



# Measuring Inuit Well-Being

STRATEGIC RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS DIRECTORATE • INUIT RELATIONS SECRETARIAT



## THE IMPORTANCE OF MEASURING WELL-BEING

In order to identify effective strategies for improving the well-being of Aboriginal people, it is important to know where and how improvements in the various aspects of quality of life have been achieved and where significant gaps continue to exist. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) has developed a number of tools for measuring the quality of life of Aboriginal people in Canada. Two of the most important tools are the **INUIT HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX (HDI)** and the **INUIT COMMUNITY WELL-BEING INDEX (CWB)**.

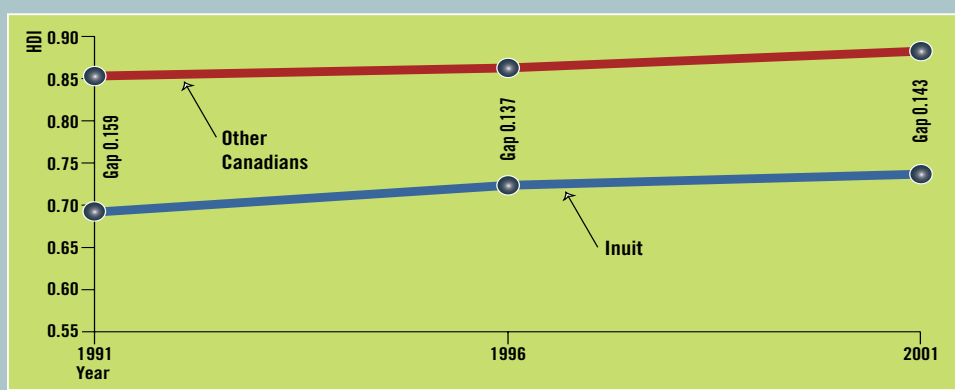
### INUIT HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX (HDI)

The **INUIT HDI** was developed by INAC to compare the average level of well-being of Inuit and other Canadians. It is based on the **UNITED NATIONS HDI**, which is a composite index used by the **UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (UNDP)** to measure and compare the quality of life in some 170 countries.

The UNDP identifies the following three important dimensions of well-being, each of which is captured by the HDI: 1) a long and healthy life, 2) knowledge and 3) a decent standard of living. The Inuit HDI uses **STATISTICS CANADA** data and life expectancy estimates to measure these three dimensions. These measures are applied to areas with significant Inuit inhabitants located in four regions closely corresponding to Inuit land claim areas. This results in a life expectancy index, an education index and a per capita income index as well as the combined human development index. These measures are currently available for the 1991-2001 Census years, and are broken down by region and gender.

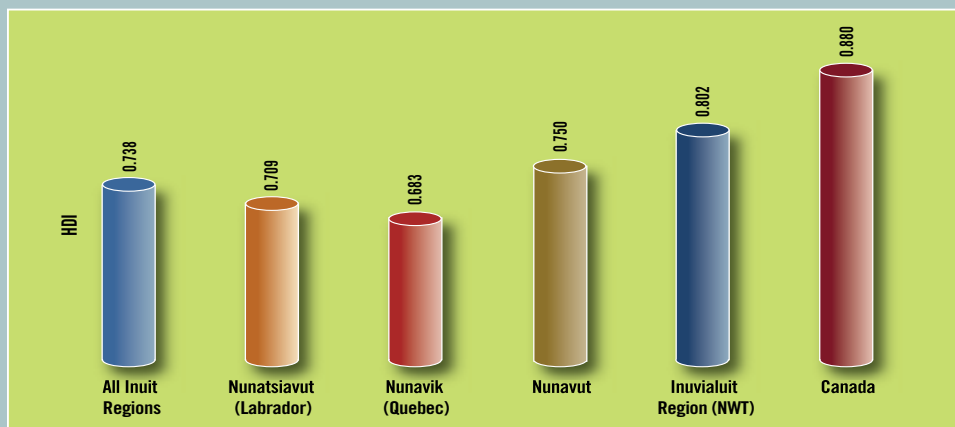
Analyses using the **INUIT HDI** indicate that overall the gap in quality of life between Inuit and other Canadians has narrowed between 1991 and 2001, but that important differences in well-being still remain. The Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate at INAC is engaged in ongoing analyses using the HDI to find out how Inuit well-being is changing over time. This work includes examining the differences in well-being between men and women and between each of the Inuit regions.

