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Société Makivik
Makivik Corporation

# Saimatsianiq Research Project

## Workshop on Inuit Knowledge regarding Legal Practices

### With Makivvik Justice Workers and Committee Members

March 24-25, 2022, Montreal

**Report**

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September 2022

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# Introduction

In this report, we will present the results of a 2-day research workshop held in Montreal on March 24 and 25, 2022. The workshop brought together ten participants (eight Inuit women, one Inuk man, and one non-Inuit woman[1]) who work for the Justice Program of Makivvik Corporation.[2] Here, we will use the term "justice workers" for all the participants, regardless of their positions. There were two co-organizers: Marie-Ève Marchand and Pascale Laneuville, who are both research professionals at Université Laval. There was also Suzy Watt Kauki, a research assistant doing undergrad studies in law and sociology at Carleton University. Finally, there were two interpreters: Annie Baron and Eva Eetook.

The workshop had three objectives: 1) develop relationships and cooperation between the research team and the Makivvik Justice Program team; 2) learn about the realities, views, and concerns of Nunavimmiut who work in justice-related services; and 3) help promote and gain recognition for their role and expertise. It also provided the participants with a safe environment where they could share their experiences, problems, and prospects while supporting each other. The findings presented here highlight their dedication to helping people in need, as well as the importance of emotional and relational skills in their role. Such skills are learned not at school or in books but through life experiences and by observing and listening to role models. During the activity, participants also suggested their own definition of justice: "the fact of treating others well."

At the outset, the participants were asked for their written consent. They could waive confidentiality and have their name associated with their words in all publications based on the workshop. None of them chose to keep their participation and comments confidential. Two translators were present so that all participants could communicate freely in Inuktitut. The comments in this report are from the perspective of the participants and cannot be generalized to everyone involved in Inuit justice.

The workshop was part of a research project called *Saimatsianiq: Documenting, mobilizing, and promoting Inuit legal practices to preserve social harmony in Nunavik*. The project had been launched by the Sentinel North Research Chair on Relations with Inuit Societies (Caroline Hervé, Department of Anthropology, Université Laval). Funding came from Justice Canada through the Justice Partnership and Innovation Program (JPIP): "Revitalization of Indigenous Laws" (2021-2024). The workshop was made possible through the collaboration and support of the Makivvik Justice Department.

[1] The participants were Minnie Alaku, Jessica Arngak, Minnie Arngak Etidloie, Rebecca Cookie, Eve Laoun, Sarah Mulucto, Danella Okpik, Victoria Okpik, Noah Oweetaluktuk, and Maggie Rhoda Annanack.

[2] Makivvik Corporation is the organization in charge of administering, distributing, and investing the financial compensation that is paid to Nunavik Inuit under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

# Makivvik Justice Program: Services for Inuit in the Justice System

The Makivvik Justice Program has three main objectives: 1) help administer justice through culturally adapted approaches that emphasize healing individuals, families, and the community and dealing with the underlying causes of crimes; 2) respond to crimes and disputes in a way that recognizes Inuit culture, values, ways, and knowledge; and 3) empower Inuit who have been affected by crimes or disputes (victims, families, offenders, community) by offering help and solutions that build their resilience and sense of dignity while ensuring community safety.[3]

The Makivvik Justice Program has three specific components: 1) Local Justice Committees; 2) the Para-Judicial Program; and 3) the Correctional Program. These components are intended specifically for offenders, that is, people going through the criminal justice system, although the activities often include victims, family, and community members.

## Justice Committees

Ten local justice committees across the Nunavik region offer direct services at various stages of the justice and correctional system. They particularly work with people before, during, or after sentencing, or after release. The clients are usually referred by the court with a view to helping them rehabilitate and keeping them away from the revolving door of punishment and re-offence.

