

Housing issues in Nunavik FACTS

Housing situation in Nunavik

Nunavik suffers from a shortage of housing for its locals. This housing shortage causes many problems within families, communities and the entire region. Inuit face many difficult obstacles when trying to get housing for themselves. These obstacles are in the forms of requirements in order to receive a type of housing. These different requirements promote different forms of discrimination and racism within our region.

With the growing numbers of Inuit within our region becoming more self-sufficient and capable of managing their affairs these “old” requirements are hindering the chances of capable, independent, motivated & educated Inuit to receive the different types of housing available within the region.

With a population of 13,168 Inuit living within the region of Nunavik, the youth population is a huge proportion of the eligible renters or homeowners. The youth population makes up more than 65.9% of the entire population. Most of the youth are not eligible because of the many different requirements stated below.

With the population growth so rapid the housing situation is getting worse each and every year. The shortage of housing causes many problems within families and communities. With overcrowded houses many problems occur such as transmission of sickness such as TB, Sexually transmitted diseases, mental health problems, sexual abuse & family violence.

Housing conditions in Nunavik:

-Population of Nunavik is 13, 168 and growing by the day. 90% of the population is Inuit and there are approximately 3000 social housing units in the region.

- Each summer KMHB & Makivik build housing for locals depending on the applicant list each community and given a certain number of buildings.

- The housing provided to Inuit is very old and not well maintained. Maintenance of the housing units is very hard and not done yearly to prevent future damage.

- 120 new housing units are promised to be built by KMHB and Makivik for the summer of 2016 in 6 communities.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF HOUSING OFFERED IN NUNAVIK.

1. Social/Affordable housing.

The social housing program is run by the Kativik Municipal Housing Bureau and the Societe Habitation du Quebec. This program runs by a point system and has many requirements each tenant must fall under such as having a low income, Being in a crisis whether it is mental problems or dealing with the law, having health problems and having children.

2. Private/ home ownership

The private home ownership program is also run by the KMHB, SHQ & the Canadian government. This program helps Inuit by subsidizing the purchase or building of a new home within the region. This program has many different requirements and many different defaults such as not being able to insure your house because no one is able to inspect it since we are in the north.

3. Company/Organization housing.

Most companies/organization within the region offer housing with a job but not to local Inuit who reside in the community where the job is offered. There is a requirement set to receive this type of housing which is that one must live 50km away from the work place in order to receive this housing. This requirement hinders young, independent, educated Inuit to receive this type of housing even if they've been away from home for many years at college or university. Some organizations are working on this problem.

These requirements have many negative impacts on the Inuit in the region.

SOCIAL HOUSING REQUIREMENT IMPACTS ON INUIT YOUTH:

- Young Inuit youth tend to re-think their choices in life considering the requirements for the social housing point systems.
- Youth start to have children at a young age in order to receive more points.
- Youth stop going to school in order to get a basic job to receive this type of low rent housing.
- These requirements create a lack of opportunity for youth to have a good sustainable life and choose to better themselves.
- This reduces the motivation of youth to succeed in school, work and in life generally.
- Inuit tend to be in grave problems within their families and communities and by this they receive assistance from social workers & doctors to create more points.
- Inuit students who attend college cannot receive housing due to not creating enough points and having no seniority because they've been away from the community.
- Inuit students who come back home from college must move back in with their parents and most do not want to come back home. Therefore we are losing educated Inuit within the region.

COMPANY/ORGANIZATION HOUSING REQUIREMENTS IMPACTS ON YOUTH:

- Inuit employees are not eligible for this type of housing if residing in the community of the work place.
- Young Inuit who come back from college are not permitted to use their southern address when applying for a job therefore cannot receive housing and choose not to work for the company/organization or come back to their home communities.
- Inuit do not want to work for Inuit companies/organization because the lack of equal benefits such as housing, Travel, etc.
- This creates tension within the communities between Inuit who reside in the community and southerners who come to Nunavik to work.
- Inuit feel discriminated against and then start to discriminate others which create a bad cycle with the community & work place.

HOME OWNERSHIP REQUIREMENTS IMPACTS ON YOUTH:

- Inuit do not understand the many requirements to receive these subsidies and the employees at the KMHB & the governments need to be of better support throughout the entire process.
- Potential home owners have a hard time getting their homes insured due to not being able to send people from insurance companies up north to do inspections therefore the potential home owners have a hard time receiving the full subsidies.
- Youth stray away from this program because of the many complicated requirements and long processes.

