

**Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)  
Activity on the  
Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (RNFIL)**



**Report  
Northwest Territories**

**Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC)**

# OECD Activity on Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning

## Northwest Territories Report

### Introduction

The NWT is undergoing considerable economic, political and social change. Aboriginal land claims and self-government initiatives and economic development are the key factors shaping Northern society.

### Component 1. Contextual Factors

#### Demographic change

The 2005 NWT population was 43,000. Forty-five percent of the NWT population lives in the capital city of Yellowknife. Fifty percent of the NWT population is Aboriginal. This is the second largest percentage Aboriginal population of all provinces and territories reported in the 2001 Census of Canada. Of the Aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories, 57% are Dene, Nineteen percent are Metis and 21% are Inuit. The NWT has 11 official languages. Forty-four percent of Aboriginal people speak an Aboriginal language. About 40 percent of territorial residents over 15 years of age spend time on the land hunting or fishing.

While the NWT population is younger than in the rest of Canada, the population is aging and birth rates are declining. This trend, coupled with increases in early retirement, can be expected to put pressure on young and middle aged adults to develop the skills required for the jobs being vacated. Unless the NWT is able to provide the trained and skilled workers that are needed, this may lead to increased in-migration of workers.

There are a number of challenges that will continue to face the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) in delivering responsive, cost-effective postsecondary education and training. Small populations, low education levels, competing opportunities such as low skill employment, large distances, cultural differences and cost all exacerbate the adult development challenge. Historically, Northerners prefer to have education and training opportunities made available as close to home as possible, particularly those adults who have children and require supports from family and their communities. As such, there is constant pressure by the GNWT to increase commitment to adult education and training. This is particularly true in relation to the resource sectors where the demand for skilled workers in the oil and gas fields and diamond mines has had significant impact on priorities and expenditures.

## **Internationalisation**

The NWT has seen significant changes in its immigrant population during the past five years, particularly with the influx of foreign workers required for the development of both the diamond and tourism industries. In many cases, these foreign workers have been recruited by industry and have brought their families to reside in the NWT.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) statistics indicate that 85 immigrants became permanent residents in the NWT in 2005. The actual number of individuals requiring immigration-related services is likely significantly higher. Currently, there is no mechanism to formally track immigrants coming to the NWT through secondary migration and temporary foreign work permits. At present, it is estimated that there are currently about 4500 immigrants living in the NWT.

Immigrant demographics in the NWT continue to change at a steady pace; presently the largest cultural groups are the Philippine, Vietnamese and Islamic communities. Other immigrant pockets include residents from Armenia, Japan, China, Korea, Africa, Israel, Croatia, India, Europe, Columbia, and the Caribbean among other countries.

Immigration is generating interest in the francophone community as the number of French-speaking NWT residents increases.

Much of the NWT immigrant population resides in Yellowknife, however other regional communities, such as Inuvik, Hay River and Norman Wells have also been attracting newcomers.

Although the NWT labour market is experiencing a skills shortage, highly skilled immigrants are prevented from working in their professions because there is no process for assessing their credentials and no opportunity for them to acquire English language proficiency at a professional level. Currently, immigrants who attempt to enroll at Aurora College are assessed based on a writing sample -- the assessment method used for all Aurora College applicants. Because their English writing skills are weak, professional immigrants are placed in elementary or junior high school courses when what they really need are advanced English as a Second Language (ESL) courses and recognition of prior learning.

## **Information and Communication Technology**

### **Economic developments and skills shortage or mismatch**

The Northwest Territories is blessed with varied resources. These support an economy that is largely based on diamonds, gas, oil, gold, and other minerals.

The NWT is home to the only two commercially producing diamond mines in North America, with a third in the planning stages. The Northwest Territories also has huge oil and gas reserves. Opportunities also exist in forestry, fishing, fur harvesting and hydro-electricity.

Even with the current boom in mining, oil and gas, and construction, the public service remains the largest single employer in the NWT. About 37.3% of NWT workers are employed in government administration, health or education services. This sector will continue to be challenged by fiscal restraint, the need to ensure the labour pool has appropriate skill levels at both the NWT and community level, and the changes that will come about as a result of devolution and the establishment of Aboriginal governments.

In 2001, the NWT's GDP grew by 19.6% (the highest growth rate in Canada), largely as a result of development in the non-renewable resource sector. This trend is expected to continue and will have a significant effect on the employment levels and skill requirements for workers.

