

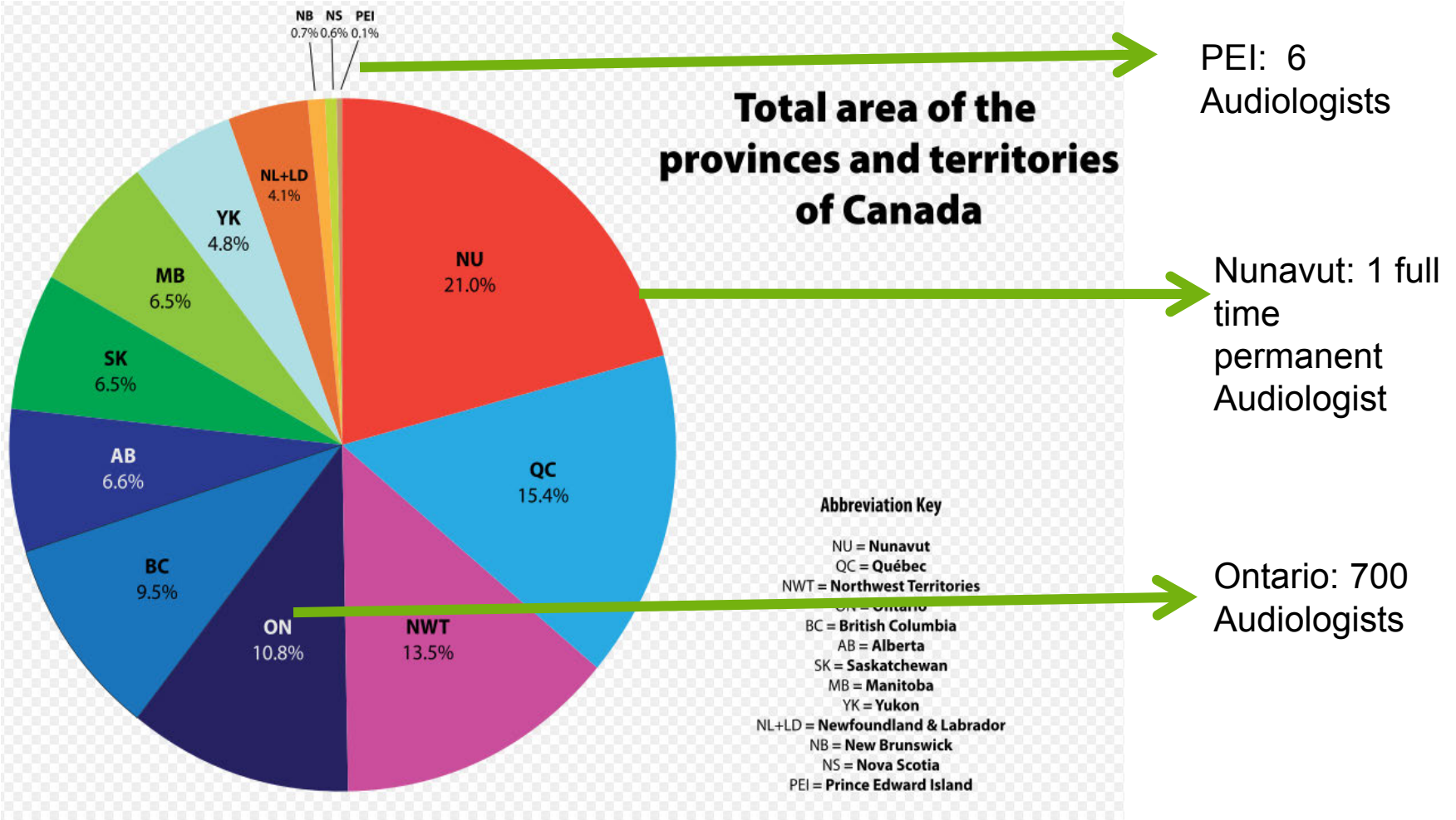
# ***Better Hearing in Education for Northern Youth***



The goal of BHENY: address hearing loss in youth, beginning in 13 underserved communities in the Qikiqtani region



# Hearing loss is an issue which has been largely unaddressed...



## Why is hearing loss such a big problem?

- There is no newborn hearing screening program to identify babies with hearing loss, and very few formal screening programs for preschool or school age children, so hearing loss is diagnosed very late
- There is an extremely high prevalence of hearing loss in Inuit children and youth due to complications from ear infections. Elsewhere in Canada, permanent hearing loss resulting from complications of ear infections is rare, but it is extremely common in Arctic regions
- Access to health care, particularly to otolaryngologists and audiologists, is difficult; many children receive services (including hearing aid fitting) in other provinces and followup is inconsistent
- There is only one permanent full time audiologist in all of Nunavut to manage the hearing needs of children and youth
- There are no teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing, and little support for classroom teachers to learn about hearing loss

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## If children can't hear, they can't learn!

