

Evaluation of the Northern Institute of Social Justice

Findings Synthesis

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Genesis and Description of the Northern Institute of Social Justice	2
Northern Institute of Social Justice Activities 2010 to 2012	4
Output Performance Assessment	8
OP.1 Cost-efficient delivery of generic and position-specific social justice-related training	8
OP.2 Completion of relevant research that supports the integrated social justice training curriculum	10
OP.3 Establishment of beneficial partnerships with organizations that have social justice-related training mandates	10
Short-term Outcome Achievement	12
STO.1 Effective delivery of integrated, relevant and recognized social justice-related training opportunities	12
STO.2 Improved opportunities for workers to develop social-justice related skills and knowledge	14
STO.3 Development of skills and knowledge which benefit employers in social justice-related fields	15
Recommendations for Improving the Effectiveness of Northern Institute of Social Justice Operations	16

Introduction

The Northern Institute of Social Justice (NISJ) was jointly founded by the Yukon Government and Yukon College in December 2009 and delivered its first course in February 2010. The NISJ is located at, and operates with the organizational and financial structure of, Yukon College. Institute operations are overseen by a multi-agency Governing Council, chaired by the President of Yukon College. The Governing Council is responsible for the overall leadership, vision and direction of the NISJ.

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of Northern Institute of Social Justice operations over its first three years of existence (January 2010 to December 2012). The evaluation is focused on the performance of activities and outputs associated with NISJ operations and considers the extent to which the intended short-term outcomes for the NISJ are being achieved. Achievement of the intended long-term outcomes for the NISJ will be considered in a subsequent evaluation. This evaluation of the NISJ builds on the Evaluation Plan developed by Onebird Resource Planning and Management in November 2012 through a thorough refocusing of the program logic model and accompanying evaluation questions and indicators.

Northern Institute of Social Justice's operations were evaluated using multiple lines of evidence to assess the production of its activities and outputs and the extent to which its intended short-term outcomes are being achieved. The lines of evidence included:

- administrative file review;
- review and analysis of financial data for the program;
- development and analysis of course delivery and course participant databases;
- face-to-face interviews with key informants (5 completed);
- focus groups with program participants (2 groups, 12 total participants; focus group participants were selected from the list of individuals who had participated in NISJ courses most frequently);
- Governing Council web interviews (8 completed);
- partner web interviews (6 completed);
- funder web interviews (1 completed); and,
- contract training partner web interviews (5 completed).

This report presents a synthesis of the findings from the lines of evidence and presents recommendations for improving the effectiveness of NISJ operations.

Genesis and Description of the Northern Institute of Social Justice

Interest in creating a northern institute to provide justice-related training grew out of pan-northern discussions in 2005. A feasibility study followed in 2006 and a Yukon market analysis in 2007. The 2007 study identified a total of 1,390 jobs in the Yukon which have a justice-related component and a potential need or interest in participating in training opportunities. Planning for establishment and start-up of the Institute continued through 2008 and 2009. A training program was piloted and the first course delivered in February 2010.

Year	Number of Participants
2010	285
2011	482
2012	485
Total	1,252

The NISJ was created to address two challenges identified in the research. First was the difficulty that Yukon employers face in recruiting, developing, and retaining employees – from entry to senior levels – in jobs with a social justice-related component. Second, employees lack access to training in the Yukon to obtain social justice-related jobs and develop social justice-related careers. Thus, the role of the NISJ is to:

- consolidate, develop and deliver social justice-related training and education programs; and,
- undertake related research.

The NISJ strives to fulfill it's role by focusing on training that is: relevant, accredited, integrated and recognized.

