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**PAUKTUUTIT**  
**INUIT WOMEN OF CANADA**



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 NUNAVIK REGIONAL BOARD OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
 RÉGIE RÉGIONALE DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX NUNAVIK

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Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada  
 Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement  
 Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services  
 Canadian Inuit HIV /AIDS Network

and

Inuit Youth  
*present:*

# Inuit Youth Sexual Health Conference “Stay Informed - Make Responsible Choices”: Toward Improving Sexual Health Among Inuit Youth

**Kuujjuaq, Nunavik, Quebec**

**February 23 – 26, 2009**



CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

Youth Engagement

**FUNDED BY:**

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## **Inuit Youth Sexual Health Conference: Stay Informed - Make Responsible Choices: Toward Improving Sexual Health Among Inuit Youth**

### **PROJECT BACKGROUND:**

Stay informed – make responsible choices was a project designed to empower youth to make healthy, responsible choices about sexual health. During this project, Pauktuutit and the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement partnered with the National Inuit Youth Council (NIYC), Nunavik Regional Health and Social Services Board (NRHSSB) and the Canadian Inuit HIV / AIDS Network (CIHAN) to use their extensive networks to facilitate and coordinate an Inuit specific youth sexual health conference. Inuit youth representatives had access to the expertise and knowledge of health professionals, community front line workers and researchers to support their participation in the Inuit Youth Sexual Health Conference held on February 17 – 19, 2008, in Kuujuaq, Nunavik, Northern Quebec

This conference was a direct result of requests and suggestions from the Pan- Arctic Sexual Health Symposium in Inuvik February 2008 where there was a one day workshop for Inuit youth. Suggestions from that workshop included:

- The youth group said they had expected more discussion during the conference about sex and youth perspectives on sex.
- They expected to learn about how STDs are spread and how STDs affect your body.
- They felt they had attended the conference not only to learn about sexual health, but to share their own ideas on youth sexual health.
- A youth-driven presentation, sharing ideas about the positive things that are happening in sex education and sexual health, would have been productive, they pointed out. “Everyone was talking about the importance of youth input, but we didn’t have the opportunity to be asked,”
- Others suggested there could have been special recognition given to youth delegates who teach safe sex or promote sexual health in their communities.
- Some youth said they didn’t understand some of the presentations and break-out discussions on resource extraction and its effects on sexual health. They felt more explanation and overview was needed, since not all conference delegates were familiar with the topic.
- “I’d really like to see self-confidence building. It affects sexual health and it affects relationships.”
- “We should have a purely-youth sexual health conference.”

## **OBJECTIVES:**

- Develop the capacity of attending youth to promote healthy sexual behaviours among youth in their communities by providing key information and the opportunity to practice skills at the Forum;
- Encourage, model and practice the building of youth - adult community teams;
- Implement the recommendations of youth from the previous conference regarding the conference format in terms of fewer presentations and more interactive opportunities to discuss their own experiences and ideas;
- Involve youth in leadership roles throughout the event;
- Involve youth from the Kuujjuaq community by having youth from the Forum develop and give workshops at the school on the final day of the event.

## **PARTNERSHIPS ‘MAKE IT HAPPEN’: THE PLANNING COMMITTEE EMERGES...**

### ***Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada***

Pauktuutit is the national organization representing Inuit women across Canada. Established in 1984, the organization has achieved widespread recognition among government and non-government agencies for its dedication and successful advocacy for Inuit women. Our mandate is to foster a greater awareness of the needs of Inuit women, and to encourage their participation in community, regional and national concerns in relation to social, cultural and economic development. Equipped with a dedicated staff located in Ottawa, and led by a highly motivated Board of Directors comprised of Inuit women elected from ten Inuit regions, including Urban and Youth. Pauktuutit is active in a wide range of areas including health, gender equity, abuse prevention, protection of cultural and traditional knowledge, and economic development.

Pauktuutit builds on community successes and celebrates the contribution that Inuit women make to healthy communities and families. Pauktuutit embraces these achievements and designs projects and programs that tackle the underlining socioeconomic experiences that are barriers to the health and wellness of communities.

Pauktuutit has a long history of work on substance abuse, diabetes, tobacco cessation, domestic violence, suicide prevention, respite for care-givers, and sexual health, HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis-C.

Specifically in the area of sexual health, Pauktuutit has produced a number of awareness materials and has worked closely with communities to raise awareness about sexual health issues including HIV and Hepatitis C.

