



world
habitat



2024

ANNUAL REPORT

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE STATEMENT

2024 was another year of rising geopolitical uncertainty that created significant challenges for progress toward ending housing poverty. Nearly half the world's population participated in national elections, with outcomes trending towards more populist leadership and protectionist policies. Efforts on tackling the climate emergency saw some amazing progress at community level, but at international and national levels advances appear to have stalled, with a COP conference that ended with few outcomes and national governments elected that dispute that a climate emergency even exists. 2024 was both the hottest year on record and the year with the highest ever recorded CO2 emissions.

Several Western governments reduced their international development contributions. The virtual closure of USAID and cuts to US contributions to United Nations' bodies by the incoming US administration are likely to have significant impact on international programmes to help the most vulnerable. We've already seen the effects of this in Central and Eastern Europe, where national funding for tackling homelessness has diminished considerably.

Despite these challenges, we remain hopeful. The world is not short of great ideas – the answers to most housing challenges already exist and are continuously being improved. To quote Aesop, "Necessity is the mother of invention". We frequently see amazing solutions to housing problems emerging from adversity. Our role is to serve as a catalyst, identifying innovative solutions, supporting their growth, and facilitating knowledge transfer to where they're most needed.



Image © David Monteith-Hodge

This report demonstrates how our strategic approach continues to create meaningful change. By supporting community-led initiatives, celebrating excellence through the World Habitat Awards, and promoting knowledge exchange, we're helping to build a world where everyone has a safe and secure home.

David Ireland
Chief Executive of World Habitat

Our role is to serve as a catalyst, identifying innovative solutions, supporting their growth, and facilitating knowledge transfer to where they're most needed.



OUR VISION AND MISSION

Our vision is a world in which everyone has a safe and secure home.

Though UN-Habitat reported in 2024 that 2.8 billion people are living without adequate housing and 318 million are homeless – a significant increase from previous assessments – we believe our mission remains achievable.

World Habitat's role is to find innovative housing projects that protect people around the world from injustice caused by climate emergency, conflict, and economic instability. We support and raise the profile of these solutions, enabling them to scale up and expand geographically.

By bringing great people and excellent ideas together, we help drive innovation into mainstream housing practice.



Image © World Habitat

OUR VISION		OUR MISSION	
A world where everyone has a safe and secure home		Through our global networks we find innovative housing solutions from around the world. We act as a catalyst for change by strengthening them and supporting them to scale to help more people facing housing injustice	
OUR VALUES			
CARING	INNOVATIVE	INDEPENDENT	
STRATEGIC GOALS			
We find and support organisations with potential to take impactful housing solutions into the mainstream	We provide tailored support and funding to promote and strengthen them to deliver greater impact	We work to end housing injustice by using our position and partnerships to highlight best practice housing solutions catalysing their uptake for most impact	
OPERATING PRINCIPLES			
CLIMATE FOCUSSED	GLOBALLY MINDED	COLLABORATIVE	AGENT FOR CHANGE

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES ARE TO:

- seek out and develop new and effective solutions to the world's greatest housing challenges;
- support emerging innovative ideas and projects to develop and grow, so they help more people;
- invest in housing projects to help them reach more people;
- promote proven housing solutions and help to transfer them to places where they are needed most; and
- work around the world to develop what works and to discover new solutions to making housing safe and secure.

THE CHALLENGES WE'RE FACING



— 70+ COUNTRIES INTRODUCED
RESTRICTIONS ON FOREIGN
NGO OPERATIONS



— WESTERN GOVERNMENTS
REDUCED INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUNDING



— DOMESTIC RESOURCES
FOR HOUSING PROGRAMMES
HAVE DIMINISHED
IN NUMEROUS REGIONS

GEOPOLITICS

2024 was marked by global uncertainty with significant implications for housing rights. With elections in countries representing almost half the world's population, we observed a trend toward protectionist policies and reduced international cooperation.

Over 70 countries have introduced restrictions on foreign NGO operations and many Western governments reduced international development funding, meaning less funding and resources for housing projects and programmes.

FIGHTING HOMELESSNESS AGAINST THE ODDS IN HUNGARY



Image © ULE

CASE STUDY

“The concept of helping people exit homelessness or ending homelessness is completely missing from our system here in Hungary, where people are simply treated as ‘homeless’, with no clear path out. They are excluded from society. While Hungary signing the homelessness declaration received little international attention, the situation changed dramatically earlier on when the government tightened its criminalisation of homelessness in 2018/19. The current legislation goes beyond banning specific activities associated with homelessness – it criminalises homelessness itself. While this approach exists elsewhere in Europe, Hungary’s legislation stands out as the most discriminatory.