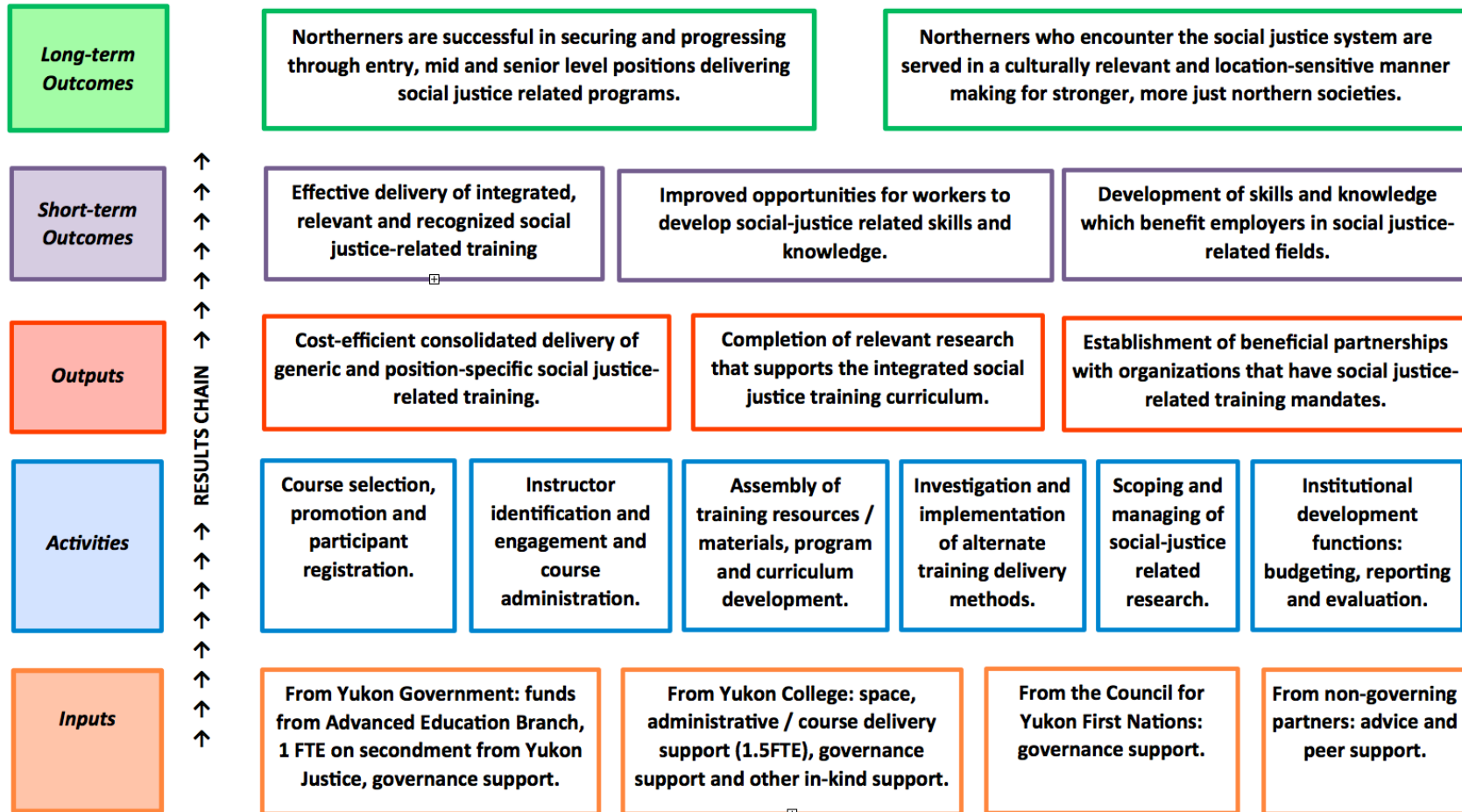
The operations of the NISJ are guided by a Strategic Plan which features three strategic directions:

- Operating an effective training and education program;
- Conducting related research that supports the training and education curriculum; and,
- Promoting an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach to program and service delivery.

While the Northwest Territories and Nunavut opted not to pursue the establishment of a pan-northern institute of social justice, the Yukon continues to hold the door open for the other territories to join at a later time. The willingness to include the Northwest Territories and Nunavut in the future is reflected in the use of “Northern” rather than “Yukon” ahead of “Institute of Social Justice”.

A logic model for the Northern Institute of Social Justice is presented on the following page. The logic model is a recasting of the logic model developed for, but not included in, the *Northern Institute of Social Justice Evaluation Plan* prepared by Onebird Resource Planning and Management in November 2012. The recast logic model is more clearly focused on the intended outcomes of NISJ operations. The recast logic model and associated evaluation matrix were presented and discussed at a meeting of the NISJ Evaluation Committee on March 6, 2013. The version of the logic model presented here reflects feedback received from the NISJ Evaluation Committee.

Northern Institute of Social Justice – Logic Model



Note: the focus of the 2013 NISJ Evaluation is on **Activities**, **Outputs** and **Short-term Outcomes**.

Evaluation of the Northern Institute of Social Justice

Northern Institute of Social Justice Activities 2010 to 2012

This section contains an assessment of the extent to which NISJ activities have been carried out as planned. The table below presents the array of courses delivered by the NISJ over the January 2010 to December 2012 review period. A total of 76 courses were offered, of which 29 represent unique course offerings. A total of 1,373 contact hours were associated with the 76 course offerings.

NISJ Course Offerings and Participation – 2010 to 2012

Course Name	Number of Course Offerings	Number of Contact Hours per Course Offering	Total Number of Contact Hours	Total Number of Participants
Accommodating to the Challenges of FASD	6	9.5	57	63
Advanced Decision Writing	2	14.0	28	13
Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training	7	14.0	100	90
Compassion Fatigue	5	5.5	28	223
Core Competencies for FASD	15	6.0	90	207
Correctional Officer Basic Training	1	190.0	190	24
Correctional Officer Qualification Training	1	120.0	120	16
Effective Decision Writing Under YESAA -- Directors	1	11.0	11	15
Effective Decision Writing Under YESAA -- Practitioners	1	11.0	11	24
Enhanced Investigative Interviewing	1	30.0	30	16
FASD & Justice	1	30.0	30	14
General Trauma Training (TIPS)	1	18.0	18	28
Individual Crisis Support and Peer Intervention	1	14.0	14	14
Legal Administrative Assistant Career Exploration Training	1	7.0	7	10
Living With Loss -- Hospice Yukon	1	3.0	3	25
Loss, Grief & Healing	4	13.0	52	69
Managing Response to Threat & Aggression	4	14.0	56	58
Managing Response to Threat & Aggression - Train the Trainer	1	21.0	21	5
Mental Health First Aid	3	14.0	42	48
Policing & Justice Careers Orientation Program	1	67.5	68	18
Practice & Procedures for Decision Makers	2	18.0	36	25
Probation Officer Training	1	36.0	36	2
Regulatory Enforcement & Compliance Training	1	120.0	120	17
Report Writing for Professional Investigators	2	24.0	48	24
Tactical Surveillance	1	40.0	40	11
Trauma Training	6	13.0	78	114
Understanding Legislation & Regulations	3	6.0	18	54
Workplace Violence Prevention	1	7.0	7	8
Yukon First Nations History & Cultural Training	1	14.0	14	17
Totals	76	n/a	1,373	1,252

Evaluation of the Northern Institute of Social Justice

The top five most frequently offered courses and the number of times offered are shown in the table to the right. Core Competencies for FASD was the course delivered most often (15 offerings) and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training was delivered second most-often (seven offerings). Accommodating to the Challenges of FASD and Trauma Training were each delivered six times and the fifth most-delivered course was Compassion Fatigue (five offerings).

