

*Strategic  
Initiatives  
Evaluation*



**Investing  
in People**

Northwest Territories



Human Resources  
Development Canada

Développement des  
ressources humaines Canada



Government of  
Northwest Territories

**Canada**

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# *Paying Dividends:*

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**An Evaluation of the Northwest Territories'  
Investing In People Strategic Initiative - Year One  
Final Report**

**November 1995**

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## **TECHNICAL APPENDICES (under separate cover)**

1. Terriplan Consultants and Martin Spigelman Research Associates. "Lessons from the Literature on Employment and Training Program Evaluations." July, 1995.
2. Terriplan Consultants and Martin Spigelman Research Associates. "Report on Methodology." August, 1995.
3. Science Institute of the Northwest Territories - West, Scientific Research Licence #12826N/East, Scientific Research Licence #0102795N
4. Interview Guides:                      Participant Interview  
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# Acknowledgement

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*NWT Investing in People is a joint federal-territorial Strategic Initiative being funded and managed by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and the Government of the Northwest Territories' Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE).*

*This report is the first of two evaluation reports on NWT Investing in People. A Summative Evaluation report is to be completed in the upcoming year, 1996.*

*This evaluation study was conducted by Terriplan Consultants and Martin Spigelman Research Associates under the direction of the Evaluation Committee, comprised of representatives from the federal and territorial governments.*

*The evaluation team would like to thank all those who contributed to the study, especially officials in both the federal and territorial governments who gave of their time and experience.*

*The team would also like to thank the many project participants, sponsors, coordinators, instructors, workplace hosts and community members who generously shared information about the impact of NWT Investing in People on their lives and communities.*

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The population of the Northwest Territories (NWT) is small in number, dispersed over a vast landscape and breathtakingly diverse. People of the NWT are facing daunting challenges in the coming decade as they create Nunavut in the eastern Arctic, as they restructure government in the west and as they work to strengthen both the new and the traditional economies.

In order to assist people prepare for these challenges, the government of the NWT is working to ensure that both the people and communities of the north have the skills, training and experiences they will need through the coming years. The Investing in People program is one part of that effort and is designed to address the low skills and educational levels and the high rates of unemployment which characterize many NWT residents who have been dependent upon social assistance.

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## Investing in People: Overview

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Investing in People is a cooperative, two year education, skills development and work experience program targeted to social assistance recipients in the NWT. It is jointly funded by the federal Department of Human Resources Development Canada, through the Strategic Initiatives program, and the NWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment. The program's goals and objectives stress:

- personal and skills development among participants;
- integration of government services at the community level; and
- community development.

In 1994/95, Investing in People provided opportunities to approximately 278 people in 17 projects, located in 15 communities. It had a budget of \$2 million and expenditures of \$1.3 million. Nunavut Arctic College and Aurora College delivered the ten college-based training projects designated as the Northern Skills Development Program (NSDP). A variety of community-based organizations - for example, the Deninu K'ue Development Corporation, the Kitikmeot Inuit Association and the Kakivak Association-Asivaqtiit - delivered the seven more employment-orientated Work Activity Projects (WAP).

During the course of the program, participants remained on social assistance and received an additional incentive allowance of \$10/day. They could also receive additional allowances for child care and transportation if required.



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## **Project Features**

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The Investing in People program and projects incorporated a number of unique and important components, for example:

- in recognition of the labour market situation and the extensive needs of many social assistance recipients, the program's success measures were not tied to subsequent labour force participation by participants;
- in recognition of the importance of the traditional economy, several projects provided training in hunting and harvesting skills;
- several projects became partners with other community and government organizations in different community economic development ventures designed to strengthen the local economy;
- one project attempted to establish a day care centre for the children of participants while another hosted a community workshop on social assistance issues and on the needs of social assistance recipients; and
- one project incorporated traditional community customs, for example distributing the hunt to community elders, and hosted a community feast in order to acknowledge the hard work and effort of participants.

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## **Evaluation**

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In July 1995, the Investing in People Program Evaluation Committee contracted with Terriplan Consultants and Martin Spigelman Research Associates to undertake a short-term evaluation of Investing in People. The evaluation incorporated a variety of methods including a planning workshop with government and college staff, use of community research assistants, a review of administrative data, focus group meetings, and surveys of and interviews with participants, project sponsors, workplace hosts and community leaders among others.

The principal researchers completed the evaluation by October 31, 1995.

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## Findings

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The evaluation process identified a number of key findings:

- Overall, 47% of participants were female and 53% male. The employment-oriented WAP projects, however, were more heavily male and three of the WAP projects focusing on harvesting and forestry work were exclusively male. The average age of participants was 29 years. Nine percent of those surveyed said they were obliged to enter the program in spite of the program guidelines suggesting that participation was to be voluntary.
- There are two participant characteristics which are particularly striking. First, the education level of participants was very low, with 52% of those in NSDP projects and 64% of those in WAP having less than a grade 9 education. Second, participants used social assistance to a much greater extent than do other residents of the NWT. About 80% of participants had been on social assistance in the past year while 71% of NSDP participants and 50% of WAP participants received social assistance for at least 10-12 months during that year.
- Over 50% of those who entered the program did not complete it, 60% of whom were female and 40% male. Most frequently those who left the program early cited, as reasons, family responsibilities (14.5%), not getting along with the instructor (11.6%) and personal issues (11.6%). Approximately 18% of WAP participants and 12.5% of NSDP participants left the project early because they had found a job. Some of those who left the program early had their social assistance benefits suspended.
- More than 75% of the participants were generally satisfied with the program - and 38% "very satisfied" - while 81% believed that it met their expectations. The largest group (31%) described the job skills component as being the most useful while 20% the life skills component. Conversely 10% found the \$10/day incentive allowance to be least useful and another 10%, the recreation components. Over 40% of participants left the program without a career plan.
- Over 90% of the key informants who were surveyed believed the Investing in People goals and objectives were appropriate for their community and 67% believed that other community organizations were involved to an appropriate degree. Key informants also were generally satisfied with the different aspects of the program and over 90% thought

that the projects provided participants with useful experiences and skills. Without exception, the key informants believed that Investing in People was a good idea for their community.

- Key informants identified the most serious problems in the program as its inability to overcome certain barriers, participant attendance and the skills and literacy level of participants.

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## Research Issues

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The "Monitoring and Evaluation Framework" for Investing in People posed a range of research questions relating to program relevance, program design and delivery, project success and cost effectiveness. In most regards the research found that the program was operating as it was intended in regard to these four areas; and that in some cases where there were shortcomings, program and project management were attempting to rectify these in the second year of programming.

At the same time, however, there were areas where the design and operations could be improved. For example:

- while the program was reaching the designated target group, the low entry threshold meant that projects, and the project instructors, had to work with a very diverse group in terms of education, skills, abilities and - most importantly - barriers and needs;
- while the projects had the capability and flexibility required to meet participant needs, the participant assessment and selection process was not well developed and there was not usually a systematic and comprehensive process in place for identifying and addressing the needs of the different individuals;
- while the program encouraged cooperation between GNWT staff and community organizations, in some cases government staff played such a large role in the design and development of the program that a strong sense of community ownership did not develop;
- while the projects appear to be successful in terms of short-term participant outcomes and cost effectiveness, the methodology and time frame permitted for the evaluation did not allow for attributing these outcomes to the project itself; and

- while the projects appear to have produced significant benefits for participants, over 53% of those who entered the projects left early, with significant implications both for the individual's personal well-being and for the program's overall cost effectiveness. This element, along with those cases in which the participant was obliged by the social assistance program to enter the project, constitute an inefficient use of the program's limited resources and valuable opportunities.

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## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

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The value of the evaluation process is that it identifies both the strengths and the shortcomings of a program; and both are equally important as foundations and building blocks for improving programs in subsequent years.

The strengths of Investing in People are numerous: many of the projects were clearly innovative and consistent with community and participant needs; the projects provided important, new opportunities and experiences to many people who had long been relegated to the social assistance caseload; and federal and territorial managers, community staff and sponsors most often put aside jurisdictional and other differences, focused on the needs of their communities and participants, and worked effectively toward the program's goals and objectives.

The program's investment in people generated and may well continue to generate important dividends for participants, for communities and for the governments of the NWT and Canada.

At the same time, however, there are areas of weakness which deserve attention as managers work to improve both the program overall and the specific projects. The first of these areas concerns the haste with which Investing in People was designed and implemented during its first year. The federal cost sharing formula under Strategic Initiatives and the GNWT/project Contribution Agreements resulted in the program being hurriedly implemented. As a consequence, field staff, sponsors and community leaders did not have adequate opportunity to influence the design of the program, to understand its guidelines or to plan for the longer-term academic and employment needs of participants.

### **Recommendations: Planning and Implementation**

1. The GNWT and Canada should work to provide community sponsors with multi-year funding commitments so as to enable them to plan in a more systematic fashion.
2. The Investing in People program should be able to carry over unexpended budget allocations from one year to the next so as to enable planning committees to avoid budget-driven haste.
3. The community-based project committees for Investing in People projects should be expanded to include the full range of federal, GNWT and community organizations providing educational upgrading, skills training and work experience.
4. Every project should have a work experience component and at least one achievable outcome which is visible to the larger community, which will earn community support for the program and in which contributing participants can take pride.
5. The community committees should identify a training path for those who complete the Investing in People project, to ensure that they can progress steadily toward their personal and career goals. Training and work experience projects should not be viewed as a one-time intervention.

The second and dominant shortcoming of the program relates to its targeting of clients. The important and valuable opportunities of the program too often went to people who could not take advantage of them or who did not wish to participate in the program but were obliged to do so. The result of this was to reinforce failure among a group of people - most often long-term recipients of social assistance - who very possibly have experienced many failures in the past, in spite of the program's commitment to personal development and accomplishment. In regard to targeting also, certain of the harvesting and forestry projects did not provide an equitable opportunity to women in spite of their historical role in the traditional economy of the NWT.

### **Recommendations: Participants**

6. Constructive programs such as Investing in People should not be compromised by a compulsory and punitive element within the social assistance program.
7. Greater attention should be committed to the participant selection process in an effort to ensure that participants want to be involved and are more likely to remain in the program for its duration.
8. Each potential participant should be provided with the array of program or service alternatives available within his or her community.
9. Community project committees should clarify and refine the program's target group and plan the project accordingly.
10. Investing in People guidelines should require a roughly equal mix of men and women in all projects, whether training or employment-directed. Program managers should also solicit proposals which incorporate craft work as a means of rectifying the sex balance in those WAP projects focusing upon traditional skills and the traditional economy.
11. Each project should be encouraged to establish clear policies and procedures concerning attendance and the withholding of incentive allowances for those who fail to maintain a satisfactory level of attendance.

Efforts should also be directed toward improving the supports available through the projects. This relates certainly to participants on whose behalf the array of community resources were not always marshalled effectively. There is room for better assessment and better planning.

Of equal importance, however, is the lack of support provided to the instructors in spite of the importance of their role and the difficulties inherent in their jobs. Instructors are usually hired by the colleges and project sponsors at the last moment and laid off again once the project's seven-month term has transpired. Subsequently sponsors have to scramble at the last moment when new funding is approved and the result can be that they must then hire who is available rather than who is best suited for the position.

Furthermore, instructors are often handed their onerous responsibilities with little preparation or training in terms of what to expect and how to respond to the problems which will invariably arise.

### **Recommendations: Supports**

12. Special efforts should be undertaken by the GNWT to train and support project instructors given their key role in the operations and success of the projects.
13. As part of their proposal to sponsor a project, sponsors should be required to identify their plans to meet the child care needs of participants.
14. Project sponsors should determine, on a local basis, a policy and procedure concerning people with alcohol or other drug dependencies.

The experience of certain of the Investing in People projects indicates how important it is to make the program visible to the community and to recognize both the challenges confronting participants and their hard work and accomplishments. Some projects placed less emphasis on these public manifestations and community benefits and, given the relatively small number of people directly involved, will come and go without any lasting impact on the community.

### **Recommendations: Community Ownership and Integration**

15. Projects should be encouraged to include components which recognize participants' commitment, hard work and contribution to the community.
16. There should be greater cooperation at the community level between GNWT programs such as Investing in People and federal programs such as Pathways.
17. Community project committees should identify community needs which could be met by participants as part of their learning experience.

Finally, evaluation is an important tool for assessing the program's operations, strengths and shortcomings and for identifying those areas in which improvement is possible. It is one key to ensuring that projects evolve in a manner which reflects the needs of both participants and their host communities.

The evaluation of the first year of Investing in People provided some insights into how the evaluation process could be strengthened in subsequent years of the program. Importantly, given the objectives of both Investing in People and Strategic Initiatives, it provided some lessons for evaluators with the governments of both the GNWT and Canada.

## **Recommendations: Future Evaluations**

18. Community sponsors should have the opportunity to meet together in order to share their experiences and to discuss the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this evaluation.
19. ECE and HRDC should assist project sponsors to develop their own internal monitoring and program review processes.
20. The Investing in People Program Evaluation Committee should improve the evaluation process and methodology in the program's second year by:
  - beginning to plan earlier for the evaluation;
  - involving participants - both those who completed and those who did not - more fully in the research;
  - devoting additional time and resources to training community research assistants and to ensuring that there are two assistants in each community; and
  - encouraging community organizations, regional agencies or the Science Institute to maintain an inventory of people qualified to work as surveyors and research assistants.
21. The Investing in People Program Evaluation Committee, in the second-year evaluation, should examine more specifically:
  - the impact on operations, particularly with regard to non-completers, of a more deliberate implementation process;
  - those who left the program prior to completion; and
  - why some people on social assistance do not want to participate in programs such as Investing in People.

Investing in People contributed in important ways to the well-being of individual participants and individual communities in the Northwest Territories. At the same time, it provides the government of the NWT with a more general lesson about the value of devolution and the possibilities within the devolution process. The experience with Investing in People indicates how the transfer of responsibility to communities must be carefully planned and implemented over a period of time which is appropriate to the particular circumstances and needs of different communities. It shows that communities must be supported as they take on ever greater responsibilities and must be given the tools and the training which they require.

Finally, Investing in People shows how it is possible to create partnerships and how important these partnerships are. Bringing together individuals, agencies, communities and governments is the key to ensuring, first, that people have the



opportunities and supports which they most need, and second, that always limited resources are used in the most effective manner possible.

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# MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

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The recommendations in this Final Report of the Investing In People - Year One have been duly noted and favourably received. Where possible, action on the recommendations will be taken.

We acknowledge that the recommendations are based on data collected from a small sample size, and program operation of only seven months.

Although Section 2.2 describes the current education levels, it does not refer to the trends in education that the NWT is experiencing. For example, during the 11 year period from 1983/84 to 1993/94, enrollment in NWT schools overall increased 26%, while enrollment in secondary school (Grades 10-12) increased 128%. Enrollment in post secondary education increased by 182% during the 10 year period ending 1993/94<sup>1</sup> Most of the increase is attributed to increased access to programming, resulting in enrollments which are now approaching proportional representation.

Notwithstanding these comments, we believe the results and recommendations arising from this evaluation are timely and valid, and will assist in improving future educational programming in the North.

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<sup>1</sup> GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment.  
March, 1995, Human Resource Planning for Division, Preliminary Report.  
November, 1995, Towards Excellence, NWT Indicators Resource, P. 14.  
September, 1994, People: Our Focus for the Future, A Strategy to 2010.

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# 1.0 Introduction

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## 1.1 Overview

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The Northwest Territories (NWT) is a tremendous expanse of land made up of a relatively small number of communities. Its population is small in number, dispersed over a demanding landscape and breathtakingly diverse. The people, communities and government of the NWT are facing and planning for the daunting challenges of the coming decade and century.

Investing in People is a two-year training and work experience program intended to assist the people and communities of the NWT to meet some of these challenges. This program is about development and strengthening: of the individuals who make up the communities and of the communities themselves. The challenge for the Investing in People program is to incorporate:

- the unique needs, cultures and aspirations of the Dene, Metis and Inuit people; and
- the economic realities of the NWT including the importance of traditional harvesting and craft activities and the high proportion of people requiring social assistance for some period of time through the course of a year.

In July 1995, the governments of the Northwest Territories and of Canada contracted with Terriplan Consultants and Martin Spigelman Research Associates to undertake a short-term evaluation of Investing in People. This first year evaluation is an integral and critical aspect of an overall, longer-term evaluation which is currently in the planning stage. It is very much the first step in coming to a fuller understanding of the operations, impact and cost effectiveness of programs enabling people and communities in the NWT meet the challenges ahead.

