

Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum Strategic Plan (2018-2021)



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**Nunatta
Sunakkutaangit
Museum**



Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum

Strategic Plan (2018-2021)

Introduction

In 2019, the Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum society (NSM) turns 50. The organization, whose name translates from Inuktitut as “things of our land,” was incorporated in 1969 to document and care for a growing collection of artwork and cultural materials from across the Eastern Arctic. While the organization’s mission and direction has changed over the years, Inuit culture, history, and community have remained core components of its identity. In 1985, the NSM oversaw the creation of the first museum in Iqaluit through the renovation of a historical Hudson’s Bay Company warehouse to store and showcase its collections. Over decades of volunteer support and public engagement, the NSM has become a cornerstone of the city’s culture, tourism, and arts. It is highly valued by community members and visitors alike for the unique experiences it provides. The NSM is taking the opportunity of its 50th anniversary to reflect on its history and contemplate new directions for its future. The development of a new three-year strategic plan has the ultimate goal of bringing the NSM into better alignment with its current capacity, environment, and community.

Organization Overview

The NSM incorporated as a non-profit society in 1969 with a broad mandate to “focus attention on all aspects of the Eastern Arctic, the environment and its history.” The society was a response to a growing collection of objects and artworks sourced from Inuit artists in Iqaluit and other Baffin communities as part of a federal economic development program. Recognizing the growing public appeal of Inuit arts, and the threat of local collections being removed to a territorial heritage centre in Yellowknife, a group of Iqaluit residents formed the Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Society to safeguard the collection. While the dream of a stand-alone museum would not be realized until more than a decade later, the society fulfilled its mission to “catalogue, photograph and register” the collection from temporary quarters in a former liquor store. In 1984, the society purchased a Hudson’s Bay Company warehouse in Apex for \$1.00; this was moved to the museum’s current location, restored, and opened to the public in the following year. The building was renovated with an addition in 1993, and another significant round of renovations in 2016.



Throughout the 1990s, with a physical museum in place, the NSM assumed a more community and heritage-oriented focus for its work, with the mission of operating “a heritage organization for the purposes of collecting, conserving, studying, interpreting and exhibiting, objects, specimens and activities which represent the local natural and cultural history.” The energy of the society became increasingly focused on serving its immediate community of Iqaluit/Apex, although artwork, exhibits and interpretive material continue to be sourced from the broader Eastern Arctic/South Baffin region. Since 2016, the Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum has operated under the mission to engage the community and visitors with the history, culture and art of Nunavut and provide unique learning experiences through its displays and exhibits.

In 2018, the NSM continues to provide a rigorous schedule of activities and services for its community. Prioritized activities include:

- Displaying cultural collections.
- Interacting with local artists through the purchase, promotion, exhibition and marketing of artwork.
- Operating a gift store.
- Curating temporary art exhibitions.
- Hosting public events including exhibitions, announcements, guest-lectures, community workshops, and visiting dignitaries.
- Facilitating educational visits and tours for local schools and cruise ships.
- Facilities rental for other organizations’ meetings, workshops and events.

This work takes place through the efforts of a full-time Curator/Manager, part-time staff, volunteers and a working board of directors. The Curator receives her direction from the board, and oversees the work of volunteers and part-time staff members. Given sufficient funding, the NSM seeks to increase its fulltime staff to include an Executive Director and museum shop manager.

Mission

The Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum engages the community and visitors with the history, culture and art of Nunavut and provides unique learning experiences through its displays and exhibits.

Vision

The Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum envisions a community that is integrated and enlightened through exposure to the history, culture and arts of Inuit.



Strategic Priorities

The Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum strives to create maximum impact for its community and visitors through the realization of its mission and vision. In January 2018, the NSM conducted extensive community interviews to identify existing community needs, and seize new opportunities at the national, territorial, and local levels. Based on this research, the NSM has identified three strategic areas to target for change over the next three years of work.

