Innu Nation Community Research Project

Kamamuetimak: Tshentusentimak Nte Steniunu Utat, Nitshish, Kie Nte Nikan

Gathering Voices: Discovering our Past, Present and Future

Nitassinan, November 1993

Funded by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

Acknowledgements

Many thanks go out first to those whose voices are the foundation of this research project, especially to our elders, and to the children and all Innu who participated in Utshimassits and Sheshatshit.

We are also thankful to the following people for their contribution: to the project researchers - Shimun Pokue and Tshan Nui in Utshimassits and Shaishushep Antane, Shishiniss Rich, Nanet Pokue in Sheshatshit; to the committee members - Kantukuet Pinashue, Patshiss Tshak, Mashen Pinashue, Nush Kanikuen, Utshess Nuna, Iskuess Osmond, Tepit Nuna, Tshakash Rich, Kanishte Nuna and Manishuni Hill in Sheshatshit, and Tshenish Pasteen, Tomas Rich, Shunin Saunders, Manteskueu Mistenapeu, Patinik Rich, Ipuan Asta, and Nanshi Rich in Utshimassits; and, to the project's coordinator, Camille Fouillard.

Tanien Ashini, Tshash Rich, Mashen Pinashue, Penash Rich, Manishuni Hill, Peter Pinashue, Shuash Kanikuen, and Kiti Rich read the final report to edit and verify the information compiled. Sheilagh Henry went through it with a fine tooth comb proofreading. Rose Marie Kennedy and Connie Heimbecker helped to lay out the final copy..

A number of people gave us pictures to bring our words to life: Ray Webber, Kanikuen Pinashue, Anikashan Antane, Kitinish Pokue, Peter Pinashue, Camille Fouillard, Tshan Nui, the Innu Resource Centre and the Innu Curriculum Centre.

Manimat Hurley contributed her poetry. Francesca Snow and school children contributed their drawings. Sheskun shared a song. We appreciate all of these very much.

Our thanks also go out to the Innu Nation board and staff for their help and leadership.

And to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, in particular Monique Godin-Beers, who gave us this opportunity to share our voices, our sincere thanks.

We hope that the combined efforts of all those who shared of themselves in this project will result in a greater understanding of our struggle as a People, and in an increased compassion for one another as we continue to create a future for our children.

Peter Penashue
President
Innu Nation
Sheshatshit

Tshash Rich
Vice-President
Innu Nation
Utshimassits

Copies of this report are available for $10.00 from:

Innu Nation Office
Sheshatshiu, Nitassinan
Nitassinan
A0P 1M0
(709) 497-8399

Innu Nation Office
Utshimassits,

A0P 1A0
(709) 478-8919

To our elders,
in recognition of their wisdom,
based in the past and the guide to our future.

Tshenut (Elders)

by Manimat Hurley

I want to learn more about our History
I am seeking help from you.
Please, Do not ignore my plea
It is important at least you share
Some of the old ways of your life

Turn around and face me
and we should speak our minds.
It could take years, months, or many hours
Until I understand.

I am sorry for what has happened
I forgive you for not being able to teach me.
It will take time, I know
But, at least it is a beginning.

Don't be ashamed of our History
you know we are so Rich.
With all the Love and resources we have.
Let's get off from the chair
and sit on the boughs while we chat.

August 21, 1993

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We, the Innu of Sheshatshit and Utshimassits have experienced many changes in our lives over the last 30 years. We face many problems today that never existed before we were settled in villages. Many of our families still spend part of the year in the country, living off the land much as we always have. Here we are healthier and happier, but we return to lives of misery in the community. We don't understand why our lives in the country and the village are so different. We worry that our culture is disappearing. We have lost control of our lives. We don't know our history. We need to know what to do about these issues.

This community-based research project examined these questions. Through individual and group interviews, community and school workshops, drawings and discussion, questionnaires and a radio phone-in program, we asked our elders, men and women, young and old, from different clans and with different life experiences, to explore together our history and our children's future. In the report, we included many direct quotes of participants, as well as direct words from the transcripts in the summarizing text - this, to be as true to the voices gathered as possible.

Our elders told us about our history, most of which is not written in books. They told stories about the vast distances we travelled throughout our territory, how we were once our own bosses without interference from government and other non-Innu institutions, how our spirituality guided our days and our relationship with the animals, sustaining our lives. They talked of days when we worked hard, of when we had our dignity and health, of the hardships back then, but also of a time when alcohol did not ravage our families. In the old days, culture was not just a word we talked about, but our children grew up knowing what it meant to be Innu.

We shared our stories of how the different non-Innu institutions changed our lives especially since we were settled in villages. The Catholic Church was the one we talked about the most. Missionaires were our first contact with Europeans. We talked of how the church gradually took control of more and more of our lives, how it destroyed our culture, how it abused us and molested our children. In Sheshatshit, through the radio program, we learned about some of the written history on the Innu and the Catholic Church. Today there are still some people who respect the church, but many of us have turned away from it.

We also examined how the other non-Innu institutions stripped us of the control over our lives. Governments stole our land to assault it with their hydro-electric, iron ore, forestry and military developments. They imposed their foreign hunting laws to keep us off our land. They made it illegal to practise our way of life. They imposed Band Councils and the Innu Nation to help govern us, and we began to ignore the wisdom of our elders. Schools taught us a foreign culture, language and history, brainwashed our children, made us feel invisible as Innu. Social Services took away our responsibilities, killed our dignity, took our children away, help to cover up the real problems. Health services dealt with all the new diseases and all their sysmptoms without asking why they were. The police helped the government keep us off the land, terrorized us, put us in jail when our lives fell apart and we turned our anger against ourselves. Stores failed to feed a bottomless hunger. Some of us can't imagine life any other way.

We also looked at where we went wrong, how we should not have been lured by empty promises,

how we lost respect and betrayed each other, how we should have fought back more, how we gave in to the alcohol and the money, how we forgot to listen to the elders, to look after our children and teach them about being Innu, how we chose to die instead of fight.

But today, many of us have hit rock bottom and pulled ourselves out of the dark hole. Many of us have chosen a path to heal ourselves. We've chosen to reclaim control of our lives. Key to our survival as well has been the fact that some of us have continued to go into the country and live our own way of life. And more and more are returning. Here we work hard, eat well and feel good about ourselves. We look after our families, listen to our elders, teach our children well, respect the animal spirits and find peace.

The outpost programs which assist people in going to the country is the most important program that exists in our villages. It is the only program that is really Innu, that promotes the Innu way of life. But, the problems of the community are making their way into the country and polluting our way of life out there. Rather than using the outpost program to promote our way of life in the country, some of us have abused it in a way that is destroying it. Some treat it like going on a camping holiday. Some use it to avoid their problems in the community rather than to heal. They bring in alcohol, don't respect the animal spirits by looking after the bones, and don't look after the land.

We shared different opinions about whether we are still Innu today. Is being Innu about speaking our language, about the color of our skin, pride and dignity in our identity, knowing the traditional skills, living on the land, or practising our own spirituality? Can we be truly Innu living in the community? We talked about being split between two cultures, especially young people, about whether we can keep the integrity of our culture as it evolves and we accept more non-Innu ways.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

* We talked about our dreams and nightmares for the future, about what we need to do to reclaim control of our lives. First, we must help ourselves and stop fighting amongst each other. We are the ones who know the answers. We need to organize community workshops and conferences on the many problems that affect our lives to discuss ways of attacking these. Elected leaders need to consult more with the people. We need to follow through on the plans we make.

* We have to continue to work on our healing and encourage others to join us in this journey. We need a treatment centre in the country and to use the healing properties of our life on the land, our traditional spirituality in these programs. We need to ensure that our children and elders, whole families are involved in the healing process.

* We need to give the elders back their rightful place as our leaders. We need to take them seriously again and ask them for our teachings. They need to be more involved in making decisions about issues in both our communities and in the country. We need to organize programs both in the community and in the country through which young people can learn from the elders about our Innu culture and language.

* We need to be practising our own spirituality again. We need to ask the elders for our Innu teachings. They must pass on their knowledge before it is too late. People who dream must come

forward, and accept and practise their spiritual powers. We need look after the animals both in the country and in the community. We need to respect and stop making fun of these practises.

* We need to continue going to the country to live on the land and teach our children our ways. We have to find ways to encourage yet more people to go to the country. We have to stop polluting our life in the country with problems from the community. We must develop clear and fair policies for the outpost programs to ensure that they continue to promote our culture and to stop the abuse and dependency on these programs. These policies must include sanctions for dealing with people who continue the abuse, and must be strictly enforced. Work and education programs should be developed in the country.

* We need to achieve self-government. We need to assert our land rights, and we need to run our own services in the villages: schools, Social Services, policing, health, businesses. We need to get training to do this. We need to develop our own policies and laws. In Utshimassits, relocation is central to our planning for the future. We need to make the decisions about our new community.

None of these recommendations will be easy to implement. As you will read in this report, we have many differing opinions on most issues that affect our lives. The problems we face are broad and complex, overwhelming sometimes. This research has but documented a moment in our history. It is a part of a process of reflection and planning we will continue to pursue as we assert our place in our traditional homeland which we hope to pass on to our children's children.

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KAMAMUETIMAK: TSHENTUSENTIMAK NTE STENIUNU UTAT, NITSHISH, KIE NTE NIKAN

GATHERING VOICES: DISCOVERING OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

INTRODUCTION

"*We can't try hard enough to find the way, our way of living.*" **Miste Pinip, Utshimassiu elder.**

WHY WE GATHERED VOICES

The Innu of Sheshatshit and Utshimassits[1] have experienced many changes in our lives over the last 30 years. Today, many of us believe we face problems we never had before we were settled in these communities. Our lives have changed a lot, and today we find a big difference between how we live when we go into the country and how we live in the community. We don't understand these differences. We worry that our culture is disappearing. We have lost control of our lives. We don't know our history. We need to know what to do about these issues.

Last year, a People's Inquiry was carried out in Utshimassits after we lost six children in a house fire. The report that came out of that gathering of voices was read by a lot of people both inside and outside the community. It helped people better understand what was happening to Utshimassiu people. The report was presented to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples at a public hearing in Sheshatshit last June. This year the Commission's Director of Social and Cultural Research, Dara Culhane, invited the Innu Nation to carry out another gathering of voices.

Innu Nation leaders discussed the idea and decided the focus of the study would be on the differences between our life for us in the community and in the country. They wondered about whether most funding and services should continue to go towards making life in the community better, or whether more efforts should be made to help people go to nutshimit (the country). Many of our families still spend part of the year in nutshimit where we are healthier and happier. However, many return to lives of misery in the community.

Leaders felt this was a question we were always talking about and there were many different opinions about it. This study could be a chance for Sheshatshit to carry out its own Gathering Voices and for Utshimassits to build on what they learned through last year's inquiry. The decision to go ahead with the research project received Innu Nation board approval at a July 15th meeting.

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[1]Utshimassits pronounced (Oot-shee-mah-seets) is the Innu name for the community of Davis Inlet. It is situated on the northeast coast of Nitassinan, the word the Innu use for their land. Utshimassits has a population of 464. Sheshatshit (pronounced Shay-shah-jeet) has a population of 878, and is located in central Nitassinan, at the western end of Atatshuinipek^{u} (Lake Melville).

"I always believed that after the People's Inquiry, people were more aware of what was happening in the community, of what happened to them. People still come into the office, flip through the pages of the Gathering Voices report. They see what was said, what was going to be done. There is a decrease in alcoholism in the community now. People are more willing to offer solutions themselves. People often say now that they are the ones who will find the solutions to problems. And when people talk about these issues, they repeat that they have said it in the Inquiry, that it is in the book. People tend to see the bible as the truth. But here people say what they said in the book, Gathering Voices, is the truth.

We have had a lot of meetings around sexual abuse, on relocation. There are a lot of consultations going on between Innu people. We have been doing a lot of research. Some people are taking control of their own lives. I hope this study will help us to keep moving towards that direction." **Tshash, Utshimassiu man.**

It was decided this research project would be called Kamamuetimak Tshentusentimak nte Steniunu Utat, Nitshish, Kie nte Nikan/ Gathering Voices: Discovering our Past, Present and Future. We wanted to hold this Gathering Voices:

1) to look at our history before and since settlement, the history of the violation of our rights to help us understand the root causes of the problems we face today;

2) in Utshimassits, to build on the stories and voices gathered in the People's Inquiry carried out last year, as well as to add to the recommendations and strategies we made to regain control of our lives;

3) to better understand the problems and the split between life in the community and in the country, how the culture is being lost, and how the tensions/problems of the community are making their way into nutshimit;

4) to look at the problems and benefits of kakuspinanut (the outpost program) and nutshimit (the country), and what we can do to solve the problems;

5) to look at what we need to do to solve the problems we face in the community;

6) to encourage people to be honest with each other about what has happened and is happening to us; to not be embarrassed and to be part of the healing process;
7) to preserve, promote and revive our traditional culture, values and spirituality;

8) to help the government, institutions and people from outside our communities better understand us and the problems we face.

"This research project is a good idea. I think the government people should go to nutshimit and see what the Innu people are all about. Still the government is denying we are a People. Why doesn't the government stay in nutshimit and see the big difference." **Miste-Tuet, Utshimassiu elder.**

We have put together this report from the words and stories we gathered. Our history has always

been told to us through the stories of our parents and grandparents. We see this report as a tool to help us to solve our problems on our road to recovery and self-determination. We wanted to return the information and voices back to the communities in the form of this report to help us better see and understand where we are at this point in time. We also wanted to submit it to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, to governments and their agencies. The report will also serve as a document that can inform land rights negotiations and planning for the relocation of Utshimassits. It provides recommendations for both short-term and long-term changes we feel are needed. Our schools will gain an important historical record which can be used as a teaching tool.

"*I really feel a difference when I go to the country from my life in the community. I feel so well in nutshimit. I don't really understand why. I can't put my finger on it. I think this is the question we should research.*" **Mani Shan, Utshimassiu woman.**

HOW THE VOICES WERE GATHERED

Innu Nation Land Rights Negotiators Daniel Ashini and Cajatan Rich were asked at the July 15th Innu Nation board meeting to appoint committees in both communities to be in charge of the research project. In their choice of committee members, they tried to include elders and young people, men and women as well as people from different families in the community. The committees were authorized by the Innu Nation to decide how the research project would be carried out. The committees met a number of times over the the four months. They hired the researchers and planned and monitored how the research would be carried out.

Matthew Penashue, Naomi Jack, Basil Penashue, Rose Gregoire, George Nuna, Mary May Osmond, David Nuna, Joseph Rich, Christine Nuna and Julianna Hill were members of the Sheshatshiu steering committee. The Utshimassits committee included Tshenish Pasteen, Joseph Raymond Rich, Julianna Saunders, Manteskueu Mistenapeu, Patrick Rich, Yvonne Asta, and Nancy Rich. Researchers were hired in both communities. These included Charlie Andrew, Cecilia Rich and Lorraine Pokue in Sheshatshiu, and Simon Poker and John Nui in Utshimassits. Camille Fouillard was hired to work with the committees and researchers to coordinate the planning of the Gathering Voices, to train the researchers and to compile the voices for the final report. The following people served as peer reviewers: Daniel Ashini, George Rich, Basil Penashue, Penash Rich, Julianna Hill, Peter Penashue, George Gregoire and Katie Rich. They read the final report to edit and verify the information compiled.

These are the questions we asked throughout the Gathering Voices:

In Sheshatshit:

1. What is our history? How did we live before we were settled in Sheshatshit?
2. How have the R.C. Church, the school, Social Services, the clinic, the police, governments, and stores changed our lives since we were settled in the community?
3. Can you compare living in nutshimit today with living in nutshimit 30-50 years ago? What are the changes that we see?
4. What are the problems and benefits of kakuspinanut (the outpost program) operated by the Band Council? What do we need to do to solve the problems of kakuspinanut?
5. What do we need to do to preserve our traditions, culture and language?
6. What do we need to do to solve the social problems of the community?

7. Do you feel it's important that we become involved and debate issues that are affecting our lives? What do we need to do to make this happen?
8. What do you think we should do in the future to avoid the mistakes of the past?
9. Where do you see us as Innu people going in the next 20 years?

In Utshimassits:
1. What were the good and the bad things about our way of life in the old days before we were settled in Utshimassits?
2. What are the good and the bad things about life in nutshimit today? What de we need to do to solve the problems of life in nutshimit?
3. What are the problems and benefits of kaupaunatsh (the outpost program) operated by the Band Council? What do we need to do to solve the problems of kaupaunatsh?
4. What keeps people from going to nutshimit today? What would encourage more people to go to nutshimit?
5. Can we survive as Innu if we lose our traditions? What do we need to do to preserve or revive our culture and spirituality?
6. What do we need to do to make sure that our culture will be alive and well when the community is relocated?
7. What do we need to do to become united with one voice?
8. Where are we as a people headed in the next 20 years?

"The questions that are being asked in this research project are good. I remember as a young man I would ask myself how I was experiencing these problems. I used to ask a lot of questions about my life. The researcher asked me if we will always survive as Innu and will we consider ourselves Innu in twenty years' time. We should ask ourselves whether we really want to stay in the community or in nutshimit? We are toying with the non-Innu way of life because we are too dependent on that life. We have lost how to take care of the animals we used to eat." **Kanikeun Pinashue, Sheshatshiu CJIK Radio call-in program.**

Both committees decided our research would focus on gathering voices as opposed to compiling information from books. Researchers gathered voices for 10 weeks. We tried to talk to as many people as possible. People were able to participate in a number of different ways. Our researchers carried out a number of detailed interviews with men and women, elders and youth. Most of these were carried out in people's homes where they would be most comfortable. We also made sure we talked with people of different clans and with different life experiences and points of view. We included people who have spent a lot of time in the country and those who haven't.

In Sheshatshit, 38 interviews were carried out. In Utshimassits, we were able to do 27 individual interviews. There, we also reached another 13 people through group or focus interviews with Band Council and Innu Nation leaders, the peacekeepers and the Youth Council. We also produced questionnaires in both communities and distributed them to each home. In Sheshatshit, 32 people filled these out and returned them to us, while in Utshimassits we received 12 completed questionnaires. Although we had slightly higher participation of men than women (through questionnaires), we still feel we reached a good cross-section of our communities through these interviews and questionnaires.

A number of workshops were held. A community workshop was held in Sheshatshit on September 15th and 16th. The workshop was entitled *Telling Our Stories - Knowing our History*. There were 103 participants, including men and women, young and old. The workshop featured a panel of elders and small group discussions to examine life for us before and since settlement as well as solutions to problems identified. During the lunch break, we also showed slides of pictures dating back to the 1920's. Participation was high at the workshop. Students from the high school Innu course attended the workshop and had prepared a number of questions they wanted to ask their elders. The stories and discussions of this workshop are part of the voices included in this report.

"*What I would like to ask the elders is what can we do now according to what our great great grandparents would do. What are we going to do about all of this? Right now we are in a meeting in this hall with electricity, chairs and so on. How are our children going to know our culture, to recognize our way of life? They need to know our culture.*" **Kantuakueshiss, Sheshatshiu man.**

We also carried out school workshops in both communities. In Sheshatshit, junior and senior high school students were asked to do drawings which showed the good and the bad things for children in the community and in the country, as well as what they would like to see to make their lives better in both these contexts. Their drawings and notes from their discussions are found in this report. In Utshimassits, elders Tshenish and Meneskuesh made presentations to all the classes in the school about what their lives as children had been. Children were then asked to do drawings on what they liked or didn't like about life in nutshimit.

A radio call-in program was held in Sheshatshit on October 24th. Aputet Antane prepared a presentation on the history of the Innu and the R.C. church from books that he has read. The tape of his presentation was played on the Sunday afternoon. Hosted by Mashen and Muiss Pinashue, the program invited people to phone in with their comments about the information presented. People also came in person to the radio station to share their stories because they did not want to speak on public airwaves. Not all of these stories are included in this report because people requested they not be. This process went on till midnight.

In Sheshatshit, the community radio was also used to inform the community about the project. In Davis Inlet, two bilingual newsletters were circulated to each household through the course of the project to inform people about the project and its progress. In the second newsletter, we quoted some of the words and stories we had gathered in our interviews to get people talking and more interested in participating in the project.

We also collected photos, drawings and writings from people in our communities which relate to our research. Some of these are included in this report.

In all of our work, we asked people to be honest, to listen to each other, to respect confidentiality and to avoid gossip.

In all we reached 277 people in Sheshatshit, and 119 in Utshimassits. This report was written from all the transcripts of notes recorded by the researchers in interviews, focus groups, workshops, questionnaires and the radio program. We have used many quotes from people in this report. (In some cases, we did not use names to respect confidentiality and because people requested that we

not use their names.) In the rest of the text, we also used many direct words and phrases from the transcripts of interviews and workshops, as well as from the questionnaires. We did this in order to remain true to the voices of the participants, and to the way we tell our stories and define our lives.

"*I think it is a good idea if we gather more voices into one. I think it will make us strong.*" **Manesh, Utshimassiu elder.**

LIFE IN THE OLD DAYS:
STORIES FROM OUR ELDERS

"Before settlement, I guess we lived in the country minding our own business and surviving. Children were born there. We buried our dead people there. We had both a good and a bad life sometimes, like everybody else." **Nush, Sheshatshiu woman.**

THERE WAS NO BORDER

"The Innu people never used to be in one place. They would travel to different places all over our territory. There are many routes and portages that we would take. We have a lot of different Innu names for all the lakes, rivers, and brooks we travelled on." **Mishen Pastin, Sheshatshiu elder.**

Most of our history is not written in books. Our elders know this history, but a lot of young people have never learned about it. The elders have many stories to tell about the way we lived before we were settled in villages. Many adults also remember these times. And even some young people remember a lot of things of living in the country when they were small. Some of the stories of the old days from elders are in **Gathering Voices: Finding the Strength to Help Our Children**, the 1992 People's Inquiry report from Utshimassits. Many of the stories collected for this research project are from Sheshatshit, although stories from Utshimassiu elders are also included.

"I won't talk very long because sometimes I'm shy because people will make fun of me. But I still hold on to the past. I hold the stories of the elders in my heart. I treasure those memories." **Mani Matinen, Sheshatshiu elder at community workshop.**

The elders tell us stories about all the territories they travelled in the old days. They say if someone was born in a territory with their family, we could say that that place was their land. The land belonged to the Innu. This is where we buried our dead.

When people went into the country, they scattered to different places. They went north, south, east and west. There was no border between Quebec and Labrador. Innu from different territories would meet up with each other. We were not strangers to each other. We were like brothers and sisters even though we came from different territories. We were all Innu. We were still a nomadic people in the bush until the 1960's. Many of us were born and raised in the country and we remember this life well.

"My father raised us in the country. And that's where my great grandparents, and my father were all the time. They used to travel from Uashat (Seven Islands). My father and Joseph Ashini, an elder then, would also travel to Davis Inlet to get supplies like tea and bullets. Then later, when I was married and my husband was still alive, we used to travel by foot all over the place with my parents. People would get tired. The longest distance from here to travel by foot was Mishikamau." **Mani An Selma, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"I always lived in the country with my parents who both died when I was younger. Mishen Pastin who was my adopted father looked after me when my parents died. Mishen Pastin was a young

man then, along with my brother Pien Pinashue. Me and my husband Jerome Pokue travelled by sled in the winter and by canoe in the summer. I would set the snares and I would travel with my husband and we would travel quite a distance. " **Shanut Pukue, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"We would stay in nutshimits one full year when the food was plentiful. We would go to old Davis Inlet when the food ran out. We travelled to where the caribou was, places like Ashuapun (Border Beacon), Kakatshekatet, east of Ashuapun. We used to walk and haul our sleds from Miste-shipu (Churchill River) to Kaskakapununakamat. We would camp where we killed the caribou. We would meet other families and sometimes travel with them. Some would be travelling from Amesh (Voisey Bay) and places like that. They usually came hungry and people would give them food." **Meneshkuesh, Utshimassiu elder.**

Innu people travelled around to many areas, from Pukutshipu (St. Augustin), Nutashkuan (Natashquan), Uashat (Seven Islands), Ekuantshiu (Mingan), to Iakuekupau (Park Lake), Lake Uinikapau, Makan nipi, Kakatshu-utshishtun (Grand Lake), along the Mushuau-shipu (George River), Miste-shipu (Hamilton River), Kamikuakemeu-shipu (Red Wine River) or the Mishakamau (Naskaupi River), to Mistinipi and Uaskanakanish (Fort Chimo), and many other places. Our elders have been to all of these places, walked on foot or paddled in canoes, before even dog sleds were used. People would meet in various places like Atshuku-nipi (Seal Lake) or Snekamuk for gatherings. They would meet and greet each other, and after divide and go in different directions. That was the rotation of life before.

"In Mushuashipu, the people used to wait for the caribou there. People from Uashat and Uaskekan and Mushuau-shipu Innu used to hunt caribou together there all the time. I used to travel to Uaskekan too. Sometimes I would travel south from Utshimassit where there was a store, then travel back up by foot. I could name all the many places I used to be at meeting people. We used to see old campsites and there would be a sign that people were there long ago. People were there long ago before we were." **Nuk Nui, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"Our family members came from Uashat (Seven Islands). It usually took eight months to travel to Lake Mishikamau and one month to Sheshatshit. We would travel back and forth." **Mani Akat, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"In my younger days, I used to spend my time on the Mushuau-shipu (George River). I survived only on country food. Traders used to bring food for the Innu in the country. That is because they didn't want the Innu to sell their furs to other traders. From Fort Chimo, there are only three portages. People used very large canoes." **Tshenish, Utshimassiu elder.**

TRAPPING AND TRADING

"From the diaries of early traders, in the 1800's, we know people would come in from the country to old Davis Inlet and get what they needed. Traders found it very hard. They would give people things on credit, but they would get a lot of furs in return. The dependency started there. It's been that way ever since we ran into the first Hudson's Bay traders." **Tshash, Utshimassiu man.**

Some people say the fur trade was the first thing that stopped us from practising our own culture. People would get furs and trade them for food and other supplies. These things were not expensive back then. When there was a shortage of food in the country, some men would travel with their toboggans to sell fur and buy some more food. Sometimes this happened around Christmas. March was the good month to set traps for uapasten (marten), lynx, otter, beaver and mink.

"We used to trap for fur and sell them to the Hudson's Bay Company. We worked hard for our money. We would open accounts at Hudson's Bay and pay them when we came in from the country. The Big Ship (Hudson's Bay Boat) used to come once during the summer. There were no frozen foods then, or canned foods. They sold salt fish and fat pork. Sometimes Hudson's Bay would run out of food. Then we concentrated on catching small game like rabbit, partridge or porcupine." **Shushep Nuna, Sheshatshiu man.**

There were trading posts in Sheshatshit and Utshimassits, as well as different Quebec communities like Pukutshipu (St. Augustin), Ekauantshiu (Mingan) and Nutashkuan (Natshaquan). There was a small store at Maniek where food and cigarettes were sold. Some elders remember when the store was erected in Sheshatshit, and then one year after that, we started to get supplies.
People would get $300 to $400 credit with the Hudson's Bay Company when they would be getting ready to go in the country. Everything in the store was in big containers. Back then, they used to weigh stuff and the price depended on how much the stuff weighed. People would buy necessities like guns and ammunition, and other supplies like tobacco, flour, butter, tea and sugar, and white butter. Some people say we would get good prices for our furs, but not everyone agrees.

"The Hudson's Bay Company would rip off the Innu that were trying to sell their furs. That is why they changed their name to Northern." **Tastu Pokue, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"The fur trade made a lot of money off of us; we lost a lot of revenue from selling furs. And our food habits began to change, like we started eating sugar, and we started to change the tools we used." **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu community workshop.**

"We killed fur and got good money for them then. We survived well. Supplies at the store were cheap then. Our people opened accounts at the Bay and scheduled to pay it back when they came out from the country. We bought other items we needed in nutshimit with what was left over." **Pun Nuna, Sheshatshiu man.**

SUMMERS AT TRADING POSTS

For a long time there was only fur trading in Sheshatshit and Utshimassits. Innu would have to go to the Quebec side of Nitassinan to see a priest. We would travel there to get married. Later, a priest began to visit Sheshatshit and Utshimassits for one week, and then one or two months in the summer. Father Whitehead was the travelling priest then.

Some people would get work when they came to see the priest. Men used to work cutting wood for Hudson's Bay Company or for the dormitories and hospitals of the International Grenfell Association. Some people would spend the summer building canoes and fishing. We used to come here in June and we would leave again in August after the priest was gone.

"I remember the times when there was no family allowance. I remember the first time when people started working. They would work 8 hours for $7.50/day." **Spastiesh Penunsi, Sheshatshiu elder.**

WE WERE OUR OWN BOSSES

Most of our elders say it was good when people lived in nutshimit. Nobody had to worry about anything but going hunting and fishing. People felt free to go anywhere. We never used to need wildlife licenses. If the Innu had to use wildlife licenses when they were in the country long ago, they would have starved to death by now. Some of our elders don't remember ever seeing a police officer down here.

"The good thing about back then was the Innuts didn't depend on the government." **Shimunish, Utshimassiu elder.**

"We had more freedom. There was no interference from low-level flying, wildlife officers or fishing camp operations. Nobody was bothering us. We just carried on with our own business. We were happy in nutshimit." **Micheniss, Sheshatshiu elder.**

We didn't have much to do with the government. We were our own bosses. When we travelled, a person who walked behind was the leader. When we canoed, the person who sat at the back was the leader. But sometimes the elders say in the old days Innu would talk with the government. Our elders say we would sit down and have a good talk to them. But we never signed anything.

"The white man never used to camp before in the country. The only survival the white man did was set up his own tent. He would have a difficult time learning the skills of the Innu to survive." **Mani Matinen, Sheshatshiu elder.**

WE SAID NO TO NUTAK

One time that the government tried to interfere with our lives was when they tried to settle Mushuau Innu at Nutak on the coast north of Nain.

"The only good thing about nutshimit back then was that people really liked it. In the wintertime, we travelled back to old Davis. We were at Nain. About 30 years ago, they moved us to a new location, to Nutak, but we came back to Davis." **Miste-Tuet, Utshimassiu elder.**

"The government told us to move to Nutak becasue they were going to shut down the old Davis Hudson's Bay post. They placed us in some kind of big boat and once we arrived in Nutak the government started to handle the relief. There was a white person there that we called Miste Puntshe. He was the one that gave out the food supplies and relief. There were Inuit at Nutak, a lot of Inuit people and a few white people. We were living on one side and they were on the other. We lived there for one year until my father decided to go back. The priest told my father that he had to go back and all the Innu decided too. My brother was killed in a drowning accident there in the fall. We left in the spring. I don't know what the government was up to moving us there. I only know the people were making snowshoes." **Meneskuesh, Utshimassiu elder.**

"I remember when we were in Nutak. I know some people didn't like it there. When we were moved

to old Davis Inlet, I think people liked it there. We were only little children then." **Shunin, Utshimassiu woman.**

WE RESPECTED THE ANIMALS SPIRITS

In the old days, the Innu respected the animals very closely. Everything on the land and water was respected. We believed in the spirits of the animals. Our spiritual beliefs were in all living creatures. These spirits had a great influence on our people. The shaman was our spiritual leader and our healer. The shaman was often a man, but it could also be a woman. One woman who was like a shaman was Uenuitamishkuen. The elders tell us stories about the spirits and sacred ways of the Innu in those days, about looking after the animal bones, sweat lodges, drumming and singing, dreaming, the shaking tent and mukushan.

"*There were good and bad spirits.The shaman would help the people when there were bad spirits. Atshen was a bad spirit that used to have an effect on hunting. The people who were spiritual like the Mintushiu (shaman) would go after this spirit to send him away from where they were camping. The spiritual people killed the bad spirit.*" **Mani An Selma, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"*You can hear all the wild animal spirits. Every wild animal has a spirit. I also believe in this Metusheun (shamanism). I have witnessed what the elders have spoken about at Kenemu.*" **Kantuakueshiss, Sheshatshiu man.**

"*In the old days, hunters provided food for all the families and shared the food they had killed. We would have a feast together for the animals killed. They would be treated in a sacred way. Every bone was hung in the trees, and also the caribou hide would be treated in a sacred way. Nothing would be wasted at all.*" **Shanut, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"*Once I remember we were low on food and we came to this other Innu camp. We were given a lot of food to eat. It was Mukushan (sacred feast of the caribou). People were more cooperative and this was our way. Sometimes it was through the help of the spirits, but we first of all had to respect the animals. Every bone that we used was hung on a tashapatakan (scaffold). Everything was well cleaned. In our way, everything was shared for nothing. Respect the animals and in return they will respect you.*" **Spastiesh and Pinamen, Sheshatshiu elders.**

This was the rotation of our living. The foods or animals were never wasted. Everything was hung in the trees or it was thrown in the fire. The bones were important. We never used to throw away any animal parts. Animal bones weren't lying around on the ground. The caribou parts, bones or feet were never given to the dogs. They were hung on scaffolds that would be built about five feet high with sticks going across it so other small game could not get at the food. Kukumish (fish) were also well respected. We would take care of the bones and when this was finished then it would be time to move on to another camp.

"*If we ran out of food, we boiled the bearskin and ate it if we were hungry. Even the fish, we ate all of it including the intestines. I'm not lying, I'm talking about the things I know. Whenever we killed a caribou, we saved some of it for another day. We would wrap the bones in a bag and use it for the Mukushan.*" **Utshimaskueu, Utshimassiu elder.**

The elders in the camp were the bosses back then. They would give advice about how the food, the bones and the marrow were to be respected. There used to be a lot of elders in those days. They were the ones to decide how many caribou should be killed, so we wouldn't kill too many. The elder was the advice giver on what should be done during Mukushan. All the bones would be given to the elders to be crushed for the Mukushan. Nothing was wasted during the meal of the Mukushan. Usually older people ate first, and then younger people.

"*To prepare for the Mukushan, the meat must be scraped off the bones, the bones must be crushed. The marrow must be saved from the bones and mixed with the Mukushan. The bones are boiled with the fat, and the oil or grease must be taken out. The grease stays on the surface so it can be taken out by using a large spoon. Then you mix it with the marrow and let it freeze. According to Innu tradition, all this must be done very carefully as directed by an elder or the person in charge of the Mukushan. The caribou broth must be in a cool place, or cooled in the snow. When there is grease left over on it, it can be eaten as a mini Mukushan, but also should be handled carefully and should not be wasted.*" **Shuash, Utshimassiu man.**

When we don't take care of the animals or respect them, the animals spirits get angry with us and don't provide us with animals for our livelihood.

"*One time my father got an otter, but there was a man in the camp who was very angry and my father said it would be a long time before he would get another otter because the spirit was upset. It was a long time, years later when he got two otters; he said it was a gift from the animal spirit. Then we had a feast and looked after the bones and made sure no one in the camp got mad. And we shared it. When you kill an animal, you have to share it.*" **Epa, Utshimassiu woman.**

DREAMS AND DRUMMING

We have many sacred practises that we always used before to help us find a way to hunt. When we ran out of animals to eat, we always used Metusheun (shamanism). We had a spirit guiding our hunters. This spirit would help them know when to take their families in the country, how to take care of the animals and hang the bones in the trees. This spirit would be passed on from one person to another. The person who received this spirit would then be able to sing the songs and he would become a very good hunter. He would receive the knowledge he needed.

The spirits talk to us through our dreams to tell us what we will get by hunting. Spirits and givers send messages in our dreams. People have what you call shadows, they are part of you - the spirits that you have when you are dreaming. They go travelling, almost like ghosts.

"*A father could dream about a bag. In his dream if the child touched that bag, it meant it would be very hard for him to learn the skills. If the child took this seriously he would be able to learn all the skills being taught.*" **Mani Ann Selma, Sheshatshiu elder.**

Dreams also brought messages of spiritual powers. People had to dream first before they could beat the drum.

"*To play the drum, Innu have to dream about something and see in their dream an animal or something else in the country. It is very spiritual. There are different kinds of drums. There is a*

round-shaped one and a square square-shaped one." **Mishen, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"The drumming and singing is carried out by an elder. This is a way of giving Thanksgiving to the caribou spirit. It is also a way of celebrating a successful hunt. The person who beats the drum is an elder who is knowledgeable about the animals and their spirit world, or an elder who can sing a song to communicate with the caribou spirit. The songs that the elder will sing is according to what he sees through the drum or what he sees through his dreams. The songs are very important to an elder, and must be kept to himself until he is ready to give them away." **Shuash, Utshimassiu man.**

"It's important to sing and play the drum. For example, when people play drums and sing, they see a fire and if it's a small fire, it is not animals. If it is a big fire, it is probably animals. I didn't used to speak when people talked about the drum and dreams. Probably people think that I'm useless but to me, I feel that I'm old enough and I have something to offer. I'm good and I have something in my legs, I can walk distances." **Shushep Mallek, Sheshatshiu man.**

SWEAT LODGES AND SHAKING TENTS

Other sacred practises that we had were sweat lodges and shaking tents. There are many elders and adults in the community who have seen sweat lodges and shaking tents performed. When we used the shaking tent, there used to be a lot of wild animals that we could hunt to feed our families with. The Innu used sweat lodges and shaking tents for good reasons like hunting or medicine.

"One of the shamans was named Pien. I used to see him using the sweat lodge to dream. The elders would be able to tell young people where the animals were after using the sweat lodge. This is why I believe the elders, especially the women. I was raised in the country and followed the path of my elders." **Katinen Pastitshi, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"People would perform a sweat during a warm sunny day in the old days. Usually an elder who wanted to do a sweat would ask his grandchildren or young people and they would build it whenever he wanted to do a sweat. They would set it up inside the tent not like the ones they have today." **Kaniekutet, Utshimassiu elder.**

"We were listening to the elders this morning talking about the shaking tent, sweat lodge, living in tents. The sweat lodge would be used for medical reasons to cure illnesses. And we used to use the shaking tent to communicate with animal spirits. We would ask the animal spirits where we could get food. We also used the shaking tent to communicate with other Innu people who were in other areas of our land." **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu workshop.**

"If someone was doing the shaking tent, a leader could find out from the animals if they are unhappy about what is going on with the people, like now when the head or bones of a caribou are lying around. This person could see everything, what people are doing, everything you need to know about the animals, where to kill them, how much killing should be done, anything they needed to know. For example, I remember long ago a shaman used the shaking tent to help people get food, supplies and ammunition from Sheshatshit." **Mishen, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"I saw the shaking tent from my grandfather. He wanted me to go in there, but he said I was

young. In the shaking tent, you would be able to hear the voices but you wouldn't be able to make it out. Only certain people would be able to understand the language spoken in the shaking tent. When I was young, I used to be in the country and I didn't go to school. My grandfather used to teach me. He gave this knowledge to me. I don't want to be like an old person, and I cannot tell you everything. But I know this much; it is the old people who know. I used to help my grandfather a lot, and also listened to him a lot. I still use what I have learned from him, but some people seem to have forgotten or stopped using the traditions." **Shushep Mallek, Sheshatshiu man.**

THE CATHOLIC RELIGION

We practised our own religion, culture and traditions in the country in those days. But at the same time, some elders talk about how people were very religious then. The Catholic church was very important to us. For example, people stayed in nutshimit through the winter and there they celebrated Christmas. The camps that were close to each other, came together for prayers, Mukushan and a drum dance. Also some elders remember that people would pray for a person with a serious sickness or on special occasions. Sometimes when a person died, his body was taken back to Sheshatshit for burial.

LIFE WAS A LOT OF HARD WORK

"*I remember a time when my mother and my grandmother used the caribou skin to make a tent. I heard stories that people used bark for the tents as well. It's really unbelievable how people used to manage long ago. People used to hunt to survive. We never received anything from the government.* " **Mani An, Sheshatshiu Elder.**

We lived off the land in the old days. We were more attached to the land. We were kept busy and it was hard work. Everybody had to pitch in. But nobody had to depend on anybody. That was our livelihood. Some people say it was a very hard life, but others say this life in the country was easy and we were happier then. And some say that our way of life back then was both very good and hard at the same time.

Innu never stopped working in nutshimit. They were always on the move. It was hard to go a long way. People used to walk a lot to travel and everything was carried on a person's back. And they would put little children on top of bags on their backs. The women also carried a lot of the stuff, the necessities we needed when we migrated from one place to another. Women were strong then. And children started helping their families at a young age. Even the old people used to travel around. They would have their sons take them around. They used to be very good hunters as they were travelling. The son would be the provider for the elders, they would be hunting for them.

Travelling was really hard; you had to walk and walk. Sometimes people used canoes in the spring, summer and fall. In the winter we used toboggans, and later sometimes pulled by dog teams. When people were moving from one place to another, they would bring in the food and other materials first and then make a second trip to pick up their families (patshatua). When we were on the move, we would often leave early in the morning and go until dusk came. When we stayed in a camp, before the sun rose, the man would get up early in the morning and start his hunting and trapping to support his family.

"*We were never hungry because my father always hunted every day. He always left early in the*

morning and came back in the evening. My mother would always clean the animal that my father had killed. Sometimes he would stay overnight and come back to the camp the following day because it had gotten dark. So he would sleep overnight making himself a fire and keeping warm and come home the next day." **Iskuess Pastin, Sheshatshiu elder.**

Women and children would usually though not always stay behind at the camp where there was always a lot of work to be done as well. They would gather boughs for the floor of the tents. They would cut some wood and haul it to the camp. There was also water to be hauled and laundry to be done. Sometimes they would also do the hunting, snaring rabbits and setting nets for fishing. They would clean and take care of the meat, tan the hide, and make snowshoes and things like that.

"*Our father provided us food, and he taught us the ways of living in the bush. Since we didn't have any older brothers, our father felt the need for us to go trapping with him. It was hard work. We were very young when we started to learn. We travelled on snowshoes with my father looking for game. My mother would prepare the animals, clean them and cook. I used to go out with my mother putting the net out. My father used to go long ways and we would move camp if the kill was successful or if beaver was located at a pond, so we would be closer.*" **Mani Akat Ashini, Sheshatshiu elder.**

WE MADE OUR OWN TOOLS

Before the trapping season started, we would prepare the necessary tools that would be needed - for example, snowshoes, canoe or toboggan. Everything that we used was handmade. In those days, there was no money to bring us into country, to buy canoes for example, so we used to make our own. We never depended on handouts from governments. We used to make things with our own hands. We would cut down trees and make toboggans out of them. Canoes were made with birch bark. Sometimes people were stationed at Grand Lake, Hamilton River and Kenimish when they built their canoes. And while they were doing this, trout and salmon was caught and prepared at these places.