Despite Hungary having signed up to the 2021 Lisbon Declaration, no significant systemic changes have yet been implemented nationally to address the root causes of homelessness, while at the same time the laws that turn homeless individuals into criminals are still in place. We need policy change, to enable people to move out of homelessness and integrate them back into society.

There is so much good practice happening around us and becoming a World Habitat European End Street Homelessness Campaign partner opened a lot of doors to this. Through the programme, we were taken on study trips to Helsinki, Bratislava and Vienna and last year attended the CRESCER congress in Lisbon. This gave us a chance to learn from Europe’s leaders in tackling homelessness, and to share our own points of view.”

Vera Kovacs, co-founder and chair of From Streets to Homes Association (ULE)

CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT

Ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza have resulted in widespread destruction of homes and massive displacement. World Habitat has supported partners in countries neighbouring conflict zones, where war has had an enormous effect on their work.

For example, we supported partners across the Middle East to establish the Housing Justice Network providing expertise and resources to set up new communications channels, bringing illegal treatment to the attention of global audiences.

In 2024 the World Habitat Awards recognised a Ukrainian project creating decent and safe emergency housing for those displaced by the war. This housing is now being developed into long term homes for those forced to permanently relocate due to the destruction of their previous housing and livelihoods.



Image © Mohammed Ibrahim Unsplash

CASE STUDY

CO-HATY, UKRAINE: EMERGENCY HOMES FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

Olena Polous, a 38-year-old showcase decorator from Kharkiv, had a stable life until the Russian full-scale invasion forced her to evacuate. She was employed and had the financial means to take vacations with her loved ones. Unfortunately, because of the war, she had to leave her home and move to a different city.

“The choice of the city depended on the path of the train. On April 8th, 2022, we arrived in Ivano-Frankivsk,” Olena explained.

They were living in a single small hostel room sparsely furnished with beds, one chair and a table. “We felt despair, overwhelming sadness, and shed many tears,” Olena said. Then they discovered CO-HATY on social media.

“The project sought volunteers to create housing for Internally Displaced People (IDPs). The improved living conditions provided support in a difficult situation. We did not feel abandoned when we desperately needed it,” Olena said gratefully.

Now, Olena has a place to call home, is part of a strong community and has a new profession as a manicurist, which had always been her dream.



Image © Co-Haty

THE 2024 WORLD HABITAT AWARDS

For nearly four decades, the World Habitat Awards have recognised the most innovative and effective housing solutions globally. Run in partnership with UN-Habitat since 1985, the awards highlight projects that have the potential to transform housing practices worldwide.



Image © World Habitat

For almost forty years our organisations have had the privilege of working together on the World Habitat Awards, successfully shining a light on innovative housing solutions globally. The dedication displayed by the World Habitat team has made a significant contribution to our shared success.

Anacláudia Rossbach,
Executive Director of UN-Habitat

COLLECTIVE ACTION AND POLICY ADVOCACY – INDONESIA



Image © Jakarta

This community-centred housing rights project works with residents of kampungs (traditional villages) in Jakarta who face eviction through gentrification. The programme provides a collective voice for current and former residents, successfully campaigning for legal protections and improved living conditions.

In August 2024, our Deputy CEO Louise Winterburn attended a conference organised by the award winners on 'Housing Rights in Jakarta', presenting the gold trophy before hundreds of stakeholders, including local people, community organisations, academics and local and national government representatives.

We also had the opportunity to meet with government officials and run a workshop as part of the development of a national community-led housing training programme, supported by World Habitat. The training programme is being rolled out in 2025.

CASE STUDY

KAMPUNG AKUARIUM

After the forced eviction of Kampung Aquarium on April 11, 2016, Yani and 40 other families lived amongst rubble for almost two years without water or electricity. During this period, 22 residents died from stress-related illnesses indirectly caused by the eviction.

“We not only lost our house, but we also lost hope,” Yani recalls. “Our children experienced serious trauma.”

Determined to fight this injustice, residents connected with the Urban Poor Consortium and partners like the Rujak Center for Urban Studies to rebuild their kampung and prevent further evictions.

