

LET INNOVATION THRIVE



SOLUTIONS FROM THE WORLD HABITAT AWARDS TO END THE GLOBAL HOUSING CRISIS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Projects adapted from World Habitat Awards winners and finalists information.¹

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This report is dedicated to the thousands of individuals whose courage, determination and innovation make better housing conditions for some of the world's most vulnerable people.

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FOREWORD



David Ireland
Chief Executive of World Habitat

The principle focus of the World Habitat Awards is to celebrate innovative, outstanding and sometimes revolutionary housing ideas, projects and programmes from across the world. We believe that safe and secure housing is a human right; without

it, people simply cannot fulfil their true life-potential. For a large proportion of the world's population, extreme poverty, conflict, disasters, and the growing effects of the climate emergency deny people this fundamental right.

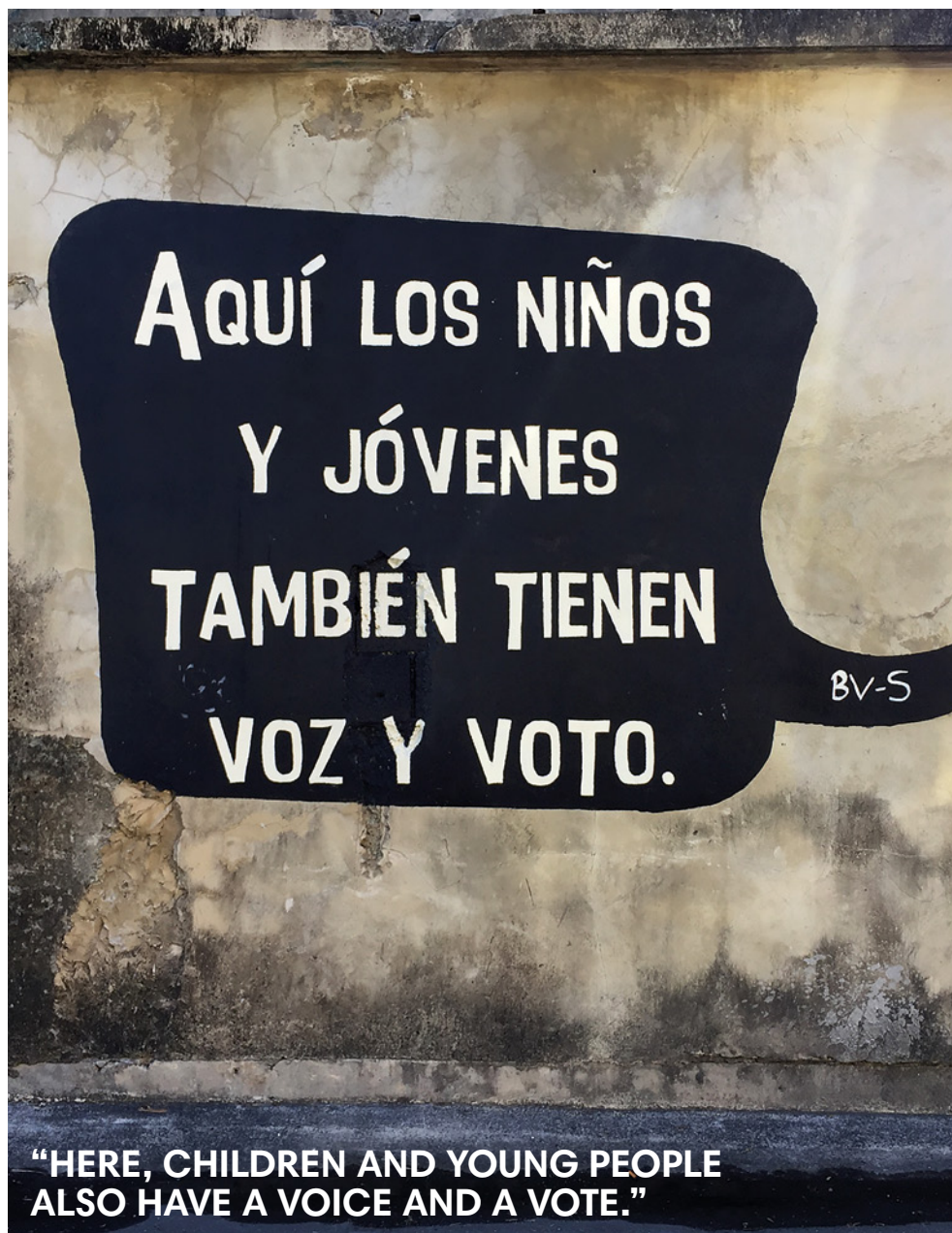
UN-Habitat estimates that around 1.6 billion people currently live in unsafe and unhealthy homes² and millions more have no home at all. It does not have to be like this. The world has made remarkable progress in social and technological development. In recent decades billions of people have been lifted out of poverty, life expectancy has soared, and more people than ever are safely housed. This proves that a world where everyone has a safe and secure home is achievable.

