

Housing in  
Nunavut –  
The Time for  
Action is Now

# INIKSAQATTIARNIQ INUUSIQATTIARNIQ

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
ON THE STATE OF INUIT  
CULTURE AND SOCIETY

DEPARTMENT OF  
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT  
**NUNAVUT TUNNGAVIK INCORPORATED**



**03/04**

**04/05**



Cover: Maria Quqsuut  
*There is a chronic housing shortage in Nunavut. Josephie Teemootee of Iqaluit, Nunavut survives the harsh Arctic climate in a shack he built from scraps of wood.*

#### PLEASE NOTE:

Since Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. published the *Annual Report on the State of Inuit Culture and Society 2003/04 and 2004/05*, there have been changes in Canada's political environment. For this reason, the report does not refer to Thomas Berger's *Final Report on the Implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*, the 2006 federal budget, or the Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. There were also developments on the recognition of official languages in Nunavut that are not addressed in this document. An update on these issues will be provided in the *Annual Report on the State of Inuit Culture and Society 2005/06*, which will focus primarily on education, language and youth. The report refers to the Kelowna Accord, an agreement supported by former Prime Minister Paul Martin, but not adopted by the Conservative government.

The 2006 federal budget allocated \$200 million over three years for housing in Nunavut. This will build 800 much needed units. The funds will be placed in a third-party housing trust to be established in the fall of 2006. NTI hopes to continue to work with the Government of Nunavut to develop the terms and standards of the housing trust.

Thomas Berger's *Final Report on the Implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* was released in March 2006. Berger was appointed conciliator for the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Implementation Contract negotiations after discussions between NTI, the GN and the Government of Canada reached an impasse. In his report, Berger's major recommendation calls for the establishment of an Inuktitut and English bilingual education system in Nunavut from Kindergarten to Grade 12 as the only way government can meet the

fundamental promise it made in the NLCA to increase the level of Inuit employment in the public and private sectors of Nunavut. NTI has consistently advocated for the development of a bilingual curriculum. With the current level of funding allotted to bilingual education, the GN will only make limited progress in this area. Increased funding allocations from the GN and the Government of Canada are required to address the crisis in the education system in Nunavut.

In May 2006, the federal government's final Residential Schools Settlement Agreement was approved. The agreement addresses the legacy of Canada's residential school policies and marks a collaborative effort between Aboriginal groups, government, churches, and lawyers to provide justice, reconciliation, commemoration, healing, and funding for education to former residential school students and their families. Inuit organizations worked intensively to ensure Inuit former residential school students were included in this process. In the 2006 federal budget, the government committed \$2 billion to this agreement.

The Language Legislation Steering Committee is now proposing to make the Inuit language (including both Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun), English and French the official languages in Nunavut. This annual report states that Inuktitut would be considered an official language, while Inuinnaqtun would be recognized as a language with special status.

ISBN 0-9734066-8-2

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*Iqaluit residents Dan Aula and his daughter Crystal lived in this tent while awaiting a social housing unit. The practice is common in Nunavut.*

# LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

March 31, 2006  
Honorable Premier Paul Okalik  
Government of Nunavut

Honorable Jim Prentice  
Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development  
Government of Canada

Dear Premier Okalik and Minister Prentice:

Article 32 of the Nunavut *Land Claims Agreement* calls for the establishment of the Nunavut Social Development Council. Article 32.3.4 requires that Council to:

*“Prepare and submit an annual report on the state of Inuit culture and society in the Nunavut Settlement Area to the Leader of the Territorial Government for tabling in the Legislative Assembly, as well as to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for tabling in the House of Commons.”*

In March of 2002, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated assumed the obligations of the Nunavut Social Development Council, incorporating it into the new Department of Social and Cultural Development within Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.

Pursuant to Article 32.3.4, we are pleased to submit this *Annual Report on the State of Inuit Culture and Society*, entitled *Iniksaqattiarniq, Inuusiqattiarniq: Housing in Nunavut – The Time for Action is Now*. This annual report covers the fiscal years of 2003/04 and 2004/05.

The annual report identifies housing as a paramount issue, one that affects many aspects of the well-being of Nunavummiut. We are hopeful that after many years of accelerating neglect, we are near the point where this grave and pivotal problem for Inuit in Nunavut will be finally addressed.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors  
Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated  
Nunavut Social Development Council



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## **Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. Nunavut Social Development Council**

Paul Kaludjak  
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Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.

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Kivalliq Inuit Association

Peter Alareak  
Kivalliq Inuit Association

Dorothy Gibbons  
Acting Ex-Officio Member  
Nunavut Trust

*Carvers at work in front of their Iqaluit, Nunavut home.*



Marina Ougssuut





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* (NLCA) calls for the establishment of the Nunavut Social Development Council (NSDC) and the submission of an *Annual Report on the State of Inuit Culture and Society* in the Nunavut Settlement Area. This annual report must be submitted to the Premier of the Government of Nunavut (GN) for tabling in the Legislative Assembly, as well as to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) for tabling in the House of Commons.

Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) assumed the obligations of NSDC in 2002.

The focus of this report is on Nunavut's housing situation and its impact on all socio-cultural areas. The situation is dire. Inuit suffer from some of the worst overcrowding in the country. In order to begin to address the severe housing shortage, NTI and the GN completed the *Nunavut Ten-Year Inuit Housing Action Plan* in 2004. The plan makes the case for 3,000 additional housing units in Nunavut. The Government of Canada has yet to respond to this proposal in a concrete way.

Immediate and sweeping action is required if the housing issues facing Nunavut Inuit are to be addressed.

The report also brings attention to other important social and cultural topics, outlined in Appendix I. Recommendations made on these topics in the 2002/03 annual report are updated and further recommendations are made.

The key recommendations of the 2003/04 and 2004/05 annual report are as follows:

### **Confirming the delivery of an Inuit and Northern housing package**

Although the new Conservative government has not confirmed the Government of Canada's commitments made in Kelowna, British Columbia at the First Ministers Meeting on Aboriginal Issues, the federal Cabinet must be pressed to deliver at least short-term solutions to ease the housing crisis.

This commitment includes the need to identify the necessary financial resources within the federal fiscal framework in time to meet transportation and logistical challenges beginning with the 2006/07 construction year.

Pushing forward an Inuit and Northern housing package is a start to reversing the current situation. The federal and territorial governments must be willing to commit to the actions recommended.

### **A roundtable housing summit for Nunavut**

Federal and territorial cabinet ministers are urged to convene a roundtable housing summit in Nunavut to develop a concrete, long-term plan to address the drastic shortages of housing in Nunavut. In order to be effective, the plan requires the following commitments:

- The Government of Canada must identify immediate and long-term funds to ensure an orderly, well planned, well coordinated and ongoing housing construction program.
- The Government of Canada and the GN must implement and maintain procurement policies respecting Inuit firms for government contracts for housing provision in Nunavut. Both governments must work with the Nunavut Economic Forum (NEF) to develop a business case for building housing in Nunavut that emphasizes economic benefits and investment in Nunavut infrastructure and human resource capacity.





## ANNUAL REPORT ON THE STATE OF INUIT CULTURE AND SOCIETY

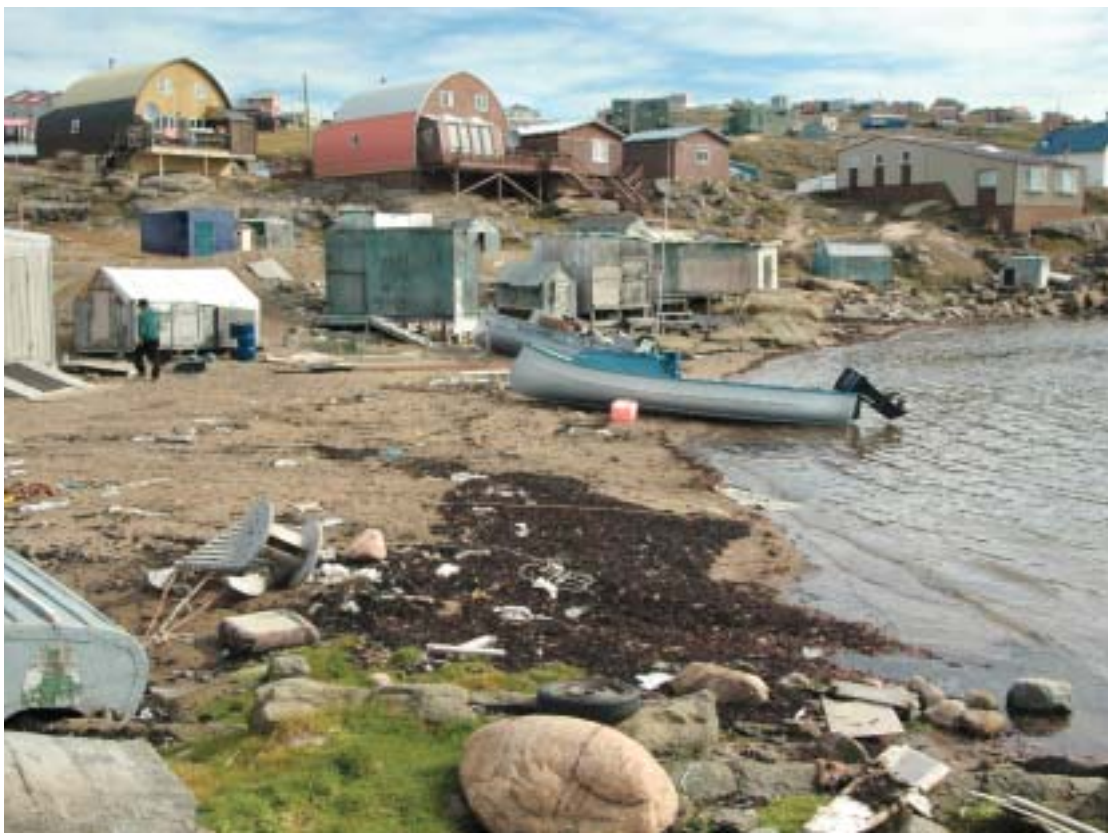
- The GN, in conjunction with community governments in Nunavut, must ensure housing-related infrastructure requirements, such as roads, power, water and sewer and granular sources, are developed for a range of housing types.
- The GN must continue to investigate options for new technology in housing design, and new delivery methods to ensure houses are built in Arctic communities in the most timely and cost-effective manner.

Statistics point to the severity of the unsatisfactory housing situation. For example, Nunavut reports a 25 per cent high school graduation rate, a suicide rate six times higher than the national average, and the reality that while Inuit make up just 0.1 per cent of the population of Canada, they make up 1 per cent of the penitentiary population.

Canada must respond to the housing crisis, which has accelerated since 1993. Now is the time for action.

The hopes and promises born of the NLCA and the creation of Nunavut are faltering as Inuit struggle with social problems, many of which are directly linked to overcrowded and inadequate housing. Inuit have documented the housing shortfalls in the *Nunavut Ten-Year Inuit Housing Action Plan*. A recent Conference Board of Canada report on *Infrastructure Planning for Nunavut's Communities* links infrastructure to wealth creation and states that the lack of basic infrastructure in Nunavut creates repercussions for socio-economic performance.

*Some Inuit are forced to live in shacks with no running water or toilets because of the drastic housing shortage that has gripped Nunavut.*



Maria Ouuquut







Maria Ougsuut

*Iqaluit resident Martha Michael is concerned about the role overcrowding and violence play in homelessness in Nunavut.*





# INTRODUCTION

Inuit in Nunavut live in a strange paradox. Our culture, environment and language create a deep sense of pride within Nunavut and the rest of Canada, but many parts of our society are neglected to the point of danger. Our symbols, words and philosophies are used to market everything from ice cream bars to the Olympics, yet our societal progress is hampered by systemic barriers inherited from misdirected, if well-intentioned, federal policies. Inuit in Nunavut will continue to generate national pride and cultural excellence, but unless the chronic social and economic problems within Nunavut communities are addressed, Inuit will continue to be prevented from enjoying the same quality of life as other Canadians, and this is a grave humanitarian state of affairs.

## Who Are We? What Do We Do?

NSDC was established pursuant to Article 32 of the NLCA as a non-profit Designated Inuit Organization (DIO) located in Igloolik, Nunavut. In 2002, NSDC was brought in-house to NTI as the Department of Social and Cultural Development, and the NTI Board of Directors became the NSDC Board of Directors. The mandate of the Department of Social and Cultural Development is derived from NSDC's mandate under Article 32 of the NLCA, which is to ensure Inuit participate in the development of social and cultural policies, and in the design of social and cultural programs and services, including their method of delivery within the Nunavut Settlement Area (NLCA: Article 32.1.1). The Department of Social and Cultural Development focuses on ten priority areas, which include:

- Housing.
- Education.
- Language.
- Health.
- Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit.
- Elders, youth and disability issues.
- Inuit sign-off on federal transfers.
- Cultural expression.
- Community wellness (including justice).
- Production of the *Annual Report on the State of Inuit Culture and Society*.

## Collaboration: The Key to Success

The role of the Department of Social and Cultural Development at NTI is to critically analyze actions which affect Inuit in Nunavut. NTI represents Inuit in all Nunavut communities in a fair and democratic way that safeguards, administers and advances Inuit rights and benefits to promote economic, social and cultural well-being. Based on this role, we make policy recommendations to the GN and the Government of Canada, and we lobby these governments to implement their legal obligations in the NLCA.

We undertake our work with government on equal footing, working in a collaborative, non-confrontational manner that is part of Inuit culture. Everyone has skills, resources and knowledge to contribute to making Nunavut a better place to live. We work together to critically assess the obstacles which prevent us from meeting our common goals. For many years, Inuit in Nunavut steadfastly trusted government to take part in this process and for many years, Inuit were disappointed. Nevertheless, Inuit continue to strive for meaningful and progressive dialogue between Inuit and government. Similar to the relationship between government and most Aboriginal peoples in Canada, Inuit underwent a tremendous amount of stress to achieve meaningful results. We feel we are close to addressing the injustices we face by entering into a constructive relationship with Canada.

The 2003/04 and 2004/05 *Annual Report on the State of Inuit Culture and Society* focuses on Nunavut's housing situation and its repercussions throughout the socio-cultural arena. Attention is also paid to all Department of Social and Cultural Development portfolios. Progress achieved on recommendations made in the last annual report is examined and updates and further recommendations are made. We hope you find this report informative, motivational and above all, a positive reinforcement that Inuit in Nunavut are strong and proud, but in dire need of appropriate and responsible social and cultural government policy. We need to realize change from an Inuit perspective, making sure we have more control over our own lives.





