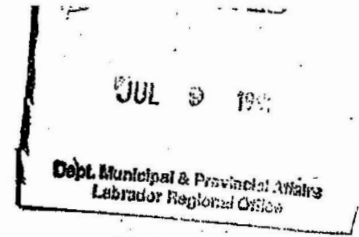


Innu0002



497-8459

**Changes to the Delivery of
Social Services
in Sheshatshit and Utshimassit:
*Whose Life is it Anyway?***

Prepared for:
Innu Nation
Newfoundland Department of Social Services

Prepared by:
Lyla Andrew, M.S.W.

Fieldworkers:
Lousia Penashue
Nastash Andrew

April, 1992

The following story is reproduced from Innu Tipatshimun, February 1992, with the permission of Suzanne and Tobias Gregoire of Sheshatshit. It is offered as an introduction to this report.

Finding the Lost Family

Bernard was born July 14, 1969. It was during the winter of 1972, when he was three years old that Social Services took my youngest brother away for good. I was present when this all happened. My mother was also there. I may have been sixteen or seventeen. The social worker and a translator came. The social worker told me that she was going to take my brother to the hospital and bring him right back. My mother and myself wanted to come along with the social worker. But when she went over with my brother, that was the last time I ever saw my brother.

When the social worker didn't bring my brother back the next day, my mother went to see the social worker, to see what she had done to Bernard. The social worker had already sent Bernard away for adoption. My mother was just told that she was an unfit mother, she can't take care of him because she was drinking all the time. She wasn't even told where they had taken Bernard. My father wasn't in Sheshatshit. He was incarcerated in St. John's at that time. That was the first one of my family the social services took away from us.

I got pregnant and had a baby girl. My daughter's name is Elizabeth. She was born on November 12, 1972. I gave my baby to my mother. Again the same thing happened. It was the same social worker who came and took my baby away from my mother. She was told the same thing. My daughter was only two and a half months old when I last saw her. I was going out with Toby already when this was taking place, but he was away in prison.

My parents moved back to Davis Inlet. I was living with Toby ever since then. We got married August 6, 1988, and we have five girls and one boy. But I have never forgotten my brother Bernard all that time. My mother died seven years ago now. I cried for Bernard. Oh I wish he had known and seen our mother. I really felt bad about all this.

After awhile I still could not forget my own brother so my husband and myself went to see the social services to see if they could locate my brother for us. We talked to Joe Wissler. He wrote a letter for us to a social worker in St. John's. He told us it would take six months at least before we heard anything

from them. I was very anxious and couldn't wait that long. In one month we went to see them again. But no luck. the social services weren't much help. I gave up all hope. In my mind I felt I was going to have to wait forever.

But something else exciting happened to me. One evening I was home when a phone rang at my home. I personally answered the phone. It was Stella Rich calling from her home to ask me this question, "Do you have a daughter named Elizabeth Riche?" I answered right away "Yes", then she said "Elizabeth called me a few minutes ago and asked about you." Stella had told Elizabeth, "'I'll call your mother and get her phone number. Call me back and I'll give you her number." That's what Stella did. After she gave Elizabeth my phone number I waited for Elizabeth to call me.

She called me in a few minutes and I was talking to my own daughter for the first time since she was taken away when she was two and a half months old! I was so happy to hear from her. I was very emotional too. I didn't know Elizabeth was looking for me. But she found me first, and I was trying to find my brother Bernard!

December 1, 1991 was Sunday evening. We came home from bingo. It was 11:00 pm and we were getting ready to go to bed. The kids were in the living room with the radio on. Jennifer Pokue suddenly called out to us and said Veronica Rich [my sister in St. John's was on the radio talking to the man. We got up right away and listened to what she had to say. Veronica had been trying to locate her brother also for a while now. She had gone to social services but no luck. So, she was trying it this way. She figured somebody out there would listen and help her locate her brother, so she gave her phone number to the man on the air.