"*Paying Dividends: An Evaluation of the Investing in People Program - Year One*" constitutes the evaluation's findings and conclusions and is intended, through wide distribution, to assist both the communities of the NWT and the two sponsoring governments to understand and improve programming of this sort.

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## 1.2 Report Organization

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This report is organized in eight sections. Following this introduction, Section 2 provides the national and territorial context in which Investing in People is operating. Understanding this context is critical for understanding individual and community needs, and for understanding the operations and impact of programs such as Investing in People.

Section 3 describes the Investing in People program while Section 4 describes and reviews the different projects. These sections are relatively brief given that fuller descriptions have been ably prepared by the project sponsors and are available from the GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE). Section 4 identifies some of the innovative features which different communities incorporated into their projects and is intended to be a means of sharing these valuable ideas. Too often the distance between communities and the demands of day to day activities prevent such information from being shared.

Section 5 briefly describes the goals and objectives of the evaluation as well as the methodology employed. It is complemented, first, by a Technical Appendices volume (under separate cover) which describes the methodology more fully and includes the various survey and other instruments, and second, by recommendations for improving the research process during subsequent evaluations.

Section 6 provides the evaluation's findings and Section 7 - Research Issues - addresses the key issues which were identified either at the outset of the project or which emerged during the community research. Section 8 offers conclusions and recommendations regarding certain overriding issues such as program planning and community ownership. Section 8 discusses the lessons which we have learned from the research. That is in keeping with our view that evaluation reports are not an end in themselves. Rather they are a tool which governments and - more importantly perhaps - communities can use to design programs which are appropriate to their needs, wants and values.

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## 2.0 Context

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Investing in People was designed and delivered within a particular national and territorial context. Different aspects of this context are described below for the country as a whole, for the NWT and for the specific communities which hosted Investing in People projects. Where noted, the figures and tables in this section have been drawn from data published in GNWT Bureau of Statistics publications. This section also identifies, as part of the context, what we know about the impact and effectiveness of employability enhancement programs similar to Investing in People.

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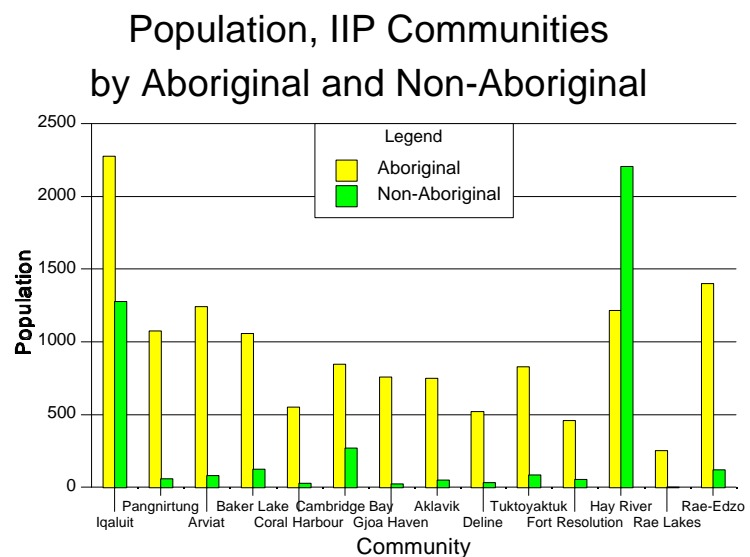
### 2.1 Population and Demographics

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Those communities hosting Investing in People projects are small in population and predominantly Aboriginal. **Figure 1** provides the population for each of the participating communities by ethnicity.

For the sake of clarity, Yellowknife is not included in this chart given its large population. The ethnic composition of its population is presented in **Figure 2**.

**Figure 1** (GNWT Bureau of Statistics. "Statistics Quarterly", March 1995, p.4.)

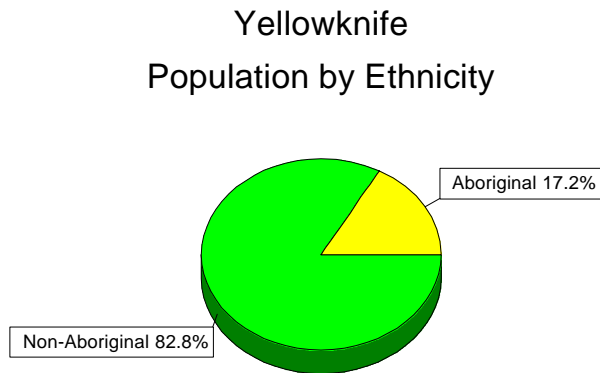


Aside from Yellowknife and Iqaluit, which are both government centres, the largest of the Investing in People communities - Hay River - is just over 3,000 people while the average size is 1,085. Approximately 78% of the population in these communities is Aboriginal. For the purposes of this report, Hay River

(3,206 people) and the neighbouring Hay River Reserve (216 people) are considered as one.

There are two particular aspects to this population, however, which influence programming in the NWT. The first is the rapid rate of growth. The population of the NWT increased by 26% from 1981 to 1991, from 45,741 to 57,649. This represents an annual rate of increase more than double that of Canada as a whole.

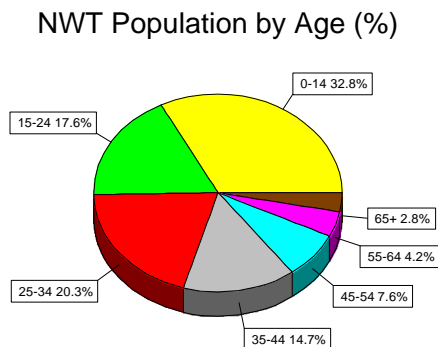
**Figure 2** (GNWT Bureau of Statistics. "Statistics Quarterly", March 1995, p.4.)



The second aspect, illustrated in **Figure 3**, shows the relative youth of the NWT population. Almost 33% of the total population - and 40% of the Aboriginal population - are 14 years of age or younger and a further 18% are between the ages of 15 and 24 years.

In Canada as a whole, only 26% of the population is age 14 or younger. Only 2.8% of the territorial population, compared to about 12% of the Canadian population, is 65 years or older.

**Figure 3** (GNWT Bureau of Statistics. "Statistics Quarterly", March 1995, p.3.)



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## 2.2 Education

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Employment, financial well-being and economic self-sufficiency are clearly associated with education and educational attainment levels. That is one of the most significant problems confronting the NWT:

- school enrolment for Aboriginal people in particular begins to drop off significantly at grade 7;
- the majority of high school graduates in the NWT are consistently Non-Aboriginal people with the graduation rate among Aboriginal students being about 11.5% compared to a rate among Non-Aboriginal students of about 52%; and
- 37% of the Aboriginal population of the NWT, 15 years and older, have a grade 8 education or less. A further 35% have some secondary schooling and 12% have some post-secondary education. Only 1% have a university degree and 16% a certificate or diploma. The educational achievement rate for Inuit people in the NWT is illustrated in **Figure 4**.

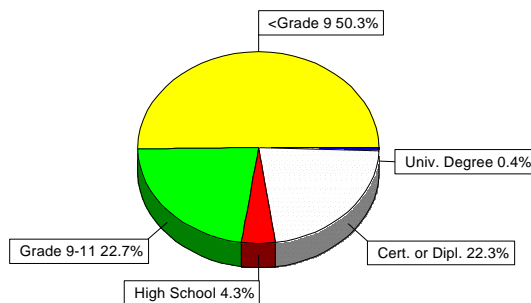
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## 2.3 Unemployment and Social Assistance

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**Figure 4** (GNWT Bureau of Statistics. "Aboriginal Peoples Data", December 1993, p.3.)

Educational Achievement among  
Inuit People in the NWT



In the early 1980's, working people in Canada were experiencing the effects of a serious recession. By 1983 a record number - 1.45 million or 11.9% of the total paid labour force - were unemployed. At the same time, the proportion of Canadians unemployed for one year or more had also grown

dramatically, from 4.5% in 1982 to 10.1% in 1985. In some jurisdictions this proportion exceeded 13%.

Through this same period, the growth in the provincial and territorial social assistance caseloads mirrored the unemployment trends. Nationally, the number of social assistance cases grew from 1.3 million in 1980 to 1.9 million in 1985. The cost of providing social assistance more than doubled. Yet the end of the recession and lower unemployment rates appeared largely to pass by those on social assistance. The welfare caseload has remained at extremely high levels: from 1990 to 1993 the number of people in Canada receiving some social assistance benefits every month increased from two million to three million, over 10% of the total population. The total cost of social assistance to governments is well over \$10 billion annually.

The caseload has remained so high nationally because of structural changes in the Canadian economy, because of a poor match between workers' skills and employers' needs, and because of changes in the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program. These have had the effect of increasing the number of people in the welfare system and increasing significantly the costs and expenditures associated with social assistance.

Coming at a time of fiscal restraint, the consequence has been an effort on the part of governments to retrain workers and to reduce costs by diverting social assistance recipients to employment and training programs, in the expectation that such would result in significant savings at least through the long term.

This national trend has certainly been reflected in the NWT. **Figure 5** illustrates the growth in the social assistance caseload since 1984. In this 10 year period, the average number of cases per month has grown from 2,006 to 4,396, an increase of 120%. The number of beneficiaries has also grown through the same period, from 6,749 people in 1984 to 10,973 in 1994, an increase of 63%.

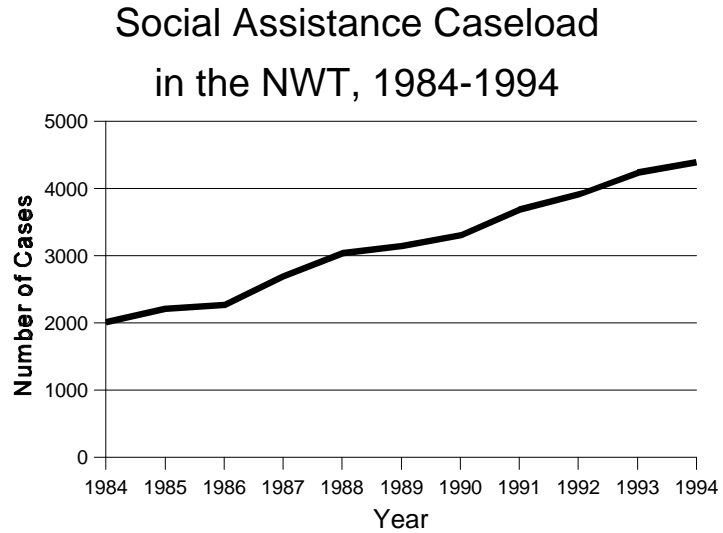


This means that over 19% of the total population of the NWT received some social assistance through the course of 1994, compared to approximately 14% in 1984.

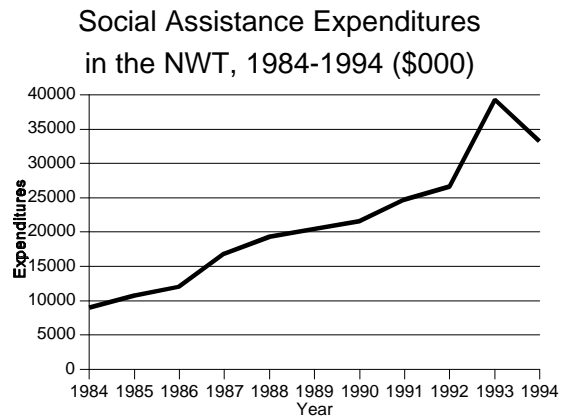
The amount of money committed to social assistance has been growing significantly through the past decade also. Total payments in 1994 (\$33.3 million) were 54% higher than in 1990 (\$21.6 million) and 270% higher than in 1984 (\$9.0 million). This growth in expenditures is illustrated in **Figure 6**.

The pattern of increasing social assistance caseloads and increasing social assistance costs is related, of course, to unemployment in the NWT. As with the rest of Canada, people in the north have struggled with a difficult and changing economy. Most striking in this regard has been the collapse of the fur industry, once a mainstay of the income of very many of the people who now rely upon social assistance.

**Figure 5** (GNWT Bureau of Statistics. "Statistics Quarterly", March 1995, p.13.)

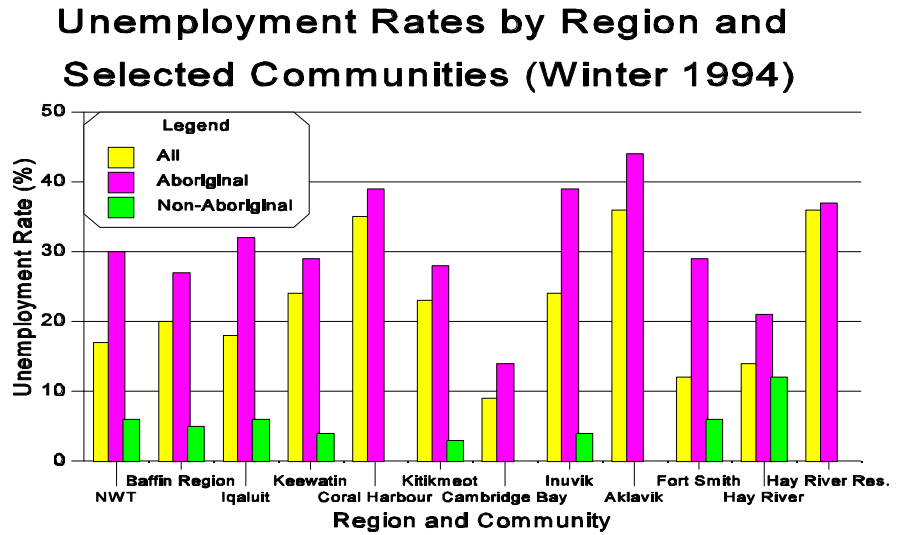


**Figure 6** (GNWT Bureau of Statistics. "Statistics Quarterly", March 1995, p.13.)



**Figure 7** examines the unemployment rate in the NWT by region and by certain of the communities which hosted an Investing in People project during its first year. Most strikingly, the figure illustrates that unemployment rates vary considerably from region to region and are very much higher among Aboriginal people than among Non-Aboriginal people. In certain communities, *i.e.*, Coral Harbour, Cambridge Bay, Aklavik and the Hay River Reserve, the Non-Aboriginal population is so small that the GNWT Bureau of Statistics does not provide unemployment rates for this population.

**Figure 7** (GNWT Bureau of Statistics. "1994 Labour Force Survey", Winter 1994, p. 7.)



**Table 1** provides further labour force data on each of the communities which hosted an Investing in People project during its first year. This table indicates the generally high unemployment rates in most of these communities and suggests a high need for social assistance.

**Table 1**

(GNWT Bureau of Statistics. "Community Profiles", 1991, various.)

**Investing in People, Community Profiles**

Community	Labour Force Particip. Rate (%)	Unemployment Rate, Men (%)	Unemployment Rate, Women (%)	Unemployment Rate, Youth, 15-24 years (%)
Aklavik	66	43	32	54
Arviat	52	26	29	36
Baker Lake	55	19	17	29
Cambridge Bay	71	12	21	25
Coral Harbour	62	32	24	36
Deline	52	24	13	38
Fort Resolution	59	38	35	75
Gjoa Haven	58	30	36	43
Hay River	83	10	9	13
Iqaluit	77	10	9	20
Pangnirtung	68	32	27	39
Rae-Edzo	55	37	31	47
Rae Lakes	56	18	33	40
Tuktoyaktuk	66	35	33	50
Yellowknife	87	4	6	9

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**2.4 Patterns of Social Assistance Use**

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In 1991, the GNWT Department of Social Services conducted a longitudinal study of social assistance usage by territorial residents. The purpose of this work ("Time on Assistance: A Study of the Patterns of Welfare Use in the NWT", 1991) was to understand more fully who is using social assistance, why they are using social assistance and for how long they use social assistance. In the absence of other studies, one can assume that these patterns are still relevant.

