



A comprehensive housing ecosystem approach in Dhaka

Innovative, affordable housing solutions in any context require evidence-based community-, market- and policy-level solutions that stem from a deeper analysis of the entire housing ecosystem. This includes understanding the housing market conditions; the policy environment; and the social, economic and environmental realities that communities face. Relevant assessments that identify constraints and optimize opportunities are essential for supporting the implementation of sustainable housing interventions, as is establishing strategic people-public-private partnerships.

Comprehensive urban housing programs help improve the living conditions in vulnerable and low-income communities, and systemic market and policy interventions in targeted geographic areas lead to greater outcomes and demonstrate the transformational impact of housing.

HOUSING OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

Since 2012, Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh has conducted slum upgrading projects and long-term development planning in 14 slum communities, benefiting 16,032 low-income families. To date, they have constructed 51 community latrines, 13 bath houses, nine water points and over 2,700 meters of walkway.

Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh's comprehensive geographic information system map and profiling of 25 slums has resulted in government budgeting for basic services in slum communities. Its annual Urban Dialogues and Urban INGO Forums bring together various stakeholders and foster communication around urban planning and development in Bangladesh. Habitat Bangladesh also has contributed to research on improving multistakeholder collaboration for urban climate resilience, water and sanitation. Altogether, this work has resulted in:

- Improved living conditions, health status, resilience and reduced threat of evictions for slum dwellers.

COMMUNITY-LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

- Vulnerability assessment.
- Informal settlement mapping.
- Community action planning.
- Water and sanitation infrastructure.
- Housing repairs and renovations.
- Slum upgrading and improved resilience.
- Capacity building for disaster risk management and preparedness.

MARKET- AND SECTOR-LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

- Connected government service providers with urban slum communities to facilitate planning and service delivery.
- Established Urban INGO Forum for better coordination and cooperation on urban issues.

POLICY-LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

- Researched urban issues and country policy around urban climate resilience, water and sanitation for slum dwellers to inform advocacy plan.

- Systemic changes in planning, budgeting and service delivery for urban slum communities.
- Improved income through livelihood activities.
- Integration of partners, sectors and spaces through urban dialogues and integration of international nongovernmental organization programming at an urban slum level.

A COMMUNITY-FOCUSED APPROACH

Community-led development is central to Habitat for Humanity's Global Urban Approach. Through community-level assessments, Habitat Bangladesh found that informal settlers experienced tenure insecurity, were excluded from basic government services, and lacked a structured way to engage NGOs working in informal settlements. In addressing the challenges faced by slum communities, Habitat Bangladesh identified a lack of current information on slum populations and their access to necessities. Rapid urbanization and unplanned development of slums across the city made it increasingly difficult for urban stakeholders to deliver basic services such as water, sanitation, education and health care. Poor coordination among existing urban actors further hampered development progress. Through its work, Habitat Bangladesh has provided slum dwellers with a voice to advocate for their basic needs and priorities.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

To facilitate collaboration and structured engagement, Habitat Bangladesh established the **Urban INGO Forum** in 2013. During this event, international organizations involved in urban planning and development in Bangladesh discuss challenges and opportunities, jointly taking policy positions and making commitments to address critical urban issues.

Habitat Bangladesh engaged the Urban INGO Forum, the Water and Sewerage Authority, the Dhaka North City Corporation and community representatives from respective slums to create the **GIS map and database**, which contain information on demographics; land tenure and housing conditions; disaster risk; water, sanitation and hygiene facilities; and community infrastructure, among other things. Both resources are maintained by the DNCC and are accessible to all urban stakeholders for use in programming, advocacy and policy initiatives in consultation with informal settler communities.

PROGRESS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In Bangladesh, 38.6% of the total population lives in urban settings. That number is projected to be over 50% by 2050. Typically located in hazard-prone areas, slum communities lack access to basic services. Combined with insufficient community-level programming, this leaves informal settlers at risk of physical, social and economic vulnerabilities.

Habitat Bangladesh's work contributes to more **inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable communities and cities** by addressing the following Sustainable Development Goals:

Goals 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 11 and 13 by increasing access to basic services, thereby decreasing inequalities experienced by informal settlers and facilitating their inclusion into the city by reducing risk of eviction and increasing their resilience to disasters and quality of life.

Goal 17 by creating an integrated platform and slum profiling database to enhance collaboration among stakeholders and informal settler communities.

