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## Innu village desperate to save children

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**SHESHATSHIU, LABRADOR**— In an extraordinary move, Innu leaders in the troubled Labrador community of Sheshatshiu are asking social services to take their children.

It's a desperate attempt to stop gas sniffing, explained band chief Paul Rich in a letter to the provincial government on Wednesday.

Rich says 50 kids, some as young as seven years old, are openly sniffing gas on the streets.

Rich says the children need help they can't get at home. And in some cases, their families have other addiction problems.

He says the children might have to leave Labrador to get treatment.

Peter Penashue, president of the Innu Nation, says his group and the police don't have the authority to pick up these children and get help for them.

Penashue says the Innu are encouraging the provincial officials — who have previously been worried about offending Innu parents — to take responsibility and exercise their power.

The band has asked for a meeting with government and health officials by Friday.

Sheshatshiu, a village of 1,200 people, is part of an Innu community of about 1,800 people in Labrador.

Last November, a British human rights group released a report that showed the suicide rate in the Innu community of Davis Inlet was 13 times higher than in the rest of Canada.

- ARCHIVE: [Canada criticized for high suicide rate among Innu](#)

Survival International issued a [statement](#) last week saying the federal government has ignored the report's recommendations.

Davis Inlet came to international attention in 1993 when six glue-sniffing teenagers barricaded themselves in a shack, intent on killing themselves.

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