The complete listing of courses delivered by the NISJ was coded according to whether the course content was primarily “justice-related” or “social justice-related”. Courses which primarily involve the administration of justice were coded as “J”. An example of a “J” course is Correctional Office Basic Training. Courses which involve

Five Most-Frequently Offered NISJ Courses

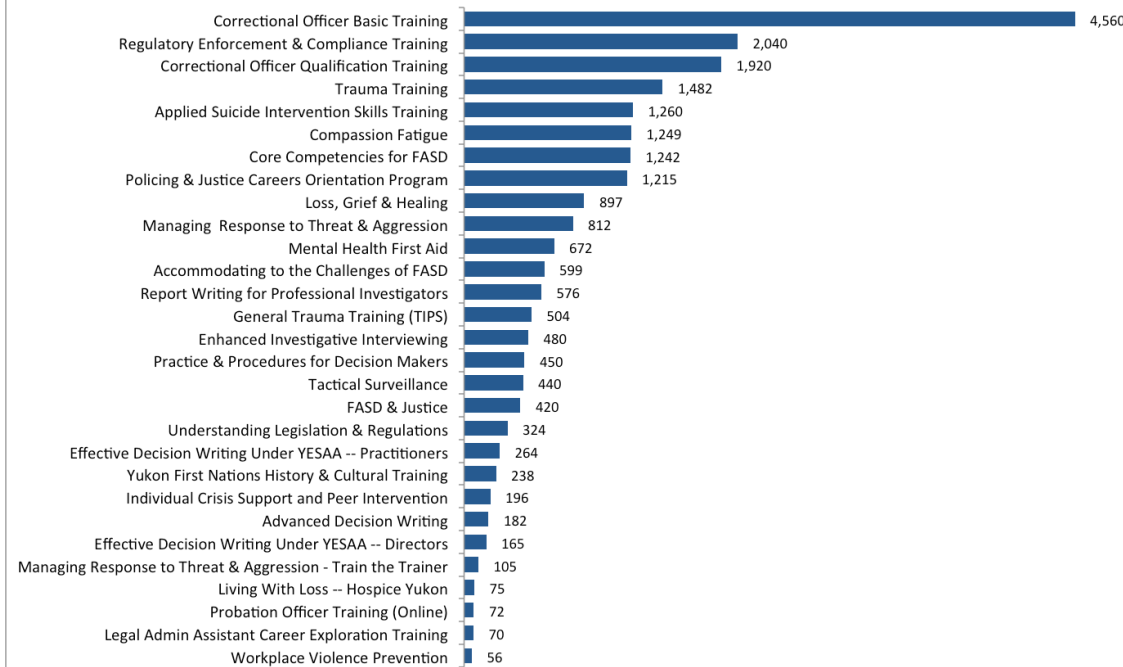
Course Name	Number of Course Offerings
Core Competencies for FASD	15
Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training	7
Accommodating to the Challenges of FASD	6
Trauma Training	6
Compassion Fatigue	5

the broader ‘people focused’ aspects of the justice system were coded as “SJ”. An example of an “SJ” course is Compassion Fatigue. One third (33%) of courses delivered by the NISJ during the three year period were classified as “J”, and two thirds (67%) were “SJ”.

When the delivery of “J” or “SJ” courses is examined through the lens of contact hours, however, a different picture emerges. While “J” courses accounted for only one third of all course offerings (25 of 76), they accounted for almost two-thirds (62%) of the total number of contact hours.

Conversely, while two thirds (51 of 76) of the courses delivered by the NISJ during the review period were coded as “SJ”, “SJ” courses accounted for approximately only one third (38%) of the total number of contact hours.

Total NISJ Participant Contact Hours by Course - 2010 to 2012



Source: NISJ Course Database.

The chart above illustrates the total number of NISJ participant contact hours on a course by course basis over the 2010 to 2012 review period. As can be seen from the chart, Correctional Officer Basic Training accounted for the largest number of participant contact hours at 4,560 hours. Participant contact hours for all courses totaled 22,564 hours during the review period.

Evaluation of the Northern Institute of Social Justice

Instruction of courses delivered through the NISJ was undertaken by instructors with a variety of affiliations. As shown in the table below, more than a third (38%) of NISJ courses were delivered by staff at Yukon College. If courses where Yukon College was responsible for course delivery together with a project partner are included in the count, the share of courses for which Yukon College was directly involved in course delivery approaches half (46%). During the three year review period, training consultants / consulting firms delivered 20% of NISJ courses and Yukon Government staff were responsible for the delivery of 14% of courses delivered.

NISJ Instructor Affiliation and Instruction Load

Instructor Affiliation	Number of Courses	Share of Instruction Load
Yukon College	29	38%
Training Consultant / Consulting Firm	15	20%
Yukon Government	11	14%
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society of Yukon	6	8%
Yukon College & Partner	6	8%
Hospice Yukon	5	7%
Justice Institute of British Columbia	4	5%
Totals	76	100%

Two NISJ partner organizations - the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society of Yukon and Hospice Yukon – together accounted for delivery of 15% of NISJ courses over the review period. Instructors from the Justice Institute of British Columbia delivered the remaining 5% of courses. The number and distribution of instructor affiliations illustrates the success of the NISJ in effectively brokering social justice-related courses over its first three years of operations.