> I work in the justice committee because our people need that. We must integrate Inuit ways in justice. Our life used to be different. People need to be helped for the pain they went through. They need someone to talk to, someone to listen to them, someone they trust. We are using traditional knowledge to help others. (Jessica Arngak, Justice Committee Member)

Five of the workshop participants were justice committee members. They described their role as one of welcoming people who are caught up in the justice system, helping them open up about their pain, and listening to them. When the court refers a client to a justice committee, the members first meet with the client and explain the importance of cooperating with the committee to avoid going back to court and then prison or to get court conditions lifted. The committee offers the client a chance to discuss his/her situation and problems with a committee member of his/her choice. Most clients, however, do not open up readily. They need a safe context. The land is often the best place for opening up and healing, as well as for spending time with and listening to elders:

> When we go on the land, elders talk to them about the land. […] The elders talk to them: "I know who you are from your childhood. I saw you growing, and it is hard when I see you in this situation." (Noah Oweetaluktuk, Justice Committee Member)

> Inuit are hunters; they would go out on the land. We have men and women who are making a living from harvesting, being out on the land. When we are out on the land, the women and men can open up. As a justice committee, it tends to happen. At the end of the outing, they

[3] Makivvik 2021, *Makivik Justice Program* (www.makivik.org/current/makivik-justice-program/).

> do a group meeting, and they are able to open up. They can open up and apologize for their action: "I understand better, I am going to do better." This is very rewarding. (Noah Oweetaluktuk, Justice Committee Member)

The committee and the client also agree on activities that the client will have to carry out in the following weeks, in addition to meeting with the committee a few times. The activities are considered community work and are determined by the client's interests and the community's needs. They also vary according to the client's gender, age, and specific abilities. For instance, the client could go pick up ice or berries for elders, shovel their porches, sew mittens for needy children, go net fishing, or go hunting for people who cannot hunt. Whatever they collect or catch is always shared with the community because food sharing is valued by Inuit. After the activities and before the next court appearance, the committee provides the court with an activity report.

The committee members among the workshop participants mainly use discussion and hands-on activities on the land to help the client get away from bad habits, such as alcohol and drug use, and to talk about problems, with a view to healing. The discussion is about who the client is, about his/her family relationships, and about what may have hurt him/her in life. Thus, justice committee members see caring and healing as ways to fight violence and crime.

## Para-Judicial Program

Three workshop participants worked for the Para-Judicial Program. Para-judicial workers work with the accused throughout the court process, from the charges to the sentence. Their role is to make sure that the accused understands the legal process, the charges, and the court conditions. They also help their client prepare for the questions that will be asked in court. They sometimes use local radio stations for legal education; for example, by explaining the meaning of court conditions to the community and thus helping everyone better understand the court process.

## Correctional Program

One workshop participant was the Correctional Program Coordinator. The program is for Inuit in custody at a provincial or federal correctional centre, and its mandate is to support them for any need or concern they may have while in prison and upon release. The coordinator is a resource person that an inmate may call for help. She also calls inmates regularly to check up on them and deal with certain needs they may have—such as booking a medical appointment, getting clothes, receiving money—and she tells them about healing programs and how to ask for parole when the time comes. She offers to meet them in person if they wish. Activities are sometimes organized for inmates to reduce their sense of isolation, such as visits by elders, games, parties, music, etc.

As an important part of the program, the coordinator helps inmates prepare for their homecoming and plan their conditional release. She contacts the inmate a few weeks before and asks whether he or she will have a place to stay, has court conditions, and wants to meet with the justice committee or the social worker, for instance. She then notifies the community that an ex-inmate is coming home and may need support.

## Caring for and Protecting Inuit in the Justice System: a Crucial Intermediary Role

All the workshop participants, regardless of the program they worked for, were primarily motivated by a desire to **help** their clients by taking care of them and showing them love. They were aware how crucial their role is to preserve and restore individual and collective well-being in their communities, and this awareness drives them to persevere.

The participants said that from their perspective the client is seen less as a criminal and more as a wounded person going through a difficult time and needing support. They are therefore dedicated to providing not only support during the healing process but also **protection** from a justice system that sometimes treats Inuit unfairly. Indeed, they too often see Inuit being discriminated against, disrespected, and misunderstood during the court process and during and after imprisonment. For instance, Rebecca Cookie is a para-judicial worker, and she explained that many Inuit have trouble expressing themselves in court and are thus at a disadvantage. So she takes it upon herself to observe them, tries to understand how they feel by reading their body language, and talks with them after court sessions:

> People are shy to say that they don't understand in court. They are shy to talk in court because there are so many people. They don't know what to say. Some want to say something, but they cannot. So we try to understand how they feel. We go see them after the court. We ask how they feel, why they got angry. (Rebecca Cookie, Para-Judicial Worker)

Justice workers act as a crucial intermediary not only between their fellow Inuit and the system but also between the community and ex-inmates, who are sometimes poorly received and treated on their return. Justice workers do their best to ensure that Inuit are respected throughout the legal process.