Courtesy of Clyde River

*A family of seven people lives in a two-bedroom unit in Clyde River, Nunavut. Similar stories of horrendous overcrowding are told in all Nunavut communities.*



Jeannie Arreak-Kulluaik

*Children are forced to live in wooden shacks in Nunavut when their parents cannot access housing.*







# HOUSING IN NUNAVUT

## Housing Must Lead the Way

As a member country of the United Nations, the Government of Canada recognizes adequate housing as a basic human right. Article 25 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* states that, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family..." (United Nations, 1948). Raising healthy children in a safe and socio-culturally sensitive environment is key to reinforcing this right. The housing situation of Inuit in Nunavut is at an extreme. The physical and mental strain of living in such conditions should not be borne by anyone.

This report deals primarily with housing issues. Unless drastic measures are immediately taken to improve Nunavut's housing situation, we will not make progress in the other social, cultural and economic fields. Providing adequate and affordable housing for all people in society is such a complex issue that it cannot be analyzed in isolation from other socio-economic indicators (Hay, 2005:6). This is especially true in Nunavut where the social fabric requires constant vigilance. Inuit currently experience some of the highest levels of overcrowded housing in the country (Inuit Tapariit Kanatami, 2004:3). The consequences for Inuit health, culture and community well-being are profound. As was pointed out by the Conference Board of Canada in its 2001 *Nunavut Economic Outlook*, the serious infrastructure problem in Nunavut affects, "Both the economic and social development of the Territory" (Conference Board of Canada, 2001:viii).



This report outlines what has been done and what can be done to improve Nunavut's housing situation. The argument is made that just as Nunavut's housing problems are complex and impact many layers of Inuit society, the solution cannot be realized in isolation of other policy arenas.

## Unlimited Potential Choked by Restraint

In 1993, the NLCA was signed. It was an historic year, making the hopes and dreams of Inuit come true. A new federal government was also elected. After a phase of heavy social spending in the 1970s and early 1980s, the federal government became more fiscally restrained in the 1990s, fearing the debt and deficit of the previous decade (Carter and Polevychok, 2004:38). Although more likely to focus on maintaining social expenditures than the previous governing Progressive Conservative Party, the Liberal Party continued the existing fiscal policy trend away from social spending when they took power in 1993.

Inuit paid a particularly high price for this trend. When the government changed in 1993, Inuit in Nunavut lost federal support for social housing. This loss came in two stages – the first as a gap in the implementation of the NLCA, and the second as a drastic cut in funding. Canada asserted that housing is a federal responsibility under Section 91 (24) of Canada's *Constitution Act*. This section states that the federal government is responsible for programs for Indians on Indian lands. Inuit are included in Section 91 (24) of the *Constitution Act* because of the historical classification of Canada's Aboriginal peoples. It was for this reason that Canada refused to include housing as a specific topic in the NLCA. Instead, housing benefits were implied by Article 2.7.3 (b) of the NLCA. In spite of this article, the federal government discontinued all social housing programs for non-Aboriginal and Inuit Canadians, while maintaining, and in some cases improving, funding to on-reserve First Nations communities. As a result, Nunavummiut, with their rapidly growing population, experience some of the worst overcrowding conditions in the country. The lack of adequate housing in Nunavut is preventing Inuit from progressing in nearly all social and cultural areas.

## A Synopsis of Housing in Nunavut: Past and Present

Before the major colonization of the Canadian Arctic took place in the mid-to-late 20th century, Inuit lived nomadically on the land. Community wellness, health, education of children and the provision of housing were self-determined acts of an independent people. Housing came in the form of snow houses in the winter and skin tents in the summer. Small stone or sod houses were also used. It was important that housing was versatile and easily constructed as people traveled across a land that was harsh and cold during most of the year.

Recent publications reveal poignant findings on the motives and outcome of the federal government's relocation experiments and the huge impact it had on the Inuit way of life. Tester et al (1994) and Marcus (1995) both write extensively on the subject and conclude that Inuit relocation policies, beginning in the 1950s, were driven by a combination of humanitarian interests and geopolitical considerations. With the decline in fur prices in the 1940s, relief and family allowances became essential to Inuit survival. Government officials noted this and expressed concern over the state of Inuit dependency and living conditions.

Marcus (1995:4) writes, "Having bitten the apple offered to them in the form of relief (public welfare) and other state benefit payments, the residents of this Arctic Eden appeared to be abandoning their traditional ways of life and 'loitering' around the small Northern settlements. Officials referred to certain areas of the North as being 'overpopulated' and suggested that by physically moving Inuit from the settlements and returning them to the natural environment, they might be restored to their traditional and seemingly idyllic way of life."

In addition to concerns over Inuit dependency on relief, officials were also alarmed about the housing conditions of Inuit living close to established settlements. Marcus (1995:46) documents the words of one federal official, Bob Phillips, who called Inuit, "Slum dwellers of the wide-open spaces" and who states, "Except for those who build shacks...no Canadian Eskimo owns a home. Most are forced to live in the cold and damp of igloo and tent."





## ANNUAL REPORT ON THE STATE OF INUIT CULTURE AND SOCIETY

The geopolitical rationale for relocating Inuit is more controversial, though Marcus (1995) and Tester et al (1994) are clear in asserting that the protection of Canadian sovereignty was a significant motivation for at least some of the relocations. Marcus (1995) argues that the relocation of Inuit in 1953-55 to Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord was essentially a single solution to two problems. It was considered vital in reforming Inuit, and guaranteed effective occupation of the High Arctic.

By the mid-1950s, a growing concern with Inuit ability to subsist began to affect policy making. Marcus (1995:210) writes, "Wariness about Inuit subsistence led to a shift in the resettlement policy towards sites of wage labor and away from unoccupied wilderness sites, as illustrated by the decision in 1955 to increase the population of Resolute."

By mid-1950s, the adaptation problems of Inuit were finally being recognized and plans to extend the relocation experiment further north were not implemented. According to Marcus (1995:213), the government, "Likely realized the old problem of welfare dependency might recur, but in even more distant location."

The accounts of Tester et al are similar to those of Marcus. Recognition of the failure of the relocation policy is highlighted through the testimony of Bob Pilot, a Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officer stationed at Craig Harbour during mid-1950s, before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs in June 1990. "The people at Resolute Bay had made houses out of packing cases and out of any kind of old lumber they could get their hands on. They were not properly insulated and they were not properly heated, whereas the sod huts, although it may not have been a very hygienic situation to be living in, did provide warmth and shelter and were far superior" (Tester, 1994:182).

An interesting observation made by Tester et al (1994:7) is that the federal relocation policy was borne in part from a very conscious decision to treat Inuit differently from Indians. This point may be valuable in providing a historical context for arguments on the different and inequitable treatment of Inuit and First Nations. "Administrators wanted to learn from the mistakes of their predecessors in the field of Indian affairs. They did not want to create Arctic reservations and the dependency associated with the reservation system. In the late '40s and early '50s, this policy led to a kind of strategic neglect of Inuit at a time when the fur trade was failing miserably. A slow shift took

place in the minds of administrators. They began to take a more interventionist approach and to expand the social services network to the Arctic. Instead of reservations, they wanted Northern suburbs. They wanted Inuit citizens who would be self-reliant, but integrated into a broader Canadian social reality. They wanted a material infrastructure that could provide Inuit with a degree of material security and well-being that, they believed, had not existed previously...the outcome was quite contrary. The housing, sanitary, and other conditions in Arctic settlements at this time were appalling."

Tester et al (1994:358), citing a Department of National Health and Welfare report from 1969, describe the conditions among Inuit at Eskimo Point (now Arviat) in the early 1960s. "In Eskimo Point, eighty-two households were crowded into sixty-four wooden and snow houses. Late in 1962 and early in 1963, an epidemic of tuberculosis affected 55 per cent of these households, half the children in the community and 24 percent of the adult population."

How did nomadic, self-reliant Inuit end up in inadequate housing with a Southern sedentary existence? As we have seen, in the 1950s, '60s, '70s and even into the 1980s, Inuit were enticed and sometimes forcibly moved into permanent settlements. With the arrival of Christianity, Western schooling and the fur trade, Inuit moved into permanent settlements, seeking the guidance of the church, the schools and access to the wage economy. This was done in many ways and for many reasons. There were also extensive periods of terrible starvation in the Kivalliq region that forced Inuit to move into permanent settlements. The permanent settlement of Inuit was beneficial to the Canadian government as it made the administration of people easier and helped assert sovereignty in the Arctic in the face of international situations, such as the Cold War. Inuit from various parts of the Arctic were relocated to establish Canadian dominion in the Arctic. Relocation hurt Inuit and the social implications are still felt.

Across the Arctic, Inuit report that RCMP slaughtered nearly all their dog teams – the main mode of transportation in the Arctic. Whether the dogs were shot for humanitarian reasons (disease, neglect, danger to children) or whether it was a method of ensuring Inuit stayed in the newly founded communities is still a point of contention and bitterness in modern Inuit society. Most Inuit who remember this period remember the dog slaughter as a malicious and one-sided act not meant to help people. Once the dogs were killed,







Maria Ougsuut

*Ninety-eight per cent of public housing inhabitants are Inuit.*



Maria Ougsuut

*Forty-six per cent of residences in Nunavut are public housing units.*





Inuit were forced to stay in one spot and rely on outside help. The dignity found in providing for family members was lost and, along with other colonial factors, this caused a downward spiral in the social development of modern Inuit. Had Inuit been able to freely travel on the land as they had before, finding traditional housing would not have been difficult. But since mobility was restrained in this and other ways, a new mode of housing was developed for Inuit. This type of housing was also news to Southern Canadians who had never built permanent, large communities in the Arctic climate.

A crucial point in the present-day provision of social housing is that many Inuit originally agreed to relocation and permanent settlement because of the government's promise to provide housing, a promise supported by Section 91 (24) of the *Constitution Act* and renewed upon the finalization of the NLCA (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2004:4).

## **How Social Housing Works in Nunavut**

The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) provides approximately \$30 million in annual funding to the Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC). Infrastructure Canada also contributes funds to NHC for the construction of new social housing. In 2003, Infrastructure Canada announced a payment of \$20 million to construct at least 160 new housing units (Nunavut Housing Corporation, 2004:9). NHC also receives \$75 million in additional GN funding through grants and contributions.

NHC is a GN agency. It has three main branches of services, which include social housing, GN staff housing and homeownership. NTI participates in NHC's activities through the Social Housing Advocacy Working Group, which lobbies the federal government for further intervention in social housing (Nunavut Housing Corporation, 2004:9).

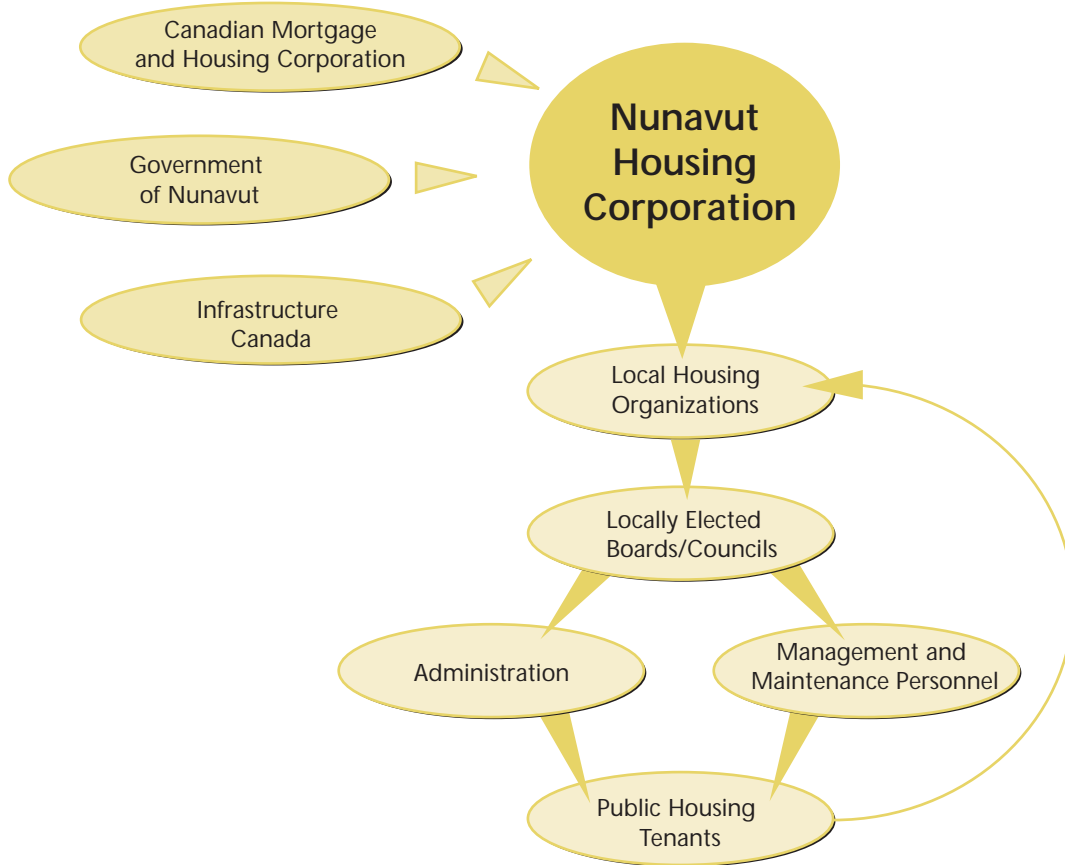
NHC is responsible for the construction of social housing. It also allocates money to local housing organizations in each of Nunavut's communities to administrate and maintain public housing units. Public housing tenants pay rent to the local housing organizations. Rent revenue is only a fraction of local housing organizations' operations and main budgets (Nunavut Housing Corporation, 2006). The local housing organizations are comprised of locally elected boards or

councils, as well as administration, management and maintenance personnel. The locally elected boards or councils select tenants according to criteria, which include residency in the community, income, number of children or dependants and marital status.

The net income cap for eligibility for public housing operates on a sliding scale and ranges between \$75,000 and \$96,000. The cap presents difficulties because if a family earns more than the cap allows, they may be asked to leave, but may not be able to because there is simply nowhere else to move. However, when a family surpasses the cap, the family is encouraged to apply for an NHC grant to help make a down payment on a privately owned house.

