



**First Nations' Community of  
Practice on Housing (CoPH)  
Participatory Event**

**Quebec, January 29  
and 30, 2018**

# Strengthening Collaboration



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## Background

The First Nations' Community of Practice on Housing continues its development to maintain and uphold its commitment to sharing, collaboration and strengthening ties among stakeholders in Quebec's First Nations housing sector. In addition to supporting the foundations of a community of practice, the Workplace online collaboration platform currently numbers over 110 Quebec community members.

In keeping with its mission: *The diversity of knowledge as a common good and source of collective learning*, the CoPH organized a two-day workshop to share on the theme of collaborative housing involving community stakeholders and key partners.

### STRONG RESPONSE

The invitation extended by the CoPH was very well received from all communities despite the short notice given between the invitation and the

event. Around 37 people from various roles and communities attended. With this event, the CoPH continues its purpose of bringing communities together and strengthening collaboration within the First Nations housing sector.

### PURPOSES OF THE EVENT

The event was organized to meet the following objectives:

- Strengthen collaboration
- Solidify ties between various stakeholders
- Create authentic relationships
- Foster mutual support and assistance
- Sharing of good practices
- Reinforce the CoPH
- Have fun



## Actors Present

Madeleine Awashish - Optciwan

Claudia Bégin - Manawan

Josianne Bellefleur – Pakuashipu

Randy Bellefleur - Unamenshipu

Stéphanie Bellefleur – Pakuashipu

Serge Bouchard – Mamuitun

Nathalie Bougoui – CMHC

Judith Buckell - Mashteuiatsh

Robin Cayer - Kitigan Zibi

Darlene Chevrier - Timiskaming

Maxime Condo - Gesgapegiag

André Dansereau – INAC

Andréanne Ferland – FNQLSDI

Brad Flamand - Manawan

Jean-Marc Flamand - Manawan

Antoine Grégoire - Uashat Maliotenam

Michelle Guanish – Kawawachikamach

Rola Helou – School Council

Andrée-Anne Larivière-Lajoie – Mamit Innuat

Guy Latouche – AFNQL

Véronique Lebuis - Mamuitun

Tanu Lusignan – School Council

Debbie Malec - Nutashkuan

Josiane Mapachee - Pikogan

Odette Mestokosho - Ekuanitshit

Sylvestre Mullen - Unamenshipu

Alain Murray – Mamit Innuat

Josianne Napish - Ekuanitshit

Doris Papatie - Kitcisakik

Régis Penosway - Kitcisakik

Francine Petiquay – Wemotaci

Peggy Petiquay – Wemotaci

Stéphanie Petiquay – Wemotaci

Marie-Louise Pien - Matimekush

Vanessa Pien – Kawawachikamach

Patrick Robertson - Mashteuiatsh

Isabelle Saganash - Optciwan

## The CoPH in the Past Year

### List of conversations

Since the Montreal collaboration event, what have been the benefits, hopes and opportunities related to the CoPH?

- User-friendly platform
- Useful for students to share information, news and projects
- Sharing policies, procedures, maintenance plan, regulations, rent collection
- Openness on sharing between communities (transition from competition to sharing)
- Separation of politics and administration
- Validation/accuracy of regional issues
- Consistency in communications
- Despite difficult access to Workplace, the CoPH is expanding
- More people are using the platform



- Cogiweb, a useful tool for communities
- Small changes make a difference
- The human side (support, encouragement, accompaniment)
- More information shared
- Questions and answers: answers available to everyone
- Obtain answers where otherwise it would be more difficult
- Access to other community representatives
- Break down isolation
- Desire to improve one's career path
- Creating a network of links between stakeholders
- Traffic on Workplace does not reflect the actual needs
- Insufficient information on where to access training
- Desire to become a mentor but could not do it

## **Lease Termination – Eviction**

## **Methods for Recovering Amounts Due**

## **List of conversations**

### **Sharing on a topic of common interest proposed on Workplace**

- Raising tenant awareness helps improve perception
- A system such as Cogiweb facilitates perception
- Letter and call process for follow-ups with tenants
- For a payment by the Council or a new employee when outstanding amounts are due, a repayment agreement is made. This is a requirement for signing a contract or to receive payment
- Payroll deductions
- Promote and support home ownership
- Transfer to home ownership program for individuals without debt
- Create a real estate market
- Use Equifax to obtain background information on new tenants and to report bad payers. Certain individuals fail to pay rent but purchase other goods