First, to support and protect people in need, a justice worker will work very hard to **explain** to the client the laws, rules, and workings of the justice system as best as possible. That job is far from easy, given the three languages of the court (French, English, and Inuktitut) and the fact that laws and procedures often make little sense in Inuit culture and society. Second, a justice worker will use sensitivity and other human qualities to develop a relationship of trust with the client and offer what that person needs most: to feel welcomed, important, listened, and loved. The client will be **encouraged** and reminded that he/she is unique and precious, has qualities and strengths, and is a valued member of a family and a community.

## Guiding Values and Knowledge

We asked the workshop participants about the main skills and values that guide them in their duties, and the important qualities needed to be a good justice worker.

## Equality and Respect

While discussing these issues, the participants talked about specific **relational skills** they had learned not only through their life experiences but also, and especially from, their role models. Their role models were parents, spouses, leaders, or elders who had been good at speaking to and helping others and who had shown a high degree of self-reliance in life. The participants thus realized that their ability to help others was based not on any educational background or legal knowledge but rather on a lot of observation and **listening to stories**. Indeed, to them, **storytelling** a critical way to share knowledge, through examples, about how to behave properly in life. Storytelling happens when you recount an anecdote or episode from your life that taught you something important.

Two important values emerged as crucial to the participants in performing their role: **equality and respect**. They strongly believed that everyone is equal and should be treated equally with respect and a nonjudgmental attitude. No one is worth less or more than another. This does not mean that everyone is the same; on the contrary, we all have our strengths and therefore can learn from each other and benefit from teamwork.

> [My colleagues] are fun to work with. They have different personalities, skills, and abilities, and this helps. They teach well. And they tell me stories on how to treat people, how to help them. I enjoy working like that. I learn from others. (Sarah Mulucto, Justice Committee Member)

## Showing Love

From these two values comes a certain kind of **knowledge** that also guided the workshop participants. First, no one is inherently bad. Everyone can make mistakes and struggle through life; this does not mean that we cannot do better. Sarah Mulucto was aware that non-Inuit see things differently: "We know as Inuit, when someone is going through the system, it is because they are hurt. We know and say: 'They need to do healing'. And it is not the vision of others. So we have different visions" (Sarah Mulucto, Justice Community Member).

Second, **we all need and deserve love in our lives**. Love, both given and received, makes us feel part of something, and important. When an inmate is cut off from the love of family and community, for instance, the impact is severe, as Suzy Watt Kauki explained:

> When you have no person or place to put your love in, I think the love becomes cold and hard. […]. If (the inmates) were in the community and participating in the life, maybe they would still be doing good. But they couldn't show love, so maybe it became cold. When they finally go home, their cold heart will have to be softened again. (Suzy Watt Kauki, Research Assistant)

Indeed, the participants said that people struggling with justice issues often need love. Love can be expressed in many ways, such as by sharing food, listening, and talking. Minnie Etidloie explained how, as a child, her mother had taught her how to show love to someone in pain:

> I remember my mother consulting a woman who was angry. The woman was crying. She was full of grief snout and her face was wet from tears. My mother was trying to consult her. I was there as a little girl. My mother tried to make me kiss her to show her love. She was trying to teach me how to love them. I didn't want to kiss a wet face, but she was showing me compassion. (Minnie Arngak Etidloie, Justice Committee Member)

### Rules and Personal Qualities

Given the importance of showing everyone love and respect to maintain peace, the workshop participants mentioned some rules that they had learned and which they think are important today:

- Welcome everyone into your house.
- Never put others down.
- Never talk badly about others or about others' problems.
- Never wish someone bad, even if that person did something wrong.
- Never be mad at someone. "Wait until the sun has set" (i.e. give yourself time to forget and forgive).
- Never force others to say or do something.