There are problems with the amount of money received from the federal government and how it is spent by the GN. Nunavut receives housing money on a per capita basis from the federal government. This funding scheme does not provide enough money to ease the housing crisis. With the little amount of funding available, building projects are allocated to communities on a rotational basis. This does not create incentive for seeking further training or employment in the housing sector. Communities do not know what funding to expect in the years to come, and therefore do not have the capacity to build high-occupancy buildings or make proper plans for expansion. Economies of scale should be created by developing large-scale building projects one community at a time. Building supplies can be purchased at a better cost, construction workers can be hired on a long-term basis, more workers can be trained, and better long-term housing plans can be made. The employment opportunities created by construction reduce reliance on employment insurance and social assistance, and cut costs government must pay in other sectors (Carter and Polevychok, 2004:24). An estimated \$65 million is currently spent on supporting the high rate of Inuit unemployment by hiring a largely Southern-based workforce (Carter and Polevychok, 2004:24).





## Why Governments Are Responsible

When the federal government stopped funding social housing in Nunavut in 1993, Inuit had not yet recovered from the great colonial changes that took place over the past 50 years. Present day Inuit still live in overcrowded, dangerous and unhealthy conditions because their way of life changed so drastically due to government initiatives and a lack of assistance in dealing with this irreversible cultural change. Until Inuit society functions at a level enjoyed by other Canadians – adequately housed, healthy and prosperous – the federal government should not, on a moral or legal basis, neglect its responsibilities to Inuit. It is critical that the Government of Canada involve itself fully in solving housing problems in Nunavut for several reasons, including:

- Inuit are dependent on permanent settlement housing due to relocation and other policies imposed by governments.
- The Government of Canada cannot abdicate its responsibility to Inuit as Aboriginal peoples of Canada because of Constitutional responsibility under *Constitution Act* 91(24) and Article 2 of the NLCA. Further, the intention of the NLCA is to ensure that Inuit receive the same benefits as other Canadians.
- The GN also has a responsibility. Through the formula financing arrangement with the Government of Canada, the GN receives federal transfers of money which it has the discretion to spend. The formula financing agreement is supposed to ensure that all Canadians enjoy the same standard of living.
- Federal government responsibility for Inuit housing is outlined in Article 2 of the NLCA, where it states that Inuit, as Aboriginal citizens of Canada, are permitted to access federal programs or services aimed at Aboriginal peoples (NLCA, Article 2.7.3(b)). This clause surely applies to housing programs designed for Aboriginal peoples.







## The Statistics

Statistics Canada (2003:1) reports that 54 per cent of Inuit in Nunavut lived in overcrowded circumstances, which is an overcrowding rate seven times higher than the national average.

NHC (2004:6-10) reports that:

- 38.7 per cent of Nunavut households are in core need, which means the housing is substandard, inadequate or unaffordable.
- 46 per cent of dwelling units in Nunavut are public housing units.
- 98 per cent of public housing inhabitants in Nunavut are Inuit.
- 15 per cent of Nunavut's population is on a waiting list for public housing. This percentage does not include the number of people who have given up and removed their names from the list. These people move in with other family members, further exacerbating the overcrowding situation, or in extreme situations, live in shacks made of scrap materials.
- The approximate length of the waiting list for public housing is three years.
- The average 740 square foot house in Nunavut costs \$250,000 to build and \$18,000 per year to maintain (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2004:6).
- The Government of Canada recently invested \$320 million in a Canada-wide, per capita affordable housing program. Of that funding, Nunavut received a sum of \$290,000 – barely enough to build a single house (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2005:1).
- 3,000 housing units are needed immediately to relieve the current overcrowding rate and bring Nunavut on par with the rest of Canada (Nunavut Housing Corporation, 2004:i).
- If nothing is done to better the current situation, there will be a 70 per cent overcrowding rate by 2016 (Bell, 2004:1).
- In the 2001 Census, Statistics Canada reports that the average individual income for Inuit in Nunavut is \$13,090. The average individual income for non-Inuit in Nunavut is \$50,128. This is an income gap of \$37,038.

It is important to note that the statistics quoted in the *Nunavut Ten-Year Inuit Housing Action Plan* are taken from Statistics Canada and CMHC reports. Their magnitude and profound effect must be understood in socio-cultural terms. Canada should recognize and respond to the actual price Inuit pay for overcrowding – in health, wellness and education.

Callaghan, M. et al (2002:28), in describing the state of the Inuit housing crisis, provide a powerful summary of Inuit housing problems and draw attention to other factors including climate, cost of living, cost of home construction and so on. "Inuit are currently facing the worst housing crisis in Canada. While the crisis can be traced back over 40 years, when the federal government began moving Inuit into permanent communities to increase access to government services including housing, the situation has become critical, as the Inuit population is rapidly increasing and housing stocks are eroding. Inuit are living in severely overcrowded, inadequate and unsafe housing conditions. Overcrowded housing is widely considered among Inuit to be the most serious problem they face."

As stated, the federal government eliminated social housing spending for Inuit in 1993. Despite vigorous protests by Inuit representatives, and promises from the federal government to increase investment in home construction in the Arctic, funding for social housing has not been reinstated. The high cost of private rental housing in Nunavut, coupled with the high percentage of Inuit living in poverty, makes the need for social housing acute. The cold Arctic climate means homelessness is impossible to survive, making severe overcrowding a common reality.

## The Sad Reality: Inuit Left in Squalor in Overcrowded Homes

Over the years, and in response to First Nations lobbying efforts since 1993, the federal government has spent \$3.8 billion on housing for First Nations, but has contributed nothing to Inuit in Nunavut (Callaghan, M. et al, 2002:28). At the same time, the public is led to believe the federal government is committed to bettering the lives of all Aboriginal peoples in Canada. For example, in a letter to the editor of the *Calgary Herald* written by former DIAND Minister Andy Scott, he states, "In aboriginal housing, changes will be developed and managed by First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, in full partnership with the federal government" (Scott, 2005:1). Later in the



same letter, Minister Scott writes about specific program initiatives, but only mentions First Nations. "Under the leadership of Minister Joe Fontana and with the full support of my department, the Government of Canada is committed to working with First Nations and the provinces to develop new and sustainable housing systems" (Scott, 2005:1). He made no mention of Inuit or a territorial collaboration. Unless one is aware of the difference between First Nations and Inuit, as well as between provinces and territories, it could be assumed the federal government is looking after Inuit in Nunavut, when this is not the case.

## **Nunavut Ten-Year Inuit Housing Action Plan**

NTI collaborated with the NHC to develop the *Nunavut Ten-Year Inuit Housing Action Plan* to address housing needs. The action plan was delivered to former DIAND Minister Andy Scott in 2004. It was also presented to CMHC Minister Joe Fontana. In August 2005, Minister Fontana announced the formation of the CMHC Northern Housing office to better manage its Northern housing responsibilities. Unfortunately, the office will be located in Calgary. Equally unfortunate, the announcement was silent on when there would be a government response to the *Nunavut Ten-Year Inuit Housing Action Plan*.

The *Nunavut Ten-Year Inuit Housing Action Plan* asks the federal government to meet the following minimum targets over a ten-year span:

- Crisis Relief: 3,000 new units to reduce Nunavut overcrowding rate to the national average.
- Crisis Relief: 1,000 existing units renovated and/or expanded to alleviate overcrowding and improve long-term utility of units.
- Forced Growth (2006-2016): 2,730 new units to keep ahead of Inuit population growth.

Since completing the *Nunavut Ten-Year Inuit Housing Action Plan*, the NHC reports that the housing need grew by more than 800 units, with just 205 new units supplied.

## **The Kelowna First Ministers Meeting**

An historic First Ministers Meeting on Aboriginal Issues was held in Kelowna, British Columbia in November 2005. At that meeting, Canada announced commitments in a number of areas, including housing for Aboriginal people. This commitment included \$300 million for Northern Housing Partnerships. While this only partially meets the targets set in the *Nunavut Ten-Year Inuit Housing Action Plan*, the commitment did indicate there would be real progress in the establishment of an adequate housing program for Inuit.

Since the Conservative Party took office in January 2006, DIAND Minister Jim Prentice says that while the principles developed at the meeting are worthy, the previous government did not budget for the commitments, nor did it lay out any funding arrangements. It is possible the new government will opt for short-term commitments instead of the previous long-term goals. No money has been promised for the coming construction season, but it is hoped that any funds will be the first phase of a multi-year initiative, and that investments would increase over the years as financial and social capital and capacity increase (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2006:2). In a recent letter to DIAND Minister Jim Prentice, former Finance Minister Ralph Goodale confirmed that \$5.096 billion was set aside on Nov. 24, 2005 to attend to the responsibilities outlined in Kelowna (Goodale, 2006:1). Goodale notes the 2005 *Economic and Fiscal Update* issued by the federal government took note of the importance of the Kelowna meeting and set aside unused money in the framework. After Kelowna took place, the money was booked (Goodale, 2006:2).

## **Home: Beyond Basic Shelter**

It is important to define what a home means to a family, and in particular what it means to an Inuit family. In the broad sense, a home is a place that provides, "Shelter...a response to special needs, social interaction [and] comfort and security" (Carter and Polevychok, 2004:1).

- Physical, financial, locational/spatial and psychological dimensions must be understood when attempting to build a home that fits all the needs





of a family. To make sure a house provides a family with everything it needs, one must ask a series of questions. The physical element of a house is the quality of the indoor surroundings and design. Is it comfortable and safe?

- Financial elements include purchase or rental and operational costs. Is the money spent on housing within the family's budget?
- Locational elements take into consideration the placement of the house within a neighborhood. Is it close to the family's appropriate amenities? Is it in a safe neighborhood?
- Spatial elements take into account the size and design of the house in terms of suitability to the inhabitants.
- The psychological dimension of housing speaks to the importance of the home as the central place where individual, collective and cultural identities are formed. Home is the place where individuals and societies are shaped and maintained (Carter and Polevychok, 2004:12).

Since the development of permanent settlements in the Canadian Arctic, there have been many disastrous attempts to build houses that are adequate and suitable to the average Inuit family. Many of the above-mentioned factors were not taken into consideration when communities were built. Cultural expectations, which include food and eating customs, how the living space functions, where hunting tools are kept, what level of privacy is expected, what degree of cleanliness is acceptable, must also be considered. As Jose Kusagak, President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) remarks, "If we use Inuit knowledge from the start of housing design in the Arctic, I think it would go a long way towards avoiding major problems that arise in the building, use and maintenance of homes in the Arctic" (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2005:1). He goes on to say, "[Inuit] need more culturally sensitive features. Who in the South would think about a family sitting on the floor carving seal meat when designing a home, or about the need for space to clean and work the seal skin for clothing" (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2005:1).

For Nunavut Inuit, the ideal home is a place where the family feels safe. Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (Inuit traditional knowledge) cultural practices are the norm, Inuktitut thrives, the family has easy access to healthy Northern foods and lifestyles, and the economic unit is sound and secure. Many of these components have not been met in social housing in the Canadian Arctic. Until these conditions are met, social housing will continue to crumble, putting Inuit at increasingly greater risk.

## Housing and Youth

Like other cultures, Inuit society has always cherished children and youth. They are a source of pride and happiness as they develop and grow, and they hold the potential for greatness. The child still remains at the centre of the Inuit family. Nearly 60 per cent of Nunavut's population is under 25 years of age. The median age among Inuit in Nunavut is 19.1 years of age, nearly one-half the median age in the rest of Canada (mainstream Canadian median age is 37.7) (Nunavut Housing Corporation, 2004:11). This means Nunavut society is on the cusp of a major social and cultural explosion. This could be an opportunity for tremendous growth, innovation and revitalization or, it could cause major upheaval.

The current vital statistics on Nunavut's children and youth are disturbing. Nunavut has one of the highest rates of suicide in the world, particularly among young men between 15-24 years of age. Nunavut and the Northwest Territories have the highest rate of infant mortality in Canada. Tuberculosis rates are 17 times higher than the rest of Canada (Government of Nunavut, 2004:33). Inuit children and youth are suffering and something must be done to ease the pain. How do we make sure children are confident, healthy, educated, communicative and resourceful? Do children feel a strong sense of culture and identity? In order to ensure our young people have positive futures, the interrelationship between a child's home, health, education and integration in the community must be recognized.

Research findings reveal that the quality of housing and neighborhoods in which children grow up play an important role in their development (Moloughney, 2004:v). Children are more adversely affected by the effects of poor housing conditions than any other age group. The physical condition of the house, the financial situation of the family, the surrounding neighborhood and the psychological dimensions of the household affect children's development. For example, children who live in mouldy or damp conditions are 32 per cent more likely to develop bronchitis (Moloughney, 2004:11). Young children are particularly vulnerable to respiratory ailments because of the amount of time they spend in the home. Overcrowding contributes to other health problems including, "Depression, sleep deprivation, fatigue, family discord and the spread of communicable diseases" (Fuller- Thomson et al, 2000:15). If a family is paying large amounts of money for housing, children may also suffer from malnutrition and stress. Children living in overcrowded homes are less likely to succeed in school and more likely to suffer behavioural problems (Fuller-Thomson et al, 2000:17).





Jeannie Atreak-Kulluaik

*Opetee Atagoyuk makes tea in his Iqaluit, Nunavut shack.*



Maria Oqusaat

*Many Inuit live in tents in the summer months.*





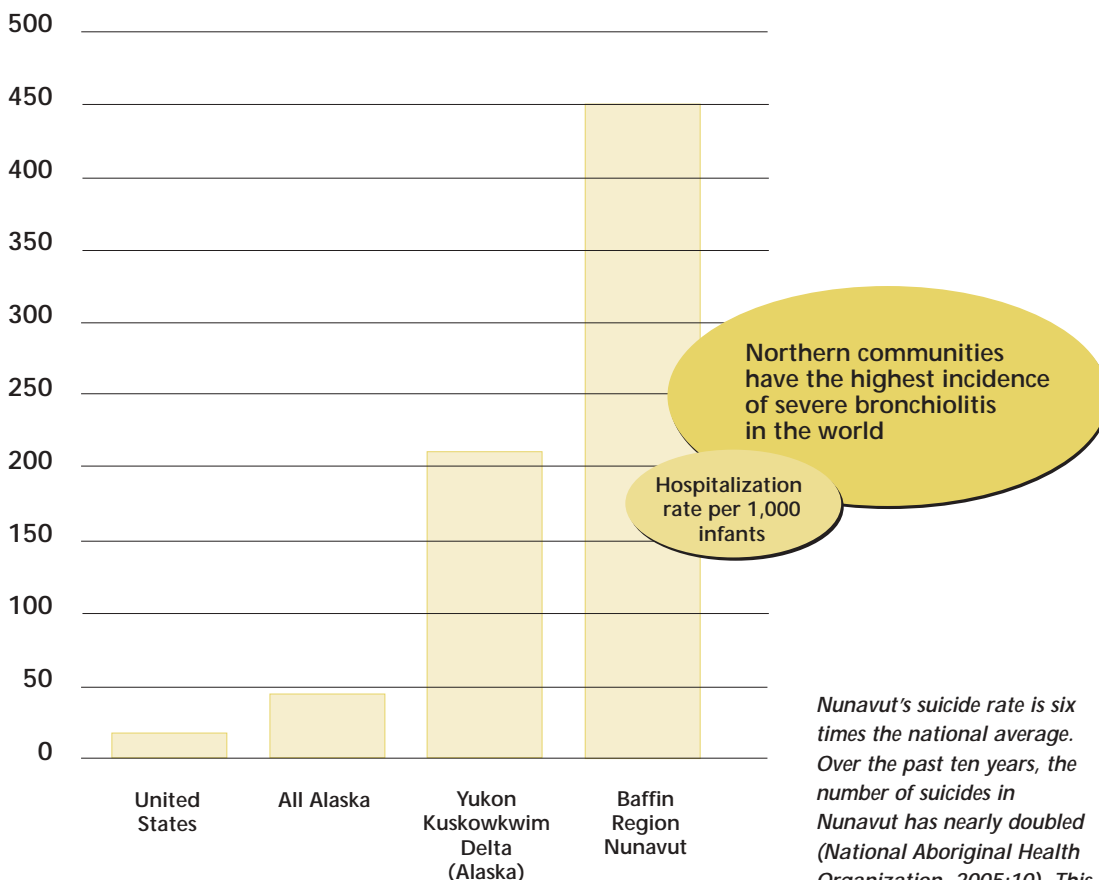


In Nunavut, youth between 15-30 years of age are most likely to experience overcrowding in a household. As they mature and start families of their own, they are unable to move out because of the prohibitive cost of private accommodations and the length of the waiting list for social housing. They are forced to stay with family members with their spouses and children for long periods of time, increasing the number of people per household. Taking into account the effects of overcrowding on children, it is critical that we pave the way for a successful future for youth. This can be done by easing the load households bear by building more houses that are affordable, sustainable and durable.