The 1991 study identified all those individuals who applied for social assistance at any time in 1984. It then tracked them - case by case, month by month - for a

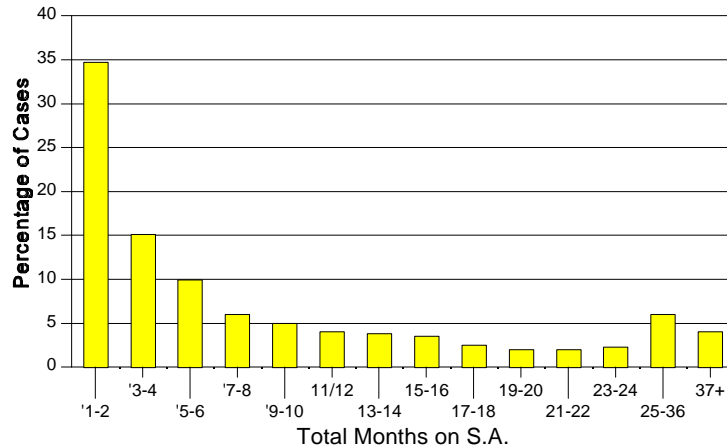
period of approximately 60 months, to December 1988. In total, there were 836 new applicants. The data revealed usage patterns that were contrary to the most commonly-held beliefs about welfare dependency. Its findings, for example, indicated that:

- over 30% of the new applicants were on assistance only once through the 5-year study and received social assistance for a total of only 1-2 months. About 50% of these applicants needed social assistance for less than 5 months in total through the 60 month study period. Some 75% of the cases were on assistance for a total of 12 months or less and only 4% were on for a cumulative total of 36 months or more.
- the new applicants used social assistance for an average of 9.3 months through the 60 month study period. This average, however, is heavily skewed upwards by the small number of people who were on social assistance for an extended period of time.
- 10% of the 836 cases used social assistance for at least 12 continuous months with this group being predominantly female and having at least one dependent. In most cases, the reason for needing assistance related to ill health or dependent children. Furthermore these long-term recipients were generally under 19 years of age or over 40, and lived disproportionately in the Keewatin and Kitikmeot regions. As indicated in **Figure 7**, these regions have unemployment rates considerably higher than the territorial average.
- 0.1% of the caseload (8 cases) could be considered as long-term recipients when a more stringent definition of long-term was applied, *i.e.*, 24 months or more of continuous reliance upon social assistance. The study found that this group was likely to be older and to live disproportionately in the Kitikmeot region.
- 0.4% (3 cases) of the 836 cases remained on social assistance for the full 5 years under study.

The duration pattern of social assistance usage is illustrated in **Figure 8**. As described above, it indicates the relatively small number of people who remain on social assistance for extended periods of time.

**Figure 8**

**Distribution of Cases by Total Months on S.A., NWT, Jan.1984 - Dec.1988**



Concurrent with conducting the longitudinal study, the GNWT examined two cross-sections of social assistance recipients:

- one cross section included everyone who was on assistance in November 1984 (2,033 cases); and
- the other included everyone who was on assistance in November 1988 (3,092 cases).

The clients in both groups were tracked - again, month by month - back to the beginning of their spell on assistance and then forward until the end of their spell or to December 1988, whichever came first. **Table 2** illustrates the change - or the lack of change - in the composition and demographics of these two cohorts.

The table indicates that there was no significant change between the two cross-sections in the length of time that people were on assistance. The average length of time for the 1984 sample was 15.1 months and for the 1988 group, 15.3 months. The median for both the 1984 and the 1988 cohorts was 9 months. The significant difference between the average and the median is due to the small number of long-term recipients.

In both groups, 57% were on assistance less than 12 months and only 7% were on more than 4 years. Approximately 7% of the 1984 cohort and 5% of the 1988 cohort remained on assistance for four years or more.

**Table 2**

**Comparison of 1984 and 1988 Cross-Sections of the Social Assistance Caseload**

<b>Caseload Characteristic</b>	<b>1984 Cross Section</b>	<b>1988 Cross Section</b>
Caseload size	2,023	3,092
Average number of months on social assistance	15.1	15.3
Median number of months on social assistance	9.0	9.0
% of cases on social assistance for 3 months or less	29.8%	29.7%
% of cases on social assistance for 9 months or less	50%	50%
% of cases on social assistance for more than 4 years	7%	7%
% of cases on assistance for 60 months or more	6%	5%
Average age of social assistance recipients	39.5	37.5
Single parents as a % of the total caseload	25%	25%
Single people without dependents as a % of the total caseload	34%	40%
Average family size	3.2	3.0

As with the longitudinal study, analysis of the data from these cross sections indicated clearly the regional variations in social assistance use. **Figure 9** indicates that people living in the Keewatin and Kitikmeot regions are likely to remain on assistance for longer periods of time than people living in the other regions.

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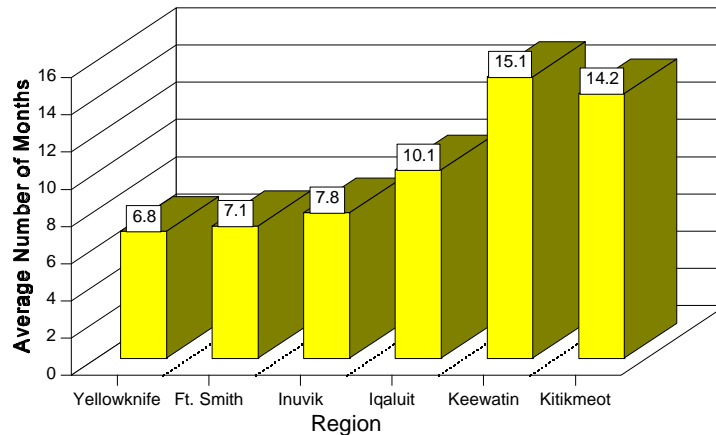
## **2.5 Employability Enhancement Programming in Canada**

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Since the mid-1980s, governments everywhere in Canada have responded to the growth in the welfare caseloads in part by implementing new employment and training programs for social assistance recipients. One assumption behind these programs was that recipients did not have the education or work skills they required to compete in the new economy. A second assumption was that savings in social assistance spending would be greater than the expenditures on the employment and training programs.

**Figure 9**

### Average Months on Social Assistance By Region, All Ages



Many of these programs have now been evaluated. The evaluation findings provide important insights into the impact of employment and training programs and into the directions which should be pursued in terms of both their operation and delivery. The literature suggests, for example, that these programs:

- can increase both participants' attachment to the paid labour force and their total incomes, and decrease their dependence upon social assistance;
- can result in participants having more confidence in themselves and in their ability to find employment;
- can improve participants' life and communications skills, and provide them with a better understanding of labour force requirements;
- can have an important, positive impact on employer attitudes toward social assistance recipients; and
- can generate significant benefits for employers, for sponsoring agencies and for the communities in which they are located.

Certain of the evaluations suggest that governments will recoup all or a significant portion of their program expenditures through savings in social assistance.

The evaluation literature provides a number of important lessons about designing and delivering employability enhancement programs. First it serves to emphasize that employment and training programs have to be capable of meeting the broad range of client needs and have to do so in a manner which is both timely and appropriate. This requires that the programs be designed on the basis of a thorough assessment of the very different needs of the different groups of people on social assistance. It is clear from the evaluations that one program, or one program model, cannot serve different groups of people equally well.

Furthermore the literature indicates that the programs have to address the complex array of barriers confronting many participants. It indicated also the importance of considering fully the relationships among the different barriers, for example the relationship among the training provided, the minimum wage jobs available to participants and the overall financial needs of certain groups of social assistance recipients.

The evaluations point also to the importance of adopting a longer-term perspective on training and of recognizing that educational upgrading - primarily Adult Basic Education (ABE) for the overwhelming majority of participants - cannot be expected to generate short-term gains in employment and income. The programs have to recognize that ABE is only the first step toward the post-secondary training which can lead to stable employment and to incomes adequate to the needs of participants and their families.

Additionally, the evaluations suggest that the programs should be exploring new means of providing training, means which are more effective and more in tune with the learning needs of the participants, in particular many youth, Aboriginal people and single parents.

Finally, if these programs are to enable people to become more independent of social assistance, there have to be jobs available in the labour market which offer a secure and adequate level of income. The evaluations indicate that the current array of programs are often preparing people for low-wage jobs or for employment in unstable sectors of the economy. These are jobs which do not ensure self-sufficiency but rather merely perpetuate the use of welfare as an income supplement.

A copy of the evaluation literature review, "Lessons from the Literature on Employment and Training Program Evaluations", July 1995, is included in the Technical Appendices volume.



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## 3.0 Investing in People: Program Description

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Investing in People is a cooperative, two-year undertaking funded by the federal Department of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) through the Strategic Initiatives program and the GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE). In its first year, Investing in People provided program direction and financial support to enable Nunavut Arctic College in the eastern Arctic, Aurora College in the west and a variety of community-based organizations throughout the NWT to provide educational opportunities and employment-related experiences to people on social assistance. Under the Agreement, Investing in People had a budget of up to \$2 million in its first year. According to ECE, the program incurred expenditures of \$1.3 million. The program start-up was delayed in the first year, due in part to delays in signing the cost sharing agreement. A total of 278 individuals participated in seventeen projects.

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### 3.1 Strategic Initiatives

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Strategic Initiatives is a two-year fund announced in the government of Canada budget of February 1994. The initiative is intended to fund innovative approaches in support of the federal social security review effort. Some 90-95% of the fund is targeted to projects undertaken in cooperation with the provinces and territories.

The government of Canada intended that this initiative would contribute to the social security reform process by:

- identifying strategic directions for change and mobilizing support;
- testing innovative and cost effective ways to make social programs more jobs oriented and responsive to client needs; and
- producing information on which to base future policy development.

Programs could be cost shared with the territories or provinces, on a 50/50 basis, if their proposal was intended to achieve any of the following:

- address the needs of children and families by enhancing nurturing, support and care provisions with particular emphasis on children in

poverty, working poor and low-income families, and those receiving social assistance;

- support youth making the school to work transition by providing a range of counselling, education, training, community service and work options with income support appropriate to life stage, family responsibilities, personal and employment circumstances;
- enable working age adults who are at risk of long-term dependency to contribute to their maximum potential as productive members of society and by providing appropriate income support and education, literacy and basic skills training and work experience based on individual needs;
- ensure that persons who experience barriers to employment and full participation in the community, such as individuals with disabilities, Aboriginal people, women, members of visible minority groups and older displaced workers can achieve equality, independence and full participation;
- demonstrate ways of reducing reliance on government assistance in particular by removal of disincentives to employment and training and by increasing incentives to participate in meaningful opportunities which result in long term labour market attachment;
- demonstrate innovative approaches to job creation; and
- demonstrate ways to eliminate duplication and waste, improve service to clients and increase efficiencies, and to reduce administrative costs.

The Strategic Initiatives fund is targeted to a broad spectrum of people who "are at risk in terms of their labour market prospects and socially disadvantaged including: children in poverty, working poor, low-income lone-parent families, social assistance recipients, UI recipients and exhaustees, youth, persons with disabilities, Aboriginal peoples, women, members of visible minorities and older displaced workers."

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## **3.2 Investing in People**

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In March 1995, the Hon. Lloyd Axworthy for Canada and the Hon. Richard Nerysoo for the Northwest Territories signed a Contribution Agreement providing up to \$8 million in cost shared funding over two years for the NWT Investing in

People program. Investing in People is intended to assist working age people who are at risk of long-term social assistance dependency to acquire the skills, confidence and experience they require in order to enhance their self-sufficiency and productivity. Importantly, it is also intended to strengthen communities so that they are better prepared to meet their development goals and to assume greater governmental responsibility as the GNWT devolves program authority.

The “Investing in People Program Handbook”, prepared by ECE in March 1995, describes the program's goals and objectives as follows:

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## Goals

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- to integrate and link social assistance with employment and career development programs and services;
- to foster participants' independence, self-determination and well-being; and
- to decrease participants' dependency on social assistance.

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## Objectives

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- to provide social assistance recipients with the education, job search, job continuation skills and effective support systems needed to compete more effectively for jobs or to continue formal education;
- to develop programs which increase the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at social assistance clients;
- to enable project participants to develop and implement realistic personal career plans;
- to develop partnerships with other levels of government, land claims groups, other GNWT departments, as well as private and non-profit sectors; and
- to support community development.

The concept for Investing in People was innovative in that its focus was upon not only participants but also upon communities and upon improving program

delivery systems in the communities in an effort to remove the barriers confronting participants. The program concept anticipated providing all three with significant, long-term benefits.

Second, its success measures were not tied to labour force participation in recognition of the fact that many social assistance recipients required extended periods of training and skills development before they would be ready to compete in the labour market. Third, by avoiding outcome success measures tied to labour market participation, the program recognized the reality of the employment situation in much of the NWT, the unique employment pattern of Aboriginal people in the NWT and their continuing involvement in the traditional economy.

The policy and operational design of the program manifested this uniqueness in a number of ways:

- improvement in the life and personal skills of participants was itself seen as a successful outcome regardless of whether the participant entered the paid labour force following the project;
- participation in the program was to be voluntary with selection being made by a community-based committee consisting of the project sponsor, the Community Social Service Worker (CSSW) and the local Career Development Officer (CDO);
- participants were to be interviewed and provided with complete information on the program prior to enrolling;
- delivery could strengthen partnerships among GNWT Departments such as, Education, Culture and Employment, Health and Social Services and other organizations such as the NWT Development Corporation and Hunter and Trappers Associations; and
- community sponsors were encouraged to include components incorporating the language and customs of the Aboriginal participants, and were encouraged to include elders in their programming.

Each of the projects was to combine upgrading or training with work experience, counselling and life skills. Participants remained on social assistance through the course of the program and received an additional incentive or participation allowance of \$10/day. Other allowances for child care and transportation were available if required. Workplace hosts were not expected to pay a wage to participants.

Finally the program was promoted by ECE through contacts with community-based organizations, Nunavut Arctic and Aurora Colleges and advertisements in territorial newspapers. ECE field staff often assisted community organizations to develop proposals for project funding.

At the territorial level, a small NWT/Canada management committee was responsible for policy decisions and major problems. Day to day management was provided at the regional level through the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. A separate federal/territorial Evaluation Committee was responsible for the evaluation component of the project.

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## 4.0 Investing in People: Project Descriptions

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### 4.1 Background

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In 1994/95, the GNWT approved 17 Investing in People projects in 15 communities. Ten of these projects were education-focused and were delivered by Nunavut Arctic College in the eastern NWT and Aurora College in the west. These projects are identified as the Northern Skills Development Program (NSDP). There was at least one NSDP project in each region of the NWT. **Table 3** and **Table 4** identify the NSDP projects, the start and end dates for each project and the approved funding.

The remaining seven projects were structured as employment-focused Work Activity Projects (WAP), and were sponsored by community-based organizations. These organizations were invited to participate in the program. As with the NSDP projects, there was at least one WAP project in each project. **Table 5** identifies the WAP sites, the start and end dates for each project and the funding approved in the Contribution Agreements.

**Table 3**

#### NSDP Project Sites, Nunavut Arctic College

Region	Community	Project Dates	Funding (\$)
Baffin	Iqaluit	September '94-April '95	\$98,010.
	Pangnirtung	September '94-March '95	98,662.
Keewatin	Arviat	October '94-May '95	100,500.
	Baker Lake	November '94-May '95	101,975.
Kitikmeot	Gjoa Haven	September '94-April '95	103,754.

**Table 4****NSDP Project Sites, Aurora College**

Region	Community	Project Dates	Funding (\$)
Fort Smith	Hay River	October '94-April '95	\$92,228.
Inuvik	Deline	September '94-March '95	99,654.
	Tuktoyaktuk	September '94-April '95	99,030.
North Slave	Rae Edzo	October '94-May '95	93,377.
	Yellowknife	October '94-April '95	94,869.

**Table 5****Work Activity Projects (WAP)**

Region	Community/Sponsor	Project Dates	Funding (\$)
Baffin	Iqaluit Kakivak Association-Asivaqtiit Traditional Skills	Feb. '95-July '95	\$142,621.
Fort Smith	Fort Resolution Great Slave Forest Products Ltd.	Jan. '95-Sept. '95	153,020.
	Fort Resolution Deninu K'ue Development Corporation Ltd.	Feb. '95-July '95	35,000.
Inuvik	Aklavik Gwich'in Tribal Council - Skills Development	Nov. '94-June '95	151,147.
Keewatin	Coral Harbour Aiviit HTA - Commercial Caribou Harvest	Jan. '95-July '95	132,849.
Kitikmeot	Cambridge Bay Kitikmeot Inuit Association - Skills Development	Jan. '95-August '95	81,185.
North Slave	Rae Lakes Community Education Council - Gameti Skills Development	Jan. '95-March '95	49,999.