In the Inuit view of justice, all of that means sharing food with inmates, welcoming ex-inmates back into the community, respecting client confidentiality, and not forcing a client to do something he does not want to do, such as talking with the justice committee.

While trying to respect everyone's freedom and independence, justice workers feel helpless when the client does not want to cooperate or comply with the court conditions, such as meeting with the justice committee. In that situation, they try to explain why it is important to abide by the conditions.[4]

On the basis of such values and knowledge, the participants identified qualities that justice workers need to help their clients adequately: being open-minded, being good at listening while also being a good speaker (i.e., talking respectfully, being good at telling stories and at teaching), and showing empathy.

## Challenges and Realities of Inuit Justice Workers

Makivvik justice workers face three challenges in their work: emotional overload, criticism and pressure from other Inuit, and constraints imposed by the system.

[4] One participant also talked about inmates who refuse to be responsible for themselves and who refuse to get help and treatment.

## Emotional Overload

Emotional overload comes particularly from the suffering that justice workers are exposed to and their feeling of powerlessness in the face of injustices experienced by Inuit. They work with clients who have very heavy stories. Listening to such stories, though very important, is exhausting, as Danella Okpik pointed out:

> Even if we say that it doesn't affect us, unconsciously, it continues to push you and brings you over the edge. With the people I work with, we find resources to be able to let everything that we hear out, so it doesn't bother us throughout the rest of our week, when we try to work on other things as well. (Danella Okpik, Para-Judicial Program Coordinator)

It is painful to see people with so many problems, especially when they lose hope and give up. Justice workers have to find ways to lighten the emotional burden, such as debriefing regularly with colleagues. Unfortunately, according to most of the participants, debriefing is not done often enough with the team. They would like to have time to debrief after each court session, or after each meeting with a client. On the committee of one participant, the members would appoint someone to tell a story to the group. The story would make the committee members laugh and even cry, thus helping them unload their emotional burden.

Justice workers must always take care to separate work from personal life, and not bring their work home. According to Noah Oweetaluktuk, whose wife is also a justice worker, the mere presence of the court in a community can create stress in people's homes: "As a family, as a community, we are all affected when there is court, even though we don't go in court. In the house, we are all affected, even if my wife doesn't bring work to home."

Justice workers also suffer from seeing Inuit being disrespected throughout the court process, in prison, and even when released and sent home. In prison, Inuit may be victims of racist behaviour from other inmates and prison guards: "This is the hardest part because they are not being respected because they are Inuit. They are mistreated. There is miscommunication also between Inuit and French people, because they are not able to speak French" (Victoria Okpik, Correctional Program Coordinator). Justice workers are also concerned about false accusations against Inuit who are unable to defend themselves. They wonder what they can or should do when they witness such a situation. For example, an Inuk may get court conditions that prohibit using a rifle even though the crime had nothing to do with a rifle. Such conditions are unfair and discriminatory for Inuit who must hunt to feed their families.

## Critics and Pressure

Some workshop participants mentioned that other Inuit would blame them for certain court actions and decisions. Or other Inuit would expect actions beyond the control of justice workers, such as getting people out of jail faster, and would blame them for not doing their job. It was mentioned that *irqatiujiaapiit* is a common Inuktitut term for "justice committee." It literally means "little judge," thus creating the impression that the committee has the power to judge and

prosecute, which it does not. As a result, some Inuit are suspicious and even surly toward justice committee members.

### Constraints Imposed by the System

Justice workers also face many challenges that come from the system itself, which is considered to be rigid, restrictive, and authoritarian. For instance, Sarah Mulucto is a justice committee member, and she argued that the numerous rules and regulations and the load of paperwork negatively affect the relationship she tries to build with a client: "There are so many regulations and rules, that it is too heavy. We follow so much the guidelines; we don't look at the person. We try to figure out ways to heal, to work with the clients." The next section will further explore the inconsistencies between the justice system and the values and knowledge of the Inuit.

