

RESEARCH REPORT



Research and Consultation Project Concerning Inuit Housing Across Canada



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Inuit Tapirisat of Canada

Final Report

**Research and Consultation Project
Concerning Inuit Housing Across Canada**

Prepared: April, 2001

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Final Report on the National Inuit Housing Research and Consultation Project

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Introduction

Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC), the national organization representing all Canadian Inuit, has been concerned with the lack of adequate housing in Inuit communities since its inception thirty years ago. The housing situation for many Inuit has been in a state of crisis since the first Inuit families were moved into settlements during the 1950's and 1960's by the federal government. Since that time, housing had remained a top priority for all major Inuit organizations and has consistently been identified as exacerbating serious social and economic problems that exist in Inuit communities.

ITC recognizes that there is no single, simple solution to providing adequate housing for Inuit. A number of substantial challenges continue to frustrate people across all sectors and jurisdictions responsible for providing housing. ITC continues to firmly believe that a fundamental element to effectively addressing the housing crisis is a substantial infusion of new funding. This basic reality is recognized by all of the stakeholders contacted within the context of the current research and consultation project. However, that being said, it is acknowledged that obtaining these funds will involve a coordinated and vigorous strategy at the political level and is therefore beyond the practical context of this project. In an effort to move beyond this fundamental assumption and toward some constructive and progressive movement on this important issue, ITC believes that an effort must be made to continue to work closely with Inuit, government and non-government, and private sector stakeholders to take a refreshed perspective on the Inuit housing situation and to carefully consider and explore new and innovative means of addressing the issue.

Housing is without doubt a complex issue and impacts upon many critical aspects of life in Inuit communities. These communities are primarily small, isolated and face numerous challenges in meeting the basic standards of living that most Canadians take for granted. In 1998, ITC began to renew its efforts to move the issue of Inuit housing forward. Updated research efforts and consultations were identified as being necessary in order to identify Inuit needs and priorities and to explore new, innovative ways of addressing the housing situation. Research was also needed to identify ways in which new funding arrangements and partnerships could be established to build upon the strengths and successes that have become apparent in certain areas of the Inuit housing milieu. As well, background information needed to be collected and analyzed to ensure that ITC was able to base its research and consultations upon current and updated information on the housing situation and plethora of programs and policies that have evolved in the housing sector across the country.

In response to these identified needs, ITC approached Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) with a proposal to enable ITC to undertake a research and consultation project concerning the housing problems in the regions of Nunavut, NWT, Northern Quebec and Labrador.

After a process of consultation and discussion, a letter of agreement was signed in February 2000 between CMHC and ITC. ITC would like to thank Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, especially Ms. Line Marie Gullison, Senior Analyst, Strategic Policy and Planning, for their support in making this important project possible.

ITC appreciated both the moral and financial support Indian and Northern Affairs Canada provided to the project as well. In addition, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, the Nunavut Housing Corporation and the Newfoundland/Labrador Housing Corporation also provided funding.

The project team would also like to thank Mr. Jose Kusugak, President of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, and the ITC Board of Directors for their invaluable contributions and support to this project.

Background

Inuit communities across the Canadian Arctic continue to suffer from a critical housing crisis that exacts an unacceptable toll on their health, society and economic development. The housing crisis has been widely cited as one of the key elements in the escalating levels of family violence, self-destructive acts, high school dropout rates, substance abuse, and overall decrease in physical health standards that have had such a devastating effect on Inuit communities. ITC believes that these problems are directly exacerbated by the fact that Inuit live in the most overcrowded conditions in the country.

A scant 40-50 years ago, nomadic Inuit were moved by the federal government to permanent communities in order to better provide them with a wide range of government programs and services including housing. Beginning at this early stage, the roots of the current housing crisis found fertile ground. Extended family groupings, rapid increases in the population, and a consistent shortage of housing, combined to expose Inuit to a chronic lack of adequate housing, overcrowding, and the related social and health problems these entail.

Purpose of the Project

Through prior research undertaken by ITC in 1994-1995, the housing problem in Inuit communities has been clearly identified and has been brought to the attention of the federal government. The intention of the current project was not to simply revisit this work but rather to build upon its results in order to develop a more current understanding of the housing issue, to establish priorities on the part of Inuit communities and to explore innovative ways of addressing housing problems.

There is widespread agreement among stakeholders in Inuit communities and government agencies that the primary solution to the housing crisis lies in the provision of new funding structures to return funding levels for the construction of new social housing, at a minimum, back to their pre-1993 levels. While ITC and other organizations will continue to pursue this objective at the political level, the current project focused upon exploring new solutions to housing problems in Inuit communities. Some of the questions that were formed at the beginning of the project were: What is the current housing situation in Inuit communities? What are their priority needs? How are Inuit organizations involved in the housing issue? What are some of the housing successes that have been achieved in the Inuit regions? Is there an awareness of any “best practices” in housing management or construction for Inuit? What innovative means of financing, construction and managing can be identified to help ease critical need for affordable housing? How can existing housing programs be improved?

Approach to the Project

In keeping with its position as the national Inuit organization, ITC established a National Steering Committee on Inuit Housing comprised of representatives of the four Inuit land claim organizations supported by ITC staff. The National Inuit Youth Council was invited to sit on the Committee after its inception.

The Inuit Tapirisat of Canada would like to thank the following Steering Committee members for their invaluable contributions to the project:

Mr. Franklin Carpenter	Inuvialuit Regional Corporation
Ms. Annie Quirke, Ms. Janice Braden and Ms. Hagar Idlout-Sudlovenick	Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
Ms. Jocelyn Barrett and Mr. Larry Watt	Makivik Corporation
Mr. Don Dicker	Labrador Inuit Association
Ms. Looee Okalik	Youth Intervener, National Inuit Youth Council
Mr. Pitseolak Pfeifer	ITC Project Team, ITC Policy Advisor
Mr. Roy Wilson	ITC Project Team, ITC Research Assistant

Research Methodology

The research phase of the project was comprised of three distinct components: 1) a review of the relevant literature on housing, and in particular, northern and Inuit housing; 2) the development, distribution and analysis of a questionnaire to a wide number of organizations involved in, or impacted by, housing; and 3) a number of interviews with individuals with expertise or insights into the housing situation. The culmination of the project was the National Inuit Housing Consultation Meeting held in Ottawa, Ontario on November 1-3, 2000. The meeting brought together a wide variety of stakeholders in Inuit housing for the first time to discuss the Inuit housing situation and to explore new and innovative ways of addressing it. The focus of the meeting was not to simply revisit the fact that more funding is required to address the situation but rather to attempt to explore and develop new means of addressing the housing issue and to clearly identify housing needs and priorities.

1) Literature Review

The literature review was undertaken to gather, identify and examine existing literature on housing in relation to the north, First Nations and Inuit. The sources for the literature review included local government, university and public libraries as well as Internet searches (a complete bibliography is available in the Appendices). Document sources included: Federal and Provincial Government Press Releases, CMHC's library, ITC's library, Provincial and Territorial Needs Assessment reports, information from both government and non-governmental organizations (NGO's), various news reports and articles. There have also been various recommendations that have been proposed in addressing housing issues within Inuit and Northern aboriginal communities including: the Government of Canada Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs on May 7th, 1999 and the Minister's Task Force Report on Housing from the Nunavut Legislature in April 2000.

To develop a clearer understanding of the origins of the housing crisis, ITC researchers went to the National Archives of Canada to review documents describing the context in which Inuit were moved into communities by the federal government in the early 1950's and 1960's. Although a significant number of the documents were restricted, ITC was able to enhance its appreciation of the overall context and the housing conditions that existed during this period. It is anticipated that future efforts will enable researchers to review a greater number of these documents and shed further light on this important period in Inuit history.

The literature review enabled ITC researchers to gain an understanding of the basic housing programs that are available to Northerners in the four regions ranging from assisted homeownership programs to financing assistance.

ITC researchers noted that among the findings from the literature review, increased focus now seemed to be back on developing more social housing units as the homeownership pool potential appears to have been nearly exhausted, thus limiting the impact of home ownership programs.