In Stephenville a woman was also listening to the same program and heard Veronica talking about her brother Bernard Riche. This woman happened to be Bernard's foster mother. Her name was Christine Green. Bernard's date of birth matched, so she knew right away that it was the same Bernard she adopted when he was three years old. She immediately called Bernard in Ontario and told him that his sister was looking for him. Bernard didn't waste any time and called the program. The man on the radio called Veronica, on the air, and I listened to my brother for the first time in nineteen years!

I was crying with happiness. Bernard and Veronica were talking to each other but Veronica didn't know that her older sister was also listening from Labrador, and crying. The next day Veronica sent a message to me on the Innu radio

station to phone her saying it was very important. I already knew what my sister was going to tell me and I told her "I know what you are going to tell me. I heard you and Bernard. I am so happy." Also Veronica said Bernard is coming for Christmas to his foster parent's in Stephenville. Then he would be coming to St. John's on December 27 to meet our family. My father and brother Joe couldn't make it but my husband and myself went to St. John's that day. We were met by Veronica.

Also at the airport was my daughter Elizabeth and her boyfriend Craig...the first time I have seen my daughter face to face in almost twenty years! She was just a baby before. Now she was a full grown young lady and beautiful. I was full of joy. I didn't know what to say to her, but I love her so much.

That same day in the evening all of us were waiting for the bus to come from Stephenville to St. John's. We knew our brother was on that bus. About 1:00 am the taxi came and Bernard walked in. I was the happiest person on earth, to see my own brother, my brother whom I saw being taken away a long, long time ago when he was three years old. It was nineteen years ago that I had last seen him. It was a very emotional situation for the three of us...he's all grown up now, twenty two years of age. I thank God for this. I feel it's the biggest present I ever had for Christmas.

I also want to thank the band council for helping us to go there. I can't understand the social services, why they couldn't help us out. They were the people who took away my brother and my daughter, but when I wanted their help, they turned their backs on me. They didn't care if I ever saw my own family again. But I have met them, and I am just a happy person now. I feel very different inside of me.

[NOTE: Toby and Suzanne wanted to tell this story because they thought it would give hope and courage to other Innu in their search for family members that have been separated from them. They are extremely happy to have met both Bernard and Elizabeth, and are now eager to search for one more person, their son Scott.]

Suzanne's story powerfully illustrates the clash of two worlds - worlds that Innu in the villages are a part of every day. In her story these worlds are represented by the Innu and the department of social services. They are worlds far apart.

For the purposes of this report these worlds are represented by the contracting parties, the Innu Nation and the department of social services. If possible, this report was undertaken to bring these two worlds closer together, specifically to arrive at recommendations for "practical ways to improve delivery of services to Innu communities" in the short term.

In good faith and in anticipation of being able to make recommendations as to ways services can be delivered more effectively and efficiently fieldwork was completed in the villages of Sheshatshit and Utshimassit. Various articles and books (see Appendix A) were reviewed as well as interviews conducted with non Innu involved in Social Services matters in the Innu villages.

However, the key informants for this report are Innu, Innu who are or have been directly involved in the delivery of services as well as Innu within the general public who took the time to be interviewed personally or who attended public gatherings. The recommendations which are this report are the recommendations and suggestions made by the key informants. It was the researcher's decision to give their opinions the most weight, to view their

opinions as the most valid.

In this regard it is important to state the obvious. First, the experience of Innu with regard to Social Services has not been the experience of non Innu with regard to Social Services. Second, the persons most affected by any Social Services policies, programs and the delivery of those programs in the villages of Sheshatshit and Utshimassit are Innu.

However, this decision, to present the recommendations of Innu for changes to services in their villages, points up a dilemma of which the researcher only in retrospect became aware. How can the merits of any recommendations for changes to Social Services be evaluated without a shared understanding by both contracting parties at the outset of the study as to what context exists presently with regard to services in the two villages?