Pauktuutit’s key strength is our capacity and commitment to partner with Inuit women and a wide variety of organizations to achieve our goals:

- Pauktuutit’s highest priority is to work with, and develop capacity among, women from ‘grassroots’ Inuit communities, so all of our projects involve working closely with Inuit women;
- The majority of our projects operate under the guidance of specially appointed Advisory Committees, comprised of highly qualified and experienced people from across Canada. Much

care and attention is placed upon establishing these Advisory and/or Review Committees, as they play a critical role in the successful execution of programs;

- Pauktuutit also works closely with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Health Canada, Status of Women Canada and a number of other federal departments, territorial and provincial governments and has an extensive network of community contacts;
- As well, Pauktuutit works closely with key Aboriginal organizations including the Ajunnginiq Centre at NAHO, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Inuit land claim organizations and various First Nation and Métis organizations.

Pauktuutit has been working on information exchange, knowledge transfer and community mobilization with regard to sexual health in Inuit Communities. This work has involved coordinating *HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C Fairs* and convening sexual health symposia. Such initiatives and others like them have helped create awareness of sexual health issues and community support for people living with HIV/AIDS. Arising from the symposia is an identified need for culturally appropriate interventions with regards to sexual health.

### ***Centre of Excellence of Youth Engagement***

The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement (CEYE) led by The Students Commission of Canada, which brings academics, youth and youth serving organizations and agencies together to conduct research and improve the practice of youth engagement. It is an excellent example of developing partnerships, resources and results that continue to sustain the project year by year since 2000. The Centre is now firmly embedded in each of the partner organizations and continues to attract new funding resources for its efforts. CEYE is conducting a number of research and evaluation projects related to youth engagement and various issues. The Centre of Excellence is led by The Students Commission of Canada, and its research and evaluation team is lead by Brock University. The Centre partners with youth organizations in all parts of Canada.

The Students Commission of Canada (SC) is a national charitable organization that is run by youth in partnership with adults, for youth across Canada. They have been creating innovative, effective and educational programs for youth since 1991. A non-profit youth organization, The Students Commission is run by youth and supported by adults, where young people work in a setting that operates under our Four Pillars: *Respect, Listen, Understand, Communicate*.™ They reach out to young people to use and develop their skills to create change in their communities and personal lives. Young people who participate in our programs have the opportunity to advance their skills by putting their ideas into action and raise public awareness of issues that concern them both across Canada and worldwide.

As the lead organization in the CEYE, SC has developed and tested nationally recognized models and frameworks for youth engagement that are used by government, in schools and community organizations throughout Canada. They have been asked to present their findings and share information at local, provincial, national and international events. This framework takes a multi-level strengths-based approach to engagement, examining the individual, social and systemic structures of positive youth engagement, as well as the initiating and sustaining factors and the outcomes of positive engagement. The Students Commission and its Centre partners may be best known for their “commissions” (youth conferences and workshops) that model effective youth-driven programming

built upon youth engagement framework.<sup>i</sup> They are experts in supporting youth to develop safe spaces to discuss research and produce action-oriented ideas and products (workshops, magazines, videos, projects, posters) that address issues that affect them. They are also experts in training adults to become more effective “adult” allies, becoming better at creating spaces for youth to learn by doing and discovering while providing appropriate professional, technical and clinical support. SC/CEYE has a series of tools for developing and executing conferences and evaluating them on multiple levels: impact on youth, impact on adults, impact on partners, and eventual community impacts.

Pauktuutit shares a regular working relationship with Nunavik Regional Health and Social Services and The Canadian Inuit HIV/AIDS Network on various mutual initiatives; thus, bringing these partners onboard made sense to ignite this project. Teleconferences began in the fall of '08, bringing in the following planning committee partners as roles were clarified:

- Geri Bailey, Mary Kelly, and Pitsulala Lyta, Pauktuutit, Lead Organization (Ottawa), Co-ordination and logistics;
- Stoney McCart, Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement (Toronto), Program Design, Facilitation Leadership;
- Faye Lagresley and Elena Labranche, Public Health, Nunavik Regional Health and Social Services, (Kuujuaq), Logistics;
- Nubiya Enuaraq and Shelley Watkins, Youth Coordinators, Inuit Tapirit Kanatami (Ottawa), youth input;
- Canadian Inuit HIV/AIDS Network (CIHAN) members for support and guidance
- Jessica Yee, National Native Youth Sexual Health Network

#### ***“TEAM’ VOICES TELLING THE STORY....***

*“As the host region for this national conference, I saw my role as two fold; first a responsibility for the logistical aspects, both before and during the conference and second to assure that as many Nunavik youth as possible had the opportunity to participate. From my perspective, challenges concerned difficulties related to the fact that although we (Nunavik Public Health) were responsible for the logistics of organizing such a conference (hotel, meals, buses, site reservations, etc) everything had to be confirmed by the Pauktuutit office. That said, the success (what worked) of the conference, was in much part due to a number of factors:*

