

Community Radio

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Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

As someone who was born and grown up in Nunavut, I am acutely aware of the importance we place on radio, in our communities.

I am also aware that the local Community Radio Stations play a unique role in many of these same communities.

In Nunavik, Northwest Territories and Nunatsiavut, there is a long history of local people operating Community Radio Stations. There is long-term funding in place and they are thriving.

In Nunavut, there is less support for them by funders here, who lack the understanding of how vital a role they do play.

Community Radio Stations allow people to tell their stories, to mirror the concerns of the population, to focus on key topics they are interested in and to increase understanding through information-sharing, on any given subject.

Small communities especially, sometimes feel a bit isolated; not everyone knows what is going on, who is coming to the community, who won the tournament, what support is needed or what the news from places further away may be.

In addition, they may welcome information from both outside the community and learn more from others right in their own community.

Elders speak of passing on information verbally; radio allows for story-telling, with an emphasis on legends that teach appropriate behaviours, that talk of overcoming great struggles and articulate Inuit Values and Beliefs that are just as applicable today.

The sharing of information, particularly to our youth, is another way for young people to develop Inuit Pride, in being able to survive in the toughest environment in the world.

Elders have shared their disappointment at being marginalized, when non-Inuit authorities arrived, who professed to be the experts.

Elders, whose traditional role it had been to act as teachers, counsellors, disciplinarians, and motivators, modelling social norms; who taught through stories and tales of folly, when someone did not follow the correct way, lost their role to the newcomers. The chain of teaching 'how to be, and act and think like an Inuk' was broken and *this has created very challenging circumstances ever since.*

Community radio can play many of these roles; it can be a part of every day lives, as it seeks to broaden the listeners' world, to mirror the community to itself, to challenge, remind, and to communicate to the broadest number of people.

This type of radio accomplishes many things:

- It supports an internal trade scenario where people go on to let others know they have objects for sale**
- It supports a sharing economy when a hunter tells the community he or she has just caught a walrus and for people to come over and eat and take some home**
- It supports a village raising a child as parents use the radio to communicate to their child it is time to come home**
- It helps spread news about coming events and lets people express how they feel**
- It shines a light on contentious issues and provides time for people to develop their opinions on specific matters**
- It encourages participation on the part of the community to speak up and speak out about what concerns community members.**
- It provides new information on subjects and increases people's understanding.**
- It tackles subjects concerning the past and informs people of what took place before they were present.**
- It enshrines traditional knowledge, showcases it's usefulness and increases understanding of how to apply time-honoured attitudes, behaviours and techniques to current and future situations that may arise.**

-It provides the best of Inuktitut terminology as Elders talk, that can help our youth improve their level of our language

-It can promote discussion regarding new topics and invite community members to share their thoughts

-It can serve as a forum for all ages to have their own specific times for utilizing the radio and playing their own music, setting out their own thoughts and communicating with their own group.

-Community Radio provides the time to talk and think more deeply about items, for the community to search among its own, for the answers on how to proceed, what else must be learned and how a decision can be made.

-It is much too valuable to be so poorly funded within our Territory.

-Equipment is very expensive, a location in the community is also difficult to find and maintain; training is involved and there are rules and limits on what and how things can be said that this training addresses that must be taught.

-It has been under-used by government too, who often fail to understand the use for community announcements, health and wellness messages, and other topics that could be covered well, in this type of venue. Surprisingly, little effort has been made to use this method of communications to reach the people.

-It also functions as the contact point in pressing circumstances, such as when hunters are lost out on the land, when someone has not returned to the community, when there is a need to amass volunteers to take action.

-Likewise, it stays on way past its regular hours, as a show of solidarity until the person is found who was lost.

-Many households do not have a phone, so the radio is their link to others.

-People often accuse their government of not consulting them or having a fly-in short meeting, then leaving again. So much more could be done with speakers addressing the topic ahead of the consultation meetings to ensure full participation on the part of those who are interested.

Community radio is a way for some to get messages to their loved ones, when they are out in hospital, or out waiting to have a baby or travelling elsewhere.

In short, I want to see a strong network of local community radio stations with all the equipment they need, the training for the staff and the basic expenses for their operation covered.

This is one very innovative way the Government can show it cares and understands this very important need.

Community radio's ability to inform, organize, and communicate to all, should be far more recognized than it is, in Nunavut.

There is an express need *to commit long-term funding* to this mode of communication.

There is a need *to commit training dollars* as well, so community people can be trained in its operation. At the moment, there is no actual training for announcers and it is only the current one trying to explain things to the new one taking place.

In short, I am asking that we recognize community radio more fully in Nunavut and get behind it all the way.

Governments at all levels, should ensure that practical and easy ways to access funding be set in place. that runs over several years at a time. No small radio operation can expect to have to continuously be in search of annual funding.

Other people outside the community, as I have mentioned earlier, should also build partnerships with the local community radio stations, to ensure them a ready supply of information, provide information campaigns, speakers when they come through the community and information hand-outs on topics local announcers can understand and discuss with their listeners.

I am calling for a full support initiative for these local radio stations, recognizing the important role in community development they play.

I want to see dedicated funding and departmental support initiatives in place, that recognize that importance and works closely to ensure the stations are not out there struggling all alone, trying to survive.