Their advocacy led to 103 temporary housing units in 2018, followed by permanent housing in 2021. Today Kampung Aquarium has inspired others to organise, advocate and fight for better housing rights, living conditions and adequate, secure homes.



Without resorting to violence or forced evictions, there are solutions through collaboration. That is what we want others to see.



Image © World Habitat

Yani, resident of Kampung Aquarium, Jakarta, Indonesia

ENERGIESPRONG – THE NETHERLANDS

This revolutionary housing retrofit system for public and social homes creates insulated facades, windows and roofs with integrated renewable energy technologies. The whole solution is manufactured off site and fitted within days, avoiding the need for residents to move out of their homes. The innovative financial model allows retrofit costs to be covered through the savings on energy bills.

Residents are better off and healthier, social landlords upgrade and move towards decarbonising their housing stock, and cities keep more high-quality social homes in circulation.

In 2024, World Habitat funded research to help Energiesprong create new Market Development Teams (MDTs) in key partner countries. These MDTs play a crucial role in setting up local supply chains, ensuring the regulatory and policy landscape is ready to handle large scale retrofit projects. They also run pilot feasibility projects and engage with policy makers to incorporate Energiesprong into national energy and housing strategies. By establishing more MDTs, Energiesprong is better positioned to transfer to new countries.

In November, World Habitat representatives handed over the Gold World Habitat trophy to the Energiesprong team at their convention in Berlin, Germany.



Image © Energiesprong

The fact that Energiesprong is an open innovation movement allows for cooperation and exchange in the supply chain, between demand and offer, finance and market regulators, but also between regions and countries. You could say that Energiesprong is an international learning community committed to a just transition to net-zero housing, and especially social housing.”

Thomas Miorin, Energiesprong, Italy

THE WORLD HABITAT AWARDS ON A GLOBAL STAGE

World Habitat ended 2024 by attending the UN-Habitat World Urban Forum in Cairo, Egypt, drawing attention to the forthcoming 40th anniversary of the World Habitat Awards, with presentations from current and former award-winning initiatives.

We also collaborated with a number of close partners, including the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and members of the CoHabitat Network to host a booth called 'Habitat Village' in the WUF12 Urban Expo exhibition hall. The space was a gathering point for informal panel sessions, networking, collaboration and partnership building.



Image © Matthew Jordan



Techo's partnership with World Habitat over the years has had a positive impact on its work, and being part of the World Habitat Awards panel, working through the assessments process and participating in evaluation visits keeps the organisation connected to a powerful network of innovators across the world.

In addition to finding, strengthening, and transferring housing solutions, World Habitat invests in organisations and relationships that create lasting impact, and Techo is proud to be part of that."



Gabriela Arrastua,
COO, TECHO-International

2024'S SILVER AWARD WINNERS WERE:

- **Rural Habitability Programme – Chile:**
High volume government-led housing construction and improvement in rural areas
- **La Ciguë, Student Housing Cooperative – Switzerland:**
Affordable co-housing for students in one of the world's most expensive cities, Geneva

2024'S BRONZE AWARD WINNERS WERE:

- **CO-HATY Emergency Housing Project:**
Shelter for IDPs in Ukraine
- **DARAJA Weather Forecasting Service:**
Saving lives in informal settlements
- **Nettelbeckplatz:**
Sustainable, affordable, and accessible housing in Berlin
- **New Ground Cohousing Community:**
Safe, secure and supportive housing for older women

TACKLING STREET HOMELESSNESS IN 2024: BUILDING MOMENTUM ACROSS EUROPE

Homelessness remains a critical challenge across Europe, with nearly one million people experiencing it nightly across the EU and the UK. Rising living costs and a persistent shortage of affordable housing continue to underscore the urgency for systemic change.

In 2024, World Habitat's Homelessness Programme worked to advance housing-led solutions that prioritise prevention, permanence, and dignity.

Our work supported and aligned with Europe-wide efforts, including the European Platform for Combatting Homelessness and the FEANTSA-led initiative to share national and local best practices.

World Habitat's European End Street Homelessness Campaign (EESHC), established in 2015, continued to demonstrate the power of partnership, evidence-based practice, and innovation. In Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), we focused on strengthening capacity and boosting awareness.

In July, World Habitat joined its Croatian partners, the new NGO Udruga AjA (What About Me), as they hosted a successful three-day study visit for 26 stakeholders from six countries.

