

# PROJECT BRIEF:

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**“Non-renewable resource development, homelessness and the potential for community-based housing governance and policy in the Northwest Territories, Canada.”**

## Project Leads

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## Publications

Inuvik and Yellowknife. This research explores the connection between non-renewable resource development, government policy and housing/homelessness in Yellowknife, NWT.

## What is this project about?

This project is about the challenges and policy responses to urban homelessness and affordable housing in Yellowknife, NWT. Housing insecurity has been a concern in the Northwest Territories (NWT) since the establishment of settlements and the introduction of state-run housing programs in the mid-20th century. Chronic housing need is worsening in many settlement communities while homelessness is on the rise in urbanizing northern centres. There has been significant public concern regarding the impact that oil, gas and diamond mining industries have on accessible and affordable housing, particularly in

## How was research done?

This qualitative research consisted of a gap-analysis literature review and 15 semi-structured interviews with key policy makers, service providers, and housing advocates in Yellowknife. Interviews were conducted over two separate fieldwork periods in November 2017 and May 2018. During the second fieldwork period, two collaborative graphic design workshops were held with research participants, representatives from various stakeholder groups, and Alternatives North, our community partner. The purpose of these workshops was twofold: to reflect collaboratively on the main research themes, to engage in member checking as participants were invited to provide feedback on preliminary research findings, and to collaborate on the development of knowledge sharing tools by identifying the key audiences for this research and the ways in which graphic design could be used to provide useful, tangible research outcomes. We are currently working with Una Lee (And Also Too) on the development of a visual tool that can be used by participants, stakeholders and partners to share the knowledge produced through this research in ways that benefit their objectives as advocates, activists and service providers.

## What were the research results?

Our research resulted in several key themes. First, we discovered that the direct links between non-renewable resource development and housing accessibility and affordability are not as evident in the diamond industry as it was during gold mining. Second, our research identified five main housing-related challenges in Yellowknife including: 1) lack of housing stock (including lack of materials, transportation, and skilled construction); 2) governmental jurisdictional discrepancies regarding funding; 3) a private rental market monopoly; 4) limitations on the provision of affordable, accessible housing exacerbated by the existence of one public housing provider; and, 5) racialized discrimination in the housing market. Thirdly, our research has identified several housing policy recommendations that aim to mitigate the negative effects of a boom/bust northern economy, including public-private housing collaborations and the revisiting of cooperative housing programs.

## How can this benefit communities?

This research will benefit the community in the way that we are making knowledge around policy provisions, housing challenges, and the work underway to remedy housing affordability. Working with graphic designer, Una Lee (AndAlsoToo Studio) we facilitated a co-design workshop with our community partners and research participants. Following these workshops we will create a product (an infographic, postcard, poster) to be used as a community advocacy tool for the Yellowknife community.



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