

AHIN December 7th, 2021 Webinar: Student Research Series pt. 2

This webinar was part two of a two-part series which featured presentations from student and post-doctoral researchers in the At Home in the North network. The speakers included Christina Goldhar, Aimee Pugsley, and Veronica Madsen, all of whom are based out of Memorial University of Newfoundland. Below is a summary of key points of their presentations.

Governing in crisis: An interrogation of housing insecurity and homelessness in Inuit Nunangat, outcomes for women and children, Christina Goldhar

Memorial University of Newfoundland

Housing in northern Canada is often framed using the language of crisis and has been described in this way for at least the last 30 years. However, 'crisis' implies a state of emergency - an often unpredictable and acute event that leads to immediate response. It implies a need for change. However, in this area, change has been very slow.

For women and children, homelessness and housing insecurity can certainly be described as being in a state of crisis. Women and children are more likely to stay in overcrowded, inadequate, or unsafe housing, and there is a close relationship between women's housing need and the apprehension of children by the child welfare system. Housing need in women and children is largely invisible due to how we define homelessness, and so we currently do not have a good understanding of this issue.

This study will investigate the housing crisis in Inuit Nunangat and Greenland and how governance and public policy approaches to housing have created and perpetuate the northern housing crisis, with particular focus on the relationship between housing and the welfare of women and children. Methods will take a "study up" approach to examine powers and structures, and will use archives, a review of media and grey literature, and virtual key informant interviews. The broad objectives include examining (1) the value and consequences of 'crisis' as a governing context; (2) the unique manifestations of settler colonialism in northern Canada; (3) the relationship between 'crisis', social policy, and colonialism; and (4) the material consequences of northern social policy for northern peoples.

Promoting home and self-governance: Housing as an active site of engagement in Fort Good Hope, Aimee Pugsley

Memorial University of Newfoundland

The health and wellbeing of Fort Good Hope's residents has been undermined by the housing crisis. Two thirds of the community's dwellings reported at least one major problem, and at least 75 community members were without a home of their own. Through the K'asho Got'ine Housing Society (KGHS), Fort Good Hope is developing local responses to these problems and are moving towards Indigenous conceptualizations of home that capture elements of kinship, connectedness, and self-sufficiency. However, very little is clear about the system through which housing is delivered in the NWT.

This research sought to understand the decision-making processes behind housing delivery, identify the policy and governance barriers to self-governed housing, and investigate how self-government in housing can be better supported in the NWT. This research found that much of the authority and control over housing remains with the federal and territorial governments, and



out of the hands of the community. Current governing systems fail to recognize and support Indigenous conceptualizations of home, and complex housing systems are difficult to understand and deeply inaccessible. An Indigenous view of home forces us to rethink how housing is governed - for example, governance is currently siloed instead of interconnected. Self-governed housing can be better supported by an increase in community control, a more holistic way of governing, and more listening to the stories and needs of communities.

Rádeyjlj kó (Fort Good Hope) Transitional home for men: A healing journey to home, Veronica Madsen

Memorial University of Newfoundland

This research sought to understand what transitional housing, supportive housing, and Housing First programs look like in Fort Good Hope and investigate what programs are presently being used as well as what programs can be added to fit with remote, northern, Indigenous family dynamics. More than 4 walls and a roof, home is a sense of safety and belonging. However, the idea of home as a space of refuge, love, and kindness may not be the case for all families. Many in the community share the understanding that being involved in the building of a house teaches important life lessons and can keep people out of trouble. This is reflected in the intentions of the community's transitional housing program, which provides useful projects that the residents can take part in as an element of their healing journey, keep busy, celebrate accomplishments, and promote healthy outlooks and confidence. Regardless of the specific programs implemented, the need for and connection to land and all it entails is critical. Being on the land has been a way for many Indigenous people across Canada to connect to their spirituality and identity and provide an overall feeling of wellbeing.

Aside from the need for more houses to avoid overcrowding or sleeping rough in the community, the KGHS felt there was a need to provide a safe place for men who have landed on difficult times. This led to the development of Ka'dule home, a transitional home for men. It sits on land suitable for gardening, which helps bring members back to the land and encourages the men to reconnect to their community. The KGHS is now also working towards home maintenance and home building programs in the community, and plan to build four small homes that members of the transitional home can move in to when they're on the final steps of their healing path.