The terms of reference for this report spelled out clearly that "an exploration of philosophical differences between the cultures, of past relations between the Department and the communities" was not appropriate. This report has not undertaken any such "exploration" but it is clear such an exploration has never been completed and is going to be a necessary prerequisite for any detailed examination of long range plans for services delivery. It was necessary however

for the researcher to evaluate comments made in interviews and meetings from a perspective of understanding as to the context of the present situation. It is also very significant for those evaluating this report to have a shared understanding of the present context.

The report deals with a situation in which clearly two very different cultures, Innu and non Innu, are involved. The context in which the researcher undertook fieldwork for this report and in which the relationship of these two cultures is viewed is that of colonialism. It is in the context of the colonial relationship that the suggestions and recommendations which follow should be viewed.

Simply stated, the colonial relationship is a process that involves one group gaining and then maintaining control and authority over other peoples in order to derive certain benefits. In this case, the government of Newfoundland has been the dominant group exerting control over Innu in order to gain benefits by claiming ownership of the land and resources which the Innu call Nitassinan.

Although the term colonialism may engender different feelings, many of them negative, by either group involved, there are certain attributes that exist in a colonial relationship which are not in dispute.

First, the ultimate power and decision making ability is vested in

the dominant group. Second, the practices, customs and traditions of the subordinate group are devalued. Third, an interactive feature of a colonial relationship conditions both the colonizer and the colonized to think and behave in certain ways. Often, the response of the colonized will reinforce the negative image of them held by members of the dominant group.¹

Clearly Social Services has been but one, and not necessarily the most significant agents of the colonial relationship. In the course of fieldwork the role of the education system and the church were most often cited as the significant systems of the colonial relationship. However, as Innu look at the present Social Services system with a view to changes in the short term there are two issues clearly rooted in the colonial relationship which must be acknowledged. These two issues, the issues of responsibility and dependency, became the threads of the responses woven by the informants through the fieldwork of this report. These issues relate directly to the attributes of the colonial relationship just outlined.

Responsibility:

Throughout the interviews it was repeatedly said by Innu of Innu that they really don't know or understand the Social Services system. For many Social

¹ Patrick Johnston, Native Children and the Child Welfare System, Page 79.

Services is "mitchim utshimau", the food boss, the person who controls the financial assistance. However, respondents had no trouble expressing their understanding that the decision making responsibility for Social Services in Innu villages lies outside, with ultimate authority and power in St. John's.

The terms of reference for this report suggest the possibility of a shared responsibility between the department and the Innu. The respondents stressed in interviews and meetings that Innu need to take back the responsibility they once had for their own social well being. Innu know that the policies which determine the programs and service delivery are not their policies. Further, Innu express the understanding that if Innu are to accept responsibility for services and the outcomes of those services, whether beneficial or not to Innu, then it is necessary to have the authority for policy and decision making as well as for carrying out the decisions through service delivery.

At present Innu staff deliver some services, financial as well as family and children support services. The non Innu staff indicate that in effect the Innu staff are already very responsible for decisions made, particularly in difficult case management situations. The non Innu staff, in referring to their own work, stressed the impact and importance of the Innu staff's role in decision making with very strong comments in interviews such as "my job is a sham... I'm

pretending to do the work... my involvement was for appearances only." In short, real social work practice involving difficult decision making is being carried out by Innu and the non Innu experienced in working with Innu staff know this fact.

The former Innu staff worker in Utshimassit made this point strongly by saying that the non Innu social worker was presented to her as a person who would offer her training and support but that in reality she, the Innu worker had to provide training and support to the non Innu social worker in order for that person to do any work at all in the village.

The interviews with social work staff emphasized the fact that Innu and non Innu seem to be guided by very different principles of practice. A very different sense of responsibility is felt by Innu and non Innu. Non Innu social work practice and training is about change. Assessments are done, goals and objectives are set and plans for interventions are made in order to accomplish a desired change. The focus is problem oriented. In contrast, the Innu who deliver services have not adopted these principles. One Innu worker says she feels the need to hide from the non Innu staff the fact that she is unwilling to tell other Innu how they should live differently. It would be very disrespectful and embarrassing for her to tell other Innu how to live, to change their ways.