The event brought together the Mayor of the city of Pula and municipal, regional and national government officials, to learn about and promote their positive and coordinated work to deliver the first Housing First project in Croatia.



It has been great to learn about Housing First in practice here in Pula. When you see it, you can really understand how it works and how others could do it too.



Marijana Penava, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy, Croatia

During 2024, across Europe, we also provided expertise, funding and support for:

- The first large-scale city street count in Bucharest, Romania supported by the municipality.
- A new short film about Housing First in Pula, Croatia, launched on World Homeless Day.
- Promotional and educational campaigning about Slovakian NGO STOPA's successful housing projects and person-centred approaches.
- A pilot energy efficiency project for flats in Budapest.
- Peer exchanges in Barcelona, Lisbon and Bratislava to share proven practices and strengthen cross-border collaboration.
- Three online 'open space' gatherings, held with 28 participants from 7 countries, organised by World Habitat.
- A specialist training session on how to introduce and gain support for Harm Reduction approaches.
- Our partners to participate in the Housing First Europe Hub's New Horizons in Housing First conference in Dublin.
- Capacity building and strengthening consultancy focused on our partners' future planning, fundraising and income generation.



Image © Udruga Aja

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**PARTICIPANTS FROM 7 COUNTRIES LEARN
AT WORLD HABITAT 'OPEN SPACE'
SESSIONS**

26

**PARTICIPANTS FROM 6 COUNTRIES FUNDED
TO ATTEND STUDY VISIT IN PULA IN JULY**

4

**CEE PARTNER CITIES ATTEND TRAINING/
Q&A SESSION ON HARM REDUCTION**

4

**STRATEGIC SUPPORT BURSARIES TO
PARTICIPATE IN THE HOUSING FIRST EUROPE
HUB CONFERENCE IN DUBLIN**

CASE STUDY

A SANCTUARY FROM HOMELESSNESS AND ADDICTION IN SLOVAKIA



Image © World Habitat

Jan knew he needed to protect his loved ones from his destructive relationship with alcohol and medication abuse, and removing himself from the family home was the only door that seemed open to him. He arrived in Bratislava with no friends, no place to stay and no options to improve his situation. That is until he found STOPA.

Through the organisation's Crossroads' programme, Jan accessed therapy that helped him understand the root causes of his addiction. STOPA also provided stable housing and employment at the Solidarity Café, creating a crucial pathway for his recovery journey.

"It's important for my mental health to feel accepted and safe," Jan explains. Now he has the understanding and support he needs, he has developed healthier coping mechanisms and is approaching eight years sober.

Jan's transformation demonstrates how targeted funding for homes and support services can break the cycle of homelessness and addiction, restoring dignity and independence to vulnerable individuals.

COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING INITIATIVES

INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN A CHANGING URBAN LANDSCAPE

Informal settlements—home to over 1.1 billion people globally—are at the forefront of the urbanisation and climate crises. As highlighted in UN-Habitat's *World Cities Report 2024*, these communities are often situated in environmentally sensitive areas and lack protective infrastructure, making them particularly vulnerable to climate-related disasters and extreme events.

The rapid expansion of urban populations, projected to grow by 2.4 billion by 2050, demands a shift towards more sustainable and people-centred urban development. Unplanned urban sprawl, caused primarily by mounting housing needs and the growth of informal settlements, amplifies climate risks such as flooding, landslides, heat stress, water scarcity, air pollution and storm damage.

Despite their vulnerabilities, informal settlements are key to urban economies, particularly in the Global South, where they account for a significant portion of employment. Recognising and supporting informal settlements is vital to the health and wellbeing of all urban inhabitants.

That is why in 2024, World Habitat continued to support two key programmes that answer the needs of residents in informal communities and provide climate-responsible solutions to adequate, safe and secure housing.