- *the opportunity for youth to meet and interact with youth from other regions*
- *the structure of the conference; including some youth presenters and opportunities for youth to build on and practise skills acquired during the conference*
- *the flexibility / adaptability of many of the organizing committee and the participants themselves*
- *the support of the host community and local and regional organizations.”*

*“ As the lead organization, our established partnerships with NRBHSS and ITK were natural to build on for this project. Pauktuutit serves as the secretariat for CIHAN and is very aware of their goals and expertise in the field. Our new partnership with the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement was very productive. The speed in which we were able to plan, coordinate and deliver this conference*

*speaks to the power of relationships and team work. Despite a few glitches, hotel reservations being cancelled and the bus breaking down, we were able to meet the objectives of the conference.”*

*“When first approached to become a partner, The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement was concerned to ensure that northern partners would see value in our participation, not intrusion. The process of the telephone calls and email exchanges to develop the concepts, objectives and program was an outstanding example of meaningful partnership and collaboration. Each partner on the calls was respectful of other’s roles and expertise, asked questions to ensure we understood each other, and added significant contributions to the program each time we met or between meetings. The communication process was excellent, as was the commitment and tenacity of each partner to execute this challenging project; bringing youth and adult allies together despite geographical, logistical and climatic barriers in a very short time frame. If there was a piece that didn’t work so well, it was that this process of communication and team building for those who were on the ground executing the event could not be carried out the day before the event with a day of collective planning for all event staff because of time and travel constraints. This was clearly a collaboration of partners who have genuine interest in the voice of young people. Kuujjuaq, as the host community, opened their doors and their hearts to welcome us in the warm spirit of kinship. We sincerely thank this outstanding team for the opportunity to contribute! NAKUURMIK! Qujannamiik!”*

### ***SPONSORS WHO PROVIDED INVALUABLE SUPPORT!! NAKUURMIK!!!***

As the vision unfolded, many sponsors came forward to support this challenging event to become reality:

- Kativik Regional Government,
- Makivik Corporation ,
- Tivi Galleries,
- Jaanimmarik School,
- Kativik School Board Adult Education Centre,
- Derek Tagoona: camera man
- Arqsaniit Productions Inc: Bob May,
- Saputiit Youth Association of Nunavik:
- Corporation of the Northern Village of Kuujjuaq,
- Auberge Kuujjuaq Inn Inc.,
- Nunavik Youth House, Kuujjuaq,
- Bruce Turner- bus driver,
- First Air,
- Air Inuit,

And... our strongest supporter and partner - Public Health Department of Nunavik Regional Board Health and Social Services

### **WHAT IS YOUTH ENGAGEMENT?**

In responding to youth feedback in 2008, Pauktuutit was committed to engaging youth more meaningfully in the process of designing an event to promote sexual health and provide opportunities

for youth delegates to experience a youth engagement model of participation. What does that look like??

## **Defining Youth Engagement**

As defined by the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement (CEYE), youth engagement is: *“the meaningful participation and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity that has a focus outside him or herself. Full engagement consists of a behavioural component (such as spending time doing the activity), an affective component (for example, deriving pleasure from participating), and a cognitive component (for example, knowing about the activity)”* (Pancer et al. 2002, p. 49). At the Centre, we refer to this as Head, Heart, Feet, and have now added a fourth component, Spirit, which relates to the sense of connectedness to greater than the self. At the conference, we conducted the evaluation asking young people to speak about how the conference had affected their Head, Heart, Feet, and Spirit.

Regardless of the specific wording, there are some common elements to most definitions of youth engagement. First and foremost, participation must be meaningful to the involved young person in order for him or her to become engaged. What is more, engagement usually involves young people having opportunities to take responsibility and leadership while working in partnership with caring adults who value, respect, and share power with them. Key features also include a link to the outside world, sustained involvement, and structured activities that have a purpose in mind (Nakamura, 2001; Mahoney et al., 2002). Further, it should be noted that “engagement is a process, not a particular program—and most importantly, it is reciprocal, dynamic, and interactive” (McCart and Clark, 2005).

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONFERENCE: “Our Process”**

### **DAY ONE, Monday February 23rd: “ARRIVAL DAY”**

Delegates arrived at various times through the day and were warmly greeted at the Kuujjuaq Airport by a ‘Walking Yellow Condom’ a.k.a. Mary Kelly on her birthday! Happy Birthday, Mary! All conference participants gathered at the Katithavik Town Hall throughout the afternoon; keeping occupied with registration, introductions and icebreakers led by CEYE, followed by dinner at the local hotel. Miraculously, after a glitch in hotel reservations only days before the event, Kuujjuaq community literally opened their doors to warmly accommodate arriving guests. All conference delegates were billeted at various accommodations in the community to include individual family residences! This also required delegates to be transported by bus service to and from accommodations to conference site each day – no small feat in sub-zero weather.