With regard to social justice-related research, the NISJ has embarked on one formal research project since its inception in 2010. The NISJ has been working in partnership with the Yukon Centre for Research Excellence and Yukon Justice to undertake a FASD Prevalence Study. Work to complete this innovative multi-year, multi-partner research project is ongoing.

To promote its course offerings, the NISJ prepares a poster for each course which outlines who the course is targeted to, course content, date, time and location information and registration instructions. As shown in the table to the right, a total of 14 posters were prepared in 2010 and a total of 24 in both 2011 and 2012. Focus group participants indicated that the NISJ is doing an effective job of making them aware of course offerings through traditional media (newspaper ads, posters, word of mouth). Some participants suggested that social media (e.g., Facebook) could also be used. Participants noted that the main constraint facing potential attendees is the limited amount of funding available to pay course registration fees for all who may be interested in attending.

NISJ Course Promotion

Year	Number of Posters
2010	14
2011	24
2012	24
Total	62

Notwithstanding that awareness of NISJ course offerings is generally high, focus group participants also noted that the course advertisements could be improved to better describe the course content. Improved course descriptions would make it easier to figure out exactly *who* in an organization should be attending the course. Participants cited several examples of where an awkward mix of course participants was a detriment to learning. At the same time, it was also noted that a diverse mix of course participants can serve to enhance participant learning opportunities.

In terms of the use of alternate training delivery methods, of the 76 courses delivered during the review period, two were delivered online and the remaining 74 were delivered in a face-to-face classroom setting. However, as was noted by one key informant, the subject matter of many NISJ courses does not lend itself to delivery methods other than a face-to-face classroom setting. For some subject areas such as trauma training or the history of residential schools it would be 'bordering on unethical' to deliver such courses with online technology and without trained support available in the same room as course participants.

Evaluation of the Northern Institute of Social Justice

The table below presents NISJ revenues and expenditures, on a fiscal year basis, over the three year review period.

NISJ Revenues and Expenditures (YG Fiscal Year Basis)

	April 2010 to March 2011		April 2011 to March 2012		April 2012 to March 2013		Total	
	\$	Share of total (%)	\$	Share of total (%)	\$	Share of total (%)	\$	Share of total (%)
Revenues								
Course Fees	70,018	9	59,390	7	58,890	8	188,298	10
Contract Training	101,780	13	57,931	7	77,899	11	237,610	13
Third Party Contracts	38,875	5	81,081	10	68,604	9	188,560	10
Funder -- Advanced Education	482,000	64	382,000	46	377,000	52	1,241,000	67
Surplus Carried Forward	61,741	8	247,993	30	147,132	20	1,453	0
Total	754,414	100	828,395	100	729,525	100	1,856,921	100
Expenditures								
Personnel	167,713	33	199,805	29	236,805	33	604,323	32
Curriculum / Program Development	248,144	49	295,059	43	365,566	50	908,769	47
Other Operating Expenses	90,564	18	186,399	27	125,701	17	402,664	21
Total	506,421	100	681,263	100	728,072	100	1,915,756	100
Surplus / (Deficit)	247,993		147,132		1,453		(58,835)	

As can be seen from the table, the NISJ has substantial partner funding with two-thirds (67%) of cash funding for the NISJ originating with the Advanced Education Branch of the Yukon Department of Education. Over the three year review period, course fees comprised 10% of total NISJ revenues. With a total of 1,252 NISJ course participants during the three year period, the average cost of course delivery per NISJ participant was \$1,530. Comparable figures for Yukon College or other similar educational organizations are, unfortunately, not available.

In fulfillment of its responsibility for institutional functions (budgeting, reporting and evaluation), the NISJ organizes meetings with its Governing Council on a quarterly basis. Briefing packages are prepared for members at each meeting. The briefing packages are framed according to the strategic plan and describe the status of efforts to achieving the three strategic directions outlined in the NISJ Strategic Plan. Descriptive information about planned and completed course deliveries is also provided in the briefing packages as well as counts of course participation. While it appears that limited financial information is provided to the Governing Council on a quarterly basis, there is evidence of budgeting information being shared on an annual basis. Consolidated information which would allow for periodic assessments of NISJ output performance and the extent to which the intended short-term outcomes for the NISJ are being achieved is not currently being provided to Governing Council members on a systematic basis.

Evaluation of the Northern Institute of Social Justice

As noted by a Governing Council member *“the fact that this organization is part of Yukon College ensures that sound processes exist and are transparent and understood.”* This perspective was countered by another Governing Council member who asks *“what is the accountability framework for the NISJ?”*. Another Governing Council member noted that the NISJ’s Executive Director *“has demonstrated excellent fiscal management. She is very rigorous with her reporting and clearly has strong values around accountability”*. A representative of the program funder noted that the budgeting and reporting functions are currently *“meeting expectations”* in terms of timeliness, accuracy and comprehensiveness.

Output Performance Assessment

OP.1 Cost-efficient consolidated delivery of generic and position-specific social justice-related training

On average, 345 unique individuals registered for NISJ courses in each year of the 2010 to 2012 review period. In comparison, an average 4,531 individuals were enrolled in non-credit courses at Yukon College in each of the three academic years spanning 2009/10 to 2011/12. Enrolment in Northern Institute of Social Justice Courses thus accounted for approximately 9% of total Yukon College enrolment in non-credit programming during the review period.