### THE HDI GAP HDI 1991-2001



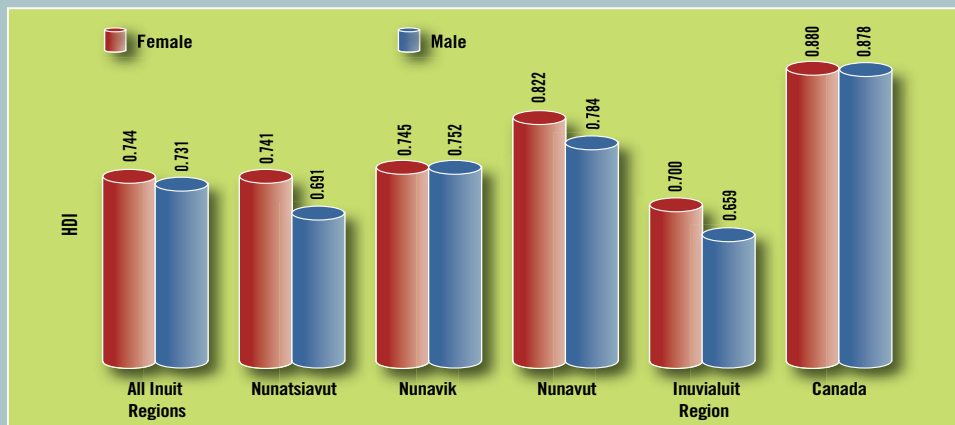
The chart above shows a considerable gap between the well-being of Inuit and that of other Canadians. However, the HDI gap has been narrowing since 1991 reflecting important improvements in education. It must also be noted that there has been no reduction in the overall HDI gap between 1996 and 2001, with Inuit not progressing as quickly as other Canadians during that period.

### REGIONAL VARIATIONS IN HDI HDI BY INUIT REGION, 2001



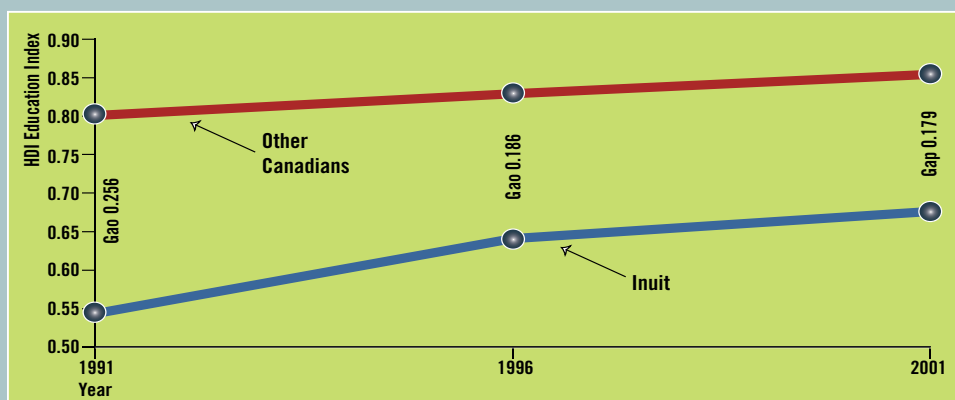
The quality of life of Inuit varies by region. In 2001, lower levels of HDI were observed in Nunavik (Northern Quebec) and Nunatsiavut (Labrador) compared to Nunavut and the Inuvialuit region in the North Western Territories.

### THE HDI GENDER GAP HDI BY GENDER, 2001



Overall in 2001, the gap in well-being between Inuit men and women was greater than the gender gap seen among other Canadians except in Nunavik where the difference was small and favored males. Among Inuit, women scored higher than men in life expectancy and education, but they had lower incomes than men.

### THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION HDI EDUCATION INDEX, 2001



The greatest gains in the Inuit HDI have been experienced in education where a reduction of 30% of the gap with Other Canadians occurred between 1991 and 2001. On the other hand, gaps in life expectancy grew by 16% during the same period. Finally, little change in the income gap was observed.

In-depth analysis reveals that much of the improvement in the overall HDI gap is due to the fact that an increased proportion of Inuit have finished primary and secondary school, especially in the 1991-1996 period.