## The Justice System in Nunavik: a Clash of Culture and Language

The workshop participants defined the justice system as being contrary to their values and practices. They explained that it treats Inuit unequally. Some of its officials lack respect for Inuit, being haughty and bossy. Its hierarchical setup and its authoritarian approach are at odds with the consensual approach of the Inuit, who value non-interference and respect for your right to act according to your own free will.[5] Whereas the justice system is focused on judging people, Inuit prefer to be nonjudgmental and respectful toward everyone. In sum, Inuit have the feeling that the court system is not based on human values. As Suzy Watt Kauki (Research Assistant) put it: "I feel that when I am reading my schoolbooks, it makes me uncomfortable. It is not my values; it is not even human values." According to the participants, the overall operation of the court induces systematic racism[6] against the Inuit, due to the clash of language and culture, as well as the "bossy" nature of the system. Workshop participants mentioned three major challenges they had observed in the legal process: 1) the way the court session operates; 2) the court conditions; and 3) the prison sentence.

### Challenges during the Court Session

The workshop participants talked about many aspects of the court session that either make no sense to them or show disrespect. They said that its setting and operation often make Inuit feel

[5] See among others, Hervé C. 2015. *Le pouvoir vient d'ailleurs: leadership et cooperation chez les Inuits du Nunavik (Arctique québécois)*. Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval: p. 135; and Pauktuutit. 2006. *The Inuit Way: A Guide to Inuit Culture*. Pauktuutit Inuit Women Association of Canada.

[6] According to the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec, "Systemic discrimination, which combines both [direct and indirect] types of discrimination, is characterized as being widespread and institutionalized in a society's practices, policies and culture. Systemic discrimination can impede individuals throughout their entire lives and its effects can persist over multiple generations" (Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec 2019: 203.) According to Suzy Watt Kauki, "it touches everyone and everything."

uncomfortable and unable to stand up and speak up for themselves, thus contributing to systematic racism. We will list here only a few of the negative aspects.

First, the participants said that two major ones are **the way questions are put** to the accused, and the **pressure to plead guilty**. In both cases, the participants felt that the accused is disrespected. They explained that the way a lawyer may directly question a client is confrontational, hurtful, and thus inconsistent with Inuit ways.[7] They mentioned that some lawyers merely try to get the information they need to win their case and are even willing to confuse the client with their questions. Such an approach does not help the client. Inuit prefer to create a respectful and helpful relationship by asking open-ended questions, as Rebecca Cookie (Para-Judicial Worker) mentioned: "We must be careful about how we ask questions; we have to ask open questions to make them comfortable. I have clients who are not able to speak up because they have been spoken to in a manner that is not open."

The participants said that defence lawyers generally encourage their clients, and sometimes pressure them, to plead guilty even in cases where they did not commit the crime of which they are accused. According to the participants, the lawyer's strategy is to speed up the legal process and get shorter prison time for the accused. They saw that strategy as unfair in two ways: first, an Inuit client sometimes does not fully understand the meaning of pleading guilty; second, Inuit in general highly value honesty. The concepts of "guilty" and "not guilty," while central to the court system, have no equivalents in Inuktitut. The participants thought that most Inuit do not understand that pleading guilty means that they confess to the charge. "You are done, you go to jail." Innocent people may wrongly confess and be wrongly sentenced.

Accordingly, translation and interpretation between English and Inuktitut are a big challenge during the court session. The challenge is all the bigger because three dialects exist in Nunavik. Sometimes, an interpreter will translate into a dialect that is different from the client's, thus creating confusion. The participants believed that judges and lawyers are unaware of the existence of dialectal differences and thus insensitive to the problems that may arise.

## Challenges with the Court Orders

Second, outside the courthouse setting, problems may result from court orders being **misunderstood or miscommunicated**. Misunderstanding and miscommunication may lead to court conditions being broken and the offender going back to court or to prison. As an illustration, house arrest is particularly hard for Inuit to understand and comply with, as Rebecca Cookie explained:

> When they get a conditional sentence order, we tell them: you are going to be at home like if you were in detention. You can get a call to see if you are at home at any hour of the day. They can come to your home; they have their own plan to check if you are home.