She feels that social services has no right to tell Innu there are better ways for them to live. Innu see their role not as goal oriented problem solving but as being supportive of the individual in whatever situation. It is the Innu workers role to try to help meet the person's basic needs rather than focus on the problem of the moment. Innu don't view themselves as objective, as outside and separate from Innu who are experiencing difficulties bringing them into contact with Social Services. Innu social work staff see themselves as part of a whole involving all other Innu and seem to be fighting against adopting the formal worker-client relationship.

Clearly the responsibility and decision making which to date has been shouldered by the Innu staff has not been either overtly recognized or sanctioned by the department. Non Innu staff continue, in spite of their own protests in some cases, to be seen as the authority figures both by Innu staff, the Innu public and the department. Non Innu staff are seen as having the legitimate and necessary qualifications and training and this takes priority over experience when deciding issues related to responsibility.

Put simply, non Innu and Innu alike recognize that at present it is the non Innu who are seen to be and who are in reality in control of and have responsibility for services with regard to Innu. This has significant bearing on any discussion

of changes regarding services, even short term changes. There seems to be an understanding shared by Innu that to talk about changes to services without talking about who will be responsible for deciding policies generating those services and the practice principles used in delivery of services is not to talk about change at all.

Dependency

A pattern has developed over time in the way Innu and non Innu relate to one another, in the way the department and Innu relate to one another. This pattern is itself an attribute of the colonial relationship. It is historically true that until the 1950's the Innu lived a life of relative self sufficiency, healthfulness and political independence. But, in one generation they

...have been transformed from a society which expected a high degree of individual initiative, self-reliance and responsibility, and which offered in return a life of extraordinary liberty, to that of a powerless and dependent population in a northern colony...the strain on Innu social systems imposed in the government villages has led to widespread alcohol abuse, and violent delinquent and antisocial behaviour previously unknown.²

Ben Andrew and Peter Sarsfield, Innu Health: The Role of Self Determination, Page 4.

Already many Innu are very isolated from that self reliant society that was the Innu way for thousands of years. Many Innu adults having dealings with social services today are the first generation to grow up having spent little time living in the country, having experienced little independence from the non Innu institutions which have been so influential in shaping their self-images.

Most non Innu who come into the villages have little or no knowledge of these historical realities and their significance for the Innu.

The actual presence of the department in the villages has been less than fifteen years. However at this point in time it seems very easy for non Innu as well as Innu to forget that the department has had such a short history in the lives of Innu. This suggests that it is not the length but rather the impact of the relationship of the department with Innu which has been so telling.

Like other non Innu who come into the villages, the non Innu who come on behalf of the department of social services have presented themselves to Innu saying and acting in effect that "Innu need us, want us to do our work here." To varying degrees Innu have accepted this notion with the response being in effect "we cannot manage these situations on our own. We do need you and your expertise." This response of Innu in turn reinforces the negative image held

by non Innu of Innu as incapable of or unwilling to manage their own affairs.

Further, it prompts more feelings by non Innu that Innu really are dependent on them.

Franz Fanon, a psychiatrist born in Martinique, writes of the psychological pressures created by colonialism in his book The Wretched of the Earth. He says that when a nationality is denied the right to its own cultural expression, mental confusion and anxiety follow. "Because it is a systematic negation of the other person and a furious determination to deny the other person all attributes of humanity," Fanon writes, "colonialism forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly: "In reality, who am I?" He says one cannot deny a distinct people their language, culture and traditions without causing psychological harm. "The negation of the native's culture, the contempt for any manifestation of that culture, whether active or emotional, and the placing outside the pale of all specialized branches of organization, contribute to broad aggressive patterns of conduct in the native. Violence is created, Fanon says, when the native person sees his own "social forms disintegrating before his eyes" and because "the settler considered him to be an animal and treated him as such." ³

This is very difficult commentary for caring people of any culture to hear. But, a dependency relationship exists between Innu and non Innu whether either group will acknowledge it or not. It is simply historically defensible. It exists whether it is termed a dependency relationship or not and it's very existence has far reaching implications for any changes to services.