RIO DE JANEIRO FAVELAS

Since 2020, we've partnered with Catalytic Communities to introduce the Community Land Trust model to Rio's favelas. In 2024, our grants and support expanded to:

- Community engagement work in Terra Prometida, bringing the total to five favela communities
- Federal-level campaigning for community land ownership rights
- A National Seminar on Community Land Trusts
- A webinar on collective property models in Latin America



Image © Catalytic Communities

SUPPORTING THE BIHARI COMMUNITY IN BANGLADESH

Since 2019, we've worked with the Council for Minorities and Al Falah to help the formerly stateless Bihari community develop community-led housing solutions. In 2024, our grant supported:

- Community meetings and workshops
- Documentation of living conditions in the Bogura camp
- Production of an advocacy documentary
- Research on historical documents supporting land claims



Image © Lisa Alam Unsplash

PLACING COMMUNITIES AT THE HEART OF HOUSING

HOUSING COOPERATIVES IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

Following housing privatisation after the fall of communist regimes, Central and South-eastern Europe faces severe affordable housing shortages. MOBA Housing SCE brings together initiatives from five countries to develop cooperative housing solutions.

In 2024, our support for MOBA focused on strengthening the organisation and helping them secure financial independence through:

- Capacity building activities
- Development of the MOBA Accelerator financial product
- Connecting them with other institutional funders, which in turn enabled staff recruitment



Image © MOBA Housing SCE

TEN YEARS OF THE COHABITAT NETWORK

The CoHabitat Network supports community-led housing globally through knowledge exchange and advocacy. In 2024, we supported the network's 10-year anniversary celebrations in Geneva, showcasing World Habitat Award winners and bringing together network members from around the world. The network, comprising nearly 30 civil society organisations, promotes housing models where residents lead on development and management.

Over 80 participants shared experiences from Brazil, Nepal, Zambia, and beyond, showcasing how community-led housing (CLH) fosters democratic participation, social cohesion, infrastructure development, and inclusion of marginalised groups.

A session co-hosted by World Habitat and IIED highlighted housing as an “infrastructure of care” and a people- and planet-first model.

Discussions focused on three key enablers:

- community organisation and partnerships;
- public policy support and legal recognition;
- and access to finance, land, and resources.



By joining local experiences with global advocacy, partners in the network will continue to collaborate to advance a worldwide movement of community-led solutions to our global housing crisis.



Alexandre Apsan Frediani, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

COLLECTING EVIDENCE

Our 2024 research project with the IIED examined the benefits of CLH across six countries, demonstrating how it can be scaled to meet the global housing challenge.

Drawing on case studies from Switzerland, Slovenia, Brazil, Malawi, Zambia, and Nepal, the findings highlighted shared challenges —such as limited recognition of CLH by decision-makers, restricted funding options and access to land and the importance of strong community partnerships.

At the same time, the researchers were able to show that CLH initiatives actively encourage the participation of historically marginalised groups with limited access to decision-making, notably women, young people, and racialised groups. And, CLH is more capable of achieving sustainability standards than conventional housing, and should therefore benefit from similar support.

The research has informed targeted advocacy strategies and generated practical outputs, including policy recommendations, toolkits, and shared learning resources which will be shared throughout 2025 to influence funders, planners, and policymakers globally.

This work was supported by the re:arc Institute.

OUR INVESTMENT IN UK COMMUNITIES

LEEDS COMMUNITY HOMES

Leeds Community Homes (LCH), founded by World Habitat Award winners Canopy and Lilac, supports community-led housing across Leeds. Through a share offer, in which World Habitat invested £25,000, LCH raised £360,000 to buy 16 permanently affordable eco-homes in the Climate Innovation District.

The homes, completed in January 2024 after a redesign due to fire safety regulations, meet Passivhaus standards. Nine are discounted rentals; seven are sold at 60% of market value. LCH is now developing its next project and working to become a Registered Provider to scale its impact.



Image © Leeds Community Homes

COALVILLE LEGACY

Although World Habitat is no longer based in the Leicestershire town of Coalville, the community will continue to have important significance for us, and we aim to leave a positive legacy there.

During 2024 we continued to tend to the large piece of land that we developed in 2019 for community use, which we called the Peter Elderfield Memorial Wood, after our founder. This beautiful, natural and biodiverse area can be freely used by the local population of Coalville and nearby town of Whitwick.

We also continued to lease our old Coalville headquarters building at a below market rent to a local social enterprise Coalville CAN (CCAN). In 2024 CCAN launched a community share offer to raise funds to buy the building. World Habitat invested £25,000 in the share offer, which achieved its target, and in early 2025 we handed ownership over to CCAN for the long-term benefit of the people of Coalville.



Working with World Habitat has been an incredible journey – they truly embody what it means to be an ethical landlord. Without their belief in us and their support, we wouldn't be where we are today.