### **DAY TWO, Tuesday February 24th: “GETTING TO BUSINESS, SOME CONTENT”**

#### **Opening Prayer and Welcoming Remarks**

An opening prayer and welcoming remarks were made by elder Martha Grieg. Elena Labranche from the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) gave opening remarks for the conference. She noted that Sexually Transmitted Infection (STIs) rates were very high in the Inuit regions and that it represented a priority health issue. Minnie Grey, a representative from Makivik

Corporation, provided some welcoming comments and an overview of Makivik and its relationship to Nunavik. Mary Hailu from the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement (the Centre) thanked everyone for being invited and gave an overview of the Centre. The Centre focused on finding ways to engage youth in developing solutions to problems facing all people. Pitsulala Lyta from Pauktuutit welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the meeting. She said the youth at a previous conference in Inuvik made it clear that further youth conferences were needed and that the current conference was a direct result of that request. She noted that Rhoda Innuksuk, President of Pauktuutit, and its Board of Directors, sent their regards to the participants. She thanked the speakers and organizers for their work and Canadian Inuit HIV/AIDS Network (CIHAN) for their support. She noted that elder Inuapik Sageatook was available to help answer any questions and share her wisdom as well. She thanked the funding agencies First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) and Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) for their support. On behalf of Pauktuutit, Ms Lyta thanked our partner NRBHSS for their support and contribution to the conference, without which this conference would not have taken place.

### **Overview of Agenda**

Mary Kelly of Pauktuutit reviewed the objectives of the conference including the knowledge exchange that would take place when the participants made presentations at the local school. As well, the meeting would build on the recommendations of the youth day that was held as part of the Inuvik conference February 2008 which called for a sexual health conference for youth. She reviewed the activities that would be undertaken at the conference and within the community.

Jennifer Watkins, President of the Sapuutit Youth Group of Nunavik, welcomed everyone to Kuujjuaq and Nunavik. She stated that sexual health can be a hard issue for youth to talk about, but that it was important to be more open about it for the benefit of all.

Bonnie Heilman, CEYE, described the success they had working with youth and getting them to work together. She listed the four pillars of the Centre's work as guidelines for the conference – "**Respect, Listen, Understand, Communicate**". She then divided the group into four separate groups to develop guidelines for each of the four pillars to be followed during the conference. The group broke into small groups for discussion. They then reported back to the main group. The four pillars were posted and also translated to Inuktitut.

#### Group 1 – Respect

- Confidentiality
- Freedom to express oneself
- Asking permission
- Paying attention to what is being said and being cognizant of different ways people use to help them listen
- Don't judge people, encourage them to be open
- Honesty in communication is important
- Important to earn and give respect
- Have no expectations

- Be welcoming to each other and to new ideas
- Keep open minds
- Challenge yourself to help be a contributor and to help others to contribute
- Respect the community, billets
- Quiet when people are talking
- No swearing
- Sharing
- Working together
- Encourage each other to communicate freely

#### Group 2 – Listen

- Good listening is critical to success of conference and to effective communication
- Good listening is important for respect
- You can't learn if you don't listen well and you need to learn so you can take the information you learn back to your community
- Listening is respecting

#### Group 3 – Communicate

- The right to not say anything if that is one's choice
- Sometimes not saying something is saying something
- Respect for other is paramount
- Cultural sensitivity is important when dealing with all groups
- Compromise when faced with disagreement
- Don't be afraid of asking questions
- Speaking one's mind is important
- "Leave no-one behind"
- Clear instructions are important
- Having options – not being forced to do something, should like what you are doing, speak slowly enough for the translators

#### Group 4 – Understand

- Don't judge by what people say or do
- People must have confidence in themselves to understand
- Good listening leads to good understanding
- Being afraid of challenges can impede understanding
- Being selfish can impede understanding
- Not being afraid to help is important
- Outgoing nature helps understanding by improving communication
- Compassion and openness are key

**PRESENTATION: Jordan Lyall - How to teach Sexual Health from a Youth Perspective.**

Jordan is from Cambridge Bay and an Inuit representative on the National Native Youth Sexual Health Network (NNYSHN). Jordan used a slideshow of photos from his life to tell the story of his journey in teaching sexual health. He described his life in Cambridge Bay with his girlfriend and his experiences when his parents were divorcing. Sexual health work was one of his passions and a continued source of inspiration to him. He described how he became involved in sexual health when Pauktuutit organized a meeting about sexual health in Cambridge Bay. He was inspired by the discussions at the meeting and eventually attended the conference in Inuvik. He also spoke about some of the shortcomings in the way sexual health education was being taught currently.

