



Strategy 2022 - 2023

Introduction

This strategy sets out our priorities until the end of 2023. World Habitat is an organisation with a unique insight and opportunity to influence housing around the globe. In a world which appears overwhelmed with deep problems and challenges, World Habitat looks for solutions that can help people thrive. The World Habitat Awards celebrate, champion, and help communities develop new innovations, ideas and advances that improve the lives of people on low incomes. Our programmes seek to prove and drive exciting housing concepts that we believe have global significance into the mainstream.

What Are the Problems This Strategy Seeks to Solve?

The first quarter of the twenty first century has been a period of enormous social change. Our world is being reshaped by extraordinary technological advancement, rapid urbanisation, shifting political certainties, a dangerously heating climate and unchecked environmental degradation. There is a strong likelihood that most of these changes will continue to accelerate over the next few decades.

The effects are profound, they generate numerous new threats, and change the balance of old ones. Not all change is negative, technology, and urbanisation bring new opportunities for employment and economic progress. But left unmanaged these changes risk polarising wealth and leaving a growing population contesting limited resources.

Housing lies at the heart of these challenges. Habitable land is the most finite of resources. Climate change risks depleting it further. The international housing market exploits this scarcity. Increasingly housing costs are dictated by the wealth of investors rather than demand from people who need a home. It is an unforgiving fight that is heavily loaded against the poor. According to UN Habitat - 1.2 billion people are currently losing this fight and live in insecure housing or have no home at all.

There is however, hope. The early twenty-first century has seen a flourishing of innovation and new housing ideas. There is a maxim that says that adversity is the mother of invention. The World Habitat Awards trawl in these rich waters identifying, and championing, housing practice that has the potential to solve global problems.

Change brings opportunity, even the major threat of the climate emergency brings with it the chance to rethink old problems and opens new sources of funds and resources. The same technology that spreads hatred and disinformation can also be harnessed for good to bring people and thinking together. The World Habitat Awards seek to amplify and disseminate best housing practice and encourage and facilitate its proliferation.

Sometimes we go further and develop programmes to help boost concepts that we believe have global significance. Over the last four years World Habitat has particularly focussed on two programmes: Ending Street homelessness and growing community-led housing. These programmes seek to demonstrate concepts that can then be rolled out at scale into the mainstream.

How We Achieve Impact

Our work seeks to identify emerging housing practice that solves global housing problems, demonstrate proof of concept and drive successful housing solutions into the mainstream.

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 help award-winning housing projects scale-up and transfer their work to more people. Our exchange activities provide customised support to help improve the process. Sometimes this involves transferring concepts from one country to another. In other cases, it helps scale-up the work within a country.

Our programmes provide longer term support on selected issues boosting emerging housing concepts that we believe have potential global significance. Our programmes aim to be a catalyst supporting and proving concepts recognised in the World Habitat Awards to achieve greater impact and broader uptake into mainstream housing policy. Our programmes each operate for several years but are time limited and involve a succession plan so that development of the programmes continues after our day-to-day involvement finishes.

We work with strategic partners, who have shared strategic aims, to amplify our work and achieve greater global reach. We provide some grant support to help assist and develop some of our smaller strategic partners' work.

We measure the impact of our work, publishing regular impact reports to demonstrate what our work has achieved. We conduct periodic evaluations to help us better understand the impact of our work and help us improve.

We provide a small grants programme to help our programme partners and award winners develop innovative ideas and make improvements. We have a small social investment programme that invests to help achieve long-term impact. Over the course of this strategy, we aim to further develop our social investment programme, providing a long-term option for projects to transfer into it at the end of our programmes.

World Habitat Awards

The World Habitat Awards are the world's leading housing awards. Awarded annually we usually award about ten awards each year. We award two gold awards to the most significant projects that have had the greatest impact in improving people's lives and have potential for growth and transfer.

In 2021 we awarded eight awards including two gold awards for "introducing Community Land Trusts to Europe" from Belgium and "Housing Monitor" from Lebanon.

During this strategy we operate the 2022 competition and develop and implement exchange actions to support the transfer of good practice from our two 2021 gold winners to new places where the concepts can help people in housing need.