Efforts in 2007 to determine if sufficient need existed for a Northern Institute of Justice established that there are at least 1,390 jobs with a justice-related component and a potential need / interest for obtaining training in the Yukon¹. Notwithstanding that the size of the Yukon labour market has grown since 2007, the uptake of NISJ programming has been impressive. With 1,035 unique NISJ program participants, the NISJ has delivered, on the basis of the 2007 market size estimate, at least one course to 74% of the identified market in its first three years of operation. Indeed, as noted by a Governing Council member:

“I am regularly astounded at the number of people that the NISJ has managed to serve each year of its existence. I believe that the way the NISJ has balanced the subsidized programs with the cost-recovery programming is very well done and allows the NISJ to reach a much larger audience”.

This is not to say that attempting to find a balance between subsidized programs and cost-recovery² programming has been easy. During the course of the evaluation research, it was suggested more than once that clarity on the issue of cost-recovery is required:

“at the same time the NISJ is expected to be self-supporting through 100% cost-recovery, it is also expected to not ‘double-charge’ YG employees as Yukon Justice and Yukon Education are the primary in-kind and in-cash funders of NISJ operations”.

The placement of the NISJ within Yukon College can work to its advantage in other ways, however:

One of the advantages of NISJ is that it is not a direct part of the Yukon Government and is therefore able to access funding and pursue opportunities that in many cases would not be available to government departments. As an organization that is outside of the Yukon Government, it can reach out to various non-government organizations as well as government departments in a manner that can be beneficial in developing programs and training opportunities.

¹ Northern Institute of Justice Feasibility Study. 2007.

² Cost recovery implies the charging of course fees above an arbitrary minimum amount and below the actual cost of delivering the course.

Evaluation of the Northern Institute of Social Justice

Prior to the establishment of the NISJ, justice and social-justice related courses were being delivered by a wide variety of organizations, agencies and YG Departments through in-house training arrangements or through contracts with third parties. Thus, a first step for the NISJ was to begin to “gather up” the various course offerings for delivery through a single organization.³ The NISJ appears to have made good progress towards the consolidation of the delivery of justice and social-justice related courses. As noted by a Governing Council member: *“I believe that prior to the establishment of the NISJ there was a great deal of duplication of spending by various Yukon Government Departments on social justice-related training. With the establishment of the NISJ, I believe there has been a reduction in this duplication.”*

However, the responses of several key informants and focus group participants confirm that continued efforts will be required to further consolidate the delivery of social justice-related training through the NISJ. As noted by one key informant, there is constant confusion among potential course participants about the difference between Justice Institute of British Columbia courses delivered through Yukon College’s Continuing Education Division and courses delivered through the NISJ. Adding to the confusion is the fact that the NISJ has itself arranged for the delivery of some JIBC courses. Focus group participants also expressed confusion about the perceived duplication and overlap between non-credit JIBC courses and non-credit NISJ courses.

While the NISJ has delivered both generic and position-specific courses, in terms of the number of courses more emphasis has been placed on the delivery of generic training. Out of the 76 courses offered during the review period, approximately three quarters (78%) were appropriate for a generic audience seeking social justice-related training and one quarter (22%) of courses were position-specific in nature. However, in terms of the number of contact hours associated with the 76 NISJ courses offered during the review period, the allocation was between the two types of course was essentially equal with 49% of course contact hours associated with generic training and 51% associated with position-specific training.

Embedding the NISJ within Yukon College has been crucial to the success of the NISJ. However, this has come at a loss of operational flexibility in some areas. First, gaining access to larger time blocks (e.g., two weeks) of classroom space on less than semi-annual notice was noted as being difficult enough to require the delivery of at least one course (Correctional Officer Training) off-campus. Second, the NISJ is obligated to enter into employment contracts with instructors at the standard Yukon College hourly rate unless justification for paying a higher “market rate” is accepted by Yukon College administration. As acceptance is not always granted (or requested by the NISJ), the range of instructor options available to the NISJ may be more limited than if the NISJ had the same flexibility to pay the “going rate” for professional instructors as YG line departments do. Both examples of inflexibility may impinge on the NISJ’s ability to achieve its long-term outcomes.

³ The corresponding second step is the *integration* of social-justice related courses that may later qualify for accreditation as part of a recognized program of study. The achievement of this short-term outcome is discussed later in this report.

Finding OP.1

As demonstrated by the impressive uptake of its diverse array of course offerings, the NISJ has demonstrated great success in the delivery of generic and position-specific social justice-related training during its first three years of operations. Sufficient evidence to speak to the cost-efficiency of the delivery of social justice-related training is not available.

Additional efforts are required to further consolidate all social justice-related training opportunities being delivered in Yukon if the NISJ is to establish a market base of sufficient size to begin to deliver recognized and accredited programming. Further consolidation could include, for example, Justice Institute of British Columbia courses delivered through Yukon College's Continuing Education Division and one-off hosting of courses by Yukon Government line departments.

OP.2 Completion of relevant research that supports the integrated social justice training curriculum

As noted earlier, the research function of the NISJ has not taken flight with initiation of only one formal research project over the last three years - the FASD Prevalence Study. No formal research projects have been completed by the NISJ to date. Two key informants noted that NISJ staff have had their hands full with day-to-day operational matters over the last three years and have not been able to focus on research activities which require attention at a "different pace".