However, there are new dangers that threaten this progress. 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 and unpredictable. These tensions are felt first by the poorest people who can least afford to protect themselves from the effects.

These challenges can appear daunting, and even impossible to solve. But what is remarkable are the solutions that often develop out of the knowledge of the people who experience them. The World Habitat Awards – some detailed in this report – find these solutions, celebrate them and help bring them to a global audience so they can be transferred, adapted and developed. We look forward to building on the success of the Awards over the past three decades and exchanging more ideas and solutions to the parts of the world where they are needed most.

INTRODUCTION

FROM GLOBAL GOALS TO LOCAL HOMES



The World Habitat Awards show us how communities, individuals, and governments can adapt and innovate to meet some of the biggest housing challenges facing the world today.

They illustrate that it is possible for even the most vulnerable and marginalised communities to have a secure home from which they can base their lives and flourish.

Established in 1985, as a contribution to the UN International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, a long-standing partnership between UN-Habitat and World Habitat (previously BSHF) began. Today in 2020, the World Habitat Awards continue their legacy.

The World Habitat Awards help ‘generate evidence-based and practical guidance for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda’ (NUA)³ along with other important processes such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change.

This report highlights innovative solutions from the finalists and winners of the World Habitat Awards to some of the world’s biggest challenges.

1. Disasters [7](#)
2. Social exclusion [10](#)
3. Land rights [13](#)
4. Climate emergency [16](#)
5. Homelessness [18](#)

The projects and programmes presented in this report have already inspired activity and been replicated in different cultures and contexts. However, we examine how this innovative work can be scaled-up and transferred to where it is needed most [21](#). The report ends with key lessons from the World Habitat Awards [24](#).

1 / DISASTERS

There are many causes of disasters, but the result is always the same – lives destroyed and devastating loss.

On average nearly 14 million people are displaced and lose their home each year due to disasters,⁵ with the world's poorest around six-times more likely to be affected than those from rich nations.⁶ The reasons for this vary. Low-income people have fewer choices over where they live and the types of housing construction they use. There's often, also, inadequate environmental health – including lack of sanitation and overcrowding.

Increasing resilience and reducing exposure and vulnerability of low-income communities to the impact of disasters is essential, not only prior to a disaster but, as the projects below demonstrate, also in the aftermath. Despite enormous variations in context, cultures and in the cause of the disasters, these projects adopt similar principles, including the use of existing resources.



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**

SDG 1.5 / By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.⁴

SELF-RECOVERY IN THE PHILIPPINES



Integration of the 'build back better' principles into the post-disaster recovery process (NUA para 78)⁷



In 2013, Super-Typhoon Haiyan devastated large areas of the Philippines causing significant loss of life and destroying over one million homes.

Through the Post-Haiyan Self-Recovery Housing Programme (2013-2016) CARE Philippines helped over 15,500 vulnerable families – made homeless by Haiyan – to rebuild their homes.