Community Led Housing

The concept of community-led housing can be seen as an antidote to a broken and unjust housing market. The core idea is that a community of people developing and managing their housing together provides a far stronger voice and more powerful entity. Most new housing development moves land ownership, access, and rights from the public realm into the private, Community Led Housing does not. This creates a more effective means of acquiring and holding land rights and generating the resources needed to create decent affordable homes for people on lower incomes.

World Habitat's work in this area is significant. It has recognised numerous ground-breaking Community Led Housing projects through the World Habitat Awards. The 2008 winner Champlain Housing Trust from Vermont in the USA was one of the earliest pioneers of the Community Land Trusts movement. World Habitat's work introduced the model to Europe and inspired the formation of Brussels Community Land Trust - the first Community Land Trust in Europe, it flourished and grew and was later to become a winner itself in 2021. Cano Martin Pena in Puerto Rico where for the first time a Community Land Trust was used as a means of regularising informally owned land. The effect was to bring an informal settlement into the mainstream of the city of San Juan. World Habitat has also helped broker the development of a consortium of national Community Led Housing organisations in the UK which successfully campaigned for a national grants programme in England.

World Habitat's work spreads this important concept to new marginalised communities in contexts and areas of the world where they are needed most. Our programme focusses on achieving proof of concept that community led housing can be developed and can solve housing challenges in three specific areas: informal settlements, refugee settlements, and the heavily owner-occupied housing markets of Central and Eastern Europe.

In this strategy we will continue to develop these three areas. We will advise assist and facilitate these projects so that communities in Bangladesh and Brazil can continue to develop the establishment of community land trusts. The first in each country. We will also continue to assist the development of the MOBA movement in central and Eastern Europe. We will implement the recommendations of the 2022 evaluation of the programme to make it more effective.

Ending Street Homelessness

Street homelessness is the most extreme form of housing exclusion. Poverty drives homelessness. Armed conflict and a heating climate threaten to displace more people and drive them into homelessness. However, we know that homelessness is not inevitable, and we know that it can be ended because there are examples that we have identified through the World Habitat Awards - in Finland and the United States - where that has been achieved.

World Habitat's work helped establish the Housing First model in Europe. Housing First provides people who have experienced chronic homelessness a stable home from which to rebuild their lives. It provides holistic support and no conditions. It was an innovative concept when it was recognised by the World Habitat Awards in 2013 through the remarkable work of the 100,000 homes campaign in the USA and in 2014 when we awarded the Y-Foundation's in ending street homelessness in Finland. Housing First was integral to both winners. The model is credited with starting in the USA and Finland concurrently. Both programmes provided the inspiration for the European End Street Homelessness Campaign and the awards gave a platform for the concept which has subsequently

been adopted at scale in most western European countries as the principal policy for ending street homelessness.

In 2015 we launched the European End Street Homelessness Campaign to prove the concept that street homelessness can be ended throughout Europe. It draws on the best practice we have identified through the World Habitat Awards. The campaign has expanded and in the last year we have welcomed new cities into the campaign from Central and Eastern Europe. We identify beacon cities that have achieved noteworthy progress so that campaign cities and other communities can learn and accelerate their journey towards ending chronic street homelessness.

Progress towards ending street homelessness was disrupted in many of our partner cities throughout the period of the Covid pandemic. Progress against individual city plans was delayed, or in some cases, deferred. In some of our partner cities the refugee crisis caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine has had a significant impact creating new priorities and radically altering the needs they must address.

During this strategy we will develop new individual city plans for each city to set a path towards “functional zero” street homelessness using the definition established by the “Centre for Homelessness Impact”. This defines functional zero homelessness as a state where homelessness is prevented and, if it occurs, it is rare, brief and non-recurring.

This will introduce for the first time the measures of “Homelessness Prevention” as well as measures to reduce homelessness. We will draw on the success of our 2020 World Habitat Awards winner Newcastle City Council and other beacon cities.

We aim to achieve a position by the end of this strategy where all our campaign cities have agreed a sustainable pathway towards functional zero chronic street homelessness.

The Climate Emergency

The climate emergency is the greatest threat to our vision: a world where everyone has a safe and secure home in a successful community. A home cannot be safe and secure if it is at risk of destruction from disasters, including floods, wildfires, and violent storms. A community cannot be successful if prosperity and societal stability are threatened.