Finding OP.2

The NISJ has demonstrated limited success in the completion of relevant research that supports the integrated social justice training curriculum development plans.

While the efforts of NISJ staff have been focused on course delivery, the limited progress in the formal research area suggests that the research function may be better placed within another area of Yukon College, or that additional supports or partnerships may be required.

OP.3 Establishment of beneficial partnerships with organizations that have social justice-related training mandates

From the beginning, the NISJ was envisioned as a collaborative endeavor between existing organizations that would "knit together" the myriad skill development and training opportunities already available and lay the groundwork for the creation of new social justice-related training opportunities. To do so would require the establishment of mutually beneficial partnerships with a variety of agencies, institutions and governments. The NISJ has established partnerships with the following organizations:

- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon
- Hospice Yukon
- Council for Yukon First Nations
- Yukon Justice
- Yukon Health and Social Services
- Yukon Education
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Justice Canada
- University of Alaska
- Government of Nunavut
- Government of the Northwest Territories
- Other parts of Yukon College (First Nation Initiatives, Liberal Arts Division, Nursing Program)

Evaluation of the Northern Institute of Social Justice

To determine if the NISJ has established *beneficial* partnerships, the full list of NISJ partner organizations was queried on the extent to which they perceive that their partnership with the Northern Institute of Social Justice have been mutually beneficial over the last three years. Partner organizations noted:

“NISJ’s reach into the community through Yukon College has allowed us access to a broader base and increased the professionalism of the training provided. The courses that have been developed jointly and the ones currently under development are quickly becoming seen as essential education for persons working in the field.”

Our partnership has improved public awareness of both NISJ and our organization, while offering course material that can potentially improve the lives of those who choose to participate. This partnership allows our organization to educate a much broader audience....than we would otherwise be able to reach.

Members of the Governing Council were asked about the extent to which they perceive the partnerships established by the NISJ have been productive and beneficial. Responses included:

Building the strong relationships with these other government agencies, NGOs and First Nations has been a huge value-add in the establishment of the NISJ for Yukon College. We have seen that relationship now being leveraged for other types of programming outside the mandate of the NISJ.

All parties are now effective in working together to resolve social justice matters that exist in the communities. Many agencies participate in case management which reduces duplication of work going forward. There is a justice network that now exists.

Finding OP.3

The NISJ has demonstrated very positive results in the establishment of beneficial partnerships with organizations that have social justice-related training mandates.

Further, the NISJ’s success in establishing beneficial partnerships involves both Whitehorse-based institutions (Yukon College, YG Departments and non-government organizations) as well as organizations in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Alaska.

Short-term Outcome Achievement

STO.1 Effective delivery of integrated, relevant and recognized social justice-related training opportunities

As noted earlier in this report, an expected output and first step for NISJ operations is the *consolidated delivery* of social-justice related training. The corresponding second step and associated short-term outcome is the *effective delivery* of integrated social justice-related training opportunities which may qualify for accreditation as part of a formal program of study at some point in the future.

The 76 courses delivered by the NISJ during the review period were attended by a total of 1,252 individuals. As shown in the table below, since some individuals took more than one course, the number of unique NISJ course participants was in fact lower, numbering 1,035. A total of 868 individuals (84%) participated in a single course. Among the 167 individuals who participated in two or more courses, 132 participated in two courses, 26 participated in three courses, five participated in four courses and four participated in five courses.

Actual Frequency of Participation in NISJ Courses – 2010 to 2012

	1 Course	2 Courses	3 Courses	4 Courses	5 Courses	Total
Course participation frequency (number of participants)	868	132	26	5	4	1,035
Course participation frequency (%)	84%	13%	3%	<1%	<1%	100%

The distribution of participation frequency indicates that NISJ courses are integrated to a very limited degree as only 16% of NISJ course participants have completed two or more courses. A higher degree of course integration would be illustrated by a larger number of course participants having completed two or more courses. By way of example, the table below outlines a distribution of participation frequency that would correspond to a higher degree of NISJ course integration. As shown in the hypothetical example, the number of participants who have completed only one course has declined from 84% to 35% and the number of participants that have completed two, three, four and five courses has increased with 65% of NISJ course participants have completed two or more courses.

Hypothetical Example: Frequency of Participation in NISJ Courses Illustrative of a High Degree of Integration

	1 Course	2 Courses	3 Courses	4 Courses	5 Courses	Total
Course participation frequency (%)	35%	30%	20%	10%	5%	100%

With regard to the recognition of NISJ courses, the only certification currently received by individuals who complete NISJ courses is a 'certificate of participation.' Testing of knowledge absorption by course participants through application of instruments such as quizzes, projects, exams, etc. is not undertaken. In consequence, the courses delivered by the NISJ cannot be included as part of an accredited program of study. Further, on the basis of input received from focus group participants, it would appear that it is not currently clear what the accepted standard for receipt of a certificate of participation actually is.

Evaluation of the Northern Institute of Social Justice

Focus group participants expressed frustration that some of their colleagues could attend only part (or even a fraction) of a course and still receive a certificate of completion. As possession of a certificate of completion for a particular course suggests that everyone is operating from the same knowledge base, for some participants to know that not everybody is in fact not operating from the same knowledge base serves to “devalue the course for all participants” and “devalue the whole NISJ program”. This was noted as being especially true when those individuals not fully participating in NISJ courses were also individuals serving in supervisory and managerial roles.

