

---

# INSPIRE PROGRAM IMPACT REPORT

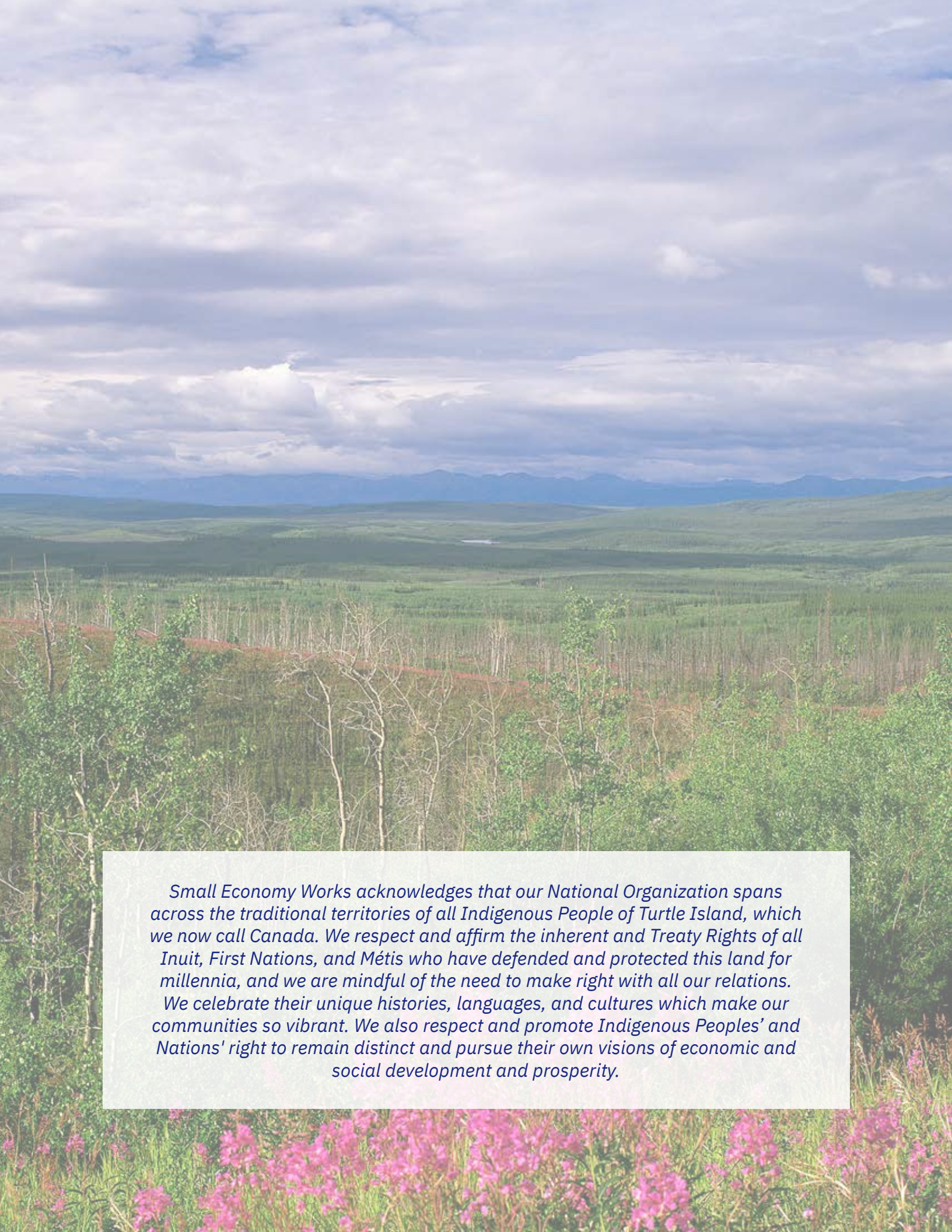
---

**Measuring the impact of the Inspire Program  
across three northern Territories**



by **SMALL ECONOMY WORKS**

SPRING 2024

A wide landscape view of a forested valley. The foreground is filled with green trees and bushes, with some pink flowers in the bottom right corner. The middle ground shows a dense forest of tall, thin trees. In the distance, there are rolling green hills and a range of blue mountains under a sky filled with large, white and grey clouds.