In total, approximately 278 individuals participated in the first year of Investing in People, 47% of whom were female and 53% male. The NSDP project participants had a completion rate of about 41% (76 participants - 30 males and

46 females), while the WAP participants had a completion rate of about 55% (42 participants - 34 males and 8 females). Overall, about 45% (118 participants - 64 males and 54 females) of all participants completed the project in which they started. Program terminations and withdrawals, including withdrawal for entry into other programs, make up the remaining 55%. These figures have been taken from project reports and participant lists and in some cases the records are incomplete. As such these figures are considered approximate.

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## 4.2 Project Descriptions and Review

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### 4.2.1 Northern Skills Development Program - Nunavut Arctic College

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**Sponsor:** Nunavut Arctic College, Iqaluit, NWT  
**Contribution Agreement Term:** August 1, 1994-June 31, 1995  
**Approved Funding:** \$502,901. (five projects)

**Description:**

NSDP delivered skills-based education programs in five eastern Arctic (Nunavut) communities. Program delivery, based on an "Individual Training Plan", included life skills, career counselling, traditional knowledge (including Aboriginal language instruction), academic upgrading, recreation and work placement in the community. The program operated on a 30 hour week.

The program locations were selected based on the following criteria:

- 1991 Census and Social Assistance Automated System information;
- 75 employable social assistance recipients within the community; and
- available (existing) Community Learning Centre.

The "Northern Skills Development Program 1994-95 Final Report", prepared by Nunavut Arctic College in June 1995, state the program objectives as follows:

- to provide a comprehensive life skills, upgrading and training opportunity for social assistance recipients;
- to raise the level of education and skills of social assistance recipients with a cooperative partnership involving local businesses, councils and government offices; and



- to provide an avenue through which social assistance recipients may develop career paths that may lead directly to employment or further education.

**Notes:**

The project's "Final Report" identifies a number of problem areas:

- the provision of timely program orientation and/or information at the outset of the program and throughout the program period;
- participant attendance;
- delays in delivery of the attendance cheques;
- NSDP committee roles, responsibilities and communication; and
- child care, *i.e.*, lack of suitable and affordable sitters and accessing the child care subsidy (delays).

**Table 6**, compiled from the "Final Report", identifies the enrollment statistics by community for the Nunavut Arctic College NSDP.

**Table 6  
NSDP Enrollment (Nunavut Arctic College) by Community**

Community	Initial Intake	Additions	Total Participants	Withdrawn/Terminated	Other Programs	Completed
Arviat	13	3	16	6	1	9
Baker Lake	15	2	17	5	1	11
Gjoa Haven	15	3	18	8	3	7
Iqaluit	9	10	19	6	5	8
Pangnirtung	13	3	16	9	-	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>42</b>

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## 4.2.2 Northern Skills Development Program - Aurora College

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**Sponsor:** Aurora College, Fort Smith, NWT  
**Contribution Agreement Term:** August 1, 1994-June 31, 1995  
**Approved Funding:** \$479,158. (five projects)

**Description:**

NSDP delivered skills-based education programs in five western Arctic (Denedeh) communities. Program delivery, based on an "Individual Training Plan", included life skills, career counselling, traditional knowledge (including Aboriginal language instruction), academic upgrading, recreation and work placement in the community. The program operated on a 30 hour week.

Both the Nunavut Arctic College and the Aurora College NSDP projects were similar in content, particularly the program design, location selection criteria, program objectives and participant selection.

**Notes:**

The Hay River and Rae Edzo project sites opted to exclude the work experience component of the program. Hay River attempted a 'Community Project' in which volunteer projects, e.g., hospital volunteers, food bank set-up and school visitation developed by the participants were to be implemented. For the most part, the projects proved unsuccessful given the lack of direction and focus.

The most common problem areas identified in the "Northern Skills Development Program 1994-95 Final Report", prepared by Aurora College in July 1995, are summarized as follows:

- lack of child care;
- participant attendance;
- insufficient planning and preparation time; and
- NSDP Committee roles, responsibilities and communication.

In Rae Edzo, the college attempted to alleviate the child care problems for the participants by establishing a day care centre in the community. It was not successful primarily due to delays in start-up funding and lack of use by the participants.

The Hay River project site was an interesting example of community-based projects in that it incorporated a number of features which stand out:

- members of the community NSDP management committee had a very good working relationship with good communication. Reports and direction were issued on a consensus basis. The project's participants selected a representative to attend committee meetings and to bring forward their concerns;
- the focus group meeting arranged by the principal researchers for this evaluation, was attended by a wide range of community members, participants and administration (all those who were invited, attended), showing great interest in the project and the program objectives; and
- during the program, participants organized and conducted a community orientation meeting providing information about social assistance and the needs of social assistance recipients to the community. Panels were organized with members of various community groups, *i.e.*, the RCMP, and the Drug and Alcohol Committee, to identify available community services. Participants indicated that the exchange of information was valuable for both the participants and the invited panellists.

**Table 7** identifies the enrollment statistics by community for the Aurora College NSDP.

**Table 7  
NSDP Enrollment (Aurora College) by Community**

Community	Initial Intake	Add-itions	Total Participants	Withdrawn/ Terminated	Other Programs	Completed
Deline	8	-	8	8	-	0*
Hay River	11	9	20	12	-	8
Rae Edzo	14	18	32	25	3	4
Tuktoyaktuk	15	6	21	7	1	13
Yellowknife	15	4	19	10	-	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>34</b>

\*Project was terminated prior to scheduled completion date.

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### 4.2.3 Work Activity Project - Asivaqtiit Traditional Skills, Iqaluit

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**Sponsor:** Kakivak Association, Iqaluit, NWT  
**Contribution Agreement Term:** February 1, 1995-July 7, 1995  
**Approved Funding:** \$142,621.

**Description:**

The goal of the project was to assist participants develop land and harvesting skills, creating productive hunters in the community. Stronger self-esteem and increased traditional knowledge were also considered goals. There were many components to the project, including: traditional skills development including commercial hunting skills, small engine repair and first aid, with assistance by Nunavut Arctic College, experienced hunters, elders and other government personnel. The project was conducted in the community and on the land. Much of the training was conducted in Inuktitut.

Six of the initial sixteen participants completed the project. Although not identified as part of the selection criteria, all participants were male.

**Notes:**

This project was well organized and extremely well presented, and the project reports provide a detailed summary of the project. Particular emphasis was placed on providing recognition to the participants - both in the report, which includes a photograph of the participants, and in the community, an example of the latter being a graduation feast held in Iqaluit at the end of the project, using the harvested meat and fish. The successful participants received certificates. The project videotaped many of the training activities and gave a copy of the video to each participant. The project coordinator has also given a group photo of the participants to the Town of Iqaluit social services office where it is now prominently and proudly displayed.

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## 4.2.4 Work Activity Project - Timber Harvesting and Sawmill Training, Fort Resolution

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**Sponsor:** Great Slave Lake Forest Products, Fort Resolution, NWT  
**Contribution Agreement Term:** January 2, 1995-September 30, 1995  
**Approved Funding:** \$153,020.

**Description:**

This project was designed to train participants (primarily residents from Fort Resolution) in timber harvesting operations. Instructors were hired to conduct classroom and field session training. This training will provide employment opportunities for successful candidates in an important industry in the region. The sawmill was purchased by the NWT Development Corporation and reopened in Fort Resolution in 1994.

This project was originally to include training in the sawmill but this element was cancelled as the participants did not qualify. The harvesting training was two months in duration. Two of the participants received additional training as supervisors.

Of the fourteen participants, 12 completed the harvesting program, all male. Eleven of the participants immediately entered into casual full-time employment.

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## 4.2.5 Work Activity Project - Fibreglass Products Manufacturing, Fort Resolution

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**Sponsor:** Deninu K'ue Development Corporation, Fort Resolution, NWT  
**Contribution Agreement Term:** February 6, 1995-July 31, 1995  
**Approved Funding:** \$35,000.

**Description:**

This project provided training in all phases of fibreglass manufacturing and related health and safety issues. The fibreglass plant, located in Fort Resolution, is a company of the Deninu K'ue Development Corporation. The training schedule included classroom instruction, practical training and on-the-

job experience. It had been anticipated that four participants of the project would be added to the plant workforce.

Of the nine participants (2 females/7 males), 3 (3 males) remained in the project until it was discontinued. One participant obtained full-time employment in the plant.

**Notes:**

The project was discontinued short of the target completion date due to sponsor problems.

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#### **4.2.6 Work Activity Project - Skills Development, Aklavik**

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**Sponsor:** Gwich'in Tribal Council, Inuvik, NWT  
**Contribution Agreement Term:** November 1, 1994-June 30, 1995  
**Approved Funding:** \$151,147.

**Description:**

The Gwich'in Tribal Council provided a comprehensive employment and training program in Aklavik, similar in structure to the college program. The project included participant assessments and on-going counselling and support; life skills training; academic upgrading; and, work experience.

Of the fourteen participants (6 females/8 males), 10 (3 females/7 males) completed the project.

The original proposal identified four delivery sites, but was eventually down scaled to one. Aklavik was chosen due to the high number of social assistance recipients in the community. The Aklavik Aboriginal Committee completed the planning and undertook the implementation of the WAP for the Gwich'in Tribal Council in Aklavik. There appeared to be good communication between community representatives in the delivery of this project.

**Notes:**

The Life Skills component of the project was completed in one-five week period at the outset of the project. It is generally agreed that this better prepared the participants for the academic upgrading and work experience modules. The Life

Skills Coach who is originally from Fort McPherson and is now residing in Whitehorse, was instrumental in getting the project underway.

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## **4.2.7 Work Activity Project - Commercial Caribou Harvest, Coral Harbour**

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**Sponsor:** Aiviit Hunters and Trappers Association, Coral Harbour, NWT

**Contribution Agreement Term:** January 16, 1995-July 15, 1995

**Approved Funding:** \$132,849.

**Description:**

This project provided an opportunity for participants to receive training in commercial caribou harvesting - a growing industry in the region. Both classroom and field sessions were conducted, although not all the classroom sessions were held. The instruction in land skills was relevant and greatly contributed to participant self-esteem. Much of the training was conducted in Inuktitut.

**Notes:**

The project became bogged down in controversy primarily because the Investing in People participants had the same responsibilities and were doing the same, very demanding work as other participants, but were being paid considerably less for their efforts. This perceived inequity led to the Investing in People participants feeling very stigmatized and resentful. There is also concern in the community about the timing of the hunt and about not being able to use the caribou skins.

Of the nine participants (all male), three completed the project.

The project used Investing in People funding to supplement other GNWT and community funding. The Investing in People program goals and the particular needs of social assistance recipients were secondary to the community goal of developing a commercial hunt enterprise.

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## 4.2.8 Work Activity Project - Skills Development, Cambridge Bay

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**Sponsor:** Kitikmeot Inuit Association, Cambridge Bay, NWT

**Contribution Agreement Term:** January 10, 1995-August 31, 1995

**Approved Funding:** \$81,185.

**Description:**

Utilizing the resources of the college, this project provided skills-based education training and work experience. The program included assessment, *i.e.*, educational testing and career planning sessions, life skills and counselling, traditional knowledge instruction, academic upgrading and work experience.

The project objectives were to:

- provide social assistance recipients with education, job search and job continuation skills, and the effective support system needed to compete for jobs or to continue formal education;
- enable program participants to develop a realistic career plan; and
- foster independence, self determination and well being.

Of the fourteen adults (8 females/6 males) who participated, 8 (5 females/3 males) completed the project.



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## 4.2.9 Work Activity Project - Gameti Skills Development, Rae Lakes

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**Sponsor:** Rae Lakes Community Education Council, Rae Lakes, NWT  
**Contribution Agreement Term:** January 3, 1995-March 31, 1995  
**Approved Funding:** \$49,999.

**Description:**

Modelled on the college program, the Gameti project provided skills-based education training and work experience. The program included assessment, *i.e.*, educational testing and career planning sessions, life skills and counselling, academic upgrading and work experience. Emphasis was placed on the life skills component (about 4 weeks in duration) and academic upgrading. The Community Education Council, as project sponsor, is a member of the Dogrib Divisional Board of Education which oversees education and training in Dogrib communities.

The primary objective of the project was to assist participants develop career paths leading to further training and employment in their home community and/or region.

Sixteen adults (5 females/11 males) participated in the project. This project continued after March 31 with the signing of a second year contribution agreement.

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## 5.0 Investing in People Program Evaluation

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### 5.1 Background

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Investing in People built upon the foundation of the earlier program evaluations conducted elsewhere in Canada and described in Section 2 of this report. At the same time, one of the program's goals is to add to the body of knowledge about the operations, impact and cost effectiveness of programs targeted to social assistance recipients. To this end, the Canada/NWT Contribution Agreement for Investing in People includes a commitment to evaluating the program.

Following consultations with the principal researchers, the program's Evaluation Committee decided upon a mixed operational and impact study in recognition of the time and budget available for the research, the inability to construct a comparison group and relatively brief period of time since the first-year projects were completed.

The value of reviewing operations is in the ability to identify the often very considerable discrepancies that arise between program design and program operations, and between implementation and operations in different communities and regions. It is obviously important to understand how a program is operating before trying to assess its outcomes or impact on the community and on the participants. This concern is particularly acute in the case of Investing in People given the community-based delivery system and given the large number of communities in which it is operating.

At the same time, both the government and community sponsors require information on program impact and outcomes so as to enable them to refine and adapt their projects on a continuing basis. Additionally the outcome measures, even if short-term only, were important to the two governments given social security reform at the national level and given the territorial government's commitment to welfare reform and to the devolution of social assistance delivery and other services to the communities.

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## 5.2 Evaluation Goals and Objectives

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The goal of this evaluation was to provide a fuller understanding of the operations, impact and cost effectiveness of the first year of the Investing in People program. Its more specific objectives are:

- to assess whether the Investing in People program in general and the Investing in People projects in particular operated as was intended;
- to identify the short-term outcomes and impacts of the projects on the host communities and on participants;
- to assist community organizations and community governments, as well as the governments of the Northwest Territories and Canada, to improve similar employability enhancement programs and social assistance delivery in the future; and
- to lay the foundation for subsequent phases of the Investing in People evaluation.

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## 5.3 Evaluation Issues

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The Investing in People "Monitoring and Evaluation Framework", May 1995, organized the range of evaluation issues into four categories relating to:

Relevance	Is the initiative consistent with departmental and government-wide priorities and does it realistically address an actual need?
Project design & delivery	Are the design and delivery mechanisms of the initiative and the projects appropriate to facilitate the achievement of their objectives?
Project success	In what manner and to what extent are the initiative and the projects meeting their objectives, within budget and without significant unwanted outcomes?

Project cost effectiveness                      To what extent are the initiative and the projects the most appropriate and effective means for achieving Investing in People objectives, relative to alternative design and delivery approaches?

The more specific research questions raised in the framework document are identified in Section 7 of this report, Issues.

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## 5.4 Evaluation Methodology

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The evaluation was conducted between July 7 and October 31, 1995, and itself had to confront the challenges posed by the size and diversity of the Northwest Territories. The evaluation methodology is described in detail in the "Report on Methodology", August 1995, and is included in the Technical Appendices volume. Similarly, copies of the survey instruments, are included in that volume.

Importantly, the budget and time frame allowed for the project necessitated the creation of two categories of communities. The Evaluation Committee selected five Category I projects, with the remaining twelve projects being categorized as Category II. The Category I sites were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- regional representation;
- good representation of employable male and female social assistance recipients (except in the case of Coral Harbour in which all participants were male);
- some projects were disqualified on the basis that they were shorter-term and would not provide substantive results; and
- project continuation into the second year of the Investing in People program, *e.g.*, WAP projects in Aklavik and Cambridge Bay and NSDP sites in Iqaluit and Hay River.

**Table 8** identifies the Category I projects.

**Table 8**  
**Category I Projects**

Category I Project	Community
WAP - Gwich'in Tribal Council	Aklavik
WAP - Kitikmeot Inuit Association	Cambridge Bay
WAP - Commercial Caribou Harvest	Coral Harbour
NSDP - Aurora College	Hay River
NSDP - Nunavut Arctic College	Iqaluit

The primary difference between the two types of projects is that the principal researchers visited the Category I communities and carried out meetings and in-person interviews with participants and key informants. In the Category I sites, the principal researchers established a survey target of 100% of participants (both those who completed the project and those who did not) and of 6-8 key informants. In the Category II project communities, the survey target was 30% of participants and 3 key informants.