In 2004, the average employment rate in the NWT was close to 70%, the highest employment rate in Canada. Employment was largely focused in large regional centres: Yellowknife, Inuvik, Norman Wells and Hay River. Smaller communities, while exhibiting some increases, still had relatively low employment rates in comparison. The difference between employment rates by gender continued to narrow approaching parity between men and women, only separated by 3%. In Canada, as a whole, this difference is 9%.

Over a 10-year period ending in 2010, the labour market in the NWT is projected to grow as much as 7,000 jobs. During that same period, a 20% decrease in labour supply is anticipated because many workers do not have the required skills. Unless changes occur, the pool of available workers within the NWT will not have the capacity to meet future demands – a situation that is complicated by increasing national and global competition for jobs.

The potential labour supply is not sufficient to meet resource industry demand, let alone existing labour gaps. Education levels are by far the greatest determinant of employment. More than half of the available labour supply has not completed high school and three quarters does not have a post secondary education.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) through its Career Centres provides information on how to access labour market opportunities, as well as providing career counselling services and employment programs. ECE, together with Aurora College, the Mine Training Society, the Aboriginal Futures Society and other partners, provide an array of programs designed to meet the needs of learners and employers in the NWT.

## Social developments

Northern social development should not be compared to other jurisdictions in Canada or globally without careful consideration. The Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR 2004:10) stated,

Arctic societies have a well-deserved reputation for resilience in the face of change. But today they are facing an unprecedented combination of rapid and stressful changes involving environmental processes (e.g. the impacts of climate change), cultural developments (e.g. the erosion of indigenous languages), economic changes (e.g. the emergence of narrowly based mixed economies), industrial developments (e.g. the growing role of multinational corporations engaged in the extraction of natural resources), and political changes (e.g. the devolution of political authority).

The newly evolved skills and competencies required in the knowledge economy in the NWT are both similar and unique from other jurisdictions. Regardless, knowledge and skills acquisitions occur in a number of sites, including through formal educational institutes. According to the Canadian Education Statistics Council (2003:109), “formal education, either at the ‘typical’ age of study, or later, as an adult learner, is key to providing people with the opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills needed in the knowledge economy.” Paci (et al. 2007:19) observed, “Northern capacity to participate fully in the knowledge economy continues to face a number of challenges, opportunities and barriers”, their analysis shows that the knowledge economy is important but not driving education policy, investments or needs in the Northwest Territories; rather, it is non-renewable resource developments that are the economic engines for employment and training in the territories.

Northern participants in the knowledge economy face some unique challenges as a result of their particular northern environments and cultures. For example, while there are fewer rural and remote Indigenous communities with limited dial-up Internet connections, changes in telecommunications and information technology exist. Their introduction have made rapid and pronounced changes to northern development; however, in most locations their application to education and other facets of life, such as telemedicine, are still making in-roads. Furthermore, culturally and linguistically the knowledge economy is slowly adapting to regional dialects. Recent investments in Teacher education in the Tłı̄ch̄o region are a prime example of the kind of investment Indigenous governments is undertaking. In order to overcome perceived barriers preventing Tłı̄ch̄o students from attaining Teaching degrees and participating in the knowledge economy, an innovative partnership with the government of the NWT and Aurora College is now established in Behchokō so that Tłı̄ch̄o students can now take classes in the community with the goal of supplying Tłı̄ch̄o communities with trained Tłı̄ch̄o professional community members as Teachers. The five other regions of the NWT are taking note and in time community-based education may well offer a wide array of opportunities for

training to meet labour demands of both the non-renewable and knowledge economies of the NWT. The goal is to establish a formal education system that embraces both traditional Indigenous languages and cultural realities along with western curricula, the best of both worlds so that northerners trained in the north can advance the knowledge economy of the north.

### **References cited:**

Arctic Human Development Report (2004) Akureyri: Stefansson Arctic Institute

Canadian Education Statistics Council (2003) Education Indicators in Canada: Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program 2003. Ottawa: Statistics Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada

Paci, C., A. Hodgkins, S. Katz, J. Braden, M. Bravo, R-A. Gal, C. Jardine, M. Nuttall, J. Erasmus, S. Daniel (u.p. sent for peer review August 2007) "Northern science and research: postsecondary perspectives in the Northwest Territories." International Northern Studies Journal vol(ed)Pp.