- Hearing loss leads to difficulty learning both English and Inuktitut. Preserving the language of Inuktitut requires being able to hear well
- Hearing loss leads to difficulties learning to read and write, as well as social difficulties, bullying, poor academic outcomes, and low high school graduation rates
- Children sometimes stay home from school for days or weeks at a time, because they cannot hear well enough to learn

# Lack of coordinated services between health and education means...

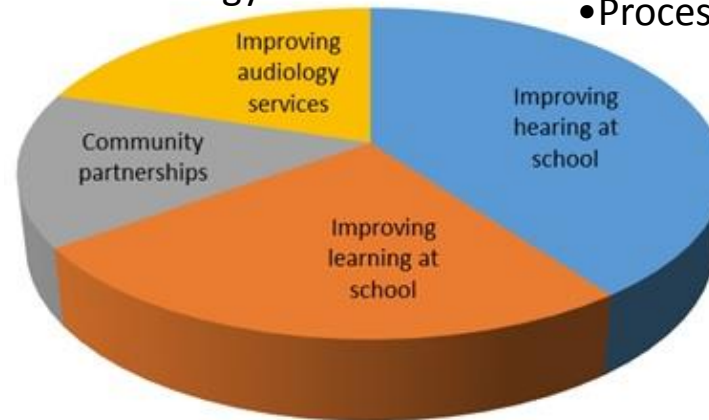
- The sole full time audiologist travels to communities once a year, or children fly to Iqaluit
- Limited to no teacher education on hearing loss, and impacts on language and literacy
- Parents and teachers are not well-informed about hearing loss
- Difficult for children to get hearing aids and keep them working well and in good repair



# Project Activities and Goals

- Remote hearing aid programming
- Itinerant audiologist position
- Loaner hearing aid program
- Collaboration with southern audiology services

- **Sound field systems in schools**
- Personal FM systems at school
- Technology training & support
- Processes for sustainability



- Parent support materials
- Collaboration with hearing screening programs
- Community awareness materials

- Teacher Virtual Resource Centre
- Webinars

# What is a sound field system?



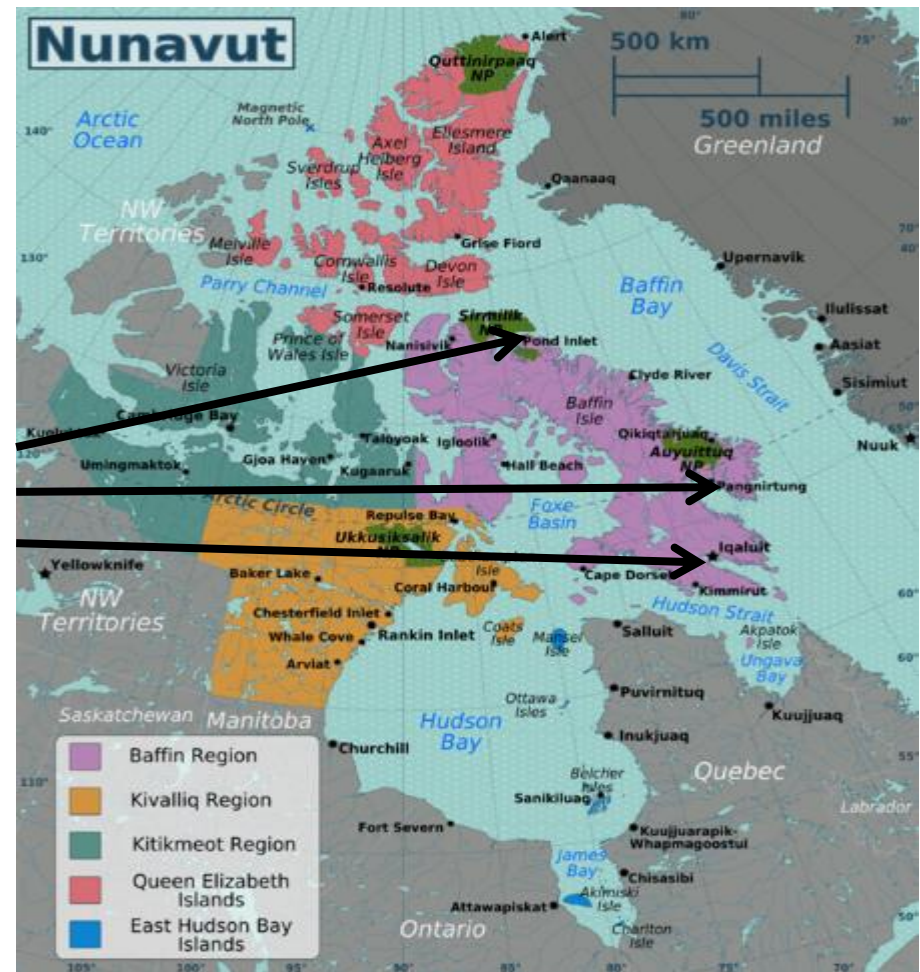
Audiologist Lynne McCurdy installing a system in Pond Inlet

Sound field systems use a teacher-worn microphone and wall mounted speakers to enhance the teacher's voice, so everyone can hear!

