



## Global Urban Approach 2018-30



### MEETING THE URBAN HOUSING CHALLENGE

Housing is central to achieving socially just, economically viable and ecologically healthy and sustainable cities, as envisioned in the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. Better-designed and better-managed cities contribute toward improved quality of life for urban residents and more sustainable and resilient urban areas. We cannot build better cities if we do not address the affordable housing challenge.

According to the United Nations, an estimated 1.6 billion people live in substandard housing and 1 billion live in slums – that’s 1 in 8 people around the world. In many developing countries, over 50% of the urban populations live in slums, and it is projected that rapid urbanization will lead to 2 billion people living in slums by 2030.

Urbanization is not a new phenomenon; the difference today is the high rate of urbanization occurring in the absence of an industrial revolution and without appropriate planning and resources. As a result, urban areas are unable to cope with the influx of people and fail to meet the need for basic services and adequate, affordable housing. Addressing this challenge requires a shift from traditional approaches designed to serve formal systems and markets.

Cities are centers for innovation, employment, creativity, and social and economic development, and are also complex environments that are constantly changing. Navigating this complexity and addressing the housing challenge in cities requires innovative housing solutions based on assessments of the entire housing ecosystem. Approaching the affordable housing challenge from a housing ecosystems perspective provides a deeper understanding of how to address the key constraints and optimize the opportunities that exist within urban contexts.

### HABITAT’S URBAN POSITION

Habitat for Humanity’s urban position is based on the fact that everyone needs a home, and that adequate and affordable housing is central to building better cities. Our work is guided by the following perspectives:

- Housing is central to creating socially just, economically viable and ecologically healthy cities.
- A people-centered, partnership-driven housing ecosystem approach is required to tackle the challenge of providing affordable housing in urban areas.
- Better-designed and well-managed cities contribute to improved quality of life and more sustainable, inclusive and resilient urban areas.

### MEASURING IMPACT

The Global Urban Approach aims to improve the scale, quality and impact of our work in urban areas and achieve the following impacts:

- Improved living conditions and quality of life for low-income and vulnerable communities.
- Enhancements to housing market systems and policy environments for affordable housing.
- Contributions to the creation of inclusive, safe, resilient cities and human settlements.
- Contributions to **SDG 1** – No Poverty; **SDG 3** – Good Health and Well-Being; **SDG 5** – Gender Equality; **SDG 6** – Clean Water and Sanitation; **SDG 7** – Affordable and Clean Energy; **SDG 11** – Sustainable Cities and Communities; and **SDG 17** – Partnerships for the Goals.

- Developing a comprehensive urban strategy and programming at a national level, demonstrating how we can achieve greater quality, scale and impact.

Additionally, the success of the Global Urban Approach depends on galvanizing appropriate institutional and corporate donors who will fund assessments and support more longer-term comprehensive programming. (five years, at minimum). As such, Habitat for Humanity International must steward well-educated, outcome-oriented partners who are eager to work toward comprehensive interventions. Habitat believes that a housing ecosystems approach opens new channels of funding as educated donors are drawn to its comprehensive nature.

**Successfully adopting the housing ecosystems approach both necessitates and facilitates linkages among the following:**

Institutional donors	Complex and technical proposals	Shift from outputs to outcomes
Partnerships (people, public, private)	Multi-year multisector, programs	Linkages to Sustainable Development Goals and New Urban Agenda
Donor education	Funding assessments	Geographic targeting

### WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- Globally positioning housing as a key driver for urban development and advocating for more comprehensive programming.
- Establishing regional and national networks to create a common vision and improve housing policies and practices to create a more enabled affordable housing ecosystem.

**Comprehensive urban programs require community-, market- and policy-level interventions that are based on contextual assessments.**



285 Peachtree Center Ave. NE, Suite 2700, Atlanta, GA 30303-1220  
 322 W. Lamar St., Americus, GA 31709-3543 USA  
 (800) 422-4828 fax (229) 928-8811 publicinfo@habitat.org habitat.org



## THE GLOBAL URBAN APPROACH 2018-30

The Global Urban Approach was one of the four organizational commitments Habitat made to support the implementation of the New Urban Agenda at Habitat III, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, which took place in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016.

