

END WORLD SLUMS

Upgrading slums, providing alternatives to slum formation

Slum growth

The world is experiencing an urban catastrophe. More than 1 billion of the world's population now live in slums. By 2020 this total will reach 1.4 billion. Currently the rate of slum formation outpaces our ability to deal with the problem. It is critical that awareness of the issue is raised within the housing and local government sectors, so that more can be done.

A challenge to the UK Housing Sector

Of all the world's problems, this is one that the UK Housing Sector¹ **can** and is uniquely endowed to do something about. Housing practitioners appreciate the complexity of housing. They understand that housing is more than building houses - it is a political, social, technological and financial endeavour – that requires integrated approaches. We also understand that it has the power to transform people, communities and cities. Upgrading a single slum provides not only shelter and basic services; it can build livelihoods, improve health and education, and the overall well being well-being of the community.

What is a slum?

A slum is a place where residents suffer from some or most of the following: inadequate access to safe water, inadequate access to sanitation, overcrowding, poorly built and maintained homes and insecurity of tenure or the threat of eviction.

Why are there slums?

Each slum is as unique as the combination of factors that have led to its formation. However, often the following factors are at work:

- A lack of political will to address the growth of slums.
- A lack of resources and/or capacity at local government level to plan for growing urban populations.
- Agencies responsible for providing affordable housing solutions, either do not exist or lack the resources and capacity to deliver.
- Private sector agencies cannot provide affordable solutions or regard housing the poor as too risky
- Housing is not prioritised by international aid agencies because it is complex and requires long-term investment. This includes our own Department for International Development (UKAid).

What are the solutions?

When as much as 70 per cent of the population of African cities and 40 per cent of Asian cities are slum dwellers, local governments are simply unable to provide the required support. Instead, slum dwellers have organised themselves to provide their own housing and basic services. Increasingly local governments are relying upon these nascent community development organisations², to serve not only as trusted intermediaries, but as agencies for the delivery of housing and basic services. As such, there is much in common with the historical formation of housing associations and cooperatives in the UK.

1 "Housing Sector" describes a range of agencies involved in the delivery and management of housing within the United Kingdom. These are inclusive of non-profit, for-profit organisations and associations, professional institutions, regulatory and governmental organisations

2 The description "community development organisation" includes a variety of civil society or third sector institutions such as community-based organisations, federations of the urban poor, cooperatives, non-governmental organisations working in an intermediation or implementation role. In the UK, these may include Housing Associations, Arms Length Management Organisations or Cooperatives.

Manifesto

Purpose

This Manifesto seeks to establish consensus between, and secure the commitment of individuals and institutions within the UK Housing Sector toward ending world slums:

What we believe:

We believe:

- that slums are a global catastrophe requiring urgent focus
- that slums are the evidence of underlying political, social and economic dysfunction.
- that slum upgrading represents a strategic opportunity to address the systemic causes of global poverty
- that local community development organisations are a key institutional component in any strategy seeking to address slum upgrading and provide affordable housing.
- that the UK Housing Sector has a significant role to play in supporting the development of local community development organisations.

What we will do as individuals

We identify with slum dwellers around the world and will seek to support in the following ways:

- Contribute our time, talents and finances to supporting local community development organisations.
- Raise awareness about the global slum problem
- Advocate for the prioritisation of housing in international aid policy.
- Support Homeless International's work across the globe.

What we want the Housing sector to do

- Provide financial and technical support for the establishment and ongoing development of local community development organisations.
- Strengthen partnerships between UK organisations and community development organisations to facilitate professional exchanges and mutual learning.
- Work with the manifesto partners³ to guide and shape international policy affecting slum dwellers.

What we want the UK Government to do

- Recognise the role of local community housing organisations to effectively engage in the processes of housing and slum upgrading.
- Support partnerships with the UK Housing Sector to build the capacity and capability of local community development organisations in developing countries.
- Allocate 10 per cent of the UK Aid budget specifically towards upgrading slums and providing alternatives to the formation of slums.
- Work with the Social Housing and Local Government Sectors to develop new ways to finance housing and basic infrastructure in developing countries.
- Fulfil its past commitments to the 1996 United Nations Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals.

³ Manifesto Partners presently include the Chartered Institute for Housing, National Housing Federation, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Community Housing Cymru and Homeless International. Partnership is open to all organisations within the Housing Sector