



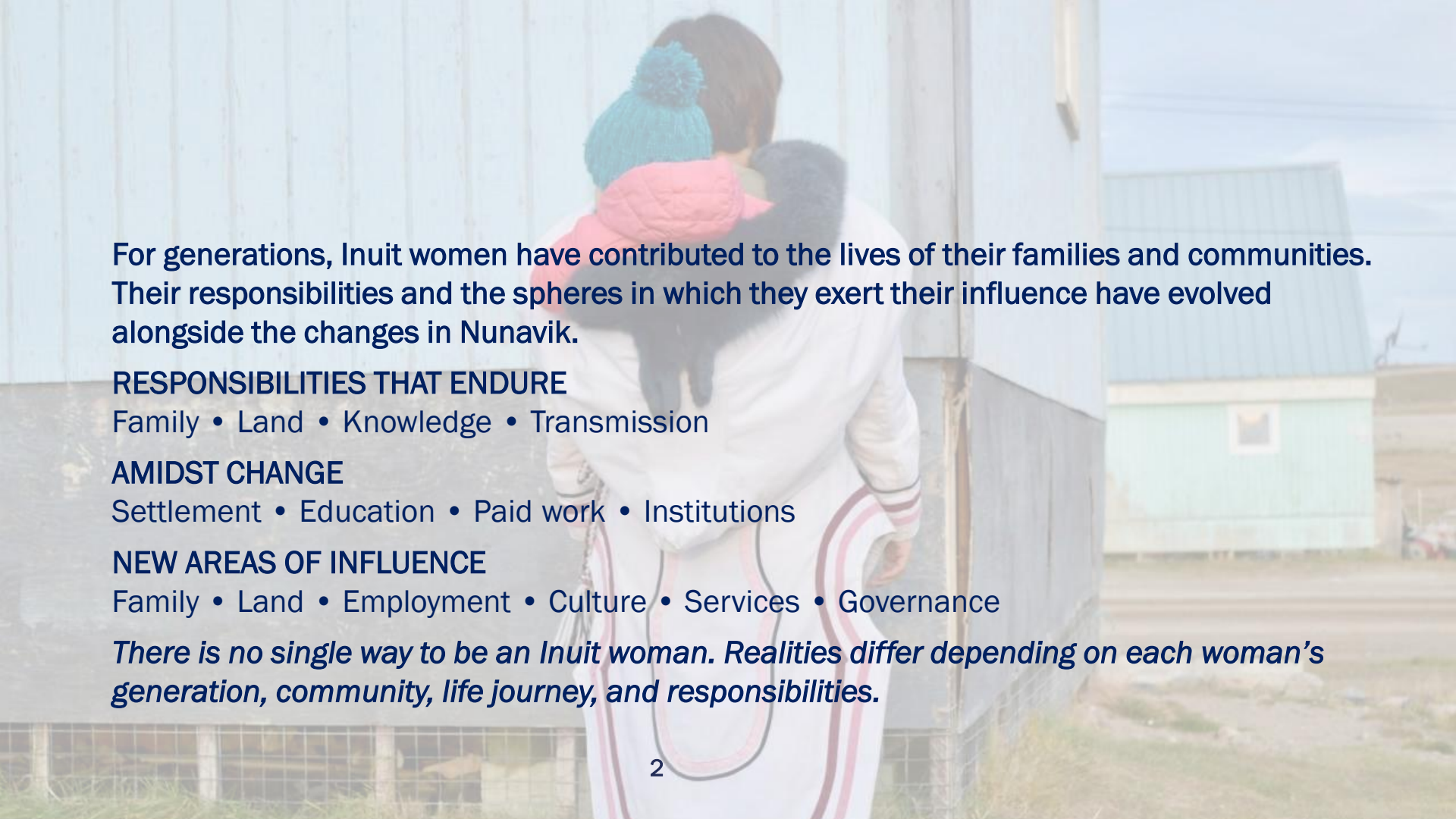
ᐅᐱᕐᕐᕐ ᐅᕐᕐᕐ ᐱᕐᕐᕐᕐᕐ
UNGAVA TULATTAVIK HEALTH CENTER
CENTRE DE SANTÉ TULATTAVIK DE L'UNGAVA