### Housing and Health

It is obvious that a house directly impacts the health of its inhabitants. If a house is overcrowded, poorly ventilated, built with hazardous materials, poorly constructed or designed, residents in the house can suffer from disease, poisoning, accidental injuries or fatigue. Mental health is also affected by the quality of housing. If a house does not meet a family's needs or is overcrowded, stress, aggression, depression, substance abuse and apathy occur more frequently. The presence of apathy is critical in assessing the effect

### Protecting Occupant Health: Moisture and Indoor Environment

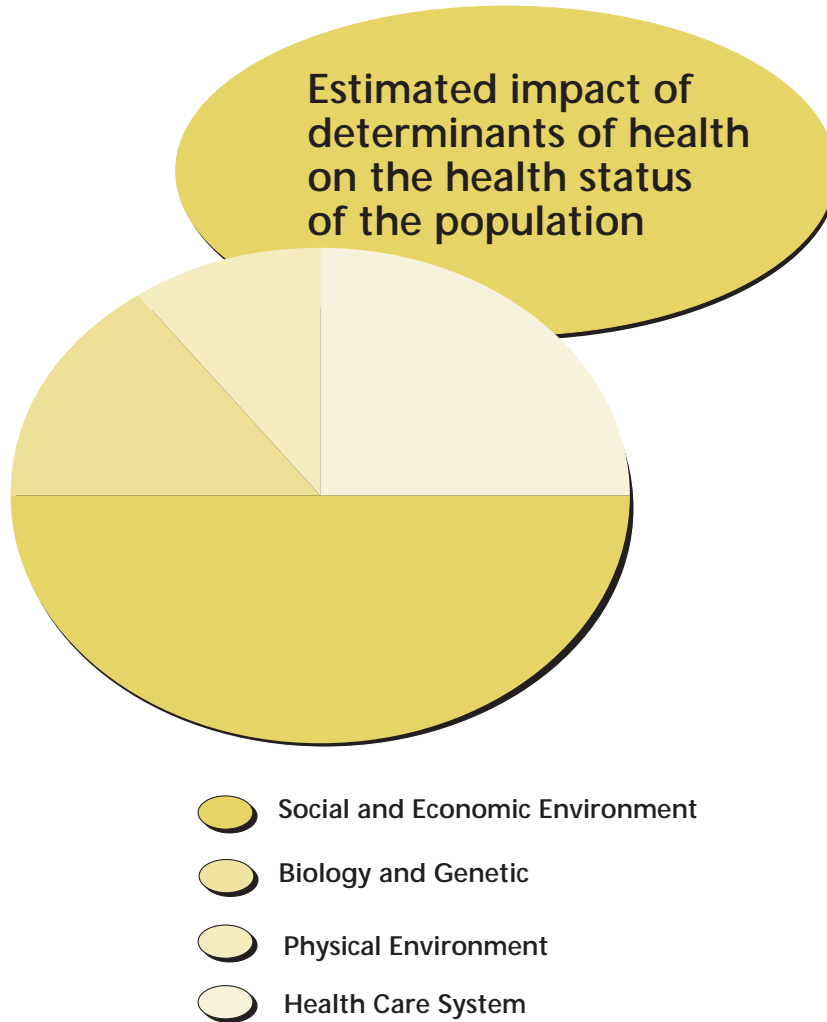


(Source: Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, Ottawa 2002.)

Nunavut's suicide rate is six times the national average. Over the past ten years, the number of suicides in Nunavut has nearly doubled (National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2005:10). This staggering tragedy can be attributed to numerous causes – residential school abuse, poor self-confidence due to culture loss, and low educational attainment.



As the chart below illustrates, the social and economic environment accounts for half the estimated impact on a person's health. This means people who are under stress because of poor social conditions at home are more likely to suffer poor health. Add the physical environment, which includes everything from contaminants in the food to quality of housing, and almost two-thirds of Inuit health is affected by social, economic and physical surroundings.



(Source: Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, 2002).





of housing on people's health because apathy makes it difficult to take care of a home, inviting further decline in the physical, social and psychological environment. This makes individuals more apathetic, creating a vicious cycle. In that 54 per cent of Inuit live in overcrowded conditions and 38.7 per cent of Nunavut's social housing stock is substandard, a large proportion of Inuit are at high risk for health problems originating from inadequate housing. It is not surprising that Nunavut has the highest percentages of tuberculosis and other respiratory diseases such as Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Bronchiolitis in Canada (see chart on page 19).

Nunavut is Canada's biggest health care spender on a per capita basis. Ensuring the most remote communities have the minimum of health care is incredibly expensive. For example, every time a patient is medically evacuated from a community with no hospital, it costs approximately \$18,000. If homes in Nunavut were improved to meet standards in the rest of Canada, the expenditures on health care would be significantly reduced. Improved housing would have a positive impact on health resulting in reduced health care expenditures.

### Housing and Education

Overcrowding and poor health related to living conditions limit the capacities of children in school. Attention spans are reduced and fatigue, aggressive, disruptive behavior and other negative psychological symptoms are more common. In addition, the physical space to study and do homework is significantly diminished in an overcrowded home. Studies show that overcrowded or inadequate housing actually delays a child's reading capabilities, creating a considerable gap between children who are poor and those who are not (Carter and Poleyvchok, 2004:17).

Several studies investigate the link between poor housing and children's educational and behaviour patterns. Stokes (2004:3) writes, "...Studies have shown that inadequate housing is a causal factor in poor educational attainment and, consequently, reduced opportunities for workforce achievement." She also states that noise associated with overcrowding makes homework difficult and that, "Mobility and change of schools are more common in children in marginal dwellings, interrupting the continuity of schooling and a child's academic performance" (Stokes 2004:3). Citing the findings of a 2003 CMHC study, Stokes (2004:3) states that, "Substandard housing has a statistically significant and unique (but unfortunate) effect on children's mental health and behavioural problems, even when non-building

moderators such as income and education are included in the investigation."

Cooper (2001:13), drawing upon *National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth* data, argues that a correlation between housing conditions and education exists. She notes that, "...Only 68 per cent of children aged four to 11 years living in insufficient housing do well in school, as compared with three of every four children in adequate housing." Cooper (2001:13) also notes the links between housing and "social engagement" arguing that, "Only 74 per cent of children living in insufficient housing had low property offence scores, compared with 92 per cent of children in adequate housing, suggesting a link between insufficient housing and the increased commission of property crimes by children living in such conditions. Cooper concludes (2001:15), "There is extensive evidence supporting a connection between housing instability, poor performance, and behavioural problems among children."

And in Canada, the Conference Board of Canada cites the fact that Nunavut is the only jurisdiction in Canada to have a higher rate of violent crimes than property crimes, adding, "Overcrowding no doubt adds to the problems" (Conference Board of Canada, 2004:11).

Phibbs (1999:15) notes the difficulty of separating housing from other factors influencing educational attainment, but points to strong links found between socio-economic disadvantage and educational performance. Brudge (1995:12) adds that, "It has been found that children from families living at or below the poverty line 'change school more often, lose more days of schooling through illness and are more likely to be truants.' It could be concluded that housing that is not affordable, or that imposes economic constraints on its occupants, is therefore likely to negatively impact upon educational performance."

Even without factoring in the housing situation, we know something is fundamentally wrong with the education system in Nunavut. Although the numbers of graduating students have increased over the years, Nunavut's graduation rate is far below the norm in the rest of Canada. In 2002/03, the rate was 25.6 per cent (Statistics Canada, 2003:1). Inuktitut immersion in schools is only available until Grade 3, and most of the curriculum from Kindergarten to Grade 12 is adopted from the Alberta curriculum. It is impossible for Inuit children to pursue a modern education in their own language in a manner that reflects their cultural upbringing.





Maria Ougsuut

*Iqaluit, Nunavut resident Akegoo Ekho desperately awaits renovations to the public housing unit in which she resides.*



Maria Ougsuut

*Geno Kidlapik (right) sits with Oqota Emergency Shelter employee Eliyah Kilabuk in Iqaluit, Nunavut. The shelter is always full.*







## Housing and Community Wellness

The relationship between inadequate housing and community wellness is a vicious cycle. Overcrowded housing helps create aggressive, disruptive behaviour and the same behaviour makes a home environment worse. It is shown that children who are brought up in low-income, poorly housed circumstances are more likely to partake in criminal activity as adults (Hay, 2005:4).

The links between housing and community wellness are studied in an Australian discussion paper (Queensland Government, 2000) which shows how the concept of affordable housing extends beyond the financial cost to the household to the socio-economic cost to the entire community. The paper highlights the key elements of an approach to affordable housing and states, "Housing affordability certainly affects households; it also affects communities and neighborhoods. A 'sustainable community' is one in which community members can meet their needs as they change over time, and continue to participate in the work and activity of the community. The changing life cycle needs and economic circumstances of households cannot be met in neighborhoods that do not offer a range of housing types at affordable prices. Affordable housing is as fundamental to meeting community needs as is the availability of employment, and access to major facilities, services and recreational opportunities. An Affordable Housing Strategy must therefore pursue successful housing outcomes for households as part of encouraging the development of 'sustainable communities'" (Queensland Government, 2000:8). The paper then lists six key elements of a comprehensive approach, including the location, cost and appropriateness of the dwelling, and argues that if these elements are not satisfied, households, communities and the state will face unsustainable costs, including, "Increasing rates of individual and family stress and breakdown and significant growth in crime statistics, as well as intangible and indirect costs, such as negative impacts on educational attainment and community breakdown" (Queensland Government, 2000:9).

Carter and Polevychok (2004:12) also offer a discussion of the role that housing plays in societal development. They write, "It (housing) is a consumer good as it is purchased or rented in various quantities, and with a range of amenities; an industrial good as it provides jobs for thousands; and a tool for economic

development as it represents community investment, creates jobs and can be a focus of skills development in the community...(these characteristics) illustrate that there are many aspects of housing that can be instrumental in: the health and well-being of individuals, community health and vitality, the state of our environment and the successful operation of our economy."

There may also be a link between substandard housing and criminal behaviour. Stokes (2004:4) notes, "Although no direct link exists between substandard housing and criminal behavior, studies show a link does exist between improved education levels and reduced recidivism rates. As housing is an important factor in educational attainment, adequate and stable housing are likely to lower the social costs of both unemployment and crime."

Research studies reported in Waller and Weiler (1984) are said to have revealed a decrease in crime rates in areas with a higher proportion of owner-occupation. Finally, Hay (2005:4) comments on housing and its links to human behavior, stating that, "...Children who are exposed to persistent low income and poor housing conditions are at a greater risk of criminal behavior as adults."

## Why Building Houses is Good for the Economy and the Community

The Arctic tundra is treeless and cold, and there are no highways to Nunavut or within Nunavut, isolating all communities in the territory. There are no major industrial plants in Nunavut. Therefore, there is no easy access to building materials. Construction in the North immediately benefits economies in the South – everything from lumber to nails is imported from Southern markets. Even architectural expertise is often imported from the South.

Although building houses is good for Nunavut, house construction in Nunavut boosts the Gross Domestic Product of Canada (GDP) as a whole. A number of studies demonstrate the positive impact house construction has on the economy. A CMHC report



notes that, "Spending on residential investment and home repairs contributed \$73.3 billion dollars to the Canadian economy in 2002" (CMHC, 2004:1). The same report states, "Indirectly, housing has a much broader impact on the economy. When the housing sector is growing faster than the rest of the economy, activity will shift towards sectors that are linked to housing, such as the manufacture, importation, distribution and retailing of building materials, furniture or appliances...Exports are another way in which housing has an impact on the economy. Exports of value-added, housing-related products totaled \$8.7 billion in 2003...Nunavut and the Northwest Territories were the destination of over 13 per cent of housing-related exports" (CMHC, 2000:2). The report also summarizes how housing expenditures give rise to ancillary spending in such areas as land development (surveying, site preparation, consulting services), infrastructure development (roads, sidewalks, and sewers), real estate services, legal services and financing services.

Without building a healthy, safe and sustainable community, a society cannot go on to pursue other goals, including protecting the environment, preserving and promoting culture and identity, and developing an education system that reflects the needs of children. All socio-cultural factors are interrelated, and housing is a basic keystone of society. Construction in general is a fast growing industry in Nunavut. In 2004, the contribution construction made to Nunavut's GDP equaled \$108.9 million – a rate that steadily increased since 1999 (Nunavut Economic Forum, 2005:33). A safe investment of federal money is the construction of social housing – a natural extension of the construction boom.

Nunavut receives housing money on a per capita basis from the federal government. In that 3,000 units are needed immediately to alleviate the worst of Nunavut's overcrowding crisis, for the federal government to only provide enough money in 2004 to cover the cost of building one house is an abdication of its responsibility (Nunavut Housing Corporation, 2004:i). Highly populated areas like Ontario and Quebec receive much more money to build social housing units.

