

## An Umiag has been built -- A trip to Greenland and back in time



### Background:

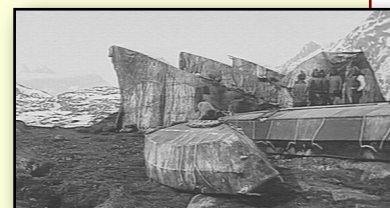
Since 1950, and until a few years ago has handicapped Greenlanders been sent to Denmark. This has had big impact on the Greenlandic society, the concerned families and especially the handicapped. They Mentally has been a taboo and a displacement of communities and families in Greenland. Today, live about 100 Greenland handicapped people in institutions in Denmark.

The group is in the general Danish public largely unknown, and the same is true in many ways in Greenland - time passes and they become more and more "forgotten"!

Here in the summer of 2007 flew 4 of them along with their friends in the kayak

Association Saqqit to Nuuk and together they built a Umiag.

In just 12 days. It was an unforgettable experience for all 9 participants.



The umiaq which we built in Nuuk was after Greenland origin but improved so that children and disabled people with high security can use it.

### Umiag

Umiag, was Inuits boat for long trips and their family boat. It is as old as the Inuit culture. Without this boat Inuits could not have spread from the extreme of Siberia to East Greenland.

The boat has been known throughout the Arctic and the name is roughly the same everywhere.

The shape and purpose is different from the narrow Umiag in Alaska -- catch of whales - to the wider in Greenland, which was used to transportation of the whole family's earthly goods.

**Elapsed:**

Before the 9 participants could travel to Nuuk, was passed almost 2 years preparations. Search Funds planning, thinking, waiting, expectations and much more. Anything to Umiaq have to be sourced and preparation, tools, wood and canvas. Total what we could imagine we could get needs, were packed into a large Box 5.70 \* 0.70 meters, which weighed 300 kg. The box was then sent to Aalborg and sailed to Nuuk.



In late July raised the team so to Nuuk. The plan was that we should be sail to the Childrens home, "Tuuparnaqs" summer camp in Ameralikfjorden, where we, together with children and staff should have built theboat. But in Greenland is many factors such as weather, equipment and working conditions that lead to we could not implement what we have planned. We could not sail into the fjord -- and it rained and rained. But build our Umiaq - we would.

Quickly, we had established a construction site just outside the childrens home with different materials, which we found around in the municipal buildings and in an industrial area. We had opened the box, which had been staying in rain in many days. The box was made so well that almost every thing was dry and soon after construction could begin.



10 days later the contents of the box as a magic was turned to an Umiaq - an incredibly beautiful boat, as we pride Umiaq-builders Friday August 10 could row and sail.



## ELAPSED:

To participate in such a scenario is something totally unique. Here there was room for presence, unity, challenges joy, concern and pride.

There was small talk on many topics: Umiaq, kayaks and the fresh Greenland food, which we got from on the "board", the Greenland concept for a fresh food marked - seals, catfish, redfish, cod, mattak, reindeer, etc.



Just outside our workshop met our eyes the contrast between the magnificent natural and the living conditions of population in Nuuk.

We could see the rain, sun, magnificent sunsets over mountains and cetaceans play in the fjord between the large container ships; including the rush of many large modern family boats, fast

motor boats and small dinghies with people, to be out and get the daily supplies of fish and seals, etc., All this we followed eagerly with in.

The children home "Tuuparnaq" is located on a range of ridges on the edge of Nuuk and we built our umiaq - literally on the edge between the new modern high-rise building with modern kindergarten with flat screens and Construction indoor mountaineering wall and a low-lying, partly abandoned industrial area, both in real and transferred meaning recalled a swamp.

Here lies the "Institute", a prison, and here are some ongoing businesses, but otherwise area marked by outstanding buildings, thrown away things and cases, survivors and constructs Secondly, floating from industrial society. There is traffic of people with beer, which is drunk in and by the old destroyed - buildings. Small groups of children and young people gathered spontaneously between remnants of building with secret activities. Other groups living on the edge of Society could be seen in small clusters around the area where there is smoke and the clatter of bottles.

A little further away with the best view over the city and the fjord thrones big, beautiful newly built houses with until several expensive cars in front.



Nuuk is a city of contrasts and the effects of the globalization can be seen just in front of you.

All this and curious people's attention - Nuuk municipality and the children home support was experience that each of us now have with us home --

but most of all was the building - to experience a box folding out in this way and become a Umiq was great. That was the frame around our experiences - So now just look forward to the pictures here and then passed on to our web blog at [www.aamosen.com/saggit](http://www.aamosen.com/saggit) - here you can read our diary for the entire trip.



Colony harbor the 10.august 2007

The exciting moment has come - for the first time in perhaps 50 years an Umiq have been built in Nuuk - Many hands were ready to carry it down to the water. The fact the the Umiq was built together with Mentally handicapped Greenlanders, who lives in Denmark did the day to something special.

Future.

A dream was realized and a new dream was born.

The Umiq teams dream is to travel back to Greenland and enter at the bottom of the fjord to a summer camp and try out our kayaks and the Umiq.



**Kajakforeningen Saqqit****Ittoornak - Igtôrnak**

*Our journey back in time to find his inspiration in this ancient Greenland expression, which well describes our group's work: Ittoornak describe how life had dealt in small uniut society where everyone is dependent on each other no matter what.*

*Ittoornak means: that the individual knows its strengths and weaknesses that he always held back and let the best take the lead in the practical situation. In a small community where everyone knows each other, are reaping the individual gradually recognition through his skills while he recognizes others' skills. On the way become different persons natural and automatic leaders in different situations or in certain areas. Everyone knows its place understood the positive, recognizing that this was what was needed to keep the uniut society going on the best way for all.*



*Paul Hansen, december 2008*