FACT SHEET 14 – INUIT WOMEN

Changing Roles, Enduring Influence

Cultural Safety Team
Reference Guide on Nunavik and cultural safety
Sheet 14 of 16



A photograph of a woman from behind, carrying a young child on her back. The woman is wearing a white parka with pink and black trim. The child is wearing a pink jacket and a blue beanie. They are standing in front of a light-colored wooden building. In the background, there is another building with a green roof and a cloudy sky.

For generations, Inuit women have contributed to the lives of their families and communities. Their responsibilities and the spheres in which they exert their influence have evolved alongside the changes in Nunavik.

RESPONSIBILITIES THAT ENDURE

Family • Land • Knowledge • Transmission

AMIDST CHANGE

Settlement • Education • Paid work • Institutions

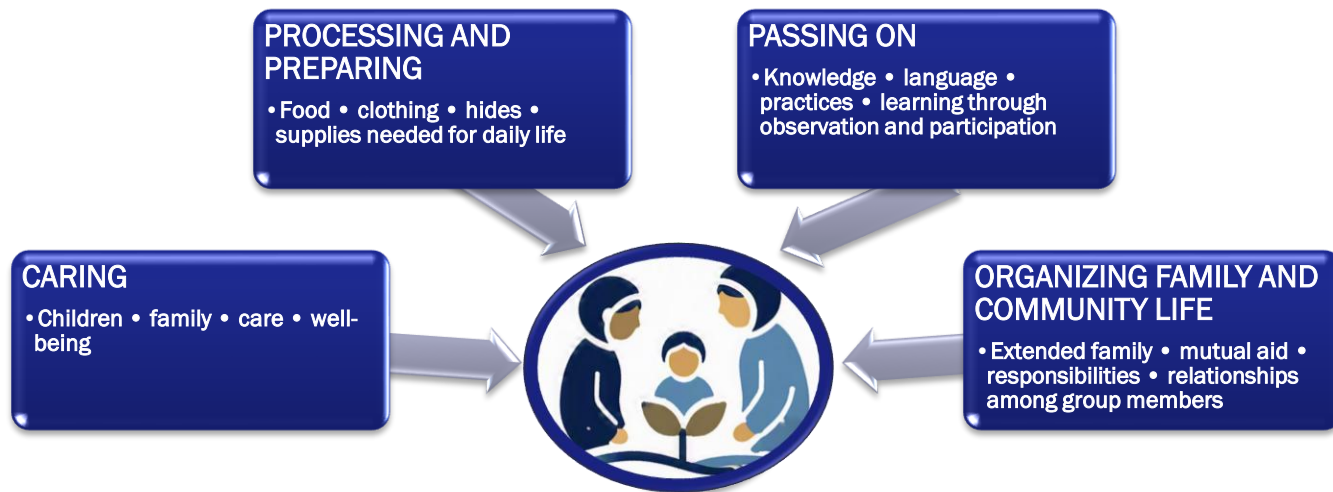
NEW AREAS OF INFLUENCE

Family • Land • Employment • Culture • Services • Governance

There is no single way to be an Inuit woman. Realities differ depending on each woman's generation, community, life journey, and responsibilities.



AT THE HEART OF FAMILY AND THE LAND



Women played an important role in the organization of the extended family and family groups, but their responsibilities and influence varied depending on age, family, and circumstances.

LOOKING AHEAD

Talking about roles does not mean that all women did the same things or that responsibilities were set in stone. They varied depending on families, circumstances, seasons, and needs.



WHEN THE WAY OF LIFE CHANGES

A MORE SEDENTARY LIFESTYLE

Settling in communities • permanent housing → Family and community life is now organized more around the villages.

SCHOOL AND NEW INSTITUTIONS

Schools • health care • public services → Some of the responsibilities once shouldered by the family are now also being taken on by institutional structures.