In summary, providing housing in Nunavut is good for the economy because it brings down the costs governments must spend in other sectors. It generates local investment and training opportunities, and it is of immediate benefit to other regions of Canada.

## The Status of Recommendations made in 2002/03

The following recommendations were made in the 2002/03 *Annual Report on the Status of Inuit Culture and Society*:

- As a top priority, NTI and the GN (NHC) must pursue a federal intervention for Nunavut's housing crisis to alleviate the worst overcrowding and bring Nunavut up to par with the rest of Canada in terms of persons per dwelling and persons per bedroom. This federal intervention would entail a capital investment of \$640 million.
- UPDATE: NTI, GN (NHC) developed the *Nunavut Ten-Year Inuit Housing Action Plan*, which calls for \$1.9 billion in federal funding for the housing crisis. The plan was delivered to former DIAND Minister Andy Scott, who then presented it to former CMHC Minister Joe Fontana. No concrete action has been taken on any of our recommendations.
- NTI, the GN (NHC) must pursue Aboriginal housing funds from DIAND to create Inuit-specific, federally funded social housing and home ownership programs in Nunavut.
- UPDATE: NTI and GN (NHC) are still working on accomplishing this. NHC announced funding for an enhanced home ownership program in the fall of 2005.

## Where Do We Go From Here?

More federal funding must be directed to the housing situation in Nunavut. Spending more money on housing does not take money away from other portfolios such as health, education and community wellness. In the long run, spending on housing will reduce spending on health, education and community wellness Cooper (2003:1).

The Government of Canada has taken some action, which gives people in Nunavut hope that attention finally might be paid to the urgent and desperate housing needs. Inuit are encouraged that these actions might be an indication that momentum and will is developing to tackle Nunavut's housing needs.





## ANNUAL REPORT ON THE STATE OF INUIT CULTURE AND SOCIETY

The first promising development was the launch of the Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable in April 2004, which included recognition and specific focus on the needs of Inuit. Former Prime Minister Paul Martin promised at the launch of the roundtable that an Aboriginal Report Card would be developed to allow Aboriginal Canadians to measure progress roundtable commitments.

At the first session of the roundtable, former Prime Minister Martin responded to longstanding Inuit concerns about Inuit needs being overlooked amid First Nations priorities by announcing the creation of an Inuit Secretariat with DIAND. In his February 2005 *Budget Address*, former federal Finance Minister Ralph Goodale committed to funding this initiative (Government of Canada, Department of Finance, 2005:12).

In that budget address, Goodale also says housing is one of the areas where the federal government has committed to, "Closing the unacceptable gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians" (Government of Canada, Department of Finance, 2005:12).

In the spring of 2005, National Aboriginal Housing Working Group meetings were held. Inuit housing was the specific focus of a breakout group. The session produced extensive and constructive recommendations on how Inuit housing needs could be effectively addressed. The working group also notes that Inuit were actively encouraged by government authorities to move into settlements, enticed by promises of cheap housing, better medical care and education for their children. Now, overcrowded housing undermines those same social and health benefits. The group concluded that the Government of Canada must develop an Inuit-specific housing policy and strategy which recognizes that the North has additional costs and unique issues different from those found in the South, including hidden homelessness, cost of living and infrastructure, cultural and design needs.

The Government of Canada also stated they understand the links between the lack of adequate housing and serious social problems in Aboriginal communities. In the *Speech from the Throne* in October 2004, former Governor-General Adrienne Clarkson described the tragic incidences of fetal alcohol syndrome and teen suicide as, "...The intolerable consequences of the yawning gaps that separate so many Aboriginal people from other Canadians – unacceptable gaps in education attainment, in employment, in basics like housing

and clean water, and in the incidence of chronic diseases such as diabetes" (Government of Canada, Privy Council Office, 2004:1).

Inuit were given some signs of hope that Aboriginal housing needs were beginning to gain the attention of federal financial planners. However, the 2005 federal budget did not provide any housing dollars for Inuit. Although \$295 million was allocated for Aboriginal housing, those funds were geared to housing for on-reserve First Nations. As the National Anti-Poverty Organization states, "There was some money for Aboriginal housing, but this was limited to on-reserve projects. This means that these funds will not address the serious housing crisis in Inuit communities or the large number of Aboriginal people who live off-reserve or in urban areas, where more than half of Aboriginal people live" (National Anti-Poverty Organization, 2005:1).

In June 2005, after an agreement was reached between the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party, Bill C-48 was introduced and passed in the House of Commons. Bill C-48 included a provision to allocate up to \$1.6 billion from the current fiscal year surplus to the 2005 budget, "For affordable housing, including housing for aboriginal Canadians" (Government of Canada, Parliament of Canada, 2005:1). However, with the fall of the government in December 2005, that commitment has fallen by the wayside

### Take the First Steps to Implement the Nunavut Ten-Year Inuit Housing Action Plan

Inuit have many suggestions on how to improve the delivery of social housing programs in Nunavut. First, fund the Inuit and Northern housing package. This will partly meet the goals of the *Nunavut Ten Year Inuit Housing Action Plan*. In addition, over the next six years, build 1,000 new family units, renovate or expand another 1,000 units, and build 600 to 800 single units for Elders and youth. It is particularly hard for Elders and youth to find adequate and affordable housing. As previously stated, since submitting the *Nunavut Ten-Year Inuit Housing Action Plan*, there is a need for an additional 600 units in Nunavut.



Since there is a strong correlation between housing and other aspects of social and cultural development (particularly health, education and community well-being), and whereas the majority of Nunavut's population is under 25 years of age, there must be Nunavut-specific discussion and policy review at the territorial and federal levels between authorities in housing, education, health and justice.

Items for discussion should include:

- The development of a training strategy so Inuit can be involved in all aspects of house construction.
- An exploration of alternative and sustainable housing construction. For example, if Inuit do not have ready access to wood to build houses, what indigenous materials can be used?
- A discussion of cooperative housing projects and construction of more multi-unit housing projects to cut down on overall costs.
- How can authorities in housing and health work together to create housing that is beneficial to the Inuit way of life and appropriate for the Arctic climate? What input can the GN Department of Health and Social Services have on the design of Nunavut housing?

There must be a clear definition of the roles the federal, territorial and municipal governments play with regard to all aspects of housing. The federal government must provide funding and general guidelines for spending, and the territorial government must implement services and programs in close coordination with other government departments and agencies. Community governments must be supported to develop community plans which include serviced lots for building housing units that best suit population needs.

## Recommendation # 1:

### Confirming Canada's Commitment to an Inuit and Northern Housing Package

It is recommended that a multi-year initiative for social housing in Nunavut be developed and acted upon as soon as possible. Nunavut's economy will start to prosper and the housing crisis will be diminished. Canada must promptly identify the necessary financial resources within the federal fiscal framework to meet transportation and logistical challenges in the 2006/07 construction year.

## Recommendation # 2:

### Holding a Roundtable Housing Summit in Nunavut

DIAND Minister Jim Prentice, CMHC Minister Diane Finley and territorial Housing Minister Olayuk Akesuk are urged to work in partnership with NTI and ITK to convene a roundtable housing summit in Nunavut to build on progress made to date by developing a concrete long-term plan to address the drastic housing shortage in Nunavut. The plan should include:

- a) On the part of Canada:
  - i) Identify immediate and long-term funds within the federal fiscal framework so that there can be immediate results and an orderly, well-planned and well-coordinated ongoing program of housing construction.
- b) On the part of the GN and the Government of Canada:
  - i) Where appropriate and consistent with Articles 24.3.1 to 24.3.3. of the NLCA, develop and implement or maintain procurement policies respecting Inuit firms for all Government of Canada and GN contracts required in Nunavut.
  - ii) Work with NEF to develop a business case for building housing in Nunavut, emphasizing:
    - Housing as a durable investment in Nunavut infrastructure and human resource capacity.
    - Nunavut housing as an investment opportunity.
    - Meaningful incentives to private homeownership.
    - Ways to leverage available public funds to present the construction of new housing as an attractive investment opportunity which will stimulate capacity building and substantial economic spin-offs in Northern and Southern Canada.
- c) On the part of the GN:
  - i) Mobilize and support appropriate GN departments and community governments to ensure that building lots and related infrastructure requirements are put in place for a range of housing types in all Nunavut communities.
  - ii) Investigate options for new technology in housing design, and new methods to deliver housing to Arctic communities in a timely and cost effective manner balanced with a design that is socially and culturally appropriate.
  - iii) Continued monitoring of community housing needs and updating of the *Nunavut Ten-Year Inuit Housing Action Plan*, as well as monitoring Nunavut's physical capital.







### Conclusion - Housing in Nunavut

Inuit in Nunavut are proud to have successfully concluded a 30-year struggle to settle the NLCA and establish a new territorial government in which Inuit culture and language will survive. In achieving self-determination, Inuit represent a beacon of hope for Indigenous peoples around the world. Full credit is given to the Government of Canada for the role they played in helping settle the NLCA and create a new public government in which Inuit are the majority. The hopes and promises which came with the NLCA and the creation of Nunavut are faltering as Inuit struggle with social problems, many of which are directly linked to overcrowded and inadequate housing. It is therefore, sad that a recent report to the United Nations Human Rights Commission on the socio-economic

conditions of Aboriginal people in Canada notes that life expectancy among Inuit is 10 years lower than other Canadians. That report described the social housing units in which Inuit live as among the smallest and most crowded in Canada (Commissioner on Human Rights, 2004:11). Inuit have documented these shortfalls in the *Nunavut Ten-Year Inuit Housing Action Plan*. The report also notes that many Inuit health indicators are getting worse and Inuit leaders are concerned that, "...The housing, education, health and suicide situation have reached crisis proportions and are not being addressed by the federal government" (Commissioner on Human Rights, 2004:11).

At the Oqota Emergency Shelter – from left: Quyuq Pudlat, Kingwatsia Qinnuajuak, Geno Kidlapik and employees Elyyah Kilabuk and Nuna Michael.



María Oucqsuut





Maria Ougsuut

*The high price of real estate in Nunavut makes home ownership extremely difficult.*



Maria Ougsuut

*Many things contribute to homelessness: the high cost of rent, unemployment, substance-abuse, family problems, and outstanding debts with local housing authorities.*





# APPENDIX I – UPDATES ON OTHER SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES

## Education

### Education in Nunavut: An Unfamiliar School System

One of the strongest accomplishments Inuit attained with the signing of the NLCA and the creation of Nunavut was total authority over the education system in Nunavut. Nunavut is in a unique position in that it is entitled to create a made-in-Nunavut curriculum for the population. Few Aboriginal populations in Canada or the world have such authority. The education system is for Inuit to shape and mould. Through it, children can be given a strong foundation in Inuit language and culture, equipping them for the future, building pride, and supporting them in their own cultural and ancestral identity. While this potential exists, the reality is that 75 per cent of Inuit drop out of school, Inuktitut is not the language of instruction and there are not enough Inuit teachers to meet the demand. Nunavut is literally failing its students. A complete transformation of the education system is needed.

### The Statistics

Statistics Canada (2003:1) reports that:

- In 2001, 85.6 per cent of the total Inuit population in Nunavut spoke Inuktitut as a first language. (Inuktitut, the language of Inuit, refers to all dialects of the language, including Inuinnaqtun).
- 79.2 per cent of Inuit stated that Inuktitut was the only or main language usually spoken at home.
- The 2001 *Aboriginal Household Survey* found that 97 per cent of Inuit believe it is important to teach children Inuktitut in school.
- The same survey found that 96 per cent of Inuit think it is important to speak Inuktitut, and 91 per cent of Inuit believed it was important to speak English, though it was not considered as essential as speaking Inuktitut.
- Graduation rates in Nunavut are at 25.6 per cent, in comparison to 76 per cent in the rest of Canada.
- As of 2000, 75 per cent of elementary school teachers did not speak Inuktitut fluently in Nunavut. English is

the primary language of instruction for Grades 5 to 12 and the majority of high school teachers did not speak Inuktitut fluently (Government of Nunavut, 2000).

- Over the last 30 years, the Nunavut Teacher Education Program (NTEP) offered at Nunavut Arctic College graduated 300 Inuit teachers qualified to teach Kindergarten to Grade 3. This is an average of 10 graduates per year.

### The Present Situation

While there is a strong desire for a made-in-Nunavut education system, the current system teaches Inuktitut only from Kindergarten to Grade 3. Grades 4 to 12 are offered only in English. The curriculum is based on Alberta curriculum standards and attempts are made to incorporate Inuit culture by adding on-the-land programs when funding is available.

It is important to note the difference between integration of Inuktitut, and the transformation of the education system entirely. Authorities are trying to integrate Inuit culture and Inuktitut into an existing curriculum. Integration into an existing curriculum does not eradicate systemic barriers -- it masks them. In order to ensure Inuit create a made-in-Nunavut school system, the curriculum must be firmly based in Inuit culture and language. Inuit must completely transform the system.

### Inuktitut as Language of Instruction

Students in the English/Inuktitut stream struggle to catch up with English stream students. It is a common misconception for parents to conclude that instruction offered in Inuktitut results in a lower quality of education. This is not the case. It is not the language of instruction in question, but the lack of adequate resources including Inuktitut materials, curriculum, programs and teachers, which leads to a lower quality of education (Government of Nunavut, 2000:21-25).

When we educate our children in English after Grade 3, what kind of message do we send them?







Maria Ougstuit

*Inuit manage to survive the harsh Arctic winter in incredibly substandard housing.*



Maria Ougstuit

*Despite a construction boom, the housing shortage is not easing up.*







Does it mean we think English is more important than Inuktitut? We must be as assertive in using Inuktitut as the Francophones in Quebec were in using French. Francophones entrenched their language and culture into Quebec law, knowing this was the way to preserve their language and culture in Canada. French is the language of instruction in the Quebec curriculum from primary to post-secondary levels. Francophones living in Iqaluit also have the luxury of learning in their first language. We must learn from their success.

Greenland, an Inuit Home Rule Government, experienced similar linguistic circumstances to Nunavut. The Danish colonial government legislated Danish as Greenland's official language in the 1950s, causing Kalaallisut (Greenlandic language) to become an endangered language. Since the 1970s, when Greenland pushed for and won self-governance, there were several important initiatives to revive the language. It was recently announced that Kalaallisut is no longer endangered. Greenlandic schools offer Kalaallisut as a first language of instruction and a school subject from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Danish and English are taught as second and third languages. Kalaallisut is also offered as a topic in medicine and journalism programs at Ilisimatusarfik, a university in Nuuk, Greenland. The Oqaasileriffik, the Greenlandic language institution, on par with L'Academie française in France, has produced textbooks in chemistry, biology, physics and other subjects over the last ten years. Kalaallisut immersion was critical in reaching the stage of language fluency Greenland enjoys today. Although Greenland has 20 years more experience with its Home Rule Government than Nunavut, they prove that where there is political and public will, Aboriginal languages survive in modern times.