This programme supported 'self-recovery', by providing guidance, equipment, cash-grants and technical assistance. Self-recovery derives from a recognition that in the immediate aftermath of disasters, the majority of families rebuild their homes with little, if any, support from the humanitarian community. A self-recovery process is therefore a powerful tool, that respects people's agency, choice and priorities. It also challenges the traditional shelter approach of imposing new housing and relocating people. By using locally available materials and debris from destroyed houses, CARE Philippines helped families avoid relocation, retain the rights to their homes and land, and maintain their social links. Through training on how to make their houses safer through incorporating 'Build Back Safer' building guidelines,⁸ communities are now more resilient to future natural hazards.

Building on existing strong community cohesion and co-operation, known in the Philippines as 'bayanihan',⁹ this community spirit enabled local people – who had learnt new skills and took charge of the rebuilding process – to specifically target the most vulnerable families in the immediate aftermath of the disaster. This was before many aid agencies had even arrived. This meant more people were reached and helped more quickly in a more empowering way than traditional responses.

ADAPTING EMPTY HOMES FOR REFUGEES IN JORDAN



Full respect for the human rights of refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants, regardless of their migration status, and support their host cities (NUA para 28)¹⁰



In response to the large migration of refugees into Jordan following the devastating conflict in Syria, the Urban Shelter Project creates new housing units in Jordan for Syrian refugees to live in rent-free for 18 months.

The project wanted most refugees not to be housed in refugee camps but to live within the host community. However, with a limited supply of affordable rented housing, costs increased for both refugees and the local community, creating tension between them.

This project works with local property-owners whose properties are empty or uninhabitable. The Norwegian Refugee Council provides funding to restore the properties to acceptable standards. This approach invests into the local economy, directly through conditional cash grants to Jordanian landlords and indirectly by creating income generation opportunities for skilled and unskilled labourers in the construction sector.

The refurbished homes are leased by the owner to a vulnerable refugee family, rent-free for 18 months. Vulnerability criteria are used to assess those who will benefit the most such as single parents, families, and disabled people.

This approach has helped to reduce tension between refugees and host communities, as they are not competing for housing and the overall supply has increased. Secure tenure also allows refugees to register with refugee and Jordanian authorities, allowing them to access humanitarian and state-provided services.

2 / SOCIAL EXCLUSION

In every society there is a strong correlation between the most vulnerable people also being the most excluded.

According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, social exclusion 'describes a state in which individuals are unable to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life'.¹² With three in every five people (60%) projected to live in urban areas by 2030¹³ the most vulnerable will be even more at risk of exclusion and unable to afford or obtain adequate housing than they currently are, due to competition over resources, volatile housing markets and affordability.

However, despite these enormous challenges, projects show how interventions to help the most vulnerable adapt their existing homes or advocate for new homes can make an extraordinary difference - to individuals, families, or entire ethnic groups.

Successful interventions can range from those that are straightforward to implement, to one, which took around 20 years to achieve.



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**

SDG 10.2 / By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.¹¹

ADAPTING HOMES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN COLOMBIA



Facilitate access for persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others (NUA para 36)¹⁴



In 1988, Time Magazine described the city of Medellín, Colombia as, ‘The most dangerous city in the world’. In the last two decades, however, it has seen an extraordinary change.

In 2013, ISVIMED, the agency responsible for managing social housing in Medellín, was tasked with helping disabled people and their families – living in the poorest neighbourhood and in informal settlements – to become more independent and improve their lives through small adaptations in their homes.

Few homes in these areas have accessible bathrooms and without adaptations, many people with mobility impairments are confined to their homes and require full-time care, usually by family members. ISVIMED found that small adaptations, for example ramps, had significant outcomes for both the disabled person and their carer, allowing them to seek work and participate in community events for the first time. Adapting homes so that they are accessible to disabled people is usually beyond the means of people living in low-income communities.