PAID EMPLOYMENT

New employment opportunities → Women are taking on new roles in service sectors and organizations.

PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZATIONS

Services • organizations • administration • governance → New avenues also allow for influence within the community and at the regional level.

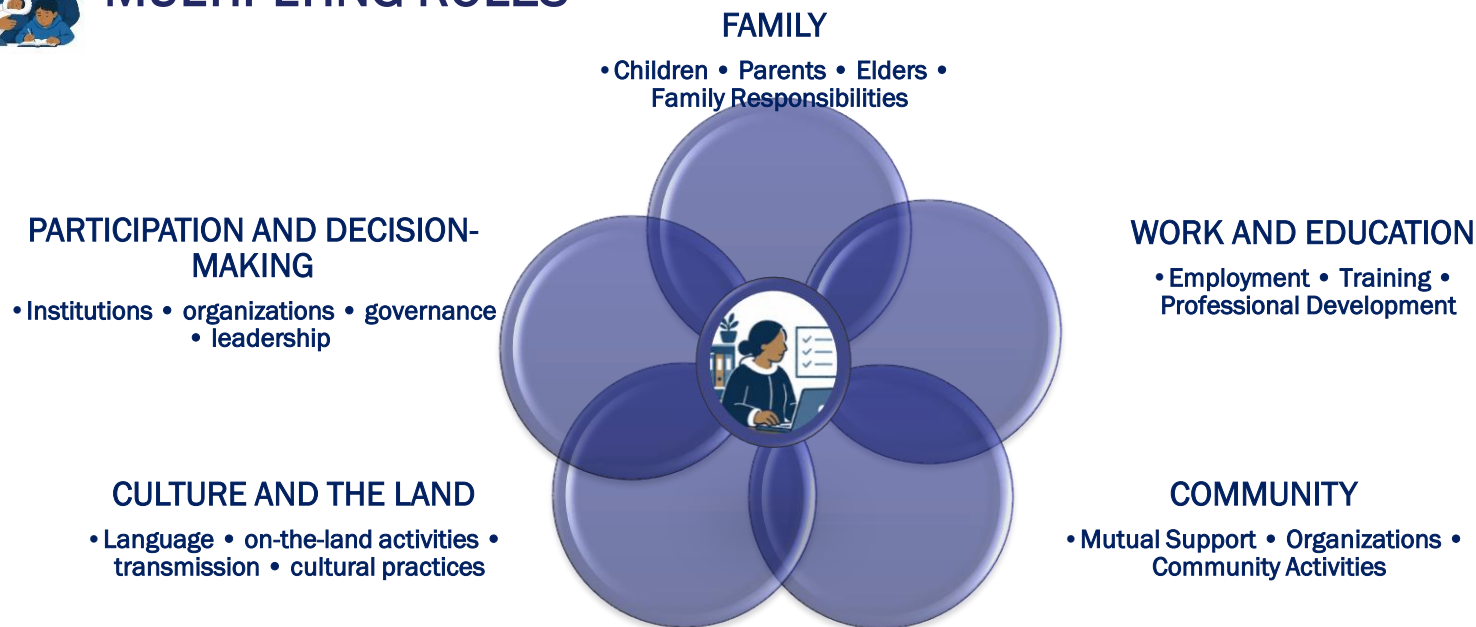
These changes did not simply replace existing responsibilities. For many women, new responsibilities were added to those they already carried out within the family and the community.

LOOKING AHEAD

These changes were not experienced in the same way by all women, nor did they occur at the same time in all Nunavik communities.



MULTIPLYING ROLES



These roles are not necessarily mutually exclusive. They often overlap and may require women to juggle multiple responsibilities.

LOOKING AHEAD

Women's participation in education, the labor market, and institutions does not mean that family and community responsibilities have disappeared.



WOMEN IN NUNAVIK TODAY



65.9%

EMPLOYED

- Indigenous women aged 25 to 64
- Men: 62.0%



11.1%

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

- Indigenous women aged 25 to 64
- Men: 4.6%



A SIGNIFICANT PRESENCE IN SERVICES

- Health • Education
- Lodging and Food Services

Source: Nunivaat — 2016 Census data, Indigenous population aged 25 to 64 in Nunavik.