"*Back in the old days, people never used guns. People used to use a bow and arrow, and a spear to kill the animals. They would make a spear by carving the bones. Sometimes they would use the antlers to make the spear. They would make the spear look like a hook. They would also make fishing hooks out of the antlers. I remember seeing something like that when I was young. My uncle used to make them. I used to hear stories like sometimes when people were hunting in Mushuashipu, they stabbed the caribou to kill them to save the bullets that they had. They stabbed the caribou when they were going across the river or going across Mushuashipu. I remember seeing them make a trap for the caribou. They would get the caribou to go inside. Today the young people don't know how to do these things.*" **Nuk, Sheshatshiu Elder.**

There were no transmission or power lines. Still people were able to make a light to use in the tent. There was no box saw; people used to use only an axe.

WE USED TO EAT WELL

We used to eat good food - caribou, rabbit, partridge, porcupine, beaver, and so on. Sometimes when people went to the country, they used to take very little supplies. They didn't depend much on tea, flour and stuff like that. We would run out so the wild food was very important. We didn't mind

just eating wild foods.

Women used to make pimikuan (pemmican) by drying caribou meat or fish, then pound it and make it into a powder. We also survived on fresh fish, caribou, and eggs. But sometimes Innu would run out of food. The only source of food would be fish and the women would gather all kinds of things from the ground to eat.

WE MADE OUR OWN CLOTHES

Some elders say there wasn't proper clothing in the old days, and only half of their bodies were covered. There was not much clothing to wear. It was very cold. Everyone was short of clothing. Clothes were handmade then. People used to wear parkas that would be made from the caribou hide. We had seal skins boots instead of rubbers to use something waterproof on our feet. They would use the caribou skin for blankets too. Today now, the white people or governments sometimes ask us what did we used to cover up with for blanket? It was caribou skin that people used.

WE STARTED GETTING RELIEF

There was no Social Services before. Sometimes people would get relief from the priest. It was not long ago when we began to receive cheques from Social Services. We didn't depend so much on Social Services because there was always hunting going on. We were trapping and setting snares, supporting our families. Some elders remember when family allowances used to be $6 month and they used to get vouchers. In the old days, our first contacts with governments were through the priests.

"Back then people were given supplies by the priest. We were given clothing, guns and food. And whenever the people were hungry, they started to travel towards Davis Inlet where they waited for the priest to arrive. We were dependent so much on the priest because we were afraid of him. The government was also afraid of the priest. Once the priest arrived with all the money that the government gave him, I don't know where he got the money, the priest started to handle the supplies. Then people would travel back to the country." **Tshenish, Utshimassiu elder.**

WE WERE VERY HEALTHY

"The good thing about nutshimit in the old days is people always cared for themselves. We didn't always rely on white man's medicine. We had our own medicines." **Patinik, Utshimassiu man.**

People were hardly ever sick in the old days because we ate good food. Another reason that we were not sick is because there was never drinking going on in those days like there is today. As well, all our families used to be in the country all the time; we were very strong in nutshimit because we were physically active. We used to travel always on foot, with the canoe or toboggan. We did a lot of hard work. The only time people rested was on Sunday.

Our elders say that our medicines were easily available if we got sick in the old days. We used materials from different leaves, branches and sap from different trees. We would gather these things from the ground before it was frozen. We also got our medicines from wild herbs and so on. Some of us remember being cured with nutshimit ntukun (medicine) used by our elders.

"I was born in the country, but my brother and my sister were born in Davis Inlet. The rest of us were born in the country. We were always in the country, and we were never sick at all because of the animal food we ate. We were very healthy people. We always had enough food even though butter wasn't enough. I remember sometimes my husband wasn't feeling well but he would still be hunting and trapping even though he wasn't feeling well. My children were never sick when I was in the country and I was never sick either." **Nuisha Penuen, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"There were no pills back then, but we didn't get sick frequently. People were always on the move although the flu was around. We treated that with the broth of brush branches boiled in water." **Mani Matinen, Sheshatshiu elder.**

BORN IN NUTSHIMIT

The lives of our children in those days was very different than it is today. First of all, children were born in nutshimit then. When the woman was in labour, they had their own way of doing it. It was hard work for the women to deliver the babies. Many of us living in the community now were born in the country. Sometimes, the elders were the midwives back then. Also, it was the elders who would give the child's name to the parents.

"My mother had her baby in the country - my brother. My aunt, my cousin and grandma and their friend were the midwives. We couldn't come back to the community; the ice was just breaking up, so my mother had my brother in the country. I always wanted my brother to have an Innu name. It was so beautiful to see my brother born out in the country. I was born in a tent in old Davis. It would have been nice if I had been in the country too. I used to go to her and talk to her about it and wanted to know more about my birth. It was other women from the community that helped my mother with me too." **Epa, Utshimassiu woman.**

GROWING UP IN NUTSHIMIT

Many people have very good memories of what it was like when they were small and Innu people were always in nutshimit. Parents and children used to be very close at one time. They were always doing things together.

"I'm 37 years old, but I spent 16 years of my life in the country with my parents. I remember the independence that Innu people used to have from any agencies, and how happy they were. What I like about my experience growing up was the joy, togetherness, and unity people had, the support people had for one another. People were happy. Our families were always together. The Pinashue family travelled together. We took our grandparents along with us. Our father helped our grandfather carry things back and forth. These were the best years of my life." **Kanikuen Pinashue, Sheshatshiu man.**

"We always had good times in nutshimit in the old days. It was very good. I never spent time in the community. I was always in nutshimit with my grandmother Manishan. The last time we went to the country with my parents, my father was very old and I had to take the lead and control our dog sled. I didn't spend much time with my parents; I often stayed with my grandparents. Everything we learned about the culture was from our grandparents, not from our mother because our mother was always sick. Every time we were in the country, our grandfather would tell us legends just to keep us from going on visits." **Shanut, Utshimassiu woman.**

"My parents were never mad at each other. The family was happy. My grandmother was really healthy; she could walk a long way. Sometimes we would have to pull her on the toboggan. Sometimes me and my sisters would walk with my grandmother. My parents would walk ahead and put the camp up. I used to like moving the camp around. Walking was really good. When my father hunted and brought food for us all to eat, that was a good thing. I liked seeing the land, and when you would see the caribou coming, it was so beautiful. And we would have to carry the caribou back to the camp. This was healthy work." **Epa, Utshimassiu woman.**

There was more discipline in those days. Parents and children used to behave differently. Sometimes children would feel like their parents or elders were trying to run their lives, but they would still listen to them.

"When I was young, my parents never treated me like parents treat children today. When children get abusive, they don't recognize or understand their parents. I always listened to my parents. I used to help my parents. I was very supportive of the people. When I was being mischievous, I was told by my parents not to get bad when they would see me trying to do something. My parents never treated me like parents today. My parents were always there when I had a hard time. I would just listen to them." **Kaniekutet, Utshimassiu elder.**

"During my young days, we used to listen to our mother, and not make fun of someone. We always used to listen to what my mother said. I always treated people with respect and I always worked for my grandparents like getting water and wood." **Tshenish and Meneskuesh, Elders at Utshimassiu school workshop.**

NOT MUCH DRINKING BACK THEN

One of the reasons that families were so happy is that there wasn't much drinking back then. Some elders say they never saw drinking at all. Others say there was some alcohol, but not like we see today. You didn't see people staggering. They knew when to stop and they didn't get involved in trouble. One thing for sure was that when people went to the country in those days, they weren't allowed to sell or take any alcohol.

"Although there were people drinking, but not like today, we still listened to the people when they were drinking because they weren't violent or anything. I remember as a child, we had a lot of fun. Mostly I listened to my parents and supported the people." **Kaniekutet, Utshimassiu elder.**

CHILDREN WORKED AND LEARNED

"There was always work to do for children. We were taught to make snowshoes, toboggans. There were a lot of things that we had to do when I was a child. I was told once that if I didn't make something, like snowshoes or how to set up a tent, I would never be in nutshimit and would not know how to survive. That's what my parents told me. Now I know I gained a lot of experience about how to survive in nutshimit. I know if you don't have skills, you will never use the land. I did many things in nutshimit that my father taught me. I still have those skills." **Kaniekutet, Utshimassiu elder.**

"It was really a lot of work, but it was really nice at the same time. In those days, there was no junk

food like candy and stuff. All we ate was wild meats and berries. I would learn stuff from my mother and grandmother; sewing and making moccasins, making socks. They would give us stuff to practise. Also we learned how to cut up the caribou and clean the skins." **Epa, Utshimassiu woman.**

When our elders were children, they were never inside a school. They never went to school or learned from the books. They only learned to be in the country. Elders and parents were always the teachers showing children their way of life and how to survive in nutshimit. That's what used to happen before. There was a lot of teaching that went on, different stages of learning how to do things. The boys used to listen to their father. The girls used to listen to their mothers. Older opinions were more respected. Young people listened to their elders and that is how they understood many things better.

"When I was young, I was taught everything about our traditional skills and to respect the elders. You have to respect your family, your parents. Your parents will tell you what to do, what skills to learn, and what are the things you must learn. As you grow up these are the things you will have learned when your parents are gone. And these skills will be passed on. I was taught a lot of skills in the camp even if I didn't have a mother then. I was an orphan at a very young age. But even then, the one who looked after me taught me the skills. I hold onto these skills today." **Mani Matinen, Sheshatshiu elder.**

The boys were taught how to trap and hunt in the country, how to build canoes. The girls were taught how to sew, how to clean and tan the animals skins, how to cook, how to fill snowshoes and make moccasins. Mothers used to help their daughters a lot. Boys and girls learned by observing parents and elders doing these things. Then they would copy them, what they did or said. Then they learned by doing things themselves and seeing what happened.

"In the old days, young people respected their parents. Boys would go with their fathers looking for game. Usually they would kill partridge, porcupine or fish. Daughters used to help their mothers to get wood, water and boughs. They always helped their mothers clean the animals." **Pinip Mishen, Sheshatshiu man.**

"There was moccasin-making, and how to make snowshoes. When a child was taught how to make things, they usually picked it up easily when she or he listened. We used to learn how to prepare for the Mukushan and how to respect nature. In nutshimit, we respected the water habitat, the fish. We always respected the animals. We would listen and learn. You are all grown up now and you should be listening by now. I am sure you would like it in nutshimit." **Meneshkuesh and Tshenish, Elders at Utshimassiu school workshop.**

FUN AND GAMES

Our lives as kids was not all work and learning survival in the old days. There was also a lot of play time.

"We used play all kinds of games when we were children. We used to go canoeing, swinging and skating. In the wintertime, it's more fun than in the summer because you can go sliding and skating. The land was beautiful. We ate healthy food. In the summertime, we picked berries."

Tshenish and Meneshkuesh, Elders at Utshimassiu school workshop.

"My father would make a toy for us to play with, a bow and arrow for hunting and to get some partridges. We also had a toboggan that our father made for us to slide down hills. Everybody was there sliding until evening. It was pretty fun. We always had something to play with like my father would build skates for us. We skated on the ice. We used to play ball. These things would keep us going without getting bored or just sitting around. We always had something to do." **Kaniekutet, Utshimassiu elder.**

GETTING MARRIED

When someone was getting married in the old days, the family would give advice about this. Both people could not get married without the approval of both their parents. All the parents had to give their consent. Now that has changed. The child has their own mind and doesn't care about his parent's advice. In the old days, all the girls had to know the traditional skills before she could get married. Now elders say the young people want to be on their own. They don't care about what their parents say.

"One white man wanted to marry me but both my parents didn't approve. They said I should marry an Innu person who knew the skills, who would understand me and could take care of me. In the old days, the children respected their parents very much. Today, some of the elders don't like to see the common-law relationships. Some of these are long-term and the elders think they could get married. That never happened before." **Mani Matinen, Sheshatshiu elder.**

WE HELPED EACH OTHER A LOT

People used to look after each other in the old days. There was a lot of sharing. We saw a lot of people cooperating. People worked together and helped each other. We were in control. We did things the way we saw they should be done. We made our own things and we got the food we wanted. The elders say everything was shared. Someone who didn't have the skills to make snowshoes would be assisted by the next person who knew how to do it. That was sharing. If someone had a poor season and ran out of food, he was given a supply of food. If a person was disadvantaged, we would share our food with his family.

"One elder did everything for the people. He was a craftsman. He made snowshoes for them, canoes and shovels. He fixed things for people. That is how much people used to help each other. We used to work together and help each other. My grandfather would make a canoe and other men would help him. Now that is gone today." **Spastiesh and Pinamen, Sheshatshiu elders.**

Sometimes people would make something like a stove or snowshoes for someone else. You didn't have to pay anybody. They would do it free and help each other out. It is true that long ago people used to respect each other and the wild animals, the bones. They did a lot of sharing with each other. They shared what they killed. Families had many children and people had to help each other.

We also looked after our elders. They were well respected. Middle-aged people or other people would pick up the supplies for them when they needed them. Elders were given food. Young people used to work with the elders and they wouldn't have to pay them. People used to visit each other a

lot more in their tents in the old days. Now unless someone wants something, that is the only time people visit each other. People used to visit each other just to talk in the country.
"*People used to set up their tents together. They were able to communicate with each other very well. There was never any arguments or gossip against each other or prejudices.*" **Mishen, Sheshatshiu elder.**

THE BAD TIMES

Most people only talk about the good things about life in the old days. But some people say there were happy times and bad times as well. And a few say things were too hard before we began to get outside services.

"*The bad thing about the old days in nutshimit is that there were no doctors or teachers. Only the priest was there to do all the teachings.*" **Mistamaniai, Utshimassiu woman.**

A number of people talk about the old days as if there were no problems, and all the problems we have now are new in our lives. But a few people say that there were problems before we were settled in the community.

"*There were no problems in nutshimit back then. Today we have many problems and difficulties. Back then people were always in nutshimit and they didn't have problems.*" **Manish Tshakapesh, Utshimassiu elder.**

"*In the old days, everybody was in nutshimit and everything was fine, except for starvation. The food would run out and that is where the problems started.*" **Ueniam, Utshimassiu elder.**

"*Some people say that long ago there were no social problems. But I asked my mother whether this was true. She explained that she couldn't remember being happy or seeing Innu happy all the time. She saw children physically abused by their parents or adopted parents. She said there were times when people wouldn't give their children something to eat because they were afraid they would run out of food. Or sometimes they didn't want them to eat because children weren't being nice or didn't do the things they were told to do.*" **Mashen, Sheshatshiu man.**

Many people say the only problem they had in the old days was when people couldn't find food. Sometimes there was no game and people were hungry. The Innu people were very poor in those days. Sometimes people would almost starve to death in the country. Some people used to drink only water. Sometimes it was really hard to hunt because the weather was really bad. But eventually elders say we always found food. Sometimes we had difficulties trying to get supplies.

"*Whenever we were in the country, a lot of people would get weak because of starvation because of lack of food. It was very hard for people to be in the country in those days and it was very cold.*" **Utshimaskueu, Utshimassiu elder.**

"*Back then the problem was starvation. Only our fathers did the hunting to keep us alive. Our mothers kept us warm. My brother was there when starvation took place. I think that was the only part that was not good in the old days. People who lived in old Davis Inlet and around the coast*

were hungry. My mother told me about the starvation. She told me true stories. She witnessed the starvation. There were people everywhere. Some would be put on the sled and people would try to haul them to the camp, but they would die along the way. Some would make it to the coast to get supplies. The Hudson's Bay Company and the government were responsible for the hunger and starvation of the people. We would be trapping for furs instead of getting food. People would pay for supplies from Hudson's Bay with their furs." **Meneshkuesh, Utshimassiu elder.**

Some people say that there were also times when people did not get along, and there wasn't always sharing going on. People don't really understand why this happened. When an Innu family ran out of food, they would expect to be served from other Innu, but this didn't always happen. Or sometimes another problem was when a person knew how to make things in the country, like snowshoes or frames, and the people who didn't know how to make these things would be left out. The person who knew how to do it would not do it for other people. This is what some people say, that the Innu weren't always sharing or teaching each other.

"*I had a really bad experience a long time ago with a lot of families in one camp. I was 17 years old. My father was looking for something to eat; he went hunting and he didn't get anything. He didn't have any luck. There were families with us that had a lot of food and didn't bother to give us any. My father had to go to another camp to look for food for us. My father said to these people that his children must be starving to death now since he left them behind. I have heard of other stories from other Innu here who had the same experience. I'm not lying when I say these things. My husband has gone through this same experience. That was the way people were; they didn't like to share all the time. There was no tensions that we knew about. They would give their relatives stuff on the sly, when we weren't watching.*" **Sheshatshiu woman.**

FROM TENTS TO HOUSES

Some elders say it was hard to live in canvas tents. Everyone used these tents. Then people started building cabins in Sheshatshit and old Davis Inlet like the ones they have today in Nutuaiashish (Sango Bay). Some families had their camps in the country. Then church and government began putting a lot of pressure on people to move. When some people heard that houses would be given out in villages, they said yes. Others were not given a choice.

"*I know a lot of things myself, things you young people don't know. I could sit here and tell you about it all day. This knowledge is important to the Innu. The most important thing is to beat the drum and sing, as well as the dreams.*" **Nuk Nui, Sheshatshiu elder.**

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

"*The Innu spirituality is a religion which is accepted by our people. It is not as a church, but an inherited right. It is a privilege to be aware of our spirituality. I am proud of it.*" **Mani Pone, Sheshatshiu elder.**

Our spirituality has been around for many centuries, but the Catholic Church has been in the lives of the Innu for a long time as well, for 300 or more years. Our first contacts with the white man were with the Catholic Church. Many of us don't know a lot about this history. Some of us have heard stories from our elders, but some of our elders don't talk about this history. It is only now that some of these stories are coming to light. Some of us don't know whether to believe them. We have seen many changes in the church over the last thirty years and there are many different opinions about the church. Some of us are afraid to talk about the church.

"*The priest used to come to Sheshatshit. I remember people would kneel on the beach while they were waiting for the coming of the priest. The Innu had a lot of respect for the priest then.*" **Shimiu Rich, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"*The church had too much power over our lives.*" **Tshanis Rich, Sheshatshiu man.**

"*The church tried their best here but they made a lot of mistakes. I don't think they knew what they were doing. Because of their lack of understanding, they were handicapped and made some serious mistakes. Their teachings were very frightening to a lot of people. And this fear is very alive here today especially for a lot of the elders.*" **Nush, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"*I am afraid of hearing the priest talked about. What do you think of the priest? I think my father still believes in the priest.*" **Antaness P., Sheshatshiu man.**

"*I am a young person. I used to be afraid of everything. I used to be frightened of material things. But now I believe in the Innu religion. I believe that the Innu religion should have been left alone. The church had no business in giving their religion on the Innu and enforcing their doctrines on us.*" **Shamanis A., Sheshatshiu.**

THE CHURCH TOOK CONTROL

Many of us believe that the Catholic Church changed our lives more than any other institution. In this research project, when people were asked about how the different institutions had changed our lives, it was the church that people talked about the most. The church took control of our lives and many say it ruined our culture. The priest became our Innu chief a long time ago. He was the spokesman. We had to do what priests told us because we were afraid of this institution. They were the architects before our people became educated. If they told us to do something, we would listen. They chose what they thought would be best for us. The Church and its missionaries greatly influenced the assimilation of the Innu.

"*The church ruled our people; they were superior. Priests were very strict and people were afraid of them.*" **Kanikuen Pone, Sheshatshiu.**

THE PAST HELPS US UNDERSTAND TODAY

"I think a lot about the many social problems we have here in Sheshatshit and throughout our Innu communities. There are stories about how people are drinking more and attempting to commit suicide. That's what we hear about all the time. I think the only way we can know what is happening to us or why we have these problems, is to look into the past and find out what our people went through and what the non-Innu have done to us.

I think the Innu were hurt a lot by the infringement of the church on our lives. I think a lot of elders know more about what the church has done. We should not think our elders experienced a good life. Things were difficult back then when people lived in the country. The priest and white missionaries have been working with the Innu people for a long time. The priest was involved with the Innu in the Uashat area over 300 years ago. Some Innu might think things were not that bad for the Innu while we were still living in the country. I have stories from elders who had bad experiences with the church and are not willing to be open about it. I wonder at times what is causing them to be like that? Why are they afraid?" **Aputet, CJIK Radio Call-in show, Sheshatshit.**

"Some people here say the old days were always good, but it's not true. People don't want to talk about it. I have spoken to some people about these kinds of things, people themselves who have had these experiences. I tell them they should open up and talk about these things." **Mani Aten P., Sheshatshiu woman.**

Some of us have been reading books that have information on the first contacts of the Innu with the Catholic missionaries. Aputet talked about some of this history on CJIK, Sheshatshiu's community radio station on a phone-in program on Sunday, October 24th. One book Aputet and others have read was put together by Jim Roche for the Innu Nation. The book is made up of writings by Jesuit missionaries and their contacts with First Nations on this continent long ago. Jim read through 71 books called **Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents**, edited by R.G. Thwaites, and pulled out the things that were written about the Innu and Jesuit missionaries. Another book that Aputet read about Innu history with the church is **Conflicts of European and Eastern Algonquin Cultures**, written by Alfred Goldsworthy Bailey. Some of the stories in these books come from Innu elders and were written down. A lot of the information in this chapter comes from Aputet's radio talk.

The stories in these books that Aputet talked about on the radio tell of the many different ways that the church influenced our lives. Some of our behaviours really changed after we came into contact with the white man, priests and French people. When these people first started to reform the Innu, they decided what was best for us. The priests and non-Innu said, "We should show these people how to be civilized and we should also try hard to have them adopt our customs and way of thinking." And they further said: "We should teach their kids our ways and try to integrate them into our non-Innu society."

ASSAULTS ON OUR SPIRITUALITY

"One of the main causes for the Innu practising their culture less is the church. They stopped us from practising our traditional beliefs, our sweat lodges and shaking tents. The R.C. Church is not our religion. The white missionary came to us and taught us this religion. We learned from them. It was Metusheun that the first people used as their religion. The missionaries used to see it and they

didn't like what they saw. That's why they taught their religion." **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu community workshop.**

"As we saw in ***Gathering Voices****, the priest played a major role in destroying the traditions of Innu people - by taking the drum away, by saying sweat lodges and the shaking tent were evil, that their god is better than the ones we worshipped."* **Kiti, Utshimassits.**

"Some of our elders tell stories about how the priests stopped us from practising Metusheun. One story of ill-treatment by the priest happened to the grandfather of one elder. Traditionally, Innu hunters, out of respect to the animals killed, hung bones on the tree as a sign of respect for the animals. This priest came to the camp of this Innu one time, removed the bones from the trees and threw them on the ground. He removed the bones sacred to the Innu and scattered them all over the ground. He told the Innu hunter he was practising witchcraft and doing demonic rituals which were totally against the church. I often wonder what Innu elders and hunters thought of the actions of the priest. What this Innu had learned over the years as a hunter and to be humiliated by this priest may have caused undue hardship on this Innu elder.

Elders talk about going to Uashat in the old days to get supplies and they would encounter the priest over there. They would then pass the stories they heard from the priest to their people in nutshimit. The priest told them about god and the devil, and this must have caused uneasiness. After word of this information spread throughout nutshimit, it caused problems and fear of this unexplained third party (God). This caused many Innu hunters to delay their hunting expeditions and stay in the camp. But there were still some Innu who did not experience problems because they did not come in contact with the priest or get news of what was occurring in other camps." **Aputet, CJIK Radio call-in program.**

"Missionaries tried to force the people to believe in their church. They told the Innu to stop practising the shaking tent, to stop working with the devil. The church and its missionaries have destroyed us. The Innu lost touch with our own religion, and we began to believe the priest and his teachings." **Group discussion at community workshop.**

One person said that the priest didn't mind kuashapatshikan (the shaking tent), unless you killed someone or abused the power. But most people say priests used to tell people that our shaking tent was not religion. We were told by the priest that whoever performed the shaking tent was the devil. Then the Innu were afraid of their own people. A person who had experience with the shaking tent was forced to live by himself. This is the kind of treatment our shaman received from the priest at the time.

"I don't think it was right for the priest to tell the Innu to stop them from practising their spirituality. It was right for us to use these things. The Innu used the shaking tent to find food and where the good hunting would be. I heard Father Pearson, he told me himself, that the rituals like the shaking tent, this was not God's work. It was the devil's way - evil magic; it was the devil being talked to in the shaking tent. And he said this to other Innu all the time." **Mani Aten P., Sheshatshiu woman.**

"I don't want to criticize the church. I want to say outright that every religion is good as long as

you believe in it. But I think what happened with the Innu spirituality was not right; it should never have been criticized. When the churches got here they criticized our beliefs, the powers we had. These should have been respected as another religion, rather than seen as an evil thing. This changed us because the power the R.C. Church had was unexplainable. They were so good at what they were doing and damaged the credibility of our own practises which were very special - our religion, the spirituality we had in relation to the animals. It's hard to explain, because we are talking about another world, about powers that you gained from hunting. How could they say this religion was evil, it existed thousands of years, far longer than the R.C. religion." **Kanikuen, Sheshatshiu man.**

The church became involved in Innu beliefs in animal spirits and the way the Innu communicated with these spirits in the country. The priests expressed concerns about the dreams of the elders and hunters. The priests told us our dreams were from hell and a sign from the devil himself.

The elders were upset over this. They must have felt powerless to do anything. We could not challenge the authority of the priest because our elders had a lot of respect for him. We felt powerless to do something about the priest because we were afraid it would cause the priest to infringe his anger on someone else. Elders' frustrations led to bitter confrontations between families and the split in family life erupted. People were travelling all over this land and their routes took them across to Quebec communities. After meeting with converted Innu, they brought news of this religion to other Innu in nutshimit.

"The church is responsible for the total destruction of Innu religion practised by our elders. In the past, the Innu tried to commit suicide while drinking. This doesn't just happen today. But before the priest came, the Innu had a lot of respect for his life. He wanted to live. This was probably a sign of things to come. He was slowly losing his way and afraid of the changes. This is why I say today there is something very wrong here. Innu never acted aggressively toward each other before. Now, families are experiencing problems and losing control." **Aputet, CJIK Radio Call-in program.**

"I feel that the church and other institutions have changed the Innu. They have ruined everything which our people were once proud of. They have made us feel ashamed of our own culture and history. Now they want us to think like them. Kuashapatshikan (the shaking tent, our religion) has been demolished. The church has abused our people. The R.C. Church put their religion in front of us like they were saying "Be a Catholic, it is better than Kuashapatshikan." This began creating a lot of divisions amongst us. The morale of the people became affected when we were put down by this institution. How would they feel if we said that to another denomination? It isn't a very good feeling." **Manimat, Sheshatshiu woman.**

OUR BEHAVIOURS CHANGED

Innu people began treating each other differently after contact with the missionaries. For example, punishment for having sinned in God's eyes was introduced in our lives. In the books are stories of priests inflicting pain on themselves by openly striking themselves on the back. A branch or a limb of a tree was used by the priest to punish himself for doing something wrong.

"Some people may have seen a movie concerning a priest's entrance into an Aboriginal community. He was trying to convert them into Christians. In the movie, the priest witnessed his

comrade participating in behaviour he thought was unacceptable and sinful. After the priest saw this behaviour, he went and knelt down and started to strike himself on the back chanting religious references to his god. The story in the movie is true. The priests used to do these things to themselves when they felt they had done an injustice to their god. They used ropes to strike their back repeatedly. When the Innu became converted to Christianity, they eventually adopted the doctrines and the priests' inflictions of self-punishment by striking themselves on the back. This is where the Innu began punishing himself for wrongful deeds considered inappropriate by the church. This caused a change of attitude in the Innu towards his own people and punishing them as well." **Aputet, CJIK Radio Call-in show.**

WE LEARNED TO HIT OUR KIDS

The stories written in these books show how the church also changed the ways we treated our kids. These things happened long ago and continued to happen after we were settled in communities.

"*There are statements from our elders documented in books that our people never struck or threatened to strike their kids when they were mischievous before we first made contact with the white man. Striking or punishing kids was first introduced by the non-Innu people and Innu eventually adopted these actions towards kids. I became aware of these behaviours from actual statements in books of Innu who believed that this kind of behaviour started when we made first contact with the missionaries and priests.*

I will tell you a story about this one Innu. His son used to play with the son of a French merchant. While the children were playing together, the French kid accidently struck his small Innu friend. The French man said to the father of the Innu child, "I will punish my kid for hurting your child." When the Innu realized what was happening and saw the French man about to strike his son, the Innu became perplexed. He said to the French man, "Don't hit your son, hit me instead. He told him that a child does not know what is right or wrong, what the child had done was an accident and he had not intended to do it. A child does not know many things yet. He does not have the mental reasoning to help him realize what he has done.

Our people never disciplined or enforced harsh punishments to our children for misbehaviour before this. Innu people used to know what to do with their kids when they misbehaved. But when the priests and nuns first taught the Innu children, they were very strict and enforced discipline when the Innu children misbehaved. That was the beginning of the Innu change of behaviour in disciplining their kids and punishing them for prankish behaviour." **Aputet, CJIK Radio Call-in Show.**

"*One time when I was small, I went to church in Sheshatshit. I was very young. Father Pearson struck me because he was upset seeing a drunk person inside his church. My mother asked Father Pearson why he was hitting me, her daughter. He struck me in the face and made my nose bleed. My mother told the priest not to worry about it. I was very confused about what had just happened. My mother forgave the priest when he was very abusive towards me.*" **Sheshatshiu woman.**

"*Sometimes priests would hit children in school and the parents would argue with him because of it. The children were really afraid of him. Sometimes the parents were arguing with him: "Why are you doing this to the children? Why are you not teaching the children about religion? Why are you*

abusing them instead?" The children would be scared to back to the school after that. Father Joseph and Father Pearson were the worst priests. This priest would go around in the night, keeping an eye on the children going around in the night. If he met them on the road, he would hit them. He would say it wasn't right what the children were doing.

There were children who weren't fed enough and who didn't have good clothes in the old days. Adopted children were not treated well and abused. I remember and I saw it. People always talk about the good old days, but these things happened. I find it very difficult to understand that some of the people who were abused are middle-aged now, and are helping the people who were abusing them. An adopted child or orphan would be given a lot of work to do. These parents weren't giving their own children hard work to do. I really feel hurt when I talk about this kind of stuff." **Mani Aten Pinashue, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"I remember the time when Father Pearson abused me physically. The church is responsible for the Innu losing our customs and traditions. Father Pearson did not treat me too kindly. He used to beat me bad when I was going to school. This happened on many occasions." **Napess Pone, Sheshatshiu man.**

WE BEGAN TO FIGHT EACH OTHER

The punishments did not end with themselves and children. Innu who were converted also started lashing out against other Innu as well. Many of us believe we stopped interacting with each other as we had in the past. We were taught to have no regard for our own people and to not treat them kindly. Converted Innu probably believed that the priests' kind of life was worth it. They thought they would go to hell if they continued to practise the Innu way of life. It must have caused them great distress and eventually overtook them. They might not have had the strength to resist. We began to turn against each other. Believers were on one side and non-believers on the other. This caused people undue stress, and they began to act irrationally. They lashed out at everyone in their way. They must have not revealed what was bothering them and suffered a lot.

Converted Innu began to harass their own people and assist the priest. Innu who were converted in the earliest stages used to make fun of our way of life. Today in our communities, there is so much conflict and people are unable to openly discuss our way of life. People are too embarrassed to talk about our traditional way of life. Some young people wish the elders would talk more about these stories. They think that what the church did was wrong. They have heard some testimonies about what the priests used to do.

"I have heard instances when Innu lashed out against each other and treated themselves with the utmost disrespect for one another while in the country. They began to think it was okay to punish other Innu for the alleged sins they had committed against god. They ridiculed their own people and chastised them for not being involved in the church. They thought it was quite all right to do that because the non-converted Innu did not believe in the church's teachings. Some Innu were abused by their neighbours, beaten up for no reason. I don't doubt these allegations because the priest encouraged our people to hate one another by separating them with his message from god. Some stories have not been revealed and some people feel it is in the past and should be left alone. They probably blame one another for this sudden change in behaviour. It is the priest who was to blame, not the Innu. But when I think of the past and what our people have done to one another, it

boggles my mind." **Aputet, CJIK Radio Call-in program.**

MORE PRESSURES TO CHANGE US

The church was also involved in other ways to try to convert the Innu. It used to ship donated clothes from the outside and give them to the Innu to wear. People started wearing them and eventually wore them on a frequent basis. The people with the clothes used to make fun of their people who came out of the country still wearing caribou skins and moccasins for clothing. The converted Innu compared their clothes to their own people. The non-converted Innu were more enticed to the church after their exposure to this new way of dressing.

In the books, they also talk about how this is around the time when the Innu contracted diseases foreign to them, that they had never seen before. It is believed that these diseases were in the clothes and eventually transmitted to us by wearing them. Eventually a lot of Innu died as a result of contracting diseases from the clothes. The priest used this predicament of the Innu against them. He told them it was a sign from god for not being converted into Christians. It was their punishment. A lot of Innu were frightened by the priest's statements and decided to believe in the church. They thought the priest was telling the truth and were finally converted. They probably did not know the disease came from the contaminated clothes. The clothes probably came from deceased and patients from the outside.

"In the old days, there wasn't any sickness. People were healthy back then. And when people travelled to Davis Inlet to pick up supplies, they usually brought back sickness with them." **Meneshkuesh, Utshimassiu elder.**

"As time went by, some Innu recovered from the diseases. Some survived. We got used to wearing non-Innu clothing after some Innu made fun of their own people wearing caribou skins for clothes. They embarrassed their own people for wearing outdated clothing. This is also an indication of non-Innu and missionaries misleading the Innu and encouraging them to be converted Innu, drawing them away from their own people." **Aputet, CJIK Radio Call-in program.**

THE PRIEST TOLD US TO SETTLE

There were other actions by converted Innu that assisted the priest's imposition of his religious doctrines on other Innu. They repeated the messages of the priests, that our way of life for so many centuries came from the devil. It was not acceptable to the church for the Innu to be living so uncivilized. The priests began to work on making us settle in communities. Although a few elders say they are not aware that we were forced to live in these villages, a number of elders tell stories about how the priest pressured us to stay in one place.

"The priest would come to visit us where we were camped. He would ask the families to come and reside in the community. The priest would do this with other people living in the country. My mother says that the priest got really angry because there was no one living in the community. The Innu people were afraid of the priest. He controlled them and told them what to do. He christianized them. The Innu would still be living in the country if it wasn't for the priest, and people would still be living their spiritual beliefs if there weren't white people around. The church was always filled up because the priest controlled the people. I never liked the priest telling us what to do and other people as well." **Iskuess Pasteen, Sheshatshiu woman.**

The priest told us that there would be new houses built for people who had children, and that if we got new houses, we should not go to the country. Many of us feel that we were forced to stay in the community and have our children attend school organized by the priest. The missionaries told people if their children didn't go to school, they wouldn't receive their family allowances. Kids were sent to school where we could not have any influence on our own kids. Innu were told if they went to the country, the children wouldn't learn anything about God or being Catholic. The priest would tell people they were saints if they stayed in the community. They would be models for other people. The church was pressuring us to prevent us from going to nutshimit. There was a price to pay for this.

"The church brought the school to us. I think I lost many Innu customs because my father never had time to teach me. My parents were mostly concerned about putting us in school. My parents had a lot of respect for the priest and the priest was law. I recall one time, we came back from the country and the priest who was Father Pearson immediately came to our tent and asked why we were not in school. I think my parents made the decision then to stay in the community. I think the church had an overpowering effect on my people. It had too much power." **Muiss, Sheshatshiu man.**

"Nowadays, the young Innu is not appreciative of his life as an Innu and doesn't want anything to do with it. This is exactly what the priest wanted. He wanted very much for our young Innu children to turn away from their life." **Aputet, CJIK Radio Call-in show.**

All these things prevented the majority of our people from going back into the interior of our land to hunt for food. But a few families continued to go. They didn't listen to the priest and took their children to the country all the time. In those days, people used to pay their own way into the country from the savings that they had. They would use planes to go out to the country and walk back.

OTHER FORMS OF CHURCH CONTROL

After we were settled in communities, there were new kinds of pressures put on us to change our way of life. The priest would force people to go to church. He was very strict and would even pre-arrange marriages. He would tell the parents to not allow young people to be together that long before they were married. He wanted them to get married right away. This also happened when we were still living in nutshimit. This priest also didn't like social events like dances in the night.

The priest wanted us to stop practising some of our Innu medicines. He told us they were not good. For example, when a person was faint or had a fever, we would use a needle to pierce the vein in the arm, on the side of the leg, or on the foot. This would draw blood. The priest said this was not good, that this was the blood of Jesus on the cross. You're not supposed to show your blood; it was a sign of God.

The priest created more problems between us because he had his chosen people in the villages.

"I remember when the priest here used to favour Innu who didn't drink. This created anger and jealousy towards other Innu. People began to judge one another and this created a lot of problems. He did not pay attention to people who drank, people would feel bad about themselves. They

actually believed that they were bad because of what the priest was doing to them. People began to judge one another. According to the bible, Jesus came on earth for everybody, not just the people who don't drink." **Nush, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"The priest would almost kill a drunk person because he really hated drunk people. He would beat them up with a long stick." **Mani Aten P., Sheshatshiu woman.**

The priest even picked our leaders for us so he could have more control. In Utshimassits, people talk about how the priest picked the first chiefs. In other Innu communities, the priest got involved in the Band Council.

"In the south of Nitassinan, when the Innu were fully integrated into the church and accepted the church as their own, a Band Council was formed. But this newly-formed Band Council was not formed to work on the administration, housing, outpost program like they do now. This Band Council worked on the Church's religious message to the people and anything to do with the church's work. The only people on the Band Council were the Christian Innu, and the other Innu who did not accept this religion were not elected to the Band Council.

The other Innu who were away in the country hunting and trapping, away from the church, probably did not want anything to do with the Council, and did not know what converted people were saying about them. Only people who were really converted ran for Band Council and the priest gave them authority and total control. He advised them to run. The responsibility of this band council was to keep every Innu in line and try to help the priest convert their own people into the church. If one Innu did commit a sin, this Band Council was responsible for punishing the Innu. He was beaten with a rope on the back. In the past, the Innu never inflicted physical abuse on each other or struck one another. These stories are from the past and not from today.

Here in Sheshatshit, the priest ran the elections, and made sure his people won. The church did the same thing to other peoples like the Grand Council of Micmacs." **Aputet, CJIK Radio Call-in program.**

NOT EVERYONE IS AGAINST THE CHURCH

Many people phoned in after Aputet's statement to say they agreed with what he said and to tell their own stories about how they saw these things happen in their lives. Others came into the radio station in person to tell their stories because they didn't want to talk about them in public on the radio. To respect confidentiality, these are not included here. A few people called to say they didn't agree with the information or they wanted to know more about where this information came from.

"I agree wholeheartedly with Aputet's statement and his analysis of the impact of the church on our people. This is also my perception of what the church has done to us." **Muiss Pinashue, Sheshatshiu man.**

"I was aware of the problems with the church. I don't feel comfortable sharing or talking about something that happened to me in public. I am not worried about the church. It has never provided a service to the Innu, but only helped create problems for us. I feel the elders were left alone by the church. I remember what the church did to our Innu kids." **Sheshatshiu woman.**

"I have never heard of Innu making fun of our own people. Ben Andrew should come to the radio station to answer some questions himself. I want to ask questions to him. He probably got information from non-Innu sources. I am a little sceptical about some of the things Aputet said. I don't believe some of those things." **Shimiu Rich, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"I am not too concerned about the history of the church, and the role it has played in the present situation. I don't really want to voice my concerns about the church on the radio. I am concerned about the statement that Aputet made. Was the author of the taped statement Aputet?" **Makes Kanikuen, Sheshatshiu man.**

"I agree with Aputet that the church and governments are responsible for the disappearance of the Innu way of life. Young people are not interested and we are slowly losing our way of life." **Kantuakueshiss, Sheshatshiu man.**

Many of us believe that if we had first realized what the priests and the non-Innu were trying to do to them, and were as well-informed as we are today, we would not have let the church do what it did. We know now what happened to our people.

But not everyone is against the church today. Some people have nothing to say about the church. Some say that the church strengthened our faith and they still support it. They want to continue to believe in the church and say that we are still very religious as Catholics. They worry about how young people are no longer following the church. They say the mission should teach us the bible because we go to the church and we don't understand enough the R.C. religion. Some people believe we need bible studies to learn about God's word.

"We don't own our lives. Some people think they own their own lives. They are lying. There is one person who owns our lives and that is God." **Utshimaskueu, Utshimassits.**

"Today, too many people live common-law. In the past, young people used to get married at a young age, 17 or 18 years old. Maybe someday, it won't be necessary to get married. Today we pray less. Years ago, our church was a full house. People were very religious then. Today, we don't know who our priest is!" **Shushep Nuna, Sheshatshiu.**

"I once saw a light in my house shining through the window. It almost looked like a Virgin Mary that I saw. I mentioned it to Mary Ann and Simon Michel. Ever since then I have never been afraid of anything. I still respect my way of life, my culture and my parents." **Mani Matinen Mishen, Sheshatshiu.**

But most of us don't go to church any more except for funerals and weddings. We are losing interest in going to church and people are starting to distance themselves from the church.

Some people say there are too many changes in the church. For example, right now when you ask for a baptism certificate, we have to pay for it, which is not fair. Long ago, people didn't have to pay for anything from the church. Another change we see with the church is that some Innu from Sheshatshit have changed their religion to the Pentecostal Church. People are changing their faith

because we can't trust the priests any more. Some people think that the R.C. missionaries are not caring for the people any more. One person worried that the former priest, Jim Roche, took pictures of our people and sold them for profit. He gave up being a priest. All the rules have changed in the church. Everything is different.