*Small Economy Works acknowledges that our National Organization spans across the traditional territories of all Indigenous People of Turtle Island, which we now call Canada. We respect and affirm the inherent and Treaty Rights of all Inuit, First Nations, and Métis who have defended and protected this land for millennia, and we are mindful of the need to make right with all our relations. We celebrate their unique histories, languages, and cultures which make our communities so vibrant. We also respect and promote Indigenous Peoples' and Nations' right to remain distinct and pursue their own visions of economic and social development and prosperity.*



# ABOUT INSPIRE

Small Economy Works' flagship “Inspire” program is an entrepreneurial leadership training program specifically designed for northern youth. The goal of Inspire is to equip youth in remote Northern communities, particularly Inuit, First Nations, and Métis youth, with entrepreneurial skills and mindsets. The program is informed by both Western and Indigenous worldviews, delivered by Indigenous and Northern instructors and Subject Matter Experts, and is adapted to the specific needs and cultural realities of participants.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This is a plain-language report based on Ivy+Dean's Independent Impact Evaluation Report of the Inspire Arctic Accelerator Program, supported by the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy from 2020-2023. For more information, visit [smalleconomyworks.com](https://smalleconomyworks.com).

For nearly a decade, Small Economy Works has been delivering entrepreneurial leadership programs for Northern and Indigenous youth from over 70 remote Northern communities. This report presents an overview of the impacts the program has made on the lives of its participants. Research conducted through surveys, interviews and group discussions also highlights the lessons learned and best practices Small Economy Works has established through our extensive work in these regions.

# EVOLUTION OF THE INSPIRE PROGRAM

**2014** Inspire's CEO and founder, Ajmal Sataar, meets with young Nunavummiut. He identifies opportunities to engage these youth in building knowledge and skills related to entrepreneurship that embraces their culture, values, and traditions.

---

**2015-16** The Inspire Nunavut program is developed and piloted in the territory.

---

**2017-18** Inspire Nunavik, a 3-year high school course in partnership with Kativik Ilisarniliriniq is created and delivered.

---

**2019** Small Economy Works is founded as a national organization to design and deliver Inspire programs in new regions.

---

**2020** The Inspire Program shifts to virtual delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic and an e-learning platform is designed. New funding allows Inspire to be adapted for the NWT and Yukon.

---

**2021** Inspire NWT program is localized to the territory and is launched in Fort Providence; Inspire NWT is expanded to youth across the territory.

---

**2022** Inspire Yukon is localized to the territory and is launched in Dawson City; Inspire Yukon is expanded to youth across the territory.

---

**2023** A new cross-Territory graduate program, "Initiate", is designed and launched, offering assistance and support to Inspire graduates.

---

**2024** The Inspire program is piloted in Labrador with the College of the North Atlantic; 11 participants from four communities take part.

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## INSPIRE WEEKS 1-6:

---

The first half of Inspire is about goal setting, self-reflection, and learning about community. Participants explore employment and entrepreneurial leadership and learn skills such as digital literacy, financial literacy, and design thinking all through a culturally informed lens.

## INSPIRE WEEKS 7-12:

---

In the following six weeks, participants apply the skills and concepts learned in Level 1 to the development of their idea for a community project or business. This phase includes writing a business plan, collecting community feedback, and learning about implementing their project within the realities of remote Northern communities.

**Participants commit to 10-12 hours of learning per week, for 12 weeks. This includes:**

- Experiential and classroom based learning in a cohort
- Structured and self-directed learning
- Regular live workshops
- Individual and group assignments
- One-on-one check-ins with instructors



## INITIATE:

---

Graduates of the Inspire program are eligible to participate in the Initiate program. Initiate supports participants to launch their community project or business idea through personalized and gamified learning. Participants receive one-on-one support from mentors and program instructors, specialized workshops, peer-to-peer learning, and networking opportunities with established First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and Northern business owners and entrepreneurs.