The programme was funded wholly by the City of Medellín and provides a model for minimal, yet significant interventions at low cost, that can allow a large number of people to benefit.

RESTORING DIGNITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN KARNATAKA, INDIA¹⁵



Cultural integration
of marginalized
communities
(NUA para 33)¹⁶



This project has supported the Koraga tribe in Karnataka, India, to access their basic rights, including land, housing, nutrition and education.

Classed as 'untouchable', this tribe has been subjected to degrading practices under the caste-based system, including Ajalu, the practice of mixing hair and fingernails into leftover foods and expecting the Koraga to eat this.

In addition, despite being entitled to certain government-sponsored schemes as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group, a lack of awareness of their rights and their perceived inferiority meant that they were not accessing what was rightfully theirs. This led to people being expelled from their land, high levels of malnutrition and few livelihood opportunities.

In partnership with Samagra Grameena Ashram (an Udupi-based non-government organisation who have been working with the Koraga tribe since the 1980s), ActionAid India worked with the Koraga tribe from 2000-2013 to empower them to see themselves as equals and access the services that they are entitled to. This 'people centred approach' has mobilised committees of the Koraga Federation to advocate from the village all the way to the state level. There is a particular focus on women's empowerment and leadership development.

Over 2,500 families have now been given land under the Forest Rights Act and approximately 10,000 Koragas and 9,000 people from forest-dwelling communities have accessed state-sponsored housing. In addition to land and housing, an alliance of 10 tribal community-based organisations successfully advocated for a Government-sponsored nutrition programme for free food products during the six months of monsoon season.

This empowering approach is transforming the lives of the Koraga people for generations to come, as this awareness is passed on, with more and more people refusing to conform to the practices imposed upon them. The project was so successful that it is now self-sufficient without ActionAid India's input, who are now focusing their attention on land and housing entitlements for people in, or freed from, bonded labour.

3 / LAND RIGHTS

Habitat for Humanity states, ‘Access to land lies at the heart of ending poverty – without land, there can be no housing and housing is the key to stability and opportunity’.¹⁸

Lack of tenure and the insecurity that it brings, prevents people from accessing their right to adequate housing, improving their homes and feeling protected. It leads to forced evictions, being priced out of the housing market and unable to maintain a secure livelihood.

Fewer than one-in-three (30%) of the world’s population has access to a legally registered land title¹⁹ and significantly more men than women own land - more than double in many countries.²⁰ With the rapid growth of urbanisation, the need for effective and equitable land tenure systems will become more critical. It will be important to ensure ‘fit-for-purpose and age-, gender- and environment-responsive solutions within the continuum of land and property rights with particular attention to security of land tenure for women’.²¹

Slums and informal settlements are described by UN-Habitat as ‘one of the most extreme forms of deprivation and exclusion’.²² They continue to be one of the biggest challenges facing the housing sector with close to one billion people currently residing in them,²³ the majority of whom have no rights at all. Estimates suggest this number will increase to three billion by 2050.²⁴

However, many projects show it is possible to provide land tenure security for thousands of residents living in slums and informal settlements using a variety of approaches.



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**

SDG 1.4 / By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property.¹⁷

ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY LAND TRUST IN PUERTO RICO



Co-operative solutions such as co-housing, community land trusts and other forms of collective tenure (NUA para 107)²⁵



The Martín Peña Channel is a waterway that runs through the Puerto Rican capital, San Juan. It is prone to flooding and over time has become highly polluted.

Over 5,000 informal homes were built there and on land reclaimed from marshes and, as in many informal settlements, land ownership records were incomplete and disputed.

Between 2002 and 2004, the Government consulted with communities about dredging the channel to reduce flooding and improving the area. The communities were united in wanting to ensure that the works did not displace them as, given the prime location of the residents, once complete the value of the land would increase and would be vulnerable to land speculation and gentrification. Following hundreds of consultation meetings, the community and the Government agreed to locally re-house the people nearest to the channel on a condition that a Community Land Trust was established for the whole community to protect their land rights.