**PRESENTATION: Jenny Williams: Introducing the role of media, art, culture in shaping norms, balance of role models and media.**

Jenny, 27 and mother of two, originally from Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador, is committed to keeping her Inuit heritage alive through the arts. She is one of the founders and is the manager of the Nipik Inuit Drummers, an Inuit drum-dancing and throat-singing group. She has traveled many times across Canada to perform and also to Mexico and Guatemala. Jennifer uses different mediums to depict the traditional Inuit way of life including painting, photography and traditional crafts. Her original paintings were displayed with the “First Voices Project 2008” that toured Canada during the summer of 2008.

Jenny gives various workshops to teach others about Labrador heritage and culture including drumming, throat singing, story telling, crafts and Inuit games. Jennifer believes youth need to “Spend time with their Elders as they will help pave the way to achieving your goals!”

At the Pauktuutit AGM in Ottawa 2008, Jenny was elected as a youth representative to their Board of Directors. She was selected as a national Aboriginal Youth Role Model for 2008-2009.

**PRESENTATION: Self Esteem and Social Norms.**

Mary Kelly began with an overview of some of the concepts involved in the exercise. The groups were asked to consider how they can change negative social norms into positive ones. The groups were encouraged to provide their responses via different media or medium.

**Group 1:**

- They discussed a number of norms that were expected of them.
- Destructive norms included partying at a very early age (under 18), marriage at an early age, smoking drugs, driving at any age, sex at any age, drinking at an early age, taboo about talking about sex,
- Constructive norms included expecting to go to university, finding a way to your true self.

**Group 2:**

They chose to do a series of skits regarding social norms in their communities.

- Skit one – smoking group and pressure to conform – need better role models for kids so they can resist bad influences.

- Skit two – Takes place in school and sexual education where the students were embarrassed about the information presented, a boy-girl relationship involving STIs. Keep trying to teach kids about sexual health as it used to be taboo to talk about it but isn't anymore.

#### Group 3:

This involved a skit - people smoking drugs and drinking alcohol over a period of time and comparing the same couple over time without the drugs and alcohol. The skit illustrated how some problems in families affect the next generation and perpetuate problems over time.

#### Group 4:

- The skit involved various people divided into “cool kids, nerds and jocks”. People had to choose their own friends and not depend on trying to join other groups.

Pitsulala introduced Louisa Ukalianuk as a member of CIHAN and a long-time educator on STIs and HIV/AIDS. Louisa made a brief presentation to the group. She described her experiences living with HIV/AIDS and how it affected her family her journey included turning to drugs, alcohol and promiscuity to help her deal with her health problems and how she turn things around by becoming a speaker at health fairs and sharing her story in hopes that people would learn from her experiences. Louisa stressed the fact that very thing is related to making informed choices.

### **PRESENTATION: Healthy Lifestyles What do Young People Need to Know about their Body?**

Theresa Norris from Sexpressions in Montreal gave a presentation to the group. She did an exercise involving two mannequins dressed as a man and a woman. She discussed with the group definitions of sexual activity and how people all have sexual elements to themselves. She said it was important to have a common definition of sex to understand sexual issues such as sex taking place only below the belt. She stressed the need to understand boundaries and respecting oneself. She asked the group to develop a list of goals they would like to have accomplished at the workshop.

- More info. on STIs
- More info. on treatment
- Breaking harmful cycles
- Knowledge affects behaviour and changes attitude

### **DAY THREE: “MORE CONTENT INTO PRACTICE”**

#### **Introductions and Summary of Previous Day's Events**

**“Snowball Exercise” for anonymous delegate feedback to process thus far.** Most of the comments were favourable with some comments being made as to how to improve the conference including having more free time available, having more of a focus on solutions and not just learning about STIs and sexual health, more structured agenda and times for breaks etc.

**More Team-Building Exercises...”Human Bingo”:** The group was then asked to play a form of bingo that encouraged people to find out details about other people to get to know one another better.

**PRESENTATION: Decision Making and Healthy Sexual Health: Focus on Infections (STI’s, HIV, Hep-C...)** Teresa Norris began by reviewing some of the discussion from the previous day. Bonnie Heilman noted that a small group had met the previous evening to review the definitions used for sexual activity and being sexual active. There was some discussion about the differences between STIs and STDs. Christina from the Public Health Agency (PHAC) gave some additional support information in response to specific questions.

**PRESENTATION: Sexually Transmitted Infections**

Geri Bailey introduced Caroline Ningiuk who was a midwifery student from Inukjuak. Caroline reviewed services available in the community in regards to women’s health including annual checkups and PAP tests. Anyone with abnormal test results was recalled for additional testing. This presentation sparked interest among participants to becoming midwives and obtaining information about how to accomplish this . The role of traditional knowledge was noted as being important to keep alive.