[7] As explained and documented in various documents about traditional Inuit values, asking direct questions is considered rude and aggressive. Inuit also prefer to avoid direct confrontation (see for example Pauktuutit. 2006. *The Inuit Way: A Guide to Inuit Culture*. Ottawa, Pauktuutit: pp. 19; 35; 37.)

> If you don't follow your conditions, they can arrest you right away. There are clients who are listening to what they are supposed to do, but not all of them do. (Rebecca Cookie, Para-Judicial Worker)

For example, a man guilty of domestic violence may be forbidden to see his spouse. His spouse may break that court condition because she is not aware of it and because the two of them live in a small community. When offenders have a condition to meet with a social worker, they do not always understand that it is their responsibility to go on their own to see the social worker. The workshop participants also mentioned that some conditions are inconsistent with Inuit values and the Inuit way of life. For example, there may be a condition against using a rifle, as we mentioned earlier, or a condition to move to another community after release. The latter condition will affect the offender's family, who cannot rely anymore on financial help from that person. Also, the offender sometimes has nowhere to go and can end up in a precarious situation.

### Challenges during the Prison Sentence

Third, workshop participants were really concerned about the isolation and stigmatization experienced by Inuit who go to prison and how it compromises their healing. While isolation occurs mainly in jail, stigmatization sometimes happens after release into the community. For example, the healing process is aided by family bonds, but those bonds may be weaker because the ex-inmate was not allowed, while in prison, to visit a dying family member or attend the funeral.

Ex-inmates may also have trouble finding a job and a place to stay, and they are poorly informed about the possibility of asking for a pardon. As Suzy Watt Kauki mentioned, many of them feel quite alone: "When they come out, they feel alone. Because they were put aside from the community for a long time. Sometimes, they might not know what to do, what to say. It has to be understood." According to the workshop participants, the community should be helped to welcome back offenders, who need to heal and get better.

## Toward an Inuit Model of Justice

During the workshop, the participants discussed what "justice" means to them. The most significant meaning: justice is about "***how to treat others well.***" It means taking good care of one another, showing empathy (*ippigusutsianiq or ippigusuqatigiinniq*, "to be sensitive to"), and living in a safe, happy community where no one goes hungry and where people are sharing and welcoming to others. As mentioned earlier, an Inuit model of justice is guided by values of equality and respect. **Sharing food** and eating together are often used as concrete ways to welcome and show respect and love to one another, and in a sense to achieve justice: "In Inuit culture, we welcome people by offering food. We give thanks because they got out the prison. If they believe that people respect them, they are going to feel like they want to be better." (Jessica Arngak,

Justice Committee Member). Since country food is related to Inuit identity and the land, justice is assisted when people obtain and share country food with each other.

Use of the Inuit language is also key to the Inuit model of justice. It helps Inuit understand the decisions and processes that concern them, it helps them express their thoughts with the right nuances, and it helps them join the discussion, reclaim their identity, and be rooted in their community. However, we need to be mindful of those Inuit who do not understand Inuktitut or who have trouble expressing themselves in that language.

Through discussions, the image of a **circle** emerged as representing what justice means to Inuit, in opposition to the image of a triangle, which better represents the court justice system. In a circle, everyone is equal and can see and care for each other. Everyone is connected and participates actively in social life (*ilautsianiq*, "being included"). Relationships and interactions are unlimited, since there is no separation. Justice keeps the circle strong. It is also a space where people can find peace (*saimaqatigiit*) and heal themselves (*mamisarniq*).

According to the workshop participants, **storytelling** is a key way to learn how to behave well in life (e.g., how to treat others, how to take care of yourself). Through storytelling, you can share knowledge that is rooted in personal experience, in space and time, and in a specific language. Because much of Inuit knowledge is rooted in the past and on the land, storytelling is best done in Inuktitut with elders on the land. In that setting, Inuit find it easier to connect to their identity, emotions, and knowledge. Traditional skills, such as how to prepare meat and travel on the land, are still considered important to individual and collective well-being. Learning from elders and practising land-based activities are also ways to keep busy (*ulapirsatauniq*), to stop thinking about your problems, and to clear your mind. By this means, elders teach "the good way" and give guidance (*ajuqiigiartuq piujukkut*, "teaching in a gooq way"). Since laughing is considered a good way to release stress, storytelling is also used to entertain and make others laugh.