# A SNAPSHOT OF INSPIRE PARTICIPANTS

OVER  
**235**  
PARTICIPANTS

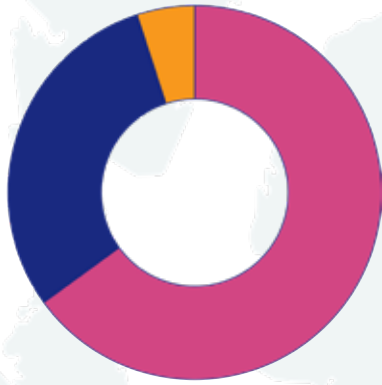
AGES  
**15-30**

FROM  
**70+**  
COMMUNITIES  
ACROSS THE  
NORTH



More than 80% of participants are Inuit, First Nations, or Métis





65% of participants identify as female, 30% as male, and 5% as non-binary or other

# 68%

joined Inspire because they wanted to start a business

# 17%

already owned a business and wanted to strengthen their entrepreneurial skills

# 50%

wanted to further their education and find meaningful employment



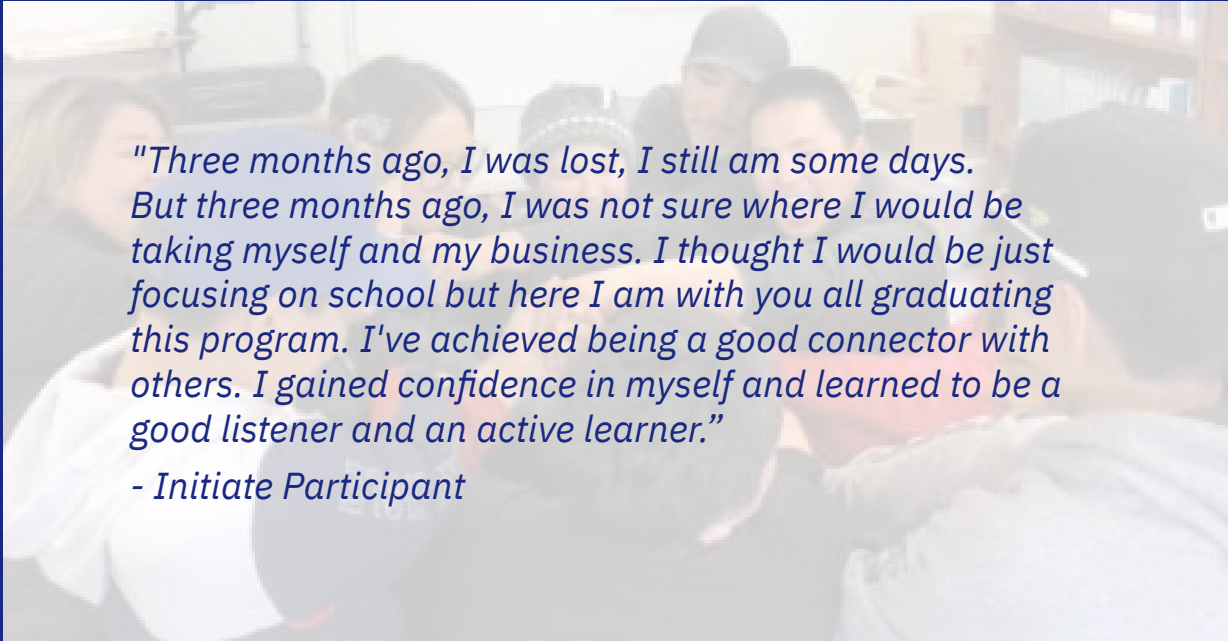
# ABOUT THE IMPACT EVALUATION

After nearly a decade delivering over 15 cohorts across Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Yukon to more than 200 participants, the Inspire program was evaluated in 2023 with the goal of understanding the cultural, social, and economic impacts of the program.

## Information was collected by third party evaluators through:

- Participant surveys
- Observations of program delivery
- Interviews with stakeholders
- Discussion groups with Inspire participants and graduates
- Interviews with friends and family of participants

Key themes and findings about the impact of the Inspire program were identified.