Alternative financing and innovation in the area of financing were two subject areas that were difficult to find information on, particularly in relation to the north. One source that was of some help was the 1995 CMHC document “Sharing Successes in Native Housing – Highlights of the CMHC Housing Awards Symposium on Aboriginal Housing”. The document highlighted various techniques of maximizing economic benefits created from new construction and how innovative financing can produce more houses with limited budgets. In the section, “Innovative Financing Options”, the Melville Native Housing Association in Happy-Valley Goose Bay, Labrador renovated 12 existing units for the same price as building 6 new units. Supplementary information in this area was accessed at via surveys and interviews.

It became apparent throughout the literature review that there was a distinct lack of data programs and studies specifically related to Inuit. In stark contrast however, there was an abundance of information available on First Nations’ housing conditions and programs. This observation coincides with the findings of previous research on housing undertaken by ITC and continues to present a significant challenge in terms of developing a comprehensive understanding of the factors, impacts and possible solutions to the housing situation in Inuit communities.

In summary, the literature review allowed ITC to develop a better understanding of the current information on housing conditions and programs and to identify a number of gaps in the data that were addressed by subsequent research methods. Although there was an overall lack of Inuit-specific information available, there was some key resources that communities and housing corporations in the north could benefit from particularly those produced by CMHC.

Circumpolar Housing Conference

To further support the research effort for this project, ITC also participated in the Circumpolar Housing Conference held in Yellowknife in September 2000. The three-day conference was a valuable source of information as it gathered together stakeholders from across the circumpolar Arctic to discuss issue relating to northern housing. A housing trade show was also held simultaneously and provided an excellent opportunity for the collection of current trade information and for the development of contacts across a wide range of housing construction sector.

The conference was comprised of four distinct topic areas:

- Modern Design and Construction focused upon best practices in Northern design.

- **Aboriginal/Native Housing Issues** provided insight into health problems relating to poor housing conditions, building capacity within the communities and funding programs available.
- **Business Opportunities** addressing all aspects of the housing trade. This stream provided an overview of various financing options, materials supply and current market conditions.
- **Planning for Sustainable Communities** delved into the issue of how to preserve the land while building on it, innovative technologies and sustainable options within specific systems such as water, sewer and power.

ITC staff attending the conference focused their attention on the Aboriginal/Native Housing Issues and gained an important understanding of the relationship between health issues and poor housing conditions. Overcrowding was an issue that was found to exacerbate a number of health problems including the spread of communicable diseases such as tuberculosis (at ten times the national rate for Aboriginal peoples), Hepatitis A, and Shigellosis. Lack of privacy and overcrowding was found to exacerbate social problems included family violence, poor self-esteem and problems at school.

Indoor air quality problems was another important element of the session. Airtight houses without the proper ventilation systems due to the cold climate can lead to high levels of indoor pollutants and humidity problems. Smoking is the leading cause of the indoor pollution, mould can lead to allergic reactions and there is increased exposure to mycotoxins and volatile organic compounds from rug and oven cleaners, hair spray and paint. Increased ventilation in buildings would address most of these issues.

The information gained during the attendance at this conference provided input into the development of the discussion paper for the national meeting and served to identify gaps in the literature review process.

2) Surveys

To enable ITC to capitalize upon the extensive knowledge, experience and opinions that existed among a wide number of stakeholders, a number of survey instruments were designed. Four questionnaires were developed and circulated to the following organizations: Elders and Youth organizations, northern Community Housing Associations, Territorial and Provincial Housing Corporations and Societies, and Regional Inuit Organizations. The following rationale was developed for contacting each of these groups.

Elders

Elders were consulted in order to gain traditional knowledge, an understanding of past and present housing issues, and to identify their current housing priorities and needs¹. Elders provide rich sources of historical information as they remember the period of moving from the land to permanent settlements. This period marks the origins of the current housing crisis and is crucial to understanding how it developed. Their participation also provided important background information as to the type of housing that was provided as well as a description of other government assistance incentives that were promised to Inuit during this period. Elders were also able to describe family dynamics, how they dealt with overcrowding and tensions within the family unit, and provided important insights into how living quarters were arranged and the roles of individual family members.

Inuit Organizations

A number of Inuit organizations were consulted in an effort to determine what kind of activities they have undertaken in regards to addressing the housing situation in their respective regions. They were also asked where housing fit in regards to other priorities within the regions and what suggestions they had in regards to possible solutions to the housing problem. Among their many activities, Inuit organizations play important advocacy roles as they represent the interests of Inuit at a variety of levels. Understanding their roles and perspectives on housing was considered crucial to determining what the housing priorities and issues are at the regional and provincial/territorial level.

Community/Regional Housing Associations

Housing agencies were consulted at both the community and the regional level in order to gain an understanding of the current housing situation, issues and perspectives related to housing and social housing in their respective areas. These institutions are front-line delivery agents for public housing and represent a rich source of hands-on information about housing programs and policies. They possess intimate and accurate knowledge of the condition of the units, number of persons living in the units, waiting lists and waiting periods. As the front line delivery agencies, their personnel are a valuable source of information and ideas on how to improve the housing situation. In order to gain a wider perspective on the issues facing Inuit communities of all sizes, surveys were sent to a small, medium and large community in the following Inuit regions: Inuvialuit, Kitikmeot, Kivalliq, Qikiqtani, Nunavik and Labrador.

¹ ITC strongly supports the recognition of *Inuit Qaujimagatuqanngit* and the incorporation of Inuit traditional knowledge in the development and delivery of programs and policies as implemented by the Nunavut Government.

Provincial and Territorial Housing Bodies

Provincial and Territorial housing agencies were also contacted to gain a broader perspective on the housing issue and possible solutions that could be developed. The following agencies received surveys: the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, the Nunavut Housing Corporation, the Société d'Habitation du Québec, and the Newfoundland/Labrador Housing Corporation.

Summary of Issues Raised in the Surveys

It should be noted that a number of challenges presented themselves during the survey process. The most important caveat to make is that the responses to the surveys were, in some cases, relatively low in number. For example, the initial intent in regards to surveying elders was to send a number of surveys to individual elders in each Inuit region. As well, an elders and youth conference was being organized in Nunavik at approximately the same time as the surveys were to be sent out. An effort was made to try and capitalize upon this event by circulating surveys to the elders attending the conference. Due to a number of circumstances, these surveys were not circulated widely. In the end, only seven of eighteen elders' surveys were returned to ITC.

In response to the timelines of the project, the surveys were sent out to housing associations, Inuit organizations and territorial/provincial housing corporations during the month of August. This is traditionally a time when many Inuit and northerners are out on the land or taking vacation time. As a result, the final number of surveys was somewhat lower than originally anticipated but all response rates fell in the 50% range. ITC believes that overall, sufficient responses were received to provide solid indications to what these stakeholders had to say about the housing situation. To provide further support to the data gained from the surveys and to address gaps in the information, selected interviews were conducted with individuals across the north and across areas of activity/specialization.

The following issues are summarized from the completed surveys received by ITC. The results are useful in identifying what each group considered the priorities, needs and possible solutions are in relation to housing. These findings provided an important baseline of information for the basis of discussion at the National Inuit Housing Meeting held in November 2000².

² A copy of the survey questionnaires and the complete analysis of the surveys were initially going to be included in the appendices but the amount of material was considered too bulky for inclusion. A copy of the final report from the meeting is included however.

Elders

The respondents (seven of eighteen) provided descriptions of their experiences in moving to settlements during the 1950's and 1960's. Although the houses were sometimes of mixed quality, small by modern standards, and overheated, the general recollection was one of relief at being protected from the elements and some of the rigours associated with living on the land. In response to a question regarding the current housing problems, the following issues were identified by respondents: an inadequate number of new housing units were being built; the population was rapidly increasing beyond the housing capacity of the communities; there was insufficient coordination in terms of matching families with the size of units; and the high costs of rent and utilities was a serious problem for many families. Elders felt that the housing situation had increased the levels of family break-ups and exacerbated a number of health problems. Young couples and elders were identified as being the top priority for housing. Single parent families and extended families were the next highest priority.