The principal researchers undertook the following activities through the course of the evaluation:

- review and analyze the documentation and administrative data relating to Strategic Initiatives, the Investing in People program and the Investing in People projects;
- analyze data from the GNWT Bureau of Statistics and ECE, and other GNWT studies relating to the demographic, socio-economic and labour force situation of the NWT, the social assistance caseload in the NWT and different governmental strategies;
- review other Strategic Initiatives and employability enhancement program evaluations and prepare a brief literature review;
- lead a planning workshop with GNWT and Aurora College representatives to discuss the Investing in People program, and to incorporate their knowledge of and experience with participants in the evaluation design, methodology and workplan;

- acquire scientific research licenses from the Science Institute of the NWT in Iqaluit (east) and Inuvik (west) for conducting in-person interviews in the Category I communities;
- employ and train research assistants in each of the 15 host communities for the purpose of conducting participant and key informant surveys, using standardized questionnaires developed for the project and organizing focus group meetings in the Category I sites, and review the first surveys completed by each research assistant;
- survey Investing in People project participants, with a target of 100% contact in the Category I communities and a target of 30% in the Category II communities;
- undertake site visits to each of the five Category I communities to interview a variety of key informants including community, municipal or Band authorities;
- survey and/or interview approximately 6-8 key informants in each of the Category I communities and approximately 3-4 in each of the Category II communities;
- interview workplace hosts in the Category I communities with the contact target being approximately 30%;
- interview key GNWT, government of Canada and college officials involved with Investing in People; and
- host focus group meetings in the Category I communities bringing together a variety of people with an interest in and experience with the Investing in People projects, including participants, CSSWs, CDOs and other community representatives.

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## **5.5 Outcomes**

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The standards and expectations laid out in the "Report on Methodology", August 1995, were not met in all cases, and the project's time frame did not permit the principal researchers to follow through in a way which would have ensured full compliance. The major factors responsible for this were:

- some project participants and key informants were not in the communities during the period of time set aside for conducting the surveys and interviews;
- many social assistance recipients did not have telephones and could not be reached either to schedule an interview or to follow up in cases where the community-based research assistants could not locate them;
- as was their right, some participants declined to participate in the surveys or to be interviewed by the principal researchers;
- many of the community-based key informants, e.g., Band Chiefs or Hamlet Mayors, were otherwise engaged during the survey period and could not meet with the research assistants or participate in the focus group meetings which were planned; and
- for a variety of reasons, a number of the community-based research assistants could not follow through on their commitments.

These shortcomings are addressed in the recommendations section of this report.

**Table 9** identifies the number of surveys and interviews completed by either the principal researchers or the research assistants. Additionally the principal researchers carried out interviews with a number of NWT and federal government managers concerning different aspects of Investing in People.

When a standardized questionnaire has been completed for either participants or key informants, the term 'survey' is used. For the most part, these surveys have been entered into a data base allowing analysis of the responses. 'Interviews' constitute those meetings and discussions with key informants, either in-person or over the telephone, when a standardized questionnaire was not used. These interviews are not included in the tabulated results but form an important part of the background information and conclusions and recommendations.

**Table 9**

**Completed Survey and Interview Summary**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Participant Surveys</b>	<b>Key Informant Surveys (dbase)</b>	<b>Key Informant Interviews (others)</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Category I</b>				
Aklavik	8	3	5	16
Cambridge Bay	8	4	3	15
Coral Harbour	4	7	1	12
Hay River	15	6	3	24
Iqaluit	3	9	2	21
<b>Category II</b>				
Arviat	5	3	0	8
Baker Lake	5	3	0	8
Deline	3	3	0	6
Fort Resolution (2 projects)	10	4	0	14
Gjoa Haven	3	1	0	4
Iqaluit	3	4	0	7
Pangnirtung	5	2	0	7
Rae Edzo	10	2	0	12
Rae Lakes	5	1	0	6
Tuktoyaktuk	6	2	0	8
Yellowknife	6	3	8	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>178</b>



# 6.0 Evaluation Findings

This evaluation relied heavily upon participant and community key informant surveys and interviews and upon other interviews with GNWT and government of Canada staff. The findings from these surveys and interviews provide important insights into the operations, strengths and weaknesses of the Investing in People program and the 17 first-year projects. At the same time, however, it must be recognized that the total number of people interviewed is relatively small and that extrapolating data across communities is difficult.

The key findings are provided below.

## 6.1 Participant Surveys

**Figure 10** illustrates the age distribution of Investing in People participants and is organized on the basis of WAP and NSDP participants. The average age of both WAP and NSDP participants is 29 years.

**Figure 10**

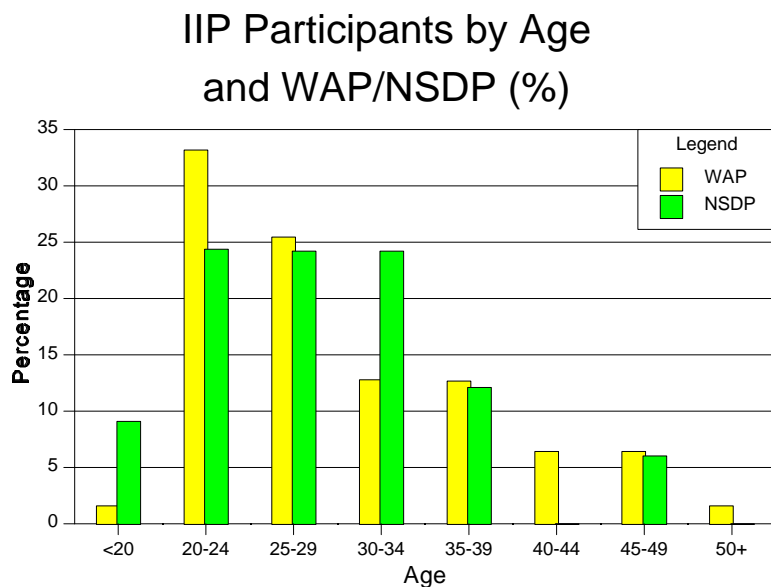


Table 10 provides an overview of other demographic

characteristics of Investing in People participants, and is again organized by WAP and NSDP. There was a significantly higher percentage of women in the NSDP projects than in the WAP projects, a characteristic which exhibits itself also in regard to the percentage of participants with young children, under 6 years of age, in the two types of projects.

**Table 10**

**Participant Characteristics  
(n=99 surveyed)**

Characteristic	IIP (%)	WAP (%)	NSDP (%)
Female	45	45	60
Male	55	55	40
Average age	29	29	29
Median age	28	26	28
Marital Status			
single	52	55	51
married or common law	43	42	43
divorced, separated or widowed	5	3	6
Children			
total with children	51	49	52
children under 6 years	61	57	63
Education			
less than grade 9	56	64	52
grades 9-11	43	36	46
grade 12	1	0	2
Employment			
employed in the past 12 months	32	32	33
not employed in past 12 months	67	68	67

Particularly striking within these data is the low level of education among participants when they entered the project. Overall 56% have less than a grade 9 education while 64% of those in WAP projects have less than a grade 9 education. Only 2% of NSDP participants have completed their grade 12 and none of the WAP participants have done so.

The data also show a very high use of social assistance by Investing in People participants. Some 80% of participants overall - 64% of WAP participants and 87% of NSDP participants - had been on social assistance for some period of time in the 12 months prior to entering the project. Approximately 75% of both

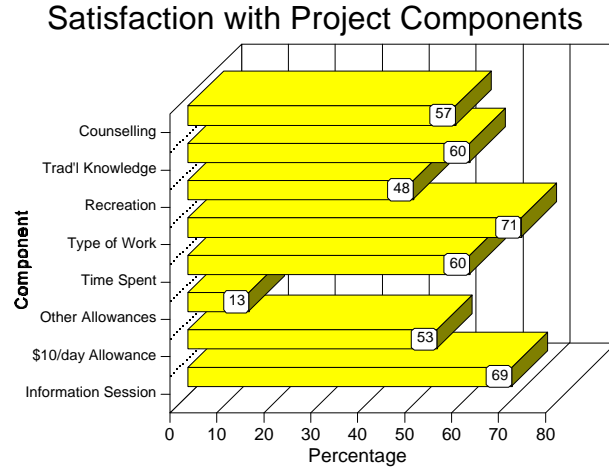
WAP and NSDP participants had been on social assistance for at least 2 months in each of the three years prior to entering the project.

Evidence indicates a degree of long-term use quite unlike the pattern in the NWT as described in Section 2. Seventy-one percent of NSDP participants and 50% of WAP participants received social assistance for at least 10-12 months in the year prior to their entering the project.

Other findings are:

- Nineteen percent entered the program in part because they needed the \$10/day incentive allowance and 9% thought they would lose their social assistance if they did not participate. In regard to the concern about losing their social assistance, this was the case for 11% of the NSDP participants and only 6% of WAP participants.
- Fifty-six percent of NSDP participants and 61% of WAP participants said they would have enrolled in the program even if there had not been the incentive allowance.
- Forty-seven percent overall expected educational upgrading from the project and 26% expected a job. Almost 40% of WAP participants said the job outcome was their most important expectation, 33% identified educational upgrading and 24% identified improved skills. None of the WAP participants identified improved life skills or a better understanding of their culture and language as their most important expectation. In comparison, 54% of NSDP participants identified educational upgrading as most important, 19% identified a job, 18% identified improved skills, 6% improved life skills and 3% a better understanding of their language and culture.
- Over 75% of survey participants stated that they were generally satisfied with most aspects of the project, for example facilities and the helpfulness of the instructor. **Figure 11** identifies those project components for which less than 75% of survey respondents stated they were satisfied.

**Figure 11**



- **Table 11** looks at the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the program by WAP and NSDP participants and reveals some distinct differences between the two, especially with regard to time spent on the job, recreational activities and the helpfulness of the instructor.
- The survey asked which components participants found to be "most" and "least" useful. Some 31% found the job skills component and 20% found the life skills component to be "most useful." No other component was identified by more than 5%. Alternately 10% found the recreational activities to be "least useful" and another 10% described the \$10/day allowance in those terms. This pattern held true when the responses were examined by WAP and NSDP.
- When asked what they liked best and least about the project, 17% identified each the job skills and the life skills as "best" while 15% identified the \$10/day allowance as "least." The WAP participants liked the job skills component best followed by the amount of time spent in the field or on the job. NSDP participants liked the life skills component best followed by the job skills component.

**Table 11**

**Percentage of Respondents Satisfied with Project Components  
by WAP and NSDP**

Project Component	WAP			NSDP		
	Satisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	N/A (%)	Satisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	N/A (%)
Information session	70	18	12	67	25	8
Helpfulness of instructor	89	11	0	75	22	3
Skills of instructor	85	6	9	75	22	3
Life skills component	82	6	12	76	13	10
Job skills component	85	6	9	73	6	21
\$10/day allowance	46	52	3	57	29	14
Other allowances	15	21	64	13	21	67
Amount of time spent on the job	79	12	9	51	14	35
Recreational activities	36	15	49	54	30	16
Personal counselling	55	9	36	59	14	27
Career counselling	49	15	36	62	14	24

- Fifty-seven percent of the participants said that they left the project without a career plan, including 61% of WAP participants and 54% of NSDP participants. These figures, however, include those survey respondents who did not complete the program.
- When asked about the project overall, 38% were extremely satisfied, 14% were very satisfied and 31% were satisfied. Some 49% of WAP participants and 35% of NSDP participants were extremely satisfied.
- About 81% of respondents said that the project generally did what they expected. Most (66%) thought they were better prepared to apply for a job as a result of the project, 56% thought they were better prepared to deal with personal issues, 74% to take further training and 78% to be more independent.

- Some 87% of WAP participants have remained in touch with other participants since the project ended and 18% with their instructors. In comparison, 86% of NSDP participants have remained in contact with other participants and 62% with their instructors.
- Keeping in mind the relatively brief period of time since the projects ended, 67% of participants had been on social assistance since the project ended, 25% for 4-6 months and 12% for more than 6 months.

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## 6.2 Those Completing and Not Completing the Project

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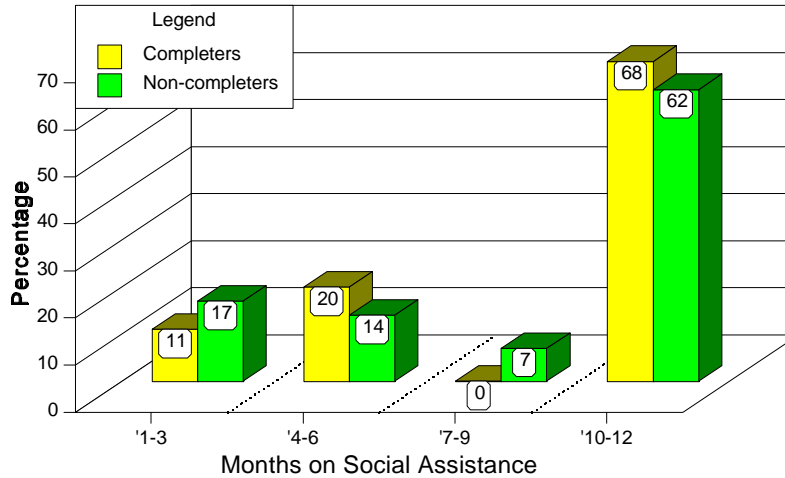
- Thirty-seven percent of those surveyed did not complete the project. Of these, 60% were female and 40% male. The average age of those who completed the project was 29 years and that of non-completers 30.4 years while the groups' median age was 26 and 28 years respectively.
- **Table 12** compares the two groups in relation to a number of other characteristics explored in the participant survey while **Figure 12** compares the use of social assistance by the two groups in the year prior to entering the project. Like the table, Figure 12 indicates roughly similar patterns among those who had been on social assistance during that time.

**Table 12****Completers and Non-Completers**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Completers (%)</b>	<b>Non-Completers (%)</b>
Percent with dependent children	48	57
Percent with less than grade 9 education	56	57
On social assistance in past 12 months	75	86
Satisfied with ...		
information session	77	54
ability to go to instructors with problems	90	74
instructor's skills	84	69
life skills component	80	74
job skills component	82	69
amount of time spent on the job	72	40
career counselling	67	40
Remain in touch with other participants	92	77
Worked since end of project	59	54
Been on social assistance since end of project	67	66

Figure 12

### Completers and Non-Completers by Months on Social Assistance (%)



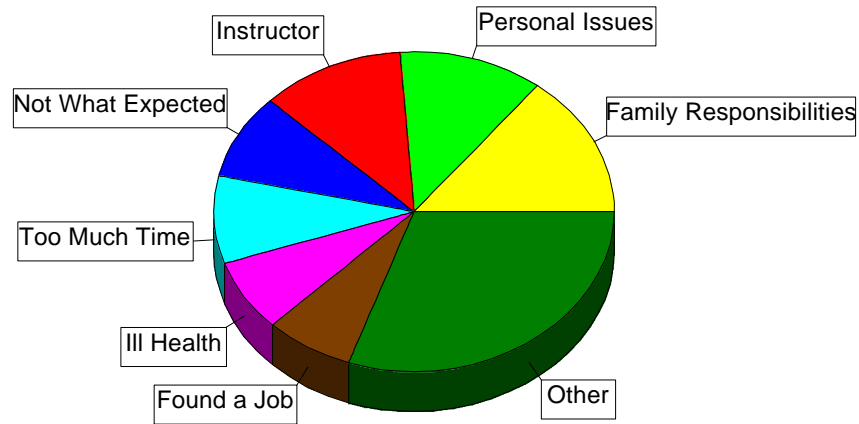
- The largest group of non-completers liked the life skills component best while the largest group of completers like the job skills component best. Each group most disliked the \$10/day incentive allowance.
- **Figure 13** illustrates the reasons provided by the survey respondents as to why they left the program early. In order of importance for leaving the project were family responsibilities (14.5% of respondents), not getting along with the instructor (11.6%), personal issues (11.6%), not what was expected (8.7%), too much time on certain aspects of the project (8.7%), ill health or injury (7.2%) and found a job (7.2%). There were some differences in this pattern between the WAP and NSDP projects. Only family responsibilities were identified by a significant portion of WAP participants as their reason for leaving the project early. NSDP participants identified family responsibilities (29%), personal issues (25%), not getting along with the instructor (25%) and too much time spent on certain parts of the project (25%).
- Smaller numbers of respondents identified reasons such as the instructor not being helpful, not getting along with other participants or asked to leave.



- Eighteen percent of WAP participants and 12.5% of NSDP participants left the project early because they had found another job.