- Create innovative approaches and develop the capacities and skills of stakeholders
- Impact of indebtedness upon death, debt inheritance and unresolved succession issues
- Family assistance for rent payment. Involve occupants
- Loss of rental income may have an impact on the lack of funding for other services offered by the Council or for subsidizing the construction of new housing units
- Sharing best practices. There is no magic formula
- Evictions in certain communities but more difficult in remote communities
- Eviction is a last-resort measure
- Inform the tenant that it is better to leave than to be evicted
- Eviction can have an impact on overcrowding

## RL-31 Slip Energy Efficiency Program

### Presentations

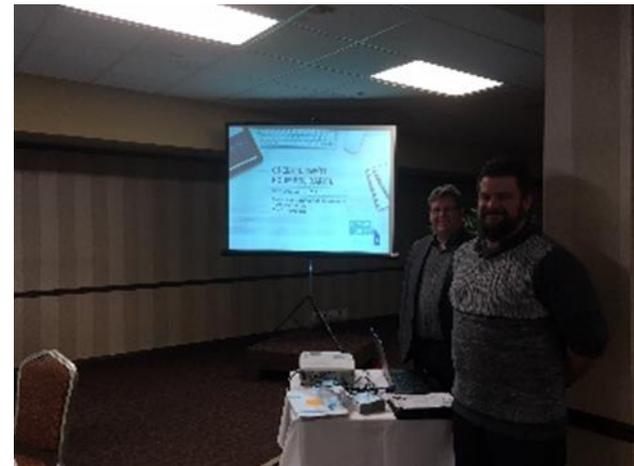
Presentations on 2 topics of common interest proposed by members on Workplace and which raised many questions

#### RL-31 SLIP

- Ms. Julie Richard, Acting Director of Aboriginal Affairs at Revenu Québec and her colleagues, presented the main elements of the RL-31 slip (Relevé 31)
  - What is the RL-31 slip
  - Solidarity tax credit components
  - Eligible individuals
  - Eligible dwelling units
  - Method for producing RL-31 slips

#### ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

- Mr. Alain Murray, trainer for the GRTH (Groupe de Ressources Techniques en Habitation) for the Mamit Innuat Tribal Council presented the Energy Efficiency Program project in collaboration with Hydro-Québec
  - Presentation of the project
  - Achievements
  - Future projects
  - Awareness
  - Educational component



## **Strengthening the CoPH and the Workplace Virtual Platform**

## **and Who Should Have Access to Workplace**

## **List of conversations**

### **How we can promote exchanges between stakeholders and improve Workplace dynamics**

- Promote access: prepare a letter to representatives explaining the purpose of Workplace and present the platform at the Directors General meeting (AFNQL)
- Information workshop and training:
  - Capsules
  - Web workshop
  - Local / physical
  - Time frame allotted to the CoPH at Regional Roundtables
- Workplace able to support videoconferencing
- Access to Housing management students during their studies
- Training on the use of Workplace (video demo)
- With Workplace invitations, attach a user manual
- Increase the promotion of the platform
- Share experiences through presentations and meetings
- Obtain answers to various questions

- Housing stakeholders must understand the platform
- Broadcast presentations during events (live)
- More direct relationship with partners (INAC, CMHC)
- Learn from others
- Job postings
- Bank of workers
- Bank of reliable entrepreneurs
- Solidify the structure
- First Nations language video on maintenance
- Housing innovations (energy efficiency, extending life span of homes)
- See the evolution of First Nations homes (traditional to modern homes)
- The beginnings of First Nations home ownership
- Tools and information to develop the transition from rental to home ownership

- Family awareness on maintenance (children and all family members)
- Solutions to reduce housing costs in isolated communities
- Improvements in isolated situations
- Develop contacts with individuals in home ownership process
- Housing history: changes over time
- Sharing achievements
- Funding programs
- Support from Councils
- Policies and regulations
- Construction criteria
- Training available for inspectors and site supervisors
- Guide on different types of construction
- Environmental regulations
- Training or tools related to social services
- SARM

### **Who should have access to Workplace**

- Housing officers and managers
- Directors General
- Elected officials responsible for housing to keep them informed (it is up to communities to distinguish between politics and administration)
- Help strengthen the links between politics and administration
- Elected officials would be aware of the topics discussed between the various housing managers
- Partners: CMHC, INAC, AFNQL, Health Canada, FNQLHSSC
- Other Band Council services (public works, maintenance, infrastructure, health and environmental health officers)
- Other provinces
- Create a portrait of the communities represented in the CoPH and invite those who are not represented