### **Other Contextual factors**

There is a huge gap between the education levels, health and housing conditions and employment rates for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations. The 2003 International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS) reveals that, although the Northwest Territories as a whole had adult literacy levels on par with the Canadian average, approximately 70% of NWT Aboriginal adults were below functional literacy (IALSS Level 3). In contrast, approximately 70% of NWT non-Aboriginal adults have proficiency levels at IALSS Level 3 and above.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) has significant implications for adult students in the Northwest Territories. Many individuals, who have completed ALBE, do not have recognized grade 12 credentials. As a result, they are overlooked by employers looking for high school graduates and excluded from employment they are, in fact, qualified for. As well, highly qualified immigrants are denied employment in their professions during a time of acute skills shortages in the NWT labour market.

## **Component 2. Description of institutional arrangements**

### **Political and legal framework**

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) is responsible to the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) for the delivery of adult and postsecondary education programs in the Northwest Territories. The Department

develops legislation and educational policy, sets program standards, funds program delivery and monitors outcomes.

Through its strategic plan, *Building on Our Success (2005 – 2015)*, the Department has established broad direction and system-wide goals, as well as the framework for program and fiscal planning and accountability.

**A key action item in the department's strategic plan is to address prior learning**

Department of Education, Culture and Employment Strategic Plan  
*Building on Our Success (2005 – 2015)*

Goal: Education of Adults

Objective 3: An Integrated Adult Learning Network

Priority: Accreditation of learning across the system

Actions:

- Establish formal mechanisms for assessing prior learning
- Increase understanding of prior learning by staff members working within the NWT learning system
- Examine the opportunity for a broad system of certification of training activities offered by public and private sector training institutions
- Determine requirements for record keeping to document learner achievements
- Make functional grade level assessment results available to the College.

Currently, the Government of the Northwest Territories does not have a policy on prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR).

### **Aurora College**

Adult and postsecondary education program delivery is designated primarily to Aurora College, a corporation operating at arm's length from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE). ECE works closely with Aurora College to ensure that college programs and services are responsive to the needs of a dynamically changing educational environment. The *Aurora College Act* and *Aurora College Regulations* were recently updated and modernized and came into force August 1, 2006.

In addition, ECE funds, supports and evaluates training programs, including apprenticeship training. ECE works with employers and industry groups to ensure a coordinated approach to labour force development. ECE establishes occupational standards and provides certification for designated occupations in the NWT.

Aurora College has a *Policy and Procedures Manual* that is the central source for all College Policies and Procedures. Within this manual, Aurora College Policy C.03 is on Prior Learning Assessment (PLA). This policy was implemented in

1995. Research is currently taking place to update, amend and modernize this policy.

Aurora College has a PLAR Committee made up of the Manager, Student Records and Systems at Aurora College Headquarters; the Aurora Campus Student Services Registrar or the Manager of Student Services; the Thebacha Campus Student Services Registrar or the Manager of Student Services; the Yellowknife Campus Student Service Manager/Registrar along with a representative from each of the three campuses (Aurora, Thebacha and Yellowknife). The PLAR committee works in an advisory capacity with the program staff (the professionals) when requests for PLAR are submitted.

The Aurora College C.03 (1995) PLA policy states that “Aurora College shall use Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) to recognize past learning to meet admission requirements for a Program and/or to obtain credit for one or more courses within a Program.”

The Principles state:

1. Aurora College accepts that prior learning shall be formally recognized.
2. PLA may be applied toward academic credit, toward the requirements of training program, or for occupational certification. (Policy C.03)

The Procedures state:

1. In order for a student to be considered for a PLA, s/he must apply in writing to the Registrar at the time of application. This submission must include personal career goals, a brief biography and a preliminary list of course(s), for which s/he wishes credit.
2. Prior learning will be assessed by the Registrar, in consultation with Program staff.
3. Tools to be used in assessing PLA may include, but are not limited to:
  - Interviews
  - Certificate, diploma, degrees, transcripts
  - Job-related training
  - Challenge
  - Standardized test results
  - Volunteer work
  - Independent study
  - Portfolios
4. Using one or more of the above methods, a student may be granted up to 40% of the total Program/course requirements.