³ Marie Wadden, Nitassinan: The Innu Struggle To Reclaim Their Homeland. Page 75.

The social services system can continue to "social work" Innu reasonably well. The system however can never make Innu healthy in all aspects of their social well-being. In other words, the system at present and with some changes in the short term, can offer some individual case management, particularly at times of crisis. But, that same system can do little or nothing to alleviate the ongoing situations facing all Innu in the villages out of which these crises will continue to develop. In some instances the system will actually make situations even worse.

This is not the fault of well meaning non Innu social workers nor the fault of the Innu staff. The fault is inherent in the design of the system, a system

...of social casework that fails to move from a consideration of some specifics of human psychology and the social situation to a perspective on the totality of the human condition. Rather, social casework operates on the basis of a limited social-psychological view that does not look deeply enough into the social roots of people's dilemmas. Consequently, it cannot develop strategies to deal with the more profound causal factors behind these dilemmas.⁴

Furthermore, this system is absolutely foreign to the Innu, never designed by them to address their own needs. In the process of having this system imposed,

Jeffrey Galper, The Politics of Social Services, Page 130.

Innu have learned to depend on and look to this system alone as the means to deal with social matters concerning families and children. Innu operating within a dependent relationship to social services have learned to think that they don't know what's best for themselves. Either they have learned to devalue the traditional ways of social relationships and relegated them to an irretrievable past or else they have had no opportunities to know how these traditional ways could be organized to still be used to benefit Innu.

One informant spoke to the issue of dependency this way: "As we are now, we are too friendly to the government, to the outsiders. When we meet with government officials, we sit down and discuss an issue with each other. The government officials seem to listen very carefully. Every important issue is written down on their paper. I think the government people are just pretending they are listening. After each meeting they leave and laugh all the way to their homes. Some Innu perceive themselves as objects of ridicule. They have learned to view themselves this way because often this is how they have been treated.

Within a dependency relationship how can the people in the subordinate position, in this case the Innu, move to the position in which they see themselves, and are perceived by those outside their group, as competent,

caring people, capable of determining how to deal with all matters related to families and children, in essence of determining their own futures?

Another informant said simply, "first, end the dependency relationship and then and only then can Innu re educate themselves to take back the responsibility which is rightfully ours."

The following is a list of comments taken from informant interviews which is representative of all interviews done and which speak to the issues of responsibility and dependency:

"Innu should control social services."

"All the workers at social services should be Innu."

"Innu should accept responsibility for Innu children. If you adopt a child from an Innu parent ask that parent for support."

"Non Innu workers don't realize Innu are smart and know the needs of their grandchildren."

"Years ago Innu should have been in control of social services...we have the ability."

"The social services system is run by non Innu and they have the control."

"Innu are different than non Innu but by watching what social services has done

we've learned that kids could be removed when nobody could speak up or explain what was going on."

"When social services gives assistance to a family maybe it's like they owe social services something back so they feel social services has the right to take their children away to the group home. They feel owned by social services."

"Innu should not use white man's training to help other Innu. We get our strength from knowing our own ways."

"When we go to the Innu social worker for support we feel that the decisions are always being made with the white man's permission."

"I feel social services tells lies and makes restrictions on Innu."

"I think Innu are losing track of how to help other Innu. This is very frightening."

These direct comments by Innu are presented to give emphasis to the strong nature of what Innu were saying when interviewed. They also show the need to place any discussion between the two groups, Innu and the department of social services, about changes to services, within the context of what the present situation in the villages is seen to be. Innu see themselves within the context of a colonial relationship. They describe themselves in a relationship which has kept them subordinate. The recommendations which follow speak to real change in this relationship because this is what the informants stressed.

The recommendations for changes have been grouped in three areas:

- 1) organizational authority and responsibility
- 2) programs
- 3) staffing

These areas are definitely overlapping and although presented separately should be viewed as parts of a whole picture.