Summary of Priorities and Action Plan

Priority #1: Create a clear purpose and identity for the organization

Action Items: Priority 1		2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021
1.1	Develop a clear, written statement of the museum's purpose, audience, stakeholders, geographical scope and goals (for internal use and to guide external communications)	X		
1.2	Create a press release to celebrate the NSM's 50 th anniversary and publicize NSM's purpose and identity	X		
1.3	Research and develop a list of funders and specific funding pools (that align with the NSM's purpose and identity)	X		

Priority #2: Increase engagement with the Iqaluit/Apex community

2A Strengthen Inuit involvement in NSM staff

Action Items: Priority 2A		2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021
2.1	Create an Inuit priority hiring policy	X		

2B Strengthen Inuit involvement on the NSM board

Action Items: Priority 2B		2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021
2.3	Create and implement a campaign to encourage Inuit to join the NSM Board	X	X	X

2C Strengthen Inuit involvement in the design and delivery of programs

Action Items: Priority 2C	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021
2.4 Create opportunities for paid Inuit participation through, but not limited to, NSM proposal projects	X	X	X

2D Increase recognition of NSM's gift store for its support and development of local Inuit artists

Action Items: Priority 2D	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021
2.5 Help local Inuit artists source tools and materials	X	X	X
2.6 Support the development of quality and diverse work of present local artist in the museum's interactions as a purchaser of Inuit art through the Gift Shop.	X	X	X

2E Review and update NSM's communication strategy

The NSM recognizes the importance of maintaining contact with its community and will increase the reliability and regularity of both digital and non-digital forms of communication.

Action Items: Priority 2E	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021
2.7 Create a website for the organization as a means of widening exposure to collections and providing updates as to the NSM's ongoing events, exhibits and activities	X		
2.8 Improve first person communication with partner organizations and funders (to inform people of the NSM's activities, needs, and potential partnership opportunities)	X	X	X

2F Develop more partnerships with Iqaluit-based organizations

Action Items: Priority 2F	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021
2.9 Identify potential partners and possible common projects. These may include submitting joint proposals for funding.		X	X

2G Increase public programming

Action Items: Priority 2G	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021
2.10 Prioritize and include public programming components in future exhibit proposals submitted for funding		X	X



Priority #3: Activate and interpret collections

Action Items: Priority 3		2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021
3.1	Transition to an electronic catalogue inventory from the present hand-written index card version	X	X	
3.2	Interpret collections after being digitally catalogued The NSM will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • add information to the objects' records through historical research • hold interviews with Elders and local knowledge holders and document these • use these to add new levels of interpretation to displays, art shows, and research projects to increase the community's awareness of Inuit culture and history 	X	X	
3.3	Activate digitized collections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote NSM collections on-line (Circulate images, stories, and objects to ensure the collections in storage continue to be accessible) • gather new information about unknown or undocumented items in the collection 		X	X

Description of Priorities

Priority #1: Create A Clear Purpose and Identity for The Organization

Over the next three years, the NSM will seek to communicate a renewed focus for the organization. Specific targets to be met through this process include:

- **Developing a clear, written statement of the museum's purpose, audience, stakeholders, geographical scope and goals**
This statement will be used internally to facilitate board unity and decision-making regarding the NSM's priorities for programs, exhibits and partnerships. It will also be incorporated in correspondence with external funders, partners and the press to ensure that a uniform message about the NSM's identity is communicated.
- **Creating a press release to celebrate the NSM's 50th anniversary**
This concise press release will help other organizations recognize the purpose and work of the museum and may create opportunities for increased partnerships.

- **Researching and developing a list of funders and specific funding pools that align with the NSM's renewed purpose and identity**

This will include both the identification of funding sources and the contacting of organizations by phone to introduce the NSM and foster personal relationships with designated regional funding agents.