**PRESENTATION: Teresa Norris: Healthy Relationships/Abstinence**

There were questions regarding virginity and abstinence, whether it was possible to catch STIs from toilet seats, etc. Theresa addressed a number of myths concerning birth control. The influence of drugs and alcohol on sexual activity was considered to have negative outcomes and clouded your decision making skills.

**PRESENTATION: Jessica Yee: Decision Making and Parenthood**

Jessica introduced her presentation by recognizing the region of Nunavik and describing how she enjoyed learning and teaching about sexual health. She is the director of the National Native Youth Sexual Health Network and described some of the activities the Network was involved in. She asked groups to list 10 ways to say “No” without actually saying the word. Jessica asked the groups to find alternative ways of saying “Yes” without using words. A discussion took place involving adoptions and various related options. Several participants explained their experiences with adoption. Jessica then asked the groups to form for a game of true and false involving sex and pregnancy. Topics discussed included condoms, traditional birth control methods, and the age of consent for abortion. Jessica wrapped up the discussion by reviewing some additional sources of information on sexual and reproductive health issues.

**PRESENTATION: Develop Healthy Check-up List: Suicide Prevention:** Shelley Watkins, Youth Intervener at ITK, and Jennifer Watkins, President of the Sapuutit Nunavik Youth Group, gave a presentation on suicide prevention. Shelley described some of her work with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) in the area of suicide prevention. She stated that she didn’t want to use the term “suicide” in the title of the project and chose “Live Life” for its more positive title. Shelley noted described some of the activities she has helped coordinate including a major kayaking trip in Nunavik to help encourage

youth to live life. Jennifer described her work in the area of suicide. She felt it was important to instill a positive outlook on life for youth. Nunavik has one of the highest rates of suicide in the world particularly among youth. Minnie Grey described the importance of having elders and parents pass on their knowledge, culture and language to they have tools to grow into strong, confident Inuit. The residential school experience disrupted this experience and it was the responsibility of elders to help youth to keep their knowledge alive.

#### **DAY FOUR: “PRESENTATION DAY”**

**“Snowball Exercise” – Group Check-in.** Mary Hailu began the day’s session by reviewing the agenda for the morning. The group was then asked to respond to a number of questions on paper and throwing them into the centre of the tables. Some of the comments from the group included:

- I had a good time and learned a lot
- I have more to work with now in my community
- I feel inspired by working with other youth
- The conference was a fun way to learn about sexual health
- The learning materials were very good
- I would like more information on healthy relationships

Christina from the PHAC drew the attention of the participants to a number of resources she had brought with her. She asked participants to email her if they had any feedback they would like to share with her. She then reviewed the questions that had been placed in the question box. She discussed some issues such as the differences between female and male condoms and where they can be found.

**Finalize and practice workshops:** The groups continued to work on their presentations. After lunch they made their presentations to high school students at the Jaanimmarik School. Once their presentations were completed they returned to the conference room to debrief.

**Workshop Debriefing with Youth Participants:** After the groups did their presentations at the high school, they returned to the main forum to debrief and identify next steps. Their comments included:

- I couldn’t believe I was teaching people older than me
- I felt confident in what I learned doing the workshops
- I feel excited about what I learned
- I talked about my family and how safe sex is everyone’s responsibility, tried my best to give them info
- I observed and thought everyone did a good job, I was impressed with how students were listening, this team was really solid in their info
- Really good to see facilitators repeat what they learned this week

Pitsulala spoke on behalf of Pauktuutit and said they were very proud of the youth at the conference—they definitely had the ability to be effective facilitators on sexual health. The objectives of the conference had been achieved. They were the leaders of today. She recognized Mary Kelly’s work in coordinating her first conference. She also recognized elder Inuapik Sageatook and Louisa Ukalianuk, urban representative of CIHAN, for their important contribution to the conference.

The participants then continued with some comments about their presentations. The comments included:

- *I didn't speak too much because I am shy but I want to try again*
- *Our presentation went well, the students co-operated with us, we had fun, and I hope to see you all again*
- *I really liked how ours went and it really helped that we weren't adults or teachers and seeing we were all their age and talking their language. We played games and everyone had a lot of fun*
- *I apologize to my team for being a little louder than others but I was so excited and think it was so awesome! It was so fun I want to do it again!*
- *It went really well. We knew what we were talking about. I can totally see us doing more of this. I was really impressed with everyone taking everything they were taught and teaching others. Keep it up!*
- *Thank you very much, I will be facilitating in the school in my community next month.*
- *I like the outcome of this conference*
- *I loved it because I used to go to the same school. The kids were really into it.*
- *I liked the whole experience. It could have been a little more serious as I hope we didn't come across as a joke*
- *I am really thankful to be chosen to be here – first I thought I should have done better but after a joke, I made the students laugh and I'm proud of myself*
- *This conference was a great experience and it really gave a lot of knowledge to me. I would not have been able to talk in front of our peers about this before the conference. After we were done, I was kind of beating myself up but then Bonnie came to me and said we did really well so now I have a plan to know how to improve.*