*Pinasuaqtavut*, a document outlining the GN's current mandate, states that Inuktitut will be the working language of the GN by 2020. This was first promised by the GN when it was created in 1999, and it is a guiding principle of the GN Department of Education. Achieving this goal is impossible if students are not taught in their first language and encouraged to use it for all purposes.

### Nunavut Teacher Education Program

There is a severe shortage of Inuktitut-speaking qualified teachers in Nunavut. NTEP is not producing Inuktitut-speaking teachers at a fast enough rate, having produced less than 300 Inuktitut-speaking teachers in 30 years. There are conflicting opinions on how many teachers are needed to offer a Kindergarten to Grade 12 program of instruction in Inuktitut.

According to 1997 Government of Northwest Territories' numbers, 317 teachers were needed by 2005. *Aajiiqatigiingniq, A Report on Language of Instruction*, announced the need for 230 new teachers. This number appears to be low because it does not take into account population growth and loss of Inuit teachers as they reach retirement or pursue new careers. If Nunavut is to achieve the goal of 85 per cent Inuit employment in the education system as set out in Article 23 of the NLCA, an adequate number of qualified Inuit teachers are required. To attain the GN goal of Inuktitut as the working language of government by 2020, today's children must grow up speaking Inuktitut, meaning it needs to be the base of the education system. A review of NTEP is currently under way, but additional funds are needed to allow NTEP to serve Nunavut's needs.

### Inuit Language and Culture as the Base for Curriculum Development

Nunavut's education system has a paradoxical and challenging function. It must produce students who succeed within the Euro-Canadian model of learning, but must also transmit Inuit culture and language in a manner that ensures the sustainability of Inuit society.

As stated earlier, there is a fundamental difference between integrating Inuktitut and transforming the education system to enable all subjects to be delivered from an Inuit perspective.

The GN Department of Education currently faces several obstacles in developing the necessary Inuktitut curriculum resources and programs from Kindergarten to Grade 12. First, there is a lack of funding and qualified staff to conduct and apply the work. The GN Curriculum Division in Arviat has worked diligently for the past six years to develop an exciting, new curriculum based on Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit with input from Inuit cultural and linguistic experts from all regions of Nunavut. Results are starting to be seen at the secondary level. New courses were implemented in secondary schools in the past few years, including Inuktitut Language Arts for Grades 10 to 12 and a new course called *Aulajaaqtut* (Wellness) for Grades 10 to 12. Currently, the focus is shifting to curriculum projects related to elementary schools, including Grades 1 to 3 math curriculum and theme units and teaching aids. However, even though the production of new curriculum materials are welcome, a model for language instruction has not been developed, and the resource support for implementation of the new curriculum materials and programs is lacking.



There are only 14 years left for the GN to meet its goals in *Pinasuaqtavut*. The entire education system must be changed, and expensive curriculum and educational materials must be developed. Developing new curriculum will require significant resources to ensure that teachers are supported to properly implement the material. A properly funded plan for implementing curriculum is essential.

## The Nunavut Education Act

Bill 1, the *Nunavut Education Act*, passed second reading in the Legislative Assembly in April 2002, but was withdrawn in 2003 following public consultation. Several groups and institutions, including NTI, strongly criticized the Bill for not supporting Inuit language rights, and favouring the teaching of English.

Canada's *Constitution Act* provides English-speaking citizens of Canada with the right to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in English. French-speaking citizens of Canada also have the right to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in French. Inuit in Nunavut should also be entitled to receive instruction from Kindergarten to Grade 12 in Inuktitut.

Work on a Bill for a new *Education Act* is being revived by the Department of Education. A steering committee involving NTI and a working group with Regional Inuit Associations (RIAs) was created to discuss the new Bill. The Department of Education is consulting with all Nunavut communities and all District Education Authorities. The *Education Act* will be a working document shared between the Department of Education, the steering committee and the working group with the final draft estimated to be ready by fall of 2006. As was the case with the last proposed Education Bill, NTI will not endorse it unless Inuit language rights and an education system based on Inuit culture are clearly included. It is hoped that the new *Education Act* will also give Inuit parents more authority in the delivery of all school programs.

## Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy

NTI and the GN Department of Education co-chair the *Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy* working group. The group will set out a number of recommendations to improve adult education at all levels, including the education offered at Nunavut Arctic College.

The purpose of the strategy is to establish GN priorities on the types of learning needed in Nunavut. At present, the working group agrees that the greatest need is to improve literacy rates in Inuktitut, English and French.

NTI's focus is to help develop a culturally and linguistically relevant adult learning environment in Nunavut. We must concentrate on getting more Inuit instructors in order to meet the objectives of NLCA Article 23, and we must focus on meeting the linguistic needs of Inuit. The *Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy* will contain recommendations on how to change the current Western-based adult learning environment into a learning environment based on Inuit language and culture.

Public consultations on the draft *Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy* will be completed by the spring of 2006. Working groups will then be established to implement the recommendations made in the strategy.

## The Status of Recommendations Made in 2002/2003

- The federal government should commit \$3.5 million per year for 10 years to the development and implementation of Inuktitut curriculum.
- UPDATE: Under NTI's initiative, work was completed to prepare NTI and GN to approach the federal government, but nothing concrete has been achieved.
- NTI, GN and the federal government should meet within the next year to plan for implementation of Kindergarten to Grade 12 Inuktitut schooling, including qualified teachers and appropriate curriculum by 2010.
- UPDATE: NTI has participated in curriculum development sessions for the past six years, but progress has been slow in implementing the new curriculum materials.
- GN, in consultation with NTI, should review NTEP to determine how it can produce more teachers at a faster rate without compromising professional standards.
- UPDATE: NTI and GN met to review NTEP. A full set of recommendations is nearing completion.





## ANNUAL REPORT ON THE STATE OF INUIT CULTURE AND SOCIETY

- GN should take appropriate steps to introduce Inuktitut at the preschool level.
- UPDATE: NTI would like to see GN develop a more aggressive approach to developing materials, resources and programs for preschools. NTI also wishes for more Inuktitut-speaking preschool staff, and a directive to use Inuktitut in the classroom. The lack of Inuktitut usage in the classroom is an ongoing reported problem.
- GN, in consultation with communities and NTI, should undertake a comprehensive review of the current education system to ensure it reflects Inuit culture, values and language and make changes as required.
- UPDATE: This has not been accomplished, although this may be achieved through *Education Act* consultations currently under way.
- Nunavut should implement skills-based assessment and certification for trades and apprentices, as other provinces have done.
- UPDATE: NTI and the GN are currently developing a *Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy* to set priorities for adult education.

### Further Recommendations

- NTI calls on the Government of Canada to provide adequate funding to support Inuktitut by allocating adequate financial resources to education and language in Nunavut.
- NTI calls on Nunavut's Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) to give direction to GN to support Inuktitut by allocating the necessary educational funds and by ensuring that:
- GN allocates adequate human and financial resources to start developing and implementing an Inuktitut-based education system.
- The new Education Bill entrenches Inuktitut rights.
- The GN allocates adequate resources to NTEP to produce more Inuktitut-speaking teachers.
- NTEP expands by increasing accessibility to the program in communities by introducing access years for potential students who are ineligible for NTEP, and addressing the student housing crisis which prevents people from entering NTEP.

- Establish recruitment programs for potential teachers.
- Refocus NTEP so the program produces Kindergarten to Grade12 Inuit teachers.
- The GN Department of Education starts comprehensively implementing Inuktitut curriculum developed by the Arviat Curriculum Division.

## Language

### Inuktitut: The Language of a Founding People in Canada

Nunavut prides itself on having one of the strongest living Aboriginal languages in Canada. Inuktitut has made communication and dissemination of culture possible throughout the Arctic for thousands of years. However, 20th century Westernization wrought great changes, and Inuktitut has declined in use. Through systemic barriers, outright discrimination and societal pressure, some Inuit parents have given up teaching their children Inuktitut, opting instead for the seemingly more socio-economically viable English. This state of affairs must change. Linguistic loss contributes greatly to a cultural loss we cannot afford.

In a report to former Canadian Heritage Minister Liza Frulla in June 2005, ITK comments, "The use of Inuktitut in Inuit households remains very strong, however there is a noticeable decline in the use of Inuktitut; 68% of Inuit used Inuktitut most often (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2005: 68). Inuktitut has numerous dialects and is spoken mostly in the Qikiqtaaluk and Kivalliq regions of Nunavut. Inuinnaqtun is spoken in the Kitikmeot region.

Inuktitut is an Indigenous language of Canada and the federal government must consider it differently than the diverse languages new Canadians bring with them from around the world. Inuktitut has an historical link to the land and culture. As proud as we are of the wide variety of languages Canadians speak, the Government of Canada must recognize the paramount importance of preserving and promoting Indigenous languages.

We must build support for Inuktitut through numerous public programs, legislation and education initiatives. Parents must be encouraged to speak Inuktitut at home. This is the only way Inuktitut can survive.



## The Statistics (Statistics Canada, 2003:1)

- 85 per cent of Nunavut's population is Inuit.
- Out of a total Inuit population of 22,560 in 2001, 85.6 per cent identified Inuktitut as their first language.
- For 72.4 per cent of the Inuit population, Inuktitut was the first language learned and still understood.
- 79.2 per cent of Inuit stated that Inuktitut was the only or main language spoken at home.
- As low as 46.5 per cent of Inuit in Iqaluit, Nunavut speak Inuktitut at home.
- Most alarmingly, only 0.9 per cent of Inuit mainly speak Inuinnaqtun at home.
- 81.7 per cent of Inuit in Iqaluit and 77.2 per cent of Inuit in other Nunavut communities stated they mix English and Inuktitut, at least occasionally.
- 42 per cent of Inuit stated they had difficulty receiving services in their preferred language from the federal government.
- 29 per cent of Inuit stated they had difficulty receiving services in their preferred language from the GN.

## The Nunavut Official Languages Act

Nunavut's current *Official Languages Act* is adopted from the Northwest Territories. It sets out the languages that can be used in the Legislative Assembly, the courts and in the delivery of government services. The Act also designates the powers of the territorial Languages Commissioner. The *Official Languages Act* outlines the GN's responsibility to promote, develop and support the vitality of official languages.

Once Nunavut develops its own *Official Languages Act*, it is likely that Inuktitut, French and English will be declared official languages. Special status may be given to Inuinnaqtun, a dialect of Inuktitut. NTI is primarily concerned with the promotion, development and support for Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun. Legislation must reflect the linguistic reality in Nunavut by promoting and preserving Inuktitut, and allowing it to flourish and develop. NTI underscores the need to incorporate the *Official Languages Act* into the education system. Inuktitut also belongs in the workplace, in the federal and territorial governments, municipalities and the private sector. The current *Official Languages Act* does not include provisions for those sectors. The court system and the medical field must also consistently provide Inuktitut services to ensure Inuit understand their legal rights and are able to receive medical treatment they understand.

Although Inuit have the right to access Inuktitut, creating the infrastructure and training to sustain it is difficult. One of the fundamental assumptions underlying the creation of Nunavut was that the new government would respect, preserve and enhance Inuit language and culture.

## Inuit Language Protection Act

NTI and the Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut strongly recommended the establishment of an *Inuit Language Protection Act* to protect Inuit language speakers from discrimination in the workplace, and to ensure language education rights. The *Official Languages Act* in Nunavut must conform to the federal *Nunavut Act*, which allows Nunavut to pass laws to protect Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun provided those laws do not detract from the existing rights of English and French speakers (*Nunavut Act*, Sections 23 and 38).

NTI has undertaken significant work to lobby the federal government to include Inuktitut as an official language of Canada. To date, this has presented a considerable challenge as it requires significant changes to be made to the existing federal *Official Languages Act*, a situation that provides a clear justification for a Nunavut-specific *Inuit Language Protection Act*.

## Inuit Language Authority

The role of the proposed Inuit Language Authority is to establish terminology in Nunavut. Some threatened languages are protected this way, but it is especially necessary in Nunavut if the GN is to achieve their goal of Inuktitut as the working language of government by 2020.

## Day-care Centres

Before Inuit engaged in the wage economy, family members cared for children. Now, parents often take their children to day-care centres. There is little government funding available to ensure day-care centres provide programs that are culturally sensitive and foster the use of Inuktitut. Currently, the majority of day-care centres operate in English, though the majority of children are Inuit. Unless the majority of day-care centre workers speak Inuktitut fluently, it is difficult to provide Inuit-specific programs.







### The Kitikmeot Region: the Inuinnaqtun Crisis must be Addressed Strategically

Four communities in Nunavut's Kitikmeot region speak a dialect of Inuktitut called Inuinnaqtun: Cambridge Bay, Kugluktuk, Umingmaktuuq and Kingaut. The situation in the Kitikmeot is dire because of the severe language loss taking place. Only 0.9 per cent of Inuit in these communities speak Inuinnaqtun at home, and children often use English as their first language.

While there are active individuals who devote their time trying to reverse this situation, it will take more resources than currently exist. It will take the willingness of the entire region to make a difference. Most importantly, the GN needs to develop and implement a strategy to revitalize Inuinnaqtun. Furthermore, the federal government needs to take responsibility and provide financial support for Inuinnaqtun revitalization. If nothing is done, Inuinnaqtun is in danger of becoming lost.

### Federal Government Role: Funding Inuktitut

The main source of federal funding for Inuktitut is the Canada-Nunavut General Agreement on the Promotion of French and Inuktitut Languages. The primary purpose of this agreement is to allocate funds to the GN so it can provide government services in French. The agreement says that English and French are the only official languages of Canada, and Canada is committed to the full recognition of the equality of those languages in Nunavut. As Inuktitut does not have status from the federal government's perspective, it has steadfastly refused to allocate funds to the GN to assist the GN to provide government services in Inuktitut. In an effort to move the federal government toward giving Inuktitut equal status with English and French, the GN refused to sign a multi-year cooperation agreement with Canada. Instead, interim agreements are signed every year, resulting in delays in the availability of Inuktitut community funding programs.