5. An evaluation fee will be charged for a PLA evaluation, payable in full, prior to evaluation (see policy J.02).

J.02 states (2003):

Additional fees shall be established for College programs, courses and services. They will include but not be limited to:

- a) Application fee for each Certificate/Diploma program \$15
  - b) duplicate Documents of Recognition \$15 (taxable)
  - c) duplicate receipts \$5 (taxable)
  - d) duplicate official transcripts \$5 (taxable)
  - e) supplemental examination application \$40 (exempt)
  - f) course extensions \$30 (taxable)
  - g) prior learning assessment application \$70 (exempt)
  - h) NSF cheques \$30 (exempt)
  - i) Recreation (where services provided) \$20 (taxable)
  - j) examination sitting fee \$15 (exempt)
  - k) invigilation fee(s) – to be determined at campus
6. Each Program will identify courses which will not be considered for PLA. Restrictions or exceptional conditions shall be published in the College Calendar and on the approved Program Outline.
  7. A student may not apply for PLA for a course if:
    - a) s/he is currently enrolled in the course with the College
    - b) s/he was enrolled previously in the course with the College and did not successfully complete the course
    - c) s/he has previously audited the course.
  8. Credits earned through PLA will be designated appropriately on the official transcript (See Policy C25).
  9. The decision of the Registrar will be final.

### **Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupational Certification**

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), through its strategic plan funds, supports and evaluates training programs, including apprenticeship training, that are responsive to the needs of individuals, industry and communities. ECE works with employers and industry groups to ensure a coordinated approach to labour force development. ECE establishes occupational standards and provide certification for designated occupations in the NWT.

ECE's strategic plan identified the need to develop certification programs for trades and occupation in response to the needs of industry.

The NWT Apprenticeship Program grants credits to three categories of applicants entering an apprenticeship.

- Graduates of a technical or technology program may be granted time credit and technical training credit.
- Graduates of an approved pre-employment, pre-apprenticeship or vocational high school course may be granted time credit and are allowed to write first level examinations.
- Individuals with previous work experience may be granted time credit on the recommendation of an Apprenticeship Training Officer with prior approval of the employer, and they may be eligible to write the first level examination.

The Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupations Certification Board (ATO CB) has adopted and modified a certification process that was originally developed for Canada's tourism industry. The certification process is competency based, meaning that emphasis is placed on how individuals perform on the job, as opposed to their educational background and years of work experience. The certification process is industry-driven, that is, the process gains its legitimacy by using industry insight and knowledge throughout the development of the competency analysis, the certification tools and the assessment process. The competency analysis must be developed and ratified by subject matter experts – people with experience in the occupation, such as practitioners, supervisors and trainers.

### **Occupational Certification**

Industry associations or groups can use competency analyses as the basis for developing and validating evaluation tools for a certification process. As with the development of training materials, an industry advisory committee should be struck to guide the decisions that need to be made.

Certification generally means that an individual challenges the requirements set by the industry association or group to see if she/he meets or exceeds them.

First of all, the certification model must be developed and validated by an industry development committee (IDC). In the NWT, the Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupations Certification Board (ATO CB) requires that every certification process include knowledge and performance evaluations, plus a minimum of 900 hours of work experience. Other requirements may be added by the IDC. They are tasked with designing a process that they believe will be a fair but rigorous test of an individual's competence.

A Knowledge Evaluation – One of the best ways to test knowledge is a multiple-choice examination. It provides a cost-effective, objectively-scored method for evaluating an individual's knowledge of an occupation. Test items should be drafted, pilot tested and validated by an industry committee. This committee will also be responsible for finalizing the number of test items on a form of the exam and the proportion of items taken from each category of the competency analysis.

Each test item should be revised based on results from the pilot testing and assigned a level of performance or passing score.

A Performance Evaluation – A performance evaluation can take many forms. A workplace-based example is an on-site evaluation, consisting of the critical performance skills outlined in a competency analysis. Other possible formats include a case study, interview or portfolio review. In any case, the performance evaluation tool should be developed, practiced, revised and validated with an industry committee. A level of performance or passing score must also be set for the performance evaluation.

The industry committee may identify other criteria that a certification candidate must fulfill. These can include entry requirements, a certain number of years of experience in the occupation, specific training or qualifications. All criteria must be accessible to all job practitioners who will seek certification.

The certification process must be transparent and fair for all. Consideration may also be made for prior learning assessments and equivalency requirements set by the industry committee. An appeal process should be developed for those who are not satisfied with their results.

For more information on both the knowledge and performance evaluations, see the *Certification Guide*; Department of Education, Culture and Employment; Government of the Northwest Territories; June, 2002

### **Schools North Apprenticeship Program**

The Schools North Apprenticeship Program (SNAP) is a program for high school students in the NWT who are interested in pursuing a career in trades. Eligible students can gain practical trades experience on a worksite while continuing their high school education.

