

Housing - a path out of poverty

How we'll help more people with more solutions, with more impact, and more visibility

Safe and secure housing is a human right; without it, people cannot fulfil their true life-potential. For a large proportion of the world's population poverty, conflict, natural disasters, and the growing effects of climate change deny people that right. UN-Habitat estimates that a billion people currently live in unsafe and unhealthy homes and millions more have no home at all. It doesn't have to be like this. The world has made huge progress in social development. In recent decades billions have been lifted out of poverty, life expectancy has soared, and more people than ever are safely housed. A world where everyone has a safe and secure home is a goal that is within reach.

Our Vision

A world where everyone has a safe and secure home in a successful community

However, there are new dangers that threaten this progress. Old political and economic certainties are retreating, weakening people's rights and increasing the risk of conflict. A rising global population is straining the world's resources and the climate is becoming increasingly unstable. These tensions are felt first by the poorest people who can least afford to insulate themselves from the effects.

The poorest people are often the most resourceful, and their communities are often the strongest. In our experience, with the right support, most communities have the potential to solve their own housing struggles and find a path out of poverty. Indeed, housing is always better, and the impacts on communities more significant, if they are shaped by the communities who live in them.

Solutions to most of the world's housing problems already exist, but most communities do not have access to the knowledge, support, expertise and experience to make full use of them. World Habitat is a catalyst, seeking out solutions to the world's housing problems helping them to grow and develop, and then transfer them to communities in new places where they are needed most.

Our Values. We are:

- An Agent for change
- Globally minded
- Independent
- Innovative
- Caring
- Well Connected

In this strategy we will set out how we will have an even greater positive impact on more communities than ever before. We will seek out evidence that seemingly impossible and insoluble housing problems can be solved and, where we can, demonstrate solutions that can be scaled up and transferred so that they become world leading.

We will do this by:

- seeking out and developing new and effective solutions to the world's greatest housing challenges;
- supporting emerging innovative ideas and projects to develop and grow, so they help more people;
- investing in housing projects that we have evidenced, to help them reach more people;
- promoting proven housing solutions and helping to transfer them to places where they are needed most; and
- working around the world to develop what works and to discover new solutions to making housing safe and secure.

Our Mission

We are a catalyst for change, we:

- help generate great ideas and identify best housing practice from around the world
- transfer those ideas and practices to places where they are needed most
- help ideas grow so they benefit people who need them

What we will achieve between 2019 and 2022

The World Habitat Awards...

...are a unique window into the most inspirational and effective housing projects from around the world. Run in partnership with UN-Habitat since 1986, our extensive global network and proven methodology finds remarkable communities who have solved often seemingly impossible problems. We look for innovative projects that are sustainable and have the potential to have the greatest impact in addressing the most challenging global housing problems.

We will continue to operate the Awards annually, developing and improving them each year to maintain their position as the world's leading housing awards, and the leading source of housing solutions.

Innovating, scaling up and transferring

We will help communities overcome the world's most pressing housing problems. We will help to turn ideas into reality, pilots into programmes and take successful housing projects from the margins

into the mainstream. We will do this by investing in them, bringing people and ideas together and helping them transfer to new places where they are needed most.

Since their introduction in 1986 the awards have received thousands of high-quality submissions. We measure the quality of submissions by the number that pass the first stage of our rigorous shortlisting process.

We will help turn more good ideas into quality submissions. We will develop an ideas lab to help nurture new and emerging ideas into world leading programmes. We will measure our success by the number of quality submissions we receive. Over the period of this strategy we aim to receive at least 300.

We will develop long-term connections with the communities we help through developing an alumni programme, and succession planning so that programmes continue to develop and flourish.

We will invest in at least six housing projects during the period of this strategy with the aim of helping more people in need to access better homes and have more influence over their future. Whilst the projects and their outcomes are likely to be very different, we aim to directly and positively change the lives of 1,000 people by improving their housing.

Ending Street Homelessness

Street homelessness is the most extreme form of housing exclusion. It is just one example of a failure of the housing system, but an important one that we have chosen to focus on. The numbers of people living on the streets of Europe's major cities has burgeoned in recent years. Only two European countries have seen a reduction in the number of homeless people in recent years: Finland and Norway. Everywhere else numbers have increased significantly. In Norway, Finland and in many cities in the USA, street homelessness has dramatically reduced or even ended. We aim to end street homelessness in cities across Europe by helping them adopt what has been proven to work.