The Global Urban Approach sets how the Habitat federation and other key partners can facilitate increased access to adequate and affordable housing in urban areas through a comprehensive, integrated and collaborative approach that contributes toward an improved affordable housing ecosystem and meets the obligations of the global development frameworks.

The Global Urban Approach is a comprehensive housing ecosystem strategy that is people-centered and driven by people, public and private partnerships, with a focus on women and vulnerable groups — e.g., children, older people and people with disabilities — who bear a disproportionate



burden of urban challenges. At the core of the approach are the co-creation of context-relevant and evidence-based community-, market- and policy-level interventions that lead to improved living conditions of low-income communities and longer-term systemic enhancements to the entire affordable housing sector. Designing interventions based on an analysis of the entire housing ecosystem, including socioeconomic and environmental conditions; market conditions; policy environment; and key community, public and private stakeholders provides a deeper understanding of the key constraints and opportunities that affect the delivery of adequate and affordable housing.

## GLOBAL URBAN APPROACH OBJECTIVES:

*The focus of the approach is threefold:*

- To guide the design and implementation of more comprehensive urban housing programs that contribute toward:
  - Improved living conditions for low-income and vulnerable communities.
  - Systematic market and policy enhancements across the housing ecosystem.
  - Integration of programs, partners, sectors and spaces.
  - Inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable communities and cities.
- To create unique urban hubs, networks, coalitions and platforms that bring together housing and urban practitioners, specialists, researchers and policymakers with the objectives of creating a common development vision and an understanding of urban challenges while facilitating better research, policies and best practices.
- To advocate for and demonstrate the transformational impact of housing and its contribution to urban development.

## IMPLEMENTING THE GLOBAL URBAN APPROACH

Designing more comprehensive programs requires various assessments to understand the constraints, opportunities and gaps in the entire housing ecosystem.

This leads to the co-creation of evidence-based community-, policy- and market-level interventions.

The implementation of urban interventions and the identification of entry points depend on context, priority, capacity and available resources.

The Global Urban Approach states that successful urban programs are not only comprehensive but also always include:

**Partnerships:** Habitat unites relevant stakeholders to promote people, public and private partnerships that drive urban programming around a common development vision. Building partnerships allows space for the active participation of those who might not have been included in decision-making processes in the past. These partnerships are essential for supporting assessments, program design and implementation.

**Systematic assessments:** Programming should be based on an expressed need and use evidence-based solutions that fit the contextual parameters of the environment. Therefore, a fundamental component of Habitat

## Global development frameworks

Increasing access to adequate and affordable housing and upgrading of urban slums at scale have become more prominent and measurable in the context of these global development frameworks: the New Urban Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and Response, the Paris Climate Accord, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Global Urban Approach contributes directly to these Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 1 – No Poverty; SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being; SDG 5 – Gender Equality; SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation; SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy; SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities; SDG 13 – Climate Action; SDG 14 – Life Below Water; SDG 15 – Life on Land; SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals.



Housing also impacts on these SDGs.

urban programming is conducting assessments that analyze the housing market conditions, housing policy environment, contextual conditions, and hazards and vulnerabilities that affect low-income and vulnerable communities.

**Co-design and co-implementation of urban programs:** The result of the assessments serves as a guide for Habitat and its partners (communities, local institutions, etc.) designing and implementing programs. This design should tackle the identified constraints, gaps and opportunities related to facilitating increased access to adequate and affordable housing. This includes the formulation of community-, sector- and policy-level interventions and their phased implementation.

- Entry points:** The entry point for an urban program depends on community priorities, available resources and capacity. Examples of entry points include basic services; water, sanitation and hygiene, or WASH; community infrastructure; community development; housing repairs; housing

construction; increasing security of tenure; advocacy; policy recommendations; capacity building; disaster risk reduction; or increasing accesses to housing finance, products and services.

- Timing:** Based on Habitat's experience, urban programming should take place for a minimum of five years in a targeted area to have impact and build the partnerships necessary to support the sustainability of the interventions.

**Monitoring, evaluation, accountability, learning and knowledge management:** Habitat promotes implementing monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning, or MEAL, practices throughout the project's life cycle to document lessons, best practices, program results, etc. Documenting the program is vital to promoting transparency between Habitat and all relevant stakeholders, thus fostering a culture of accountability that uses evidence to guide actions.