Priority #2: Create More Engagement with the Iqaluit/Apex Community

The NSM is a publicly oriented institution, and it relies extensively on a network of individuals, organizations and interest groups to fulfill its mission. Over the next three years, the NSM will prioritize its engagement of the Iqaluit/Apex community through four targeted areas:

- **Increasing Inuit involvement**

Iqaluit's Inuit population makes up roughly 60% of the Iqaluit/Apex community. Inuit make up the vast majority of the artists who sell artwork to the museum gift store and through exhibits. The NSM economically supports Inuit artists working in Nunavut. In 2017/2018, the NSM purchased over \$200,000 worth of arts and crafts from local artists. There are currently no Inuit board members or Inuit fulltime employees working at the museum. However, the museum will strategize how to increase Inuit participation on the board. It will also formalize an Inuit priority hiring policy.

- **Modifying NSM's communication strategy**

The NSM recognizes the importance of maintaining contact with its community and will increase the reliability and regularity of both digital and non-digital forms of communication. This will involve

- the creation of a website for the organization as a means of widening exposure to collections and providing updates as to the NSM's ongoing events, exhibits and activities.
- improve first person communication with partner organizations and funders to inform people of the NSM's activities, needs, and potential partnership opportunities.

- **Developing more partnerships with Iqaluit-based organizations**

There are a number of organizations in Iqaluit whose missions and areas of interest overlap with the NSM. Partnership with these organizations will be actively sought out to help the NSM gain access to new funding, capacity, audience and resources. Partnerships allow the NSM to share its expertise and capitalize on the strong assets of its museum collection and building.

- **Increasing public programming**

Programming is the best way for the NSM to extend its reach in the community,

bring in new audience, and make itself more relevant. Over the next three years, the NSM will focus on the development of public programs that do not draw heavily on the capacity of the organization's limited staff and finances. This will be accomplished by partnering with organizations that can contribute people and resources to help meet a shared vision for the community. All new programs will be relevant to the community, with an emphasis on matching program topics to times of year when community members are available and interested in participating.

Priority #3: Activate and Interpret Collections

The NSM's collection of arts and ethnographic materials is a defining feature of the organization, and a continued source of attraction for community members and visitors. As stewards of this collection, the NSM has an obligation to ensure its objects are both accessible and cared for on behalf of its community. This is accomplished with an understanding that the community values the collection for multiple different reasons, ranging from its age and technical mastery, to the cultural knowledge it communicates and the connections it provides to people past and present. The NSM has recently started to revive its collections management. Over the next three years, these efforts will continue with the following areas slated for priority:

- **Determining the scope of collections and creating an electronic inventory**

The NSM will determine the complete scope of its collections, including of archival documents, photographs, artwork, and ethnographic objects. A basic electronic inventory will be developed that allows access to object documentation and provides a search format for material keywords.

- **Interpreting collections**

Once collections have been catalogued, the NSM will begin adding information to the objects' records through historical research, and interviews with Elders and local knowledge holders. These interviews will be documented, as they are important records in themselves. Both the material collections and associated knowledge will be used to add new levels of interpretation to displays, art shows, and research projects with the end goal of increasing the community's awareness of Inuit culture and history.

- **Digitizing collections**

The NSM will increase its efforts to promote its collections on-line. This will be accomplished through the digitization and circulation of images, stories and objects. This will allow the NSM to gain new information about unknown or undocumented items in the collection, and ensure that collections in storage continue to be accessible.

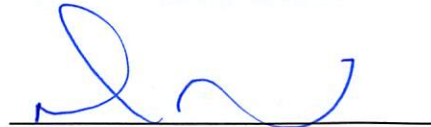
Acknowledgments

The strategic plan created for the Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum is intended to be a product of both internal and community desired directions for the organization. Over the course of developing this plan, 53 individuals were interviewed although some of them declined to have their names listed. Many more people offered information through anonymous questionnaires. We would like to thank everyone who contributed to their insights, wisdom and time to this process, including the following individuals:

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Chair:



Acting
Secretary:

