

Nunavut television network launches Inuit-language channel

Inuktitut shows for kids, archived content from elders shared nationally on Uvagut TV

[Beth Brown](#) · CBC News · Posted: Jan 15, 2021 4:50 PM CT | Last Updated: 11 hours ago



Singer Rita Claire and husky Qimmiq are shown in a scene from the television show Anaana's Tent, filmed in Nunavut. A new Inuit-language television channel called Uvagut TV launches Monday. The name means 'Our TV' in English. (Arvaaq Media Inc./The Canadian Press)

Inuit Canadians will soon have 24/7 access to Inuktitut-language television programming.

The Nunavut Independent Television Network (NITV) is launching a new channel — Uvagut TV — starting first thing on Monday, at 12:01 a.m.

It will be available nationally to Shaw Direct customers, and to Arctic Co-ops cable subscribers in Nunavut and the Northwest territories, according to a news release announcing the launch. It will also stream online through the website uvagut.tv.

The new channel's Inuktitut title translates to "Our TV" in English — a term used to encompass all Inuit languages, including Inuktitut, which is spoken in western and central Nunavut.

Canada is home to several other Inuit regions besides Nunavut, including the Inuvialuit region of the Northwest Territories, Nunavik in northern Quebec, and Nunatsiavut in Labrador.

- [Is it possible to save a dying language? 4 Inuit women are doing just that](#)
- [INUIT NAMES How Inuit honour the tradition of naming, and spirits who have passed on](#)

Uvagut TV is calling itself the first language-focused Indigenous television channel in the country. Content will be primarily in Inuit languages, with English subtitles, says the network's executive director, Lucy Tulugarjuk.

"For me, Uvagut TV is a dream come true — to see Inuit culture and to hear our language full time on TV," Tulugarjuk said in the news release.

"As our elders pass away, we are fighting against time to keep Inuit culture and language alive for our children and grandchildren. TV in Inuktut all day every day is a powerful way to keep a living language for future generations."



Circus performers from the group Artcirq. Musical and performing arts television from Inuit regions throughout Canada will play on Uvagut TV. (CBC | High Arctic Haulers)

Tulugarjuk said the network will also have programming in Inuinnaqtun, an Inuktut dialect spoken in western Nunavut, and Inuvialuktun, which is spoken by Inuit in the Northwest Territories.

Both of those languages are considered dying languages, and the organizations from those regions that create cultural programming for television, like the Inuvialuit Communications Society, often create content in English as well.

Tulugarjuk says the network is hoping in the future to have content from Alaska and Greenland.

Daily Inuktut TV for kids

Uvagut TV will offer five hours of Inuit-language children's programs daily, air shows from the Igloolik-based circus and performing arts group Artcirq, and air award-winning films like *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*, the release said.

The Nunavut Independent Television Network will create programs through partnerships with other Inuit video production companies, such as the youth-focused Taqqut Productions, the online arts and culture media group IsumaTV, and the long-standing Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC), founded in 1981, which currently runs the majority of its content on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN).

NITV says it is registered with the CRTC as a discretionary service, meaning it is exempted from needing the kind of license a larger broadcaster would require, because of its small subscriber base.

In July, on Nunavut Day, [another broadcaster announced its own plans to launch an Inuit-language channel](#) called Inuit TV, but that project doesn't have approval yet through the CRTC and is still in the works.

The Inuit Television Network does have funding from Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated — the organization that represents Inuit in Nunavut — to pursue creation of that television channel.

Ugavut TV is separate, and is not in partnership with Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.

Dying languages, archived content shared

NITV has been broadcasting programs on community cable in Nunavut since 2010 and it works closely with streaming company IsumaTV, which started in 2008. NITV says that the only external funding it accessed for the new channel was a \$90,000-grant from a COVID-19 relief fund for Indigenous television.

"In the absence of external funding, all our program suppliers have agreed to defer licensing fees to get the channel on the air," the network said in an email.

The Inuit Broadcasting Corporation will share six hours of its own content with NITV daily.

"IBC is willing to work with anyone to bring our priceless programming to the public," the broadcaster said in a news release on Friday. "Elders have been waiting for over 20 years for this to happen."



The Inuit Broadcasting Corporation building in Iqaluit. IBC will have six hours of content daily on Uvaguq TV. (Inuit Broadcasting Corporation/Facebook)

IBC content includes archived video from the creation of Nunavut and its Inuit governments, cooking shows about traditional foods, concerts and performances by Inuit-language musicians, and retellings of Inuit stories and legends.

"We have collected and preserved this treasure, and it needs to breathe out into Inuit homes and we are glad that some of the content will be seen on this new station along with new and innovative programming IBC is planning now," IBC said in the release.

NITV says it will also use the channel to air political content, like live [environmental hearings by the Nunavut Impact Review Board for a proposed expansion at the Mary River mine](#). Those two-week hearings start on Jan. 25.

Nunavut Independent Television Network is working to make the channel available on other satellite and cable systems, it said in the release.