A Community Land Trust is a model of land ownership that develops and manages affordable housing on behalf of the community. It separates the value of the land and the buildings. Land is held in perpetuity by the community so it remains affordable for local people. This is one of the first examples of a Community Land Trust being used in an informal settlement.

The Community Land Trust in Puerto Rico has enabled the local community to formalise the relationship between more than 2,000 families and the land on which their homes stand. It guarantees affordable and safe housing, improves environmental conditions, and provides a model for other communities to adopt, including in Rio de Janeiro.

TRANSFORMING SLUMS IN ODISHA, INDIA²⁶



The rehabilitation and
upgrading of slums and
informal settlements'
(NUA para 77)²⁷



In 2017 the Odisha Government passed The Odisha Land Rights to Slum Dwellers Act – the first such Act to be implemented in India.

It has two interlinked objectives; to provide tenure security to slum dwellers against the constant threat of eviction or demolition, and to create a legal base for improving the liveability of slum dwellings.

Implementation of the Act involves a unique combination of state-of-the-art technology (including drones to prepare high-resolution maps of slums), with participatory and community mobilisation approaches. Communities are involved in mapping, conducting door-to-door surveys, stickering and numbering of dwellings, and local decision-making.

The Odisha Liveable Habitat Mission project is being implemented across all 114 urban areas in 30 districts of the eastern state of Odisha in India –incorporating nearly 3,000 slums. Starting in October 2017, within the first 18 months the project achieved; 1,725 slums mapped through drone aerial surveys and 1,725 Slum Dwellers Associations formed, 15,000 homes built, 147,000 households surveyed and over 50,000 family land rights granted. Utilising state of the art technology to map the slums makes Odisha the first and only state in India to have detailed maps of all its slum settlements. Solid waste management and smart energy efficient LED street lighting is being introduced in all the towns including the slums, leading to substantial energy savings.

The project enables extremely marginalised communities to gain land tenure and a guarantee of land rights, removing the fear of eviction. The project has ensured that women are given equal rights through joint ownership of land and through their active participation in the process. The Slum Dwellers Associations are encouraged to have women represent half of their members. They also give special priority to disabled people and women-led families.

4 / CLIMATE EMERGENCY

“We are losing the race.”

António Guterres, UN General Secretary²⁹

The climate emergency is the biggest challenge facing humanity. Without a rapid decarbonisation of the world's economy, catastrophic climate change is likely to occur.

Almost 40% of energy-related CO2 emissions are related to buildings and construction.³⁰ Though low-income countries produce far lower CO2 emissions than rich countries per capita³¹ it is the poorest who disproportionately suffer the impacts of climate change.

With the world's population expected to increase by 10% to 8.5 billion by 2030³² demand for houses is set to rise, especially in cities and urban areas in Asia and Africa – where almost all (90%) of urban growth is forecast to happen in the next 30 years.³³ It is crucial, therefore, that all housing projects, no matter the scale, culture or situation, be designed to avoid contributing to the emergency and instead fulfil the commitments of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

UN Environment believe ‘globally, the buildings sector continues to fall short of its potential’.³⁴ Current housing policies may place emphasis on affordability but not on environmental sustainability³⁵ even though the technology exists for sustainable, carbon neutral and energy-positive homes – homes that produce more energy than they use.³⁶ As UN-Habitat state, ‘green and sustainable housing is affordable’³⁷ and construction costs are falling to the point that there is virtually no additional cost in building them over traditionally-built homes.

‘Mutual Housing California’³⁸ won a World Habitat Award in 2017 for its permanent year-round housing for agricultural workers. It was the first 100 per cent Zero Net Energy ready rental housing development in the country and as of June 2019 has gone on to build 39 positive energy homes.³⁹

We are optimistic that future World Habitat Award entries will deliver innovative projects that address the climate emergency and the Awards will be a catalyst for affordable, energy-positive homes to become commonplace across the world.