**Figure 13**

## Reasons for Leaving the Program Prior to Completion




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### 6.3 Participant Responses by Sex

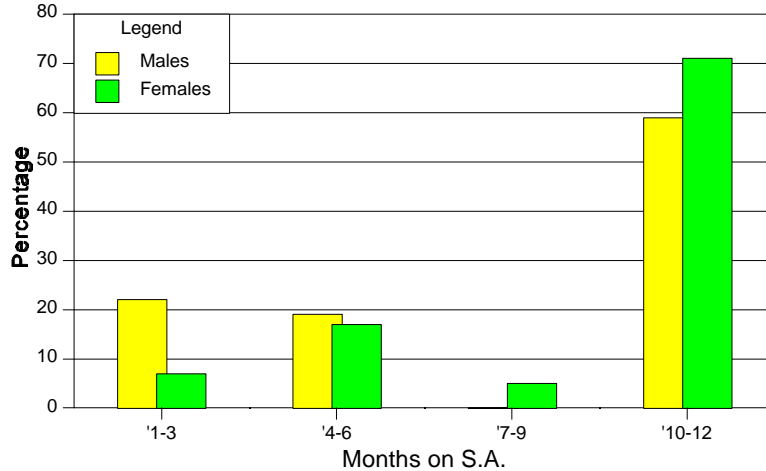
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In regard to **most** of the survey questions, for example, age or educational attainment, there are not significant differences between the male and female participants. More significant differences, however, do appear relative to the following:

- Sixty-eight percent of the females and only 31% of the males have dependent children. Approximately 60% of the women in WAP projects and 71% of women in NSDP projects have children.

**Figure 14**

### Duration on Social Assistance by Sex



- Fifty-one percent of male participants and 36% of female participants have worked in the past 12 months and 74% and 83% respectively have received social assistance over the past 12 months. **Figure 14** indicates that females were more reliant upon social assistance than were males prior to their entering the project.
- Sixty-three percent of women in NSDP compared to 33% of women in WAP had been on social assistance for 10-12 months in the previous year. Some 60% of the men in NSDP and 22% of the men in WAP had been on for a similarly long period of time.
- Seventy-four percent of females and 49% of males entered the project because they wanted to improve their education, and 70% and 51% respectively wanted to improve their skills. Sixty-seven percent of males and 60% of females completed the project.
- While females and males were equally satisfied with the \$10/day incentive allowance, 30% and only 9% respectively were dissatisfied with the other allowances available for child care or transportation.
- Almost half of the males (44%) found the job skills component to be the most useful part of the project compared to only 21% of females. A

slightly larger percentage (23%) of females found the life skills component to be the most useful part of the project.

- Seventy-two percent of the men and 45% of the women have had paid employment since the project ended. A slightly higher percentage of women than men have been on social assistance since the project ended.

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## 6.4 Key Informant Surveys

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- Approximately 18% of the key informants surveyed had been consulted during the planning phase while 22% knew people who were participants and 39% said they became aware of the project through other ways. Some 73% of the respondents said they were directly involved in some aspect of the developmental phase, for example planning or selecting participants.
- Almost 27% of this group learned of the project directly from the GNWT while another 30% learned of it through other ways. Only 17% learned of it from the CDO and only 7% from the CSSW.
- Some 28% said they became involved in the project in order to "help people" while 16% said in order to "build skills in the community" and 11% because it was part of their specific mandate and responsibilities.
- Virtually all of this group, 93%, believe the Investing in People goals and objectives were appropriate for their community.
- Sixty-seven percent thought that other community organizations were involved to an appropriate degree and 44% thought the extent of involvement by other community organizations was adequate. Only one respondent thought there was too much community involvement.
- This group was generally satisfied with all the different aspects of the Investing in People program, *i.e.*, the information available from the GNWT, the cooperation of GNWT staff, the allowance provided to participants and so on. "Extremely satisfied" responses were highest in relation to both the cooperation of the CSSW, the CDO and other community organizations (37%, 43% and 35% respectively) and the willingness of local employers and organizations to serve as workplace hosts (63%). The highest level of "extreme dissatisfaction" related, first,

to the lead time available to plan the project (16%) and the cooperation of the CSSW or CDO (17%).

- In terms of the project's most serious problem, 24% identified its inability to overcome certain barriers, 21% suggested participant attendance and 17% identified the skills and literacy level of participants. Only one respondent suggested a lack of community support as the project's most serious problem.
- Key respondents were generally satisfied with the design and the operations of the project in their community. For example, 89% thought the project was well suited to the community; 55% thought the project provided reasonably well for the financial needs of participants while 23% thought it did not; 49% thought it provided appropriately for the personal and family needs of participants while 23% did not.
- Ninety-three percent thought the project provided participants with useful experiences, 83% thought it helped them to develop job-related skills, 73% to develop "personal skills" and 83% to "strengthen their confidence and self-esteem."
- While lack of motivation (24%) and personal or family problems (22%) were identified as the major reason for participants not attending regularly, 44% identified a wide variety of other reasons. Much the same pattern was seen when the key informants were asked to identify the major reason for participants dropping out of the project.
- Forty-nine percent thought the project helped the community to get ready to take over more responsibilities from the territorial government. Nevertheless 100% of the respondents believed that it is a good idea to have projects like this in their community and 84% thought the project contributed to the well-being of the community. Some 79% thought the project will help participants to become independent of social assistance.
- Twenty-five percent thought there would be more cost effective ways to achieve the same goals and objectives.
- **Table 13** identifies what the key informants believed to be the project's benefits to the community.

Table 13

### Community Benefits

Community Benefits	All Projects (%)
Jobs for community members	11
More money for participants, at least during the project	12
Fewer people on social assistance	8
Developing life and job skills among participants	21
Developing skills in the community	16
Encouraging cooperation among different agencies in the community	9
Promoting the independence, self-determination and well-being of participants	18
Developing skills which would strengthen the community during the devolution process	4
Other	3

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## 6.5 Governmental and Non-Governmental Key Informants

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- Sixty-seven percent of key informants **not** employed by the GNWT, Canada, the colleges or sponsoring agency believed the degree of community involvement was appropriate. This response rate was identical to that provided by all key informants together.
- Generally the answers provided by the smaller, non-government group of key informants were consistent with those provided by all key informants together. The only marked difference in this regard came in response to the question whether there were more cost effective ways of achieving the same goals. In this regard, 50% of non-governmental community respondents and only 25% overall replied "yes."
- When examining key informant responses by WAP and NSDP, a small number of distinctions arise. First, WAP respondents were much more satisfied than were NSDP respondents with the degree of involvement by other community organizations. Some 89% of WAP key informants

compared to 36% of NSDP respondents thought the degree of community involvement was appropriate.

- Similarly, 67% of WAP respondents and 41% of NSDP respondents were either very or extremely satisfied with the cooperation of the CSSW or the CDO.
- Sixty-one percent of WAP respondents and 36% of NSDP respondents agree that the project helped the community to get ready to assume more responsibilities from the territorial government.
- Forty-four percent WAP and 14% NSDP respondents thought that participants should receive more than \$10/day as an incentive or participation allowance. A small portion of either group (17-19%) thought that there should be penalties applied to those participants who did not attend regularly.

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## **6.6 Participant and Key Informant Recommendations**

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The survey asked participants for suggestions and recommendations for improving the project. The answers of those who responded generally fell into one of four groupings. The largest group identified financial issues, suggesting that the \$10/day allowance was not sufficient and that the additional allowances for child care or transportation were not necessarily available.

A second group of participants, for a variety of communities but primarily within the NSDP projects, focused on the instructors and suggested that his or her skills and teaching methods should be improved. Several participants identified the need for more one-on-one instruction and the need for tutors to assist the instructor.

A third group identified community involvement and suggested that participants themselves, elders and other community people should be more involved in designing the project. Similarly, they should all be involved in making the decisions which affect the project and participants.

The final group of participants focused upon the time available and suggested, first, that more time was required for meaningful educational upgrading and, second, that more time should be spent on cultural activities.

Key informants were also asked for suggestions and recommendations. A number suggested that improvements could be made around the project's time frame: training requires more than two years to have a real impact; sponsors require more lead time to plan their project appropriately; participants need to be involved for a longer period of time to improve their educational, life and job skills in any significant way.

Another group of key informants identified financial issues: increased funding for the project, higher allowances for participants and a payment schedule which provided participants with more incentive, and funding more readily available for child care. A third group suggested that the projects should have more of a vocational and job specific orientation.

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## 7.0 Research Issues

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The “Monitoring and Evaluation Framework” developed by the Evaluation Committee in May 1995 for Investing in People, posed a range of research questions concerning both the operations and the outcomes of the program and the different community-based projects. This section of the report considers each of those questions and allows the evaluation to move beyond the participants' and key informants' views presented in Section 6. Consideration of these issues will allow program managers to focus their efforts in the second year of Investing in People and in subsequent years as governments develop similar programs.

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### 7.1 Relevance

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The evaluation framework posed three specific questions concerning the relevance of the Investing in People program.

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#### 7.1.1 In what way does the Investing in People initiative reflect the criteria established for Strategic Initiatives?

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The Investing in People program and projects are generally consistent with the criteria established by the government of Canada for Strategic Initiatives. Most important in this regard, many of the Work Activity Projects in particular are clearly innovative and quite unlike employability enhancement programs targeted to social assistance recipients operating elsewhere in Canada. For example:

- in Coral Harbour and Iqaluit, community sponsors developed Work Activity Projects which were carefully targeted to the local harvesting economy rather than, as elsewhere in the country, to the mainstream paid labour force;



- project participants in the Hay River NSDP project planned a community workshop which was designed to build community understanding of social assistance issues and of the needs of social assistance recipients; and
- in Iqaluit, project sponsors carefully adhered to traditional customs, distributing the hunt to elders in the community and using community feasts to recognize the accomplishments of the project participants.

Furthermore, Investing in People emphasized the Strategic Initiatives criteria of encouraging partnerships in the development and delivery of its projects:

- the Coral Harbour project was an integral part of a local initiative endorsed by the Hunters and Trappers Association and the NWT Development Corporation to develop a commercial caribou harvest;
- WAP projects in Fort Resolution also built upon existing community economic development initiatives and involved not only local non-governmental associations but other agencies of the GNWT; and
- in other communities still, the projects generated an unprecedented level of cooperation between officials of different GNWT departments, in particular the CSSW and CDO.

At the same time, by stressing community development and non-labour market outcomes, Investing in People clearly tested the limits of the federal criteria and certainly of the most commonly held federal priorities in this regard. By all accounts, however, the federal officials responsible for reviewing the design and conducting the evaluation exhibited a commendable degree of flexibility in their willingness to accommodate the unique needs and the unique perspective of their GNWT counterparts.

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### **7.1.2 To what extent does the Investing in People initiative reach the intended target group?**

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The survey findings indicate that the program reached the client group to which it was targeted. Virtually all met the social assistance threshold requirement and, overall, there was a good mix of both men (53%) and women (47%) in the participant group.

However, reaching the target group was not a difficult achievement given the breadth of the threshold which was established in the guidelines. The program handbook states that participants had to have been on social assistance for three months through the past year or had to be at risk of long-term reliance on social assistance. As discussed in the background section of this report, a very high proportion of the NWT population frequently require some social assistance through a period of time.

More specifically, however, the data indicate that:

- 80% of participants had been on social assistance during the 12 months prior to their entry into the program;
- 65% had been on social assistance for 10-12 months in the previous year; and
- 75% had been on social assistance for at least 2 months in each of the previous three years.

This threshold created its own problems however. First, the projects had to deal with a very difficult client group whose use of social assistance was greater than the average for people in the NWT. That suggests the participant group had some very significant and fundamental barriers to employment which had to be confronted by projects of seven and eight months duration.

Second, the skills, literacy levels and work readiness of participants varied greatly, even within a single project. That presented projects, and instructors, with the challenge of meeting some very diverse needs with relatively few in-class supports such as tutors or classroom assistants. Third, in some projects the program selection process opened the Investing in People opportunities to those with physical, learning and emotional disabilities. That placed additional strains and pressures on the limited resources available to each project.

Investing in People had other, more secondary criteria for participation. These required that potential participants:

- be actively seeking training and new skills;
- be willing to participate voluntarily;
- have career aspirations in-line with the project; and
- be free of any barriers relating to drug or alcohol abuse.

Finally, the participation criteria required both a determination that the program was the most appropriate intervention for the client, and that there were

resources available in the community to provide additional supports to those who needed them in order to succeed.

These criteria were not significant factors in the selection process. At least 9% of the participants who were surveyed - and one suspects many more than that - thought that they would lose their social assistance benefits if they did not enter the program. Indeed some Career Development Officers who were interviewed were not aware that participation was supposed to be voluntary.

It appears, then, that some clients were obliged to enrol in the projects as is permitted under the social assistance regulations; and again as the regulations permit, that some were penalized - their social assistance benefits were cut off - when they dropped out, whether for family, personal or any other reasons.

Furthermore, the criterion concerning career aspirations was largely irrelevant. Given the educational levels of participants - 56% had less than a grade 9 education - the issue is not one of career selection. Instead it is one of beginning the long and difficult process to attain even a minimally acceptable level of education or to gain even some of the skills which would enable them, some day, to participate in the paid labour force more fully than in the past.

The criterion concerning drug or alcohol problems was also generally overlooked and, according to some key informants, had to be ignored given the clients who were being referred to the program. In some cases, instructors appeared to believe that participation would assist individuals come to terms with their drug and alcohol problems, and with the personal issues that were often responsible for their social assistance dependency.

All in all, the Investing in People projects were reaching the target group established for the program. Nevertheless the selection process is clearly one of the weaker elements of the projects. In some communities, the selection of participants was not the result of any rational selection process involving the client, Career Development Officer, Community Social Service Worker and project sponsor. More often it was a matter of one person's discretion, often the CSSW following a canvass of his or her caseload, or the program instructor with little support from the CSSW.

This shortcoming was compounded by the need to fill the program spots quickly. The funding arrangements between Canada and the NWT, the potential of lost dollars and missed opportunities meant filling the spots with any body available.

There are in the NWT very many people who would benefit from the type of opportunities and programming which Investing in People offers. Forcing people

to participate constitutes a waste of limited resources, consumes an inordinate amount of the instructor's energy and disrupts the efforts of those other participants who genuinely wish to be in the program.

The Investing in People program and projects would benefit from refining the target group and ensuring a more rational and careful selection process.

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### **7.1.3 Are the services or interventions provided consistent with the needs of the target groups in terms of enabling them to address skills, support or structural barriers?**

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Survey respondents generally expressed their satisfaction with the design of the projects, with the different components of the projects and with the supports that were available. Clearly, instructors and project sponsors devoted considerable time and energy to meeting the range of needs experienced by participants, for example:

- many of the projects brought in guest speakers from a range of community resources, for example the women's shelter or the alcohol treatment centre; and
- certain of the projects attempted to address, albeit not always successfully, the needs of participants relative to child care.

At the same time, however, there is no evidence of a systematic process to assess the particular needs of participants on either an individual or a group basis. In the case of the NSDP projects for example, course components were developed centrally by Nunavut Arctic College, Aurora College and GNWT staff using largely a southern training model. The needs of individuals and of individual communities can get lost in this approach.

Additionally, the GNWT department responsible for the delivery of social assistance benefits (at the time) and responsible for supervising the CSSWs, was not an integral part of the Investing in People planning process. This was a very serious problem given their experience with and understanding of the client group. The result was that some CSSWs did not understand the objectives of the program or their own role in program delivery. Indeed many CSSWs learned

of the program from community sponsors and then only after approval to proceed had been given.

In some communities, it appears that the social services office used the Investing in People program to rid the caseload of some of its most difficult clients, those who had been in receipt of social assistance for the longest period of time. It did not matter whether they were particularly well suited for the project or whether they indeed had career or educational goals.

At the same time, other public servants in the different communities and regions - including Social Services in Iqaluit - did not participate in the planning process. This constituted a missed opportunity:

- to identify client and community needs;
- to align the project with other community activities, for example the Community Wellness initiative; and
- to consider the structural barriers confronting participants in any particular region.

Furthermore the resources available to address skills, support or structural barriers were rarely adequate to the need and were determined primarily by the government's own fiscal and program priorities. No additional resources were available, for example, to the Iqaluit NSDP project to enable it to meet the particular needs of those participants with significant physical and learning disabilities. The \$10/day attendance or incentive allowance, for example, was established on the basis of what other programs offered rather than upon any analysis of client need; and indeed 52% of WAP participants and 29% of NSDP participants identified their dissatisfaction with this aspect of the program.

Additionally, it appears that some project sponsors, many clients and even some CSSWs were not aware that participants were entitled to special allowances for child care and transportation. Not surprisingly then, 21% of participants and 23% of key informants expressed their dissatisfaction with this aspect of the program.