"There are so many things tapped into our veins now. We shouldn't have let go of our beliefs. We started brushing away the things we believed when the R.C. Church came. We felt our thinking was evil. Now people are looking for another church, because they want to throw this one away. I think some of the people that go to church the most are the craziest and have the hardest time. I was talking to someone who went to a new religion, and asked her if she really changed. She said she was happy, but I don't think so. I don't think you can leave one religion for another and think you are a better person. I quoted a lot of things that I believe in the Holy Bible. You can't take it just as it's written, you have to go beyond." **Kanikuen, Sheshatshiu man.**

"In church today, I find fewer people attend services, and we can't read the language. It is foreign to us. Our priest never seems to be around. He always travels. Before the priest used to control us. Now they can't seem to stay around too long. There has been too much child molesting by priests. Some got married. It seems people stay away from church since stories broke out about the priests." **Pun Pone, Sheshatshiu man.**

Some people say that we are starting to realize the serious mistakes the church made. We are more aware now of the church's failure to help Innu children. It could've been better if all our children were taught the traditional way, but it was difficult given the power of the church and its influence on young children. People had different needs and some were swayed to the church. But now many of us believe that we were not the evil ones, it was the priests.

"Before we started the radio talk show, we met on what we could say to a person if they became emotional on the radio. We had some people who called in but didn't want to go on the radio, or for us to mention their names in writing. We respected these people and appreciated them. One caller said that he'd been charged with sexual abuse. Why weren't the priests charged? Is it because they are white? It isn't a fair system.

After we did the talk show, I met people on the road who asked me what we were trying to do. What are you trying to do, get rid of the church? Some people said we were listening carefully. We really like listening to the people. I had the feeling that there were people who wanted to phone in but couldn't. I keep asking myself what it is that makes Innu not speak up about what happened. Sometimes the phone would ring, and the person would hang up. this happened many times. One caller would say, 'I'm still thinking, I'll call back later.' They would ask if the priest was around the community.

We played the tape a number of times. We started the program at 2:30 and it went on until midnight." **Mashen, host of CJIK Radio phone-in program.**

SEXUAL ABUSE OF OUR CHILDREN

"I don't think very much of the church today. I used to, but now because of what has been going on like physical and sexual assaults that have been done to the children by the priests. I don't feel good

about the church any more. We really trusted the priests long ago. We trusted them with our children. I just don't understand what is wrong with them, how they could do this to our children. I used to feel that these were the people we could really trust. But that trust has gone." **Mani Aten P., Sheshatshiu woman.**

Some of us feel that the Catholic Church has ruined everything in our lives. That's why we don't respect the priests now. They are responsible for the sexual and physical abuse of our people. The priests treated many of us badly.

"There is a lot of bad news about the priests sexually abusing the children. I don't know if I trust the church people any more. Maybe we should find some ways to deal with these problems. And I don't even know the new priest that is in the community now. I never see him. I don't even know when he is gone outside the community. I just don't know." **Pinamen Tshak, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"The greatest sin that our elders committed was they got brainwashed by the priest and the nuns who came. They should have stuck with their own Innu spirituality. It's not our fault that we don't know much about our Innu spirituality. I really wish that these people who are religious today would know that the greatest gift of all that the Creator gave us is LOVE. The priest and nuns don't have that love. A lot of priests have been charged with sexual abuse. They are sick sick animals. They are not saints or holy people. They abused Native children all across Canada and if this is hurting what I'm saying, I'm very sorry but it's very true." **Utshimassiu woman.**

A LOST CULTURE

The church has hurt our children in other ways too. It has deprived them of their culture. Our children today are lost and suffering because of the assaults of the church on our culture.

"It was when the Innu lost their way of life that more serious problems erupted. We lost interest in passing on our skills and traditions to our children. Today no attempts are being made to teach the young people more about their traditions. Our kids don't know much about their own culture and this is why we have so many social problems in this community. We don't respect ourselves or anything else to do with our way of life.

This is contributing to the confusion of who we are and what we want to do. Young people don't know where to go. Some are looking for possible employment and when they succeed in finding jobs, this does not help them as well. They still miss something. They should go back to nutshimit and find what they are looking for. But some parents don't tell them about the country and Innu culture.

This is a direct result of our first contacts with priests and missionaries and their attempts to embarrass us about our culture. Some of us remember the priest saying our culture was Satan's life. This caused our people to not talk openly about Innu traditions. This is why parents are not teaching their children more about our way of life. There is still a lot of culture here within our communities, but young people are not too aware of this. Young Innu are not appreciative of their life as an Innu and don't want anything to do with it. This is exactly what the priest wanted. He wanted very much for our young Innu children to turn away from their life. The Innu are suffering

because of the church.

Elders experienced these problems first and now it's our young people. They don't know where to go. If our young people face unsolved problems in the coming years, their future children will inherit the problems we have today. We have seen these problems. They are obvious every day not only in all Innu communities. Our young people do not know the first thing about their way of life. Almost all our children have lost their culture.

I sometimes wonder what the elders are thinking every time I see them walking around the community. I think they are distressed over their young children's futures. They carry their secrets within about their own lives over the years. Elders have a lot of experience and I wonder how we can encourage our young people to learn more about our way of life. There are still Innu who practise their way of life, although they have lost the traditions like looking after the bones, taking care of the food, etc.

I was asking someone here what it was that the Innu liked about hunting and nutshimit. He said he eats well; he is strong in the country and his children live well. He said it is peaceful and the scenery like the mountains, streams, lakes and valleys are nice. I injected that there is something else Innu people like out there. I thought he would say something about respecting. I knew something was on his mind and he should say it. He was not able to express it. He eventually said that the Innu dreams are much more important than anything else. He has a lot of respect for those. I wondered after he said that how come the Innu are afraid to talk about their dreams? Why can't they share that information with us? Maybe they are afraid they will be laughed at, ridiculed and humiliated.

People are not that afraid of the church today, but they are afraid of being harassed and humiliated by their own people. Today we don't communicate that much. When we meet our neighbours on the streets, we pass each other. We just visualize what the other people are thinking. Innu here don't know each other any more. It is difficult to know what the other is thinking.

When the elders or other Innu try to talk about the land and traditions, they find it difficult at times to explain to our young people the importance of our lives as Innu. Young people don't understand. Elders also have difficulty trying to talk about the dreams. They are afraid they are going to be considered doing magical powers and face ridicule from young people. That is where I sometimes wonder how we are ever going to resolve our problems when we don't treat our elders with the respect they deserve.

We are working against one another. We are not allowing our faith in our way of life and beliefs as Innu to work. We are slowly breaking apart. How many times have we heard our elders saying this when we have meetings? They are probably thinking nobody listens to them any more when they are trying to talk about the Innu way of life. We need to talk about our way of life and educate more of our young people in the Innu way of life. Maybe they would express interest again in the Innu traditions with more encouragement.

Young people are getting a lot of information from Innu who are abusers of alcohol. They learn from their behaviour. These people probably brag about the Innu and how good a hunter they used

to be. It's not helping our young people. Today, we are affected by many non-Innu things and it is difficult to not notice them.

More and more young people are helpless and feel rejected by our society. They think about suicide and abuse alcohol to escape the pain and suffering in their home. If they were exposed to the Innu way of life in the country, then I believe they could be saved and happy. No one needs to be alone. No Innu, whether young or old, need to be alone. We can succeed in revitalizing our youth to become Innu again." **Aputet, CJIK Radio Call-in program.**

"*I liked hearing Aputet. It's true that young people don't listen; they are embarrassed to talk about their way of life.*" **Antanes P., Sheshatshiu man.**

WE NEED TO HEAL OURSELVES

"*They preached us to death by their words, not by example. But we cannot complain about this. We need to go on and heal ourselves for what happened. We're running out of time. We have few elders left.*" **Nush, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"*We don't need to treat the priests and nuns like such high authorities. They are just servants of the religious institution. They are no different than us.*" **Report from group discussion Sheshatshiu workshop.**

"*The reason I am talking about the church and how it has changed our people by forcibly preaching their doctrines, is that I don't like it when I hear Innu talking about their own people as if they don't exist. If Innu didn't have anything to worry about, then I think we could exist as Innu without having to resort to alcohol. Innu people are stronger when they think about their way of life. We have serious problems in the community. We should continue to live off the land without dependence on the church. It saddens me to hear of people being treated badly by their own people. In the past, Innu people never treated each other badly. It was a privilege to be an Innu.*" **Aputet, CJIK Radio call-in program.**

"*I used to respect the church before but not any more. I have since changed my mind after what I read about what this institution did to my people. Why should I respect them when they did not show respect for Kuashapatshikan? It makes me mad to see people who work for the R.C. Church, like the priests who feel highly about who they are. Now our elders are afraid to speak out against the church. They were made to feel like that and that's what bothers me today. It will continue to make us feel like that. I won't feel healthy until we get an apology from the R.C. Church and the Bishop.*" **Mani Mat, Sheshatshiu woman.**

LIFE AFTER SETTLEMENT: INSTITUTIONS TAKE CONTROL

"People would come to Sheshatshit as a meeting place. Different people would come from Quebec, they would be here for a while, then people would go south, west, east and north. Some people who now live in Sheshatshit are Mushuau Innu from Utshimassit, some people are Uashat Innu, and some Mishkua Innu. This is how we all got together now in Sheshatshit." **Mishen, Sheshatshiu Elder.**

"The bad thing about the past is that they moved people here and the whites told us lies about what our houses would look like. I sometimes think that the person who moved people in here was crazy and he didn't know that the Innu had rights." **Penash, Utshimassiu woman.**

"I believe these organizations are trying to assimilate us; the white people are wanting us to live like they live." **Aniskutapan, Sheshatshiu woman.**

The church is not the only institution that has had a big impact on our lives. Especially since we have been settled in villages, the other institutions have had strong influences on our lives. We have many different stories and opinions about these other institutions.

"We found it easy for us since we were settled. But we lost our culture, our way of hunting and trapping. But we work and we go to school because of the R.C. influence. We depend on the akaneshau (white) influences and that is no good in some ways." **Apenan, Sheshatshiu man.**

"Each of these institutions were totally controlling us. We became victims. It's like the Pinocchio syndrome, like there were strings attached and we moved how the strings were controlled. The different institutions have changed us completely. We have lost our customs and become victims to each of the organizations. They have us wrapped around their fingers. They made us lose our confidence in the Innu way of life and in ourselves. We have lost all of our self-esteem." **Tanina, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"I think they changed our whole way of living, our values, spiritual life, language and our physical well-being. We are not as strong in mind, body and spirit as we once were. I think the changes are helpful in some ways, but not too much. They are very damaging in other ways." **Enen Antane, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"In this drawing, people are in the community and given social assistance. This person is lying in the bed, she should be in the country. Children are also inside watching t.v. staying in the house. They hould be in a tent living in the country. We were given houses. This is another reason for us to stay in the community and not go to the country. We want to look after our houses and are afraid that they might be vandalized." **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu community workshop.**

GOVERNMENTS - THE BIG BOSS

"When I first heard about governments, they were good to us. They were building us houses. Education was available to our children. The police were here and other services. We didn't know their plans. Today we understand what they are doing. The younger generation has become educated and understand the issues better.

Governments promised us many things. This was their way of telling us we should stay in the community. We didn't know why they were doing this. They used to tell us if a family had five sons, that one of them should go in the military. They used to take advantage of us because we didn't understand." **Niui, Sheshatshiu elder.**

Our history with tsheutshimaut ('the big boss' or governments) has become a long line of broken promises.

"When the first houses were constructed in 1967 in Utshimassits, there was a man here, a labourer, who asked the foreman, why there were no basements built? This was one of the promises that was made to us. 'Those will come later,' he was told, and 25 years later we are still waiting." **Kiti, Utshimassiu woman.**

Some of us say that the governments provide us with a good living, the necessities in life. They built a solid foundation for us to live in the community. But others say we are poorer now than before when we always lived in nutshimit. They wanted to discourage us from living our way of life. They ruled over us.

"The government is trying to stop people from going to the country by giving them houses, the school and so on. People won't say what it is that stops them from going, but it is the government giving out everything. He is trying to make people happy by giving out these things. He is helping out the Innu, the Innu are accepting these things and liking the things they receive. But some people don't like what the government is doing and fighting the government." **Etuetish, Utshimassiu man.**

Many of us believe that the government came and pushed unhealthy developments down our throats. They make their economy - a lot of money, through gathering resources from our land. They are loaning us money all the while destroying our land, our trees, making cabins in the country for sports fishermen from elsewhere, training foreign military over our land, scaring away our livelihood and our children and the animals. Governments are developing our land, putting dams, enforcing new laws like game laws that are foreign. The government is taking a lot of our resources. The resources should be given to Innu people. This land is our culture.

"When Goose Bay started, we were working there. We didn't know their plans for the future. In the old days, people were less educated. Maybe we thought money was important because we were getting paid. There were smaller sawmills in this area. One was located at Mud Lake, Trapervine, Hamilton River and Kenimish. Horses were used and the logs were sent away." **Miste-Pinip, Sheshatshiu elder.**

Governments will make us weak if it destroys our land. Many of us fear what will happen in the

future if there is too much concentration of developments in nutshimit. It will ruin the animals and the land.

Some people believe governments have created the most damage in our lives because they are the key - the number one figure over all the institutions in our lives. All institutions are the agencies of the government. We are pulled in so many directions, we end up in a box with no way out. That is the hardest thing. Since we live in the government's communities, there are social problems like child abuse and sexual abuse that never existed much at all before. Before people did things for themselves. They were so busy hunting, women working at the camp cutting wood and other things. People were very close and independent.

"*The Innu people are dependent on government funding. Wherever this funding is coming from, the Innu people are learning to be lazy. Our social life has changed. We are not helping each other or sharing our skills or our kill. These are the things that keep us from moving from the community to nutshimit.*" **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu community workshop.**

"*People have been made powerless over government. If we protest, we are threatened that our funding will be cut short. If we do things the way we think is the right thing to do to help our community, we are told we misuse the funds. We cannot do things the way we want. We are always controlled by the government.*" **Nush, Sheshatshiu woman.**

Some of us try to break this dependency, to talk to people and stop from always going to the Band Council or other agencies for help. Some of us are still independent in some ways, except for maybe pensions, or UIC. We believe if we keep going to the Band Council, we will be spoiled by all the things we are given, by grants and monies. We will lose our happiness. We will no longer do things for ourselves. Our lives will be a total wreck. Some of us are not proud of always asking for things all the time.

One person complained about governments stealing a lot of income tax from us. And they deduct C.P.P. when we don't know how long we will live, what our predictions in our lives will be. She said we shouldn't have to pay for pensions when who knows, we may die tomorrow?

"*The government is our master to this game, and we are the players. That is the way the white society sees us. They want us to play our part of the game.*" **Pun Pone, Sheshatshiu man.**

BAND COUNCILS AND THE INNU NATION

Governments created the Band Councils and the Innu Nation so that one person could do the speaking for us. Some of us believe that these institutions don't work right for us.

"*The government set up the Band Council in the white way. The Band Council receives money which makes people fight and hate each other.*" **Group discussion, Sheshatshiu workshop.**

Some of our leaders also say that there are problems with institutions like the Band Councils and the Innu Nation. They say that in their jobs, they are caught between both worlds.

"*One of the hardest things that I find in being a leader is that I have a lot of responsibilities for the*

people. As a leader you have to live on both sides, both the Innu and the non-native way. You have to follow the white man's way of living; you have to be able to understand their ways. It is really hard for me as a leader. You have to choose which path you will go for the people. Because people depend on you a lot, you want to take the steps towards what the people want, but the government also pressures me to do things their way. It is dividing the leaders not in the sense that there is division amongst the leaders, but dividing us personally. I find this hard." **Kiti, Utshimassiu woman.**

A number of people say there are problems with the young leadership. Some people say that the leaders don't have the skills to do the job. They don't do long-term planning. They might drop something and then a few months later come back looking for money.

ELDERS SHOULD BE LEADERS

One of the main problems is that governments only recognize these leaders today; they don't recognize the tshenut (elders). Many of us are worried that the tshenut are losing their power. Some leaders admit they have made mistakes. They say they have not taken enough direction from the people and especially from the elders.

"We have been talking self-government for twenty years. Still today we are talking about the struggle. Since the land rights negotiations have started, we have gotten elders involved when we are talking to government. I have been working with the talks for nine months. Sometimes I approach the government and tell them what the Innu need. Here I am telling him the needs of the Innu. I may be lying to the government; I don't know what my people need. We are too young. We have to let our elders be the first to be approached for advice before we give other people a voice.

For instance, what the elders have said about the planes flying over our camps and using our land. The government is pouring so much money into our land for foreign people. We are the ones who are suffering and being taken advantage of. I want to approach an elder and get advice and yet I know he might not understand what I would be saying because he has his way of talking and he is holding on to this. We are getting all this government funding now. Thirty years ago, people walked by foot. They supported themselves, helped each other, and worked together without the help of governments. Here we are going on planes to take us to the country. This is not the way to support ourselves. I might hurt people for what I have said, But I am so right for what I am saying. I really am trying to do what the elders say." **Penote Mishen, Sheshathsiu man.**

Some leaders say the problem of including elders more in decision-making is hard to solve.

"Sometimes I find it hard to deal with the elders because there is a lack of understanding of the white culture. One elder who goes to a lot of meetings outside keeps pounding us, the young leaders, that he wants to see the big boss - the government. He wants to ask him why he doesn't want to help our people? We tell him what we know, how hard it is to deal with those people. We keep telling him that it wouldn't do any good. But he finds it hard to understand. If the government is not going to do anything to help us, the elder thinks they should tell us. We explain to elders that we need to protest and write letters. But to the elders, the government is like the trader. In those days, when Innu asked for things, they would get them. Today, the elders don't know the government structure. It is very hard to ask for things now." **Tshash, Uthsimassiu man.**

"The sense I'm getting from elders is they don't understand how complex both levels of government are. One of the things they would like to see is that we deal with the ministers as nation-to-nation, rather than having to deal with the bureaucrats like we do now. Elders see us leaders as going out for meetings with the top people, but we only deal with the representatives that are being sent by the various ministers. They don't understand that." **Kiti, Utshimassiu woman.**

But leaders are also recognizing that they want to include tshenut in real leadership roles. They want to make things better. They say they've tried to find out what kind of leadership role elders played in the old days. They see that a lot of this is gone, but hope that it is being restored now as well.

"A lot of elders act as consultants to the Innu Nation and Band Councils. They are advisors around land claims issues. They are there to show the governments that this is our land." **Tamene, Utshimassiu man.**

"We need to respect our elders because we have neglected them for the last few years. We did not bother to listen to them. I think they have stopped talking to us. We need to respect what they say about certain issues in the community, what they teach us about how to do things like sweat lodges and how to treat the animals. They have so much knowledge that we need to learn. We need to act fast on this one. We have only a small number of elders in the community." **Kiti, Utshimassiu woman.**

"The elders can play an advisory role in regard to land use. They can advise us on how to restore our way of life; they are the guardians of our culture, the teachers of our language. The elders could be major players in the leadership of this community. They can be elected to the Band Council or the Innu Nation - some of them are. It wouldn't look right if we put them on the back burner. We have been doing that for years. They need to be in more advisory roles. They are our wildlife officers. One elder here is a real expert on the caribou. I would rather talk to him than Stuart Luttich in Goose Bay, the wildlife biologist." **Tshash, Utshimassiu man.**

TOO MUCH MONEY-CHASING

Some say that the tshenut are ignored when governments flash money to the younger generation. They say our leaders are money-chasing and become blindfolded by the dollar sign.

"I think the programs of the Band Council are abusive. They are scary; their policies are so loose. People are really afraid because they won't be able to act the way they used to when they were so free in the country. I think people are afraid because of the power of the government using money on the people. I am probably brainwashed by this Band Council. Even in my job, I hate doing this, but it is like somebody is grabbing my hand and making me do it. What am I doing here, where am I taking these people? Or should they be making their own decisions, their own judgement day?

I am very supportive of the Innu Nation or the Band Council, but I am crying about it too. It scares me. I don't know the answers, but I think we need to find the answers inside. The sad thing about being leader is you get tied to the money. You begin to lose control of beliefs that you had. Leaders might have good ideas, but when they get in that position, they forget about these because of the

power of money. Money is controlling us; we are not controlling it. We wouldn't be able to move if we don't have money. It is like a battery to us." **Kanikuen P., Sheshatshiu man.**

LEADERS SHOULD BE FAIR

Some people complain that the Band Councils and the Innu Nation only help some people and not others. They don't see some people as their responsibility, even if they really need help.

"I think the Band Council or leaders are helping their relatives only. They don't seem to help other people other than their relatives. When people ask for help they just won't help even when the government doesn't want to help. Every time people ask the Band Council for a job, they are just told lies. People are angry. I think the problem is the chief." **Utshimassiu elder.**

"The Band Council and the Innu Nation were asked to help this woman who has no place to live. They were asked for a tent that would only cost $300 or $500. They were asked to give her one of the six new houses, but they said no." **Sheshatshiu woman.**

THE SCHOOL

"I was never inside a school before. I never went to school or learned from the books. I was never taught that way. I only learned to be in the country. I learned from my parents. Long ago, there used to be a lot of elders. There are hardly any left now. Nowadays, it doesn't happen enough that young people get to learn from their elders." **Nuk Nui, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"The priests started taking our children and putting them in schools. This is how we got stuck in the community. People were told by the priest that if their child didn't go to school, there would be no family allowance. Sometimes people felt they had no other choice. They were also told they would be given houses to live in so the children would go to school." **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu community workshop.**

It was in the 1960's that we had to settle down in the communities. One of the main reasons was the school. Some of our elders thought this would mean a better life for their children. But the school became another pressure to keep us away from nutshimit. Some people are angry because they feel they were forced to send their children to school.

TEACHING A FOREIGN CULTURE

"The school is damaging our culture. In the old days, English was always taught and religion was taught as well. We were told to go to school and always go to mass every day and every Sunday." **Iskuess Pastin, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"School educated us about the akaneshau way of life and taught us to feel that our own way of life was inferior or not worth living." **Tanien Ashini, Sheshatshiu man.**

"The way I see it is, we were taught in school that Innu people are no good. We need to bring back the pride and the spirit of the Innu people, to be proud of who we are." **Kiti, Utshimassiu woman.**

Many people think the school had done a lot of damage to our children and our culture. Some say the children are being brainwashed in the school. Today, we are like white people because of the

school. We haven't learnt as much because of the white culture that has been put into our lives. The biggest problem with the school is that our children are not learning enough about their own culture. Many think our children are not getting enough education at all.

When the school was first open, there weren't any Innu teachers, and no Innu culture was taught at all. We were never taught anything about Innu history in school. Some of us can't read or write our own language. And many people are worried that we are even losing our language slowly. More and more children are shortening the words.

"In school, the children should be taught Innueimun, the old Innueimun. For example, right now one of the girls in our group didn't understand what we were saying She wanted more detail about what I was saying. I feel like she is going to lose her language. Our children don't understand even words such as nishiet which means dish. The children are not getting educated enough in the school." **Atuan Pinashue, Group discussion at Sheshatshiu workshop.**

"Why haven't we been taught our culture? We don't blame the teachers, we blame the school system. The children are starting to think like non-Innu. The students are being taught that way. We place ourselves between the tent and the non-Innu house, between the two cultures. We have respect for our own animals and the non-Innu have their own animals. We use trees to make canoes, and the non-Innu make houses out of the trees. We don't learn any Innu culture in Peenamin Mackenzie School. We want to learn these things in school. Some of us wished we knew how to make a canoe and paddles like our great grandparents did. We want to know all the things that Innu people knew before." **High School student group discussion at community workshop.**

DROPPING OUT

Some people think the white teachers today don't make any sense. Some say we need better teachers and many people feel our children are not getting enough education. We sent our children to school, but most of the children never finish high school, only some. Before there wasn't any high school in the community. Students had to finish high school on the Island like in St. John's. This was both a good and a bad experience for us.

"I was sent to high school in St. John's because there was a lot of drinking in Sheshatshit. In the 1970's, mostly everybody was drinking then. I ended up staying in an orphanage boys' home. I was treated fairly well, and kept fed well. But I still didn't learn anything about the Innu. I was never taught about Innu history. I learned to watch people drink and smoke dope. I'm not blaming anybody but governments for this." **Mashen, Sheshatshiu man.**

"We had a hard time to understand in the school. It was all in English, the language and the history. That's why I wanted to quit school too." **Epa, Utshimassiu woman.**

WORKING TO BETTER THE SCHOOL

Some things about the school have changed for the better. We now have Innu teachers and our children are learning things about their culture now, although many people would like to see more.

"I have been teaching in school now for 10 years. I teach Innueimun, the right Innueimun. Right

now a lot of our kids are half finished grade 11 and high school, but they do not understand what we say in Innueimun. They are confused don't know where to go. Sometimes they leave the classroom because they are so frustrated. If someone could come to class and show them how to make a canoe and the paddles, the students would really like that. I also think we should be teaching the children in school about the dreams, the drums and the shaking tents.

I use books written by Innu people in school to teach the children. This one book I use is illustrated and the kids like to see the pictures. I would like to see someone in this community write a book from here so we could use it in school. There is another book by Matthew Andre, an elder from Uashat. This book talks about the country, about the things that happened to the land and how it affected the people. There are pictures in the book that show the signs Innu people used to use to let people know this is where the camps were. Students really like this. They don't listen to teachers when they don't see pictures about the Innu ways. This is the only way students learn.

But right now there are only three things that are important to the students: English, Maths and Science. With the other subjects, they just sit there and listen, doing nothing. They are not interested in those subjects." **Mani Katinen N., Sheshatshiu teacher.**

There are some people who have no complaints about the school. And some people say that even if the school made a lot of mistakes, there are some good things about it too. The school is the place where the children learn to read and write. Some people are glad today that they can speak and write English. Some say that it is good that kids are in school because they are not willing to go to nutshimit so they should attend school.

OTHER SCHOOL PROBLEMS

Another problem with the school is that the teachers used to be abusive, physically abusive, and verbally. Many of us were strapped with a belt or a stick in school. Now we found out that we were abused by the white teachers and the priests. Some of us blame the school for some of the social problems we have in our communities.

"*At first when my children started school here, I really thought they would get a good education. We were told this, but I learned that they didn't learn anything. The RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) come into my house now. The first thing they look for is my children. What kind of education did my children get? What did my children learn in school? Some of my children have gone to court in front of the magistrate. Where did they learn how to break white laws? This is what I think about the changes that have happened here in Sheshatshit.*" **Spastiesh, Sheshatshiu elder.**

There are specific things some people don't like about the school. A few people mention that school dances are a problem. One person complained that the teachers don't let kids use the washroom regularly. Someone said that there is a need to have an adult looking after the kids on the bus, not only the driver, because kids are fighting and hurting each other on the bus.

"*I don't like school and get a headache because the kids are noisy.*" **Utshimassiu child.**

Some say that all the problems are not the school's fault. For example, some of the kids up at the

school are really bad. They are confused about what is happening in their lives. They have their own problems at home with their parents. They get back at the teachers because of the problems they have at home.

MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Many people have very mixed feelings about the school. We think that it is important but we are also worried about what we learn in the school and what it does to us.

"I was never in school much at all. I didn't spend much time there. I was one of the lucky ones that got saved by nutshimit. I didn't get brainwashed. It's important for us to get a good education. We need to know about the rest of the world. But the sad thing is, when we have kids and send them away to university, we are sending them away to be brainwashed, to have who they are raped by this other way of thinking. I see some people who went out and got an education. After getting back to the community, they are embarrassed to talk about their Innu-ism, and talk about their beliefs. They are not open.

I often argue with a lot of people about education when they say kids should be taught in school. I have always been critical of teachers who are trying to teach Innu ways, because they themselves need to go to the country to learn as well. Some have never been in the country. My way of education, I started learning when I was nine. I went with my father. It took me six or seven years to learn, to know what to do if I was all by myself with my family in the country. I don't need to depend on my father. I completed my education, and could live happily and support my family. I have said that openly to teachers." **Kanikuen Pinashue, Sheshatshiu man.**

"Some Innu support the idea of having their children educated and preparing them for the future. We look to education to find satisfaction, job security, financial stability. We don't use the Innu way of thinking like planning for tomorrow, where to go hunting, where you will go to trap, etc. We think like the white man, taking jobs and talking about our land. Just talking about our land will be useless because our kids are too much engulfed in the non-Innu things. They are not interested in the Innu way of life. There will come a time when they will have no regard for the land. They don't know what to think of nutshimit. Every time they are exposed to discussions about nutshimit, they ask what is out there? What do we do over there? They don't know. We are avoiding to take responsibility and are trying to distance ourselves from the problems faced by our youth. We are hiding from the problems.

Sometimes I did not understand what was going on in school. Now, they are teaching children about the land and the traditions. When I went to school, I never encountered anyone telling me we were the first inhabitants of this land. They mentioned only briefly about the Innu and more on the non-Innu who first settled here. We were told once we would be taught Labrador history. The only Labrador history we ever got was about the North West River white settlers and where they set their traplines. We were not taught about our ancestors or any kind of information concerning our own people. Today, our lack of knowledge about our own people's way of life and culture is because of this. We are lost and unable to fully understand the beauty and peaceful co-existence of our people with the land.

This is contributing to the confusion of who we are and what we want to do. Young people don't

know where to go. Some are looking for possible employment and when they succeed in finding jobs, this does not help them as well. They still miss something." **Aputet, Sheshatshiu CJIK Radio Call-in program.**

We have been discussing our schools for years now. People criticize and are confused about the school, but most say it is important for our children to get an education.

"I think our children and grandchildren should finish high school and then fight for the things we have lost and follow in our footsteps." **Pinamen Tshak, Sheshatshiu elder.**

SOCIAL SERVICES

"If fur catches were low in the old days, Social Services would assist us. I remember an incident long ago, where some Innu were starving on the way to the community of Sheshatshit. So the government began to give us social assistance." **Pinip, Sheshatshiu man.**

Social Services was also involved in making us settle in villages. Along with the priest, they threatened they would discontinue family allowances if our children didn't go to school. Now many people think Social Services doesn't pay attention to us and what the solutions to our problems are. There are three Innu community services workers in both Sheshatshit and Utshimassits, but they do not develop the policies that rule us.

Many people say Social Services doesn't give enough financial assistance. They are too stingy with all the money they have. Why are we getting so much less money than other Innu living in Quebec? They are getting two or three times as much money. People here get welfare, but it is not much, not enough to feed the whole family. There is barely enough for food.

"Me and my wife used to work. Now the amount I receive from Social Services is not enough. The social assistance I get is not enough for the twelve people living in my house. There is no basement in the house I am living in. Social Services does not help me out. We always ask for help from Social Services and $300 is not enough. If you are in the country, you don't see too much money, but if you are in the community, there always has to be money used." **Napess Pone., Sheshatshiu man.**

Sometimes Social Services doesn't help our elders. They are not able to assist people on Old Age Security (OAS). When these elders are given advances to go to nutshimit, OAS doesn't refund Social Services. Before OAS was able to reimburse Social Services, but they don't any more.

Social Services also can't help people who have permanent jobs, even if they are low income. Social Services can't give them social assistance if they make more than what is given to people on social assistance. Social Services also barely gives enough money to single mothers. What is going to happen to single mothers? They are not supported and they are barely surviving.

SOCIAL SERVICES AND NUTSHIMIT

Sometimes people go to the country for food instead of depending on Social Services. There is enough food for the whole family in the country. The workers at Social Services don't usually recommend or encourage people to go to the country. They say it is up to people if they want to go.

But they do help people to go with social assistance. Social Services gives people advances on their assistance so they can go. People used to get three months advances, but now some say they won't travel to the country because they only get monthly social assistance. This does not buy enough supplies for when they are in nutshimit and sometimes they have a hard time finding food.

When people on UIC decide to go into the country, they can get on social assistance. Social Services gives people advances, and then UIC reimburses them. There is a lot of paper work involved for the Financial Assistance Officer during the month that people go out. Afterwards it quiets down for them, but there are still other people in the village. But then when people come back from the country, sometimes it takes a whole month to get their UIC straightened out because of all the paperwork involved with reimbursements. This holds up their UIC and people blame the Social Services workers for this delay. The UIC people should do rush paper work so people get their checks faster.

One of the Innu Social Services workers said if the Band Council could hire one of the spouses who is not on unemployment insurance (UI), they would have some income and wouldn't have to go back on social assistance when they come back from the country. There would be at least one income while they wait for UI to be activated again.

TAKING OUR CHILDREN AWAY

We don't only depend on Social Services for financial assistance. Social problems have gotten worst and now we use Social Services to solve some of our problems such as family violence, housing and health. In some ways, Social Services is taking away people's responsibilities like when they remove children from their parents. Our elders say we used to look after our children. Social Services took over and some people say they are not doing a good job. It seems like now the children are really looked after by the Social Services agency. But other people believe that sometimes social workers have no choice but to take away this responsibility.

In the old days, Social Services took advantage of us when they took our children away. They were taken away without going through the proper channels. The parents didn't understand the language, so they were taken advantage of. We didn't understand and couldn't write English in those days. Social workers used to take the children and send them away for adoption without telling people, without their permission. They took the babies when young girls were pregnant, sent them away for adoption and the mothers didn't know what happened. These children were sent away and we didn't see them for twenty years. And some of these adopted children weren't treated good.

"Social Services would always remove children from the homes and would place the children in Newfoundland. Now the Innu people are fighting back for their rights when the children are being removed from their homes. The Innu children are now placed within the community. People are fighting back at last." **Iskuess Pastin, Sheshatshiu woman.**

Social Services is still taking our children away. Kids are taken away and put in group homes. Some people say this is not helping. Also our children are suicidal and there is no help for them.

"When our children are sent to court, they are sent to group homes. The more they are sent there, the more they like group homes, and the more they do vandalizing. They like the group homes

because they are treated well, they have free food and they are well clothed." **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu community workshop.**

SOCIAL SERVICES JOB PROGRAMS

People have a number of complaints about the Social Services' job program. Some say there are never job openings for single people. When a person is looking for work, the worker asks if you have any kids and if you say no, he says he can't give you any work.

"The change I don't like about Social Services is they won't have two people working if someone is receiving UIC and the other person is looking for work." **Manish Nuna, Sheshatshiu woman.**

BREAKING THE DEPENDENCY

"I have always been lucky, because I haven't been on social assistance since I got married in 1974. I have always been able to find jobs. But other people tell me their independency has been taken away and they depend on Social Services. A lot of them are on social assistance. Things are getting worse. People can't find work and some are on social assistance permanently. Social Services, like all the other institutions are leading the Innu to the edge of the cliff because of their programs. They are so bad. They lead people to not be able to think for themselves, to not be able to depend on themselves and to not respect themselves as human beings." **Kanikuen, Sheshatshiu man.**

Some people worry that we are depending too much on Social Services for their funding and services. Our way of life in the past was very hard, but today we are spoiled by Social Services. We get things easy. We just go into Social Services and ask for assistance. We expect the social workers to do everything for us. Some of us depend on them for small things like filling out an application. People ask social workers to even call the clinic or the hospital for them. They feel this is part of the social worker's work. Will we be able to break this dependency?

Now, Social Services easily control us. We feel frightened to jeopardize our relationship with them so they get away with "murder" with us. Our dependency on Social Services has also created anger and shame in us. People feel helpless and hopeless. We feel bad that we have to depend on Social Services for almost everything.

"Social Services has taken away our independence. Our responsibilities have been taken away by them. Now the Innu really depend on social assistance. In the old days, people used to depend on wild animals and the fish." **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu workshop.**

Some people blame Social Services for making us dependent on them. Others say that there are no jobs so people have to depend on social assistance. Some people are thankful for the help they get from Social Services. They say Social Services provides people with funds to help us bring up our children. Some people are also thankful for the jobs they get from Social Services.

"It is good that we get social assistance while we are not working. If the Innu were working then we would not need it." **Shamani, Sheshatshiu man.**

ABUSING THE SYSTEM

There are people who make good use of Social Services but some say that others tend to abuse the

system. For example, some people will look after foster children or people who need help just to get the money.

"This person is looking after a woman who needs help. She is only doing it for the money. One time she said to Social Services if they didn't pay her, the woman would be kicked out." **Sheshatshiu woman.**

HEALTH SERVICES

"Since we have clinics, we are always sick, but long ago we didn't have clinics, so we had to get our own medicines ourselves." **Manikinet, Sheshatshiu woman.**

Health services are like everything else. Some things about them are good and some are bad. Many people think the clinic is fine because it provides us with a service and medicines when we are not well. It is good that we have our own clinic in Sheshatshiu. But many people think that the first problem with our health is that we've abandoned our Innu medicine. We don't pay any attention to our homemade medicines and the health services we have also don't recognize or respect our medicine. This medicine was very important to our people in the old days. We used to cure ourselves using plants and other things.

"There is Innu medicine in the country; this is the Innu hospital. People have stopped using traditional medicines now that they depend so much on modern medicine. Now some people can't go to the country because of their health. They want to stay in the community because there is a hospital nearby." **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu community workshop.**

But some of our elders are worried about using Innu medicines.

"Everything about the hospital is killing all the Innu medicine we used to depend on. There are all kinds of medicines in nutshimit. The Innu medicine is not here any more. It is all polluted. Why has it been killed off? It has been polluted." **Nuk Nui, Sheshatshiu elder.**

Like with other parts of our lives, we have become too dependent on health services. The main thing is that we that we don't look after ourselves any more. People prefer doctors and medicine more than they used to. We have to wonder what kind of chemicals our bodies are taking and how it affects our health.

MORE HEALTH PROBLEMS NOW

Since we were settled in the community, people have a lot more problems with their health, although some people settled because they had tuberculosis. Older people say that changes in what we eat in the community are making us unhealthy. And yet we have no choice; we have to take it. Elders say they used to be healthy enough to carry one whole caribou on their back, but the food they ate was always pure and fresh.

"Since we were settled in the community, there are a lot of health problems, such as heart disease, cancer, gallbladder problems, high blood pressure, diabetes. All these health problems never existed in the country. So now the clinic is all right because when someone is sick, he or she goes and gets medical help." **Iskuess Pastin, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"My wife has to be checked at the Melville Hospital in Goose Bay all the time. Both of us are on medical pills, and both of us have health problems. I am on a lot of medications, and so is my wife. I take about eight different medication pills. One of these is an anti-depressant pill. It helps me to relax and not be as depressed as well." **Sheshatshiu man.**

Alcohol is another thing in our lives that has mades us sick.

"I was 17 years old when I started drinking and ever since then, I drink more and more. Alcohol is the cause of my health problems. I am sick because I used to drink heavily. When people say this is the cure for hangovers, it only makes things worse and worse. This is where the health problems lie in the community. Now many people go to the country and all I can do is watch them go because I can't. I have too many health problems and I get tired so easily. I encourage my children to abstain from alcohol use because this is where my wife and I started to get health problems. Look at my father; he has lived a longer and healthy lifestyle. He still walks around the community and shares his knowledge with people." **Sheshatshiu man.**

THEY DON'T KNOW OUR CULTURE

A big problem with the health services is that the white staff doesn't understand our culture and our way of life. Some people believe they help to cover up the root cause of our problems. They deal only with the symptoms of the problem and make us forget about the 'real' problem.

Sometimes the staff give our elders food which isn't going to be good for them. Some people need interpretation because the nurses and doctors usually don't understand Innu people. There are problems with translation.

"Some translators now don't understand the medical words. They don't have the training to know this. Sometimes there is no word in Innueimun for the English word. It is also hard to translate for the elders because we are losing the old Innueimun. It is difficult for them when they go to the hospital to find the right translator because their way of saying things is different. Sometimes the translator is afraid to say what was said." **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu workshop.**

Some people feel that we don't get the medical treatment we need. People complain that when we have to go to Goose Bay to get seen by a doctor, we have to spend all day at the hospital. Sometimes when we are given orders by the doctor and don't obey them, he/she gets mad at the patient and gives them a hard time. Some people feel that sometimes the doctor or nurses are not serious.

THE POLICE AND JUSTICE SYSTEM

"I used to want to be a police, but I decided to quit on that, because I knew it wouldn't be me, the way I was taught or brought up. In my young days, there were no laws to be broken. I used to live lawless. We didn't need these laws. Fear of police has made people change. My grandfather was a Mintushiu (shaman). There were only three or four things he looked at. Maybe these were his laws or religion. 1) Never abuse tshenut (elders), 2) Never abuse kids. 3) Never abuse animals. 4) When you turn 21-years-old, find a match to marry. This was the only problem; people were made to get married even if they didn't want to. But people had to respect one another. My grandfather's belief

was that whenever people needed something, give them something. Someday you might not have enough and someone else would help you. This was our law." **Kanikuen, Sheshatshiu man.**

Our first contacts with the police began when they started to enforce wildlife regulations. They had no right to do this. Many people here have been charged and convicted for hunting on our own land.

"As my father got older, he could only travel short distances. We were allowed into the country the few years before we settled permanently, but governments put restrictions on beaver catches. Only eight beavers were allowed per family." **Pinip, Sheshatshiu man.**

"Before the RCMP were here, the Innu people were not scared of anything. They were not scared of hunting and didn't need permits to hunt. The police used to be the game wardens. They enforced wildlife, game and fish laws. They terrorized and put fear into the people. Now we have both police and wildlife officers, and Innu people are scared to practise their own way of life." **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu workshop.**

Now when we protest the injustices we face, the police are used by governments to intimidate us and keep us in line. The RCMP is one more form of control over us. When we try to assert our rights we are locked up to scare us. When we go on the runway to protest or when we set up a road block, many of us don't agree with the RCMP being involved with us. We're just protecting our rights then.