These data show that women play an important role in the workforce, particularly in several service sectors essential to the functioning of communities.

LOOKING AHEAD

Behind these statistics are women working in schools, health services, regional organizations, villages, and community organizations across Nunavik.



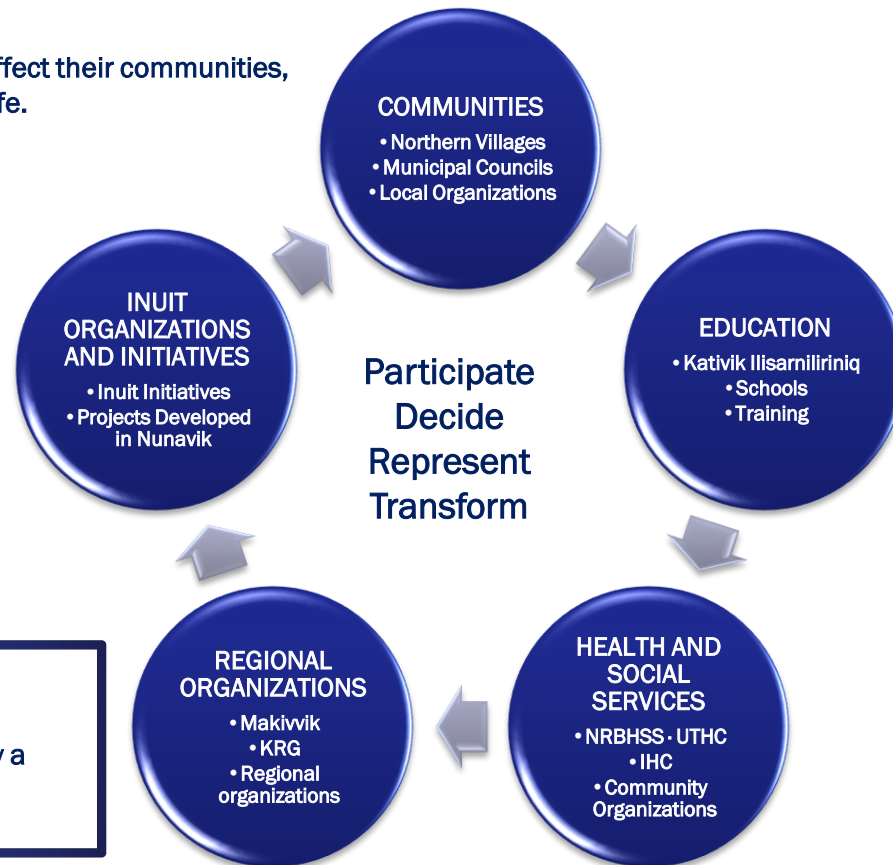
PRESENT WHERE DECISIONS ARE MADE

Throughout Nunavik, women are involved in decisions that affect their communities, services, education, regional development, and community life.



LOOKING AHEAD

Leadership isn't measured solely by one's title. It's also demonstrated through the ability to influence a decision, rally a team, share knowledge, or drive an organization forward.





WOMEN WHO HAVE SHAPED NUNAVIK

These stories are different, but they show how women in Nunavik have made their mark in health, governance, Inuit rights, and relations with the rest of the world.



MARY SIMON —
Kangiqsualujjuaq

- From Inuit Rights to International Diplomacy
- Makivvik • Inuit Circumpolar Council • diplomacy



MINNIE GREY — Kangirsuk

- Transforming Services in Nunavik Health • Social Services • Governance



SHEILA WATT-CLOUTIER —
Kuuujuaq

- Linking the Environment and Human Rights Inuit • climate • international stage



MAGGIE EMUDLUK —
Kangiqsualujjuaq

- From Community Leadership to Regional Governance
- Kangiqsualujjuaq • KRG • Makivvik

LOOKING AHEAD

These four stories represent only a small part of a much broader history of women's leadership in Nunavik. Women's influence is also felt within families, communities, culture, organizations, and services.