Deana Bamford, Connector at Coalville CAN



OUR LAND

World Habitat owns a small portfolio of land near Coalville. The land was bequeathed to the organisation when it was established in 1976. It is largely rented to local farmers and used for agricultural purposes. In the past some land has been sold and the proceeds invested to provide income to fund the charity's activities.

In 2024 we tested the viability of developing one of these pieces of land for an exemplar housing project. The aim is to develop environmentally excellent social housing as an exemplar for the social housing sector. We are working with a social housing partner and a series of advisors to develop this project.



Image © Deb Barnes Unsplash

TACKLING THE CLIMATE CRISIS: OUR PROGRESS IN 2024

World Habitat recognises the climate crisis as a major threat to safe and secure housing. In 2024, we deepened our commitment to carbon reduction, climate justice, and ethical investment.

We approved a new carbon reduction policy, committing to cut emissions by at least 5% annually while maintaining strategic outcomes. We calculated our 2024 carbon footprint at 30 tonnes, down from 121 tonnes in 2016. A carbon consultant helped establish our base emissions at 24.52 tonnes, guiding future reduction efforts. We continue to offset unavoidable emissions via the Nubian Vault Association and the Gold Standard-accredited Kenya Biogas Programme.

We maintained Planet Mark certification for the fifth year and remained signatories to the Funder Commitment on Climate Change. These frameworks ensure accountability, continuous improvement, and collaboration across the philanthropic sector.

On investment, we upheld our ethical policy by maintaining our portfolio in the Cazenove Sustainable Multi-Asset Fund and Sarasin Climate Active Endowments Fund. While we do not control these funds' emissions, we continue to report on them transparently—3,154 tCO₂e and 2,276 tCO₂e respectively—and advocate for further decarbonisation.

Finally, we recognise that those most affected by climate change are often least responsible. In 2024, we prioritised support for climate-vulnerable communities, balancing carbon reductions with housing resilience. This included preparing to adjust methods where lower-carbon solutions might not meet local needs.

World Habitat will continue to reduce emissions, align our work with climate justice, and support affordable housing solutions that also protect the planet.

GOVERNANCE

In 2023 World Habitat commissioned an independent external board effectiveness review. The review was carried out by The Centre for Charity Effectiveness at Bayes Business School. The review comprised interviews with all trustees and senior management, observations of board meetings and a review of all of World Habitat's policies and procedures. The review made a number of recommendations for improvements which were accepted by the board and developed into an action plan. During 2024 all of the recommendations of the action plan were implemented.

In 2018 World Habitat signed up to the Charity Code of Governance. This code is a practical tool to help charities and their trustees develop high standards of governance. The principles are based on, but go beyond, legal requirements. This code was used as the basis of the board effectiveness review. The trustees and Senior Management Team review our compliance with the code annually and will continue to do so to ensure that good governance is maintained and continually improved. Trustees agreed that we will publish any areas where we do not meet the standard in the annual report. Our 2024 internal review showed that there were no areas where we do not meet the standard.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND SECURITY

Like most charities World Habitat has become more reliant on IT. This has enabled us to collect and store far more information online and communicate with our audience more easily and effectively than ever before. This brings many benefits, reducing the need to travel so frequently for meetings and enabling staff to enjoy more flexibility in their working arrangements, and as a result reducing our carbon emissions. However, as our reliance on digital tools increases, so do the associated risks and costs, potentially introducing vulnerabilities for business continuity and loss of data.

To manage these new risks World Habitat has taken advice and implemented changes to increase its cyber security. This has included a programme of upgrading our hardware and software, improving policies and procedures and a programme of staff training.

In 2024 we achieved Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation. Cyber Essentials is a UK government backed scheme for organisations that helps them to improve their cyber security.

We are aware that the threat is ever increasing. New technologies of AI and quantum computing are likely to be deployed by cyber criminals making attacks more frequent, more sophisticated, and more effective. We will continue to take expert advice and increase our cyber security in line with the risks.



AREAS OF LEARNING

Not everything went according to plan in 2024. Our values say that we won't be afraid to fail, and we will learn from our mistakes.

We planned to carry out an evaluation of the World Habitat Awards in 2023. However, a focus on implementing the new strategy meant that the evaluation did not take place and was deferred for a second year in 2024. The evaluation is planned to take place in 2025.