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## **7.2 Project Design and Delivery**

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The evaluation framework identified three research issues concerning the design and delivery of the Investing in People projects.

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## 7.2.1 What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Investing in People projects' organizational structure?

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Generally, key informants had few complaints about the organizational structure of Investing in People and certainly did not identify reporting or accounting requirements as particularly onerous. In a similar vein, participants indicated that the projects were able to meet most of their needs. Interviews indicated that there was good cooperation between instructors, project sponsors, GNWT field staff and program management in Yellowknife. In several instances the partners worked together to resolve problems specific to a particular project and invariably found a solution which was satisfactory all around.

It appears that the organizational structure of the Investing in People program was one of its strengths. On one level, key informants lauded the degree of cooperation and partnership which characterized the relationship between the federal and GNWT staff responsible for the program. Federal officials were prepared to accommodate the uniqueness of the NWT and to stretch Strategic Initiatives criteria as required in order to ensure their relevance to the NWT. Federal managers were available as required for policy decisions although generally they left the day to day management of the program, and the day to day supervision of the projects, to their GNWT counterparts.

At the project level too, there was general satisfaction with the roles and responsibilities of each of the project partners. Interviewees frequently remarked upon the unprecedented degree of cooperation which was evident between the CSSW and the CDO. GNWT staff solicited proposals from a number of communities and went to great lengths to ensure that communities were made aware of the Investing in People program. In a number of cases, government staff - most often the CDO - worked with a community organization to develop and even write its proposal.

While such cooperation is commendable, it contributed to a weakness which characterized some of the projects, *i.e.*:

- the lack of community knowledge of or commitment to the project; and
- the lack of any real sense of community ownership.

In some cases, projects appear to have been developed and designed because the GNWT wanted a project in that particular community or region; or because the NWT Development Corporation or some other enterprise was looking for a

way of accessing funds for an initiative which had little to do with the goals and objectives of the Investing in People program.

Efforts are required to foster community ownership of community development initiatives and program guidelines should provide communities with adequate time to consider and design these. Schedules, time tables, funding deadlines and funding penalties imposed by the territorial and federal governments are inconsistent with the principles of community development.

Importantly, community-based key informants appear ready to go further than Investing in People planners in terms of organizational structures. They urged the establishment of a new program goal or objective, namely the organizational and service integration of GNWT programs such as Investing in People with federal programs such as Pathways or UI-sponsored upgrading.

They suggested that this approach would:

- contribute to more effective and more client-centred planning;
- ensure a broader range of opportunities to potential participants; and
- make better use of community resources.

Furthermore integration of government services at this level would be consistent with the way in which communities function and overcome the artificial, jurisdictional boundaries which exist between governments and departments.

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### **7.2.2 What tracking or monitoring mechanisms have been put in place to collect information on participants and interventions? Have comparison groups been identified?**

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It is a given that program and evaluation planning should be undertaken simultaneously. Among the benefits of this approach is the attention which it brings to implementing the reporting and information systems needed for program monitoring and for evaluation.

Such planning rarely occurs, however, and Investing in People is by no means unique in this regard. In part the development and implementation of a system for collecting baseline information on participants and for tracking participants following the program was severely constrained by the speed with which Investing in People was designed and implemented.

As a result, there was no baseline information gathered for the first year of the project. Nor was a comparison group constructed for evaluation purposes. Investing in People managers have attempted to redress the first of these shortcomings through both the year-end reports requested of projects and this evaluation. Both are gathering participant information relating, for example, to family status, employment, income, social assistance use, barriers and the supports available. These data will be available for the final evaluation if a decision is made to track the first year's participants in order to assess the longer-term impact of the projects.

The year-end project reports used a variety of approaches to gather the requested information, including participant surveys. Without detracting from the effort committed to this by the projects, the methodology employed may have compromised the results. It appears that the surveys were primarily completed by those who completed the program and by those who remained in touch with the instructor. It has also been suggested that project staff have assisted participants with completing the questionnaires.

At the same time, program managers appear committed to improving the data collection process through the second year of Investing in People. Projects are gathering detailed baseline information on new participants although the particular instrument being used is generating some concern in the different communities. It has been suggested that the instrument is too long, too detailed, and somewhat inappropriate both to the literacy level of many participants and to the reality of the employment and income situation of people in the NWT.

In this regard, some questions are being raised in the communities about the utility of instituting elaborate data collection or tracking mechanisms given the very brief, two-year time span of the program. The program will end in the Fall of 1996, in spite of the evaluation findings about impact and in spite of almost 85% of key informants suggesting that the program contributed to the well-being of their community. Key informants supported the evaluation process and, without exception, made themselves available to the principal researchers or the community research assistants. At the same time, however, they want assurances that the evaluation itself will have some impact on decisions about program continuation.



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### **7.2.3 Have any operational, legislative, regulatory or jurisdictional constraints been identified that impinge on the ability of the Investing in People initiative to achieve its objective? Are each of the project's design features consistent with the stated objectives of Investing in People?**

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The Investing in People objectives relate first, to personal development among participants, and second, to community development. Program guidelines call for a range of personal supports designed to promote the first of these objectives. The design also relies upon cooperation at the community level in support of the second of these objectives.

In brief, the projects' design features are consistent with and indeed supportive of the program's objectives. None of the governmental key informants identified operational, legislative, regulatory or jurisdictional issues which constrained the ability of the program to achieve its objectives. The community-based key informant surveys support that conclusion.

These responses, however, tend to overlook the time lines imposed arbitrarily on the projects by both Strategic Initiatives and by GNWT policy. The two-year time frame for Investing in People, the need to implement the program immediately, the need to maximize federal funding and the inability to carry over unexpended budget allocations to the second year all affected the ability of project sponsors:

- to plan and design their project in a way which fully met client and community needs; and
- to build community support and a sense of community ownership.

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## **7.3 Project Success**

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The evaluation framework identified a number of important questions relating to the success of the projects in developing partnerships, changing employer attitudes, removing barriers, meeting participant needs and both preparing and assisting social assistance recipients to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

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### **7.3.1 How and to what extent have the Investing in People initiative and Investing in People projects succeeded in developing successful partnerships among the various levels of government, employers and community groups?**

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The Investing in People program and projects were successful in developing partnerships among the various governments and agencies involved in the different aspects of programming:

- federal and GNWT officials affirm that there exists an excellent working relationship between them;
- GNWT staff from both Yellowknife and the regions worked closely and effectively with community-based sponsors such as Hunter and Trapper Associations and private employers; and
- the key informant surveys affirm that community representatives were involved to some degree in designing the program and suggest that the amount of their involvement was quite appropriate.

The interviews conducted with a small number of workplace hosts affirm their satisfaction with the operations of the program and their appreciation of the contribution of program participants to their activities. The day care centre at Nunavut Arctic College in Iqaluit, for example, was able to call upon the program if it suddenly found itself short staffed. The post office in Aklavik used a project participant to cover off for regular staff during their vacation period. The Gwich'in Tribal Council used participants at a personal care facility for community elders.

The workplace hosts remarked favourably upon the project coordinators and the relationship which emerged. Several suggested that their involvement with the program resulted in their having a more positive view of social assistance recipients. In one case, however, the workplace host said it made no difference what-so-ever. First, she had not been aware that the participants were recipients and, second, she had no particular attitude toward social assistance recipients in the first place.

In another vein, the Hay River community forum on social assistance issues served to build bridges between those on social assistance and others in the community.

The evaluation framework posed a series of other questions relating to whether the program and projects were successful in integrating services, encouraging community development, and supporting the community transfer initiative. These are addressed in Section 8, Conclusions and Recommendations.

Finally, certain questions in the framework about the program's success in "integrating duplicate services" or "addressing jurisdictional issues" have not been fully addressed. Interestingly, however, key informants and participants made it clear that the issue was not one of duplication or jurisdiction. Rather the real issues were, first, the overall lack of opportunities given the extensive needs which exist; and second, the need to integrate planning at the community level for both federal and GNWT programs so that they better complement one another and provide people with the right experiences at the right time.

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### **7.3.2 What was the impact of the Investing in People program and projects on participants, on the barriers confronting them, on their home and family lives, and on both their readiness for economic self-sufficiency and their achieving self-sufficiency?**

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This section, while constrained by the short-term nature of the evaluation, draws together the number of outcome questions posed in the evaluation framework, namely:

- how satisfied are participants with various aspects of the projects;
- to what extent have the Investing in People projects succeeded in removing disincentives or increasing incentives;
- have the projects brought about changes in the personal and family lives of participants; and

- to what extent have the projects prepared or assisted participants to achieve economic self-sufficiency?

The site visits, surveys of participants and key informants, in-person interviews and focus group meetings all provided answers to each of these questions, and the data related to them are included in the Findings section of this report. In summary, those surveyed suggested that Investing in People was achieving its outcome goals although, without a comparison group and within the time frame provided for the research, this evaluation is unable to ascribe particular outcomes to the program or projects themselves:

- most participants participated in career counselling sessions and likely over half of those who completed the program left with a career plan in place although in many cases that would have entailed further educational upgrading and skills development rather than a mainstream job;
- participants in the Work Activity Projects in particular acquired important, work-related skills. Participants in the Iqaluit harvesting program gained new respect in their community and among the community's other hunters, and some left the program with items they required to continue hunting, for example, a qamutik which they built themselves during the project;
- over 56% of participants stated that the program left them better prepared to address personal and family issues and over 78% said it left them better prepared to be more independent;
- at the same time, 57% have had paid employment since finishing the program compared to 43% in the year prior to the program;
- in the six months following the program, 50% had some income from wages compared to 43% in the year prior to the program; and
- following the program 67% received some social assistance income, considerably fewer than the 80% who had social assistance income in the year prior to the program.

There is a clear contradiction and dilemma within the findings however. On the one hand, participants expressed their satisfaction with most aspects of the projects, stating that the job and life skills components were the most useful components. They also stated that the projects generally met their expectations and provided for their personal and financial needs, and that the program left

them better prepared to address both employment-related and personal or family issues.

On the other hand, almost 50% of participants (and 37% of survey respondents) did not complete the program with the most common reasons for leaving early being family responsibilities, personal issues and not getting along with the instructor.

Conclusions based upon the generally positive findings, therefore, have to be tempered by that non-completion rate:

- some people - those who completed the program - enjoyed significant benefits. For them, Investing in People was achieving its objectives; but
- the large number of people who did not complete likely suffered a number of serious consequences. These would have included a significant loss in self-esteem, self-confidence and self-respect, all elements which the program was supposed to strengthen. Some may have suffered also a significant financial loss given the penalties that were sometimes applied for dropping out. The penalty was a two-month denial of social assistance, an action which could have adversely affected not only the participants but their families as well.

Program managers need to know more about the non-completers; and about those aspects of the program and projects which are responsible for so many people giving up the opportunities they offered, giving up the financial incentives associated with participation, and incurring the financial penalties associated with non-completion.

Ascribing the drop-out rate to a lack of motivation is not a satisfactory answer; neither is ascribing it to personal issues or family responsibilities given the ability and the responsibility of the program to address these. These answers, for example, ignore the similarly high drop-out rate in the mainstream K-12 educational system. More likely the reasons for the high drop-out rate have to do with:

- the target group and with the significant barriers which have caused them to remain on social assistance for such an extended period of time;
- the classroom instruction and possibly with the unsuitability of certain teaching methods for particular groups of people; and

- the apparent lack of future prospects given the high unemployment rate and the other structural barriers in their communities and in the NWT.

This dichotomy between completers and non-completers is paralleled in relation to the program goal of strengthening the host community and preparing it to assume more responsibilities from the territorial government. Key informants suggested that host communities benefited from the program but they cautioned against having unrealistic expectations in this regard.

The projects involved a relatively small number of people in each community, especially in relation to the need which exists. The number of participants who completed the program and who may be prepared to play a larger role in their communities is even smaller.

Finally, community development is a long-term process and Investing in People a short-term intervention. Service integration at the community level is not a new concept, and gains made during the course of Investing in People can quickly be lost as staff leave the project and as the projects become dim memories.

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## **7.4 Project Cost Effectiveness**

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The evaluation framework presented several questions relating to cost effectiveness which, as in the previous section, have to be considered together given their inter-relatedness. These ask:

- are the Investing in People project models a cost-effective way of achieving the Investing in People objectives;
- are there more cost-effective methods of achieving the same objectives; and
- how do the results compare with the results of other projects/programs with similar objectives?

The findings and evidence regarding cost effectiveness have to be treated very cautiously. First, cost/benefit analyses are very complex and require a methodology - including comparison groups - which was not part of this project's research design. Second, sufficient time has not elapsed since the end of the projects and we know from other attempts at such analysis that outcomes can change significantly over time. Third, cost/benefit analyses require:

- that consideration be given to a comprehensive range of short and long-term costs and benefits; and
- that the different stakeholders reach a consensus on which of these costs and benefits should be included in the analysis and which are more or less important than others.

The methodological concerns are particularly relevant in the case of Investing in People given that participants, prior to the project, had very low educational attainment levels and had a lengthy history of dependence on social assistance. One cannot reasonably expect to see significant benefits accruing to government or to the community in the short term.

With these qualifiers foremost in mind, the data suggest that the projects indeed constituted an effective expenditure and commitment of financial resources. In total, direct program expenditures in the first year of Investing in People were approximately \$1.3 million. The expenditure per participant was less than \$5,000 overall. The average expenditure per WAP participant was slightly over \$6,000 and per NSDP participant almost \$4,300.

Although comparisons are very difficult to make because every program is different, these figures are in line with expenditures in other parts of the country for similar, quality programs. That is quite remarkable given the higher costs associated with everything in the NWT.

As in the previous section, one must factor into the equation those who did not complete the program. This has the effect of almost doubling the cost per person completing the program.

This new estimate of \$10,000 per completing participant, however, is relatively meaningless for a number of reasons. First the surveys suggest that the non-completers may also have benefited from the program. Second, it may be that Investing in People was a vital first step to academic upgrading and financial self-sufficiency even for non-completers. Third, the evaluation literature from programs elsewhere in Canada does not examine the experience of non-completers, making impossible any comparisons with the Investing in People data.

The data and research also suggest that communities and the NWT enjoyed a significant and important dividend from their investment in people:

- in the short term, participants increased their income from wage employment quite significantly following the program and experienced a

reduced need for social assistance. Furthermore only 9% of survey respondents received some income from UI in the months following the program. While noting these changes, however, it is impossible to ascribe them to the program itself given both the research methodology and the time frame for participant follow-up.

- the program provided participants with incremental income of approximately \$200/month for a period of 6-7 months, and 12% of the key informants stated that one of the significant benefits of the project was the increased income it provided to participants. Given the income level of the participant group, there is no doubt that they spent all of this additional income, both immediately and within their home community. Those expenditures would have had some positive impact on community well-being through the jobs they sustained.
- there is no evidence that the Investing in People projects were merely duplicating other federal or GNWT activities in the host communities. Indeed both community and project-related key informants suggested that there is a considerable unmet need for additional training and work experience opportunities. That need is evidenced by the low educational attainment levels and the high unemployment rates which characterize much of the NWT. The issue, then, is not duplication but rather meeting the needs which exist with the limited funding available from either the federal or the territorial government.
- given the focus of the evaluation, the research methodology and the time frame available, there is no way to analyse whether, through the long term, there are less costly ways than Investing in People to achieve the same objectives. We have to come to a full understanding of those impacts which are directly attributable to the program before such is even remotely possible.

Finally we have to be careful in our consideration of cost/benefit and realistic in our expectations of programs such as Investing in People. Indeed that realism is embedded within the Investing in People program goals and is one of its most significant strengths. The program judiciously avoided judging the success of its projects on the basis of how many entered the paid labour force following the program. It recognized that a positive outcome would be personal growth and a reintroduction, for some, to traditional pursuits and the traditional economy. It recognized that neither of these would necessarily offer cost savings in the short term. In other words, the program incorporated objectives and success measures which had nothing to do with short-term cost effectiveness.



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# 8.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

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## 8.1 Conclusions

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This evaluation has a variety of purposes. One is to assess the operations and to identify the different outcomes of the Investing in People program and projects. Another is to identify the strengths of the program so that these may be built upon and used as the foundation for planning more effective programs in the future. A third purpose is to identify program shortcomings since understanding them can also be the foundation for improved programming.

The strengths of Investing in People are evident, most compellingly in the responses of both project participants and the community-based key informants.

