

Ilitaqsiniq Nunavut Literacy Council, Rankin Inlet, Nunavut

The Niqitsialiurniq Program was designed by Ilitaqsiiniq as a 4-month seasonal program to provide cooking/healthy eating skills and basic literacy and job training. The project was modelled on the very successful Miqqut Program that blends modern and cultural skill development through a program embedded with literacy and employability skills. The plan involved offering a community food kitchen as a training ground and to include seasonal/land-based harvested food, and learning modules taught by Elders and cultural experts in the preparation and preservation of country food.

In the spring, a 2-week nipku camp was held involving a guest hunter and Elder experts. Butchering, meat preparation, proper methods of drying and preserving meat and the various aspects of using all parts of the animal in food preparation were taught. This was followed by a camp dedicated to harvesting during the arctic char run in July where pipsi making, smoking and other ways of traditional preparation of fish were taught. In addition, seasonal opportunities for harvesting such as berry picking or mussel gathering were also included.

A core aspect of the training was the delivery of a weekly community lunch program through the summer months. The Community Learning Centre was available for this training during the summer when Adult Learning Courses were not being delivered. Participation in the lunch program was open to anyone, especially trainees and their families. Initially, attendance was about 80 people, but this quickly increased until 175-200 people were being served throughout the summer months. It was noticed that many of the people attending were groups of youth and elders who were living alone and tended not to cook for themselves regularly. The lunch program was served at the community hall and was seen by many as an opportunity for social interaction in addition to a good meal.



# NIQITSIALIURNIQ

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The program included a self-selection day every Friday where trainees could select a recipe they wished to learn and then prepare it and take home the results to their family.

Literacy components of the program included learning new terms, reading recipes accurately, adjusting recipes, understanding measurements, how to use food mail, store price checking and reading ingredient and nutrition labels. There was a strong nutritional training component which examined the consumption of convenience foods, the nutritional value in country foods and store-bought foods and taught how to prepare healthy meals on a budget. Introduction and tasting events to various fruits and vegetables and how to prepare and preserve these foods was a focus. Guests often participated in additional programming such as diabetes awareness and prevention information shared by the regional dietitian

In addition, formal training in food safety, First Aid and CPR were mandatory. Job skills such as resume writing, job searches, setting personal goals, teamwork and task orientation and mini business planning were covered. Trainees toured food businesses such as the fish and meat plant and the Meadowbank Mine and were able to do on-the-job training to gain real hands-on experiences. Three trainees became employed by the mine and one has gone on to training the field of culinary arts.

The program ran twice in Rankin Inlet and was extremely popular and showed significant impacts based on participant evaluations and interviews from participants in the lunch program.



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NUNAVUT FOOD SECURITY COALITION  
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COALITION SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ALIMENTAIRE DU NUNAVUT



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