RACIST POLICE

"When we go to jail, the RCMP call us bad names. They don't respect us, abuse us and treat us like dogs or animals. They have put all these regulations on us, arrest us, bring us to court and send us to jail for years." **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu workshop.**

Some people find the police in our communities racist. Some police call us names and use abusive language. They treat Innu different than non-Innu. Innu get bad treatment or beaten up by the RCMP. Many people say the police take advantage of us because we don't know our rights. They break into our homes without search warrants. There is no translation and some of us don't understand them. Innu get easily picked up. The RCMP often blame the Innu if they don't have any suspects. They threaten people to influence them to give information.

"Police assume the Innu don't know their rights. Innu are easily taken to jail and locked up as just 'drunk Innu'. The police take our freedom away. They assume we don't speak English at all, so they do everything to remove our rights and freedom away. The white law is not Innu culture at all." **Iskuess P., Sheshatshiu woman.**

JAILS DON'T HELP

Many people feel that the police don't respect the Innu way of life. They don't help people in the way they need to be helped.

"When a person has been incarcerated, he doesn't have enough support. People are just put in jail, and they are not helped. The police treat the Innu people like shit." **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu workshop.**

"I think the RCMP shouldn't be allowed to come into Sheshatshit because they don't know the culture and traditional way of life of the Innu. We don't understand the white legal system. Innu should have their own system. Innu go to court and shouldn't be there because they don't have a clue about how the justice system works. This is not for the Innu. It's for white people. We were here long before the lawyers." **Mashen, Sheshatshiu man.**

BUT WE NEED POLICING

There are people who don't think we need the RCMP, but others feel the police are here because sometimes we need them. The police wouldn't be involved in our communities if people didn't call them to come. Sometimes we need the RCMP because at times people change and act differently. There is so much drinking and violence now. The RCMP lock up people who break the law. If we didn't fight and physically hurt one another, or damage things, the RCMP wouldn't interfere with us. We need police.

Some people think the police should work shifts and be able to stay in the community for twenty-four hours. Police never come when they are needed. Many times, we have to wait a long time for the RCMP to come when they call them. They won't come to Sheshatshit after midnight. Sometimes we have to wait two days and sometimes the police don't respond for months.

STORES

Many of our elders say that in the old days, none of the items in stores cost much but today everything is more expensive. There are many problems with the stores. In Utshimassits, people complain that the government store now does not carry the supplies we need. We can't even get boots for children for the coming winter. But people are also happy that there are stores and we can buy modern things. In Sheshatshit, people think it is good that the stores are closer to the community. It is good that we have this service. But people don't like having to pay a lot of money for everything they buy.

"We feel like the Innu have always been ripped off by white store keepers. The Innu should be able to have their own stores, something like a co-op. But where are we going to get the money to get a store? But if you look at Mrs. Blake's store, our money is the reason it is there." **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu community workshop.**

"Cecil Blake's store, all it does is rip off the senior citizens and the youngsters." **Sheshatshiu woman.**

PAYING A LOT FOR BAD FOOD

Stores have influenced the diets and health of our people. People didn't used to have to buy a lot of their food. Country wild game is much better than buying food from the stores. Store-bought foods are too expensive. Some say that some of the foods that we buy at the stores are not fit to eat. Since stores came into our lives, we eat strange things. Many people think this is why we are always sick. Food at the store is not fresh whereas if you kill wild game, it is really fresh to eat.

"The store-bought foods we have here are not good for our elders. The elders say people used to feel very well. They weren't ill because they were eating fresh meat all the time, or the meat that they

preserved." **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu community workshop.**

There are ingredients and preservatives in store-bought foods. We don't know what we are eating. Many people say that the food they buy doesn't strengthen them. They get hungry in a shorter period of time after they consume modern foods like chicken legs, hot dogs, pork chops, hamburger or others. We can go a long way without eating when we eat our nutshimit mitshem (country foods). We used to eat strong food that strengthened us biologically.

"We should decide what we should eat. I don't trust modern foods today. There are too many unknown chemicals or preservatives that have been put into the meat. It is weak food. The government pushed us to buy their foods in stores, then they chose to close the season on our traditional Innu foods." **Shaishushep, Sheshatshiu man.**

"The acceptance of all the institutions in our community has meant a wounded and crippling lifestyle that has replaced nutshimit shutshen tamun (strong pride in our Innu way of life). It really has put our lives in a state. It has caused a social and spiritual breakdown of who we are as a unique hunting people." **Eric, Sheshatshiu youth.**

LIFE AFTER SETTLEMENT: THE IMPACT AND SURVIVING

"What we could have done differently is that we shouldn't have trusted and listened to the white people when they came on our land. We should not have abandoned our culture and traditions. The white people brainwashed the Innu into believing that by settling down, we were going to have a better lifestyle, like we would have houses, stores, church, school and government handouts. We feel we've been placed in this community so we would stay away from the land and lose our culture. The government put us here." **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu community workshop.**

The places where our communities are today used to be only temporary stopovers. In the summer, people would wait there for fur-bearing animals to be good to go out to nutshimit again. They were places where we gathered. People would meet and greet each other, and this was mixed with leisure time. But since we were settled in these places, a lot of problems have arisen. Many of us believe that settling in our communities was a bad move and this is when our lives really started to change for the worst. Non-Innu people have tried to take away the most important things in our Innu ways, and we find this very upsetting.

"These institutions have changed our way of thinking. We spend our energies in the wrong way. We are easily grabbed by less important things, for example, watching video movies or playing bingo. All of these things have changed us to become half Innu and half non-Innu. Let's get at things which are important in our lives." **Shuaush, Sheshatshiu man.**

Some of us say that when you really look at it, we were forced to stay in villages because of these institutions. We no longer wanted to stay away from the community. We have become assimilated and we are living the white way of life.

Although we think we should respect the elders, some of us think the elders long ago should never have listened to the priests and other non-Innu when they wanted us to settle in these villages.

A few of us will say that things have changed for the better since we settled. One person said the institutions are working for our cause. Some say that we settled because we were offered jobs. Maybe some of us wanted to stay in villages once we tasted the comfort of a house or cabin and akaneshau mitshim (white foods). When we were always in nutshimit, starvation was a real problem. The food would run out and that is where the problems started. Some say that is when we started to become dependent on non-Innu to help us.

WE LOST CONTROL

"People have lost control of their lives, not being sure of themselves. We have no respect for each other. People have been forced to adapt to a white culture, thus creating the abandonment of their own upbringing as Innu people. The institutions have really screwed up where we no longer have control of our destiny. This thinking needs to be changed. We need to fight back and be in control." **Mishen Kanikuen, Sheshatshiu man.**

Non-Innu have taken away our independence. They have dramatically let us depend on them for every need we have or had. Control over our lives was gradually taken over by the different institutions - the church, the school, Social Services, Health Services, all the government-funded agencies. These institutions are all run by other-than-Innu people. They have done as they wished. Many of us say that by adopting the ways of the different agencies, we accepted too many influences. Our lives have changed plenty. These institutions have brainwashed the people. They did a lot of damage and it will take a long time to get back to the way we were. They created a downward social effect which includes alcoholism, violence and so on.

WE ARE ANGRY

Some of us don't really know how our lives have changed since settlement. We were too young to know the differences, but for many of us, the changes that have come with the different institutions have left us very angry.

"We are Innu people. The white men want us to be like them. I cannot lose my language because of the white men. I don't like them. I don't trust them. The white men rape us with our land. They rape us with our culture." **Small group discussion at Sheshatshiu community workshop.**

"The different institutions control our lives.
They sexually abuse our children.
They brainwash our children.
They take away our children.
They take away our land Nitassinan.
They put us in jail." **Shenum Tshak, Sheshatshiu man.**

*"The biggest change in our lives is that we are all living in Sheshatshit permanently. We're *#$%*!! stuck here!"* **Nui Rich, Sheshatshiu man.**

MONEY NOW CONTROLS OUR LIVES

The cost of living is very high nowadays. Since some of us work 40-hour schedules and have jobs, prices have been raised. Some of us say that since we have been settled in the community, we are always hungry.

We don't do much any more. We don't work that good or very hard these days. Jobs have replaced trapping. Jobs have slowly grasped people to stay permanently in the villages. But there are hardly any jobs and this is bad. We used to live with little or no money, but now we really depend on money in our lives. Money has created a lot of new problems in our lives.

"Money is the number one killer in the community. We have lost respect for ourselves. It's like money is an addiction. Any government funding that exists is like a drug. We are addicted to it, so it is really hard to give it up. Like with bingo or gambling - some people call it sobriety. When money is flashed before them, they are lost, they go into a deep sleep. What does sobriety really mean? It's hard to understand.

The problem we also have is we are so scared because the things that exist today are not explainable. They are so new to us. The whole world changed right under our feet. We are lost. Sometimes we

talk about not taking government money any more. Then people say we should take the money because it is our land that they have taken. We should forget about the money for now because we can't plan with the money these days. We have tried to plan with the money but things have just gotten worse." **Kanikuen Pinashue, Sheshatshiu man.**

A number of us say that we don't know how to spend money. For example, bingo has become a problem for Innu in Sheshatshit.

"When we receive our cheques, all the money goes to bingo halls. Our children are hungry because we have not used our money wisely." **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu community workshop.**

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO OUR CHILDREN?

"Before settlement, the kids were good. Now they are having problems. The government is responsible for this. Ever since the government has started helping the Innu, there have been problems occurring." **Etuetish, Utshimassiu man.**

Our children have changed a lot from the old days. They are suffering now and things are getting worse. Some of us say that our children are too neglected today. Some of us say we are not looking after our children very well, although others disagree.

"People are always spending money on bingo and not on their children. There is a child in this picture. This child is neglected and this child was beaten by the other kids because he is not well looked after by the parents." **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu workshop.**

"In the community, there is a lot of drinking, and people go to bingo a lot. There are two ways of looking at these things. Some people say we neglect our children when we go to bingo. And a lot of people say they neglect their children when they are drinking, but it is not true." **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu workshop.**

LISTEN TO THE CHILDREN

"The good things about the community include unity, school, the church, stores, the hospital, playing pool, power lines and the RCMP. Having the clinic in the community is good, as well as the Innu Nation, the Band Council and the Resource Centre. Going hunting and fishing with people around the community is good too. The good thing in the community is going to the country. Some kids like alcohol like red, red wine, Toronto Blue Jay's Labatt's Blue, Ice Beer, Big Dipper Wine, and Labatt's Wildcat beer." **Children's group discussions, Sheshatshiu school workshop.**

"The bad things in the community include drugs - marijuana, cocaine, acid and pills, cigarettes or smokes, beer and Black Tower wine, and gas sniffing. Kids do not like alcohol. People shouldn't drink and drive, or smoke until they die. Children shouldn't hang onto trucks and cars and they shouldn't play with lighters and matches. The garbage is not good as well as the RCMP, politics, the church and low-level flying. Kids should not have sex. Parents shouldn't leave their kids when they are drunk. We need more street lights." **Children's discussions, Sheshatshiu school workshop.**

FAMILY BREAKDOWN

"We purely taught our children in the old days. We spent a lot of time in nutshimit. We had control of our children. Families were close then. The circle of the family has been broken." **Mani Katinen Nuna, Sheshatshiu woman.**

Most of us agree that there is a serious generation gap in our communities. Some parents and children don't seem to be getting along. This is another area of our lives over which we have lost control. Today some kids are in control of their parents. They no longer obey their parents. It never used to be like that before. It was the other way around. Young people used to obey their parents.

"I see kids today have too easy movements from their parents. They get their way too much. There is no more control within the family. Something should be done about this. Even Social Services steps in on family disputes when spanking is involved. Discipline is not allowed any more." **Aniet Budden, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"I don't like the dances that are held every night and the way the youth handle this. People or the women are talking about this. Sometimes small children are abandoned. I think it is not good. I hear elders are complaining they can't sleep." **Ueniam, Utshimassiu elder.**

Some parents say that children have their own minds and don't care about their parents' advice any more.

"In the old days, young people could not get married without the approval of both their parents. Now they don't care about what their parents say. There are common-law relationships. Some of them are long-term; they could get married." **Mani Ann Selma, Sheshatshiu elder.**

KIDS ARE TOO INFLUENCED

Some of us believe that the breakdown of our families is because there is too much influence from the white society on our young people today. It is a major breakdown. Nowadays, kids just want to have fun. Some people think the young generation doesn't listen any more because of the books they read. They are exposed to television, music Nintendo, video tapes, and other influences. Then they copy them in how they act and talk. They come home very late at night from the dances or wherever. Some elders don't like this. And the kids are vandalizing things. Kids used to have more respect.

"I am from Uashat. Young people have completely lost their way of life over there. They watch videos and go to dances. But I believe the way of life can be brought back to them." **Shamanis Asta, Sheshatshiu man.**

Another major problem since we have moved into these communities, young people and teenagers have lost their traditions. For example, kids today don't eat nutshimit mitshem. They always want modern foods such as hamburgers, pork chops and so on. Another example is that a lot of young people won't do anything for you except if they get paid. They don't have the values we used to have. Some people say they are too lazy.

"I do not know where to turn to. I don't want to live the non-Innu way of life. I would prefer to

follow the Innu culture. Many kids and teenagers follow the non-Innu culture. I would prefer that elders teach us young people about our traditions and customs. I want to be Innu." **Eskueu Milley, Sheshatshiu youth.**

WE DON'T RESPECT OUR ELDERS

"There is not one elder here that I used to know, only young people. Did you notice that? Our elders of the past are all gone now along with their knowledge and wisdom. If people know the knowledge, maybe they just won't tell you young people. But if I know the knowledge and the wisdom of our spirituality and beliefs, I would tell you but I am shy." **Shimunish, Utshimassiu man.**

Our elders are the ones who have the answers and can open the doors to the future for us. We don't respect our elders and this is a major problem. We need them to teach us about our culture. We must help and support our elders before they die.

"Today we don't use our traditional ways. The younger generation doesn't respect our elders enough. They don't respect our opinions. That's why I lost interest in attending meetings." **Matshias Pone, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"Right now I'm living by myself. My husband died years ago. There are a lot of people here in Sheshatshit. Now I never see anybody. It is very difficult to get help from people in Sheshatshit. This hurts me a lot to say this. I find it very difficult how some people don't respect their relatives. They don't give them anything when they are asked. We used to give each other food and visit each other. Elders were given food and they would visit each other. But now when I visit an elder, people laugh at me. They make fun of me and the other elder.

I have a tent set up behind my house. I wait for my grandchildren to come and ask questions about the animals, how to clean the animals. That is why I have my tent set up. I almost never see people come and ask questions. That is what is happening to the elders. Like everybody, I like it when Innu people come into my house. I always talk to them and I talk to them about the good things. Sometimes when my son-in-law comes into my house, I give him cooked food like caribou. I like my son-in-law.

Now young people are spending too much time with a pencil. They should visit the elders and ask questions. If only young people now could just take the words from the elders. The children know everything in English, yet they don't the traditional words. Here I am trying to teach them the words that I know, giving them advice, and yet every time they laugh at me. I talk to my kids. They won't listen to my advice. I have a foster child who is a boy, and I tell him a lot of things of what I know but he just laughs at me. His grandfather died but his spirit is still living. I tell him a lot of things every single day, but he doesn't seem to listen to me any more.

I don't work as hard as I used to, just slowly now. I am very tired when I give advice to my grandkids. Some of them don't listen to me. Only one grandchild comes to me and I give good advice to her. She told me she should have listened to my advice about her marriage. If she had, she would not be where she is today. I am not laughing at my grandchildren. Even if I give her advice and she didn't listen, she learned from her mistakes.

It is unbelievable that I live by myself when there is a lot of people here. When I was young, I was taught everything about our traditional skills and to respect the elders. People shouldn't be laughing at what people are saying. After sometimes when there are meetings, people go home and they make fun of the elders and what people are saying. It is very serious what I am saying. Like what I am saying today, you shouldn't laugh at what I am saying.

This is probably the last meeting I will do this for you young people. I feel bad to continue on because I don't think you young people will listen to what I have to say." **Mani Matinen Mishen, Sheshatshiu community workshop.**

("Something happened yesterday, someone came to me and brought a porcupine to my house. This is one of the nicest things that anyone has ever done to me." **Mani Matinen Mishen, Sheshatshiu community workshop on the second day.)**

"When I ask my grandchildren to do something for me, they don't listen to me. But when they go to school, they listen because they are spoken in English in school. It is true that long ago people used to respect each other and the wild animals, the bones. Now sometimes when I try to tell something to my grandchildren, they could almost attack you right now. It is completely different." **Mani Ann Selma, Sheshatshiu elder.**

We have heard the elders say these things to us over and over again. The elders have been telling us for a long time what young people have done to them. Many young people now are also concerned about how the elders are being treated. They worry that we have very few elders. We need to talk to them while they are still around. Some people are really making efforts to do this.

"I learned about our traditional medicines at the camp for the families and the kids who came back from Poundmakers. The things our elders were showing the other elders were things I didn't know before. One elder was showing the plants they used for medicine. The sweat lodge is very important. I watch the elders in the sweat, seeing how they cleansed themselves. The younger people are learning stuff from the elders. That is happening now. We won't lose it all. The elders seem like they have started talking." **Epa, Utshimassiu woman.**

"Our culture is coming back to life right now with young people going into country. The elders are teaching them how to look after bones. It is on everybody's mind that we have to find ways to deal with some of these issues. One guy was telling me he was in the country with his grandfather. There were things he didn't know, but his grandfather taught him how to take care of the bear. These things should happen more. The link is with the elders. The elders have so much knowledge of the past that we need to learn." **Kiti, Utshimassiu woman.**

DIVISIONS IN THE COMMUNITY

"There never used to be any gossip. People right now fight each other over little things, or they argue. Things are very different now than they were before when people set up tents together and were able to communicate with each other very well. There was never any arguments or gossip against each other, or prejudices." **Mishen Pastin, Sheshatshiu elder.**

We don't get along with each other when we are in our villages. People used to visit each other in their tents, just to talk. Now unless someone wants something, that is the only time people visit each other. Now in the villages, a lot of people don't talk to each other at all. Instead, they talk about each other and put one another down. They don't feel good about themselves. There is so much jealousy. We are always offending each other by all means like gossiping. People who have problems talk about other people who are doing good. There is always so much fighting. People are divided so much. We can't help each other any more. We have no motivation to do things. Some of us say we don't really know why this happens.

"People don't recognize each other. Even if we work in different places - the Band Council, the Innu Nation, the Parish Council, Social Services, the group home or alcohol program, we don't recognize or know each other. We have to get together and know each other and the problems we face here in the community." **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu workshop.**

NO HELPING AND SHARING

"People used to do everything in respect and support of each other. People would travel 40 or 60 miles to help people who were hungry. No money was involved. It was pure love and respect of one another. My father told me many times that he travelled a lot to help people. Nowadays if somebody got sick, nobody would help. They just call the Band Council. This is the scary thing, that we don't help each other any more." **Kanikuen Pinashue, Sheshatshiu man.**

There used to be a lot of sharing. We used to work together and help each other. For example, one man would make a canoe and other men would help him. But some of us don't see any of that happening today.

"Right now when people are working for somebody, they always get paid. They don't do it voluntary. Before the Innu sometimes would make something like a stove or snowshoes. They would do it free and help each other out. Now we have to spend a lot of money for people to do things for us." **Mani Ann Selma, Sheshatshiu elder.**

ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

A PERSONAL STORY

"When we came to live in the community, my parents started drinking. It was really bad. It hurt everybody in the family. My sisters and I started drinking too. There was a lot of violence. When we were in the country, we used to listen to my parents all the time when they wanted us to do something. But in the community, we never listened to them.

My parents started drinking because there was nothing to do; there were no jobs in the community. But when I was really young, we would be out in the country and come back to the community. My father had a job with the priest working on the houses. Those days were good even if we were in the community. A lot of people were always helping one another. Men would be out hunting together. They would be playing checkers or cards all night. Women used to do things together too to help one another. Instead of going to home brew, people were always having meals together. The women would make a big pot of food, people would help themselves. There would be a big pot of tea. This would happen on the weekends, rather than when we were in school.

As I got older, I didn't see this happening much. There was more drinking. Now, women are fighting one another. Women used to tell their girls not to do stuff, but now they just let things go. A lot of women are drinking with their husbands too. When I was young, my dad would drink but my mother was always with us. When she started drinking it got really bad. We were left by ourselves, we had to look after ourselves. In the mornings when it was school, we would sleep in. There would be no meals on for us. They would be drinking very early.

My parents drinking would really hurt me. I always felt like my parents didn't want me. I felt like they didn't love us when they turned to booze. It still hurts.

When they were in the country when we were getting older, they used to drink in the country too. When we knew we were getting ready to go, we would run away. We didn't want to go because of the booze. We would walk back to the community. We would have to do all the work they would tell us. I didn't want to be around them when they were drinking. They would stay up all night.

We always had to try to make them happy and we thought they would stop drinking if we listened. But even when we listened to them they wouldn't stop drinking. We would have to cook the meals. They would get us up in the middle of the night telling us to cook meals. When my parents would be out drinking, my older sister looked after us. She was like a mother. She would cook meals and do the laundry. My dad used to hit us when he would get really mad. My other sister was the hard case and she would fight my parents.

They would want us to get water to make their home brew. We used to help them. They would show us how and we used to make it for them. It's like enabling, that's what my sisters and I were doing. To make them happy, we had to do it.

When my parents were drinking, we didn't want to stay home. We would go to my aunt's house and spend time there. Then we started to act up. We were drinking; we missed a lot of school. We started sniffing gas. There was nothing for us to do in the community.

The home brew bucket was more important to my parents than the children. They would take it with them when they went out in the country. But when I was little, there was no home brew, just as I got older." **Utshimassiu woman.**

MORE ALCOHOL IN OUR LIVES

Alcohol never existed before like today. The problem has gotten worse and worse over the years. At first, people made home brew when they visited each other, but they never drank so much and they would go home and do their duties. Alcohol is more accessible these days. Especially in Sheshatshit you go up to Goose Bay and buy as much as you need to buy. In Utshimassits, people make too much home brew. We have seen a lot of changes since alcohol has been in our communities.

"Now when people receive their cheques from the post office, they pay their bills and buy a little bit of groceries. What ever is left will be gone to the Valley to get alcohol. Sometimes when the people drink they don't know when to stop and they get into trouble. Then the RCMP will come around."
Mishen Pastin, Sheshatshiu elder.

"Alcohol is also a main player in disrupting our lives. People don't trust each other now. We are falling apart. People don't talk to each other now. There was a friendlier atmosphere before. We are too far apart and can't help each other any more." **Pinamen Penunsi, Sheshatshiu woman.**

DEATH AND SOCIAL CHAOS

Many of us say alcohol is the biggest problem in our communities. Too many people have died because of alcohol. It is destroying our way of life. Many of us are sick from having drank so much alcohol. Substance abuse is the number one disease. One leader called it Mr. Alcohol the Destroyer. In Utshimassits, some of us call it "plastic".

"I started drinking when I was 17 years old. I have been exposed to a lot of alcoholism; I have seen a lot of things. Two of my sisters died from alcohol, as well as my brother-in-law. My stepbrother Simon Pasteen's death was also alcohol-related. I have started to see clearly how damaging alcohol can be." **Napess Pone, Sheshatshiu man.**

Some of us say we don't know when to stop. When people say this is the cure for hangovers, it only makes things worse and worse. When we drink, we are neglecting ourselves, our children and each other. Most of us have experienced tragedies in our lives because of alcohol. This is where a lot of social problems happen. Innu workers at Social Services say that alcoholism is behind all the problems they have to deal with.

"At Social Services, we're working almost 24 hours a day dealing with problems that come up because of people's drinking. People beat up their wives and children. Sexual abuse is happening. Kids are neglected. Most of our time is spent dealing with the family crisis caused by alcohol problems. Kids get into trouble. They want to get out their anger because they are not getting the love and care from their parents, so they vent their anger at buildings and people. They break into homes. They take booze from their parents when they are very young. They think it's normal: "My parents are doing it."

All community problems go back to the root which is alcoholism. When people get jobs, they drink and get fired. They don't spend the money on their kids but on bingo and booze. People have no self worth. The Spirit is dead for them in them." **Iskuess Osmond, Sheshatshiu Community Services Worker.**

WHY WE DRINK

Some of us say that our dependency on governments and their money is the reason why people drink. We are too dependent on money, and don't want to go in the country because there is too much happening in the community. That is the reason why the young people won't go in the country today. We have lost ourselves and our culture. So we drink too much.

Some people say we drink because our lives are so hard in these villages. That is why we have a lot of suicides. Especially in Utshimassits, it is hard to stay sober because the housing

conditions and the water conditions are so bad.

Some people say that it is loneliness that makes them drink. Even after people have stopped drinking they still think about doing it. They think they will have more friends if they do. When you drink, you have a lot of friends. Non-drinkers say that they have lost friends when they quit drinking. They don't see their old friends because they don't visit each other any more. We don't visit each other any more except if we have alcohol. Also people pressure each other to drink even when we have quit.

When somebody is sick from drinking, they can't stop drinking. It's like their medicine. They drink when they have a bad hangover to feel better. A lot of people have in their homes the white stuff to drink when you have an upset stomach.

"I used to have a problem with drinking before. I gave it up long ago now. I realized I had a problem with alcoholism and that is the reason I have given it up. Sometimes people offer me a drink, but I don't take it. When I say no, they say, "Who are you? What kind of a person are you? Are you a saint?" I tell them no. But I did give it up because of God." **Mani Matinen Mishen, Sheshatshiu elder.**

Sexual abuse is another reason people drink. Disclosures have been made in our communities and there will be more. We don't know how to deal with this and many of us need healing. It's not only sexual abuse, but physical and mental abuse too. Victims are living with a lot of pain and we know the abusers are sick. Many of us don't believe the court system is the way to deal with this problem. It is not safe for victims and they are not winning. Abusers are not getting helped, but we have not developed another way to help people who are dealing with these problems. This has created extra stress and conflict in our communities.

NOT ADMITTING TO THE PROBLEM

Some of us believe that denial of the problem of alcoholism keeps people from talking about this problem. There are people that don't admit there is a problem and don't want to help themselves. Alcohol is really bothering the children but some parents don't want to do anything about it. People have to really find themselves first; everyone has to decide to quit themselves. They have to say "That's enough for me. I'm going to think about my kids and my wife or husband." Some have to hit rock bottom before they stop.

"The last century brought bad years for the Innu. It brought a high rate of alcohol, drugs and other substance abuse. Because these were brought from the outside, we were curious and wanted to try them and feel the effect of these abuses. We did not realize the effects of these things. We woke up and did not realize where we are. But now, we are on our feet again. It will be a long process of healing. We must ask our elders for their advice on where to go from here." **Kashetai, Utshimassiu man.**

HEALING OURSELVES

"I encourage Innu people to see that alcohol is not the answer to their problems. We must help one another and respect each other at all times. We will live a healthy lifestyle and we will all work together and strive for what we need to regain control of our lives." **Napess Pone, Sheshatshiu man.**

A number of us have begun talking about alcoholism and trying to understand what it has done to our lives. How can we put an end to it? For some people, it is not easy.

"Even if you stop drinking, your life will not be perfect, but you're working hard to bring up your self-esteem and worth. There will be ups and downs. As individuals, we all have to work hard to make that work. I struggled with my drinking. I gave up for five years, I fell, picked myself up again, still struggled. Now it's been 12 years since I stopped drinking." **Sheshatshiu woman.**

A number of services are available in our communities to help people deal with their drinking problems. We have AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) meetings and women's circles in our communities. Men also have their meetings. We talk about other problems like sexual abuse. Some people go to the communities' Alcohol Programs for counselling. In both communities, sweat lodges have been set up to help people with their healing.

"In the summer, we organized a women's camp to learn about culture. We had a healing circle there too and a sweat lodge. We started working together and there was a lot of communicating there. We plan to have another one next summer again. The women started getting together Christmas presents for the kids. Every month this year, the women gathered together and had birthday parties, baby showers, just to get together.

Men also had their meetings. They talk about culture and it was a healing circle for them. The kids have a Youth Council that organize games for youth. There are gym nights for women and men. Sometimes, maybe twice a year, the community gets together to play Innu games. The community has a gathering every year. They camp in the Nutuaiashish (Sango) area, where people want to move.

Today I see half of the community has quit drinking. Sobriety is very high here. Only forty adults maybe and youth are still drinking. People recognize how alcohol has affected the community. They now have AA to go to. They see support from other sober people. They are realizing that alcohol is no good for them. It is just ruining their lives, their health and their families." **Nupi, Utshimassiu Alcohol Program worker.**

TREATMENT PROGRAMS AND EDUCATION

A number of us in both Sheshatshit and Utshimassits have been out to treatment to get healing for our alcohol problems. We've gone out to programs in the Atlantic area, in Quebec, Ontario and out West. Some of us say treatment programs have helped us a lot. For example, in Utshimassits this year, 17 children were sent out to Poundmakers, a treatment centre in Alberta. The hardest part was that we had to send them so far away, but there was nothing here for them. The leaders say that they knew how devastating solvent abuse is on young bodies. They learned this at conferences. But some parents don't know the effects of gas sniffing.

"Education is needed to teach the older people about some of the things the children are doing which are damaging. There are drugs outside that are not here yet. We need to educate the young people and elders that these drugs exist and we need to tell our children not to get involved with these drugs. The drugs are getting into the community now. Outside people are bringing them in." **Kiti, Utshimassits.**

Workshops have been held in both communities to provide education on substance abuse. Many people have attended these. In Utshimassits, The Youth Council organized workshops like "Flying on Your Own" by Bearwoman and Associates. The Alcohol Programs have also held different workshops on different topics for the community. The Nechi Institute from Alberta has also offered training programs for people from both communities.

"The Nechi workshop was very good. It opened my eyes a lot to the way I was looking at drinking and my attitude towards people. I have walked that road. I was awakening but not facing the reality about drinking and what it does to us. This workshop worked because the front line workers were there. We were saying we should support each other with our problems of alcoholism and co-dependency. When we talked 12 of us in a group, I found out why I am burned out, why I feel overwhelmed.

We are all co-dependent of each other, even between partners like husbands and wives. When I was angry, I kept it inside. I kept all my feelings inside, but through this workshop I found out I could talk about it, like with my husband, how he used to hit me before. I talked to him about it and all the pain came out. I just sat there and cried. He held me, not talking but taking responsibility for what he did. I used to do a lot of what we call displacements, like when I'm angry at my husband, but I take it out on my kids who are weaker. I am still doing this and I see others doing it all the time.

Like the man at the workshop said, we are solely responsible for our thoughts, actions and feelings. I really believe that." **Sheshatshiu woman.**

DIFFERENT OPINIONS ON HEALING

Not everyone believes that these programs and workshops help us. There is not one solution to our problems. There are different opinions on these workshops and programs.

"In terms of long term solutions, if you're talking about the alcohol problem which is the major problem, I think it needs to be solved by the individual. It won't be solved by going to Apenam or going on expensive trips to treatment centres. I went through all this myself. I look back on what it did or didn't do for me. Would I be able to solve my own problems without these centres? It is in the power of the individual to solve his own problems. You can't solve someone else's problem. If I put my mind to it, like when I quit smoking for example; I did it by putting my mind to it. People use treatment centres as the solution to their drinking problem, but I feel it is not the solution. You have to understand the problem you have first, like alcoholism. The first thing I did was try to understand what was wrong with me. I thought about it and that's how I fought it." **Sheshatshiu man.**

HEALING IN NUTSHIMIT

Some people ask to go to the country to hunt and fish. They say that is their way of healing when they go on the boat hunting. Some say that going to the country is better than going out to a treatment program.

"The culture in nutshimit is healing. There is a lot of healing in the old ways. The land, if you pray to the land and the animals, and to your family, that is part of healing. Culture is part of healing.

Like if you were in the country for a year, I know you would feel better. There is no alcohol or drugs, or people abusing other people. It's not out there." **Nupi Tshakapesh, Utshimassiu Alcohol Program worker.**

But others say that when people with a drinking problem go to the country, it is like they are running away from all their problems in the community. Sometimes they come with you to the country.

"People still have problems even when they are in the country. They have so much pain inside, the country is not enough to help them. Sometimes in the country kids still sniff. One person tried to commit suicide even in the country. People still need treatment. People hold their pain inside; they're not showing it. I have a lot of pain inside me now. If I go to the country I will be happy out there, but the problem will still be inside me. It's like running away from it instead of dealing with it." **Utshimassiu woman.**

And when people return to the community, the problems are still there. They start drinking all over again and nothing has changed. Going to the country does not fix their problems. These problems hit them again; they are lonely again. They bo back to drinking to cope. They go out, feel really good, but then come back and see people drinking in the community. They see themselves falling down again.

They need more than the country to heal. They need help from treatment and counselling. They should attend meetings like AA meetings or other support groups. Some people say that the country would be a good place for this counselling and treatment. Maybe when people are in the barrens, they should get their anger out. They should yell out. We could have our own treatment centre in the country or the barrens. This would be a good place for people to express their feelings and heal their spirit.

TAKING BACK THE CONTROL

"Some of the kids know what the government is doing to us, and they are fighting against what the government is doing. Their kids will take over this fight against government. They will try to see what the government is really doing. The things we have been doing like protesting, blocking the runways, going to Ottawa, with these kinds of things we are showing our children how to be strong, how to do these things to fight for their rights." **Akatish, Utshimassiu woman.**

We have many social problems in our communities, problems such as sexual abuse, physical abuse, and there is mental abuse in schools. We have suicides, family violence, crime, vandalism. Some of us say these are priority issues for us to deal with. We have to find solutions to these problems, to change how we live here in the community. For example, we are realizing how much we have destroyed or neglected the elders and the children. Our eyes are being opened.

"We have dealt with tragedies in this community. When the fire happened and the children died, people came together to talk about problems and out of this came Gathering Voices. When the six children were found sniffing in January, we put together Hearing the Voices, a seven-point plan of what was needed to deal with that crisis. People came together again to find the solutions needed. The other tragedy we have been faced with is the disclosures being made about sexual abuse.

There are so many problems and issues for us to be dealing with. Even a small issue is major for some people. Like getting water is still a major problem. It is an issue that still needs to be dealt with in the community. We are taking steps to correct some of these problems. We have been discussing these issues at committee meetings; we've been making the right choices, finding solutions." **Kiti, Utshimassiu woman.**

The church and the governments agencies used to make decisions for us, and look where it got us. People realize this, and we have started to act on this. We are beginning to address our community problems ourselves. Some people are taking control of their own lives. We have done a lot of research into different aspects of our lives and issues we need to address. We are making demands to the government. We want responses because so many promises were made and none were kept. We think it is about time that governments make commitments. This time they should implement them. People are making sure they keep their promises. Many of us say we will protest if these commitments are broken again. Steps will be taken to correct this.

In Utshimassits, an important step in taking control happened last year when the community organized an inquiry into itself. Some people in the community say that now people are more aware of the problems and more willing to come forward and offer solutions. People often say now that they are the ones who will find the solutions to problems. Some of the recommendations made in the Inquiry report are being implemented now, like for example, the recommendation to go back to the country - we are seeing a lot of young people going to nutshimit.

In Utshimassits, another major step in regaining control over our lives is planning for relocation. Although many of us are the first to admit that relocation will not be the solution to all our problems, relocation is a number one priority for us right now. We also know that we have to deal with the problems in the village, and leave them there. We are trying to have a new beginning in our new village, a new life for the next generation. We are waiting now to see if the new federal government will finally assume its legal responsibilities regarding our case.

"We are acting on the people's recommendations in ***Gathering Voices*** ***(The People's Inquiry)*** *to voice our opinion, to make choices, to make the decisions that will affect their children and future generations. One of the recommendations in the People's Inquiry was that people should make their own choices about relocation. The people, children and elders, are starting to make those decisions. Taking the step to relocate is certainly one of the ways to make our community whole again, to make people well again. The place where we are now was not selected by the people. So, we are going through a process where the people are consulted; the people are making the decisions. We are making the choices now."* **Kiti, Utshimassiu woman.**

This is a very slow process, but in both communities we are also beginning to take control of the different institutions.

The Innu Nation is responsible for asserting political and land rights for the Innu of Sheshatshit and Utshimassits. It also is developing health, justice, social, education, environment, economic and communications programs. At this time, twenty-three people work for the Innu Nation out of Sheshatshit and 12 in Utshimassits.

Our Band Councils are now staffed by 19 people in Utshimassits and 11 in Sheshatshit. The Councils are responsible for providing community services such as housing, water and sewer, garbage collection and recreation programs. They also administer the outpost program.

A number of young people have been going out to get training, with the goal of eventually taking over the various agencies. Some of our people have completed their teacher training and others continue to take courses being offered through the Teacher Education Program for Labrador. We have nine certified Innu teachers, 11 teacher aids, two principal's assistants and one guidance counsellor's assistant working in our schools, as well as 17 or so teachers in training.

"In Sheshatshit, we have been trying for years to take control of our school. We have held public meetings, hired a consultant to undertake a community survey and we have met with the present R.C. School Board and with governments about this. Last year the provincial government offered us subcommittee to the R.C. School Board status with control over finances, the Innu Curriculum Centre and staffing. We would not have control of curriculum and teachers would still be members of the Newfoundland Teachers Association. We turned down their offer because we want full control. We had a school committee which was given token responsibilities from the present school board while we negotiated for our own school board. We were only being asked to make decisions that Gerry Butler, the assistant superintendent didn't want to. The committee was dissolved early this year when the provincial government stopped all negotiations with the Innu Nation over our hydro meters protest. We want all or nothing. We will continue to struggle to take control of the education of our children." **Napaen Kanikuen, Sheshatshiu man.**

Five people from our two communities have graduated as peacekeepers and three more are in training. In Utshimassits, four have been hired by the Band Council to police the community after the provincial government refused to recognize or fund them. We have two Innu court workers - one full-time in Sheshatshit and one part-time in Utshimassits, to help people understand the system and their rights.

"Our own police officers can relate to their people; they understand what people are going through. We want our own people working for us. We have proved that we can work with each other even though the provincial government is not supporting us. This is what is happening with our police officers, even if we have to fight hard to get them recognized. It doesn't really matter how the government sees them as long as the community sees them as police officers." **Kiti, Utshimassiu woman.**

"We are still struggling to get funding for our own peacekeepers. These peacekeepers are not like the RCMP who come to take people away. Our peacekeepers are like social workers. They are willing to do counselling if people need it. But they are still needing office space." **Tshash, Utshimassiu man.**

People have also gone out now to nursing programs. We have one graduate nurse in Sheshatshit who works at the Melville Hospital in Goose Bay. Three others are now in training and another is studying medicine. The Innu Nation Health Commission is staffed by a coordinator, Community Health Representatives in each community, respite workers and the workers at the Innu-run health

clinic in Sheshatshit.

With regards to Social Services, we have Innu people working there, six in Sheshatshit and four in Utshimassits, but they still have to follow the government's policies. Seven others work at the group home. Some of our workers are thinking about getting training as social workers. We don't make decisions about the programs or policies of Social Services in our communities and this will have to change.

The Alcohol Programs are staffed by four in Utshimassits and two in Sheshatshit.

We have also organized a number of community-based training programs. In Utshimassits, the Youth Leadership Development Program employs two young adults. There have been a few snags with the program, but the young people are making progress and will be able to take on leadership roles. The community also has a Youth Council.

In both communities the Band Councils have set up training programs for housing repairs and new housing construction. In Utshimassits, 30 people were trained this year so we don't have to depend on people from outside coming into the community and taking the jobs. Some of these training programs have been joint projects with the Labrador Community College. This year in Sheshatshit, an archaeological training project was carried out as well as a literacy training project which incorporates Innu history education and how to write the old Innueimun. Plans for a white fish fisheries training project are also underway.

In Utshimassits, the leaders are negotiating with government to take over the government store. The first Innu business, a restaurant, opened this fall and is doing well. In Sheshatshit, the Innu Development Corporation has conducted a community survey to look at various options regarding a community store. The results indicate that the community wants its own Innu-run store. The Corporation is also working on setting up a laundromat and a gas bar in Sheshatshit.

So slow progress is being made with regard to taking control of various agencies. Over the last few years, our leaders have become more accountable to the communities. There are still problems with this, but it is better than it used to be. For example, leaders in both our communities hold more meetings to let people know what is going on. This is where people can tell the leaders what they want them to do. There are a lot of consultations going on between Innu people. There are meetings on low-level flying, sexual abuse, the school, relocation in Utshimassits, what to do with the outpost program, and so on.

It was at one of these meetings that people in Utshimassits told the leaders they didn't want people from outside coming in to fix their homes. They wanted to do it themselves. After the crisis of gas-sniffing in Utshimassits last winter, community meetings were held to try to figure out what to do with the children who needed help desperately. It was at this meeting that decisions were made about what to do, and needs were identified. Another recent meeting was held to address the ongoing problems of sniffing and alcohol abuse, and it was decided to convert the nurses' residence into a safe house for women and children.

People have also been trying hard to make these meetings work better. For example, in

Utshimassits, there has been 100 percent sobriety in people attending all the meetings for the relocation or renewal committee. We have never seen this before. This is a sign that people are taking the process seriously. And they are taking the necessary steps to move in the right direction for the whole community.

Many of us realize it will be hard to make changes, but we are trying to do it one day at a time. There are problems that we are just beginning to try to deal with. For example, there is still a lot of sexual abuse going on. There are a lot of unreported cases.

We are also getting help from the outside in our struggles. For example, the recent Canadian Human Rights Commission report made a lot of strong recommendations to governments that we agree with.