## Open Topics

## List of conversations

The CoPH belongs to its members. Conversations and topics of discussion must result from their interests. Following a round of the sharing circle, the topics proposed are as follows:

- Sustainable development
- CMHC inspection process: OZHI
- Vision of the CoPH in January 2019
- Customer approach training
- Consider the future in communities (social reality)
- Overcrowding
- Training of inspectors and workers
- Rent collection
- Computer software: housing data
- Preventive maintenance



To prioritize the topics, a show of hands allowed us to target priorities:

## PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

- All dwellings must be subject to the preventive maintenance system
- Communities have an established maintenance guide
- Who carries out inspections
  - Tribal councils
  - Health Canada
  - Community technician
  - Volunteer firefighters (related to fire risks)
- When the system is implemented, a schedule is established and forwarded to the person in charge
- A paper system for some
- COGIWEB software is a helpful tool
- Interventions in social situations: be direct and request clean up
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities: Board/Administration and make it clear

## Open Topics (continued)

## List of conversations

- Hold information and awareness sessions
- Have tenants initial the rules to be followed
- At Lac Simon, partnership with the Kitci Amik RAEC for a training for new tenants on maintenance and other tenant responsibilities (25-hour training with credits)
- No more freebies. Today, tenants have to pay and agreements must be made
- Submit capacity development projects

### RENT COLLECTION

- For some, if a salary or income security is paid, rent is deducted at source
- If the agreement is not signed, there is no employment
- Pre-authorized payments from the bank account but there are still NSF's
- At source deduction agreement (pay, income security, training allowance)
- Implementation of Accès D for payments via Internet

- Agreement with financial institutions to reduce service fees used by the councils
- Collection procedure included in the housing policy
- An rent collection agent works in collaboration with the housing officer
- If the tenant has debts, no repairs are made except for those related to security
- Upon signing the lease, immediate signature of a pre-authorized payment authorization
- Prioritize pre-authorized payments because of risks of losing the client when at source deductions are made and the tenant changes type of income
- Rent collection: training provided by Brian Deconti

## Open Topics (continued)

## List of conversations

### RENTAL RATES

- Based on housing policies of each community
  - Fixed cost
  - 25% of income
  - 25% of income plus around \$75 for electricity
- Based on type of dwelling
- Sometimes uncertain which rate to use:
  - Housing policy
  - CMHC minimum contribution
  - New rate proposed in a restructuring of the housing stock
- According to a predetermined grid prepared with the CMHC based on the following elements:
  - Tenant income
  - Type of dwelling
- 35% of income for retirement home (including services such as maintenance, security, snow removal)
- Income follow-ups can be made to determine if rent can be lowered
- Kitigan zibi, maximum rate of \$950. Ekuanitshit, \$400

- For the North and Lower North Shore, food is expensive and considerations are made for individuals on income security
- Must ensure that rental rates do not prevent meeting other essential needs

### TRAINING OF INSPECTORS AND WORKERS

- Collège de Montréal – upgrade training for workers subsidized by the CMHC
- AVS (Attestation of Vocational Specialization)
  - Construction
  - Maintenance
  - Fall protection
  - Health and safety
- School Council offers AVS in construction
- School Council can ensure link with educational institutions to ensure reasonable costs
- *Circuit riders*: concept developed for water treatment. The concept was reproduced for housing even if the domain is much more complex

## Open Topics (continued)

## List of conversations

- A prior learning assessment process was conducted by the Mamuitun Tribal Council to provide certification to workers and offer development training
- INAC - communities can establish a plan for coming years for training needs. The reason projects are not accepted is usually a lack of funds. Content can be represented as part of a new initiative
- Recognition by the CCQ
- Uashat negotiated a percentage of the construction paid at the CCQ rate and the balance, non-CCQ. 2 years of negotiations
- FIHs can help with training needs. It has been a pilot project for 2 years and we would like to evaluate the impact in supporting communities. Possibility of a new Circuit Rider Trainer (English-speaking)



**Results from  
the activity  
feedback  
questionnaire**

Following the activity, we asked participants to answer a feedback questionnaire. A total of 18 participants responded to the survey.