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**

SDG 13 / Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.²⁸

LOW CARBON HOMES IN THE SAHEL



Sustainable, renewable and
affordable energy and energy-
efficient buildings and construction
modes (NUA para 75)⁴⁰



Despite being in one of the poorest regions of the world, the Nubian Vault Association is leading the way with cost-effective, comfortable, energy-efficient homes using locally-sourced materials.

The project started in Burkina Faso but has spread to other parts of West Africa including Mali, Senegal, Benin, and Ghana. It revives an ancient architectural approach to overcome the problem of unsuitable sheet metal being used for roofs and concrete blocks for walls. These provide poor heat insulation, must be imported at great expense and have high-embodied energy.

The programme, 'A Roof, a Skill, a Market', promotes a sustainable and affordable alternative: the vaulted earth roof. Clay slabs are used to create the roof that supports itself and so does not need supporting beams or joists, meaning timber or steel are not needed. The clay slabs are environmentally sustainable – materials have low-embodied carbon, are available locally and the construction techniques are embedded in local traditions. The vast thermal mass of the building creates an even temperature that enables a comfortable and healthy living environment throughout the home, removing the need for electric fans.

The core target group is rural populations of West Africa, living on less than USD \$2 per day and outside formal economies. However, the concept is flexible and appropriate for many groups: urban and rural, private and community, low and high income. The programme also boosts the local economy, creates jobs through training masons and reduces the impact of the climate emergency. The Nubian Vault technique has been identified by the Governments of Burkina Faso and Senegal in their commitments to the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change.

5 / HOMELESSNESS

Despite ‘the right to adequate housing’⁴² being enshrined in International Human Rights Law, around 1.6 billion people lack access to adequate shelter⁴³ and at least 150 million people worldwide are homeless.⁴⁴

The root causes of homelessness are wide-ranging and complex, and include issues such as inequality, social exclusion, lack of social protection and land tenure. It is the most vulnerable who are most at risk of homelessness, and this will only get worse with rapid urbanisation and increasing population pressures. Being deprived of adequate housing often means lack of access to basic needs such as health, work and education. This can then reinforce homelessness in a vicious cycle.

Social protection systems, inclusive housing policies and having a clear definition of homelessness for governments to work from, are all important measures that can help address this issue. Street homelessness is the most extreme form of housing exclusion, yet is an area where extraordinary progress can be made. This is highlighted in projects in Finland, where street homelessness has almost been eliminated, and a campaign in the United States which has achieved remarkable outcomes.

In two very different countries, these projects were able to develop sustainable long-term housing, adopting a Housing First approach for people who were formally street homeless. Housing First means giving people experiencing homelessness permanent accommodation unconditionally, with the support they need to keep it – instead of shelters, hostels and other emergency or temporary options.



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**

SDG 11.1 / By 2030 ensure access for all to adequate and safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.⁴¹

ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN FINLAND



Inclusive and
sustainable housing-
first programmes
(NUA para 108)⁴⁵



The Y-Foundation's goal is to end homelessness in Finland and it is making exceptional progress, having virtually ended street homelessness nationwide – 12,000 homeless people have been housed since 1987.

It has achieved this by increasing the amount of affordable rental housing available to homeless people. As Finland's fourth largest landlord, the Y-Foundation specialises in housing homeless people and vulnerable groups and as of 2019 has over 17,000 apartments in over 50 cities and municipalities.⁴⁶ It is now seen as a world leader on this issue.

The Y-Foundation was an early adopter of the innovative Housing First approach. The Y-Foundation state, 'In the Housing First model, a dwelling is not a reward that a homeless person receives once their life is back on track. Instead, a dwelling is the foundation on which the rest of life is put back together.'⁴⁷

Extensive surveys are carried out to identify and prioritise the most vulnerable people and understand the human stories behind the statistics. This people-centred approach saves valuable funds as housing a long-term homeless person saves around 15,000 euros per year.