Today, the justice committees play a major role in justice. They assist needy people by listening, talking to them respectfully, and encouraging them. A culturally relevant way to assist the needy is through community work, especially if it involves sewing, hunting, or sharing. The assistance is both direct and indirect: the justice committee helps the client, who then helps others through community work. Workshop participants also called for more use of cultural practices, such as being isolated for a short while in a tent on the land for self-reflection. Some committees have adopted names that better reflect their role, such as *ajuqiigiartiit* ("guiding") in Kangiqsujuaq.

## Conclusion

During the workshop, the participants talked about how they perceived their roles in the community as justice workers, especially as agents of three programs managed by the Makivvik Justice Program: the justice committees; the para-judicial program; and the correctional program. Their primary motivation in their work is to help their clients. They are devoted people and have

a strong sense of community and their uniqueness. Indeed, salaries, job recognition, and career ambitions were seldom mentioned. Their greatest satisfaction was when their clients could open up about their pain, turn their lives around, and get out of the legal process. Justice workers act as intermediaries between their fellow Inuit and the criminal justice system. They thus play a crucial role, especially because the justice system diverges in its values and practices from those of the people it serves. To perform their role, and to compensate for the challenges and inequalities they observe in the legal process, they must implement equality and respect and show love. They do their job while bearing a significant emotional burden, while being possibly targeted by some critics, and while having to navigate between major constraints within the justice system. Moving toward an Inuit model of justice, as defined by the participants, would not only help them individually in their daily practice but also provide healing at the community level. Given their dedication and abilities, we need to encourage Nunavimmiut capabilities and opportunities with a view to providing community members with appropriate solutions and bringing positive change. The justice workers themselves called for more involvement from their fellow Inuit, in order to move toward justice: "We have to accept that we are able to help each other" (Sarah Mulucto, Justice Committee Member).

The participants said they really enjoyed the activity. They especially liked the opportunity to learn from others. This was also an opportunity for them to share their experiences, whether good or bad, to do some debriefing with the group and open up about their difficulties, as opportunities to unload are scarce. They felt they were in a safe space, with everyone being open and kind, and thus felt confident. Some of them said the workshop increased their motivation. They especially benefited from the chance to learn from one another and participate in the interactions. They wished to see more workshops in the future, with a greater diversity of justice workers. Concrete fictitious scenarios could help them answer the questions in a more practical way. Finally, they appreciated the interpretation services, which helped everyone understand each other.

## Needs and Solutions

**For the justice workers**

- Organize regular workshops with storytelling and teaching of traditional knowledge and emotional skills.
- Plan regular debriefing times with colleagues.
- Strengthen the capacity of the justice committees.
- Take better care of the justice workers by providing counselling.
- Work in pairs, so that justice workers can support each other and learn from one another.
- Hold meetings with all the justice workers when they travel for court sessions, and plan the activities together (sewing, parties, celebrations).
- Provide the justice committees and their clients with access to cabins.

**For accused or sentenced Inuit**

- Meet with the accused in advance when the court is about to arrive in town, to allow everyone to prepare.
- Provide the accused with psychological/psychiatric assessment and support before sentencing.
- Take better care of people in prison, by calling and visiting them more often and by offering more activities.
- Organize family get-togethers for people who return to their community after a long time in prison.
- Welcome ex-inmates back to the community more systematically.
- Create transition houses for women and men who have been released on the condition of not going home.

**For court officers and the system**

- Teach court officers and the senior staff of Nunavik and government organizations about intergenerational trauma, colonial history, and intercultural realities.

## Acknowledgments

We are very grateful to the participants for their time and for what they shared with the research team. We would like to thank Suzy Watt Kauki (Research Assistant) for her active participation and her enthusiasm for the project, and Eva Eetook and Annie Baron for their work as interpreters. We wish to highlight the contributions of Marie-Ève Marchand (Project Manager) and Pascale Laneuville (Chair Coordinator) for organization of the activity. This project has been financially supported by Justice Canada.

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