathering is well-timed, given the pace of change and rapid development of the resource-based economies in the North,” says Helen Balanoff, executive director of the NWT Literacy Council.

“The forum will give people working in the area of adult education a rare opportunity to connect and share information. We want to create a space in which partnerships are built, emerging practices supported, and successful initiatives celebrated,” she says.

The forum is designed to support open conversations, networking, and knowledge- sharing among delegates, their networks and their home regions and organizations.

.../2

- 2 -

Delegates are arriving from more than 30 communities. They will participate in presentations, workshops and moderated plenary conversations around the following themes:

- Workforce Development and Workplace Education
- Inspiring Practices in Non-formal, Community-based Programs
- Reconsidering “Literacy and Essential Skills” in Multi-lingual, Multi-cultural Contexts
- Innovations, Challenges, and Developments in College Classrooms Across the North

The forum website is at [www.madeinthenorth.ca](http://www.madeinthenorth.ca).

- 30 -

To arrange interviews with delegates or speakers or for more information contact: Pre-event: Helen Balanoff, 873-9262 or [Helen@nwtliteracy.ca](mailto:Helen@nwtliteracy.ca)

During the event: Alan Morantz, [alan@alanmorantz.com](mailto:alan@alanmorantz.com)

## **FORUM BACKGROUNDER: Why “Made in the North”? Why now?**

There are many innovative, local approaches to adult learning and skills development in use across northern Canada today—in community and wellness centres, remote college classrooms, and cutting-edge workplaces. The forum is designed to showcase these approaches and to strengthen the connections among educators, policy makers, and community leaders.

Sessions will focus on four areas:

### **Workforce and Workplace Skills Development**

Workplace education combines literacy with relevant workplace training and integrates worksite issues and materials. Typically, such programs are developed by staff and management together. Workplace education shows promising results in places such as Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Manitoba. The sessions in this track highlight innovative practices and offer an overview of the current state of workplace education across northern Canada.

### **Non-formal, Community-based Skills Development Programs**

This track is about adult learning programs that take place outside of formal learning institutions. “Embedded” literacy programs weave literacy and basic skill development into other subject-specific learning, such as computer skills courses, trades programs or traditional knowledge programs. These customized programs have high participation rates and low drop-out rates compared with conventional training. The forum will hear about successful examples, such as the Miqqut project in Nunavut. Miqqut involved the teaching of traditional and modern sewing skills with embedded literacy skills.

### **Literacy and Essential Skills in Our Multicultural, Multilingual Regions**

Literacy has been described as the ability to “see our world and know what we are seeing” (from elders in Gjoa Haven, Nunavut). Literacy, in fact, is about more than the three Rs—it is central to our cultures and includes the basic skills upon which all adults build their lives. Effective northern adult learning policies and practices must work from this expanded perspective. What are “multiple literacies”? What do they mean for adult learning, literacy and essential skills? In this track, forum delegates will learn more about the NWT-based Ulukhaktok Literacies Research project.

### **Challenges and Innovations at the Territorial Colleges**

Formal adult education service providers, especially the three territorial colleges, play a central role in adult learning, literacy and skills development. This track will explore current programs, policies, challenges and developments in formal adult education in northern Canada.

## Sponsoring Organizations

### Yukon Literacy Coalition

The Yukon Literacy Coalition (YLC) is a Yukon-wide organization that is community-governed and committed to supporting and encouraging literacy in all the languages of the Yukon.

Although the purpose and responsibilities of the YLC have evolved over the last six years, the YLC adheres to the founding belief that individuals and communities know their own challenges, know their own resources, and should be supported in meeting their literacy goals.

The YLC achieves these objectives through family/community literacy initiatives (including the Yukon Family Literacy Centre), literacy promotion, practitioner training, information sharing, resource development, research and essential skills training.

Executive Director: Beth Mulloy Phone: (867) 668-6535

Email: [communications.literacy@northwestel.net](mailto:communications.literacy@northwestel.net) [www.yukonliteracy.ca](http://www.yukonliteracy.ca)

### NWT Literacy Council

The NWT Literacy Council, founded in 1989, works with individuals and groups to promote and support literacy and essential skills in all the official languages of the NWT. We:

- Develop resources and learning materials.
- Mentor, train and support local literacy workers and projects.
- Design, write and edit plain language documents.
- Promote, research and share information about literacy and essential skills.
- Monitor and respond to territorial and national literacy and essential skills policies.

The NWT Literacy Council believes everyone has a right to literacy and that literacy is something that involves everyone – individuals, families, communities, business, labour, and governments. Literacy is the foundation of lifelong learning and of active participation in the social, economic, and political life of our communities, territory, and country.

The Council has six staff members and is governed by a board with regional representation from across the NWT.