Issues caused by the housing situation:

- Unhealthy Living, transmitting sickness.
- Higher risks of drug and alcohol abuse
- Higher risks of Sexual abuse
- Isolation
- Higher risks of violence
- Higher school drop out rates (no space to study, No help in the home)
- Low achievers, unmotivated youth
- Racism and neglect

HOUSING RECCOMENDATIONS

1. Create safe houses in each community.

Each community in Nunavik should have a "Safe House" for the youth. This safe house would be a type of shelter for youth who need to have some space and need a safe environment. During the day the safe house could offer different workshops on topics such as mental health, suicide prevention, leadership skills, parenting skills, family healing and at night they can take in youth who need a safe place to sleep and need a bite to eat.

This program could be in partnership with the Qarjuit Youth Council, The CLSC's, Youth protection departments, Local Municipalities and the Nunavik Regional Board of Health & Social Services.

Each Safe House would be staffed with community youth workers from the local municipalities such as elders, youth committees, or wellness committee workers. There would also need to be a team of social workers/mental workers who would follow up with the youth and their families. This program could also help create volunteer work for youth in the communities by creating different extracurricular activities, sports tournament and other events.

The benefits & possible outcomes:

The safe houses would provide the youth a safe place from any violence within their families or the community. The program would give the youth a chance to learn new life skills and to get some counselling with or without their families. Youth would have good space to do their homework or extra learning by joining in on activities provided during the day.

The safe house would help decrease the family violence and help youth stay away from the drug & alcohol abuse within their families. The program could help the Youth Protection department to create better relationships with the youth & the communities. This program will better the next generation of future tenants/home owners in the region.

2. Create a coop housing program for youth.

Create local housing coop programs for successful, educated, motivated youth. This program could help challenge the social housing type of program. The program would aim at setting high goals in order to receive the housing by having education, a good paying job, an involved citizen; this would help shape the minds of young children to aspire to live in coop housing and not social housing.

This program will also be a tool to help youth gain independence, help them to better able to manage their affairs and work within a board and be responsible for their homes and their environments. The program would create small apartment complexes for rent to youth at a subsidized (Reasonable) cost and each apartment would have a board of directors who are tenants of the complex and the youth would manage the coop affairs and make decisions.

Potential partners could be local Coop stores, Local Municipalities, the Qarjuit Youth Council and local business owners. These partners would all have major roles such as helping manage the financial affairs, Help select the tenants/board members and make the coop is running without deficit.

The benefits & possible outcomes:

This program would create a different type of housing offered within the region. The program would be managed with the community and governed by laws from the community and the board members.

This program would encourage youth to better their lives and achieve their goals by getting educated and coming back home with great opportunities. The coop program would also educate Inuit youth on how to manage a board of directors and how to be responsible for their homes.

3. Follow through with "Rent to own" program.

From 1959 to 1965 the Indian and northern affairs Canada (INAC) introduced two types of housing in the region, one type was offered to local as a "rent to own" style and the tenants would have to pay their rent for over 20 years at an interest rate of %4. Homeowners had to pay off their mortgages as well as the cost of services. At the time the costs were too high & this program failed.

Now in 2016 with many jobs available and more and more inuit educating themselves it may be the right time to restart this program with certain houses. This program would allow Inuit to become home owners and sustain themselves. With the help of KMHB, The SHQ and local municipalities this program could be well maintained.

The benefits & possible outcomes:

Inuit would be proud homeowners and take better care of their homes. This program would encourage Inuit to pay their rent and create good neighborhoods within their communities. The “rent to own” system would help Inuit become more involved with housing in the region and have better relationships with the KMHB & the SHQ as this would be a benefit to families.

4. Revisit the Home ownership program, create more support.

The home ownership program needs to be more adapted to the Inuit realities and the hardships faced when applying for the subsidies and maintain a steady relationship with the KMHB, The SHQ and the governments.

Inuit need more information and guidance when applying for this program and need help throughout the entire process. Client service agents at the KMHB should be more trained and more willing to help out future home owners through the process.

The benefits & possible outcomes.

Inuit would become more interested and feel more supported with this program. This program would ease the worries of families dealing with such heavy and complicated system of home ownership. Families would be better able to understand the system and be able to stick with the program for the long run.

Some interested home owners fear the other steps that need to be taken to receive these subsidies are too complicated and they begin to back out because there is not enough support throughout the program. Client service workers would be the support and knowledgeable for all the steps such as payments, insuring their house, etc.

The KMHB, SHQ and the governments would create better relationship with Inuit home owners and be of better support to their clients.

5. Revisit the company housing requirements

The company housing requirements that were created by unions in the 60's need to be revisited and amended. Requirements need to be changed to include local educated, successful Inuit to be eligible for company housing.

Each organization should be able to tailor their requirements to their needs and to encourage Inuit to work for Inuit employers. Inuit organizations should be able to offer housing and other benefits to their successful Inuit employees as much as the southern employees.

The benefits & possible outcome:

Inuit from the communities would be more encouraged to work for inuit companies/organizations within their communities. The work atmosphere would be better between inuit and southern workers who live in the community.