### The Status of Recommendations Made in 2002/03

#### Official Languages Act

- The Government of Nunavut should appoint a Minister Responsible for Inuktitut Language Services to implement the *Official Languages Act*.
- UPDATE: NTI and the GN sit on a joint steering committee to amend the *Official Languages Act* and have recommended that provisions be included to designate a cabinet minister responsible for the implementation of the legislation. Further recommendations include a requirement for the designated cabinet minister to table an annual report to the Legislative Assembly on the GN's implementation of the *Official Languages Act* and the *Inuit Language Protection Act*.
- GN should allow written and oral comments (in keeping with Inuit tradition), concerning the *Official Languages Act* to be filed with the Official Languages Commissioner.
- UPDATE: The Office of the Languages Commissioner allows oral comments to be documented by staff. Written complaints are not a requirement.
- GN should expand the role of the Office of the Languages Commissioner to give it more power and responsibility.
- UPDATE: NTI and the GN have recommended the Languages Commissioner's authority be raised to a level equal to other independent officers of the Legislative Assembly. The Languages Commissioner's authority would include the ability to compel witnesses to appear, and the power to require the GN to respond to recommendations by a certain time.
- GN should extend the term of the current Languages Commissioner.
- UPDATE: The previous Languages Commissioner resigned her position to pursue other opportunities. A new Languages Commissioner is now in place.





Maria Ougstuit

*Iqaluit resident Jacobee Adamie says the demand for housing grows every year, and that it is difficult to determine the number of homeless people in Nunavut.*



Maria Ougstuit

*Josephie Teemootee of Iqaluit, Nunavut takes care of his daily chores.*



### ***Inuit Language Protection Act***

- GN should enact an *Inuit Language Protection Act* to protect, promote and expand the use of Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun.
- UPDATE: NTI and the GN Nunavut have recommended that an *Inuit Language Protection Act* be established with provisions to have the right to work in Inuktitut, and the right to have children educated in Inuktitut. Further provisions would include incentive programs for businesses and non-governmental organizations to comply with the enforcement of the legislation, and the establishment of an Inuit Language Authority responsible for developing, approving and promoting terminology.
- The *Inuit Language Protection Act* should allow all communities to operate in Inuktitut and English. In Iqaluit, where there is a large French-speaking population, services and signage could also be provided in French.
- UPDATE: NTI and the GN have recommended that Inuktitut, English and French be designated as official languages in Nunavut. Inuinnaqtun should be given special status.
- GN should appoint Inuktitut, English and French as the official languages of Nunavut, and give special status to Inuinnaqtun. This will prevent discrimination against Inuktitut speakers.
- UPDATE: NTI and GN have recommended that an *Inuit Language Protection Act* be established for the purpose of preventing discrimination against Inuktitut speakers in places of employment, education or in receiving services from government or private businesses.
- GN should establish an Inuktitut committee under the *Inuit Language Protection Act* for the purpose of promoting Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit, and seeking agreements, contracts and treaties with other jurisdictions inside and outside Canada.
- UPDATE: NTI and GN have recommended that an Inuit Language Authority be established in Nunavut to develop new terminology for Nunavut. The Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut made recommendations for the structure and mandate of the Inuit Language Authority.

### **Program Development**

- GN should provide adequate funding for the development of Kindergarten to Grade 12 Inuktitut curriculum
- UPDATE: The GN increased their Inuktitut curriculum development budget by \$776,000 in 2005/06. GN has approved a Curriculum Development Plan for bilingual education but it must be adequately funded and implemented in each region of Nunavut.
- GN should require all signage, announcements, notices, road signs and commercial signs to be in Inuktitut and English, and French where warranted.
- UPDATE: NTI and the GN have recommended that all new exterior and interior public signs include Inuktitut, in addition to other languages. It is recommended that Inuktitut be equally as prominent as other languages. It is further recommended that all existing permanent interior and exterior signs include Inuktitut.
- GN should create an Inuktitut Language Authority to develop legal, political and scientific terminologies in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun.



Maria Ougsuut

Many public housing units are in need of serious repairs and renovations. Iqaluit, Nunavut resident Akegoo Ekho has lived in this house for over 14 years.



- UPDATE: NTI and GN have recommended that an Inuit Language Authority be established in Nunavut to develop new terminology. The Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut made recommendations for the structure and mandate of the Inuit Language Authority.
- GN should provide in-depth Inuktitut language courses for Inuit and non-Inuit. The current two-week Inuktitut course is inadequate.
- UPDATE: NTI and GN co-chair the *Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy* working group that will provide a number of Inuit language and culture-based recommendations regarding adult learning in Nunavut.
- GN should provide training to familiarize new employees with Inuktitut vocabulary and terminology to encourage the use of Inuktitut in the workplace.
- UPDATE: NTI and GN co-chair the *Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy* working group that will provide a number of Inuit language and culture-based recommendations regarding adult learning in Nunavut.

### Further Recommendations

- The Government of Canada must provide adequate financial resources to enable the GN to provide adequate services in Inuktitut.
- Programs must be set up to encourage the use of Inuktitut at home.
- New programs and funding announcements for childcare should have specific requirements for Aboriginal children. While childcare is available in most communities in Nunavut, it is difficult to secure Inuktitut-speaking, culturally relevant day care services.
- GN must establish and implement detailed plans to reach their goal of using Inuktitut as the working language of government by 2020. GN needs to build support for Inuktitut through programs, policies, legislation, education and community initiatives.
- The *Official Languages Act* must raise the status of Inuktitut in the education system, governments, the workplace, the private sector, non-government institutions, the court system and medical field.
- An *Inuit Languages Protection Act* must be established to protect Inuit language speakers from discrimination in the workplace, and to secure the right for education in Inuktitut.
- GN must establish an Inuit Language Authority whose role would be to establish terminology in Nunavut.

## Health

Inuit in Nunavut suffer from poorer health than Canadians in other parts of the country because of poor housing conditions, a lack of up-to-date and relevant research, poor access to health services, and a lack of health education. Health care in Nunavut is a large and complicated field. NTI is committed to improving the health of Inuit by participating in all aspects of health policy affecting Inuit, including the drafting of the *Public Health Act*, working with the Nunavut Midwifery Association, and making recommendations to DIAND's Food Mail Program.

### The Statistics (Government of Nunavut, Comparative Health Indicators, 2002:9-12)

#### Life Expectancy

- In 2001, Nunavut's life expectancy was 68.7 years of age, while in the rest of Canada, it was 79.3 years of age.
- The average lifespan for Inuit women is 14 years lower than the general Canadian population.

#### Infant Mortality

- In 2001, there were 13.9 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in Nunavut, while the rate in the rest of Canada was 4.4/1,000.

#### Suicide

- Suicide rates in Nunavut are six times the national average (National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2005:10).
- The Chief Coroner's Office of Nunavut (2005:1) reports that:
  - There have been 165 suicides in Nunavut since 1999.
  - Approximately 87 per cent of suicides were committed by male Inuit between 14-24 years of age.
  - As of June 2005, there were 10 suicides in Nunavut, compared to 19 suicides in 2003.

#### Weight and physical activity

(Government of Nunavut, Diabetes, 2002:v)

- In 2000, 30.7 per cent of Nunavummiut were overweight, and 23 per cent were obese.
- Nearly 50 per cent of Nunavummiut were physically inactive in 2000.







### Respiratory Health

(Government of Nunavut, Comparative Health Indicators, 2002:7, 13)

- The tuberculosis rate in Nunavut is 17 times the Canadian average.
- In 2001, Nunavut experienced a rate of 209.5/100,000 deaths due to lung cancer. This is compared to the national rate of 48.2/100,000
- In 2001, 46.3 per cent of the population between 12-19 years of age was daily or occasional smokers.
- In 2003, over 65 per cent of Nunavummiut over 15 years of age were smokers. (Government of Nunavut, 2002:v)

### Our Work

The following description outlines the committees, programs, activities and working groups NTI participates in to ensure Inuit input in government policy in the health sector. Through these mechanisms, NTI strives to improve the quality of life for Inuit in Nunavut.

### Evaluation Advisory Committee - Federal Contribution Agreement

The Evaluation Advisory Committee consists of NTI, GN's Department of Health and Social Services and Health Canada (Northern Secretariat). This committee was created to steer the evaluation process of the contribution agreement programs.

Currently, a contribution agreement exists between Health Canada and the GN. In 2003/04, an \$11 million contribution agreement was signed to deliver programs, including Brighter Futures, Building Healthy Communities (mental health), Building Healthy Communities (solvent abuse), Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program, National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program, Tobacco Control Strategy, Home and Community Care, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative.

The Evaluation Advisory Committee's goal is to have an independent firm review and bring forward recommendations on the benefits and effectiveness of the contribution agreement programs.

In the past, NTI was not included in the negotiation and consultation process of the contribution agreement programs. Consequently, Nunavut's Inuit population was not fully represented. Under NLCA Article 32, the federal and territorial governments are obligated to consult with Inuit on all social and cultural policies and programs, including health.

NTI hopes that recommendations made through the evaluation process will bring NTI to an appropriate participation level as required by NLCA Article 32.

### Nunavut Addictions Survey

In 2003, an addictions survey was completed in provinces in Canada. Another survey is planned for Nunavut. The survey gives an indication of the number of people in Nunavut who are addicted to tobacco, alcohol and drugs. This is the first time a survey of this type will be conducted in Nunavut. The information gathered will help design Nunavut-specific programs and services. However, the Nunavut Addictions Survey is stalled because NTI, Statistics Canada and the GN cannot agree on the methodology. NTI is concerned that while the methodology may be effective in other parts of Canada, it will not result in sufficient participation in Nunavut. Government would like to do the survey by telephone, but NTI has pointed out that telephone surveys do not work well in Nunavut because of cultural and linguistic barriers between the interviewer and the interviewee. Statistics Canada has since referred the project to the Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, and there have been no further developments on the survey.

### Public Health Act

Nunavut's current *Public Health Act* was adopted from the Northwest Territories. It was established in 1957. There is a need to create a made-in-Nunavut *Public Health Act* as the current legislation does not reflect Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit or modern needs like responsiveness to major outbreaks or other public health emergencies. The purpose of the *Public Health Act* is to promote, protect and enhance the health and well-being of Nunavummiut, while incorporating Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit in-service delivery and design. NTI wants Inuit to be heard during the creation of the legislation, and is trying to find ways to ensure NTI and the RIAs are present at the discussions.

### Health Research Review Committee

The Health Research Review Committee is designed to help Nunavummiut keep better track of health research in Nunavut. It is mandated to review research applications made through the Nunavut Research Institute. The committee was developed by the GN Department of Health and Social Services. NTI participates in the committee with GN policy makers, the GN's Chief Health and Environmental Health Medical Officer, and other health and social services staff. NTI has become aware that more follow up is needed





Maria Oqupsuut

*Iqaluit-based Qimaavik Transition House Executive Director Napatchie McRae provides shelter for women who are victims of violence in Nunavut.*



Maria Oqupsuut

*A room at the Oqota Emergency Shelter in Iqaluit, Nunavut.*





when research is completed in Nunavut. It is also important to ensure that when conducting research, local resources, businesses and workers are used so communities receive the maximum benefit from the research process. NTI will continue to participate in this committee so Inuit are not unethically affected by research in Nunavut. NTI would also like to ensure research results are brought back to the community so more local knowledge is gained.

### **National Inuit Committee on Health**

This committee is mandated by ITK to consult with Inuit regions in Canada on national health issues. One topic before the committee is the \$700 million former Prime Minister Martin announced for Aboriginal health. The money is to be directed toward suicide prevention, diabetes, maternal child health, early childhood development, a health transition fund, and a human resources health strategy for Aboriginal populations. NTI has provided input as to how the money should be spent in Nunavut.

### **Non-Insured Health Benefits**

NTI is involved in bilateral discussions with Health Canada on Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) for Inuit in Nunavut. Health Canada shares information about initiatives, and NTI relays concerns from Inuit. Items discussed include the Medical Transportation Policy Framework, the NIHB Privacy Code, program expenditures and cost projections, delivery model studies and Inuit-specific dental delivery options.

### **Food Mail Program**

DIAND runs the Food Mail Program. Fresh food is delivered by Canada Post to isolated Northern communities at subsidized rates. This program was initiated because many communities suffer from high food prices and low quality food products. The program has been available in some parts of the Arctic for 30 years, although it was introduced to some communities as recently as 1991. There have been problems with the Food Mail Program. The entry points chosen for food from Southern Canada are not always economically viable. Not all businesses are interested in shipping food because of the prohibitive costs. This is a particular problem for the Kivalliq region of Nunavut because the only entry point is Churchill, Manitoba. NTI wants to ensure healthy, fresh, affordable food is available to Inuit in Nunavut. NTI monitors developments in the Food Mail Program and provides advice on how to improve the service.

### **Suicide Prevention**

NTI participated as a lead organization in the establishment of Isaksimagit Inuusirmik Katujjiqatigiit – the Embrace Life Council in Nunavut. The council is a registered society in Canada and Nunavut. The council is mandated to coordinate suicide prevention and community wellness initiatives, and to provide training to volunteers, teachers, and police officers to increase awareness of youth at risk of suicide. NTI helps in the operation of the council by providing expertise on suicide prevention and intervention. NTI is in consultation with the GN and RIAs to maintain the council. NTI also provides financial and in-kind support, and is seeking ways to find more funding for the society to continue its work.

### **Health Integration Initiative**

The Health Integration Initiative will lead to the development of an action plan in Nunavut for increased integration of federal and territorial health promotion and illness prevention programs, and services in the areas of dental health, addictions treatment, and maternal and child health. It will also lay the groundwork for the development of a territorial addictions treatment centre with community outreach capabilities. NTI has engaged in negotiations with Health Canada's (Northern Secretariat) and the GN about the Health Integration Initiative. As a result, a contribution agreement was approved by all parties, effective February 2005. NTI and GN are working to ensure a relevant outcome will benefit Inuit in Nunavut. NTI has hired a project coordinator for this initiative. NTI will review existing programs to identify duplications and gaps in services, develop an action plan for further integration between federal and territorial programs, develop culturally-based addictions treatment program models, and support increased community capacity by fostering greater confidence in self care.



Courtesy of Clyde River

*The housing shortage negatively impacts all aspects of Inuit life.*



## **Inuit Diabetes Network, Inuit Tobacco Network**

NTI participates in the Inuit Diabetes Network and the Inuit Tobacco Network with ITK, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Labrador Inuit Health Commission, Pauktuutit, the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services and the National Inuit Youth Council. At present, NTI works with the RIAs on diabetes awareness. NTI also works with the GN Department of Health and Social Services on the Minister's Youth Action Team on Tobacco. This group, comprised of 25 youth from Nunavut, was initiated because of the high number of young smokers. Topics the group covers include tobacco cessation, harm reduction, mass media campaigns, and leadership and presentation skills. Funds for the youth action team are not secured for 2005/06, but NTI continues to work with the GN to move the project forward.