Responses garnered through several lines of evaluation evidence confirm the perception that NISJ courses are relevant as there is a good match between the courses offered through the NISJ and the needs of course participants. As noted by respondents from NISJ partner organizations:

“The courses offered by the NISJ are very well matched with the goals and objectives of our organization.”

“NISJ has responded by offering the courses and supporting initiatives which support [our organization]. The NISJ has demonstrated a desire to develop and grow the partnership and has been responsive to the organizational needs and expectations of [our organization].”

Differing views were expressed, however, about whether a good *mix of participants* was achieved in all of the courses delivered through the NISJ. While some respondents felt that the people participating in the courses they attended were clearly benefiting from the material, it was the people not in attendance – namely supervisors and managers – who they believed would benefit most from the course material. Focus group participants noted that it can be a tough slog going back to the office having to get caught up on missed work and at the same time try and impart best practices to co-workers when a supervisor or manager ‘has no idea where you are coming from’.

Other respondents noted that, given the very sensitive subject matter of many NISJ courses, great care must be taken to ensure that course participants feel they are in a safe environment if they are to fully engage in the course. A respondent indicated that taking a course with your co-workers can be both good and bad: good in the sense that everyone is closer to being on the same page at the end of the course and bad in the sense that it can be difficult to openly share personal experiences with people you will see day in and day out at the conclusion of the course.

Student evaluations are completed at the conclusion of each NISJ course and are compiled into summary form. The available summary course evaluations were provided to the evaluator in the form of hard copy and on a memory stick. A comparison of a count of course evaluation forms with the total number of courses delivered indicated that course evaluations are available for 59 (or, 78%) of the NISJ courses delivered over the three year review period. Three factors limit the usefulness of the completed evaluation forms for purposes of this evaluation. First, the same structure and list of questions was not used for all evaluation forms thus limiting comparability among courses. Second, because the course evaluation forms used are very generic, they are not at all specific to the intended outcomes of the NISJ program. Third, course evaluations are typically the last task to be completed before going home for the day and are completed before participants have had an opportunity apply what they have learned in their workplaces. As such, they are likely biased towards the positive as participants simply want ‘to be done with it’.

Evaluation of the Northern Institute of Social Justice

Notwithstanding the three limiting factors, a common question on overall participant perceptions was identified among the 50 of available course evaluations. The common question took one of three forms:

- “How would you rate the overall quality of instruction in this workshop?”
- “What is your overall rating of this workshop?”
- “I found the workshop valuable:”

Course Participant’s Perception of Overall Course Quality (n= 50 courses)

poor / 1 / strongly disagree	average / 2	good / 3	very good / 4	excellent / 5 / strongly agree
<1%	<1%	5%	30%	64%

As can be seen from the table, NISJ course participants clearly perceived NISJ courses to be of high quality, with 94% of participants indicating that the course quality was ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’ or that they ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that the workshop was valuable.

Finding STO.1

The NISJ has demonstrated some progress towards achieving the short-term outcome of the effective delivery of integrated, relevant and recognized social justice-related training opportunities. Several lines of evaluation evidence confirm the perception that there is a good match between the courses offered through the NISJ and the needs of course participants.

While the impressive numbers of courses offered and participating individuals is providing a solid foundation for NISJ outcome achievement, only limited integration of social justice-related course has occurred to date, as evidenced by only 16% of NISJ course participants having completed two or more courses.

Further, the apparent variation in the application of standards for the achievement a ‘certificate of completion’ – and with no evidence of application of instruments such as quizzes, projects, exams, etc. being found – suggests that the NISJ needs to sharpen its focus on ensuring proper recognition of completion of NISJ courses. This will be especially important should the NISJ choose to evolve towards the delivery of accredited programming.

STO.2 Improved opportunities for workers to develop social-justice related skills and knowledge

As noted earlier in this report, the uptake of NISJ programming has been impressive. With 1,035 unique NISJ program participants, the NISJ has delivered, on the basis of the 2007 market size estimate, at least one course to 74% of the identified market for social justice-related training in its first three years of operation.⁴ Clearly, opportunities for workers to develop social-justice related skills and knowledge have improved over the last three years.

⁴ Note that the market for social justice-related training is not static but is constantly evolving. For example, many people working in social justice-related positions, such as RCMP officers regularly cycle through the Yukon due to job transfers with new arrivals needing to be trained. In addition, operational experiences of the NISJ over the last three year indicate that there may be ‘untapped markets’ for course participants, especially among individuals and groups working directly with First Nation populations and governments.

Looking beyond simple numbers, one governing council member pointed out that opportunities can be described in different ways by stating that *“the NISJ is providing a more culturally diverse range of courses.”* And as shared by another respondent:

“By educating workers, managers and human resource staff on the topic of loss and grief in the workplace and giving them the tools they need, they can understand what a grieving individual might need, they can understand why a person might behave the way they do, and have the skills and knowledge to assist that person through the grieving process. We have heard time and time again, if loss is handled in a compassionate way in the workplace, people return to work able to do their job much sooner than if it is handled in an inappropriate way. This occurs not because people are not compassionate, but because there is a knowledge gap.”