The Y-Foundation successfully influenced the Finnish government to be the first country in Europe to set a target for ending homelessness. It is one of only two countries in Europe⁴⁸ to have reduced homelessness and has practically eliminated street homelessness. Many cities and countries across the world have come to learn from this pioneering approach.

HOUSING 100,000 HOMELESS PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES



Prevent and
eliminate
homelessness
(NUA para 33)⁴⁹



In 2010 the NGO Community Solutions set an ambitious goal to house 100,000 street homeless people in just four years.

Not only did they achieve their target ahead of time, but they surpassed it – housing a total of 105,580 homeless people. Working across a network of almost 100 organisations, 190 communities benefited from this nationwide movement. It scaled up the ‘street to home’ method that was pioneered in New York and had a success rate of 85% (meaning that people who were housed sustained their tenancy for at least a year) – far higher than success rates for traditional methods of re-housing homeless people.

With a focus on the most vulnerable people, the project set competitive targets to encourage communities to improve their rehousing rates. Setting up a registry of all homeless people was a core part of its strategy to reach them. These ‘vulnerability registries’ provided communities with actionable data and a practical method for targeting their efforts.

The campaign engaged with government authorities and influenced policy. For example, dozens of public housing authorities created ‘local limited preferences’, which helped prioritise chronically or vulnerable homeless people for housing. This project was the inspiration for the European End Street Homelessness Campaign, led by World Habitat ²³.

SCALE UP AND TRANSFER

The purpose of the World Habitat Awards is to see best practice celebrated, developed, transferred and adapted to where it is needed most.

Over the years we have seen scale and transfer happen in a variety of ways including innovative marketing, peer-to-peer learning, and policy change.



Peer-to-peer learning, subject-matter-related partnerships and collaborative actions (NUA para 149)⁵⁰



In 2011, My Shelter Foundation in the Philippines created the Liter of Light programme to enable informally constructed homes, with no windows, to have light.

It supports low-income communities to produce a cheap source of lighting which can be distributed locally. It uses recycled plastic bottles – filled with water and a small amount of bleach to prevent algal growth – that are fitted into the roof to provide lighting during the day. They upgraded the model to add an LED bulb, micro-solar panels and a battery to provide a low-cost night-lighting system. A further development saw the model used to create low-cost solar street-lights for roads and public spaces where there is no public mains electricity.

Liter of Light is an open-source, DIY programme that can easily be replicated by volunteers around the world using readily available materials and basic carpentry and electronics skills. Within 20 months, Liter of Light had become a global movement benefiting more than 150,000 households in the Philippines, and 350,000 homes in 15 countries.

The open-source model allied with a well-managed brand and skilful marketing allowed transfer to happen quickly and at incredibly low-cost. My Shelter Foundation remains a small NGO with few staff and minimal infrastructure, but the influence of its programme and brand has become a global phenomenon. One of the main reasons for this project's success was innovative marketing, adapting lessons from the private sector to social innovation.

THE EUROPEAN END STREET HOMELESSNESS CAMPAIGN



In 2014, World Habitat organised a peer exchange to the 100,000 Homes Campaign in Los Angeles to bring together 14 senior homelessness practitioners from around the world.

Several participants went on to develop their own projects, inspired by the visit. Then in 2015, representatives from six European cities, who were keen to develop a campaign to end street homelessness, visited the Y-Foundation in Finland to learn about their approach and see how they could incorporate it into their work. This visit led to the 2015 launch of the European End Street Homelessness Campaign, co-ordinated by World Habitat.

Each campaign city is supported to develop its own context-specific approach to solving homelessness, despite the diversity of challenges they face – such as lack of government commitment, limited access to funding, land or homes. The cities are offered a support programme which includes coaching calls, peer exchanges and collaborative peer support.