The program allows students to earn:

- as many as 40 SNAP credits towards high school graduation;
- time credits towards an apprenticeship contract; and
- pay for their work.

SNAP gives students the opportunity to enter the workforce after graduation with a developed set of skills in their chosen career. SNAP students will receive five credits for 125-hours of work. The 125-hours try out period (the credit work experience) provides the student and the employer the opportunity to determine if they want to continue in SNAP by signing a SNAP apprenticeship contract. At this

point, the student must be at least 16 years of age. If the employer and SNAP student enter into an apprenticeship contract, the student must pass the relevant trade entrance examination, achieving a mark of 50% or higher. (The student must also achieve a mark of 70% or higher after the first year of training.) When all parties agree to signing an apprenticeship contract, the student will be required to complete and/or provide the apprenticeship training officer with the following documentation:

- copy of school transcript showing workplace safety and job preparation modules;
- trade entrance examination;
- application for services form;
- verification of trade experience of possible time credits; and
- apprenticeship contract.

The student receives a record book, once the apprenticeship contract has been registered. Note: First level technical training will not be scheduled until the student has completed his or her secondary schooling. In addition, the employer provides the school with regular performance evaluations that are completed with the supervising teacher and the journey person in charge of the student.

### **Governance and role of government**

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) vision of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly states:

Self-reliant individuals and families sharing the rewards and responsibilities of healthy communities and a prosperous and unified Northwest Territories.

The 2004 GNWT strategic plan *Self-reliant People, Communities and Northwest Territories – A Shared Responsibility* states:

Goal 2: Healthy, educated people living in safe communities, who are able to contribute and take advantage of life's opportunities. This means

- Youth, parents and adults who see wellness as the preferred alternative, and who make healthy and productive lifestyle choices for themselves and their families.

Priority 1: Helping people help themselves – our personal, family and community responsibilities

- Educating ourselves – improving education levels for children and adults

### **Resources**

There are no assessment centres in the NWT. Aurora College does the assessments on an individual basis.

## **Others**

The Manager, Student Records and Systems is the Chairperson for the PLAR Committee. The Manager is the contact person for the Alberta Council of Admissions and Transfers (ACAT), which is currently working on and establishing policies and procedures for the institutions that are members of ACAT.

There is an ongoing relationship with the Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA) for the international conference on PLAR that was held in Fredericton, NB in October 2006.

## **Component 3 - Description of technical arrangements**

### **Qualifications, qualification systems, qualifications framework**

The Government of the Northwest Territories currently does not have a policy on prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR).

Aurora College's Board of Governors passed a PLA policy in 1995 which states that "Aurora College shall use Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) to recognize past learning to meet admission requirements for a Program and/or to obtain credit for one or more courses within a program." Principles and Procedures have also been developed and have been shared earlier.

### **Credit accumulation and transfer**

Aurora College has granted students prior learning credits for practicum/work placements in the Early Childhood Development, Adult Education and Natural Resources Technology programs. The College has looked at other fields of study that students have participated in and have granted PLAR for some course work.

Students are assessed for PLAR by Aurora College on a case-by-case basis.

### **Assessment methods and procedures**

See Aurora College Policy C.03

## **Others**

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is currently working with Aurora College on an articulation process at the secondary high school level that would enable the Adult Literacy and Basic Education curricula to be recognized for a high school diploma equivalency. This work is still in preliminary stages and may involve PLAR credits.

There are no other technical arrangements to add.

## Component 4. Stakeholder behaviour

### Characteristics of Stakeholders Grid

#### Non-formal and Informal Learning

Provider of non-formal learning	Recognizer of such non-formal learning	Types of recognition received	Regulator	Main User(s)
Aurora College – Continuing Education	-government -self-government -AHRDA's -quasi government -non-government organizations (NGOs) -industry -personal development	-record of participation -awards -academic qualifications -in house awards/certificates	-government -professional body	-Working professionals -Low literacy skilled residents of NWT -Low and High Immigrants -Unemployed (over 25 years old)
Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA)	-government -self-government -AHRDA's -quasi government -non-government organizations (NGOs) -industry -personal development	-record of participation -awards -academic qualifications -in house awards/certificates	-government -professional body	-Working professionals -Low literacy skilled residents of NWT -Low and High Immigrants -Unemployed (over 25 years old)
Government of the Northwest Territories	-government -self-government -AHRDA's -quasi government -non-government organizations (NGOs) -industry -personal development	-record of participation -awards -academic qualifications -in house awards/certificates	-government -professional body	-Working professionals -Low literacy skilled residents of NWT -Low and High Immigrants -Unemployed (over 25 years old)
For profit private companies	-government -self-government -AHRDA's -quasi government -non-government organizations (NGOs) -industry -personal development	-record of participation -awards -academic qualifications -in house awards/certificates	-government -professional body	-Working professionals -Low literacy skilled residents of NWT -Low and High Immigrants -Unemployed (over 25 years old)
Industry – in house training (E.g. Kingland)	-government -self-government -AHRDA's	-record of participation -awards	-government -professional body	-Working professionals -Low literacy skilled