Executive Director: Helen Balanoff Phone: (867) 873-9262

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## **Ilitaqsiniq – Nunavut Literacy Council**

Ilitaqsiniq—Nunavut Literacy Council was founded in 1999, branching off from the NWT Literacy Council when Nunavut was established as a separate territory. Ilitaqsiniq promotes and supports the literacy needs of Nunavummiut in the official languages of Nunavut with respect for the principles and values of community capacity building and development. It conducts research and develops resources for language and literacy skills in Inuit language dialects, French, and English.

The organization is membership-based and includes adult educators, literacy practitioners, Government of Nunavut departments, non-profit organizations, schools, libraries, and individuals. It relies almost exclusively on project-based funding and donations to carry out its work. Ilitaqsiniq currently has eight staff members, living and working in Cambridge Bay, Rankin Inlet, Iqaluit, and Ottawa.

The Inuktitut name – Ilitaqsiniq – means “continuous learning” or, literally, “continuous recognition of the world around us.” Ilitaqsiniq defines literacy as “seeing and knowing what you see,” a definition developed by Inuit elders in Gjoa Haven, Nunavut.

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## Literacy forum seeks homegrown answers

By SARAH LADIK, Northern Journal Reporter • Tue, Oct 23, 2012

Adult learning in Canada's North needs local solutions over imports from the South, say organizers of the first pan-Northern conference on adult literacy.

The "Made in the North" forum will unite representatives from all three territories in Yellowknife Oct. 23 through 25 to discuss challenges and solutions in a unique regional context.

While there are a few presenters from southern Canada, the main focus will be on programs that have proven successful in the North. Literacy development coordinator at the Nunavut Literacy Council, Cayla Chenier, indicated that while programs created further south can be effective in the provinces, the adult literacy rate in the territories requires specifically Northern solutions.

Chenier said that, compared to the provinces, there has been a lack of support for meaningful and relevant training opportunities for Northerners.

"We need education that takes into account history, different languages and where people are starting from. This is an opportunity to talk about things that can work here," she said.

The conference will focus on four approaches to education: workplace skills development, the particulars of teaching literacy in a multilingual context, non-formal community-based training and formal adult education.

The 160 delegates include educators, employers and policy developers, as well as representatives from each territory's department of education, and the three main organizing bodies, the NWT Literacy Council, the Nunavut Literacy Council and the Yukon Literacy Coalition.

The event's organizers are also hoping the forum will result in increased communication among agencies and governments dealing with adult literacy challenges across the territories.

"We're looking to build partnerships with not just the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Literacy Councils, but also across the North and all the different stakeholders invited, including researchers, adult educators, business people and government representatives," said Jeanine O'Connel, project coordinator at the Yukon Literacy Coalition. "The goal is to build a network that can be sustainable after the conference."

As to the specific challenges faced by educators and adult learners in Canada's North, both O'Connel and Chenier agree that one of the biggest is geography.

"It makes communities more isolated," O'Connel said, adding that it's difficult to access programming outside regional and territorial hubs, including literacy centres and tutors. "Having that information and getting resources out to all the communities is the biggest challenge."

Organizers believe the time is ripe for the first pan-Northern conference on adult literacy. The process, spearheaded by the three literacy councils, began when they realized how much material they were already sharing and decided to make the practice more efficient.

"It's really good to start sharing and see what everyone else is doing," O'Connel said.

### **Northerners expanding definition of literacy**

#### **Literacy councils include sewing, cooking, map-reading and hunting skills in definition**

**CBC News** Posted: Oct 25, 2012 9:18 AM CT Last Updated: Oct 25, 2012 12:26 PM CT

Northern educators, elders and literacy experts are grappling with the concept of Northern literacy at a conference in Yellowknife this week.

Representatives from the NWT Literacy Council, Ilitaqsiniq - Nunavut Literacy Council and the Yukon Literacy Coalition are hosting the pan-northern gathering on policy and practices.

Adriana Kusugak, with the Nunavut Literacy Council, said that in Rankin Inlet, the council identified sewing as a northern literacy skill. The course saw 15 women spend four months learning to sew — Kusugak said they left the course with more than just a tangible skill.

"There was a lot of confidence building," said Kusugak.

"The women started to feel proud of themselves and achieved goals that they had set out for themselves. The newfound confidence that they had from the program allowed them to take a step into the workforce or higher education or more demanding challenges."

Other skills identified by the conference as 'literacy' include hunting, map reading and cooking.

The literacy conference wraps up Thursday.

**CBC Radio: “Yellowknife hosting pan-territorial literacy forum” // Oct. 23 (note misspellings)**

More than 160 educators, policy makers, literacy experts, and elders from more than 30 communities are gathering in Yellowknife today. It’s part of a pan-territorial literacy forum aimed at identifying literacy skills which people need in the north. In the NWT, close to 42 per cent of adults don’t have the skills employers require for the workplace. Helen Balenov (sp) is the executive Director of the NWT Literacy Council.