"We are headed in the right direction. Even if we don't plan this stuff, we are still directed. I am very confident. Some people have stressed that it will be a long hard battle. We can see obstructions along the way. But we are getting our message across to the federal and provincial governments. Still it will be a long hard battle for us. We have been warned about that from some people." **Tshash, Utshimassiu man.**

"We are now at a very critical stage in the community's and in people's lives. We are seeing people come together to find solutions, make the right choices and changes for our children and future generations. We are facing up to and dealing with the issues and problems at hand. We will become a model for other Native communities across Canada that have similar problems to us. We will be able to show other people how we have dealt with our problems." **Kiti, Utshimassiu woman.**

LIFE IN THE COUNTRY TODAY: THE GOOD AND THE BAD

"When people were first settled in the communities, we missed the old ways of the country, the traditional foods, the way we used to live. We have always been thinking of going back to living in the country. Some of us wanted to go back to the country. In this community, people are always drinking, but in the country they are sober for three or four months. When people started living here, there were a lot of changes. Ever since settlement, people don't feel at home, they feel like something is wrong, not like it used to be in the country. It's no good in the community. The country is where the people's lives are, where the things we depend on like the caribou are. You'll never hear Innu say that they don't like the country. You'll only hear good things about the country. But people will tell you they don't like it in the community. People just came back from the country and say they miss the country. They were always busy, like with drying caribou meat, right up until they went to sleep. This is how we used to live, long ago. We work until we can't see what we're doing, until it's time to go to bed." **Akatish and Etuetish, Utshimassiu couple.**

"I went to the country with my grandparents when I was young. I really enjoyed it when I saw them, how they worked. We did everything together like getting wood. I liked seeing my grandmother cutting up the animals and getting the feathers off the goose and ducks. I was there maybe a couple of months. It was very peaceful; we could play there. My cousin and I played outside. I learned how to cut wood with a small axe. My grandfather and grandmother were very happy in the country. They were very proud living the old ways. We ate caribou stomach. My grandmother cooked it every morning. I didn't like it because the colour was black. I felt like throwing up the first time. But I didn't want to disappoint my grandmother, so I ate it every morning. And then I got to really like it. And I got used to eating geese and ducks. I got used to eating those kinds of things. Now the young don't follow the ways of their ancestors and our elders." **Nupi, Utshimassiu woman.**

Many of us still spend time in the country. Some have never stopped going. There are families who didn't listen to the warnings of the priests, Social Services or school authorities. They didn't send their children to school. They didn't care if their family allowances were cut off. Parents or grandparents continued to bring their children to nutshimit.

"I was taught in school because the priest persuaded my parents to stay in the community. But in 1973 when I was 13 and my father died, I went to the country with my grandfather. He taught me how to clean the caribou. I never knew these things before. But my grandfather taught me how to do these traditional skills. I travelled in the country by foot. I learned a lot of things in the country. In the summer, we do a lot of fishing and hunting. I still do a lot of camping with my mother. But my sisters and her don't last very long in the country and two of my children don't like the country life. I stay a long time in the country even if people go back and forth. There is nothing for me here in the community. I prefer living in the country. My son Antane, he's probably following in my footsteps. He's the one who comes with me and stays a long time." **Napess Ashini, Sheshatshiu man.**

When the outpost program was started up, more of us started going to the country regularly. And today still more people are going, even young people who have never spent time in the country before are going.

"I always had the fear before that if our elders like Mistepinip, Miste-Tuet, Tshenu, Shushep, if those people fell ill, they wouldn't be able to go to the country and we would never learn the things they know about life in nutshimit. These are the people who go to the country regularly. If they stopped going, I thought young people would lose interest. Without those skills, we can't go into nutshimit. I never went to the country before this spring when I went for just one month. And when I was there in the fall, that fear was gone. I noticed that young people like Eric Mistenapeu have learned from their parents. They have the skills of nutshimit. There are children like Theresa Rich also, children of parents who frequently travelled inland in the spring and fall when they were young." **Tshash, Utshimassiu man.**

"When I was young, I really hated going to the country, but I never had a choice but to go with my family. Since then I never really bothered going to nutshimits. I was afraid I'd get homesick and bored. But since my two and half years of sobriety, I have been really wanting to go with my family to learn about our way of life. I know I made a big mistake to not bother or care about learning our traditions. I feel that it is extremely important for my children to participate in the outpost program because I know they will learn and I will too before I lose it." **Utshimassiu woman.**

"I find it very interesting that particularly young people like to go to nutshimit today even if they don't have the knowledge of the land, or the culture. A lot of young people, kids, many families are going to nutshimit. Before you would only have maybe four families going, they would scatter around. Today they travel in a group and stay in one place. Last summer there were three groups staying at different places. I find it interesting that many families are going to nutshimit at the same time." **Kaniekutet, Utshimassiu elder.**

THE GOOD LIFE

Elders say that once we are in nutshimit, we like it a lot. Not everyone agrees with this, but many people believe their lives are better in the country than in the community.

"I have way fewer problems in the country than when I am in the community. There is nothing in the country to make you upset, nothing to make you feel negative about yourself. We don't hear stories about anybody. The life is good. We enjoy it and we are happy. It is peaceful in the country. That's why people feel different. We are strong when we live in nutshimit and weak when we live in the community." **Mani Aten Pinashue, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"This family was in the country every year all the time with all the children. When they were back in the community, the kids would steal and vandalize their home, sniff gas, and do a lot of that stuff, but not when they spent a lot of time in the country." **Tamene, Utshimassiu man.**

"When I was there, even though I had a hard time, I found it good. It was the first time I ever travelled so far on foot. The boys who were with me were younger. They had more experience and were in better shape. But they were there to help me out. They laughed at me when, for example, I missed the duck I was shooting at. But you learn regardless of your age differences. There is always

going to be somebody out there to help you out." **Tshash, Utshimassiu man.**

People always go to nutshimit mostly in the fall and spring. For some of us, it is a welcome break from our jobs in the community. We get away from our communities, and its problems like beer and crime. For many of us, going to nutshimit is a very important part of our lives. There are many good things about going to nutshimit. It is like we are going home when we go to the country. People go to get away from the white man's world. Some of us, especially the elders get upset when they can't go to nutshimit in the spring or fall.

"When I was out in the country, I felt really good about myself. I felt more healthy, I was always happy there. I looked after myself. The land made me feel happy, going off hunting and walking, to see people killing the animals. We got a bear and people were sharing with one another. We got really close. We were sharing all the wild meats. We had sweats out there. People were really cheerful in the morning. Kids were happy too. The whole camp was happy. To be able to cut wood, carry water, like the land and the air is so clean." **Epa, Utshimassiu woman.**

"People like to go to nutshimit. That is where our roots are." **Mistamiam Tshak, Sheshatshiu man.**

OUR CULTURE IS STILL ALIVE

Although some of us will say that there is nothing left of our culture and how we used to live, many of us talk with pride about our culture that is still alive. For some people, things in nutshimit today have not changed much from years ago.

"Other women and I prepare meals for our husbands when they are away trapping. If they are delayed, we get our own wood, and we do the fillings of the snowshoes. We also clean the caribou skin and do the preparations for tanning them. The snowshoes will be used by the men to go hunting. When our husbands get the game, we clean it and prepare the meals. We also clean porcupine during the evenings when our husbands get home. There is a lot of work to be done when my husband is gone hunting." **Pinamen Penunsi, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"Sometimes the work in nutshimit is very hard. Like in the winter time, we made a hole in the ice using only an ice pick, not the modern technology ones used today. The ice was very thick and it was only when we could make a hole in the ice that we can have something to eat. In the winter, it is also hard to hunt because you can easily get frostbite. I would go to nutshimit in the spring time, anywhere, because I need to eat caribou meat again. Whenever Innu are in the country, we hunt and eat a lot of traditional food. We get to see the land and we are all happy." **Utshimaskueu, Utshimassiu elder.**

"I like to be alone with my family and my grandchildren in the country all the time like it was more in the old days. I don't like to be out there with a crowd of people. I don't mind if there are two other families." **Mani Aten Pinashue, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"When I was in the country, I did the things my mother used to do like skinning the caribou hide, learning how to dry meat. I would think about my grandmother and my mother. But I had to learn myself without depending on my mother because she was not there. If my mother was there, I

would have let her do all the work and not learned anything. I didn't have time to go for a walk in the mountains. There is always so much work to do around the tent. I like watching the people cleaning the caribou. I learned while I watch them." **Kitinish, Utshimassiu woman.**

NUTSHIMIT IS HARD WORK

"When the Innu people are in nutshimit, the whole family works together on their own. When a man travels to nutshimit, do you think everything is out there waiting for him?" **Shimunish, Utshimassiu man.**

In nutshimit, our Innu life still rotates around hard work and hunting for food. We don't have Social Services out there, but we go out hunting. We want to go where the caribou is roaming, where it is plentiful. One of the good things about nutshimit are the challenges we face out there. In the community, people just go to the store to get food and bring it home. In the country, there is always the challenge of finding wildlife, of figuring out where it is, of having to do things like going through rapids. This motivates people to find the food necessary for their families. We hunt for goose, caribou, partridge and so on. We take pride in what the hunters get when they come back from a trek. We work hard in others ways too, like getting wood.

"There are always things to do when you wake up in the morning in the country. When I was there, I was kind of expecting that I would have time to write in a diary. I didn't have time to do that or even to read a book." **Kiti, Utshimassiu woman.**

WE ARE HEALTHIER IN NUTSHIMIT

People get a lot of exercise in nutshimit and that is good. The exercise keeps people healthy, like when people go walking for hunting. Some people say a lot of Innu traditional medicines are used, not like in the clinic. And people are more healthy because of the food that we eat out in nutshimit.

"Sometimes people go to the country because they are hungry and they want to go hunting. The food in the store is too expensive and there is not enough." **Mata, Utshimassiu woman.**

We pay less if we get our food in nutshimit, and many of us say that country food is stronger. If you have enough wild game, you are not hungry, but if you buy food at the stores, you are always hungry and you always want to eat as well.

"When I am in the village, I don't like the food. It is weak and makes me hungry sooner. When I am in nutshimit, the wild food is stronger. We can go days without eating. The food's effect is longer and it makes us healthier. I don't like white food." **Ann Mishen, Sheshatshiu woman.**

MODERN THINGS IN NUTSHIMIT

There have been some changes to our lives in nutshimit. Now things are more modern. We use planes, machines and it is much easier. Some of us say these changes are for the better. They think there is no way that people could do what we used to do before, like all the walking. We wouldn't find anybody doing that today, only using modern things like planes and ski-doos.

"I still practise what my grandmother taught me years ago. I am very happy that I remember all the

things she taught me. My children also enjoy themselves and are very happy when they kill the wild food. I always tell my children about our ancestors, about how they used to live, like how they used dog teams and canoes. My children say that it would be nice if we could go back to the old ways and use the dog teams again. But I tell them it can't be done. Everything today is run by machines and they are a lot faster than a dog team." **Shanutish, Utshimassiu woman.**

CHILDREN LEARN IN NUTSHIMIT

"*Children do not get influenced by TV, movies and videos in nutshimit. They only learn about families, history, the land and nature, the animals and so on.*" **Tanien Ashini, Sheshatshiu man.**

Our children learn from their parents and grandparents in nutshimits. We feel different when we are in the country. We show our kids what to do and how to live. The kids look at their mothers and fathers as their role models. We have our own identity again. It is important the young experience and learn about this hard fulfilling lifestyle so they can use it to know what our ancestors went through.

"*I want to pass on what I know to my children. They will learn the skills and knowledge about nutshimit. Some of our elders still just use yesterday's tools, and that is what I like to see my children and grandchildren do. I don't use the white man's ways very much. I want my grandchildren to be able to continue our way of life in nutshimit.*" **Niui Pinashue, Sheshatshiu man.**

Parents and elders are passing their skills on to their children and grandchildren in nutshimit. Children learn how to carry the canoe, how to build things, how to make things like moccasins and snowshoes, how to hunt, what their parents eat. They can watch their parents carve up ducks and geese. By watching, they learn how to clean the animals and cook them. They do more things out in nutshimit. They learn to survive in the wilderness.

"*When my children talk about the work they do in nutshimit, they seem to enjoy it.*" **Shanutish, Utshimassiu woman.**

"*We always use our old ways because they are strong. We like our life in nutshimit and enjoy teaching our children or grandchildren about living in nutshimit. This is important. They copy us in nutshimit. Younger women are taught how to put boughs for the floor. Young men observe how the tents are put up. Through seeing things and practising, they learn. They keep things in their minds of what they see, hear or do in nutshimit for a long time. Children also listen to their parents. I like to go to the country. That is where I was born, where I lived all the time. I go to the country to sew clothes for my family, for the hunters.*" **Mani Aten Antane, Sheshatshiu elder.**

Another thing that happens is that children are more curious of what other animals exist outside the community. You don't see some of the animals in the villages. For example, bears are more accessible in the country; you have to go very far from the community to get bears. Children are distracted when they are in the community; they don't see how an animal is being cared for, whereas in the country the children spend a lot of time in the woods discovering how the animals are being treated after they have been hunted.

Some young people say they want to know more about their culture because they will lose it. Some say the Innu culture is the other generations', but they want to keep it going. They want to know more about how to respect the animals, the trees, the land, nature. Some of them are learning every day hearing about the old ways from the elders, sitting with them, hearing stories about what happened in their lives, what did they used to do, how they respected the elders and Mukushan. They say it's very powerful. Some say they want to learn the names of the different places where Innu used to travel.

WHAT THE CHILDREN LIKE AND DON'T LIKE

The small children like many different things about spending time in nutshimits. At our workshop in Utshimassits, the children in grades two and three said they like boat rides, fishing, getting caribou, swimming, playing tag and volleyball, walking in the woods, playing outdoors, hunting, going on the plane, long ski-doo rides, living in a tent, the jets and the caribou. They also like swinging, berry-picking, and the trees. A number of the children said they liked everything about the country.

"We played outside. I washed the clothes. I like fighting and the snow, and playing with strings, climbing trees. I like the candles and the plane and to ski-doo. I like the toboggan going bumpy. I like playing baseball. I like killing bambies, making fires. I like hunting caribou and partridges. We like to hear stories." **Penote and Kitinish's children, Utshimassits.**

"The good things about living in the country are fishing, cooking, cutting woods, cleaning the tent, going hunting, riding on the ski-doos, canoeing and praying on Sundays. We like our culture, getting caribou, snaring rabbits and setting traps for beavers." **Sheshatshiu school workshop discussions.**

There are things that children don't like about the county as well, like missing a game of pool, swimming, falling in the water, berry picking, when the flies and insects are there, when their friends are not there or when their mom is not there. Some don't like fishing, are very scared in the boat and would like to be able to ride their bikes. Some don't like short ski-doo rides; others don't like going on the ski-doo at all. And some don't like riding in the truck. One child said he didn't like being left behind when everyone went on the boat. A lot of children said they don't like to see the jets and think they make too much noise. They are scared of them. One said she didn't like going back to Davis Inlet. And a number said that their was nothing they disliked about nutshimit. (Utshimassiu school workshops.)

"The bad things about living in the country are walking on thin ice. Children shouldn't play with guns and bullets, or with candles and matches. They shouldn't go hunting alone. They shouldn't play with ski-doos, or hang on to them. There should be no drinking in the country. Playing bingo cards in the country on Friday is bad. Other bad things about the country are smoking cigarettes, garbage, machinery and low-level flying." **Sheshatshiu school workshop discussions.**

FAMILIES ARE CLOSER

Today the family is breaking down or falling apart. Maybe if families stayed in nutshimit, they

would be closer. Elders say when they take their grandchildren to nutshimit, everything changes about them. These are teenagers who are always in trouble. They are more positive when they are in nutshimit. Elders enjoy taking their grandchildren with them. Children also help their parents and grandparents when they are in the country.

"I always wanted to go to the country with my children because I find it so lonely in the village. My children also provide me with the food they kill that I really love. My children used to help me out, like cutting wood and fetching water." **Shanut Pukue, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"A few years ago, I started going to the country with my mother. I enjoy observing and want to know more about this life. In a small camp, everyone is together with the same focus. We all know what we have to do. In the community, closeness and togetherness is gone. That is what I like about nutshimit. We are closer." **Nastash Qupee, Sheshatshiu woman.**

In nutshimit, there is also more communication with the elders. In the evening the elders tell stories about the past. They tell legends, old legends like about how the world was made and so on. They talk to the younger ones in the tent when everybody is about to go to bed. Sometimes younger parents also tell stories.

"I think nutshimit is nice to live in and to listen to the elders' stories about what they saw long ago." **Manish Nuna, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"When I was out in nutshimit last month, it was the first time I had been in nutshimit for a long time. I told stories in nutshimit with the other families - Penote's and George's families. They asked me questions about life in nutshimit in the old days. That's what I do best being in nutshimit. It's like working. My grandson James asked me what I like in Utshimassits. He told me that he really liked it in Davis. I told him that as a child I liked it very much in nutshimit because of the beauty of the land. It was like a home. I had everything I needed, but in the village, I don't know much." **Kaniekutet, Utshimassiu elder.**

"There is a lot of freedom and happiness in nutshimit - the beauty of nature, sharing and communication. I also see how the elders and young children develop a special bond together." **Tshan, Utshimassiu man.**

"I like listening to the old people telling stories. I like to hear them singing in the morning. They used to sing in the morning. They always do that the old people." **Kitinish, Utshimassiu woman.**

Another reason that families are closer in nutshimit is because there is not much alcohol or home brew in the country. When people take their kids to the country without their home brew buckets, it is good. Families do more work and get closer together.

"Families are together and close when they are in nutshimit; everyone pitches in and helps out. It is a sober environment. We go to sleep early, and wake up early but well rested for the next day." **Tann, Utshimassiu man.**

MORE VISITING IN NUTSHIMIT

In camps, we also go to each other's tents and visit. We talk and feel closer. In the community, we don't see each other as much. That is sad. Before we spend time with people in the country, we might know their names but not their inner thoughts. In the country we find out what each other's fears are, what we want in our lives. We talk about our problems like drinking. We get to know each other. We have conversations in nutshimit and we open up more to each other about our different emotions, not like when we are in the community, in our offices or houses. We're friends with them in nutshimit. People feel safe and feel good about themselves, who they really are as Innu. In the community, everyone is only for him or herself.

Elders also visit each other more out in the country, but in the community they miss each other. They don't walk house to house. They just stay in their homes and it's lonely like that to be home all the time. People are much closer in the country, especially when we are in small groups of three or four families. There is a lot of sharing in the country. And there is a lot of laughter as well.

"In nutshimit there is more talk between elders and children. My father and my daughter Hillary were talking on the radio. She asked him about what he had killed. He said he hadn't killed anything, but he had seen two bees! People talk more in nutshimit." **Kiti, Utshimassiu woman.**

FINDING PEACE IN NUTSHIMIT

Many say they are happier in the country because this is the place they find peace. There is nothing to worry about in nutshimit. Sometimes people are scared to go to nutshimit. They think they will be homesick. But they come back and say they really like it. They find this happiness in nutshimit that they never had in the community. People don't experience the loneliness they have in the community.

"The reason so many people get sick in the community is because they worry about where the money will come from. When we were in the country, we didn't worry, only about tipping our boats, walking on ice, handling our axe the right way, don't cut your foot off, don't point your gun at anybody." **Kanikuen Pinashue, Sheshatshiu man.**

"We built a sweat lodge there, it was hot. We tell stories in there, about how we feel in the country. We talk about things, spiritual things. I like listening to the people talking about themselves there, talking about how they feel when they are in the country. They talk about how they feel when they are in this community, how they feel different when they are in the country. They feel safe in the country, they feel free. They can go anywhere they want to go any time." **Kitinish, Utshimassiu woman.**

People also find peace in nutshimit because this is the place where they find their freedom.

"When people go to nutshimit, they always talk about how this is their land, how they feel a real sense of freedom when they are out there. In the village, they are intimidated by things like the RCMP, the social worker, or by Newfoundland Telephone hassling them. A couple boys who were out at our camp were saying, "we heard the RCMP were in the village, but they can't bother us out here. People recognize they are more comfortable in the country." **Tshash, Utshimassiu man.**

"There is lots of freedom in nutshimit. Nobody is able to stop you from doing what you want to do." **Tann, Utshimassiu man.**

TAKING CARE OF THE LAND

When we are in nutshimit some of us say we become more aware that we are the caretakers of the land, and we also have to look after the animals. In nutshimit, we don't have to follow the laws of the governments. We just follow the laws of nature. It strengthens our spiritual beliefs. We never waste animal meat when we are in nutshimit. But some of us mess up our campsites and leave our garbage behind. Some people are beginning to realize that it is important to keep our camps clean.

"When we were out there, we had a big load of garbage we realized we had carried out with us. We decided we would not make the place dirty like in Utshimassits. We wanted to keep the place clean, to hold the land more sacred. We are more environmentally alert. Sometimes it is also very hard to get people to think about what they are doing. The boys wanted to go hunting all the time, but we stopped them from going because we said we should eat the duck and geese we had first. We don't need to kill things all the time. And the ducks and partridge we brought home, we shared around the camp." **Tshash, Utshimassiu man.**

The land and the water is good in nutshimit. We live with the animals, and the climate whether it is northerly or westerly winds is good. Many of us talk about the beauty of the land. For people from Utshimassits, they especially like all the fresh water in nutshimit because there is none in the village. The water in nutshimit is very good to drink and they can live near water. They just step outside whenever they want water in nutshimit.

"People enjoy the scenery, the view, and life in nutshimit. People's health is good because the spring water is so clear and there is no garbage. The environment is clean." **Peacekeepers, Utshimassits.**

"I like the country when I can watch the sunrise in the morning, and sunsets. I took a lot of pictures when I was up there and I did some sketches. I can also hear the loons in the morning." **Kitinish, Utshimassiu woman.**

DISCOVERING OUR PAST

Being in nutshimit keeps us in touch with our past in other ways as well. There is so much to discover. There are many old Innu camps. We talk among ourselves when we find such a camp, about who it was that camped there before, about how many people were there and that sort of thing. We see the old sticks where people had their tents, but they are rotten now. One group in Utshimassits this year found an old shoe left behind. It was maybe fifty years ago. They talked about the shoe, imagining how there was a family that had camped there, who they were and what child's shoe was left there. We try to figure out what the family was doing there. We wonder if the camp was built in the summer or fall, if they killed caribou, and so on.

NUTSHIMIT AS HEALING

"Nutshimit is also a good rehab program. People go out for a month of treatment and it's very good rehabilitation for people to take themselves out to the country. There they can do things, practise

our way of life, cut wood, feed their families, hunt. The government should look at paying for the outpost program as treatment." **Tshash, Utshimassiu man.**

"There is a family that wanted to go into the country. The children are not attending school and staying out late. I recommended to the father that he take them out to the country rather than take them to treatment centres or the same thing that was done with the people from Poundmakers. People spending time in the country with their children can be part of their treatment in a cultural way." **Tamene, Utshimassiu man.**

Some people go out to the country to give up drinking or to deal with other problems they have in the community. They get three or four months of sobriety. But there are different opinions about whether nutshimit is a good way to solve these problems. When these people come back to the village, they go back to drinking when they return to the village. They are using nutshimit as an escape from their problems in the village.

Nutshimit will not solve all our problems, but it can help with some. We need to learn to bring the good things about nutshimit back with us when we return to our communities.

"Elders came to our workshop and told us that there is no way that we can go to the country the way it used to be. But people can still go for some time and get the feeling of belonging there and bring it back. They can go to the country and come back refreshed. When I'm really down, I go to the country. I come back feeling really good, but just going to the country won't solve problems. Some people come back and start drinking all over again. It shouldn't be that way. They leave the good strong feeling there. They don't bring it back to let it sustain them till they go back again. It really hurts me to see people leave what they picked up in the country, this spiritual feeling that stays in your heart." **Sheshatshiu woman.**

NUTSHIMIT HAS CHANGED TOO MUCH

"I can't compare today with life in nutshimit 50 years ago. But I have some insights of what happened then, just by listening to my mother and the elders. They had an extraordinary way of life full of hard adventurous journeys, a life they inherited from their mothers and fathers. They carried the richness of this life with them." **Eric Antane, Sheshatshiu man.**

Some people say that there have been tremendous changes - too many to count, in our life in nutshimit over the last 30 years. They say there is no comparison. Some say it is the same old thing. Some people like the changes, but many say that our way of life used to be better than it is today. A number of people talk about the old days as if there were no problems, and all the problems we have now in nutshimit and in the community are new in our lives. Many of us worry that the problems we have in our communities are making their way into the country.

THE PROBLEM OF LOST TRADITIONS

"One time long ago, an elder told me that someday there would be a breakdown in the knowledge about nutshimit with the young people. Now today, that is happening." **Mani Matinen Mishen, Sheshatshiu elder.**

We used to stay in nutshimit for nine months at least. Today most of us go only three months, and

sometimes even less. There are not as many people who go to nutshimit. Before people used to be only one family in a camp. Now these days people couldn't do it. We have two or three families in the country these days. Many people say there is too much influence from white society not just in our villages but in nutshimit as well. We have become too assimilated.

Some of us don't practise some of our old ways even in nutshimit. We used to help ourselves and each other more in the old days. There is not as much sharing. We used to practise our own spirituality more. Now we also show less respect to the animals. Children are not learning about their culture as they used to.

"The boys and the girls are losing their culture. They don't practise it. It's not their fault. I think they should listen very closely to the elders. Everybody has this problem. The young people should understand why they should not throw away any leftovers of the animals. We are confused when we look at the white society. Some people are acting like they are living in white society today. We should be able to reveal our culture and practise it." **Kantuakueshiss Pinashue, Sheshatshiu man.**

Too much of the culture in nutshimit is gone. We use more modern ways when we go to the country. Kids at a young age today are not being taught nutshimit atuseun (work). Some say they are losing the culture because they are lazy and don't respect their parents any more. Some parents blame themselves for not teaching the culture to their kids. Kids are losing interest in nutshimit and this is a major problem if we want to keep our culture alive. This upsets parents and grandparents. Young people always go back and forth to the community when they are in nutshimit. They go into the country for a few weeks, one month and then they go back. Many of us worry that the skills we need to live in nutshimit are disappearing.

"Some young people say there is nothing there for them in nutshimit so why should they go there? Then parents and their children are stuck in the community. Children are wanted in the country when their parents are going. Children should be good workers. There are lots of things that a child can do when he is in the country with his family because other people are staying in the country too." **Penash, Utshimassiu woman.**

"When I was a child, I used to hunt with my father, but now young people don't hunt like we used to. We tried to teach them the hunting lifestyle but they prefer the non-Innu way of life. I'm not as healthy as I used to be; I am getting old. Young people are not as active as before. We need to do more tutoring. We need more training, like how to find their way home. When I was young, I could find my way home when we were in the bush. Young people prefer using snowmobiles but if they were Innu they would use snowshoes. Young people are more involved with alcohol. Some of my kids are educated. They can read. I like the outpost program and I enjoy going to the country. I haven't been going to the country for some years and I would really like to go some day." **Mani Pone, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"I asked my wife if we would last long in nutshimit. She said yes. But my daughter said, we wouldn't have this, we wouldn't have that. It makes me blame myself. Because we lived in the community, it made my kids think this way. When I was in the country, sometimes we would run out of things, but we never had time to worry about this stuff, that we don't have flour, tea, and

stuff like that. But here, if we run out of stuff my family goes crazy. They are in the community, how could they starve? " **Kanikuen Pinashue, Sheshatshiu man.**

Many of us worry that the knowledge of the elders is not being passed on. Some elders now can no longer go to nutshimit, people like Sam Napeo in Utshimassits who is ill right now. He used to go in nutshimit; now he is chronically ill and can no longer go. And elders like Tshenish are worried about their health; his eyesight is gone. Old couples can't do the things they used to do when they were young. They need help to go to nutshimit and sometimes they can't get it.

Nobody would help me and get me the stuff I need. Like I need to have someone do the hunting for me because I have no spouse. Since my husband died, I was only in nutshimit last summer." **Utshimaskueu, Utshimassiu elder.**

Many of us worry about what is going to happen when the elders are gone and if people stop going in the country?

"*One of the things you have to remember is that you have to have the skills to be in the country to survive. When you don't have them, you can't survive. You can't survive when you don't know how to make snowshoes, when your wife doesn't know how to make moccasins. You also have to know the area around you. The last time I was in the country with my family was ten years ago. We were just one family, no one else. My father and mother used to have these skills. I would like to learn those things my father used to do. But my mother is not well now. It's too late for me to go back in there. My parents can't go any more.*" **Tamene, Utshimassiu man.**

"*I see less older people in nutshimit today. Younger people have replaced the older generation. It is dangerous that younger people will lose respect of the traditions and culture; it will affect the whole process - Innu kaitiat (way of life).*" **Pinip Mishen, Sheshatshiu man.**

"*Today, the younger generation want their own way all the time. Instead they should look towards the elders. That is how it used to be. They should see how older people work in nutshimit. Young people are staying in nutshimit too short a period of time. They need to be told what is important in nutshimit. There are a lot of things the younger generation doesn't know about nutshimit. It seems that the younger generation wants to take control of their parents.*" **Mani Matinen Mishen, Sheshatshiu elder.**

FOREIGN LAWS

Nowadays, the wildlife department discourages our people from staying in nutshimit. We get interference from the wildlife department. They confiscate equipment if our people are caught hunting during a closed season. There were no restrictions before. We had our own limits. We respected the land and its animals. Now we get harassed by wildlife officers.

BEATING UP OUR LAND

A major problem for us when we look at our life in nutshimit today is what non-Innu have done to our land. We have seen many changes to the land and the environment over the years. We have seen the negative impacts ourselves. Our land has gotten beat up by akaneshau making roads, building hydro dams like the Churchill Hydro development, cutting our forests down and many new

things. There are fishing camps everywhere. All these developments are ruining the land and affecting our ways. This will be bad for the generations to come.

"My family's hunting grounds is Mishikamau Lake. The lake is all flooded now. Everything we left behind is all under water, gone to the bottom, even the graves of people. People would leave things behind because they would be used again when people returned to the same area." **Pinip Mishen, Sheshatshiu man.**

"Now today I look at the travel routes we used to take. Some are all dried up now and some may be under the water. People's personal belongings and people's graves are under water on the bottom." **Mani Aten Antane, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"Today kukumish (lake trout) is not available at the following places: Kakatshu-utshishtun (Grand Lake) and Miste-shipu (Hamilton River). When we were working at the transmission lines, we could see a lot of oil spills. This spill would run off to the lakes and rivers and it affected the fish." **Pinip Mishen, Sheshatshiu man.**

LOW-LEVEL FLYING

The development most of us complain about is the low-level flying jets that are interrupting our way of life and ruining the land. The good thing about life in nutshimit is that you get the chance to see the land again, the land that is so beautiful and important to us. But the government is trying to destroy it with their low-level flying.

"The thing I am most afraid of is that the low-level flying will ruin nutshimit. We depend on the animals when we go to nutshimit. Maybe the government wants to ruin our food so we can depend on them. I have seen some animals don't taste the same. They are not as fresh. We have seen the destruction that has gone on in Nitassinan. We won't be able to eat the wild animals because of what the non-Innu have done to our land." **Mani Matinen Mishen, Sheshatshiu elder.**

A number of us said that low-level jets are the only problem we have when we go to the country. There is too much low-level flying on Innu territory. Only one person said that it is good to have the low-level flying because they will be here to defend us.

"Low-level flying is a big problem. We just can't live or hunt; they are always in our way. One time, I saw the jets flying over where the caribou was and we couldn't get any caribou. I really hate them." **Miste-Tuet, Utshimassiu elder.**

Many of us say that today there are fewer animals in nutshimit and this is because they are feeling the effects of low-level flying. The fumes that come out of the military jets stretches for miles and miles and falls into the water. The fumes are also dropping on the land which feeds the animals. Then the animals eat the plants and of course we eat the animals. We believe the fumes from the planes are ruining the soil and plants which feed the animals. We have even seen a difference in the colour of some trees. A number of us have seen dead animals. Who killed them? We don't know. Many of us believe the jets kill animals. The jets are scaring the animals. They are too noisy. We have witnessed strange things happening to animals which we believe are caused by the low-level jets.

"Not long ago, we were in nutshimit at Makan Lake (Wolf Lake) and I saw five dead caribou. I never saw anything like this before. I have spent many years in nutshimit. I think that while they were eating, they just fell on the ground. We couldn't eat them. Something happened to them. I don't know what. Can it be low-level flying? The low-level flying jets bother us too much. That is the reason we had to move from our camp. " **Niui Pinashue, Sheshatshiu elder.**

Animals act differently and taste different since low level jets fly over our land. Some say they are skinny and don't have a strong taste. Sometimes they are even too skinny for us to eat. Young partridge are getting smaller. There is a different colour and taste in fish and caribou. The fish used to be a yellowish colour but it seems whitish now, and it doesn't have a strong taste. It is too thin and it was always fat and healthy before. People say ducks and geese are also affected by the low-level flying today, especially if they are living in water and they drink the fumes from the water. One person said that she noticed that there were no squirrels in the country where her camp was this last year.

In the long run, we will start to feel the effects of the low-level jets as well. How, we don't know. It will affect our food supply and our biological system. We will be physically affected, maybe with deformed children or in other ways.

The other major problem with the low-level jets is that they frighten our children and disrupt our peace of mind and the peacefulness of the land. We always have to worry about being frightened and harassed by the jets. They are especially dangerous for people who spend a lot of time on the water in canoes.

"I don't like the low-level flying. It's really scary. It's noisy and they scared my kids. I was asleep one time when I heard the jets flying above us. My daughter was screaming. She is two years old. I tried to cover her ears. I didn't realize that I was covering my ears instead of hers. The children are too afraid. It was the first time I saw the jets so close. I could see the pilots sitting there. This was in the daytime. There are no bad things about the country except the jets." **Kitinish, Utshimassiu woman.**

"In my younger days, we never had military jets, but today I hear them all the time. They shouldn't be flying where Innu are camping. When we were in the country last month, there were jets flying over our camp site. We didn't hear them at first until they passed the camp site and the loud noise came. Some of my children are afraid of the military jets. Some of them can't even sleep in the evening because they are afraid that they might startle them again." **Shanutish, Utshimassiu woman.**

"When I was young in nutshimit, I used to be afraid of helicopters. Today, younger people are supposed to get used to more powerful noise. It must be frightening." **Pun Nuna, Sheshatshiu man.**

"They play with our land." **Auen, Utshimassiu boy.**

Many of us believe that the foreign countries should not have the right to destroy our peace. For a

long time, we have complained about how the fly without warning. The military planes promised us they would avoid our camps, but they always fly over them anyway.

TOO MUCH OTHER TRAFFIC

Some of us complain about the other air traffic we see and hear when we are in the country. There are many planes and choppers going to fishing camps and other places. They also disrupt the peacefulness of the land. You wonder what they are doing there. After all, this is our land. Some of us complain about what these people are doing to the land.

"We found seven drums of gasoline under the water at Makan Lake. I think that what happened is that fuel drums were left on the ice and when spring break-up came, the drums fell in the water. We blame it on the biologists who are flying around nutshimit. I think this gas has a major impact on living things under water. We couldn't stay at that lake. We had to move." **Niui Pinashue, Sheshatshiu elder.**

THE PROBLEM OF SICKNESS

Today people are more healthy in nutshimit than in the community, but one of the biggest fears people still have about going to the country is getting sick. Sometimes a lot of people in camps get sick. Some elders are weak and something serious can happen if they get sick. It's also really hard for the parents when their children get sick, like with measles, and there is no medicine and no one qualified in First Aid. It's hard especially in the winter. People feel bad when someone gets sick while in nutshimits.

"There is too much dependency on the clinic, and on medications and pills, and people always call the nurses. My son got a high fever in the country. We didn't know how to deal with it. He was shaking a lot so we called the nurses. He had a fit; and we were worried that the weather would go down. I was scared my son would lose his life. When he came into community, it only took something to stop the fever, I could easily have done that in nutshimit.

Somebody in our camp was on medication. When I opened the bottle, it was damaged, so we ran out of medication. I heard often on the radio people talking about people being sick, their son or daughter. They wondered should we get a nurse or doctor in? I just had my mother flown in from nutshimit. I was worried about what she had. She depends a lot on the opinions of the nurses and doctors. How are we going to break away from that dependency? We have lost our traditional Innu medicine. Some people are trying to trace it, but it will be hard." **Tshash, Utshimassiu man.**

Sometimes it's very hard to get a hold of people when there is an emergency and a nurse or doctor are needed to come into nutshimit. People have to be flown out to the hospital sometimes. People have problems with the nurses other times. They get angry with the people when they ask for medicine to take with them for a long time in the country. They don't want people to take too much medicine, but they end up not bringing as much as they need. Sometimes the nurses don't believe people when they say someone is sick out there.

Some people, especially elders, say they are just not well enough to go to nutshimit.

"It has been six years since I have been sick and unable to go anywhere in the country. I am not

able to do things for myself and depend on my oxygen to help me breath. I cannot do things for myself any more." **Mani Pone, Sheshatshiu woman.**

COMMUNITY PROBLEMS IN NUTSHIMIT

A few people say there is not much difference between our lives in nutshimit and in the community. Some of us, especially elders, worry that some of the problems from the community are making their way more and more into the country.

One person said that problems such as the communication breakdown also happens in the country. The divisions of the community sometimes happen in the country too. People are not talking to each other or sharing as much. Now there are more arguments and complaining when people are in nutshimit. Sometimes when there are big families going into the country, tensions start up between the children and they fight each other.

THE PROBLEM OF DEPENDENCY

"Living in nutshimit long ago was less expensive. Today we have machines that are very expensive. Planes and skidoos, boats and gas-lube, plus parts, if machines break down - all these things cost a lot. Today, we want the easy life." **Kanikuen Pone, Sheshatshiu man.**

We used to depend on our own resources to live in nutshimit. Everything was handmade back then. We travelled by canoe, dog sleds, toboggans and walking. You had to haul your gear wherever you wished to go. Today we use planes, helicopters, speedboats, trucks and skidoos. We just hop on machines and let the machines work for us. We used to travel long distances, but nowadays we are exhausted when we walk only short distances. We will be weaker if we don't use our physical power. We also use other white technology like radios and lanterns. Many of us say that today we want the easy life too much. The changes in our lives in nutshimit have created some dependencies like we have in the community.

"How would people feel if they had to travel in the country without using ski-doos and without using a gun? The trip with aircraft is very short. By foot, we would probably have to set our tents up five times to get to our destination." **Shuash and Shanutish, Utshimassits.**

"Today machines are taking over and maybe we don't know how to travel in nutshimit. We live like the white man. I don't see people any longer on long trips with their toboggans. That is the danger. We are too assimilated." **An Mishen, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"Long ago, there were no radios in nutshimit. A person had to travel a long ways if a person was sick and needed to be taken to the hospital. Today, we use a lot of money if we go to nutshimit. We don't make money by trading furs like we used to because prices are down. There is less hunting now because we take too many modern foods such as chicken legs, hamburgers and potatoes. Nutshimit has it's foreign tools now. When people used to have a shortage of food, they would take the toboggan and go. Today, we just pick up the radio and call for helicopters. We are getting and expecting too much. Life has gotten too easy." **Shushep Nuna, Sheshatshiu man.**

THE PROBLEM OF MONEY

In the old days, there was no government funding or local administration like the Band Council. There was less expense involved back then. Today if there is no outpost program, some people fear nobody would go to the country. Some people say the Band Councils buy too many supplies for people. But others complain they can't go to the country if they don't have speedboats and skidoos. As well, some elders say they can't go to the country when there is no aircraft to bring them.

Some of us say it costs too much to go to nutshimit. But maybe we bring too much stuff when we go out, plane loads of it. People can't do without a lot of supplies like sugar, flour, tea and butter. For some people it is a real problem, although others get by.

"My family had a very good time this last time we were in nutshimit. But sometimes we ran out of food. It didn't bother me at all because we had caribou meat and fish. My children weren't worried too, except for one. One time, I baked bread and barely had enough for everyone. This son who is nine wanted more." **Shanutish, Utshimassiu woman.**

Some say it is like the government and its funding are breaking us up, breaking our ways. But others argue that if people today didn't have the outpost program, UIC, family allowances, or social assistance, they would be really afraid to go to country. Their basic needs would not be taken care of. They need assistance to buy basic supplies. This was the generation young people were born into. They are used to these things. Sometimes when people go to the country, they have problems with their UIC when they get back. It takes a long time to get their cheques again and Social Services can't help them.

Some people simply don't have the money they need to go to nutshimit. They can't even buy groceries. Some won't go out because they don't have money for transportation. Others say their families are too large; they have too many kids and it gets expensive.

THE PROBLEM OF ALCOHOL

"People are busy making their home brew in the bucket. That is where they are stuck. Anywhere the people go, their home brew buckets go too. Always, the kids don't like to go to the country with their parents because of the alcohol." **Utshimassiu teacher.**

Alcohol is one of the community problems creeping into nutshimit more and more. It keeps some people from going out. They are too sick from drinking to go and live the life in nutshimit. For others, they don't like to leave their drinking buddies. For others, their addiction is too strong. They won't be able to drink out there without their home brew. Some people don't go to the country because they are scared of getting sick and having DT's.

But the worst problem is when people go to the country and don't leave the alcohol behind. Alcohol in nutshimit can cause serious accidents or other unexpected incidents and mishaps.

"I think some people are sick because of the alcohol. They can't go to the country when they don't get their cheques. They don't have enough money to buy food or sugar for their home brew. They usually stay in the community, but the next day off, they go out because they have bought their sugar. But instead of hunting, they go drinking." **Penash, Utshimassits.**

PULLED BY COMMUNITY LIFE

"What's happened is that the government's way of thinking, that people depend on the services that we have here, has taken hold. Even if the services are not working for the people, people have still bought the idea. The dependency is there and it will be there for a long time. Services were supposed to better the lives of the Innu, but it has destroyed the spirit of going in the country by depending on these goods and services." **Kiti, Utshimassiu woman.**

"Thirty years ago were good years for me because I used to go in nutshimit with my parents. I was a little girl. But now today, I don't go in the country any more because there are too many things to do in the community." **Enen Hart, Sheshatshiu woman.**

What keeps us from going to nutshimits? There are many pulls for us from the community that keep us from going to nutshimit. Some children don't want to go, because the things they get in the community have become part of their needs. There is people's dependency on welfare cheques, or things like television, soap operas like "All My Children", and the First Choice cable channel. We have bills and "car" loans to pay off. Other influences include stores, the clinic, our houses and belongings, junk foods, bands, dances and bingo. Trips to Goose Bay and the chance to go to Trappers or Rumours also keeps people from going out. Some say they just want to play; they just want to hang around.