**Recommendations:** The participants were then asked to make recommendations regarding the conference. Comments included:

- *Youth from every community should be involved at future events*
- *More men should be invited*
- *More participation*
- *More presentations like those from Teresa and Louisa*
- *More Elders because it was very good when our elders spoke*
- *More talk about sexual health as an overall topic*
- *Add one more day so we don't have to do evenings*
- *Invite more people from Nunavik – maybe two youth from each community*
- *There should be annual conferences*
- *Each community should send an elder and youth who work together*
- *More advance notice is needed for application forms*
- *More role models*

The conference ended with everyone wishing each other well and safe travels on their way home.

**Head, Heart, Feet, Spirit Evaluations of the conference “experience” of participants– some quotes...**

**FROM YOUTH PARTICIPANTS...**

*“This week lifted my ‘heart’, and I loved it...made me see in another direction in life and I want to and will keep this good direction...and that this feeling – that everyone is here for you...the feeling is one of ‘zee’ best feelings I’ve had in a long while...I love you guys!”*

*“I am going to keep myself informed about safer sex and I’m going to teach and tell what this conference how it made me feel – because there are soo much my friends need to know.”*

*“I learned ..alot, about more of myself and what I am capable of doing. Of course,sexual health. I learned from every person from the conference. I loved it ...everything about it. But I think that Inuit Youth should be umm have more attention, and this helped a lot. Thank you FOR HAVING ME!”*

*“I feel happy and excited at the same time because we can take from this experience and teach other people.”*

*“I feel more confident on what I knew and what I know now. This conference helped a lot. Thanks. What I want to do with what I learned is spread it out to more youth and do something like we did in the school.”*

*“I really liked how ours [WORKSHOP AT THE HIGH SCHOOL] went, really helped that we weren’t adults or teachers – seeing we were all their age and talking their language – played games – everyone had a lot of fun.”*

*“It [WORKSHOP AT THE HIGH SCHOOL] went really good, we knew what we were talking about, can totally see us doing more of this, really impressed with everyone taking everything they were taught and teaching others. Keep it up!”*

*“This conference was a great experiece, really gave alot of knowledge, would not have been able to talk in front of our peers about this before the conference.”*

**FROM ADULT PARTICIPANTS....**

*“I feel inspired! We heard a lot of great stuff and hopefully everyone can go back home and practice what we learned.”*

*“I have learned the word “social norm” and the meaning of it, and how it affects our youth in a positive or negative way. I learned what tools we could use to do presentations. I learned about the way our elders in early days believed about pregnancy and motherhood or family hood I’ve learned that not many Inuit youth have much sexual education.”*

*“I feel much honored to be in this conference and very grateful. I feel there is a lot of information to pass on to our youth. I feel like having a serious healthy relationship in the future with my son and maybe his father too.”*

## **Two Months Later...Follow Up Inquiry With Y-A Delegates on Impacts (May 2009)**

### **KEY QUESTIONS FOR FOLLOW UP PHONE SURVEY OF YOUTH AND ADULT DELEGATES:**

#### **1. What motivated you to attend the conference? (i.e. interest, your role, another person)**

*My teacher encouraged me to attend the conference to learn about sexual health.*

*I was curious and my principal encouraged me to attend.*

*I was encouraged by Pauktuutit to attend this conference. I had attended the Inuvik conference and was selected to participate.*

*Pauktuutit and Jessica Yee were essential in my participation.*

*I wanted to know more about sexual health to give advice to the younger generation to be safe and aware.*

*Interest in sexual health and what we're doing in our community with secondary students. We're teaching sex education to the students. Helps me find out what youth think about sex education.*

*I spent about two years in Iqaluit doing a youth educating to youth about sexual health and how to be safe program. Ever since I've been interested and this conference was perfect to enhance my knowledge.*

#### **2. How has this conference experience impacted you since returning to your community?**

*The conference has given me comfort in talking about sexual health and I have the answers to share with them. Don't go below the belt!*

*Made me think about whether or not people might have an STI.*

*It hasn't really impacted my professional life because I don't work in sexual health. It has helped with my personal experience and I now have the necessary information to give to anyone needing it.*

*It was encouraging to see a lot more youth get involved in sexual health. Helps me to pursue more projects knowing I have a lot of support.*

*I'm able to answer more questions and have a larger knowledge base about sexual health.*

*Feel confident in talking about sex and sexual health with clients and community members.*