Image © Pierre Arnold

LOOKING FORWARD

2025 is a significant year for World Habitat. It is the first of two successive anniversary years that mark important milestones in the charity's history. 2025 marks the 40th anniversary of the World Habitat Awards. 2026 will mark the 50th anniversary of World Habitat itself.

The World Habitat Awards competition is a central pillar of World Habitat's work. Apart from recognising the world's best housing projects and programmes, it provides the means for World Habitat to research and find examples of best housing practice from around the world. World Habitat will mark the anniversary with a number of activities that highlight the impact of the awards over their history. We will publish a book which details the achievements of award winners and the difference they have made to people's lives. We will also be running events including our first ever conference that will highlight, in particular, solutions to homelessness and housing affordability. We will implement our ambitious new strategy that will guide our work for the next decade.

In an uncertain and rapidly changing world, it may seem difficult to plan so far ahead, but we aim to set broad principles that will apply the charity's objectives into the 2030s. We will revisit the strategy regularly to plan how the strategy will be applied in practice. This strategy will build on our previous successes and seek to help us identify more housing solutions, with greater impact, for more people in housing need.

A key part of our next strategy is an acknowledgement that the world is in a climate emergency. The impacts will have a profound effect on housing and the way people live. New thinking and solutions will be necessary to protect people from the risks and to accelerate the road towards net zero so the worst effects can be averted.



Image © Amogh Manjunath Unsplash

HOW OUR ACTIVITIES DELIVER PUBLIC BENEFIT

When planning activities for the year World Habitat's trustees had due regard to guidance on public benefit produced by the Charity Commission. Our charitable activities focus on the prevention or relief of poverty, and the advancement of education for the public benefit.

In particular, our programmes aim to increase the provision of adequate housing for people with few housing choices. Our work in operating and promoting the World Habitat Awards aims to fuel innovation and inspires others to adopt and adapt the best housing practice. The awards also enable the best housing projects to scale up, expand and be replicated where they are needed most. This, we believe, will enable more people in housing-need to live in safe and secure homes.

Our Community-Led Housing work aims to create the conditions in which community led-housing can be implemented in which this model can be used in new areas, scale-up and expand. This will provide greater provision and greater choice of low-cost housing benefitting people on low incomes.

Our European End Street Homelessness campaign aims to first reduce, and then end, street homelessness in participating cities in Europe.

Street homelessness is the most extreme form of social exclusion. People living on the streets have dramatically worse health, lower life expectancy and poorer life chances than others in society. This campaign aims to create the conditions in which people living on the streets are quickly and permanently housed.

Trustees believe undertaking our main activities described above fully meets the requirements of section 17 of The Charities Act 2011 to deliver public benefit.



Image © Amogh Manjunath Unsplash

FINANCIAL REVIEW

OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR

In 2024, the trustees carried out a detailed review of the charity's activities and produced a strategic plan for the direction and activity of the charity for the following ten years (until December 2033). The implementation of the plan started during 2024.

The total income for the year was **£1,200,591**. This represents a 2.7 per cent increase on the income in 2023 of **£1,169,426**. The increase is primarily due to £19k from Re.arc for the advocacy project. The principal funding source is income received from financial investments (**£1,142,290** i.e. 95.1 per cent), with the remaining 4.9 per cent secured from grants, rental income, advocacy project and interest. Expenditure for the year was **£1,126,040**. This was lower than income by **£74,551**. This included costs for renting the office at Gresham Works.

Funds have been applied in respect of research costs and in the governance and administration of the organisation, with 92 per cent of funds expended relating to research and 8 per cent to governance and administration.

INVESTMENT POWERS, POLICY AND PERFORMANCE

Under the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the charity has the power to make any investment that the trustees see fit. Investments are held to provide an income to further the objectives of the Foundation, both now and in the future. The investment policy has been amended to reflect the slight shift in emphasis towards income, rather than capital growth.

Capital appreciation of the investments continues to ensure that the value of the original gift is maintained in real terms, in the longer term, recognising that there will be short-term fluctuations due to changes in stock market values. World Habitat seeks to ensure that a sufficient income stream is generated to cover its current activities without incurring undue financial risk for the charity.

The income from the charity's investments increased by 0.80 per cent from **£1,167,358** in 2023 to **£1,176,691** in 2024. There was an increase of **£2,321,884** in the valuation of the World Habitat total investment portfolio at the year end from **£34,822,606** in 2023 to **£37,144,490** in 2024. This increase was mainly due to a recovery in the markets after the ongoing conflict between Russia and the Ukraine.

KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL REMUNERATION

Key management personnel are defined in the Charity SORP as *‘those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the charity, directly or indirectly, including any Directors of the charity’*. World Habitat trustees consider that key management personnel of the charity are: the trustees, the Chief Executive and all other members of the senior management team.

All trustees give up their time freely and no trustee remuneration was paid in the year. Details of trustee expenses are disclosed in note 8 to the accounts. One employee received remuneration above £60,000.

Trustees are required to disclose all relevant interests and register them with the Chief Executive and, in accordance with the charity’s policy, withdraw from decisions where a conflict of interest arises. The pay of the senior management personnel is reviewed annually and normally increased in accordance with average earnings and set at market rates.

The remuneration is also bench-marked with charities of a similar size and activity to ensure that the remuneration set is fair and not out of line with that generally paid for similar roles.

DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

We are passionate about challenging the chronic injustice of the one in seven people across the world who live without a proper home. Our mission is to help those who live on the streets; those who have lost their homes due to war and disasters; and those who simply cannot afford to live where they need to. Everything we do is focused on understanding what works and getting solutions to the people who need them most.

As just one organisation operating across the entire planet, we know our staff and board of trustees can never be as diverse as the multiplicity of people we serve, but we are on a journey that aims to bring us closer. We are building an organisation and a work culture where difference is valued; where the views and insights of the growing network of people around the world we work with, enhance and enrich what we do, and ultimately make us more successful at achieving our mission.

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

- **Commitment to improvement** – We are committed to improving diversity. We have agreed to increase diversity on the board, and introduced a ratchet so that diversity will not decrease again in the future. All staff and trustees have received diversity training. Our commitment to increasing our diversity will continue to be published on our website and reflected in our delivery plans with a set of clear actionable steps. We will ensure that our website and social media reflect this commitment.
- **A good employer** – We will update and commit to annual diversity monitoring. We will strengthen our recruitment process in line with good practice. We will commit to regular diversity training for all staff (at least once a year). We will investigate a range of diversity accreditation schemes and consider how they could help us continue to strengthen our work.
- **Improving how we work with others** – As a global charity we will take a range of actions to more effectively develop our approach to diversity and inclusion through our partnerships and the work we deliver. We will take active steps to improve our diversity and improve the impact of our programme delivery. We will increase our accountability and our understanding by building on the diverse nature of our networks to improve our work by actively involving them in shaping our work and actively seeking feedback.

In 2024 we carried out our diversity monitoring for staff and trustees, made further improvements to our recruitment processes to appeal to areas where we are underrepresented.

We implemented an action plan based on the information gathered from the National Centre for Diversity, this has been shared with staff and is currently being completed. Trustees received diversity training in 2023. Staff received diversity training in 2024.



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OUR VISION, VALUES AND OPERATING PRINCIPLES

OUR VISION IS A WORLD WHERE EVERYONE HAS A SAFE AND SECURE HOME OUR VALUES

Caring • We are committed to social justice and equality of opportunity • We are focussed on sustainable outcomes for people, both now and for future generations • We value diversity and strive to achieve equality and inclusion, challenging discrimination and proactively targeting help to those in greatest need.

Innovative • We encourage fresh thinking and practical and scalable solutions to housing policy and practice • We tackle difficult, sometimes unfashionable issues, because they matter • We won't be afraid to fail, and we will learn from our mistakes.

Independent • We are impartial, professional, open and act with integrity • We maintain our freedom to focus on issues that are relevant and important • We nurture community resilience and self-reliance.

OUR OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Climate focussed • The climate emergency is the greatest threat to our vision. It disproportionately affects those least responsible for it. We will act to change that in our own work and the wider housing sector.

Globally minded • We build connections and understanding between people their homes and the planet. We promote adaption and transfer of concepts across contexts and borders, fostering collaboration and free sharing of knowledge.

Collaborative • We work in partnership with others because together we can have more influence. We work with people who have direct experience of the issues we care about knowing they are well positioned to deliver sustainable change.

An agent for change • We seek to be a catalyst to bring about positive change by influencing policy and practice. We do this by providing opportunities for creative thinking and action.



Office 1, Gresham Works, 38 Market Street, Leicester LE1 6DP

Telephone: (+44) 0116 482 9446

Email: info@world-habitat.org

world-habitat.org