"Now when there is no outpost program, people stay home getting drunk, going to bingo, and watch the world go by." **Mani Shan Nuna, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"Some people don't want to go to nutshimit because they want to work. They have to pay for their new ski-doo, ATV, for their boat loans. They have to pay hydro bills and telephone bills. Some people worry about this, others don't. When I told Mistepinip I needed to pay my loan, he told me I should have bought the ski-doo with cash, not with a loan." **Tshash, Utshimassiu man.**

Others say they can't go to the country because they have too many personal problems. Others worry that their houses will get vandalized if they leave them. Sometimes people don't get support from their friends, boyfriends, girlfriends or families to go. Laundry is hard work and there are no electrical appliances such as washing machines in nutshimit. Some people get bored. Some people fear unknown emergencies such as accidents could happen in nutshimit.

"Some people say they don't want to go because there is nothing to do, but I know there is a lot of hard work to do. For the younger generation, it is a different story. There are no lights, television, no power, nowhere to go at nights. They couldn't chase women. (In the country it's too dark; people are afraid!) People don't usually stay up late at night in the country. Parents will say to the kids that there is a lot to do tomorrow." **Etuetish, Utshimassiu man.**

Some people don't go to the country because they are working. They are scared to lose their jobs. Some say they would go but their wife or husband is working. For example, when we think of going out till December, we have to look after our responsibilities that keep us the community. It is very hard for us to throw that away. Some of us say we can easily quit our jobs. Some of us have quit a few times already. And we are able to get them back when we return. We say if we have a

good mind, we can handle it.

"I think about going out to the country with my family, not too long but for a little while. I've got work and my wife has work. This is the only life we know now. It would be a hard life for the kids. They won't be able to take it. They won't want to stay a long time. I don't see it like other people do." **Etien Antane, Sheshatshiu man.**

Sometimes people with permanent jobs can't afford to go to the country. They can't get on social assistance to take three months to go out. They're not on UIC. They can't take three months - where would that three month's of money come from? Social Services can't give them anything. People with jobs often can only go for a small number of days when they have holidays.

The school year is also a problem. A lot of people worry about their kids, because if they go to nutshimit, they will miss out a lot of the school year and will be set back a grade level. We worry they will never be able to finish. Some of us feel we have to send our kids to school even with the kinds of things they teach them there, and even if we have these ideas that we would like to go to nutshimit.

Food can be another problem if you're not used to it or for younger people. They don't want to eat nutshimit mitshem (wild foods) because they are so used to eating foods in cans or chickens.

"Some people in the village don't really eat much wild food like geese and fish. Some like eating it once in a while, once every year. My son especially won't eat fish or wild foods. But my daughter eats it sometimes." **Nupi, Utshimassiu woman.**

"I had a problem with my health one time. I ate a partridge and then I got sick. It's almost like it was too long a time since I tasted any wild food so I had a problem after I ate the partridge. I blame sometimes the alcohol for our health problems. And if we eat the store-bought food all the time, we will have a problem eating the wild animal foods." **Kantuakueshiss Pinashue, Sheshatshiu man.**

"People who spend a lot of time in nutshimit can't get used to living in the community. He or she always hungers to live in nutshimit. Something bothers this individual if he can't live his or her lifestyle. It will always be on his or her mind." **Shuash Nuna, Sheshatshiu man.**

OUTPOST PROGRAMS: THE GOOD AND THE BAD

"In 1975 the outpost program was set up. The Band Council was also just being set up then. We didn't have direct funding like we do now. I was chief. We had to deal with the provincial government. We would send them a basic proposal of what we wanted and they would come up with the decision about what funds they would send us. We came up with the idea of sending people in the bush. We were told we could get $5500. I told them we'd take it. We chartered planes and made sure people understood they had to chip in with some of their own money to come back from the bush. They paid half. We sent out around 23 families that first time. We had the idea for the outpost program because we knew people wanted to go out and trap. Prices for fur were good then. More money came the following year. The program was very well received. People were happy and they were willing to put in some of their own money, as much as they could to pay half of the air fare. That's where it started." **Etien Antane, Sheshatshiu man.**

THE ONLY INNU PROGRAM

"The benefits of the outpost program are too many to be numbered. The outpost program helps people go to the country where they know who they really are as Innu. That keeps them strong rather than living in towns or villages." **Enen Antane, Sheshatshiu woman.**

Most people in both Sheshatshit and Utshimassits think the outpost program is very important. Kakuspinanut or Kaupaunatsh (outpost program in Sheshatshiu and Utshimassiu dialects) is the only program that we have that is really Innu. It is the only program that encourages us to be Innu. It is very important in helping us become proud of being Innu again. Some say the program takes us out in nutshimit where we are supposed to be.

The program takes people out to the country or the barrens in the fall and spring which are good hunting seasons. Families are together. We share a lot. We feel well and eat well. The program helps us to realize the importance of the land and our relationship with it. For many of us, it is an opportunity to live the good life in nutshimit where people have fewer problems. It gives us peace of mind. It provides us with the opportunity to make a living.

"The positive side of the outpost program is that it allows me to live in nutshimit. This is the only time that I feel like I am free from prison, from this community life full of problems." **Mani Aten Antane, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"The outpost program encourages people to still use the land. We need to see more on the land, and our children need to experience the land to keep their Innu culture. Parents are able to show their children how to hunt and which direction to go in. We eat traditional foods in nutshimits. Children are happy when they are not in school. We can save on a lot of our food supplies when we are eating wild foods." **Youth Development Council, Utshimassits.**

The biggest benefit of the program is that people get to live the way our ancestors did. It really benefits the elders. They can experience the way of life they know and appreciate. The program helps to break down the generation gap between elders and young people. It provides us with the

opportunity to learn and teach our way of life. The younger generation learn their history, traditional skills, and language. This helps them to learn to live a normal life. The outpost program strengthens our culture.

"If the outpost program didn't exist, we would lose our culture, all the basic skills that we need to practise our culture." **Etuetish, Utshimassiu man.**

"The outpost program helps people because we can see the land again. The hunters are happy about the way they can hunt. They can work again, like working on snowshoes and preparing the bones. And the women can work on the caribou hides and making moccasins." **Kapia, Utshimassiu man.**

Some say there would be more benefits if more people were out in nutshimit. Some leaders and other people as well hope that more and more people will participate and benefit from the outpost program.

"There are more families going now. I would like to see even more people going into the country and spending time, maybe four or five months at a time. I would like to see more young people going out by themselves with their families. The program should continue because eventually as young people spend time there with their families, their children will want to also spend more time in the country to learn and teach our way of life. We are following in our ancestors' footsteps. We haven't forgotten. It is part of the life here." **Tamene, Utshimassiu man.**

OTHER BENEFITS

"The Outpost program is a good idea. In the old days there wasn't anything like that. There weren't any charters. People travelled by foot and together. If in the past, there had been charters with store-bought food, people would have loved it and they would have stayed in nutshimit without moving to Utshimassits." **Meneshkuesh, Utshimassiu elder.**

A number of people mentioned that the outpost program is good because it makes our life in the country easier than it used to be.

"The good thing about the outpost program is that you don't have to work so hard when you go to the country. You just sit in the plane. The only hard thing is setting up the tent. I can remember when I used to go to the country. It was very hard. If I went on the plane, I would remember all the hard things I used to do the hard way. We would have to travel all day until we couldn't see where we were going any more, especially when we travelled by dog sled, or by canoe when we would go upstream. Some people find these new machines good, because back then it was a lot harder work." **Etuetish, Utshimassiu man.**

People mention that it is good that the outpost program provides us with radios. When people are in the country, they can talk on the radio to the Band Council and ask for supplies. When somebody gets sick, the can call on the radio and they are right there to help.

Some people are not sure about the benefits of the outpost program.

"I don't see very many benefits. It provides a bit of service, eating good food and learning a bit." **Sheshatshiu woman.**

"I can't think of any good things about the outpost program. The only good thing is that people go into the country at the right time to hunt. Some camps are not as lucky as others though, because there is no caribou or no game. The only good thing is that people go hunting. You feel good when you are in nutshimit. People are free, and their own boss. They are not drinking, although some do, they still manage to drink." **Etien Antane, Sheshatshiu man.**

"There are no benefits from the outpost program for the Innu. Only non-Innu like the money that gets spent on taxis, airlines, gas bars, stores and so on. The problem is that young Innu are not tough about nutshimit and its practises." **Tapit Nuk, Sheshatshiu man.**

WORKING AS KAKUSPINANUT COORDINATOR

There have been many different band councils elected since the outpost programs started up. And many different coordinators have worked at running the programs over the years. The programs are not always run the same way each year. In Utshimassits, the way the program is run from one year to the next can change. We interviewed two program coordinators, one from each community to get their points of view about the program and what their job is like. We got two very different points of view.

UTSHIMASSIU COORDINATOR - TAMENE

"This is the first time I worked as coordinator. Basically, being coordinator involved making sure that the airplanes are here in order to transport the families into the country. Also the base radio has to be in place. You have to make sure that the families are all right in the country. They are not having problems in terms of their health, making sure that they have enough supplies. For medical reasons, we supplied a lot of the families with medicine boxes for each camp. If the family had a medical problem, I made sure the person had the right medication for living in the country. If he has a chronic illness, you have to be careful. You don't want that person to be in there sick. If that person has a serious illness, then he's not fit to be in the country. I would recommend to him to be just outside the community, not too far so we could have easy access.

The only time I found it difficult coordinating this program is when there was an emergency in the country. The nurse would ask all kinds of medical questions that I didn't know. It was hard for me to respond. She would ask all kinds of details, how long the person was sick. They supply an aircraft in case of an emergency.

The coordinating job itself, other than the medical emergencies, I found that everything is okay, no problems. Before we fly in people, we would advise them ahead of time that there would be no planes until such and such a time. We made a schedule. There was no plane that we didn't schedule unless there was an emergency. If somebody wanted supplies, they would have to wait until the time the plane was scheduled to come.

I didn't find there was abuse. I just started last March, but I don't find the funds abused. There is money there for the planes. Sometimes it's hard to keep track of the budget because the program is not separate. It's all part of the Band Council budget.

I don't find this job hard, but the coordinator is supposed to just coordinate, not help people load the stuff on and off the plane. This was one thing I found hard to deal with. I'm not supposed to load and unload. People bad-mouth on the radio, but you expect that and get used to it. You get over it.

I would love to have someone working with me. The Council only had one person on the budget for working. There has never been more than one person working. Sometimes the maintenance man or the garbage collector helps people look after getting their supplies together. That is working.

We have a lot of radios in the community. Sometimes people receive messages and pass it on to the coordinator. That seems to work pretty well. I don't have the radio in my house. If there is an emergency, somebody else might get a call from the country, pass it on to me and I'll take it from there. We used to own the radios, but as people spent a lot of time in the country, we decided they could keep the radios for $500. We maintain them in terms of repairs. We send them out if they need fixing. They have their own radios and don't have to fight over them and everybody is happy.

We include anybody in the outpost program, everybody who wants to go. We treat everybody the same whether they are related to the Band Councillors or not.

We had a meeting a few months ago. We had a discussion about if the families wanted to go to the country, we would get money for that, and buy people ski-doos instead of chartering planes. Some people were satisfied with that and used them to go to the country. But this year, we chartered the planes to fly them there. Buying ski-doos is more expensive. It's hard to say whether people are more happy with ski-doos or planes. They are just satisfied being in the country.

If people have ski-doos in the country, we provide gas. Each person has their own gas so they can get back to the community and we don't have to send out planes in the winter. We just fly in the ski-doos with the gas, or we send people here to pick them up by ski-doos rather than have planes flying back and forth. We save money that way. We don't provide food, rifles and ammunition. Those things, people provide for themselves.

I think some people are too dependent on the outpost program. It's hard in the twentieth century, a lot of people are depending on aircrafts, ski-doos. It's very hard to go back to the way it was before. I remember before there was any outpost program, we just packed up and went into the country. But that is not going to work any more." **Tamene, Utshimassiu outpost program coordinator.**

SHESHATSHIU COORDINATOR - ETIEN ANTANE

"I was coordinator one time when Tanien Ashini was chief. We had radios at the time to keep in contact with people in the bush. Sometimes people would call for just a few small items like flour and sugar. They said the kids were hungry so we should send a plane out. One time a family called at 4:00 in the evening. It was fall and dark by then. I told them we couldn't send a plane at that time, and they would have to wait till morning. The woman said her son was sick, that he would die for sure that night. So we called the hospital and they sent in a Search and Rescue helicopter to bring the man out. The next morning he walked out of the hospital. He was not sick.

The only thing I could do was call the hospital if people told me this kind of story. The same thing happens now. When somebody wants to come out from the bush, they say somebody is sick. There is nothing you can do as coordinator but what I did. We've done everything to stop all these unnecessary trips. People go back and forth; it has happened so many times. People will use any excuse to get a plane or helicopter to come out.

One family was in Shepiskan Lake. One man wanted to get gas brought over to his camp. The pilot said the ring ice was not strong enough to land a plane. The man insisted a helicopter bring gas over. We could say no to gas, but they tell us they have to have gas in the camp. They say the dollars are there for the outpost program. Some people would come out every week. They make a habit of it and use any excuse.

There are other problems. In the beginning, when people were getting ready to go to the country, we would book a plane for them. We would pick people up for that day to take them to Goose Bay, but they wouldn't be ready. They were not packed. Some would still be drinking. They wouldn't be home. Some would say the whole family had to go out at the same time. It would be afternoon and we could only do one trip that day and they would need two or three trips.

Radios are another problem. We buy so many radios every season. This last spring, I think we bought six. Some families have two radios at home and won't turn them in for maintenance. When they break down, they come in and ask for a new one. When they are in the country and they break down, people stick screwdrivers or knives into them and break them. They ask for a new one. Radios are very expensive. We have to pay for the batteries. The nine batteries needed for each radio cost about $100. Radios are about $2500 or $3000. People keep the radios on all the time till they go to bed. This is unnecessary. They should only keep them on when they need them and save on batteries.

Everything has gone wrong with the outpost program. People want too much from this program. Right now people want everything bought for them - stoves and stove pipes, sleeping bags, ammunition and guns, traps, tents, boats and outboard motors, canoes, canvas and paint, ski-doos, cash, everything. When they come out, they bring back all this stuff and sell it all. The next season, they come and ask for more. They expect it will be given to them.

Last spring, over $500,000 was spent on the outpost program. Everything is expensive nowadays. And people want more and more. They say they need more of this and that, everything. That is the kind of life people are taking. They want more. The more you give them, the more they want. People rely on the Band Council for everything. This just feeds people's hunger for dollars and to get everything free." **Etien Antane, Sheshatshiu outpost program coordinator.**

THE PROBLEMS WITH KAKUSPINANUT/KAUPAUNATSH

"There are more problems since we created this outpost program because people depend on that program for everything. Most people abuse this program. This is happening because it is a government funded thing, so it will get into problems because everything gets based on money." **Kanikuen Pinashue, Sheshatshiu man.**

Many people say the outpost program is very important. But at the same time there are many

problems with the program. The biggest problem seems to be that people take advantage of it too much. This has been happening for years. Many say there is misuse of funds. And more people are following the path of the other people abusing it. This makes some people angry. One person said that everything was wrong with the outpost program.

TOO MANY AIRCRAFT

Too much money is spent because people are travelling back and forth on planes and helicopters. Sometimes they are in camps that are far away, and this is even more expensive. But some say that they need to go farther out in the country, not just near the community. Others say the problem we have is that aircraft is the only way we can go to the country now.

Some people seem to use planes and helicopters like taxis. People come out after only a few weeks, sometimes days. The only reason people should go back to the community is when they are sick. Sometimes when people come back they really are sick and need to come out, but sometimes people pretend to be sick to get a ride back. They come out when they only have a fever. People use many other excuses, but sometimes it is not their fault that they have to come back.

"Social services should give people full amounts (three months advances on their social assistance) instead of half, so people won't be coming back and forth. People return and it is very expensive." **Mistamiam Tshak, Sheshatshiu man.**

"We went to the country for a short time. When I got sick, I stayed for three or four days, but my husband wanted me to come back because he said I might get worse. We didn't ask for supplies, but we flew back home. We were running out of food, but we didn't ask for new supplies. We used what we had. If I hadn't got sick, we would have stayed another three weeks. I don't want to say anything about the people who go and about the outpost program. Maybe people need that stuff. People might be calling for stuff when they know the plane is going out in their area. I don't think the outpost program is that bad here because the plane is so far. Maybe they do it once or twice, but people sometimes really need the stuff." **Nupi, Utshimassiu woman.**

Some people say that people come back early because they have lost their culture. They don't have the skills to know how to live in the country. Sometimes people have jobs in the community and they can't go for a long time. Some say there are no incentives for people to remain longer in nutshimit. There is no education for us to teach us why it is important to go to nutshimit.

The younger generation is abusing the program more than others. It's like a game to them. Some elders say they have to suffer because of it. They don't like to see people fighting over the outpost program, saying harsh words to each other and causing more problems. Some elders are happy about the program and have no complaints.

"It is better for the elders to go to the country because they don't go back and forth from the country. But the other middle-aged people and teenagers go back and forth from the country." **Manikinet Rich, Sheshatshiu woman.**

Another way the money gets wasted is when people want to use choppers when they don't need to. People shouldn't use helicopters when lakes are already frozen. They should use planes because

helicopters are very expensive.

"I think we depend too much on the outpost program's charters. Back in the old days, there weren't any programs like we have today. The people used to carry their supplies on their backs when they travelled to nutshimit. And usually they would meet people form Uashat or Sheshatshit." **Matinin, Utshimassiu elder.**

TOO MANY HAND-OUTS

People say that the money is misused in ways other than the aircraft charters. People depend too much on the Band Council for everything. Every time people are prepared to go in the country, many receive all kinds of help from the Band Council to buy things for themselves - gas, ski-doos, motor boats, tents and so on. Life is too easy.

Some of us worry that if there was no outpost program, people would stop going to nutshimit and our culture would really be lost. There is too much abuse and dependency of the outpost program, although some people don't receive help from the Band Council except for the aircraft. They use their own money to buy the things they need.

"One of the problems with the outpost program is that I see that we are spoiled rotten. We are given small things such as ammunition that we could buy ourselves. Instead we buy junk food for our kids. The Band Council should think twice before this happens again." **An Rich, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"If there was no outpost program, I would say that some people might still go out to the country, maybe about five percent would go on their own. People don't want to do anything on their own any more. They rely too much on the Band Council. The money is there, they say. Why can't we be given what we want?" **Etien Antane, Sheshatshiu man.**

"One of the problems with the outpost program is that machines are taking over. In the old days, we used to walk back and forth to the country. We used canoes or toboggans. Everything was hand-made. It was hard work. It is an easier life today. You just hop on a plane and we go a long way in a few hours flight. Elders used to build their own canoes and it would take two or three weeks. Today the outpost program is too expensive. Some people use the outpost program to just go out on vacations." **Mani Matinen Mishen, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"Innu cannot control themselves any more, but they don't talk about it at all. That is why the outpost program spends a lot of money. Every day people want airplanes when they are in the country. We are all sports hunters now." **Penua Pukue, Sheshatshiu man.**

When the outpost program budget is overspent and the money runs out too soon, some say the first thing that gets cut is the outpost program. Then when people want to go back to the country the following year, they are told there is no money left. When the outpost program is going good, everybody goes to the country. In Utshimassits, when the Band Council runs out of funding, it causes problems for people who are out in the country and want to come back. There is not enough money to charter the planes to bring them back.

THE PROGRAM IS BADLY RUN

People have a number of other complaints about how the program is run. In Utshimassits, a number of people talked about how the Band Council only takes the same people out all the time. They should take other people out as well. Some said that sometimes when they charter a plane, it takes a long time to get a hold of the plane. Some people get mad when they are going to the country because they want to go early but can't. There are disagreements about the Band Council and how the program is run. Sometimes people have problems with the outpost program coordinator and how he is doing his job. They say there are too many hassles when somebody wants help from the outpost program.

"One time, we were supposed to head back to Utshimassits, but the person who was in charge wasn't available. He was at home and we almost missed our flight. Sometimes the person who is in charge of the outpost program is always complaining and seems to be in a bad mood. We don't like that." **Shanutish, Utshimassiu woman.**

"The outpost program doesn't seem to work properly. The people themselves sometimes have problems when they travel to nutshimit by plane. Sometimes the person who runs the outpost program is not there when people need them." **Meneshkuesh, Utshimassiu elder.**

"Sometimes the person who is operating the outpost program does not know what he is doing. This person should be in charge of everything. The outpost operator should listen to the people in nutshimit. When a caller needs something and calls on the radio, sometimes the operator ignores them, or is very impatient and rude." **Youth Leadership Council, Utshimassits.**

"Our orders from Sheshatshit usually don't get delivered. Once we were out of food for a long time because of this. One member of the family assisted us, gave us some food supply. Also when we went back, we lost some of our personal belongings. " **Iskuess Pastin, Sheshatshiu woman.**

A number of people have complaints about the radio. One problem is that the bush radios are sometimes in bad shape and don't work well. There is a lot of badmouthing and making trouble that goes on with the radios. The coordinator cannot always be reached. In Utshimassits sometimes people have to look for the coordinator all over the place because he doesn't have a radio in his house or a channel of his own. People have to communicate with Sheshatshit to find out what is going on. One person mentioned there are too many radios in some camps. One camp can have two or three radios, and people talk to each other on the radio. They don't visit each other. Each camp should have just one radio.

"People never used to have CB radios. Now they depend on them and they argue on the radio and fight for everything that the Band Council has. I think it's sickening this bumming around for everything they want. Every day I hear people telling someone they want this or that to be sent on the next flight." **Utshimassiu woman.**

WHO'S TO BLAME?

People have different opinions on who is to blame for all this mismanagement of the outpost program. Some people say it is the Band Councils or chiefs that are to blame. They don't know where the money is going. They don't set limits on the planes and helicopters and then the money

runs out. Some people don't believe the Band Councils. They think the Band council spends too much money on the program. A few say that the Band Councils are only helping themselves and their families.

Many say it is the people who go back and forth who are to blame for the money running out. We should know better that the planes and helicopters are too expensive to be going back and forth. People are the problem not the outpost program. The outpost program will only work if people cooperate. Some people believe we must blame it on ourselves if there are any consequences from over-spending the budget. What happens from overspending is that people can't go in the country the following year. It is not always the leaders' fault.

"*Since a lot of money is involved in the outpost program, we have become greedy. People are fighting over things or matters. We fight over whose camp has the most plane trips.*" **Pinip Mishen, Sheshatshiu man.**

"*There should be a person looking after the outpost program and its budget. Sometimes the outpost program budget is wasted when chartering a plane. People depend on Kaupaunatsh. There might not be enough funding, but when I hear people say there is always not enough money, I think it is because the money is not well managed and used for other things.*" **Tshenish, Utshimassiu elder.**

"*I think the Band Council is doing its job for the people. But people are asking for too much when they go to the country. I don't think it's fair. The Band Council is doing what is right for the people, but they still want more stuff from it.*" **Penash, Utshimassiu woman.**

"*It isn't the Band Council's fault that the outpost program doesn't work. It is the people's fault because when they go to the country, they just go back and forth. And they are running out of stuff like groceries. Innu people just have to blame it on their selves.*" **Testu Pukue, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"*I think the people who want to go to nutshimit will go. What I think is that people are happy when the Band Council is supporting them. But other people feel left out. The Band Council doesn't look after them. I think we only see the same people going to nutshimit. Why can't other people go? I think the people don't like that.*" **Manesh, Utshimassiu elder.**

"*We need to control the spending in this program. It is like some people are going to nutshimit on holidays, rather than to practise our rituals and way of life. The attitude people have is "Here's the money and spend it as soon as possible." There are too many child-like behaviours from adults, politicians and so on in this community for everybody to actively enjoy the program. We should spend the money wisely and effectively.*" **Nuk Rich, Sheshatshiu man.**

A number of people say that it is neither the Band Councils or the people to blame. They believe that the program doesn't get enough government funding and that is why the money runs out.

BAD POLICIES

Many people think that we are not doing anything about the problems with the outpost program. These problems have been going on for years. We need to be more straight about our problems with

the outpost program. In Sheshatshit, we have tried to do something but it hasn't worked yet. A few years ago we had a public meeting to get people to develop policies and guidelines or rules for Kakuspinanut. But some people say that a public meeting is not the place to develop policies. The leaders let people make their own policies. Some people feel that if people are elected as leaders, they should make these decisions. When people drafted policies for the outpost program at this public meeting, the policies were so broad, anything went. Everything was included. If people wanted a plane for almost anything, they could get it. It was too loose. This is no way to run this program.

"In the last few years, we have been seeing more young people going into the country because we are taking a first step in helping them.. We've never seen such a large amount of young people going in for a long time. We are providing the transportation that they need to travel. It might not work at first. But as we progress, eventually young people will spend a lot more time in the country later on. The expansion of the outpost program is a step in bridging the gap between the elders and young people. Now young people are going in for a few days, they come back after a week or two. But eventually it will work itself out as more and more young people see what our elders are doing in the country.

I think there is always going to be a price to pay. We have to spend money on aircraft and transportation to take people in the country. We have already paid a price in neglecting our elders and young people. There is no price too great in trying to create and build the relationship between the elders and the young people." **Kiti, Utshimassiu Band Council chief.**

DEFINING OUR CULTURE: ARE WE STILL INNU?

"I used to hunt since I was 14 years with my grandfather. My father died when I was 14 and my grandfather took care of me. I would leave with my grandfather at 8:30 in the morning and come back at night. We would walk to the top of the mountain. I would have to wait for him, and then we would stop and he would tell me stories. Sometimes, I brought a bag and we picked berries. We would hunt partridge, and set snares and traps. I loved my grandfather with all my heart. He taught me everything I know in the country. He was my mentor. My grandfather died in 1990, and part of me and what he taught me died too. Now, it's not the same going in the country. I don't want to go hunting without my grandfather. I just pick boughs and things like that. I still have the things my grandfather taught me in my head, but now I don't want to go in the country. I miss my grandfather too much. Now when I am lonely, I go down to his grave and talk to him, then I feel better." **Aniskutapan Ashini, Sheshatshiu woman.**

WHAT IS INNU CULTURE?

In the old days, Innu people were just living their culture. We don't know if the word culture was used in those days. The Innu were just living it. It was their reality rather than somebody else's reality. Today we talk about our culture, but when you look at it, some of us say it is all talk and not a reality because we don't practise it. Some of us believe that our culture is very much alive, while some say we have lost too much of it. Others worry about losing more of it yet. Some of us despair that it is too late. Most of us believe that many problems we have today are because we are losing our culture.

It is important that we understand what we mean when we are talking about culture. What is the key to our Innu culture? Being Innu and the Innu culture mean different things to different people. There are many different opinions in our communities about whether we are still Innu and whether we can continue to survive as Innu.

HAVE WE LOST IT?

"I think we will survive as a people. A long time ago, when starvation hit, we survived because we had the knowledge and the skills to survive. We knew how to hunt. To revive our culture and spirituality, we need to practise our Innu way of life." **Manish, Utshimassiu elder.**

Some of us don't believe we will ever lose our language, traditions and culture. Some say that we will continue to survive as Innu because we have already survived this long. For some, key to being Innu is to practise our spiritual beliefs. Some say that even if we lose our traditions, we will still consider ourselves Innu. The colour of our skin makes us Innu. Others say that if we stop practising our culture, it will be like there were no more Innu, like we were dead. For some, once we lose the language, we will no longer be Innu.

"If we lose our culture, we'll survive but not as Innu. If we lose our traditions, we will have nothing left to depend on, but to go on living the same as the white man's world." **Tshan, Utshimassiu man.**

"As for me sitting here today, I cannot call myself Innu because I am ashamed. Before I used to say

I was Innu. I would use the word. But I am starting to understand now what it means to be Innu after hearing the elders." **Penute Mishen, Sheshatshiu.**

"Today we're acting like white people. I don't think we will ever act like real Innu, like our forefathers and our ancestors." **Matinin, Utshimassiu elder.**

"I don't know if we can survive as Innu if we lost our traditions. But we'll never be like the white man anyway." **Manin, Utshimassiu woman.**

"I think we can survive if we live, and if we can have our own identity. But sometimes people are getting sick easily and can die from it." **Utshimaskueu, Utshimassiu elder.**

"I don't think we will lose our traditions, because we are Innu. They could be put on the side, but somebody can pick them up just like that. We can dress like white people, eat like the white man, and even speak like one, but we won't lose our culture. We still have our skin. And things like the sweat lodge are coming back. I think we can survive. Even if we lose our culture, any Innu will be able to see who he is and where he came from. People will still have the visions from the past." **Peacekeepers, Utshimassits.**

"I don't think we can survive because a lot of Natives across Canada have lost their culture because they were really depending on the white culture. Now they're realizing that they made a big mistake for listening and trusting white people. This is how we are going to end up if we lose our traditions. We will not survive as a people. We will be speaking English especially the small children. Our elders would really be hurt. Anyways, I feel that some of the younger generation don't give a shit if we lost it all or not." **Utshimassiu woman.**

"I think we will survive if we lose our culture and values, but we will live like black people in ghettos in the United States. We will be living like white people, but we will survive." **Tshash, Utshimassiu man.**

CULTURE AS INNU IDENTITY

"We cannot salvage the past, but we should at least try to be aware of our identity as Innu." **Mishen Kanikuen, Sheshatshiu man.**

For some of us being Innu means standing tall and proud. One of the reasons we feel we are losing are culture is because we have lost this pride. The racism we face in this society is responsible for this.

We were taught in school that Innu people are no good. We need to bring back the pride and the spirit of the Innu people, to be proud of who we are. That is one way the healing of the Innu will happen. We will be proud again of being Innu. If we look across Canada, we see Native people are always being put down. We have seen things being said about Native people, that they get things free, that they don't pay taxes. (We pay taxes). We need to heal the people. There has been so much damage inflicted upon us as a people.

"Every time we speak of being ourselves as Innu people, we are labelled as racist people. I don't

consider myself a racist person. But I look at what white people say about the Innu, and when you try to defend or try to protect your people, you are called racist. But I feel a strong message from the community that people want to go back to the country to regain our pride in being Innu. In the future, if we lose all the traditions and values, we will no longer be Innu. That is why there is so much protesting, why we are making waves trying to survive as Innu, trying to protect the way we have lived.

We have a long way to go because, from my point of view, I have lost so much of my traditions and culture, of the spirit of the people. I think it will take me a long time to get to know the things that I really want to know. It took me ten years to realize that I have lost so much. It was the elders that taught me how much I was losing. When I returned to nutshimit, I realized this when I saw the elders doing the things they used to, how they cared for the animals, for example." **Kiti, Utshimassiu woman.**

CULTURE AS SPIRITUALITY

"Today you young people don't respect the wild animals. Sometimes I used to see the bones of the caribou lying around in the community. I am very disappointed. I feel so sad to see the caribou parts, bones or feet to be given to the dogs. Long ago, that never used to happen. I am also disappointed to see that young people don't know anything about doing things in the country. We used to travel and it was very hard. You don't have to believe me, but I encourage you to believe us." **Mani Matinen Mishen, Sheshatshiu elder.**

For some of us, the key to our culture is our Innu spirituality. We are not Innu if we do not accept and practise our traditional spiritual beliefs. The animal spirits are angry with us. Many of us don't look after the animals like we should and this shows how our culture has been eroded. We have also lost touch with many of our spiritual powers and practises like the shaking tent. This is something that Innu used to practise before, that white people have never used and that we no longer have in our lives.

"It took about 300 years to wipe this Innu-ism almost all away, ninety percent of it. Ten percent is just a cloud of smoke. If people lose their traditions and beliefs, I don't know if we will still be Innu. We are so confused now living in the community. Half the time we don't know who we are. Instead of talking all this politics, we should ask the question: "Are we Innu, are you Innu?" but in what ways? My father Pien can show you what it means to be Innu.

If you are Innu, you have to practise a lot of things that our grandparents used to practise. We had the Innu world, where we respected nature, and nature respected us in a mysterious way. The number one belief was kamantushit; I don't know if the word we use shamanism is the right word. We're so corrupt because of past experiences, because of institutions like the church. Now we just don't know where we're going. We don't know where to turn. It's scary when you think about it, that kamantushit may be gone. We don't believe in these things any more. It's like we are in a deep coma. We will be there as Innu, but just existing, and won't be able to talk about it proudly." **Kanikuen Pinashue, Sheshatshiu man.**

"Everybody always wants to know about the shaking tent. There is an elder here that has dealt with the shaking tent. People always ask about the shaking tent, but they just don't understand what has

happened to our culture. I know that the government is responsible for that, for having lost our culture. That is what I want to know about. Rather than people asking about the shaking tent here, people should ask about the drum. We have people who have experience using the drum but they don't have a lot of songs of their own. If a person had a lot of songs to sing with the drum, he might be able to experience the shaking tent and know about it. A lot of white persons want to know about the shaking tent, but I don't know the answers.

One thing I really want to know is about the government's responsibility over our loss of culture. What has he done? I have never seen a white person or the government performing the shaking tent. I have seen it performed but I have never experienced it. I have seen it performed in other communities like in Sheshatshit. Today there is a lot of talk about the shaking tent. Why are people asking these questions? Only the shaman person who has experienced the shaking tent can talk about it. The person who has not experienced it cannot talk about it. He does not know about it. I don't have the experience. The same thing with the Innu people. They want to talk about it but they never saw or experienced it. If there was a person who experienced it, they might tell you.

I cannot talk about these spiritual practises when the government is still trying to ruin us? I can only talk about the bones and the sweat lodges. About the caribou bones, how to take care of them, I don't know how many hundreds of years this has been done. I still carry on that tradition. It's been a long time that our elders before us carried on these traditions and we still do it today. But today people don't respect a lot of important things that have to do with the animals. They are left all over the place. It would be very good if they did. It makes more sense to do these things in the country, to practise these things in that situation." **Kaniekutet, Utshimassiu elder.**

There are some elders who believe that the shaking tent could be revived.

"Innu could use the shaking tent in the country like long ago. There might be some people able to perform the shaking tent or this kind of spiritual act today. But these people don't want to identify themselves, because they are afraid they will be made fun of and called names. You can use it in the country like long ago to find out things they needed to know." **Mishen Pastin, Sheshatshiu elder.**

There are certain spiritual practises like drumming and singing, like the Mukushan and looking after the bones that have not disappeared. Although some of us no longer do these things, there are still some who do especially when people are in the country. People don't agree on whether these are things that you can practise in the community as well as in the country. Some say that we could learn to do these things in the community. This is one area where we really feel the split in our lives.

"My grandfather Uatshetshish (Sylvester Pokue) was talking to my older brother Antuan. He said you can't practise Innu religion in the community. You have to be in nutshimit. You depend on the animal masters out there. It won't fly in the community. It's in the country you get dreams. I don't have those dreams any more because I am in the community. You can make canoes and snowshoes in the community, but you can't practise our spirituality. Now we just live day by day by day. In nutshimit, it was different because we used to have dreams about what we would get by hunting. Spirituality is the most important part of the culture. We have to believe in it to exist." **Kanikuen Pinashue, Sheshatshiu.**

"When I am in the community, sometimes I look after the animal bones. I hang the skulls in the trees, but I do it where people won't see because they might laugh at me. And the young people will not respect it and knock it down." **Sheshatshiu man.**

"I think we can learn about the culture in the community too. Now, it's impossible to hang the bones in the community. If we are told about it, we might. If when we were growing up, we were told to respect these things, we would. I'm learning now not to abuse the animals and the land, to respect the animal spirits. This is where our grandchildren will live. We can't abuse their land. We have to make it better for our children and the great-grandchildren we will have." **Nupi, Utshimassiu woman.**

"We can teach our children about their spirituality. I don't think we will ever lose our traditions. Our spirituality can be taught anywhere. Innu people don't just live in the country; they also live in the village." **Katinin, Utshimassiu woman.**

Some spiritual traditions are being revived. For example, we now have sweat lodges again after many years of not having them. Some of us believe this is very important to the survival of our culture. Others fear that the way the sweat lodges are being done now is not our way, but the way of other First Nations. Can we allow our cultural practises to be influenced by the cultures of other First Nations? Should we only practise our ways as our ancestors did? We have different opinions and answers to these questions.

"I think we will survive as Innu, but slowly Innu traditions will disappear. But to preserve or revive our culture, we should have more sweat lodges, shaking tents and more advice from our elders, not from the other tribes across Canada." **Tepit, Utshimassiu man.**

"We had three sweats back in the country. Back in those days, we only used the sweat lodge when somebody was ill, and we never used it in the evenings. But today in nutshimit, one time we were in the sweat and one of my sons was in there too. He spoke and shared and it really surprised me. He asked questions about life in nutshimit and how we feel today. And he complimented the beauty of nature where we live. He believes the sweat lodge has helped him whenever he is sick. He surprised me. That's why I feel different today about the sweat lodges. Back then, my grandfather only sang, and today everything is happening." **Shanutish, Utshimassiu woman.**

"I feel strange about the sweat lodge they have today. It is not the same as the one that my grandfather performed. The ones they perform today is one they got from other people. The one we used to have was built inside a tent. The one they have today is done outside. I find it strange. That is not how the Innu sweat. The sweat lodges they have set up in the community and on the other side of the air strip - that is not how it is done. When I was a young man, they always set it up inside the tent. Today I feel that the young people who are doing a lot of sweats, I feel like they are abusing the sweat lodge, because they can set it up anywhere. I can ask Tshenish or Tuamish, "is this how it is really done?" And they might tell them something about how it is done. I saw how the sweat lodge was performed and it was not like this. They should set it up inside a tent if they want to have a sweat." **Kaniekutet, Utshimassiu elder.**

"What is happening here now is that people know we are a sick people in a spiritual sense. That is the reason why the young people go to the sweat lodge to be well again. I brought my three children in the sweat lodge over the weekend. It was their first time and they were afraid of it. But I saw a baby in the sweat lodge and he stayed all the way through. But my children had to leave. But the good thing is we are seeing even children going to the sweat lodge now." **Kiti, Utshimassiu woman.**

CULTURE AS LAND

This land is also an important part of being Innu and Innu culture. If the land and the animals upon which we depend are destroyed, we will no longer be able to practise our Innu culture. Many of us agree that it is essential that we continue to go to nutshimit to practise our Innu way of life. In nutshimit, that is where we are more identifiable as Innu. We really know who we are. Knowing this land is Innu land is an important part of our identity. Our culture depends on this. Nutshimit is the place where people feel safe. They feel good about themselves, about who they really are as Innu. The land is where we have the ties to our history, our ancestors and our past. It is the key to the future of our children.

"I don't know if we will be Innu if the caribou is gone or traditional foods run out, we could lose our way of life. But I don't know if we will lose our way of life or not. Right now, we could survive. But people are acting like white people." **Tshenish, Utshimassits.**

"As Innu, we know more about the country and about our old people that died long ago when we are out there. The old people talked about the people who used to live there a long time ago, what their names were and what they did in the country. I don't think we will lose our culture because the young people are learning about their culture, like my sons Aaron and Simeon. They are interested in learning about it. The young people like myself and my husband are teaching our kids and they can teach their kids, and their kids, and so on. That way it won't disappear. I don't like speaking English." **Kitinish, Utshimassiu woman.**

"People learn about themselves in nutshimit. It was a real eye-opener for me. I am much more aware of who I am now. Here in the community, I come into the office, sit, do a little bit of work. It doesn't do me any good; I am just here for the pay cheque, I would like to spend more time in the country. I see myself, I see my ancestors in the country. When we paddle along the river, we see in our minds that our ancestors were here. We see old tent sites. We see teepee poles still standing. We know these people lived much more hardy lives. They didn't wear fancy clothes or boots. Their life was much harder.

I found myself thinking when I was in nutshimit. I always thought my life was hard, but when I saw those old tent sites, I feel a little bit better. Our people lived a tough life in the old days. Now we live a life full of conveniences. They lived in a much more hostile climate. They didn't have warm clothes. But when you look at the pictures, people are smiling. You can see them in a negative way and say, "look at those poor people," but they had their own identity and their own spirituality. Now I never smile when I take a picture because our identity and our spirituality is gone." **Tshat, Utshimassiu man.**

CULTURE AS LANGUAGE

For some people we must keep the language alive to keep the Innu culture alive. Our children must speak Innueimun to be truly Innu. But others believe that speaking the language is not enough. One thing that has many of us worried is that young people are speaking more and more English. They seem to be ashamed of using their language because they might not be understood and it is their people that they don't understand. We are losing our language.

"Sometimes my children speak to me in English and I don't know what they are saying. I don't like that because I don't know and speak English. I always tell them they shouldn't speak to me in English whenever they want something because we only have one language. I only know two languages - Mushuau Innu and Sheshatshiu Innueimun. The only word I know in English is "yes" and that's it." **Shanutish, Utshimassiu woman.**

"If we lose our culture, we will still look like Innu, but we will be running our lives like the white society. I am afraid of that. Some of it is starting to fade away. When I used to take the kids out hunting, they would say everything in English. They wouldn't understand what I was saying. I had to explain to them, and it was only then they understood what I meant. I know some kids in Sheshatshit say many things in English. I don't let my children say things in English. I make them say things in Innu to practise." **Etuetish, Utshimassiu man.**

"If we lose our culture, we will still be Innu. We will be able to see ourselves as Innu, but we'll be depending too much on white man's technology. I see other Natives who live like white men. They still speak their tongue, but they don't know anything about life in the country." **Shuash, Utshimassiu man.**

CULTURE AS TRADITIONAL SKILLS

Some people say that we need to know our traditional skills of survival on the land to be Innu. There are young people who are learning the basic traditional skills of our culture. Some parents have passed away now, and their children still carry on with those traditions. But many elders worry that children are not learning about their culture like they used to.