*Know my resources and people in different communities for reference or feedback relating to sexual health. Great networking opportunity and meet new people who could help from all different locations and ages.*

#### **3. What ways can we support you to stay involved in these types of activities?**

*Keep sending me information through email or through the post office.*

*More information about the old days and more information about personal experiences. Have more input from elders.*

*Make more related conferences and events available to participants and send information consistently.*

*More frequent conferences.*

*Get more people involved and have more conferences like this one. Have more activities so that people can be interested.*

*More people need to be interested, small communities should be involved. I can encourage people to come to conferences like this one.*

*We could talk more about what is being done and evaluate to continue this project.*

*Giving more information and market to smaller communities to attend.*

### **Shared Learnings: "Some Hindsight"**

In debriefing the process of organizing a conference of this magnitude, we were first struck that the team did not actually come together until October 2008 spanning great distances from various locations by teleconference. The concept, program design and logistical planning came together in just five months over six teleconferences to include Christmas interruptions in the process

(Note: there were a number of teleconferences bilateral between CEYE - Pauktuutit , and Pauktuutit - Nunavik)

Our shortlist of doing things better would be:

- ✓ More time to plan;
- ✓ Importance to role clarity of each partner in advance; written and agreed to by all parties;
- ✓ Reliance on email communication for important tasks (like booking accomodations) created a huge logistical glinch;
- ✓ Assigning the right people to the right roles;
- ✓ Inaccurate assumptions that ‘silence’ on calls means ‘agreement’;
- ✓ Bring facilitation team together a day prior to event for role clarity, orientation to program, team-building and training. Facilitators are the ‘glue’ to a successful event.

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## Appendix 1

### The Centre of Excellence’s Youth Engagement Framework.

The CEYE’s Youth Engagement Framework provides a way to conceptualize youth engagement more comprehensively (see Figure 1 below). The framework is continuously growing as we learn more about engagement. To date, most of the research related to youth engagement has been focused on the “act” of being involved in activities, such as the type of activity, number and involvement over time. However, youth engagement is more than just doing certain kinds of activities: process matters. This framework depicts the complexity of qualities and factors that lead to and support meaningful youth engagement and positive outcomes.

In the centre of our framework is the youth engagement activity (e.g., policy consultation), which is made up of various objective qualities such as structure, content, frequency, and breadth. Involvement in structured and organized activities is linked with positive outcomes. These qualities also include how young people experience the engagement activity: enjoyment, meaningfulness, stress, learning, how challenging it is, how good they are at the activity, how much control they have on the activity. These qualities are important parts of the picture of engagement, and are also related to positive engagement outcomes.

The rest of the framework is designed to take into account the three levels in which engagement happens: 1) Individual, 2) Social, and 3) Systems. These levels are illustrated by the three layers of each bubble. The initiating factors (represented by the three-layered green bubble in Figure 1), or initiators, deal with how youth become engaged in the activity at the start of it. In recruiting and involving children and youth, these factors include individual motivators and incentives for them to

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participate (e.g., personal values, interest, monetary incentive). At the social level, youth might initiate engagement because they were invited by an adult ally they trust. At the systems level, systems such as governments, communities and other institutions provide engagement opportunities for children and youth, often because of policies (values) or practices they initiate.

More challenging is sustaining engagement. The sustainers (blue bubble in Figure 1) are the reasons that children and youth stay involved. At the individual level, these may include reinforced motivators (e.g., beliefs about making a change) and personal characteristics (e.g., dedication). Social and systems level sustainers seem to be very important (e.g., supportive adult ally, institutional support and resources, etc.). Children and youth face many barriers to participating, and each child and youth may have a different barrier that must be overcome to remain engaged.

The outcomes (purple bubble, Figure 1) can be positive or negative at all three levels, which is why it is important to have a clear and shared understanding of success and the goals of the policy development engagement activity. This framework suggests that true engagement of children and youth in public policy development requires a balance between positive outcomes for children and youth at the individual level (e.g., personal skills, healthy choices, sense of identity), their relationships and interactions at the social level (e.g., stronger connections with friends and adults, a larger support network), and system level outcomes (e.g., greater civic engagement, policies and programs responsive to the needs of young people, new and creative ways to develop policy) in terms of changes at the policy level and/or in communities.

Another important point to note is that all of the pieces of the engagement framework are connected to each other; there are dynamic and fluid relationships between all components. Therefore, in addition to the actual engagement activity, the factors and processes that initiate and sustain engagement are important in generating outcomes. Meaningful and responsible engagement of children and youth in public policy development is based upon activities with engaging qualities and strong processes that initiate and sustain engagement. Figure 1: CEYE Youth Engagement Framework

# THE MAIN PARTS OF THE MODEL