Solutions to the housing problem suggested by the respondents included: the construction of more housing units; tenants should be encouraged to play a greater role in maintaining their homes; greater assistance should be made available to assist people in owning their own homes; more housing for disabled people is needed; and lower rent for social housing should be considered.

Elders had clear ideas on what action should be taken to address the issue of housing and what organization should be responsible for carrying this action forward. Among the suggestions made, the following had the highest levels of support: housing should be highest priority for government; Inuit and elders' organizations can play an important role in lobbying governments to place a higher priority on housing; these organizations can also play an important role in educating Inuit in regards to the housing issue; Inuit organizations should explore the possibility of building homes if there are sufficient funds arising from land claims; and, the overall design of houses is generally satisfactory but certain changes would be better facilitate Inuit culture and values (i.e. wider halls, bigger porches).

Housing Associations

The surveys received from the housing associations (ten of eighteen) provided a number of interesting facts including: the average waiting period for social housing is approximately 32 months; the longest waiting period was 64 months; and 50% of respondents indicated that some of their social housing units needed major repairs. Top priority issues identified included: the overall lack of available housing units; the poor quality of existing housing; overcrowding; the high costs of private ownership; and there was a need for tenants to play a greater role in maintaining their units.

The housing associations identified single parents, young couples, and elders as having the most pressing housing needs. Possible solutions to consider included replacing older units with new, higher density housing, increasing funding for new housing construction, for renovations and repairs. Suggestions for possible alternate financing arrangements included: forming partnerships with First Nations' development and investment services; having family cooperatives manage and maintain housing units; having municipalities and governments provide housing for their employees; and better utilizing available government programs. Utilizing "sweat equity" programs such as "Habitat for Humanity" received mixed support primarily due to the high costs of materials, the shortage of skilled labour, as well as the need for a significant level of coordination. It was noted that high utility and mortgage carrying costs exacerbated the difficulties in establishing such programs.

The housing associations also responded to a question regarding the role of government. The majority of respondents felt that the construction of new housing units was essential to providing any real progress on the issue. The government should play the primary role in providing the necessary resources but there were also some suggestions that the community should be involved in the design of these units so that they better meet the needs of the Inuit. Training was also identified as important, particularly for administrative staff, maintenance staff, in the construction trades as well as the education of tenants about housing maintenance. Programs to increase home ownership were also identified as a priority. One association suggested establishing a rent-to-buy plan for tenants. Another association provided the following useful comments: "Adjust the size of units to fit changing needs of families (for example, shift a three bedroom unit to a two-bedroom unit as families get smaller), develop programs to help tenants "rent to own" their units, and involve the community in designs for new units".

Inuit Organizations

Of the Inuit organizations that responded (five of ten), a clear majority of respondents indicated that housing was in a state of crisis and was the highest priority issue for Inuit in their respective regions. A number of specific impacts of the housing situation were noted including: an exacerbation of the already high unemployment rate, crime and social problems; higher incidences of communicable diseases and homelessness; and observations that high rents and utility costs have increased poverty levels. One respondent indicated that housing had provided key economic benefits in the region.

Inuit associations identified the following groups as being in priority need: young couples, single families (two parents and their children), single parent families, and elders. Priority types of housing included public housing, private homes and rental housing.

Respondents felt that a number of solutions should be explored including: encouraging the federal government to reinstate funding for construction of new social housing (identified as a top priority); increasing Inuit participation in the housing construction sector possibly by enabling Inuit Birthright Corporations to build and lease back units to housing associations; establishing new programs to increase home ownership; developing new housing designs that reflect Inuit culture and lifestyles; and developing new partnerships between agencies involved in housing.

The role of Inuit organizations in the area of housing included lobbying governments for increased/reinstated funding for housing and for using land claim monies to strategically leverage other funding sources including enhanced government resources.

Territorial and Provincial Government Organizations

Two completed surveys were received out of a total of four circulated. In response to the level of current housing need, one respondent replied that 22 per cent of households were in core need. The goal of the department was to reduce this level of need by 2-5% in future years. Impacts of the housing situation included increased migration to larger centres and an increased lack of hope and exacerbated social problems in communities. Single families, elders and single parents were identified as groups needing priority housing.

Possible solutions to the housing situation included: increasing Inuit training and employment opportunities in the housing sector; developing new housing designs to improve the durability, comfort and requirements of the residents; establishing new programs to help increase home ownership; developing new methods of housing construction that are more responsive to northern realities; developing new partnerships among stakeholders; developing new financing arrangements; and increasing knowledge of “best practices” specifically for northern conditions. In regards to funding issues, suggestions were made to increase funding for the construction of new social housing units and that extra funding should be provided for the renovation and upgrading of existing housing stock.

Local community organizations could play a bigger role in housing by providing financing in association with the housing corporation. New partnerships could be established between the housing corporations and local development corporations that assist in financing and managing the project. Aboriginal land claim organizations could play a part in developing solutions to the problem at the regional level. Concerning the applicability of “sweat equity” programs, the respondents were split in support of such initiatives. One concern raised was the high cost of materials and transportation and the lack of serviced building sites. Both respondents agreed however that people in their respective regions would be willing to provide sweat equity to help construct a home for their families.

Priority issues identified by the respondents were: that tenants needed to play a greater role in maintaining their units; the basic lack of available units; and the fact that the high costs of private home ownership greatly limited the number of people that could afford their own home. Priority housing needs in the NWT was for 1-bedroom/bachelor units for young single people and couples. In Labrador, new construction for single-family houses was identified as the priority housing need.

Governments could improve the situation by making a commitment to existing funding levels. Governments should also consider annual increases to reflect population growth. Finally, more funding should be provided for new construction, repairs and training programs on home maintenance.

3) Interviews

In addition to the surveys, a number of interviews were conducted with selected people in an effort to fill in certain gaps that had become apparent during the other research phases. These gaps arose primarily in relation to specific suggestions regarding alternative financing methods and the awareness of “best practices” in the housing sector.

Alternative Financing & Innovation

A majority of Inuit within Canada relies upon public/social housing due to their present socio-economic circumstances and the lack of a developed housing market. Many Inuit are unable to afford the high costs associated with private homeownership, and as such continue to rely heavily upon subsidized rental housing provided by the territorial/provincial governments. CMHC’s current programming primarily focuses upon helping those people who own property, which definitely benefits homeowners, however, Inuit primarily live in social housing units and thus receive minimal benefits from such programs.

The territorial and provincial governments have assumed responsibility for public/social housing but they have been unable to address all of the identified housing needs within their respective jurisdictions. This shortfall has been primarily due to an ongoing chronic lack of funding despite their efforts to pressure the Government of Canada for increased resources in this area. These governments are now looking at how partnerships can be utilized to aid in meeting the urgent need that currently exists. Public Private Partnerships (P3’s) have been utilized to varying degrees and in various forms, including such large infrastructure projects as major highway construction, hospitals and other public buildings. This approach uses private capital for the development of infrastructure projects whereby the government leases back the facilities from the owner/builder, with purchase options provided at the end of the lease period. This model has demonstrated that it delivers cost savings to governments. However, the developer involved must have the capital and management strength to carry out the project.

If governments were to examine the P3 model in relation to social housing construction, they would have to consider the challenges involved in allowing small- and medium-sized Inuit-owned companies to participate fully in the process while attempting to achieve socio-economic development objectives such as training, employment, financing and management development. Typical construction or real estate financing is viewed as the riskiest stages of development while mortgage financing is typically secured by long-term government leases. Therefore, management strength and experience is weighed heavily against a financing or lending decision. Inuit participation is a key component in addressing current social housing construction, however, barriers to participation must be identified and strategies put in place to enable this participation to be effective and meaningful.

“Best Practices”

In preparation for the creation of Nunavut, Public Private Partnerships were used between the Government of Canada, the Government of Nunavut and the Nunavut Construction Corporation (owned by all the Inuit Birthright Development Corporations of Nunavut) to design, build and lease back incremental office and housing unit requirements to the Government of Nunavut for its employees. This project was valued at over \$100 million and took over four years to complete. This P3 partnership has been nationally recognized as an example of Best Practices between aboriginal people and government.