"I'm not Innu because I don't have the skills like walking, sewing, language, hunting, paddling, how to make tools and materials." **Group discussion from Sheshatshiu workshop.**

"I have a family who is unable to support themselves in the country. They know nothing. They are more adapted to the non-Innu way of life. They have difficulty learning traditional skills. They find it very difficult to hold on to their culture. When I clean the porcupine, they are very surprised to see how the porcupine is cleaned. Yet when our kids want to go to the country, they just travel back and forth. In the old days, we travelled by foot or canoe. Nowadays, young people are more dependent on battery-operated things. Everything is more accessible. This is what young people want. You have to use your hands and your feet to do work or to go where you want to go. We are facing very difficult changes in our lives. The younger generation will have a difficult life ahead." **Katinen Pastitshi, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"I don't think we can survive as Innu if we lose our traditions. I have seen so many Native people across Canada in cities and on reserves who have lost their traditions. There is so much talk

amongst them of not knowing who they are. It will be the same here. If we lose all the traditions, all the culture that we have, we will lose our sense of being Innu. Gas sniffing was unheard of when our parents were growing up. That is not part of being Innu. Alcoholism is not part of Innu life or culture." **Kiti, Uthsimassiu woman.**

"Today, I'm almost embarrassed to say I'm Innu. Because I don't have the skills that my Dad had, or I don't practise them. Out of 100 percent, only 10 percent of the Innu still practise the beliefs they used to have.This thing that people have in their minds now is false, when they say that they don't know how to do these things. Their ability to do things or the belief that they can do these things is lost. It is dishonest to claim we don't know these ways. If you want to, you can do it. If my father wanted to do something, he would just do it. He would build a canoe. People are lying to themselves; I don't know if you could call it lazy, but this is what the money is doing to them." **Kanikuen Pinashue, Sheshatshiu man.**

SPLIT BETWEEN TWO CULTURES

"I'm caught between life in the community and life in nutshimit." **Mata, Utshimassiu woman.**

"I feel like we are half-Innu, that we are just hopping on one leg." **Matshen Pinashue, Sheshatshiu man.**

Some people feel a real split between their two lives - in the community and in the country. The things we do, the way we live in the community are not Innu. We have to be in nutshimit to be Innu. To be Innu we have to live the way our ancestors did.

"We should quit our jobs and become Innu." **An Rich, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"Today we are like white people, driving around and so on." **Shimunish, Utshimassiu man.**

Young people especially feel this split. They are using what they learn in white society, what they learned in schools. That is what keeps them from going into the country. This upsets their parents and grandparents. They want them in the country with the family. Young people always want to go back to the community when they are in nutshimit. Some have never been to nutshimit or very little. They don't know much about life in the country. Some want to learn more, and some don't. A very few say that there is no difference between life in the community and life in nutshimit. There are also a few of us who have been to nutshimit and don't care for that lifestyle. How do young people define being Innu?

"When I was growing up my father used to send us to school instead of going to the country. Mostly since I've been an adult I have been working. I don't really know what it's like in the country, so I'm not sure what I would feel like out there. I'm afraid I might get bored. But I think people in the country are more happy. They seem to enjoy doing things out there that they cannot do in Davis Inlet, like tanning caribou hide. People say the kids listen a lot more. They quiet down and don't act up like they do here in the village." **Katinin, Utshimassiu woman.**

"Some of us say that in the community, we feel useless, but in nutshimit, I feel like an Innu and more healthy. When we were young and in nutshimit, we knew a lot of things. We supported

ourselves. These were the best years of my life. These days since we live in community, we have so much misery. We should ask ourselves whether we really want to stay in the community or in nutshimit? We are toying with the non-Innu way of life. We are too dependent on that life. We have lost how to take care of the animals we used to eat. We should not be too dependent on non-Innu things. We need to really understand what it means to be Innu. Some people think they are Indian and can use feathers on their heads. This is the total opposite of what they should be thinking.

I will be almost embarrassed to talk about what it means to be Innu with my grandchildren, because I spent so much time in the community. My father did it his way, the Innu way. The Innu Nation and the Band Council is - we base a lot of our lives on these institutions. I was brought up on these government monies. My kids were brought up that way." **Kanikuen Pinashue, Sheshatshiu man.**

CULTURE EVOLVING

Some people accept that changes are a natural part of cultures. They believe that we can still be Innu even if we have accepted things like modern technology or living in communities. We can be Innu and practise our culture in the community as well as in the country.

"*I think we will never lose our culture. We are just going around the circle from living in nutshimit and then in the community.*" **Shimunish, Utshimassiu man.**

"*I think we can survive because every year we seem to change.*" **Miste-Maniai, Utshimassiu woman.**

"*You can have your own culture in your house. We have the same culture in the community and in the country. Going to nutshimit is not necessary to keep the culture. I don't know. What is culture in the first place? Is putting up a tent, culture? If I can't do that, I'm not Innu? If I can, does that make me Innu? A white person can have these skills, but they are not Innu. Culture is not what you do. You can have the same skills, but it doesn't make you Innu. You will never change my skin. What I am, I will be all my life. Language is very important to culture.*" **Etien Antane, Sheshatshiu man.**

"*I don't think you have to be in the country to practise the culture. My parents lived here in the community. I was born here. My mother does her snowshoes, weaves them, gets the skins, cleans and smokes them. My father goes to get the birch needed to do this. My mother still dresses in the traditional way. She also does beading and moccasins. My father retired at 65, and started learning about making snowshoes. His first pair looked funny. Now they look really good. Sled or toboggans Innu used to have, fish spears - my father made those. They're here in the community all the time.*

My mother made moccasins for us to put in our homes and real snowshoes made with the deer skins. This is to remember her when she is gone.

When we went up the road and got some caribou with my mother, we hung the skull up on the tree. You do this because it is what needs to be done. My mother and father are in the community. They have caribou in the freezer all year round. We gather food, collect it before the snow comes. But

people come out of the country with nothing. They only eat good when they are in there. My parents never have to buy that kind of food. They save it until the next time the caribou comes." **Iskuess Osmond, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"I don't think we can survive as Innu if we lose our traditions. We can't live like white men. There would be a lot of drinking. Without our culture, we won't survive. Without our grandfathers, their knowledge, our mothers and fathers wouldn't know how to take care of us or provide for us. Without the medicine man and sweat lodges years ago, we wouldn't have survived. If we wouldn't have had drums, we would have starved. Without the knowledge of our ancestors of how to survive in the barrens, we wouldn't be here today. Our culture, I think people will get it back, not all of it, not five generations ago, but some of it. Elders still drum, women still dance, people still have Mukushan." **Nupi, Utshimassiu woman.**

WHERE ARE WE HEADED IN THE NEXT 20 YEARS?

"We can only go in two ways in the next 20 years. One would be that we will all be assimilated. We will only have our dark skins. The other way is that our way of life and our language will survive and hopefully what is almost lost or lost will be revived such as our religion and parts of our language. My hope is for the latter part to happen. I believe this will happen if and when we start realizing the urgency of our situation and start taking it seriously." **Tanien Ashini, Sheshatshiu man.**

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

There are many different opinions about where we are headed in the future. Some of us have a lot of hope. We believe that in the next 20 years we can go a long way in solving the problems that plague our lives now. We will see more people helping people. Our communities will be healthy. We will have stopped drinking and have changed our lifestyles. There will be 100 percent sobriety. We will be better parents and our children will get a better education. We will be strong and practising the traditions and culture of our ancestors. We will love one another.

"The first good thing that will help us in the future is that people are still holding onto each other. I think we will make it to the top, to where we want to go or what we want to do. And we will have a sober community when people are moved. Everybody will get jobs and we will take good care of our people. I hope the children will take care of their parents. The children are our future." **Penash, Utshimassiu woman.**

"Twenty years from now, we will not be lacking spiritually, emotionally, physically and socially. The cycle will be strong in the future. Amen." **Mani Shan Nuna, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"In the next 20 years' time, people will be spending more time in the country and young people will learn more about how we live in the country." **Shaia, Utshimassiu woman.**

In Utshimassits, many of us see ourselves in a new community twenty years from now. We hope to be at a new site, with houses that have running water. Some of us hope that we will not be as poor, that we will be thankful if the government also gives us supplies and furniture for our new homes. We will be in Nutuaiashish (Sango Pond).

MORE OF THE SAME OR WORSE

Not everyone has hope for the future. There are quite a few among us who really despair about where we are headed. We either believe that we will find ourselves in the same situation we are in today or that things will only get worse. Those of us who say things will be tougher believe that people will still be suffering from alcohol problems. It will still be the main problem we face, and bars and beer outlets will be in our communities. Suicides will still be on the rise. Others say the government will still own us. Some also believe that we will have lost all of our Innu culture. There will be more and more assimilation.

"In the next 20 years, we will be so caught up in the white man's way of life, the only difference

will be the color of our elders, but not the young people because there are so many half breeds running around in the community. A lot of things could happen between now and then. I may get swallowed up by a whole tomorrow. I see nothing will be left of us, our culture/language in the next 20 years. The only thing that will be left are the stories of what happened." **Sheshatshiu man.**

"I don't know about the Innu people. Maybe they will be going to bingo." **Sheshatshiu man.**

"I don't know the predictions for the future in 20 years. Probably when I get rich, I will hire a servant to work for me." **Shanut Pukue, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"We are going in the ground. That is the way it is going to happen." **Sheshatshiu man.**

"I expect hard times ahead. The way things are going now, it is going to be hard. We will see the white man everywhere in nutshimit. There will be conflicts between the white and Innu in nutshimit. I see more destruction of our land if we don't do something about it." **Misheniss Tshak, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"I see ourselves as Innu becoming so adapted to the white society after our elders die. We will lose our language, customs, ways of life and we will become like white men. When our elders die in the future, that is what is going to happen. Pretty soon, we will have nothing left of our culture. We'll end up in a dumpster." **Tanina Antane, Sheshatshiu woman.**

Some people worry that our communities will be towns or cities, and we will not know each other any more.

CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM

Some people are more optimistic, but cautious as well. They feel the struggle will be difficult, but things can change for the better if we take control of our own ruins. It will be a winding road to break the government's control over our lives. But if we get involved in the decision-making, our outlook will be better.

SELF-GOVERNMENT

If things go well, many of us hope that we will have self-government in twenty years, but we must educate our children first. Some of us expect land claims will be settled, although others expect we will still be protesting for our rights. There are some people who worry about a land claims settlement. They worry that this will mean we have sold our land, that we will get more money, and then more problems will occur.

"The next 20 years are going to be hard living. We will have to endure the impacts of developments and invasions. The real danger has to be the dispossession of the land. It really has to be the focus of this century." **Eric Antane, Sheshatshiu man.**

But with self-government, some of us hope we will have better houses, roads, schools and health clinics. We will be in charge of our lives. We will have self-determination and self-control. Our own people will be manning the different agencies such as social services and the school. We will

operate our own stores. We will be strong and support ourselves and our children. We will be able to do this if the white people don't get in our way.

"*Our children should be more educated to become doctors, lawyers, judges. We have to be able to fight the government and get what we need to better our community and ourselves. We can learn two cultures and be able to better fight for our community and our land.*" **Apenam Pone, Sheshatshiu man.**

SOME WILL BE GONE

Some of us are not sure what to expect in the future. Some elders will have passed away, and others will now be the elders. Some of us worry that we will also lose younger people to illnesses or more tragedies. Of all the people who have died from drinking, if they had been sober, they would still be alive today. We must not go that way.

LOSE OUR CULTURE

Many of us worry that we are going to be like white people rather than like Innu. They worry that we will lose our culture and language. Our children will no longer go to the country. They will copy the western lifestyle and live like white people. They will accept more their school system, their careers and their language. We will turn into apples - red on the outside and white on the inside.

"*We are using white culture now. Some of the people in the community don't, but I think for myself, we are going to be just like white people in the next 20 years.*" **Enen Hart, Sheshatshiu woman.**

THE ROAD

People have a number of concerns about the Trans-Labrador Highway. They feel it will have a negative impact on our lives. There will be smaller mini-towns scattered all over the place along the road and more people coming in from everywhere. Gangsters may be among them. Some are afraid strange people will bring drugs or other negative things. There will be less room for us to hunt. With the road, more Innu people will move away to towns and cities, maybe in the U.S.
"*Drugs will be on the increase. Young Innu girls will go out with strangers. Buses will be running back and forth on the Trans-Labrador Highway. We will lose our young people.*" **Pun Nuna, Sheshatshiu man.**

"*The population will increase with the highway. This land will be flooded with people from other places. More land will be used and damaged. There will be fishing camps along the road. People from outside will be coming here. It will have a bad influence on younger people here. Drugs will come in and possibly other sicknesses. Also kids will just hop in the bus and go elsewhere in Canada.*" **Spastiesh and Pinamen Penunsi, Sheshatshiu.**

NEW DISEASES

Others say the highway will also bring diseases like AIDS. And people worry about other new diseases we are now facing.

"*I think these days we are a dying people. It is the sickness that is in our way. It was never like this*

before. There will probably be more sickness in the future." **Miste-Tuet, Utshimassiu elder.**

MIXING THE OLD AND THE NEW

Others expect it will be a mixture. They say we cannot go back to our traditions 100 percent. We will be using some Innu ways and non-Innu ways of living. There will be two paths for us. For example, there will be people in the country and others who will have careers. We want our kids to grow up to be nurses, teachers or doctors, but to understand the culture at the same time. We expect our lives will be more modernized. We will be using more modern machines, and less our traditional ways, but we hope we will still be Innu.

"We have to slow the present process down. The Innu must reinvent the wheel. They must grow with the old and the new." **Penute Mishen, Sheshatshiu man.**

REGAINING CONTROL OF OUR LIVES: RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES

"To solve the our problems, we have to help each other, talk to each other. We have to fight for what is ours, battle for our rights. We have to respect each other. We need to change the negative. We have to have the will to change things. We are a strong people. We can do anything we believe in." **Iskuess Pastin, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"We need to stop now and think of how we can regain our culture. We need to ask ourselves: "Have I contributed myself to help others preserve our heritage and pride as Innu?" **Kashetai, Utshimassiu man.**

WE MUST HELP OURSELVES

"What happens in the future really depends on us. There will be no time for fighting amongst ourselves. The ship doesn't sail if all the sailors are fighting! We turned our backs on each other. Today, let's turn around and put our arms around each other. We need each other. We must make careful decisions. It is our children's future we are holding in our hands. We can carefully base our future on what has happened to us. If we don't know about our past, we are walking in the dark." **Shaishushep Antane, Sheshathiu man.**

Many of us say that we can no longer wait for the government to help us. We need to awaken our communities. We must help ourselves. Nobody will do things for us, we must do these things on our own. We have to stop waiting for the government. We must try to help ourselves and not depend on the government any more. The leaders and the people need to work together. We have to teach our children to not depend on the Band Council, Social Services or other government agencies, but to try to help themselves. We should try to work together. We are strong and we have the willpower to do things good sometimes. We need to make our mark as a people. It is going to be a slow process.

"One advice I want to give you all is that we should all be able to work together and be friends with each other. And it could work if we tried." **Mishen Pastin, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"We have to work collectively because that is our power and advantage to do so. We have to take the approach that if one of us is not well, it will affect all of us somehow. If we believe the Innu Nation, the Band Council, governments or anyone else are responsible for this then I think we are just pretending. We have to understand it is our responsibility, each and every one of us, to do something which will help ensure our way of life is protected and enhanced. We also have to believe that we have better chances of survival if we continue our relationship with our land." **Tanien Ashini, Sheshatshiu man.**

"I think Innu should give up drinking and keep our families together and let the people buy their own things. The Band Council should not buy windows, doors, cars for people. That's the reason

why the Innu don't know how to do their own finances. They don't know how to spend money." **Enen Hart, Sheshatshiu woman.**

We are the ones who know the answers. We need to handle our own problems and we should never give up. If we don't do anything, our strengths will collapse. We need to be strong and truly believe what we believe in. We should never allow any institutions to take advantage of us again. The answer to our problems must rest on us. Let's all get involved, not only a few.

AVOID PAST MISTAKES

It is important that we avoid the mistakes of the past. We cannot change what has already happened, but we should first try to fix our past mistakes. First we need to talk about these mistakes and better understand what happened. We also need to forgive ourselves for our mistakes of the past. No one is perfect.

We were so nice in the past, and took everything that was given to us by governments. We never thought about what this would do to us. We should think first before we accept anything now. Maybe we should accept it with a tear on our face if we don't know what we are getting. We should not respect people like they are greater than we are. They are people too, just human beings.

"First, if we want to change, we should look at our way of life and change it if we don't like it. We have to stop blaming the community and start to do something about our problems, get involved in the school, the Innu Nation, the Band Council and the Innu Alcohol Centre." **Apenam Pone, Sheshatshiu man.**

HEALING

First we need healing, that's where we will start to regain control of our lives. We have to look after ourselves to make us strong. We need to heal our children, the parents, the grandchildren, the grandparents, uncles and aunts, the whole family, the whole community.

There are a lot of people who are on the healing path now and we are proud of this. We have been hurt a lot, but now we need to fight for our rights. If there are more people who are willing to take the risk to quit drinking, GO FOR IT! And don't give up. It won't hurt you. You are only hurting yourself and making yourself sick if you keep drinking because alcoholism is a disease and it's progressive. People get more and more sick if they keep drinking. We have to avoid letting these problems get worse.

"We should have a dry community - no alcohol. We should start with healing ourselves. We need to start dealing with the problems like abuses. If everyone in Davis Inlet helped each other out and everyone communicated and listened, we could solve our problems of sexual abuse, alcoholism and other social problems." **Peacekeepers, Utshimassits.**

A number of people believe we should ban alcohol and become dry communities. We should introduce prohibition or introduce a by-law to ban liquor from entering the community. People would have to drink outside the boundaries of our communities. A number of people from Utshimassits said the ban should be introduced when the community relocates.

Some people say that the elders should also get involved in the healing process. There are some elders who don't want to participate in the healing process because they say they won't be around in the future. Some of them have given up. It's hard for them to know really what is going on. Many young people are involved in the healing process. If the elders participated, they could help speed up a slow process.

A number of people say that part of our healing involves taking care of our spirituality. People need to take a look at everything around us. There will be things that we will see and not like. We don't want to lose our culture and spirituality. This is why we lost so many of our people. We haven't taken good care of our spirituality.

Intervention is needed to solve problems. Community caregivers need to work together to educate people about alcoholism, other substance abuses, fetal alcohol syndrome, marriage problems, and so on. These caregivers need more training. The Alcohol Program workers and Community Health Representatives can work on these programs. Some people suggest we need conferences to address some of these issues.

We should set up a prevention program for people who may want to kill themselves. Suicides and attempted suicides are happening too often. We are losing our young people. Some say this program should be run by the Innu Band Council or the Health Commission.

Many people talk about the value of support groups like healing circles and AA meetings. People say we should always talk about the problems that we are having so the problems will not grow. We have to talk about our pain and break the silence. Some say the Alcohol Program should do more to invite people to their meetings. One person suggested that the clergy should be invited into discussions on alcohol. Alcohol Program workers should do more outreach and come by to talk with people who have personal problems. They should make home visits if people don't have time to go and see them, or have other problems. Counsellors should also be available at the Alcohol Program offices.

"We need to depend on our Higher Power more than anyone or anything else. We need to depend on the resources we were given to use daily and be committed to see this through." **Mani Shan Nuna, Sheshatshiu woman.**

Another suggestion is that social gatherings be organized. We could have banquets or suppers where we could discuss our problems freely.

People need to forgive each other. This is part of healing. We need to look at the person inside, not the person outside. Sometimes when a person is always causing trouble, it is because he's hurting and wants to be loved like everybody else. Someday he might be asking for forgiveness. We also have to not be ashamed of one another.

People who are in recovery or healing, should support each other and they shouldn't fight with each other. They should listen to one another about what their problems are. When one person knows that the person is listening, they will continue to listen to each other and be supportive, and they in turn will support others who are still not in recovery.

The different organizations should work together and give each other support as well. The workers have to be committed to helping their people, but at the same time they need encouragement and support so they won't get burned out. It's up to the individual to look after himself or herself so they don't burn out. But we should share the work and not let them do all the work.

There are different solutions to the problem of alcoholism. Some people say that it is up to each individual to get treatment for his/her alcohol problem. People have to pick what is best for them. For some people it is going out to treatment centres. For some, it is going to nutshimit. And for others, it is to work on themselves.

HEALING OUR CHILDREN

Children need help too, not only the adults. Children are the way to our future. We need to develop programs that will meet the special needs of children and we need workshops on parenting for the adults. Nowadays, kids are taking control of their parents. It's frightening. Young people are threatening suicide if they don't get their way. Both children and parents need help. We need to think positive of our children. We need a treatment centre to help children and recreation activities in the community.

"We need to get together and heal ourselves to help our children. First we have to respect our children and young people so they in turn can respect us. Young children and young people are not to be ignored. They are very very important. They need to learn from us. Everyday they see us fighting and hurting one another. They have to learn to respect us and all of us respect and listen to them. We have to give them things and work with them." **Nush Kanikuen, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"We should try to be strong to help our children the way the other Natives from Poundmaker have helped our children who have problems. The kids think they can take care of themselves at a young age, but the parents should take care of them." **Shanutish, Utshimassiu woman.**

TREATMENT CENTRE IN NUTSHIMIT

Many people say we should have our own treatment centre out in the country, or near our communities. The country or barrens is the place to heal our spirit and express our feelings freely. It would cost less than sending people out and we could be near our families. Whole families could get treatment as well. This centre would be like a camp in the wilderness. Log cabins could be built. People could go there to look at their problem and stay as long as they need to as a family. Some people in Utshimassits say that the centre and its program could be similar to the one with the people from Poundmakers this fall when the 17 children came back from Alberta.

We can take some of our traditions and use them in the healing process in our treatment centre. We need healing in a cultural way. Some mention things like sweat lodges, being part of nature, walking in the woods and looking at the trees, talking to the Creator. You don't have to be in church to do that. The Innu way of life would also be taught as part of this healing program.

One good thing about having our own centre is that the resource people would be here. There are people in our communities with the experience who can help in this healing work. They have training in doing this kind of work. We could work from there and bring the community up. Our

elders need to be part of the resource team in this treatment centre. Some say we should look up to healthy elders for guidance and wisdom. They say 'healthy' because some elders have been abusers and need to heal themselves. But looking up to the elders is a part we have to pick up from the old days and use today in our treatment centre.

NUTSHIMIT AS HEALING

Some people think the outpost program could be considered like an alcohol treatment program. People now go out for a month of treatment all over Canada. Being in the country is very good rehabilitation for people. There they can do things, practise our way of life, cut wood, feed their families, hunt. The government should look at paying for the outpost program in the same way they spend money on treatment programs.

But not everyone agrees with this proposal. Some believe that people should be able to solve their problems here in the community before they go back to the country.

HEALING FROM SEXUAL ABUSE

Many people need help in healing from sexual abuse. More and more disclosures are being made. We need to understand the enemy within and without.

"When I talked to my abuser, he just said this happened long ago. He doesn't realize what harm and pain he has caused." **Sheshatshiu woman.**

People are asking for workshops on this issue. In Utshimassits, some people think we should continue with more workshops like "Flying on Your Own" and "Self-awareness" by Bearwoman. It has helped some people to deal with their sexual abuse and there are people who still need it. Some people in Sheshatshit would also like to see those workshops offered in their community.

Some people say we need to help ourselves and not just look outside for this help. We have called community meetings in both Sheshatshit and Utshimassits to try to figure out how to deal with this crisis in our communities. At an Utshimassits meeting, people agreed to not get involved with the courts when we are dealing with a sexual abuse case. Some people feel that some offenders should not go to court. The system needs to change to work for both the victim and the offender. We know the abusers are sick; they need to be helped so they can be well again. We don't think offenders should be put in institutions or jails. Some say they should be punished but not in that sense. They should receive treatment for them to understand what they have done. The victims are losing now in the courts, and they need to be helped.

We have still not developed a program to replace the court system in our communities. In Sheshatshit, the committee meeting to respond to sexual abuse was called a healing circle. It wasn't a real healing circle, but a committee made up of people from all the agencies to talk about this problem together. But it dissolved for whatever reason. It is like everything else. We start something but we don't get it finished. There is not enough interest or too much conflict. We don't know how to work together. Some people say the committee didn't work because the Innu Nation and the Band Council are not behind the people working with the agencies. They feel left alone to deal with this serious issue.

Some say leaders and men don't want to get their hands dirty dealing with this issue. They don't seem to understand what the problem is. They want to let the women do all the hard work. The men don't work to support women; they work against them. In Utshimassits, some people feel that when someone wants to speak out about something that the Band Council is doing, they are made to feel that he or she will ruin the healing process.

In Sheshatshit, some conflict arose in the community about the work of Sister Yvonne. Some people say that she was the one to try to set up a program, and that it was not the people at the Alcohol Program who did it. She is due that. But others say she went about it the wrong way.

Some people are concerned about what we should do now with offenders if we don't use the court system. If some offenders have gone for alcohol treatment, we don't know if they have disclosed this problem. They may not have had to deal with it in their treatment. We need to find a way where we know they have dealt with it.

We need to hear people's ideas on this. Some of us have been talking about a program where the community takes care of the case. The offender comes to a group and talks about what he or she has done in front of the victim and the families. There is healing that happens for everyone in this way.

Some say that we need to work together instead of criticizing one another a million times a day. We need to respect and listen to one another. Some say that we have to stop blaming people for what happened 50 or 60 years ago. It's in the past. We need to work on healing now that we have a chance. We have to find a way to work together to develop programs to address sexual abuse in our communities.

PRACTISE OUR OWN SPIRITUALITY

"The spirits of the land are reacting negatively because we no longer respect the animals. Today, for example, caribou is being wasted along the Trans-Labrador. It will have impact on us if the spirits are mad." **Pinip, Sheshatshiu man.**

We need to make peace with the animals spirits. This means we have to practise sharing like we used to do. We have to stop wasting different parts of the animals. We should not abuse the animals and take care of the bones. We need to respect and honour what our elders say about these sacred practises.

Some of our traditional spirituality will be hard to bring back, like with the shaking tent. Is there anyone who can say they can do it? But with some other things, it won't be hard. The children need to learn things like how to respect the animals, how to build sweat lodges.

The elders or hunters should talk about their dreams. It is evident that some of the hunters have had experiences of hearing stories about the dreams of the elders. Young people who dream a lot about playing the drum need to come forward, and take their place playing the drum. If you dream about it, you can play the drum. It could be done if people dream about it.

We should treat our tshenut (elders) like we used to treat the priest, and let them tell us about the old spirituality, help us find the way out. Some of our grandparents were almost like saints to our

families. They stood for so much that had power in our lives. We cannot put our elders on the back burner any longer. We have been doing that for years. We have been neglecting them. We did not bother to listen to them. They have stopped talking to us. We need to really listen and respect what they tell us about issues in the community and life in nutshimit. They have so much knowledge that we need to learn. We need to act fast on this one. We have only a small number of elders in our communities.

"People who have experienced our own spiritual practises should come out now and talk about this. These are sacred practises. We should stop being embarrassed about talking about these things. We should stop listening to the church telling us these beliefs were evil. How could they say this religion was evil, it existed thousands of years, far longer than the R.C. religion. I talked to Father Fred about this, and it almost made me feel like he was trying to back away. He is really interested but he doesn't want to touch it. He said he would come and visit but he never did. Religious leaders should delve into this religion and find out what it's all about like Father Jim did. The question is do we believe in our own religion? We need to focus on this question - do we really believe in this. If we do, it's a good sign. If not, we're in trouble." **Kanikuen Pinashue, Sheshatshiu man.**

Some people say we should start practising our spiritual ways in the community as well as in the country. For example, we can look after the animal bones in the community. We can hang the wings of the goose outside on the branches instead of using them to sweep the dust like some women do in the community now. That is not the way to do it. We should hang the antlers on tree branches rather than leave them on the ground. We should stop being trophy hunters or weekend hunters and become Innu hunters again.

LISTEN TO THE ELDERS

"We won't be here 20 years from now, but you people will and your children. We must think as a people which way we are heading. We must be prepared for what the outcome will look like. You young people should know about the future of our culture. By then the elders will be gone.

As children, we learned the culture. Respect the elders and eventually you will be strong. You should always listen to your parents. Do what we tell you. Put it in your head. Work for your grandparents. You are acting like white people. You are fooling around and not listening. Maybe you would feel different if you spend some time in the country. Maybe you will like it.

Do you understand what I am saying? Please keep this in your mind what I am saying to you. It is important that you don't forget it." **Tshenish and Meneshkuesh, Utshimassiu school workshop.**

Many people say it is time we gave our elders their rightful place again. We need to take our elders seriously again and listen to what they are telling us to receive the essentials of being Innu. We need to do this before it is too late. We need to encourage them to talk to us more often than just once or twice a year. We need to hear from them on a weekly basis.

Young people need to go to the elders and ask them for their teachings, ask them about the culture, the legends, their sweat lodges, what they learned from their mothers and fathers, grandparents, what did they do, how did they survive, how did they get healing, how did they raise their kids, what their spirituality was? We need to listen more to the elders. They are the most important

people in the community now.

"We have to get the elders to teach us the things that need to be taught. We need to respect the animals. We the young generation should respect and honour the elders and the animal spirits. And we should also respect the land. We should try not to abuse the land. We need to get young people more interested in nutshimit. We can always practise these beliefs if the elders teach us." **Utshimassiu peacekeepers.**

Many say elders need to be more involved. We need to gather all the elders and have elders' committees. The Band Councils and other agencies like the school, Social Services need to get elders involved in their work and decision-making.

"It will be hard work for the elders to keep the culture alive because a lot of things are happening around the community like suicides and people playing with guns. But if the elders are willing to teach the young population about our life and basic skills of nutshimits, and we practise it in our everyday life, and keep on practising it for the remaining days of our lives, our culture will go on. Our elders are starting to fade away from our population, so we MUST respect, honor and listen to them because they are leaving us one by one." **Tshan, Utshimassi man.**

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NUTSHIMIT

"We need to go to nutshimit more. We should travel there and learn our ways in nutshimit. We should respect the animals and the land, the animal spirits and the elders. If we keep going to nutshimit we can hang on to our culture and understand it. To maintain our culture we need to be able to eat our traditional foods. Young people and kids enjoy what they learn. It's easy to get to nutshimit now." **Youth Leadership Council, Utshimassits.**

Many of us say we must continue to go to nutshimit. This is the circle of Innu life. Families teach their children and children continue their way of life, and eventually teach their kids. That is how our traditions will be continued. When they start young to learn the knowledge of nutshimit, they will never want to give it up. It will be hard to get away from it and it will always be in their minds.

Many people say we should slowly start moving back towards our traditions and culture. It will be a slow process because we are deeply assimilated. It will take time. We need to be more involved in nutshimit to save our culture and have our pride. It is necessary if we want to become strong again. Some people believe that the solutions to many of our problems are to be found in nutshimit, not in the community. We need to plan for these changes. We will have to change our ways of thinking.

"I have never seen any First Nations community that has managed to become a healthy community living the white way. It is especially hard for the Innu; we struggle very hard just to exist. When we moved into the community, we didn't consider the miseries we would experience moving in here. We need to talk about it more, think longer-term and plan out how to spend more time in nutshimit. If we are looking at going back to the Innu way of life, we need to look at draining a lot of things out of our present system and go into another system. It will be like being put on a respirator to support us. We need time to be able to tap into something else and make it work for us.

We need to plan out our move to nutshimit. We have talked about giving up everything in the

community but we don't know where we are going. Are we really serious when we say we must listen to tshenut and go back to nutshimit? They have their own way of thinking, their own time frame. The tshenut do think of long- term plans. My father would choose to spend more time in nutshimit. But young people are confused, people who are between one and forty years old. They want to do it, but they are scared. They don't know what they are thinking. We will have to deal with the disease that we have where people have so many bills. They need to be working all the time to pay their bills. If we leave tomorrow, we'll be in a hopeless struggle. We need to talk to people and try to make them understand. That is the hard decision. They are the ones who will be hurting the Innu. They will just look at how much money they can make." **Kanikuen Pinashue, Sheshatshiu man.**

Some of us say that we need to handle the problems we face in nutshimit right away. We should help our elders more to go to nutshimit. Some have expressed that they would like to see places they haven't seen for a long time, places across the border, like Tshinuatipesh (Indian House Lake).

"*Some elders need someone to work for them when they go out to nutshimit. They are not strong enough to work. But it would be very good if someone would work for them or for other people who are sick.*" **Penash, Utshimassiu woman.**

Young people should also be encouraged to go to the country. They should try harder and show consistency. They need to go every season and not give up so easy. Some people say we should be realistic about taking on life in nutshimit again. This is what some elders advise as well.

"*I think the best thing to do is go back to the country and live the way we lived. I don't mean go back to the old ways but live the way Innu lived a long time ago. But mix it with white people's technology, but not too much of it. Let's not overdo it.*" **Tanina, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"*I think it will be very difficult to go back to the old ways because everything is too modern now. Right now we have some Innu students being trained in policing, we have Innu teachers, we have these organizations that weren't here before.*" **Spastiesh, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"*I have heard that Innu here in Sheshatshit want to go back to their way of life. They would boycott the outpost program and also receiving money from the government. They told the government, we are going back to our way of life. I don't think it would happen because it is really difficult in the country. You are young and don't have much experience.*" **Mishen Pastin, Sheshatshiu elder.**

WHEN WE SHOULD GO TO NUTSHIMIT

While most people say we should spend more time in nutshimit, there are many opinions about how long we need to spend out there. Some people say we should stay out there all the time, but others say we cannot turn back the clock. Others say we should spend half of our time in nutshimit and the other half in the community. And others say that it is up to each individual to decide when and how long they want to go to nutshimit.

People had a number of suggestions about the schedule of the outpost program. A number of people said that the program should be run all year round. Another person in Sheshatshiu said we should change the schedule of the outpost program because a lot of men who work in housing construction

want to go to nutshimit. But the schedule of house building starts in the fall. Some ask why don't they build houses in May and June and finish them in the fall, so then they would have time to get involved in kakuspinanut?

One person said the program should run in the summer when school is out, so that children wouldn't have to miss school. Others suggest that we change the school year so that children will not miss too much school and be set back a grade level. Also teachers should be able to live with people in camps and teach the children.

MAKING LIFE IN NUTSHIMIT BETTER

Some people say we have to depend less on machines and use our hands more. We need to grasp that strength again.

A number of us said that it is important for us to keep our camps cleaner, and to make sure we clean them up before leaving.

Some people would like to set up their own permanent dwellings in the country. These could be like cabins or shacks. If people had these dwellings, they would go more often, stay longer and could travel out further to places they haven't seen for years.

"The only thing we can do to solve the problems in nutshimit is to share when somebody runs out of things. Or when something comes up, we can help each other and we can try to solve it." **Meneshkuesh, Utshimassiu elder.**

NO ALCOHOL IN NUTSHIMIT

People should stop drinking when they go to nutshimit. Alcohol should be banned. It shouldn't be allowed to be taken to the country. People should not be making a special trip for that. There should be strict rules on alcohol.

EDUCATION ON LIFE IN NUTSHIMIT

We should have workshops where people could find out what they need and what life in nutshimit is really like. People need to learn the basic skills to deal with the fear of being able to survive in nutshimit. This would solve many of the problems that we have in nutshimit now. We need to make sure we know what to expect in nutshimit and accept what is ahead for us in nutshimit. This applies to children and some adults as well.

TEACH OUR CHILDREN WELL

"Steps could be taken to orient people about life in nutshimit. Our teenagers need instruction and lectures about our traditions. This orientation could be taking place before they are allowed to go into the country. If we don't tell our young people what it is like out there, then they will go back to the community sooner and cause a strain on the outpost program budget. We should teach the young people skills which they could be proud to use.

Young people should be made aware of stories that still exist for their information. Our elders have a great deal of information that could be useful in reviving our way of life - stories from the past: what the elders did as young men and women, stories about the hardships, suffering, good hunts,

etc. I think we should try to communicate more as Innu and share ideas in order to revive our way of life. We should continue to go into the country and encourage young people to ask questions about our traditions." **Aputet, CJIK Radio Call-in program.**

A number of people said the Band Councils should set up programs in nutshimit for people to learn how to live out there. Young people and children could go often to nutshimit where the elders could get back in action and teach them Innu ways. Elders could be hired to teach the culture. These programs have been undertaken in our communities before. There are elders who are willing to be instructors to teach these skills to young people. We could pay an elder in each camp to teach our Innu kaishiniunanut (way of life).

Some people say that nutshimit is a better place to hold these programs because in the community, young people don't listen. They do whatever they want here. But in nutshimits, they will listen and not take off. But if the elders can't go outside in nutshimit, they can still go outside the community and teach there. They can teach wherever they want. They can teach in the community because they have always taught these things in the past. But the children will learn more if they are being taught by the elder. This would help to interest more youth to go to nutshimits and it would be a learning procedure for both the parents and children.

Another suggestion made was that young people also get paid to participate in these programs. This is one way to make our youth listen and be more interested.

"I was taught by my father to use snowshoes years ago on a training program. More and more people are going after financial matters rather than the Innu way of life. They would prefer to get paid to learn the Innu way of life rather than learn it voluntarily which is not an Innu way of thinking." **Antanes Pinashue, Sheshatshiu man.**

There are so many things that our children need to learn. For example, they need to learn Innu games, how to travel with just the basic stuff, how to get the wild foods, hunt the animals, how to clean them, how to get near them, figure out directions, the lay of the land. For instance, when you are going after a beaver and you see the beaver house. You have to know what direction to go in and how the wind is. The caribou as well have a very strong sense of smell. You have to be careful about the wind and the direction that you approach him from. The Innu also have a lot of hand signals that they use to not make noise for the animals to hear them. Young people need to learn how to tan the skins, make snowshoes, moccasins, komatiks, canoes like we had when we were still nomadic. We also need to look at what people used to use as medicines in the country, how people were cured if they were sick, like with the sweat lodge. Children need to learn how to respect the animals and birds. They need to learn all the names for the many different places out on our territory.

"The elders talk of places and use names that I don't know where they are. The elders should go in and teach the young people where these places are. For example, we would like to see the elders go to this one place. If we did, I'm sure there would be a lot of stories that would be told about what has happened there. It was a place where people from a lot of different bands gathered to intermarry, to hold Mukushan. It is on our agenda as well to bring people from different Innu communities to gather there. It's not the same thing to have people from Schefferville come to the community, it

would be different if we met in nutshimit." **Kiti, Utshimassiu woman.**

WHAT CHILDREN WANT

"*In the country, we would like to see log cabins, lots of ski-doos and boats, new tents and stoves, lots of guns and bullets, a new radio and batteries, and lots of gas for the ski-doo.*" **Children's discussion from Sheshatshiu school workshop.**

ENCOURAGING MORE PEOPLE TO GO TO NUTSHIMIT

It is important for more people to experience life in nutshimit. Many suggestions were made on ways we can encourage people to go out to the country and for longer periods of time. Just seeing other people go out encourages more people to join them in this experience. If the people could go in groups of maybe five, six or more families, then they would be happy about it. It never happened before that so many young people went to the country. Eventually more young people will go and see what their elders are doing. Hopefully the whole community could go. Band Councils and the Innu Nation should get involved in promoting this way of life. They need to identify what people want.

Many people say we can talk to people to persuade them to spend more time in nutshimit. We should try to find out why people don't want to go first of all. We can ask them to explain why. We can't tell what is on people's mind. Maybe it is their health, or maybe their age. Maybe the old couples will think the things they used to do when they were young, they can't do any more and they need help. Then we can figure out how we can provide that help.

Some people might say that they don't want to go because there is nothing to do, but then parents could explain what life is all about in the country, and they would begin to change their minds. There are many enjoyable things about life in the country.

"*Sometimes people feel like nobody cares about them. If we care for people who have problems in the community, we can tell them they should be in the country, maybe this is the best place for them. People need support to do this, from the social worker or anyone else, from our family, our friends. You don't need to push people to do stuff, but sometimes they need advice from other people.*" **Epa, Utshimassiu woman.**

Some people say that they want to keep going back to nutshimit because they need to for the sake of their children. They need to learn that our ancestors had this kind of life.

Some suggestions to help young people go to the country is to do job-sharing in the community. Another is to meet with government to ease their restrictions or regulations on unemployment benefits, so people would not be penalized for quitting their jobs to go to nutshimit. People who work should be given a leave so they can go to the country without having to lose their jobs.

Some people say that more funding for the outpost program would encourage more people to go to nutshimit. Many people mention incentives as a way to get more people interested in life in nutshimit. Like in Newfoundland with the fishery, they lost their way of life because the fish is gone. Now with the package, they get money every week. This kind of program should apply here as well. We should pay people to go into the country, like a guaranteed annual income. Other

communities have this kind of program that pays people to go to the country.

People also mention other kinds of incentives that could be provided to encourage people to go out. Band Councils could ask people what they need. People could get more supplies. Some people say we should get everything free - food , supplies, 2 by 6's for komatiks, money to buy clothing and other necessities. And if people had new skidoos and boats, they would want to go to nutshimit more. We should also provide something for the children to encourage them to go to nutshimit. The children here live with so little money that their parents have in the community. Money, money, money, money, money, money.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON KAKUSPINANUT

Many people think that we are not doing anything about the problems with the outpost program. These problems have been going on for years. People should help each other when problems occur and they should try to solve them. People should also try to help themselves and we need to be more straight about our problems with the outpost program.

A number of people suggested that the first thing to do to solve these problems is to hold meetings and talk about them. We have to talk to our Band Councils about our problems. The Band Councils and people should decide what should be done together. Meetings need to be held before people go out to nutshimit. Then maybe we would find out what the problems are, because people usually get mad after they go and the problems start happening. We should be very protective and run it as nicely as we can.

Guidelines and policies must be developed to deal with the abuse and overspending. They need to be strict but fair. Band Councils should help everyone who wants to go. Everybody should be given a fair share. We need to also have rules for what will happen if somebody abuses the program. Most people say that the best way to improve kakuspinanut is to get more control of the finances and make sure there is always money in place for this program.

Band Councils and kakuspinanut coordinators need to practise how to say "NO" to the people of Sheshatshit and Utshimassits. The Band Councils should accept they can't always make all the families happy and satisfied all the time. They need to save all the money for kakuspinanut not waste it. There should be strict control on the budget. The money should be spent wisely. The Band Councils should take the risk and hire somebody to do their dirty work for them, someone to enforce strict policies. Some people say that there is no one here who has that authority, the strict kind of authority.