We will work intensely with a group of - at least - twelve European cities that have signed up to a set of principles, including adopting Housing First, to help them first reduce, and then end street homelessness. We will encourage and help communities to participate in ending homelessness in their own cities. We will disseminate information about the Campaign with the aim of its principles being adopted beyond our immediate campaign cities.

Our Campaign Cities

Alicante Athens Barcelona

Bratislava Brighton Brussels

Croydon Glasgow Leicester

Sheffield Torbay Valencia Westminster

The aim of the campaign is for street homelessness to end in all our campaign cities. We aim to make significant progress towards this during the period of this strategy. By the end of the period of this strategy we aim for all our campaign cities to be on a trajectory to end street homelessness, with at least 300 street homeless people securely housed.

Community-Led Housing

Our belief in Community-Led Housing is based on a conviction that all communities have the potential to have control over their own housing, and that housing is better when they do. Community-Led Housing is a diverse concept, it comes in many different forms, we do not favour any one form over another. But we do encourage and support the growth of it so that more people enjoy a right to safe and secure housing.

We will focus on areas where Community-Led Housing can add the greatest value. We are inspired by programmes such as the Caño Martín Peña in San Juan in Puerto Rico where a Community Land Trust has formalised previously informal ownership and enabled the community to fight off land speculation and invest in improvements. We will encourage the growth of Community-Led Housing to help solve insecure land ownership and help keep communities together. We will also focus on places where there are fewer housing choices - places such as Central and Eastern Europe where mass privatisation of state housing in the late 1980s and 1990s saw a reduction in social housing.

We will bring people and skills together and we will invest to help communities develop their own housing in new places where they are needed most.

By the end of this strategy period we aim to have caused Community-Led Housing to have been introduced to new countries in at least two different contexts. We will measure this by the establishment of new community groups and the progress that they have made towards creating new Community-Led Housing.

Effective Communications

We cannot be effective if people do not know who we are or understand the objectives we are seeking to achieve.

We will improve the reach and quality of our communications so that they engage more people and influence more of those who have the power to improve the right of people to safe and secure housing.

We will measure the reach of our communications and set challenging new targets for growing our audience through our website, our social media reach and media coverage. We will also evaluate the impact of our programmes including our communications.

Responsible Investments

Our financial investments provide the resources to enable us to carry out work and achieve our objectives.

We will invest our resources responsibly in line with the values of the organisation and effectively so that they provide sufficient income to enable us to carry out the activities and achieve the objectives in our strategy and secure a long-term legacy for the future of the organisation.

Acting Responsibly

Like all organisations our activities consume energy and generate carbon. Our international travel means we consume more than most organisations of our size. We take our responsibilities seriously and have developed a carbon management plan that seeks to reduce our carbon emissions and offset all that we emit. We do this through carefully measuring our emissions, setting targets and programming in improvements. To offset our emissions, we invest in housing related programmes that reduce carbon emissions and also help provide safe and secure housing for low-income people. We are currently planning to develop our carbon offsetting programme to enable others to invest in these same programmes.

We will publish the results of our carbon emissions and offsetting in our annual report each year.

We aim to live by our values and will ensure our programmes, our partnerships and our investments are operated in line with our values.

People

We want World Habitat to be a great place to work. We value our staff, the skills, the creativity, and the effectiveness that they bring to the organisation. We provide flexibility benefits and rewards to retain and recruit good staff.

We aim to provide a working environment that gets the best from people. We will review our office arrangements and make the changes we need to improve the working environment for staff.

We aim to increase the diversity of our staff and our board so that they better represent the communities in which we work. We will adopt and follow a new diversity plan to help us achieve this.

Good Governance

Good governance in charities is fundamental to their success. It enables and supports compliance with the law and promotes a culture where everything works towards fulfilling the charity's vision.

We are committed to good governance and to the charity's continued improvement. We recognise the requirement of meeting the charity's stated public benefit. Trustees understand their roles and legal responsibilities.

We have signed the Charity Governance Code which sets out good governance that goes beyond legal requirements. We will comply with the code, seeking to continuously improve our governance. We will publish any variation from the code with reasons in our Annual Report.