1) Organizational authority and responsibility

- 1.1) In both the villages of Utshimassit and Sheshatshit a group of Innu should be convened for the purposes of directing all Innu family and children's services. This group or committee would be the authority in each village out of which would come all decisions regarding Innu family and children's services. Essentially the work of this committee would be the forerunner to an Innu family and children's services agency. The establishment of such an agency seems to be more of a long range plan.

At this point in time however, this family and children's services

committee would make the decisions regarding interventions by a worker with Innu families. These committees would be the "clearinghouse" for any queries or complaints about children and families from outside agencies such as the school and the RCMP. Each committee would have a membership of five or six Innu. The band council would have a representative, as would the health council, alcohol program and Innu Nation. Other representatives could be interested individuals drawn from the general public. This would be an independent committee, receiving support from the Innu Nation but not run by the Innu Nation staff. The membership of the committee will receive an honorarium each month for their attendance at regularly scheduled meetings, at least once a week in the beginning.

1.2) Specifically the work of the committee would be to make decisions regarding the necessity for interventions by a worker with an Innu family and or child. These decisions would be guided by policies that the committee would develop with regard to what constitutes appropriate standards of care within Innu families.

1.3) To this end it will be necessary for the directors of child welfare and youth corrections to have their mandated authority legislated over to the

Innu family and children's services committee. The committee then accepts responsibility to guarantee quality of service to Innu families and children. [There has been some suggestion by non Innu that this particular recommendation amounts to self government and therefore goes well beyond the scope of this report. Innu felt however that it was absolutely commonsense that they have responsibility for their own children and that no argument could be made to justify otherwise.]

1.4) The committee would act as the employer to those individuals working as family and children's support workers. Each committee would hire Innu in their village to provide the day to day work with families and children needing support. The committee would also hire and act as supervisor to any non Innu person contracted to provide on the job training and support to the Innu workers.

1.5) These committees must have seed funding to hold workshops in order to develop and establish in detail their mandate before they actually take on responsibility for directing services.

2) Programs

2.1) The artificial division between child welfare programs and youth corrections programs will be ended. Programs will be developed with the focus on families, children and young people. Those young persons who come in conflict with the justice system will be seen as young people in families in need of support. Policy and staffing issues would be developed accordingly.

2.2) The group home in Sheshatshit for young people in conflict with the law will no longer be considered as a placement for young people from Utshimassit in conflict with the law. [There is a very strongly held belief that young people from Utshimassit are "attracted" to the group home for a number of reasons and will subsequently act out to make sure they are placed in the group home. Innu in Utshimassit feel the young people are getting what they want by acting out, that the acting out behaviour, although very often serious, is often done to guarantee placement in Sheshatshit. People want to try and stop the acting out behaviour and believe that eliminating the possibility of placement in Sheshatshit will help in this regard.]

Obviously, this will change the role of the group home in Sheshatshit. Depending on the numbers of young people from Sheshatshit requiring a

custody placement, the closure of the home is a possibility requiring further assessment.

2.3) Alternatives to group home placement in Sheshatshit will be developed in Utshimassit. Utshimassit will expect to receive funding equivalent to that which would have been spent on group home placement in Sheshatshit. This funding would be used to develop programming with a focus on the prevention of acting out behaviour, especially in the area of solvent abuse. Also, programs with a focus on "treatment" will be developed to provide services such as guidance, peer counselling, limit setting and role modelling to those young persons already in need of help. These programs may be developed for delivery in the village as well as provide young people with opportunities for extended stays in the country.

2.4) For those children and young people deemed by the children's and family services committee to be at particular risk or in need of protection, there will be specific programs developed aimed at protection. There will be a re-examination of existing protection services such as child welfare allowances and foster home placement to determine how these services are consistent with the new policies developed for appropriate standards

of care for Innu children. Where there are inconsistencies, new protection programs will be designed.