- The program encouraged and supported projects which were often innovative and imaginative, which were generally consistent with community needs, and which brought together and integrated at least some of the government and non-governmental resources within each community.
- The projects provided important opportunities for a group of people who had long been relegated to the social assistance caseload and who were often overlooked by other training and employment initiatives.
- The program exposed many of its participants - possibly for the first time - to the array of community-based services which existed and which could offer them continuing support as they pursued their personal and career goals. Conversely some of the projects gave much needed recognition to the efforts and accomplishments of participants and, furthermore, exposed the community to the needs of those who were on social assistance. In this way, the program contributed in some meaningful way to community cohesiveness and integration.
- Generally the projects tried to meet the full range of participants' needs. In some cases that meant additional funding for child care; in other cases it meant training techniques and materials which were adapted to their unique capabilities and experiences. The commitment and energy of project instructors have to be acknowledged in this regard.

Similar acknowledgement is due the GNWT and federal managers of Investing in People. They put aside jurisdictional differences, focused on the needs of communities and participants, and worked effectively toward the program's goals and objectives.

These strengths - and Investing in People - generated important dividends for participants, for communities and for governments.

Participants expressed their satisfaction with the program. They suggested that it has helped them to address personal and family issues and, with time and further effort, to become contributing partners in both the traditional and the new economies of the NWT.

The impact of the program on communities is perhaps smaller and less obvious, but it is no less real: people and agencies working together, often for the first time; and new skills and new confidence among some of their residents. Community development depends first and foremost upon an investment in human resources.

The governments of the NWT and Canada also stand to reap dividends from their program investment. First, they can benefit from individuals and communities becoming stronger and more self-sufficient, and from the lessons presented by the Investing in People experience. They can benefit by incorporating these lessons in their other programs, whether in the NWT or elsewhere in Canada.

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## **8.2 Lessons and Recommendations**

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### **8.2.1 Planning and Implementation**

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There was considerable haste to design and implement the Investing in People program given the potential for accessing the federal funding available under Strategic Initiatives. The need to rush continued after implementation since allocated but unspent Strategic Initiatives funding would revert to Ottawa rather than remain available for 1995/96 programming.

The consequences of this haste were evident in the design of the projects. The NSDP projects, and some of the WAP projects, were based largely upon a southern model and did not necessarily take full advantage of the opportunity,

flexibility and northern sensitivity inherent in the Investing in People guidelines. This is evidenced by the lesser emphasis in NSDP upon traditional activities and in the absence in several cases of a work experience component to the projects.

Furthermore, this haste resulted in projects being implemented prior to field staff, sponsors or community leaders having a full opportunity to influence the design or to understand the guidelines developed by the management team in Yellowknife. Some of those responsible for program delivery, for example, were not aware that participation was to be voluntary or that additional allowances were available to participants for child care or transportation. The department of Health and Social Services, and subsequently the income support group of ECE, although involved in the initial planning, was only peripherally involved in the implementation of Investing in People. The CSSWs were given little direction initially as to their role even though that role was a critical component of the program.

Finally, both the Investing in People program and the specific projects recognize that making people job ready is a long-term undertaking and that seven months of life skills, educational upgrading or even work experience will not necessarily enable them to become self-sufficient. Yet there is little planning directed at the longer term for individual participants, at continuing to provide opportunities beyond the two-year time frame of the program and of Strategic Initiatives. More importantly, there is too little planning directed at ensuring that participants can continue along their path toward academic achievement and employment.

Many participants will be obliged to return to Investing in People during its second year of operation because there are no obvious alternatives. Others may move along their career path and then stop because there is no place to go.

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## **Recommendations: Planning and Implementation**

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1. The GNWT and Canada should work to provide community sponsors with multi-year funding commitments so as to enable them to plan in a more systematic fashion. Multi-year commitments would also enable sponsors, and the colleges in particular, to plan for their staff requirements in a more satisfactory manner.
2. Employability enhancement programs should be able to carry over unexpended budget allocations from one year to the next so as to enable planning committees to avoid budget-driven haste.

3. The community-based project committees for employability enhancement projects should be expanded to include the full range of organizations and programs providing educational upgrading, skills training and work experience. These committees should include also representatives of the participant group and/or the previous year's participant group.

Enlarging the local project committees would build upon the first year's experience and draw into the circle those responsible, for example, for Pathways or other HRDC-sponsored programs. It would enable the committee to identify who from the potential participant group might benefit most from each of the specific programs available within the community.

Furthermore, in order to develop additional, long-term opportunities for participants, the committee should work to integrate Investing in People with the NWT Community Wellness and other initiatives.

4. Every project should have a work experience component which is designed with community needs in mind, and is consistent with other community initiatives and planning exercises. Each project should plan at least one achievable outcome which is visible to the larger community, which will earn community support for the program and in which contributing participants can take pride.
5. As part of the planning process, the community committees should devote attention to identifying a training path for those who complete the employability enhancement project, to ensure that a steady progression toward the individual's personal and career goals is possible. Training and work experience projects should not be viewed as a one-time intervention.

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## **8.2.2 Participants**

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The dominant shortcoming of the program has to do with its targeting. First, this involves the significant number of people who were obliged to participate when they were either unwilling to do so or when they had personal or other issues which made them unsuitable as participants. The laudable goals and objectives of Investing in People became entwined with a punitive attitude toward social assistance recipients. The important and valuable opportunities offered by the projects too often went to people who could not or did not wish to take full advantage of them.

This constitutes a squandering of valuable opportunities and of too scarce financial resources.

Furthermore, one of the Investing in People goals was to strengthen self-esteem and self-confidence. This goal is particularly important in light of the client group and the failures which many long-term social assistance recipients have experienced in the past. Forcing people in a direction in which they do not wish to go, and into a program for which they are ill-prepared, is setting them up for failure. This serves only to diminish their self-esteem further while at the same time disrupting the program and compromising the efforts of those who are participating by choice. It places a burden on the projects and instructors for which they are not prepared.

A second shortcoming in regard to targeting involves the relegation of women to training as opposed to job-oriented activities, a characteristic of very many employability enhancement programs everywhere in Canada. Only two of the forty-eight participants in the most job-oriented WAP projects (Coral Harbour, Iqaluit and the two projects in Fort Resolution) were women in spite of their needs, in spite of their numbers on the social assistance caseload and in spite of being equally well educated as the male participants.

Importantly, this streaming occurred in spite of the role which women in the NWT have always played in the traditional economy, whether as crafts people - with the important economic benefits which come from the sale of crafts - or as partners in processing the hunt.

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## **Recommendations: Participants**

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6. Constructive programs such as Investing in People should not be compromised by the compulsory participation element within the social assistance program. Concerns about voluntary or involuntary participation by social assistance recipients should be addressed by strengthening the participant recruitment, assessment and selection process. At the same time, the GNWT Department of Health and Social Services and the ECE branch responsible for income security should become a full partner in the program's project committee.
7. Greater attention should be committed to the participant selection process in an effort to ensure that participants want to be there and are likely to remain in the program for its duration. Sponsor funding, however, should not be adversely affected as students leave the program as that would

increase the pressure on sponsors to retain people who may not be suitable.

8. Each potential participant should be provided with the array of alternatives available within his or her community. The decision as to which program or service is best suited to their particular needs, at this particular time, should be reached by the client in consultation with the assessment committee.
9. Community project committees, in consultation with the Investing in People program management, should clarify and refine the program's target group. Together they should decide whether the target group is to be longer or shorter-term recipients of social assistance, those with greater or fewer barriers to employment, or those farther from or closer to self-sufficiency. Program components should be planned with the needs of the particular target group in mind.
10. The Investing in People guidelines should require a nearly equal mix of men and women in all projects, whether training or employment-directed. Program managers should also solicit proposals which incorporate craft work as a means of remedying the imbalance of primarily male participation in those WAP projects focusing upon traditional skills and the traditional economy.
11. Each project should be encouraged - even obliged - to establish clear policies and procedures concerning attendance and the withholding of incentive allowances for those who fail to maintain a satisfactory level of attendance. It is suggested that the policies conform to those for sick leave in the paid labour force.

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### **8.2.3 Supports**

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There was clearly a gap between program design and project operations in terms of the array of supports provided to participants. In a number of cases, financial support for child care and transportation was not available. In other cases, community resources were not adequately marshalled to ensure the availability of child care, of personal counselling or of treatment for drug and alcohol problems. In most cases, project sponsors could do little to address the structural and systemic barriers which are most responsible for the employment, educational and income situation of participants. Most important among these,

perhaps, is the failure of the mainstream K-12 education system to retain young people until they are prepared for life's challenges.

It can be expected that the situation will improve over time in regard to the availability of these specific supports and community resources. The competence of the program and project managers suggests that they will learn from their experiences during the first year of Investing in People and will introduce improvements through the course of its second year.

Meanwhile, the issue of structural barriers is not one which will be resolved easily or quickly, in the Northwest Territories or in Canada. One can only hope that experience with programs such as Investing in People will lead more people, in government and in the communities, to an understanding of this larger and more complex issue.

There remains, however, one gap in terms of support which is rarely identified yet which has the potential to compromise the effectiveness of the Investing in People projects. This involves the support provided to the instructors who work with participants on a day to day basis.

Everyone acknowledges, or should acknowledge, the importance of their role and the difficulties inherent in their jobs. Yet they are usually hired by the colleges and project sponsors at the last moment and laid off again once the project has run its course and the seven-month term has transpired. Subsequently, sponsors have to scramble at the last moment when new funding is approved. The result often is that they then must hire who is available rather than who is best.

Furthermore, instructors are often handed their sometimes onerous responsibilities with little preparation or training in terms of what to expect and how to respond to the problems and challenges which will invariably arise. They are left to sink or swim, and it is remarkable that they do not sink more often than they do.

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## **Recommendations: Supports**

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12. Special efforts should be undertaken by the GNWT to train and support project instructors. The GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the federal Department of Human Resources Development Canada should sponsor an orientation and training

workshop for all Investing in People instructors prior to program implementation.

13. As part of their proposal to sponsor a project, sponsors should be required to identify their plans to meet the child care needs of participants.
14. Project sponsors should determine, on a local basis, a policy and procedure concerning people with alcohol or other drug dependencies. The pre-entry assessment and counselling meeting should identify alternatives - such as treatment - to those clients for whom the Investing in People program is not appropriate at this time.

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## **8.2.4 Community Ownership and Integration**

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Investing in People was designed not only to improve the skills of participants but also to strengthen communities. An important program goal was community development, building skills and creating partnerships within communities which can be applied to the many challenges which will be confronting them through the next decade, particularly in light of the creation of Nunavut and the devolution of certain GNWT responsibilities.

The success of Investing in People in achieving this goal cannot be definitively or quantitatively measured. Key informants generally agreed that their community benefited from the program, at least in some small measure. Half of the key informants suggested that the program helped to prepare the community to take on additional responsibilities and encouraged some community agencies to work together. During the interviews, most supported the idea of further efforts being made which would contribute to community development, community awareness, community cohesion and community-based integration of services.

Investing in the skills and capabilities of community residents is one key to community development. Bringing community resources together, building a consensus around needs and priorities, and focusing on common goals are another. Information, knowledge and promotion are a third.

The experience of certain of the projects - the NSDP project in Hay River or the WAP project in Iqaluit for example - shows how important it is to make the program visible to the community and to recognize both the challenges confronting participants and their hard work and accomplishments. Other



projects placed less emphasis on these public and community manifestations and, given the relatively small number of people directly involved, will come and go without any lasting impact on the community.

Some community members interviewed through the course of the evaluation strongly recommended that there be more outreach to the community, greater integration of participants within the local work force and a clearer and more obvious contribution to the community from the program.

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## **Recommendations: Community Ownership and Integration**

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15. Projects should be encouraged to include components which recognize participants' commitment, hard work and contribution to the community. Some emphasis should be placed upon publicizing, within the program and within the community, those who can serve as role models. This could involve, for example, inviting as guests those who successfully completed the program in a previous year.
16. The greater cooperation evident now in some communities between the CDO and the CSSW should be viewed as only the first step toward local integration of services. Subsequent steps should be towards integrating GNWT efforts with those of the government of Canada. GNWT programs, Pathways and UI-sponsored employment and training programs should cooperate more fully.

Education Culture and Employment, on behalf of the government of the NWT, and Human Resources Development Canada, on behalf of the government of Canada, should sponsor community planning meetings involving the range of program staff involved in educational upgrading, skills development, training and work experience. The purpose of these meetings would be to identify the full range of employment and training opportunities available within a community and to discuss the most appropriate role and target group for each.

Local Band and hamlet authorities should participate in these planning sessions.

17. A further objective of such meetings should be to identify community needs which could be met by participants as part of their learning experience. One community might identify a range of voluntary activities

such as at the local hospital. Another may suggest working with elders as another contribution.

The idea behind this recommendation is to provide something concrete to both participants and the community and thus enhance the stature and visibility of the program and of those participating in the program.

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## **8.2.5 Future Evaluations**

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The Investing in People Program Evaluation - Year One enjoyed some successes and confronted some significant challenges. On the success side of the ledger, the evaluation gave people in the communities and in government the opportunity to share their experiences and their views. It met their wish to contribute to improving this program in its second year and to improving similar programs through the longer term.

The evaluation was able to use research assistants and benefited significantly from their perspectives, their enthusiasm and their understanding of community realities. The principal researchers' only regret in this regard was that more time was not available for training, for working with the research assistants and for learning from them.

A second regret, unrelated to the first, is that the Evaluation Committee's schedule and budget for the project did not permit more time to be spent in each of the project communities, experiencing first-hand their strengths, concerns and priorities.

Evaluation is an important tool, for government funding agencies certainly but even more so for project sponsors. It is the key to assessing a project's operations, strengths and shortcomings and for following up on those as appropriate. It is the key to ensuring that projects evolve in a way which reflects the needs of both participants and their host community.

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## **Recommendations: Future Evaluations**

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18. Community sponsors should have the opportunity to meet together in order to share their experiences and to discuss the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this evaluation. This meeting would also serve

both to transform the evaluation into action and to build a commitment to on-going evaluation at the community level.

Similar meetings should be convened to plan any subsequent evaluation of Investing in People.

Additionally, efforts and resources should be committed to returning the evaluation findings and the knowledge gained through the evaluation process to the participating communities. This knowledge belongs to the community and should be made available to them, in a meaningful way, so they may use it to improve their projects.

19. ECE and HRDC should assist project sponsors to develop their own internal monitoring and program review processes, in part for the immediate benefits which flow from those and in part to expedite future formal evaluations of programs such as Investing in People.
20. There are several ways in which the program's Evaluation Committee could improve the evaluation process and methodology in the program's second year. First planning for the evaluation should begin earlier and should be more inclusive. Second, the committee would be well advised to place greater emphasis in the future on focus group meetings involving participants, both those who completed and those who did not. The focus groups should be organized on a more structured basis with honoraria being paid to program participants.

Third, additional time and resources should be devoted to training community research assistants and to ensuring that there are two assistants in each community. In this way, they could support each other. Furthermore this would ensure that the evaluation's principal researchers have a trained alternate available if one is unable to complete the work.

Fourth, community organizations, regional agencies or the Science Institute should be encouraged to maintain an inventory of people qualified to work as surveyors and research assistants.

21. There are three specific components which should be examined in any subsequent evaluation of Investing in People. The first would be an assessment of whether the implementation process in the second year was less hurried than in the first year and, if so, what impact that had upon client selection and the non-completion rate.

The second-year evaluation should include also an intensive sub-study of those who left the program prior to completion. The purpose of the study would be to learn about their experiences, about what is needed to lower the drop-out rate and about what, if anything, they gained from even their temporary involvement in the program.

Additionally, the GNWT and Canada should undertake a study of why some people on social assistance do not want to participate in programs such as Investing in People. The results of that study would be used to improve the programming in such a way as to attract participants.

Investing in People contributed in important ways to the well-being of individual participants and individual communities in the Northwest Territories. At the same time, it provides the government of the NWT with a more general lesson about the value of devolution and the possibilities within the devolution process.

The experience with Investing in People indicates how the transfer of responsibility to communities must be carefully planned and implemented over a period of time which is appropriate to the particular circumstances and needs of different communities. It shows that communities must be supported as they take on ever greater responsibilities and must be given the tools and the training which they require.

Finally, Investing in People shows how it is possible to create partnerships and how important these partnerships are. Bringing together individuals, agencies, communities and governments is the key to ensuring, first, that people have the opportunities and supports which they most need, and second, that always limited resources are used in the most effective manner possible.