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OUR HOME

FOUR-PART SERIES INSIDE

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A NUNATSIAQ NEWS SUPPLEMENT
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NUNATSIAQ 50 YEARS NEWS

When home ownership in Nunavut came with a bit of sweat and a hammer
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In the meantime, she says, the unit “needs a renovation big time” — the doorframe, windows, porch — but the housing authority hasn’t come around to fix it. “It’s a long waiting game,” she says. “You keep calling them and nobody shows up.”

The Nunavut Housing Corp. supplies 5,955 public housing units in the territory for an estimated 22,831 occupants.

It spent \$224.4 million on public housing in the 2022 fiscal year for maintenance, utilities and other expenses, but only made back \$17.49 million, or 7.8 per cent, of that cost through rent payments. More than \$35 million was spent last year on maintenance alone.

Iguptak’s odyssey in public housing is representative of many Nunavummiut’s experiences: overcrowding, mould, wait-lists and lack of repairs.

Some say that Nunavummiut building their own homes often means better quality, and a return to HAP could help mitigate many public housing issues, taking pressure off Nunavut Housing Corp. to house nearly two-thirds of the territory’s residents.

AFTER FINISHING A DAY of teaching carpentry at Tuugaalik High School, Naujaat elder Gabe Kaunak sits at his kitchen table over a cup of black tea. He recalls the days when many Inuit built their homes through government programs such as HAP and other contracts. He himself used to be a partner in a small business that built homes in Naujaat.

Before Kaunak was a teacher, he was a maintenance worker at the local housing authority for 24 years. He says public housing Inuit built are better quality than other public housing. And yet it costs the government much more today than it did when Inuit were building homes.

“At that time we were contracting, we were trying to prove to people in town that Inuit can work on their own, without the help, without getting anybody in,” Kaunak says, adding jovially that the biggest problem he faced was finding an electrician.

HAP should be brought back, he says, as well as more contract work for Inuit-owned small businesses. “Our

ბერძენი ლაზარისი

დარსებობს 24-მ წელიწადში. მშენებლობის დროს ხელსაწყოები ადრევე გამოვიყენებთ. მშენებლის დარსებობა დარსებობს დარსებობს. მშენებლის დარსებობს. მშენებლის დარსებობს.

“მშენებლის დარსებობს, მშენებლის დარსებობს.”

მშენებლის დარსებობს, მშენებლის დარსებობს.”

2021-ი, მშენებლის დარსებობს. მშენებლის დარსებობს.



Helen Iguptak’s current public housing unit, she says, is in need of repairs. The windows and doors get stuck, and her daughter suspects there’s mould growing. (Photo by David Venn)



Helen Iguptak points to the “mould thingamajig” in her laundry room that she insists doesn’t work — or, at least, not as well as poking your own holes. The exhaust fan is located in her laundry room, where the door can’t shut because of where the washing machines are placed. (Photo by David Venn)

houses are still good, the ones we built,” he says. “We didn’t rush and we didn’t hide anything.”

In 2021, former Nunavut MP Mumilaq Qaqqaq produced a report on housing. She visited five communities, including 10 homes in Naujaat. Each was mouldy and overcrowded, with one four-bedroom unit reportedly housing 14 people.

More than 80 per cent of the nearly 1,100 people living in Naujaat are under the age of 40, and 130 residents are

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on the waitlist for one of the community’s 205 public housing units — 115 of which have been deemed as poor quality, according to a Statistics Canada report.

Nunavummiut attribute the dire condition of these units to different causes. One is a lack of care and attention by southern construction companies in their work, which Clarence Synard, chief executive officer of NCC Investment

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ბერძენი მშენებლის დარსებობს



Naujaat elder Gabe Kaunak sits on his favourite spot on his couch after a day of teaching at Tuugaalik High School. (Photo by David Venn)