- 2.5) A review of the present funding for these protection services must be undertaken to determine a base figure for funding. For the period of at least one year, it is suggested that a budget be drawn up for programs to be delivered and that levels for funding in both villages be established from this base.
- 2.6) The social assistance and employment opportunities programs will remain essentially unchanged until such time as a new funding relationship between the Innu and the federal government may be available.
- 2.7) Serious thought should be given to a review by an independent group of Innu to all current placement situations of Innu children to determine that these situations are acceptable to all Innu parties involved. How to address the issue of placement that has led to adoption of Innu children outside the villages remains unknown but this is an issue which Innu demand be addressed to bring any measure of justice to what is perceived as an ongoing unjust situation.

3) Staffing

3.1) All staff working directly with Innu families and children will be Innu. Any non Innu staff will work in a "consulting" capacity with Innu staff and the family and children's services committee.

3.2) The staff will be guided by the principle that "the worker is as implicated and involved in the social situation as is the client, and the solutions which the client must seek are the same solutions that the worker must pursue in his or her life."⁵ This principle is adopted to demystify the social work process, to break down the current barriers between those needing service and those delivering service which have been erected with a focus on professionalism. This means that whatever skills and knowledge the workers develop about how to help people that they will share this with the people they help.

3.3) In both villages there will be new staff positions created. The workers might be called family and children's support workers. It is envisioned that in both Utshimassit and Sheshatshit three support worker positions would be necessary. These would be generalist workers. They would be

⁵ Jeffry Galper, The Politics of Social Services, page 215.

involved in all areas of providing service and support for families and children, from working with the elderly to those young persons in conflict with the law. This would mean that the current positions staffed by non Innu would be eliminated. Also eliminated would be the position of District Manager. The funding for these positions would be redirected into the newly created generalist positions in both villages.

3.4) There needs to be much more flexibility in the job descriptions of these new positions than in the present social work positions. This means that a whole new way of determining qualifications needs to be found as well as with the organization of the work itself. The positions may be organized so that two are full time and one is part time. This would allow the workers the opportunity to job share especially for the purposes of taking periods of time off to go into the country. It would also prevent one person from having to bear all the responsibility for a particular "case load".

3.5) There would be two contract positions created for non Innu, one in each village. These workers would offer on the job training, support and advice to Innu staff as deemed necessary by Innu staff and the committees. The qualifications for these positions would be some human service work

related experience, preferably in a setting with aboriginal people. Most importantly, the non Innu staff would have to demonstrate a sincere willingness to learn about the Innu culture from Innu.

One final recommendation is that in order to bring about the implementation of the foregoing as soon as possible that a short term position should be created for someone with a knowledge of the present social services system. This person would work solely on trying to bring about the implementation of the recommendations. Mr. Ed. Haydn, the present District Manager of the Sheshatshit office, has already indicated a personal desire to take on this responsibility.

In conclusion, this report and its recommendations are as much about the issue of risk as they are about practical ways to change delivery of services.

There is a clear need at this point in time for the department to take risks, to leave the way open for Innu to have the opportunity to assume real authority and responsibility in the area of services to Innu families and children. It is very obvious that the present relationship between the Innu and the department is not working. It is time to end this relationship so that Innu can develop their own ways to cope with social issues involving families and children.

The real risk in this however rests not with the department but with the Innu themselves. In taking on responsibility for services to children and families Innu have to face their worst fears, fears that they will make mistakes, that there will be painful and difficult decisions to make in trying to arrive at what is in the best interests of Innu families and children.

Innu already know the legacy of hurt and pain that exists now because of the mistakes and difficult decisions which the department has made. Fundamentally it is a basic right of the Innu to be allowed to resume full responsibility for families and children and to develop services to meet the needs of families and children. There is no argument which can be made to justify otherwise.

Appendix A

1. An International Review of Child Welfare Policy and Practice in Relation to Aboriginal People, Anna S. Pellatt, 1990.
2. Innu Health: The Role of Self-Determination, Ben Andrew and Peter Sarsfield M.D., Sixth International Circumpolar Conference, 1984.
3. Native Children and the Child Welfare System, Patrick Johnston, Canadian Council on Social Development, 1983.