CULTURE, LANGUAGE, AND STORIES: ANOTHER FORM OF LEADERSHIP

Influence is not limited to institutions. Through music, film, writing, and the arts, Inuit women keep the language alive, share their experiences, and pass on their perspectives to future generations.



BEATRICE DEER — Quaqtaq

- Bringing Culture to Life Through Creativity
- Music • Inuktitut • storytelling • cultural transmission

CREATION



ELISAPIE — Salluit

- Bringing Nunavik's stories beyond the land
- Music • Film • Inuktitut • Identity

LANGUAGE



ASINNAJAQ — Kuujuaq / Inukjuak

- Telling Inuit Stories in a Different Way
- Film • Writing • Archives • Visual Arts

TRANSMISSION

LOOKING AHEAD

Cultural transmission is not about keeping culture static. Creativity also brings it to life, reinterprets it, and conveys contemporary Inuit perspectives.



WOMEN WHO ARE TRANSFORMING SERVICES

In Nunavik, women are leading teams and driving transformations aimed at better adapting institutions to Inuit realities, priorities, and aspirations.

NUNAVINGMI ILAGIIT PAPATAUVINGA

Mina Beaulne and her team



Rethinking Services for Children and Families



A systemic transformation aimed at developing services by and for the Inuit, rooted in the values, strengths, and realities of Nunavik families.



CHILDREN • FAMILIES • CULTURE • TRANSFORMATION

KATIVIK ILISARNILIRINIQ

Harriet Keleutak — Executive Director



Advancing Education in Nunavik



Since 2018, KI has undertaken several transformations affecting infrastructure, training, working conditions, and student support.



EDUCATION • TRAINING • ACCESS • DEVELOPMENT

LOOKING AHEAD

Across various fields, these initiatives demonstrate how leadership can also be exercised from within: by transforming institutions and services so that they better reflect the realities of Nunavik.



A COLLECTIVE VOICE: SATURVIIT

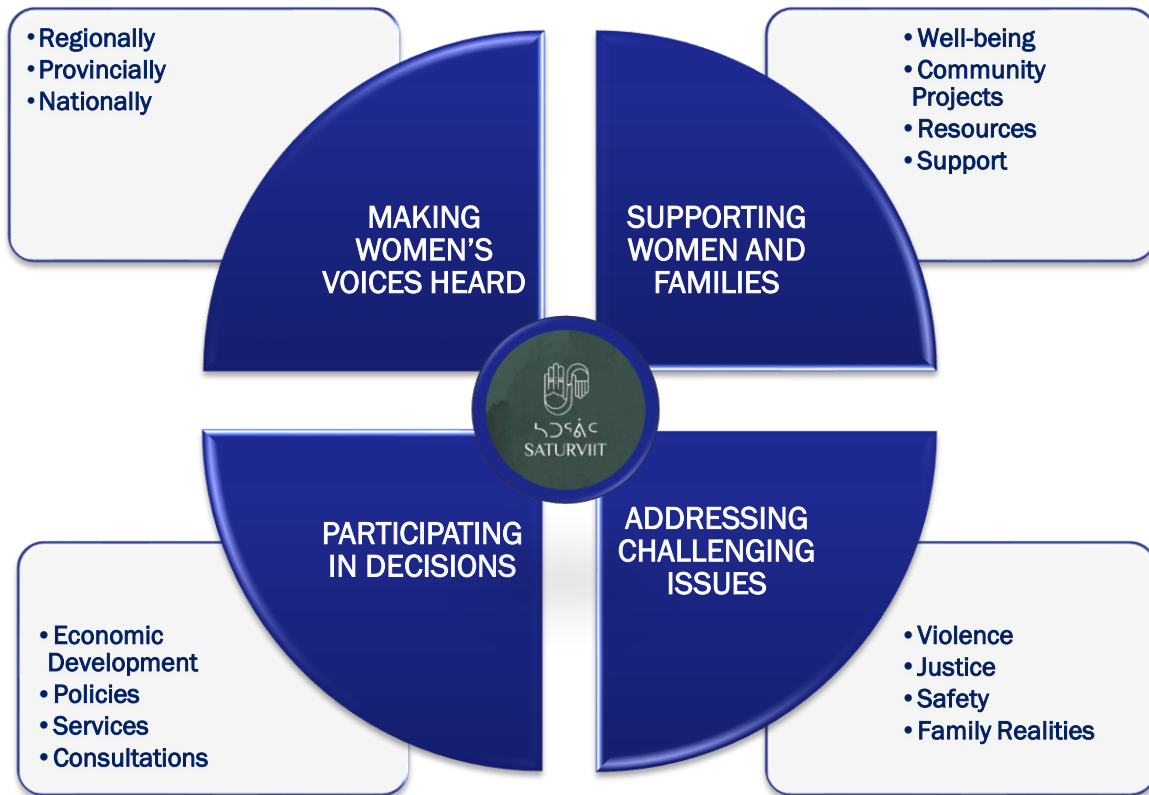
In 2005, women from Nunavik's 14 communities and the South gathered at Camp Qilalugaq, near Puvirnituq. From their discussions emerged the recommendation to create an organization to strengthen the voice of Nunavik's women.