In Nunavik, Makivik Corporation, the Birthright Corporation of the Inuit of Northern Quebec, has been given the task of building social housing units for several of its communities. Government has recognized that Inuit must be part of construction, training, employment and capacity-building opportunities that derive from housing construction.

Regardless of these positive examples, it is important to remember the lessons learned and the challenges that still lie ahead for Inuit participation in the economy. The high cost of transportation and limited transportation routes all substantially raise the cost of doing business in Inuit communities. These high costs remain one of the biggest challenges in developing affordable housing in Inuit communities.

Resources and Techniques for Communities

The most effective technique we used during our literature review was talking directly to people. We conducted phone interviews with construction companies, social workers, financial institutions and medical professionals. The greatest set of knowledge comes from discussing the issues with people who work in the field. They were able to give us specific ground level data that was beneficial to our research. Views of what is needed from different aspects of people who work in fields that are affected by the housing situation across the north.

The internet was the medium that we found the most information. We were able to access many different organizations that are in or affected by housing. This vehicle was backbone of our research. It granted us the opportunity to read and research many different articles, reports, news releases, and newspapers without having to leave the office.

A consortium of valuable information was available to investigate in different national libraries. The CMHC library was one that we visited on a few occasions as it contains an incredible amount of information on aboriginal housing. The other two main libraries we used were the National Archives of Canada and the DIAND library.

National Inuit Housing Consultation Meeting

The convening of the National Inuit Housing Consultation Meeting in Ottawa, Nov. 1-3, 2000 brought together, for the first time, key stakeholders from across Arctic Canada to address issues relating to housing for Inuit. The forum presented a rich opportunity for over 40 participants to share information on the current state of affairs within their respective regions and to learn what was happening in other regions. As well as reviewing the history and current status of the housing sector, participants also discussed and explored new and innovative solutions to the housing situation facing Inuit communities. Although ITC's research findings provided a starting point and basis for the presentations and discussions that took place, the quantity and the quality of the discourse surpassed the most optimistic expectations of ITC.

The initial component of the meeting was comprised of presentations made by several representatives from Inuit organizations. These presentations generally focused upon providing an overview and background of the housing situation in each of the land claim regions as well as some description as to how the organization had approached the issue of housing.

Government agencies involved in housing programs also made presentations. These agencies, from the national, provincial and territorial level provided an overview of the housing situation in their respective regions and outlined a number of programs and developments that had been established to try and deal with the housing situation.

Non-government agencies including the Inuit Non-Profit Housing Corporation and Pauktuutit, the Inuit Women's Association, also made presentations on their involvement in the delivery of housing programs and services as well as the impact housing shortages has had on Inuit communities.

A number of presenters were from the private sector including the Nunavut Construction Corporation, SRI Homes, URBCO and Arctic Financial Ltd. These presentations served to provide insight into the challenges faced by private sector companies in developing housing. As well there was discussion involving various options that could be utilized to help ease the housing crisis in the north.

Summary of Housing Needs

This section summarizes the housing needs identified during the meeting.

All Inuit Regions

All regions reported that housing was a major priority for them and that it has been for a long time. Many participants stated that a wide number of social problems were exacerbated by poor housing conditions. There was consensus that the housing situation began to rapidly deteriorate when the federal government cut funding for the construction of new social housing in the early 1990's. This effectively stopped the development of new social housing when populations that were dependent upon social housing were the fastest growing in the country. Priority target groups were primarily young families, single young people and elders. Overall, the high costs of transportation, land and land development costs and the high costs of construction were cited as some of the key factors that limited the number of housing units being built.

Northwest Territories

The last needs projection done in the NWT estimated that nearly 3,600 housing units were necessary. Although no further needs assessments have been conducted since that time for the territory, there is a general consensus that the current level of need is much higher³. The most serious housing demand was in the area of social housing where rapid population growth and few new additions to the current social housing stock have greatly increased the pressure on existing resources. The fact that the existing stock is old and expensive to renovate and maintain also exacerbated poor housing conditions in the region. Housing for single people and seniors was the most pressing priority in the region. Demand for private home ownership had also increased substantially with the steady growth in the economy over the past decade. Growth in the oil and gas industry in recent years was anticipated to place greater pressure on the housing situation.

Nunavut

Nunavut government agencies and Inuit organizations identified housing as a primary issue of concern and tied it directly to a number of pressing social problems in Nunavut. The regional economies are insufficiently developed and not strong enough to enable a large number of Inuit to own their homes. High costs of construction and operating and maintenance costs continue to force the majority of Inuit into social housing. It was noted that these factors placed an unfair burden on Inuit to provide their own housing.

Certain social housing programs served to undermine the self-reliance of tenants. Many of the programs that were originally developed to assist Inuit instead encouraged dependency and penalized Inuit if they wished to work.

³ The needs survey was conducted in 1992 and covered the entire NWT including what is now Nunavut.

Current rent structures did not encourage Inuit to work for fear of losing benefits. Housing programs needed to be closely tied in with income support programs. Current income exemption policies needed to be changed to a sliding scale that promoted work and recognized other important factors such as family size.

Nunavik

As in other Inuit regions, housing conditions in the region quickly deteriorated into a crisis when the federal government unilaterally dropped funding for new social housing construction in 1993. Nearly 99% of the population in Nunavik rent their homes⁴, and a very high percentage of these live in social housing. Overcrowding is standard for many families with the average household having nearly double the provincial average⁵. The wait for social housing can extend to five years. Clearly social housing is a priority for the region with young families, single young people and elders requiring immediate assistance in this area. Makivik has experienced some success as the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs noted in a final report the seriousness of the housing situation and recommended that the federal government take immediate action to improve housing conditions in the region. Recently, Canada, Quebec, and the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) and Makivik Corporation signed a housing agreement stipulating that Quebec and Canada would contribute \$10 million each per year for the next five years towards social housing. Although this was a positive move, social housing remains a critical issue in the region.

Labrador

Labrador currently experiences perhaps the most overcrowded living condition in Canada. Current housing needs are estimated to be 220 homes in the Inuit communities with this number rising quickly. The \$7.7 million that had recently been approved by the provincial government was considered to be a relative “drop in the bucket” in relation to meeting the actual housing needs of the region.

Issues, Challenges and Recommendations from the National Consultation Meeting

A key element of the meeting was the information gained during the breakout group discussions that took place. These groups were able to focus upon specific issues and explore solutions and challenges relating to the housing problem in more detail than in the general forum.

⁴ Statistics Canada - 1996 Census

⁵ Statistics Canada - 1996 Census

Developing Partnerships Between Inuit Organizations, Government and the Private Sector:

The participation and control of local organizations and the people residing in the housing projects as being a priority. The best ideas for addressing the housing situation will come from the communities themselves, not the government. With greater local control, tenants will take greater pride in their units, provide them with the opportunity to provide input into the design of the projects and encourage them to take better care of the homes. Fort Good Hope was an example of a community-driven project where the local Land and Financial Corporation provided financing of \$500,000 for direct financing of and leasebacks of housing units to the local housing corporations. The Land and Financial Corporation were also overseeing the actual construction of the units.

In general, banks were perceived to be making profits on financing of projects but not returning very much to the community. There was a need to get all the federal governments involved in housing partnerships as an active partner.

Further investments needed to be made to encourage people to become less dependent upon social programs. For example, people should be allowed to earn a reasonable amount of wages before their rent goes up. As well, more research is needed to identify best practices for construction in northern communities. Youth should be involved in this development and efforts should be made to ensure all stakeholders receive this information.

Innovative Financing:

A number of challenges are facing the development of a healthy housing industry in the north. The lack of long-term records of housing construction exacerbated the impression that the sector was considered high risk and therefore required higher fees to attract capital and investment. The lack of a significant housing market meant that wage earners who can afford a house have few options and are forced to stay in subsidized housing even if they could afford their own homes. The lack of bridge financing created difficulties in the housing market and construction industry.