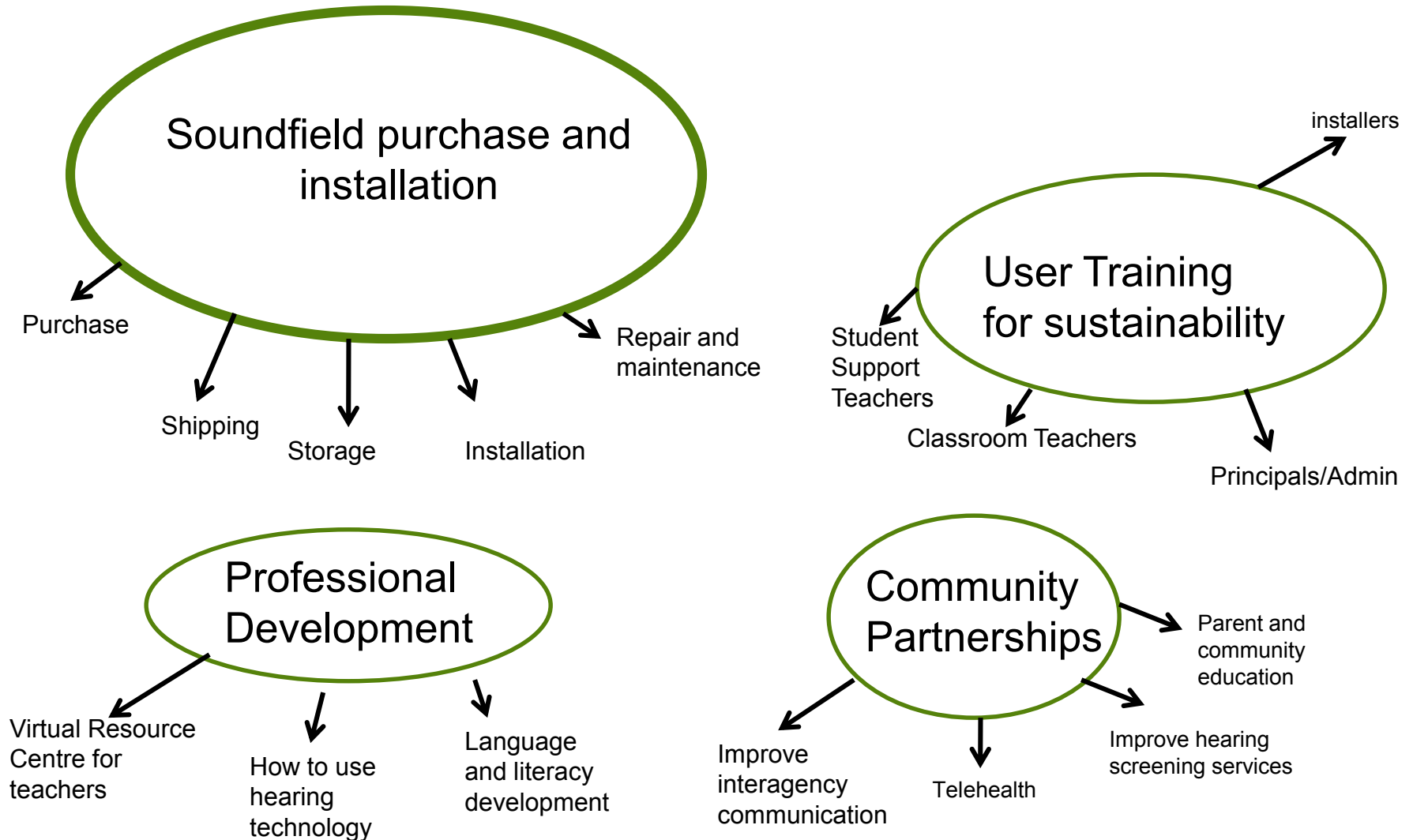


# The first goal of BHENY will focus on sound field systems in classrooms

- Sound field amplification enhances the clarity of the teacher's voice with a wireless transmitter sending the voice to a speaker mounted on a wall
- Install systems in all 13 communities starting with the three largest communities with the greatest need
- Provide training on best practices for educating children with hearing loss, and support to ensure sustainability



# Components of the project



## Expected Outcomes

- Improved reading, writing and numeracy skills
- Better language learning (Inuktitut and English)
- Improved attendance at school
- Improved high school graduation rates
- Improved hearing in the classroom overall
- Improved attention and listening in the classroom
- Improved cultural preservation through second language acquisition
- Improved social acceptance of hearing aids – reduced bullying
- Improved social well being
- Earlier identification of hearing loss
- Better knowledge and awareness by parents and community

# BHENY is already making a difference...

Iqaluit – June 26, 2015



Pond Inlet – Sept, 2015

- 3 sound field systems installed (with teacher and installer training) in a school in Pond Inlet by team leader Lynne McCurdy and team members. Lynne has also provided professional development for the full time audiologist
- BHENY team members have begun interagency meetings and development of education and training materials for teachers