Saturviit was founded in 2006.

SATURVIIT — “Those Who Reclaim What Has Been Lost”

LOOKING AHEAD

Saturviit demonstrates that leadership can also be collective: women pool their experiences, identify their priorities, and make their voices heard in decisions affecting Nunavik.





REALITIES WE CAN'T IGNORE

Recognizing the strength, contributions, and leadership of Inuit women does not mean ignoring the realities that many face. Some of these realities are linked to social and historical changes that continue to affect families and communities.



These realities do not define Inuit women. However, they do influence the conditions under which they exercise their choices, responsibilities, and autonomy.

LOOKING AHEAD

Inuit women are not merely affected by these realities. They are also among those who identify them, develop responses, and transform their communities and institutions.



IN MY WORK AT THE UTHC

The women we've discussed in this fact sheet are also our colleagues, the people we serve, the loved ones who support our clients, and the women we encounter every day in our communities.



WITH MY COLLEAGUES

Recognize their expertise in the field

- Listen to their perspective on a situation
- Recognize their knowledge and experience, beyond their job title
- Make genuine room for their participation in decision-making



WITH THE WOMEN WE SERVE

See the person beyond their immediate need

- Ask what is important to her
- Take her family and community responsibilities into account
- Avoid making assumptions about who makes decisions, who provides support, or who needs to be informed



WITH FAMILIES

Understand that the relationship may extend beyond the individual

- Recognize the role of the extended family
- Ask who the person wishes to involve
- Do not automatically interpret the presence of multiple relatives as a complication



IN THE COMMUNITY

Our relationships extend beyond the UTHC

- A colleague may also be a loved one of a client
- A person we see today may be encountered elsewhere tomorrow
- In a small community, discretion and confidentiality are essential.

LOOKING AHEAD

A woman can be a colleague, a mother, a daughter, an aunt, a caregiver, a professional, a leader, or a user of our services—all at the same time. Understanding these different responsibilities helps us avoid reducing a person to the role in which we encounter her.



DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

..... women are very active in regional governance?

In several organizations in Nunavik, women play a significant role on boards of directors and in decision-making bodies. At the NRBHSS, they currently make up the majority of community representatives.

..... this involvement in decision-making is nothing new?

In 2018, women held 75% of the seats on the NRBHSS board of directors and half of the seats on the boards of Nunavik's two health centers.

..... are young women also taking their place?

In 2018, 9 of the 10 members of the Qarjuut Youth Council were women. Even today, young women represent Nunavik's youth in various regional and national bodies.

..... several institutions in Nunavik have been led by women?

Health, education, regional governance, Inuit organizations: women have held or currently hold leadership positions in several key institutions in Nunavik.



THE BASICS

Roles are evolving, not simply being replaced

Responsibilities related to family, passing on traditions, and community life now coexist with work, studies, and participation in institutions.

→ **Women's roles are evolving and overlapping across generations and life paths.**

Influence does not depend solely on a title

It can be exercised within the family, the community, a team, an organization, artistic creation, or a decision-making body.

→ **Leadership takes many forms and is exercised in many settings.**

Family remains an important aspect of many life paths

Responsibilities toward children, loved ones, and the extended family may coexist with other professional, community, or personal responsibilities.

→ **Understanding a person sometimes requires looking beyond the role in which we encounter them.**

Challenging realities and the capacity to take action can coexist

A woman may face barriers related to housing, safety, family responsibilities, or access to services while also being someone who makes decisions, supports others, creates, and brings about change.

→ **Recognizing these challenges does not mean defining women by them.**

Women are driving change in Nunavik

In families, culture, services, education, organizations, and governance, their contributions shape the changes taking place on the land.

→ **Talking about Inuit women also means talking about how Nunavik is being built and evolving.**



UTHC RECOMMENDATION

AALAAPI | ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ

Audio documentary — Magnéto Runtime: 1 hr 01 min

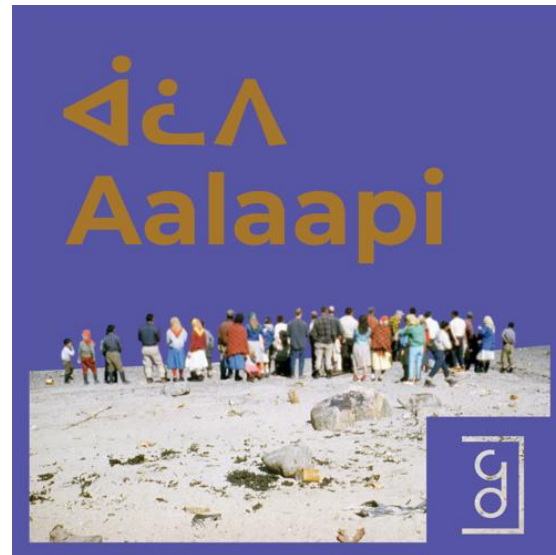
Audrey, Samantha, Louisa, Mélodie, and Akinisie divide their time between Nunavik and southern Quebec. In Aalaapi, which means “to be silent in order to hear something beautiful” in Inuktitut, the five young Inuit women reveal themselves through their reflections and their silences.

Why the UTHC recommends it:

Because Aalaapi allows us to hear directly from young women in Nunavik as they talk about their lives, far from simplified portrayals or those focused solely on hardships.

The documentary was released in 2018 and remains available on the Magnéto website.

[Watch “Aalaapi” on Magnéto](#)





FURTHER READING



SATURVIIT — RESOURCES AND PUBLICATIONS

To learn more about the realities faced by women in Nunavik: reports, tools, and publications based on the concerns and initiatives of women in Nunavik: well-being, families, justice, violence, and participation in community life



LIFE — A SHORT FILM FROM PUVIRNITUQ, NUNAVIK - Nancy Saunders (Niap)

A short film that gives voice to a woman from Nunavik in a new way, through artistic creation and a perspective on her community.



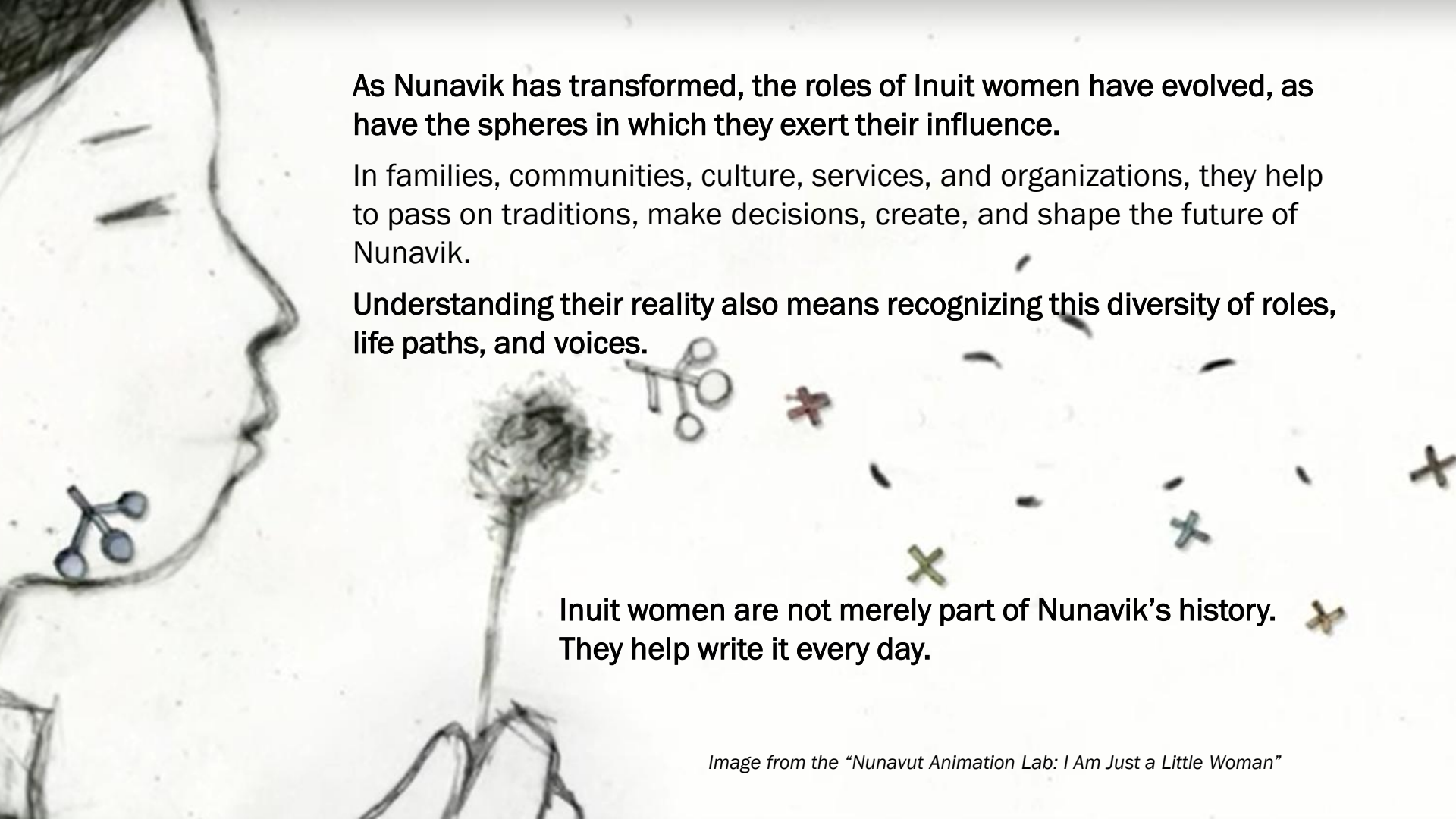
THE CALL OF THE NORTH - Radio-Canada OHdio

A documentary series that amplifies diverse voices from the North. For this resource sheet, employees may be particularly interested in the episodes featuring Beatrice Deer and Lisa Koperqualuk.



RESPECTING TRADITION, PROTECTING OUR FUTURE

A history of Pauktuutit's 40 years of activism, created to give Inuit women a national voice and enable them to participate in the policies and decisions that affect them. It deliberately broadens the perspective from Nunavik to Inuit Nunangat.



As Nunavik has transformed, the roles of Inuit women have evolved, as have the spheres in which they exert their influence.

In families, communities, culture, services, and organizations, they help to pass on traditions, make decisions, create, and shape the future of Nunavik.

Understanding their reality also means recognizing this diversity of roles, life paths, and voices.

Inuit women are not merely part of Nunavik's history. They help write it every day.

Image from the "Nunavut Animation Lab: I Am Just a Little Woman"