

# Community Report

## Inuvialuit Language & Identity:

Perspectives on the Symbolic Meaning of Inuvialuktun in  
The Canadian Western Arctic



**Ingamo Hall Friendship Centre, 20 MacKenzie Road**  
**Wednesday, September 5th, 2012, 7:00-8:00 pm**

Snacks will be provided



**Aurora Research Institute, 191 Mackenzie Road**  
**Thursday, September 6th, 2012, 12:00-13:00 pm**

Snacks will be provided



**Alexander Oehler will be presenting on research that took place between  
August 1. and December 20, 2011**

The purpose of this study was to examine how Inuvialuit beneficiaries in Inuvik felt about the importance of Inuvialuktun, especially in relation to their own cultural identity. This information was intended to help Inuvialuit language planners and instructors in promoting Inuvialuktun. The study consulted 45 Inuvialuit beneficiaries between the ages of 6 and 59. Data was gathered through interviews, group meetings, and questionnaires conducted with individuals who were part of the college, the learning center, the secondary school, and the community at large. The study identified some separation in the beliefs held by individuals about their heritage language. While some saw Inuvialuktun as a pillar of their cultural identity, others saw it merely as a benefit, while favoring land-ties as primary sign of cultural identity. Moreover, learning desire fluctuated according to age, peaking in young adults who were building identities to pass on to younger generations. The data also confirmed that Inuvialuktun had to compete with English on unequal terms, and within a generally accepted hierarchy upheld by economic demands. Although Inuvialuktun was held in high esteem, most people were satisfied knowing only a few words, as this connected them to their heritage. Several recommendations for language revitalization were made, based on participants' insights.