Some say the Band Council should tell people they have too many planes going back and forth bringing people back after a week or two. We also need to cut down on helicopter travel. These trips should be limited. Only emergencies should be allowed for a special trip out on planes or helicopters. And if people are known to have made easy trips out, than they shouldn't be allowed to go back. The coordinator should get a doctor's advice before bringing people out from nutshimit. One person said the Band Councils' bookkeepers should control travel arrangements so that he can keep track of the money spent. Another suggestion was that only one aircraft a month would be allowed for each camp.

In the long-term, it was suggested that we get our own aircraft. It would be a wise investment for the outpost program because it will going on for years to come. Also some people said the Band Councils should encourage people to train in how to pilot a plane. They should support him or her all the way.

Some people say there should be more money available for the outpost program. Band Councils should get more funding if the people want to travel further north and also so that more people could go out to nutshimit. Some say we shouldn't have to just stay close to the communities to save on costs.

USE OTHER MEANS OF TRAVEL

In Utshimassits, it was suggested that people use skidoos to travel to the country in the winter time. It is easy and fast. All we do is pack our gear and go into the barrens. A number of people in Sheshatshit also say that we should start thinking of alternative travel to deal with the high travel costs. They suggest we use ski-doos or other ways to go to the country so we would spend less money. One person suggests that people should try to travel on foot when entering or coming out of the country.

OTHER WAYS TO CUT COSTS

Another suggestion to save on travel costs is for people to travel to the communities themselves to get supplies, groceries and other necessities when they run out. One person from each camp could do this instead of having planes bring the supplies in. Yet another suggestion was that people should start thinking about building log cabins or home base camps. Materials like food supplies and ammunition would be available. This base camp would serve people in a 20-30 mile radius. This could cut down on costs, although some people worry that people might want more and more because it is free. Others suggest this camp could be like an outpost store.

When people go to the country, they should bring everything with them - all the gear like skidoos. When they come back in the spring, they could leave their skidoos behind and pick them up in the winter time and that way we would save money. Others suggest that we not go far distances. Why can't Sheshatshiu people go not so far distances, places like Kenimu, Sabaskuashu or Hamilton River? We should use trucks and boats.

Some people say there should be less use of machines. People used to use their physical strength when they went to nutshimit.

"*Also get rid of ski-doos and outboard motors. They are too expensive. It requires more helicopter trips, and parts for whatever is breaking down. People should use canoes and paddles, and hauling toboggans for their daily travels. Plus, machines also require gas and oil. Have ski-doos or engine motors available only in the local area. Make them only available to people who stay short distances from the community. There would be less expense involved.*" **Pun Nuna, Sheshatshiu man.**

Also, some say that people should be given fewer supplies. We are getting too much. People should supply their own materials. The outpost programs should not be buying things like gas, ski-doos, motor boats, all kinds of things. In Sheshatshit, people are taking advantage of this. Materials that were given to them later find their way into the selling syndrome. People should stop this. Some

people also say that we could save our supplies when we use the plane so we don't run out too fast.

Quite a few people say that the responsibility should not just be taken by the leaders and program coordinators, but by the people as well.

BE FAIR

Some people think that the funds used for the outpost program should benefit everybody. One person said that if the people don't want to go to nutshimit, they should be given something else that they want. A number of people said that those of us who are working full time should get our piece of the pie too when it comes to the outpost program. They go off to nutshimit on weekends or other days. But other people believe that those who work should pay their own way to the country. People who don't work, the Innu Band Council could help them.

One person said that the outpost program is a good idea, but he thought the Band Council should concentrate on other things such as the children who desperately need help, like the children who were in Alberta at the treatment centre and their parents, or on helping people who are sick.

RUN THE PROGRAM BETTER

Many people say that problems could be solved if we coordinated the outpost program more. If there was more planning, it would be better. We should make sure we have the supplies we need from the store. People should know when they want to go so that an aircraft can be booked for that time.

"There should be an advertisement, like put up a notice around the village to let people know that the outpost program is happening and to give them a deadline. There should be a decision on what date the people will go or come. Reservations should be made for those who want to go. There should be an agreement for people to sign which explains what date they want to go and what date they will be picked up on." **Utshimassiu peacekeepers.**

"The Band Council should tell people what to do before they leave for the country. They should tell them that they will limit the flights and they should order everything before they leave." **Shuash, Utshimassiu man.**

Some people said the coordinator should be well-qualified for the job. A number of people said the program is understaffed. The coordinator should have an assistant to help him out. The coordinator should be a committed person. He should be unemployed because the person who already has a job can't concentrate on two jobs. The coordinator also needs transportation so he can help the people get their belongings to the plane. Some people thought that the coordinator should be there all the time because whenever someone is ill, he must call the nurse or doctor quickly.

"The person who runs the outpost program must commit him/herself to do what it takes for the people in nutshimit. Sometimes the operator receives little pay and can't do the job. He should have a large salary because we spend a lot of money on the planes. He or she has to be there when they are needed. They should be patient. He/she must have the knowledge of the area where the people are going." **Youth Leadership Development Council, Utshimassits.**

There are other people who say that some of us are too demanding.

"*The people who go to the country shouldn't get fussy about how they are treated or about not receiving their belongings. Every time when something is missing, they report it to the coordinator and complain. My suggestion is that they should let one person stay behind until all their stuff is flown out.*" **Tshan, Utshimassiu man.**

SOLVING MEDICAL PROBLEMS

There were a number of suggestions made about helping people who are sick. Many people said we should practise our own Innu medicines again. Some say doctors or nurses should visit more frequently. There are too few medical trips. One person said that maybe the doctor could stay with the family when someone was sick and look after them. In Utshimassits, some said that in case someone gets sick during spring break-up, people should have some gear like canoes, motorboats when they are in nutshimit. There should be something available for them to use to get out of the country.

"*I think the person who looks after the outpost program should always keep track of people, especially the people who are sick. People should bring medicine with them and should take care of the medicines they bring.*" **Miste-Maniai, Utshimassiu woman.**

SOLUTIONS TO RADIO PROBLEMS

A number of suggestions were made to solve the problems related to the radios. First of all, radios should be in good working order. The coordinator should have a new radio. Some said he should have a radio in his house so he can always be reached. Others suggested that there should be a permanent radio operator who could handle all the messages. This person should be in the Band Council office all the time. This way he could get what the people want and do it early. The outpost program radio should be open all the time, but it should not be for public use.

A few people from Utshimassits said there should be separate channels for Sheshatshit and Utshimassits radios. One person said that cellular phones are needed in each camp to inform people or announce messages, but only in emergencies. In Utshimassits, we need a radio station for the public, so that when a person is not around, the disc jockey can speak on the air and tell the person that he is wanted.

OTHER WAYS TO SAVE OUR CULTURE

"*If we are not sure our way of life will be affected or not, we should assume it will be. After all, our way of life is being lost or eroded each day. But the akaneshau way of life will always prosper or progress no matter what. It is under no threat at all!*" **Tanien Ashini, Sheshatshiu man.**

"*They destroyed our culture and they are still doing it as they did it to our great great grandparents. Therefore this generation should fight for what is rightfully ours first, then start asking ourselves why we are letting them do these things that are wrong for the Innu people. If we can do this, then I can assure you I will become one proud Innu woman.*" **An Rich, Sheshatshiu woman.**

Most people recognize that it will be hard for us to go back 100 percent culturally. But there are still

many things we can do to retain our traditions and culture. Everybody needs to learn that the culture is very special, very sacred to us. We need to do everything we can to accomplish this. Spending more time in nutshimit is very important to the survival of our culture, but there are other things we can do as well.

"We must not forget where we come from and how we got there. We have to teach our culture to our children each day while we are on this Earth. Keep our language and use it. Be young in our hearts." **Mani Shan Nuna, Sheshatshiu woman.**

Many of us say we need to know more about our history to keep our culture alive. This is the first thing we must do. We need to look at ourselves, where we are coming from, who we are, what our history has been. Then we will be able to realize the importance of our culture and how much of it has already been lost or eroded. We have to know where our people came from and what has happened to us. Then we will know what may happen if we don't do anything.

Some say we need to do research into this history, to keep finding out who we really are as Innu. We should gather artifacts, do studies on our people - anthropological. We should gather facts in our studies and get people on site in nutshimit to tell us what they know. We should go to the burial grounds of our ancestors in nutshimit, or any other place, to find out the facts about who our people really are. We can find out what these people did if we dig deep deep in the ground, like in archaeology.

"I heard there is an archaeology project going on in Sheshatshit now. It will be hard to find things now. It must be six or seven feet underground now. People never used to stay in one place. They used to travel all over. I think with this archaeology project, they should use these techniques and go along the routes that people used to travel." **Mani Ann Selma, Sheshatshiu elder.**

Our children need to learn our history. We should have reading materials on our history and it should be taught in our schools. We should hire elders in the school to teach the children about the culture. Information on our history, like about kushapatshikaut (the shaking tent) could also be made available at a conference where our own elders and others from the Quebec North Shore would also be involved. The people who work with the institutions like Social Services, the R.C. Church, the school, and so on, need to learn more about our people and history.

A number of suggestions were made on ways we can preserve our culture in our communities as well as in the country. The elders also need to be central in these activities. They can advise us on how to restore our way of life; they are the guardians of our culture, the teachers of our language. For example, we can hold drum dances, mukushan and other special events in the community. We could have culture teaching weeks, spiritual weeks for the elders and the whole community. We should have rituals in the community like other Natives where they offer tobacco to the elders. We need revival times, where people talk to each other more and more through home visits. Some people say we should develop these cultural programs ourselves because right now non-Innu organizations introduce programs about our culture rather than us doing it.

In Utshimassits, some people say we should think about our culture when we plan for relocation to make sure it will be alive and well in our new community. We have to decide how we want to see

our new community and plan to fit it into our culture.

"I believe I must do what I can to preserve my Indianhood, because that's how I was raised by my grandfather learning the skills from him, my traditional lifestyle, my culture and my language. Without these, I am nothing. It is very important for me to hold on to my Indianness." **Aniskutapan Ashini, Sheshatshiu woman.**

LANGUAGE

We must be careful about our language or we might lose it. We need to spend time in nutshimit to keep our language strong. When we live in the community, the language is weak. Many of us need to learn how to write our own language. We also need to get a major newspaper in the Innu language. Some people say that it would be very good if we could always speak in our own language. We should never talk to each other in English. But others say that while we need to always remember that we are Innu, it is important to learn both languages, Innu and non-Native.

MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

We need to have meetings and workshops on different issues to resolve the many problems we face in our lives. These public forums are needed if we are ever to cooperate. We need these to investigate what is happening within our communities and to analyze the problems. In small groups of people, we should discuss ways of attacking our problems.

"This workshop is very short. There are a lot of things elders could say. Even a 5-day workshop would not be enough." **Spastiesh Penunsi, Sheshatshiu elder.**

Many of us say we need more meetings than we have now. Elected leaders have to call more meetings. We must get together more often and we have to improve on the meetings and workshops we hold now. Many issues need public discussion. These include looking at the R.C. church, social services, the police, government, the Band Councils, forestry projects, the military, our dependencies and so on. We need to see what the most important issues are and begin addressing those first.

"If we could have one issue to talk about and just stick to it. That way we would be able to have the strength and we might eventually accomplish something if we focus on one issue at a time rather than issues piling up and ending up with so many difficulties." **Tshenish, Utshimassiu elder.**

We need conferences on some of these issues so we have time to really examine them. People need to know more about what the issues are. Some meetings and workshops need to provide information to bring these issues to our attention. People have to be educated. Slide-shows could be used to do this.

We can't seem to get together for evening meetings, for important meetings. We should decide what is more important, bingos or meetings? Meetings are stronger when many people attend. Elders should be in the front and speak more. They are the knowledgeable people. They should be the advisors and play a major leadership role. We have to start really listening to them because some of them have stopped talking to us.

"Not everybody knows about everything. The elders, the adults or the children need to hear everything about what is going on, about the funding received by the Band Council or the Innu Nation, and about what we are going to say to the government." **Shuash, Utshimassiu man.**

Leaders need to listen to the people and hear their concerns. Meetings are one way that people can have some say in decisions that are being made. Chiefs and councillors have to communicate clearly so that people know what is being talked about. Otherwise people jump in the other way and that is when the problems and gossiping start. When people are saying many different things, we should try to sort out the facts and make decisions.

"We need more public meetings to inform the people on what is going on. The leaders need feedback from the people, and should listen to our concerns. The Innu Nation and the Band Council should give us updates on what has to be done and what has been accomplished. Also the different agencies should gather and update each other on what is being done." **Youth Leadership Council, Utshimassits.**

"We need to talk about social problems. Everybody and every organization should be involved in a big conference. The Innu are always inside their houses or going to bingo. We need to understand each other and try to deal with the problems we have here. We don't need outsiders for these. We need ourselves and our children. Even the organizations don't know what each other is doing. Like me, for example, I meet Innu people and we talk about the Chief, Social Services, the school, the justice system, the Innu Nation, about the problems they have with these organizations. This is why I strongly recommend that we have a big meeting with the Innu public. It is important and the elders and children should be there. We should be available for them when they want to talk." **Mashin Pinashue, Sheshatshiu.**

Some people suggest that we have conferences and invite Innu from Quebec. We are the same people. We speak the same language. We should come together.

Children should sit in on the meetings. They will listen to what is going on and they will understand and help out in the future. If one kid hears about these things, he will tell his friends, this one will tell another, and they will all gather around and help each other. It is the children's future that is at stake and they will need our support.

We need to trust each other. Workshops should have group discussions where we should talk more and openly about our problems. We need to break the ice. When meetings are held, for example AA meetings, very few people turn out. Why? It is because we don't trust each other? How can we solve our problems if we don't come together? We have to talk to each other in an easy way. We need to speak out with honesty to others, to talk about what we are feeling and explain everything about what we think and are going through. We have to talk about our pain, the hurt. We have a lot to learn from each other. It is important as a people that we know where everybody stands on issues.

"We should be in a big group, open up and say what is bothering us and to let it out like AA group members." **Testu Pukue, Sheshatshiu woman.**

Another important thing at meetings and workshops is that we need to respect each other. We have

to find ways to encourage people who are shy to speak. We have to stop making fun of each other when people have something to say. We need to have the right atmosphere. There should be fewer personal attacks in meetings. We should have respect for the other people's opinions. There should be no persons allowed intoxicated during meetings. It is too disruptive. And people should be transported to the meetings, so we can have more people at the meeting.

There are different opinions about the usefulness of debating issues, although most people feel it is an important part of the process of working together. But some people only want their voice to be heard.

"We shouldn't have debates. They are only there to make a fool out of the Innu. We should listen to our elders. They make more sense than any of us." **An Rich, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"There will be a lot of difficulties going on. It can't be done because everybody will have a different opinion. Maybe the person who is in charge like the chief should go along with his or her say. When other board members are trying to say what should be done,that's where the conflict starts. When the person is trying to explain things, the board members don't want to listen to them. They tell them they have no right to speak. After when the meeting is over, when everybody else has gone home, other people say he is trying to control the meetings. Maybe they don't understand that we need to have one voice. Maybe when conflicts arise, the meeting should be cancelled and have a meeting the next day. Everybody should listen more and everyone should have a say." **Etuetish, Utshimassiu man.**

Some of us say we need to do more than just talk about the problems at these meetings. We are frustrated with meetings because we feel that we have talked about things over and over. We need to discuss how we can find our lives as Innu again, and how can we fix our problems? We can fix them if we try harder.

"We have heard the things we are talking about today many times before. We should have a time and place to speak about these things. These things we are talking about should be looked at. For example, we talked about the school. What should we change about the school? There are some good things about the school. We have to work it out, we will have some disagreements. We will have to have some compromises. We have to get beyond just talking about it over and over. We keep saying these things, but we never change anything. We should figure out what we should do about it. Is anything ever going to be done about these things - about education, hospitals, and so on? What are we going to do about this?" **Group discussion at community workshop.**

TAKING CONTROL OF AGENCIES

Many of us believe that if we had control of our lives, then maybe we would have better services in our communities. We think we should run our own schools, clinics, social services, peacekeeping force. We need to get training for ourselves to do this. A number of us have gone out for training, and more are planning to go. We want to have Innu staffing these agencies and we also want to develop our own programs, policies and laws. Some of us see this process as part of achieving self-government. We should also operate our own stores. Discussions are presently underway in both communities to do this.

There are some people who are concerned about taking over these services. Some Innu employees in these agencies worry about the changes in community leadership every two or three years. They say they would have to see what was being put in place of the present systems before they could really support it. It was mentioned that some leaders are not able to take on these responsibilities. There needs to be more cooperation between community leaders and Innu employees in the agencies. Some feel that we need to heal and educate ourselves first.

In the short-term, it was suggested that non-Innu workers in these agencies need to be educated about our culture. Some of them might be interested.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SCHOOL

With regard to the school, the recommendation was made to look at the whole system thoroughly. Our schools need to be evaluated. There are too many white influences and foreign information with the present education system. The school should teach more Innueimun. Our children need to learn to read and write our own language. The school should also be teaching the Innu way of life. Children should be taught traditional skills. Government funding should be provided for this kind of training.

"It is very important to teach these things in school, to get the school involved in the outpost program, to get elders in the school to teach spirituality. To teach our spirituality and language, we need to access the kids in school, one or two hours a day. We need to have more Innu people involved in the school. That is where the power is, getting more of the culture taught in school. All they learn now is the English language. How long will speaking Innueimun at home last, ten or twenty years?" **Tshat, Utshimassiu man.**

The elders should play a leadership role in the schools. We need to fight for the elders to play a bigger role in schools. Some of this is happening now, and the things we will learn, we will be able to pass on to our children and future generations. They are our link to the survival of our culture.

We should look at changing the school year, so that children can go to the country without worrying about falling behind in their grade.

Our children should also be able to travel and see how other communities across Canada live, how other communities have the same problems. They need to experience the world.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

Social Services needs to change so that the Innu front line workers workers are in positions where they can really help people be responsible for themselves. People who work at Social Services need to be educated on alcoholism and they need to educate others from there. This will help people break the dependency.

We need to be involved in developing our own social services policies that will better meet our needs. Some people have special needs, like the elders and others who are sick need help. They need transportation to get around, to go to the clinic, the church, to do shopping and things like that.

"There should be transportation for the elders when they have to go across the river. Why not have

this service? We always have problems with getting elders to meetings. They should be able to get a ride. They should have a van to show respect to the elders and help them." **Spastiesh Penunsi, Sheshatshiu elder.**

HEALTH SERVICES RECOMMENDATIONS

We need more Innu people involved in the field of health - nurses, doctors and translators. There should be more Innu staff in the hospitals to help the Innu. Some Grenfell Regional Health Services staff should be Innu and be able to translate well.

"*We should depend on Innu medicine, not just the hospitals. We should try to get our Innu medicines; we should get our elders to show us. Maybe sometimes we don't need a doctor or hospital.*" **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu workshop.**

We should be able to use both Innu and white medicines. Both have their place. We can use hospitals sometimes because Innu cannot perform operations or surgery. Some women would like to see midwives in our communities again, so that they wouldn't have to go outside to have their babies.

We need to become aware of the possible diseases that will enter our lives. There should be educational programs about dangerous diseases such as AIDS.

Some of us are chronically ill and need a helper around to help us in our homes.

POLICING RECOMMENDATIONS

We should be able to have our own law enforcement and have our own laws. For example, if the Band Office developed by-laws, when somebody committed a crime, the Band could ask the family to go to nutshimit to help themselves. The judge could ask people who abuse their wives or kids to do community service, or to go to counselling or treatment. Tribal police could make the laws for the people. They could be involved in developing programs and policies to bring the suicide rate down. People who want to commit suicide could be sent to treatment or to the country.

The tribal police should also be involved in dealing with sexual abuse and the church. They should be part of a crime prevention committee to meet with priests who come to the community. This committe could also include people who have attended drug abuse programs across Canada.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE CHURCH

Some people feel we need to deal with our history with the R.C. Church. The church should be confronted for destroying our lives. We need to look at what we should do about the church, priests and nuns. We have to find ways of confronting the church about its history of, for example, sexually abusing our children without fear. Some people say that only then will we be able to find solutions for ourselves and find ourselves as Innu.

Others suggest that we make sure we have some clear information about the priests who have come to our village. We should have complete scrutiny of the situation. The community should meet with the priest and find out how much commitment he can offer to this community. We should investigate the priest first before they settle here. We should talk to him about child abuse more

openly. Also some priests drink and we should ask them about that.

WE NEED SOUND LEADERSHIP

"*Our elders say we need to deal with governments as Nation-to Nation.*" **Kiti, Utshimassiu woman.**

"*To avoid the mistakes of the past, we have to try to cooperate and work together as one people. Leaders have to take criticism and respect the opinion of others. Our decisions should be based on the best information and advice available.*" **Tanien Ashini, Sheshatshiu man.**

Many of us say that we need sound and level-headed leadership in our communities. Some say we need to rethink the leadership structures we now have. They say these structures and the way we are operating are foreign to us. Sometimes it is hard for us to make good judgments.

A major recommendation made by a lot of people is that we need to get the elders more involved in leadership roles. We should put the elders first. We should have them as advisors. Young leaders shouldn't do anything about issues by themselves. The elders are our experts, our biologists and wildlife officers. They are the ones who know. They should be major players in our decision-making. We need to fight for them to play a bigger role in Band Councils, the Innu Nations, with youth leadership and in schools. For example, more could be elected to Band Councils or the Innu Nation. They can play an advisory role in regard to land use.

"*Let us keep going forward and let us now listen to the elders. I am starting to realize now that listening to the elders is the road that I want to take. Because it is really important now to take the words of the elders. I must stop dictating to other people. I must use the words, concerns, and issues raised here by the elders. And I will try to do what the elders want.*" **Penute Mishen, Sheshatshiu man.**

Some people say the leaders have to stop saying YES and being conned by governments. We have made many political mistakes. They say leaders should do more to show young people what is good about being Innu. They should guide us to a path which leads to our destiny not to any government. Our leaders cannot live without the governments' handouts. Some of us say we should be careful about giving gifts to government officials when they come, because we have to remember what they have done to our land.

Another leadership problem identified is that we don't know where we are going. We need more planning, both short-term and long-term planning. We shouldn't jump at anything that everybody says because we don't know if it is the right thing for us. Some people say little progress has been made. Sometimes these structures create a lot of problems and frustrations in our people.

Leaders need to work together as well as the various organizations. Elected and non-elected leaders need training in administration and the management of our own affairs. They need more education. Now some of them are afraid that their ideas might not work. Some people say that the Band Councils and Innu Nation have too much power over the people. They need to share more of the power with the people who elect them. They need to be honest with the people they serve. They need to get more input from people before they make decisions. They need to let their communities

know what they are doing.

People working on these problems with the different agencies including the Band Council and the Innu Nation, shouldn't be there for the money. They need to be there to serve their people not please their bosses. At the same time, people also need to take responsibility and do more talking to the Band Council and the Innu Nation as well.

"*Sometimes when the government and their agencies visit Sheshatshit, they only talk to the leaders of the Innu Band Council and the Innu Nation. What are they talking about? Are our leaders telling us what they are saying? I am not really sure they are telling us the truth in what they do tell us. I want to know what the responses are. Sometimes I feel like I am not told anything.*" **Spastiesh Penunsi, Sheshatshiu elder.**

Some people say that leaders need to help everyone and be fair. They need to serve people equally. They should not just help their families, and they should help the people who really need assistance, like people who are sick. Some of us say there is corruption in our Band Councils. We need to stop the financial abuse, the fraud and corruption of the programs and services offered to the Innu. We need to set up policies which meet the needs of the people. We should follow strict guidelines. Another suggestion was that the government should audit the Councils to shake up the abusive behavior so it will stop.

WHAT CHILDREN WANT IN THE COMMUNITIES

"*In the community, we would like to have playgrounds, a new school, a skating arena, swimming pool, swings and slides, camping trips and boats. We need cable, a new bus, new janitors (10 janitors), and beach parties.*" **Children's group discussion, Sheshatshiu school workshop.**

"*People shouldn't drink and drive, or smoke until they die. Children shouldn't hang on to trucks and cars and they shouldn't play with lighters or matches. Parents shouldn't leave their kids when they are drunk. We need more street lights.*" **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu school workshop.**

"*Some kids would like to see a beer store, cigarette store, bars, bingo, slot machines, baseball field and hockey rink.*" **Group discussion at Sheshatshiu school workshop**

FIGHTING FOR OUR LAND RIGHTS

"*To preserve our ways in the long run, we need to protect our land. Any major developments must come to an end. That is where our roots are. For example, low-level flying or hydro developments. Someday this will ruin our land, and our way of life. We should fight back in our language and talk in Innueimun.*" **Shamani Selma, Sheshatshiu man.**

"*Long ago, there were a lot of trout at Mishikamau Lake. Today, there is much less fish. I blame it on hydro developments. What is going to happen to our trout and salmon in the Lake Melville area?*" **Shushep Nuna, Sheshatshiu man.**

Some people say leaders should stop every development on our land before these kill us all. Many say that we all need to work together on these issues. We should stand up for our rights and speak up if we think we're not being treated right. We need to fight against all the injustices that have been

done to us. Some say more women should speak out and stand up for their rights too. We must voice our concerns. We need to tell the white man and his governments to leave our land alone. We need to do this to protect the land, the plants and the animals. Developments are unhealthy on our lands. It ruins the territory that we depend on to continue our traditional way of life. Without any course of action, we are putting ourselves in danger, as well as the lives of our children and grandchildren.

We should be aware when we are being railroaded! Today we are more outspoken. We must continue to speak against issues that are affecting us. Only one person said that if non-Innu want to start developments, we are better off leaving them alone.

"I am very concerned about the Churchill Falls Road. We must not make an agreement to make that road. There wouldn't be any road now if we had spoken out against it. In the old days we never saw planes going to country. Who is more in control of our land, the Innu or the government? As for Churchill Falls, the government never consulted us about installing the dam. Why should we pay our hydro bills now when it is our land that they have flooded and are destroying. The government built all these houses in the community, and put us here to live, so they could take our land. Non-Innu keep surveying and measuring our land." **Shimun Mishen, Sheshatshiu elder.**

Some of us say that we need to get tougher in fighting against these developments on our land. We need to make our voices heard. The governments ignored us in the past. They made decisions about our land without consulting us. At this moment, this is still happening. The government doesn't listen to us, whether we like it or not.

"We must speak together and fight against the issues that are ruining us, the policies made by non-Innu people. We should make our own policies and our own regulations or laws." **Iskuess Pastin, Sheshatshiu woman.**

"This is Innu land and sometimes now the governments or the white agencies just go ahead and do things without letting the Innu know. I think they should let the Innu know. I want them to do this because when I am gone, I want my grandchildren and their children to use the land. This is Innu land." **Mani Ann Selma, Sheshatshiu elder.**

Governments must ask us if we agree before they start big developments on our land. At this time, many of us want to stop projects while they are in process. It is going to be hard. We need to stop the Lower Churchill hydro project, the Gull Island project. There will be a lot of environmental damage. That is why it is important for us to fight together against any major developments that will ruin our land.

Many of us believe protests are a good way to get our voices heard. We need vocal speaking out against unwanted developments and in support of our rights. This can only strengthen us. We need more protests.

"I don't care if my lights are cut off. We should not put back the hydro meters and we shouldn't pay our hydro bills anyway. This is our land. Governments have ruined our rivers, and lakes to get this electricity. Today the government tells us to pay our hydro bills. It will be double the payment

if we pay now. The government is stalling us, trying to get us to stay in the community while he takes and destroys our land with developments like low-level flying and hydro. He will take us to courts. Maybe it will be a hard road ahead. Governments are pushing too hard on developments on our land. That is why we need to be strong in showing disapproval of any major developments on our land." **Niui Pinashue, Sheshatshiu elder.**

Many say we do protests not to disrespect white people but against their governments. This is a way to do public awareness, to help people from outside of Nitassinan know what is happening to us. We need to do this to get their support to help us fight governments. If other people understand our position, it will be good. We also need to lobby foreign governments when we are working on bigger things.

We need to use strong tactics because if we can't stop these developments, that's it. In the past, some people in our communities have not been involved and many of us say they should join the protests. It's important that we become involved in issues that are affecting us.

"Even today, some people are afraid to get involved in the low-level flying protest. We should settle our differences. We should fight against low-level flying together because we all depend on the animals. We have to if we want to continue our life in nutshimit. It is no good when there is only a few handfuls of people fighting all the time. People don't seem to get along well. And governments are taking advantage of this. When people start to protest, the government seems to take them seriously, but we should continue to speak out against developments that affect us and our children in the future." **Mani Aten Antane, Sheshatshiu elder.**

"We need to see more people fight the low-level flying. It would be good if there was no low-level flying in nutshimit, and if all the people of Davis Inlet helped each other in trying to stop low-level flying." **Utshimassiu peacekeepers.**

Some people say it helps us now that younger people are educated. But not everyone agrees with protests. A few people say we should not do things that are against the law. We need to find other ways to say what we have to say and be heard.

"Long ago when people used to talk with the government they would sit down and have a good talk to them. Now it doesn't happen. We just ignore the government. We should sit down with them around the table and talk with them. Don't make any threats and the governments won't make any threats also. For example, we should be able to work something out about the meters. We should sit down and talk with them." **Mishen Pastin, Sheshatshiu elder.**

Some people say we need to learn to not be trustful of governments and use the people with expertise in areas where we have no knowledge. We may have to have outside help to talk about our issues. Some people say we need to do research to help us in our struggles. We should hire people who will study the animals which are suspiciously dead out in nutshimits. Let's show some facts to governments because they don't believe us when we talk about the damages. We should bring photographs to governments as evidence whenever some animals are suspiciously dead. We should record the deaths and bring the animals to the lab for examinations.

Some people say we need to be careful about what supporters we work with. For example, one person said he was concerned about some photographers that we bring to the country to learn the way we live. We must be careful that they don't take advantage of us. We must be very careful about how we deal with the white man.

"*Let us not be over-confident about what we are dealing with. We should always stand firm and be cautious. Remember first the priorities of the elders.*" **Eric Antane, Sheshatshiu man.**

RELOCATION

Relocation is a key to the survival and future of Utshimassiu Innu. We want to have a new community. We need better housing and good water and sewage facilities - good living conditions. With water and toilets, our community won't be as dirty. We won't have to drink contaminated water and get sick from it. We won't be as poor. People's houses won't be too small for their families and their kids won't have to sleep in the kitchen, like we see in some houses today. Our homes won't be overcrowded and our kids will have their own rooms. We'll have furniture in our houses. We should try to keep our new community clean.

Some of us believe the government should fund all of this relocation project. But we feel we need to make the decisions this time. We have to look back and think about when we were settled in 1966-67. Who made that decision? The white man did, not us. So now we must make our own decision to relocate. This is why the government does not want to help us now, but we should not give up. We should try to help, support and respect each other more. And when we move, we should live by our own rules and laws.

"*I think when we relocate we should not rely on the white man. We should run ourselves. I really like the old ways and I think we should do it ourselves.*" **Patinik, Utshimassiu man.**

Our elders say we need to make sure that our culture will be alive and well when the community is relocated. We need to talk about more than just whether we will move and when we will move. They hope that in this new community, we will be able to practise our culture like in the past. This will mean leaving the alcohol behind. Some young people also want to see this happen. We need to put away the things that cause us the most troubles here in Utshimassits. We shouldn't bring these problems with us to the new site - things like drinking, kids getting into all kinds of trouble. These problems should be left here. We must help ourselves and be happy and then maybe our children will be happy. Some people say we should not rush the move, but take our time so that we won't bring these problems with us.

"*To make sure our culture is alive and well when we relocate, we should look at the failures in the community now, and then we should look ahead.*" **Ueniam, Utshimassiu elder.**

"*Our people should be strong to quit drinking so they can take good care of the spiritual things. The children can also help the elders and their families. So let's be strong and stay away from alcohol. That is why we lost so many people. If there wasn't any alcohol in the community, our families and friends would still be here. I hope people won't bring their home brew buckets when the community relocates.*" **Penash, Utshimassiu woman.**

Some of us think it will be like getting out of prison when we move. It will be like setting us free. But some people also worry that when we relocate, people won't want to go to the country as much, because they will be too busy looking after their new houses. They will be worried about their house. Maybe when people go to the country, and see that their house has been broken, he will be angry. The Band Council might get mad at the person if the houses get wrecked after they gave it to him. We have to do some planning to avoid these conflicts and to make sure people keep going to the barrens.

Some people are more hopeful and say that when we move to the mainland we will be closer to the barrens. It will be different for our kids. They will be able to concentrate more on going hunting and that kind of stuff. Maybe they won't bother with the gas sniffing, or the way they have been here. Maybe they'll change their thinking.

"The social problems seem to be part of our society all the time, but ours seem to be more than other societies. I believe this is an indication of how we cannot cope in a foreign world, but we should continue to try to deal with these problems the best way we can. We have to talk about them, establish our own programs, but most importantly I believe we have to return to our own world. We have to, at the same time, ensure that this way of life is not threatened. It will be the Innu and only Innu who should deal with our problems. It is obvious that when other people try to impose solutions to our problems, they don't work." **Tanien Ashini, Sheshatshiu man.**

"We are taking responsibility for what is happening, and responsibility for trying to solve them. People are starting to see hope for the future. We might have a few people that might not be involved. But people have reached rock bottom and they are starting to grow. There is no way we can go back to where we were. Our culture will be revived. Our people will be well. Hopefully, by that time people will go back to the country." **Kiti, Utshimassiu woman.**

Numushum

Numushum[1], I know I've been in the country.
Numushum, you know I've been in the country.
Me, I go to the country where I've been before.
I go to the country whenever I want to use the land.

Nukum[2], you know I'll always be there.
I'll go to the country
I'll always learn wherever I go.

Numushum, you are always teaching me,
whenever we are in the country.
I paddle on the river and go where we were.

I'll always believe that I belong in the country.
I'll always believe in the country,
because I was there.

by
Tshani Piwas
Sheskun

[1]Grandfather

[2]Grandmother

Appendix a

SHESHATSHIU PARTICIPANTS

(There were also other participants: 9 returned questionnaires with no names, and a number of people who participated in the radio call-in program preferred to not be included on this participants' list.)

Mary Angela Abraham
John Abraham
Angela Andrew
Caroline Andrew
Charlie Andrew
Denina Andrew
Eric Andrew
Etienne Andrew
Germaine Andrew
Greg Andrew Jr.
Helen Andrew
Mary Adele Andrew
Olivia Andrew
Sylvester Andrew
Terry Andrew
Virginia Andrew
Sylvester Antuan
Celina Ashini
Daniel Ashini
Jackie Ashini
Joseph Ashini
Mary Agatha Ashini
Napess Ashini
John Aster
Edmund Benuen
Jose Benuen
Louisa Benuen
Madeline Benuen
Annette Budden
Mary Dyke
Derrick Gabriel
Francesca Gabriel
Garry Gregoire
Germaine Gregoire
Helen Gregoire
Janet Gregoire
Max Gregoire
Michel Gabriel
Pien Gregoire
Raphael Gregoire
Rose Gregoire
Roger Gregoire
Winnie Gregoire
David Hart
Eugene Hart
Helen Hart
Marilyn Hart
Judy Hill
Ann Hurley
Calvin Hurley
Gillian Hurley
Manimat Hurley
Pamela Hurley
Edwina Jack
Frances Jack
Jerome Jack
Marcel Jack
Mary Lou Jack
Michel Jack, Sr.
Philomena Jack
Tim Jack
Leah Jenkinson
Darren Mackay
Peter Mackay
Joseph Mark
Raven Mark
Anne Michel
Ben Michel
Janet Michel
Joachim Michel
Julianna Michel
Mary Ann Michel
Mary Madeline Michel
Philip Michel
Simon Michel
Bernadine Milley
Emma Milley
Rose Montague
Frances Nui
Luke Nui
Mary Jane Nui
Sam Nui
David Nuke
Michael Nuke
Adeline Nuna
Alex Nuna
Ann Nuna
Christine Nuna
Deborah Nuna
Edward Nuna
George Nuna
Jimmy Nuna
John Nuna
John Luke Nuna
Joseph Nuna
Kathleen Nuna
Manish Nuna
Mary Jane Nuna
Michel Nuna
Paul Nuna
Richard Nuna
Sebastian Nuna
Simon Nuna
Wayne Nuna
Mary May Osmond
Agnes Pasteen
Michel Pasteen
Irene Pastichi
Kathleen Pastichi
Kristin Penunsi
Dominic Penunsi
Karen Penunsi
Patricia Penunsi
Shelley Penunsi
Sebastian Penunsi
Philomena Penunsi
Andrew Penashue
Antuan Penashue
Bart Penashue
Basil Penashue
Elizabeth Penashue
Frances Penashue
Geraldine Penashue
Germaine Penashue
Greg Penashue
Kathleen Penashue
Louis Penashue
Louisa Penashue
Martha Penashue
Mary Ann Penashue
Mani Aten Penashue
Maurice Penashue
Paul Penashue
Philomena Penashue
Judy Piwas
Ann Philomena Pokue
Benoit Pokue
Charlotte Pokue
Dominic Pokue
Frank Pokue
Glen Pokue
Jerome Pokue
Louisa Pokue
Apenam Pone
Apenam Pone Jr.
Etienne Pone
Gregory Pone, Sr.
Janet Pone
Jerome Pone
Josie Pone
Lizetta Pone
Mathias Pone
Paul Pone
Toby Pone
Tony Pone
Anastasia Qupee
Brian Rich
Ann Rich
Cecilia Rich
Desmond Rich
Germaine Rich
Leona Rich
Leonard Rich
Louie Rich
Johnny Rich
Joseph Rich
Luke Rich
Margaret Rich
Mary Jane Rich
Patrick Rich
Randy Rich
Roberta Rich
Simeo Rich
John Selma
Mary Ann Selma
Francesca Snow
George Snow
Michelle Snow
Antuan Tshakapesh

Appendix b

UTSHIMASSIU PARTICIPANTS

Mary Jane Andrew
Ricky Andrew
Raphael Asta
Amanda Aylward
Brigetta Aylward
Mary Ann Aylward
Melissa Aylward
Damien Benuen
Kathleen Benuen
Epa Byrne
Roy Byrne
Shane Byrne
Shunee Byrne
Charlotte Gregoire
George Gregoire
George Gregoire Jr.
Gerry Gregoire
Jonah Gregoire
Lisa Gregoire
Peter Gregoire
William Katshinak
Edward Mistenapeu
Jason Mistenapeu
Ricky Misttenapeu
Justine Noah
Mary Ann Noah
Simon Noah
Darryl Nui
David Nui
John Nui
Charles Pasteen
Charles James Pasteen
Katie Pasteen
Peter Pasteen
Richard Pasteen
Susie Pasteen
Theresa Pasteen
Akat Piwas
Bob Piwas
Edward Piwas
Jean Marie Piwas
Kutshesh Piwas
Martha Piwas
Michael Piwas
Robin Piwas
Brenda Pokue
Darren Pokue
Dorothy Pokue
Elizabeth Pokue
Marie Pokue
Aaron Poker
Christine Poker
James Poker
John Poker
Penote Poker
Simeon Poker
Tomas Poker
Tommy Poker
Adeline Rich
Agathe Rich
Annie Rich
Anna Rich
Cajatan Rich
Caroline D. Rich
Caroline V. Rich
Charles Rich
Charlotte Rich
Debbie Rich
Donald Rich
Dorothy Rich
Edward Rich
Eric Rich
Etienne Rich
Francis Rich
Garfield Rich
George Rich
Greg Rich
Hank Rich
Hillary Rich
Irene Rich
Jaqueline Rich
Katie Rich
Leon Rich
Lloyd Rich
Lorraine Rich
Madeline Rich
Martyne Rich
Mary Agathe Rich
Mary Margaret Rich
Mary Margaret Rich
Mathias Rich
Patrick Rich
Penash Rich
Philip Rich
Raphael Rich
Romeo Rich
Samuel Rich
Sara Rich
Scott Rich
Sebastian Rich
Stanley Rich
Stephanie Rich
Toon Rich
Jim Saunders
Julianna Saunders
Storm Saunders
Anne Marie Toma
John Baptiste Tshakapesh
Joyce Tshakapesh
Manish Tshakapesh
Mary Charlotte Tshakapesh
Ruby Tshakapesh
Simeon Tshakapesh

Appendix c

Glossary

akaneshau:	*Anglo-white*
atuseun:	*work*
Innu:	*the people, or, of the people*
Innueimun:	*Innu words, or, the Innu language*
Innut, Innuts:	*the plural of Innu*
kaitiat:	*Innu way of life*
kakuspinanut:	*outpost program in Sheshatshiu dialect, program to assist families to go into the country*
kamantushit:	*spiritual leader, or shaman*
kaupaunatsh:	*outpost program in Utshimassiu dialect, program to assist families to go into the country*
kuashapatshikan:	*the shaking tent, a traditional Innu ritual*
kaishiniunanut	*Innu way of life*
kukumish:	*lake trout*
mentusheun:	*Innu traditional spirituality*
mitshem:	*food*
Mintushiu:	*Innu person who has spiritual or shamanic powers*
Mukushan:	*sacred feast of the caribou hunt*
muskami:	*broth made from caribou or other wild meat, fowl or fish*
nutshimit/nutshimits:	*the country, life on the land in Sheshatshiu and Utshimassiu dialects*

pimikuan:	*dried meat or fish pounded into powder*
shutshen tamun:	*pride in Innu way of life, strong thinking in your mind*
nutshimit ntukun:	*country or traditional Innu medicines*
patshatua:	*the practise of making several trips into the country to bring supplies and later the family*
Sheshatshit/Sheshatshiu:	*name of community, or, of Sheshatshit*
tashapatakan:	*traditional scaffold used in ritual of hanging the bones of the animals*
tshenut:	*elders*
tsheutshimaut:	*the big boss, or, governments*
Utshimassit/Utshimassits:	*Davis Inlet*
Utshimassiu:	*of, or from Utshimassits*