Recommendations to ease the housing supply problem included new policies that encouraged/supported private developer housing. Policies need to reflect northern realities – to encourage a more level playing field in regards to loan to equity ratio. Greater flexibility in policies are needed – i.e. rather than issuing a Request For Proposals for a certain number of units; perhaps housing agencies could say they have a certain budget and would like to entertain a number of innovative proposals. This may result in mixed projects where subsidized and non-subsidized units are built. A mixed project may also facilitate obtaining financing due to assured income from the subsidized unit component.

Lenders, the developer, and government agencies should meet to discuss cooperative means of working together. An increased exchange of information on opportunities and challenges and how they can best be used or overcome would help all stakeholders. Other regions should be looked at to see how they have addressed particular issues. For example, some First Nation financing authorities encourage a collective effort and pool available resources and share the associated risk. Perhaps municipalities should make land available for social housing at no cost or reduced cost thus relieving this sector the responsibility of recouping this cost. Municipalities could also look at encouraging Inuit trust funds to support local companies by investing in these companies. Government lending agencies should permit private land developers to access funding. Current regulatory regimes prevent the development of land for housing for profit. This should be reviewed in order to encourage the development of a private housing market.

Inuit Housing Designs:

The fundamental finding for this breakout group was that housing for Inuit should reflect Inuit values and lifestyle. In particular, special attention should be paid to ventilation, energy efficiency and ensure the unit is constructed in an environmentally friendly fashion. A number of other specific suggestions were made including a number involving the actual design and layouts of units to better meet the needs and priorities of Inuit. Some of these suggestions included: larger common areas bordering kitchen areas; larger storage areas/porches; floor drain in kitchen combined with a durable, waterproof floor finish; and sheltered work areas and shed (3 m X 4.5 m).

Suggestions to Help Ease Housing Problem:

This breakout group suggested that there was a need to develop more efficient housing designs to save on building, maintenance and operating costs and to extend the lifespan of the buildings. Better communication is required to let people know the true costs of housing and to educate tenants on how to look after their homes and what their obligations are. Landlords have to be more accountable for ensuring units are well maintained.

Simplified rental scales are needed. Current rent scales are outdated and need to simplify the definition of wage earner to take into consideration seasonal workers who do not earn a wage throughout the entire year. The private sector needs to become more involved in the home ownership programs with the development of innovative financing options. Land costs should also be reviewed to see if there are ways in which they could be controlled or reduced.

Greater public recognition of the existence of an Inuit housing shortage is needed to spur the government into providing additional resources and attention to the resolution of this pressing problem. The Liberal Red Book announced, "A new Liberal Government will work with our provincial partners to create the Affordable Rental Program (ARP), a cost-shared capital grants program to help stimulate the creation of more affordable rental housing, both private and non-profit.

Under this initiative, we expect to see the construction of 60,000 to 120,000 new rental units over four years⁶.” The time is opportune to raise the awareness of the Canadian public concerning the housing needs of Inuit. Inuit consultation in the development and delivery of housing programs is mandatory – Inuit need to be consulted to ensure any solutions will adequately reflect their needs and priorities.

There exists substantial capacity currently among Inuit organizations including development corporations and Inuit-owned construction companies such as SRI Homes in regards to designing and building housing. Efforts should be made, possibly in cooperation with CMHC architects, to design houses that better meet the needs of Inuit including larger sheltered entrance ways, larger kitchens (with a floor drain) and living room areas. Innovative modular/panelized variations of houses should be reviewed to evaluate the performance and cost virtues of these housing options versus the recent experience with site-built housing. Priority must be made, however, to ensure that priority is placed upon providing training and employment to Inuit at the local level.

Any programs developed to address housing should take into careful account northern realities and preferences. More attention should be paid to encourage home ownership among lower income families. Training for tenants should also be instituted in all regions to help encourage the maintenance of units as well as pride one’s home. Inuit organizations have the capacity to facilitate this kind of training.

Housing Corporations across the north need to make more of an effort to communicate amongst themselves in order to share knowledge, experiences and “best practices”. Inuit organizations and the Inuit general public must also be kept informed as to current housing programs and policies as well as changes in these as they occur. Too often programs are altered and not adequately promoted among Inuit.

Conclusions

The results of this research and consultation project are numerous and varied. It is often a challenge when summarizing the results of such a project to accurately reflect what the more important findings and conclusions are particularly in the cases where no consensus existed. What has become clear, however, is that there are a number of fundamental views and opinions that are widely shared as to the current priorities that exist in the area of Inuit housing and what some of the innovative steps may be taken towards addressing the high level of current need in the communities.

⁶ CMHC informed ITC that the breakdown of the initiative would be \$600 million over four years in urban centres and \$80 million for remote communities, also over four years.

1) National Inuit Housing Program

Perhaps the most obvious finding of the current research and consultation project is the fact Inuit housing needs have never been adequately met since Inuit were moved into permanent settlements. Despite the best intentions of a number of stakeholders, the simple, stark reality is that Inuit remain, as they have for decades, the most poorly housed people in the country. The impact of this reality continues to exact an unacceptable toll on a vulnerable population.

First Nations have continued to reap the benefits of housing programs that Inuit can only dream of. Details concerning Inuit access to general housing programs remain unclear but early indications are that Inuit do not benefit from these programs to the same level enjoyed by other Canadians due to Inuit dependency upon social housing and their concomitant low-levels of home ownership.

The solution to the Inuit housing problem requires a substantial investment in political will and financial commitment on the part of the federal government. Inuit must play a fundamental role in the development of this new housing program. Without this critical catalyst, the housing crisis in Inuit communities will become a permanent blemish upon the character of Canada.

2) Current need – 8,800 units over the next 5 years just to meet the current level of need

The current level of need in the Inuit communities has been estimated to be 8,800 units to be built over the next five years. This number has been based upon the most current needs assessments studies available and reflects the rapid increase in population that has occurred since these studies were conducted⁷.

7

During the National Inuit Housing Consultation Meeting, discussions took place concerning the estimated level of current housing need in Inuit communities. The regional break down is as follows:

Nunavut	1100 homes	X 5 years =	5500 new homes
Nunavik	210 homes	X 5 years =	1050 new homes
Inuvialuit	50 homes	X 5 years =	250 new homes
Labrador	200 homes	X 5 years =	1000 new homes
Additional	200 homes	X 5 years =	<u>1000 new homes</u>
Total			8800 new homes over five years

These numbers were taken from the various government reports and with the aid of people who represented housing associations and corporations at the National Inuit Housing meeting. The addition of one thousand homes is attributed to the fact that some of the government housing reports used were very old. Additionally, we also took into consideration that the birth rate for Inuit is twice the national average, which adds to the need for housing. The last Nunavut needs assessment was conducted in 1996 when Nunavut was still part of the NWT. The figures from the NWT were extracted from the NWT Housing Needs Survey – 2000. The Newfoundland/Labrador Housing Corporation has conducted a needs survey for the community of Nain, but it has been many years since they conducted a Provincial wide needs survey. For Nunavik the numbers were taken from the Kativik Regional Government's figures from 1998.

This number reflects only the number of housing units that need to be built to accommodate the backlog of housing needs.

3) Priority Needs – elders and youth, young families

Through the research and consultation process, the target groups identified as being in most need of housing were elders, young people and young families. Although little explanation was provided in the responses to the survey and consultation process as to why these groups need the most help, it may be that these groups are the family members who would most prefer to live on their own outside of the family core (parents and their children) and yet due to an inadequate supply of housing, they are prevented from doing so. At any rate, these groups were identified in all regions as being in priority need.

4) Public housing

Inuit reliance upon social housing has not diminished over time. Despite the fact that there are likely more Inuit homeowners than ever before, socio-economic determinants, the very high cost of housing and a very underdeveloped housing market in virtually all Inuit communities, ensures that heavy reliance upon social housing will remain a reality well into the future.

There has been some success in various home ownership programs that provide subsidies and incentives for people who can afford their own homes to move out of social housing units. These programs should be encouraged and expanded where possible. Not only do such programs help free up valuable social housing units, but they also enable more families to begin to build up equity in their homes, provide a more diversified local and regional housing market, and stimulate the economy at the local and regional levels.