## **Healthy Living Strategy**

NTI participates in the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program and the Drop the Pop Campaign Working Group as part of the Healthy Living Strategy. The prenatal nutrition program aims to improve maternal and infant nutritional health by providing a greater depth of service to mothers earlier in their pregnancy, and for a longer period of time after giving birth. Particular focus is directed toward mothers and infants considered high risk.

The Drop the Pop Campaign targets children and adults in Nunavut to raise awareness about tooth decay, obesity and diabetes.

## **Nunavut Midwifery Association**

Currently, all midwives in Nunavut are members of the Northwest Territories Midwifery Association, which is under the direction of the Government of the Northwest Territories. The midwifery centre in Rankin Inlet leads the process of creating a Nunavut Midwifery Association. NTI wants to play a supporting role in the development of a successful Nunavut-based midwifery association that incorporates Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit.

## **Qauma Mobile Treatment Project**

The Qauma Mobile Treatment Project addresses the impact of residential schools on former students from Nunavut. The project provides opportunities for former students to share their experiences and support each other as they heal from the impact of attending residential school, and its intergenerational effects. The project also promotes activities to reclaim relationships severed by residential school experience. In 2004, the project visited Igloodik, Taloyoak, Sanikiluaq and Chesterfield Inlet and reported positive results. Once additional funding is secured, project officials plan to visit more Nunavut communities.

## **The Status of Recommendations Made in 2002/03**

### **Policy**

- GN should incorporate a culturally appropriate healthy living curriculum, which includes smoking cessation, nutrition, active living, lifestyle choices and mental health.
- UPDATE: The GN Department of Education is working on a healthy living curriculum for Nunavut schools. The first priority is nutrition. In October 2004, the GN Department of Health and Social Services partnered with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) to host the first planning meeting of the Nunavut Healthy Living Strategy. A Nutrition Education Steering Committee was formed with representation from NTI, GN, and private industry. This group ran a successful Drop the Pop Campaign in 2005, which attracted attention across Canada. The program encourages Nunavut families to make healthier drink choices.







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- GN should adopt a practice that requires merchants to disclose the volume of cigarettes they sell each year. The Nunavut Bureau of Statistics should calculate and publish an estimate of the resources tied up in cigarette smoking each year.
- UPDATE: The GN Department of Health and Social Services is developing a monitoring and inspection strategy for the *Tobacco Control Act* and will consider this recommendation.
- GN and the federal government should promote public education programs that encourage smoking cessation.
- UPDATE: A program was initiated to educate the public on the harmful affects of tobacco, and to raise awareness about different cessation methods. Television and radio public service announcements, posters, presentations, quit kits, cessation training for health care workers, and anti-smoking legislation are some of the initiatives focused on encouraging Nunavummiut to quit using tobacco. Future considerations include establishing cessation groups in each community.
- UPDATE: The GN Department of Health and Social Services reports that this is already in place through community health centres, and community health representatives.
- GN and the federal government should work together to recruit more nursing staff to fill current vacancies.
- UPDATE: Nursing recruitment is an ongoing issue. The GN has recruited 50 international nurses to work in Nunavut.
- GN should develop a recruitment strategy to address the long-term need for nurses and other health professionals.
- UPDATE: In 2005, the GN Department of Health and Social Services is scheduled to publicly release a health human resource strategy. Its primary focus is to increase the mid-level Inuit workforce, including community health representatives and dental therapists. The strategy will support educational leave for employees. A leadership development program for nurses is also envisioned so nurses will receive management training, as well as clinical training.

### Program Development

Nunavut Arctic College should instruct education, nursing, and social work students on suicide prevention, intervention and post intervention techniques.

- UPDATE: The GN Department of Health and Social Services is supporting a two-year mental health diploma program starting in the fall of 2005.
- GN, Nunavut Arctic College, District Education Authorities and frontline service agencies should educate health and social service workers to discuss the importance of ceasing cigarette, drug and alcohol use during pregnancy.
- UPDATE: This is the primary role of community health representatives, fetal alcohol syndrome coordinators, community wellness workers, alcohol and drug workers, nurses and social workers. The GN Department of Health and Social Services will continue to promote healthy living.
- Community clinics should receive sufficient funding to promote healthy lifestyles.

### Further Recommendations

- The federal government needs an Inuit Health Directorate. NTI strongly recommends the creation of such a body because Inuit health needs, living conditions and culture are unique in Canada. Existing programs, policies and services available to other Aboriginal peoples do not meet the needs of Inuit.
- There is a need for new Nunavut and Inuit-specific statistics. Much of the existing data is out of date and irrelevant to the reality of living conditions in Nunavut. There must be consultation with Inuit and research methodologies must be culturally sensitive.
- In accordance with NLCA Article 32, Inuit organizations in Nunavut should have more control over Inuit-specific programs developed under the federal contribution agreement.

### Elders: Our Past, Present and Future

Elders are a precious part of Inuit society. They have the experience, knowledge, skills and language of our ancestors. Elders are the foundation of our families. We must make sure our Elders are heard as Nunavut



develops, and we must make sure we care for our Elders with dignity and respect. During the past year, NTI worked with the GN Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth to develop work plans which focus on Elders' strategy development, Senior's Care and Mainstream Resources. NTI also participated in the development of the New Horizons for Seniors Program.

### The Statistics

The Government of Nunavut's Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth reports (Government of Nunavut, 2004: 22) that the numbers of Elders who hold traditional knowledge are declining at a rapid rate:

- In 2001, there were 1,269 Elders alive in Nunavut.
- In 2004, there were 1,015 Elders alive in Nunavut.

### Activities

The work plans will assess the services that already exist in Nunavut, and will improve those services. Of particular interest is the Mainstream Resource. NTI and GN would like to create a one-stop service for Elders to make it easier for Elders to access information on Elders' rights, pensions, taxes, community events, medical services and housing. There are also discussions on the development of a booklet for Community Liaison Officers to use to better serve Elders.

The federally-funded New Horizons for Seniors Program focuses on local projects that encourage seniors and Elders to contribute to their communities through social participation and active living. Priorities include reducing the risk of Elders' isolation and increasing physical activity. Funding for this program does not make allowances for the high cost of living in the Arctic.

### The Status of Recommendations Made in 2002/03

- The Government of Canada, GN and municipal governments should each establish a clear role for Elders as advisors to key decision-making bodies and provide appropriate compensation for these services.
- Inuit organizations should seek Elders' advice and guidance in advance of board meetings, ensure that board and executive meetings benefit from Elders' wisdom and guidance, and invite their involvement in ongoing policy discussions related to housing, language, education, health and other key issues related to social and cultural development in Nunavut. Elders should receive appropriate compensation for their services.

- NTI should launch an NLCA Article 7 outpost camp building program that unites Elders with youth to build new camps.

### Update on recommendations:

Programs to collect Inuit traditional knowledge, oral history and Elders' knowledge continue to be a priority for NTI and GN.

### Further recommendations:

- Long-term care facilities are needed in Nunavut communities to properly care for Elders.
- Training programs are needed to properly train caregivers to work at these facilities.

### Disabilities in Nunavut: Working Uphill

Life in Nunavut can be very difficult for disabled people. Access to proper health care is expensive, the infrastructure is lacking, and the knowledge and skills to care for disabled people are not available in every community. Disabled Inuit have the right to live as well as fully able-bodied people. It is important to provide advocacy services for disabled people.

Before the creation of Nunavut, disabilities issues were coordinated by the Northwest Territories Council for the Disabled. The council was created in 1979 and covered the entire Northwest Territories. They met many times a year, both in person and by teleconference, until the creation of Nunavut in 1999. At that point, the Nunavut Council of People with Disabilities was formed with \$90,000 in funding from the GN. Unfortunately, the council disbanded in 2000 due to financial reporting problems. Since the fall of 2003, NTI has worked with various agencies to establish a Nunavut disabilities council.

### Nunavut Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society

The Nunavut Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society (NDMS) was created in March 2005 and registered as a non-profit organization under the Nunavut Societies Act. Member groups include NTI, Kitikmeot Inuit Association (KitIA), Kivalliq Inuit Association (KivIA), QIA, and GN. NTI donated office space to the society for two years and secured external funding for a researcher/coordinator for the council. The council will deal with all physical disabilities issues and help improve the well-being of physically disabled Inuit.





NDMS identified the need for solid statistics on disabilities in Nunavut. One of their first objectives is to conduct a community needs assessments in all Nunavut communities to identify the needs of disabled people. A needs assessment has never been conducted in Nunavut.

The only facility that serves the needs of physically disabled Inuit who require the highest level of care exists in Chesterfield Inlet. Inuit workers at the facility deliver health care for disabled Inuit, making it unique in Canada and a model for other facilities.

**Recommendations:**

- All GN agencies that interact with disabled Inuit should financially support NDMS as much as possible.
- Programs and services should be tailored to suit the needs of disabled Inuit. This includes providing better access to services for physically disabled persons.

**Cultural Expression - In Our Own Words, In Our Own Land**

Inuit historical, archeological, artistic and archival materials are housed in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, at the Prince of Wales Heritage Centre. Nunavut does not have its own archival centre. A Nunavut heritage centre would provide Inuit with understanding and access to Inuit cultural expression. The centre would also highlight Inuit culture for tourists. NTI is working with the GN and the Inuit Heritage Trust (IHT) to develop an implementation plan for building a heritage centre in Nunavut.

When the initial feasibility study for a heritage centre in Nunavut was completed, the study did not include the financial requirements needed for building and maintaining the centre. The working group has since hired consultants to research ways to raise money to build the centre. A final report is expected in 2006.

**Recommendations:**

- Funding for a Nunavut heritage centre should be secured immediately.

**Community Wellness**

NTI's perspective on community justice is that providing support before problems arise is as important as dealing with the after effects of actions. In order to build a healthy community, we must be proactive. The more we help one another, the less we hurt one another. NTI focuses on four areas under the community justice portfolio: adoptions, penitentiaries, family violence and participation in community justice committees.

**Activities**

**Adoptions**

NTI and the GN are developing a cultural plan for the adoption of Inuit children into non-Inuit families. The plan would be used as a guide to assist adoptive parents and adopted Inuit children with cultural needs. Until this cultural plan is implemented, the GN is considering the possibility of imposing a moratorium on out-of-territory adoptions in Nunavut.

**Statistics on Adoptions**

The GN Department of Health and Social Services reports that from 1999-2005, there were:

- 1,415 custom adoptions.
- 32 private/step adoptions.
- 90 private out-of-territory adoptions.
- Two international adoptions.
- 20 departmental adoptions (12 of which were to non-Inuit foster families in which the foster children lived for numerous years).

Custom adoptions occur when children are adopted by close family or community members. This type of adoption has always been used by Inuit. It is an informal process and the children grow up knowing their biological kin. Private adoptions are regulated by the government. Step adoptions occur when one non-biological parent becomes the adoptive parent of a spouse's child. Private out-of-territory and international adoptions are regulated adoptions that occur either outside of Nunavut or outside of Canada. Departmental adoptions are the adoption of children who were permanent wards of the state.



## Penitentiaries

NTI is developing the Kajusiniq Action Plan with justice workers from Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, Nunavik and Labrador. This plan will ensure that federally incarcerated Inuit have access to culturally sensitive programs in the North and South. Currently, Inuit prisoners participate in the same programs as First Nations and Métis prisoners. Because the cultures and experiences of Inuit, First Nations and Métis are different, and because the programs are often based on First Nations cultures, this approach does not benefit Inuit prisoners.

Officials who work with Inuit in prison are also interested in seeking out funds to provide Inuit with Inuksiutit (Inuit country food). Access to country food helps Inuit prisoners connect to their culture and homeland as they deal with their crimes and problems in a foreign institution. Correctional Service Canada has hired an Inuit support service officer at their Aboriginal Regional Headquarters. The officer covers five federal institutions and one halfway house, is securing funds for country food, and has started a cultural awareness campaign for individuals working in the system.

## Statistics on Penitentiaries

Correctional Service Canada reports that:

- Although Inuit comprise 0.1 per cent of the Canadian population, Inuit offenders account for about 1 per cent of the federal inmate population.
- There are approximately 100 Inuit offenders incarcerated in federal correctional facilities.
- Nearly all Inuit offenders are from small Arctic communities, and they plan to return to these communities once they are released from prison.
- Most Inuit offenders speak Inuktitut as a first language.
- Most Inuit offenders are incarcerated for violent offences, primarily of a sexual nature, and most are at risk of family violence.
- Many Inuit offenders have similar backgrounds - high incidences of substance abuse, a criminal history, violence in the home and failure to complete high school.

## Family Violence

NTI's work in the area of family violence deals primarily with violence against women. NTI sits on a committee with the GN, Justice Canada, National Crime Prevention, Qullit Nunavut Status of Women Council, and police. The committee is analyzing domestic violence legislation to be proposed by the GN. This legislation would allow emergency intervention orders to be made by the victims, police, lawyers and service providers. The legislation would introduce the victim assistance orders, which would help victims obtain reimbursement for losses arising from domestic violence, including employment, financial, medical and dental expenses. The victim assistance orders would be available 24-hours a day. NTI has also participated in workshops, including Choices for Positive Youth Relationships.

## Community Justice Committees

NTI participates in community justice committees that look at alternative sentencing programs for Inuit offenders. These programs are based on a model developed in the Kitikmeot region. The committees allow offenders to meet with their victims, and other people affected by their crimes, to come to a resolution and an appropriate sentence.

## Recommendations:

- Endorsement of the draft cultural plan for adoptions.
- Recognition that culture and language issues of Inuit offenders from Nunavut must be addressed in correctional institutions. Inuit needs are different than Southern Aboriginal needs. It is not beneficial for Inuit prisoners to participate in programs directed at First Nations. Responsiveness to Inuit needs should include the provision of Inuit country food, counseling in Inuktitut, and Inuit cultural activities.
- In order to help curb family violence, communities need to access information on family law and the rights of children and families, including the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, a document supported by the Government of Canada.





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# ACRONYM LIST

CMHC	Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation
DIAND	Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
DIO	Designated Inuit Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GN	Government of Nunavut
IHT	Inuit Heritage Trust
ITK	Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
KitIA	Kitikmeot Inuit Association
KivIA	Kivalliq Inuit Association
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
NDMS	Nunavut Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society
NEF	Nunavut Economic Forum
NHC	Nunavut Housing Corporation
NIHB	Non-Insured Health Benefits
NLCA	Nunavut Land Claims Agreement
NSDC	Nunavut Social Development Council
NTEP	Nunavut Teacher Education Program
NTI	Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
QIA	Qikiqtani Inuit Association
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RIA	Regional Inuit Association
RSV	Respiratory Syncytial Virus

