

Statistics Canada goes to Nain, Nunatsiavut

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The Statistics Canada's Aboriginal Statistical Training Program (ASTP) has been building a collaborative partnership with the National Aboriginal Organization's Health (NAHO) Naasautit Inuit Health Statistics project. The project involves gathering available health statistics for Inuit populations in Canada's North and training four health-data analyst interns to organize and present data. In December 2008, the ASTP was in Nain, Nunatsiavut in northern Labrador (part of Inuit Nunangat) to provide statistical training to NAHO's Inuit health-data analysts and other Inuit interested in this training.

Inuit Nunangat

Inuit Nunangat means 'Inuit homeland' in the Inuit language. Inuit Nunangat comprises of the Inuvialuit region of the Northwest Territories, the territory of Nunavut, Nunavik in northern Quebec, and Nunatsiavut in Labrador.



What is the Aboriginal Statistical Training Program?

Head Office team: Maria Mamaril-Faith, Valorie Whetung, me, Niann Sheu, Pat Foster and Monique Allard.

The Aboriginal Statistical Training Program was developed to meet the statistical training needs of Inuit, Métis and First Nations peoples across Canada. Courses have been offered since 1999 following a recommendation of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Statistics Canada is

committed to delivering quality training on how to collect, access and use data. As such, the ASTP is a cornerstone of the Aboriginal Statistics Program.

The ASTP consists of the Head Office team working in close collaboration with Aboriginal Liaison Officers and their managers in the regions. The program is currently recruiting instructors from all areas of Statistics Canada to provide statistical training in Aboriginal communities across Canada. Building statistical capacity of Inuit analysts

The first course delivered in Ottawa in November 2008 was "Surveys from Start to Finish" and trained participants from NAHO, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Inuit students from the Nunavut Sivuniksavut program. The second course, "Introduction to Basic Statistical Techniques," was delivered in Nain in



December. The participants came from the Nunatsiavut Government, the Nain Inuit community government and other organizations.

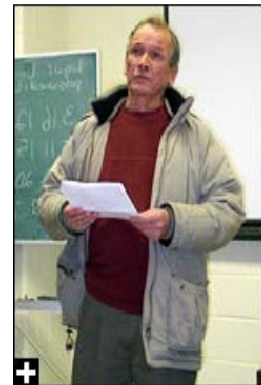


The class: Fran Winters, Karen Dicker, Gina Dicker, Ernestina Lampe, Pat Foster, me, Sarah Merkuratsuk (seated in front), Jennifer Williams, Edna Winter (seated), and Cassandra Chaulk.

The Statistics Canada team in Nain consisted of Isme Alam, ASTP Program Manager; Pat Foster, Unit Head; Debbie Calcutt, Project Manager of the Aboriginal Surveys, and Sheila Pelkey, Aboriginal Liaison Officer in the Eastern Region. Tom Axtell, the NAHO Project Co-ordinator, joined the team to participate in the training and show the team around the community, introducing them to friends and contacts.

At Jen Havens Memorial School, the Statistics Canada team prepared the room, materials and computers and welcomed the participants. What a polite and focused group of participants! They demonstrated a strong ability to work with data.

The President of the Nunatsiavut Government, Jim Lyall, joined the class with his First Minister, Tony Andersen. Mr. Lyall said to the class, "I encourage you to make the most of the training you receive as it will enable you to make better use of statistics on Inuit health....I am sure the results will be positive for the Nunatsiavut Government as the numbers will give us a better idea what the numbers mean to Labrador Inuit as we set priorities for the future while aiming to improve the overall health of our people."



Tony Anderson told the trainees, "As Inuit, we agree that we have all been over-studied. With those studies and stats, we've seldom agreed. It's encouraging that Statistics Canada and our National (Inuit) organizations are here to train some of our people so that some of these stats and some of these studies bring more positive results and will reflect our health needs that we are trying to bring to a level playing field."

After the course, Tom Axtell provided his feedback to the ASTP team and said, "I know that your workshops will really contribute to developing greater self-reliance in these communities. Measuring is at the heart of managing resources. It was the high point in the Naasautit project so far, to see this group's ability to turn numbers into statistics that go well beyond the basics in analysis."

It was very exciting for the Statistics Canada team to be in Nain since they had the opportunity to learn about Inuit land and culture. This directly impacts the relevance and content of the training courses. The Statistics Canada team gained new knowledge, while at the same time sharing their knowledge on statistics. In this way, capacity building took place in both directions and was mutually beneficial.