### INUIT COMMUNITY WELL-BEING (CWB)

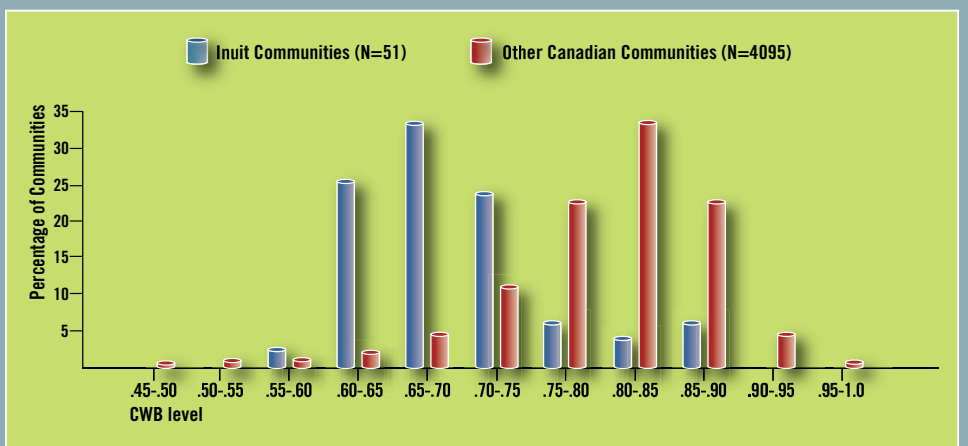
The **INUIT CWB** was developed as a complement to the **INUIT HDI**. While the HDI measures average levels of well-being among Inuit at the national and regional levels, the CWB measures the well-being of individual Inuit communities.

The CWB is used to compare well-being in Inuit communities relative to other Canadian communities and to examine the causes and correlates of well-being in Inuit communities in Canada. The CWB also allows for the identification of prosperous communities that may serve as sources of best practices as well as communities that are in greatest need.

The CWB was calculated using data derived from the **2001 CENSUS OF CANADA**. Four indicators (education, labour force activity, income and housing) were combined to give each community a well-being score from 0 through 1 (with 1 being the highest). A CWB score was calculated for 4,685 Canadian communities. This number includes all Canadian communities that participated in the 2001 Census, that were captured in the 20% sample database, that had at least 65 inhabitants, and that did not have data quality issues. 51 Inuit communities are included in this grouping of communities and will be analyzed here.

### COMPARING INUIT AND OTHER CANADIAN COMMUNITIES

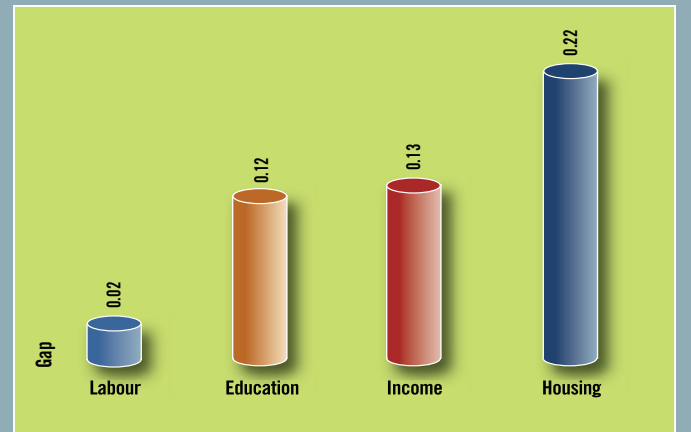
The chart below shows the distribution of Inuit and other Canadian communities across CWB levels. It demonstrates that well-being in Inuit communities was markedly lower in 2001. Over 60% of Inuit communities occupied the lower half of the index range (between 0.45 and 0.70) while less than 7% of other Canadian communities fell within this range. Importantly, however, this chart also shows that well-being varied greatly among Inuit communities themselves, and that quite a number of Inuit communities could be found in the higher CWB strata.



### HOUSING GAPS: THE IMPORTANCE OF CROWDING

The chart below illustrates the respective gaps in CWB components between Inuit and other Canadian communities in 2001. According to this gap analysis, housing explains close to half of the well-being disparity between Inuit and other Canadian communities.

The CWB index housing score is comprised of two distinct measures: crowding and condition of dwelling. Upon assessing each sub-component separately, it can be seen that Inuit communities are typically faced with more challenges associated with crowding than with condition of dwellings. The average Inuit community score for crowding was 0.69 while the score for condition was 0.75. This specific pattern is different than what is seen in Other Canadian communities where condition is usually more of an issue than crowding. Even when looking only at Northern non-Inuit communities, we see that while overall scores are lower than in the south, condition typically is more of an issue than crowding.



### CWB ACROSS INUIT COMMUNITIES IN CANADA

Overall, the average CWB score for Inuit communities in 2001 was 0.69 compared with 0.81 for other Canadian communities.

A closer inspection of the individual community scores reveals a range of scores which is quite large. This variation in CWB scores is reflected in the regional averages with Nunavik showing the lowest average CWB score, followed by Nunavut, Nunatsiavut and the Inuvialuit region. The map below displays Inuit communities divided into four levels of well-being based on their 2001 CWB scores.

For more information on the HDI and CWB visit [http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/index\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/index_e.html) or call 1-800-567-9604.