“The federal government has designed nine essential skills, which are for the workplace. They’re also skills that apply in everyday life. But if you live in the north, if you’re a young person that lives in the north, you need other essential skills for your own identity and to be able to live in a northern community.”

Balenov says northern literacy skills include finding your way on the land, reading the weather, and being able to cook and sew. Balenov says this is the first time literacy councils from all three territories have put on this kind of conference together. It runs until Thursday.

**Made in the North Conference**

**CKLB Radio, Thursday, October 25, 2012, 8:30 a.m.**

JOSH CAMPBELL, CKLB: Three women from the North shared language revitalization efforts they’re making in Canada’s three territories. Megan McBane has more about yesterday’s panel at the Explorer Hotel in Yellowknife.

MCBANE: One person each from the NWT, Yukon and Nunavut participated in a panel discussion at the Made in the North Conference, which looks at adult literacy and skills development. Mary Rose Sundberg spoke about how she’s part of a group which is digitizing old audio and video tapes, some of which date back to the 1960s.

SUNDBERG: When we first started we became very emotional because we were not prepared. We never thought about it because a lot of times we didn’t know what was on these tapes.

MCBANE: She says at times they had to take breaks in between their project after hearing their ancestors, some of whose voices they’ve never heard before.

SUNDBERG: Suddenly, you know, you hear your grandfather or your grandmother.

MCBANE: Marilyn Jensen is a manager for a language revitalization program in the Yukon and says she's just relearning her language now. She says growing up in the Yukon in the 1970s was not easy for people who are Aboriginal.

JENSEN: There was racism, prejudice, very blatant. The message we got from society is it is not good to be indigenous at all.

MCBANE: And Becky Kilibuk from Nunavut spoke about how at one point in her life she started forgetting her native tongue of Inuktitut and how hard that was on her as a youth.

KILIBUK: When a person or a culture suffers great trauma, the way we have historically, culturally, and, you know, the first peoples, that kind of historical trauma anytime, you know... (inaudible)... if a group of people or a person from that kind of trauma it's proven that we end up kind of getting stuck on the bottom half of this triangle where we're just focusing on our basic needs. We're just kind of in the survival mode.

MCBANE: All three women spoke about the efforts they're making now for both themselves and in their hometowns to revitalize the language. Megan McBane, CKLB News, Yellowknife.

### **Minds meet for literacy**

#### **Pan-territorial conference on adult literacy in the North draws 160 participants**

**Sara Wilson, Northern News Services**

**Published Monday, Oct 29, 2012**

SOMBA K'E/YELLOWKNIFE

Nearly 160 adult educators, policy-makers and government officials from all three territories attended the Made in the North literacy forum in Yellowknife last week to discuss ideas about promoting adult literacy in the North.

Each territory sent its own delegates to discuss literacy program accessibility, funding and new ideas to encourage the growth of literacy rates among adults throughout the North.

The forum, which ran from Oct. 23 to 25 at the Explorer Hotel, was hosted by the NWT Literacy Council. It was divided into four subject areas: learning for work; non-formal, community-based skills development programs; do my literacies count as literacy; and formal adult education in the North.

“Literacy is like the foundation of a house,” said Helen Balanoff, executive director of the NWT Literacy Council. “If the foundation isn’t there, the house falls apart.”

Throughout the forum, groups brainstormed, coming together on the final day to share what they believe are areas that need to be looked at to help improve adult literacy rates. Delegates from the NWT identified holistic non-academic outcomes, increased assessment tools, and to a need to create new approaches to existing programs as priorities.

“I really wanted to hear what was happening in the broader sense in education in the North,” said Sandra Drost, an adult educator from Tsiigehtchic. “I wanted to see if what I was feeling, other people were feeling.”

Drost said one challenge is overcoming a “workforce driven” approach to education and literacy. She feels that while employment should be one educational goal, a job isn’t “the only thing in life.

Many conference participants wanted to approach the subject with a less traditional structure.

“(Lutsel K’e residents) They might not have the reading and writing skills, but, on the other hand, they have other skills,” said Jessica Enzoe, a program assistant with the Mine Training Society of the NWT, and part-time resident of Lutsel K’e. “They might not need a Ski-Doo manual to know how to use a Ski-Doo - they can just go and put it together, and they are very innovative.”

Funding opportunities and expanding programming were also discussed as was the idea on how does an organization judge success in programming.

“I think there’s success on different levels, I think there’s success on the individual level,” Balanoff said. “The NWT Literacy Council did a research project on barriers to success and what facilitates success, and one of the learners said if there’s one person that has improved their spot in life, that’s success. I think you have to look at it at an individual level.”