Focus group participants noted that even though more courses are being offered through the NISJ, for “increased course offerings” to translate into “improved opportunities for workers”, employers need to respond to the potential opportunity by doing a better job of supporting staff to attend NISJ courses. Some participants noted that there is often a lot of competition for training dollars within a unit or branch and that ongoing operational requirements can make it difficult for employees to find the time to attend training. Another focus group participant noted that the NISJ could assist by drafting clearer and more detailed course descriptions that would allow them to make a stronger case to their supervisor for why they should be granted permission to attend a particular course. Some focus group participants noted a very strong interest in being able to apply their NISJ course towards an accredited certificate or diploma.

Finding STO.2

Having delivered at least one course to 74% of the identified market for social justice-related training in its first three years of operation, the NISJ is quite clearly making very good progress towards achieving the short-term outcome of improved opportunities for workers to develop social-justice related skills. That progress includes improving the cultural and social diversity of training opportunities.

The NISJ needs to be aware, however, that enrollment in its course offerings is not completely at the discretion of course participants and that it must be proactive in facilitating access to its courses for potential participants through continued engagement with their employers.

STO.3 Development of skills and knowledge which benefit employers in social justice-related fields

To assess the effectiveness of NISJ operations from the perspective of employers, a web interview for NISJ contract training partners was also designed and implemented. Responses were received from five organizations who in aggregate had approximately 100 staff participate in NISJ courses. When asked to describe in what ways the skills and knowledge of their staff have increased, interview respondents noted that staff:

- *“are better able to respond to people with mental health concerns”*
- *“gained some insight into the First Nation experience as it relates to the Yukon”*
- *“learned some very practical coping techniques and strategies”*

Evaluation of the Northern Institute of Social Justice

In terms of how contract training partners perceive how NISJ training benefits their organizations, interview respondents noted that their organization benefits by:

- having staff on board who are more *“informed, aware, connected and motivated”*
- having *healthier workers providing better client service*

In contrast, one respondent noted that *“...there needs to be two levels of training for many of the courses (basic and advanced) to ensure that staff benefit from training that is not too basic as our staff were frustrated that they spent two days away from work with very little gained”*. The same respondent suggested that there are *“trainers/facilitators from the south who might be able to offer a higher skill set”*. In terms of being able to bring up instructors from the south, as noted earlier, the NISJ is constrained by the Yukon College practice of being obligated to enter into employment contracts with instructors at the standard Yukon College hourly rate unless justification for paying a higher “market rate” is accepted.

Finding STO.3

On the basis of limited evidence, it would appear that the NISJ is making good progress towards achieving the outcome of the development of skills and knowledge which benefit employers in social justice-related fields.

Recommendations for Improving the Effectiveness of Northern Institute of Social Justice Operations

Overall, the findings of this evaluation clearly indicate that the Northern Institute of Social Justice has made outstanding progress towards the achievement of its short-term outcomes in its first three years of operations. The ten recommendations outlined below are intended to help improve the effectiveness of NISJ operations as the NISJ continues to work towards the achievement of its long-term outcomes:

- R1. To facilitate attendance at NISJ courses by employees who need their supervisor’s permission, revisit the 2007 *Northern Institute of Justice Feasibility Study* to identify generic job functions for workers in social justice-related fields. Make reference to the job functions in NISJ course posters and other advertising so that employees may present more informed cases to their supervisors and managers for why they should be able to attend a particular course.
- R2. In light of the Yukon’s small population base, securing enough momentum to maintain current participation levels will require that all potential students be steered into NISJ courses. Accordingly, the NISJ Governing Council should make a formal request to the Yukon Government that the NISJ be provided with the first opportunity to provide training to all YG employees interested in social justice-related training.
- R3. For course evaluations to be truly useful in a subsequent evaluation of NISJ operations, a single revised evaluation form should be drafted and completed by all NISJ course participants. The revised course evaluation form needs to speak to the intended outcomes of NISJ efforts and should retain some degree of comparability with the existing Yukon College evaluation form.

- R4. The formal research function of the NISJ has not yet taken flight. This suggests that the research function may be better placed within another area of Yukon College or that additional supports or partnerships may be required.
- R5. The NISJ has delivered an impressive array of courses to an extensive number of course participants with limited staff resources – NISJ courses accounted for approximately 9% of total Yukon College enrolment in non-credit programming during the review period. Whether current organizational capacity can continue to sustain the level of output achieved in the first three years of operations needs to be further examined.
- R6. Much effort is repeatedly being expended attempting to find a reasonable balance between subsidization and cost-recovery for NISJ course fees. Principles for the setting of course fees which exhibit a reasonable balance between subsidization and cost-recovery should be developed by the Governing Council for application by NISJ staff.
- R7. With benefit of the participant knowledge base it has developed, the NISJ should investigate implementing an off-the-shelf customer relationship management (CRM) system to track the progress of its client base and proactively market opportunities for further course opportunities, especially for courses which may later be aggregated into some form of accreditation.
- R8. Briefing packages prepared for Governing Council members should be augmented to include measures and indicators which illustrate the NISJ's progress towards achieving its short and long-term outcomes and that progress should be discussed at each Governing Council meeting.
- R9. To ensure proper recognition of NISJ courses (and especially important should the NISJ choose to evolve towards the delivery of accredited programming), the NISJ must clarify the standard for the receipt of a 'certificate of completion' by making full attendance mandatory for receiving it and by investigating the implementation of testing for knowledge absorption at all NISJ courses.
- R10. In terms of contact hours per course, the more substantive courses (in terms of participant contact hours) are being delivered in the "justice" field (e.g., correctional officer training). As such, efforts to develop a social justice certificate / diploma program should first build on "justice" courses being delivered through NISJ and then the more broadly-focused "social justice" courses.