**GENERAL APPRECIATION**

	U	A	G	VG
I enjoyed this activity			33%	67%
This activity was relevant to help me in my work		6%	33%	61%
The location to hold the activity was appropriate	11%	11%	33%	45%
The content met my expectations			50%	50%
The discussion format was appropriate		6%	33%	61%

U = Unsatisfactory

A = Acceptable

G = Good

VG = Very good

**Results for the activity feedback questionnaire (continued)**

	YES	NO
Would you like to participate in another similar CoPH event?	100%	0%

**Why?**

- Rewarding
- It was very helpful for a newcomer like me
- It was interesting to share with other communities
- A lot of information to share and receive
- The human context is all the more important in a work environment
- Planning the role of each participant (file leader, manager, general management and housing officer)
- Exchanges will help me a lot and are interesting
- Interesting for searching for tools and for hearing from other communities
- For networking and learning more about local realities
- I learn more about housing whenever I come
- Reinforcing and an updating knowledge
- Listening are sharing about our experiences in our communities
- Creating more contacts and sharing information
- Helpful

## **Results for the activity feedback questionnaire (continued)**

### **What word(s) would you use to describe this activity?**

- Satisfying
- Bravo
- Helpful
- Super
- Sharing
- Respect
- Open
- United to move forward in our communities
- Innovation and original
- Learned a lot of information
- Collaboration
- Networking
- A beginning for working together
- Beneficial
- Exchange
- Exciting
- Informative
- Rewarding
- Challenging
- Satisfying
- Relevant for housing stakeholders

- **Which element(s) will you implement immediately??**
- All the elements
- There are no wrong answers
- Workplace
  - Register
  - Frequency of use
  - Make it more dynamic
  - Be more active
  - Share more information about my community's activities
  - Access for everyone
- Conveying information
- Follow-ups on renovations
- Monitoring energy behaviour
- Information on RL-31 Slip
- My courage
- Development of a housing policy
- Becoming closer to clients

## Results for the activity feedback questionnaire (continued)

### Are there any improvements to be made to this activity?

- I do not think so
- I enjoyed the interaction because simply listening could be boring
- Nothing, well organized and good meeting
- Avoid simultaneous workshops
- Enjoyed for a first experience
- Effective method for a meeting
- Present capsules: experiences, achievements, or in progress
- Simultaneous translation, would be more efficient and would allow to discuss more topics
- More efficient sessions
- Document sharing, realizations and training
- Plan topics ahead of time by asking on Workplace
- Include a construction component
- Explain access to Workplace
- Conduct follow-ups
- Well-defined topics
- Promote Workplace

- Are there any improvements to be made within the Community of Practice framework?
- It is fine as it is. We simply need more participation and the rest will come
- Haven not really worked with it but it will come
- Begin earlier
- Allow for participation in all the workshops
- Include elected officials in charge of the housing file
- Translation to First Nation language
- Greater opening on the platform
- Conduct follow-ups
- More dynamic interactions on Workplace
- Simultaneous translation



## Results for the activity feedback questionnaire (continued)

### Additional comments:

- Always a pleasure to get together
- Well done, I really like this team
- I really enjoyed the 2 days
- Respect towards all
- Create PowerPoint presentations
- Enjoyed the energy activities
- Appreciated the content and exchanges during workshops

- Good meeting, I enjoyed
- Everyone was comfortable expressing themselves freely
- Bravo
- Continue the good work
- We are on the path to fulfillment



## **Strengthening our Collaboration**

The First Nations' Community of Practice on Housing (CoPH) is primarily a human network whose mission is to enable its members to work together to improve the well-being of their communities through collective capacity building, mutual assistance and the sharing of good practices. This virtual platform is the tool that CoPH has set itself to do on an ongoing basis. Mutual support, as well as the sharing of experiences, knowledge and questions, lies at the heart of the collective and evolving learning that is created through the CoPH.

Each member's mission is to support, inform, train, educate, share and learn in a spirit of collaboration. By fostering genuine and non-political exchanges based on common interest, we are able to see that questions and discussions about housing practices and issues in First Nations communities become an immense source of collective intelligence available to all who are involved. It is an important source of recognition as well. The mission of the CoPH belongs to you, you who are the key-players in housing! Because it is your COMMUNITY, it is your PRACTICE that forms the heart of the mission of the CoPH.

**The gathering of our shared strengths, qualities and skills forms a vast network of support and mutual help.**

**The symbol of our network also represents a dream catcher, which will help fulfil our common dream that each member of our communities is provided with adequate housing.**

**Thank you for your  
participation!**