Ford's modular training on variety of topics such as customer service	-quasi government -non-government organizations (NGOs) -industry -personal development	-academic qualifications -in house awards/certificates		residents of NWT -Low and High Immigrants -Unemployed (over 25 years old)
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### **Access**

Aurora College is the only publicly funded postsecondary institution in the NWT. As such, it is the only postsecondary institution that has a formal policy that recognizes PLAR.

### **Participation**

There are no formal numbers that track informal and non-formal learning or that looks at how many people have taken up the process at different levels.

Disadvantaged groups include individuals who have not been successful in the traditional K-12 system and want to enter either an upgrading (Adult Literacy and Basic Education Program) or a certificate, diploma, trade, or degree program.

### **Incentives and Disincentives**

The NWT Apprenticeship Program grants credits to three categories of applicants entering an apprenticeship.

- Graduates of a technical or technology program may be granted time credit and technical training credit.
- Graduates of an approved pre-employment, pre-apprenticeship or vocational high school course may be granted time credit and are allowed to write first level examinations.
- Individuals with previous work experience may be granted time credit on the recommendation of an Apprenticeship Training Officer with prior approval of the employer, and they may be eligible to write the first level examination.

All three pathways enable an apprentice to take different routes to enter and successfully complete an Apprenticeship Program.

Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE) is the essential foundation to the attainment of personal, career and educational goals. The impacts of adult education and training reach far beyond the economic sphere to improved job satisfaction and improved self-esteem and health. Many people lack the basic or advanced skills needed to get a good job in the NWT. Upgrading and further postsecondary education dramatically increases employment potential.

The Department funds ALBE programs and services through contributions to Aurora College and other non-governmental organizations that offer adult basic

education services. The ALBE program offered throughout the NWT is at levels 110 to 160 (equivalent to grades 1 to 12). ALBE programs give NWT Adults the opportunity to access Aurora College postsecondary programs such as certificate, diploma, degree, trades and technology programs, as well as other postsecondary or employment opportunities.

Students may have obtained informal and non-formal learning skills that would enable them to move through the ALBE curricula at a faster pace than just looking at a formal transcript.

### **Others**

Currently, the Northwest Territories has no additional arrangements for collective bargaining or technical arrangements.

## **Component 5. Case studies on benefits and barriers**

The GNWT has not completed any formal case studies or research on benefits and barriers for informal and non-formal learning.

Economic benefits

Educational benefits

Social benefits

Personal benefits

Others

## **Component 6. Conclusions and challenges**

Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR), which is becoming widely accepted in Canada, could be used to give adult students in the NWT the course credits they need to graduate. PLAR could lead to accepting adult students' work and life experience in lieu of secondary school graduation requirements, such as CALM, community service, Career and Technology Studies, Physical Education, Fine Arts and Career and Program Plan (CPP).

Even more importantly, if students can demonstrate mastery of grade 12 learning outcomes, PLAR could give them credit for the grade 10 and 11 prerequisites for those courses, even if that learning has occurred outside a formal educational setting. Thus, PLAR could open up an alternative to accumulating 100 course credits to earn a high school diploma. If NWT Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE) students can demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes and meet the requirements of secondary school graduation through a combination of formal and

informal learning, their accomplishments should be recognized on par with younger students, who have acquired most of their skills in a formal educational setting.

ALBE articulation would recognize formal and informal learning of NWT adults with a high school diploma and motivate more people to upgrade their skills and more actively participate in the labour market.

It is crucial to have a standardized system for assessing and recognizing learning that takes place in informal settings. Adult learners do much better in formal learning programs if what they already know is acknowledged and built upon.

Investment in Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition would build on NWT residents' existing knowledge and informal learning and enable us to develop programs more suited to learners' needs. PLAR would acknowledge traditional knowledge and aboriginal language literacy, as well as other skills.