Campaign cities have seen increased local government support for Housing First; the development of new homelessness policies; improved data and evidence about the needs of homeless people; the mobilisation of almost 3,000 volunteers; and crucially, secure affordable housing for over 350 previously homeless people.⁵¹

As homelessness continues to grow in all but two European countries,⁵² the World Habitat Awards highlight organisations that are making positive progress in reducing homelessness. Discus (Silver Award Winner 2019)⁵³ was the first Housing First programme in the Netherlands starting in 2006. It has expanded rapidly over the last decade with more than 600 homeless people having been housed. The success of this approach led to the city of Amsterdam incorporating Housing First into its homelessness policy and Discus has contributed to the growth of Housing First across the Netherlands and in other European countries.

KEY LESSONS FROM THE WORLD HABITAT AWARDS



Disasters

- When disasters occur, community-based and community-led responses have a better long-term impact than externally imposed interventions.
- Well-targeted small interventions that work with survivors can lead to extremely beneficial impacts. Communities naturally self-recover – helping this process can speed up and improve the outcomes for far more people than traditional approaches.
- The impacts of disasters go beyond immediate victims. Holistic responses which consider the needs of the host community, as well as refugees, ease tensions and create more successful long-term outcomes.

Social exclusion

- Small low-cost but well-targeted interventions can have a transformative effect on social inclusion.
- Helping communities develop self-sufficiency and be empowered to advocate for their rights is an effective way of lifting the poorest communities out of poverty.

Land tenure

- Land insecurity is inextricably linked to poverty. Providing land security and housing rights is a key part of lifting people out of poverty.
- The Community Land Trust model has proved one of the most effective ways of providing low to middle-income communities with land security in the global North. There is emerging evidence that it can be just as effective in the global South.
- Technology provides opportunities for developing knowledge about informal communities and making large-scale improvements.

Climate emergency

- The climate emergency is already the single greatest threat facing most low-income communities – that threat is likely to grow significantly.
- Most housing in developed countries is extraordinarily energy inefficient. This inefficiency is one of the largest contributors of man-made greenhouse gases.
- The technology and knowledge to build homes that are energy-positive and produce virtually no greenhouse gases is well-established but is being implemented far too slowly.

Homelessness

- Ending street homelessness is an achievable goal for most cities. The costs of doing so in developed countries are frequently no greater than the cost of managing the status quo.
- Traditional 'staircase' models of housing homeless people do not produce the best outcomes for everyone in developed countries and are generally not effective at reducing levels of homelessness.
- Housing First, allied to systems of homelessness prevention, is an effective and proven method of ending street homelessness.
- Achieving wide community support and setting ambitious campaign targets is an effective way to mobilise local support to end street homelessness.

Scale-up and transfer

- Skilful marketing and effective branding are just as important for scaling-up social innovation as they are for commercial products.
- Peer-to-peer learning and strong partnerships have proved effective methods of scaling-up social innovation and achieving common goals across many cities and countries, despite the variety of contexts and challenges.
- It is important to advocate for good practice to be scaled-up through policy change.

END NOTES

1. These projects, unless stated otherwise, reflect the information given about the projects at the time of their submission. For more information see www.world-habitat.org/world-habitat-awards/winners-and-finalists/
2. http://mirror.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/13555_1_596472.pdf page 7
3. www.habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-English.pdf para 128
4. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>
5. www.internal-displacement.org/publications/global-disaster-displacement-risk-a-baseline-for-future-work
6. www.unisdr.org/files/61119_credeconomiclosses.pdf page 3
7. www.habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-English.pdf
8. These guidelines focused on three key techniques that significantly improve safety and are affordable.
(i) Construction techniques that strengthen homes, for example cross-bracing (ii) Building strong foundations as a starting point for construction (iii) Ensuring roofs are securely nailed onto the structure.
9. The concept of *bayanihan* can be found across south-east Asia and is particularly marked in the Philippines.
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