5) Revise Social Housing Policies

Social housing policies and programs should be oriented to supporting people's efforts at finding, and holding, employment. Current programs often penalize people for working and act as a disincentive for increasing one's self-reliance. Perhaps increasing the threshold at which point rental increases start or enabling newly employed tenants a vacation from rent increases for a certain period of time would encourage more people to seek out employment. Much could be learned from some Scandinavian countries that encourage people to operate small businesses out of their subsidized homes. Innovative steps such as these could unlock significant economic potential in many communities where vacant business space is non-existent or priced beyond the reach of the small business operator.

6) Best practices

A number of best practices were identified in the project. The number was not as high as originally anticipated due to a number of factors including a low response rate to questions on the survey in regards to housing best practices, and the fact that few people had “best practice” examples on hand. A fundamental best practice that was clearly identified was Inuit participation in the development of housing programs and policies impacting upon them. In the past, this lack of consultation with Inuit has left them vulnerable to the vagaries of government political machinations. Many national housing programs have been developed in the south, and have primarily designed for a “national” target group that all too often leaves Inuit on the sidelines. CMHC has a number of very good programs that northerners have utilized effectively but these do little to help improve the housing situation of the vast majority of Inuit.

Existing and future programs, particularly those focusing upon rural and remote areas, should include an Inuit-specific element to ensure the unique needs and priorities of Inuit are adequately addressed. Issues that are critical in understanding the factors involved in construction in Inuit communities such as transportation and high land development costs need to be carefully considered. An Inuit-specific housing program as outlined above, could address most of these concerns.

ITC was pleased to learn from its consultations and research that CMHC has established as a best practice, consultation with communities and target groups to ensure the programs and policies it develops truly meet the needs of the client. ITC would encourage CMHC, and its provincial and territorial counterparts, to consult with Inuit directly to determine what programs can be developed to address Inuit housing needs.

Additional best practices identified included the inclusion of Inuit and Inuit firms in the development of the housing industry in the North. By ensuring Inuit firms and Inuit labour is maximized in the construction industry, Inuit communities and regions are able to capture the substantial economic benefits from this activity.

Programs supporting tenants move to homeownership offer multiple benefits to communities including increasing the number of homeowners and the subsequent stimulation of the private housing market. As well, pressures on social housing will ease if more tenants are able to move into their own homes.

Further effort is needed to identify, collect and distribute best practices to stakeholders in Inuit housing.

7) New partnerships

ITC's research has indicated that there are a number of successful examples of new partnerships that have taken place in the Inuit North. In particular, the examples of IRC working with NWT HC and Makivik working with the KRG offer some important lessons on how Inuit organizations can work with public and private sector groups to address pressing housing needs. The example of Nunavut with its Public Private Partnership approach uses private capital for the development of infrastructure projects whereby the government leases back the facilities from the owner/builder, with purchase options provided at the end of the lease period. This model has demonstrated that it delivers cost savings to governments. While the developer involved must have the capital and management strength to carry out the project, serious consideration must be made on the part of governments to enable this process to come to fruition.

Although land claim organizations have made it clear that they are unwilling to direct land claim compensation monies to undertake activities that clearly fall under the moral and fiduciary responsibility of the federal government such as housing, they should be encouraged, along with Inuit Birthright Development Corporations, to look very closely at becoming more involved in the housing sector. This would require obvious due diligence on the part of all parties but it is highly likely that there are some good business opportunities in the housing sector. For example, NTI has undertaken long-term leasing of units built by Inuit Development Corporations for its staff. This seems to be a very solid and practical investment – not only making a good investment opportunity for the Inuit Development Corporations and providing the concomitant increase in local employment during the construction phase, but also providing critical housing facilities for NTI's staff.

8) Increased Communication Between Housing Stakeholders

Participants at the National Inuit Housing Consultation Meeting were nearly unanimous in their support for the convening of another national meeting to revisit the issue of Inuit housing and to review the progress made on the recommendations developed at the first national meeting. Several participants indicated that the meeting had been the first opportunity for them to learn what was occurring in other regions and that they had found the experience most rewarding and would welcome the opportunity to participate in another subsequent meeting.

In addition, the various government agencies involved in delivering housing to Inuit need to make more of an effort to communicate amongst themselves to share knowledge, experiences and "best practices".

9) Developing solutions for financing housing construction

Overcoming the challenges that currently act to restrict housing construction in the north will require new partnership initiatives on the part of municipal, provincial/territorial and federal governments, developers, commercial lenders, Inuit organizations, tenants and home owners. Increasing the supply of Inuit housing will require that all these actors work together to develop the right financial conditions to encourage the development of additional housing including equity and debt financing for land development, bridge or construction financing, and equity and mortgage financing. In a CMHC study conducted in 1998, access to reasonably priced financing was identified as one of the major constraints to increasing the supply of affordable housing⁸. The following recommendations are based upon the results of the research and consultation project.

- I. Governments at the provincial and territorial levels should be encouraged to foster the development of a healthy housing market particularly in the smaller, more remote communities;
- II. ITC and other interested stakeholders should work with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce to lobby for changes to the tax environment to make investment in rental housing more attractive. Part of this lobbying effort should be focused on encouraging governments to enable low income earners to deduct part of their mortgages payments;
- III. Municipal governments should be encouraged to contribute developed land for the construction of social and lower income housing to help increase the amount of affordable housing available;
- IV. CMHC should liberalize the terms for their insurance programs for housing projects in more remote communities so that these terms match more closely those in areas with more developed real estate markets;
- V. If #IV is not possible, governments should be encouraged to augment CMHC insurance coverage for construction and mortgage loans;
- VI. The establishment of a commercial mortgage fund should be considered for access by both developers providing accommodation to beneficiaries and to beneficiaries wishing to purchase accommodation;
- VII. Encourage the NWT and NT Housing Corporation to:
 - i. Use existing housing stock where possible to meet housing needs, rather than constructing new units. Buildings no longer needed by governments should be considered for use as housing units;
 - ii. Remove the bias against the use of manufactured housing. Reducing the costs of projects, and decreasing the risk of cost overruns, facilitates access to investment capital;
 - iii. Increase the use of multi-family rental accommodation to meet housing needs;

⁸ The survey undertaken by Hal Logsdon Consulting interviewed 130 individuals, government officials and corporations involved in housing in the NWT, Nunavut, Yukon and Labrador.

- iv. Facilitate the sale of older housing to individuals as “starter homes”. This would strengthen the housing market, reduce the cost of first homes, allow individuals through sweat equity to improve the value of their home, and provide the Housing Corporations with much needed revenues.
- VIII. Encourage governments and CMHC to ensure construction and mortgage financing allow for draws against materials ordered and in transit to the site, and/or stockpiled on the site, for those projects that are dependent upon seal lift/barges for delivery of building materials;
- IX. Adjust government lending programs to remove the bias against commercial land and housing development projects that would serve to address the housing needs of Inuit;
- X. Encourage government agencies to consider making multi-year lease or rent supplemental commitments for a portion of the units in larger developments, to assist the developer in acquiring reasonably priced financing for the project;
- XI. Ensure that programs and initiatives are equally applicable to housing developments sponsored by for-profit and not-for-profit corporations;
- XII. Encourage the Government of Nunavut to consult with developers about adjustments in Government of Nunavut legislation that would facilitate condominium developments on leased lands;
- XIII. Make information available to developers and Inuit interested in home ownership, of banks and other institutions that do lend for housing projects in remote communities, and their key lending criteria;
- XIV. Make information available to lenders/developers about the housing market in communities (i.e. demographics, income statistics etc.); and
- XV. Provide land and housing development firms owned by Inuit with access to case studies that show how other firms have successfully structured financing for housing projects.

Next Steps - The Role of Inuit Tapirisat of Canada

Through discussions held at the National Meeting, the role for ITC in the area of Inuit housing became more defined.