Housing is itself a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. To achieve the UN Paris Accord goal of keeping global temperature rises to within 1.5C, housing must follow a rapid path of decarbonisation to achieve net zero emissions. We know that most housing providers are way behind the transition needed to achieve a net zero business model in the timescales needed. In addition, decarbonising housing can also help reduce fuel poverty and improve occupants’ health.

World Habitat has worked with our 2016 World Habitat Award Winners Association La Voûte Nubienne to develop an accounting protocol so that the embodied energy consumed in the construction of Nubian vault houses in the Sahel can be accurately calculated. We will develop the protocol and research how it can be used to support climate financing.

We have a responsibility to ensure that we minimise our own environmental impact. World Habitat has adopted a carbon strategy that will see us transition to a net zero organisation as soon as possible and no later than 2030. We will make significant changes to our operating model to

prioritise and minimise business travel and other improvements to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

Diversity Equality and Inclusion

We are committed to becoming a more diverse and equal organisation through improvements to our workplace and our board, so that we better connect the organisation with the diversity of our work and the people our work aims to help

We will deliver the outputs on our diversity action plan which sets out how we will improve. We will have increased the diversity of our board so that it better represents the communities in which we work.

We will maintain and improve on our accreditation from the (UK's) National Centre for Diversity. We will improve our understanding and practice and maintain this accreditation through regular staff training and improvement of all our policies.

We will develop a diverse policy advisory group to guide and advise World Habitat's policy direction. Membership of the group will be drawn from the global breadth of our work and will be geographically and culturally diverse to inform challenge and enrich World Habitat's policy development. The group will consider new thoughts, ideas, and perspectives and make recommendations to help us improve our policies and practices.

We will review the impact of our programmes and design and improve them so that they do not discriminate and are proactively targeted to helping those in greatest need.

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 develop an ambitious new Communications strategy that will support this strategy. It will achieve the following:

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 safe and secure housing for everyone.

Initiate media campaigns that highlight injustices in housing and the solutions that our programmes and award-winners can provide.

Measure the reach of our communications and set and met challenging new targets for growing our audience through our website, our social media, and global media coverage. We will also have evaluated the impact of our programmes including our communications.

In addition we will review our website with a view to developing a new and improved website that supports improved content and technology.

Good Governance

Good governance is fundamental to our success. It enables and supports compliance with the law and promotes a culture where everything works towards fulfilling our mission.

We will continue to improve the governance of the organisation; we will evaluate our approach through conducting an external governance review.

We will audit and maintain our compliance with the Charity Governance Code which sets out good governance that goes beyond legal requirements. We will publish any variation from the Code with reasons in our Annual Report.

We will implement the action plan of improvements identified through our completion of the Stronger Foundations Initiative operated by the Association of Charitable Foundations.

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. In 2022 we moved into brand new offices in a city centre location in Leicester. We have introduced hybrid working and improved flexibility so that staff can have a good home/work balance and so that we are able recruit and retain staff from a wider geographical area.

We will introduce a new on-line HR system so that staff can access information and interact with the organisation when working remotely.

We will introduce new appraisal system and implement other recommendations that were generated by our completion of the Stronger Foundations process.

Responsible Investments

World Habitat was established with long-term investments that provide an income to fund World Habitat's activities. During the period of our previous strategy we developed a new investment policy and reinvested all of our financial investments so that they are now invested in line with World Habitat's values. Specifically, they exclude investing in companies that pursue armament of military regimes, human rights violations, unethical lending practices, environmental degradation and activity that is incompatible with the 2015 Paris agreement to limit average temperature increases to 1.5C. In addition they are invested to provide sufficient income to enable us to carry out the activities and achieve the objectives in our strategy, and secure the long-term future of the organisation.

In addition, World Habitat owns a small portfolio of land and property that is local to the town of Coalville, where the organisation was originally based. This portfolio is a legacy of the gift that was made to the organisation on its formation. Most of the land is let for agriculture. In recent years the

organisation has developed Peter Elderfield Memorial wood (named in memory of our founder) to be a recreational and wildlife area available for people to use for leisure.

Trustees are actively engaged in monitoring our investments to ensure they continue to meet these objectives. We will develop our monitoring of our investments so that we maintain confidence that our investments in accordance with our investment policy.

We will investigate opportunities to expand our portfolio of social investments.

We will investigate opportunities to improve our land and property so that they provide greater social value to the local population. This includes providing accommodation for local charities and social enterprises and amenity use of our land where it is not used for agriculture.