*"Three months ago, I was lost, I still am some days. But three months ago, I was not sure where I would be taking myself and my business. I thought I would be just focusing on school but here I am with you all graduating this program. I've achieved being a good connector with others. I gained confidence in myself and learned to be a good listener and an active learner."*

*- Initiate Participant*

# RESULTS OF THE INSPIRE PROGRAM EVALUATION

Participants talked about the program's ability to inspire, connect, and empower them on various levels, from personal development to career and education goals. Many participants reported feeling a stronger connection to their community and a strengthened desire to contribute to their community in a positive way. Indigenous participants felt more connected to their culture as a result of the program. Non-Indigenous participants found that the program supported them in their journey towards Indigenous Reconciliation in the North.

**83%**

of graduates agree that after being in the program, they are able to think, feel, and act in a more positive way

**70%**

of graduates felt more connected to their passions and their communities, following participation in Inspire

**35%**

of graduates attribute current activities to their participation in the Inspire program

## Key findings of the independent evaluation:

- The Inspire program increased young people's confidence levels and their ability to recognize their own potential.
- Participants improved their communication, leadership, decision-making, and interpersonal skills.
- Youth who were part of the program feel more hopeful for their future and are more motivated to pursue their goals.
- Participants feel more connected to their community and their culture because of the Inspire program.
- Overall, participants reported having improved mental health and well-being.

# BEST PRACTICES

The independent evaluation found the successes of the Inspire program can be adopted by future initiatives that serve First Nations, Inuit, and Métis youth in order to create more impactful programming in remote Northern communities

## Best practices applied by the Inspire Program:

- Programming is adapted to meet the needs of each community and context; local experts work together with instructors and education teams to incorporate local examples and experiences into the program materials and activities. Indigenous teachings and practices are relevant to the specific Indigenous populations that the program is aimed at and cannot be a “one-size-serves-all” approach.
- Youth participants are compensated for their involvement. This makes the program more accessible to more youth, and also provides a learning opportunity about finances and future workplace expectations.
- Local leaders are engaged as partners and presenters. Doing this gives participants opportunities to see “people like them” who are successful leaders in their community.
- Participation includes access to free emotional and mental health supports, for all participants. This is imperative for programming with northern and Indigenous youth; these supports allow youth to overcome barriers and to successfully complete the program.
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth are provided opportunities to collaborate within community programs, particularly to advance the work of non-Indigenous youth towards reconciliation.



# HEAR FROM INSPIRE PARTICIPANTS

*"Inspire has made an exponential difference in my life. When I first began this program I was a completely different person. I was always in my head, filled with so much self-doubt and anxiety, I was isolating myself prior to the program. Now I feel confident in my [abilities] and am so excited for the future. I'm breaking out of my shell and becoming more and more extroverted as well."*

*- Inspire Yukon Participant*

*"I have learned how to function in the business world as an Indigenous artist and create the space I deserve. I learned so many useful tactics and tips that improve the way my business and I function from taking the Inspire courses [...] I have been able to get my business off the ground and have been getting territory wide recognition and even been contacted for attending festivals, teaching workshops, and participating in interviews. I am forever grateful to the Inspire program, their teachers, the participants, and the opportunities that taking this course has opened for me."*

*- Inspire NWT Participant*

*"You guys didn't just change me, you changed all 5 people's lives in my household. My family saw how positive and inspired I had gotten throughout the program and they started being more positive and driven too, the program changed us all."*

*- Inspire Nunavut Participant*

*Inspire wouldn't be possible without support from the partners, funders, and communities that we work with.*

*Thank you – Máhsi – Mársi – Máhsi – Hq̄i' – Mahsi – ᐃᑦᑦᑦᑦ (Nakurmiik)  
L'ᐃ (Ma'na) – ᑦᑦᑦᑦ (Quana) – ᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ (Qujannamiik) – ᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ (Quyanainni)  
kinanāskomitin – Merci – Mähsi' – Mähsi' – Sógá sénlá' – Tsin'ij̄  
Shäw níthän – Gùnètchīsh – Gunat̄chīsh – Niyę sáw nīdhín*

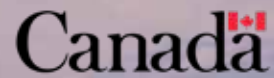


Lᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ  
**Makigiaqta**



**KITIKMEOT INUIT ASSOCIATION**  
ᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ ᑦᑦᑦᑦ ᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ  
**KITIKMEOT INUIT KATUYIKATIGT**

Funded by the Government of Canada's  
Youth Employment and Skills Strategy



**Inspire**

by **SMALL ECONOMY WORKS**