- ITC should play a lead role in lobbying for the establishment of a National Inuit Housing Program that meets the specific needs of Inuit. ITC should communicate with Inuit stakeholders, perhaps through the working group mentioned below, to ensure that a common vision is developed, maintained and communicated to government and other agencies.

- A working group on Inuit housing should be established under the auspices of ITC to continue monitoring the housing situation and to provide ongoing guidance in regards to the implementation of the recommendations arising from the National Inuit Housing Consultation Meeting, including the establishment of a National Inuit Housing Program.
- A small support staff should be retained to lend support to this working group and to assist ITC and the working group to keep current on the housing issue and to work to move the Inuit housing agenda forward.
- ITC should undertake the completion of a report based upon the findings of the National Meeting and ensure that the report is circulated to the appropriate stakeholders and other interested parties⁹. An Inuit delegation should be sent to Saskatoon to attend the Aboriginal housing conference that took place in November 2000¹⁰.
- ITC should develop the internal capacity to continue its monitoring and lobbying activities in the area of housing and to keep Inuit stakeholders informed as to any developments that may take place.
- Part of ITC's internal capacity in the area of housing should be utilized to work towards keeping current and accurate housing data and ensuring that this information is available to interested parties. Establishing best practices for research projects should also be an objective for staff.
- ITC should emphasize the principle of working together with other stakeholders to address the housing situation.
- ITC should also work towards assisting in the development of policies and practices at the community level that help address the housing problem.
- ITC should coordinate a second National Inuit Housing Consultation Meeting within two years of the completion of the first national meeting. A major focus of this meeting should be the development and exchange of best practices in housing construction, financing and management for Inuit communities.

⁹ This was completed in early December 2000 and the report is included in the Appendices.

¹⁰ This was completed in November 2000

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Inuit Tapirisat of Canada – Research and Consultation Project

Inuit Housing Needs

Questionnaire – Government Departments - Housing Situation

Preamble for Interviewers

In this section we need to find out what the person thinks is the current housing situation in their region and what the government has been doing to address housing needs. We also need to find out what they think is the group that has the priority housing needs such as elders, single parents, extended families etc.

An important area of inquiry is what they think could be done to address this situation that is not already being undertaken. Have they any ideas about innovative solutions to the housing situation (for example in the area of financing, or training or homeownership)?

Issues

In this section, we need to find out what the interviewee thinks are the priority issues related to housing – is it simply a lack of housing units, or people not being able to afford their own homes, or the need for better designed homes? What to they think are some of the steps that could be taken to relieve the situation? Are there any new partnership arrangements that could help in this area? What are their department's plans to improve housing conditions for Inuit? What do they think the impact of the housing situation has been on Inuit?

Basic Information to be gathered:

- Name and title of person _____
- Name of Government Department _____
- Telephone and fax numbers _____
- Community/region _____

Housing Situation

- 1) What is your department's role in housing?

- 2) What is the structure for the delivery of housing programs and services in your region/province/territory? (*How are housing programs delivered?*)

3) What programs and services does your department provide in terms of housing?

4) What is the current level of housing need in your region/province/territory?

5) What steps does your department plan on for addressing this need?

6) Has your department conducted any studies concerning housing in the past five years? If so, could you please send ITC a copy. Yes ____ No ____

7) What do you feel are the greatest areas of needs in housing currently?

- ☐ Single family dwellings
- ☐ Multi-family dwellings
- ☐ Social housing
- ☐ Houses available for private ownership
- ☐ Special needs housing – please specify
- ☐ Single young people
- ☐ Single mothers
- ☐ Elders
- ☐ Disabled
- ☐ Others please specify

8) What group do you feel has the most pressing needs in terms of housing?

- ☐ Single Families – two parents, children
- ☐ Extended families – two parents, children, grandparents, siblings of parents
- ☐ Single parent families – single mother and child/children
- ☐ Young couples

- ☐ Single young people without children
- ☐ Elders
- ☐ Disabled
- ☐ Other – please specify

- 9) Are there any new, innovative solutions to the current housing situation that you would like to see considered or developed? Please specify
- ☐ In financing the construction and operation of housing
 - ☐ Increasing Inuit employment and training opportunities in the industry
 - ☐ Development of new partnerships between stakeholders in housing
 - ☐ New forms of housing ownership – ie. cooperatives
 - ☐ New forms of housing construction – ie. Habitat for Humanity
 - ☐ New designs to improve durability, comfort and/or better reflect the needs of the residents
 - ☐ New programs to help increase home ownership
 - ☐ Other:

Issues

- 1) Please identify the priority issues related to housing in your region/territory/province:
- ☐ Lack of available housing units
 - ☐ Overcrowding
 - ☐ Poor quality of some units
 - ☐ High costs associated with private home ownership
 - ☐ Tenants not knowing/helping in keeping units maintained
 - ☐ Imported labour used for construction
 - ☐ Lack of qualified/trained people to maintain units
 - ☐ Inappropriate housing designs
 - ☐ Other – please describe
- 2) What is the single biggest need in your region/territory/province in the area of housing?

- 3) What do you feel can be done to improve the housing situation?
- ☐ Increase knowledge of housing construction “best practices” specifically for northern conditions among housing associations
 - ☐ Increase funding for construction of new social housing units
 - ☐ Increase funding for renovation and upgrading of existing housing stock

- ☐ Develop new housing designs to find more appropriate designs that can be built using more local labour
- ☐ New programs to encourage home ownership – please provide more detail
- ☐ Increase training programs/ coop programs for local labour
- ☐ Other – please specify

4) In regards to financing, have you any thoughts on how new financing arrangements could be developed to help address the housing situation? Are there any sources of funding available that have not been fully utilized?

5) Do you have any thoughts on new “partnerships” that could be developed to help address the housing situation?

☐ Within the community? Please describe

☐ Within the Region? Please describe

☐ Other? Please describe

6) Do you think housing options such as “Habitat for Humanity” could work in your region/territory/province? This is an organization that helps build houses with volunteer labour and supplies. Yes ___ No ___

- Would people be willing to provide “sweat equity” to help construct of home for their families? Yes ___ No ___
 - What challenges do you see for such a program?
-

- Are there other programs you would like to see implemented on a trial basis?
-
-

7) What do you feel are the most important steps the regional, territorial/provincial and federal governments could do to help improve the housing situation in the north?

- 8) What have some of the impacts been on Inuit families/elders/youth as a result of the housing situation?

Inuit Tapirisat of Canada – Research and Consultation Project

Inuit Housing Needs

Questionnaire – Community Housing Associations

“Hello my name is _____ and I am working for Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, the national organization representing Inuit. ITC is undertaking research on Inuit housing conditions and needs. We are currently speaking to a number of housing associations across the North to find out what the current housing situation is like and what the priorities and needs are in the communities. The information we gain from our survey will be used to help ITC provide direction to the government in an effort to address the housing needs for Inuit. The survey should take about 45 minutes and we appreciate your help.

Basic Information to be gathered:

- Name and title of person
- Name of Housing Association
- Telephone and fax numbers
- Community/region

Housing Situation

- Current number of housing units in community (breakdown of private, social housing, “corporate” housing units)

- Current number of social housing units
 - Composition of social housing stock –
 - # of units with 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ bedrooms
 - Average number of people living in these units _____
 - Average number of families living in each unit (# of units containing more than one family) _____
 - Current waiting period for social housing units _____
 - Estimated number of units to be built in:
 - ☐ current year
 - ☐ next year
 - ☐ two years
 - ☐ three years
- Current number of units -
 - ☐ % of units in need of major repairs
 - ☐ % in need of minor repairs

Issues

- Please identify the priority issues related to housing in your community:
 - ☐ Lack of available housing units
 - ☐ Overcrowding
 - ☐ Poor quality of some units
 - ☐ High costs associated with private home ownership
 - ☐ Tenants not knowing/helping in keeping units maintained
 - ☐ Imported labour used for construction
 - ☐ Lack of qualified/trained people to maintain units
 - ☐ Inappropriate housing designs
 - ☐ Other – please describe

- What do you think is the single biggest need in your community in the area of housing?

- What group do you feel has the most pressing needs in terms of housing?
 - ☐ Single Families – two parents, children
 - ☐ Extended families – two parents, children, grandparents, siblings of parents
 - ☐ Single parent families – single mother and child/children
 - ☐ Young couples
 - ☐ Single young people without children
 - ☐ Elders
 - ☐ Disabled
 - ☐ Other – please specify

- What do you feel can be done to improve the housing situation?
 - ☐ Increase knowledge of housing construction “best practices” specifically for northern conditions among housing associations
 - ☐ Increase funding for construction of new social housing units
 - ☐ Increase funding for renovation and upgrading of existing housing stock
 - ☐ Develop new housing designs to find more appropriate designs that can be built using more local labour
 - ☐ New programs to encourage home ownership – please provide more detail
 - ☐ Increase training programs/ coop programs for local labour
 - ☐ Other – please specify

- In regards to financing, have you any thoughts on how new financing arrangements could be developed to help address the housing situation? Are there any sources of funding available that have not been fully utilized?

- Do you have any thoughts on new “partnerships” that could be developed to help address the housing situation?

- Within the community? Please describe

- Within the Region? Please describe

- Other? Please describe

- Do you think housing options such as “Habitat for Humanity” could work in your community? This is an organization that helps build houses with volunteer labour and supplies. Would people be willing to provide “sweat equity” to help construct of home for their families? What challenges do you see for such a program? Are there other programs you would like to see implemented on a trial basis?

- From the perspective of a housing association employee, what are the most important steps the regional, territorial/provincial and federal governments could do help improve the housing situation in the north?

Inuit Tapirisat of Canada – Research and Consultation Project

Inuit Housing Needs

Questionnaire – Elders

Objective: To gain traditional knowledge and an understanding from our Elders on past and present housing issues. This information will help provide direction to ITC in working to address the housing needs of Inuit.

Introductory Comments for Interviewers

“Hello my name is _____ and I am working for Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, the national organization representing Inuit. ITC is undertaking research on Inuit housing conditions. We are currently speaking with elders across the North to find out what it was like when Inuit lived on the land and when they began moving into permanent settlements. I would also like to ask you some questions about your current housing situation and some thoughts you might have concerning housing in your community. The information we gain from our survey will be used to help ITC provide direction to the government in an effort to address the housing needs for Inuit. The survey should take about 45 minutes and we appreciate your help”

Basic Information to be gathered:

- Name of elder _____
- Name of Elder organization if they belong to one _____
- Telephone # of elder or organization/committee contact _____
- Community of residence _____

Traditional Knowledge:

1. What were the first few months like for your family when you moved in from the land into a qallunaaq style house?

☐ very hard ☐ hard ☐ bearable ☐ very easy ☐ other, please describe
comments: _____

2. When you moved into the community, what did you think the government was going to provide for you and your family?

☐ housing ☐ education ☐ health services ☐ other

comments: _____

3. Describe how Inuit used to live together during the period of living on the land?

- The average size of the family household
- Did families get together to live for periods – why and when would they break up into individual families again;
- Who were the family members living in the household – parents, elders, children, uncles, etc.
- How did people deal with tension in the family (if overcrowded, how did people deal with this?)
- How did they know when it was time to make a new structure for family members

Comments: _____

Today's Housing Situation

1. Where do you live now?

☐ own home ☐ elders home ☐ family ☐ other: specify _____

2. Do you live alone?

☐ yes ☐ no

3. If you live with other people, how many people usually live in the same unit?

☐ 1-4 ☐ 5-8 ☐ 9-13 ☐ 14-16 ☐ more – please specify _____

4. If you live with other people, who are they?

☐ Son/daughter and their spouse

Detail: _____

☐ Grandchildren

Number: _____

☐ Other sons/daughters

Number: _____

☐ Other relatives – please specify relationship and number _____

☐ Non-relatives – relationship and how many _____

5. Who takes care of your everyday needs?

☐ self

☐ family members: specify _____

☐ health care workers

☐ group home staff

☐ other – describe _____

6. Do you receive home care?

☐ yes

☐ no

7. If yes, how often do you receive home care?

☐ daily

☐ weekly

☐ monthly

7. Are your present living conditions acceptable to you? If not, how would you change it?

☐ yes ☐ no Comments: _____

8. Does the design of your house meet your cultural needs? (Note: bigger kitchen, living room, bedrooms and what priorities do they have in terms of living space?)

☐ yes ☐ no

Comments: _____

9. If there was one thing you could change about the design of your accommodations, what would it be? _____

10. How has the housing situation affected Inuit families? _____

11. What do you think is the basic cause of the housing problem in the North?

12. What group do you feel has the most pressing needs in terms of housing?

- ☐ Single Families – two parents, children
- ☐ Extended families – two parents, children, grandparents, siblings of parents
- ☐ Single parent families – single mother and child/children
- ☐ Young couples
- ☐ Single young people without children
- ☐ Elders
- ☐ Disabled
- ☐ Other – please specify

13. What solutions do you think should be undertaken to improve the housing situation and who should be responsible for making sure it gets done?

14. How important do you feel it is to have attention paid to improving the housing situation?

- ☐ The highest priority that needs immediate attention
- ☐ A priority but there are many other issues that are more important
- ☐ Not important

15. If you belong to an Elders' organization, what role can organizations such as yours play in addressing the housing situation?

16. What role should Inuit organizations play in this area?

- ☐ build homes using land claim money
- ☐ tell the governments Inuit need more housing
- ☐ educate Inuit on housing issues through discussions with Inuit
- ☐ other:

Inuit Tapirisat of Canada – Research and Consultation Project

Inuit Housing Needs

Questionnaire – Inuit Organizations

Basic Information to be gathered:

Name and title of person
Name of Inuit Organization
Telephone and fax numbers
Community/region

Housing Situation

1) How does your organization address the issue of housing currently?

- ☐ Not active on this file presently
- ☐ Discuss the issue at meetings
- ☐ Present the organization's position to government or other Inuit organizations
- ☐ Write letters to appropriate agencies
- ☐ Consult with government agencies involved in delivering housing
- ☐ Other lobbying activities, please specify
- ☐ Other, please specify

2) Has your organization developed any position or discussion papers concerning the housing situation within the past five years? If so, could you please send ITC a copy.

- ☐ Yes, a paper has been developed
- ☐ No

3) Please describe the current housing situation in your region.

- ☐ Good
- ☐ Acceptable
- ☐ In need of immediate attention
- ☐ In a state of crisis

4) On a scale of 1-5, with five being the highest, where do you think housing fits in relation to other needs and priorities for Inuit in your region ie. economic development, health, social programs, political development?

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

5) What have been some of the impacts of the housing situation on people in your community and region? For example, in the area of economic development, health, family violence, substance abuse, etc.

6) What group do you feel has the most pressing needs in terms of housing?

- ☐ Single Families – two parents, children
- ☐ Extended families – two parents, children, grandparents, siblings of parents
- ☐ Single parent families – single mother and child/children
- ☐ Young couples
- ☐ Single young people without children
- ☐ Elders
- ☐ Disabled
- ☐ Other – please specify

7) What area of housing needs the most immediate attention?

- ☐ Public housing
- ☐ Privately owned housing
- ☐ Rental housing
- ☐ Government/corporate housing
- ☐ Single dwellings
- ☐ Multi-unit dwellings
- ☐ Other: please specify

8) What solutions do you think should be undertaken to relieve the situation and who should be responsible for undertaking this action?

- ☐ Have you thought of any new ways of doing things that could help improve the housing situation?
- ☐ Financing
- ☐ New Partnerships between agencies involved in housing
- ☐ Reinstatement of federal funding for the construction of new social housing
- ☐ New ways of building houses (Habitat for Humanity)
- ☐ New designs that reflect Inuit culture and lifestyle
- ☐ New programs that could be used to increase home ownership
- ☐ Increasing Inuit participation in construction of houses
- ☐ Others, please specify

9) What role should Inuit organizations play in addressing the housing situation?

- ☐ Lobbying governments for increased/reinstated funding for housing
- ☐ Using land claim monies to leverage other funding sources including government funding
- ☐ Other please describe